Education, Professionalization and Social Representations

On the Transformation of Social Knowledge

**Edited by Mohamed Chaib,
Berth Danermark and Staffan Selander**

With a Foreword by Denise Jodelet

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Routledge International Studies in the Philosophy of Education

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Routledge
Taylor & Francis Group
New York   London

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Foreword

Denise Jodelet
(translated by Christine Carter)

In choosing "transformations of knowledge" as the directing and unifying theme for this book on education, professionalization, and social representations, the editors have faced a dual challenge. The first has been to bring together contributions from different countries and intellectual cultures by associating different approaches and objects of study, without subordinating any of these to any other, within a single perspective centered on social representations. This has resulted in a true melting pot that allows for the assessment of resources offered by this perspective and opens up new avenues for its further development through the confrontation of issues or questions raised by different and complementary points of view expressed in local contexts or in specific scientific frameworks.

The second challenge has been to tackle the problem of change and transformation of knowledge. Not that this problem has been hidden until now—it was indeed at the origin of Serge Moscovici's principle work, *Psychoanalysis: Its Image and Its Public* (1961/1976, 2008) that has recently been translated to English—and it has inspired numerous studies on social representations. The problem has been obscured, however, by the emphasis on the structural aspects of representations, on their roots in history or culture, and on the consensual inertia that ensures their sharing and sustainability in social groups. It seems to me that the question is now back in the forefront for two reasons: first, the taking into account of social conflicts in the recent models proposed for the analysis of social representations; and second, the findings imposed by the implementation of the paradigm of social representations in defined social or professional fields. This book bears witness to this movement and to the reasons for it, which I will examine in considering successively the two sides of the book's previously-mentioned challenge.

First, the melting pot: It is a wonderful idea, resting on the richness and fertility of diversity and crossbreeding. In their introduction, M. Chaib, B. Danermark, and S. Selander provide the theoretical justification of the book's purpose and of bringing its contributors together. I would like to add a historical note because this group of contributors has a story. Researchers who met regularly during the International Conferences on

Social Representations[1] decided to coordinate their research through cooperation and international meetings. The cooperation has focused on the two fields of application, education and health, which—along with that of the environment—are most likely to benefit from an approach in terms of social representations. The first meeting took place in 2006 at the International Conference in Rome. Upon the initiative of M. Chaib and Suzana de Stefano Menin, scientists from Brazil, France, and Sweden provided input and assistance to this collective work, validating the merit of the idea to initiate these new forms of international collaboration. Indeed, this book brings together original contributions—contributions that bear witness to research and perspectives that were previously developed independently in each of the countries—around a common axis of orientation: the social representations approach. This is a new approach to intercultural cooperation, where in general we settle for carrying out studies in different countries based on a more or less uniform scheme designed by one of the participants. This new approach opens up a space for dialogue between the authors, stimulates the reader's reflection by benchmarking the individual works, and augments the usefulness of the authors' subsequent meetings.

The Brazilian and French authors are experts in the science of education, of which they cover various aspects by taking social representations into account. The range of the Swedish contributions is broader, both in terms of their including the domains of health and the media and, in most instances, in referring to external models, in terms of the representative phenomenon discussed. This difference is enriching in that the theory of social representations is called upon to meet the requirements of conceptual refinement posed by, on the one hand, the treatment of specific objects by Brazilian and French researchers in response to the evolution of the science of education, and on the hand, the issues raised by the expansion of focus and theoretical references among the Swedish researchers. Before considering the contributions of these works which constitute the second success of this book, a word about the position of the study of social representations vis-à-vis the various fields of application that are covered here.

The links between the field of study of social representations and the fields of education and health are both historical and logical. The historical link is that from the outset the theory of social representations has focused on the relations between scholarly and/or scientific forms of knowledge and ordinary knowledge as it unfolds in everyday life in the form of common sense. In addition, the vector used to study this relation was directly related to the field of health: It concerned the reception of psychoanalysis, a theory written in the field of mental health. The question of the transmission of knowledge, of direct interest to the field of education, and marginally to that of health, was immediately a central concern of Moscovici's. The study of the effects of the social diffusion of psychoanalytic theory enabled the identification of the dialectic existing between the transformations of common sense through contact with scientific knowledge and the

transformations of scientific knowledge following its penetration into the public arena and its appropriation by subjects whose identities and ways of thinking are marked by the subjects' adherence to the values and beliefs of their group.

These transformations are directly relevant to the problems concerning the transmission of knowledge and the forms such transmission takes in the realm of academic or vocational training. They also concern the integration of medical knowledge in the lay interpretations that patients make of their state of health or illness. We must not forget that the publication of *Psychoanalysis: Its Image and its Public* contributed greatly to the impetus of two new research areas. The first was devoted to the popularization of science, the dissemination of knowledge, and science education. These disciplines look at the role that socially shared representations play, whether as facilitators or barriers, in the processes of understanding and assimilation of expert knowledge as well as in the orientation of health practices, adherence to medical and health prescriptions, or the following of public health policy recommendations.

The second new research area began its development with the publication of the first work applying Moscovici's theory to the study of social representations of health and illness (Herzlich, 1969). This was followed by a cohort of studies conducted in Europe on the body and physical and mental health (De Rosa, 1987; Giami, 1983; Jodelet, 1984, 1989, 2000; Markova & Farr, 1994). These studies focused on the apprehension of the body and of health in light of the experience and social identity of individuals and on the role of communication in the adoption of practices for the promotion of health and prevention and treatment of illness.

This is the point that provides the logical link between social representations and education or health. In neither field is it sufficient to address knowledge and the effects related to the diffusion and assimilation of this knowledge within the framework of a linear vision of the relation between emission, transmission, and reception. These fields all belong to a space that exceeds them in the sense that values, norms, ideas, the functionalities of language, and identities come into play, calling for a more complex approach. The approach of social representations responds to these exigencies.

The importance that this approach has for reflection about education and training practices has to do with the fact that these practices go well beyond socialization, beyond the acts of teaching and learning or a mastery of pedagogical techniques. According to Durkheim (1934), the inventor of the concept of collective representation and inspirer of Moscovici, education is a voluntary action involving certain conceptions of its receiver, of human conduct, and of the formation of the citizen. It is based on values and concepts that define the dominant patterns at different times of the education system's evolution. Social science research has amply demonstrated that these patterns are dependent on societal conditions and on political

and economic demands that vary over time. These patterns carry ideologies that determine the functions of the education system (production of a specific culture, reproduction and social selection, social and professional integration). Emerging in response to social changes and to the huge increase of the school system's public (i.e., the masses), new orientations were added to the traditional objectives of the school. These orientations are intended to satisfy economic requirements (preparation for employment, production and economic performance), educational requirements (to provide intellectual tools that allow for an understanding of the universe of life and enable orientation and action), and democratic requirements (to ensure the equality of all while respecting differences, to fight against school failure and social exclusion). These orientations directly affect the functioning of the education system and the options that actors choose based on their experience, giving rise to representations about teachers' status, rights and duties and the nature of pedagogical work (Jodelet, 2007).

In the field of health, the use of social representations has emerged in various capacities. As the social sciences show (Augé & Herzlich, 1984; Godelier & Panoff, 1998), social representations have a role in the treatment of cultural issues related to social identity and corporal life. The body as natural symbol (Douglas, 1973), health as social signifier (Herzlich, op. Cit.), and disease as an expression of the social imaginary (Sontag, 1979) are objects of discourse that vary according to history and culture (Laplantine, 1986, Herzlich & Pierret, 1991; Jodelet, 2006) and according to the social and group insertion of social actors. This means that the systems of interpretation of health and disease governing private, social, and institutional conduct refer to a symbolic universe. This universe encompasses not only medical knowledge, but also the meaning that the actors concerned attribute to their physical condition according to the logic underlying daily activities and the meaning they attribute to their lives (Pierret, 1993).

This historical and logical link has resulted, in the two fields, in a long tradition of research that has diversified over time. This book is a continuation of this tradition, of which it includes the classic problems as well as more recent concerns. I will try to show how it enriches this tradition through its variations around a common theme centered on the change or transformation of representations and by using methodologies directly inspired by the paradigms proposed for the study of social representations.

The contributions that focus on issues related to education in schools or to life in the school and/or preschool milieu fall into the category of what I am calling the classic problems. In the category of recent concerns fall those contributions focusing on adult education, specifically vocational training, and those interested in inter-professional interactions in conjunction with the activities of agents. These points of view permit one to cover a wide range of questions posed by the transmission of knowledge and the transformations it induces. We find the usual distinctions (Jacobi, 1993) between the discourses of transmission depending on whether they emanate from the producers of

knowledge (scientists) or from the transmitters of science, the latter operating either in the school milieu (teachers) or in the public and media arenas (the popularizers). These modes of transmission involve forms of power, as Roqueplo (1974) demonstrated concerning the "sharing of knowledge", as well as the accessibility of expert knowledge for the lay public or its distance/proximity to common sense knowledge. In addition, we have the distinctions introduced between different educational cultures (Barbier, 1996): teaching cultures providing learners with knowledge (*savoirs*)[2*] that may be appropriated in the form of "understanding" (*connaissances*); training cultures targeting the acquisition of new capacities that can be transferred to situations beyond that of training; and cultures of competency development aiming at the transformation of competencies in relation to the transformation of activities. These various distinctions operate in the chapters of this book. Furthermore, the notion of culture, understood in a broader sense, occurs in several texts. This use allows for the treatment of two important phenomena: the shaping of representations of self in the educational environment; and the reception of representations conveyed by the communications examined at different levels—interpersonal (in the case of health), collective (in the case of religion), didactic, or at the level of media.

One of the major issues in the field of education, since the time of M. Gilly's decisive contribution (1980), has been to analyze the effect of actors' representations of their partners and of their tasks on teaching and training practices. In this classic line, several chapters of this book focus on representations relating to teaching activities: the analysis of teaching work and the representations formed by its protagonists in connection with the conditions of their practice or with their past experience; representations and models of teacher training; and images of those taught and of their relation to their training as dependent on their social belonging. As they illuminate the processes by which representations are entwined with social, political, and cultural contexts, these contributions may inspire further ethical reflection regarding the functions and modalities of the transmission of knowledge.

This work also records the shift of attention concerning the issues of the transmission and transformation of knowledge. Early research on the construction of representations in the school milieu had emphasized the structuring role of the institutional framework and its norms. This view was amply justified insofar as this framework and these norms corresponded to a period of great stability in the system's functions, statutes, and roles. Changes in the school situation as a result of the huge increase and diversification of the public, however, have profoundly changed the situation. In the experience of everyday teaching practice, the position of teachers and their identities have been called into question, and teachers have increasingly had to call upon their personal capacities for adaptation and invention faced with situations where the expectations of pupils are not always compatible with the objectives of the institution (Dubet, 1994). This has resulted, for the training of teachers, in a new orientation towards analyzing the subjective experience of

teachers, emphasizing the importance of identity as a condition and product of their practice. The theme of identity recurs in almost all the contributions that also emphasize the importance, in planning training programs, of taking into account the subjective level of actors. These contributions reinforce the idea emerging in the field of social representations that to reflect the complexity of social representation and the role of actors in the production of reality, the approach must incorporate the subjective experience (Jodelet, 2008).

Reflection on social knowledge is the starting point for a certain number of the contributions in this book. They analyze the processes of transformations of knowledge in cases where several professions need to coordinate their views and their actions vis-à-vis a common object. Two themes emerge which are crucial for the development of the social representations approach. How can the confrontation of different sets of knowledge—constituted, institutionally based and corresponding to differential positions of power—lead to their transformation? How are these transformations stabilized in the cognitive universe of the actors? The responses given in this book address two major concerns in the field of vocational training and open up new avenues for thinking about the dynamics of social representations. The first issue concerns the role of action in the expression, co-construction and entrenchment of a representation. The second relates the change or stability of representations to conflicts or convergences related to the relative influence of the positions of actors (i.e., power relations). It similarly relates the change or stability of systems of representations to conflicts or convergences tied to the power or authority of the frameworks of knowledge. These analyses meet the perspectives developed in several chapters that are devoted, in line with Lewinian theories, to the importance of group reflection for inducing changes or ruptures in the systems of representation at the individual or collective level.

Complementing the canonical analyses carried out on the relations between informative thought and representative thinking, in the language of Moscovici (Moscovici & Hewstone, 1984), or paradigmatic thinking and narrative thinking, in the language of Bruner (1996), the book sheds new light on the path of social thought. Indeed, the various chapters permit us to isolate the forms of thought that occupy an intermediary place between everyday common sense and scientific thought. Different models dealing with social representations have portrayed social representations as being dependent on subjects' group belonging or their insertion in social relationships (Abric, 1994; Doise, 1990). The contributions of this book provide a new contribution in that they reveal the specific properties of forms of thought corresponding to insertions in various fields of professional activity. These fields are defined by particular objects, the implementation of practical knowledge, the borrowing of scientific and technical knowledge specific to the field concerned, and by involvement in a career that sets objectives for action during or at the end of training and shapes the lived experience as well as social identity. The adoption of social representations as a unitary perspective for dealing with knowledge transformations

helps to separate various types of representations—socio-professional, professional, or inter-professional—that preserve a relation to lay and expert knowledge. It is thus possible to observe from a completely new angle the dynamic of social thought in the game of confrontations between knowledge, practices, and viewpoints of various actors and practitioners.

The reader of this book will not fail to grasp the profound similarities to be found in these texts of diverse origin and appearance. Behind the unity conferred by the choice of a common perspective, it will be appreciated that the latter does not simply provide a label under which the book can be shelved. It gives the opportunity to identify, beyond the original themes and styles, some axes for a set of problems that can provide a general structure for areas of research that at first glance seem quite remote from one another. Not least among the interests of this book is that it demonstrates that the progress or further development of a theory relies upon the contributions of its application to fields, the complexity and evolution of which require renewed reflection.

NOTES

1. These conferences have been organized every two years since 1992, alternating between the European continent and another continent. They have taken place in Ravello (Italy) in 1992, Rio de Janeiro (Brazil) in 1994, Aix-en-Provence (France) in 1996, Mexico City (Mexico) in 1998, Montreal (Canada) in 2000, Sterling (Scotland) in 2002, Guadalajara (Mexico) in 2004, Rome (Italy) in 2006, Bali (Indonesia) in 2008, and in Tunis (Tunisia) in 2010. The next conference will be held in Evora (Portugal) in 2012.
2. *Translator's note: The literal translation of the French '*savoirs*' and '*connaissances*', as they appear in Barbier's text, would be 'knowledge' in both cases. They have been translated here and in Barbier's text as 'knowledge' and 'understanding' in order to render Barbier's distinction. Although perhaps not entirely satisfactory, these terms have been chosen because knowledge, in at least one sense of the English term, can be conceived as something existing outside of the mind (i.e., something that can be made available), whereas 'understanding' necessarily occurs inside the mind (i.e., though a subject's appropriating, or internalizing and incorporating knowledge).

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Acknowledgments

This work is the result of an international project, involving researchers from a broad range of academic traditions and work experiences. To gather together researchers from Brazil, France, and Sweden around the research on social representations in connection with education and professionalization is in many ways a challenge. It is also a promising task. The challenge consists in demonstrating that language difference does not necessarily constitute an insurmountable barrier to scientific coproduction. From the beginning, the idea of starting collaborative research on social representations and education received strong moral support from Serge Moscovici and Denise Jodelet. Indeed, both Moscovici and Jodelet consider education and professionalization as important and particularly rich fields for the study of social representations. We are very grateful for their support. Denise Jodelet joined the project from the start. She acted as a mentor and guided us, through her extensive international network, to the relevant poles of research in France and Brazil.

This collaborative project started with the goal of inspiring the emergence of bilateral and multilateral networks of research on social representations, education, and professional development. Indeed, the work behind this book has hitherto given rise to other collaborative projects involving, in Brazil, the University Paulista in Sao Paulo and Presidente Prudente; in Sweden, the Universities of Örebro, Stockholm, and Jönköping; and in France, the University of Toulouse le Mirail and the Conservatoire National des Arts et Métiers, CNAM in Paris.

It is our hope that the publication of this book will create even better ground for collaborative and international research on the theory of social representations in the field of education and professionalization. We are confident that this work constitutes a modest but important contribution to a better understanding of the transformation of social knowledge as expressed in human learning and social behavior.

Many persons contributed to the completion of this work. Many thanks to Ylva Lindberg, who enabled us to bridge the linguistic gaps during our meetings. We would also like to address a special thanks to Christine Carter for her invaluable help with the editing of the book and for coordinating

the final phases of the work. Her extensive experience of work on the international level has in many ways contributed to the finalization of the project. We would also like to thank the Swedish National Center for Lifelong Learning, Encell (www.encell.se), for material and financial support for this project.

<div align="right">The editors</div>

Introduction

Social Knowledge—Shared, Transmitted, Transformed

Mohamed Chaib, Berth Danermark,
and Staffan Selander

In his famous work, the *History of Western Philosophy* (1961), Bertrand Russell strongly criticized the Greek philosopher Xenophon for his inaccurate report of the reasons behind the execution of Socrates. Russell wrote: *"A stupid man's report of what a clever man says is never accurate, because he unconsciously translates what he hears into something that he can understand!"* (1961, p. 101). This anecdote may illustrate the dilemma we are faced with when knowledge is transmitted from one person to another or from one context to another. The anecdote above can provide a starting point for our reflection, in this work, on the transformation of knowledge and the role of social representations in it. The meaning of a message is always subject to transformation and reinterpretation depending on how people represent the content of that message. Our social representations of the reality surrounding us, and our daily encounters with other people, obviously affect our interpretation of the meaning conveyed, whether the message is communicated as a formal or an informal one. Neither information nor knowledge is always truthful or even plausible. Influenced by the rapidity of the flow of information and by media, we always tend to take up the latest information and give it a functional role in our social and professional lives.

The purpose of this book is to deploy a variety of research related to how social knowledge is shared, transmitted, and transformed in the context of education and professional formation. The studies presented in this anthology reflect different theoretical and empirical approaches to that form of common sense knowledge called social representations, the theory of which was developed almost a half-century ago by Serge Moscovici. Researchers from various research institutions in Brazil, France, and Sweden, and representing a wide variety of disciplines within the social sciences, have contributed chapters that are grouped into three main categories related to *education, professionalization, and transformation of knowledge*. The first theme is about the theoretical approaches to transformation of knowledge considered from the perspective of social representations. It presents some analytical tools for the understanding of how knowledge both transforms and, at the same time, is transformed by social reality. In the second part of

the book we analyze the impact of the theory of social representations on the transformation of knowledge in the field of education and professional formation. The third perspective presents some empirical studies focusing on the social and cultural frames that condition the transformation of knowledge.

The transmission of knowledge is, we believe, not a reproductive process but a process in which transformation of information takes place. The transformation processes can be investigated by way of different theoretical approaches. In this work, we have opted to investigate the process of transformation of knowledge from the perspective of the theory of Social Representations, originally formulated by Moscovici in the 1960s (Moscovici, 1976) and further developed by Jodelet (1989a; 1989b), Abric (1994), Doise and Palmonari (1986), Marková (2003), and Jovchelovitch (2007), among others.

Social representation as a theory is almost a half-century old. This is quite a short interval in the life of scientific theories and yet, during this period, social representation has proved to be a reasonably heuristic theory of knowledge. It has been put into practice in many empirical investigations, as Jodelet (1989b) showed in her comprehensive review of the theory. In the present work, we have chosen to examine how the theory of social representations may shed light on how knowledge as a representation is transformed through social practices in a process of communication and interaction between people and in different social and cultural contexts, particularly in the contexts of education and professionalization.

Social representation is mainly a theory about everyday or common sense knowledge, that is, that form of knowledge that is different from rational scientific knowledge. The theory describes a triangular relation that is established between two or more individuals towards a specific object (Jodelet, 1991). This object of representation may be iconic, symbolic, social, or physical. As a value system, social representations establish a social order, helping people to orient themselves in their social and cultural environment. Social representations also facilitate communication between different groups of people by providing them with linguistic codes that help them to classify social phenomena in their environment. However, other forms of professional and domain-specific knowledge have also been analyzed in terms of social representations.

A central objective of the theory of social representations is to explain how scientific knowledge about a certain phenomenon is reflected (transformed) into common sense knowledge of ordinary people. We can clearly observe this perspective in several of the present contributions, including Chaib and Chaib's work (Chapter 9) on how teacher students represent learning among adult people. Knowledge as a representation, or common sense, may also change and be transformed through the process of social practices. As Guimelli and Jacobi (1995) have demonstrated, new social practices may bring about social transformation and hence the emergence of new social

representations of a certain phenomenon. Such encounters, however, can be of different kinds. Jovchelovitch (2007) distinguishes between two different types of encounters: dialogical and non-dialogical. The first process is characterized by perspective taking and recognition, and the result is often a process of transformation, a creation of a new representation as a result of a mutual understanding of the social representation of the other. The latter process is very different from the first. In this process "the aim is to impose on the other the perspective of self" (p. 146). The complexity of the process of encountering representations of others is clearly demonstrated in the contributions to this volume of Danermark and Germundsson (Chapter 2), of Piaser and Bataille (Chapter 3), and that of Prado de Sousa (Chapter 5). In these contributions we can observe how transformation is operated through social practices among different groups of professionals in the course of their interactions with other professionals.

The acceptance or the rejection of new representations is reported to be dependent on the cultural attributes people carry throughout their lives. As Moscovici (1984) stated, *"Nobody's mind is free from the effects of the prior conditioning which are imposed by his representations, language and culture"* (p. 47). In order to be accepted, new representations must be anchored in some pre-existing cultural foundations.

Thus, social representations change and take different shapes. They also act as a kind of vehicular language that makes knowledge accessible to people with different codes and different social experiences. Abric (1994) relates this process of change of knowledge to changes in social representations, particularly to the role of the so-called "central nucleus", that is, the somewhat controversial "hard core" of a representation reportedly very resistant to change. He maintains that the schemata of new social practices progressively integrate with the activities of the central nucleus and fuse with them to create new central nuclei and hence new representations. New forms of knowledge thus emerge from this process of integration of new and old forms of social practices (Abric, 1994).

The theory of social representations is itself periodically subject to transformation (Guimelli, 1994; Purkhardt, 1993). The process of transformation of the theory is demonstrated in this volume by the contribution of Gustavsson and Selander. They show how the historical process leading to the framing of the theory of social representations has logically and ideologically developed from Durkheim, to Moscovici, and still is developing towards new theoretical horizons. The theory of social representations is deeply rooted, in its ontological premises, to the struggle during the last century for the emergence of social psychology as an independent science of knowledge and communication (Moscovici & Markova, 2006).

When we examine the social institutions that deal with the production and distribution of knowledge, we generally focus on their formal ways to produce and transmit knowledge. An educational, social, or cultural institution is expected to manage formal sets of knowledge and to negotiate

these between different actors. In this volume we try to look at the hidden, non-apparent aspects of the knowledge provided within these institutions. We thus focus on this special form of knowledge production associated to socio-psychological processes of communication between people in specific contexts of interaction, such as in schools, hospitals, universities, or teacher colleges. The theory of social representations, as formulated by Moscovici and others, is in many senses a theory of knowledge. Social representations, in Moscovici's view, constitute a particular mode of knowledge called "common sense" knowledge, sometimes also called lay-knowledge, everyday knowledge or stereotypic knowledge, and even naïve knowledge. The specificity of this kind of knowledge resides in the social character of the processes that produce it. Social representations thus deal with all forms of knowledge, beliefs, and opinions of a group towards a specific object (Guimelli, 1994).

The process of transformation of knowledge can be studied when, for example, a specific group tries to come to terms with unfamiliar images, ideas and language by transforming these into something familiar that they can understand. Moscovici writes:

> The act of re-presentations is a means of transferring what disturbs us, what threatens our universe, from the outside to the inside. The transfer is effected by operating normally linked concepts and perceptions and setting them in a context where the unusual becomes usual, where the unknown can be included in an acknowledged category. (2000, p. 39)

In a recent work, Jovchelovitch (2007) developed a social-psychological approach to knowledge, analyzing the personal, interpersonal, and socio-cultural worlds in which knowledge is produced. She argues that representations are at the basis of all knowledge. According to her, representation is seen as the interrelations between the self, the other, and the object-world, and it is this interrelation that explains the ties between knowledge, personal, interpersonal, and socio-cultural contexts. Jovchelovitch understands knowledge as an intersubjective enterprise. The process of transformation of knowledge is, in accordance with this view, an act of intersubjective communication (Jovchelovitch, 2007).

In a dialogue with Marková, Moscovici developed his idea of how social influence is linked to the circulation of knowledge in a society, as an act of transformation. Objecting to models of knowledge diffusion that reduce the transmission of knowledge to an endless series of individual choice and acceptance of knowledge, Moscovici argued for a model of *transformation* of knowledge, which he saw as a model of communication: "As soon as you pass from an individualistic to a social vision of the circulation of knowledge and languages, you tend to see this process as one of communication in the course of which information is transmitted and transformed" (2000, p. 259).

Thus, transformation of knowledge is at the core of the understanding of social knowledge, how it is transmitted, interpreted, and changed. Transformation processes can be studied on many different levels: how expert knowledge is interpreted and transformed by laymen (and even an expert can be a layman in regard to a domain of another expertise), how knowledge is acquired in a professional development, based on education and practice, or how knowledge is gained through processes of transformations in a formal school context.

In this present work we have tried to set out a number of examples that illustrate that social representations are a prerequisite to the circulation, diffusion and transformation of knowledge. We began our work behind the production of this volume by focusing on the field of education and formation, as we supposed this to be a privileged field for research on the transformation of knowledge and on social representations as a tool for the analysis of such transformation. We soon had to revise our assumptions, as it became clear that the theoretical problems addressed by education were equally relevant for other fields of social research as well. The questions regarding social representations and transformation of knowledge that we wanted to scrutinize in the field of education were soon to be equally apparent in other fields, such as social work, media and communication studies, and cultural studies. In the course of this project, our own work with this book reflected a transformation of knowledge within our own research group.

Gustavsson and Selander, in *Transformations and Changes in Social Knowledge—Towards the Dynamics of Meaning Making* (Chapter 1), discuss social knowledge from the perspective of its dynamics. How does social knowledge change, and how can such processes of change be understood? The issue of change versus stability has been long-standing in the literature on social representations. Although our interest in social knowledge is broader than the field of social representations, in this chapter the authors use the theoretical development of social representations as a special case in exploring transformations and changes of social knowledge. The more precise scope of the chapter is the relation between change and stability in a historic perspective, with a special focus on processes of construction, transformation, and evolution of professional social knowledge.

Danermark and Germundsson, in *Social Representations and Power* (Chapter 2), focus on the increased tendency to study professionals and inter-professional cooperation (IPC). Problems in cooperation are characteristic features of these interactions. The authors scrutinize social, economic, and political dimensions in the field of research on disability that. Their chapter considers IPC in situations of strategic interaction and the role of social representations. It focuses on the power relations between actors and how these power relations challenge and influence the transformation of social representations. It further analyzes conflicting interests and the social contexts in which such interactions take place.

Piaser and Bataille, in *Of Contextualized Use of "Social" and "Professional"* (Chapter 3), discuss the different definitions and interpretations of professional representations. Various studies, while examining the theoretical relevance of the concept in different professional environments, have revealed a few problems that were unexpected in the early studies which raise the question regarding the relation between social representation and professional representation: Are these two categories complementary or mutually exclusive? Their chapter responds to this question by presenting the REPERE-CREFI-T (research) team's state of progress in their reflections on this subject.

Ratinaud and Lac, in *Understanding Professionalization as a Representational Process* (Chapter 4), present two research projects undertaken between 2000 and 2003 concerning the relation between social and professional representations in the dynamic perspective of professionalization. The results, drawn from two professional fields and from different methodologies, show that professionalization can be seen, in part, as a transition (for a given social group) from a naive to an "enlightened" and contextualized knowledge. This development toward professional representations was studied partly in vocational training and partly in French secondary school teachers' professional representations. In both cases, there are differences between representation structures according to time and social reference contexts. This confirms their hypothesis of professionalization as a specific representational process.

Prado de Sousa, in *The Teacher's Work* (Chapter 5), presents different studies of education and of teacher training. The author argues for a multifaceted approach to the understanding of the profession of teacher, stating that only a theoretical–methodological combination that takes into account the context in which the professional is inserted, the social conditions the professional depends upon to perform his/her activities, the experiences that produced the teacher's education, and the processes the teacher develops in his/her practice would allow us to understand the subject-teacher and his/her teaching activity.

In their chapter *Education Processes of the Teacher as an Apprentice* (Chapter 6), Souza Placco and Trevisan de Souza focus on teacher education in Brazil. They argue for the perspective of adult learners in teacher education. Through an empirical investigation, they explore the question: *How do adults learn?* They have highlighted aspects such as memory, metacognition, and subjectivity as generators and corollaries of an identity formation process that involves both individual and collective knowledge and experiences, crossed by their characteristic intentionality and direction.

In *Social Representations and Cultures of Action* (Chapter 7), Barbier proposes that it is possible to identify "modes of production" of social representations. To designate these regimes of production, he introduces the concept of cultures of action, a notion that he says arose from the observation, from within the sphere of activity of education and training, that

there is not only one world of education, but several. The author describes three types of culture of educative action—teaching cultures, training cultures, and mentoring cultures—and goes on to consider the expansion of the original observation to other fields of social and/or professional activity and to the tools that have been conceived for taking them into account.

EDUCATION AND PROFESSIONAL FORMATION

A Privileged Field of Research on Social Representations

One of the main perspectives of this volume is focused on the use of the theory of social representations in the field of research on education and professional formation. Education may be considered a privileged area for research by those employing the theory of social representations because it offers many different phenomena related to education itself or the processes of learning and formation that should be extremely important to approach from the angle of social representations. Moscovici himself started his career as a researcher by studying adult education back in the 1960s in France.

In the field of educational research, the theory of social representations is commonly used. This is not, of course, by chance. Education captures both a social and structural dimension as well as a psychological dimension. An educational system is a part of, and reflects, the social structure of the society. An analysis of the social dimension of different educational systems reveals that they are a "product of negotiating, conciliation, concession and coercion . . . suppressing certain educational initiatives" (Archer, 1995, pp. 340–341). Educational systems vary over time and space. For instance the educational systems of England and France differ in many respects. Archer (1995) points to a number of important differences, such as the fact that in France "a powerful elite founds a national educational system in order to serve its various vested interests", while in England "educational networks already serving different interests become incorporated to form a national system" (p. 341).

Education is an important part of the process of creating, maintaining, and/or transforming social representations. In this volume we do not only discuss education from a perspective of young learners; as education is a lifelong process, we also address questions related to adult learning. The latter could be approached in a number of ways, not only from a didactic perspective. The discussion on professionalization and professional representation in this volume is an example of another important aspect of adult learning. In short, the theory of social representations is able to effectively treat—from both a structural and an individual perspective—the entire spectrum of learning, from early childhood learning to a constant developing of professional competence.

When discussing education and social representations, it might be helpful to distinguish between social representations *of* the educational system and social representations *in* the educational system. The former includes ideas and conceptions of the role of education in a society. There are a number of conflicting or complementary social representations about this. After World War II—at least in Sweden—an important aspect of the public educational system was that it should contribute to the creation of generations "immune" to the totalitarian ideologies that had been the breeding ground for Nazism and fascism in the 1930s and '40s. During the 1960s and '70s another view of the educational system emerged, claiming that the main object of education was to foster new generations into a growing economy. After September 11, 2001, a discussion about secular or confessional schools has grown.

Social representations of the religious and political roles of the educational system are present among parents who choose to send their children to religious schools. The political role of education is also an important dimension in, for example, Latin America, with its large social differences. At the same time, many teachers are ignorant about these kinds of ideas, and such ideas are not a part of their social representations of the educational system (Alimandro, 2004, cited in Chapter 8, this volume).

Analyzing social representations *of* the educational system brings a number of important questions to the fore. What do these social representations look like among different groups in society (e.g., parents, students, teachers, educational managers, and politicians)? How do such different social representations correspond to social position in society? How do these social representations come about and how do they change? What do the power relations look like in these processes? Some of these questions will be touched upon in this volume, although we have only begun addressing these types of questions in the field of social representation research.

The second aspect of social representations research and education is social representations *in* education. This field of research is, to date, far more elaborated than the one described previously. Most commonly analyzed are the teacher and the teacher profession. One should, however, bear in mind that there are other important professions in the field of education, such as educational managers, social workers, and health service providers. Students are another important category as well. In this volume both teacher and teacher students have been the focus for research, although most of the aforementioned professions are addressed to a lesser extent. One important and common question is: What do the teachers' social representations regarding their role as teachers look like? A concrete example (see Chapter 8, this volume) is the discussion about how teachers attribute the responsibility for students' failure in education. It is the student's own shortcomings that most teachers see as the problem. Another example of social representations *in* education, discussed in Chapter 1, is the number

of conflicting social representations of reading and writing difficulties among students.

The list of important social representations *in* education can be made long. Besides the two types of social representation mentioned in the previous paragraphs, we can, for example, add: teachers' social representations of democracy, in terms of class cleavages and other types of inequalities such as sexual orientation, ethnicity, and (dis)ability. This complexity is further discussed in Chapter 6 where the authors stress the importance of widening the understanding of the educational process and taking into account, for example, the teachers' broader values and beliefs.

Menin, Shimizu and Lima, in their contribution *The Theory of Social Representations as a Theoretical and Methodological Tool for Research on Teachers in Brazil: Analyses of Theses and Dissertations* (Chapter 8), scrutinize the use of the theory of social representations and its impact on doctoral and master's theses in Brazilian graduate programs in education. They analyzed 27 doctoral dissertations and master's theses of Brazilian graduate programs in education that use the theory of social representations to study representations of and about teachers. They investigated the methodological aspects of the different studies, the objects chosen, and the contextualization and justification of these objects as objects of social representation. The results of their investigation showed that, in general, the theory of social representation is under-explored in the investigated studies. On the other hand, they found that the theory of social representations did contribute successfully to illuminating teachers' representations of the several fields related to their professional lives.

Chaib and Chaib investigate, in *Teacher Students' Social Representations of How Adults Learn* (Chapter 9), how students enrolled in teacher education represent adult learning. The study encompassed 138 students who responded to two types of questions: First, what characterizes adult learning, and second, what they themselves would particularly consider when teaching adults. The answers show that students often represent adult learning in relation to their own experiences, not in relation to theories of learning. The students express normative characteristics of learning. This study also gives support to the notion that the scientific knowledge acquired by the students in the course of their formation is transformed into common sense knowledge as stereotyped attributes.

What kind of social representations do teachers in Brazil have of their profession and of how it is exercised and rewarded? Alves-Mazzotti has been involved in this kind of research for many years. She contributes here with some insights regarding these questions with her chapter entitled *Being a School Teacher in Brazil* (Chapter 10). The global social changes in society, she argues, put the classic role of the teacher in check. In her study, conducted in 15 public elementary schools of Rio de Janeiro, she investigates how teachers of public elementary schools represent their professional identity today.

Bouyssières and Trinquier, in their contribution *Trainers of Adults: Professional Representations and Training Knowledge* (Chapter 11), deal with the question of what kind of representations the teacher trainers have of their professional knowledge, their "training knowledge". The research shows that training knowledge forms a major part of the trainers' identity, distinguishing them from social workers and school teachers. Moreover, trainers show four distinct orientations in representation according to training knowledge. The dominant orientation is the "application orientation", using didactic methods emphasizing technical nature. The "explanation orientation" relates to didactic methods that help to better understand disciplinary logic. As for the "engineering orientation" and the "support orientation", training knowledge uses less didactic methods: organization and administration training resources in the first case, building a project of insertion in the second.

Mias reports, in *Training and Ruptures* (Chapter 12), on an experiment where adults resume their studies and work towards a DHEPS (Diploma of High Studies in Social Practices, allowing for the professional title Responsible for Studies and Social Projects). This kind of formation has been labeled a "practiced Utopia". Mias insists on the concept of "rupture", the breaking away from usual ways of thinking about reality, from personal experiences, from one's own professional past. The deconstruction of established ideas cannot be achieved without distancing from the "facts of the present" nor without reflecting on one's own involvement in the process.

A SOCIO-CULTURAL FIELD OF RESEARCH ON SOCIAL REPRESENTATIONS

In this part we will give five examples of formation and transformation of social representation in different contexts. There seems to be an intrinsic and complex relation between the social context and social representation. This will be illustrated in the third part of the book. An important aspect of research on social representation is the study of encounters of different social representations, for instance the meeting between a doctor and a patient. How people cope with competing representations is an important but difficult question.

Hägglund and Löfdahl investigate the formation and the transformation of children's *Social Representations of Belonging in Pre-School Children's Peer-Cultures* (Chapter 13). Peer-cultures can be understood as dynamic social and cultural arenas, where children acquire fundamental knowledge about human relationships. Social knowledge, norms, conventions, and rules are established by way of daily verbal and non-verbal interactions, related to the understanding of social belonging and social inclusion. The chapter highlights the fact that peer-cultures serve not only as contexts for learning about friendship and its positive connotations, but also how social exclusion, violence, and ignorance may be legitimated.

In Olin Lauritzen and Ohlsson's *Transformation of Risk Knowledge—The Medical Encounter and Patients' Narrative Construction of Meaning* (Chapter 14), the authors focus on social representations as embedded in communicative action. In the chapter the authors address the communication and construction of meaning that occurs in the interface between the professional/medical world and the everyday world of the patient. The medical encounter is seen as a pedagogical situation where interpretations of the patient's suffering as well as medical advice are provided, which the patient will have to make sense of within the context of his or her everyday life. The focus is on how the patient, in this process, draws on socially shared representations of health and illness, normality and deviance, and how these representations can be explored in the patient's illness narratives. The role of media, both in formation and transformation of social representations, is emphasized in the theory of social representation.

Höijer and Olausson have chosen to illustrate the transformation process by studying *The Role of the Media in the Transformation of Citizens' Social Representations of Suffering* (Chapter 15). Modernity changed our social representations of suffering and death. Once, suffering and death were parts of everyday life, but nowadays these aspects of human life are institutionalized and hospitalized. On the other hand, the media almost daily serves us intrusive pictures of victims of violence, of human suffering and brutal death. It is the distant suffering of strangers. The authors present results from studies of citizens' social representations of distant suffering and discuss two identity positions in relation to media reports: global identity and national identity. The result underlines the important role played by the media in the complex processes of transformations of common sense knowledge.

Campos Madeira, Rangel Tura, Barbosa Alvim and Carvalho Madeira focus in their contribution, *Religiosity as a Way of Appropriating Knowledge* (Chapter 16), on how religiosity makes its way into people's social representations. At the core of the study are the representations of the object "Father Cícero do Juazeiro" constructed by pilgrims during a pilgrimage to the "holy places" of Juazeiro do Norte, Ceará, relating to the object, values, symbols, and rites connected with the mythical figure.

In the last chapter, *Appropriation of Knowledge and Social Psychology: Milgram's Experiment on Obedience to Authority* (Chapter 17), Richardot discusses the outcome of some students' encounters with a well known experiment in social psychology: the case of Milgram's experiment on obedience to authority. Milgram's results of his experiment indeed challenge most people's ideas of human beings' conscious willingness to take actions that are life threatening to other people. In this chapter, Richardot focuses on the way in which students integrate new knowledge that challenges their representations of the individual as free, responsible, and human. The results shows that students elaborate rules of conditionality which allow them to accept information which conforms to common sense thinking and refuse information which blatantly contradicts it.

THE AUDIENCE OF THE VOLUME

Several groups would benefit from reading this volume. A primary audience will be educators of teachers and teachers in training, for all levels and for all types of education, and particularly in the fields of adult education and vocational training. Researchers on issues related to social psychology will also find much of interest. The theory of social representation offers a well-elaborated and comprehensive theory and a number of research tools for analyzing such issues. The volume includes a number of examples of approaches to social representation theory, and methods for studying and analyzing social representations.

Practitioners in education and social work and those involved in facilitating cross-cultural or inter-professional collaboration will also benefit from the volume, as well as anyone who has a general interest in the question of how people make their worldviews and how these influence their actions. We think that students, academics and educators, school and university administrators, and leaders would benefit from having some understanding of the issue of social representation.

Although we address a number of questions that are complex and very often described in specialized jargon, it is our hope that we have been successful in finding the balance between accessibility and rigor. Every theoretical perspective has its own jargon; it is a challenge to elaborate on such issues in an accessible way. It is very important that people not trained in the theory of social representation can comprehend the basic ideas and arguments, because the theory of social representation has indeed practical implications. It is our firm belief that if one understands that people have different worldviews, and understands how these came about and how they are transformed, and one approaches these issues in an informed dialogical way, then the likelihood of solving common educational and social problems will increase.

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Part I

Theoretical Approaches

1   Transformations and Changes in Social Knowledge

Towards the Dynamics of Meaning Making

Anders Gustavsson and Staffan Selander

THE SCOPE

The general scope of this chapter is social knowledge, with a special interest in its dynamics. How does social knowledge change, and how can such processes of change be understood? In a recently published book, Ivana Marková (2003) addresses these questions from within the theory of social representations and states: "Although we have numerous theories about stable universals, their nature, content and form, *we do not have theories of social knowledge based on concepts of change*" (p. 5). The issue of change versus stability has for a long time been an issue in the literature on social representation (see Marková & Wilkie, 1987; McKinlay & Potter, 1987; Perez Campos, 1998; Purkhardt, 1993). Even if our interest in social knowledge is broader than the field of social representation, we will use the theoretical development of social representation as our special case in exploring transformations and changes of social knowledge. The more precise scope of this chapter is the relation between change and stability, with a special focus on processes of construction, transformation and evolution of social knowledge.

EDUCATION AS A PRIVILEGED FIELD FOR THE STUDY OF TRANSFORMATIONS OF SOCIAL KNOWLEDGE

Our own research has its roots in the field of education sciences. Michel Gilly (1989) described the state of the art of research on social representation in education and concluded that "there is still little research in the education field, where social representations occupy a central position" (p.383). At the same time, he outlined education as a privileged perspective on social representations:

> Beyond the interest for education [in a narrow sense], work in the field of education contributes to the study of very general questions concerning the construction and the functions of social representations . . .

education appears to be a privileged field to see how social representations are constructed and how they develop and are transformed in the heart of social groups, and to illuminate the role of these constructions in the relations of these groups and their representations. (Gilly, 1989, p. 384, our translation)

This understanding of the general educational perspective on social representation is very close to our own perspective. Most of the theoretical development so far, has been related to the fields of social psychology and sociology; however, empirical and theoretical studies within the whole field of education seem to contribute significantly to our understanding of transformations of social representations in particular and of social knowledge in general.

FROM SOCIETAL (COLLECTIVE) AND SOCIAL REPRESENTATIONS TO DIALOGICAL REPRESENTATIONS

Three major theoretical steps can be identified in the theoretical understanding of transformation and change of social representations. The first step is described by Emile Durkheim in his article "Représentations individuelles et représentations collectives" (1898) and his book *Les formes élémentaires de la vie religieuse: Le système totémique en Australie* (1912). These texts do not primarily address the issue of change; on the contrary, a major theme in Durkheim's work was the analysis of stability in social knowledge even though the background was the dramatic changes of the European societies from traditional to modern, industrial, urban societies. In *L'Éducation Morale* (1902–1903) Durkheim analyzed the upholding of moral values in societies undergoing such changes. Another of his key projects, outlining the foundations of sociology, was to show and describe the importance of societal processes in understanding individual, social, and societal actions and events. Thus, his representational unit was society and he introduced several concepts describing societal phenomena on a societal level, opposing the reduction of these phenomena to psychology or biology. He presented the concept of "social facts", for example, in *Le Suicide, étude sociologique* (1911) in order to explain the societal realities of the collective mental processes in "a thinking society".

Durkheim's most important concept is collective representation. The best example is probably religion, which influenced society as a whole during the 19th century, but Durkheim also refers to mythology, science, and the collective understanding of space and time. In describing the development of theory from one of collective representation to one of social representation, Moscovici (1961) points to the influence of Simmel and his analyses of the processes of individualization during the second half of the 19th century, especially Simmel's analyses of the link between individualization and

the need for separate individuals to represent the experiences and knowledge of others. According to Moscovici, Durkheim was also influenced by Weber and his idea that individual action could be understood against the background of current societal representations.

In the program to illustrate the importance of societal representations, Durkheim made a sharp distinction between individual and collective representation. The "thinking society" must, he argued, be understood as a phenomenon in itself, that functions according to its own logic and principles. Its main function is to maintain the social bonds between individuals and to prepare them for uniform action. Collective representations are stable across generations and socialize each new generation into traditional ways of thinking and acting. Collective representations have certain stability, as they are produced and maintained collectively and not influenced by an individual's deviance. Once established, collective representations gain certain autonomy, undergoing transformations only according to their own special conditions and principles. When, and if, collective representations change, they change through the transformation of the whole society.

When Moscovici (1961) introduced the concept of social representation—the second major step in a theoretical understanding of change and transformation of social knowledge—he linked on to Durkheim's classical concept and at the same time presented a new concept that was addressed to the question of how social knowledge is transformed and understood in different social groups in modern societies. In a historical overview of the development of theory from collective to social representations, Moscovici pointed out that most of Durkheim's examples of collective representations came from traditional societies (often referred to as primitive), while examples from modern societies constituted exceptions. By means of the concept of social representation, Moscovici (1961) wanted to emphasize the diversity of the origins of social knowledge, which depend on differences between both individuals and groups, and he especially wanted to emphasize the importance of social relations and communication. One of the key points of the new concept is that social knowledge in modern societies, in the form of social representations, is constantly created and recreated through the social interaction of people sharing positions, experiences, and perspectives concerning themselves and the world around them.

In conclusion, Moscovici's introduction of the concept of social representation marked an important step in our understanding of the issues of change and transformation of social knowledge, as it emphasized that stable societal mythologies, religious beliefs, and other collective representations are, in modern societies, replaced by a diversity of representations—that is, social representations—that are created and maintained by individuals interacting in groups of different kinds where they are able to communicate and share experiences and to develop perspectives of their own.

These perspectives undergo constant changes according to the experiences and interests of the persons involved, limited by the special principle that social representations are often anchored in the previous knowledge and experiences of the individuals and groups concerned. This shift in focus from society to social groups was illustrated in Jodelet's almost prototypical study (1989) of social representations of madness in a small French village, where families had a long history of accepting former psychiatric patients as lodgers.

Still another important step in the theoretical understanding of representational change and transformation can be identified in the late 1980s and early '90s, a period of time in which not a few researchers were associated with the prefix *post*, as in post-modernism or post-structuralism. A common characteristic of these theories is a radical breaking away from global, societal, and cultural structures, stability and grand stories to local actions, situations, and local stories.[1] This new interest in the local highlights the boundaries, the unique, the tensions and fragmentations as well as the exceptional.

SITUATED AND DIALOGICAL KNOWLEDGE

A recently published book by Marková (2003) illustrates this theoretical development within the framework of social representation, drawing primarily on the theories of dialogue. Here, Marková uses the concept of dialogue, and especially dialogical communication, as a springboard for understanding the transformations of social knowledge. In introducing what we regard as a third major step in social representation theory, Marková argues for a dialogical understanding of human thinking, breaking away from the understanding of the social as an exchange between individuals:

> In contrast to the position of "exchange", Rommetveit (1974) argues that both participants jointly generate all dialogical and interactional contributions. Human cognition and communication is dual, always oriented both towards the speaker and the listener, who adopt simultaneously the roles of active participants. Self and others always dyadically share social realities because the human mind is dialogically constituted. In communication the participants reciprocally adjust their perspectives by drawing the focus of attention to what is being talked about from the position of the temporal attunement to the atonement of the other. (Marková, 2003, p. 15)

Some of the main characteristics of the three steps in the theoretical development concerning representational change and transformations are summarized in Table 1.1. Here, Durkheim's concept of collective

representation is compared to that of social representation as it has been presented and used by Moscovici (1961) and Jodelet (1995), and also to the dialogical model of Marková (2003), here referred to as dialogical representation. To some extent, these concepts complement each other and they get their theoretical specificity in relation to typical cases of analysis and typical units of representational stability, that is, collective representation covers a whole society, while social representation is maintained in local, social groups. Dialogical representations can cover a variety of representational units—and Marková mentions this—but the typical unit stressed by her and others adopting similar perspectives is the micro-unit of dialogue between an Ego and an Alter. As all sorts of representational stability involve some kind of power and hegemony, we have chosen here to characterize hegemony in terms of how representational norms are maintained. Under *Centers of change* in Table 1.1, we want to point out important differences in how the dynamics of representational change are understood under the three different representational models, as illustrated by the types of typical conditions promoting representational transformations. The last row describes how much space each conceptual model allows for stability and change.

Table 1.1   Three Representational Models and Their Characteristics of Stability and Change

CHARACTERISTICS OF STABILITY AND CHANGE	**Collective representations** Durkheim	**Social representations** Moscovici	**Dialogical representations** Marková
Typical case of analysis	Religion	Social groups, such as the family colony of Ainay-le-Château (Jodelet)	The conversation between two persons
Unit of representational stability	The society	The social group	The situation
Hegemony	Societal norms	Social norms	Situated norms
Centers of change	Tensions between norms and anomalies	Tensions between interacting groups	Tension between Ego and Alter
Balance: stability/change	Large space for stability, but little for change	Fairly large space for both ingroup stability and intermittent change	Large space for change, but little for stability

A CASE OF TRANS-PROFESSIONAL COMMUNICATION

In order to illustrate our own understanding of the construction and transformation of social knowledge, we have chosen to present an empirical Swedish case (albeit a case that has not been analyzed before in terms of social representations), which provides an example of social knowledge transformations. Our case (Geijer, 2003) is a project initiated by a middlesized Swedish municipality with the aim of facilitating trans-professional collaboration concerning children with reading and writing difficulties/dyslexia. The motivation for the project was that pupils with reading and writing difficulties/dyslexia were being treated in many different ways by the professions involved—most importantly the teachers, special-education teachers, physicians, speech therapists, and psychologists. The municipality wanted to come to terms with all of the different views, definitions, and treatments of the students with these problems. At first the various professionals showed very little interest in the project. One reason seemed to be that each profession tended to assume responsibility limited to only those problems and tasks defined in accordance with his or her professional language and knowledge. After a while, however, an interest in discussing reading and writing difficulties/dyslexia started to grow among the professionals involved, and some of them even chose to continue the project by themselves when the community decided not to prolong its engagement. Our case can be understood as an example of trans-professional communication, wherein professionals gradually came to establish new, situated shared social representations of reading and writing difficulties/dyslexia.

The case of dyslexia provides a rich and productive example for studies of transformations of social knowledge. Reading and writing difficulties/dyslexia is a fairly new field of specialized knowledge with low stability. Some people would speak merely of reading and writing difficulties, while others would make a distinction between the diagnosis of dyslexia and more general or vague difficulties. The field is characterized by strong interest on the part of the different professional groups engaged in the support of children with these problems and is a field of profound current controversies (Hjälme, 1999). A medical professional perspective focused on brain dysfunction can be identified, as well as a social-educational perspective and a psycho-linguistic perspective focused on phonological coding and pupils' problems in understanding the structure of letters. Thus, there is no consensus concerning how to understand and talk about reading and writing difficulties/dyslexia, and consequently there is probably a larger space here than in other fields of knowledge for new constructions and bricolages, that is, for borrowing fragments from different perspectives and putting them together in new ways. The ongoing controversies in the field motivate people engaged in these matters to argue their positions, so the controversies can also contribute to stability, as people defend their current positions in the field. Significant ideas also touch on central norms

concerning normality/deviance that are of great importance in our society. A basic concern to avoid stigmatization was sometimes contradicted when pupils with reading and writing difficulties/dyslexia were regarded as especially gifted children with a special type of difficulty. In our case study, the participants involved carried both professional views (of their own fields of expertise) and layman's views (of the other fields of expertise).

The Professionals' Initial, Stable Understandings

As mentioned previously, Geijer (2003) initially found that the professionals generally had little interest in participating in group discussions in order to achieve common understandings and terminologies. Professionals with similar institutional belonging tended to defend their own views and perspectives on reading and writing difficulties. Health care personnel (physicians, psychologists, and speech therapists) typically emphasized the pupils' problems in terms of disability, while teachers focused rather on abilities, intentionally striving to avoid categorization and classification. The health care professionals took for granted basic distinctions between normal/pathological and health/illness and identified, to a large extent, their own professional responsibilities within the sphere of illness and pathology.

Thus, institutional belonging influenced the professionals' ways of making sense of the problems with reading and writing. The health care professionals strived for common goals (often articulated in terms of health and illness) within a shared organizational structure (often governed by the same politicians and administered by the same civil servants), and they were part of a well-established system for certification and a strong medical tradition of knowledge. Thus, institutional processes of stability proved to be of great importance first of all in stabilizing professional knowledge. Institutions are here understood in a broad sense, as in the work of Douglas (1986) on how institutions think and how representational systems are maintained in ordinary, day-to-day professional conversations.

Institutions do not just maintain their own specific practices, however; they also often maintain a cosmology or a paradigm. In the medical cosmology the meanings health and illness, diagnosis, treatment, and prognosis play central roles. Terms like "aphasia", "cerebral damage", "catarrh" and "otitis" were often used by the health care professionals, but seldom expressed, for example, by the teachers in the studied municipality. Another characteristic of the cosmology of the health-care professions was that they often regarded all problems belonging to the sphere of normality and health as the responsibility and competence of the other professions—the regular schools and their teachers.

It could also be noted that established orders of power tended to decide priorities. In the health care institution, the voices of, for instance, physicians, nurses, and speech therapists compete in handling "a case" (cf.

Duveen, 1998). According to established hegemonic representational structures and power relations, the voice of the physician often seems to overrule the word of the speech therapist or the nurse. These professional hegemonies also have bearing outside of the specific institution: The voice of the physician, for instance, is often more valued than the word of a teacher, belonging to an educational institution.

It should be added that Geijer discovered other interesting differences between professions within the same institution. For example, the physicians and the speech therapists frequently used diagnosis, while the psychologists preferred to talk about testing or assessments of, for example, a child's interaction with peers. An interesting difference was also found in the ways pre-school and regular school teachers talked. Pre-school teachers did not regard children's reading and writing as their business. To them, reading and writing were tasks and responsibilities exclusive to the regular schools. As a consequence, in the beginning of the project, pre-school teachers also tended to regard reading and writing difficulties/dyslexia as being someone else's field of knowledge, a field in which they themselves lacked competence. In the regular school teachers' ways of talking about pupils with reading and writing difficulties/dyslexia, Geijer found a strong influence of more or less standardized norms, values and understandings of the pupils' development of language. They were accustomed to following up on their pupils' progress in reading and writing, but surprisingly many of them also expressed a lack of knowledge about reading and writing difficulties, especially in terms of what they could do to support their pupils' progress in these skills. Thus, it came as no surprise that the teachers would turn to others, such as the medical professionals, for advice in these matters. One reason for the project, aimed at enlarged cooperation, was to discourage the different professions from continuing to work from different cosmologies and, in the worst cases, making contradictory interventions.

In conclusion, Geijer found important initial barriers between the different professionals based on their different institutional belongings and on the stability maintained in the cosmologies, hegemonies and specialization of these institutions. The variations between pre-school teachers and teachers in regular schools could, to some extent, be understood as an expression of the fact that preschools and schools in Sweden have for a long time constituted separate societal institutions. The variation noted within the medical institution seems to be linked to the variations in specialization between different professions (with their own representational stability based on separate knowledge bases, training, and therapeutic techniques). Thus, the dominant pattern in the beginning of the project on reading and writing difficulties/dyslexia was one of strong stability based on the "thinking" of institutions and professional groups. Then, after some time, a process began wherein new ways of sharing other professionals' understandings and representations came to coexist with the stability of old knowledge.

Negotiations of Situated Meanings by Way of Mediation in Meaning Making Practices

Over the 3-year period, Geijer (2003) could observe changes in the ways the professionals understood and talked about reading and writing difficulties/dyslexia. The most interesting finding was that the participants gradually found and started to use a new common language based on new meaning making practices that seemed to be valid to the representatives of all the professions taking part in the process characterized by interpretation, negotiation, meaning making, and sign production.

In the process of change illustrated in our case, the tape recordings and protocols (see later) that took place during the process of negotiation were of utmost importance. The "fixed" meanings of how each profession understood its own, and the others', competencies changed through common re-negotiation of meanings, explicitly articulated by written protocols, and the construction of new resources for testing and training. The decision to use the new conception "the development of children's acquisition of language" is a good example of the result of such negotiation. This expression became a common denominator for all participants when referring to issues concerning reading and writing difficulties/dyslexia. Neither dyslexia, speech disorder, intelligence (used by the medical professionals), nor more everyday expressions like silent children, children without language, or children who are difficult to understand (used by the pre-school teachers), nor descriptions concerning lack of phonological consciousness (used by the teachers) had worked as common denominators of a valid working language for the whole group of professionals.

The development of the new significant practice could be understood in several phases. In a first phase of the transformations, the different professional groups made themselves familiar with each others' terminologies and special ways of making sense of reading and writing problems. On the tape recordings made by Geijer, one could hear the participants repeating and echoing the other professional's concepts and terminologies. At first, they seemed to merely repeat mechanically what the other said. After some time, however, they gradually began to use the new words in their own contexts, as they gained deeper understanding of each other's languages. Geijer discusses this in terms of the professionals' gradual appropriation of the other professional languages. This process of appropriation did not just consist in a passive taking over of existing terminology used by the other professionals, but demanded active reinterpretation. This reinterpretive appropriation can be seen as a second step in the generation of new meaning making practices. In a third step, Geijer identified completely new constructions by the members of the collaboration group, based in new, situated, shared *mediated practices* concerning children with reading and writing difficulties. Typical examples were the collaborative production of instruments of assessment and training such as *Språkträdet* (The Language

Tree), *Fabeldjuret* (The Fable Animal), *Språklådan* (The Language Box), and *Boksamtal* (The Book Conversation). These new practices were developed within the framework of the collaboration project, through new media, and the development of these practices shows the way the different professionals engaged in the process of dynamic conceptual change. The process also points to the important role of signs, media, and artifacts in "binding" a meaning to a practice and in maintaining a shared knowledge.

With regard to artifacts and mediation, participants were also able to clarify in which ways each profession documented its own analyses and understanding. The various kinds of journals, made available as part of the common documentation of the project, functioned as a resource for reflection in practice among the participants (what was "the same" and what was "different"). Ways of relating to artifacts—one's own and others'—that are usually taken for granted, such as nodding, intensity of speech, conflicts, and clarifications, etc., were observed by the researcher *and* by the participants themselves. The development of the new meaning making practices was documented in the form of tape recordings and field notes by the researcher. When this documentation was shared and jointly discussed, the participants started to see themselves and their communication in a new way. They started to "listen" (more intensely) and to reflect on a meta-level, that is, the participants not only talked about their own professional analyses and treatments of reading and writing difficulties, they also talked about *how* they talked about this issue.

During this process of dialogue and negotiation, the professionals got a more varied picture of what reading and writing disabilities could mean and how such disabilities could be represented, both in terms of schooling and in terms of everyday life. It should be added that, in terms of power, the different professionals seemed to have different strengths in argumentation. Before we draw the conclusions of our case in relation to Table 1.1, we would also like to introduce Ricoeur's (1985) concept "Mimesis", pinpointing even more in-depth the observed changes of representations and social meanings and their relations to the new mediated practice.

Transformations in Terms of Mimesis

Here, we are primarily interested in mimesis within the framework of Ricoeur's (1985) analysis of storytelling as a general form of human understanding and in applying this analysis to the transformation of social representations. In short, people's experience of a new practice does not automatically change their representations or ways of signifying their practices. Our case indicates that a joint storytelling is one way of mediating between a specific practice and a more explicit, socially shared knowledge. Mimesis refers to the mimetic function of all stories to configurate human experience. Storytelling is a complex process, Ricoeur argues, and he points

to three different kinds of configurations: Mimesis I–III. First, all understanding and representing in storytelling is guided by knowledge of earlier stories, particularly by basic semantic and representational structures presented in these shared stories. The meaningful prefigurating functioning of these stories Ricoeur defines as Mimesis I[2]. In the trans-professional communication case we have been discussing, we see the professional and institutional languages of the different professions as representational prefiguration. Thus, Mimesis I, first of all, represents stability.

The exchange that took place between the professional groups as they represented their common understanding seems to be equivalent to what Ricoeur described as Mimesis II: a creative configuration of their understanding of reading and writing difficulties in a new situation. This was the first step to transformation and change in our case. For Ricoeur, Mimesis II is the bridge between the pre-understanding and a new, appropriated understanding (in Mimesis III) where a refiguration that takes place when someone listens to a story and it makes sense to him or her. Ricoeur describes this in terms of refiguration: a typical appropriation characterizing all reading that ends in an existentially meaningful experience for the reader. Mimesis III constitutes the realization of change.

As we have seen, the most important representational change in the group was the construction of new, shared mediated knowledge of reading and writing difficulties. This process can be analyzed in terms of the three types of mimesis. On the basis of our experience with the trans-professional cooperation case, we can add a fourth step to the mimesis (Mimesis IV) process, that is, mediated meaning making in the form of socially anchored stories about the problems of reading and writing and newly constructed tools for addressing, assessing, and following up different kinds of problems. In this case, several necessary conditions seem to have had a crucial influence on Mimesis IV. First, the collaboration group constituted a new common situation in which all the members of the various professions had the opportunity to define the new social relevance. The same changes would most certainly not have taken place in any of the groups separately. Secondly, the new interpretation of reading and writing difficulties was constructed as the result of a negotiation process, wherein everybody had the opportunity to present his or her own views, and in which new, commonly shared significations were generated. This process of negotiation seemed to be the key factor for change in Mimesis IV. Thirdly, the new understanding of reading and writing difficulties was configured, in a new mimesis process, into new social narratives, which were also anchored in individually reconfigured understandings.

New common knowledge was not first defined theoretically, but rather in terms of new ways of handling a set of shared problems. *The Language Tree* was developed, for example, for use by pre-school teachers to assess children's conceptual and syntactic development, and these assessments

could later be followed up by teachers in the regular schools or by health-care professionals. In *The Book Conversation*, an adult begins by reading a story to a child and then asks the child to retell the story, making sure that each retelling of the story includes a beginning, a plot of events, and an end.

TOWARDS A NEW UNDERSTANDING OF TRANSFORMATIONS OF SOCIAL KNOWLEDGE

Our case illustrating a developmental project in natural context points to a weakness of the theoretical model of dialogical representations. When Marková (2003) describes her dialogical model, to a large extent she limits her description to general characteristics of change. In her empirical examples, it seems as if the situated dialogue determines the outcome in terms of shared representations. In this model there is very little that "stabilizes" the transformations from one situation and representation to another. Every dialogue appears anew without any trace of what has happened before. Marková's analysis also contains very little about power relations or hegemonic domains. As a result, the dialogical model creates a very large space for change and transformation of (social) knowledge. The emphasis on change is so strong that stability becomes something unexpected. In fact, it is difficult to see how the knowledge discussed by Marková in terms of the dialogical model really can be seen as *social* knowledge.

Marková's (2003) empirical illustrations do not alter this impression. In her first example, Marková discusses *the triadic dialogical model* in terms of a conversation between two persons' meeting regularly at a day center, one person with a speech disorder (described as a non-speaker) and the other a caregiver. The example illustrates a tension between the two persons which is so strong that it comes as a surprise that they are able to establish a common object of communication at all. The analysis reveals that the person with the speech disorder wants to tell the caregiver that: "I watch *Wheel of Fortune* (a television program) on Monday at 8 o'clock in the morning" (Marková, 2003, p.153). In the micro-analysis it becomes obvious that it is a task, first of all, for the person with the language disorder to establish joint attention permitting a conversation to start. The rest of the sequence of the conversation analyzed seems primarily to illustrate how difficult it was for the two persons to understand each other, and for the caregiver to piece all of the fragments of the message together in order to understand that the other person wanted to say that he watches *Wheel of Fortune* on Monday at 8 o'clock in the morning. Here, instability or change seems to have almost unlimited space! As a consequence, it is hard to see how it can even be possible to achieve stability in the form of shared knowledge.

In her second example, Marková starts from established, social/aesthetic norms of what is recognized as an object of art in a specific genre. Here too, two persons are presented: an artist and a spectator. The tension between the two is illustrated by the artist's transcending, creative act. In fact, Marková defines art itself as challenging current aesthetic norms. Here, the dialogical model describes both change (in terms of the tensions that the artist presents by his/her work) and stability (in terms of existing aesthetic norms which are challenged by the new work). But Marková only discusses the aspect of tension (change), apparently avoiding the exploration of stability within the dialogical model and the interesting interaction between interpersonal tensions and existing norms.

Thus, the dialogical model as presented by Marková (2003) gives such priority to the dyadic dialogue that it fails to do justice to stability, also an obvious characteristic of social knowledge. Two important findings illustrate the interaction between stability and change in our trans-professional communication case study. First, all types of exchange, understanding, and transformation of knowledge were hindered by the traditional practices and the *institutionalized and professionalized knowledge* of the health professionals on the one side and the school professionals on the other. In order to allow for exchange between the different professional groups it was necessary to stage a new practice that was articulated into a communicative situation where the representatives of each profession could make explicit their current (stable) understanding and begin the process of negotiating for new, shared understanding. When trans-professional knowledge started to grow, the fact that *this new knowledge was mediated by the artifacts* of the newly created practices, in which the assessment instruments played a crucial role in the maintenance of the shared knowledge. Thus, the dialogical model in itself did not shed very much light on the crucial conditions for change. Transformations could not be understood until the transformations from the stability of earlier to new practices and social stories were also emphasized in the analysis. Furthermore, the introduction of the interpretative theory of mimesis into the dialogical model made it possible to tease out the specific dynamics of the dialogue, illuminating the complex interaction between change and stability.

CONCLUSION

One way of summarizing our analysis of the transformations of knowledge that took place within the framework of the trans-professional communication is to relate it to our typology (Table 1.1) presented previously. In Table 1.2, we hereby introduce a fourth column under the heading, *Mediated Meaning Making (MMM)*. This does not present a completely new type of social knowledge that excludes all of the other three types (neither does the dialogical model, as we have indicated above). In fact,

Table 1.2   Four Representational Models and Their Characteristics of Stability and Change

CHARAC-TERISTICS OF STABIL-ITY AND CHANGE	Collective representations Durkheim	Social representations Moscovici	Dialogical representations Marková	Mediated meaning making Gustavsson & Selander
Typical case of analysis	Religion	Social groups, such as the family colony of Ainay-le-Château (Jodelet)	The conversation between two persons	Trans-professional interaction
Unit of repre-sentational stability	The society	The social group	The situation	The mediated meaning-making practice
Hegemony	Societal norms	Social norms	Situated norms	Institutional and profes-sional norms
Centers of change	Tensions between norms and anomalies	Tensions between interacting groups	Tension between Ego and Alter	Tensions between interacting institutions and profes-sional groups
Balance: stability/change	Large space for stability, but little for change	Fairly large space for both in-group stability and intermittent change	Large space for change, but little for stability	Fairly large space for both change and stability

both the dialogical model and the mediated meaning making model might be understood to some extent as new ways of understanding social representation. The mediated meaning making model of social knowledge points to the need to take new analytical models into account (like the dialogical model) without leaving out the complex interaction between change and stability often highlighted for instance in earlier research on social representations. If the three original columns (collective, social, and dialogical representations) are seen as representing a gradually increasing

understanding of flexibility and space for change, our proposing the fourth column (mediated meaning making) to some extent represents a reconceptualization of the role of inflexibility and stability, highlighting the stabilizing dimensions of practices and mediating systems. A dialogue is always staged within the frames of certain practices and mediating systems. Another of our reasons for introducing this model is to emphasize that the dialogical functioning of social knowledge can only be understood in an interpretative and mediated perspective. Thus, the model of dialogical representations is, as we see it, completed by the necessary theoretical framework of situated significant practices and mediating tools in order to make it possible to discover and understand the complex dialectical processes of stability and change.

The MMM column highlights interpreted and mediated meaning making in institutional contexts. Dialogue is an important part, but we emphasize the role of mediation through different artifacts. Here, change can only be understood, it appears to us, in relation to institutional practice and stability. In fact, most transformations of social significations are probably practically situated and mediated often within the frame of institutions. The axes of professional–layman are negotiated and re-created, and thereby changed, during the very process of negotiations (cf. Karcevskij, 1982). Thus, we argue that with this model we can explain changes (at a micro level) and stability (at an institutional level) of social meaning making; and thereby, we would claim, it is possible to understand the dynamics of "social" knowledge.

NOTES

1. One can observe that this shift in focus coincided with more general changes in the social sciences, from overall structures on a societal level to actions and opinions in different social groups. A similar shift of focus can be seen in many disciplines. To the linguistic focus on grammatical structure (Saussure) was added an interest in speech acts (Searle), change (Karcevskij), CA (conversational analysis; Linell) and CDA (critical discourse analyses). The anthropologic focus on symbolic structures (Levi-Strauss) was extended by interest in group development (Dauvignaud) and conflicting worldviews (Knorr-Cetina); the sociologic focus on economic and class structure (Marx), state structure (Althusser, Polantzas), and structural conditions of reproduction (Bourdieu & Passeron) changed to an interest in social fields (Bourdieu) and social understanding (Morin); and there was a shift in semiotics from structure (Saussure) to meaning-making (Kress & Van Leeuwen, Kress). Shifts of focus can also be noticed in rhetoric, from persuasion to dialogue (Billig); in learning, from giving knowledge to the zone of proximal development where meaning is created (Vygotsky); and in hermeneutics, from the study of the inherited meaning of texts (Schleiermacher) to the study of constructions of meaning (Ricoeur, Vattimo, Caputo).
2. Similar processes have been described by Moscovici (1961) in terms of 'anchoring' a new representation in well-known experiences.

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2 Social Representations and Power

Berth Danermark and Per Germundsson

INTRODUCTION

In this chapter we address the issue of power relations and the transformation of social representation in inter-professional cooperation. The background is the current development we see in the industrialized part of the world: a fragmentation in public and private services caused by decentralization, specialization and professionalization. In many countries this fragmentation in, for example, health services, education, and social services, has triggered a strong need for inter-professional cooperation. As an example, in Sweden there are a number of cooperation projects that aim to facilitate entry into the labor market for people with, for example, mental illness. The main professionals involved in such processes are social workers, occupational therapists, psychiatrists, and administrators at the regional social insurance office and at the employment office. These professionals all have a social representation of the target group for action, and of the barriers and facilitating factors influencing employment processes (finding, obtaining, and retaining a job) for people with mental illness. Another example is the Swedish government's allocating approximately 22 million euros for inter-professional cooperation projects focused on children at risk for abuse and other types of violence. Professionals from education, social services, psychiatry, and police cooperate.

Professionals are thus encouraged and sometimes forced to cooperate in order to develop programs for the target groups. The interaction between professionals can take place either (a) within specially designed projects and programs in which the professionals comprise working teams, sometimes located in special units, or (b) as part of the daily routines of the individual professionals in their original organization. The way the cooperation is organized influences the development of social representations and power relations. In the former case (a), the interactions with other professionals who have different social representations gives rise to new experiences that frame their representations in a more substantial way. In the latter case (b), the individual professional is less exposed to alternative representations.

In both ways of organizing cooperation there is an element of power and wielding of power at play in the interaction. In the literature on social representation, power relations have rarely been analyzed. Indeed, this topic is an underdeveloped theme in the theory of social representation (Voelklein & Howarth, 2005). Implicitly, however, power is an important part of the analysis as to how social representations are challenged (by competing representations) and transformed. This occurs, for instance, in face-to-face interaction where the aim is to present one's own perception of reality as objective truth (Grize, 1989).

Here we will elaborate a theoretical framework for analyzing power relations and the exercise of power when professionals with different social representations interact. In the first part, we discuss the concept of power and power mechanisms; in the second, we briefly present some features of social representation that are relevant for an analysis of power; and in the last part, we suggest a conceptual framework for an analysis of power in relation to the transformation of social representations. In sum, the aim is to develop and discuss a theoretical approach to an understanding of power in the process of shaping and/or transforming social representations in inter-professional cooperation.

POWER AND POWER MECHANISMS

There is a substantial body of literature on power that elaborates many ways of understanding power. However, an important part of the scholarly debate over power has directly or indirectly revolved around the question of the applicability and utility of the so-called "three-dimensional view of power". The model is strongly indebted to Steven Lukes (1974) and has been further developed by a number of scholars (see e.g., Benton, 1982; Clegg, 1989; Cox, Furlong, & Page, 1986; Gaventa, 1980). In general, power is a kind of transformative capacity. An agent has the capacity to transform something to something else (Giddens & Held, 1982). According to this view, the three dimensions of power are (a) *explicit decision-making* on issues over which there is an observable conflict; (b) *non-decision-making* (see Bachrach & Baratz, 1962, 1970) which refers to processes wherein actors prevent issues or demands from entering the decision-making arena; and (c) *influence on consciousness*. The third dimension focuses on the processes that influence people's perception of reality, their "ways of world making" (Moscovici, 1988, p. 231), that is, social representations (although in the context of the power discourse referred to here, the concept social representation is seldom used). In this chapter we will discuss the third dimension of power and will not address the other two dimensions.

An important part of the debate about power has revolved around the concept of *interest*. Lukes (1974) states that "*A exercises power over B when A affects B in a manner contrary to B's interests*" (p. 27). The concept of

interest has been disputed and contested (see, e.g., Benton, 1982). Its con-notation of the duality of real and false consciousness has been criticized for being analytically confusing. Among others, Gaventa (1980) has aban-doned the concept of interest in his analysis, focusing on interaction, com-munication, and conveyance of information for the purpose of altering the behavior of another person. Whether such alteration is positive or negative for the person then remains an empirical question. Our understanding of the concept of interest in the context of power is that B would have thought and acted differently if certain power mechanisms had not been present. The relation between B's action and his or her "real" interest is irrelevant. In our approach, interest is understood as stemming from and adapted to a person's or group's purpose—thus, in this particular study, the purpose of professionals in the performance of their tasks (functions and duties), an issue to which we will return.

POWER IN SOCIAL REPRESENTATION

Drawing on Fairclough (2001), we suggest that it might be useful to dis-tinguish between power *in* social representation and power *behind* social representation. Power *in* social representation can be analyzed in relation to face-to-face encounters and from a cross-cultural perspective[1]. This is sometimes called interpersonal power (Scott, 2001, p. 28). The latter, power *behind* social representation, should be distinguished from interper-sonal power, and here it will be discussed in terms of different professional cultures. However, we will first focus on face-to-face interaction between professionals where social representations are articulated. These encoun-ters are sometimes characterized by unequal power, that is, some partici-pants are powerful, some are non-powerful.

When people get together in order to cooperate about something (an object, a process, a category of people, etc.), they need to have a percep-tion, or a model, of what the object of the cooperation is; otherwise, com-munication would not be possible. A group of professionals usually has a rather developed model of the object for cooperation; however, as we will see in the next section, these models usually differ from each other. From a power analytical perspective a number of questions thus arise, such as "How do the interactions between professionals influence their models when agents have different models?" or "What happens when one of the agents has a limited understanding or a less developed model of the object of cooperation?"

In this context we distinguish between strong and weak models (Daner-mark, 2004). This distinction is akin to Lac and Ratinaud's description (see Chapter 4, this volume) of "naïve" and "enlightened and contextual knowl-edge of objects". There is no absolute criterion for distinguishing a strong from a weak model: It is a relational issue. If an actor in the cooperation has

a more developed, knowledge-based, model of the object, that actor can be called "model strong" compared to another actor that has a less developed model, who is correspondingly "model weak". When, for instance, a psychiatrist and a social worker meet to discuss the mental illness of a client, most often the social worker is a "lay person" in the field of mental illness. Hence we have two dimensions to take into account in the analysis: the *degree of differences* between the models and the *degree of how developed* a model is.

Below we will briefly describe four types of relations between actors.

1. When professionals with the *same, developed* model interact (i.e., there is no or small differences between the models), the assumption is that such a situation does not trigger any important power mechanisms. None of the actors' social representations of the object for cooperation are challenged in terms of a competing alternative model. This is usually an unproblematic situation from the power analytical perspective we discuss in this paper.

2. Other types of situations are all more or less embedded, although in different ways, in power relations. A context where actors with *strong* but *different* models meet to cooperate might have the greatest potential to trigger power mechanisms and to reveal power struggles. The situation is characterized by the fact that there exist (at least) two different ways of understanding and interpreting reality. If these parallel interpretations can exist in harmony, the cooperation might work smoothly. However, since an actor's representation of the object for cooperation tends to influence the action, for example, intervention in order to change a state of affairs, and that cooperation requires that actions taken by the cooperating actors be concordant and consonant, there will always be a potential for conflict and a struggle over different perceptions of reality. We will return to this when discussing the core and periphery of social representation below.

3. Another important and common situation occurs when some of the actors have a *weak* model and others have a *strong* and different model. In other words, one of the social representations is more elaborated and often more articulated than the other social representations. Since the aim of trans-professional cooperation is usually intervention with a view to altering processes, and because this requires ideas of, for example, causes and effects, an actor with a limited perception of such elements in the understanding of the object of cooperation might be controlled and dominated by the actor with an elaborated social representation. If an actor with a less elaborated social representation is "offered" a description and explanation of some aspects of a phenomenon that (s)he does not fully grasp, (s)he runs the risk of uncritically incorporating such elements in the social

representation. In accordance with the discussion above about interest and purpose, we have to ask whether this transformation of the social representation is in his or her interest, that is, in accordance with the professional's purposes, for this process of adapting a social representation might be unreflective. Although we do not want to underestimate the actor's capacity for reflexivity nor yield to determinism, this possibility—of unreflective absorption—must be taken into consideration. The actor who adapts to another actor's social representation might be unaware of this and its consequences, not least for his or her purposes. However, it is important to underline that such a transformation does not always occur. There are often many counteracting mechanisms such as ideology, status, and/or gender relations, to mention but a few.

4. Another situation is when *model weak* actors interact, that is, the object of cooperation is little-known for all of the actors. None of them has an elaborated social representation of the object. During the process of cooperation and the actions taken to alter the object, their social representations will be transformed. The question is how this transformation correlates with the interests and purposes of the actors. If all of the actors develop a social representation that is in harmony with all their purposes and interests, the cooperation might work out without conflicts; but if not, there is a great risk of generating difficulties in the cooperation process.

In short, the outcome of encounters and interactions among actors with different models could be stability, that is, the social representation that the actors hold do not change, or it could be transformation of the social representation. In both cases, the process can be characterized in terms of involving conflicts or not.

The second type of power in social representation is cross-cultural and will be discussed here in terms of different professional cultures: different professions develop different cultures. An important question is what happens in an unequal encounter (a non-powerful agent meets a powerful agent) regarding professional language and organizational culture. Social representations differ in terms of language, and a powerful agent might assume that other professionals are familiar with the language discourse of the powerful agent and assume that others understand what is said. When this results in miscommunication the outcome could be negative for the non-powerful agent. Furthermore, a specialist vocabulary can be used as a means of excluding "outsiders" (Fairclough, 2001, p. 64). A powerful agent can determine which jargon is legitimate to use in the encounter.

An example of cultural differences is when professionals from a professional and "scientific" culture such as the medical professional culture interact with an organizational culture characterized by political interests, such as social work. In the former context, the decision making process

could be interpreted as more potent and efficient than in the latter, where a decision requires the support of a political board. Both of these types of power could be used, claiming one social representation to be superior to another. Another example of power is when a powerful agent claims that the practice (s)he represents is evidence-based but that this is not the case for the non-powerful agent's practice.

POWER BEHIND SOCIAL REPRESENTATION

Social representation can also be analyzed in terms of power behind social representation. First, there are *structural* conditions that influence the constitution of the institutional practices of the professionals involved in the cooperation. At this level we can differentiate three spheres of power: the capitalist system, the state, and interest organizations (Ahrne, 1989). For instance, in a capitalist society a worker is valued in relation to his or her contribution in the labor process. Most often a person with an intellectual or a psychiatric disorder cannot compete in the open labor market. An employer develops a social representation of, for example, the work process and the workers that differs from a social worker's social representation. The social worker is constrained in his or her actions (to help the disabled person get a job) by the power relations constituted by the system. However, the state could intervene and, for example, legislate that a certain percentage of employment be earmarked for disabled people (as in France). If the state implements such measures, this will have an effect on the power relations mentioned above.

Furthermore, when we said that a powerful agent can impose a *jargon* upon other professionals, this was an example of power *in* social representations. But this is a result of structural conditions, that is, power *behind* social representation. This type of power could be anchored in legislation, professional status, gender, economic resources, etc.

Second, we can also distinguish an *institutional* level. The question here is how the practices, including enduring and internalized organizational forms, norms, and social relations, are constituted. An important part of power at this level is neutralization and the generation of common sense (Fairclough, 2001 p. 76ff). When something (e.g., an idea about the world) is neutralized, it is accommodated in a social representation in such a way that it changes its original character of being something contradictory, or an "issue", to being something conventional and more or less a part of a common sense opinion of the object. A consequence of this neutralization process is that the nature of the initial idea about the world is changed.

SOCIAL REPRESENTATION

Social representation could be understood as being situated inside a dynamic semiotic triangle consisting of an object, a subject, and a social group

(Moscovici, 1984, referred to in Voelklein & Howarth, 2005)[2]. The latter is important since we need to develop intersubjectivity when giving meaning to an object, that is, our understanding of reality is a social process. Furthermore, Moscovici addresses the relation between the ontological and epistemological dimensions by stating that a social representation is not a *mere* reproduction (in mind) of the ontological dimension. However, this should not be confused with the idea that reality is a social construction, the epistemic fallacy (Bhaskar, 1978). We cannot reduce the ontological dimension to the epistemological dimension. It is our *understanding* of reality (i.e., our social representation) that is a social construction. This has a number of implications. First, a social representation is always a representation of something, an object (see the semiotic triangle). Second, this representation is socially influenced (but not determined); and third, there is always an (implicit) relation between the ontological and epistemological dimension that could be target for an analysis (although this is usually not done in the social representation paradigm). Stating that social representation is influenced but not determined by social processes indicates that we agree with Moscovici when he emphasizes that a social representation is more than a reproduction of reality in our mind. The ontological *and* the epistemological dimensions are both involved in shaping the actual social representation.

The Epistemological Status of Social Representation

Following Jodelet (1989) in her discussion of the epistemological status of social representation, we take the idea of a "socio-centered" form of knowledge as our point of departure. A social representation can be interpreted as a form of knowledge that fulfils the needs, desires, and interests of a group. This means that social representations are adapted to the purposes of different groups, here professional groups in institutions with different tasks and areas of responsibility.

Hence one of the fundamental questions in relation to the analysis of cooperation among different professional groups is whether they have the same or different needs, desires, and interests. If they have different needs, desires, and interests, they will most probably—in accordance with Jodelet's discussion—construct different social representations. It is plausible to assume that they have different needs, desires, and interests since most often the institutions in which the individual professionals work have different purposes, for example, police, psychiatry, and social services.

Given the different purposes among the principal actors in a welfare state there will be a number of different professional educational regimes oriented to meeting these different needs. For instance, social services and health services require different types of professional and hence, a different training or education. In short, society generates the educational structure it requires. There is nothing strange about this. The implication is that different social representations are formulated in terms of theories and scientific knowledge. A social representation takes the form of a theoretical

conceptual framework and certain representations have the status of "expert knowledge", for example, the psychiatrist has the expert knowledge regarding psychiatric problems and the social worker has the expert knowledge regarding social problems. When members of these professional groups collaborate, they are experts in their "own" field of knowledge, with elaborated representations, and laypersons in other fields, with less elaborated representations, so that there is a tendency among the experts to claim that the representation pertaining to their expert knowledge is superior and so should dominate over alternative representations.[3]

The different purposes will have an impact on social representation in three ways: distortions, additions, and leaving out, or omissions (Jodelet, 1989). How these three ways of displacement are manifested is an empirical question. What could be said here is that the first type of displacement, *distortion*, means that the characteristics of a phenomenon are either exaggerated or downplayed, for example as the aggressiveness among people with schizophrenia may be exaggerated. *Additions* occur when an object is attributed characteristics it does not have, for example, being always able to turn up at a certain place at a certain time (a common demand in the health service). An example of an *omission* would be the failure to recognize the need and ability among people with mental illness to be included in working life. How these three kinds of displacements serve the interest of the actors can be illustrated by the following example. In cooperation between psychiatry and social services, sometimes the object of cooperation is the so-called dually-diagnosed—people with both a psychiatric disorder and drug problems. It is in the interest of psychiatry that the drug abuse is recognized as the primary problem and dealt with before psychiatric support and service is offered. From the perspective of social services, it is the other way around. A consequence is that the social representations of this group (of people with dual diagnoses) differ between the two actors regarding which is the primary problem and hence which type of action should be taken first[4].

In the context of cooperation between professionals, interaction is often characterized by discussions pertaining to ontology and/or epistemology, or to put it in terms of the semiotic triangle, the object–subject–social group relations. For instance, when a profession tries to impose its version of reality, references to objects, or reality, are very common. Arguments for a certain social representation often refer to "facts", "truths", " . . . as we all know . . . ", etc. An example of this is when different groups of professionals, for example, psychiatrists and social workers, have different opinions about whether ADHD (Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder) is mainly caused by biological or social factors (or if ADHD exists at all). This means that in our analysis of the interaction we must examine such references, but not in terms of judgments of which social representation is more "representative" than another, but rather in terms of distortions, additions, and leaving out in a *comparative* analysis of different social representations.

The Periphery and Core of a Social Representation

In the analysis of social representations it is important to distinguish between the periphery and the core of a social representation. When professionals with different social representations of the object of cooperation are interacting, their social representation may be called into question. As Voelklein emphasizes, it is in the confrontation with other, different, social representations that people begin to critically examine their own social representations (Voelklein, 2003, referred to in Voelklein & Howarth, 2005). There are different responses to such challenges, depending on the content of the difference. If there are only minor differences or differences of lesser importance in relation to the purposes and interests of the professionals, the call for adjustments and transformations usually does not trigger any conflict. But if it requires a fundamental transformation of the core of the social representation, there will be problems. As Lac and Ratinaud stress, referring to Abric (see Chapter 4, this volume), the central features that constitute the core are *nonnegotiable*. Furthermore, it is not probable that an actor will change his or her representation of an object in such a way that it no longer serves the interest and purpose of the professional or his/her institution. For instance a social constructionist understanding of mental illness cannot incorporate a representation of mental illness as a purely biological phenomenon. Within cooperation, such "sub-groupings" are mostly rooted in divergent scientific world views, that is, social representations. Divergent clustering of this type may result in conflicts and struggles, even to the point of the collapse of collaboration (Sawa, 2005).

CONCLUSION: A TENTATIVE ANALYTICAL SCHEME OF POWER AND SOCIAL REPRESENTATION

As Voelklein and Howarth point out, "representations are never neutral but constantly permeated by power relations" (2005, p. 446). This is still an underdeveloped field of the theory of social representation. In this chapter we have tried to outline some theoretical aspects of power relations between professionals in collaboration. Exercising power in inter-professional cooperation, for example, claiming superiority of a certain social representation, can be analyzed in terms of power *in* social representation and power *behind* social representation. In analyzing these processes, it is important to consider the content of the social representations and the transformation of the professionally biased displacements (distortions, additions, and omissions) concerned.

We try to combine the insights of the discourse of power with the theory of social representation. Suffice it to say that we are focusing on the third dimension of power (influence on consciousness) and that there is a close affinity between this dimension of power and the topic of social

representation. The focus of the analysis is the interaction of professionals with different, sometimes contradictory, social representations, and the transformation of social representations in the process of cooperation. By including the role and function of social representation in the analysis, we hopefully overcome the tendency to merely describe social representation.

Some of the pertinent features of our argument are illustrated in Table 2.1.

In the table we highlight two types of mechanisms that have been discussed in this chapter: those related to power and those related to epistemology. Examples of how mechanisms are operating in a certain context, inter-professional cooperation, were given. The outcome—transformation of social representation, struggle over social representation, or the absence of these—is an empirical question. There are a number of other important mechanisms that are not discussed in this chapter, but we argue that power mechanisms and mechanisms influencing our understanding and interpretation of reality (the epistemological dimension) are two important types of mechanisms. These mechanisms will produce different outcomes depending on the context in which they are operating. Here we have focused on the context of inter professional cooperation since this is a context in which the mentioned types of mechanisms come to the fore. The outcome of the interplay among the mechanisms and the context will result in empirically manifested outcomes.

Table 2.1 Mechanisms, Context, Outcome, and Social Representation

MECHANISMS		+ CONTEXT	= OUTCOME
Power mechanisms	**Epistemological mechanisms**	**Conditions for production and transformation of social representations**	
Power *in* Social Representation: - face-to-face - strong and weak models - cultural Power *behind* Social Representation: - institutional - structural	Displacements (professional biases): - distortions - additions - omissions	- Professional groups forced to cooperate - Unequal encounters - Institutions with different purposes (needs, desires, and interests)	Transformation of knowledge? Struggle over social representations?

NOTES

1. Fairclough also mentions mass media but we do not discuss this here.
2. Here we do not address the issue of the differences between "social representation" and "professional representation" discussed in Paiser and Bataille (see Chapter 3, this volume) although we agree that "professional representations are a specific part of social representations."
3. This statement does not rule out the possibility of a plurality of representations within a group or within an individual (cognitive polyphasia), (see Moscovici, 1988, p. 219).
4. Such examples are described in several reports from The Swedish Board of Social Affairs.

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3 Of Contextualized Use of "Social" and "Professional"

Alain Piaser and Michel Bataille

Since the definition of professional representation was initially proposed, various studies investigating the theoretical relevance of the concept in different professional environments have revealed a number of unexpected difficulties. These difficulties raise further questions concerning the relation between social representation and professional representation: Are these two categories complementary or exclusive of one another? This chapter attempts to briefly answer the question, presenting the current thinking on this subject within the REPERE-CREFI-T team directed by Mr. Bataille.[1]

DEFINITION

To better follow the emergence of the various questions which have progressively appeared with the use of the concept, a return to the main definition is essential: "Professional representations are social representations relating to objects belonging to a specific professional environment and shared by all members of a same profession. Being jointly situated on the product side and on the process side, they are a constant reference element, helping individuals to operate in a professional situation: opinions, attitudes, standpoints, etc." (Piaser, 1999, p. 92)

Professional representations are a subset of social representations with the following two characteristics: the groups of representation carriers and the objects being represented belong to the same professional sphere.

Following a brief discussion of professional groups and objects of representation, the text below will focus on some theoretical reflections that bring the conceptual framework of professional representations into question.

ABOUT PROFESSIONAL GROUPS

Lassalle and Lopez (2001) show in their study that the organization of professional representations of the IUFM trainees (Institut Universitaire de Formation des Maîtres, Teacher training Institute) changes not only with

the subjects' progression through the training course but also in accordance with the various advancing stages of their young careers (first- or second-year IUFM trainees, or recently qualified teachers). They found that the most common answers of the various groups questioned varied over the 2 years in which they were followed. For example, first year trainees (PE1) and those preparing their theses (PE2) put forward standpoints concerning the adequacy of "training and school practices", while recently qualified teachers (PE3) focused instead on questions regarding the "relationship with the schoolchildren's parents". This shift of standpoint can be explained by the existence of a more immediate relation to practice in the third group: Their relationships with parents and administration or attendance at various professional meetings are school practice facts and no longer training or discussion subjects.

Beyond this limited example, this could mean that professional groups have access to a very wide range of elements of professional representation because they live a real working situation. This genuine "pool of answers", useful in situations of doubt or professional questioning, could help protagonists to better operate under most professional circumstances and in carrying out most of their professional activities. One might consider access to this category of representations to be highly relevant, given that the people using it have acquired a real professional experience or a recognized qualification.[2] Trainees of any vocational training have very little experience, and their lack of this deprives them of most of the professional sociability shared by members of a working community.

The study carried out by Boucharine (2002), also looks at reference representation systems. The author explores the professionalization of national rugby club players ("Top14"), meeting a certain amount of players[3] under contract in their clubs. She highlights two different standpoints. Within the first standpoint, there is a strong "technical polarization" of the discourse: organization of the practices, physical preparation, and good management of alternating matches and practices. The second standpoint emphasizes, however, "management of activities", apparently relating to the need to balance the practice of a sport where physical problems threaten every match with the need to be present at one's other place of employment (i.e., not rugby).

In the first sub-group, the people interviewed are engaged in a mono-activity (they do not have outside employment) and are concerned with acting under the best conditions—for their employers, who will wish to renew their contracts, and for themselves, to be in a better position to negotiate terms at the time of inter-clubs transfers. The players of this first sub-group are aware of the need to change their professional careers in the future, but when the interviews were conducted, this need wasn't yet a main preoccupation (as their answers seem to indicate).

In the second sub-group, the players handle two professional activities at the same time. Each shows real commitment on the field as part of a

team made more effective by the full participation of every member, but each player also has another professional occupation which in most cases will be the only one left when he decides to stop playing rugby. The players of the second group are more conscious of the need to manage well: They must constantly check their limits in order to avoid injuries that could jeopardize their other jobs. It seems that the various players' responses are drawn from a common pool, and that it is each subject's professional status which conditions the predominance in his response of certain elements over others. We can assume that the psycho-sociological dimension of social anchorage, such as defined by W. Doise (1992)[4], gives an account of the differentiation of standpoints. According to different discursive uses, the separate sub-groups of sportsmen give different elements of professional representation, they "color" them in different ways: " . . . by the process of social anchorage, society changes the social object into an instrument it can dispose of, and this object is situated on a scale of preference in the existing social relations" (Moscovici, 1961, p. 171).

The two previous examples might seem to indicate that professional representations in fact constitute already complete sets of knowledge, attitudes, opinions, values, etc., or true professional "commonplaces" (Jodelet, 1984). Under this assumption, studies would then need to focus on two processes:

1. access modes by which professionals would be able to refer to the representations in question; and
2. ways of maneuvering choices to activate one element or another.

But this reasoning is quickly contradicted, for it would entail the assimilation of professional representations to collective representations as in Durkheim[5]. This would be tantamount to returning to a body of doctrines former to the works of Moscovici, from whence came the inspiration to propose the concept of professional representations in the first place.

The consideration of objects of representation provides us with the opportunity to approach these first observations from another, more heuristic, angle.

ABOUT THE OBJECTS OF REPRESENTATION

When P.-M. Darnet (2005) obtains a number of unpredicted answers in the course of his investigation, he decides to consider the utility links a group might have with an object of representation. The author postulates that the selection of three groups, each differently involved in the subject of astronomy, will make it possible to isolate three different representations. He thus meets a group of art students, a group of visitors to the Jolimont Observatory in Toulouse, and several CNRS researchers working for the

"Pic du Midi" Observatory (in Central French Pyrenees): If the first two groups will call upon social representations to define this object (with still divergences to be shown), the last one will surely activate a professional representation.

The data he collects in an evocation test enables him to identify two separate standpoints: The first includes a series of "common" words associated with astronomy: "planet", "sky", "universe", "star", "galaxy", etc. This set of elements is given by the art students and the CNRS researchers. With the same inductive word, the second standpoint includes a series of "technical" words: "telescope", "sighting", "to take a photograph", etc. This set of elements comes from the group of visitors to the Jolimont Observatory.

At first surprising, these results indicate a special characteristic of professional representations: they relate to "objects belonging to a specific professional environment". If the comments of the CNRS personnel cannot be distinguished from those of the novices (the art students), it is because the reason given by the researcher to meet "astronomers" for his study does not refer to the real nature of the professional activity as experienced from the inside.

The scientists questioned do not think of themselves as "astronomers" but as researchers belonging to specific scientific fields whose work informs the subject commonly known as "astronomy": One is a specialist in high-energy physics, the other a geologist working on extraterrestrial minerals, etc.

Being referred to under a title not used in their professional inner group ("astronomer"), the scientists knew immediately that the interviewer was entering the discussion in general terms; thus, they didn't need to change their communication register. This choice was reinforced by the first request asking the participants to take part in a verbal association exercise, far removed from the professionals' scientific concerns.

Moscovici (1961) has already pointed out this capacity to use a plurality of reference frames: "The investigation has shown that an individual (or collective) subject could use a plurality of reflection modes according to his command of the external world and of his goals" (p. 289). These "reflection modes" mentioned by the author very often find an outcome in specific "elocution modes". This helps to explain how the subjects questioned can show flexibility in their answers. Semantic precision is thus essential in any research work on representations.

J. Roussel's (2006) work reinforces the previous point. The author questioned schoolchildren's parents and their teachers on the topic of creativity, postulating that the two selected categories should activate different representations: social ones for parents and professional ones for teachers. The analysis contradicted this position: regardless of the topics raised, there was no significant difference in standpoint between the two groups[6]—social representations and professional representations were not differentiated.

As in the previous example, this result can be explained by reference to the vocabulary used, even if the reason appears to be different. "Creativity", alone, is a value with no real connection to direct practices, while it perhaps acquires a more specific meaning when applied in the context of a series of objectives to be pursued. One never does "creativity" *per-se.* The teachers were therefore required to hold a broader discourse than they would have had they been discussing elements of their immediate practices, and so they referred to the same mode of expression used by the schoolchildren's parents.

These last two examples illustrate the capacity we all have to modulate our expression registers: "With the rise of knowledge and social division, we have all become polyglot" (Moscovici, 1961, p. 286). Yet, these are two examples of effects produced by the subject's activity, that is, that which Moscovici (1989) put forward as distinguishing social representations from collective representations. Taking this activity into account, we were led to reconsider our first diagram portraying the transition from social representation to professional representation.

FROM ONE DIAGRAM TO ANOTHER

After several studies examining either one or the other type of representation, Fraysse's (1996) thesis resulted in the addition of an element to the diagram summarizing our team's theoretical view on this subject.
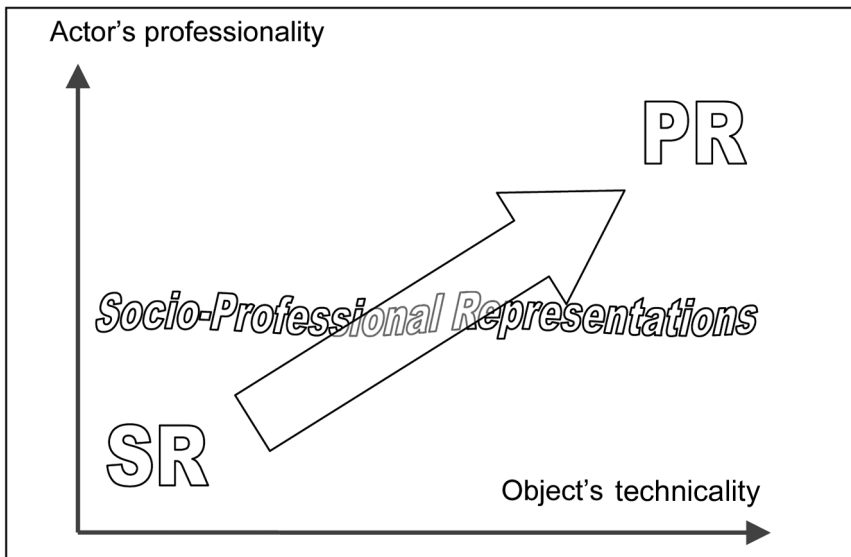

Figure 3.1   From social representations to professional representations.

In this diagram, the move from one type of representation to the other is done gradually on a trajectory going through "socio-professional representations": They are no longer only "social" because they use technical elements belonging to a profession, but they are not yet "professional" because they still lack the given professional group's experience memory. The length of this transitory stage varies according to the individual and his or her current level of progress in the professionalization process, that is, whether the individual is in professional training, in a training course, or is a new professional. Also, this is a one-way system: When the individuals' reference framework is that of professional representations, it stays that way.

We have just seen that this point of view causes a certain number of problems. We will try from now on to express our ideas differently.

Figure 3.2 shows that professional representations are a loose subset of social representations (which are systematically more inclusive). The absence of solid lines signifies that limits can never be defined in a strict way, neither between the two sets of representations, nor between the social representations and their "beyond". From now on, this specific property of "the porosity of limits" will call our attention.

The model of social thought (Rouquette, 1998, p. 53) postulates that ideologies are inclusive structures for social representations but it does not define strict limits between the two concepts. Such strict delimitation might be called into question, given the fact that elements of values can be found in the framework of some social representations. Similarly, there is no rigid limit between a social representation and a professional representation, as Moscovici has insisted since the publication of his first work:

> A person, even cultivated, has a specific way of reasoning, regarding a specific field or function. A doctor, a physicist, a manufacturer, a student or a workman do approach the analysis of a situation, a phenomenon, an event within their professional framework in a different way than if they had to give their opinion on psychoanalysis. (Moscovici, 1961, p. 279)
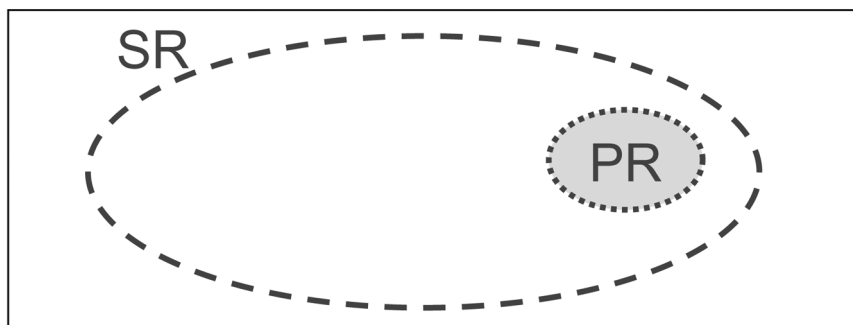

Figure 3.2 Coexistence of the two orders of representations.

Subjects perceive characteristics of a situation of interlocution and choose a reference framework and a linguistic register accordingly. That which held true for psychoanalysis, previously, also applies to any subject, whether it is being approached in the professional domain or simply in general conversation: In all cases, the aim is to understand one another. To avoid ruptures of meaning in linguistic exchanges, we know very well, in the vast majority of situations, how to modulate our references and to adapt to those of our interlocutors. "Everyday life is above all possible thanks to the language I share with my own kind" (Berger & Luckmann, 1992, p. 55).

We recognize here the phenomenon of cognitive polyphasy which S. Moscovici had assumed:

> In general, we can estimate that the dynamic coexistence—interference or specialization—of distinct methods of knowledge, corresponding to definite relations of man with his environment, leads to a state of cognitive polyphasy. (. . .) the cognitive systems must be conceived as systems under development and not as systems striving for "equilibrium". (Moscovici, 1961, p. 286)We will define the concept of equilibrium in the next chapter.

Although the concept of professional representations provides support to Moscovici's claims concerning cognitive polyphasy by explaining one of the modalities of variation of the elocution context (the professional situation), many studies still need to be done to assess the specific methods of implementation.

BACK TO LEWIN AND BEGINNINGS

In discussing "cognitive systems under development which do not strive for equilibrium", and "the porosity of limits" (Figure 3.2), it can be useful to go back to Kurt Lewin, with his 1935 work at McGraw-Hill Book Company, translated from German, *A Dynamic Theory of Personality*. A presentation of his work, in French, can be found in Claude Faucheux's classic 1959 work: *Psychologie dynamique et relations humaines*, PUF.

Lewin did much work on the concept of equilibrium and on many others, such as conflict, systems under tension, force fields (driving forces and restraining forces), and firmness and fluidity of limits or boundaries.

We will consider the equilibrium "theme" from the angle of its founding epistemic schemes, on the basis of its etymology: equi- (aequus) = united, plane, horizontal, equal, (thus impartial, as opposed to iniquus, unequal and unjust), and mostly libra = balance, resting or moving state. This coexistence of rest and movement characterizes the equilibrium "theme".

Rest means a "good relation" between two opposite things, that is, couple (in mechanics, set of two equal forces of opposite direction).

Movement corresponds to a change of position in space according to time (= move, moving). The process of equalization of scales leads to a momentary disequilibrium (oscillations of the arrow).

The move under consideration can be compared to a process of the re-balancing on a lower level of tension of a system too fluid inside and not protected enough from its environment by "external" walls, that is, too little separated from it.

If the borders inside of my system A (professional, for example) are too fluid, the tension in one of the areas of my psychological field spreads into the other areas of this system (i.e., the relationship I have with my superior is reflected in those I have with my colleagues). If my "external walls" are too weak, the tension of system A spreads into my other field systems B, C, D, etc. (family, and/or association, and/or political, etc.). The re-balancing effects a generalized reduction of tension. In an interlocution context, the activation of one of the "cognitive polyphasy" forms allows a reduction of the psychological tension.[7]

Lewin also says that one of the basic psychological concepts is that of psychological position, examples of which are: an individual's *belonging* to a group, his *professional position*, or his *involvement* in an activity.[8] Our team calls the latter *professional involvement*.[9]

The assumption of "porosity of limits" as seen in Figure 3.2 refers to a momentary disequilibrium in the subject's move from one belonging to another or from one position to another, according to the interlocution context, and also movement according to the form of involvement produced by this perceived context. The belonging to and position in a professional group, as well as the nature of involvement in regard to a specific object of this professional field, imply an obvious change of "phase" in the context of interlocution adapted to the interlocutor (more precisely, adapted to his perceived image).

We will draw an example from the personal experience of one of us. An eminent professor of medicine, having just learned that he was condemned to die shortly of an incurable cancer, replied to a young student who came to him to talk about his own future, "I don't give a damn." Yet this man was famous for his extreme attention to his students' futures. The student later understood in context, upon the death of his professor, the real meaning of the professor's utterance.[10]

In the professional medical field (belonging), the student's expectations towards his eminent and respected professor (position) were unsettled by the invasion of the professor's psychological field through a formidable tension related to his personal, and not professional, involvement in his being suddenly faced with his own mortality and imminent death.

The student's expectations were "out of phase", because of his ignorance of the essential element of the interlocution situation. We should not forget that interlocution is a two-way practice: the meaning of interlocutor A's speech only appears with interlocutor B's answer, and sometimes with a

misunderstanding.[11] But this is a different story—along the lines of our discussion of substantives formed with the "poly" element, we would then be obliged to talk about polysemy.[12]

NOTES

1. Le CREFI-T is a team (équipe d'accueil, EA 799) directed by A. Jorro and bringing together five groups: EVACAP directed by A. Jorro, EURED directed by J. Fijalkow, GPE directed by M. Bru, REPERE directed by M. Bataille, and DiDiST directed by C. Amade-Escot.
2. P. Zarifian : "Qualification doesn't only express required and applied qualities to complete a job. It also indicates how a set of competences, representations, behaviors acquired by individuals during their socialization process is being built and gives its contribution to give shape to the work itself" (cited in Tanguy, 1986, p. 251).
3. The selected sample also included former players and club managers but we only refer here to the active players' statements.
4. "This kind of anchorage registers the social representations in the way the individuals symbolically position themselves towards social relationships and also position and categorize divisions specific to a given social field" (cited in Doise, 1992, p. 192).
5. "If it can be said, from one angle, that collective representations are situated outside individual conscience, this is because they do not come from separate individuals but from their addition, which is different" (Durkheim, 1898, p. 17).
6. Talking about "creativity in school", both groups mention "art", "imaginary", "expression", "equipment"; they differ on two words : parents talk about "music" and "invention", teachers about "music" and "project".
7. It will be noted that 'polyphasy'—Moscovici's lexical invention (this substantive cannot be found in the dictionary, unlike the adjective *polyphase*, describing that which supplies alternating currents with different phases)—goes well, in the electricity metaphor, with the concept of tension (potential difference). Lewin, as a Gestalt School follower, borrowed this *tension* concept from physics by explicitly referring to the models of spring in tension or a pressured gas container.
8. To be compared to the "minimalist" definition of social psychology suggested by J. L. Beauvois: "social psychology deals with, whatever the stimuli or the objects, these fundamental psychological events, i.e., behaviors, judgements, affects and performances of human beings as these human beings are members of social collectives or have social positions (such as their behaviors, judgements, affects and performances are partly dependent on these belongings and positions)" (1999, p. 311).
9. The involvement concept (to be distinguished from the commitment concept), still borrowed from Lewin (!), has been adopted by several social representation theorists (as C. Guimelli, 2007, and M.-L. Rouquette, 1997) as a major variable. Our REPERE team from CREFI-T has proposed the concept of professional involvement in the ternary modeling proposed by C. Mias (Meaning, reference marks, Feeling in control). See C. Mias (1998). See also M. Bataille (2000).
10. We implicitly took up again this example (the cancer specialist's cancer) to suggest that involvement is a different variable from the proximity/distance to the representation object (involvement is not a simple dimension of

proximity/distance, such as the object levels of knowledge and practice; it is a real variable; Bataille & Mias, [2003]).
11. Having quoted some great names, we cannot overlook G. H. Mead. Cf Mead, G. H. (1934)
12. On this topic, see Bataille, M. (2002, pp. 25–34). See also Moliner and Martos (2005).

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4 Understanding Professionalization as a Representational Process

Pierre Ratinaud and Michel Lac

INTRODUCTION

The Anglo-Saxon meaning of professionalization is "the process of birth and structuring of organized, autonomous groups protecting their common interests, especially by controlling access to their profession and its practice" (Barbier, 2005, p. 126). In France, it also refers to the training of individuals for insertion in a given professional field. This approach underlines the concepts of change, evolution, structuring of specific knowledge (Altet, 1978), as well as the dimension of reflexivity in practice (Barbier, 1998).

This point of view will lead our work. It will be centered on the representational dimension of the concept of professionalization.

In this chapter we will be discussing two studies that focus on the theory of social representation (Moscovici, 1961/1976), and refer to the specific category of professional representation (Piaser, 1999).

The first is a 2-year longitudinal study on a group of students during their university vocational training in socio-cultural coordination. It is centered on the dynamics of the group's representation of the object "socio-cultural coordinator" and shows quantitative and qualitative modifications of the representation of the object between the beginning and the end of the training.

The second is a study of the representation of the internet in a group of secondary school teachers using it. The results show that the representation of the object differs depending on the context in which the object presents (personal or professional).

Through these results, we can analyze the process of professionalization as partly depending on the transformation and/or the formation of a system of representations. Beyond the theoretical and praxeological interest of the concept of professional representations in the field of social representations, we would like to emphasize that the notion of professional representation also allows for a better comprehension, and hence better pedagogical and/or practical appreciation, of the process of professionalization.

THEORETICAL APPROACH

Social Representations

Social representations are defined as forms of naïve knowledge intended to organize behaviors and communications (Moscovici, 1961/1976) of a social group regarding objects representing stakes values for this group. This knowledge is collectively produced and generated (Moscovici, 1961/1976) and is specific to the groups producing it. In addition to the functions of comprehension and explanation of reality, social representations have an identity function allowing individuals to find a place in the social field. They also have functions of orientation and of justification of practices.

From this definition, two different approaches of social representations appeared. The Geneva School studied the differences in standpoint between social groups and defined representations as "generating principles of standpoint" (Doise & Palmonari, 1986). The Aix-en-Provence School (or structural school), was interested in the study of objectification, that is, researching the consensual items for groups through the central core theory. This will be our approach for this chapter.

In the central core theory, social representations are defined as a structured set of information, beliefs, and attitudes on a given object: All of these dimensions develop relations, determining their significance and situating them in the representation. According to Abric's hypothesis (1976), any representation is organized around a core composed of a few number of cognitions, which determines its meaning. One of the features of these (core) items is to be nonnegotiable: The object being represented cannot be recognized if a central characteristic is removed.

This theoretical approach is focused on the examination of the items for an object that are most shared by members of a group. We think that these often polysemous elements form a "mobile center" (Bataille, 2002), consensual inside the groups because they can take on a plurality of meanings. This plasticity of the central system was highlighted within the framework of a study on the representation of the ideal group (Bataille & Mias, 2003; Ratinaud & Bataille, 2004). We think that within the professionalization framework, as the training groups undergo a change in position, they change their central system of representations of professional objects. We also think that if a group is concerned with an object leading to both social and professional practices, the group can use different central systems depending on the activation context (private or professional) of the object.

The larger part of representations consists of peripheral items which form a "specific but complementary" system (Abric, 1994) around the central core and allow the adaptation of the representations to the various contexts encountered by social actors.

Unlike central items, peripheral items are negotiable and can undergo adjustments according to the situation. Their concrete nature gives them an

operational function in the representations (Guimelli, 1994). In the structural theory, two social representations are different if and only if their cores are different (Rouquette & Rateau, 1998).

Professional Representations

Professional representations conceived as a specific category of social representations are defined as follows:

> Neither a scientific knowledge, nor a common sense, they are elaborated and put into context in professional action and interaction, by protagonists whose professional identities they form. These identities correspond to groups in a specific professional field, in connection with salient objects of this field. (Bataille, Blin, Mias, & Piaser, 1997, p. 63)

The proximity of the object, the important identity stakes, and the practical dimension will bring about specific knowledge of the object.

These representations

> comprise conscious items of scientific and technical knowledge, conscious and unconscious items of practical knowledge (recalling the notion of "body knowledge"), and items of relational, organizational and institutional cognition. All these items are implicitly incorporated in an efficient representation that guides usual practices and also helps the subject to deal immediately and almost automatically with unforeseen situations. This representation, shared by all individuals working together, but also perceived differently depending on one's position in the working structure, allows the subjects to know that they speak about the same thing and, when divergences appear about their professional objects, that they don't need to speak much, and also, to know why they have divergences. (Bataille, 1999, p. 76)

Fraysse (1996) showed that during a vocational training, the representation of the students' future profession changes. The author interprets this as a transition from a social to a professional representation and calls it the stage of "socio-professional" representation.

Professionalization

In a minimalist manner, professionalization can be seen as the "transition" from a non-professional state to a professional one. This can be related to one or more individuals and, more generally, to one or more objects.

Regardless of whether professionalization is observed through the subjects or the objects, the construction of a profession or the professional

training, this process can be studied from the angle of representations. This transversal theory allows for the observation and analysis of these (trans) formations concerning groups in training and/or the introduction of a new object in a professional field.

Professionalization, as approached in this chapter, is thus, at least in part, a process of structuring one or several representations of one or more salient objects of a given professional field. Within this framework we will see that this process, this representational relation between subject and object, can be observed and analyzed from the point of view of the individual or of the collective subject and/or of the object of representation. Our research standpoint can thus lead us to study the dynamics of professionalization as an active process of specification leading from social to professional representation for a group of individuals in regard to their profession (first study) or in regard to objects salient to their field of activity (second study).

FIRST STUDY

In this first study, we tried to observe to what extent and in what way a training centered on a pedagogy built upon special, group centered, work-based learning allows for a process of the students' professionalization, and, specifically, of transformations of representations of the object "socio-cultural coordinator".

Presentation

Since October 2000, the department of Sciences of Education and Training of the University of Toulouse le Mirail (UTM) has offered a new vocational course of studies in socio-cultural coordination for groups of about 20 students through a D.E.U.S.T.[1]

The object of research (Lac, 2003) was a group composed of one-third men and two-thirds women, with an age average of 26.5. They were socio-cultural coordinators either on short term contract, or without stable employment, working mainly in the leisure or education fields and, for a quarter of them, in the social field. Only a third of them had a university diploma before entering the training course. Twelve of the 22 students have finished the training course and received their diplomas at the end of the 2 years training.

Methodology

For 2 years, a longitudinal and diachronic study was undertaken. To better analyze and compare the representations of the object "socio-cultural coordinator" at different stages of the training, we used a single method at

the beginning and at the end of the training course. To do so, we composed an ISA questionnaire (Induction by Ambiguous Scenario): The hypothesis is that, if a characteristic is attributed to an ambiguous object only when it (the object) is explicitly given as the object of representation, then this characteristic concerns the core of the studied representation. Indeed, in such a case, it can be said that there is a systematic bond between the appearance of this characteristic and reference to the object of representation. (Moliner, Rateau, & Cohen-Scali, 2002)

This questionnaire, developed by Moliner, highlights the structure of the social representation of an object, that is, the vocation of "socio-cultural coordinator". On the basis of an ambiguous inductive scenario, the validity of which was tested beforehand, half of the group of students was asked to take a position on the bond between various items and the object "socio-cultural coordinator" and the other half on the bond between the same items and an indefinite object, different from "socio-cultural coordinator". This process allowed us, simultaneously, to determine the salience of items presumably included in the representation of the object and to question these. Both scenarios are presented next:

Scenario 1   Locating the ambiguous object in the field of representation of socio-cultural coordinator:

> Dominique works in contact with the public. In order to respond as best he can to his public's needs, Dominique must implement competences, know-how, and personal qualities essential to his function. Dominique has been a socio-cultural coordinator for several years.

Scenario 2   Locating the ambiguous object outside of the field of representation of socio-cultural coordinator:

> Dominique works in contact with public. In order to respond as best he can to his public's needs, Dominique must implement competences, know-how, and personal qualities essential to his function. However, Dominique is not a socio-cultural coordinator and wants it to be known.

Half of the given items of this questionnaire came from the analysis of group interviews, the other half from literature (especially works by Poujol, 1981, 1989; Mignon, 1999; Gillet, 1993; Augustin & Gillet, 2000) and from official texts of the Ministry for Youth and Sports. They all give various definitions of the socio-cultural coordinator.

The 32 items given as "the specific items of Dominique's trade" were: bond, autonomy, communication, socialization, safety, intuition, personal development, group, pleasure, integration, relations, citizen's values, insertion, game, cultural life, physical competences, psychological competences, nondirective techniques, clear objectives, hierarchy, specific tools, social

recognition, important knowledge, substantial salary, historical values, broad scope for freedom, fixed defining features, adapted means, meaningful function, team work, project construction, and common procedures with colleagues.

This ISA questionnaire was given twice: once at the beginning of training and once at the end of training. The transformations of this representation in a professionalization dynamic are analyzed from the diachronic comparison of these two results.

An item is regarded as part of the central system when it meets the following three conditions:

Its score as an object of representation (when the subject is asked to give the characteristics of the socio-cultural coordinator from scenario n°1) is higher than the average score of all the items.

Its score as a "non-object" of representation (when the subject is asked to give the characteristics of the socio-cultural coordinator from scenario n°2) is lower than the average score of all the items.

The difference between the scores, for a considered item, in both configurations of the ambiguous object is higher than the average difference of the scores.

An item is regarded as part of the peripheral system when its score is higher than the average score of all the items in both configurations of the ambiguous object.

Results

Considering the representation of the socio-cultural coordinator, these results show an appreciable change from a "voluntary" connotation at the beginning of the training to a "professional" connotation at the end of it. The group changes from having a collective representation of this object to having a professional one.

Representation of the Vocation "Socio-cultural Coordinator" at the Beginning of Training

Items of the central system are: "group", "pleasure", "cultural life".

Peripheral items are: "communication", "bond", "socialization", "team work", "projects construction", "clear objectives" and "specific tools".

The central items give an account of a representation of the socio-cultural coordinator anchored at the same time in history, with "cultural life" (in reference to popular education) and in a voluntary, leisure type, coordination with "pleasure". In the common discourse, the concept of "group" appears as an item which distinguishes the socio-cultural coordinator from the other protagonists of the socio-educational sector (Poujol, 1989). The "cultural life" concept is a concept related to the various definitions of
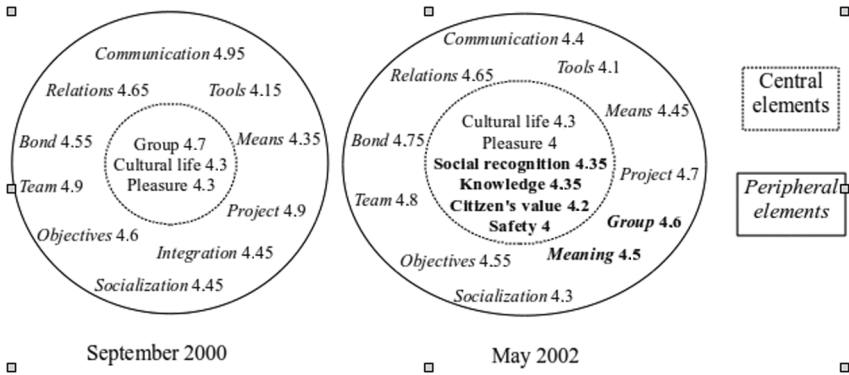
Figure 4.1 Diachronic comparison of the representation of "socio-cultural coordinator".

socio-cultural coordinator, the "pleasure" concept comes from discussions between members of the training group, and the "group" concept comes from both.

This could be a "collective" representation of the vocation "voluntary socio-cultural coordinator".

Representation of the Trade "Socio-cultural Coordinator" at the End of Training

Items of the central system are: "cultural life", "pleasure", "citizen's values", "safety", "social recognition" and "important knowledge". Peripheral items: "communication", "team work", "relations", "socialization", "projects construction", "clear objectives", "bond", "specific tools", "means" and "meaningful function". Here, we have three different kinds of central items are: two common sense items (cultural life and pleasure), two contextual items (citizen's values and safety) and two items relating to professionalization (social recognition and important knowledge). We can hypothesize that this is a social representation of the vocation "professional socio-cultural coordinator" or at least, of one in the process of professionalization.

Comparison

Two items of the central system of the representation of the vocation of socio-cultural coordinator remained stable in time, that is, the concepts of pleasure and cultural life. These two concepts were regarded as reflections of voluntary leisure-coordination originating from the history of popular education. "Group", the main item of the central system at the beginning of training, became peripheral. This item was the object of several

theoretical courses and collective explanations all throughout the training course (approximately 30 sessions of 4 hours intended to create and (re) build the representations of this object). After 2 years, this concept has lost its polysemy, but the sharpening of meaning was accompanied by a loss in specificity: the "group" item acquired significance beyond the field of socio-cultural coordination (Lac & Mias, 2004).

Despite the change of status of the "group" item, the central system became larger. We note that the four new items composing the central system are items which did not appear in the structure of the socio-cultural coordinator representation at the beginning of training. There was thus no slip from the periphery to the central system. There is indeed a transformation of the representation, and within this theoretical framework, a new representation is being built.

This transformation can be associated with the group's professionalization in relation to its trade and thus a professionalization of the representation of the object "socio-cultural coordinator". In other words, this transition, this transformation of representation is part of a constructional dynamic of an active professional implication, both collective and individual (Mias, 1998).

Indeed, we know (with Mias, 1998) that professional implication can be understood as the activation of three dimensions: points of reference, meaning, and feeling in control. The beginning of training gives the students a feeling of loss or, at least, a lack of these three dimensions. Comments obtained at the time (Lac, 2003) reveal a weak feeling of control, a loss of meaning concerning the coordination trade, and a will to make up for these "gaps" through training. The 2-year long formation process (of installation) of explicit and implicit points of reference—partly understood as a system of representations concerning the salient objects for the profession of socio-cultural coordinator—makes it possible for students to collectively re-examine the meaning given to these points of reference and to build new knowledge.

This collective action and the elements that emerge from it would activate an individual new involvement (or "re-implication") process and thus a transformation of the system of representations. This collectively built meaning would, to some extent, enhance and modify the "first" marks and would then establish a new representation system correlated with a professional practice characterized by a strong feeling of control. There would be a reactivation of the three dimensions of professional implication around new representations which then would be "professional representations".

This first study highlights the representation process in action during the professionalization of a training group. The second underlines the coexistence of different representations of an object within the same sample. These representations can be distinguished by the context in which this object is mentioned (personal or professional).

SECOND STUDY

Presentation

This second study looks at the professional representation of "internet" for secondary school teachers using the Web. After questioning a large group of teachers to collect the elements of this representation (Ratinaud, 2003), we noted the differences between the practices reported by these teachers' in the context of their private lives and those they reported in the professional context (with their pupils). In their private lives, they equally divide their practices between using the internet as an information tool and a communication tool, whereas in their professional lives, they state that they mainly use the internet as a tool for information search. We can then assume the existence of two different representations of internet within this population: one for the private space (directing practices of the use of a tool of information and communication), and another for the professional space (guiding practices of the use of a tool of information search).

Description of the Population

For this study, 124 general and technological upper-school teachers answered a questionnaire on-line. The population was composed of 60% men and 40% women, working in 27 of the 31 French education areas (Academies). All disciplines were represented.

Methodology

To measure the central place of an item, we used a method known as the "verification task"[2] (Moliner, 1989) in the variant suggested by Bataille and Mias (2003). This method rests on the nonnegotiable property of the central elements of representations. It postulates that subjects cannot recognize an object of representation if it is presented with one of its central items missing. A missing peripheral item does not prevent this recognition. For example, it is difficult to imagine an ideal group of friends if the members of this group are not friends. On the other hand, it is indeed conceivable to imagine an ideal group of friends whose members do not share the same opinions. According to this principle, the concept of friendship is central to the representation of "ideal group of friends" whereas the sharing of same opinions is peripheral.

To determine if a characteristic resists its refutation, the subjects fill a questionnaire in which the object of representation is presented without its supposed central characteristics.

In this study, the test challenged each subject on 10 items under two different conditions: The subjects answered once within their private life (e.g., In your private life, could a technology that doesn't make information access

possible be Internet?). They were then asked the same question within their professional life (e.g., In your professional life, could a technology that doesn't make information access possible be Internet?).

Possible answers are "yes", "no", "it depends" and "no answer". The "no" answers indicate refutations to the element in question (i.e., No, a technology that doesn't make information access possible could not be Internet). An item is regarded as central when 50% of subjects answer "no" to its refutation.

Results

The following (Table 4.1) shows the rates of refutation (percentage of "no" answers) obtained for each item in each evocation context.

Under the "private life" condition, with respectively 84% and 80% of refutations, we see here that the items "communication" and "information" are central in this population's representation of Internet. So are the concepts of "exchange" (77%), "openness" (76%) and "vastness" (68%).

Table 4.1 Results of the Challenging Test in Both Evocation Conditions (N = 124)

	private	professional	Chi2 (Mac Nemar)
communication	**84.0%**	**81.5%**	NS*
information	**79.7%**	**89.1%**	Chi2 = 6,66, p = 0,0098
exchange	**77.3%**	**76.5%**	NS
openness	**75.9%**	**70.1%**	NS
vastness	**68.4%**	**69.8%**	NS
speed	48.7%	62.2%	Chi2 = 7,03, p = 0,008
critical mind	40.2%	30.5%	Chi2 = 4,03, p= 0,044
working tool	35.3%	**77.1%**	Chi2 = 43,18, p<0,0001
commercial	17.9%	12.8%	NS
disorganization	15.8%	8.3%	NS

For items in bold, the refutation rate (% of "no" answers) is superior to 50%
Chi2 corresponds to the study of differences between two contexts.
* NS = not significant.

Under the "professional life" condition, we find all the central items of the above condition: "communication" (82%), "information" (89%), "exchange" (76%), "openness" (70%) and "vastness" (70%).

In addition, the concepts of "speed" (62%) and "working tool" (77%) join in the representation central system.

Evoked within the framework of their professional life, Internet becomes a "working tool" for these teachers. This adaptation of the representation to the professional field has several consequences on the elements making it up. The items "information" (Chi2 = 6.66, ddl = 1, p = 0.0098) and "speed" (Chi2 = 7.03, ddl =1, p = 0.008) have their refutation score increased to a significant degree. On the contrary, the element relating to the information reliability ("critical mind") involves less refutations (Chi2 = 4.03, ddl = 1, p = 0.044). It is also true (even if not significant) for the concepts of "openness" and "exchange".

The image of Internet is thus adapted to be regarded as a "working tool" by these teachers. This adaptation can be seen as giving coherence to a representation in the teaching culture.

An object only leads to a practice in a professional field if it has characteristics that are congruent with institutional and organizational realities and ideologies, and thus with the system of professional representations and practices of the field's protagonists.

Thus, the "conceptual and professional maps" (Garnier, 1999) regulating professional activities present a "reality" the idea of which differs from social thought. "What draws attention above all, are two differently regulated practices, "built" on two different imagination systems, but nonexclusive of one another" (Bataille, 1983, p. 29).

CONCLUSION

These two studies, each in a different field and employing different methodologies, help to distinguish social representations from professional ones.

This specification of social representations can be approached in both cases as a transformation movement, understood as the transition from a "social" state to a "professional" state of representation and as the "construction of a new form" of representation of a given object.

This transition is not only linear. It is also a link that permits the back and forth between the social and the professional representation of an object. The professionalization process thus refers to the time and space aspects of the notion of transition.

Representations are a means of examining professionalization, thanks to the theoretical distinction between social and professional representations. There would be, in this case, concomitant (trans)formation of the object and of the group, from social to professional and even of social by professional.

This text was meant to highlight the representational component of the professionalization process. It does not deal with all the underlying complexity of this concept and its study. Other concepts should be investigated, including those of groups of reference, context, and implication, all of which we know are of major importance in the dynamics of social and professional representations (Mias, 1998; Rouquette, 1998).

NOTES

1. D.E.U.S.T. : Diplôme d'études universitaires scientifique et technique—University diploma of scientific and technical studies.
2. Mise en cause, in French.

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5 The Teacher's Work

Clarilza Prado de Sousa

Studies carried out with a view to understanding various research in education and the education of teachers (André et al., 1999; Placco, 2005; Menin & Shimizu, 2005) have clearly demonstrated the complexity of this subject, which thus requires a delimitation of comprehensive theoretical references to facilitate our understanding of the social, historical, and subjective and practical injunctions involving the study of education.

We can state in agreement with Borges (2001), whose work on this subject exhibited a conceptual, theoretical, and methodological diversity, that although theoretical trends moving in opposite directions may be found, there is an overall consensus that the teacher's work can best be observed in the intersection of psychological, cognitive, and sociological theories and social anthropology. Moreover, as Saujat (2004) maintains, disciplines such as psychology, sociology, and linguistics, individually, would not be sufficient to understand how the dimensions of the teacher's work are mobilized and how the teacher resorts to them in each of the practical situations he/she experiences in classroom.

Only a theoretical–methodological combination that takes into account the context in which the professional is inserted, the social conditions the professional depends upon to perform his/her activities, the experiences that produced the teacher's education, and the processes the teacher develops in his/her practice would allow us to understand the subject-teacher and his/her teaching activity.

This is to say that, even if we are to take the teacher, his/her development process, and the social building of him/herself and his/her profession as the start and end points of analysis, an adequate theoretical–methodological framework should support our understanding of knowledge in the context of the teacher's work and of how the subject-teacher is built from this knowledge within a given social context.

In the search for a theoretical and methodological contribution that would favor the interpretation of the complexity of the teacher's work, we have explored social psychology as it is outlined from the European perspective and presented by Moscovici (1976), who defines it as the "science of conflict between the individual and the society" (p. 6) and also

the science "of the ideology phenomena (social cognitions and representations) and of the communication phenomena" (p. 6). Applied to education, a psychosocial perspective allows us to consider contributions from sociology—the analysis unit of which is mainly the collectivity, such as the social class, the family, the groups, the society, the state—and those from psychology, which focuses on the subject and the experiences lived by the subject, without, however, considering the subject as an "isolated and autistic individual" (p. 12).

From a psychosocial perspective, to analyze the teacher's work is to understand him/her as the subject that "does not limit him/herself to receiving and processing information, but who is also the builder of meanings and who theorizes the social reality" (Vala, 1997, p. 357).

It can be stated, based on Moscovici's (1976) and Jodelet's (1989) analyses, that the teacher builds realities, while in the mediation process of relationship, that are not mere reflections of external reality, but are mental constructions of a certain object, resulting from his/her symbolic activity within the context of the broadest social system. The examination of this process through an analysis of the teachers' social representations of their work is intended to elucidate how teachers understand and explain the meaning of this work, the factors that lead to good performance, the links they maintain with their practice and that define their social identity, the expectations they have regarding their professional futures which guided their choices to be trained in education, and the knowledge that comprises them as teachers.

Therefore, the theory of social representations, as a theoretical and methodological instrument, makes it possible to perform a study of education within a psychosocial perspective, thereby facilitating the understanding of the private subject's action and of the transformation processes, a major target of education.

In our research, we have elected this perspective and have tried to illuminate the teacher's work starting from the representations the teacher has built of his/her work, understanding that teachers' (or future teachers') knowledge is gained through experience and education and presents itself as a reality-building process. It is a mediation, relationship process, which, however, is not a reflection of external reality, but a mental construction by the subject that is the result of his/her symbolic activity, within the context of the broadest social system. In Denise Jodelet's opinion, social representations are

> . . . a form of knowledge, socially prepared and shared, which has a practical dimension and concurs for the building of a reality common to a social set. Equally referred to as common sense knowledge, or even ingenuous, natural knowledge, such form of knowledge is differentiated, among other things, from scientific knowledge. However, it is considered a study object as legitimate as (scientific knowledge), due to its importance in social life and in explanation. (1989, p. 36)

In these terms, such knowledge, socially prepared and shared by teachers in their professions, allows us to examine the relationships they build in their daily lives. It is a form of common sense knowledge, which also discloses the manner in which they think, understand, and explain the meaning of this work. The factors they believe will lead to effective teaching and the expectations they have in relation to their futures as teachers.

Such knowledge built by the teacher, which will provide sense and guidance to the teacher's practice, can be defined as the teacher's knowledge, and, as Tardif (2002) states, it is

> organically connected to the person of the worker and to his/her work, to what he/she is and does, and also to what he/she has been and did, in order to avoid deviations towards conceptions that do not take into account such teacher's incorporation into a work process, focusing on the socialization of the teacher's profession and on the conceptualized domain of the teaching activity. (p. 17)

Moreover, we may also state with the author that the teacher's knowledge "actually contains signs of his/her work, showing he/she is not being used as a means of work only, but is produced and modeled in and by the work" (Tardif, 2002, p. 17). Again, when our focus of study is what the teacher thinks about his/her work, the theory of social representation may offer us proper theoretical and methodological supports to identify the direction the teacher wants to give to his or her work, or teaching practice. According to Billing et al., 1988 (cf. Vala, 1997, p. 357):

> The social psychology of social representations has been built from the questioning of theories that ignore what individuals think, or that ignore the weight of the individual's thought on the establishment of society; and simultaneously, from the questioning of theories that ignore the social context in which individuals think and the weight of this context in building thought.

The understanding of the teacher's thinking with the support of the theory of social representation clearly shows the articulations of knowledge that teachers build in their concrete practice. It indicates how they structure knowledge about the science of education—with which they systematically come into contact in education colleges—together with common sense knowledge on education. Better said, analyzing the thought of future teachers requires that we understand what the characteristics of scientific knowledge are and what those of common sense knowledge are and, next, that we inquire how such knowledge is produced and guides the teacher in the production of educative action (Moscovici & Hewstone, 1986).

Television, radio, newspapers, and magazines are all vehicles that spread information and analyses on education, on how to educate and how to teach. All of these information-spreading vehicles are imbued with values

and infused with ideologies and have varying levels of commitment to change. These constitute privileged information sources for the teacher to build his/her views on education, on students and on how to educate, and thus serve to reinforce principles and concepts proper to common sense, as clearly shown by Tavares (2000) in his analysis of the sources used by teachers from learning acceleration programs to build their teaching methods.

In this sense, to understand how teachers think or how they are elaborating their thought requires that we investigate how common sense knowledge is intertwined with scientific knowledge. To elucidate this process is to enhance the possibility of acting in the initial and continued training of teachers in a more effective manner. To access this process with the support of the theory of social representation is to renew hopes for educating the future teacher, for altering common sense, and it is also to show that teacher education processes should necessarily take into account the common sense of teachers to allow the transformation that guides the building of an enlightened common sense, according to terms pointed out by Boaventura Souza Santos (1989).

The perspective of observing the teacher's work from an epistemology of common sense and not only from an epistemology of scientific knowledge, which defines the teaching forms and models related to the teacher's task, does not mean that there is a sharp contrast between these epistemologies. The great philosopher of science, Duhem, said in 1981 that

> The ground of common sense is not a treasure buried in the ground to which no piece is added; it is the asset of a huge and prodigiously active society, made by the union of human intelligences; this asset is transformed and increased century after century; theoretical science contributes largely to these transformations and to this increase of richness, spreading itself incessantly through teaching, conversation, books and periodicals. Science goes to the bottom of ordinary knowledge, draws its attention to phenomena thus far forgotten; teaching analyzes notions of truth common to all men, at least to all those who have reached a certain degree of intellectual culture. (cf. Moscovici & Hewstone, 1986, p. 684)

The common sense that guides the daily teacher's relationships, is thus not "an ingenuous, intuitive, profane one that would turn the ordinary man into a kind of Adam on the day of his creation, devoid of prejudices" (Moscovici, 1986, p. 687).

The teacher's common sense knowledge that we are discussing here, in accordance with Moscovici (1986), is built in the consensus of groups, prepared, modified and transformed historically (Rouquette & Guimelli, 1992) from the access one has to scientific knowledge, from the social context one lives in.

It is this common sense knowledge that will operate in the teacher's daily life; and an understanding of the teacher's common sense knowledge is

crucial for the purpose of educating teachers to act, to practice their teaching. It is only upon the basis of our knowledge of how the teacher thinks about being a teacher that we may propose actions that lead the teacher to truly improve his/her work. In other words, given that social representations are exactly the ones that in everyday life will carry out this process of articulation between experience, what has been lived, and knowledge (Jodelet, 1989); then to be familiar with the teachers' social representations of his/her work is to understand the articulation processes that are being built and that will become hypotheses or directions for action.

In the analysis of this articulation produced by subjects being educated, two intrinsically related processes should be considered: alterity and identity.

Alterity is a process that "convenes the notion of identity" (Jodelet, 1998, p. 49) and shows itself as a "product of double process of social building and exclusion that, indissolubly linked like both sides of a same sheet, keeps its unit by means of a system of representations" (p. 48). The notion of alterity in the teacher's work acquires legitimacy when it is observed that being a teacher is to perform a professional activity that demands the complementarity of having students (Sousa, 2005). Thus, the teacher's work may only be analyzed in reference to his/her *other,* that is the student, to the extent to which this *other* is determinative of being a teacher. The *other*, the student, who at the same time defines the teacher as a teacher, who identifies him/her with the work of being a teacher, has an essential space in a psychosocial study of the teacher's work. Therefore, discussing the teacher's work requires one to inquire: teacher for which student? from which school? within which context? under which conditions? To know the *other* (the student) constructed by the teacher is to define how the teacher establishes criteria of belonging, of inclusion and exclusion—that is, who will be part of the *Us (nous)* and who will *They* be in a given social context—and also, how the teacher is building his/her alterity process. Based on the discussions of Licata and Sanchez-Mazas (2005), we could say that the manner in which a group is recognized as belonging to *Us* depends on multiple social values, and these criteria are exactly those that will allow us to understand how the teacher has built his/her alterity. The teacher is a teacher of the student with difficulty, with learning problems and not only of the successful one. Thus, it is important to know to what extent the teacher includes all types of students in his/her work, and what type of representation of the *other* establishes his/her alterity relationship in the educative action. Education is defined as a process of relationship wherein alterity should be cultivated and based upon principles of equity and universal values of justice, cooperation and democracy.

As an example of the importance of this concept in education, let us refer to results published in the recent UNESCO Report (2007), the product of a study conducted in public schools in 10 Brazilian States, which revealed that for most teachers questioned, the student him/herself is to be blamed

for failure at school. It is first the student and then his/her own family who are deemed responsible for learning difficulties.

Such results are alarming and signal the rupture of an ethics of alterity, but they also indicate a displacement of the teachers' understanding of their work. An analysis of these teachers' social representations of the others, their students, would allow us to reveal how alterity structures the educative relationships in class. Schemes (2005) says that when the teacher's work has as its parameter the ethics of alterity, "his/her pedagogical practice will be a liberator of stereotypes, of pre-judgments, prejudices and exclusion of the different, because the practice will be face to face, eye to eye, having as a result the respect for the other as a unique and special human being" (p. 31).

The results of the UNESCO Report also show how psychosocial approaches may clarify tensions between the *Us* and *Them*, which are intensified in periods of crisis. In these periods, due to self-defense mechanisms, the *other* becomes the target of projections that differentiates it from itself and distances it from the one it represents (Joffe, 2005). According to Joffe (2005), in these periods the subject of authority becomes evident and is manifested in social representations that will participate in the building processes and the social identity protection of a certain group. For teachers, when data on public school education indicate clear quality problems in Brazil, when national assessments reveal a disparity in relation to private schools, the student that fails seems to be representing a threat to the teacher's image and, therefore, social representations start to emerge to intensify the separation of the *Us (nous)* and *Them (eux)* causing attributes to be created for the *other* (Joffe, 2005)—in our case, the student—as incapable of learning.

In conclusion, we may state that the contributions of the psychosocial approach in the area of education and particularly the analysis of social representations of the teacher's work are relevant and make it possible for the researcher to illuminate the intricate networks of meanings intertwined in the daily life at school to guide educative action. In our research on social representation of the teacher's work, the results have helped us to better understand teacher training; that is, how scientific knowledge in the area of education—knowledge regarding the duties of being a teacher and how to educate—is related to common sense knowledge built in a certain culture. Our studies are also intended to contribute to the education of teachers by enabling teachers to acquire awareness of the alterity that defines their educative action and their own profession.

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6 Education Processes of the Teacher as an Apprentice

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INTRODUCTION

Teacher education themes have been giving rise, on the part of many authors, to different propositions and views as to what the education process should be in the initial and continuing categories. In our teaching experiences, we have been personally confronted with the difficulties of teaching practice and the insufficient results current education processes achieve. What has become increasingly clear to us is that teacher education should be viewed in its multiplicity, and it should stimulate the teacher's professional development in multiple dimensions, synchronically intertwined in the individual himself.

It is from this perspective that we propose that the training of teachers should be considered from the standpoint of a set of dimensions that are synchronically awakened when the education process takes place. In the first section of this chapter, we place these dimensions within the context of their connections to the intentionality and awareness of the educator and the graduating students. In the second section of the chapter, we present our reflections on a group of studies which investigate, discuss and systematize questions involving adult learning. In its 3 years of holding fortnightly meetings, this group[1]—formed by educators who work with the training of teachers in schools (continuing education) or universities (initial education), or in training of other educators—has been trying to understand the essential processes involved in the education of teachers, focusing mainly on adult-teacher learning. Therefore, this chapter, which affirms its authorship, is a product of studies and long discussions, and this is reflected in the style chosen: few bibliographic references and a language accessible to future teachers and practitioners.

SECTION I—DIMENSIONS OF THE TEACHER'S EDUCATION

Central to our view is the belief that, if multiple dimensions are not considered synchronically in the education process, there will be no effect on the very subject (person) to be educated nor, consequently, on the subject's daily practice.

In other papers (Placco, 2002a, 2002c), we have presented various concepts and propositions concerning this subject, drawing attention to the concepts of synchronicity[2] and of synchronic multidimensionality in the education and work of teachers, and we have asserted the importance of the teacher's awareness during the education process and his/her teaching practice, which allows for the teacher's increased participation in and commitment to teaching and his/her own education. A theoretical–practical construction of the teacher education is on the horizon.

On several occasions, we have selected and made use of a set of dimensions in the education process as follows: technical, human-interactional, political, knowledge to teach, continuing education, critical-reflexive, esthetical, cultural, and identity formation—all of which are intersected by the ethical dimension and by the intentionality of the educator and the graduating student. These dimensions are understood as non-discrete, non-isolated, and not merely complementary. Thus, while we propose them specifically in order to present their individual scope, we do not mean to imply that they have an expression in themselves. In fact, they only have meaning if understood in their co-occurrence or simultaneity, in the dialectical relations they establish with each other. These dimensions are present in the subject and they affect education processes singly and also together in a more complex manner, with interrelations and co-occurrences, dialectically. Thus, in education, the subject's development in multiple dimensions is caused simultaneously, even if the educator has not intentionally proposed this complexity (Placco, 2002b, 2002c).

It is important to draw attention to the fact that, if there is awareness and intentionality on the educator's part, and if these dimensions are engaged with the awareness and intentionality of the teacher that is graduating, a possibility arises for education processes wherein senses (of the personal order) and meanings (of the collective order) are built, through significant pedagogical and personal relationships, either cognitively, or affectively (Placco, 2002c). These are the senses and meanings that make it possible to structure oneself and the other; they broaden the development of awareness, permit significant interactions and learning, and enable partnerships in which such dimensions, simultaneously and alternately, mobilize the building and constitution of the entire person.

Another aspect to be highlighted refers to the awareness that the teacher is expected to have as to the relative projection that each of the dimensions may assume, at each moment of his/her teaching practice and even as to the pedagogical trends that these projections represent. The fact that the teacher is not able to value or evaluate the fragmentation of his/her practice or education is frequently related to the social, political, ethical, and/or affective context of the teacher's training and of his/her environment, which, interfering with his/her education and teaching practice thereby leaves him/her estranged from him/herself and his/her work. Thus, we propose that the teacher's professional development is a consequence of his/her

education through the broadening of awareness of his/her synchronicity and of the synchronicity of his/her education

In this sense, it is important to consider the instrumental role of teacher education in professional development. Thus, in education, the educating and simultaneous self-educating actions make it possible for the teacher to become aware: (a) of the dimensions involved in his/her practice; (b) of the privilege granted to one or other of these dimensions that, at each moment, his/her performance as teacher (the professional practice) concretizes in classroom; (c) of the fact that, even with such privilege being granted, the other dimensions continue present and active; and (d) that the choice of these dimensions and the occasional privilege granted to one or another reveal the teacher's constitutive pedagogical trend(s).

The mediation the educator performs implies a commitment to the continuing education and the professional development of his/her graduating students, insofar as such continuing movement is a requirement of the professional's synchronic development itself and of the evolution of knowledge. Each educating action that is stimulated enables the broadening of the teacher's synchronic awareness and, thus, a clarification of directions to be transmitted to the teacher's work in class and to the school's collective project.

Finally, we consider the concept of synchronicity—and the awareness of this concept—to be a useful instrument for the purpose of continuously educating teachers and for their professional development. Because it includes dimensions of the entire person, the concept allows for the mobilization of distinct aspects of education: autonomy and partnership of teachers in the teaching-learning process; improvement of personal relationships (intra- and inter-group); development of the teacher's study habits; his/her possibility of intervening in the education of students regarding sexuality and prevention of drug abuse, for instance; ongoing scientific education; knowledge and commitment to the social, emotional, and cognitive development of students in different age ranges; the improvement of teacher–student relationships; and building individual development spaces for teachers.

If the educator's work involves the professional development and training of teachers, it should include the study and criticism of theories; it should allow the educator to critically examine his/her practice and that of the school, and thereby encourage the appearance of contradictions between theory and daily practice in schools; it should generate questions regarding teachers' values and beliefs. In general, " . . . given as defined and definite; it should generate doubts in their certainties, generate disruptions in thought and action, so that contradictions generate provisional and provocative syntheses of the awareness movements" (Placco, 2002b, p. 117).

Over the years of study and activities in the training of educators, the idea of dimensions of teaching and in teacher education has acquired specificity and amplitude. Today, we consider it necessary that educators and graduating students take the following dimensions into account in the education process (as mentioned previously): technical or technical-scientific,

human-interactional, political, continuing education, collective work, knowledge to teach, critical-reflexive, evaluative, esthetical, cultural, and ethical. One of these—the ethical dimension—intersects all others, involving values, attitudes, commitments, desires, intentionalities, and actions.

Although not all of these dimensions are usually included as areas of education, we believe that taking all of them into account and including them in the education process has important results for teachers and for their action in the classroom.

It must be considered that the diversity and complexity of the dimensions discussed are constitutive of the human person, which means that, if we do not include them deliberately in the education process, they will still be there, in random and spontaneous manner, without the educator or student being able to clearly understand or be aware of their influence and direction.

In previous papers we have presented some of the characteristics of the dimensions being discussed here, so we will not repeat that discussion here. We again emphasize, however, that although each dimension can be said to have its own characteristics, their occurrence is always simultaneous, with occasional projections of one in relation to the other, in certain moments of the practice (Placco, 2006).

SECTION II—ADULT-TEACHER LEARNING

Three years ago, educators and researchers of the Graduate Program in Education: Psychology of Education, from PUC—SP, formed a study group around the Teacher Education theme. In analyzing the teacher education process, questions arose regarding how adult teachers learn. This became the core focus of the study group—How does the teacher, an adult, learn?—and has led the group to "investigate processes such as subjectivity, memory and metacognition, understanding them as generators and corollaries of an identity formation process that involves singular and collective knowledge and experiences intersected by an intentionality and characteristic of the manner in which the adult learns" (Placco and Trevisan de Souza, 2006, p.7). For such investigation, a set of themes has proved fertile: the intentionality of the adult's learning; the group as a mediator of the learning process and of identity formation; different languages as favoring the expression of subjectivity; theoretical studies; and registration as a learning resource.

By discussing the role of memory in the teacher's learning, we identify its potential as a resource that allows access to contents and meanings essential for that process. Once more, we reject the static and passive nature that is often assigned to memory, for memory, in its plurality and plasticity, approximates, repels, discharges, and includes new knowledge and learning. In the learning process, memory is triggered simultaneously in the individual and in the group, with its own dynamics, permitting the reconfiguration of both experiences—the individual and collective—creating senses and re-defining actions.

The study of subjectivity contributes greatly to our understanding of the adult learning process, insofar as it reveals the singularity of the knowledge appropriation process and the new meanings produced by subjects interrelating with each other. Thus, considering subjectivity in the context of the connections established by individuals with themselves and with groups, the study of subjectivity makes it possible for us to acquire a new understanding of the knowledge appropriation process.

Metacognition is a third aspect that forms the learning process. Metacognition is understood to be essential for adult-teacher learning. The teacher, an active participant in the learning process, is capable of "learning to learn" and of thinking about his/her own thinking and learning process. The question that interests us is precisely this: How does the adult teacher develop these strategies? To what extent does gaining awareness about how one learns, how one appropriates certain kinds of knowledge, influence one's education? In the search for responses to these questions, we have had discussions with theoreticians and have also discussed examples from our group's lived experiences, with a view to elucidate the importance of metacognitive practice in the teacher education processes.

One last aspect that seems relevant to the subject of adult-teacher learning, precisely because it is related to the specificities involved in teaching, is knowledge. What is the characteristic knowledge in teaching? How is such knowledge built-up in adult-apprentices? What is the source of such knowledge? To what extent does it relate to memory, metacognition, subjectivity, and finally, to the adult teacher's learning process?

Through discussions with authors such as Tardif, Imbernón, Placco, and others, the group has been reflecting on teachers' practices, with the purpose of identifying dimensions of knowledge and its sources—that is, where it comes from and how it is built. The subject has given rise to much reflection about the teacher education process, mainly in relation to issues that should be considered and addressed by educators.

Adult Learning

The ways of knowing that we wish to examine in addressing the adult teacher's learning specificities are those that are built in the group and by the group, that respect the singularities, the production of senses and of meanings.

The word 'learn' is defined in many dictionaries of the Portuguese language as follows:

> *'to acquire knowledge—from the Latin apprehendere = to catch';*
> *'unlearn = variant of disengage, loosen, untie'; 'to acquire knowledge from studying, instructing oneself'; 'to acquire practical skill in'; 'to come to a better understanding of something'; 'to hold in memory, upon study, observation or experience'*

As we can see, all definitions refer to the acquisition of knowledge and some of them to study or implication (Placco and Trevisan de Souza, 2006, p. 17).

As Brookfield (1986) informs us properly, it would be ingenuous to imagine that adult learning occurs only in restricted scenarios or educating instances subsidized by public assistance. Adult learning, understood as a phenomenon and process, can occur in any scenario in which families and community action groups are included as important protagonists. Our study group has the form of a non-formal learning space, the intentionality of which is turned towards learning. Therefore, as the author states, at some point a significant number of adults will recognize that their "particular" problems are reflections of a larger structural contradiction and will initiate collective action, generating structures of more common interest (Brookfield, 1986).

In this sense, adult learning, translated into new knowledge, results from the transaction between adults, when experiences are interpreted, skills and knowledge are acquired and actions are inspired and produced. In considering adult learning through the examination of our own learning experiences—as male and female adults in our study group—we observed the following to be movements or processes that are part of our learning (when and how we learn):

- in the confrontation of ideas and actions;
- trying, succeeding, and failing;
- listening to the experiences of others;
- resorting to the recollection of what we know and live;
- studying theories, and questioning and clarifying positions;
- writing on a given subject;
- dissecting the new, subdividing it and putting it together in a new way (analysis and synthesis);
- exercising the practice and reflecting on the practice;
- accumulating ideas and testing them;
- researching; and
- reflecting on the way we ourselves learn.

We identify internal and external factors that influence our learning, such as: desire, interest, need, curiosity, discipline, sympathy for what one is doing, tension, prejudice, stubbornness, emotions, bonds, enthusiasm, happiness, elation and determination, the help of others, organization and systematization of the situation and of the content, strictness requirement, diversity of fields of action, amplitude and deepness required, nature of knowledge, and permanent challenge—all of which facilitate, conduct and mediate such learning.

We perceive that conditions are required for learning, strictly linked to what we call internal factors, such as: willingness to open oneself to the new, to articulate new meanings, to devote oneself to adventure, to become

reacquainted with oneself; language domain; logical thought; flexibility; ability to stimulate others; and sensitivity. In the absence of these, learning becomes much more difficult, if not impossible.

It is in the interaction between these factors and conditions, in dynamic and permanent manner, that the learning process is developed, in a complex dimension that needs to be considered by those involved or interested in this theme. Such vision, if appropriated by the educator, is in itself a condition that favors the learning process of adults interrelating with each other.

Discussions of authors such as Kolb (1984), Brookfield (1986), Garcia (1999), Dubar (1997), Tardif (2000) and others; of poetries, images, and films; and of reports of our experiences—as informed by our reflections in the study group on adult learning and how the adult learns—enabled us to draw some conclusions regarding the definition of our adult-apprentice, which we will present later.

We have also identified, after Brookfield (1986), some adult learning characteristics and have selected four aspects we deem important: experience (as the learners are adults, there are prior events lived/experiences that influence the formation of new ideas); meaning (adult-teachers possess knowledge on how to teach while they experience learning); willingness (the adult-learner is motivated by a purpose, such as the development of skills); and deliberation (learning results from a deliberate choice to participate or not in a given process).

In addition, we have also considered that we learn in many ways, as we have experienced in our study group, by means of multiple relations and through the exercise and exploration of other languages, such as: images, poetries, songs, films, etc. However, only in the group does interaction occur favoring the attribution of meanings (of the public order) by the confrontation of senses (of the private order). In the collective, thus, senses based upon individual experiences circulate and confer new meanings—now shared—on knowledge.

Experience is the start and end point of learning. Experience, by means of the relationships it awakens, makes it possible for knowledge to be significant. We are not referring to just any experience, but that which results from the implication of the act of knowing with the choice to know a certain object or event.

Learning involves a very intense cognitive and affective interaction: on one hand, learning requires acceptance that one does not know everything or that one knows in an incomplete or inaccurate or even erroneous manner, which can be painful; on the other hand, learning involves the pleasure of discovering, creating, inventing, and/or finding the answer(s) for which one is seeking, and to the conquest of new knowledge, ideas, and values.

Who is the subject that learns—the one in our study group who is the reader, or the studious individual, or the one who is interested in training teachers?

The adult learner is one in any phase of his/her career and within a large age range who is inserted in an initial or continuing teaching education process which has as its characteristic the intentional involvement with teaching and explicit (internally motivated) and/or potential (externally motivated) education.

This subject of our study is an adult, involved in his/her diverse reality, acting within diversified contexts: child education, elementary, middle, high school, or higher education, in teaching activities, in socio-educative environments. In the performance of his/her work, demands are made upon the many dimensions of his/her human person: cognitive, affective, social, sensitive, cultural, ethical, esthetical, etc., precisely because he/she is interacting with others with educational purpose of a rather complex nature.

It is from this context that his/her need to seek knowledge is derived, and it will be this experience that sustains the attribution of meanings and senses to the accessed knowledge. The object or event to be learned will also be related to this experience, and only this relation can produce involvement and the choice to learn it.

It happens, as we have said, that in this knowledge appropriation process, affections, desires, and personal stories of singular actors act jointly. Thus, these aspects also interfere with the attribution of meanings and senses as the actors/characters interrelate with one another. A specific characteristic of adult learning is that it is not merely a time of preparation for the practice of an activity or way of functioning in the future—it is a condition for action, for thinking, and many times, for the subject's (educator's) own survival.

This condition of being a learning subject involves subjectivity, memory, and metacognition manifested and amalgamated in/by the knowledge and experiences lived by the learner in his/her teaching education. This is, thus, a process of identity formation.

Identity Formation

One of the important moments in the work of the study group was marked by the collective building of a conceptual map[3] of the most significant concepts that were part of our discussions. The map refers to the set of interrelated concepts we have discussed and consider pertinent to the field of adult-teacher learning and education. The map has undergone many revisions until reaching its current form, and it supports and synthesizes this article.

By analyzing the above figure, it is possible to point out the place identity formation occupies in this way of understanding adult-teacher learning: It is an identity building and unbuilding, a formation and deformation process, that is, it is a movement wherein the teacher assumes forms of identities
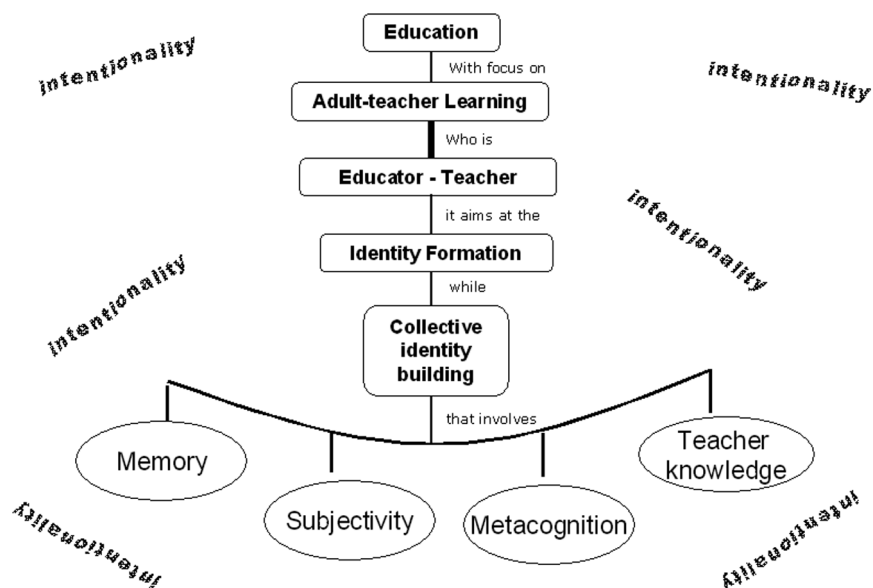
Figure 6.1   Adult-teacher learning.

by means of processes of identification and non-identification with attributes that are assigned to him/her by him/herself and by others with whom he/she relates. In this movement, there are constant acts and feelings of belonging/not belonging, strictly related to subjectivity, memory, metacognitive processes, and knowledge and experiences of individual people in the education process.

According to Dubar (1997), what characterizes the building process of identity forms is a constant tension between attribution and belonging. That is, there is a game of strengths between what they tell us we are—how others identify us—and what we feel and think we are—what we identify ourselves with as we define ourselves. In case of the teacher, this question assumes great relevance if we consider the attributes assigned to him/her regarding the duty of teaching, practice, education, and regarding his/her responsibility for the students' learning results.

Thus, it is not possible to design adult learning, and particularly that of the adult-teacher, without considering the identity formation process.

Also affecting adult identity formation and learning are the principles that guide the subject's thoughts and actions. These principles can be the result of collective construction, if they are explained, discussed, and systematized by the participants of a group. In the case of our study group, inspired by Carlos Marcelo Garcia (1999), we have identified the following principles as those that guide our studies, research, and reflections:

- adult learning results from group building;
- learning occurs from the confrontation and deepening of ideas;
- the learning process is singular and involves deliberate choice;
- the learning process involves commitment and involvement with the object or event to be known and with other learning events;
- the act of knowing is permanent and dialectical;
- the starting point for knowledge is accumulated experience; and
- the basis of learning is language, the attribution of meanings and senses.

Thus, we maintain that adult learning occurs primarily in the group, in the confrontation and deepening of ideas, through individual choice and in one committed to the object or event to be known. Such object or event presents itself in its multiplicity and is based upon the apprentice's experience and given meaning by the language.

CONCLUSION

In the study group work process, we performed a significant movement of theoretical–practical elaboration of the grounds of teacher education, trying to understand the adult-teacher's learning processes.

We have identified that adult learning has specificities that, once understood and explained, are an important contribution to the field of teacher education. The aspects of memory, metacognition, subjectivity, and knowledge of the adult-teacher are articulated with experience and formation processes of his/her personal and professional identity, and the understanding of these processes offers indicators that make it possible to advance in the research and establishment of a specific field of knowledge on Teacher Education. All of these aspects constitute and are constituted by social representations, providing an interesting and important relation between the Theory of Social Representation and Teacher Education. It is within such perspective that our current research is conducted: to understand the relation between teachers' identity formations/reformations and the representations they have of their teaching work.

NOTES

1. The following people participated in the group: Marli Eliza Dalmazo Afonso de André, Amali de de Angelis Mussi, Beatriz de Azevedo Blandy, Carlos Luiz Gonçalves, Cleide do Amaral Terzi, Luzia Angelina Marino Orsolon, Madalena de Oliveira Molochenco, Magali Aparecida Silvestre, Maria Aparecida Campos Diniz de Castro, Marili Moreira da Silva Vieira, Rosangela A. C. Moura, Silvia Russo Correia, Yara Garcia Paoletti Cunha.

2. The concept of synchronicity is developed in Placco (2002a). It could be described as "the critical occurrence of political, human-interactional and technical components, which is translated into their action, which occurrence generates movement that is the action from and between teacher–student–reality. This movement engenders new understandings of the totality of the educative phenomenon, in which there is an ongoing and consistent restructuring in all of them, in each one and in the relationship between these components, insofar as a collective pedagogic project is defined and redefined" (p. 18).
3. The conceptual map shows the conceptual framework of a knowledge area or object.

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7 Social Representations and Cultures of Action

Jean-Marie Barbier
(translated by Christine Carter)

Social representations are of considerable heuristic value for the understanding of human activity. In particular, they permit us to think of the development of representations directly in relation to the engagement of individual and social subjects in their activities; to understand the relations existing between subjects and the representations they make of the context of their actions; to describe the relations between individual and collective subjects in the representations that accompany their activities; and to closely link mental activities, individual and collective, and discursive interactions. What can be said, however, about the conditions under which the production of social representations is organized, and hence the regularities that can be observed?

In the present chapter I propose that it is possible to identify "modes of production" of social representations, introducing lines of consistency, differentiation, and articulation, where one and the same subject is able to participate, in the space of different activities, in several of these modes. I am also interested here in the conditions of the transformation of social representations.

To designate these regimes of production, I will utilize the notion of *culture of action*. Culture of action will be defined as a *mode, evolutive and shared by several subjects, of organizing constructions of meaning around the activities in which the subjects are engaged, where such constructions can give rise to communication in the framework of the subjects' interactions with one another.*

I will proceed in four steps. First of all, I will describe the primary empirical base from which this notion arose: the observation—from within that sphere of activity, education, and training, which are the privileged objects of this study—that there is not only one world of education, but several. These are marked by their reference to very different lexicons and semantics, often causing between these worlds much confusion or misunderstanding. Secondly, I will consider the expansion of this observation to other fields of social and/or professional activity, and to the tools that have been conceived for taking them into account. I will then propose a definition of cultures of action. Finally, I will attempt to characterize their functioning and construction.

CULTURES OF EDUCATIVE ACTION

The work that my colleagues and I have carried out on educational tools and the discourses that accompany them, as well as the work by our laboratory, the Center for Research on Training of CNAM[1], have enabled us to note that it is possible to discover at work in contemporary situations different cultures of educative action with quite diverse historical and social anchorings. *We call educative action those actions that are specifically intended to provoke or promote in other subjects the occurrence of learning—that is, desired transformations of sequences or stable organizations of activities.* This intentional specificity seems to follow along three lines in particular, characterized by very different representations and discourses concerning the object–subject of educative action, the actors involved, its space–time, the relations between this space–time and the environment, and the modes of evolution of this space.

Teaching Cultures

Teaching cultures are unique in that they conceive of educative action as an activity in which teacher-subjects make knowledge available, paralleled by an activity of "appropriation" by student-subjects. The object/subject of educative action is conceived in terms of 'knowledge' (*savoirs*) and 'understanding' (*connaissances*).[2*] Knowledge consists in oral or written statements having a social existence distinct from those who utter or appropriate them—hence, the "making available" of knowledge. Understanding is their supposed complement in the subjects (persons) taught. Understanding is conceived of as a state and is supposed to be the product of the interiorization of knowledge. The actors concerned by such interventions are designated in terms of *teacher*, possessor and transmitter of knowledge, and *pupil* or student, recipient and potential acquirer. The space–time of the educative intervention is conceived as a space–time of *making knowledge available in an appropriable form*. The relations between this space–time and the environment are conceived in terms of conceptualization/application (theory/practice). The motor of change consists in the emergence of new knowledge.

Teaching cultures appear consistent, in the way they function, with more general cultures of action that distinguish and rank word, thought and action in a hierarchy—a highly structuring hierarchy of western thought and one which we see in the distinctions–oppositions–complementaries of theory/practice, conception/realization, and academic/professional. They are also echoed in the modes of organization of work and activity that are founded on the social distinction between conduct and performance. Knowledge and understanding belong, more generally, to the semantic zone of statements relating to values, rules, and norms, and more generally, to those statements that are the object of social value-making sanctioned by an activity of transmission-communication (formalized culture).

Training Cultures

Training cultures *conceive of educative action as an action of explicit linking, of combination, of articulation, between the activities of ´trainer´ subjects and those of ´trainee´ subjects, intended to produce in the trainees new capacities in view of enabling the transfer (i.e., use) of such capacities in other situations.*

The object/subject of educative action is thus the notion of *capacity*, usually defined as a *quality*, rather than a possession. A capacity would be an individual construct *(of which the learning subject would be the bearer) that is susceptible of being transformed*. It functions as a *potential corresponding to a class of activities*. The actors are the *trainer*, as *organizer of learning situations*, and the *trainee*, as the *subject of his/her own training*. The space–time of the intervention is conceived as a space–time of *transformation of capacities transferable* to other situations. The relations between this space–time and the environment are conceived in terms of *decontextualization–recontextualization*. The motor of change consists in the appearance of *new activities or new spheres of activities*, for which new capacities need to be produced.

The way training cultures function appears consistent with the way of thinking about human action which distinguishes and combines moments of activities ordered around the construction of subjects (training), and moments of activities ordered around the mobilization of subjects (production), as in "alternation" or "lifelong learning". They are echoed in the manners of organizing work that are founded on the importance of the management of action, on the distinction of "fields of action" exhibiting relative autonomy, and on the articulation of these fields. More generally, the capacities belong to the semantic zone of qualities, skills, and aptitudes obtained through construction–abstraction of the relations that the subjects maintain with their activities and in relative dissociation from their actual involvement in these same activities *in situ*.

Mentoring Cultures

These are unique in that they conceive of educative action as *a supplemental social activity added to the mentored subject's current activity in view of optimizing, simultaneously, the activity in which he/she is engaged and his/her own transformation as subject*. We sometimes speak of 'training integrated with activity', and when the activities in question are activities of work or production, 'training integrated with production or work'.

The object–subject of the educative intervention is often designated today under the terminological rubric of *competences*, where competences are *constructs that we infer to be present in subjects in light of their engaging in situated and targeted actions*. The constructs include the meaning that the activities take on for the subjects, as well as the significance they

attribute them. The actors concerned are the *'practician'* him/herself, and the *mentor* of his/her development. The space–time of the *transformation of the world* and that of *the transformation of subjects* are indistinct: The production of goods or services, or 'ordinary' activity, is organized as a space of 'development of competences' or of 'growth'. The relations between this space and the environment are conceived in terms of *mutual transformation*. The motor of change consists rather in *new combinations of activities that were previously disjoint* (unifying devices, integrative projects, 'polychronicity').

Mentoring cultures are functionally consistent with more general ways of viewing action that do not separate activities of world-transformation from the event of self-transformation, as in the approaches inspired by constructivism, for example. These are reflected today in the models of work and production belonging to the service economy. They make use of terminologies *emphasizing the designation of human subjects in relation to their engagement in action and particularly the notion of 'subject' itself*, in the social sense of subject of one's action.

There exist certain phenomena of misunderstanding between these three types of culture, and even power relations. At the same time, there is undeniable social pressure for their combination in the context of broader educational devises. We hypothesize that these cultures are not destined to eliminate one another, but to reconfigure their places in the 'architectures' that are continually evolving.

A MUCH BROADER OBSERVATION

The previous observation regarding the field of education can also be made regarding other various fields of activity. For example, regarding the field of the production and communication of knowledge, in which authors such as Michel Foucault and Thomas Kuhn are interested, we can make three observations.

First, *the very emergence of scientific activity as a specific action* seems to have come about through the gradual establishment in the mind of a relative autonomizing of the act of knowing and, in parallel, a distancing, an *objectification* of the world as object of knowledge. This way of thinking about the action of knowing is itself part of a *new way of thinking about human action* that *differentiates* human subjects and the world upon which they act, subject of intervention and object of intervention, subject and object. Correctly or incorrectly, many scientists locate the emergence of 'science' as a new kind of activity (as well as the emergence of the figure of 'scientist') at the turn of the 15th and 16th centuries—with thinkers such as Copernicus (who abandons, significantly, the anthropocentric hypothesis), Galileo, and Giordano Bruno, among others—and they locate the development of science from the 17th century. Gradually, science seems to

have become established as a unique domain of activity, presenting itself as a distancing from the world and as capable of revealing order in the world, particularly in the form of 'laws'.

Second, in the same manner, the later (quite structuralizing) *establishment of scientific disciplines* and hence of corresponding "communities" seems to be connected to a progressive establishing in the mind of a new way of managing actions of production and communication of knowledge through *specialization*. This was itself part of *a new representation of the organization of human activity associating specialization with efficiency and progress*, as we also see in the *development of the division of labor in the domain of economic production*. The study of the founding discourses of these disciplines and of the early discussions regarding their delineation is a particularly interesting exercise for the purpose of illuminating their character as cultures of action. This is indeed linked to representational systems involving *a specific object and corresponding 'facts'* such as (in the social sciences) 'social facts', individual 'behaviors', 'discourses', etc., *of which it is hypothesized that they can be, at least provisionally, isolated as objects of thought*; *a specific 'figure of actor'*—in place of 'the scientist' we now have 'the' physician, 'the' chemist, 'the' biologist, 'the' sociologist, 'the' psychologist, or 'the' linguist; *rules for the production of results[3] or specific methods* controlled by specialized communities—rules that are more or less explicit in their formulations, but often implicit in their foundations, as in the majority of professional communities (Cru, 1986, p. 41); and *detailed rules for the interpretation of results* obtained.

Third, *the development* (within and across all of these disciplines) *of epistemological postures* to which the researchers subscribe—having multiple effects on the design and conduct of their activities—also seems to be related to broader ways of thinking and managing the links between knowledge–production and world–transformation. It is quite significant, for example, to observe the profound similarities between the epistemological postures present in the domain of the so-called 'exact' sciences and those in the domain of the social sciences. In the case of quantum mechanics, chaos theory or system dynamics on one hand and the constructivist schools of social science or those involving clinical or situated action on the other hand, we find the same recourse to the notion of interaction[4] to refer to objects; the same recourse to history for contextualizing these objects (the 'arrow of time' in the case of the 'sciences'); the same transformation of causal models to account for the "irreversible" (Prigogine, 1994); the same appreciation for the notion of construction; the same recourse to the notions of possibility, probability, or instability; the same types of concepts such as trajectory, evolutionary operator, sensitivity to initial conditions, etc. In many cases, these epistemological orientations prove to be related quite directly to different ways of 'situating' the scientific action in relation to the task of transforming the world.

Along an entirely different line of thought, in his celebrated text entitled *Gothic Architecture and Scholastic Thought* (1951/1967), Erwin Panofsky

looks at *the links between architectural and theological thought* and attempts to characterize the "new style of thought and the new style of architecture" which seems to have appeared in the 12th century and flourished for at least a century and a half, having diffused throughout an area "comprised within a radius of one hundred and fifty kilometers from Paris" (p. 72). Beyond this, he also tries to capture the "new manner of perceiving, or rather of conceiving in function of the act of perception" (Panofsky, 1951/1967, p. 79) elaborated by 'the many masters of different nations'[5] who "would also transform the other arts".

Several concepts have been developed in order to take this phenomenon into account. E. Panofsky's goal (1951/1967), for example, is to update the concept of "*mental habit*[6]—bringing this old cliché back to its more precise scholastic meaning of 'principle that governs the act'[7], *principium importans ordineum ad actum*" (p. 83), mental habits being "at work in every civilization" (p. 83). These habits are usually unconscious and in all cases they are 'generators' of practice, which explains the interest that P. Bourdieu has shown them in his attempt to define the concept of *habitus* (Doise, 1985)[8]. In *Words and Objects* (1966/2004) and *Archeology of Knowledge* (1969/2004) Michel Foucault seeks to update epistemes: "By episteme we mean *the totality of relations*[9] that may unite, in a given epoch, the discursive practices that give rise to epistemological figures, to sciences, and possibly to formalized systems; the way in which (. . .) the passages operate (. . .)" (Foucault, 1969/2004, p. 250);

> the episteme is not a kind of big underlying theory, it is a space of dispersion; it is an open field and, undoubtedly, one of indefinitely describable relations . . . the episteme is not a slice of common history belonging to all the sciences, it is a simultaneous play of specific residuals . . . the episteme is not a general state of reason, it is a complex relation of successive shifts. (1968, pp. 676–677)[10]

Since Kuhn (1962/1991), the notion of *paradigm* is used to take into account these ways of constructing meaning in the field. *Paradigms are actually cultures of scientific action*. For Stengers,

> A paradigm is, first and foremost, practical. That which is transmitted is not a vision of reality, but a way of doing, a way not only of judging phenomena, but also of intervening (. . .) In brief, it is precisely because a paradigm should have the practical and operational power to invent action that it itself is not invented, at least not in the same sense. The invention of action is competent, debatable, clever, while the 'invention' of a paradigm happens, for Kuhn, like an event, creating its before and after. (1993/1995, pp. 60–62)[11]

Other enterprises of the same nature, exhibiting variable degrees of formalization, can also be mentioned. Two examples are the work undertaken

by Max Weber on *The Protestant Ethic and the* Spirit[12] *of Capitalism* (1904–1905/1964), and his concept of elective affinities (Wahlverwandschaft); and more recently, the original and confusing work of Douglas Hofstadter, *Gödel, Escher, Bach: An Eternal Golden Braid* (1979/1987)[13], on the affinities or similarities observable between human activities arising in different contexts. Hofstadter examines in particular the modes of self-reference and play occurring between different levels (the 'strange loops') that can be detected in the works of the musician, as well as the designer and the mathematician.

CULTURES OF PROFESSIONAL ACTION

The previous list is not exhaustive; the different examples merely serve to clarify my position. Engaged as much in research (analysis of training and, more broadly, professional activities) as in training (of professionals and of researchers-in-training) in the professional world, I am indeed constantly faced with different manifestations of what might be called *the professional intellectual life*: discourses and verbalizations of subjects in and about their activities; constructions of meaning and of significations; conception, conducting, and evaluation of actions; stories of practice; models of action; values, norms, and rules; knowledge and especially knowledge of action; techniques and procedures, etc. I would like to note three phenomena in particular concerning this field:

First, the strong presence, in a given situation, of *invariants in the discourses* held by very different individuals concerning *the conception and performance of professional actions* and, more generally, concerning the management of actions—demonstrated, for example, by the common use, in the most varied contexts, of the terminology of rational action or the objective of evaluation. These patterns are presented as 'axiomatic' of thought.

Secondly, the similarity of various proposed formal *models of action* which, despite variations in form, are based on largely similar references: for example, the primacy given today to reference to the activity of the subject ('the subjective injunction'), observable in both models of the organization of work and production (participation of employees in the management of production processes in which they are engaged) and in models of training (primary emphasis on the learner).

Finally, the frequent *confusion* occurring in both analyses and research *between activities and utterances about activities*: A great number of studies and analyses carried out on professional activity access nothing more than utterances about activities, and that which is presented as 'practice' is nothing more than the reports that subjects give of their own activities, reports collected in conditions such that they tend to take on the existing dominant categories, and such that the analysis of these verbalizations, far from

functioning as an analysis of activities, amounts to nothing but the *painting of cultures* in which the actors conceive of and conduct their actions.

To designate this phenomenon, it thus appears to me to be necessary to speak of cultures of professional action: cultures of educative action, cultures of social action, cultures of therapeutic action, cultures of management action, cultures of 'cultural action', etc. The present hypothesis is that in the emergence and development of these cultures of professional action 'mental habits' (Panofsky, 1951/1967) or 'folds/contours of reason' (Jullien, 1996) are at play, self-evidences acquired and shared by all people in a given situation or at a given conjuncture, which resemble, mutatis mutandis, the mechanisms at play in the large groups of people previously mentioned. We can speak more generally of cultures of action, where these are seen as manners—or ways-in-action, common to a group of given subjects, of thinking of their actions, of conceiving of and carrying out their actions, and more generally of their constructing meaning around and attributing significance to their actions. The term action does not only (or at least not exclusively) refer to a direct transformation of the world, but refers much more generally, as we have defined elsewhere, to *a set of activities imparted a unity of meaning and/or significations by the subject or subjects who are engaged in them, within the framework of their interactions with other subjects.*

THE CONCEPT OF CULTURE OF ACTION

We therefore define a culture of action as a mode, *evolutive and shared by several subjects, of organizing constructions of meaning around the activities in which the subjects are engaged, where these constructions enable communication within the framework of the subjects' interactions with one another.*[14]

Let us take a closer look at each element of this definition:

A *mode*: *A mode can be defined as an inference drawn from invariants or observable regularities in the organization-in-action of activities*. It is an *inference*: The concept of culture of action is a *construct* built in order to take observables into account. This qualification is important because we see so frequently in the scientific milieu a tendency to *naturalize* concepts, that is, to consider those mental and discursive tools that the subject has built in order to take observables into account as realities 'external' to the subject. In the case of the concept of culture, the consequences can be particularly prejudicial. *Drawn from observable regularities*: The point of departure for an approach of cultures is primarily the invariants that can be observed in these constructions, rather than the variety of constructs. *In the organizations-in-action of activities*: F. Jullien speaks of 'folds/contours of reason', and E. Panofsky of 'mental habits'. The fact that it concerns mental activities does not detract from the interest of *modus operandi*: modus operandi does not imply consciousness on the part of the subject, even if

it does not exclude it; mental habits are often unconscious, forgotten, or repressed at the level of the subject or group to which the subject belongs (as we can well see in the example of our having forgotten the origin of the construction of words). Cultures of action largely involve, according to F. Jullien's formulation, 'unthoughts'—unconscious or buried processes—all the more interesting because they regard unthought thought.

Shared by several: Shared does not mean collective. The qualification is important today as great pressure is applied by the heads of organizations on their members that they all construct the same meanings and give the same significance to collective actions and to that which each can contribute (especially thanks to activities of coordination), all with the goal of inculcating representations of collective identities . . . Research and observations lead us to identify *similar cultures of action in very disperse subjects, though they may belong to a common large group*—"the many masters of different nations", as Panofsky quotes Suger. The great consistencies identified across space and through time in Chinese thought as well as in European thought (F. Jullien) illustrate this even better. 'Many' can be understood here both in the sense of vast groups of people as well as restricted groups, without thereby referring to collective action. In either case, we are in the presence of shared processes and not joint or collective processes: today, the analysis of activities frequently employs the notion of shared representations.[15]

Subjects: There is no culture that is not borne by human subjects. In this sense, it is important to distinguish between what were once called 'works' of human activity, considered as 'manifestations' of culture (whereas culture is nothing more than an inference from these works), and *that which the works are supposed to imply about the subjects who accomplish them*, which is the culture itself. I emphasize this point because most definitions of culture in the scientific literature of intention conflate the two. Such is the case, for example, in the first 'ethnological' definition of culture (significantly related to that of civilization) by the British anthropologist Tylor: "Culture or civilization, in the broadest ethnological sense, is the whole complex which includes knowledge, beliefs, art, morals, law, customs and other capacities and habits acquired by man as a member of society" (1871, p. 1). It is also the case in Levi-Strauss's proposed definition: "Each culture can be considered as a set of symbolic rules the foremost of which are language, marriage customs, economic relations, arts, science, and religion" (1962, p. XIX). Moles, perhaps more precisely, says that "the trace left by this artificial milieu in the mind of each man is that which we call culture" (1967, p. 19), which he defines as

> "the intellectual aspect of the artificial milieu that man creates in the course of his social life. It is the abstract element of his Umwelt (. . .). The term culture covers the totality of intellectual aspects present in a given mind or in a group of minds and possesses a certain stability, *materialized* [emphasis added] in his/their libraries, repertoires and languages" (1967, pp. 67–68).

Our hypothesis is that the relative vagueness[16] that characterizes the definition of culture is precisely related to the fact that works carry the 'trace' of cultures, they constitute its 'manifestation'; this helps us to understand the extensions of the use of the word. In fact, works allow us to infer processes present in subjects—they do not replace them.

An evolutive mode: To say of culture that it is inseparable from human subjects, and to suggest that it refers to their relations to their environment(s), obviously leads to the question of culture's construction and evolution. While cultures are probably *temporary or more sustainable stabilizations of processes*, they are generated by activities and contribute to generating activities. In his work, Edgar Morin frequently gives[17] a simple definition of culture as 'that which is not hereditary'. For Linton, culture is "the configuration of learned elements and their results, the composing elements of which are shared and transmitted by members of a given society" (1988, pp. 33–34). Although the word transmission is not always precise, cultures and learning are in fact very closely related, inasmuch as we want to give learning the sense of a transformation of a stable sequence of activities. It is no coincidence that the term 'culture' comes from the Latin *colere*, which means to develop, and that it is often linked to the term 'education' in its broadest sense. We will discuss this point in more detail when we examine the construction of cultures of action.

The organization of constructions of meaning around the activities in which they are engaged: This is of course the essential aspect of our definition. *If meaning can indeed be defined as an association made by a single subject between representations issuing from an ongoing activity and other representations issuing from his personal history*, then we are led to observe that human subjects, all the while throughout their activities, unceasingly make such constructions, where these constructions concern the environment of the activities and their organization and execution, as well as the subjects themselves as acting subjects, and other subjects with whom they are interacting.

In his attempt to create a cultural psychology, Bruner gives a major place to these constructions of meaning. He writes,

> The individual expression of culture is the elaboration of the signification which *assigns a meaning to things according to different dispositions and in the given circumstances* [emphasis added]. To create significations we must situate our encounters with the world in their appropriate cultural contexts in order to know 'what is going on'. Although these significations are installed 'in the mind', they have their origin and acceptation in the culture in which they are created. It is because the significations are culturally *situated* [emphasis added] that they can be negotiated and, ultimately, communicated (. . .). From this point of view, knowledge and communication are highly interdependent

by nature, and even virtually inseparable. Although the individual seems to carry out his quest for meaning on his own, nothing can be achieved without the aid of the symbolic systems of culture. It is culture that gives us the tools that allow us to organize and understand the world around us in communicable terms. (1996, p. 17)

Constructions of meaning are mental constructions, which explains their extremely mobile and difficult-to-access character as well as their relation to that which we call mentalities—object of interest to historians of the "Annales" School[18] and to ethnologists such as Levy-Bruhl (1910, 1922/1960). Constructions of meaning are not separable from discursive constructions made in the context of interactions with others, which support and transform them; however, we must *not confuse these communications where constructions of meaning occur with those communications whose object is the manifestation of these constructions of meaning, of which culture is a part in the sense of being an autonomous social domain of activity* (to be addressed later). These constructions of meaning are not mere mental constructions; they are directly linked to the emotions and dispositions of subjects who engage in the activities (as in P. Bourdieu's *habitus*). This perspective clarifies the space given in the scientific literature on culture to the affirmation of culture's 'dynamic force' and to its connection with 'attitudes'.

We therefore hypothesize that *cultures of action may be defined as modes according to which these activities of the construction of meaning are organized*. This character becomes particularly clear in the case of phenomena of acculturation, which Herskovits (1948/1952) described as processes of *re-interpretation*, that is, processes through which old meanings are attributed to new elements or by which new values change the cultural signification of old forms.

These constructions are able to give rise to communication within the framework of subjects' interactions with other subjects or groups of subjects. In his work, *Culture in the Social Sciences* (1996/1998, p. 7), Denys Cuche observes "that the word 'culture' has no equivalent in the majority of oral-language societies usually studied by ethnologists" and he comments: "This obviously does not imply (even though this view is not universally shared!) that these societies have no culture, but rather that they do not raise the question of whether or not they have a culture and even less that of defining their own culture." We hypothesize that *the word culture in its most frequent social use* (the domain of culture) appears *in situations of interaction the occasion of which there is manifest a particular issue or need for communicating to one another*, through various means of expression, constructions of meaning made by subjects or groups of subjects. Then we have an opening up of activities or sectors of activity having social significance and an autonomous status: in the traditional sense, the area of the arts, letters, and sciences; in the modern sense, all production, distribution, and consumption of intellectual products.

FUNCTIONING AND CONSTRUCTION OF CULTURES OF ACTION

Regardless of the scale and scope of different cultures of action, we hypothesize that they all have the following characteristics:

They function as connections, as associations, that are temporarily or more permanently stabilized.

" . . . we will define culture," writes Moles,

> by the sum of the probabilities of *associations* [emphasis added] of any kind existing between elements of knowledge[19*], and we will distinguish cultures as *broad* where the elements of knowledge are present in large numbers, and as *deep* where the relations between the elements of knowledge are frequent and strong. (1967, p. 36)

Foucault makes frequent use of the notion of relation.

This brings the notion of culture of action closer to other notions in use in the social sciences: the notion of *topos*, employed in particular by Ducrot and defined as a general principle underlying an argumentative sequence presented in a discourse, "the guarantor which allows the passage from argument A to conclusion C" (Anscombre, 1995, p. 85); the notion of *mental pattern/scheme*, used in psychology; or the notion of *type or scheme of experience used in the comprehensive sociology of A. Schutz* (1932/1974, p. 109). Cultures of action can be defined as sets of topoi, of mental patterns, of patterns of experience, or of types.

We can observe that the notion of an association or relation that is able to be mobilized by a subject is at the heart of the majority of concepts constructed to take into account the engagement of human subjects in their activities—notions of *habitus*, scheme, pattern, script, montage, etc. The concepts of culture, mental habit or mental pattern, and topos emphasize the mental aspect of these associations. This does not mean, however, that these concepts discount the possibility that the associations involve other elements. Such broader associations are in fact probable, if only to explain what happens at the link of sensation and perception.

To access these links, which may take the form of *whole systems of relations*, Moles prefers content analysis of discourse—an important route, yet still indirect. Foucault's recommendation that we focus on discursive formations is not fundamentally different, although it is true that the actions with which he is primarily concerned are the production and dissemination of knowledge, themselves largely discursive. He writes,

> In the case where we could describe, between a certain number of statements, a (. . .) system of dispersion—where between the objects, types of utterance, concepts, and thematic choices, one might define a regularity (an order, correlations, positions and functionings, transformations)—we would say by convention that we are dealing with a *discursive formation* (. . .) we would call the conditions to which the elements of this division

(objects, methods of statements, concepts, thematic choices) are subject the *rules of formation* (1969/2004, p. 53).

The analysis of discourse—which, contrary to the analysis of content, focuses on the very relation that subjects have to their discourse—is certainly an interesting method within this approach.

These relations or associations are "held as true" by the subjects.

This is a crucial point. F. Jullien frequently resorts to the notion of self-evidence, or obviousness. John Dewey made the search for "guaranteed assertions" an important aspect of "investigations" (1993) conducted by subjects in a situation, allowing them to act. For Ducrot (Anscombre, 1995, p. 86), the topoi are "beliefs presented as common to a certain collectivity that includes at least the speaker and his partner in discourse, who are supposed to share this belief even prior to the discourse in which it is operative". For Schutz (1932/1974, p. 109), "types are patterns of experience. They function as givens, in the way of the obvious." For T. Kuhn, the 'paradigms' of scientific activity are "rules accepted and internalized as 'norms' by the scientific community at some point in its history to delineate the 'facts' it deems worthy of study". More recently, G. Vergnaud speaks in more visual terms of *'theorems in action'*, to emphasize the force with which subjects may apply interpretive tools in action. And we recall that Goffman said that W. James, "rather than questioning the nature of reality, (. . .) proceeds with a phenomenological reversal and subversively poses the question: 'under which circumstances do we think that things are real?'" (1974/1991, p. 10).

We thus have a phenomenon of *assent*, analyzable in terms of belief—belief in the strength, durability, or self-evidence of these links and associations, in their correspondence to external "reality", to that which would allow one to act. The judgment of "truth" can only be considered as the affirmation of a correspondence between representations or systems of representation and the "realities" supposedly represented . . . As R. Polin (1944, p. 80) remarked, "the truth of a judgment does not depend on the judgment, but on the affirmation of its truth." Mr. Duchamp expressed this in a more literary manner when he wrote, "I like the word 'believe'. In general, when we say 'I know', we don't know, we believe" (1975, p. 185).

This phenomenon of subjects' assenting is probably at the origin of what is often called *the logic of action*, a term which, far from denoting something internal to an action, applies to the *relation that subjects have to their actions*. The logic is sometimes defined as a set of principles that structuralize more or less consciously the manner of knowing the reality in question and, consequently, the manner of acting upon it.

These links, these associations, present to the subjects as 'possibles' that can be mobilized in the activities of constructing meanings.

"Thought," writes A. Moles

> is an active process, distinct from culture, but which uses culture to make original constructions. We create new ideas from the elements

of old ones, from previously existing words or forms, from atoms of
knowledge, in general from culture made available by our culture . . .
Culture . . . is the possibility of action . . . (1967, pp. 68, 310)

To describe this active process of thought, C. Levi-Strauss employs in regard
to mythic thought the term *bricolage,* which may be used to account for
any process of construction-reconstruction of meaning[20], and the term of
pre-constraint: "As constitutive units of myth, the possible combinations of
which are limited by the fact that they are borrowed from language where
they already possess a meaning that restricts maneuverability, the elements
that the bricoleur collects and uses are 'pre-constrained' " (1962, p. 29);
"Mythical thought (. . .) works by way of analogies and associations,
even though, as in the case of bricolage, his creations always come down
to a new arrangement of elements whose nature is not modified by their
occurring in the instrumental whole or in the final design" (p. 31). He cites
Boas[21] (1898, p. 18): "It looks like the mythological universes are destined
to be dismantled when just barely formed, so that new universes are born
from their fragments," adding, however, an additional decisive remark that
"in this ceaseless reconstruction with the help of the same materials, it is
always the old ends that are called upon to play the role of means—the sig-
nified changing to signifiers, and vice versa" (p. 31). But he also recalls that
the conceptual systems he studies "are not (or are at least only secondarily)
means of communicating; they are *means of thinking* [emphasis added], an
activity for which the conditions are much less stringent" (p. 90).

 What holds for interpretation and for activities of constructing mean-
ing also holds for communication and discursive activities: in his work on
lexical signification, O. Galatanu speaks of the 'quantum world' of lexical
signification and employs the concept of 'argumentative possibles': lexical
signification would be

> the association of the stereotype, durably associated with the word and
> making up part of its signification, traditionally called 'descriptive',
> with other semantic representations (or stereotypes associated with
> other words), thus forming the possible arguments from which (the
> discourse) selects one to deploy in the environment that the discourse
> constructs for each utterative occurrence. (1999, p. 48)

Broadly speaking, the notion of possibles, close to quantum epistemology,
can be linked to the notions of *configuration and reconfiguration*, definable
as *singular organizations or reorganizations of regular forms*. It is likely
that *all activities function, in fact, as reconfigurations or reconstructions,
or at least can be analyzed as such.*

 *In the work of constructing meaning, these links or associations are
connected with the representations originating in the current experience
of the subjects, which they 'interpret'. They transform themselves possibly
at this time.*

Several types of work can be useful here. First, we have the work of A. Schutz and of those he has inspired on 'social typification'. "Interpretation," he writes, "(. . .) is nothing other than referring the unknown back to the known, that which is apprehended in the radius of attention to patterns of experience" (1932/1974, p. 112). The typification is indexed to the "biographically determined situation" of the actor in question. For D. Cefai, looking at this mechanism,

> the synthesis of identification and recognition involves an apperceptive transfer of phenomenal configurations being temporalized by the actor to other phenomenal configurations encountered in the past. This apperception is achieved through the 'awakening' or recollection of sedimentary experiences through passive syntheses of congruence and recovery—again called syntheses of associations, coupling, pairing or *apprésentation*. (1994, p. 109)

Second, there is the work of E. Goffmann on 'frameworks of experience', according to whom,

> any definition of situation is constructed according to the organizational principles that structure the events—at least those that have a social character—and our own subjective engagement. The term 'framework' refers to these basic elements. The expression 'analysis of frameworks' is, from this point of view, a watchword for the study of the organization of experience. (1974/1991, p. 19)

Finally, we have the works of ergonomic psychology or of activity-analysis (e.g., Rosch, 1999; Theureau, 1992; Durand, 2006; Zeitler, forthcoming) on the processes of *construction/reconstruction of types* through emergence, strengthening or weakening, case generalization, abductive inference, induction, deduction, etc. . . .

For A. Moles, "Individual culture is the mental canvas of knowledge [connaissances] upon which the individual projects stimuli—messages he/she receives from the outside world to build perceptions, that is, forms apprehended as a whole that can be symbolized by names or signs" (1967, p. 68).

These links or associations influence the constructions of meanings concerning the environment of activities, the activities themselves, as well as the subjects engaged in these activities.

This is manifest in particular by a high degree of consistency or *coherence between the manners of perceiving, conceiving and acting in situ*, and by *unity of occurrence and transformation of constructions relative to a situation (setting, affordance), of constructions relative to the carrying-out of actions (intentionalities), and of constructions of identity representations (subjectivities, intersubjectivities)*. This coherence and solidarity can be apprehended precisely in terms of shared modes and of cultures of action.

These links and associations are 'manufactured' in subjects during several types of 'experiences'.

Experiences of 'doing': Engagement in previous activities in the same field experienced precisely as such 'experiences', during which the subject hypothesized certain links or associations which were subsequently found to be confirmed. In this sense, as de Certeau indicates, "culture is manufactured daily, in every-day mundane activities" (1990/2004, pp. 13–30).

Experiences of *'communicating while doing'*: Communications between subjects during the carrying out of activities—whether they occur by discursive means or otherwise—are bearers of such links and associations. *Language* in particular plays a very important role, often having the function of *signifying* them (the links and associations). This is what leads de Certeau to say,

> We are subject to, although not identified with, ordinary language. As upon a ship of fools we are embarked, with no possibility of gaining outside or total perspective. This is the 'prose of the world' that Merleau-Ponty spoke about. It envelopes all discourse, even though human experience is not limited to that which can be said. (1990/2004, p. 26)

For A. Schutz,

> Language is a system of typifying patterns of experience based on idealization and anonymization of immediate subjective experience. These typifications of experience detached from subjectivity are socially objectified, by which they become a component of the *social a priori* previously given to the subject. For the person growing up normally in the natural attitude, the typification is thus strongly intertwined with language. (1932/1974, p. 282)

Experiences of specific *communications about these associations and types, which is the function, in particular, of teaching*, to which is given the role of formal transmission of statements regarding a part of the culture: For P. Bourdieu,

> in a society where the transmission of culture is monopolized by one school, the profound affinities uniting human works (and, of course, behavior and thought) originate in the educational institution invested with the function of transmitting consciously—and also to some extent, unconsciously—that which is unconscious or, more accurately, of producing individuals with this system of unconscious (or deeply buried) patterns which constitutes their culture, or better, their habitus . . . (1967, pp. 147–148)

Finally, experience *of actions that are explicitly intended to 'develop' these links and associations: reflection, research, spiritual experiences, etc.*

These links and associations are the object of a process of interiorization, of incorporation. This does not prevent their transformations, which probably occur in stages.

This mechanism of interiorization is of course at work in learning[22] and in the construction of subjects in general, but, for our interests here, it particularly concerns those links and associations relating to the mental register, and it can explain their being "forgotten" or their being banished to the nonconscious, which can increase the efficacy of their mobilization in situ.

Ethos, another construct for taking these mechanisms into account, is defined by de M. de Coster and F. Pichault as the "stock of significations interiorized by an actor" (1998, p. 68).

CONCLUSION

It is clear that many of the characteristics of cultures of action cover the same characteristics usually attributed to social representations: For example, their being shared, their constant transformations, their links with action and with communications that accompany action, their 'self-evidence' or 'obviousness' for the subjects who share them, and particularly, their connection with the subjects' histories. Cultures of action and social representations are compatible and complementary. Perhaps the concept of culture of action allows one to combine the problem of social representations with the problem of the joint construction of subjects and activities, which is of great importance for training and for the construction of professional and social identities. It permits us to relate the organization of social representations, the organization of spaces of activity, and the trajectory of subjects in the spaces of activity. While it is likely that *in a given area of activity* a subject may participate in *only one single culture of action*, it is also likely that because of his/her history and the diversity of areas of activity in which he/she finds him/herself involved, a single subject might participate in many cultures of action (cf. the notion of cognitive 'polyphasy' in Moscovici, 1994). Some of these cultures of action may appear from an external point of view to be contradictory: They are not experienced as such by the subject as he or she passes from one area to another. Paradoxically, given the possibly contradictory social constraints to be found in various different areas, cultures of action assure, to the contrary, the overall coherence of the subject's personality.

NOTES

1. Conservatoire National des Arts et Métiers
2. *Translator's note: The literal translation of the French 'savoirs' and 'connaissances' would be 'knowledge' in both cases. They have been translated

here as 'knowledge' and 'understanding' in order to render the desired distinction. Although perhaps not entirely satisfactory, these terms have been chosen because knowledge, in at least one sense of the English term, can be conceived as something existing outside of the mind (i.e., something that can be made available), whereas 'understanding' necessarily occurs in the mind (i.e., though a subject's appropriating, or internalizing and incorporating knowledge).

3. For Michel Foucault, "discipline is a principle of controlling the production of discourse. It sets limits by means of a *jeu d'identité* which has the form of a permanent updating of the rules" (1971, p. 37). (Our translation.)

4. The notion of interaction can be used to refer to the relation between two or more things simultaneously engaged in a process of transformation.

5. The expression is Abbey Suger's: 'des nombreux maîtres de différents nations'.

6 My emphasis.

7. In the case of an act of thought.

8. P. Bourdieu speaks himself, in his Postscript to Panofsky (1967, p. 148), of transformation of "the collective heritage in individual and collective unconsciousness".

9. My emphasis.

10. *Translator´s note: All translations of Foucault appearing in this chapter are unofficial (i.e., my own).

11. *Translator's note: unofficial translation.

12. My emphasis.

13. French title: *Gödel, Escher, Bach: les Brins d'une Guirlande Eternelle*

14. Culture of activity can be defined in parallel as a mode, evolutive and shared by several subjects, of organizing activities themselves, that is, the processes of transformation of the world and thus the transformation of the activities themselves in which the subjects are engaged.

15. In the area of management, M. Thevenet speaks of 'shared self-evidence(s) in business' (1983).

16. B. Malinowski's approach, in his work entitled A Scientific Theory of Culture (1944/1970, p. 39) is characteristic: " . . . the best objective description we can give of a culture consists in identifying and analyzing all of the institutions of which it is composed".

17. The CNRS Meetings. Sciences and Citizens. What Does Science Contribute to Culture? 1997.

18. The history of 'mentalities'.

19. *Translator's note: Here, the French 'connaissance' is translated as 'knowledge'.

20. And probably also for any activity that is not subject to a prescriptive algorithm.

21. Boas, F. (1898). Introduction to: James Teit, Traditions of the Thomson River Indians of British Colombia. *Memoirs of the American Folklore Society*, 6.

22. For Dewey, we learn only by doing.

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Part II

Education and Professional Formation

8 The Theory of Social Representations as a Theoretical and Methodological Tool for Research on Teachers in Brazil

Analyses of Theses and Dissertations

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INTRODUCTION

This chapter originated in an incitement made by Denise Jodelet and in questions raised in a previous study on research about the theory of social representation and education presented in congresses (Menin & Shimizu, 2005).

Jodelet, in one of our first meetings to form the Social Representations, Education and Professional Education Group in 2004 in Paris, called our attention to the number of studies on education and teacher education in Brazil and she said that it would be interesting and opportune to analyze the results of so many years of research on social representation, mainly in the area of teacher education, to verify how the theory of social representation has contributed to the professional education field: Specifically, what have been its most consistent contributions to education, to the education of teachers, or to teachers' representations of the elements of their teaching?

At the time, we had just analyzed the papers published for the Education and Social Representations Congresses (ANPED, JIRS, CIRS)[2] held from 2000 through 2003 which used the theory of social representation to answer questions in the area of education (Menin & Shimizu, 2005). In that study, in which 138 papers were analyzed, we raised some questions and considerations regarding the quality of use of the theory of social representation in many of the Brazilian studies on education. We verified, as other authors did (Sousa, 2002; Arruda, 2005), that the theory has been extremely useful for elucidating the relations between practical knowledge and performance of roles and functions at school and ideological, political, and pedagogical issues in the field of education. We identified (Menin & Shimizu, 2005), however, some problems—methodological and other—connected with the superficiality of the investigations, such as: Few studies check the anchoring of representations, since they describe the representations more than they

explore their origins; few comparisons are made between scientific knowledge and common sense; as regards the kinds of analyses being done, the studies tend to prioritize description and classification obtained through questionnaires and interviews rather carrying out structural analyses; the subjects in the investigations are often mischaracterized; the anchoring of representations in pertinent factors or cultural history of the groups is not sufficiently investigated; the studies lack perspectives of more anthropological and sociological analyses which explore the relevance of group, social and cultural experiences with regard to the representations; there are few studies investigating the transformation of social representations, both the ones that historically happen in function of cultural or political factors, or the ones brought about by specific situations of training or education; the relations between representations and practice are often merely inferred and presented as hypotheses which are then discussed rather than directly investigated; few studies analyze the broadcasting of representations by the media, despite the great importance of such means of communication in the construction of representations (Moscovici, 1961/1978); and, finally, we have seen that, although most papers use very simple methods of data analysis (description, classification, quantification of representations), some studies on social representations are carrying out content analysis using newly created and innovative software.

Thus, although the research on social representations in education is one of the most prolific fields in Brazil, as shown by Arruda (2005), its quality in terms of depth or methodological rigor does not necessarily match its quantity. Therefore, we think this is an interesting moment to carry out a critical synthesis by examining the existing studies and investigating their methodological tendencies and their main contributions to a field that is of great interest to us: teacher education.

The purpose of this study is to analyze theses and dissertations on education and social representations that have a specific focus on representations of or about the teacher. We intend to investigate how these studies are theoretically and methodologically organized for the use of social representation theory as a theoretical reference and investigation tool. We also wish to emphasize the contributions of such studies to the field of education.

METHODOLOGY

Doctoral dissertations and master's theses defended in 2004 in Brazilian graduate programs in education accredited by Capes[3] were chosen for analysis. We selected 29 theses and dissertations, from different Brazilian universities from several states in the country, that used the theory of social representation to study social representations of or about the teacher as a professional. Of these, 2 have not been located; therefore, 27 studies have been analyzed—4 doctoral dissertations and 23 master's theses.

The theses and dissertations were read in full and analyzed according to the criteria established by the group of researchers taking part in this investigation.

The criteria established by the group for the analysis referred to: choice of representation object to be investigated; pertinence of the object investigated to the set of subjects; choice and description of the subjects taking part in the research; review of the relevance of references with regard to the authors' exposition of social representation theory concepts; description and pertinence of data collection procedures; exposition and coherence of the procedures of analyses; and indication of the main contributions of the study to the theory of social representation and to education.

RESULTS

The Studies' Themes, and Identifying the Objects Defined in the Studies

The 27 studies identified as teacher's representations were focusing on themes such: teacher's education; teacher's professional identity; the contents taught at school; the students; and the relational processes in the educational context.

One of the first questions we raised when analyzing the studies was whether the object chosen within the theme proposed is in fact a true object of representation. As Sá (1998) points out, many times what the researcher considers to be a research object or social representation object is relevant for the researcher, but not for the subjects. Moscovici (1961/1978) has shown since the beginning of his investigations that a social representation object must be an object of relevance and social "strength" for a group of subjects in order to provoke the construction of representations around it. We have questioned whether the variables defining the group of subjects account for the object chosen for the investigation or whether the object is, rather, a theoretical construction.

In most of the works analyzed we verified that the objects of choice are objects of representation for the research subjects: "teacher's identity", "evaluation", "pedagogy program", "sexuality", "struggle for land", "function of the teacher and the child education institution", "initial education in mathematics", "violence in the school setting", "Paulo Freire's pedagogical conceptions", "pre-adolescents"; "gender and teaching", "information technology in education", "profession and professionalization", "patrimonial education", "the school of the past, the present and the future", "the environment and environmental education", and "good teacher". These are, without a doubt, objects that provoke homogeneous, common representations in the groups investigated. Beyond this, many of the studies make a theoretical construction of the object, historically recalling how it has been constituted.

Although the theses and dissertations make reference to the history and context of the objects of the representations to be studied, they seldom investigate the historical changes of such representations in the groups investigated. It seems that the theory of social representation is used by the researchers primarily for collecting data about an object's representation later on in their investigations, but not for clarifying the representation's nature, origin, construction, or transformation. Only a few studies show this concern.

The Participants in the Investigations

As Jodelet (1986) says, representations are always about someone or something and, as symbolic constructions, they carry the characteristics of the ones who make them. The studies analyzed focus on representations of or about teachers and the study participants were mostly teachers already working or students preparing to be teachers in various parts of the country.

Most of the studies provide a reasonable characterization of the participants of their investigation: they give information on age, gender, grades taught, length of teaching, kind of school, kind of function, etc. In general, the age range of the teachers taking part in the studies analyzed is broad, as well as is the range of length of teaching experience. The gender is mostly female. The schools taught at are usually public, in both municipal and state spheres, and many of the teachers participating have graduated from or are students in pedagogy programs, higher teacher education programs or other higher education programs.

Despite these descriptions, the studies still lack data that more completely characterize the participants as a group constituent of social representations. In most of the studies, the mere fact that the participants share the same profession seems to have been considered a sufficient condition for belonging to the same representation group. The studies seldom investigate other variables linking the participants. There isn't enough information describing the cultural and historical context in which the group is inserted, or what marks the subjects as belonging to that group.

In addition to this lack of information in the description of the research participants, the authors seldom mention the reasons that led them to choose the specific subjects with whom they are working. There are also very few comparative studies working with different groups' representations of the same object, although many of them compose their populations using different variables. It is important to point out, however, that some studies take care to delineate a statistically representative sample of the population.

The samples of subjects varied: there were 8 studies with 20 or fewer participants; 5 with more than 20 and fewer than 40 participants; 8 with more than 40 and fewer than 100 subjects; 3 with more than 100 and fewer

than 200 participants; 2 with more than 200 subjects; and 1 that did not specify the number of subjects.

Bibliographic Review

A good chapter introducing the theory of social representation was present in all of the theses and dissertations analyzed. Each presented the theory, introducing the basic concepts of the theory at its inception, with the great majority referring to Moscovici (1961/1978) and his studies on social representations of psychoanalysis. We tried to follow the movement of that chapter in the theses and dissertations by investigating which sources and authors were mentioned—whether they were current authors, whether Brazilian authors were used, and whether there was a study review of the theme investigated.

We verified that most of the chapters devoted to theoretical review follow the same movement, defining the main concepts of the theory (representation as symbolic construction, representation as social, anchoring, objectification, process analysis, and structural analysis) and most often mentioning the works of Moscovici, who is cited in 25 out of the 27 theses and dissertations analyzed. Other common citations were: Jodelet in 21 studies; Abric in 14; Gilly in eight; and Doise in 5. Some frequently cited Brazilian authors were: Sá in 16 works; Alves-Mazzotti in 15; Madeira in 12; Spink in 7; and Guareschi and Jovchelovitch in 6. Usually, no incompatibilities among the authors were to be found, once each concept was described separately. Most of the studies use primary sources of reference.

Although the theoretical review of the very basic concepts of the theory was often very well done, missing were reviews of already existing studies and research in social representation on the themes or objects being investigated. Taking into consideration the number of works produced in Brazil and published in congresses records, books, and journals, we can say that this is far from what one might wish. Some of the studies do not mention any such previous works, and in others, even though such review are mentioned they are not commented or analyzed. We have also verified—and we'll return to this point later on—that although the theory review chapters are often rather complete, they tend to be "forgotten" as the work develops, or only a small portion of the concepts described is recalled further in the data analysis and interpretation.

Procedures for Data Collection and Treatment

The data collection procedures most frequently used in the studies with or on teachers were interviews (22 of the 27 theses and dissertations analyzed) followed by questionnaires (16 of 27). Among these, 11 studies contained free association questions with induction words on themes such as 'evaluation', 'being a teacher', 'pedagogy program', 'settlements students'[4],

'mathematics', 'violence', 'teaching', 'learning' and 'information technology'. Six studies collected data through observation, 5 used focus groups, and 2 studies undertook document analysis. We noted that many studies used more than one procedure for collecting data.

By observing the most frequently used instruments, that is, the interview and the questionnaire, we verified that the most common way of treating the data from open-ended questions was to seek answer categories through more qualitative methods or content analyses. (One of the most cited authors in these cases was Bardin [1977].)

In all, 11 theses and dissertations use software such as *Trideux*, *Logiciel Alceste* and *Modalisa* to analyze the data.

The Data Analysis

Continuing the study of the dissertations and theses, we looked at the types of analyses carried out (categorical, speech, procedural, structural, or others), questioning whether they were done consistently; whether they presented proper inferences; how the theory of social representation was used, and how the expressions of the subjects were considered when analyzing the social representations and other points.

The analyses most frequently performed were speech, content, theme, categorical, and descriptive analyses. Seven studies used structural analyses. We found that many studies fell short of carrying out analyses to a depth suitable to research at the master's or doctoral level. As mentioned previously, although many studies present a good chapter on the theory of social representation, all too frequently the studies fail to refer back to these chapters when analyzing their results, except in a very limited or restricted manner, such as when verifying the central or peripheral elements of a representation. Other concepts of the theory are seldom present in the analyses, and the theory itself remains underexplored as the studies develop.

The Results Highlighted in the Studies Analyzed

Regarding the results of the theses and dissertations, we sought to verify what conclusions were mainly drawn by the authors and what kinds of contributions the studies generally made to social representation theory, to education, and to knowledge of the specific theme of social representations of and about the teacher. Our analysis revealed that the studies' conclusions constituted contributions that were more relevant to education, specifically concerning the teacher and his/her professional context, rather than to the theory of social representation itself. In our opinion, this is due to the fact that most of the studies we analyzed were master's theses that were developed within 2 to 3 years and, therefore, there was little time for deeper theoretical-epistemological reflection.

Focusing on the studies' contributions concerning representations of or about the teacher and his/her professional context, we sought to group the results in broad categories so as to verify what the studies reveal about the professionals' common (in the sense of more frequent and/or repeated in the studies) representations of:

- their profession (professionalization, being a teacher, one's identity);
- the institutions in which they work (day-care center or school);
- the education process (initial and continuing education);
- pedagogical and relational processes in their work at school;
- their students.

We mention in advance that we have only been able to make broad generalizations within these categories because there was a great diversity of themes in the 27 studies analyzed. Even so, this sufficed to show that the theory of social representation, even when used in a limited manner, is a powerful instrument for elucidating how professional teachers structure their professional universes.

Regarding the institution in which the teacher works, David's study (2004) on a community day-care center and Albuquerque da Silva's (2004) on the school in the present, the past, and the future, both reveal a far more positive view of the school in the past than in the present. The school of the past, in Albuquerque da Silva (2004) is seen as good, a place where students study and learn and where the family is present; the view of school in the present is loaded with negativity—the quality of teaching is poor and the family is absent; and the school of the future is represented around the objectification of information technology and physical structure. David's research (2004) explains the positive view of long-standing professionals of a day-care center, showing that such view was anchored in a feeling of belonging to the group that founded the institution.

From those studies that contributed to revealing what teachers think about their education, we mention Alimandro's study (2004) on Paulo Freire's pedagogical conceptions and the political dimensions of teachers education, and Costa's study (2004) on teachers entering continuing education and how this reflects in their practices. Alimandro (2004) verified that most teachers do not take part in union activities and that the political role of education is not clear for all teachers, although they affirm that they seek to guide the students towards a process of understanding reality and formation of critical thinking. Costa (2004) verified that teachers, when thinking critically about their continuing education, believe that changes in teaching occur in four domains: new representation of the ludic, new view of the student, new view of teachers' knowledge, and new sense regarding writing and the literacy process. The social representations of entering continuing education can be reconstructed along the education process and have a

positive impact on changing the social representation of pedagogical work and on the process of building a new professional identity.

As for those studies that investigated the pedagogical and relational processes, we verified that most of them show how much the social representations of the teachers are reflected in the way the contents taught at school are appropriated, and the studies suggest that such representations may guide teachers pedagogical practices. These studies also point out to the need for teacher education programs to utilize teachers' representations as a basis for formulating the programs, because the representations reveal the knowledge constructed by teachers and supposedly guide their everyday performance in the school place. Some examples are the works by Ferreira (2004) and Cavalcanti (2004). Ferreira (2004) studied educators' representations of the environment and environmental education and discussed how these representations are connected with classroom practice. According to the author, teachers in general came up with a simplistic and naïve view that doesn't take into account the macro-determinants of how human beings relate to the environment. Ferreira (2004) also emphasized that discussions about environmental issues—which must be taken up in very diverse school settings—depend more on teachers' representations about the environment and environmental education than on the existence of specific courses. With some exceptions, specific courses haven't contributed significantly to make environmental education effective in schools. In fact, specific courses can even work as one more means of fragmentation, hindering the study of the environment as a transverse topic and as a non-disciplinary, integrated, and complex discussion. According to the author, there is no lack of production and discussion about the environment. What are urgent are the democratization of what is produced and the expansion of the debate in teacher education, in schools, and in society. Cavalcanti (2004) studied to what extent teachers' social representations about teaching–learning interfere in the construction of their representations about information technology in education. The results showed that there are two kinds of representations about the teaching–learning process that especially influenced teachers' representations about information technology. Under the influence of representations of the teaching–learning process based on a traditional perspective, the computer is seen as a resource only, and the use of information technology as a useful tool to train skills and capacities. For teachers whose pedagogical conceptions are directed to constructivism, however, computer resources are represented as an efficient device to build new situations for meaningful teaching and learning for both teachers and students. Finally, the author emphasizes the need for teacher education to encourage a posture of critical reflection on the part of teachers about their work, based on modern conceptions of the teaching–learning process and the mediation of the use of information technology in education.

In the studies whose object was teachers' representations of their students in connection with specific themes and contexts, it is possible to note that the main aspects highlighted were: how the representations might be anchored in daily life experiences, in current social models or in scientific knowledge, and the possible influence of those representations in the teachers' relationships with their students and in their pedagogical practice. Coutinho's research (2004) on teachers' representations of public school students' representations of sexuality indicates that teachers' representations (what they think students think about sexuality) are anchored in traditional models that were constructed long ago and are still transmitted in society. The results show that teachers feel they are not well prepared to approach sexuality at school—and this coincides with what the students think about this matter. Furthermore, teachers believe that there are differences between what fifth and eighth graders want to know, that students have few sources of information about the issue, that boys have different representations than girls, and that students have little educational commitment to school. In another study, Ramos da Silva (2004) examined math teachers' representations about public school students and identified differences between what teachers think about public school students and private school students regarding math. They have a negative view of the public school student, saying that they have a poor chance of learning math. Rocha (2004) studied teacher's representations of students living in settlements and found that teachers who have personal links with landowners have more difficulty to articulate their social representations of their settlement students, whereas those who have links with the settlers idealize their students excessively. The author concludes by stating that there is a need for rethinking the limits of the dichotomies idealize/depreciate, rural/urban, emotion/cognition, theory/practice, and content/process in the education of teachers who deal with this new reality in Brazil.

Eight of the 27 studies analyzed were concerned with examining the social representations of teachers working at different school levels of being a teacher and of their professional identities, and these studies contributed to a better understanding of this theme. Of these, Costa e Silva's (2004) stands out. Examining representations of teachers' professional identities, the author concludes that the elaboration of teacher's identity is going through a crisis. This crisis has its origin in the historical and cultural moment, of "being" in the teaching profession and a new way of anchoring the social representations of the teacher's identity in accordance with this moment. Another study dealing with professional identity is Marujo's work (2004), which concludes that teachers see teaching as a profession, the model of which approaches the "trace model". As for teachers' professionalization, the author subdivides this into "professionality", or the internal process of professionalization, and "professionalism", the external process of professionalization. Teachers associate professionality with

the knowledge (contents) and experience they need to use in their activity, whereas professionism is related to the struggles teachers have to face for the recognition of the profession. Another example of results on teachers' professionalization and the constitution of their identity is provided in David (2004), who studied teachers in day-care centers and shows that the meaning of being a teacher changes according to the feeling of belonging to the group and the time lived. The past is understood as a time of enhancement, struggle and conquering, autonomy, and superiority in relation to the present; in the present, in the opinion of the subjects studied, being a teacher is associated with terms such as undervalued, tired, lacking complicity, and stimulus. The author further indicates that the situation of pre-school teachers is even more serious. In their case, not only does the community not accord them their real value, but in addition, the professional class itself and the public agencies such as the State Education Department see them as "second class" professionals or baby-sitters. In order to fight the feeling of "rejection" and to feel valued, pre-school teachers end up denying affectivity and exclude the concepts of "caring for" and "mothering" from their professional identities, thus creating a distance from their little students.

Finally, within this category comprising studies on social representations of "being a teacher", we would also like to mention Santos (2004). The author reaches the conclusion that social representations of the gender of teachers originate in the meanings attributed to being a woman, to teaching, and to being a woman teacher. Teaching is represented as an important, difficult, and undervalued socio-professional field, the demands of which go beyond the question of gender. In spite of this, the researcher identified the conservation of the idea of sexual roles and gender attributes in the research participants' speech. Being undervalued, in the eyes of the women teachers, is not due to the fact that the teaching profession is composed predominantly of women but is, rather, primarily determined by social and economic reality and by the quality of educational policies, especially those for the first years of elementary school. Thus, this study examines teachers' individual-social constructions of the teaching subject (themselves) and indicates shortcomings of the profession and professional accomplishments and purposes, with the focus on gender. It also emphasizes the importance of gender discussions in the initial and continuing teacher (both male and female) education process.

The studies analyzed show that being valued (or undervalued) seems to be a constant concern of these professionals. They also indicate that initial and continuing education programs should consider this aspect and provide in their curricula theoretical and practical knowledge which would allow teachers to safely and legitimately perform as an essential instrument for the development of society. In short, it seems to us that all studies analyzed are concerned with pointing out that teachers represent teachers as undervalued professionals who need special attention both from policies and pedagogical and educative practices.

CONCLUSIONS

The analyses carried out on the theses and dissertations on representations of or about teachers defended in 2004 in Brazilian post-graduate programs in education allowed us a certain critical view of this group of studies as a whole. This view indicated some lacks and deficiencies in the use of the theory of social representation as a theoretical-methodological reference. In a word, the theory is underused in the studies, being used to provide but one or another investigation or analysis instrument that is invariably separated from the rest of the study. The theory appears in these studies more as a tool to elect the data collection or analysis procedure of an aspect of the subject-matter rather than as a theoretical corpus inspiring hypotheses or analyses. We have the notion that social representation as a concept was transformed into an empirical investigation tool without deepening the theory as a whole. The authors related their conclusions strictly to their objects of study, rather than conceiving them under the theory of social representation as an epistemological basis for constructing knowledge. As we said earlier, perhaps this is due to the fact that most studies analyzed were master's theses developed within 2 or 3 years, with little time for deeper theoretical-epistemological reflection.

With the criteria we utilized it is possible to synthesize some of the strengths of the analyses: The subject-matter of the investigations and the choice of subjects of the theses and dissertations in the field of teacher education were pertinent and relevant; there was a historical contextualization of the representation objects studied, although it was not always referred back to in the interpretation of the data; we verified the use of mixed data collection procedures and a creative combination of data collection manners. Concerning this last topic, however, we also considered that the studies on social representations were predominantly descriptive and did not explore the explanatory potential of the theory with regard to many of its concepts.

Finally, after analyzing 27 studies on representations of or about teachers, how shall we answer Denise Jodelet's question concerning the knowledge that the theory of social representation has provided about the professional teacher in Brazil? We think that there are many results with different quality, nature, and realities, obtained with different media, subjects, and themes. The 27 studies alone have already provided some very interesting results.

We believe that this work must continue. In the last few years, new advances have occurred in the field of research on social representations and in data analysis techniques. Furthermore, the production of studies in the area of education has been increasing. An analysis more specifically directed to specific themes—such as a selection of all studies done in a certain year studying the representations teachers have about their own work or about their students or about their education—would allow us to

demonstrate whether we are able to construct a profile of the professional teacher through the representations revealed in those studies.

NOTES

1. The following researchers have helped in the construction of the criteria for the analysis and reading of the theses and dissertations in this investigation: Alda Judith Alves-Mazzotti, Margot Madeira and Tarso Mazzotti (Universidade Estácio de Sá—RJ); Ângela Martins, Clarilza Prado de Sousa, Marialva Tavares (Fundação Carlos Chagas); Vera Nigro de Souza Placco (Pontifícia Universidade Católica de São Paulo); Alessandra M. Shimizu, Claudia M. Lima and Maria Suzana S. Menin (Universidade Estadual Paulista). The participants of this research are the members of the Brazilian sub-group of the "Social Representations, Educations and Professional Formations" International Group coordinated by Prof. Mohamed Chaib, Ph.D., of the University of Jönköping, Sweden. We have also had the help of Helenice Maia, Lúcia Velloso Maurício (Universidade Estácio de Sá—RJ) and Juliana Zechi (UNESP) in the analysis of dissertations and theses. The research is part of the initiatives of the CIERS—ED—International Center for Studies on Social Representations and Subjectivity—Education, of the Fundação Carlos Chagas, directed by Clarilza Prado de Sousa.
2. National Association of Post Graduation and Research on Education (ANPED), International Journey on Social Representations (JIRS) and International Conference of Social Representations (CIRS).
3. Capes (Coordenação de Aperfeiçoamento de Pessoal de Nível Superior) is a Brazilian Institution in charge of financing and evaluating research and post-graduate conditions
4. Students who live in small settlements that are organized by the government for families who lack land.

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9 Teacher Students' Social Representations of How Adults Learn

Mohamed Chaib and Josef Chaib

BACKGROUND OF THE STUDY

This study is an empirical investigation of teacher students' social representations of learning among adults. The study stems from two essential considerations, one theoretical and one more prosaic. The theoretical assumption behind this project is related to the somewhat rhetorical question, often asked, on whether learning among adults differs, in its form and content, from learning among children and adolescents. This question, in turn, is related to the considerable emphasis put on adult education, lifelong learning, and professional development in society today. Lifelong learning, despite being a very old concept or phenomenon, has under the last decades become a panacea in the public discourse on education, professional development, and economic welfare (see e.g., Jarvis, 2007). Students enrolled in teacher education are devoted to the education and fostering of pre-school children, school children or secondary school students. They have given matters related to teaching adults very little mental focus. This position is further reinforced by the content of the teacher education. The major part of the courses and literature in teacher education are theoretically and practically restricted to provide knowledge on children's way of learning.

Social representations is a social theory of knowledge (Chaib & Orfali, 2000; Jodelet, 1989; Moscovici, 1998, 2000). It is a complex theory and in this study we are particularly interested in how the content of students' social representations of adult learning is organized and shared between the informants. The main purpose of this study was to explore the content and the structure of teacher students' social representations of adult learning. In this short contribution we have focused particularly on three aspects of social representations: (a) the content of the representations expressed by the students; (b) the ways these representations are articulated, and finally; (c) how scientific knowledge on learning is transformed to common sense knowledge.

METHODOLOGICAL APPROACH

The data was analyzed qualitatively, and sorted into different categories. The analysis was conducted through the method of reading the texts in three successive steps. For each step the content and the form of the representations were identified, negotiated between the authors, compounded, and reduced. The study recounts how the respondents represent the phenomenon, how they talk about it and construct it; for example by relating the phenomenon to oneself or comparing it to other phenomena, known within the group. The results of the analysis are presented in interpretative schemes with some common features of the students' representations. Neither of these should be regarded as mutually exclusive in any way. Instead of seeking coherence and consistencies in our results, what is typical are contradictions, uncertainties, and vagueness. Utterances from the same respondent can occur within different categories, and serve as evidence of different conclusions. The data from the two investigated groups is thus regarded as one. The likeness of the results from the two different groups emphasises the social interplay between the students and form a prerequisite of the emergence for their representations of the phenomenon investigated (see, e.g., Breakwell, 1993; Farr, 1993; Flick, 1998).

The study encompasses 138 students consisting of two groups of students (84 from the 1st term of the teacher education and 54 from the 5th term). The average age was approximately 24 years. Data was collected through the *essay method*. The students were asked to write two (2) short essays of about 500–600 words each, on adult learning. The questions were handed out and the answers returned during a workshop session on research methodologies. The two questions, were asked with a two day interval. Both questions were asked presented in writing, and preceded by a similar short introductory text, for both studies. The intention of the explanatory text was to orient the students' thinking towards the study object, namely adult learning, without interfering with the outcomes of the answers. No fundamental differences in the students' answers were found in this study. The data from both groups was consequently aggregated and analysed as a one-group data.

The question for the first essay was: *In your point of view, what characterizes adults' way of learning?* This question was intentionally formulated vaguely, in order to seize the social representations as they emerge spontaneously from the students' discourse. The second question was: *Exercising as a teacher, what would you specifically think about or take into consideration when teaching adults?* This question was intended as a follow-up to the previous question, and was intended to find the relationship between people's way of thinking and how this thinking is related to their social actions.

EMPIRICAL EVIDENCE

How the Students Characterize Adult Learning

When characterizing the ways adults learn, our respondents referred to some specific aspects of that learning. They associated adult learning to the *characteristics of adult individuals* and to their *social environment*. They also related adult learning to *themselves as adult learners* and contrasted it to the *learning of children.*

It is a common view, from the perspective of the respondents that individuals learn differently. There are several different techniques and methods to utilize. Adults are often more aware of which ones appeal to themselves, and these methods become more distinguished with age, as well. Motivation and interest are equally prominent features, and they are evidently indispensable for learning. Opinions differ, however, as to how they change with age. Some state that adults are more easily motivated, others that older people have a harder time finding the motivation and interest for learning. Choosing what to acquire out of the information flow can be an advantage for adults, but it can also be restraining. This selective perception can be highly unconscious, and some state that adults are less open than young people, in the sense that they have already made up their mind and have chosen to interpret things in their personal way. Many respondents believe that learning is more difficult and time-consuming for adults, than it is for children. Respect and attentiveness are important elements in a learning environment with adults. This holds for the relation between teachers and students, as well as among students. Confirmation and acknowledgement, from peers as well as teachers, are important for the adult students' self-confidence and help to 'anchor' their knowledge. Reflections and discussions are also considered helpful.

Concerning the environment and surroundings of adult people, the students often refer to experiences and practices as the most prominent features of adult learning. These are mainly portrayed as an asset to acquiring new knowledge, since they allow adults to comprehend new knowledge and impressions, and to grasp the context. Experiences can also have a negative effect, as a 'bitter lesson of life' or in making people more narrow-minded. A great many of the respondents, when asked about the characteristics of adult learning, took their own specific situation as a point of departure. Answers often had an 'I perspective,' for example they referred to how 'I learn,' or 'we, adult . . . '. Some respondents explicitly expressed that they could only answer the question in relation to themselves.

As said previously, adult learning is contrasted to that of children's. Contrasting adult learning to learning among children and youths can be done in a number of ways, and in different contexts. Neither the stated question, nor its introductory text, mentioned children's learning, but is a conspicuous

feature of the form of the representations. "*Never thought about that we adults also learn things but we do, especially if you study later on in life. Since I'm studying to become a teacher with the emphasis on preschool, we are fully occupied with children's learning and don't think about that we too learn things in different ways", says one respondent*" (T5:4)[1]. Another student says: "*As an adult you learn in a different way than children. In most cases, you have accomplished the nine-year compulsory school and carry knowledge since then, but also through the years you have acquired a broader range of life experiences and concepts*" (T5:15).

Specific Considerations in Teaching Adults

Asked what they should specifically consider when teaching adults, the respondents suggested two different alternatives standpoints. They referred to *their, somewhat exaggerated, respect for adults' superior experiences and knowledge,* but they also referred to *their own professional competence* that must be affirmed towards the adults "superior" life experience.

The respondents' answers took various shapes. The question intentionally called for a rather pragmatic stance, which leaves little room for differences regarding the form of the representations. Instead, some pointed out details to consider in teaching, such as the number of breaks, while others expressed more vision-like remarks, such as establishing an environment of respect. Among the predominantly normative features of teaching adults is establishing teacher legitimacy. Many asserted that legitimacy can be somewhat difficult to obtain when teaching adults, both with regard to the students' age and to their knowledge. It stands out as an objective to strive for, and the means remain quite rudimental. Legitimacy is preferably secured with good (scientific) knowledge, clarity, and/or honesty.

Adults' social environment and conditions can affect their learning. Respondents stated, for example, that feeling bad emotionally or psychologically make the teaching and learning process less effective. The adults' lack of familiarity with the formal learning environment can produce pressure and result in anxiety, and the adults' everyday situations can not be entirely separated from the teachers' job. Assessment of the first question showed that adult people's experiences are a main characteristic in adult learning. Accordingly, experiences are frequently mentioned as something to consider in teaching. The rather vast goals can be to establish respect and a pleasant relationship, to learn from each other, and to provide a general feeling of grasping the bigger picture of the education. "*When teaching adults, I think it is important that they can feel as adults. You'll try to meet each and everyone at their own level and go from their previous experiences*", says one student (T5:24). Another student stated a more disclosing view on the difference between teaching adults and teaching children when he wrote: "To teach adult people can't be the easiest thing, in my opinion. If you compare to children who are like blank sheets, and don't question

everything you say. Adults already have many and different experiences both in everyday and in working life" (T1:43).

Respondents conceded that teachers must be flexible in their planning, and be able to change the schedule, or occasionally push deadlines. Adult life raises high demands on people, and integrating the students in the planning and embracing student participation in decision-making could reduce presumptive clashes between the spheres of the educational and personal life. To minimize these conflicts, the respondents suggested allowing time for discussion when teaching adults. The benefits of such pedagogy, however, are rarely explicated. From the answers, we can discern that discussions can be a suitable way of sharing and acquiring knowledge and experiences, or a way to 'anchor' what has been recently learned. Finally, there was a frequently expressed constructive idea that is also something of an axiom. Encounters in the teaching environment should be marked by mutual *respect*. This element is simultaneously the means and the end. A respectful treatment, where adult people are treated as equals in age and value, is something to consider, but a higher purpose for this is hardly necessary. Some respondents narrowed the scope, and gave details of how respect is pursued, while others widened it, and pointed out long-term benefits.

Two Types of Learners Obtained

Among our most immediate observations is the striking resemblance of the answers between the two groups of students. In neither of the groups do the students, to any appreciable extent, refer to theories, known scholars, or other explicitly scientific explanations. The answers were to a high degree marked by common sense knowledge, where personal observations and experiences, opinions, and truisms were numerous. This becomes evident as many of the respondents referred to their own lives and situations, such as giving examples from the formal educational environment of university studies.

Generally speaking, the reasoning often takes one of two main paths. One path consists of descriptions of an adult learner who is *self-conscious*, *motivated*, *interested* and a rather *critical* and *demanding* person, while the other path describes the adult learner as *less motivated* and *self-aware*, and who is *unaccustomed to the learning* environment and also *distracted* by his surrounding conditions and relations. These two types can be seen as stereotyped characters, that is, theoretical constructions emerging from the social representations of the students. The students can not be said to belong to either of the two paths. The representations are rather contradictory and complex in the sense that they can ascribe, in their utterances, both characters to the same adults.

The many different features and elements of adult learning were expressed both in the content of the social representations and in their

form. It is important, in other words, to pay attention to *what* the students expressed, as well as to *how* they expressed it. In the answers to the first question, dealing with the characteristics of adult learning, content and form are both highly considered. In the second question, concerning what teachers should specifically consider when teaching adults, the content of the answers is of a more central issue than the form. This second question directed the students to an active situation, and thus somewhat narrowed the possible ways of approach to realistic scenarios. Altogether, the two ideal types of learners were constructed from the representations at large, whether they were uttered in relation to the first question or the second, and whether the representations' content or their form was considered.

The first type of adult learner—who is, among other things, self-conscious and motivated—is here called the *self-conscious learner*. The nature and traits of an adult individual are different from that of a child, according to many of the students' answers. Adults are, for example, driven by their motivation and their interest, they have the possibility to sift out relevant information, and they are aware of their need and the reason why they are learning, thanks to their own experiences gathered through the course of life.

> Adults often have a completely different motivation when they're about to learn something new. Usually, they learn because they want to and they know why they benefit from the knowledge in another way. Children may not know why they should learn something, they're just told to do it. Adults often want to contemplate and discuss the subject, such as bringing up pros and cons, rights and wrongs. (T1:55)
>
> As an adult, I can sift through the media supply, I can choose for myself who I want to spend time with and thereby be influenced by and learn from. As an adult I have the possibility to "choose" my learning myself. By this I mean that you choose for yourself what you want to acquire or not. As an adult you have probably acquired the knowledge to see what is important for ones learning. (T1:77)
>
> So to sum up my answer on this question I'll have to say that what I think characterizes adults' learning is that we do it in a more conscious way. (T5:51)

The same main elements are present in the descriptions of the second type of adult learner, tentatively called the *distracted learner*. However, here the interpretations are the inverse. In this case, lack of motivation and selective perception are among the main deficiencies of adult learners. These factors can severely obstruct the process of learning, and act as a hindrance to acquiring new knowledge. The distracted learners' process of sifting out irrelevant information from relevant is, for example, similar to being narrow-minded. In addition to this, the learning process is more difficult and time-consuming than it is for younger children.

But I think that we adults, the older we get, must be more active to learn things. It's no longer as natural as when we were kids. I think that it's easy for adults to just keep on walking in the same old tracks without reflecting. You have your job and your family, and you don't have to learn things anymore. You know what you need to manage your job and take care of your home. (T5:44)

I think that the most characteristic is that you don't learn as quickly as when you were younger. It takes longer for everything to process in the brain. This is of course because of different things. Part of it can be that you have lived for at least twenty years or much more, and you carry an infinite amount of impressions and values that function as a kind of wall before facts and knowledge can be taken in. / . . . / You KNOW that things are in a certain way and really don't want to change you're way of thinking. (T1:8)

When it comes to learning new things it's often difficult for many adults. Compared to children, they're afraid of new things, they're afraid of making mistakes, and they prefer not to do things than give it a try. This I think characterizes adults' way of learning new things, it's often difficult in the beginning and they hesitate several times before they give it a try. (T5:39)

Experiences are one of the most recurrent themes of the social representations, and are more often than not regarded as an asset in the learning situation. With experiences from working life, or from previous educations, the adult can contextualize new knowledge and comprehend its importance. Life outside the learning environment does have these beneficial effects, but there are also obstacles to overcome. For the distracted learner there are aggravating circumstances in the social and relational life. The family is a natural ingredient in adult life. Taking care of children, other family members and associates takes time and attention from the learning process.

In the second question, focusing on teaching adults, experiences are equally present. The self-conscious learner brings knowledge with him into the classroom, and lets others benefit from it. "*I think that if you teach adults,*" one T5-student says, "you *have to let them share their experiences.*" It can be quite unpredictable to stand in front of a group of adults. There can be self-conscious learners who are rich in experiences, which is intimidating for an inexperienced teacher, and there can be inexperienced adult students who need as much care and support as children.

When as an adult you start studying, you look at a text or a book in a different way and you have other, perhaps also more, angles of approach than children and youths. Especially if you have a family and you have spent a couple of years in working life. (T5:16)

I think that adults can learn easier by reflecting what they learn from experiences. By this I mean that adults have gone through many

experiences and can in this way reflect on them, when they attempt to learn something new. They are thus able to grasp the context in a simpler way. (T1:76)

A social element that matters is that it sometimes can be difficult to find the time and energy when you have several children and a home to look after, but mostly it works all right. (T5:23)

One of the T5-students began the answer to the first question—on what characterizes adult learning—by stating that "*I can here only refer to how I as a person learn*." This statement does not fall under either of the two ideal-typical adult learners, but it does show how everyday life comes to be the main source of knowledge in adult learning. About half of the students referred to themselves or their everyday environment in some way when answering the two questions.

CONCLUDING REFLECTIONS

Whether the students are in the very beginning of their education or have come quite a long way, they share many thoughts and ideas on adult learning. Many refer to the same phenomena, of which their own personal life and environment are significant examples. On one hand, it appears natural that a person uses his or her own specific experiences and surroundings to interpret a phenomenon. On the other hand, in the rather homogenous group of teacher students, one might expect a certain professional approach to adult learning. The utilization of scientific theories and concepts is remarkably absent in the statements. In the 300 pages of written material, constituting the basic data for this study, we have been looking for the appearance of some notions that we believe the 5th term students, at least, would be familiar with after their course of education.

We were amazed to notice that not a single student referred to such common names and concepts in teacher education as Piaget or Vygotsky, and only a few to any other learning theories or theoreticians. One may speculate about what causes prospective professional educators to avoid any kind of reference to scientific categories, when explaining learning among adults.

Our informants clearly showed that their spontaneous reflections on adult learning were largely shared within the group through a consensual schemata of thinking. The social representations theory attempts to explain the differences between scientific knowledge and the knowledge that is socially formed in everyday communication in groups of people. Our data in this study gave many examples of stereotyped thinking expressed by the students. When the students offer themselves as an explanatory example for adult learning, they are giving support to one of the most central aspects of how social representations can be identified and explored, namely the process of anchoring. In order to explain the somewhat complex phenomenon

of adult learning, the informants anchor its salient aspects to their own world of concepts and ideas. The students are in these ways giving support for some kind of attribution theory (cf. Hewstone & Augoustinos, 1998), in the sense that they attribute to adults stereotyped ways of learning that have no support in any evidence other than the experiences of the informants themselves (cf. e.g., Breakwell, 1993; Flament, 1994; Flick, 1998; and Gilly, 1989).

Another salient characteristic of the answers as a whole is the tendency to socially and emotionally overestimate the nature of being adult. With the descriptions of adults' way of learning comes an entire package of cognizance as to what an adult is. Some of the assertions have to do with the adult individual, some with the adult person's surrounding conditions and relations. This can also be interpreted as distant from the rationales of scientific knowledge.

Different Modes of the Same Knowledge

For a handful of the teacher students, scientific references and theories are naturally attached to the answers. These are however exceptions from the undisputed trend, namely answers founded on common sense assumptions and depictions. Although the assertions differ in topic, in content, and in many other aspects, nearly all share the frame regarding the mode of knowledge.

Three hypotheses could shed some light on the matters at hand. The first is that the respondents simply do not possess the means to treat the question scientifically; they see themselves as experts on learning among children, not adults. The second is that the students have transformed, or naturalized, theories to common sense knowledge. The third hypothesis is that what the students express are theories that have been transformed to common sense knowledge by the teacher educators—and the students themselves have perceived things just as they are put down in the answers.

What we are dealing with here is, in other words, most likely some kind of *transformation of knowledge*. The inclination towards the common sense approach holds for all different kinds of assertions. Whether we focus on *what* is said or *how* this is said, there is a tendency towards lay thinking about the phenomenon. The fact that the same elements—such as motivation, experiences, selective perception, and the surrounding conditions—are interpreted in such essentially different ways indicates that the students are quite unfamiliar to the phenomenon of adult learning. This would argue for the first hypothesis—that they are preoccupied with the learning of children rather than that of adults. When adult learning is contrasted to children's learning, which is done quite frequently, children's learning is more coherently described; there seems to be a consensus on this. Whether adult learning is described as similar to, or different from, children's learning depends on how one views on adults.

There can of course be no absolute certainty as to why the teacher students in this study took such a seemingly unscientific standpoint on the concept of adult learning. The conditions under which the responding students were given the questions can be of some significance. Can it be the case, for example, that the students interpreted the questions as a form of test, and this influenced their answers? Did the students regard the questions on adult learning as an evaluation, which directed them to their own study situation? Although the context should be regarded, neither of these explanations is plausible in this very case. If the questions had been interpreted as a test on acquired knowledge on the topic, this should rather have called for explicitly scientific references, instead of lay explanations. The other explanation is also quite improbable. The introductory text to the questions starts with "*You have now reached halfway in your studies as a teacher . . .* ". which could make the students focus on themselves. The rest of the text, though, speaks about what the students have learned about different conditions for learning, and adults are termed "them," indicating a third person. These things ought to appeal to the respondent's expertise on learning, and not on their own situation.

Adult Learning Perceived by Adult Students

The social and emotional aspects of adult learning, and the resulting consequences for teaching adults, are quite interesting to comment. The discourse that can be read from our informants' answers is that they seem to consider adults as ultimately shaped individuals, whereas children are still in a process of formation, under the responsibility of the teacher. The teachers to be, in our study, seem to be quite humble and respectful towards the difficult task of teaching adults with so much life experience and social charisma. Although they do not express it clearly, one can understand that teachers are more comfortable in teaching children where they have full control, than when they consider teaching adults.

The working life is presumably one of the most salient marks contrasting the adults' everyday situations from those of children, for whom playing and formal learning is often their main occupation. Despite this—and despite the fact that the respondents often highlight the importance of practical experience—working life and jobs are rarely described as learning environments. The introductory text to the two questions pointed out that adults learn "*both formally, e.g. when going through an education, but also informally in the everyday life.*" Analyzing the representations makes evident that 'the everyday life' is interpreted mainly as the time devoted to family and social life, with a few exceptions.

The social action of teaching adults draws on some of the characteristics of adult learning, as laid forward in the first sections of the results presentation. The lack of academic or scientific notions and theories is a common feature of the answers, and shows persistence both when describing

the ideal teaching situation and when pinpointing specific suggestions. It is worth emphasizing, however, that this does not mean that the education context does not affect the assertions on adult learning. The answers clearly showed that the informants' common surrounding, that is, the teacher education context, was present in their representations of adult learning.

NOTES

1. T1 or T5 refer to the group investigated, and the following number is the serial number of the individual.

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10 Being a School Teacher in Brazil

Alda Judith Alves-Mazzotti

INTRODUCTION

The deep transformations that characterize contemporary societies require an education that enables the student to deal with the new problems brought about by those changes. Among them we can point out the conflicting values systems and cultural models, the weakening of traditional family roles, the crisis of ethics, the increasing requirements for the qualification of the work force, the tearing of solidarity bounds and the various facets of violence that characterize daily life in urban centers. Another important feature of contemporary culture is the penetration of the computer and the Internet in people's lives, and also in the schools, propitiating new forms of acquiring knowledge and establishing relationships that affect the students, both cognitively and affectively, as well as their relation with the teachers.

All these challenges put in check the classic role of the teacher, leading governments and researchers to propose a variety of teacher training models to enable them to deal more effectively with the new demands, as well as with the resources offered by contemporary reality.

Without getting into the merit of these proposals, we have to admit that they represent a significant impact on the nature of teacher's work and on teachers' knowledge. The effectiveness of the desired changes, however, requires more than good will. We agree with Perrenoud (1999) when he states that educational reality is not transformed by the adoption of good ideas, but rather by the change in teachers' representations. This means that, in the process of appropriation of new knowledge, the subjects filter its contents guided by the beliefs, values, symbols, and models of thought that comprise their previous repertoire of representations. This is a complex cognitive process, since it involves the subjects' own professional identity.

Moved by this concern, we investigated how teachers of public elementary schools represent their professional identities today. We used as our theoretical-methodological framework the structural approach of social representations proposed by Abric (1994a, 1994b, 1998, 2003).

The research was developed in 15 public elementary schools of Rio de Janeiro. Data collection was made in two phases. The first corresponded to the application of a free association test, with justification, as proposed by several authors (Abric, 1994b; Flament, 1981). Participating in this phase were 248 elementary school teachers: 123 in the first segment (1st- to 4th-grade teachers) and 125 in the second (5th- to 8th-grade teachers). The first subgroup included 114 women and 9 men, and the second, 98 women and 27 men. Teaching experience ranged from 5 years or less to 20 years or more, with higher concentration in the older group in both segments. As to the educational level, 22% of the teachers of the 1st segment did not have higher education formation, while all 2nd segment teachers did. In the second phase of data collection, 60 conversational interviews were made (30 in each segment).

In the free evocation test the subjects were asked to write the first words that came into mind as they heard the expression: to be a teacher today. Then, they were asked to indicate the two words they considered the most important, ordering them. Finally, they were asked to justify, in a small text, the importance attributed to these words.

The treatment of the free evocation test was done using the software EVOC (Vergés, 1994). This technique allows one to identify the possible elements of the central nucleus considering the frequency (F) and the average order of evocation of the word (Tura, 1998)[1]. The combination of those two criteria allows for the distribution of the results into two orthogonal axes forming four quadrants. The items of highest frequency and lowest AEO are situated in the left superior quadrant and are those that probably constitute the nucleus. The items situated in the right superior quadrant are the "close periphery" to the central nucleus, and those in the right inferior quadrant, the most distant, since they present the lowest frequencies and occupy lowest position in the hierarchy provided by the subjects. In this study, it was established that words with frequency lower than seven would not be considered.

To complete the analysis of the structure, we tried to identify the organization of the various elements of the representation using the analysis of similitude of the categories defined in the analysis of the evocations. This technique, based on the theory of graphs, enables one to verify the level of connectivity between the elements in the nucleus and the other elements of the representation by examining the maximum tree. After this phase of analysis, the verification of centrality[2] of each one of the possible components of the central nucleus was made, using double negation statements (Campos, 1998).

Finally, it is necessary to try to understand the integrated functioning of situational elements, attitudes and values that sustain the subjects' discursive production. This is an essential phase of the analysis of a representation, because it is this which allows us to re-situate the representation within its context and understand its connections with the set of psychological,

cognitive and social factors that determined it (Abric, 1994b; Jodelet, 1989). This goal was accomplished by the thematic categorical analysis (Bardin, 1977) of the 60 conversational interviews.

RESULTS

First Segment

Table 10.1 presents the possible structure of the social representation of "being a teacher today" according to 1st- to 4th-grade teachers.

We can observe that the central nucleus is composed of a single word, dedication, revealing a traditional representation deeply rooted in teaching history and culture. However, in the proximate periphery, with strong tendency to centrality, appears the term tiresome, which seems to indicate that the representation is going through a transition. The analysis of the justifications presented by the teachers showed that the term dedication is associated with vocation, mission, gift. This nucleus orients the functioning of the periphery in daily life. Accordingly, we observed that the terms in the periphery of this representation remit to an idealized reality,

Table 10.1   Possible Composition of the Central Nucleus and the Peripheral System—Teachers of the First Segment

$f_x \geq 25$	Evocation	f_x	AEO< 2.7	Evocation	f_x	AEO ≥ 2.7
	Dedication	35	2.143	Tiresome	27	2.741
	Difficulties	22	1.727	Love	20	2.800
	Challenege	15	1.533	To be patient	17	3.294
	Friend	11	2.455	Responsibility	15	2.733
$7 < f_x < 25$	Likes what s/he does	9	1.778	Learning	11	2.818
	Gratifying	9	1.889	Caring	9	2.667
	Vocation	9	2.333	Joy	8	3.000
	Struggle	8	1.875	Hope	8	3.750
	Persistency	8	2.250			

indicating an emphasis on socially desirable terms that match the meaning of dedication.

The analysis of similitude, by indicating the organization of the elements of the representation, helps us to understand the meanings of the terms dedication and tiresome.

The maximum tree confirms the term *dedication* as that of greatest connectivity, with 21 lines. Most part of the terms (13), however, do not constitute chains (sequences of lines) or cycles (closed figures, that return to the starting point), revealing a variety of circulating notions, values, symbols, or images but no articulations among them. This configuration seems to suggest that those particular evocations are *clichés* that do not have much meaning to the respondents. In addition, the terms *dedication* and *tiresome* are in opposite positions, suggesting an ambivalence for which we can find clues all over the representation field.

There are, however, some coherent cycles. We can point out, for instance, two quadrilaterals: one, defined by the lines that link dedication, determination, vocation, courage[3], *dedication*, and another that articulates *dedication*, determination, vocation, choice, *dedication*. These sets indicate meanings implied in the definition of the central nucleus, which are consistent with the justifications provided by the subjects. To these figures is added a pentagon formed by the lines that link the following points: *dedication, choice, responsibility*, commitment, hope, dedication. This set allows us to foresee a modulation in the meanings associated with the term dedication: a space defined as a choice marked by commitment and hope, of which *joy, sharing, emotion, realization, creativity*, and even *struggle* are lines that are connected to *dedication* and only to it. It is worth emphasizing that, from the lines linked to *dedication*, the elements to like, pleasure, gratification, and also, hope and struggle are those whose association with that element is strongest.
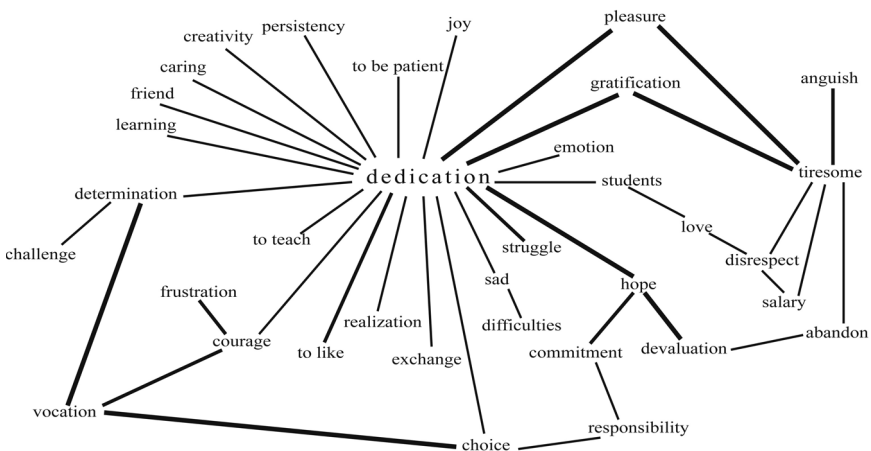
Figure 10.1   Maximum tree of similitude of the first segment.

This configuration suggests that *dedication* sustains itself in highly valued meanings. However, this element, through pleasure and gratification, presents a strong association with tiresome (proximate periphery). This last term in turn constitutes the center of a figure with five lines: the ones that link it to devaluation, disrespect, gratification, pleasure, *and* anguish. Based on the term tiresome, there is also a quadrilateral, articulating pleasure, dedication, gratification, *and* tiresome and, finally, a pentagon formed by the lines tiresome, disrespect, love, hope, *devaluation, tiresome.*

Through *hope* is configured another pentagon that links devaluation, tiresome, pleasure, dedication, and hope, as well as a quadrilateral articulating *love, students,* dedication, and hope. It is interesting to notice that this is the only instance in which the term *students* appears, and it does so in a positive context. Moreover, the elements of that context are so coherent that they almost constitute a phrase.

Finally, the analysis of the justifications presented by the teachers of the first segment regarding the emphasis given to *dedication* seems to suggest that today's working conditions are in opposition to an idealized meaning of the teaching profession based on traditional values, symbols and stereotypes, and that this opposition announces a transformation in the representation of *being a teacher today*, which is further indicated by the tendency to centrality of the term *tiresome*.

On the other hand, teachers of the second segment (5th to 8th grade) seem to have a different representation of the profession. Table 10.2 presents the possible structure of their representation.

As shown in Table 10.2, *difficulties* and *struggle* are the possible components of the central nucleus. According to the justifications presented, the association of these two terms having as referent the expression *to be a teacher today*, is related to the devaluation of the profession, the low salaries, the unfavorable work conditions, and the frustrations and challenges that the teachers have to cope with in today's school life. In the proximate periphery, we find the words *love* and *consuming*, two terms that suggest a certain ambivalence.

This ambivalence, however, disappears when we examine the justifications for the evocation of the term *love* in comparison to those related to the word *consuming*: in the first case, they are usually very vague, as, for example, *"love is the basis of everything in life", "love for one's fellow man",* suggesting they are oriented by the socially desirable. *Consuming*, on the contrary, is coherent with the difficulties of daily life and the constant struggle to overcome them, mentioned in the justifications.

In a first examination of the maximum tree of this segment we can distinguish three poles: In addition to *difficulties* (13 lines) and *struggle* (5 lines), which were previously indicated as possible components of the central nucleus, appears *to be patient* (7 lines). *Difficulties* and *struggle*, however, are the elements that present the greatest connectivity, since to these are associated chains and cycles that connect several meanings of *being a*

Table 10.2 Possible Composition of the Central Nucleus and the Peripheral System—Teachers of the Second Segment

	Evocation	f_x	AEO< 2.7	Evocation	f_x	AEO ≥ 2.7
$f_x ≥ 24$	Difficulties	35	1.714	Love	26	2.769
	Struggle	35	2.424	Consuming	31	2.774
$10 ≤ f_x < 24$	Rush	13	2.077	Chaos	13	3.077
	Disap-point-ment	13	2.538	Devaluation	10	2.900
	Challenge	10	2.500	Professional-ism	10	3.300
	Frustration	16	2.500			
	Low salary	13	2.692			
	To be patient	22	2.373			
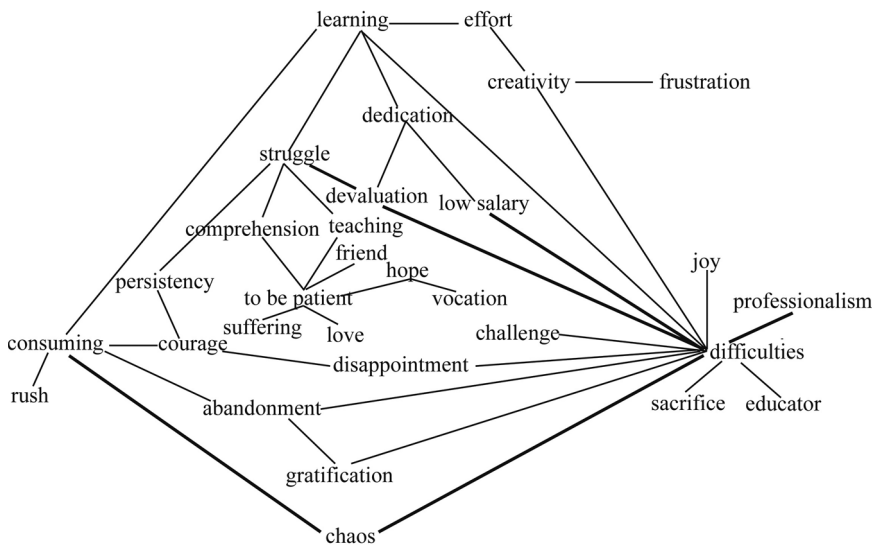
Figure 10.2 Maximum tree of similitude of the second segment.

teacher today. With the element *to be patient*, this does not occur: The only figures that stem from it are associated with *struggle*—an element to which it is opposed; the other lines directly connected to it, such as *friend, hope, challenge, love, suffering*, express meanings that, although traditionally related to the teacher's role, appear to be losing strength given the difficulties faced by the teacher in today's school life. On the other hand, the set of combinations associated with *difficulties* and *struggle* seems to indicate that teachers of this segment are consistently critical in the evaluation of the public educational system of Rio de Janeiro, as the following analysis of associations indicates.

Initially it is important to stress that the line that links difficulties to struggle passes through devaluation, and these are strong associations. The element *difficulties* gives rise to several combinations worth distinguishing: (a) difficulties, devaluation, struggle, learning, dedication, low salary, and difficulties; (b) difficulties, chaos, consuming, abandonment, and difficulties; (c) *difficulties, deception, courage, consuming, abandonment,* and *difficulties*; and (d) *difficulties, creativity, effort, learning,* among others. Moreover, contrary to what was observed in the tree corresponding to the first segment, in this tree we see a very small number of lines connected to a single pole. Thus, the elements *joy, professionalism, sacrifice,* and *educator* are connected only to the pole *difficulties*; and connected to *struggle*, there are no loose lines.

These configurations seem to indicate a greater consistency among the elements of this representation as compared to the results obtained in the first segment. The meanings distinguished by the teachers in this segment, besides being more coherent and well articulated, represent teaching work in a less idealized way, anchoring it in their own professional experience rather than in values aggregated to vocation.

Finally, the fact that *professionalism* has a strong link with *difficulties*, and only with this element, means that every time the first term appeared, it did so in relation to the second. This suggests that, although professionalism is a concern to these teachers, they do not feel supported by the school system to perform their role as professionals.

The analysis of the interviews, presented next, further clarifies the meaning of those representations. The discourse of the teachers was submitted to thematic analysis and classified in four large categories: the choice of profession, impact of contemporary world changes on teaching practice, difficulties in exercising the teacher's professional role, and the professional identity of the teacher today.

The Choice of Profession

When asked why they chose the teaching profession, the majority of the teachers in the first segment distinguished the vocation, the influence of the family and their love for children. Others mentioned the lack of options

in the cities in which they lived, the influence of teachers they admired, and the fact that teaching was considered a feminine profession. Taken together, the answers seem to suggest that, for most subjects, theirs was not a real choice, either because the term vocation emerged with a vague meaning or as something almost innate ("since I was a little girl"), or because it resulted from an external influence, or yet because it was the "natural" destiny of women at the time. It is worth mentioning that, in this subgroup, 92% of the subjects were women.

Among the teachers of the second segment the absence of choice also predominates but, in this case, it is clearly stated. The majority of them say that their main interest was to get a formation in the specific subject areas of the course: They wanted to be biologists, mathematicians, historians, and so on. Thus, becoming a teacher happened by chance, because of life situations that prevented them from following through with what they had previously planned. It must be said, however, that, in spite of admitting teaching was not their first choice, these teachers, except for one, said they like what they do. Of those who affirmed they wanted to be teachers, the reasons presented were "to help the student have a better life" and "to change society". Finally, some teachers reiterate that teaching was just a job.

Impact of Contemporary World Changes on Teaching Practice

Although the question about changes in the contemporary world had been deliberately stated as neutral, teachers of the first segment always referred to them from a negative point of view. Among these changes, they distinguish economic and social changes that led women to the job market, preventing them from giving the necessary attention to their children, and the dissemination of audiovisual technologies, mostly television and Internet, that constitute sources of information with which the school is not prepared to compete. They also mention the crisis of values, the devaluation of schooling, and the increase in violence. The teachers emphasized, as consequences of these changes, the following: accumulation of tasks transferred to the teacher, primarily those related to their having to assume responsibility for the primary socialization of the children (previously the role of the family); students' lack of interest in school contents; and disrespect for the teacher. To these difficulties are added the absence of human and material resources in the schools, continuing changes in the orientations of the Board of Education, and increasing bureaucracy in the schools resulting in a huge amount of paper work.

The 5th- to 8th-grade teachers describe a very similar situation, stressing: changes in the family, dissemination of audiovisual technologies, and urban violence. They also believe that the fact that women (independently of their social class) have entered the job market leaves the children without limits and disrespectful of the teachers. However, contrary to the teachers

of the first segment, the 5th- to 8th-grade teachers do not feel obligated to assume the role of the family in the education of the children.

Regarding audiovisual technologies—mainly the use of computers and the Internet—teachers of the second segment praise the possibility of quick access to a large amount of information, but they also emphasize a series of problems, such as the inability of the student to absorb that information in a critical way, the issue of digital exclusion and the fact that teachers do not have enough time or opportunity to master these technologies in order to incorporate them into classroom work.

Finally, urban violence, "a civil war", they say, is being brought into the classroom, where students are very aggressive with their classmates and with the teachers. Other changes mentioned are the economic situation of Brazil and drastic changes in teaching, requiring constant updating.

Difficulties in Performing Teacher's Professional Role

Teachers of the first segment center these difficulties on unfavorable work conditions, pointing, among other things, to: overcrowded classes; lack of infra-structure and specialized support in school; loss of the teacher's autonomy; and degradation of salaries, which forces most teachers to have two or more jobs, leaving little or no time for professional improvement nor even for planning more interesting classes. They stress, however, that what affects their practice most is, again, the need for filling the gaps left by the family.

Among the difficulties mentioned by the teachers of the second segment, we can distinguish the "increasing amount of bureaucratic of work" and the students' lack of interest in school activities. They complain about the overcrowded classes and the time-consuming bureaucracy, represented by files and reports they have to fill out. They also say that the students "only want things that are 'cool' or 'fun'", leading many teachers to act as "entertainers, presenting a lot of show but little content". To sum up, they feel that everything is required from the teacher and nothing from the student.

Teacher's Identity Today

Two aspects seem to especially affect the identity of the teacher of the first segment: the changes in their traditional role and their public image as they perceive it.

Regarding the first aspect, the majority of the teachers demonstrate discomfort with the demands that they do not consider to be their responsibilities and with the curtailing of other responsibilities that were traditionally within their domain. As a consequence, they feel they are not the teachers they dreamed of being, nor even the teachers they once were. Some say they do not know what they are anymore: "one day I seem to be the mother, another day I am the teacher, and yet another I know not what . . . ".

As to the public image they believe they have, the teachers classify this as "the worst possible": "incompetent", "lazy", "people who are teachers for lack of a better option". They consider this professional devaluation as closely related to the fact they earn low salaries, since today's society associates professional competency with salary rather than with the social importance of a profession. The huge discrepancy between the public devaluation and the image the teachers constructed about their profession makes them feel "stressed", "frustrated", "ashamed", among other equally negative feelings.

Finally, although the majority of the teachers of the first segment admits that the changes in their work affect their professional identity, a significant number of them say that this situation does not affect them "because they like what they do" or because "they do it out of love for the children", ratifying, once more, meanings strongly articulated to *dedication*. There seems to be imbedded in these discourses a defense mechanism of negation, since we can perceive a great deal of discomfort as we examine various parts of the discourse.

The 5th- to 8th-grade teachers say that, primarily as a consequence of their inadequate work conditions, they end up "criticized with no chance of defense", and feeling "incompetent", and "frustrated". In addition, the current norms and policies of the Board of Education—especially in reference to the evaluation of student performance—restrain their autonomy even more, which, for them, implies a lack of confidence in their work. To these factors they add the lack of security in schools, which makes them feel afraid of reprimanding a student or even of giving him/her a low grade. In short, teachers feel disrespected in many forms, having "to make an effort to maintain the integrity of (their) professional identity".

Their perceived public image is also predominantly negative, although the feeling is not unanimous, as it is among the teachers of the first segment. The image that predominates is that of a "a loser", "accommodated", "lazy", "without authority", "outdated", in short, "devaluated" and "disrespected" by society in general and by the students and their families—an image that the teachers refuse to accept and struggle to invalidate. The majority of 5th- to 8th-grade teachers say that this negative social image does not affect their professional identity. The defensive quality of this statement is confirmed by the observation that these teachers anchor their professional identity in the specific discipline they teach, presenting themselves as English teachers, math teachers, geography teachers, and so on. According to them, this way of stating their profession "confers more status".

FINAL CONSIDERATIONS

In order to be different, two representations must be organized around two different central nuclei (Abric, 1998, 2003). We can therefore conclude that the 1st- to 4th- grade teachers and 5th- to 8th-grade teachers have different

representations of what it is *to be a teacher today*. Abric also indicates that the elements of the central nucleus are consensual, linked to the group's collective memory and history, and present strong resistance to change (Abric, 1994a).

The long duration of the element *dedication* that composes the nucleus of the representation presented by teachers of first segment is supported by several studies. Araujo (1998) analyzed the educational writings of Erasmo, Montaigne, and Rabelais and came to the conclusion that *dedication* has been related to the teacher's profile since the 16th century.

In Brazil, *dedication* is an element traditionally attributed to the teaching role, as some studies indicate. A study by Oliveira (1998) found characteristics of myth in teachers' representations of teaching work also present in our study: emphasis on innate, hereditary vocation and tendency toward self-sacrifice and suffering. Oliveira compares the representation of teacher's work to the myth of Sisyphus—symbol of endless and meaningless work—a metaphor that seems to condense the meanings attributed to the term *tiresome* in our study. Oliveira's research provides clues about the history and consensuality of the elements *difficulties* and *struggle* that constitute the nucleus of the representation constructed by the teachers of the second segment of our study. It shows that the image of the hero who is never defeated by difficulties, struggling incessantly to overcome them and to "change the world" is also very archaic. The author concludes that a defensive representational complex leads teachers to represent their work as a "heroic act".

The content of the interviews adds meaning to the terms distinguished in the nucleus of the representations conveyed by the two focus groups and helps us to understand the similarities and differences between them. The analysis of the *corpus* indicates that both groups see the economic, social and cultural changes that characterize contemporary society as negative, with the teachers stressing the engagement of women in the job market resulting in children without limits who are disrespectful and uninterested in school activities; the fact that schools are unprepared to compete with audiovisual technologies; and increasing urban violence. Among the difficulties regarding the exercise of the profession, teachers unanimously emphasized the overwhelming amount of tasks attributed to the teacher, associated with unfavorable work conditions; loss of autonomy; salary degradation; and lack of free time to update themselves and to plan more interesting classes. This situation, according to teachers of both segments, has not only added new tasks that deviate from the traditional teaching function, but also negatively affects their public image, making them feel devalued by society and by the students and their families.

If the difficulties elaborated are so similar, what, then, distinguishes these groups? It seems to us that it is their attitude regarding these difficulties. While teachers of the first segment respond with *dedication*, anchoring their conduct in the mothering role, those of the second react by fighting these difficulties in order to protect their professional space. In this sense, the two groups are in opposite poles regarding the construction of their professional identity.

Another important difference between the groups refers to the impact of the devaluation of the teaching profession on the subject's identity. The *corpus* of the research suggests that professional devaluation seems to affect more profoundly the teachers of the 1st segment. Maurice (cited by Ludke & Boing, 2004), after an encompassing review of the literature, concludes that the only consensual criterion to characterize a profession is the specialization of the knowledge held by its professionals. We found that the teachers of the 2nd segment consider that they have a specialization that corresponds to the subject matter they teach (geography, history, math, etc.). This specialization also allows these teachers to identify themselves with a more socially valued reference group (the geographers, historians, mathematicians), thus escaping the devaluation of the teaching profession.

On the other hand, the 1st- to 4th-grade teachers do not seem to represent their profession as based on specialized knowledge, nor do they have a more valued group with which to identify. Besides, unlike the teachers of the second segment, they feel compelled to take on functions they do not consider to be theirs, which prevents them from adequately performing what would be the "essence of their role", namely "the transmission of knowledge". Last but not least, 1st- to 4th-grade teachers are held more responsible for school failures because they do not share a class with other colleagues as do the teachers of the second segment. Perhaps it is for these reasons that their discourse seems so defensive.

NOTES

1. The frequency (F) of an evocation is the sum of its frequency in the different positions; the average frequency (AF) is the arithmetical average of the several frequencies obtained by a given evocation, and the average evocation order (AEO) is the pondered average obtained by the attribution of differentiated weights to the order in which a given evocation was stated.
2. The following written proposition was presented to a group of 30 subjects: "To each one of the statements below, choose the option that seems to be the most adequate." Then, statements involving each of the most distinguished evocations were presented in the following form: "It is not possible to think about being a teacher today without thinking about _____ (evocation)." Below each statement there were three options for the respondent: (1) No, it is not; (2) Yes, it is; and (3) I do not know.
3. The use of bold indicates that the terms are strongly associated.

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11 Trainers of Adults
Professional Representations and Training Knowledge

Patrice Bouyssières and Marie-Pierre Trinquier

INTRODUCTION

This chapter presents an analysis of the various representations trainers of adults bring to focus concerning the knowledge they teach. This knowledge depends on social context. Since the 1980s, social and professional integration depends on a constant renewal of knowledge, binding together knowledge of action and theoretical knowledge. We call this "training knowledge". The results of our research show that for trainers, training knowledge forms a major part of their identity, distinguishing them from social workers and schoolteachers. Moreover, trainers show four distinct orientations in representation according to training knowledge. The dominant orientation is the "application orientation", using didactic methods emphasizing a technical nature. "Explanation orientation" relates to didactic methods, which assist into a better understanding of disciplinary logic. With "engineering orientation" and "support orientation", training knowledge uses less didactic methods, organization and administration training resources in the first case and building a project of insertion in the second.

Since the 1980s production methods, as well as goods and services marketing, have been going through a contemporary upheaval, due to the rapid progress of scientific discoveries and technological innovations and to the expanding disclosure of knowledge.

Consequently, human work requires a constant renewal of knowledge. Adults are confronted with a constant state of cognitive incompleteness, once found only in childhood and youth. "In regard to employment, aging can become a source of vulnerability, just as seniority in a job can become a negative factor" (Dominicé, 2004, p. 54).

In France, adult training has become an individual right regulated by official texts. Training institutions have been subjected to the free market and training "products" have grown in number. They compete with each other by offering lower cost, shorter time, more training, faster training, or immediate "profits".

The trainer's trade has developed according to the needs of the various training organizations, that is, state organizations, private enterprises,

or associations. The first adult trainers adopted the spirit of the Popular Education movements and of the professional promotion from the years 1930 to 1970: militants of literacy tuition, culture and leisure for all, and technical trainers of the "Association pour la Formation Professionnelle des Adultes", AFPA (Adult Professional Training Association).

Then, around the 1980s, adult continuing education started to be seen as an industrial investment and one of the main issues in the fight against unemployment. A second wave of the trainers' professional development appeared. These trainers focused on the difficult task of professional insertion or reintegration of the adult trainees. A few trainers specialize in training engineering "to qualify the quality of training services while others seek the best productivity thanks to the new information and communication technologies" (Palazzeschi, 1999, p. 39).

Although being recognized[1], the trainers do not constitute a very homogeneous occupational class. They have various statuses: workers on short term contract, "free-lance" workers, civil servants, or occasional trainers. Even the name of "trainer" has at times been disputed, despite the fact that this term is the only term providing a relatively stable professional identification of this group.[2]

Our interest in this diversity and these transformations inspired us to attempt to update the common and differentiating elements in the trainers' trade. We thus conceived several research programs connected with the trainers' practices, identities, and "professional representations" (Bataille et al., 1997). Some of them have a direct link with the concepts of knowledge, central to this collective work (Bouyssières, 1997, 2000; Bouyssières & Mulin, 2004).

In this contribution, we will highlight some results of our research to show that the different types of knowledge transmitted during adult training courses are objects of representation for adult trainers. We will see, among other things, why the trainers' divergences on representations, for example, about what place to give to the training contents in their practices, are due to differences in identity dynamics and in professional representations.

vIn the first section, we define the different kinds of knowledge conveyed during training courses and the stakes they raise for the trainers' professional development. In a second section, we describe the main methodological elements of our research. Finally, our results are presented, showing the place and role of the knowledge transmitted by trainers in the representations they have about their own profession.

TRAINERS AND TRAINING KNOWLEDGE: CONTEXT AND PSYCHO-SOCIOLOGICAL ISSUES

As mentioned previously, the trainers' professional development is related to the promulgation of learning in our "society of knowledge". New work

and leisure social practices are related to an expansion of new, multiple, and changing knowledge. This "moving" specificity undermines the stability of knowledge which previously provided structure to professional activities. This fluidity of a major part of the knowledge needed for social integration has given birth to the idea of "training throughout life".

"Training knowledge" is a name we gave the various types of knowledge needed to improve and succeed in various social tasks: professional, domestic, artistic, parental, and associative. This "training knowledge" is in constant evolution because of its interconnection with technological, social, and economic practice changes, as well as with the evolution of theoretical thoughts. Trainers conceptualize "training knowledge" and then organize its transmission. They are generally in possession of this knowledge and teach it in a didactic way. Others are self-learning helpers.[3]

The value of knowledge, its recognition and classification, is one of the main concerns in our modern societies. Although it has always raised important ethical and political problems, it has become central for over 40 years, since the birth of our society of knowledge.

Training Knowledge, Dialogism between Theoretical Knowledge and Action Knowledge

Barbier's reflection (1996) situates "training knowledge" in connection with "theoretical knowledge" and with "knowledge of action", which can alternatively be either statements about a transformation of reality, or components of identity supposedly giving account of a transformation of reality.

As "social constructions" these two types of knowledge follow different "logics":

- Theoretical knowledge depends on recognized and institutionalized discipline logics. It is validated according to its degree of scientific or academic knowledge.
- Knowledge of action depends on a pragmatic logic. It is related to social practices. It is built according to experience (experience knowledge), and tries to rationalize the ways of acting (practical knowledge) with the material (know-how) or human (personal skills, social knowledge) environment.

"Training knowledge" is born from the need to connect these two logics. They thus take the form of a dialogism which trainers play out. The trainers have good experience of the real production activities they try to theorize. They also rely on theoretical knowledge for which they emphasize the practical repercussions. Training knowledge thus evolves according to this double movement of theorization of practices and application of theories.

Trainers have to elaborate an "intelligence of transitions between action and knowledge" (Barbier, 1996, op cit.). Therefore, they use functional

reference points framing this interplay between action and knowledge: activities and training reference systems, capacities and skills inventory, and transfer and transposition concepts. This development is mainly achieved thanks to the interactions with the adult trainees. On this subject, Trinquier (2005) talks about "alteration of trainers".

The "training knowledge" elaboration follows different standards: the efficiency of the various available knowledges of action, recognition of usable theoretical knowledge, and level of relevance between theory and practice. Depending on the types of institutions or training aims and means, different types of knowledge will be promoted or down-played.

"Training Knowledge" and Different Issues for Trainers

The construction and evolution of "training knowledge" is thus important for the trainers' professional development. The preliminary surveys we did before the start of our research show that:

- Defining the profession of "trainer" is relatively difficult (De Lescure, 2004) due to their close working cooperation with the companies, schools, or social work professionals.
- 85% of the trainers came into the training profession first after gaining professional experience where they acquired the skills they then translated into "training knowledge". However, 80% of them did not have any trainers' training and made this change in an intuitive way.

Finally, two training concepts have been in opposition to each other in France since the beginning of the 20th century: continuing education and vocational training. They give different objectives to training knowledge, respectively:

- individual emancipation and social progress through education throughout life; and
- the individuals' adaptation to working conditions through vocational training.

As underlined in the introduction, the second concept has taken the lead since the '80's, with training policies and subsidies focusing on employment.

"Training Knowledge" as an Object of Professional Representations

To determine whether an object is a professional representation object for a given professional group, we refer to the process suggested by Moliner (1996). This process allows us to determine if an object is a social representation

object for a given social group, the professional representation being indeed a special social representation. This enables us to define training knowledge as a genuine object of professional representation for adult trainers. We can indeed suggest that training knowledge is a polymorphic object, with multiple references. We also note that trainers do constitute a specific, although poorly structured, professional group. Moreover, training knowledge gives rise to a strong identity and social cohesion for the trainers. Finally, if as in France, orthodoxy impedes academic and scientific knowledge (French, history, mathematics, physics . . .), training knowledge, thanks to its aim at practical effectiveness and its characteristics of being between theoretical knowledge and knowledge of action, is not subjected to official authority control.

Regarding professional representations as a specific type of social representation, we will refer to Doise's theoretical proposals (1990). We consider the professional representation of training knowledge as a generating principle of standpoints relating to this object, linked to specific integrations in a set of social relations and organizing the symbolic processes taking place in these relations.

Consequently, we ask: which are the trainers' standpoints leading to representational regularities or variations in connection with training knowledge? Are these representational convergences or divergences linked to specific levels in the trainers' professionalism, that is, statuses, functions? Are they linked to the nature of the trainers' institutional frame? Are they linked to the evocation of other objects of the trainers' professional representations?

METHODOLOGY

As stated previously, we compared the data collected in three published researches (see previously). We then questioned three samples of trainers on various objects in their professional world, including training knowledge. In 1997, 134 trainers from the Midi-Pyrénées region answered our questionnaire and 15 trainers granted us an interview. In 2000, we analyzed 92 professional reports of trainers in vocational training. We then crossed this analysis with an observation over 15 methodological follow-up sessions with a group of these trainers. These two studies examined the trainers' practices, identities, and professional representations.

Finally, in 2004, we analyzed the answers given by 357 trainers to a questionnaire about their professional representations and their expectations concerning trainers' training. This sample is representative of the Midi-Pyrénées trainers and the research was financed by the regional council (Conseil Régional de Midi-Pyrénées).

These analyses were carried out using the statistical processing software for textual data "Alceste" (Reinert, 1987) which uses Chi2 as a basic statistical

test. This software helped us to highlight various classes of discourse in the interviews and various associated classes of answers in the questionnaires (downward hierarchical classification process—*CHD* in French).

For this contribution, we have extracted from these three researches the representational elements involving the different types of training knowledge, their origin, nature, aims, the way trainers conceive them, and what didactic methods they implement. In the interviews, we focused on the place taken by training knowledge in these trainers' identity dynamics, and finally on what they think of its value and relevance: usefulness for insertion and complementarities with other kind of knowledge.

During this comparative analysis of 7 years of research, we highlighted two convergent aspects and a series of four categories of divergent discourses. We regarded as convergent, types of answers given by more than 75% of trainers, and about which the remaining 25% did not express contradictory suggestions. The divergent discourses are not always exclusive to one another. Some trainers had indeed two or even three different types of discourse about training knowledge. The percentage of questioned trainers who fit into the various types of choices exceeds 100% due to multiple discursive choices.

First, the convergent representational aspects are presented, then the divergent ones.

TRAINERS AND TRAINING KNOWLEDGE, STATE OF REPRESENTATIONS

In the trainers' discourses about training knowledge, two convergent elements were highlighted.

The first concerns the "pedagogic" nature of their relation to this knowledge. This term is here to be understood in the broad sense, described by Durkheim (1922), of "practical theory" enabling one to formalize and improve the transmission activities of knowledge. Trainers talk about pedagogy to describe their activities of preparation, implementation, or evaluation of this knowledge transmission, and also to describe the relations they have when working with their trainees.

Second, the consensual element: When describing their practices of knowledge transmission, the trainers refuse to be compared to teachers. Denying the efficiency of school methods they tend to caricature, they try to implement with trainees other types of teaching to facilitate a new relation to knowledge, often marred by bad memories of a difficult schooling. They also stress that, as opposed to school knowledge, generally only given under its theoretical aspect, training knowledge must be connected to practices and serve social and professional integration.

We found only those two consensual representational elements. They bring up special types of practices in relation to knowledge. They also have

an identity nature. Indeed, the trainers insist on the specificity of the education and the pragmatic relation they have with knowledge. They thus think that they constitute a specific occupational group different from social work or company management professionals, considered to be too distant from educational considerations, and from school teachers who are too distant from the socio-professional aims of insertion.

Regarding the representational divergences, the main category highlighted by our comparative analysis differentiates the trainers' standpoints according to the "distance to knowledge" criterion:

- For some trainers, the transmission of training knowledge is the main and daily core of their practices towards teaching adults. These practices have a didactic nature. However, two different types of representations can describe these didactic practices. These orientations are related to the type of training knowledge and to the training aims. We called them "application orientation" and "explanation orientation".
- For other trainers, training knowledge is integrated into broader training functions, that is, the design and implementation of training courses (engineering orientation), or working with adults in difficulty (support orientation).[4]

DIDACTIC DIMENSION OF TRAINING KNOWLEDGE: TWO REPRESENTATIONAL ORIENTATIONS

The Application Orientation

In this first type of discourse, the main topic refers to the technical knowledge application. It is the most frequent representation orientation and it can be found in 47% of discourses. The training knowledge mentioned here is listed in reference systems under a double aspect, that is, practical (activities reference systems) and theoretical (training reference systems). They are then split into procedures to be applied.

The trainer starts the apprentices' training process with exercises, practical situations, role playing, and simulations. He presents application models the trainees should imitate. If necessary, he will explain the theoretical bases and action schemes.

There is a particular form of bond between knowledge of action and theoretical knowledge dominated by theoretical knowledge application. The training goal is the success of the activity in terms of "capacities", "know-how", "competences", and "skills".

In this representation register, the trainer's practices depend on "technical" references, that is, training and communication techniques, training or evaluation "tools".

The training knowledge mentioned here plays a strong part in the trainers' identity, who considers themselves as technical specialists. They work within initial and vocational training organizations.

The Explanation Orientation

For the discourses gathered in this second, less frequent, orientation (26% of the questioned trainers), training knowledge initially covers teaching and possibly research disciplines such as languages and arts disciplines, mathematical and scientific disciplines and art. A comprehension of the types of logic which structure training knowledge is of utmost importance here. The trainers create situations to facilitate an explanation.

We find here a second form of bond between theoretical knowledge and knowledge of action, the latter being used to illustrate theoretical knowledge. Exercises are intended to feed reflection upon the meaning, logic, and rules found behind the knowledge being taught. They are means for a better understanding.

The knowledge mentioned above is also at the core of these trainers' identity dynamics, who present themselves as specialists in a specific discipline.

They work in higher education, or within organizations fighting against illiteracy. They also can be found in training organizations where they deal with "general culture". To synthesize this first category of representations, training knowledge is the essential element of these trainers' identities and professional practices. Training knowledge is used to formalize, for most trainers, professional technical capacities, and for others, specialized disciplinary knowledge.

THE PLACE OF TRAINING KNOWLEDGE IN COURSE DESIGN AND SUPPORT FOR TRAINEES

In this second category of discourse, training knowledge is less central. It is only one professional function among several. Two kinds of trainers are concerned here: either they implement and coordinate training courses (engineering orientation), or they deal with adults being a long way from social integration (support orientation).

The "Engineering" Orientation

The discourses structuring this orientation integrate terms such as "resources, expertise, audit, coordination". They concern 28% of the trainers. Compared with the previous orientations, training knowledge is put here into perspective. It is, in a way, a product, seen from "outside", only identified by a title, that is, "Sales techniques" or "company

communication". The main objective here is to recognize this knowledge as relevant for insertion. Great attention is paid to the acquisition of new knowledge and the elimination of obsolete ones. This representation orientation mainly relies on the ideas of

- complementarities in the training course between different types of knowledge, that is, theoretical, technical, experimental;
- connection between this knowledge and the training's general aims; and
- constitution of an original program by developing new or specific knowledge.

The trainers pertaining this discourse hold administrative and accounting functions. They coordinate teams of trainers, or are training advisers or consultants for companies. They work in large training organisations where they are generally specialized in these functions, or in small organizations (less than 20 trainers), where they have a double responsibility in executing and managing training.

The "Support" Orientation

The main characteristic of "support orientation" is putting knowledge in balance with the difficulties the trainees have in becoming socially integrated. This concerns 38% of trainers. Here, training knowledge is a means to eliminate exclusion. These trainers deal with people with social, economic, or psychological difficulties. Their first aim is to listen to these adults in training: what they expect and what they need. These training courses have eloquent names: "pre-qualification", relaunching, reclassification, reintegration, or "back to work".

   Knowledge here is used on request for a main objective: start individual construction towards a social integration project. Social knowledge (knowledge of action) is central here: knowing how to express oneself, to come in contact, to present oneself, to sell oneself, to listen, to reformulate, and to dialog. Close to social workers, these trainers assert their specificities: by their long lasting involvement in a specific professional branch, they help these adults in temporary difficulty

- to feel confident again;
- to develop acquired skills; and
- to be in contact with some working organizations and anticipate the additional trainings they will need for their future insertion.

In conclusion, for this second category of representations, the topic of training knowledge is integrated here into professional functions which initially have humanist or administrative and economic priorities. Training knowledge is considered under their future utility or accessibility angle.

CONCLUSION

Our contribution shows that trainers insist on the specificity of their practices in knowledge transmission. This specificity differentiates their identity from other professional branches such as teaching, management, or social work.

In addition, trainers associate training knowledge with the insertion aims of the training resources with which they are involved. Most trainers transmit technical knowledge, others teach a more cultural knowledge. Also, technical knowledge representations are related to the trainers' functions within those training resources. We also show that the training knowledge representation is in interdependence with a whole set of professional or social representations: representation of training, representation of company and professional techniques, representation of culture, representation of courses and training levels, representation of the trainees' social characteristics, and representation of competence. All these interactive professional objects create a broad socio-professional field of adults' trainers.

Until now, there have been only few researches on adults' trainers. Some authors even question the specificity of a trainer's trade. Our contribution shows that, in connection with the knowledge they transmit, trainers have, indeed, divergent points of view. However these points of view are not exclusive of one another and show a relative cohesion between the various trainers' functions. These divergences are more related to the social context evolutions than to the trainers' various institutional origins. Moreover, trainers are in agreement on certain essential points of their professionalism, that is, their teaching (not school teaching!) skills.

We think that the profession of trainer is in the process of being built. Its construction is a difficult one because trainers are confronted with fast evolving knowledge in multiple intervention fields and very few of them have followed a trainers' vocational training. However, training for trainers has become more structured in the most recent years, especially at the university, thanks to the local authorities' request. We hope for an expansion of research into the trainers' professional development.

NOTES

1. A collective labor agreement for trainers has been signed in 1988, followed by implementing decrees in 1994.
2. For example, over the last 40 years, French trainers have been episodically named under various appellations: self-learning helper, monitor, coordinator, teacher, contributor, training agent, accompanying person, coach, training councillor.
3. This term has been promoted by Carré (1992).
4. These various functions of knowledge transmission, organization, and help coexist in some training organizations and a third (31%) of the questioned trainers swap between those functions on a regular basis.

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12 Training and Ruptures

Christine Mias

INTRODUCTION

Training *in* Research, Training *through* Research

In this chapter, I wish to present some reflections on my teaching experience in a training program called the DHEPS, Diploma of Advanced Studies in Social Practices[1].

These two expressions—training in research and training through research—seem to sum up two separate logics: one of thinking and one of doing. Are these indeed antagonistic, each excluding the other within an approach to training?

The first expression, training *in* research, gives the trainee a perspective of controlled production of knowledge and is centered, by definition, on the approved construction of an object of research (in the inter-relation between a problem, a methodology and a research field). To be trained in research implies obeying, to some extent, special rules, known as fundamental: references to an accepted theoretical framework, use of a designed methodology, production of knowledge, inclusion of research results in the public scientific arena. The trainee also agrees to take distance, to be critical, to break with the obvious facts encountered through experience. (Thus, beginning a training course in research implies rupture, a concept that will be discussed later in this chapter.)

This set of procedures and methods, stating what *doing a (research) study* means, must be distinguished from *being in research*, which has more to do with the process of being trained *through* research. In this case, there is an intention aimed at the action itself and the transformation of the trainees' practices through changing their vision of reality, and possibly, in addition, an intention to strengthen their conception of the world, which requires yet another rupture.

These two orientations undoubtedly share the characteristic of intellectual curiosity, but the first will privilege a theoretical orientation and the second a praxeological orientation. These are two different forms of

knowledge: scientific knowledge aimed at the production of new knowledge, and strategic knowledge aimed at answering questions (or solving problems) brought up directly by action.

DHEPS trainees come from different professional backgrounds: social workers, trade unionists, public authority decision makers, music and theatre professionals, public service employees, and also unemployed people who have in some cases quit their jobs. As actors or witnesses of work experiences, most of them protest against the perceived importance of socio-economic and political stakes which neglect, according to them, more humanistic individual expectations.

They are in (re)search, so to speak, of a social ideal. Referring to Alain Pessin's remarks about anomy, or social instability and social alienation, and adapting them for the current purpose of this paper, these "individuals suffer the shock [of social disqualification] because they find themselves located, within the distribution of social roles, in places where the break in time is sharper, quicker, inescapable and radical." This position leads them to experience or take into account "the manifestation of marginalization where collective pressure leads to unbearable situations, which needs to be expressed in a new way through creation or action. These social conditions create an individual openness to the unknown" (Pessin, 2001, p. 35). This is yet another form of rupture.

DHEPS AND LEVELS OF RUPTURE

Before discussing in detail the various forms of rupture I have presented previously, I will provide a definition of rupture[2]. This term is often associated with a brutal breaking up, a tearing, a dissension, a fracture, or even an abrupt change. The desire to be trained is not always related to such violent action; nevertheless, it implies the general idea that passage from one state to another requires a break, a distancing of oneself from a previous state. It is less well known that 'rupture' gave rise to another term through the phonetic evolution of popular Latin: "rotura", meaning "turned over, cleared ground" and, later, "newly cleared"[3]. I wish to underline the fact that this term (rotura) allows for a passage from one state to another while developing and aiding the acquisition of another form of culture, in other words, another form of knowledge related to transformations of previous representations.

The DHEPS students' entry into training could thus be described as involving the need to tidy up their previous knowledge in order to produce another form of it. Let us go back, however, to the different levels of rupture that I would like to distinguish: What distinctions may be made between these two different levels of rupture? Could these levels constitute material for the training-actors' reflection?

Rupture with Conventions and Socio-Cultural and Political Norms

The first level of rupture comes before training and in fact causes it. As underlined previously, most students engaged in a DHEPS disapprove of their socio-political environment. Their militant journeys, their desires and claims for a "more just world", and for an organization of the city in conformity with humanistic aspirations, lead them to dream of a social transformation which they agree to describe as utopian. But they want a lived utopia, an active utopia, a practiced utopia (as H. Desroche said) requiring rigor and content.

This Utopia is based on "*the idea that to change life, there must be a redefinition of the social bond, the world democracy having to be resolutely taken in charge by people connecting in a new* way—mainly *in* networks—no *longer by local groups but by people of the world*" (Pessin, 2001, p. 17). It is time to take a fresh look at the city, social issues, and social bonds, and this must be done before one begins the training, as change for a better world first requires rupture with the establishment. Their Utopia "*is initially an intimate protest against the sequencing of facts. It is an opening (. . .) to new realities needing an act of rupture to happen*" (Pessin, 2001, p. 29).

A. Pessin thinks that this capacity of rupture can be achieved if a man's imaginative world is left free to grow in order to let his "*spirit take off*". Relying deeply on the works of G. Bachelard and G. Durand, the author insists on the validity of the imaginative world not as a possible fantasy but as a power able to structure the individual. "*Against the man who struggles against need, connecting chains from cause to effect, building systems of ideas and machines to reduce the world to his will, we must build an imagining man, able to invent universes, to amplify experiment, to expand life*" (Pesssin, 2001, p. 30). G. Bachelard underlines that "*to imagine means to go away, to go deeper into a new life*" (Pessin, 2001, p. 31).

I do not aim to expand further on Utopia, but this concept, together with the idea of the imaginary, seems to be congruent with the DHEPS training. People register for a DHEPS because they experience a near ideological rupture with the world in which they evolve, because they become de-socialized (in a different way from that which they will experience during the training). They wish to invent new alternatives. The search for new possibilities requires an ideological uprooting or a distancing with respect to temporarily overcome ideals. There is hope to create and realize new ideals by once again controlling one's own life.

As we will see later, the various levels of rupture are very close to one another and even fuel one another. It is important to locate this first level of rupture, however, at the pre-formative stage. The protagonists need it to nourish their desire for research, to feed their desire to understand why they disqualify the social world to a point where they cannot find their place in it anymore.

The students come to the training with the aim to change their social reality. The first stage of the DHEPS gives the trainees an opportunity to produce an "autobiography of reasons". In small groups, each student explains the kind of questioning that led him/her to resume his/her studies. The aim of this autobiography is to discover links between a student's personal, professional, associative, and affective journeys and his/her future object of research.

Such a tool provides a first glimpse of the researcher's personal involvement in his/her upcoming research: At the beginning of training the students want to clarify their practices and even suggest some changes in practice, so the subjects they select in their autobiographies reflect these preoccupations. This stage is an important precondition for the development of the future research report. By relying on past experience and at the same time taking into account the concerns of the present, this stage will also bring the 3-year course into a broader perspective and thus reduce the risks of confusion. In this first split between research and action, the trainees need to take distance such that *it becomes possible to overlay thinking on action and even sometimes to stop a now obsolete action and pull oneself together over a new action yet to be discovered* (Desroche, 1990).

Desroche thus proposed considering the construction of a DHEPS research as a "maieutic mental exercise" whose first stage is described as "maieutic mental childbirth", that is, going from action to research and from experience to expression. The question is to change this experience into a project based on scientific validity, the final objective being to change a protagonist into an author. This is when the autobiography of reasons starts, and we think that it should be continued throughout the training course.

The following two kinds of rupture are closely related. They are concomitant during the course, but they should be distinguished in the training process because they are based on two different kinds of knowledge.

Epistemological Rupture

"The scientific spirit" Bachelard says, "must be formed against Nature, against what is, inside and outside of us, the impulse and the instruction of Nature, against the natural drive, the exceptional event" (Bachelard, 1934/2003, p. 28). This is another level of rupture and another form of de-socialization: learning to unlearn.

The DHEPS apprentice-researchers begin training in research. (The writing of a research report to be presented at the end of the three years training is indispensable.) Thus, they are obviously very quickly torn between their knowledge of action and the knowledge to "unlearn" which will be given to them, between the know-how acquired in their daily professional (or personal, associative, etc.) lives and the need to cope with scientific rigor, to turn their backs on their experience-assets to learn other skills.

According to Ardoino (2000), the researcher is defined above all by his explicit intentionality, by his project to produce knowledge, matched, however, by the strategic and methodological means he intends to use to achieve his goal. In his view, although repercussions or deferred effects of knowledge involve consequences for action, allow its possible optimization, and incidentally influence political choices, it is never the principal aim of such a process, but at the most an added and appreciable benefit.

At the beginning of the training, there is probably an explicit intentionality. It is nevertheless largely inspired by the action plan. Self-education is a strong point in the resumption of adult studies, that is, experience in a trade, professional life, travels, action, observations, or militant commitment in local or global projects. This intentionality is a privileged point of view, to some extent, and an inside knowledge which implies a form of understanding. Nevertheless, in a scientific field, explanations cannot rely on personal experience but require proof, heuristic projections, a chosen and clear approach, and confrontation with the broader scientific community. These guarantee the logic of research: Doing research is not the same as simply researching or studying something. To do research doesn't necessarily mean to discover something, but to learn how to produce and construct a fraction of social reality differently (even if the object of research is familiar, or "known from the inside"). While the expert continues to broaden his knowledge (read: know-how) to respond to the requests of his/her beneficiaries as quickly as possible, the researcher must first deconstruct, grope, erase, even fail, in order to better explain and understand. The researcher gives descriptions and explanations, but does not seek to directly produce useful action, whereas the expert seeks above all efficiency. The researcher speaks in doubt; the expert speaks with certainty towards a specific action.

We note here an opposition between the expert's relationship with time (still very important at the beginning of training) and the researcher's. The expert has to make quick decisions, deal with problems, often act with urgency and be rapidly efficient. The researcher, on the other hand, must give him/herself time in order to better exploit observations, build hypotheses and models step by step, confront his/her ideas with the research field, and re-work his/her ideas again. But, even though it is not possible to let action-time (i.e., time as experienced by the expert) encroach on research-time, the latter (for the students) is still impinged upon by deadlines or targets—those of the time allotted to training.

Still working from Deroche's model, we can say that this stage, within the framework of training in research, is a "maieutic mental support": To have a better sense of one's research is to try to understand the emotional and cognitive construction that is being built, and it is the role of the research director to support this step. Desroche (1990) says in substance that the work of study and research will be all the more successful if it is done within a framework of rules and constraints, in a controlled tension

between social and research practice, because we can only put pressure on that which resists. Within such a framework, people can exchange, agree, question, be stimulated and share. Group work is very important because, although research is a solitary enterprise, it is also nevertheless achieved through solidarity. Other important points to stress in this training are the emphasis on the dynamics of the training group (approximately 15 students per year) and on the interactivity in the exchanges during courses and during co-operative workshops where each student presents the progress of his/her work to the others.

Although a student's privileged relationship with his/her research director is very important, the group itself is also a major element in the pedagogy, for it serves as mediator for this further form of de-socializing rupture. The task of distancing is thus realized through the student's personal work on his/her implication and his/her active participation with the others.

Rupture with Socio-Professional Meaning and Knowledge

The second level of rupture which has just been mentioned about training *in* research is parallel to another level which applies to training *through* research. This level of rupture can be found in the renegotiation of meanings: the meaning (so far) of one's actions, the meaning one gives to the course of one's professional career, the meaning one ascribes to one's personal path, etc. If professional training exists, this is because it is fed by the whole of the phenomena of ruptures or discontinuity in professional careers (Santelmann, 2001, p. 23)—careers which need to be resumed on the basis of new knowledge and experiences to give them new meaning and direction.

Consequently, the subject in training

> *builds himself while working. (. . .) This capacity of self-authorization—a progressive and continuous creation of self that originates in social and personal interconnected aspects that are constituted by both conscious intentionality and unconscious perlaborations—is the most representative object of an educational praxis. It is said to be creative and can also be distinguished from the acceptance of conformity and, therefore, from the tendency to simply reproduce which characterizes artificial social practice defined solely by professional, strategic and technical values.* (Ardoino, 2000, p. 63)

Creation and imagination induce another register of thinking and doing, a breaking away from professional reflexes and going beyond simple judgments about one's actions and the actions of others. The student's evolution throughout the training course requires an inversion of the normal, every-day way of thinking in order to aim at scientific knowledge (as noted previously) and also at a more operational and strategic knowledge, the

function of which is to reconsider or re-think action. This cannot be done without a better knowledge of oneself and of one's aspirations. Social practices and their reconstruction (as often desired by DHEPS students) are first imagined and projected, but they cannot be realized before they have been thought through and their feasibility tested.

In this process of training *through* research, the difficulty lies in maintaining a balance between these two ways of thinking, or two logics, while not abandoning either of them. Social and scientific thought generate two different kinds of knowledge. Neither is inferior to the other, but they follow different logics, and a gap is created between them (at the levels of both action and self-knowledge); a clearing up is thus needed. *"Indeed, ordinary thought is influenced by scientific knowledge, but it makes a methodical selection in accordance with its own cognitive and discursive practices. The man of the street is not a passive consumer of scientific theories; he is an active producer of knowledge"* (Stoczkowski, 2002, p. 47).

One of the effects of the training is this mental work of renegotiating meanings, which changes the students' usual representations and also aims at praxeological knowledge. Redefinition of rich and multiple common sense concepts entails their semantic impoverishment, but nevertheless they must still have meanings that accord with former experience. The trainee will validate his/her course if he/she can establish a bond between his/her new experiences (building new representations) and his/her prior experiences, which convey previous representations related to his/her psychosocial history. This work of establishing such a bond is amplified *"by a mental activity functioning as a validation process of this new experience (. . .) thanks to the previous experiences providing representations that the student regards as desirable for himself"* (Barbier, 2000, pp. 69–70). In other words, in order for an individual to have access to the sense of the research that he/she undertakes during training, it is necessary that he/she be able to approach what he/she is doing now (the new) to what he/she has known before—a bringing together of experiences that could be translated by the everyday expression, "It has to make sense." This work directed toward the self requires that the new ways of looking at the world—the transformations or evolutions of the representations—are in tune with previous experience. The work upon the self is also accompanied by a renegotiation of identity and may consequently cause emotions which in turn affect the representations. It is the link between these different representational elements that contributes to the construction of meaning.

While training *in* research privileges an acquisition of know-how and assimilation of knowledge in a very coded way, training *through* research certainly aims at personal development based upon capacities for listening and analysis which can be reinvested in a new form of action. This raises the question of the utility of knowledge that is asserted by researchers. It ties up with what H. Desroche described in the last stage of his maieutic

mental transition as "maieutic mental elaboration", that is, negotiating, after research, knowledge's reinvestment into action.

CONCLUSION

In the DHEPS training, at least three kinds of rupture can be seen at different levels:

- A rupture with socio-cultural and political standards triggering the start of research, originating in ideological disenchantment and rejection of the socio-economic environment, carrying a desire for social change through the realization of a practiced and non-fanciful Utopia: *"those who live an adventure, try to catch up with their own lives, to regain control of their lives, those who are overcome by history and who come out of all revolutions (large or small, economic and political) dispossessed and marginalized "* (Pessin, 2001, p. 33).
- An epistemological rupture, inevitable within the framework of training in research, but which is for the DHEPS public more of a learning experience than a decision, as this rupture is not imposed but, rather, learned. It is a *search for explanation* (about the action but without it), as H. Desroche puts it.
- A rupture with "ordinary" meaning concerning training *by, or through,* research and *for* research and allowing the accomplishment of oneself and of one's project. It is a *search for involvement* (research through action) and a *search for implementation* (research for action).

The rupture—or more precisely, the ruptures—we have evoked in this chapter are loaded with knowledge having different aims and they can be considered, in the desocialization experiences they carry, as real instruments of knowledge: knowledge of the world, scientific knowledge, and self-knowledge—an opening to a new dimension through a revisited socialization.

At this stage, the previous remarks could be considered as referring to an aim almost exclusively centered on individuals in an *isolated* training program. What I have done is to report representations firmly fixed in the minds of individuals in general. The aim of the training program is to transform these representations. To refer to the works of S. Moscovici, it has been established that representations are shared knowledge, collectively constructed within social interactions (such as linguistic interactions), and this is why it is useful to return to the collective dimension of training.

The DHEPS's clear training ambition is to be a space permitting the trainees (most of them professionals) to move beyond their isolation and to contribute to collective constructions of *common systems of action*

references. This construction permits the consideration of a large number of perspectives and their heterogeneity when conceptualizing and working out training contents. It is interesting to note that "conflicts" between individuals (i.e., intra-professional, as when looking at intra-individual functioning within professional teams) often stem from a "false" sharing of values that are nevertheless declared common because of confused objectives, each person believing he/she holds the correct operative translation of the action to take.

In consequence, this training framework clearly calls for work *in* groups and *on* groups and ascribes to a Lewinian approach to the dynamics of groups. I think, in fact, that the group is a very important element in the training course. By doing an autobiography within the group, one builds the foundations of the collective work that is to follow in the collective workshops.[4] The group is considered as an instance of mediation, like a third part in which each individual can claim his place and also cooperate to work out a collective dynamic.[5] Considering what has been said previously about the different types of rupture experienced by individuals (ideological, sociopolitical, professional, etc.), the fundamental objective is to help individuals to rid themselves of established positions that seem uncomfortable (even unbearable) to them to allow them to access another level: a change from the present level to the desired level (Lewin, 1959). The change expected here is that of a change of view concerning obvious facts and about one's interior knowledge: According to Kohn and Nègre (1991), each change of point of view supposes a change related to earlier perceptive behaviors: change in the relation between the observer and his environment, change in the relation between the observer and himself. The observer cannot avoid 'taking a stand' and 'a new stand'. As the works of Lewin have demonstrated, to achieve the objective of stable, permanent and successful change is a question of considering three aspects: *the decrystallization, the displacement towards a new level, and the crystallization of the group's life at this level* (Lewin, 1959). Although Lewin's works mainly treated change of social habits (like food habits), we may still point out that social and/or professional customs and uses confer on individuals habits that are not always deemed desirable. A change in the process of questioning during the training is expected, and the training will be even more successful since confidence will be established through confrontation with others, adherence to the group and active participation of different partners.

The pedagogical conception of the training, in its individual and collective approach, leads us to believe that it offers the trainee precious possibilities for the invention of:

- a new meaning given to his/her understanding of his/her journey in the confrontation with others;
- reconstructed points of reference, wisely and profitably activated, which allow for a useful negotiation of the past without rejecting, but

rather by re-examining the values of which the trainee is bearer, in order not only to create a relational network/tissue of exchanges and socialities, but also to "subjectivate" his place in the socio-professional space; and

- the "rehabilitation" of a feeling of regained control, thanks to the realization of a research souvenir that situates the trainee, certainly in his own history and origins, but also in a much larger referential and cultural community, at the same time as it demands *surmounting the obstacles* and *the contradictions* that affect him and for developing a *control over self* and a *will of reaching beyond*.[6]

NOTES

1. This level II diploma gives official recognition to three years of studies after the defense of a research report in front of a board of university examiners and leads to the professional title of Manager of Social Projects and Studies.
2. From Latin *ruptura* : fracture.
3. In *Le dictionnaire historique de la langue française* edited by Alain Rey.
4. As P. Bourdieu emphasized in his last and posthumous book about the research team for which he was responsible, it is a matter of introduction of " . . . the logic concerning the rigorous and modest collective work, and the moral that goes together with it . . . " (Bourdieu, 2004, p. 32).
5. This is along the lines of J.-F. Six's comments on the role of the mediator, that the third is symbol. The third of the mediation is not a person of flesh and blood, but a symbolic referent and because of this extremely efficient (Six, 2002).
6. See what Malrieu (2003) says about the functions of "work".

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Part III
Socio-Cultural Contexts

13 Social Representations of Belonging in Pre-School Children's Peer-Cultures

Solveig Hägglund and Annica Löfdahl

INTRODUCTION

Over the last decades, the Swedish pre-school has been subject to several changes. As in the education system at large, an increased decentralization has taken place, leaving it to the local authorities to implement political strategies and to attain goals according to the national curricula. Pre-school has had its own curriculum since 1998. A strong emphasis on serving the parents´ need of child care when at work has gradually been replaced by a stress on the pre-school as 'the children's pre-school' and by its organization as a place for learning and development where children themselves have the right and the ability to participate in educational activities. This is in line with an image of children as independent actors who are not only allowed, but also expected, to take responsibility for and influence their own everyday life, including how to make sense of and handle social and moral values such as justice and equality. As in society at large, cultural and social diversity is a fundamental element in daily life in pre-school. Although more rarely studied than gender and social class, age is a well known concept for demarcating groups. Within the education system, due to the main task that is to be carried out there, age constitutes not only a concept for differentiation between age groups, but also a powerful concept for discriminating levels of competence and status. With this in mind, in this chapter we will illustrate and discuss how pre-school children communicate and practice meanings of age as a cultural and social resource for social categorization and belonging. Our main message is that the use of social meanings of age should be regarded as a key element in the children's construction of social representations of belonging, including their shared understanding of conditions for access to and exclusion from social space and power.

The empirical illustrations presented here are drawn from an ongoing study on stability and change in what we refer to as social knowledge domains among pre-school children. The purpose of the study is to deepen the knowledge of what processes and mechanisms are involved in children's shared constructions of social knowledge in pre-school settings over time. An integrated theoretical perspective, drawing on concepts from social

representation theory and childhood sociology, frames the study. A more detailed description of the project is given in Löfdahl (2005).

SOME COMMENTS ON THE PRESENCE OF AGE . . .

in Pre-school Tradition . . .

The Swedish pre-school, like other educational institutions, has a strong tradition of grouping children on the basis of age. The reasons for this are practical as well as pedagogical. From a historical perspective, there is a fundamental distinction between the crèches, established in the early 20th century for toddlers of 1–3 years of age, with their emphasis on caring, and the kindergarten, where education and fostering activities for children from the age of 4 were the main focus (Hultqvist, 1990). During the expansion period in the 1970s–1980s the pre-school institutions developed to also include after school care. The organization and activities were ruled by commissions and official reports according to which children should be separated into different activity settings according to age: toddler groups for children of 0–2 years, sibling groups for children of 2–7 ½ years, and extended sibling groups for children up to 12 years. Age-separated as well as age-mixed groups were recommended, but the value of regarding children's age as a group identity factor when planning for activities was emphasized (Socialstyrelsen, 1987; Swedish Ministry of Health and Social Affairs, 1972). This is in line with child centered practices in the developmental psychology tradition, according to which age is central for systematic observation and measurement of children's competences in relation to predetermined norms. This age-based, developmental paradigm has also been pertinent for the production of age differentiated instruments and tests (Burman, 1994; Cannella, 1997; Walkerdine, 1995). Ideas about age-mixed groups have had great impact on pre-school practices, and even though the ideology behind mixed ages is no longer articulated, it still shapes educational practices (Swedish Ministry of Education and Research, 1997). In the present national curriculum for the Swedish pre-school, age is not as salient as in earlier official documents. It is mentioned once, and in a way which does not explicitly direct activities into age segregation: "The pre-school should provide children with a well-balanced daily rhythm and environment related to their age and time spent in pre-school" (National Agency for Education, 1998, p. 7). When recent policy documents discuss and direct how to organize work related to issues on norms and values, other criteria for diversity than age seem to be in focus, such as length, weight, and living circumstances (Swedish Ministry of Education and Research, 1997). It seems as if age as a tool for separating children into homogenous groups has lost its importance in official documents of today. However, as age is a most powerful signifier of growth and development—major issues in the life and work of the pre-school institution—it is

unlikely to have lost its importance in children's efforts to make sense of the social and cultural dynamics of everyday life in pre-school.

and in Research

Age in itself is rarely the primary focus in current pre-school research but it quite often accompanies results where other issues are at hand. Summing up some of these results show that, after all, age is important in pre-school. Both children and adults use age as criteria for forming groups and distributing access to activities (Gulløv, 1998). Studies of gender segregation in children's activities report that this is more frequent among children of the same age groups (Thorne, 1993). Studies of power structures in peer-groups report older children's suggestions about play activities as being more accepted and listened to (Corsaro, 1985; Sawyer, 1997). Finally, in studies of children's play, age has been reported as a key tool in positioning and role casting (Löfdahl, 2002). These descriptions rarely present analyses of the specific importance of age; rather, the results concerning age are presented as 'bi-products' in research primarily focusing on play, gender, communication, or other issues. This may possibly reflect the paradigm shift during the latest decades during which developmental theories have lost their prominent position within research on children and childhood. In the place of developmental focus, social and cultural theories stressing children as social actors in context have come to the foreground. An important representative of this new paradigm is referred to as the new social studies of childhood. Thus age can be said to have lost not only empirical interest, but it has also been less elaborated as a theoretical concept for describing and understanding pre-school life compared to other categorical concepts such as gender, class, and ethnicity. One may argue that when the interest in age as a prognostic variable for individual change decreased, possibilities for studying age as a social category were overlooked. Nevertheless, some exceptions are to be found in research within the tradition of social constructionism. Forrester (2002) has suggested that age should be considered as a social co-construction, created by children in their every day talk and action. Further, Kelle (2001) has shown how the meaning of age-related concepts such as 'childish' and 'development' are socially constructed within peer-cultures. Finally, Mayall (2000, 2002) when introducing 'generationing' as a theoretical concept to denote the dynamic relationship between childhood and adulthood, she gives age a theoretically strong potential in studies aiming at understanding relations and interactions between children and adults.

THEORETICAL FRAMEWORKS

In the main study, childhood sociology and its view of childhood as a social category constitutes a major theoretical perspective (Mayall, 2002).

Further, we regard children's common constructions of systems of social knowledge, including conditions for relationships and belonging, as processes of the kind that Corsaro has referred to as interpretive reproduction (Corsaro, 2005). The knowledge systems as such, their content and function, we theoretically regard as social representations (Moscovici, 1984, 1998), thereby adding a social psychological perspective to the sociological one.

   Below we will briefly present these theoretical strands and relate them to the focus of this article: That is, how age is used as an active element in pre-school children's social construction of belonging, including their shared understanding of conditions for access to and exclusion from social space and power.

Childhood Sociology: Four Positions

As a primary outline of the theoretical landscape, an integrated model of four various perspectives on childhood is being used. James and James (2004), by developing a model first presented by James, Jenks, and Prout (1998), suggest four positions, offering a comprehensive theoretical conceptualization of children and childhood. According to the authors, the model offers a way to

> . . . conceptualise the dynamic and complex relation between childhood as a particular generational and cultural space, and children's actions as the occupants of that space; that children are social members of the category 'child' who, through their interactions and engagement with the adult world, help to form both the categorical identity of 'child' with which they are ascribed *and* the generational space of 'childhood' to which they belong; and that this relationship delineates the 'how' of the socialisation process. (James and James, 2004, p. 74)

In other words, the model includes what is common for all children as well as what is specifically typical for local settings and conditions. A central trait in the model is the assumption that there is a mutual relationship between children and the environment—at the same time as culture forms the child, s/he also contributes to cultural and social change. The four positions in the model are referred to as childhoods where the child (or childhoods) can be understood as (1) a social structural child/childhood as a socially structured category; (2) a socially constructed child/childhood as a social construction; 3) a minority group child/childhood as a minority category; and 4) a tribal child/childhood as a cultural tribe. It would be too much of a digression here to go into details of the descriptions of the four positions and their inter-relatedness. For the present purpose, we will limit further presentation of the model to comments about how age can be understood from the various positions.

In the perspective of a socially structured childhood, age is primarily a way to distinguish one category (childhood) from another (adulthood). Here, age simply legitimates segregation. In the second position where childhood and children are looked upon as socially constructed, age implies social dependency and relationship. Childhood and being a child means some kind of dependency in relation to adulthood and being a grown-up. In the third position, where childhood is regarded as a minority group, age means limited access to social and cultural (and political) resources, thus age has a discriminating function. Finally, when viewing age from the fourth position where childhood is looked upon as a cultural tribe, meanings of age are indirectly related to children as being segregated, dependent, and discriminated in relation to adults. However, in terms of how the positioning of a tribal childhood can be theoretically understood from the perspective of a peer-culture, we interpret the fourth position as being socially constructed by children who share this position and share the challenge to establish and maintain a meaningful daily existence.

Apart from the four positions, James and James introduce the concept ´Law´ in the model, which corresponds to formal and informal systems of culturally and socially determined rules, codes, values, and norms with relevance for how children and childhoods are looked upon and dealt with in a shifting time and space perspective. According to James and James, Law is a primary mechanism for social order:

> Law in this formulation is taken as one of the primary mechanisms for social ordering, comprising a system of principles and practices that underpin the social construction of a wide range of behaviours, attitudes, beliefs and relationships. It is Law that defines the rights and responsibilities of, and therefore the relationships between citizens in a given cultural and political context. It is Law, therefore, that also creates and sustains the regulatory framework that defines 'childhood' as a particular kind of collectivity, specific to a particular locale; and therefore it is also in and through the operation of Law that the everyday interactions that take place between adults and children are encapsulated, routinised and systematised. (James & James, 2004, p. 49)

Law may be seen as mediating norms and rules in interactions between members of a society and also between the state, institutions, and citizens. It contains norms, for example in relation to age, and is present in all four positions in the model. This way of understanding Law as regulating actions in a society according to rather homogenous patterns of thinking and acting, is similar to what underpins Corsaro's theory of interpretive reproduction. According to what Corsaro has suggested, children are assumed to bring abstract principles, values, and norms from the adult world into their peer-cultures within which they interpret and establish their local meanings. Through these processes, principles, and values are reproduced, but

modified and situated in accordance with demands and conditions in concrete peer-cultural contexts.

In our analyses, ongoing processes of interpretive reproduction are expected to form systems of social knowledge, common to a specific group of children who share their daily lives at pre-school. These systems contain, are formed by and form social representations.

Social Representations: Specific Forms of Knowledge

In literature on social representations, the social dimension of knowledge is emphasized as a central element in the theory. According to Flick (1998), the *social* in social representations is related to what is represented, to how they are constructed, and to their functions. Social representations thus concern shared rather than individual knowledge, they are constructed through social interaction rather than individual cognition, and their functions are described as "Sustaining the mutual agreement inside social groups and their dissociation from outside . . . " (Flick, 1998, p. 52). Social representations are described as forms of everyday knowledge, contributing to and supporting social identity among members in a group sharing their every-day lives. They serve to normalize and conventionalize communication and action in a group.

In our study, pre-school children's social representations of belonging are studied as social constructions of how to explain and handle social and cultural diversity in shared daily life at pre-school. We regard the children's social representations of belonging as a locally interpreted version of what may be identified as views of children and childhood in what James and James refer to as Law. Age, gender, and ethnicity are seen as general descriptors for diversity that are likely to be objects for constructions of locally decided interpretations among children. It is assumed that age will appear in social representations of belonging as it comes up in various situations at the pre-school, in verbal as well as in non-verbal communication, and in arranged play activities as well as in spontaneous interactions of other kinds.

Social Representations and the Tribal Position

Drawing from the model presented above, the tribal position can be seen as a position from which children make sense of social and cultural diversity within their own peer-groups. Concepts indicating universal and abstract meanings of age as occurring in the other positions, such as segregation, dependency in relation to others (adults or older children), and restricted access to activities, responsibilities, and spaces, are regarded as interpreted and integrated in social knowledge systems with concrete relevance for daily activities and routines. Social representations of belonging are continuously being constructed in these processes, serving as mediating actions

and interactions which confirm, establish, and change social knowledge systems in children's peer-cultures.

METHOD

The empirical study took part in a Swedish pre-school setting with children of 3 to 6 years of age. Observations were conducted in three periods over the school year, from August 2004 to June 2005. Observations were resumed during two months in the autumn of 2005 as the group of children changed. Eleven new 3- to 4-year-olds replaced the 6-year-olds after their move to regular schools. Data consists of field notes, video observations, formal and informal talks with the children about their activities, and joint time together in the pre-school. Ethical considerations were undertaken according to the ethical principles (information, consent, confidentiality, and conduct) as put forward by the Swedish Council of the Humanities and Social Sciences (Swedish Research Council, 2002). An ethnographic approach was used. Parents and teachers were formally asked to allow us to observe what was going on and to talk with the children. In order to gain access to the children´s activities we spent time to let them become acquainted with us and our equipment. (Corsaro & Molinari, 2000; Kampmann, 2000; Löfdahl, 2002). All participants were informed about the aim of our study, and teachers, parents, and children all gave their consent.

ANALYSES

Analyses are based on transcribed observations and talks with the children. Data was first encoded in the overarching theme 'positioning' and in a second step divided into overlapping sub-themes such as age, gender, and competence. Analyses carried out for the purpose of the present chapter were based on transcripts from data where references of age were being done. From these encoded sequences, the analyses were directed towards identifying and describing children's common use of the concept of age, for example, what kind of shared knowledge and attitudes about social meanings of age were revealed and how the children made use of age, their own as well as others'. The ethnographic approach means that we have access to data that were not the focal part of our study, a type of data sometimes referred to as 'prior ethnography' (Corsaro, 1985) or 'extended participation' (Lüders, 2004), and which is supposed to contribute to a broader understanding of the research questions. In our study such data consists of a marked attention to age in the physical environment, in pedagogical activities, and in the teachers' attitudes. For example, we noted birthday celebrations, age groupings, and physically positioning of the children.

The Pre-school Setting and Social Constructions of Age

As was mentioned previously, we have suggested three concepts, derived from James and James' model, as potentially directing the way age may be culturally interpreted and expressed in the children's daily communication and action in pre-school. These concepts are *segregation*, *dependency* and *discrimination*. We suggest that meanings of age as legitimating segregation, dependency, and discrimination do not appear from nowhere, but are embedded in pedagogical and administrative routines as carried out and decided upon by the adults in the pre-school setting. We also suggest that when we enter a pre-school setting, it is possible to discern shared social meanings of age in activities and communications. Thirdly, we suggest that both adults and children are involved in establishing and maintaining these meanings. Next we will give some examples of how this was observed in our field observations.

Age as an instrument for forming homogenous groups with distributed access to physical and social space was observed on several occasions. On one occasion, the 6-year-olds were leaving for a picnic and a 5-year-old girl commented, *"The bigger ones are going on a picnic."* When asked who 'the bigger ones' were, she replied, *"Those who have had a birthday. I'm not big, I'm small."* Knowledge about social diversity related to age was also expressed in the younger children's way of 'knowing one's place'. Obviously, it was natural for them to ask the older children for permission regarding props or to join an activity. Also, quite frequently activities were defined as being for adults or children only: another example of how age segregation and its social meaning were observed in the setting.

A number of observations can be related to the presence of meanings of age as expressed in socially constructed images of children and childhood with bearing on the relationship between children and adults, and the concept of dependency. Shared constructions of the child as being responsible, dependent, and unwanted are identified in the empirical material. For example, a view of the child as being responsible was expressed when the teacher left it up to the child to decide about the amount of food to eat, whether s/he should put sugar/salt on it or not, or whether s/he should finish the food or not. A common teacher comment was: *That's for you to decide!* A second image, the dependent child, reflects a child who does not understand. S/he is supervised by others, both adults and older children, and is dependent on others for help and support. When two 5-year-olds were discussing their experiences of being 4 years old, they agreed about why they hit each other at that time: It was because, they said, *"we didn't know any better"*. The unwanted child occurred in the communication between the children when they referred to a small child with whom they did not want any relationship. The small children should not be allowed to join the play, and they were named in unpleasant, belittling utterances like "toddler" ("pluttis" in Swedish). When children gave voice to the idea

that small children were unwanted and should not be around, the caring function of the pre-school tended to enter in the sense that an adult stepped in and took care of the small ones who were not accepted in the older children's activities.

A central implication of being small in the pre-school setting was that one is *not able to* and *not allowed to.* Generally speaking, children have fewer every-day-rights in the pre-school setting compared to adults. While adults can bring along a cup of coffee or use the computer at any time, children cannot do so without asking for permission. In the study, the primacy of age was expressed in that younger children lacked abilities to assist the youngest ones at the dinner table or in joint activities. When teachers chose to carry out certain activities themselves, such as preparing for painting pictures or making paper-dolls, this was also an expression of the young ones' not being able enough (read: old enough) to participate. It was observed that the older children took possession of spaces, props, and activities, referring to rules indicating that younger children were not allowed to because of their young age. Finally, the setting was often arranged in a way which kept small children from reaching material, such as crayons and paper, without asking for help.

Taken together, the described instances of using age as a means for legitimating and making sense of social segregation, (in)dependency, and discrimination may be seen as a common basis for how to act and communicate in relation to age in daily life at pre-school. The situations indicate the social power of age and its position in the culturally shared knowledge of social order. In the next section we will briefly illustrate how this knowledge is being used by the children.

Children's Use of Age as a Social and Cultural Resource

Our analyses show that age was being used as a social and cultural tool for segregating and discriminating peers. It seems as if this was particularly common in situations that called for marking social demarcations, for example, when one did not want to allow a younger child to join an activity, or when access to physical or social spaces was needed. In many sequences in our data, the children activated age to justify themselves and their legitimacy to make decisions, making it possible for them to obtain advantages or to exclude and ridicule those who were younger. It is interesting to note that we observed very few instances where age was used as a means to mark belonging or inclusion. Rather, age occurred when there was a need to legitimate exclusion and constraint access.

The children used age as a means to communicate to each other how old they were and, on the basis of this, to clarify who was in the position to make decisions. Being older, if only by a few hours (as was the case in a pair of twins in the study), was a decisive factor in establishing the power order. Birthday celebrations and mutual information about age served as marks and

were parts of frequent negotiations about access to and content of the children's play. The following example, where some girls are playing cats locked up in a cage and trying to get out, illustrates how age is activated and become a resource in the negotiation. (Children's ages within brackets.)

> Malin (4): Don' go out there.
> Sandra (4): I can do it.
> Malin: Yes, but you couldn't go out.
> Paula (3) Yes, I can.
> Malin: No, if you do—I won't join the play!

Sandra and Paula then climb up and get out of the cage, which makes Malin activate age in the continuing negotiation:

> Malin: Well, then I'll ask Emma, she can really be angry, she is five
>   years and I am four years.
> Sandra: And I am already four years.
> Paula: And I am so many years (showing three fingers).
> Malin: And I have already . . . four . . . two days, no three . . .
> Sandra: I have also had my third birthday.
> Malin: I have done like the adults.
> Paula: I am so many years (now showing four fingers).
> Malin: Four? You too?
> Sandra Have you had your fourth birthday?
> Malin: Yes, but only once.
> Sandra: Yes, she has.
>
> (October, 2004)

The example shows the importance of age for re-establishing and maintaining the social order. Sometimes it was not enough to refer to one's own age but references to older friends was needed to support one's position in the negotiations. Older peers were used directly, as in the example above, or indirectly, as when being friends with an older child may contribute to one's status. Age as a social and cultural resource was connected to strength and size. Integrated in the view of older children as being in a stronger position than younger ones, was the knowledge that bigger children were in a better position than small ones. For example, it was enough to remind or show one's older age in order to legitimate grabbing something from a smaller/younger child. Also, age was used as a means to permit ridiculing and making fun of younger children. This could be done in terms of, for example, humiliating phrases or by making ugly faces. In the example below, two 3-year-old girls talk about how the older girls act towards them:

> Ella (3): They tease us and tell us they are bigger.
> Paula (3): Mmm . . .

Annica (researcher):   Do they?

Paula: Yes!

Annica: How do they tease you?

Ella: They just say "we are bigger than you" (using an affected voice).

Paula: Yes, "you small tiny tots", and then they do like this . . . (She puts her hands to her ears and waves). That is how they do!

Annica: Okay.

Ella: Yes **. . .** (She shakes her head)—ugh!!

Paula: We don't want to.

Ella: No, ugh!!!

Paula: Then we leave.

(May, 2005)

A common example of how the older children used their position to humiliate the younger ones was to refer to young children's lacking verbal skills (pronunciation and articulation). Though their utterances were well understood by the older children, they repeated and copied what was said in a humiliating way, thereby making the younger ones both aware of their own weakness and of the older children's strength and power.

   The previous illustrations show how references to age were activated to obtain power in single situations. Data indicates that over time, children had developed shared norms and values linked to age, making it socially and culturally acceptable to exclude and humiliate someone younger. An interesting example of how children's shared knowledge of the social meaning of age could be expressed was observed during some initial months of the school year. A younger girl, also a newcomer in the group, was subject to the older girls' efforts to make clear that they were the ones to decide who could join activities and on what conditions. Sometimes the older girls declared conditions for joining that were impossible to fulfill, for example, demanding that she bring props that were not available or not allowed in the setting. We also noticed comments alluding to her young age such as *"you cannot swing as high as we can—sorry for you that you are not strong enough"* when she couldn't swing as high as the older girls in the playground. According to our data, children's visible use of age as a social and cultural resource seemed to be more frequent in the autumn, when new children entered the groups, compared to during observation periods in February and May when the groups were fairly established. We interpret this as an indication that social representations of age and its social implications are likely to appear during periods when the social ordering in the group is challenged. During other periods, social meanings of age are assumed to be integrated in activity patterns and interactions, and the need for making them explicit is not present to the same degree.

CONCLUSION

In this chapter we have presented an integrated theoretical perspective in order to shed some light on how children in pre-school settings construct shared meanings of age as a social and cultural resource in their common peer-culture. We have argued that a sociological model with various positions from which childhood can be considered can serve as a source for tracing concepts significant for understanding how this takes place. By introducing social representations as a theoretical concept at a social psychological level, we have linked the sociological model and its concepts to daily life in a pre-school setting. By doing so, we have been able to show how social knowledge about meanings of age may be formed and transformed through dynamic interaction in pre-school children's peer-cultures. We have suggested that much is left up to children themselves as they interpret and try to make sense of social meanings of age, but that traditions and routines in the pre-school culture also play a role in carrying these social meanings.

Initially, we were looking for social representations of belonging and their content. Along the journey we have come to realize that social representations of belonging are likely to contain social representations of age and that these, to a large extent, mediate social order in the pre-school peer cultures. We have also observed that social representations of age are likely to contain normative rules for social segregation and social discrimination, rules that to a large extent follow principles in the setting at large. The children's task to establish and maintain a peer-culture in a setting where age plays a major role for social categorizing and rewarding seems to be conducted in a way which may have been expected. Notably, the mediating function of social representations of age is rather to exclude than to include, and elements of diversity rather than similarity are stressed.

The concept of dependency we generated from James and James´ model has not been as visible in the children's interactions as segregation and discrimination. This is interesting, as it touches issues of the pre-school's caring function. Particularly in relation to children's social representations of age, it would be valuable to explore whether caring, in the children's perspective, is something just for the adults to do. We will not do this here, however. Instead we will conclude by arguing that the data we have presented illustrates children's ability to construct shared knowledge about social meanings of age, and that this is done in such a complex and dynamic way that there are reasons to call for further empirical and theoretical studies of children's social representations of age and other elements in their common understanding of what constitutes social belonging and diversity.

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14 Transformations of Risk Knowledge
The Medical Encounter and Patients' Narrative Construction of Meaning

Sonja Olin Lauritzen and Robert Ohlsson

INTRODUCTION

Today, there is a substantial interest within various social sciences in everyday understandings of health and illness. Some of this interest is oriented towards communication in the interface between the lay person's everyday world and the medical world. This communication can be understood as taking place at different levels: in face-to-face interaction between medical professionals and patients, when people access medical information on the internet or are exposed to popular versions of medical news in the media, in interaction with other patients in self-help groups or forums at the Internet, to mention just a few. Here, we take our point of departure in an understanding of the medical encounter, in its different forms, as a pedagogical situation where the person is provided with interpretations of her suffering as well as medical information which s/he will have to make sense of within the context of her everyday life. This process of sense-making involves a 're-presentation' of medical interpretations and information into something that can provide experiential coherence for the individual.

Importantly, the medical world that people encounter is not static but continuously changing as a result of development in medical knowledge, technology, and policy. One of the issues that people are increasingly being confronted with in contemporary Western medicine is the notion of risk.[1] In communication with the medical world, people are not only provided with a diagnosis and treatment, but also with estimates of risk for future illness. The healthy person can, for instance after screening or genetic counselling, be confronted with a risk estimate for an illness or disability that s/he has been completely unaware of. New diagnoses will appear in the world of medicine, and turn ailments hereto regarded as part of human life into a distinct illness with a particular prognosis. The person already suffering from an illness can be confronted with a risk concerning the future development and implications of her illness. The impact these developments in the medical world can have on people's everyday understandings of health and illness, and their future identities as healthy or ill persons, still need to be explored.

In this chapter, we will address the way people make sense of risk information that they have received in different kinds of medical encounters. More specifically, we will discuss how the construction of meaning of risk in relation to illness is framed by culturally shared knowledge and expectations, drawing on examples of patients' narrative accounts in two recent empirical studies of peoples' encounters with the medical world where issues of risk are raised.

NOTIONS OF RISK

Research into people's everyday notions of risk has not been limited to the cognitive aspects of risk-perception or risk-assessment, but has also dealt with risk as a social or cultural phenomenon. In her influential work, Mary Douglas (1966/1994) has analyzed risk from a cultural perspective in terms of danger and 'otherness' that are dealt with symbolically as 'pollution' and 'taboo', and also how risk is constructed as a breaching of conceptual boundaries, as anomalies and ambiguities that arise from cultural systems of classification (Douglas, 1992). A wide range of social science research has addressed questions concerning the meaning and understanding of risk in people's everyday lives (see Tulloch & Lupton, 2003, Lupton, 2005, and Gabe, 1995, for an overview). From this perspective, risk is a 'lived dimension of life' that cannot be reduced to a matter of how people can deal with information about probability, but rather refers to people's 'anxiety about the future, fear, or danger, that is, something emotionally highly charged that is threatening on a personal level: threats to one's welfare, well-being, health, maybe life' (Linell, Adelswärd, Sachs, Bredmar, & Lindstedt, 2002, p. 197).

Risk assessments have expanded to many areas in late modernity, particularly as related to health and illness. As risk in the medical world is calculated on an aggregate level and belongs to the world of probability, the lay person's re-contextualization of these medical representations of risk to the level of the self and the understanding of one's own health is of necessity difficult (Adelswärd & Sachs, 1996). The inherent message, for instance in screening, is that there is a 'small chance of a great misfortune' (de Swaan, 1990). The odds will be known to some extent, but rarely with great accuracy. As de Swaan argues, statistical probability has no experiential equivalent for the individual. Also, everyday understandings of risk include notions of randomness and luck (Davison, Frankel, & Smith, 1992). Individuals can be knowledgeable about health risks, but at the same time refer to people in their environment who live long lives in spite of 'risky behavior' or those who were struck by 'bad luck' in spite of having done all the right things (Davison, Frankel, & Smith, 1992). Furthermore, medical practice (such as screening, genetic testing, and the introduction of new diagnoses) imposes ideas of threat or risk, as well as control, and also

brings to the fore the individual's own responsibility for her future health (Olin Lauritzen & Sachs, 2001).

Research in this field thus indicates that people struggle to understand risk information, but also that they try to understand the *origin of risk* for bad health as located in the environment, in their lifestyles as well as in their bodies. Reference to risk generated by the environment has a long history, and here, we can mention the work of Claudine Herzlich (1973), who has demonstrated how people see their 'way of life' (where they are confronted with noise, pollution, stress, toxic substances, etc.) as something that puts them at risk for development of illness. Also, the meaning of risk in terms of the impact this will have for the person's *identity* has been studied. Joffe (1999, 2003) has looked at responses to AIDS, and found that these involved the forming of representations that distanced the self (and the group of healthy people) from the risk of AIDS; by linking the threat to 'the other' the representations of risk had an identity protective aspect.

So, everyday understanding of risk as related to health and illness involves transformations of biomedical representations of risk (at the level of the population) into representations of risk that people can integrate into their own everyday lives. In this process of transformation, people adopt different 'strategies' to try to grasp the possible origins (or causes), impact, and magnitude of the risk they are confronted with. In this chapter we will exemplify how this process can be explored in people's narratives of their encounters with the medical world. These narratives can be seen as a result of a representational activity where people are engaged in attempts to 'translate' expert knowledge into everyday understandings. In the next section we will discuss how social representations and narrative theories can contribute to this exploration of everyday understandings.

SOCIAL REPRESENTATIONS AND ILLNESS NARRATIVES

In social representation theory, representation is seen as an activity that is simultaneously individual and collective (Moscovici, 1984; Bauer & Gaskell, 1999; Marková, 2003). The individual is thereby linked to the social and, as opposed to being cognitive grids, social representations are characterized as social psychological phenomena that are 'embedded in communicative action' (Jovchelovitch, 2002, p. 131). The study of social representations therefore involves an examination of the creation, circulation, and elaboration of knowledge in everyday interactions.

The way social representations theory is concerned with understanding everyday knowledge is in many ways similar to the narrative psychologist's interest in how people make sense of the world (even if they might address different levels of analysis; Murray, 2002, p. 654). The narrative can be seen as fundamental mode of sense-making. People think, experience, fantasize, and take moral stances according to narrative structures (Bruner,

1986). According to Bruner, narrative is a basic mode of thought that can be contrasted with the 'paradigmatic' or 'logico-scientific' mode, 'each providing distinctive ways of ordering experience, of constructing reality' (Bruner, 1986, p. 11). Where the paradigmatic mode of thinking transcends the particular in its specific context and operates on an abstract or general level, the opposite movement is accomplished in the narrative mode where meaning is constructed by locating experience in time and space according to a different logic. Bruner refers to Paul Ricoeur as he argues that narrative is built upon concern for the human condition: 'stories reach sad or comic or absurd denouements, while theoretical arguments are simply conclusive or inconclusive' (Bruner, 1986, p. 14).

In the narrative, the experience of the individual is articulated in a narrative mode, drawing on shared symbolic *resources*: knowledge and cultural ideas that are available to the narrator, resources that we can speak about as social representations. To obtain experiential coherence, *time* is an important dimension (which has not been explored to any great extent in social representation theory). When constructing a narrative, we have to select and order events and episodes in a way that is temporally organized, so that one thing leads to the next, where 'emplotments' can provide an overarching structure for a series of events. The time dimension serves to bring order to disorder, and the fundamental structure of the narrative is temporal [although some illness narratives seem to lack a clear time dimension, as has been described by Frank (1995) in what he calls 'chaos stories']. Further, narratives are constructed in a *social and interpersonal context*, and oriented to the other in a rhetorical way: 'the narrator is attempting to convey the legitimacy of her story, to convince the listener' (Murray, 2002, p. 665). While the interpersonal setting is important in shaping the character of the narrative, this setting as well as the character of the narrative are in turn shaped by broader social representations (Murray, 2002, p. 667).

In recent years, the *illness narrative* has increasingly been used in research on people's experiences of illness and of medical encounters (Kleinman, 1988; Hydén, 1997). The illness narrative gives voice to illness experiences and suffering in the everyday world, in a way that lies outside the biomedical domain (Hydén, 1997, p. 49) and it can have several functions such as making the illness understandable, reconstructing the life history of the teller, and sharing and collectivizing the illness experience (Hydén, 1997). As Radley and Billig argue, 'accounts of health and illness are more than reporting of a mundane state of affairs, either external (what happened) or internal (as attitudes). Instead, they are expressive and constitutive of a way of being that is invoked in the telling about health and illness' (1996, p. 236). Illness narratives will thus tell us something about the experiences of the individual *and* about the social and cultural context and shared ideas about health and illness (Garro & Mattingly, 2000). In the construction of the narrative, the narrator draws on cultural or collective as well as more

locally shared representations. Also, the individual narrative is presented in accordance with socially constructed and shared narrative structures.[2]

The study of illness narratives can thus be an avenue to explore social representations of health, illness, and other related phenomena. In the next section we will look at the illness narratives from two empirical studies of people who, in different ways, are confronted with medical assessments and information implying that they are at risk. These people will have to make sense of medical concepts, information, and diagnostic categories that are based in medical science and communicated to them in medical encounters. In the narratives presented to the researcher after the medical encounter, these patients re-present the medical risk information in order to identify and understand the meaning and relevance of the risk they face in the context of their own lives. We will look more closely here at this process of re-presentation.

UNDERSTANDING RISK IDENTIFIED IN MEDICAL SCREENING

Our first example is from a recently conducted study of women's experiences of a new type of ultrasound screening (nuchal translucency screening) for Down syndrome in early pregnancy (Georgsson Öhman, Saltvedt, Waldenström, Grünewald, & Olin Lauritzen, 2006; Olin Lauritzen, Georgsson Öhman, & Saltvedt, 2007). The purpose of this study was to explore the meaning and significance of screening results that indicated a high risk for Down syndrome. Twenty women were interviewed about their experiences of the screening procedures and the high risk information they were given. Here, we want to look more specifically at how issues of health, illness, and risk surface in the women's narratives.

Each woman in this study had an ultrasound scan and then a conversation with a midwife who informed the woman, and her partner, about the result in terms of a risk score for Down syndrome.[3] In the interviews with the researcher after the medical encounter, the women accounted for how they tried to understand the high risk information and the meaning of the new situation they found themselves in—as possibly carrying a child with Down syndrome. In the following example, we will see how one of the women reflects on the high risk information:

> When we first saw those papers we didn't understand anything about the meaning of those figures, and then she (the midwife) explained that she had measured, measured the neck, she had measured the back and somehow multiplied with my age, the age of the foetus and come up with this risk that means 0.5 percent probability that something is wrong. So I think she was very nice and calm. But of course we started to raise a lot of questions. What is the most common, and how big does the risk have to be to be dangerous and things like that . . . "

This woman describes how she and her husband at first did not understand 'anything' of the medical information. Then, the midwife explained how she had carried out the measurements leading to the estimate of risk: what she had measured and how she had come up with the risk figure. This is immediately followed by an evaluation of how the midwife did this explaining (she was nice and calm). The woman goes on to talk about the midwife's way of explaining: 'she explained in a very good way'. One reason why it was good was that 'because she didn't give any direct answers' to the questions she and her husband raised about what the 'normal' figure should be and how big the risk had to be to be 'dangerous'. The midwife was 'fairly vague' in her answers, the woman says, but then argues that 'of course there aren't any answers'. So, the information was difficult to grasp but the midwife was nice.

Typically, the women talk about the way the midwife 'translates' the medical information, or rather, *tries* to translate the information, which is depicted as difficult. Even if the midwife tries to translate the information, it is still difficult for them as patients to quite understand. But in spite of these difficulties, the midwife, as the person they met in the medical encounter, is consistently depicted as 'nice' and somebody who does her best. Through their narratives, the accounts of questions and explanations are continuously intertwined with evaluations of the midwife's way of delivering the information. In their efforts to understand the high-risk information, the women would draw on different strategies. One was to try to *visualize* the high risk. One of the women who received a risk score of 1 to 219 argues in the following way:

> Imagine that you give birth to 219 babies—if you would have 219 babies, one of them would have this deviance. The risk is that you think about 219 mothers with babies in the street, so one of these babies would be, but that is not the case, you must not think like that, because that is wrong, it's supposed to be that if every individual gives birth to that number of babies, one of them will be born with (it), so I have tried to think more like that, or if you try to think of 219 things in front of you, you can count paving-stones in the street or something and try to understand. . . .

Here, we see how the woman tries to understand the risk figure by turning it into something concrete within an everyday context: actual mothers who give birth to babies or paving-stones in the street. Another strategy was to *compare* their own risk figure to other types of risk calculations:

> And if it concerned anything else, if somebody told me there is a 0.5 percent probability that you will miss your plane tomorrow, then I would have said, 'okay, my God, how good that I will not miss the plane', but when it comes to something important like this, it feel [sigh]

why couldn't it have been 0.05 or something like that, because it is so *important . . .*

The women sometimes compare risk figures to understand if their own risk score is 'high' or 'low'. For example, one woman thought her own risk score was not so high until she talked to another woman with a risk score of 1 to 3,000. They also made comparisons with risks of other illnesses or accidents that could happen. Importantly, when the women compared their risk estimates to other (non-Down syndrome) risk estimates, the risk information is recontextualized into an everyday context that is familiar to the individual woman.

  Furthermore, the women describe how they try to make sense of what the medical information *means* in the context of their lives. Typically, the women accounted for their own emotional reactions when they talked about risk scores. The midwife could have said that the risk was small, but it could still *feel* like a big risk. 'The risk was 0.5 per cent but it felt like a fifty-fifty chance and that was so tragic, I thought, terrible'. The sense-making thus involves strong emotions, as well as concerns about the future. Some of the women talk about themselves as from now on *belonging to a risk group*:

> I asked how high is this risk, and then she (the midwife) made a circle on a piece of paper, like this, and all those with a high risk around 300, she placed in a small circle in the middle, which I belonged to, and then I understood that even if the risk is not so high, you belong to a group with a higher risk than the average. . . .

Another typical pattern is the way the women elaborate on different *future scenarios*, scenarios with or without a child with Down syndrome. The woman in the next example says that she is convinced that she and her husband could cope with a Down syndrome child, 'if anybody should have such a baby it should be Henry and me'. But still, she argues that:

> Some days I am completely convinced that we will have a healthy baby, and then other days I think, my God, how is a child with Down syndrome going to cope with life in our society that is so individualistic, and how am I as a parent, or we as parents, going to cope with a child that will always be a child, even as grown up, that frightens me more, children will always demand a lot of time and presence from their parents, but as grown up they will be independent, but I am not sure a child with Down's syndrome will ever. It is these thoughts I have had. . . .

The risk information is here re-presented in terms of what this particular risk actually could mean in terms of the life of the individual woman. The woman comments that this is not something trivial (like missing a plane)

but something extremely important: It means that she will potentially have a disabled child and what that would mean to herself and her family in the future.

So, in their narratives, the women in this study account for their difficulties and strategies in trying to 'transform' and understand the risk information they were given in the medical encounter. But they also account for how the high risk information is understood in the context of their own lives as mothers, more precisely in the context of the moral responsibility for another being. Of particular interest is how in this process they describe different scenarios: scenarios of the expected baby as normal and healthy as well as scenarios of a termination of pregnancy in the near future or a future life as a mother of a disabled child. The high risk information is thus not only something that has to be understood in itself, it is placed within a wider life world context that is elaborated on in the women's narratives as they evolve through the series of interviews. Important aspects of this process are the ways the women re-contextualize the medical information into dimensions of time, future parenthood, and also the future wellbeing of the (potentially) disabled child.

IDENTIFICATION OF RISK FOLLOWING MENTAL ILLNESS

Our second example is from a study of representations of mental health and illness, where Sara, a woman in her 20s, was interviewed.[4] Sara has suffered from shyness throughout her life and 1 year before the interview she was diagnosed with social anxiety disorder at a psychiatric outpatient clinic. In the interview Sara says that she previously could not make sense of the problems that she experienced. But when she searched for information on the Internet about 'extreme shyness' she found a patient organization website about anxiety syndromes, where medical information was presented together with newspaper articles, and a forum where visitors presented their own experiences of anxiety and asked questions that other visitors replied to. Sara says that 'It felt good to find out what it was, not believing that one is mad or something, that there was a name for it and help to be found'. The information given at the website made it possible for Sara to represent her illness experiences in terms of a known specific and treatable mental disorder, instead of as signs of diffuse and threatening 'madness'. She felt reassured that 'it wasn't something wrong with my head' and learned that her condition was quite common, especially among young people. She also discovered that these kinds of problems can be successfully treated with cognitive behavior therapy, which the website describes as involving: 'to confront the problem and with support gradually get used to enduring situations that were previously painful'. She also learned that there is a genetic basis for the development of the disease.

In the interview, Sara's relation to the illness is represented as a fight or a struggle. The abstract illness is reified as something separate from her self: Rather than 'being ill' the illness is something that 'has come' to her and can 'go away', and that can be transmitted to others in different ways. This new representation of her illness, as social anxiety, is also implicitly claimed to be more valid than her previous understanding, which is now rejected.

In responding to the open-ended interview questions, Sara mostly gives narrative accounts. Initially she presents a short comprehensive narrative in which periods in her life are demarcated and turning points identified, thereby providing a chronological structure. During the conversation Sara returns to elaborate and flesh out this narrative by describing in more detail specific episodes and turning points where illness 'breaks out' and illness symptoms increase or decrease. Sara also includes prospective narratives of future illness scenarios for herself and her child, which she uses to guide her steps to minimize the health risks. By this temporal ordering of states and events, health and illness are related to each other, and the resulting narrative structure can be said to be constitutive for Sara's representation of illness.

By retelling her illness experiences in the social context of the interview, Sara is not only making a point about the nature of her problems but also about herself, and the telling of her story involves evaluative features and argumentative strategies. The narrative thus has a rhetorical dimension— something is accomplished both by narrative structure and content, an argument is delivered by the way Sara tells her story. For example, her own suffering is contrasted with examples of mental illness such as madness, and in effect, the stigma and 'otherness' of 'the really ill' are rejected. By recurrently accounting for meetings with others with similar problems, and by referring to epidemiological facts, her own illness is normalized. The representation is organized in accordance with an 'us versus them' model that serves to protect her identity, which is threatened by the prevalent stigmatizing social representations of mental illness. The way her past is retold serves to convey an evaluative image of who she is, and a moral dimension is added to the medical information when this is transferred to the context of every day life. This evaluative feature is also obvious when considering how 'strength' constitutes a central theme in the story of Sara's life, in which she goes from being a passive victim to an active, responsible, and 'mature' person.

But Sara's new knowledge about her illness does not only result in a sense of relief from the threat of madness and new hopes for a cure. It also associates her illness with a number of new risks that she has to make sense of and respond to. First, the re-representation of her illness changes its character. Sara still feels that she lives under the threat of sudden attacks of intense anxiety or 'panic' in social situations, but what formerly appeared to her as something incomprehensible is now

understood as a mental state with known causes that is possible to control with techniques that are offered by medical experts, that is, therapists. In the medical encounters, cognitive behavior therapy is consistently presented to Sara as an efficient remedy for her kind of problems, and in the techniques that the therapy offers she sees possibilities to 'fight' the illness, to 'struggle' and 'win over her mind'. Sara's representation of the disorder and therapy thus puts her in a 'polemical situation' (Canguilhem, 1966/1991) where she is to master her self and become the 'entrepreneur of herself' (Lupton, 2005, p. 88). Rather than a passive victim of illness, she presents herself as an active and responsible subject, and the threat of anxiety is transformed into a risk of failure.

A second risk that is introduced in Sara's life concerns medication. When answering the interviewer's question about her experiences of the medicine, Sara talks about how the medicine has helped her, but in the narrative a more complicated picture is also presented. From what is said in the medical encounter, and by becoming aware of other people's experiences through the website, Sara concludes that she is in need of medicine that is also potentially dangerous. The drug package insert provides a catalogue of negative side-effects that adds to her own ideas about consequences of over dosage (she talks about an acquaintance who 'acted really weird' which she thinks might be a consequence of his taking too high a dose of a medicine of the same kind) and addiction, which her husband considers to be a real threat although the doctor told her that 'you wont be addicted'. The ambivalence towards medication is also related to her associating medication for mental illness with those who are 'really, really ill'. In the interview she tells about how she tries to make sense of the risks and identify side-effects together with her husband who eventually throws the pills away when Sara gets pregnant:

> I was really angry at him, but on the other hand it said [the package insert] that they don't know, they haven't done research on it with fetuses, how it worked, so I should quit it anyway.

A third aspect of risk that is introduced to Sara in the medical encounters concerns the information on genetic causes of social anxiety. Sara now understands that 'dad has the same thing' and thinks that she has 'got it' from him. This also puts her own child at risk:

> I haven't told them at the day care center yet, but I was planning to do that, to see if my kid could get something like this to, if you could notice it on the kid. Because my son was a little shy here in the beginning, but now he is better, he's more open and dares to go to the rooms of all the groups at the day care center. (Interviewer: 'So then you thought about the . . . ?') Yes, you feel a little worried that it will make a leap to your child.

Information about the disease as hereditary, and Sara's beliefs about what is normal for children in her son's age, leads her to interpret the behaviour and feelings of the child in terms of a deviation from the normal. She concludes that her child is at risk, that his shyness can develop into illness in the future. As Sara refers to her harsh upbringing and difficult childhood experiences, in addition to genetic predisposition, when explaining her own health problems, we can see that she sees her relationship with her child as important for his future health—the raising of the child becomes a matter of risk reduction. In this way medical notions about genetic predispositions are incorporated in a narrative about parental care, responsibility and children's vulnerability. Heredity is thereby represented as an aspect of a family drama with moral significance that involves three generations.

But the risk of transferring the illness to others is not limited to her child:

> It could be like if I told something, that I've got a social anxiety, then people might start 'Maybe I've got it too', or they start getting that disease too [. . .]. It might be contagious, you never know. Maybe they'll start getting the same thoughts that I have.

This means that Sara puts other people at risk by just talking about her thoughts and feelings. The possibility that she will 'pass on' the disease to others is related to what she has read about social anxiety, that similar to burnout syndromes, it is becoming increasingly common. Sara thinks that 'maybe we are leading a too comfortable life', that the modern and peaceful society might put all of us at risk of contracting this kind of disease.

CONCLUDING REMARKS—RE-PRESENTATIONS OF RISK IN ILLNESS NARRATIVES

The two examples we have presented here differ in the types of illnesses for which the patients are at risk and also in the types of clinical encounters and risk discourses in which they have been involved. However, the illness narratives from the two studies reveal some common themes in how these patients, in their narrative accounts, try to transform biomedical risk, in both cases with potentially serious consequences, into something that is possible for them to comprehend:

1. Risk is re-presented in two steps: first by the professional in the communication with the patient, and thereafter by the patient according to her knowledge and within the context of her life world. These re-presentations can be said to involve a recontextualization of risk in two senses: The notion of risk is transferred from a scientific/professional representational field to a field of everyday knowledge and is

thereby moved from a context of statistical significance to the specific case and an individual level of meaning. These should be considered as two aspects of the same process—a process that is initiated in the medical encounter and thereafter continued in the patient's communicative actions in the context of her everyday life. This re-presentation is reflected in the patients' illness narratives wherein the patients refer to and reflect on what the health professional said in the medical encounter and how they understand these messages. These reflections are presented according to a narrative 'order' that reveals how 'one thing leads to the next'. Thus, in their narratives, these people do not only describe their potential illnesses and their risks in categorical terms, but also, in line with what has been pointed out by Bruner (1986), inject intentionality and narrative order into their conceptualization of the illness. Further, the patient's own understanding of risk evolves over time and in interaction with other people. This means that taking account of the narrative structure in the analysis of representations of risk will provide knowledge not only about the types or categories of risk and illness that emerge in everyday sense-making, but also how these are placed in a temporal and social context. For example, the way the patients' understandings of risk are intertwined with a 'rhetoric of trust' can illustrate not only how isolated representations, but also implicit or explicit evaluations of the professionals (who supply medical information and interpretations) can be examined in illness narratives.

2. The representations of risk that people encounter are anchored in understandings of threat or danger that are already familiar to them. As has been demonstrated in research on social representations of 'new' scientific knowledge that is circulated in society (Wagner & Kronberger, 2001; Washer, 2004), these patients draw on notions of probability and magnitude of risk from other arenas, that is, by comparing health risks with risks of accidents, or by visualizing figures as a number of concrete objects in their environment. They also utilize different explanatory models from other areas, such as 'contagion', to account for the causes of risk. The illness narratives not only let us know what these earlier understandings are, but makes it possible to follow these 'comparisons' with earlier experiences that are reflected on as more or less valid, and even criticized, by the narrator.

3. In the illness narrative, risk is re-presented by the lay-person; the abstract representation of risk, as probability at an aggregate level, is thereby transformed and understood as an evident threat to the individual that calls for precautions and preventive action. The risk is 'personalized' and confronts the individual with choices within the context of her everyday life. In the life world of the individual these choices are not only a matter of risk reduction. As risk in a biomedical sense is transferred to a field of everyday representations

it becomes related to moral ideas, takes on a symbolic meaning and acquires a significance that is highly emotional. The choices therefore involve moral issues as well as ways of dealing with fear and feelings of responsibility. As a consequence of this personalization, identity is at stake in responding to risk, and the narrative that serves to make sense of risk is at the same time part of the person's efforts to protect or reconstruct his or her identity. As these choices, past and present, are reflected on and legitimized in the narratives, an analysis of the narratives can tell us something about what the individual sees as her choices. In the analysis of future scenarios presented in the narratives we also learn something about the individual's construction of meaning of present risk and the significance of her choices.

4. In this chapter, narrative and social representation theory have been treated as complementary approaches to the study of people's sense-making in encounters with the medical world. As representations are embedded in communicative action and since the telling of stories plays a central role in thinking and everyday interaction, we argue that it is useful to turn to empirical material of a narrative character in the study of social representations. This, however, does not imply that either of these theoretical perspectives should be considered as subordinate to the other. In narrative analysis, qualitative dimensions of the researched phenomena can be emphasized which contributes to the richness of our understanding of social representations. The narrative analysis also directs our attention towards the communicative actions in a way that reduces the risk that social representations are objectified in a cognitivistic way as 'mental furniture'. Thereby the functions of social representations in social interaction are highlighted and it becomes possible to examine the way they are constitutive to the life-world of the individual. Conversely, social representation theory can make important contributions to narrative theory by offering a way to conceptualize the way social representations underlie both narrative content and the way this content is given a narrative structure in accordance with shared understandings. To conclude, we argue that the combination of these theoretical perspectives provide valuable tools in the study of the construction of meaning and particularly in the study of processes fundamental to learning (i.e., re-presentation, recontextualization, transformation), in pedagogical research.

NOTES

1. See Hayes, 1992.
2. Furthermore, the content of social representations of illness can be organized into certain 'standard' narrative structures (Murray, 2002, p. 662).

3. A fluid-filled space at the back of fetal neck (nuchal translucency), which exists only in early pregnancy, is measured in millimetres. Using software, a risk score is estimated based on this measurement in combination with maternal age and length of gestation. High risk was defined in this study as a risk higher than 1 to 250.
4. Ongoing study carried out by Robert Ohlsson at The Department of Education at Stockholm University.

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15 The Role of the Media in the Transformation of Citizens' Social Representations of Suffering

Birgitta Höijer and Ulrika Olausson

INTRODUCTION

In the past suffering and death were familiar and close at hand. Relatives, friends, neighbors, and also children were brought in to the sickroom of a dying person (Ariés, 1974). People's social representations of suffering and death—though, of course, formed by tradition and culture—included a large proportion of self-lived collective experiences. When the principles of hygiene were discovered, dirty homes and overcrowded bedrooms became a problem for doctors, and people's social representations of illness and dying started to change. With the development of medical care in the West, illness, suffering, and death left the homes, to a large extent, and entered the hospitals.

According to Ariés (1974), this transformation accelerated between the 1930s and 1950s, and people no longer died at home in the bosom of their families but in the hospital—because of the doctor's failure to heal the sick person. He discusses:

> a new sentiment characteristic of modernity: one must avoid—no longer for the sake of the dying person, but for society's sake, for the sake of those close to the dying person—the disturbance and the overly strong and unbearable emotion caused by the ugliness of dying. (Ariés, 1974, p. 87)

Suffering and death then become remote and strange elements in everyday life, even taboo, something for medicine and doctors to face and take care of. Bauman (1992) further proposes a present post-modern phase of deconstruction of immortality in which one strives to avoid death by being remembered after death.

However, suffering and death are not totally absent from our everyday lives. A paradox may be formulated. At the same time that people of the Western world have made suffering, death, and dying taboo subjects and are striving for immortality in their personal lives, they are more and more often witnessing the suffering and brutal death of distant victims via the

media. Boltanski (1999, p. 3; see also Chouliaraki, 2006) discusses the development of a "spectacle of suffering" in late-modern media, which provides the audience with a "proposal of commitment" (p. 149), that is, an invitation to respond to distant suffering. Thus, in public symbolic forms, suffering and death have (re)entered our most private sphere: the home. As pointed out by Thompson:

> Few people in the West today are likely to encounter someone suffering from extreme dehydration or starvation, someone shot by sniper fire or maimed by mortar shells; but most will have witnessed suffering of this kind on their television screens. (1995, p. 208)

Thompson (1995) also emphasizes that we live in a world in which experiencing can be disconnected from encountering, yet the development of the media, especially television, has produced a new kind of intimacy, at least vicarious intimacy.

Photographs are often perceived as plain depictions of reality. As audience we experience that we see the innocent victims of the violence with our own eyes, and the pictures become evidence of the suffering. Through the media, and especially through the moving images of television, people have become aware of the suffering of remote others and are challenged to include strangers in their moral conscience. Although there are, as we shall see, different ways of responding to distant suffering, no one can deny the existence of large-scale humanitarian disasters.

On the whole, news media are focusing more on civilian populations as victims of conflicts and wars than before. We may talk about a *victimization* in conflict and war journalism. According to Bell (1998, pp. 15–16), the reporting 'has changed fundamentally' from mainly reporting on military aspects, such as strategies and weapon systems, to reporting with a greater focus on people—'the people who provoke them, the people who fight them and the people who suffer from them'. Studies show an increased exposure in television news of pictures of human suffering among civilian populations, and that the visual presentations have become more lurid (Cronström, 2000; Höijer, 1994, 1996). The camera explores faces twisted in pain, or lingers on wounds and bloody bandages, it zooms in on broken and mutilated limbs, or pools of blood, and the injured are not soldiers but ordinary people. Streams of refugees or people in refugee camps, severely injured people or dead bodies lying on the ground, on stretchers, piled on lorry platforms or even in mass graves are shown in films and pictures from wars, conflicts and genocides, such as the Iraq war, the Israeli–Palestinian conflict, and the genocide in Darfur, Sudan.

One conclusion is that the media delivers representations of suffering and brutal death on an almost daily basis and that the photographic moving pictures of victims place us in the position of witness right in the heart

of our most secure space, the home (Morley, 2000). This is the new intimacy of suffering and death, in vicarious or symbolic forms, which has replaced the old real-life familiarity with these life conditions.

This chapter addresses the question of transformations of social representations of suffering and death by presenting results from empirical studies of people's sense-making of distant suffering, more precisely in relation to the media reporting of the Kosovo war. As pointed out by Moscovici (2000, p. 63), the character of social representations is revealed especially in times of crisis and upheaval. The conflict and civil war between Serbia and Kosovo ended with NATO and allied countries bombing the area for 78 days. Almost one million people became refugees and were forced to leave Kosovo. A massacre with Serbian victims was uncovered after the war. The media exposed pictures of suffering and brutal death during the whole period.

SOCIAL REPRESENTATION THEORY

Social representation theory emphasizes the social and collective dimensions of our everyday cognitions of the world and the need to relate the cognitive level to societal processes. As stated by Moscovici (2000, p. 160), social representations "participate each time in the global vision a society establishes for itself", and operate on different levels, including large communities such as nations and small subgroups of people.

Social representations are, in all essentials, constructed through communication. They are built on collective consensus and reproduced discursively, not least by means of media discourse. The media is, in the theory, regarded as an interconnecting link between the social representations of the public and society, and it plays a significant role in the construction and reproduction of common sense:

> The mass media have [. . .] increased the need of a link between, on the one hand, our purely abstract sciences and beliefs in general and, on the other, our concrete activities as social individuals. (Moscovici, 2000, p. 32)

Even though the role of the media is often emphasized in the theory of social representations, and research on the media has been conducted (see Christidou, Dimopoulos, & Koulaidis, 2004; Moscovici, 2000; Wagner & Hayes, 2005), the field is still somewhat underdeveloped. The relationship between media discourse and the social representations of the public is complex, as will be shown, and there is a need to probe deeper into the role of the media.

Another aspect of social representations is the *inclusiveness* of a number of dimensions forming social representations as wholes. In the words

of Moscovici (1973, p. xii) "[Social representations] do not represent simply 'opinions about', 'images of' or 'attitudes towards' but 'theories' or 'branches of knowledge' in their own right, for the discovery and organisation of reality". He also emphasizes that "from the dynamic point of view social representations appear as a 'network' of ideas, metaphors and images, more or less loosely tied together, and therefore more mobile and fluid than theories" (Moscovici, 2000, p. 153).

We will also argue in favor of the necessity to take *emotions* seriously and integrate them in theories of social representations. It is more and more often realized that emotions and cognitions are intrinsically interlinked, and that emotions are of critical importance for all aspects of social cognition (Bless, Fiedler, & Strack, 2004; Smith & Kirby, 2001). Emotions help people interpret and judge social situations and act suitably (Marcus, 2002); they are natural and necessary parts of all meaning-making. According to Nussbaum (2001), emotions further play a basic role in ethical thinking and in narration and political life in general.

Social representations will here accordingly be seen as *complex dynamic meaning structures and processes, often emotionally loaded, relating general visions of society and collective social cognitions of the public through communication and discourse* (cf. Moscovici, 2000).

Social representations are extremely powerful, since they rest upon traditions and culture, which set the limits for the range of possible representations. Moscovici (2000) claims that sense making in everyday life builds on conventions and collective memory to a larger extent than on rational thinking and reason. As a consequence of the "invisible" nature of social representations, they constantly offer a kind of common sense explanation to societal events (Augoustinos & Walker, 1995; Moscovici, 2000; Hewstone, 1989)—for example, a war reported in the media.

The emphasis on common sense knowledge makes it possible to connect the theory of social representations to theories of ideology. Ideology is one of the most debated concepts within social science, with definitions ranging from Marxist imbued accounts to general political accounts to accounts of common sense thinking in everyday life, such as by Billig et al. (1988). In traditional Marxism, ideology in the singular form is regarded as an overall abstract system of values, interlinking people into a certain order. Current theories concentrate more on ideolog*ies* in the plural form, that is, the sense making practices of everyday life (Fairclough, 1992). Hall, as an example of the latter perspective, although heavily influenced by the Marxist tradition, regards ideologies as mental categories through which meaning is created, stating that they are "the mental frameworks—the languages, the concepts, imagery of thought, and the systems of representation—which different classes and social groups deploy in order to make sense of, define, figure out and render intelligible the way society works" (Hall, 1986, p. 29).

Thus, according to Hall (1995), ideologies work as taken-for-granted beliefs about social reality, and the media has a pivotal role in the construction of such common sense knowledge (cf. Morley, 1992).

Despite the clear-cut connection between social representation theory and theories on ideology, empirical research has seldom made use of this fruitful relationship (Augoustinos & Walker, 1995; Moscovici, 2000). Van Dijk (1998; cf. Olausson, 2005) argues for the need to study ideologies in terms of social cognition, and this chapter interlinks the concept of ideology with citizens' social representations of distant suffering. Ideologies enable the individual to position herself in the social and material world, and this *identity positioning* constitutes an important mechanism in the construction and transformation of social representations. A central point in this chapter is that society is undergoing a transformation of social representations of suffering and death. This transformation concerns identity positions along an axis from private to local to national to transnational, and finally, global. As in all processes of transformation, there are contradictions, dilemmas, and tensions. We will especially focus here on tensions between deeply rooted national identities and evolving identities of the global. Via identity processes, the "new" phenomenon of distant suffering is *anchored* in familiar domains yet contributing to the transformation of knowledge by the enlargement of identity.

Ideology of Global Compassion

That contemporary media give so much attention to distant suffering and death is, as we will emphasize, part of an ideology of global compassion (Höijer, 2003)[1]. During the Cold War period, a global struggle between capitalism and communism guided the understanding of tensions in the world. Today other thought models form our understanding and commitment, or lack of commitment in political and civil conflicts in the world. Ignatieff (1998) asserts that on one hand there is a new nationalism with ethnic claims and conflicts and on the other hand a moral universalism based on human rights. Human rights and democratization are increasingly acknowledged as belonging firmly together (Beetham, 1998). In international courts of justice and human rights, war crimes such as the massacre of civilians and genocide are tried with the aim to punish responsible politicians, members of armed forces, and individual perpetrators. In business life there are spokesmen for "corporate compassion" as a way to long-lasting success (Lynch, 1998), and people's engagement in humanitarian organizations is growing (Tvedt, 1993). Television channels want to be associated with humanitarian goodness, broadcasting charity programs, or so called telethons (Tester, 2001). This expression of the ideology of human compassion may in part be a cynical exploitation of distant suffering. It may, however, contribute to the development of a global identity by bringing about the public's emotional involvement with remote and innocent victims of violence and acts of cruelty.

National Ideology

Alongside the development of an ideology of global compassion, national ideology is, as will be shown, still present in the construction and transformation of social representations of distant suffering and death. In a seminal work, Anderson (1991) analyzes the origin of the nation-state as the "imagined community" and traces its roots to, among other things, the rise of the national daily press. Since then, the debate of globalization has gathered considerable speed, and in several theories the nation-state as the foundation of identity is said to be, more or less, withering away. The "cosmopolitan turn" within academic discourse notwithstanding, a form of "banal nationalism" (Billig, 1995) still permeates national media content. (This type of nationalism should not be confused with its "hot" counterpart, associated with right-wing extremism.) The media have a tendency to "domesticate" news (Clausen, 2004; Löfgren, 1990; Riegert, 1998) by means of, for instance, framing the stories in national socio-political contexts and focusing on national weather reports, sports results achieved by national athletes, and so on. This inclination to adapt the news to the national population (more or less in terms of the ethnic majority) results in the construction of an ideological nationalism. National identity should thus, as Crofts Wiley (2004, p. 78) puts it, be viewed as "one particular logic among others that organize economic, political, technological, and cultural territories and flows".

THE STUDIES

Qualitative methods can yield valuable knowledge about the comprehensiveness, complexity, and cultural embeddings of social representations. The focus group interview has been put forth as a suitable method when one wants to study collective meaning-making (Lindlof, 1995). As Moscovici (2000, p. 62) argues, this particular method—"to obtain material from samples of conversations"—gives access to the social representations, and it was used in the present study.

Two related studies, one in Sweden and the other in Norway, were conducted in order to find out how citizens negotiated meaning in the media reports on the Kosovo War with a special focus on distant suffering.[2] A total of 23 focus groups (13 in Norway and 10 in Sweden) were run, and the groups were recruited so as to reflect a wide spectrum of citizens: school boys and girls, male and female pensioners, male and female professions from respectively the health care sector and the technology sector, and male and female Kosovo-Albanian and Serb immigrants. The selection followed what Lindlof and Taylor (2002, p. 123) call "maximum variation sampling", that is, to cover a diversity of social experiences which may be assumed to be relevant for the phenomenon studied. In our case

gender, life phase, profession, and ethnicity were expected to influence the social representations of distant suffering. The purpose was to build an in-depth conceptual and theoretical understanding of this phenomenon, and therefore the groups did not need to match their actual distribution in the population.

Previous research shows that the best way to conduct focus group interviews is to organize small gender-homogeneous groups of people with similar social experiences (Brandth, 1996; Höijer & Olausson, 2003). This was done, and with a total of 86 participants, the size of the groups varied between 3–6 participants.

The interview method was based on Spradley's (1979) guidelines, with different types of questions in combination with experiences based on a large number of focus groups studies by both authors. Since the group interviews were conducted half a year or somewhat more after the Kosovo War, a first section with spontaneous memories of the war was followed by a section in which a collection of television news from the war period was shown in order to facilitate the retrospective interviewing. It should be said, though, that people in general had very vivid memories and that they had a lot to tell before the clips were shown. While the focus group interviews covered a number of themes about the Kosovo War and the media reporting, we will only focus in this chapter on the topic of distant suffering.

RESULTS

Since it is important for the discussion of citizens' social representations of distant suffering to know something about the media, we will start by giving a short review of the findings from studies of the media coverage of the Kosovo War. Thereafter results from the focus group study will be presented.

The Media's Social Representations of Distant Suffering

Two themes, initially originating from NATO propaganda, especially dominated Swedish and Norwegian media discourse on the Kosovo war, as was probably the case in most other countries in the West (Höijer, Nohrstedt, & Ottosen, 2002). One theme was the image of the Kosovo-Albanian population as, in the words of Chomsky and Herman (1988), "worthy victims"—a depiction of the conflict emphasizing the Kosovo-Albanian population as innocent victims of enemy violence. This abstract concept was *objectified*, that is, transformed into concrete perceptible experiences (Farr & Moscovici, 1984) by a process of figuration in which television repeatedly exposed pictures of the seemingly endless stream of refugees from Kosovo. In documentary pictures and reports of great

emotional appeal the refugees were shown on the run or in primitive refugee camps, in despair, crying. Women and children, especially, were featured in the pictures expressing their pain, horror, and despair. The public has a need to see the distant others—deemed worthy the attention of politicians and the media, and deserving of our compassion—as innocent victims of some external negative force (Herman & Chomsky, 1988). The other dominant theme in the media representations of the distant suffering was the enemy image personalized in the shape of the Serbian president, Milosevic. Personification is, according to Moscovici and Hewstone (1983, p. 112), a process characterizing objectification alongside figuration and reification. Demonization of the leader of an enemy state through attribution of dispositional malice is typical of war propaganda and war journalism (Ottosen, 1995), and Milosevic was presented in line with this general tendency as having an evil disposition, as being unreliable and dangerous, a rough Serb figure that NATO went to war against (Höijer, Nohrstedt, & Ottosen, 2002).

The ultimate aim of propaganda is to transform into social representations; to become naturalized, taken-for-granted, and beyond rational questioning. In Swedish and Norwegian media, the images of the "worthy victims"—the Kosovo-Albanian population who suffered—and the "enemy"—Milosevic, who caused the suffering—became a common sense depiction of the conflict.

Compassion for the Distant Suffering

The mediated pictures of the victims of the war, the stream of refugees, and the human suffering were the very first images that emerged in the informants' minds when asked to spontaneously tell about their impressions of the Kosovo War. Almost all of the groups interviewed immediately started to talk about television pictures, especially about children, women, and elderly people on the run or in the refugee camps: *"What I spontaneously remember is the massive expulsion of one million Kosovo-Albanians from the country. [. . .] And the suffering of the people, both during the expulsion and later in the refugee camps."* In many groups, but far from all, the "proposal of commitment" (Boltanski, 1999, p. 149) offered by the media activated emotions of compassion, sometimes implicitly expressed in sad voice and gaze, other times more explicitly:

> *"It was what I saw of live pictures on television that made the strongest impression, all the innocent people, all those who cried."*
> *"I have terrible memories of children stepping on board buses and sitting by the windows crying."*
> *"It breaks my heart seeing all the refugees. [. . .] When they are coming in endless numbers and telling about what they have been through. It was so terrible."*

Compassion is both an affective and a cognitive reaction involving such beliefs as that the suffering of the other is serious, and that the suffering person does not deserve the pain (Nussbaum, 2001: p. 306 ff.).[3] In the case we are discussing, the compassion evolves through the enlargement of identity beyond national borders: It is transnational or global in its moral sensibility (Höijer, 2004; Olausson, 2005). With, for example, the help of emotional-cognitive imagination related to personal identity, the informants transferred themselves to the position of the suffering people. Personal experiences and memories from other situations were also sometimes used as frames of reference in this process of compassion and global identity:

> *"It made a really strong impression seeing all the children and elderly people, and women, infirmly wandering about. You start thinking about how it is for them."*
>
> *"And this thing with the mass graves. They didn't just hoard up a lot of dead people that they found, but they arranged them there, so that they would fall into the graves when dead. Imagine, to stand there and watch: 'In a few seconds I'll be lying there dead.' It's horrific."*
>
> *"And I, I have been out travelling. Yes, if you're on your way out to a Greek island or something like that, and the transfer from Athens is tiresome, sort of. You think it's hot and the kids are wining. Lord! This is tiresome! And then you see these buses, and they aren't even out there voluntarily."*

Compassion enables the spectator to perceive the distant suffering from a perspective of *proximity*, that is, the cognitive distance to the victims is reduced. Through compassion it is, as expressed by Boltanski (1999, p. 92), possible to "feel oneself in one's fellow man". By this, one's identity is enlarged to include remote strangers and a global identity may evolve as one dimension of citizens' social representations of distant suffering. The global identity position is not, however, only dependent on processes of personal identity involvement. The possibilities of broadening identity beyond national borders are partly also dependent on whether or not similarities with the national community's way of life may be recognized: The more similar to "Us", the imagined national community, the more likely the rise of global compassion:

> *"I think it has to do with culture as well. Their culture is still more like ours in many ways. They are like us in many respects. That's the way it is, I think. If something happens close to you, near yourself, then it's easier to place yourself in that situation."*

By means of the national identity position it is thus possible to empathetically understand what it would be like to find oneself outside one's home,

the nation-state. National identity may thus enable the compassionate emotions in relation to the distant suffering:

> *"You wouldn't want to live in some other country. You had to get back home. So, if you get help, like they, then, you just have to pack up and go home, that's perfectly clear."*

The enemy-image Milosevic in the media reporting was unanimously accepted by the informants of the focus groups (Höijer & Olausson, 2003) He was considered as a *"bad guy", "evil", "non compos mentis", "a mad dictator", "a psychopath",* and so on. Not even the groups of Serbian immigrants had anything good to say about him. He *"had brought the country into deep trouble",* was *"a drawback for the country",* and *"someone who should be replaced as soon as possible".* This stereotyped personification of an evil force sharply underlined the perceived innocence of the Kosovo-Albanian refugees and led to indignation and blaming of a perpetrator in combination with compassion for the victims. Elsewhere (Höijer & Olausson, 2003; Höijer, 2004), we have identified four types of global compassion:

1. *Tender-hearted compassion* focuses on the suffering of the victims and the response of pity it gives rise to in oneself: *"It breaks my heart when I see the refugees"; "It is so terrible"; "I felt pity for them".*
2. *Blame-filled compassion* brings up the suffering of the victims in combination with indignation and anger: *"I became angry when I saw the many innocent people and civilians who died and were stricken by the conflict".*
3. *Shame-filled compassion* brings in the ambivalence connected with witnessing the suffering of others in one's own comfortable life and the coziness of one's living room: *"I had such a bad conscience and I almost did not manage to watch any more terrible scenes on television".*
4 *Powerlessness-filled compassion* arises from a subjective awareness of the limits of the possibilities to alleviate the suffering of the distant victims: *"You feel so helpless and there is so little you can do".*

Dissociation from the Distant Suffering

In the previous section, we have shown how global identity may arise and include its national counterpart. Thus, national and global identities have the ability to function interactively. This interaction is far from always being the case, though. National identity positions may also be

used to reject the invitation to compassion with distant suffering offered to the citizens by the media. One way by which informants put a distance between themselves and the suffering they were witnessing on the television screen was by using the national identity position and contrasting it with the distant "Others". National identity is reproduced by the construction of "Us" and the simultaneous construction of "Them". In some focus groups, the informants again and again returned to the difficulty of identifying with the suffering people who seemed to exist too far away from their own national horizon:

> *"It's a completely remote picture, these scenes with refugees walking in lines, kilometers in length—it's so horribly strange to me. It could have been Estonia, but I wouldn't experience it any closer. You lead some kind of sheltered life."*
>
> *"I was constantly thinking that 'Yes, this is kind of far away' because you have your own little reality and that's here in Sweden."*

Another way to form a distance through national identity and reject the invitation to compassion and global identity was to dehumanize the culture, mentality, and way of living and behaving of the suffering people. As Kamali (2005, p. 29) points out in a discussion about mechanisms of discrimination, "'We' is made the better part in comparison with all the others, ethnicities and nations" (our translation). Similar processes of cognitive exclusion were also part of citizens' social representations of distant suffering:

> *"We have a society built on democratic values. [. . .] But in the Balkans there is a large population of farmers which I believe is on hayfork-war level. [. . .] They are primitive."*
>
> *"It must be a different culture or disposition of their minds. It is something with their temperament or mentality. [. . .] It comes from the religion. It is such a fanaticism."*
>
> *"On the whole it is not only the leaders who are mad. Many are. It is the mentality of the ethnic groups."*

With stereotyped thought-figures such as, *"In the Balkans they think only of vendetta"*, *"It is a totally different culture from ours"*, or *"It is something with their temperament"*, compassion is turned away and the lack of involvement is rationalized and legitimized. Why bother about people who are primitive and uncivilized and not like us, civilized citizens in democracies? *"Personally I felt no compassion for the people down there"*, as one informant said, *"I think they only have themselves to blame."*

Besides dissociation from the suffering through national identity, there were also some other processes for putting a distance between oneself and the suffering others.

Rejecting the truth claim of the news reporting was one strategy, although not very common.[4] Here the news pictures were regarded as having been staged for propaganda purposes: *"All pictures may be arranged. [. . .] They said that thousands of Kosovo-Albanians were hiding in the forest. But to me the pictures seemed incredible, arranged."*

Criticizing the news for sensationalism was a more common critical perspective, which created a distance from the human suffering. News media give a distorted picture, according to this view, by paying too much attention to violence and human misery: *"You get to watch sequences that you've already watched five times before. Some poor creature who's lying dead in front of some house or pictures from some prison camp or refugee camp. It's a journalism of sensation and its only aim is to create as much emotion as possible."*

Becoming blunted or immune to the recurring dramatic and emotional pictures exposed in the media was a quite common reaction in the case of the Kosovo war, especially as time went on and new encroachments and sufferings were reported: *"In the end you could not manage it any more";* *"I cannot engage in it any longer";* *"You get blunted. It must be very rough things if you are going to pay attention to it and get engaged."*

To shield off from distant suffering was further a strategy of some informants, that is, to stop watching such news items. This may be a necessary defense strategy for avoiding being overwhelmed by intrusive pictures of distant suffering: *"Personally, it was quite simply too much unpleasantness and it was too hard to watch all this suffering, so I shielded off."*

DISCUSSION

Two types of transformations of social representations of suffering have been brought up in this chapter.

The first, *historical transformation*, concerns long-term changes along a time dimension. Such transformations were discussed in the introduction with the conclusion that in contemporary Western societies the media have replaced the old real-life familiarity with suffering and death with a new kind. Today it is the news media who deliver representations of suffering and brutal death on an almost daily basis, especially of distant suffering in relation to large scale humanitarian crises, such as international and civil wars, conflicts, and natural disasters. This has transformed and enlarged the social representations of the public to include distant suffering others. Via compassion, and together with other processes of globalization,[5] this is contributing to the development of global identity. As a consequence of the historical transformation of suffering from the local/proximate realm to the global/distant realm, tensions and dilemmas have also evolved between identity positions founded in national and global ideology.

We have demonstrated examples of processes of identity positioning in the analysis of the second type of transformation, labeled *situated transformations*, which more specifically refer to the relationship between the media representations and the social representations of the public. Discussing results from two focus group studies of public responses to the humanitarian crisis of the Kosovo war, we have shown that identity positioning constitutes an important mechanism in the construction and transformation of social representations of distant suffering. Empathetic interpretations in which the informants were able in different ways to place themselves in the position of the suffering were present.

In general terms, emotions of compassion, related to a global identity position, are central in the public's social representations of distant suffering. This global identity is further related to other identity positions, sometimes to more private identity or gendered identity[6], and other times to national identity. As pointed out by Breakwell (2001, p. 346) "there must be an intimate connection between the social processes of anchoring and objectification and their parallel individual processes". We have especially focused here on national identity. In relation to social representations of distant suffering, the national identity position enables compassionate emotions and global identity. On the other hand, national identity also creates a cognitive and emotional distance to the distant suffering. In short, the evolving global identity needs to be anchored in the familiar terrain of established identities, of which the national one is important.[7] With regard to social representations of distant suffering, this process of anchoring sometimes results in global compassion and other times in dissociation and the absence of compassion.

We have also shown that the social representations of the public are not mere reflections of the social representations of the media. It is probably true that the two dominating social representations of the media, the images of the "worthy victims" (the Kosovo-Albanians) and the "enemy" (Milosevic), to a large extent set the *agenda* (McCombs & Shaw, 1972), that is, determined *what* the public was to create meaning about; however, this is not the same as determining *how* meaning was to be made. Within the discussed thought-figures of "compassion" and "dissociation" in relation to the media reporting, we have identified a number of modes of interpretation. The transformation of social representations between media and public is thus not a linear process but the result of an active process of interpretation in which the public uses relevant parts of their existing repertoire of social representations and other internalized social experiences and knowledge as frames of reference.

In conclusion there are especially three points that we would like to emphasize concerning social representation theory:

1. *The complexity of the transformation of social representations between the media and the public*. In this chapter, we have demonstrated the diversity of interpretations of the media's social representations of distant suffering. This diversity, constituting the "active

audience", is well documented within media and communication studies (e.g., Jensen, 1988; Liebes & Katz, 1986; Livingstone, 1990; Morley, 1980), and theories of "direct injection needle" effects of the media have repeatedly been falsified. It is our conviction that the field of media and communication research is able to greatly contribute to the production of knowledge about the complex relationship between the media and the public regarding the distribution, reproduction, and transformation of social representations, thus highlighting the dialectics between social influence and human agency (cf. Voelklein & Howarth, 2005).

2. *The importance of including emotions in social representation theory.* As we have shown, emotions are a fundamental ingredient of the public's interpretations of social representations offered by the media. They are decisive of whether the media representations should be accepted, rejected, or transformed. It is, today, emphasized that emotions are of critical importance for all aspects of social cognitions (Bless et al., 2004; Smith & Kirby, 2001), and emotions ought to be included and emphasized also in an integral theory of social representations. Moscovici (2000, p. 70) indicates this when he says that "emotional reactions, perceptions and rationalizations are not responses to an exterior stimulus as such, but to the category in which we classify such images, to the names we give them". When he discusses social representations of money, a particularly strong emotion—passion—appears (Moscovici, 1993).

3. *The utility of relating the theory of social representations to the concept of ideology.* This conceptual link has proved useful in order to locate processes that are often thought of as belonging to the "macro-level"—for example, processes related to aspects of human rights and global compassion, and national community, as in the present chapter—on the so called "micro-level" as well, that is, in the meaning making of the public. As emphasized by Moscovici, for example, when arguing for a social psychology based on the theory of social representations, "[T]he central and exclusive object of social psychology should be the study of all that pertains to ideology and to communication from the point of view of their structure, their genesis and their function" (Moscovici, 2000, p. 110). Questions of power can easily be included in such an analysis (see Olausson, 2005), although this has not been addressed in this chapter.

NOTES

1. Media may also be a driving force in the development of global compassion affecting both politicians and the public. The so-called "CNN effect" refers to the impact of rolling television news about children and other innocent victims of disasters and conflicts on policy makers' awareness of populations in need. One example is the sanctions that the UN proclaimed against Serbia

in 1992 after the shellfire against people queuing for bread in Sarajevo. Television all over the world broadcast shocking pictures of the senseless attack.

2. The studies were part of a larger project in which a number of researchers studied the media reporting in Sweden, Norway, and Britain (Berglez, Mral, & Listerman, 2003; Höijer, Nohrstedt, & Ottosen, 2002; Höijer & Olausson, 2003; Olausson, 2005; Riegert, 2003).

3. In line with Tester (2001, p. 18) the concept of compassion is here reserved for compassion for the suffering others in the public sphere. Other concepts, such as empathy, sympathy, or even altruism, may also be relevant, but they do not include the same public and political dimensions as compassion. According to Sznaider (1998) public compassion originates in an abstract, theoretical, and rational idea of humanity closely connected to the ideas of Enlightenment and the humanitarian movements, such as movements to abolish slavery, child labor, and so on. Boltanski (1999), elaborating on the theories of Hannah Arendt, uses the term 'pity' for the involvement with distant strangers, but this usage corresponds to the term of 'compassion' used by other writers.

4. It was the groups with Serbian backgrounds who regarded the news and pictures about the Kosovo-Albanian refugees as propaganda, and therefore rejected them.

5. As pointed out by Castells (1996), and many others, traveling, communication technologies, and mass production of identical clothes and other products have made the world more global and connected.

6. Especially the female groups expressed compassion with the distant others and thereby global identity with more force than others. Dissociated and repudiating reactions and interpretations were more common among the male informants. This general difference has also been found in other studies (see Höijer, 2004).

7. We are suggesting that the global and national ideologies, in their essence, are not necessarily excluding but *mutually reconstructing* each other (cf. Delanty, 2000; Olausson, 2007, 2009).

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16 Religiosity as a Way of Appropriating Knowledge

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INTRODUCTION

"Padim" Cícero, the name by which Father Cícero Romão Batista (1872–1934) was known, a charismatic figure with Messianic traits who lived in the northeast of Brazil (Barbosa, 2007; Negrão, 2001), is considered a strong reference for the religiosity of the people of that region.

Each year the town of Juazeiro do Norte, Ceará, the land where Father Cícero lived and died, is thronged by multitudes of pilgrims in ever increasing numbers, sometimes tripling the local population during the principal festivities. From the social, economic, political, and religious points of view, the influence of that movement is huge.

The complex phenomenon of the "Father Cícero pilgrimages" or "Juazeiro pilgrimages", taking place for more than a century, seems to be a symptom of the living conditions of a poor and unprotected people whose roots lie deep in the mixture of eradicated indigenous populations and descendants of slaves. This human mass of rural origin that the elite has always despised and sought to exclude from the social process seems to be finding a niche for itself by affirming its identity of pilgrim. Furthermore, Juazeiro—as a mystical space of the dream of freedom and the idealized figure of protector—alleviates the everyday confrontation with the reality of poverty, a reality belonging equally to those who have remained in the region and those who migrated to other parts of Brazil yet still experience the same frustrations of poverty they had sought to escape.

The occurrence of the pilgrimages has been socially imposed. Earlier, 'pilgrim' was a pejorative term in the region's cultural context. The pilgrimage only won its citizenship recently, after being kept in a marginal position for decades. Today the pilgrim is seen as a wayfarer, a status earlier reserved for those who sought out centers of devotion that are officially accepted by the ecclesiastical hierarchy transmuted into an accredited level of the social structure. References to the opposition of the "fathers" to devotion to the "Padim" appear frequently in the language of pilgrims.

To reach the place of pilgrimage, the wayfarers usually travel long distances under adverse conditions, enduring sun and rain in the backs of

trucks, under a precarious covering of tarpaulins, poorly accommodated on planks improvised as rustic benches. They travel more or less piled up, eating poorly and sleeping even worse but, even so, intoning "blessings" and reciting prayers from a special prayer book. Those blessings and prayers reveal the simple soul of a people little accustomed to the rigors and precision of the Catholic catechism.

Considering the fact of this manifestation of faith in the face of so many difficulties borne by the devotees, some questions arise for analysis: what drives these contingents of pilgrims towards Juazeiro? What attraction does the figure of "Padim Ciço" of Juazeiro da Mãe dos Dores have for these multitudes? Why does this movement cause many people to return several times a year?

Many studies have been done on the historic figure of Father Cícero and on the anthropological, sociopolitical, and psychosocial phenomenon of his relation to the pilgrims. There have been times when some insisted on seeing the pilgrimages as an expression of "religious fanaticism" caused by the ignorance of the masses. The focus of our investigation is on the social representations of these pilgrims regarding Father Cícero of Juazeiro. In other words, what interests us is what the pilgrims themselves think and not what is thought of them. The consideration of this thinking gives us a glimpse of the dynamism of the construction of a wisdom that sets the pilgrims apart, or differentiates them, as it denotes their role as subjects of the process or actors of a social and religious scenario.

The starting point of our study is respect for these men and women as we hear their discourses and note their practices in pursuit of the representations making up their own identity. It is from this perspective that our paper discusses results obtained in research in which the objective was to apprehend and analyze the social representations of pilgrims about "Father Cícero of Juazeiro" and their connection to the social processes of appropriating knowledge.

THEORETICAL COMMENTS

The study of the *representations* of the object "Father Cícero do Juazeiro" constructed by pilgrims during a pilgrimage to the "holy places" of Juazeiro do Norte, Ceará, may contribute towards a better understanding of the fields of social representations in which that object is defined and associated with others. Consequently, an attempt will be made to obtain information circulating: about the object, values, symbols, and models that are glimpsed in the distortions and reorganizations of such information; about practices, in the everyday relationships of the subjects; and in the images modulating gestures and interactions that emerge. This approach is based on the presupposition that neither the construction of knowledge about an object, nor its transmission or appropriation by others are neutral,

mechanical, or uniform; they create conditions of effectiveness in the social and cultural relationships that define, distinguish, or articulate groups in different spaces and times of a given social totality (Moscovici, 2003). The movement—even apparently spontaneous or unrestrained—of transmitting information that originates from a field of knowledge (whatever that field may be) is made through choices that are not always controllable, articulating the receiver's representations to whoever transmits and the various levels of interest polarized in the definition of what, how, when, and how much to inform. In turn, the reception and subsequent appropriation of this information by the receiver invoke broad fields of representations mobilized by group belongings and references to which the individual refers in his relations with the object, with the transmitter and with the means to which the transmitter resorts. The values, models, notions, and pre-notions specific to those belongings and references provide him with the conditions for hearing, sorting, and understanding the information referring to the object and for the appropriation of this information in a new configuration that exhibits signs of authorship as it strengthens group identities.

As Moscovici (2001; Moscovici & Hewstone, 1984) pointed out repeatedly, we should above all bear in mind that the information circulating in a given society, referring to an object, is filtered by the different groups that form it, taking into account their particular features and their references. That filtering decontextualizes the information from its original fields of knowledge to integrate it into those already familiar to such groups so as to avoid possible dissonances between the novelty (the new information) and the values, beliefs, models, and specific symbols of the cultures involved. Social representations thus constitute themselves as complex fields in which meanings attributed to objects interconnect, forming vast networks that interconnect with others in a web in which persons, things, ideas, etc., find their place as they acquire their own meanings. Along this line of reasoning, social representations are formed in a process through which, when building up knowledge about a certain object while appropriating it, the subject constitutes and enriches a practical wisdom that guides him in his communications and conduct referring to that object and to that with which it is associated (Madeira, 2001). It is thought, therefore, that social representations focus around the object "extensive networks of meanings that form and reform through the filtering of information and of experiences that the subject will undergo throughout his life" (Madeira, 2005, p. 460).

METHODOLOGY

The investigation was multi-methodological and sought to triangulate views (Bauer & Gaskell, 2002), combining observations of the living conditions, social relationships, conduct, and practices of the subjects taking part in the pilgrimages (Ginzburg, 2003; Geertz, 1989) with a test of free evocation

of words (Abric, 2003; Sá, 1996; Tura, 1998) using "Father Cícero" as the inductor term, and with verbal interviews that sought to clarify doubts and also to expand on questions regarding the person of Father Cícero, his definition and influence in the life of the pilgrims (Maisonneuve & Margot-Duclot, 1966).

The field work was carried out in two periods. During the All Souls pilgrimage of 2003 (on the days close to November 2), the researchers were able to observe the various aspects of the event as they accompanied the pilgrims in the various religious and profane activities programmed. On that occasion, contacts with clergymen were also made, both with some who encouraged the liturgy of the pilgrimages and with others from local parishes and from the Diocese. During the winter 2004 pilgrimage of Nossa Senhora das Candeias (Our Lady of Candelmas), the whole research team conducted verbal interviews with pilgrims who agreed to participate and made systematic observations (in the weeks around February 2).

The free evocation test and the interviews covered a group of 127 persons chosen at random at the various pilgrimage sites: the Sanctuary of Our Lady of Sorrows, the Parish Priest's House, the Socorro Church, the site of Father Cícero's tomb, the Capuchins' Church, the house where the Father lived (today a museum), and other parts of the town, all replete with pilgrims.

The word evocations were analyzed so as to contemplate the individual and collective dimensions involved by studying the structure and organization of the representation, as proposed by Vergès (1994) and Sá (1996). The interviews were recorded with each subject's prior consent and, once transcribed, were submitted to an enunciation analysis, which presupposes a deeper study of each one, followed by a comparative analysis of all the material. On those two occasions, transformations that were operating in the discursive construction were considered without separating anything at all, because any separation could lead to losing the conditions that allow for clues to be found regarding the cultural and personal dimensions involved in the transformations, as well as signs that were glimpsed in the variances and invariances of the association of the transformations with rhetorical figures or language (Kerbrat-Orecchioni, 1980; D'Unrug, 1977).

RESULTS

1. Contextualization

First, we will describe the context in which the research was carried out. The observation procedure revealed that throughout the year pilgrims may be found visiting the places considered holy in Juazeiro do Norte and fulfilling their "obligations" as devotees: they go to mass, pay alms, sing, pray, and visit the tomb of "Padim Ciço", the Sanctuary of Our Lady of Sorrows, the Horticultural Nursery, the Way of the Cross and other churches, etc.

As happens at every pilgrimage site, that is, Aparecida or Guadalupe, much trade is established and grows. Information was received that at the end of an intensive period of pilgrimage the local tradesmen needed to replace their stocks because the pilgrims bought up everything to take as souvenirs, making a point to leave their money in the land of the "Padim". Accordingly, the constant presence of the pilgrims drives the local economy: all over, all kinds of products are for sale—straw hats (a distinctive sign of the pilgrim), statues of Father Cícero made of gypsum or wood, religious objects, pictures with the image of the Father, sandals, and sundry handicrafts. At each step one finds carts, stalls, or improvised food stands, or houses with signs announcing "Vacancies for Pilgrims". In the streets and trading centers, or along the pilgrimage paths, photographers advertize that their photos will guarantee the recollection of such precious moments. These photos, sometimes placed in small binoculars, and shown proudly by the devotee, serve to fuel the pilgrims' hopes after their departures.

All this bustle, noise, mixture of odors, and sounds intensifies cyclically, reaching a paroxysm around three dates: the feast of Our Lady of Candlemas (February 2), the feast of Our Lady of Sorrows (September 15), and All Souls Day (November 2). According to the pilgrims, the latter two dates were venerated by "Padim Ciço", who asked his devotees to never to fail to come to Juazeiro, preferably on those occasions. The feast of February 2, also according to the subjects, became a special occasion for pilgrimage due to the influence of a former priest of the region.

Each pilgrimage, as the groups of pilgrims are called, has its own customs, although by and large the routines are very similar: The pilgrims arrive beforehand, so that the participants may be present at the *novenas* or at the preparatory *triduum*, and they leave immediately after the end of what is considered the closing. These groups of pilgrims from every place and origin each have a person responsible for the organization of the pilgrimage (travel, accommodation, etc.) and one or more persons who guide and rehearse hymns and prayers, inform the pilgrims about the times of masses and sermons, and indicate desirable behavior, or in short, reinforce the beliefs that unite the members of their group. These persons, usually women, maintain that they are the bearers of a special wisdom, and through this they seek to distinguish themselves from the rest, maintaining a power-space whose roots, they say, lie in the messages of Padim Ciço himself. In this way, members of the various subgroups are strengthened in accordance with the fundamental belonging of each one to the group of devotees.

The pilgrim comes to Juazeiro do Norte to give thanks or to ask for something. Most are poor. They travel by truck, light vehicles called vans, or by bus. By and large, the vehicles are old, in bad shape, and unable to cope with the road, but nevertheless travel long journeys. Pilgrims of better social position are almost unseen; they are in a minority and are lost in the crowd.

2. Analysis

The initial analysis of the answers showed that 305 evocations by 127 subjects were recorded, containing 102 different words and corresponding to an average of 2.4 evocations per subject, indicating that not all of the subjects managed to carry out the three indications requested. The averages of the evocation frequencies (F_m) and of the average evocation orders (AEO) were calculated, obtaining the values of 21 and 2.l0, respectively (see Table 16.1)[1].

These parameters make it possible to distribute the various elements in a dispersion chart divided into four quadrants by the crossing of the F_m and AEO axes.

As Table 16.2 shows, *saint* is the only element forming the central nucleus; the elements *hope, mentor, friend-of-the-poor, love, martyr, peace,* and *devotion* form the peripheral system. In the upper right quadrant, are *miracle-worker* and *faith-in-him* and in the lower left quadrant are the elements *servant-of-God, protector, powerful,* and *God,* composing what Campos (2003) calls the first periphery which, according to Flament (1994), is harder to interpret.

The analysis of similitude[2] (Bouriche, 2003; Pereira, 2005) reveals that *saint* appears in the middle of a star formation organizing the elements *faith-in-him, mentor, protector, devotion,* and *friend-of-the-poor.* Note two other radiated formations, each with five elements: one connects *faith-in-him* to *love, saint, miracle-worker,* and *martyr,* and in another, *miracle-worker* organizes the elements *powerful, friend-of-the-poor, devotion,* and *faith-in-him* (Figure 16.1). These formations highlight the symbolic value of these elements, located on the first periphery, because they show power of relationship, confirming their strong tendency to centrality (Moliner, 1994).

The similitude analysis shows that three elements appear with greater symbolic power: *saint, miracle-worker,* and *faith-in-him.* These are also

Table 16.1   Summary of Results of Evocation Test

Number of subjects	127
Number of different words evoked	102
Total number of evocations	305
Average number of evocations per subject	2.4
Average AEO	2.0
Average of evocation frequencies (FM)	21

Table 16.2 Results of the Evocations

Fm	AEO < 2.0			AEO ≥ 2.7		
	Elements	F	AEO	Elements	F	AEO
F_m ≥ 21	Saint	53	1.528	Miracle-worker	28	2.036
				Faith-in-him	24	2.000
F_m < 20	Servant-of-God	9	1.778	Hope	14	2.357
	Protector	8	1.625	Mentor	12	2.417
	Powerful	6	1.833	Martyr	9	2.000
	God	5	1.400	Friend-of-the-poor	8	2.375
				Peace	8	2.250
				Love	7	2.000
				Devotion	5	2.200
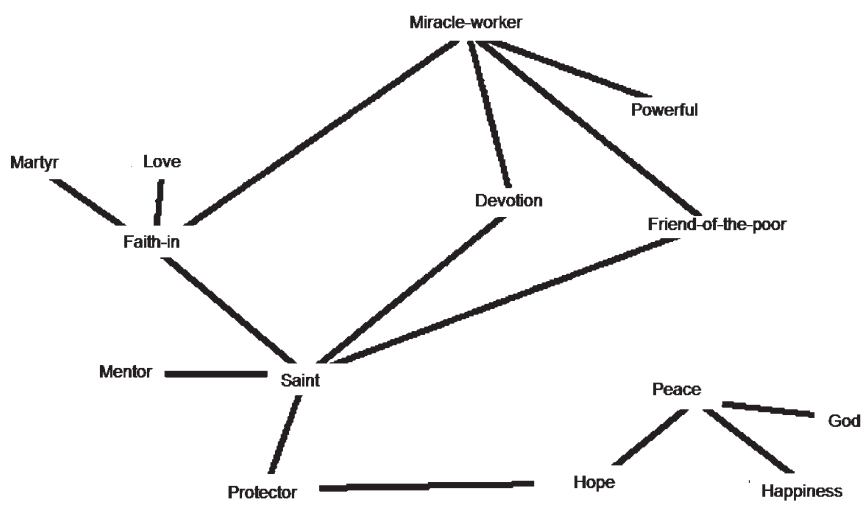
Figure 16.1 Maximum similitude tree.

repeatedly present in the interviews, in an invariant articulation in which the word *saint* is being used not merely metaphorically, but as a synonym of the designation 'Padim Ciço', which is ratified by the expressions containing the attribute *miracle-worker.* The attribute *miracle worker* brings the *saint* closer to the everyday struggles of his people, to their sorrows and their yearnings, and naturalizes this presence. In this context, *saint,* in addition to forming the central nucleus, is also a figurative nucleus of the social representation of "Padim Ciço": it is the iconic form that indicates the "Padim", his title of glory, the summary of his life.

In this respect, we should mention the processes of objectification and anchorage of this construction: Information about Father Cícero is being appropriated over the years by the pilgrims, fragmented, decontextualized, distorted, and remodeled by the filtering of values and models that define the social and symbolic spaces of these subjects. Reconstructed and integrated into the "know how to live" that identifies them, they turn the "Padim" into a *saint* and *martyr, friend-of-God,* and *miracle-worker.* The designation *saint* incorporates the positivity that the word *faith-in-him* implicitly calls for. The *faith-in-him* is not just a prerequisite for the miracle and, to a lesser degree, a consequence of its happening, but also an indication of the space in which the pilgrim fits in that colloquy: *faith in Padim* and *help our equals.*

FINAL COMMENTS

Throughout the material analyzed, and above all in the interviews, there were recurrent signs that in addition to forming the central system, *saint* is characterized as a figurative nucleus of the social representations of "Padim Ciço", pointing also to a history of quarrels between those who have power and Father Cícero *friend-of-the-poor,* emblematically, together with his devotees.

In this perspective, the delimitation of meanings involved in the rule of *helping equals* is made clearer: The definition of the recipients of this help is equal in positivity to those of agents of help, in the same movement that excludes from this circuit all others. Here, the subjects offer a glimpse— without speaking, through their allusive style—of the distances between their work and that of powerful people.

Gradually, the discursive transformations operating allow one to perceive—in the hesitations, attempts at conjunctions, and reductions—signs of successive disruptions expanding strong opposition systems: the poor, pilgrims, devotees, Father Cícero, and Jesus Christ versus the rich, the priests, the faithful, and the Church; or, regarding references to values and models, faith, love, prayers, dedication, pilgrims, and devotees versus disbelief, hate, sloth, conspicuousness, mundane, avarice, powerful, and wealthy.

In the discourses of the subjects, disjunctions of time and place lead us to associate the persecutions they believe were imposed on Father Cícero by the combination of greed, envy, and pettiness of priests and the powerful with the sufferings they endure themselves in their struggle to survive. In an invariant movement, they establish a fusion between Father Cícero-*martyr* and those who consider themselves his devotees so as to be able to participate in the victory of the "Padim". At the same time, paradoxically and almost hyperbolically, the references to his *faith* and to *hope* in Father Cícero-*miracle-worker* enable them to discover themselves to be strong and powerful, and in their pain and necessity and hardship, they declare themselves winners even in the atemporal and aspatial.

Such is the situation that our investigation was able to reveal. During the research, gradually the meanings involved in the pilgrims' social representations around the "Padim" were glimpsed. In these meanings, a simple and strong belief in a *saint* emerges, in the figure of a *miracle-worker, a martyr*, disdained by the powerful of the land and strengthened by God to be the father and protector of the poor.

This is the central figure in the life of these subjects. Father Cícero is familiarly called "my" Padim, nearly a protector, because this is a protective tie that substitutes for paternity through delegation from God: The pilgrim belongs to a lineage that extrapolates his time and his space. In a continuous and always new movement, the faith-in-him, the martyr, the miracle-worker, the mentor, the friend-of-the-poor, the powerful, the servant-of-God, and the saint are affirmed. In this group of values, models, and symbols, knowledge is built up, the knowledge of living that guides the communications and everyday practices of the pilgrims of "Padim Ciço".

NOTES

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17 Appropriation of Knowledge and Social Psychology

Milgram's Experiment on Obedience to Authority

Sophie Richardot

INTRODUCTION

In this chapter, we intend to examine the conditions of appropriation, by individuals, of scientific knowledge opposing theories of common sense and the process of anchoring this knowledge in their systems of representations. We will focus our interest on the way in which students integrate knowledge taught in social psychology. The idea is to analyze the reception of Milgram's famous experiment on obedience to authority (Milgram, 1974), an experiment which, as we know, tends to challenge the representation of the individual (free, responsible, and human) commonly conveyed in our society.

Let us recall that, in the basic experiment, a subject is asked to teach a learner (introduced as a second subject, but in reality a confederate of the experimenter) some word pairs; when a mistake is made, the subject must inflict on the learner electric shocks of increasing intensity for each new mistake. When the subject hesitates to inflict the shocks, the experimenter exhorts him to do so, in the name of science. S. Milgram's idea was thus "to study the reactions of the individual placed in the center of a conflict between his conscience and authority" (1974, p. 1). "On one hand, the obvious suffering of the learner encourages him to stop; on the other hand, the experimenter, the legitimate authority to whom he feels committed, urges him to continue" (Milgram, 1974, p. 20). One remembers that the results were particularly surprising since the average maximum shock was 360 volts, and 65% of the subjects obeyed and went up to a maximum of 450 volts. Milgram showed, by varying the experimental contexts, that it is obviously not people's sadism which explains their persistence but the fact that they feel in certain situations more constrained by the orders of the experimenter than by the voice of their conscience. Let us recall that this obedience to authority is observed in equal proportions in women and in men, which also contradicts stereotypes according to which women are less able than men to cause another pain.

The reception of this experiment by students is to be referred to the theory of social representations (Moscovici, 1961), a theory more and more

frequently used to analyze the integration of knowledge from social sciences (Lautier, 2006; Cariou, 2006; Beitone, Decugis, Dollo, & Rodrigues, 2004). This theory, elaborated from the study of the transformations of psychoanalytical theory as it made its way into the sphere of common sense, postulates that two major processes, objectification and anchoring, underlie this work of integration of one kind of knowledge (science) by another (common sense). *Objectification* proceeds from a simplification: Individuals try to transform an abstract or complex concept into a simpler reality, perceptible in pictured form. *Anchoring* more specifically relates to the integration or the rooting of the object of social representation within a preexistent frame of reference (representations, ideologies, attitudes, beliefs, values, conducts . . .). "These processes of objectivation and anchoring will be especially brought up to date during a confrontation with the unexpected or the unexplainable. Moscovici (1984) defends the idea that an important function of social representations is precisely the domestication of the strange" (Palmonari & Doise, 1986, p. 23).

Here, we will focus our attention on the process of anchoring by analyzing the way in which the students integrate (or reject) the elements of knowledge resulting from this experiment in their representational universes. We expect that this integration, implying a strong questioning of the social representations commonly shared about the individual (his/her morality, his/her autonomy, his/her responsibility, etc.), will turn out to be problematic. How, consequently, will the students proceed to anchor in their cognitive universe the knowledge resulting from this experiment while preserving their representations? It is known that "when a social representation is called into question the requirements of the communication reveal a rhetorical activity of rationalization aimed at deeming this questioning admissible or inadmissible (. . .) These rationalizations conform to general modes of argumentation which can be called *frameworks* or *structures* in the sense of predefined figures which can be altered according to the circumstances and the stakes involved" (Rouquette & Rateau, 1998, p. 118).

To date, two types of reasoning *structures* have been identified: *the strange scheme* and the *scheme of negation*. The first type of *structure* corresponds to the process of assimilation of the exception to the representation, which is not much modified by it. It is characterized by the recall of normality, the designation of an exception, the assertion of a contradiction between the two terms and the suggestion of a "good reason" making the contradiction understandable. For example, "normally, one will say, a liberal teacher is not authoritative. If he expresses authority, it is because he was forced to do so" (Flament & Rouquette, 2003, p. 140). The second type of *structure* alludes to the situation where the exception is completely rejected. If the preceding example is taken again, we will thus have: "normally, a liberal teacher is not authoritative. If he expresses authority, he cannot be liberal" (Flament & Rouquette, 2003, p. 140).

Thus, faced with the questioning of their representation, individuals either think of "a good reason" which makes it possible to integrate the contradictory information, or they do not succeed in doing so and just reject it. What then are the factors which will further the adoption of one mode of reasoning rather than another? Studies show (Rouquette & Guimelli, 1995) that the *perception of the reversible or irreversible character* of the change which has occurred influences the mode of reasoning used by individuals. When individuals believe that the change is only transitory, they will find some "good reasons" that make it possible to bear the contradiction temporarily, while waiting for a return to normality (*scheme* of rationalization). On the other hand, when they think that the changes are indeed irreversible, and that these changes fundamentally undermine an element of their representation (central rather than peripheral), they will tend to reject the innovation to preserve their beliefs (*scheme* of negation).

The degree of self-implication also enters into the choice of one mode of reasoning over another. Guimelli (2002) showed that

> subjects personally involved in the situation [i.e., in the position of actors] prefer to make use of a more moderate reasoning *structure*, enabling them to rationalize the effects of the questioning, even when it is the central system that is affected. In other words, the subjects who are involved tend to put forward "good reasons" that are likely to explain in what way the element causing the questioning is un-matched in the field of representation, in order to possibly be able to integrate it. On the other hand, the subjects who are not involved in the situation [i.e., in the position of observers] have a more radical reasoning which utilizes the process of refutation in much more im-portant proportions. (p. 145)

In light of these studies, we can expect that individuals will have a ten-dency, in order to preserve their initial representations, to believe, for as long as they can, that the situation is reversible and/or that they themselves are not affected directly. Concerning Milgram's experiment, it can be sup-posed that the students will all the more easily integrate the results if they believe: (a) that they could not be reproduced today; and/or (b) that they don't apply to themselves (if the results did apply, this would mean that the students also have a 65% chance of continuing the experiment to its term). In other words, we expect that the students would lay down certain condi-tions for the integration of the problematic knowledge resulting from this experiment. This way, they will work out a reassuring framework enabling them not to have to reject the knowledge and they will integrate it with-out damage. The objective of this chapter is thus to analyze the explica-tive schemes that the students confronted with this experiment produce by focusing on the conditions that the students will insist on in order to integrate the knowledge resulting from this experiment.

METHODOLOGY: AN INVESTIGATION IN TWO PARTS

To analyze the reception of these results by the students, they were asked to answer a questionnaire in two parts.

First part: The experiment was exposed to the students in detail *without presenting the results*. Students then had to predict the results themselves. Thus, they were asked to answer the following two questions:

> In your opinion, what is the percentage of *subjects* placed in this situation who agree to continue administering electric shocks until the end (450 V)?
>
> In your opinion, what is the percentage of *men* and *women* subjects placed in this situation who agree to continue administering electric shocks until the end (450 V)?

Second part: The results of the experiment were announced (the absence of a male/female difference as well as the role of obedience to authority was stressed). Students were then asked to react to the results, indicating on a 4 point scale (1 = *not at all* and 4 = *absolutely*) if:

(a) they were surprised by the percentage of subjects agreeing to administer electric shocks until the end; and
(b) they thought that the same results would be obtained today if the experiment were reproduced.

Finally, they were asked about their personal implication: "Now that you know the results of this experiment, what are the chances that in the same situation, you would

(a) agree to take part in the experiment?
(b) agree to continue administering electric shocks until the end (450 V)?

The students had to justify in a few lines all of the predictions in percentages and the choices of positioning on each scale.

SUBJECTS

This questionnaire was administrated to 314 students working towards a degree in Educational Science. Seventy eight percent of the students were women. Their average age was 20 years. 41% of the students had heard about the experiment and, of these, 80% in a social psychology course.

As our objective is to study the anchoring of the knowledge resulting from this experiment in the representational universe of the students, we

will systematically analyze all the answers obtained by comparing the students who declare having heard about the experiment to those who declare never having heard about it. This comparison will enable us to appreciate to what extent these experimental results are considered to be problematic and to study the cognitive work done by the students who already know of the experiment to integrate this knowledge into their representational universe.

RESULTS OF THE INVESTIGATION

Some Problematic Experimental Results

The comparison of the predictions formulated by the students concerning the percentage of subjects, men and women, placed in this situation who agreed to continue inflicting electric shocks until the end (450V) reveals a significant effect of training: the students who have heard about the experiment make, in all cases, higher predictions than those who have never heard about it (see Table 17.1).

Nevertheless, it can be noted that the structure of the data remains the same, whether the students have heard about the experiment or not: the predictions formulated for men are higher than those given for women, the predictions of subjects ranging between the two. In other words, while those who know of the experiment generally formulate higher predictions than those who do not know of it, all of the students tend to think that women will persist less in their behavior than men.

This first analysis thus shows that it is indeed difficult for the students to conceive *a priori* that more than 31% of the individuals (the maximum obtained in the case of men subjects) will continue to inflict electric shocks until the end. It also shows that those who know of the experiment, in spite of the cognitive work done to integrate the results, tend to revise the figures downwards, in particular for female subjects. Should we see in this revision an attempt to establish conformity between the knowledge resulting from

Table 17.1   Students' Predictions of the Percent of Subjects Who Would Continue to Inflict Shocks up to 450 Volts

	Subjects	Men	Women
Students unaware of the experiment	19%	31%	16%
Students aware of the experiment	37%	44%	26%
Significance test	$F(1.308) =$ 41.41 $p = 0001$	$F(1.307) =$ 14.37 $p = .0001$	$F(1.307) =$ 8.96 $p = .0001$

this experiment and the beliefs most commonly shared concerning individuals, men and women? The analysis of the justifications which accompany the various percentages (subjects, men, and women) seems indeed to point in this direction.

"Normally, people are human . . . "

To justify their general predictions (for the subjects), the students give three justifications:

1. "People are human; they do not like to make others suffer";
2. "Only the insane and sadistic will continue until the end"; and
3. "People are under the influence of authority, are conditioned, don't take responsibility".

"Normally, people are human . . . " is the premise of the reasoning used here by the students. This reasoning continues:

– either without reference to a "good reason" allowing them to justify a possible exception (scheme of negation):

"Consequently, nobody will inflict electric shocks up to 450 volts" (the predictions are thus 0%)

– or with reference, implicit or explicit, to a "good reason" (scheme of rationalization):

"some people, however, are not human (like sadists)" [explanation 1 and 2]. Consequently, "some (the very few exceptions) will administer electric shocks until the end of this experiment";
   "in certain situations, people are under the influence of the authority" [explanation 3]. Consequently, "the individuals will tend to administer electric shocks until the end of this experiment".

Very few students consider that not a single subject will continue until the end (4.5%), and all those who think so justify their prediction of 0% by simply declaring "people are human". A very large majority of the students confronted with the experiment thus produce strange schemes to anticipate the results.

   The first two explanations are there to justify much lower predictions (than the third explanation) concerning the number of subjects who will persist in the experiment (14% for explanation 1 and 10% for explanation 2 versus 49% for explanation 3). These two types of "good reasons" are not comparable in nature: The first two explanations are dispositional, arising from the nature of the individuals, while the third is situational, proceeding

from the experimental conditions under which the subjects are placed. As Table 17.2 shows, the dispositional reasons are mainly advanced by students who had never heard about the experiment, while the situational reasons are more often given by those who had prior knowledge of it.

As we can see, calling upon a situational explanation (in terms of obedience to authority) does not appear to be very "natural" for the students. Rather, the dispositional explanations are those that in fact come to their minds—including in 41% of the students who were already aware of the experiment. We have here what Ross (1977) proposed we call "the fundamental error", that is, the preference of individuals for internal rather than external attributions.

It is also apparent that the two registers do not have the same explanatory capacity. Indeed, if the dispositional register makes it possible to justify exceptions from the rule, the situational register makes it possible to explain the less constraining character of the rule itself. That's why internal explanations always justify low predictions, even when the students know of the experiment beforehand. (Students with prior knowledge of the experiment predicted that 17% of the subjects would agree to inflict electric shocks until the end, and students who did not have prior knowledge predicted that 11% of the subjects would do so.) The students informed of the experiment thus only regard people as a little less "human" or a little more "sadistic" than they first thought, but it is obviously difficult for them to think that as many as 65% of people can be "inhuman" or "sadistic" . . .

Results Applying to Men

While very few students think that no male subject will continue until the end of the experiment, there are even more who think that no female subject would do so (4% versus 10%). The students thus resort more often to the scheme of negation when they consider the case of women rather than

Table 17.2   Frequency of the Dispositional or Situational Reasons Advanced by the Students to Justify Their General Predictions According to Their Prior Knowledge of the Experiment (Chi2 = 37.50; df = 1; p < .0001)

	Dispositional reasons	Situational reasons	Total
Students unaware of the experiment (n = 182)	86%	14%	100%
Students aware of the experiment (n = 128)	41%	59%	100%
Total	63.5%	36.5%	100%

that of men. To justify the rejection of the exception they say, generally, that (1) "women are more sensitive to pain than men" or (2) "men and women are not different". When the students agree to consider the exception (strange scheme), they give moreover the following "good reasons": (3) "men are harder, more resistant, more courageous than women" or (4) "men are more violent, sadistic, cruel than women".

Only explanation number two is without stereotypic contents. One could suppose that it would be used more by those who know of the experiment—the constraints of the experimental situation being exerted on all the subjects in the same way—but this is not the case (see Table 17.3). Among the reasons with stereotypic contents, two of them refer to male stereotypes ("men are more courageous", "crueler ... ") and another to female stereotypes ("women are more sensitive"). As Table 17.3 shows, no difference is observed when resorting to one or other of these two explanations according to prior knowledge of the experiment by the student.

Whatever the prior knowledge of the experiment, it is the explanation that "women are sensitive" which is most frequently given, the two other types of explanation being advanced much less frequently and in similar proportions.

Again, these justifications accompany very different predictions about the percentage of subjects who would accept to inflict shocks of up to 450 volts. It is the explanation without stereotypic contents that justifies the highest percentages of female subjects (41% of female subjects who are aware of the experiment and 20% of female subjects who are not aware of it). The explanations involving male stereotypes justify more moderate percentages (30% versus 15%), while the explanation referring to female stereotypes is associated with even smaller percentages (23% versus 13%).

The intervention of gender stereotypes, in particular female ones, thus causes a downward revision, including for those who already know of the experiment, of the initially general predictions formulated by the students

Table 17.3   Frequency of the Three Types of Explanations Advanced by the Students to Justify Their Predictions, According to Students' Prior Knowledge of the Experiment (Chi2 = 0.8735; df = 2; NS)

	Reasons "Female stereotype"	Reasons "Male stereotype"	Reasons "Without stereotype"	Total
Students unaware of the experiment	74%	14%	12%	100%
Students aware of the experiment	79%	10%	11%	100%
Total	76%	12%	11.5%	100%

concerning the percentage of subjects who would agree to inflict electric shocks up to 450 volts. The analysis also shows that the students informed of the experiment and who previously justified the persistence of the subjects by resorting to situational explanations, in terms of obedience to authority, now choose explanations about the "nature of women" to explain the lesser persistence of female subjects in the situation. Milgram's results thus seem to have a general value, for men at least, but not for women; or, in other words, the idea according to which the subjects will persist in the experiment because they are submitted to authority seems to be admissible provided that it does not apply to female subjects.

A finer analysis of the justifications suggested by the students who are aware of the experiment thus revealed contradictory logics which testify to an acceptance of the general results and a rejection of the results for women. For example, a student justifies his general prediction of 20% by saying: "certain people submit themselves to authority, which inhibits their reflection in the situation". He then says, to justify his predictions concerning men and women (70% for men and 30% for women): "women are perhaps more sensitive to the pain of the learner and choose to stop the experiment". He thus indeed justifies his general predictions by referring to the process of obedience to authority and then refers to the nature of women to explain the weaker predictions he advanced for the female subjects. In other words, he changes explanatory registers from one response to another: On the one hand, he uses situational explanations, following Milgram's conclusions, when he answers generally and, on the other hand, he uses dispositional explanations, in conformity with gender stereotypes, when he answers for women.

This tendency to accept the general results and to reject those for women is also observed in those who did not know the experiment when, in the second part of the questionnaire, the experimental results actually obtained by Milgram are stated. If, as a whole, the students "accept" the general results, many on the other hand reject the results which indicate an absence of difference between the rates of men's and women's obedience. A student who was not aware of the experiment and who predicted 60% for the men and 40% for the women, said, for example: "I do not agree. The obedience to authority is normal, but the proportion of men and women is not, in my opinion."

Results Applying to the Past

Following the announcement of the experimental results effectively obtained by Milgram, the students were required to answer the question "Do you think we would obtain the same results today if this experiment were reproduced?" by positioning themselves on a 4-point scale (1 = not at all and 4 = absolutely). The analysis shows that those who had already heard about the experiment believe more than the others that the results

would be the same (2.78 as compared to 2.38, F (1.301) = 10.41; p < .001), which certainly reveals the influence of the mode of transmission of the knowledge resulting from this experiment (a course versus a simple text) on the work of integration by the student. But it can also be supposed that, whatever the form under which the results are announced, the results themselves are often the object of a first movement of rejection. Moreover, the analysis shows that the more astonishment the students expressed when faced with the experimental results (also on a 4-point scale), the less they think that the same results would be obtained today (R = -.16, p < .05). To believe that the results would no longer be valid today undoubtedly allows the students to rationalize the dissonance generated by the announcement of the results. It is, however, interesting to note that the results remain problematic for the students who had already been informed of them, since those students still say they are "surprised".

More than one student out of two (55%) think that the rate of obedience recorded today would be less important because "mentalities have changed" (32%) or because people are more "sensitive" (13%) or "thoughtful" (10%); 35% of the students think that the results would be the same because "mentalities are the same" (13%), "people are the same" (10%) or "obedience to authority is the same" (12%). 10% of the students affirm that the results would be "worse" ("because people are interested", "accustomed to violence", etc.). While students informed of the experiment beforehand think that the experiment can be reproduced more often than the uninformed do, and while they believe more often than the others that "today, obedience to authority would be the same" (22% against 4.76%) to justify their positions, the fact remains that about half of them (40%) think that the rate of obedience would be lower today than in the past, mainly because "mentalities have changed".

Such an explanation allows the student to say that these results apply only to the past, while remaining coherent with what he/she said about them before. A female student, for example, to justify her general prediction of 70%, said: "he hesitates to do it but, since there is another person with the subject regarded as an authority, the subject submits himself to the authority. The subject unconsciously lays any responsibility on the authority. If that hurt, it is not his fault because it is the person in authority who required him to do so". To explain why, according to her, the results would definitely be lower today, she states: "I think that there is a change in mentality. People assume more responsibility". Here she thus very coherently takes up a central element of her initial argument and then refutes it.

Results Applying to Others

Students were also asked, following the announcement of the results, to evaluate their "chances" of agreeing to (1) take part in the experiment; and (2) continue administering electric shocks until the end (450 V). The

students are numerous, this time, to reject the idea that they could take part in such an experiment (36%) and they are even more likely to think that there is no chance that they will continue until the end (76%). While the students who know of the experiment do not evaluate their chances of taking part in the experiment differently than the others (27% versus 30%), they do tend, on the other hand, to think that they have less chance (than the others think in regard to themselves) of continuing until the end (7% versus 12%, F (1.308) = 2.81; p < .10).

It can be observed, again, that the more astonishment the students expressed when faced with the experimental results, the less they think that they would take part in the experiment (R = -.18, p < .001) and that they would persist in the situation (r = -17, p < .003). This correlation can perhaps also be interpreted as an attempt to reduce the dissonance induced by the announcement of the results. They would apply only to yesterday and not to today, to "the others" but not to themselves. To justify the low probabilities they give to being involved in the situation, the students say mainly: "I would take part but would not continue until the end" (40%); "I do not want to do like the others, I resist the norm" (30%) and "I would not be able: I am not sadistic, I do not like to hurt" (30%). To justify their decisions, the students who already knew of the experiment do not advance different explanations than those who did not know of it. On the other hand, the students who believe that the results can be reproduced today tend to explain their position as "I do not want to do like the others, I resist the norm" while those who do not think they could be reproduced say rather, "I would take part but I would not continue" (Chi2 = 4.64; df = 2; p < .10). Therefore those who believe that individuals would behave in the same way today as yesterday in such an experiment tend to engage in strategies aiming at being different from "the others". A female student thus says that the same results would certainly be obtained because "if in the Sixties, there were 65% of the subjects able to continue until the end today, it would be worse. It is linked to the fact that our sensitivity to things has clearly changed". But she considers she doesn't have any chance of taking part by declaring "it is not because 65% of the subjects agree to do it that I should do it!"

CONCLUSION

The analysis of the reception of Milgram's basic experiment highlights the problematic character of the knowledge resulting from this experiment for the students: the predictions of the percentage of the subjects who would inflict shocks up to 450 volts are *a priori* very low and are *a posteriori* revised downwards. The students, including those who knew of the experiment, say they are very surprised by the results once they are announced in the second part of the questionnaire. The experiment seems

in particular to question the idea that "people are human, do not like to cause pain". This questioning nevertheless leads the students to produce more strange schemes than schemes of negation. Indeed, a very large majority of the students do not reject the idea that there can be certain exceptions from the rule. They seem to think rather spontaneously that any rule has its exceptions and imagine "cases" where this one does not apply. Flament (1994), in fact, proposed the idea that any norm comprises absolute aspects and conditional aspects; absolute aspects correspond to the general case and conditional aspects to the particular case. Concerning Milgram's experiment, the exceptions which come most spontaneously to the students' mind cover categories of subjects rather than characteristics of the situation in which they are placed: "sadists" or "madmen", men rather than women. The situational interpretation that Milgram proposes to explain his results is not therefore *a priori* very "natural" for the students. Nevertheless, it is observed that the majority of those who are aware of the experiment manage to integrate the idea according to which, in this context, the subjects are submitted to authority. The integration of the elements of this knowledge, however, seems itself subjected to conditions. Two of these conditions were identified here: The first is that the results of this experiment apply to the past and not to the present, and the second is that they apply to others and not to oneself. Our results show that the students who already knew of the experiment rather tend to think that the results are not valid for themselves, and those who did not know of it rather tend to believe that they are no longer valid today. Other studies are necessary to understand to what extent this difference is due to the mode of appropriation of knowledge (a course versus a simple text) or to the work of appropriation itself. Another factor is also likely to intervene in this process: identification with others. To believe that the results are reproducible today is undoubtedly more problematic for subjects who consider themselves "like the others". On the other hand, to believe that one is "different from the others" can undoubtedly help foster the idea that people would behave today in the same way as yesterday.

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