

EDITORIAL

Social representation theory is by far not the youngest theoretical orientation in social psychology. During the thirty years or so since its implementation a lot of work has been done using this approach which has yielded a variety of interesting results. This work has probed nearly each and every field, be it the multitude of contents and social objects whose social representations have been researched, or be it the variety of methodological approaches applied to investigate theoretical aspects of the concepts involved. Today researchers dispose of a rather well developed and elaborated corpus of concepts staking out the field of the theory. Nevertheless the theory still evokes discussion and - sometimes heated - argument. We believe this to indicate that the developing potential of the theory is far from being washed out.

There are competing theories in the field of modern social psychology offering an explanation potential for the social dimension in issues of human mind and behaviour like social constructionism, rhetorical analyses, linguistic repertoires, social marking, theories of ideology, Alltagstheorien, etc. to name but a few. These approaches together with social representation theory represent a class of theories aiming at what one may call the "socializing of social psychology". This is what counts today in the efforts for making social psychology still more valuable for the understanding of everyday, social, and political problems.

"ongoing production on social representations - threads of discussion" is intended to provide a flexible and - hopefully - fast medium for publishing papers on empirical research and theoretical and methodological reflections primarily in the field of social representations, but also in the wider field of approaches mentioned before. The papers will be accompanied by two or three discussions which are supposed to comment on them and provide a critique. Such discussions necessarily need to be controversial and to juxtapose opposing views. No soup tastes without a pinch of salt and pepper. Equally we believe that discussions need to be measured with a fine feeling for which critique is helpful and constructive and which oversalts the meal.

Of course, *"ongoing production on social representations"* does not (yet) intend to replace formal publication outlets at the present time. But nevertheless it can provide valuable ideas for the authors, clarify fuzzy issues, and instigate argument in a science where silence would mean intellectual aridity. As a consequence we also want to encourage young researchers to submit their papers. The title *"ongoing production..."* implies that we do not only intend to consider already perfect papers for publication (What in the world ever is perfect?), but also reports on work in progress and unfinished businesses, where the comments may be able to point out blind alleys and offer alternative ideas.

A similar project was suggested to us some years ago by our late Jean-Paul Codol. His proposal was to establish a discussion journal for European Social Psychology and distribute it by Electronic mail. In this sense - though without electronic means of distribution - we want to dedicate the first number of the present publication to his memory.

This first issue contains three papers which are evenly spread over such diverse issues as basic theoretical considerations (Räty & Snellman), methodology (Sotirakopoulou & Breakwell), and an indepth analysis of a mental "landmark" - the so-called siege mentality -

in Israel (Bar-Tal & Antebi). We have the impression that the accompanying comments all handle the balance between critical distance and constructive support very well. Even with such controversial issues as those presented by Rätty and Snellman, the discussions, though partly opposing social representation theory, provide insights into some minor or major (you tick it) shortcomings of the approach.

As the idea to this endeavour was born in discussions between colleagues, we also hope to initiate a lively and ongoing further communication between you. Please don't hesitate to contact us in case you want to suggest any change you consider important, or to give us feedback on any aspect of this publication.

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