

64 YEARS OF SOCIAL REPRESENTATIONS THEORY IN BRAZIL OF SOCIAL COMMITMENT

64 ANOS DE TEORIA DAS REPRESENTAÇÕES SOCIAIS NO BRASIL DO COMPROMISSO SOCIAL

64 AÑOS DE TEORÍA DE LAS REPRESENTACIONES SOCIALES EN BRASIL DE COMPROMISO SOCIAL

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Abstract

This essay examines the development and social commitment of Social Representations Theory (SRT) in Brazil over 64 years (1961-2025), focusing on its appropriation and re-elaboration by academia, especially in Social Psychology and Education. The reflection highlights the role of SRT as a critical and transformative tool, capable of unveiling social realities and, particularly, contributing to analyses of subjectivities within the fields of education and health. The manuscript also explores how Brazilian studies in social representations have been solidified through research groups and associations, driving a movement of intellectual resistance and scientific innovation. Finally, it reinforces the ethical-political commitment of SRT in Brazil, which aims not only to understand but also to transform unjust social structures, with a fundamental emphasis on education as a path to social change.

Keywords: Social representations. Education. Social psychology.

Resumo

Este ensaio examina o desenvolvimento e o compromisso social da Teoria das Representações Sociais (TRS) no Brasil ao longo de 64 anos (1961-2025), com foco na apropriação e reelaboração pela academia, especialmente em Psicologia Social e Educação. A reflexão coloca em relevo o papel da TRS como uma ferramenta crítica e transformadora, apta a desvendar as realidades sociais e, particularmente, a

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contribuir para as análises das subjetividades no âmbito educacional e da saúde. O manuscrito também explora como os estudos brasileiros em representações sociais se consolidaram por meio de grupos de pesquisa e associações, impulsionando um movimento de resistência intelectual e inovação científica. Ao final, reforça-se o compromisso ético-político da TRS no Brasil, que visa não apenas compreender, mas também modificar as estruturas sociais injustas, com ênfase no papel fundamental da educação para a transformação social.

Palavras-chave: Representações sociais. Educação. Psicologia social.

Resumen

Este ensayo examina el desarrollo y el compromiso social de la Teoría de las Representaciones Sociales (TRS) en Brasil a lo largo de 64 años (1961-2025), centrándose en su apropiación y reelaboración por la academia, especialmente en Psicología Social y de la Educación. La reflexión destaca el papel de la TRS como herramienta crítica y transformadora, capaz de revelar realidades sociales y, particularmente, contribuir al análisis de las subjetividades en los campos educativo y de la salud. El manuscrito también explora cómo los estudios brasileños sobre representaciones sociales se consolidaron a través de grupos de investigación y asociaciones, impulsando un movimiento de resistencia intelectual e innovación científica. Finalmente, se refuerza el compromiso ético-político del TRS en Brasil, que busca no sólo comprender, sino también modificar las estructuras sociales injustas, con énfasis en el papel fundamental de la educación para la transformación social.

Palavras-chave: Representaciones sociales. Educación. Psicología social.

We must ask what is the aim of the scientific community.
Is it to support or to criticize the social order? Is it to consolidate
it or transform it?

Serge Moscovici

Serge Moscovici's call for action and social commitment⁵(Bock, 1999), suggested in the epigraph that opens this text, guides our description of the “trajectories” of the Theory of Social Representations

⁵In this manuscript, the concept of social commitment is approached based on the vision of Bock (1999), who defines it as a critical and transformative orientation of professional practice, aimed at improving living conditions. Social commitment, according to Bock, involves not only the critical analysis of reality based on our science and profession, but also the breaking with centuries of inequality in Brazil. It involves questioning and rejecting the naturalization of social inequalities, promoting knowledge that reveals this reality instead of masking it. It therefore involves a restless and investigative stance that refuses to accept the state of things, always seeking new perspectives and solutions.

(SRT) in the Latin American context. From a timid acceptance when it was introduced, TRS has grown vertiginously in volume and diversity of areas of application, embracing all theoretical-methodological approaches, hosting conferences and creating research centers and groups.

The human and social sciences in Brazil, although influenced by various international trends, have always followed a path of commitment to social transformation, as exemplified by the work of Paulo Freire in Education, Florestan Fernandes in Sociology, and Darcy Ribeiro in Anthropology.

Social psychology, particularly lines of research based on SRT, drew from this tradition, as shown by the historical evidence and the work we present throughout the text.

It should be noted that this social commitment is not only that of the scientist – who can always express his/her engagement against oppression, exclusion and inequality – but is also a potential of the theory itself, already characterized by Moscovici (2009) as a *kulturkampf*, a cultural struggle, which the author identifies when introducing new knowledge into the public sphere, generating opposition between different interpretations and appropriations of this knowledge. In fact, if social representations (SR) can be thought of as a set of knowledge, ideas, attitudes, beliefs, that “[...] knowledge, socially elaborated and shared, having a practical orientation and collaborating with the construction of a reality common to a social group” that Jodelet (1989, p. 36) speaks of, then they can also be seen as a guideline for innovation and change.

In fact, Moscovici (1988) recognized the existence of controversial SRs, which arise from conflicting and contested contexts and point to processes of resistance, for example, from a minority within a group. SRs – as a phenomenon – can therefore be potential carriers of resistance and opposition, precursors and mechanisms of change. The same can occur with the concept of social representation: as already mentioned, the SRT has transformative potential.

The exercise of this potential, however, is not automatic or immediate. The very idea that the notion of social representation applies to “everything” carries with it the risk of dispensing with theoretical reflection, since theory seems “*aller de soi*”. This is the risk that Valentim (2013, p. 161) described when discussing the future of SR:

Instead of a theoretical deepening, a dialogue and articulation with other theories (and even adjacent disciplines), we are left, all too often, with vague, generic and imprecise ideas. SR becomes an explanatory framework, fed by a kind of portfolio of objectification, in which we

ask people “what is it for you... (it doesn’t matter what)?”. We somehow bring together the answers that people give us, and here we have a new study on SR. (authors’ translation)

This potential manifests itself when the use of SRT reveals the forms of legitimization of different knowledge systems and the possibilities of resistance (Howarth, 2006). At this moment, the transformative potential manifests itself through the understanding of the systems of signification that are at stake in the appropriation of a social object.

This is the potential for transformation and social commitment that was at the origin of the adoption of SRT in Brazil and that has grown steadily over the last 64 years. This trajectory – in fact, “trajectories” – is what we intend to show in the following pages, recalling the history of the introduction of TRS in Brazil and presenting, as evidence, examples of some works that illustrate the choice for socially committed research.

Thus, in order to reflect on the 'emerging research' of SRT in Latin America, we are compelled, given the Brazilian context, to meditate on the historical conditions and the paths taken in recent decades to promote this theory by scholars who have been conducting research in this area in Brazil. Therefore, the 'emerging research' in RS studies in Brazil arises thanks to a historical background of organization, resistance, indignation and overcoming of conjunctural adversities that the scientific community has carried out around the development and consolidation of this psychosocial theory.

From this perspective, although we acknowledge and admire the academic efforts of Brazilian intellectuals (Sá & Arruda, 2000; Sá, 2011; Camargo, 2016), who sought to systematize the 'histories' of the development of SRT in Brazil, this manuscript has modest objectives. We only intend to present in a panoramic overview of the 'trajectories' that the aforementioned theory has been following according to the memories that the authors of this manuscript have developed and continue to develop in the daily practice of appropriating and reworking SRT in our country. To this end, we will present research that exemplifies the social commitment of the Brazilian scientific community, which seeks to articulate the theoretical-methodological contribution of SRT – a critical and responsible science that allows us to analyze, denounce and transform the social problems that inscribe our complex realities.

In this sense, we affirm that the following reflections are open-ended, but particularly interested in not contradicting other interpretations regarding the scientific trajectory of SRT in Brazil. Our academic

effort aims much more to foster debate about the constitution of SRT in our country, as well as to celebrate with the academic community the 64 years of dissemination and promotion of studies in SR in Brazil, which will be completed in 2025.

64 years of Brazilian antropofagia⁶...

In 1978 – two years after the French publication of the second edition (Moscovici, 1976) of the thesis *La psychanalyse, son image et son public* (Moscovici, 1961) – the first part of Serge Moscovici's thesis was published in Brazil with the title *A representação social da psicanálise* (The social representation of psychoanalysis) (Moscovici, 1978), by Zahar Editora. Although the Brazilian scientific community initially demonstrated interest in this work, the adherence and dissemination of this theory would only occur, predominantly, years later (Castro, 2011; Sá, 2011), given that the field of national Social Psychology itself was in the process of accommodation in the face of the theoretical-methodological dispute between two scientific perspectives led by Aroldo Rodrigues – of North American influence and empirical and experimental basis (Rodrigues et al., 2000) – and by Silvia Lane – based on dialogue with the social sciences and the epistemology of dialectical historical materialism (Lane & Codo, 1993).

Nevertheless, Jodelet (2005) comments that SRT gained greater strength in Brazil in the wake of redemocratization and the effervescence of the return to the country of intellectuals exiled in Europe. Namely in 1982, Denise Jodelet, after a stay in Venezuela at the invitation of Maria Auxiliadora Banchs, came to Brazil to teach a course on 'Methodology of Social Representations' and to set up and collaborate on a project on 'Social Representations of Mental and Somatic Health' at the Federal University of Paraíba (UFPB), at the invitation of Ângela Arruda and Margot Madeira.

Next, Jodelet, at the invitation of Silvia Lane, visited the Postgraduate Program in Social Psychology at the Pontifícia Universidade Católica de São Paulo (PUC-SP) and also went to the city of Campinas to

⁶ “Antropofagia” refers to a concept rooted in the Brazilian Modernist movement, particularly the 1928 “Anthropophagic Manifesto” by Oswald de Andrade. It symbolizes the cultural practice of metaphorically “devouring” foreign influences to reinterpret and transform them into uniquely Brazilian expressions, emphasizing creative appropriation rather than literal meaning.

participate in round tables at the 34th Annual Meeting of the Sociedade Brasileira para o Progresso da Ciência (SBPC). In the words of the researcher:

The SBPC congress was a real shock to me. [...] In Social Psychology, the debates about the identity of the discipline, defined outside the dominant models that came from the USA, were an opportunity to become aware of what it meant to have a scientific practice focused on the problems of society, intervention, and change. All of this resulted in a strong sense of the importance of social contexts in the analysis of social representations and in the use of the paradigm of social representations (Jodelet, 2005, p. 17 – our emphasis).

In light of Jodelet's memory, it is clear that, although Serge Moscovici had already asserted in the genesis of SRT the importance of psychosocial researchers adopting a responsible, critical and especially ethical scientific stance (Moscovici, 1988, 2011a), as well as the 'crisis of Social Psychology' having already taken hold in the 1970s in favor of the re-humanization of this discipline through the challenge to the epistemological and ontological assumptions disseminated by behaviorist and cognitivist Social Psychology (Silva, 2018), it is clear that the process of dissemination of SRT in Brazil manifested itself in a social framework that, at the same time that it suffered from and participated in the aforementioned "interpretative turn" (Arruda, 2002, p. 149) of Social Psychology on the international scene, was inserting itself in a historical-cultural context of change of political regime.

Therefore, the transition from the civil-military dictatorship (1961-1985) to democracy during the 1980s contributed to imprinting colors on the SRT in Brazil, reflecting the social struggles in favor of human rights, the fight against violence, the confrontation of social inequalities and the recognition of populations – social minorities – neglected by the State. Consequently, Castro (2011)⁷ and Arruda (2014), sharing the same interpretation, point out that, possibly, in the origins of SRT in Brazil there is the slow constitution of an intellectual movement committed to using this given theory not only as an analytical tool for understanding realities – concrete and symbolic – but, above all, to establish a scientific practice that aims to transforming the social fabric formed and deformed by an authoritarian, classist, prejudiced and especially anti-republican national history.

⁷As Castro (2011, p. 12) reports: "I do not believe that the entry and development of the Theory of Social Representations in Brazil occurred at the end of the democratic transition by chance. Research on social representations could not proliferate during the dictatorial period. We could not study and analyze common sense and social thought that derives from everyday life in an authoritarian regime. Dictatorships promote a single way of thinking and all differences are seen as a threat." (authors' translation)

Portraying the strength of studies in SR in Brazil, Sá and Arruda (2000) emphasize that during the years 1988 to 1997 there was the production of 867 scientific works of different types, with exponential growth in the years 1992, 1994 and 1997. In depth, the authors already indicated that, although Brazilian SR studies were predominantly organized in the disciplinary domain of Social Psychology (66.6%), they were already manifesting themselves in other interface areas (33.4%). Shedding light specifically on these areas, it was identified that SRT in Brazil was already penetrating Education (45.3%), Health (28.0%), Social Service (18.0%), Sociology (6.9%) and other areas (1.8%) (Sá & Arruda, 2000).

Among the conjunctural factors that contributed to this boom in studies on SR in Brazil, we can mainly highlight: 1. Creation of working groups; 2. The organization of the International SR Conferences and the Brazilian Conference on Social Representations.

Regarding the first factor, it is clear that the better consolidation and articulation of Associação Nacional de Pesquisa e Pós-graduação em Psicologia (ANPEPP) in 1983, allowed the creation of an organic *intelligentsia* in favor of the development of SRT in Brazil. Thus, in 1990, the first Working Group (GT 70) on 'Representações Sociais' was created, which later, in 2008, fragmented, giving rise to the Working Group (GT 27) 'Memória, Identidade e Representações Sociais'.

In turn, the second factor that contributed to the portrayed “explosion” (Sá & Arruda, 2005, p. 20) of studies on SR in Brazil brings the facet of the internationalization of our scientific community. In fact, it was from the I and II Conferências Internacionais de Representações Sociais (CIRS) in Ravello, Italy (1992) and in Rio de Janeiro (1994) that Brazilian academics, led by Margot Madeira, proposed the creation of the Jornadas Internacionais em Representações Sociais (JIRS), which would later be followed by the Conferência Brasileira sobre Representações Sociais (CBRS).

The JIRS, currently in its 12th edition, although it only took place outside Brazil in 2009 – specifically in Buenos Aires–, have been constituted since 1998 as an academic meeting, mainly for feedback and integration between Brazilian scientists and the Latin American and European academic community, giving rise, in many cases, to study networks and the formulation of inter-regional research projects and, above all, allowing the consolidation of SRT in Brazil. As Arruda (2014, p. 29) comments:

[...] We decided to hold the JIRS, which was organized by the participating universities: Federal do Rio Grande do Norte, Federal do Rio de Janeiro, Estadual do Rio de Janeiro and Estácio de Sá. I think 1994 is a milestone and 1998 is another. It was the consolidation stage of the field in Brazil. From 1998 onwards, we established a frequency of meetings, a style of event in which

seniors meet with juniors and those who had not yet started, in a certain intimacy, in a certain informality that allows for dialogue, as in discussion groups, socially, etc. (authors' translation)

In the 21st century, it is clear that the trajectory of SRT in Brazil assumes an institutionalized level, given that research centers with multiple interests and distinct theoretical-methodological approaches to SRT are founded.

The first research center – Centro Internacional de Estudos em Representações Sociais e Subjetividade - Educação (CIERS-ed - São Paulo) – was founded at the Fundação Carlos Chagas (FCC) in 2006, by Clarilza Prado de Sousa (PUC-SP) and by Denise Jodelet, after Serge Moscovici was awarded the Balzan Prize and allocated part of the resources to the expansion of SRT in Brazil. Currently coordinated by Adelina Novaes (FCC/Unicid), CIERS-ed has research agreements with 10 foreign universities, 25 national universities and brings together more than 40 research groups.

CIERS-ed's main objective is to carry out research in the field of education through the contribution of SRT in conjunction with other theoretical and methodological references in order to analyze and reflect on educational processes, as well as their social consequences, developed in educational institutions.

In 2016, CIERS-ed founded the Cátedra Franco-Brasileira Serge Moscovici, aiming to strengthen the development of existing scientific cooperation and support new partnerships between the FCC and French teaching and research institutions. Under the management of Lucia Pintor Santiso Villas Boas (FCC/Unicid), the chair is closely involved in research with Nikos Kalampalikis from the Institut de Psychologie of the Université Lyon 2 and Themis Apostolidis from the Université d'Aix-Marseille.

In turn, the second research center – the Centro Internacional de Pesquisa em Representações e Psicologia Social “Serge Moscovici” (Centro Serge Moscovici) – was founded at the Universidade de Brasília (UnB) in 2007 by Ângela Maria de Oliveira Almeida (UnB). Currently coordinated by Maria de Fatima de Souza Santos (UFPE), the center has encouraged the formation of a network of researchers in Social Psychology and related areas who incorporate the concept of SR into their work. It is worth noting that the center, despite developing research in different approaches to studying SR, predominantly focuses its research on the societal approach of William Doise.

In 2014, this same research center collaborated in the founding of the Associação para o Desenvolvimento da Psicologia Social (ADEPS) in the Postgraduate Program in Social Psychology at the

Universidade Federal da Paraíba (UFPB). Coordinated by Ana Raquel Rosas Torres (UFPB), the association aims to contribute to the scientific and technological development of the country in the area of Social Psychology, to bring together professionals, professors, researchers or scholars who carry out research, teaching, university extension, intervention and/or civil society activities in the field of Social Psychology and to stimulate interdisciplinary studies, promoting exchange with similar national or international associations and favoring the participation of specialists from related areas.

Given the establishment of these research centers – CIERS-ed and the ‘Centro Serge Moscovici’ – Jodelet (2011) assesses that SRT in Brazil entered a new trajectory in its history, given that, at the same time as these centers managed to bring together researchers more in tune with specific approaches to research in SR, resulting in the improvement of research practices and the strengthening of interconnections with European schools, they also allowed greater capillarity and legitimization of a movement of studies and research in SR in Brazil. As Jodelet (2011, p. 24) recalls:

This new framework indicates to us that the most appropriate term to describe what is happening in the Brazilian field of study of social representations seems to be the notion of “movement”, and not that of “school”. Indeed, the concept of movement allows us to consider the diversity and complexity of the field of social representations, as it appears today in Brazil. It preserves the freedom of each group within a shared vision. It allows us to abandon the idea of a single leadership associated with the concept of school [...] (our emphasis).(authors’ translation)

Illustrating the heterogeneity of this movement, the research by Martins and collaborators (2014) identified – without a time frame – the existence of 172 research groups in SR in Brazil registered in the Diretório de Grupos de Pesquisa Conselho Nacional de Desenvolvimento Científico e Tecnológico (CNPq), and, of this amount, 88% of the groups were organized in public institutions, 7% in non-profit institutions and 5% in private institutions.

The research (Martins et al., 2014) also revealed that 62% of the research groups were included in the broad area of 'human sciences'⁸, then 17% were in 'health sciences'⁹, 12% in 'applied social sciences', 7% in 'linguistics, literature and arts', 1% in 'agricultural sciences' and 1% in 'exact sciences'.

⁸Descriptively, within the area of 'human sciences' it was found that 49% of the groups were from Psychology, 21% Education, 11% Sociology, 9% History, 6% Anthropology and 4% other domains (Martins et al., 2014).

⁹In detail, within the area of 'health sciences', it was found that 30% of the research groups belonged to Public Health; 30%, Physical Education; 27%, Nursing; 7%, Dentistry; 2%, Pharmacy; Physiotherapy and Occupational Therapy (Martins et al., 2014).

Furthermore, it was found that 60% of the research groups were led by women, 21% by men and 19% by pairs of researchers of both sexes. Regarding the territorial distribution of these groups, it was explained that 34% were located in the Southeast region, 30% in the Northeast, 23% in the South and 5% in the North. At the same time, the results indicated that no research groups in SR were identified in the states of Tocantins, Amapá, Roraima and Rondônia (Martins et al., 2014).

In light of this study, it is clear that, as in the research by Sá and Arruda (2000), reported earlier, the movement of studies in SR in Brazil reveals, from an interdisciplinary and heterogeneous perspective, a striking volume of academic production in the areas of Education, Psychology, Public Health and Physical Education. On the other hand, if the strength of SRT in Brazil can be observed in its employability in many areas of knowledge, it is clear that one of the challenges that arise in the history of this theory in Brazil is its expansion to interior regions, since, as demonstrated by the study by Martins et al. (2014), Brazilian research groups interested in the development of SRT are still limited to the regions where the large university centers are located.

Aware of these characteristics that make up the SRT studies movement in Brazil, another element that has permeated the historical development of the aforementioned theory has been the effort of the academic community to translate, edit and organize essential works. It is clear that, in addition to the translations of fundamental SRT works made by Editora Vozes (Moscovici, 2011a; Marková, 2006) and other publishers (Moscovici, 2005; Jodelet, 2017; Marková, 2017), since the 1990s, there has been a movement of Brazilian scholars attentive to the organization, editing and recording of theoretical-methodological reflections developed in universities, research centers and academic events dedicated to SRT, for example, the JIRS.

Namely, some of the fundamental books that explicitly demonstrate the intellectual commitment of the Brazilian scientific community to continuing and improving studies on social representation in Brazil are: *O conhecimento no cotidiano* (Spink, 1993); *Textos em Representações Sociais* (Guareschi & Jovchelovitch, 1994); *Representando a alteridade* (Arruda, 1998) *A construção do objeto de pesquisa em representações sociais* (Sá, 1998); *Estudos interdisciplinares de representação social* (Moreira & Oliveira, 1998); *Representações sociais e esfera pública* (Jovchelovitch, 2000); *Por uma epistemologia da subjetividade* (Rey, 2002); *Núcleo central das representações sociais* (Sá, 2002); *Representações sociais:*

uma teoria sem fronteiras (Oliveira & Campos, 2005); *Diálogos com a teoria das representações sociais* (Santos & Almeida, 2005); *Perspectivas teórico-metodológicas em representações sociais* (Moreira et al., 2005); *Interdisciplinaridade e diversidade de paradigmas* (Almeida & Jodelet, 2009); *Teoria das Representações Sociais: 50 anos* (Almeida et al., 2011); *Angela Arruda e as Representações Sociais* (Sousa et al., 2014), among others.

In light of this panoramic reflection on the memories that make up the 64 years of SR studies in Brazil, in brief, it is clear that SRT has been appropriated, used and continually reworked by the Brazilian scientific community in different areas of knowledge, work groups, research centers and research groups that have resulted in the inscription not only of a single trajectory of the theory in our country, but of 'trajectories' that have contributed complementarily to sedimenting and perfecting the aforementioned theory.

Interestingly, it is observed that, if until the 1980s the SRT was sometimes interpreted by segments of the Brazilian academy as 'a theoretical-methodological fad' or even as 'yet another foreign colonizing theory' (Jodelet, 2005), it is clear that, in the course of history, Brazilian studies in SR have been sedimented under an *anthropophagic scientific ethos*.

In other words, if until the 1980s and 1990s the efforts of the Brazilian scientific community that studied SRT were mostly focused on the dissemination, accommodation and legitimization of this theory in many areas of knowledge, from the 2000s onwards, under the framework of a greater consolidation of working groups in prestigious national and international associations and the creation of interdisciplinary research centers, Brazilian scholars intensified the 'examination' of the theoretical-methodological contributions of European SRT in order to rework them in alignment with a critical, autonomous scientific movement committed to reflecting, improving and adapting SRT, considering the realities, historical-cultural contexts and idiosyncratic knowledge of our people.

SRT in Brazil & Social Commitment

Demonstrating the plurality, complexity and, above all, the social commitment that studies in SR have garnered in the Brazilian academic community, we now present scientific investigations in the form

of a thesis on the different approaches that encompass SRT. Nevertheless, understanding that SRT is used in several areas of knowledge, in this manuscript we will focus on research carried out in the areas of Social Psychology and Education, since, as previously reported (Sá & Arruda, 2005; Martins et al., 2014), these are areas of knowledge in which studies in SR in Brazil assume great preponderance.

Gaining greater muscle in the Southeast region of Brazil – especially in the State of Rio de Janeiro –, the *structural approach* to studies in Social Social Representations had as its cardinal researcher Prof. Dr. Celso Pereira de Sá (1941-2016) who, at the Universidade Estadual do Rio de Janeiro (UERJ), founded the Laboratório de Memórias e Representações Sociais. This laboratory served as a Brazilian center for the dissemination of studies and research developed by the *Midi Group* at the University of Aix-en-Provence (France), as well as constituting one of the groups most dedicated to developing methodologies in favor of the studies of Social Representations (Sá, 2002, 1998).

Influenced by Sá's teachings and bearing the mark of social commitment, Karen Sibila Strobel Moreira Weimer's thesis, entitled *Memory and social forgetfulness: the National Truth Commission of Brazil* (2019), was developed at UERJ, under the guidance of Professor Denize Cristina de Oliveira.

Prepared in a context of resurgence of authoritarianism and political polarization in Brazil, which became more acute in 2016 (Souza, 2020), Weimer's study, when analyzing the SR of university students about the National Truth Commission (NTC) and the Brazilian military regime, revealed that, for the group investigated, the SR of the NTC are inscribed by the recognition and value of this commission in rescuing the memory of human rights violations that occurred in Brazil during the civil-military dictatorship (1964-1985).

In turn, with regard to the SR on the Brazilian military regime, it is found that university students developed their representations associated with terms such as "dictatorship", "violence", "torture", "history", "military" and "coup" (Weimer, 2019). In this line, the author points out that the results suggest the emergence of representational elements regarding the 'military regime' around *rejection, disapproval* and, above all, knowledge regarding the occurrence and perpetration of violence in the aforementioned historical period.

In addition to these results, it is worth noting that the research indicates that the group investigated is *afraid, apprehensive and fearful* of the return of the military regime, as terms such as 'they want to

come back', 'hard times' and 'no democracy' are mentioned. From this perspective, corroborating the study by Sá (2009), Weiner's research reveals that university students, despite not having lived through the military regime/civil-military dictatorship, have built a historical memory supported by a set of information, but especially linked to psychosocial elements of the *sensitive/affective dimension*. In the opinion of the group studied, the voices that still echo in the Brazilian streets and squares demanding the return of the military regime appear as a sneaky threat and a ghost that corrodes the democratic regime.

In other words, the study clearly explains the social commitment of SR studies in Brazil, while the researcher analyzes how the new generations represent a historical period of state terrorism (Silva Filho, 2011) and, equally, sheds light on the constitution of a collective memory that is sometimes constructed and reconstructed according to the attempt to create an official history that eclipses specific social segments or other narratives regarding the same historical facts.

In turn, the *societal approach*, which is more widespread in the Central-West and Northeast regions of Brazil, as previously reported, flourished largely through the Centro Internacional de Pesquisa em Representações e Psicologia Social "Serge Moscovici", led by Ângela Maria de Oliveira Almeida (UnB), Maria de Fatima de Souza Santos (UFPE), Zeidi Araujo Trindade (UFES) and other researchers. Established as one of the Brazilian research centers that most develops theoretical and methodological investigations in SR according to the 'Geneva School', this center has concentrated its efforts on the psychosocial analysis of social phenomena and problems that permeate the fields of health and education.

Imbued with this approach to societal studies, Divaneide Lira Lima Paixão's thesis, entitled *Human rights and adolescence in the context of a violent society: a study of social representations* (2008), supervised by Ângela Maria de Oliveira Almeida, at UnB, stands out. Written during one of the successive returns to the debates on the reduction of the age of criminal responsibility in Brazilian society, Paixão's thesis (2008) sought to identify the SR that military police officers and young people have about adolescence and respect for adolescents' rights.

The study revealed that both young people and police officers anchor their SR of adolescence in accordance with historical markers of the notion of transgression. However, it is observed that for the police officers there is a subtle representational cleavage, in which certain types of adolescents are understood as 'beings in the process of development' and with an *acceptable/tolerable rebelliousness*,

while for other types of adolescence - lived in contexts of greater structural violence - the notion of rebellion is transformed into *transgression/attack* on the social order, with the primary function of the State being to restrain these adolescents, who do not enjoy the status of 'beings in development' (Paixão, 2008).

In turn, regarding the SR of young people and police officers on adolescent rights, it is symmetrically observed that these groups emphasize that human rights and other rights that assist adolescents lose adherence/recognition due to the imminent notion of transgression/rebellion that is symbolically associated with adolescence (Paixão, 2008). An understanding is silently maintained that adolescent rights are privileges/benefits of the State, and not rights, because, as young people and military police officers equally justify, since adolescents are potential offenders of the social order, they are not able to enjoy human rights and other rights.

Therefore, Paixão (2008) comments, the close proximity between the SR of young people and military police officers on adolescence and adolescent rights makes it clear that repressive and sectarian discourses have been diluted in Brazilian society and that, despite the fact that within each group these discourses adopt a system of justifications and arguments of their own, the end is the same – to punish.

At the same time, given the author's study, it is clear that these SRs bring to light characteristics of a society inscribed by the punitive logic of a legal system that is designed and interprets adolescence and the rights of adolescents according to a puerile scrutiny and riddled with moral records, social classes, and identity elements of the State's security apparatus. Thus, it is worth noting that the investigation stands as research in SR that is based on the social commitment to denounce the intensification of discourses and a warlike social broth in which individual and fundamental rights are narrated as privileges.

Next, regarding studies in SR in Brazil guided by the *procedural approach* and characterized by social commitment, one of the examples of research is the thesis by Luiz Paulo Ribeiro, entitled *Social representations of students of the Bachelor's Degree in Rural Education on violence* (2016), which was supervised by Maria Isabel Antunes-Rocha at the Universidade Federal de Minas Gerais (UFMG). Ribeiro's thesis (2016) aimed to analyze the SR of students of the Bachelor's Degree in Rural Education (LECampo) about violence.

Ribeiro starts from the understanding that violence is one of the historical phenomena that inscribe Brazilian social relations in both rural/peasant and urban areas. Therefore, in the exploratory stage of his study, it was revealed that the trajectories of students in the LECampo course indicate that their SR move in five possible attitudes:

a) give up living in the countryside; b) live in the countryside in a condition of submission; c) not perceive the violence; d) confront the violence with welfare proposals; and e) resist collectively in search of better living conditions in the countryside (Ribeiro, 2016, p. 11).(authors' translation)

Delving deeper into the study, the researcher concludes that, while the investigated group presents SR of violence that guides its actions, these representations bear the mark of everyday situations and forms of pressure to inference. Therefore, the SR of violence is woven from individual and/or collective experiences, as well as from the memories that permeate the relationship between peasant social movements, unions and the LECampo course. Consequently, the close relationship between peasant social movements, unions and the LECampo course is revealed, which stands as a fundamental relationship for changes in the positioning of subjects in social spaces (Ribeiro, 2016).

In view of Ribeiro's study (2016), it should be noted that, regardless of the attitudinal marker that assumes greater salience in the procedural construction of the SR of violence in this group, it is clear that such SR are engendered in a basis of experiences and experiences rooted in ethical-political suffering (Sawaia, 1999), that is, these representations bear the scar of a group treated by society as inferior, subordinate and, especially, without recognition. In this way, it is noted that the study brings the social commitment to highlight that such SR present anchors and objectifications procedurally spun by the *social tensions/struggles* that mark rural education, by the backdrop of the differentiation between urban/rural, by the conflict of traditional knowledge/legitimized knowledge and, above all, by the estrangement of the ways of existing, feeling and acting that do not follow the tune of the so-called urban culture.

Finally, regarding studies in SR guided by the *dialogic approach*, it can be seen that, still in the process of greater sedimentation, legitimization and diffusion in Brazil, this approach has been prominently investigated in the Southeast and South regions of our country by the areas of knowledge of Education, Psychology, Communication and Languages. This approach has won over researchers of SR in Brazil largely thanks to the efforts of CIERS-ed in translating works, promoting scientific events and making

the thinking of Ivana Marková and other scholars of the name more didactic, called *Anglo-Saxon school*. Among the Brazilian researchers who have contributed to disseminating the aforementioned approach, Adelina Novaes (FCC/Unicid) stands out.

Considering the process of accommodation of the dialogic approach in Brazil, one of the studies that proposed to examine theoretical points deepened by this approach is the thesis by André Felipe Costa Santos, entitled *Education for peace: social representations of young people in public high schools on tolerance/intolerance* (2021), which was supervised by professors Clarilza Sousa (PUC-SP) and Serena Erendira Serrano Oswald (UNAM-Morelos, Mexico). Against the backdrop of the resurgence of polarization, nationalism and authoritarianism (Souza, 2018, 2020) and the intensification of multiple forms of intolerance (Schwarcz, 2019) in Brazil, Santos' thesis (2021) analyzed the SR of young people in public high schools on tolerance/intolerance, articulating the contribution of SRT with studies in the field of Education for Peace.

The author concluded in the first stage of the investigation that young people tended to socially represent the tolerance/intolerance antinomy according to symbolic elements: linked to historical background; originating from the ego-alter relationship and context; arising from the order of the sensitive – affections/emotions/feelings; by the personification of the subject as 'being tolerant or intolerant'; associated with transversal symbolic axes linked to freedom of thought and expression, fundamental rights and social minorities.

In turn, in the second stage of the study focused on the attitudinal dimension (Moscovici, 1961/2011) of the SR of tolerance/intolerance for the investigated group, Santos (2021) constructed and validated projective scenarios that required the positioning of young people in situations/occurrences of tolerance/intolerance linked to *freedom of thought and expression, fundamental rights and social minorities*. Applying the projective scenarios in a focus group composed of young people, the author concluded that those investigated evaluated themselves as tolerant and in certain circumstances adopted intolerant positions; they declared that until 2021 Brazil was a more intolerant than tolerant country; they expressed general attitudes towards conflicts related to tolerance/intolerance portrayed in the projective scenarios – they assumed an active/confrontational stance in all projective scenarios, highlighted the importance of establishing a dialogue in order to try to resolve conflicts, indicated that social actions to

counter intolerance are closely originating from the sphere of the sensitive, mentioned the value of social institutions as mediation agencies in conflict situations (Santos, 2021).

By crossing the results of the two stages, Santos (2021) concluded that the SR of the investigated group on tolerance/intolerance are possibly objectified: in the historical background; in the circumstantial relationship between self-other-context; in personification; in the social actions of “bearing”/“not bearing”, “putting up with”/“not putting up with”, “submission”/“non-submission”; in transversal elements – freedom of thought and expression, fundamental rights; social minorities. In turn, the foundational elements were located around: the dyad of the presence or absence of dialogue; in the belief in the dyad enlightenment/ignorance; in moral and normative elements; in the legitimacy of institutions as agencies for mediating social conflicts; rooted in elements related to the sphere of the sensitive (Santos, 2021).

Given this scenario, it is noted that the study by Santos (2021), while presenting as a theoretical contribution the articulation of SRT with the field of Education for Peace/Peace Research, simultaneously reiterates that the Education for Peace to be planned and implemented for the group of young people from Public High Schools researched must go beyond the 'formation of and in values', since, recognizing the porosity, heterogeneity and symbolic elements that circumscribe tolerance/intolerance in the group, it is essential to set in motion a critical debate on tolerance/intolerance according to current historical contingencies and especially in the light of a social prism that recognizes the *Other* as an idiosyncratic other with collective shared rights and duties.

From this perspective, it can be inferred that Santos's thesis (2021) brings as a social commitment the attempt to analyze how the SRs that permeate tolerance/intolerance are sedimented and dialogically elaborated, considering the conflicting *ego-alter* relationship situated in a cultural context of a Brazilian society divided by polarization, marked by the naturalization of violence and primarily by values in crisis. Furthermore, educational proposals are made in order to reflect on the importance of moral values in guiding and modifying the social actions of groups in everyday social life.

In conclusion, considering the theses cited (Weimer, 2016; Paixão, 2008; Ribeiro, 2016; Santos, 2021), it is uniquely observed that the movement of studies in SR in Brazil brings the striking tendency to employ SRT not only as a tool for analyzing realities, but also as a theoretical-methodological framework

imbued with a social commitment (Bock, 1999) that aims to denounce and transform the social problems, conflicts and tensions that permeate the daily lives of Brazil and its plural historical-cultural realities.

In other words, in the final analysis, it is possible to interpret that historically the Brazilian context with its abysmal social contingencies and contradictions has contributed to SRT scholars in Brazil silently developing a movement of indignation and resistance to the perverse and exclusionary realities of our country (Lane, 1995). Consequently, it is accentuated in the midst of scientific study of SR a critical epistemology.

Final Considerations

When we propose to reflect on the 64 years of the SRT in Brazil, shedding light on the 'memories' of the Brazilian scientific community dedicated to the study and development of this theory, we initially conclude that, while SRT was and continues to be appropriated by different areas of knowledge – in particular, *Education, Health and Social Psychology* (Martins et al., 2014) –, this theory has revealed itself as one of the recognized, sedimented and thriving psychosocial theoretical-methodological contributions in Brazilian science.

It is noted that Brazilian scholars of SRT, while sharing, respecting and improving the assumptions that govern Serge Moscovici's thinking and the approaches to studying SR, have simultaneously sought and continue to seek to expand this theory on a daily basis, considering interdisciplinarity, the diversity of paradigms and the knowledge systems that cross the different areas of knowledge (Almeida & Jodelet, 2009).

Next, as a second takeaway, it can be concluded that, over the course of these 64 years of internalization of SRT in Brazil, this theory has been dynamically shaped and reshaped by Brazilian academia, taking into account our cultures, social problems, conflicts, histories and social contradictions that manifest themselves in different and heterogeneous ways in the many Brazilian regions. Building on Jodelet's (2011) analysis that there is no 'Brazilian school of studies in social representations', but rather an 'investigative movement', it is possible to suggest that, thanks to the extensive diffusion of SRT in the different Brazilian realities and the attempt by scientists to analyze and present solutions to the social

demands of their regions, what we can call 'Brazilian schools of regional investigations of SRT' have slowly crystallized in recent decades.

In other words, without limiting our interpretation to the territorial extension of our country, but also considering this factor as important in Brazilian scientific work, it is clear that SRT has taken root in Brazil, possibly in the form of 'regional schools', when we see the development of a scientific community divided into research centers with their own investigative agendas – CIERS-ed and 'Centro Serge Moscovici' –, through the formation of distinct working groups at ANPEPP, through the creation of their own associations, among other elements of differentiation. Along these lines, as a precautionary measure, considering that these 'regional schools' have been consolidating themselves around the same epistemic matrix, sharing the same scientific and ethical assumptions indoctrinated by Serge Moscovici, it is important to emphasize that they are not antagonistic or discordant, but, above all, complementary.

As a final conclusion, it is clear that, although these 'regional schools' are different, they have in common an *anthropophagic scientific ethos*, because, even using relevant studies in SR developed in foreign social contexts – especially on the European continent –, the Brazilian scientific community has made an effort to rework such investigations according to reflections guided by the historical-cultural experiences of Brazil. From this perspective, paraphrasing Santos (2018), it is important to be aware that in these 64 years of SRT in Brazil, our scientific community has strived to continually requalify this theory according to the realities that arise 'below the Equator'.

Alongside this *anthropophagic scientific ethos*, another scientific characteristic that has been consolidated in studies on SR in Brazil is the social commitment that our scientific community has internalized. While not an exclusive hallmark of Brazilian SR scholars, the use of SRT, according to social commitment, has allowed for critical analysis and denunciation of the many social problems and tensions that make up our Brazilian realities, it has also facilitated the management of the scientific community's nonconformist drive in the face of a belligerent, unjust, and perverse society (Chauí, 2011) aiming to identify elements for social transformations. As Moscovici (2011, p. 562) teaches:

[...] any research, no matter how modest, begins with a gesture of indignation. We have the impression that, in human existence, something is not as it should be. [...] When the transformation of indignation or desire occurs, our science becomes more assured of itself and more firmly anchored in the facts.(authors' translation)

In this line, in our view, among the multiple factors that allowed the SRT to be vibrant in these 64 years in Brazil were, primarily, the critical and autonomous capacity of the Brazilian academic community to organize itself, so as not to reduce or even transform a given theory into a mere *technique*, the interpretation and application of this theory in symmetry with a scientific spirit not brutalized in the face of the harsh objective and subjective conditions of doing science in a country subjugated as peripheral and the fact that we have not forgotten that the SRT imposes an ethical-political commitment to indignation and action in favor of the development of a socially just world.

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