

Papers in Social Representations: Editorial 2009

Towards scholarship, innovation and collaboration

It is great honour to be the new Editor of Papers on Social Representations. Since 1992 when Wolfgang Wagner set up the journal it has been home to a good number of high-quality debates and controversies within the field of Social Representations Theory (SRT). It is evident that the theory has stood the test of time: being first proposed by Serge Moscovici over 50 years ago, it is now a major theoretical perspective within Social Psychology internationally. The research carried out that draws on and develops SRT connects researchers and students interested in social cognition, psychological processes, culture, communication, identity, knowledge practices, narrative, dialogue, ideology and social change. Papers on Social Representations, as the main international journal for SRT, draws together researchers from around the world, from France where Moscovici first developed the theory to many countries across Europe, the Americas and Australasia.

One of the strengths of SRT and PSR has always been a spirit of collaboration and joint enterprise. Neither would flourish without insight, dialogue, debate and also an openness to new ideas and directions. Following this tradition, I have consulted with many about what future direction PSR should take. Many agreed that the central aims of PSR should be:

- building up a collection of the main ideas and debates on Social Representations
- advancing the quality of discussion and scholarship within SRT and related fields
- fostering a community of scholars, researchers and students working in these areas

In order to meet these objectives it is imperative that we ensure that both scholarship and innovation characterise work in PSR. The journal needs to encourage high quality debates that convey the complexity of the theory, its breadth of application and its centrality to the social and political issues of the day. While it is important that authors demonstrate depth of knowledge of the field, it is also important that theoretical development does not stagnate. What is enticing and useful about SRT is its rich potential – potential to attract scholars and researchers from across not only Social Psychology but also the Social Sciences as a whole, interested in similar issues and debates. SRT has also great potential in terms of a) original theoretical developments that generate thinking and collaboration, b) methodological innovation and reflection and c) societal applications over a broad range of fields such as health, economics, community, technology, communication, intergroup relations, education and politics. We would like to see that papers submitted demonstrate this potential.

PSR also has great potential. This is largely thanks to the careful leadership and hard work of the editors over the years. Again, in the spirit of collaboration there are many people who have played an important role in making editorial decisions, encouraging and submitting high-quality papers and careful reviewing. Most obviously the previous editors - Agnes Allansdottir, Adrian Bangerter, Alain Clémence and Wolfgang Wagner - have all kept the

journal in good shape. But all those on the editorial boards (past and present) need to be thanked for their valued contributions. And I am sure there are others too to be acknowledged and I apologise for not giving a complete list.

What is very promising today is that PSR has good citation rates, even in comparison with highly regarded international journals. Most PSR papers are cited at least 10 times, which is not bad at all, with papers by Abric (1993), Valsiner (2003) and Breakwell (1993) having well over 50 citations. In the publish or perish culture that we all have to adapt to, this is very good news indeed.

However there have been serious challenges in recent years, partly due to the pressures brought about by citation records and partly related to our complex multilingual peer review. These have contributed to unacceptable delays in the review process and a decrease in the number of accepted papers. I sincerely apologise to all those affected by these difficulties and delays. It is unfortunate that this means we shall have to adopt an English-only submission policy.

I am delighted to say, however, that this has not affected submission rates, quite the contrary in fact. Since word has got around that PSR is doing well I have had a very healthy number of submissions. Hence, there are many reviewers to thank for their hard work in 2009 (see list below). Many of these papers have been submitted for consideration for the forthcoming special issue on Social Representations and Social Identities – Inspirations from Gerard Duveen. It was with great sadness that we learnt of Gerard's illness and premature death in 2008. Not only did we lose a dear friend, an inspiring mentor and an insightful critic, the discipline of Social Psychology has lost one its most thoughtful and innovative scholars. So it is timely to dedicate some thought to an area of the theory that Gerard played a central role – the connections between social representations and social identities. Hence the special issue shall draw together reflections on Gerard Duveen's work on identity from a range of scholars from around the world.

We hope that this shall be the first special issue in a series, and have plans for issues to follow on social solidarity and cognitive polyphasia (two separate issues). Please look out for announcements on the website. In addition, if you would like to propose a special issue please contact me with a one to two page synopsis of the theme of the special issue, relevance for Social Representations Theory, possible contributors and a timeframe. All proposals will be considered by the Editors.

We hope that these special issues will assist in community-building by encouraging open debates and diverse perspectives to develop on issues relevant to the SRT community. We shall continue to publish independent papers on all topics related to SRT (so submitted papers do not have to relate to special issues). In addition, we shall continue the PSR tradition of commentaries on papers – on already published papers, and alongside papers as they come out as independent papers or in special issues. Again this should promote rich discussion and productive debate. If you would like to propose a commentary on one of our published papers please contact the Editor.

A new initiative for 2010 shall be a series of book reviews, led by the new Book Review Editor, Arthi (Cambridge). There have been a number of edited collections and sole-authored texts that use and develop SRT published in recent years, including Serge Moscovici's seminal study on Psychoanalysis. We would also like to encourage reviews of books from the social sciences generally that will interest SRT researchers. If you would like to propose a review of any text relevant to SRT audiences please contact Arthi directly. Another idea under consideration is to encourage translations of some classic papers and chapters into English. If you are interested in this, please do contact the Editor.

Finally I would like to thank the founding editor of PSR, Wolfgang Wagner, Nicole Kronberger, the Associate Editor, and Saadi Lahlou, Director of the Institute of Social Psychology at LSE for their valued support and assistance in relocating PSR at the LSE. I am delighted to say that Nicole remains on the Editorial Board. In addition there are two new faces to welcome onto the Board: Arthi as Book Review Editor and Gordon Sammut as the Editorial Assistant. Already they have come up with thoughtful and innovative ideas to ensure the sustained development of PSR.

PSR will only flourish with the support of readers, reviewers, commentators, editors and authors. This is a time to consolidate on the successes of PSR to date and also to make some changes. So do contact me with any comments, criticisms or suggestions. And, most essentially, do submit papers for potential publication, review papers if invited, and reference and recommend PSR to colleagues and students.

I look forward to hearing from you.

Caroline

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2009 Reviewers

I would like to thank the many reviewers of 2009 for their careful and insightful comments on submitted papers. The quality of any journal is very dependent on the quality of reviews. So this work is very much appreciated.

Alex Gillespie
Anat Bardi
Catarina Nyberg
Charis Psaltis
Claudine Provencher
Dario Spini
Eleni Andreouli
Gabrielle Ivinson
Gail Moloney
Gordon Sammut
Helene Joffe
Ivana Markova
Jaan Valsiner
James Liu
Juliet Foster
Maaris Raudsepp

Marjan Nadim
Mick Billig
Mohammad Sartawi
Nikos Kalampalikis
Parisa Dashtipour
Rom Harre
Shose Kessi
Susan Condor
Tania Zittoun
Vlad Glaveanu
Wolfgang Wagner