Social Psychology and Social Change

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When following the public debates on the occasion of the recent presidential elections in France one must have known nothing about the theory of social representations not to understand that representations of social and political changes constantly intervened in these debates. The least that can be concluded, and until colleagues more expert in the analysis of such debates, such as Pascal Marchand, tell us more about it, is that participants in these debates evoked the possibility of another functioning of society, or even of a more or less radical innovation of the principles and objectives that should regulate this functioning. Thus at least in their speeches politicians activated the social representations referring to changes of societal nature.

If I chose as theme of this conference the relationship between social psychology and social change, it is neither because I would like to directly intervene in a society debate, nor, as I already have often done, to insist once again on the need to rely on sociological analyses such as those provided at the time by Pierre Bourdieu and Alain Touraine (on this topic see Doise & Lorenzi-Cioldi, 1989) to develop a socio-psychological analysis of societal functionings. My goal is more modest, while also being more personal in nature; it is to try to understand why, as a

social psychologist, I have taken an interest in societal change. At least, what we now call "mainstream social psychology", due to the English language, has paid almost no attention to societal change, at the most, mainstream social psychology considers it as a framework in which take place individual and interpersonal processes that can be studied as such, because invested with a certain universality they would occur in very different societal contexts.

I shall then start with a return to the past already initiated in a previous publication (Doise, 2008) to show how this effort, admittedly personal but also practiced by others, corresponds in my view to two challenges that were laid down for me in a more or less distant past. One of these challenges forced me to ask myself about the possible contributions that social psychology could provide during a period of societal change; another challenge implied the necessity to better elucidate the relationship between pedagogy and social psychology. Such challenges have certainly been taken up by others, but it is here in Portugal that they were laid down for me at the same time and in the clearest manner, after the Carnation Revolution. Fortunately, I was already somewhat prepared to take up these challenges, of course not enough to permanently solve the theoretical problems involved; these are still present and are to be constantly brought up to date.

Only afterwards, a third challenge was added to the previous two when I came to the conclusion that the consideration of problems of such importance also requires in social psychology to conduct a discussion on the importance of the intervention of legal systems at least in some of the phenomena studied.

My contribution shall thus consist of three parts; it will successively consider the links between societal change and social psychology, between pedagogy and social psychology, and between societal psychology and legal institutions.

SOCIETAL CHANGE AND SOCIAL PSYCHOLOGY

In 1967 I was hired by Serge Moscovici as research assistant. My first job was to initiate experiments on collective polarisation, to pilot a few exploratory experiments on minority influence, but also to provide him with abstracts of articles on social influence.

We regularly discussed these abstracts. One day, certainly before the spring of 1968, he appeared in the vast office of his colleagues, actually a former artist's atelier with, on one side,

large glass walls and on the other side a wall with a board. He stood in front of the board and asked the following question out of the blue: "Are Asch's experiments experiments of majority influence?". Let us remind that in these experiments three individuals, "confederates", give before a "naive" subject a same incorrect response, while the correct response is obvious.

Of course Moscovici's question was a rhetorical question; he provided it with his own response that came down to reframe Asch's experiment in a societal context. He thus argued that if one only took into account the experimental situation in itself, one could speak of a majority influence. But considered in a wider framework, there was no possible doubt, this majority was actually a minority in relation to the whole non-experimental population that would indicate the correct line.

This intervention of Moscovici was at the source of several years of research. Works of the first generation, such as those of Mugny and Papastamou (1981), at least at the beginning, resorted to a theoretical model involving an active minority, faced with a majority, to which an established power imposed somehow its dominant conception, which was challenged by the minority. This pattern itself was thus of societal nature and compatible with a Marxist analysis of the bourgeois society. Over time, such models have disappeared from the literature on minority influence.

Another model that also wanted itself as societal at the time is Tajfel's (1981) on social identity and categorisation. The works that fall within this line of research are currently more numerous than those who still claim to follow the theory of minority influence. This of course is not an evidence of their intrinsic interest, but they have become somehow essential given their presence in the major journals of reference which, through the well-known "impact factor", now control the selection process for academic positions. But also in these works, probably because of the impact of the paradigm of minimal groups, societal analyses have now become rare.

Let us recall though how Jean-Claude Deschamps and myself have tried to introduce a more societal perspective in these works by proposing to work on the idea of cross memberships. When several people share the same membership while being at the same time divided as to another membership, which effects may such a situation have on the often observed effects of differentiation between groups?

Deschamps had imagined a simple case of cross memberships. Experimental subjects belong to two categories according to the gender criterion: they are females or males. According to another criterion, they also belong to other categories: to a "red" or "blue" experimental group. Let us combine these categorical memberships so that each group of males and females gathers one half of "blue" and one half of "red" and that each group of "blue" and each group of "red" gathers one half of males and females.

In such a situation, how should the categorisation process function, when both categorical memberships will be made simultaneously relevant for the subjects? There should be at the same time an intensification of the differences between the two gender categories but also between the two "blue" or "red" experimental categories. At the same time, there should also be an accentuation of the differences within a same category, as each category is composed of members of the two categories that differ according to the other criterion. For the same reasons, there should be an accentuation of the similarities of a part of the members of a same category and with a part of the members of the other category. It is thus possible to expect that, in this case, opposite effects weaken the categorical differentiation. This is what we indeed observed experimentally (Deschamps & Doise, 1979).

Elsewhere I have related these cross-memberships effects to different antagonisms between social groups in Belgium. Tensions between secular and religious views have persisted there with great force until the 1960s. Their specificity was the crossing with other tensions. While Belgium was divided into two ideological communities, these communities themselves were culturally divided between Flemish-speakers and French-speakers; conversely, the two linguistic communities were each one divided by a conflict between a secular side and a confessional side. It should be first specified that this analysis does not necessarily apply anymore to today's Belgium.

For a long time the majority in Flanders was "Catholic", while in Wallonia the majority was "secular"; in each linguistic community always existed however an important minority of the other side. Schematically it is thus possible to represent Belgium on an entire square sheet of paper as separated by a horizontal line dividing the whole into a northern and southern part: in the northern part are all the Flemings, in the southern part all the Walloons. In fact, there were also French-speakers in the northern part, especially members of the haute bourgeoisie and colonies of

Flemings worked in the steel factories and mines in the south (Verbeken, 2007). Another line goes through the sheet in oblique, from near the bottom left corner of the sheet and ending near the top right corner. To the left of this imaginary line are all the confessionals who strongly defend the principle of a free school, to the right the seculars who fight as strongly this principle; the former constitutes the majority in Flanders and minority in Wallonia, the reverse being true for the seculars.

For over a century the two dividing lines have been strong and have somehow neutralised themselves. By necessity, the governing bodies of both political sides have been for a long time strongly unitarist: the leaders of the secular side, even if they belonged in majority to the Francophone community, wanted to protect the secular minority in the north against the domination of the clericals, and the leaders of the Christian confessional party, just as the bishops, were unitarist because they wanted to protect their co-religionists in the South. Some wanted to protect their compatriots against the installation of a "theocracy" in Flanders, the other against a "religious persecution" in Wallonia.

In the 1960s, for different reasons, a change occurs in this balance of power. A school pact that guarantees a public funding to religious schools is signed. The oblique line, the antagonism between the religious and seculars is greatly attenuated. The linguistic divide remains strong and even tends to coincide with an economic and demographic division favouring the Flemish region. Both antagonisms do not counterbalance themselves anymore and the linguistic conflicts prevail distinctly. Political parties are split in two; from now on there will be a Flemish socialist party and a Walloon socialist party, just as there will be two liberal parties, two Christian Democratic parties. At the level of the political institutions, the autonomy of both linguistic communities increases dramatically.

On a very different occasion my interest for the study of social changes also led me to introduce the study of social representations in this domain. In the second half of the 1970s, the teams of social psychologists of Geneva and of the University of Bologna have gradually established contacts that still endure today. The first contacts mainly aimed at working together on a social psychology of cognitive development. But our colleagues in Bologna were also especially interested in the status of the professional psychologists in Italy. Let us here briefly

summarise the results of the main research that they have carried out on this issue (for a more complete description, see Palmonari, 1981; Palmonari & Doise, 1986).

Four different representations of the work of psychologists emerge from the results of this research. The first representation is that of a psychologist who defines herself as a social worker among others, as a militant whose main purpose is to reveal the contradictions of society. A very opposed representation is that of a psychologist who prefers to define herself as a psychotherapist, who considers that her main work tool is her personality enriched by a psychoanalytic experience. A representation less extreme but close to the latter is that which affirms that psychology is a science that allows to better know the individual and eventually to help him without actually aiming for an impact on the social reality. Another intermediate representation closer to the first one is that which considers psychology as a social science that also allows to intervene on the social reality as a sort of interdisciplinary expert. At the level of the reality of the implementation of institutions and counselling centres, these centres are found to claim at the beginning to be more from the first representation and to gradually evolve through intermediate representations to a more individualistic approach.

With the help of questionnaire studies we (Doise, Mugny, De Paolis, Kaiser, Lorenzi-Cioldi, & Papastamou, 1982) were able to observe that the same representations also structure in Switzerland the responses of students in psychology.

PEDAGOGY AND SOCIAL CHANGE

The challenge which I will discuss in this section led me to go back even further in my past and to return to a small village of West Flanders in Belgium. My father was a teacher there and I spent the first three years of primary school in his class because, depending on the periods, he was in charge of three or two flocks of younger ages of this "free" (i.e., Catholic) school of boys. I thus got to know in a very particular manner the education system which I only got out from about sixty years later as emeritus professor. There I was able to observe for instance how my father managed to teach to younger children things I already knew while entrusting sometimes the task of helping younger children to more advanced children.

With one of his brothers-in-law, a teacher in a primary teacher training college, my father embarked upon a program of "modernisation" of school education. He was indeed recognised by his colleagues and by the inspectorate for his novel way of teaching "calculation"; for that he used the Cuisenaire materials, materials consisting of rods of colours and different lengths from one to ten centimetres. He was often invited to give demonstration lessons with some of his students during the pedagogical "conferences" of the teachers of the region.

At La Sorbonne, in the framework of the Certificate of Child and Teenager Psychology, I read Piaget's and Szeminska's (1941) book on *The child's conception of number*. The reading of this book was not mandatory, but this choice was also for me a way to reconnect with my father.

A decade later, it is through my first collaborators in Geneva, and particularly thanks to Gabriel Mugny and Anne-Nelly Perret-Clermont that I deepened my understanding of the Piagetian theory. I wanted to continue with their help in Geneva my research on collective polarisation. For my present purpose, it suffices to remind that the collective polarisation consists in a restructuring of individual opinions in a situation of group discussion often in the direction of an extremisation. With my colleagues in Geneva I was trying to test the hypothesis that this polarisation in a group situation was due to an increase in the salience of some dimensions that structure the opinions concerning the objects to be discussed. An experiment (Doise, 1973) involving discussions on preferences for aesthetic materials varying according to three dimensions, colour, shape, size, tended to verify this hypothesis. In my conversations with my colleagues I often used the term of structures and restructuring. And I proposed to measure the importance of these structures by factorial analyses. This was a discourse which was hardly acceptable for Anne-Nelly and Gabriel. To my great surprise one day the two of them made me the following proposition: but if it is a matter of structures, why not simply work with operational structures in the Piagetian sense? Shouldn't children in a group situation then produce better structured performances to Piagetian tasks, conservation of number, volume, etc.?

Similar to the famous intervention of Moscovici that I mentioned earlier, their intervention led to a body of research that has stretched for decades and that falls within the socio-cognitive constructivism approach.

In his early writings in psychology, Jean Piaget strongly emphasises the role of cooperation and coordination between individuals as a generating factor of individual cognitive

development. In particular, the book on *The Moral Judgment of the Child* (Piaget, 1932) and other writings of this time are important in this regard; they can be described as a transposition of the democratic ideal in terms of social psychology. The basic idea is that only *cooperation* between equals can become source of reason. Such cooperation is considered in the first period of his work as a necessary condition for the development of morality, of rationality and of logical thinking itself.

At a time when the writings of Bourdieu and Passeron (1964, 1970) in France or of Bernstein (1973) in England had already emphasised the inequality of children from different social backgrounds before the educational institution, we (Doise & Mugny 1981; Perret-Clermont, 1979) deemed urgent to rework Piaget's initial ideas on the relation between social interaction and cognitive development. The aim was also to test the hypothesis that an intensification of the interaction between children or between children and adults could under certain conditions fill the handicap that children from less advantaged social backgrounds were suffering from.

To explain the gradual development of cognitive tools in children when participating in social interactions, it is necessary to resort to a pre-structuring of the social environment corresponding to norms, representations, rules, or to use more recent concepts, shared scenarios or scripts that organise the social interactions in which children are led to participate. These are regulations of social order that lead the individual to regulations of his own reasoning activities on the environment.

A conception of spiral causality reflects the interdependence between social and individual regulations. Here is the central idea of this sociogenetic conception: at any time of his development, specific abilities allow the individual to participate in relatively complex social interactions that can give rise to new individual abilities that can enrich themselves again during participations in other social interactions. It is difficult to exactly define the initial individual abilities that would not be of social origin and that would therefore be innate (see on this topic, Mehler & Dupoux, 1990). This identification is not of primary importance for a theory that focuses on the social construction of more complex thought operations from more elementary individual organisations. Of course, the outlined conception is developmental; this does not mean that all social interaction is source of individual development. But for a cognitive development to

arise in the individual, it is necessary that his individual abilities be repeatedly supported by social constructions.

The specific study of the intervention of these coordinations may be the subject of empirical research. Durkheim's conceptions on the primacy of the social and those of Piaget on cooperative interaction as a factor of cognitive development fall into the high theory level. They provide general guidance and encourage the construction of research paradigms to describe the mechanisms and more specific causal relationships. To construct these paradigms, we resorted to the classical experimental procedure, manipulating social interactions modalities as independent variables to study their effects on the cognitive development considered as dependent variable. At certain stages of the research it is indeed about studying the anteriority of a form of social interaction that will be subsequently reflected in the acquisition of new individual abilities.

To empirically illustrate the thesis that these individual cognitive coordinations develop from coordinations between individuals requires the elaboration of propositions of a more limited scope. Those which were proposed by the Genevan team of social psychology (see Doise & Mugny, 1981) are the following:

1. It is by coordinating his actions with the ones of another that the child is led to construct cognitive coordinations which he is not yet individually capable of.

2. Children who participated in some social coordinations become afterwards capable of performing these coordinations on their own.

3. Cognitive operations that actualise on a given materials and in a specific social situation present a nature of stability and of generality and are, to some extent, transferable to other situations and other materials.

4. The social interaction becomes source of cognitive progress through the socio-cognitive conflict that it provokes. It is the simultaneous confrontation of different approaches or individual solutions during a social interaction that requires and generates their integration in a new organisation.

5. For a socio-cognitive conflict to occur, participants in an interaction must already have some cognitive tools; likewise, the child will only benefit from the interaction if he can already establish a difference between his approach and the approach of others. This prerequired ability

leads some children to benefit from certain social interactions, while those who have not yet reached this initial ability do not enjoy the same interactions.

6. The regulations of social nature (norms, representations) that direct a given interaction can be an important factor in the development of new cognitive coordinations in this situation. It is precisely the intervention of such social representations or meanings during cognitive coordinations performed on a particular task that is empirically studied with the help of the notion of social marking. It refers to the links that can exist between, on the one hand, the social regulations that characterise the relations between protagonists actually or symbolically present in a specific situation and, on the other hand, the cognitive operations concerning certain properties of the objects that mediate these social relations. Such a link exists for instance when a social norm requires the equal distribution of a drink in two containers of different sizes.

Let us add to this brief summary that our initial purpose to forge intellectual weapons to participate in the debate launched by sociologists such as Bourdieu and Passeron or Bernstein was also fulfilled. For very different tests, we were able to show that a brief but appropriate interaction involving the socio-cognitive conflict and/or social marking, allowed children from less advantaged social backgrounds to reach the levels that children from more advantaged backgrounds reached on their own. The least we can say is that such results are difficult to reconcile with innatist theories that attribute a different biological heritage to members of different social groups. It is indeed the study of a single individual exposed to a cognitive task that tends to lead to neglecting the study of the social conditions of cognitive development. On the contrary, our social definition of cognitive development favours and requires the resort to the study of individuals in interaction.

Since then, our colleagues Céline Buchs, Fabrizio Butera, Gabriel Mugny and Céline Darnon (2004) have not hesitated to produce a list of advice intended for teachers who want to promote the use of socio-cognitive conflict in their teachings. We shall here only retain those pieces of advice that are directly related to the ideas previously presented. It is a matter of promoting the socio-cognitive conflict by systematically asking individuals, even of different cognitive levels, to compare their views or solutions, by presenting problems so that different views are possible and can be compared, by encouraging the controversy while emphasising the cooperative aspect of the situation, by discouraging conflict avoidance, by encouraging the active

participation of each other, by avoiding negative judgments on abilities and by promoting the search for exact responses rather than the demonstration of one's own abilities, by promoting the decentring and the representation of knowledge as a construction of complementary points of view.

It remains to wonder why peer learning is not more widespread, despite the fact that its benefits are well attested. Various studies resorting to meta-analyses of sets of research (e.g., Cohen & Cohen, 1991; Johnson & Johnson, 1989; Slavin, 1995) show that procedures of collaborative learning are very effective, also at the university level. The fact that they are not used more systematically may be because often in school competition is valued over cooperation; also for fear that it would level individual performances by preventing individuals who are already more advanced than their peers to progress further. Research on the tutor effect demonstrates that it is the reverse that occurs. Regarding this form of learning where more advanced students are led to teach peers who are less advanced, Arreaga-Mayer, Terry and Greenwood (1998) report results regarding teachings in the fields of mathematics, reading and writing, vocabulary knowledge to conclude that the results are generally positive for all students (see also Cohen, Kulik, & Kulik, 1982).

The Piagetian theory, like other psychological theories, is undoubtedly useful to better understand the individual appropriation of knowledge that remains one of the key objectives of school; Bourdieu's theory, like the theory of other sociologists, is as much useful to understand social inequalities before the institutionalised knowledge. Each of the two theories, while being equally essential, provides no information on the dynamics studied by the other. The aim of our research on the intervention of social dynamics in cognitive operations was to forge conceptual tools to try to bring psychological and sociological analyses closer.

In different countries, I was invited to speak about this research, as well as in the framework of teacher trainings. The first invitation was sent to me through the intermediary of my colleague Jacques Vonèche. Together we were invited for a seminar on developmental psychology and teacher training organised in the centre that Danilo Dolci had erected in the framework of his anti-mafia struggle in Trappello in Sicily, since the 1960s. After the seminar, a review of Palermo published a report (Doise, Mugny, & Perret-Clermont, 1974) of our first research on the social development of intelligence. In this regard, my colleagues in Northern Italy

were all surprised that such a review existed in Sicily. When I recently returned to Italy, I asked two well-informed persons what had become of the centre of Danilo Dolci. Both responded that unfortunately almost nothing remained of the centre, and one of them did not fail to add: "Even if Dolci did a tremendous job in Trappello, this work was not continued after his death. All things considered, he was a man from the North". Nevertheless, "the struggle continues", as even in early April 2012 another dozen of "bosses" of the Mafia were again arrested in the region of Trappello. A plaque is also attached to the facade of the house where Danilo had initiated his first hunger strike to manifest his indignation following the death by starvation of a child living in this house.

Another participation in the launching of pedagogical initiatives began almost at the same time in Lisbon and continues to bear fruit. Shortly after the Carnation Revolution, several faculty members of the department of psychology of the University of Geneva were invited by Oliveiro Cruz to participate in a day of reflection on the "new" education. Since then, this educational entrepreneur managed to set up a network of Piagetian Institutes in different places of Portugal. I regularly participate in the training activities organised in these Institutes.

In addition, and this is probably not a gratuitous coincidence, at the same time I was also able to participate in an international conference on social change organised in the Gulbenkian Foundation after the Carnation Revolution. Several participants in this symposium have since become members of the management team of the ISCTE. Since then, my contacts with the team, not only composed of researchers on social change but also of real change agents, have never stopped. On the contrary, they still tend to expand, as members of the original team or their students have scattered in other universities. The contrast between my experiences in Sicily and Portugal made me think a lot about the links between societal changes and pedagogical changes.

SOCIETAL PSYCHOLOGY AND LEGAL SYSTEMS

Let us change of context to now situate ourselves at a resolutely intersocietal level. When different trade systems had to coordinate themselves, more or less formalised conventions on common practices and rules were gradually implemented in order to create some compatibility between standards and practices anchored in very different cultures. Certainly, such general

regulations still remain amendable, also depending on power relations that change, but even imperfect these regulations meet a necessity.

Similarly, the aim of human rights has led to the proposal of a general normative system. When we presented an overview of our work on the social representations of human rights (Doise, 2001), we had already noted that the perceptions and experiences of different kinds of conflicts intervene to a great extent in the positionings vis-à-vis those rights. Individuals perceiving more conflictive relations, especially those who suffered from these relations, generally position themselves in a favourable way vis-à-vis fundamental rights and the public institutions in charge of ensuring the respect of such rights. In this domain, the reality of societal experiences and of the perceptions which relate to these thus forms a sort of system generating general normative representations, that ideally concern all humans by granting them rights, but also duties, each compared to the other.

In the continuation of this work on fundamental rights, a team of sociopsychologists, now mainly based in Lausanne, conducted several studies on the social representations of humanitarian rights, the rights to respect in situations of armed conflicts. By analysing the data of a wide survey commissioned by the International Committee of the Red Cross in countries affected by such conflicts, Guy Elcheroth (2006) first revealed a paradoxical phenomenon: victims *to a lesser extent* than non-victims adhere to a legalist approach to transgressions and violations of these rights while the more victims there are in a country, *the more* the entire population is in favour of an approach aiming to legally protect these rights, possibly involving the intervention of an international tribunal. A more recent analysis has revealed another source of variation in these attitudes: they are reinforced especially when victimisation is equally important in the camps that fight or fought each other (Spini, Fasel, & Elcheroth, 2008).

Objective realities constitute in this domain a sort of societal or intersocietal basis favouring or not the genesis and consolidation of international regulations of legal type. In particular social relations, national systems build at an international level legal systems that should also apply in case of situation of war between nations. Once these legal systems installed, they function or should function in turn as systems of regulations of conducts in the appropriate conditions specified in advance. This underlines the importance of such systems of legal regulation, the violations of which an International Criminal Court can now sanction.

As confirmation of the relevance of the analyses elaborated by Elcheroth and colleagues, we can invoke the fact that the history of international conventions and of the institutions explicitly in charge of ensuring the promotion and implementation of humanitarian rights is inextricably linked to the history of international wars: "In the same way that the 1864 Geneva Convention has for indirect source the 1859 Franco-Austrian war, several conventions subsequently adopted appear as reactions to the horrors of a conflict: the 1874 Brussels Declaration has its sources in the 1870 Franco-Prussian war, the 1925 Geneva Protocol and the 1929 Geneva Conventions in the first world war, the Geneva Conventions in the second world war, and the 1977 additional Protocols in the wars of national liberation and Vietnam in the 1960-70s" (Sassoli & Bouvier, 1999, p. 51).

Conversely, the lack of commitment of the United States with respect to international institutions such as the League of Nations or the recent International Criminal Court could be partly explained by the fact that in international conflicts they have been less frequently and to a lesser extent victims as compared with others. Let us quote on this topic an American specialist, Tony Judt (2007, p 47): "it is no accident that our European allies – for whom the twentieth century was a traumatic catastrophe – are predisposed to accept that cooperation, not combat, is the necessary condition of survival – even at the expense of some formal sovereign autonomy. British military casualties at the Battle of Passchendaele in 1917 alone exceed all US losses in World Wars I and II combined. The French army lost twice the total number of US Vietnam casualties in the course of just six weeks' fighting in 1940. Italy, Poland, Germany, and Russia all lost more soldiers and civilians in World War I – and again in World War II – than the US has lost in all its foreign wars put together (in the Russian case by a factor of ten on both occasions). Such contrasts make quite a difference in how you see the world".

If we can use today the notion of international community, it is precisely because further to repeated experiences of collective trauma international conventions and organisations were created to more firmly organise the relations between individuals and between States around a set of normative principles.

The functioning of such legal systems and their impact hardly received attention from social psychologists, even when it comes to situations that are familiar to them, as replicated in well-known experimental situations, as in the famous Milgram's (1974) experiments on

obedience to authority. Even recently these experiments were the subject of a TV demonstration in France (Vaidis & Codou, 2011). In most reports on these experiments, obedience to an authority who orders participants to torture another person is presented as arising from a sort of fatality, as a vast majority obey these injunctions.

Unfortunately, most current reports on experiments using this paradigm do not mention the experiments of Meeus and Raaijmakers (1995) who carried out an adaptation of these experiments in the Netherlands. As Milgram, they show that many participants in their experiments do not hesitate, upon simple injunction of an academic authority, to violate in the case they study the elementary rights for an unemployed to get access to a work position.

The Dutch researchers are also interested in the particular conditions that may prevent such an injustice to occur. In one of their experiments, the basic procedure is used, but the subjects are informed since the beginning that it has already happened that the job applicant takes legal action against the university denouncing the conditions in which the test was done. To avoid any problem in the future, participants in the experiment are informed that the responsible authority of the university refuses to accept any legal liability and explicitly asks them to sign a document which specifies that only the participant in the experiment is legally responsible for what may happen during the realisation of the test. In this case, the obedience rate decreases considerably.

It is indeed the evocation of a legal system that prevents the paradigm of obedience to authority to function. Why do we almost never remind such results when it comes to question the "regularity" with which Milgram's effect is replicated? Also, Vaidis and Codou (2011) do not mention these results. Here we find again a common feature of many experiments in social psychology and already denounced by Moscovici; they are interested in a situational dynamic without questioning the societal conditions that may reinforce or impede the unfolding of such dynamics. Of course, it is very important to study situational effects and to demonstrate the harmful outcomes to which they can lead; but it is also important to remind in scientific publications and in those directed to a wider audience that societal dynamics can counteract these effects. In this respect it is a journalist, who in the debate following the television program proceeded to a societal reframing of the situation, by simply mentioning that were the "Extreme" experiment to be true, its author would be arrested the following day by the police.

Now let us look at how indeed the author of another famous experiment was led to proceed to such a broadening of perspectives. Just as Milgram's experiments, the experiment called "The Stanford Prison Experiment" from Philip Zimbardo (1989) is often mentioned to illustrate a fatalist conception in social psychology. This is a situation created to test what happens when a group of people is invested with a "quasi-absolute" power over another group. To this end, some students are arbitrarily divided into a group of prisoners and a group of prison guards. Very quickly in the situation created by Zimbardo, the students turned into "prison guards" abuse their "prisoners" in such a way that the experiment that should have lasted two weeks was stopped on the sixth day.

Here I limit myself to the relation that Zimbardo (2007, Chapter 15) establishes between his experiment and the Abu Ghraib scandal in Iraq. Indeed in some pictures that were widely disseminated on the degrading treatments in this military prison of the American army, the similarities with the pictures taken during the Stanford experiment are striking. According to the analysis that Zimbardo offers of the events that happened in the American military prison, it was not firstly about some undisciplined sergeants who would have led others to participate in degrading behaviours towards the prisoners. He describes in detail how in this military prison, it was above all a question of authority structures failing due to interferences between two chains of command. On one hand, the military police had well established rules stipulating how military guards should behave towards prisoners of war. On the other hand, the representatives of the Central Intelligence Agency (CIA) and of the Military Intelligence intervened with these same prison guards. Within the structures of the CIA forms of torture and infringements of prisoners' dignity were accepted as, according to the American political authorities at the highest level, these prisoners were "unlawful combatants" whose rights were not guaranteed by either the International Geneva Conventions or by the laws of the United States. In addition, members of the military police who had to guard the prisoners were tasked by the heads of the intelligence service to "prepare" them before the interrogations by using techniques amounting to torture and degrading behaviours.

This is a totally different aspect from the "legal liability" situation in Meeus and Raaijmakers's experiment: in Abu Ghraib the "other" authority that interfered with those of the prison guards took the guards' responsibilities "away" from them. At least temporarily, a sense of

no guilt and impunity was created around them. However, the military guards were indeed those who were later caught by justice. The legal system was reactivated at their own expense, what Zimbardo denounced before the concerned authorities.

Somehow it can be said that in Zimbardo's original experiment a social representation of the life in prison directed the behaviours of the concerned students and Zimbardo, incidentally upon injunction of his fiancée, ended the experiment. In the case of Abu Ghraib, those in power permitted the creation of a prison without rights and the competent legal system could not be activated at the appropriate time.

CONCLUSION

The broadening of perspectives that I recommend in this conference should help us to take on new challenges, such as the one that Moscovici (2004) formulated in a text first published as an introductory chapter to a social psychology handbook published by Adrian Neculau, ten years earlier.

In this Moscovici formulates a principle that should guide the adaptation of any theory in social psychology to new social conditions; this is the principle of contextuality: "It consists of a theoretical side and a practical side. It must be recognised, on the theoretical side, that science focuses, as it should be, on universality. But this does not mean uniformity or conformity to a unique and predetermined model. What this principle implies, in particular in the social sciences, is the broadening of perspectives and an effort to overcome the limitations inherent in each of them. Each model is a source of learning, no more no less" (p. 6).

He expresses his surprise over the fact that social psychologists in Europe, both those in the East than those in the West, have been hardly concerned about the change introduced in their relations after the fall of the Berlin Wall. What struck him was that "sociopsychologists were not as prompt as sociologists, historians and economists in taking an interest in the new problems that the social upheavals in the East heralded. ... This was not due to a lack of sympathy or interest. But to the development of our discipline which prevented it to deal with historical and political realities on a societal scale" (p. 8).

To rectify this situation, he specifies various tasks to be carried out jointly by European social psychologists. We shall mention only one of these tasks: "The third task concerns our way of approaching social reality. (...) Too often, we use notions and hypotheses of limited scope, too simple and unrelated to concrete situations. (...) One might think that our attitude towards the problems of the real world continues to be ambiguous. And that we do not link these problems to our scientific enterprise. This creates a gap that not only separates us from society, but also from the other social sciences" (pp. 8-9).

This task of refocusing was unfortunately not carried out on the occasion of the fall of the Berlin Wall. But in my opinion, it was done on the occasion of the Carnation Revolution in Portugal, and I am grateful to my colleagues to have been able to witness it with others somehow as participant observers.

Can we draw a conclusion as to the approaches of research in social psychology on societal problems? One suggestion would be to start each research program by a systematic, and necessarily of interdisciplinary nature, investigation of the different social representations that could guide the cognitive activities and behaviour of individuals participating in the social interactions under study.

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