Diffusion, Propagation, Propaganda: And Then Came Effusion.

A New Mode of Communication for Social Representations.

FABRICE BUSCHINI[1] and ÉLISABETH GUILLOU[1]
[1]Laboratoire de Psychologie : Cognition, Comportement, Communication (LP3C - EA 1285), Université de Bretagne Occidentale, Brest, France

The advent of the internet and information and communication technology marked a radical shift in how people communicate. Moscovici (1995) highlighted that this new reality produced representations with their own logic and style but did not envisage that they would have their own metasystem and a new mode of communication that will subsequently be referred as effusion. Effusion shares some common features with rumour: information transmitted between receivers and sources with interchangeable positions and, therefore, equivalent statuses. It is however different and cannot be likened to rumour because the relations between receivers and sources, which are both specific and general, are predominantly virtual. Our analysis shows that effusion differs from the Moscovici's three classic modes of communication (diffusion, propagation, and propaganda; see Moscovici, 2008), in terms of target audience, objective, and function. Although it may appear to be informative, what it actually does is to activate a cognitive modality different from opinion, attitude, or stereotype that corresponds to specific behavioural

modalities required by the metasystem. The impact of effusion on social representations is discussed.

Keywords: social representations, modes of communication, metasystems, effusion, social judgement.

In Moscovici's pioneering 1961 study on psychoanalysis that presented the theory of social representations, French press articles from the 1950s were used to show how variations in the normative metasystem could influence the selection and communication of elements, thus enabling the development of socio-cognitive systems with their own logic and style, which he called "social representations" (Moscovici, 2008). This analysis led him to present what have now become three classic modes of communication: diffusion, propagation, and propaganda. Moscovici found that the mode of communication adopted depends on the normative metasystems of the communication. "Two cognitive systems are at work in the reflexive effort characteristic of science, philosophy, or any form of thought whose goal is the 'apprehension' of categories" (Moscovici, 2008, p. 167) and likewise, the same systems are at work in common sense and social representations. "The first is an operational system that works with associations, inclusions, discriminations and deductions; the second is a sort of metasystem that reworks the material produced by the first" (Moscovici, 2008, p. 167). However, even if "natural thought, like any form of thought, implies a system of operational relations and a metasystem of relations that provides checks and validations and that maintains the system's coherence" (Moscovici, 2008, p. 168), this "metasystem or the relations that constitute it are usually and primordially normative relations" (Moscovici, 2008, p. 167). The use of diffusion, propagation, or propaganda to communicate thus depends on the normative metasystem in which the communication occurs.

Although Moscovici developed his typology of modes of communication and their respective metasystems by analysing press articles, the modes of communication he identified extend beyond the field of media communication. Normative metasystems – which both impose social regulations on individual cognitive systems and shape interactions and communications – affect communication at all levels. Moscovici clarifies this as follows:

My hypothesis in *La Psychanalyse* was that there are different systems of communications and conversation at interpersonal levels, just as there is diffusion, propagation and propaganda at the "mass" level; and that their "rules" or logic shape these social representations in specific ways. Since I read Bakhtin, I prefer to call them "communication genres" (Moscovici & Marková, 1998, pp. 402–403).

Communication modalities primarily depend on the relations established by the norms of the metasystems between people who communicate. Nevertheless, media have the advantage of increasing the visibility of these relations insofar as their institutional nature tends to specify the expected relations between the source and target of the communication. For this reason, media communication is a relevant field for studying communication systems and how the metasystems regulate interactions within these systems. This paper will focus on media communication to describe a new mode of communication, however, the rationale could also be extended to other forms of communication from an intermediality perspective (Jensen, 2016).

The respective links that diffusion, propagation, and propaganda have with the cognitive modalities of opinion, attitude, and stereotype – in particular due to the normative authority relations between their sources and target groups – are also well established by the theory of social representations (Doise, 1993; Duveen, 2008; Moscovici, 1992, 1993, 2008). It is highly worthwhile taking into consideration this important aspect of Moscovici's typology in the analysis of new modes of communication, as they could produce particular cognitive modalities within the target groups, and therefore have an impact on intergroup relations.

CONTINUITY AND INADEQUACY OF TRADITIONAL MODES OF COMMUNICATION

Diffusion is used to convey information about a social object to as many people as possible. Since the objective of diffusion is to convey content of general interest as quickly as possible, it tries to blur the social differences of the target audience. The main objective of this mode of communication is not to exert influence or use open persuasion, but to inform, so that individuals can develop their own *opinions*. This may create opportunities for behaviour. Scientific popularization could be the prototype of this mode of communication that is widespread in the news media.

Propagation is a different mode of communication that addresses a specific group to show members how to integrate new, potentially disturbing, information, in a way that it becomes compatible with the group's reference framework and values. Propagation is thus part of an authority relation and must take into account the different group dimensions: values, beliefs, practices, and history. Transmitted information is chosen according to these aspects and organized into a system so as to reinforce or generate *attitudes* among group members, thereby enabling them to adopt appropriate behaviours. Moscovici used the Catholic press of the time to illustrate this mode of communication.

Propaganda also targets a specific group to show its members how to integrate new information in line with group interests. The authority relation in which propaganda is applied constantly underlines the group's opposition relation with other groups, therefore responding to the two functions identified by Moscovici: regulation (allowing for the affirmation and strengthening of group identity), and organization (setting up a representation of opponents and ideologies to combat). Propaganda must be omnipresent to guide group members and obtain automatic reactive behaviour from them; its purpose is to produce and maintain opponent *stereotypes*. Moscovici used the Communist press of the 50s as an example of this mode of communication.

Duveen (2008) uses all three media communication systems to criticize the too homogenous conception of social groups that has been established in social psychology by social identity theory (Tajfel & Turner, 1986) and self-categorization theory (Turner, Hogg, Oakes, Reicher & Wetherell, 1987). Like Moscovici, Duveen highlighted the relationships between the group's communication system and its value and belief system. He proposed three forms of affiliation with the group corresponding to Moscovici's modes of communication: sympathy, communion, and solidarity. For Duveen (2008), *sympathy* forms the basis of affiliation with social groups who communicate via the mode of diffusion, since these groups are based on the "voluntary association of independently minded individuals [with] a certain sceptical intelligence while the out-group is seen as seen as [sic] embracing various forms of dogmatism" (p. 372). For groups using propagation, the basis is *communion*, as affiliation is conditioned by the sharing of a belief system that is guaranteed and defended by an authority. Groups using propaganda require their members to demonstrate unconditional cohesion around authority to fight against those who oppose their value and belief system. In this sense, their membership is based on *solidarity*.

Duveen (2008, p.373) concludes his rereading of Moscovici by pondering "what repertoire of communicative genres can be identified in current mass communication? Do we still find diffusion, propagation, and propaganda? And have any other forms appeared?" It is important to answer these questions.

During the twentieth century, rapid transformations profoundly changed modern societies. These transformations that further increased at the beginning of the twenty-first century, mainly on account of information and communication technologies (for which the internet became the emblem), have completely changed ways of communicating. They have contributed to the dual phenomenon of our late-modern societies that Rosa (2010) has identified as acceleration and alienation. In this new context, the classic modes of communication identified by Moscovici are still relevant for analysing common sense: diffusion, propagation and propaganda are found online. However, they must be enriched by integrating this new aspect of reality that is full of social representations, as Moscovici predicted: "One refers to them [the information networks and virtual realities] as the information technology revolution or 'information highways'. Yet, representations are what it is about and what is conveyed" (1995, p. 19, translation author's own). Although Moscovici highlighted that these representations would have their own mode, style, and logic, he did not extend this thinking to the necessary conditions for producing these representations, namely a specific metasystem and mode of communication.

A SPECIFIC METASYSTEM

The mode of communication considered here is different from the three other modes, particularly in the way it responds to a specific configuration of the normative metasystem that is different from that of the other modes of communication. This configuration impacts on the relationship with the public, how this relationship takes place, and its expected outcomes.

This is not the first time a new mode of communication has been proposed to enrich Moscovici's typology. First, Palmonari and Zani (1989) used the term *proposition* to express the mode of communication specific to establishing, within groups of non-dogmatic experts (psychologists in this case), the social representations of their profession. It is, however, a mode of communication involving smaller groups whose affiliation is based on the principles of commitment and care to constantly check that the representation matches the social

environment. These characteristics mean that such a mode of communication can only fill a niche within Moscovici's typology. Second, Buschini and Lorenzi-Cioldi (2013) have proposed the term *media rumour* to describe the social network communication. However, rumour is not specific to a single mode of communication. It is a fully-fledged form of communication present in the development of a common-sense thought (Kapferer, 1990; Morin, 1971; Rouquette, 1975, 1997). Once rumour is considered as such, then its three basic processes described by Allport and Postman (1945) –levelling and sharpening on the one hand, assimilation on the other– no longer appear as symptoms of a pathology, but are similar to objectification and anchoring, the constituent processes of social representations and social thought (Moscovici, 2008). In the constitution of the figurative core of a representation, reduction and sharpening phenomena inevitably act at the selective construction and structuring schematization levels of objectification (see, for example, Jodelet, 1989, 1991). Similarly, many forms of assimilation can be found within Doise's typology of anchoring (1992). If rumour processes are to be found in those used to develop social representations, then rumour cannot be specific to a particular mode of communication, as it must be present in all modes of communication.

The mode of communication we will describe is neither a niche nor a form of communication that could be used within the different metasystems governing diffusion, propagation, and propaganda. It fits logically into Moscovici's typology as soon as we consider the target of this mode of communication and what is expected from this target.

Propagation and propaganda have many points in common: both are targeted at a specific group in an unquestionable asymmetrical authority relation between the group and its members, and both select information fitting the group's system of beliefs, values, representations, and practices. Their objective is to introduce behaviours consistent with this system. However, there are also some differences between them, such as how each group envisions its relationship with the exterior, and their expectations about social reality. Propagation proposes an inward-looking vision of social reality that must be preserved to maintain the group's cohesion, without worrying about the positions of other social groups. Propaganda conversely proposes an outward-looking vision that aims to bring about social change by establishing a conflictual and antagonistic relationship with the other social groups. In this sense, it is not unreasonable to consider that propaganda is a communication system that is particularly suitable for active minorities (on this topic, see Moscovici, 1993), and to liken propagation to the communication of majority groups requiring conformity on the part

of their members. One could certainly argue against this analysis that propaganda is mainly used to communicate to and within its specific group. However, there are two essential points that should not be forgotten. First, as propaganda does not occur in a social vacuum, its communication cannot be ignored outside of the group, and therefore it communicates with the rest of the society. Second, propaganda requires group members to constantly express their opposition to everything they stand against outside of the group, a constant opposition that strongly evokes the consistent behavioural style of active minorities (see Moscovici, 1976; Moscovici & Faucheux, 1972). An appropriate adage for each of these modes would be, "outside the group there is no salvation", and "you're either with the group or against the group", respectively. Among the forms of affiliation proposed by Duveen (2008), *communion* is appropriate for describing affiliation that corresponds to a propagation system, since the most important thing in this case is to uphold a community of values. *Solidarity*, on the other hand, is not exclusive to propaganda, as it is also required by propagation. Here, Duveen (2008) could have replaced *solidarity* with *cohesion* as the latter implies ideas of strength and stamina. It seems to be more applicable for propaganda and to be a prerequisite for forming a minority style of behaviour.

Compared with propagation and propaganda, diffusion appears isolated, accumulating characteristics that are the direct opposite on a point-to-point basis to those that are common to the other two modes. Diffusion addresses everyone by seeking to erase the distinctive features derived from group belonging. It is no longer about communicating to a group, but communicating to individuals. Diffusion does not rely on an authority relation to transmit information because it is part of a symmetrical relationship in which authority is supposed to be absent, even if the control of information ensures an undeniable power. But this control relies more on accessibility to information than, as is the case for the two other modes, on its structuring or selection. The purpose is no longer to provoke expected and similar behaviours, but to provide opportunities for individual behaviour.

EFFUSION

In the same way as propaganda maintains community and opposition relations with propagation, a mode of communication maintains similar relations with diffusion. It is a mode that could go beyond the individual ideology of diffusion (just like propaganda extends beyond the group ideology of propagation) and could be considered as a kind of intensified

diffusion (just like propaganda could be considered as a kind of intensified propagation), which resonates with diffusion like propaganda resonates with propagation. The metasystem at the root of this new mode is also based on an individual ideology, but, unlike diffusion, no longer refers to an isolated individual who needs guidance or advice. As with the two modes based on group ideology (propagation and propaganda), the difference lies in both the envisaged relationship of the individual with the exterior and social reality expectations. Individuals no longer act in isolation but operate in networks, no longer with the intention of adopting behaviours according to the opportunities suggested to them, but rather reacting to other individuals who, like them, can be just as many sources of information. Operating in networks and reacting to others do not, however, transform the ideological background of the new mode of communication: if the individual opens up to the collective, it is not in order to undergo a deindividuation process within a group, but to become more individualized within a community. Therefore, this mode of communication is established through relationships based on equivalent statuses between the different actors involved in the communication, to the extent that their positions in the communication process are interchangeable: relationships where the asymmetry of the statuses, which is implicit in diffusion, disappears. These relationships can be simultaneously anonymous and global, spreading rapidly through vast interconnected virtual networks and play a part in establishing the metasystem that governs them by producing new collective norms.

> There is no doubt that belonging to these communities is expressed in a new way that sometimes replaces face-to-face and can be experienced remotely at the same time as belonging to other virtual or real communities: by behaving according to the collectively established norms and rules, with specific dialects and rituals, that have the capacity to encourage participation in joint decisions and initiatives (Moscovici, 1995, p. 20, translation author's own).

Here, it is clear that Moscovici was already aware of the importance of individuals' involvement and the particularity of the expected behaviours in this new mode of communication. Unlike potential individual behaviours made possible by diffusion, expectations here are for participatory behaviours, i.e., actual behaviours actively directed towards others, that aim just as much to create and maintain social cohesion as they do to contribute to the existence and sustainability of the networks. This participation in network

communities is not limited to the exchange of information; it also involves sharing information, impressions, assessments, emotions, advice, guidance, practices, etc., often in a personalized way[1]. The right, even the duty that one has to express their point of view to enrich the available information is at the core this normative metasystem. This expression of oneself, which can affect many people, can give rise to a feeling of power. As we shall see, these participatory behaviours will have an impact on individuals and repercussions on social representations. However, it is immediately clear that this form of behaviour does not match any of the three cognitive components that Moscovici had linked to the other modes of communication. Participatory behaviours go beyond the mere expression of opinion, but they do not require cognitive structures as stable as attitude and stereotype and that have been built within groups whose belief and value systems are permanently asserted. We must therefore move towards a cognitive component more labile than attitude or stereotype, one that reflects opinion but that is more oriented towards other individuals. One cognitive component from social psychology that meets these conditions is *social judgement*. It is a good match with the above-mentioned behaviours arising from this mode of communication that consist in expressing one's own stands in reaction to their perception of that comes from other individuals, whether that comes within one's latitudes of acceptance or rejection (Sherif & Hovland, 1961).

Moreover, the three conditions fostering the emergence of the representations, dispersion of information, focalisation and pressure to infer (Moscovici, 2008), are accentuated in this new mode of communication. In continual expansion, information is still dispersed along the "information highways" (Moscovici, 1995) and always needs to be called into question. The focalisation on certain aspects or types of information is heightened by the presence of attractive nodes in the networks that are due, inter alia, to algorithms (see next section). But this is especially true of the pressure to infer that is intensified by the tacit injunction to react with quick, if not immediate, assessments. This injunction has become a norm in our post-modern societies in increasing social acceleration (Rosa, 2013).

Diffusion and effusion are very similar in meaning because of their close Latin origin, however, the former corresponds to the "action of spreading" whereas the latter relates to the "action of pouring out" (Online Oxford English Dictionary). Mainly used for liquids or gases, effusion evokes the idea of an expanding fluid that is projected outwards, and the idea of

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[1] As it is the case when people give evaluations on *Google Maps* or react to a post or a tweet, for instance.

unrestrained intensity that becomes clear when used to talk about feelings or emotions. We propose to call the new mode of communication "effusion". This term is well suited to describe a mode of communication that is different from diffusion because of its increased outward-looking orientation towards other individuals and the active participation that this requires. Moreover, it is perfectly suited to the particularity of this mode of communication's preferred (but not only) medium. Indeed, the idea of fluid is closely linked to the information and data flows communicated in the Internet's virtual networks and extensions (connected devices). The forms of affiliation proposed by Duveen (2008) seem to be particularly suited for the modes of communication that focus on groups, however, it is difficult to be in agreement when he proposes *sympathy* as a form of affiliation with an intragroup that would distinguish itself from rather dogmatic outgroups, because diffusion is not intended for specific groups, but for publics that are difficult to identify precisely. Individuals recognize themselves in these publics more by their interest in the object of representation than by the feelings they might experience towards the individuals that make up these publics. This *interest* is the minimal form of affiliation required by the metasystem governing diffusion. Nonetheless, it is feelings such as sympathy or its compensation antipathy that prompt individuals to take a stand and make a judgement on what comes from other individuals on the networks and in real life (IRL). This is why *sympathy/antipathy* seems to be a form of affiliation (or non-affiliation) that is more appropriate for effusion than for diffusion. Table 1 presents a summary of the differences and similarities between the four modes of communication.

Table 1

Characteristics of the normative metasystem dimensions for each media communication system

Normative metasystem dimensions	Media communication systems			
	Diffusion (newspapers and magazines)	*Effusion (internet and social networks)*	*Propagation (Catholic press of the 1950s, majority groups)*	*Propaganda (communist press of the 1950s, active minorities)*
Relation between source and receiver	vague and intermittent link, hidden authority	symmetrical relations	univocal and clear link to authority	univocal and clear link to authority
Social model: themes and relations	autonomy, mobility	sharing, individuality, on line	directivity: guiding line laid down with normative requirements	directivity: repeated guiding line laid down with normative requirements
Form of affiliation	interest	sympathy/antipathy	communion	cohesion
Message structure	discontinuity, no order	discontinuity, no order, profusion	organised in a system	organised in a binary system
Aimed impact on behaviour	creation of opportunities of behaviour	fast reactive behaviour (evaluation, judgment)	controlling behaviour	production of a reactive behaviour (automatism)
Relations with communication	optative and local	necessary, immediate, explicit, and widespread	necessary and implicit	necessary and explicit
Cognitive modality	opinion	judgment	attitude	stereotype

Note: *Based on Moscovici (1961, pp. 628–633) and Duveen (2008, pp. 371–372)*

CONCLUDING PERSPECTIVES

Due to the idiosyncrasy of its medium metasystem, effusion has an influence on individuals and could eventually have an impact on their social representations. Evaluative judgment – the main behavioural modality at work in effusion – produced freely and reactively concerning a variety of social objects, should increase commitment in individuals (Kiesler, 1971) and give them a form of gratification (Chan, 2014), if not a feeling of power. Combined with a lack of thought or hindsight, those reinforcements could lead either to polarization of attitudes or to dissonance. The consequences can already be seen at the social level with the rash of fake news, which should be seriously considered (Kucharski, 2016), since they are an indication of the deep transformation of our societies (Greifeneder, Jaffé, Newman & Schwartz, 2021). In the societies that have already been described as post-truth (Sismondo, 2017) or post-fact, forms of communication have a major role (Mihailidis & Viotty, 2017), particularly when they are symmetrical (Lynch, 2017). This qualitative change could ultimately produce more univocal and consensual representations with contexture and content that are less rich, thereby making it difficult for a variety of stances to exist and consequently leading to their polarization. For some authors, the phenomenon is already at work in what is called, following Cass Sunstein, echo chambers (see for instance, Garrett, 2009) or homophilous networks (Boutyline & Willer, 2017; Mihailidis & Viotty, 2017). Testing different modelling of networks, Geschke, Lorenz, and Holtz (2019) distinguish three kinds of filters that could produce this phenomenon. If the role of technical filters imposed by networks (algorithms) is ambiguous, networks' architecture and particularly the possibility for free expression for everybody, as per effusion, could reinforce the echo chamber phenomenon. Its origins, however, must be sought in individual filters, such as selective or confirmatory exposure, and social filters that fall within the province of positional and ideological levels of analysis (Doise, 1986; Doise & Valentim, 2015). The research on the role of political orientation in the echo chamber phenomenon has paid special attention to those two levels. However, it is difficult to draw definite conclusions from this research. Boutyline and Willer (2017) show that on Twitter, conservatives and extremists join more homophilous networks than liberals and non-extremists. Results are hardly surprising when compared with the classical works of Rokeach (1960) and Altemeyer (1981). Analysing the communication of nearly four million Twitter users, Barberá, Jost, Nagler, Tucker, and

Bonneau (2015) found that individuals operate in homophilous networks when they communicate on political issues, and in more open networks when they communicate on issues of a general interest. Although authors notice that conservatives tend to stay more on homophilous networks, they consider ideological asymmetry (political orientation) in the use of social networks is overestimated. Again, focusing on Twitter, Colleoni, Rozza, and Arvidsson (2014) obtained more qualified results conversely showing that echo chamber phenomenon and political homophily are more accentuated in democrats than in republicans, except when the latter follow the republicans' official accounts[2]. Moreover, interestingly, they showed that homophily is more important in networks where members follow each other than in those with one-sided followings. This confirms that the way in which interactions are organized within communication networks, or how networks structure interactions, impacts communications and information seeking. Symmetry of interactions plays an important part here and should therefore be considered in the study of communication modes. Moreover, contrary to these above-mentioned works, Frimer, Skitka, and Motyl (2017) did not find any political orientation-related difference (liberals vs conservatives) in the important motivation that individuals have in order to avoid any information that could challenge their political convictions. Their results show that the avoidance of counter-attitudinal information is the result of anticipating socio-cognitive conflict (dissonance and break in the shared reality with others). However, the echo chamber phenomenon needs to be put into perspective as it depends on the number of media individuals usually consult and on their political interest, as it appears in the study by Dubois and Blank (2008). These authors also noted that most of the studies on this phenomenon used a limited number of media and most often Twitter. Garrett (2009) also found that individuals tend to expose themselves to information that reinforces their political opinion but do not reject information that challenges it, at times even considering this conflicting information instead of disregarding it immediately.

The structure of networks and the form of interactions and relations they allow (symmetrical or not) are important factors for determining if connected communications (via virtual networks) will form homophilous or open networks. According to the research on echo chambers, algorithms and effusion can reinforce homophily, the former by directing users towards consonant and similar, even redundant, information, and the latter by its ability to institute interactions based on symmetrical and non-authoritarian relations. This, however,

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[2] Following a party's official account amounts to submitting to a one-sided communication with an underlying authority relation, as is the case in propagation and propaganda.

overlooks the fact that in the same way a mode of communication is not restricted to a single media, a specific media is not restricted to a single mode of communication. Effusion is common on virtual networks, yet it is not the only mode of communication used on those networks; as previously mentioned, diffusion, propagation, and propaganda are also present. According to the present authors, even if the echo chamber phenomenon can be increased by the networks' technical design features, its root needs to be sought in the normative metasystems that govern propagation and propaganda. Those two modes of communication actually produce a strengthening of homophilous relations and, for propaganda, a polarization of stances.

Another element to consider is the omnipresence of images on the networks (see also Duveen, 2008). This should favour representations, since social thought, as Jodelet states (1991, p. 670, translation authors' own), is a "thought in images". However, in accessing networks, images have lost their variety, and appear almost exclusively in their photographic or video form, thereby fixing and freezing an identical reality for all. This could lead to more consensual objectification. Contrary to illustrations, graphic signs, and even analogies and textual metaphors that introduce variety into this form of symbolic thought that social representations are, photography or video tend, through their fixed nature, to substitute images for symbols or pictures[3]. Photographs and videos are also often egocentric: That could open the door to different forms of psychologization (Papastamou, 1986) when communication comes under propagation or propaganda metasystems (see above for the relation between modes of communication and forms of influence)[4]. By reducing polysemy, the omnipresence of images, which is not confined to the internet and social networks, could potentially lead to the homogenization of representations and societies and a scarcity of social innovation. It could also, by stimulating psychologization, accentuate the isolation of echo chambers and produce a proliferation of incomparable representations, inducing fractures between groups that exhibit their particularism within divided societies.

On the contrary, the metasystem governing effusion should counteract the echo chamber phenomenon as it gives individuals the authority to react to the outside world.

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[3] Image and picture are commonly used interchangeably. They are used here with regard to their Latin meaning/origins of *imago* and *pictura*. The former refers to the idea of copy, like a reflection in a mirror, and the latter to the art of painting, which is more transformational in nature.

[4] Egocentric photographs are often altered with filters. This also has consequences on adolescent body image and self-esteem (Harrison & Hefner, 2014; Kleemans, Daalmans, Carbaat, & Anschütz, 2018; Nakano & Uesugi, 2020), but this falls outside the scope of this paper.

Effusion should thus make echo chambers visible. Even if individuals carry on learning and communicating within their groups or virtual communities, their increased proclivity to react should lead them to be more outward-looking in communications by making reactive judgments on information and postures from which it would be unrealistic to expect them to escape. One of the consequences of effusion should be to make the different echo chambers visible to each other, thus allowing different ideologies to exhibit stances that could generate sociocognitive conflicts, which remain the driving force behind social change.

Not all behaviours or judgments directed towards other individuals are necessarily part of the effusion mode that coexists in the media with diffusion, propagation and propaganda. Expressing oneself on an Instagram account for instance will not be a form of effusion if the account belongs to an influencer or to a member of a political party acting in electoral period. In the first case, the commercial interest prompts the influencer to maintain an audience, what places their communication in the propagation mode. In the second case, the will that a party wins against the other is typical of the propaganda system. However, if the owner of the account is a person without any specific affiliation that just wants to express oneself, that is clearly effusion. Behaviours like bullying or harassment that have easily spread on the social networks can be considered as a particular form of effusion since they are a judgment, a nasty one indeed, towards an individual. This kind of behaviours can be encouraged by the feeling of power that effusion can produced on individuals. But if these behaviours are produced in the aim of punishing a deviant group member or of damaging the reputation of an opponent, they are then closer to propagation or propaganda respectively. It is the metasystem and its prescriptive norms on behaviours, interactions and communication that allow determining which mode of communication is at work. Normative metasystems of diffusion, propagation and propaganda have been recognised by the social representation theory. But new norms appeared, probably as a result of using technologies and contrivances installed by the Big Tech companies (Lahlou, 2017) and largely deployed to test and use a so called user experience, pure product of the commercial ideology. These norms that determine the reactive behaviours of effusion are not trivial: they constitute a real metasystem that produces new representations of social interactions. The effects of effusion are visible on social networks where everyone can pour out one's stand by producing, approving, relaying, contesting or denying information. Reposting a publication, trolling a forum, rating a post or a service, expressing one's emotion with emoticons are, amongst others, examples of effusion. Less visible in real life, effusion is nevertheless present. Just think about how difficult it is to leave

international airport toilets without pressing a more or less satisfied button to express the experience you had there. Consider that fortune cookies are often replaced with a smiley's scale in some restaurants. Rid of inhibitions, one got into the habit rid of inhibitions of expressing what one thinks or feels about other, so that it is no more surprising that anybody could advice anyone what doing ; a child can say an adult what they could do, or a student a professor for instance, without it looks too weird. It has become an evidence when individuals' status is not taken into account.

The inflation of judgments produced by effusion is confusing. One could be lost facing judgments that are inevitably contradictory about the same people, organisation, company... It could be difficult to find which are important and which should be ignored. There is no doubt that this is fertile ground for establishing social representations.

The advent of digital networks has indisputably strengthened, accelerated and complicated classic psychosocial phenomena. To believe that networks only exacerbate behaviours that are harmful to individuals and to society[5] is a too narrow analysis that presents several risks. The first risk is of locking oneself into a moralizing and even militant view of these networks that is incompatible with scientific research. The second is abstracting the phenomena from their overall functioning by considering that once connected, individuals would be in a sort of social vacuum. Of course, people are more connected every day and digital networks with their myriad of connections are expanding. The fact remains that individuals are connected with their social identity, within their societies and cultures which they contribute to enriching and ultimately transpose to the networks (Papacharissi, 2010).

Studying effusion is particularly important if these risks are to be avoided. It is a challenging area of research, but it would contribute enormously to the field of social psychology, as it will increase understanding of the consequences of a new normative metasystem on the social construction of meaning, together with its impact on behaviours and social interactions.

Despite the examples given, this theoretical proposal is essentially programmatic and therefore lacks empirical validation. Let's hope it could convince researchers to follow this promising lead to investigate how changes in communication impact our behaviours, identities and representations.

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[5] Examples are research on the echo chamber and opinion bubble, addiction, sectarianism, or terrorism, in relation to digital networks.

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FABRICE BUSCHINI is an Associate Professor in social psychology at the University of West Brittany (Brest, France) and member of the research laboratory LP3C (Psychology: Cognition, Behaviour, Communication). His research interests include social influence, social representations and intergroup relations. His work examines the processes at work in these different areas, focusing in particular on the impact of language and communication on attitudes and representations, as well as on the impact of levels of representation on risk behaviour. In his research, he pays particular attention to methodological aspects and applications of social psychology, but also to computerized textual analysis.

ÉLISABETH GUILLOU is a Professor of social and environmental psychology at the University of West Brittany (Brest) and member of the research laboratory LP3C (Psychology: Cognition, Behaviour, Communication). In a psychosocial and psycho-environmental orientation, her research focuses on the interrelations between man and environment by mobilizing the theories of social representations and identity, in connection with the relation to place. Her work focuses, among other things, on the theme of risks, and in particular coastal risks, understood as social constructions. Within the framework of this theme, with the help of qualitative surveys (semi-directive interviews, document analysis...) and quantitative surveys (mainly questionnaires), she studies coastal lifestyles and the associated representations.