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## In memoriam Serge Moscovici (1925-2014)

Juan Pérez, N. Kalampalakis, S. Lahlou, D. Jodelet, Thémis Apostolidis

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# In memoriam Serge Moscovici (1925–2014)

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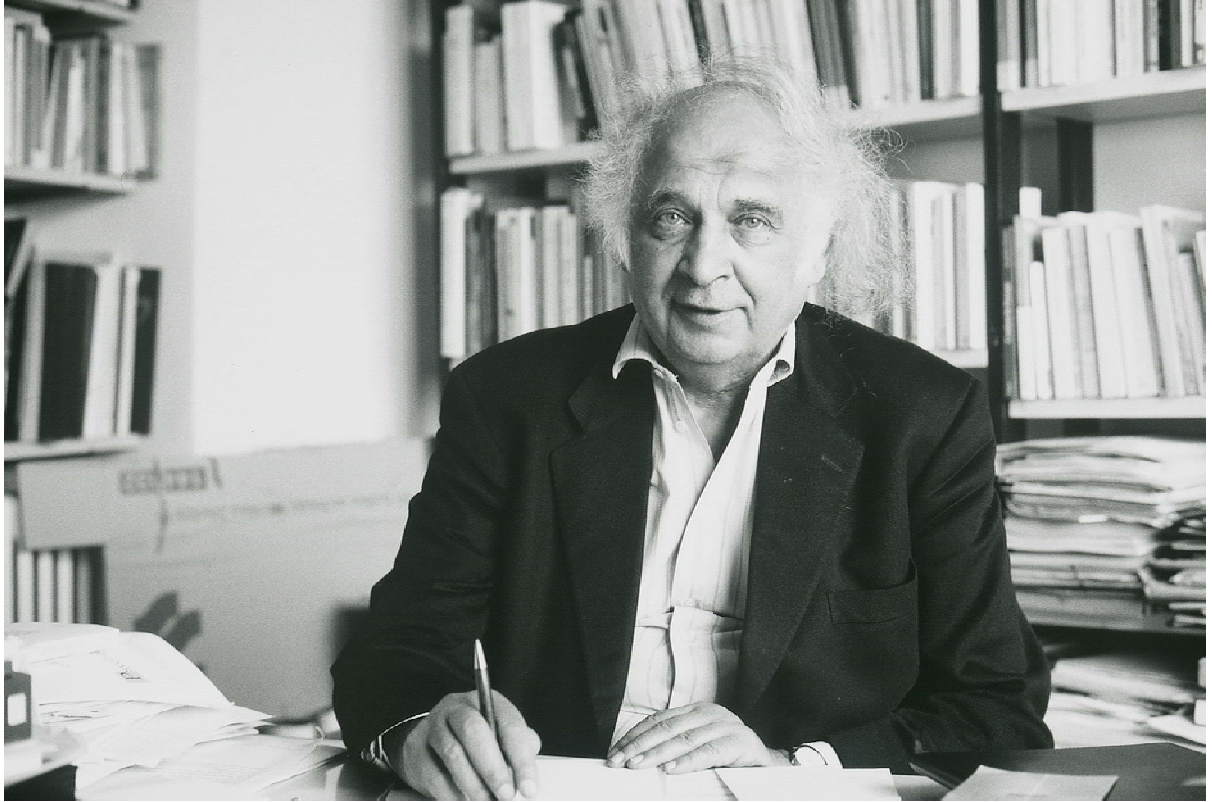
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## In Memory of Serge Moscovici (1925-2014)



Serge Moscovici (1925-2014)

*Personal collection of Saadi Lahlou, London School of Economics, United Kingdom*

### *Preface*

This collection of tributes to Serge Moscovici is meant to complement other initiatives EASP is currently developing, by bringing together personal reflections on how Moscovici influenced the life and thoughts of social psychologists in Europe and beyond. Moscovici is a key figure in European social psychology, both for his theoretical innovation and for the service he paid to our community. Moscovici's scholarly contributions, such as his theory of social representations, or his focus on non-conformity and minority influence, have wide ranging implications for social psychological thought, and have influenced theory and research across a variety of domains, as the contributors to this collection highlight. Many will also realise that Moscovici played a key role in the foundation and development

of the European Association of Social Psychology. Indeed, the foundation of the European Association of Experimental Social Psychology, now EASP, was formally approved in March 1966 by a European Planning Committee chaired by Serge Moscovici. That committee became the first Executive Committee of our association—and Serge Moscovici our first president. Paying tribute to Moscovici's life and work is not easy. His contributions were so important and multi-faceted that any attempt at recognising their magnitude and significance risks failing to reflect them adequately. Nevertheless, this must be attempted. The European Association of Social Psychology is committed to paying tribute to Moscovici's legacy and to ensure that it continues to influence theory and research in future years. With input from our members, specific activities have been developed. Towards the end of 2015, the European Journal of Social Psychology will publish a Virtual Special Issue consisting of an online collection of many of Moscovici's major contributions accompanied by an editorial in the print journal highlighting their significance for contemporary social psychology. In 2017, EJSP will additionally publish a Special Issue bringing together review and empirical papers that reflect on, as well as build upon, Moscovici's contributions. Further commemorations are currently being planned.

The current collection of tributes is meant to complement these formal activities with a more personal reflection. When bringing these texts together, our idea was not to build an exhaustive record of influence, but both to illustrate how broadly it spans and to provide a glimpse of Moscovici in action for those who did not have the privilege to be inspired by him first hand. This collection will be part of EASP's historical archive, published on our website, and possible to find by anyone curious about Moscovici and his legacy.

With sincere thanks to all of those who have contributed to this collection.

The EASP Executive Committee  
*Manuela Barreto, Jean-Claude Croizet, Mara Cadinu, Daniël Wigboldus,  
Kai Sassenberg, Torun Lindholm, Ernestine Gordijn*

The Chief Editors of EJSP  
*Radmila Prislin and Vivian Vignoles*

## In memoriam: Serge Moscovici (1925-2014)

For the REMOSCO, the members of the Steering Committee  
of the *Réseau Mondial Serge Moscovici* (REMOSCO)  
*de la Fondation Maison des Sciences de l'Homme, Paris*  
*Juan A. Pérez, University of Valencia, Spain*  
*Nikos Kalampalikis, University of Lyon, France*  
*Saadi Lahlou, London School of Economics, United Kingdom*  
*Denise Jodelet, Ecole des Hautes Etudes en Sciences Sociales, France*  
*Themistoklis Apostolidis, University of Aix-Marseille, France*

"There are special times when, looking back on his life, a man discovers how what appears to others as a career was for him a long series of improvisations and surprises." These are the first words spoken by Serge Moscovici in Bern in 2003, when receiving the prestigious Balzan Prize for his work in social psychology. This award crowned a deep seminal mark left in social psychology as a discipline and especially as a science.

Born in 1925 in Braïla, on the banks of the Danube, in a family of grain merchants, he experienced the impact of anti-Semitic laws with his exclusion from school (1938) and the Bucharest pogrom (1941). Drifting via Hungary, Austria and Italy through the 1945 "displaced persons camps" system, he arrived in Paris in 1948. There he worked in the clothing industry, then in footwear, and met old and new friends, such as Paul Celan, Isac Chiva and Isidore Isou. The terrible events he survived during the war as an adolescent and marked all his life are described in his autobiography, "Chronicle of years lost" (Moscovici, 1997).

### *Institutional trajectory*

After an epic arrival in Paris, he received in 1949 the recently created Bachelor degree in Psychology ("Licence") at the Sorbonne (grade: pass!). Attracted by the course on "the psychology of social life" of psychiatrist and psychoanalyst Daniel Lagache, also concerned about the extension of his residence permit as a refugee, he wanted to enrol for a PhD thesis under his supervision, saying: "Lagache received me in the hallway and was surprised when I expressed the wish to do a thesis that he would supervise. Fortunately, he had time and listened to me developing the project for a half hour. Obviously, I avoided telling him that the study would focus on common sense material transformation of psychoanalysis." (Moscovici, 2003). Lagache, initially wary, suggested Moscovici meet Jean Stoetzel, a

social psychologist, founder of the IFOP (French Institute of Public Opinion) to learn survey methods.

In Paris, two familiar places and two discoveries were as important as they were unexpected. The booksellers of the banks of the River Seine yielding Norbert Wiener's *Cybernetics* and the French National Library yielding Robert Lenoble's *Essay on the notion of experience* helped Moscovici to find some much sought after concepts - collective representations, common sense, and communication - but he also found also an unlikely science that made their articulation so productive: social psychology (Moscovici, 2003). Lagache encouraged him and put him forward for a scholarship at the CNRS (French National Centre for Scientific Research) which Moscovici is awarded in 1952. In 1953 he published his first article in the French Review of Psychoanalysis and also became a student at the Ecole Pratique des Hautes Etudes where he followed the seminars of Alexander Koyré, historian of philosophy and science.

In 1955, in collaboration with the sociologist Guy Barbichon, a specialist in social change, he worked for the Department of Work on industrial conversion programs, as a member of the Centre for Studies and Research on Psychotechnics (CERP) and in 1958, became editor of the Centre's journal, the CERP Bulletin. Alongside his study of psychoanalysis, he wrote his second thesis on a social and economic problem still acute nowadays, industrial restructuring (*Reconversion industrielle et changements sociaux. Un exemple : la chapellerie dans l'Aude*, 1961, Albin Michel). In 1961, in the grand Louis Liard amphitheatre of the Sorbonne, he defended his doctoral thesis, *La psychanalyse, son image et son public. Étude sur la représentation sociale de la psychanalyse*. (Jodelet, 2015).

That same year he graduated from the Ecole Pratique des Hautes Etudes, under the direction of Alexander Koyré, with a thesis on the Galilean mechanics (*L'expérience du mouvement. Jean-Baptiste Baliani, disciple et critique de Galilée*, 1967). Based on manuscripts kept in the Biblioteca Ambrosiana in Milan, this paper carries the seeds of his ideas on science, knowledge and nature. Baliani, a Genoese patrician, to whom we owe the first formulation of the principle of inertia, postulated in 1582, unlike Galileo, that the earth revolves around the moon the latter exerts a mechanical influence on the tides. Moscovici was inspired by their correspondence to theorize creative scientific uncertainty, i.e. the idea that mankind has created nature through science. This work opened the door to the Institute for Advanced Studies in Princeton (recommended by Koyré who was a member since 1955) as a Fellow in 1962-63. He gave his first lectures in English at Yale and Harvard and there met Thomas Kuhn.

In 1962 he was appointed Senior Scientist at the CNRS (1962), and was elected Directeur d'études at the Ecole Pratique des Hautes Etudes (1964). The same year, he became a member of the Transnational Committee on Social Psychology of Social Sciences Research Council, whose fascinating history has been written up recently (Moscovici & Markova, *The Making of Modern Social Psychology*, 2006). He was one of the original founders of the EASP, its first President in 1965 and associate editor of the European Journal of Social Psychology (1969-1974) alongside Leon Festinger, John Lanzetta, Ragnar Rommetveit and Stanley Schachter and soon after, Henri Tajfel, Harold Kelley, Morton Deutsch among others.

In Paris, he brought in the "Social Psychology Research Group", his first laboratory created in 1965 in the 6<sup>th</sup> Section of the Ecole Pratique des Hautes Etudes, a pioneering group of researchers whose work was along his scientific lines of interest (among them: Claude Faucheux, Claudine Herzlich, Jean-Claude Abric, Denise Jodelet and Willem Doise). That is when he began an extensive experimental research program devoted mainly to social influence and social communication.

Following a parallel intellectual direction, connecting both history of science and social psychology, he is again a resident at the Center for Advanced Studies in the Behavioral Sciences (Stanford) between 1968-1969, and publishes another monumental work, the *Essay on human history of nature* in 1968. France is in turmoil on all levels - social, ideological, political and generational - and Moscovici reflects on the connection to nature in the first of a trilogy (*Society against nature*, 1972, *Domestic Man and Wild Man*, 1974) which marks Moscovici's "green period" – the least known part of his works by social psychologists. His anthropological ideas about nature, feminism, and political ecology trace a new horizon for generations of young students and activists: Nature is a relation; it is not the environment; no part of humanity, however primitive or advanced, is closer or further away from a state of nature; the analysis of the prohibition of incest as a social rule captures the relations of domination and control between groups. A theory of society is in the making.

This intellectual adventure led him to Robert Jaulin (theorist of ethnocide), head of the Teaching and Research Unit in Ethnology, Anthropology and Religion studies at the Paris VII University (Jussieu). Together and with the participation, among others, of Michel de Certeau, Jean Monod and Jean-Toussaint Dessanti, they run "off" seminars with "wild anti-colonial ethnology" which become hype among students, environmental activists and intellectuals. Moscovici got involved militates, writes: collective books come out " *Why mathematics?* (1974); " *Beyond crisis*" (1976) " *Why*

*ecologists do politics*" (1978). With one of the great mathematical geniuses of the last century, Alexander Grothendieck, who died two days before Moscovici, Jaulin and documentarist Yves Billon, they travelled through the south of France with a photographic exhibition called "Occitania, Amazonia, same fight" to denounce the ethnocide of small local and traditional peoples all over the world.

This hive of activity feeds his psychosocial production. He published a book of seminal English texts on social psychology (with Claude Faucheux, *Social Psychology, theories and experiments*, 1971), a second one on language (*The Psychosociology of Language*, 1972), an *Introduction to Social Psychology* (1972-1973) in two volumes, his theory of innovating minorities in English (*Social influence and social change*, 1976) and published a revised version, a hundred pages shorter, of his 1961 book (translated in English in 2008... *Psychoanalysis, Its Image and Its Public*). He received numerous international invitations as a visiting professor at the New School for Social Research (New York, 1970-72), the Institut Jean-Jacques Rousseau of the University of Geneva (1972-73), the University of Leuven (1976), the Franqui Chair at the University of Louvain-la-Neuve (1976), became a Fellow of the Van Leer Jerusalem Institute (1977) and of Churchill College, University of Cambridge (1980). For fifteen years (1980-1995), he was a Visiting Professor at the New School for Social Research (New York). This gradual increase in the international recognition of his work comes with the creation of many communities of researchers from different countries who learn, discuss, advance his seminal ideas, establish academic communal practices (e.g. biennial international conferences, Brazilian lectures, European doctoral training, Moscovici centres). In the 2000s, came full international recognition of his work, and in his own words, the work of the group around him (Moscovici, 2004).

The recognition of this work is very important in the world. Between 1980 and 2012, Moscovici is awarded sixteen honorary degrees, mostly in Europe but also in Latin America (Geneva, Glasgow, Sussex, Seville, Brussels, Bologna, London, Rome, Mexico, Pécs, Lisbon, Jönköping, Iasi, Brasilia, Buenos Aires and Evora). He won six international awards (1980, In Media Res Prize of the Burda Foundation; 1989, European Prize for Social Sciences and Sociology; 2000, Ecologia Award; 2003 Balzan Prize; 2007; W. James and W. Wundt prize; 2010, Premio Nonino Master of His Time) honouring all aspects of his thinking.

### *Main contributions*

Regarding the study of social representations, one of us (Kalampalikis, 2013, pp. 8-9), in the introduction of Moscovici's last book in French (*The scandal of social thought*, 2013), highlights the contributions: the conversion of a form of scientific knowledge into a composite system of opinions and interpretation of reality; the dynamics of the formation of knowledge and social thought through the communication and action of historically and culturally situated groups. Moscovici's aim, comprehensive and ambitious, stated in 1961, is twofold. First, to give this young discipline, social psychology, a "material", its own epistemological horizon: studying representational states as forms of social knowledge. Consecutively, to root it in the social sciences with a "unity of concern" in the present, along with the streams of common ideas that have shaped them (Jodelet, 2011). To achieve this ambitious and radical plan, given the protean state of social psychology in Europe at that time and the relative neglect of Durkheim's contribution to the social sciences, one had to be innovative, inside and outside the disciplinary core of the theory. In psychology, Moscovici had to break with the prevailing North American behaviourist currents and individualist which evacuated the reflective and symbolic dimension of human conduct in society (Farr, 1996; Greenwood, 2004). In the social sciences, the breakthrough was to introduce the scientific legitimacy to studying of common sense in a "thinking society" against the criticism of the dominant epistemological and ideological models, in order to claim both the epistemological proximity and the specificity of the discipline (Jodelet, 2009).

In these early works, he developed two hypotheses that occupied much of the rest of his scientific career. He points the history of science to the study of the link between two essential areas of knowledge: science and common sense. For him, epistemology only glosses over the analysis of the relations between these two types of knowledge. On occasion he liked to quote Einstein and claim that without common sense science would fall into solipsism. He was therefore interested in a non-hierarchical interaction between scientific knowledge and social knowledge, that is to say the know-how and knowing of common sense, how they transform into each other, how the content of one is transferred to the other and vice versa. The seminal 1961 book highlighted two main socio-cognitive processes, objectification and anchoring, which function as connecting rods transforming the linear motion into circular motion and through which the abstraction of a scientific theory is reified in common sense and everyday practices. Among the many assumptions he addressed, Moscovici stresses that each group makes its own connecting rods, which serve to anchor the

nomothetic knowledge into something idiographic. These tools are communication systems, which always carry traces of the recipient and the sender. Thus, one of the most original parts of his work is the analysis of communication systems, including how the emitter, while building the message or selecting the information to be transmitted, takes into account the social relationship and therefore the influence it seeks to establish with the receiver. This analysis of communication systems has been mainly applied to media communication and inspired other works (Doise & Palmonari 1986). Among these systems, or communication genres, Moscovici distinguished diffusion (when communication is to pass across different social groups), propagation (communication within a given social group) and propaganda (communication stressing differences between groups or social categories).

This proposal is based on a critique of the classical model of communication (e.g. Lasswell) which led to the bulk of studies on attitude change at that time. In his first paper in English (*Attitudes and Opinions*, published in the *Annual Review of Psychology* in 1963) Moscovici criticizes this research tradition. This model excludes the two-way interaction that essential to both communication and influence. There cannot be messages, rhetoric, or language without context. A message cannot be understood as shaped in social vacuum. Emitter and receiver influence each other in the construction of the message. There is no communication without taking into account the receiving end.

These assumptions were developed in his work on language. In a chapter published in *Advances in Experimental Social Psychology* (1967) and in the book *The Psychosociology of Language* (1972), Moscovici notes that there is no such field as the social psychology of language and therefore he tries to outline what should be included. He begins by questioning Saussure's hegemonic distinction between *language* - a stable system of relationships among lexical units - and *speech*, an observable set of uses of this system by the members of a community of speakers. For Moscovici communication is a process of linguistic production. Speech planning is the first point examined because here lexical and non-lexical elements combine. On the basis of the knowledge one has of the relations between emitters and receivers, their motivation, and their distance with respect to the object under consideration, it is possible to predict the message characteristics - grammatical features, redundancy, degrees of formalism - that relate to the given situation. Communication systems are linked to syntactic or lexical systems. The actual speakers, the actual creators of language patterns, are groups: class, nation, profession, cultural group, rural or urban culture. Differences between these groups by far exceed any individual differences

both quantitatively and qualitatively. He observed that the linguistic creativity is provoked and structured by collective exchanges. Even if language as communication is often said to hold society together for Moscovici it would be just as correct to assert the reverse: those cohesive forces, conflicts, negotiations, festivities, and rituals that characterize a given society are the factors that generate linguistic or meta-linguistic rules and cause their combination and diffusion.

He never understood why some social psychologists sought in the individual and his or her brain what in fact lays in social interaction. It is through this interaction that social knowledge is created, extended and spread, because ultimately there is no transmission without transformation. This communication process, specific to the human species, in which information is not processed, but rather interpreted or re-interpreted, was for Moscovici a principle that no psychosocial theory should ignore. On several occasions he was very critical of the cyber metaphor of people as information processing machines, which often consisted in reducing social knowledge to "social cognition", as he remarked quite often – a position in social psychology took the social for granted but did not make it explicit.

His first contact with American social psychology, at least the only one to be institutionalized at the time, was mediated by the group of psychologists of Lewinian tradition. Similar to this tradition, he locates change and innovation within the interaction between individuals and social groups. He argued that mechanisms of change are in active exchange, in the expression of differences, and especially in conflict (following Simmel). Thus, with Claude Faucheux they explored the hypothesis on how the structure of communication within a group (centralized vs. free) resulted in an effect on the performance of groups (groups with a centralized structure better solved logical, highly structured, tasks; while groups with a free communication performed better in creative tasks).

Europe organized by Lanzetta, where he came to know Festinger, Schachter, Deutsch, Pepitone, among other figures in American social psychology. He built a strong collaboration and forged a profound friendship with Festinger, who no doubt inspired in him several principles for the discipline of social psychology, for example the importance of the experimental method. Despite this importance, this never prevented Moscovici to practice the widest diversity of methods and advocate "methodological polytheism". In a way we can say that he always had something of a Wundtian side, even though folk knowledge and social representations are phenomena that are difficult to grasp with an experimental approach. Besides, he considered experiments as inventive experimentation, where we realise that something

new can be discovered. Hence he never took too seriously the mantra of experimentation as a verification device to test the predictions of a theory. On quite a few occasions he could be heard saying more or less jokingly, "if the experiment goes against the theory, too bad for the experiment" He listened to and read the experiences in great detail, paying particular attention to understand if the experience had simply changed a parameter or if it really addressed a variable. He was very critical of the trend to repeat experiments and varying only one more parameter, leaving aside the core of the problem or the actual phenomenon studied.

His introduction into social psychology through figures like Festinger led him to follow Festinger's advice to Moscovici in the numerous meetings of the Transnational Committee namely that Europe should not limit itself to simply replicating studies by American social psychologists just to see if there were cultural differences. In this respect, he cited as exemplary an article of his close friend and colleague Claude Faucheux (Cross-cultural research in experimental social psychology, *EJSP*, 1976). He remained, until the end, a leading advocate of the importance of the study of *our* culture in specific historical and political contexts (Moscovici, 2012).

His dedication to social psychology coincided with the so-called 'crisis' of the discipline. Although this crisis was primarily about methodological issues, the question for him was more epistemological. This was to define the "matter" of this science. For him, this "matter" was common sense, in the same way that language is the matter for linguists, myths for anthropologists, dreams for psychoanalysts, cell life for biologists or market for economists. In addition, he theorized the perspective of this discipline, the *psychosocial perspective*, offering a triple reading of phenomena and relationships in order to replace the dual relationship between subject and object, an interaction, that is a three-term relation (individual subject (ego) - social subject (alter) - object).

A constant interest in his works, and not just his social psychology research, is the study of innovation. As was usual with him, he first observed a general phenomenon, and then he tried to conceptualize and analyse it. He noticed all societies change, but at different speeds. He then wondered whether this was due to differences in innovation processes in the construction of social knowledge. On this issue he proposed two theories that are better known by "mainstream" social psychologists. One is the theory of the collective polarization and the other the theory of minority influence.

In 1969 he first published his theory of collective polarization, later followed by numerous articles, some co-authored with Marisa Zavalloni. So far a number of social psychologists reduced group decision making to some aggregation of individual decisions, where the group situation merely diluted individual responsibility. But Moscovici started from a much broader issue, namely, how attention in a society gets polarized on one topic or another, then how feelings will polarize on this topic. It goes without saying that opinion leaders or the mass media are key in determining the thematic agenda for a society. But the original question that interested Moscovici was how the symmetry of interactions within a group can be broken at some point, and what happens next. In something of Lewinian and Festingerian tradition, he saw that there is on one hand the normalizing group that produces a pressure to reference and compliance, and on the other hand a pressure to inference, the group that produces dissidence and differences of content that will eventually break the symmetry, and where social interaction results in change and innovation. He showed that in a group discussion new perspectives can emerge that were not originally present in any of the participants. He tried to generalize the polarization phenomena observed in experiments, and co-authored publications building on the notion of symmetry breaking with physicist Serge Galam.

Immediately he understood that when a group comes to polarize its attention on a given topic, and initiate a debate then a lively discussion, opinions, and feelings will polarize towards the pole to which they initially tended. In his book with Willem Doise (*Conflict and consensus: a general theory of collective decisions*, 1994), they show how to go against the "groupthink" phenomenon (Janis, 1972), how to transform a standard setting and conformist group into an innovative, creative and effective group. Organizations will derive great benefit from this work.

In parallel to these works, he continues his research on social influence and social change. In *Social influence and social change*, he examines in depth all the theories proposed in social psychology to account for social influence. He then comes to two major conclusions. On the one hand, theories confuse social influence and power: they reduce influence to the possession of some kind of power or authority (normative, informational, referent) which commands increased compliance and uniformity. On the other hand, none of these theories is able to account for social innovation. His experience in the ecologist movement has taught him that social minorities are forceful social actors and that they can be innovative. Hence he raises two key questions: can a social minority, with no power, produce influence? If so, how? His early experiences in this field aim to discover the existence of minority influence. This may appear a bit simple, but remember that for Moscovici experimentation should lead to discovery of phenomena, beyond the mere testing of assumptions.

Eventually this led to his genetic or interactionist model of social influence. In the origin of innovation, he put the minority's behavioural style, mainly consistency or mere repetition of an alternative without contradiction. This would be the only way a social minority can generate social conflict and force the majority to think about what the minority wants to say and at a certain level to rethink its own previous positions. He also sees that the nature of the influence exercised by a majority is different from that exercised by a minority, which led him to write the conversion theory, published in the 1980's, with others in *Advances in Experimental Social Psychology*. Throughout his life, he considered active social minorities were the means for a community, a society, to step out of its own normative patterns.

We limited this short tribute to the major contribution that Moscovici leaves us for social psychology, and this is far too limited. Here we cannot sketch the complete picture of his long, active, creative and original intellectual and scientific career, fully anchored across the social sciences. Among his essential contributions we should also include his reading anew and reinterpretations of the classics of the crowd psychology, for example, Le Bon, Tarde, Freud (*The age of the crowd: a historical treatise on mass psychology*, 1985). He also returned to the source of the founders of the social sciences as Weber, Durkheim, Simmel (*The invention of society: psychological explanations for social phenomena*, 1993), and more specifically of collective psychology, in defence of the inseparability of the social and the psychological.

His two institutional "inventions", the Laboratoire de Psychologie Sociale de l'École des Hautes Etudes en Sciences Sociales (LPS) and the Laboratoire Européen de Psychologie Sociale (LEPS) have hosted and influenced generations of researchers worldwide. The first, the LPS, brought together and trained for four decades researchers to a specific social psychology, deliberately societal in orientation, now clearly identified and recognized across a broad international community. Over 90 theses were defended there from 1966 to 2007 (of which 59 under his supervision). Most of these highly-trained researchers now operate in prestigious academic institutions in France and Europe but also in many other countries.

The second, the European Laboratory of Social Psychology (LEPS), was created by Moscovici in 1976 the Fondation Maison des Sciences de l'Homme (FMSH) in Paris. It was designed to strengthen the various European research currents that had an original approach but were disparate, thus complementing the work of the European Association. Several research groups led to the emergence of innovative and interdisciplinary themes,

strengthened the collaboration between researchers and resulted in many collective publications. It was organized from the beginning as a network long before this model of collaborative work become fashionable, and was a rare example of institutional innovation (Kalampalikis, 2003).

After thirty years of activity of the LEPS, Serge Moscovici supported its transformation by encouraging the creation of a new network, also located at Fondation Maison des Sciences de l'Homme in Paris FMSH in 2014, to extend and continue with new means the approach he advocated, connecting the now very broad international community of researchers who rely on its work. This new network, now named the "Serge Moscovici Global Network" (REMOSCO) brings together the diverse and inventive communities which revolve around this Moscovician societal approach of social psychology, supported with digital technology, for example by organizing the International Conferences on Social Representations, which bring together biennially some 600 researchers and are now in their 13<sup>th</sup> edition.

Human history is inseparable from the history of ideas. Moscovici started his study of the history of ideas, with Koyré and Lagache. He added his own theories of how ideas emerge, transform, and spread through social interaction. In the end, Serge Moscovici's own trajectory through the history of the twentieth century, this "long series of improvisations and surprises" accorded to him, deeply affected the social sciences as a whole and not only the science of ideas. His death now makes us realize the full dimension of his polymorphic work and, in particular, in a science which he wanted to be, as he was himself, open, curious, inventive, sensitive and in line with societal issues of the time. A Social Psychology that "explores how and why we seek to understand the world *hic et nunc*, and act on it; that is, *an anthropology of our culture*" (Moscovici, 2012).

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French version available at: <http://remosco.hypotheses.org/>

## Serge Moscovici

*Augusto Palmonari, University of Bologna, Italy*

Serge Moscovici died in Paris during the night of November 15. His death is a huge loss. Those who had the privilege to have met him were impressed by the breadth of his culture and the intensity of his relationships, relationships that were not always easy, but that, for their intellectual challenge, had the power to mark everybody for better or for worse.

Moscovici contributed greatly to the evolution of the theory of, and research in, social psychology. His work strongly supports the specific role of social psychology as a science, highlighting its links with other social science disciplines such as anthropology, sociology, history of science, and history of culture.

He was among the social psychologists who experienced personally the violence caused by the racial prejudice and the discrimination that characterised the twentieth century. While unique, his life has many points in common with the lives of European Jews during the Nazi nightmare that dominated Europe in the 1930s and 40s.

Many of the intellectuals saved their lives by migrating to the United States, where they were able to build new professional lives. Among them were many German psychologists, such as some of the theorists of the psychology of the Gestalt, notably Max Wertheimer and Kurt Lewin, who, working in different American universities, founded a new, innovative branch of social psychology. Moscovici, as well as Tajfel, had to face more difficult challenges: trapped in the Europe occupied by the Nazi army, in which the local fascist organisations supported the occupier, both of them had to face forced labour and very precarious living conditions.

Even after the war they faced hardship. Tajfel talks about his experience in his "personal notes", published in the introduction to the volume that contains the complete synthesis of his works (Tajfel, 1981). Moscovici, on the other hand, left a long autobiography, published in France in 1997. It is easy to see that, for both of them, the interpretation of social reality and the study of social groups and of the violence against the marginalised and discriminated became a priority. Their contribution to the creation of social psychology started from their own tragic experience.

It is obvious that Moscovici's personal experiences shaped his personality and his scientific thought. Born in 1925 in Romania from a Jewish family of

cereal traders, his childhood was scarred by the constant conflict between his parents, who divorced when he was only five, an event heavily stigmatised in his culture of that time, especially as it involved a very religious family. With the divorce, the families put an end to every contact between them and, in accordance with the law, Serge went to live with his father, and his younger sister with his mother, an arrangement that reflects the customs of the time. In this way he lost forever his relationship with his mother (although he did later have two brief encounters with her).

He was then raised by a nanny and by a very affectionate father, unfortunately often absent due to his trading activity. At six he started to attend a Jewish religious primary school in order to avoid the anti-Semitic violence frequent in the local state schools. He lived relatively serenely, albeit often being lonely due to his mother's absence. Because of his father's business's financial difficulty, he had to move with the family to Bessarabia, a rural location, where the business thrived again. Serge remembered that time fondly: He so loved the land where he lived for so many years that in his memoirs he says that he felt at home there, immersed in fascinating reading.

He had to move again when his father remarried, this time to the woman who had been his first love. His father ended his commercial activity and moved with his son to his new wife's family in Bukovina, the region returned to Romania after World War I after two centuries of Austro-Hungarian domination. There Serge attended high school, devoting himself to his reading and fulfilling his aspiration of becoming a "man of letters". He struggled, however, to accept the discipline his stepmother wanted to impose on him, while his father found it increasingly difficult living with his new wife and her family.

Consequently, his father decided to entrust him "temporarily" to his sister who lived in Galatzi, a small town close to Bucharest. It was supposed to be a short stay, but it resulted in the longest period Serge lived in a house where he felt loved. He lived with his aunt for eleven years, from 1936 to 1947, when he decided to move to Western Europe.

In Galatzi, Serge attended a religious high school, where for the first time he experienced racial hatred for being Jewish. Anti-Semitism, until then dormant in Romania, started to surface, incited by politicians, admirers of Mussolini's Italian fascist regime.

In order to escape the ever-stronger and threatening anti-Semitic atmosphere, his aunt decided, in agreement with her absent brother, to

move to Bucharest, a big city where it would be easier to lead a more anonymous life. This happened in 1938, the year of Lucifer, as Moscovici says in his autobiography, quoting a Jewish proverb according to which God, tired of creating and caring for the world, rested on Saturday every week, and every seven years for a whole year, a year in which terrible things could happen.

That year racial laws were issued banning Jews from working in public institutions and attending schools (Serge was, however, able to attend, even if intermittently, a professional high school for mechanics and electricians). From then Romanian political life turned towards fascism, and the city was at the mercy of militarised groups such as the Iron Guards, the local expression of the fascism rampant over Europe. These groups were very violent, and mainly targeted the most visible representatives of the local Jewish community, organising real pogroms. Hitler was preparing his Romanian ally for the war against the Soviet Union he was to start soon. Between 1938 and 1941 Romania did not, however, participate in the war. Serge, even if poorly dressed and malnourished, could attend school and read many books borrowed from a very well-stocked library, while making friends.

His friendship with Isidore Isou (Isidore Isou Goldstein), a very talented and ambitious young man who shared his passion for culture, developed in these years. During his time in Bucharest, he and Serge shared a passion for the classics and the study of French, but life was very hard, the political and social situation aggravated by the uprisings, the murders committed by the Iron Guards, and the constant threat to the Jewish people.

They and most of their friends feared being killed: Isou, in particular, was afraid to die before he could develop his genius. In 1941 in Bucharest, the Iron Guards massacred Jews, destroying the Jewish quarter. Serge was out in the street and witnessed what was happening, an experience that dramatically changed his vision of the human being. Then came forced labour: for Isou out of Bucharest, for Serge on the extreme periphery of the capital, a terrible parenthesis in their lives. All young men from 12 to 17 years old were called to dig defensive trenches all across Romania (now finally at war to support the Nazi invasion of Russia). Because he was the tallest, Serge was chosen as the team leader, who had to report directly to the official in charge. The work was hard, the days long and cold, with little food. They could, however, return home in the evening. In this period Serge had to suspend all reading: each night, exhaustion made him fall asleep immediately after returning to his aunt's house.

He managed, however, to negotiate a half-day break a week for the members of the group, which allowed them to keep in touch, even if intermittently, with the schools they attended. The work ended in the summer of 1941. Already before this experience of forced labour, Serge had been approached by young people who were organising themselves into a clandestine group with the intention of joining the Zionist movement. He participated, keeping some distance, because the group's ideology did not convince him completely. Instead, encouraged by a friend, he joined the clandestine Communist party. He participated in a cell involved in propaganda activities. His testimony about this period is, however, very sketchy. In any case, this experience allowed him to consolidate his friendships with young men of the same age committed to radical political and social change. With them he shared discussions, projects, and dreams for a better future. The most passionate of this group was Isou, who considered himself a genius and was already writing a play and thinking about an innovative reorganisation of human knowledge.

The Romanian army participated in the invasion of Russia and for a long time the Red Army had to retreat under the military advance of Hitler and his allies. The siege of Stalingrad, however, put a dramatic end to the Nazi illusions of a flash victory, and soon the Red Army regained the positions lost so quickly, occupying Romania. At the end of 1944, a coalition of anti-fascist parties took power, supported by the king, who substituted the fascist generals with other military, faithful to him, in order to negotiate an armistice with Russia. These historical events, well documented in history books, in Moscovici's autobiography are reported in a very general, but clear way. He always links them with his personal experience, his intense but brief love affairs, with his friendships and political activities, together with his illusion of a communist revolution that would liberate mankind from oppression. This was the atmosphere in which the young Serge developed his vocation to become an intellectual, by devoting himself to literature, history, and the humanities in general. His goal was to go to Moscow to study in the city that he considered as the centre of the new world order, a dream that looked possible thanks to the brief stay in Bucharest of Ilya Ehrenburg, the well known writer who was a mythologised among young communists. Serge managed to meet him and discuss with him his project, hoping the writer could help him to move to Moscow for a period of study. The writer, however, after listening to him, did not encourage his plans to study in the Soviet Union. On the contrary, careful not to betray his political beliefs, Ehrenburg warned him: "You do not have any idea of the problems that the Soviet world has to face and solve, this is why you could find that you do not like it. Remember that Moscow is not Paris..."

This long conversation took place in French, and convinced the young Moscovici to look to other routes for the realisation of his intellectual development. His trust in Communism gradually fading, due, in part, to the party banning all the democratic parties (liberals, cooperative, etc.) in favour of an authoritarian policy, Serge was elected head of the Jewish Youth organisation, of which, until then, he had been a tepid supporter and from which he had kept his distance. This gave him the opportunity to influence not only young Jews in Bucharest, but all over Romania. He had the opportunity to travel to cities where many Jewish families lived. Thanks to this activity, one of the representatives of a Jewish international organisation in charge of directing Jewish Holocaust survivors' migration to Palestine asked for his help. This organisation, supported by funds provided by American Jews, had the purpose of organising the migration of the refugees from Western Europe, now under Soviet control, to Austria and Bavaria, and then through Italy and France to Palestine. Serge was asked to live for short periods of time in the countries where refugee camps had been organised, in order to receive the victims of the concentration camps. From there he clandestinely organised their transfer to Austria and West Germany.

In 1945 and 1946, Moscovici successfully carried out some of these missions and was able to re-enter Romania and reach his brave Aunt Anne's house in Bucharest. His autobiography offers an impressive testimony of these experiences. The scale of the Nazi genocide, completely unknown to him until then (Bucharest saw some pogroms but was spared the experience of mass deportation), became apparent. He also learnt of the sinister events in Bukovina and in other regions. He was impressed by the huge number of ex-detainees now in refugee camps scattered all over Eastern Europe. Once liberated from the concentration camps, they had tried to get back to their countries of origin, only to find that their families had been victims of the Nazi atrocities. In addition, their old houses had been either destroyed or occupied by others displaced by the war. This was the sad reality of ex-detainees now with no family, house, or country. In this context, the effort to re-settle them in Palestine looked like a welcome opportunity for a new life.

Another painful fact disappointed the young Moscovici: The pretence of innocence of the German veterans he met in Munich regarding their involvement in Nazism. In his testimony, he says that it looked as if nobody had supported Hitler's folly and that inexplicable forces were the origin of the ruins of the German and Austrian cities. The discovery of the immense sorrow caused by Hitler, joined with the lack of personal responsibility of

those who participated in it, turned into a kind of personal, intimate feeling of loss. This pretence of innocence filled him with indignation.

These events made him think about migrating to Jerusalem, where his father had already settled, but he decided that only in Paris could he realise his intellectual vocation. His friend Isou had been in Paris since 1945, and he had quickly found the way to realise his dreams, founding the artistic movement of 'Lettrisme' when he was only twenty-one years old.

In July 1947, Serge decided to move to Western Europe with a friend. The plan was to enter Hungary illegally and then reach Italy via Austria. The journey took place by train, with an incident at the border that almost compromised the entire plan. A series of lucky coincidences, however, including a few days' long detention, allowed them to cross the Austrian border and ask for the support of an American Jewish organisation that helped fugitives from the Communist bloc.

They reached Italy through the Brenner Pass, and the Italian soldiers, who in theory should have stopped them, impressed him with the warm welcome they gave to the clandestine group, which included women and children. With the help of the same organisation, Serge and his friend Freddy reached Milan, where they stayed for a few days, enjoying their regained freedom and appreciating art. From Milan, despite their scant funds, they visited Verona (Juliet of literary allure) and Venice. Imagine the fascination of an aspirant intellectual in a city like Venice, totally unknown to him until then. The autobiographical pages that describe this have a very high literary value. Finally, they reached Villa Emma (a residence in Nonantola, a village close to Modena) where the refugees from Eastern Europe found temporary accommodation. The quiet time spent in Nonantola allowed him to organise his ideas into life projects. After a few months, he moved to Soriano nel Cimino, close to Rome. This allowed the two friends to discover Rome and its fascinating history. With little money, they visited the whole city, discovering the treasures from the different historical eras. He then went to Paris from Genova, where Freddy took off for Latin America to join some relatives. Moscovici never heard of him again.

The autobiography reports few information about his arrival in Paris and the way in which he settled down there. Some information on this period are drawn from the volume edited by da F. Buschini and N. Kalampalakis "*Penser la vie, le social, la nature*" (Maison des Sciences de l'Homme, Paris, 2001). At the beginning he strove to balance a job with his university studies in order to survive. This was the time in which he enrolled in a bachelor course in Psychology at the Sorbonne University. This did not prevent him from meeting new friends and spending many nights with two other

Romanian refugees, the poet Paul Celan and the anthropologist Isac Chiva, whom he met for the first time in Paris. Both of them shared with him the experience of displacement due to the war and to the anti-Semitic persecutions, as well as being refugees from the Soviet bloc. Since the beginning of the '50, he started to publish papers on sociological issues, history of science and research methods.

It is not clear in which year Moscovici obtained the "*Bourse pour réfugié*", which allowed him to start his research career. He chose as mentor the famous philosopher of science Alexandre Koyré, who became a valuable point of reference for his studies and who certainly influenced his various interests. In 1961, he published his dissertation, "*La Psychanalyse son image e son public*", which constitutes the foundation of the theory of Social Representations and another important essay on industrial innovation. In the sixties he extended his commitment to academia and gained more international recognition. In 1967 he published a volume on the history of science titled "*L'expérience du mouvement. J.B Baliani disciple et critique de Galilée*". (Paris, Herman). This work was accomplished basing on correspondence between Baliani and Galileo that Moscovici himself discovered at Biblioteca Ambrosiana di Milano. In the same years he was awarded a chair at the Department of Anthropology of the University of Paris VII. In that period he developed an interest in ecology and together with other intellectuals he founded the Association of the Friends of the Earth (supported, among others, by C. Levi-Strauss, K. Lorenz, Th. Monod, and J. Rostand). He also published three volumes in a very short period of time: *Essai sur l'Histoire humaine de la nature* (1968), *La société contre nature* (1972), and *Hommes domestiques et hommes sauvages* (1974). He stood for the national and European elections with the ecologists. In 1965 he obtained the title of *Directeur d'Etudes* in the *Ecole des Hautes Etudes en Sciences Sociales* (EHESS) and founded the laboratory of Social Psychology in the same Ecole.

He then established a programme of experimental studies, first on the polarisation process within groups, then on the investigation of the processes of social influence of minorities. He also contributed to the study of social representations, supervising Denise Jodelet's thesis on the representations of mental illnesses in a rural community of central France. In 1965, together with J.M. Nuttin, G. Jahoda, H. Tajfel, and M. Mulder, he founded the European Association for Social Psychology, of which he was the first president. From the mid-sixties, his commitment to the development of social psychology increased in France, Europe, and the United States, where he was invited to the prestigious Centers for Advanced Studies of the University of Princeton and Stanford

In 1984, he founded the *Laboratoire Européen de Psychologie Sociale* in the *Maison de Sciences de l'Homme* in Paris.

In the cited volume edited by Buschini and Kalampalakis (see above) a detailed bibliography of Moscovici's writings is available. Here we want to quote only the most famous:

*La psychanalyse, son image, son public*, PUF, 1961/ new edition 1976 /  
*Psychoanalysis. Its image, its public*, Polity Press, 2008

*Psychologie de minorités actives* (Paris, PUF, 1979) *Social influence and social change*, [Academic Press](#), 1976

*Psychologie Sociale* (Paris, P:U:F:,1984)

*L'Age des foules* (Paris, Fayard, 1981) *The age of the crowd: a historical treatise on mass psychology*. Cambridge, Cambridge University Press, 1985

*La machine à faire des dieux* (Paris, Fayard, 1988) *The invention of society: psychological explanations for social phenomena*, Cambridge, Polity Press, 1993

*Chroniques des années égarées: récit autobiographique* (Paris, Stock, 1997)

*The Making of Modern Social Psychology* (in collaboration with I. Markovà) (Cambridge, Polity Press, 2006)

Whoever is not familiar with Moscovici's works, but only with the often too-severe critiques that circulate in academia, can read his chapter, *Society and Theory in Social Psychology*, published in the volume edited by Israel and Tajfel (*The context of Social Psychology*, London, Academic Press, 1972). This chapter constitutes, together with Tajfel's contribution published in the same volume, a kind of manifesto of the European Association of Social Psychology. The theoretical studies and the research that followed constitute Serge Moscovici's coherent effort aimed at the development of social psychology, not only in Europe, but all over the world.

## The power of the minority: A personal homage to Serge Moscovici

*Charlan Nemeth, University of California Berkeley, USA*

*Serge Moscovici 'invented' minority influence. One of his students, Charlan Nemeth describes what he meant to her and all of us*

It is with great pleasure that I write for Psychology Review on the topic of minority influence and pay homage to Serge Moscovici, who died recently. Serge was a mentor and friend for over 40 years. He influenced my work greatly and I must admit, he also influenced many of my personal decisions. I first worked with Serge towards the end of the 1960s. I had just finished my PhD and was invited to take up a visiting professorship with him in Paris. The timing couldn't have been better. In the years 1968-1969 Bobby Kennedy and Martin Luther King were assassinated and it was a time of protests, mostly against the Vietnam War. My co-teacher in a course was brutally attacked for his views against that war. The offer to flee to Paris for a year was a life raft. It proved to be a defining year for me, professionally and personally. Social Psychology research could help us to understand the important real-life events that surrounded us.

In Paris, 1968 was also a year of protest. There were massive student protests about the 'bourgeois' university system and more general political and economic issues. The movement quickly grew as workers staged widespread strikes. This is the context for understanding Serge's work on minority influence. It was in 1969 that his seminal and famous study on the blue-green slides was published (Moscovici et al. 1969). He had theorised about the power of the minority a few years earlier but this was the main experiment that introduced minority influence. It demonstrated that people with minority viewpoints could persuade, provided they were consistent in their position. Again, some context is needed to appreciate why this was a novel demonstration and changed the way we think about influence.

### *Social Psychology prior to the late 1960s*

Earlier research viewed social influence as flowing from the strong to the weak. We had scores of studies showing that you could change attitudes if you had status or power or what they called 'credibility'. So if you were the head of a major organisation or had titles like professor or 'expert', you could change attitudes more readily than someone without such credibility. There were also scores of studies on the power of the majority. It was the 'many' who influenced the 'few'. The classic study on the power of the majority

was done by Solomon Asch over half a century ago and it dominated research on influence.

In that study, Asch had shown that a majority – even as few as three, *even when they were completely wrong* – could persuade people to adopt their position. That early study had individuals judge which of three comparison lines was equal to the standard line. It was an easy task and people didn't get it wrong. If three or more people all agreed on a different line as the correct answer, over a third of the subjects agreed with that erroneous answer. They didn't know what they knew. They ignored the information from their own senses and believed the majority was correct. This study is one of the very few that has been replicated in more than a dozen countries. The findings hold up and continue to do so a half century later.

In all the textbooks, there was an assumption about influence. It was that the 'many' who influenced the 'few'. If you were alone or in a minority, the best you could do was to remain independent. No one seriously thought that the minority viewpoint could prevail. Yet, the events in Paris and America told us that minority voices could change minds and hearts. Those protests became broader movements. Serge always realised that minority views must have this potential. How else could there be social change? How else could there be great inventions? How could there be anything new?

### *The voice of the minority*

With even a very cursory view of history, it is clear that minority voices can influence. They are often ridiculed and even punished. They invoke anger and pressure to yield. This is one reason why many people agree with the majority, even when they are wrong. This is one reason why people remain silent in most organisations even when they see problems or ethical violations. But what happens when someone decides to do more than remain independent but silent? What happens if s/he speaks up and tries to influence the majority?

### *Consistency*

That first experiment by Moscovici showed that minorities can persuade and that one important element is consistency over time. In their experiment, groups of six included two individuals who called blue slides 'green'. Those two were confederates of the experiment, paid to make these judgments.

In one condition of the experiment, those two confederates called every slide 'green'. In a second condition, the confederates only called 2/3 of the slides

'green' and called the other 1/3 of the slides 'blue'. This means that they agreed with the majority 1/3 of the time. Which condition, if either, would convince the majority to call the slides 'green'. Remember, the slides are blue. When tested alone, people were not confused. They called them blue. Most of my colleagues were convinced that no participants would call these slides green. They predicted that the two 'dissenters' would be laughed out of the room. Most then predicted that, *if* either condition could get someone to call these slides 'green', it would be where the minority of two was correct on 1/3 of the trials. The results showed otherwise. The condition where the minority of two called the slides 'green' every time was the one that persuaded – when they were wrong all of the time. In this condition around 9% of the judgments by the majority were 'green'. When the two dissenters called the slides 'green' 2/3 of the time and 'blue' 1/3 of the time, they had no influence. Consistency was more important than accuracy. This basic finding about the importance of consistency over time has held up over several decades of research. It is the necessary, if not the sufficient, condition for minorities to persuade others to their position. We have since learned that there are more subtle aspects to consistency but what you can't do is be inconsistent. You can't just change your mind. You can't compromise or appease the majority. You have to be perceived as having a position that you believe. That is essential for minority opinions to persuade.

### *The importance of conviction*

We have learned that there are more artful ways of being consistent and of exercising influence. We have learned that conviction is more important than being liked. We have learned that compromise can be counter-productive for persuasion. Here is perhaps the basis of the power of martyrs and whistleblowers. As noted by Abraham Lincoln, one of our more esteemed Presidents, 'If there is anything that links the human to the divine, it is the courage to stand by a principle when everybody else rejects it.' If there is one discussion with Serge that I particularly remember, it was on this topic. As a new faculty member, I would sometimes worry about expressing a contrary idea (especially in a published paper). I remember him always asking me 'what do you believe'? That would lead to an honest outpouring on my part, ending with a concern about having a 'short career'. He would always say 'you have to write that'. I can't tell you how many times that discussion comes to mind whenever I start to appease the 'powers that be' in the field. And the result? When I say what I believe, these are usually my best papers. They have also, by the way, been the source of some irritation and annoyance to my colleagues. Like all of us, they

are nicer when you agree with them – and cite them favorably. Majorities have power but so does speaking the truth as you best see it.

### *Conclusions*

Research on minority influence has flourished since those early studies. We know much more about the art of persuasion. We have learned to question two assumptions of the field. One assumption is that influence goes from the strong to the weak. That is not necessarily true. There is power in being underestimated. There is power in holding minority views with conviction. Another assumption is that influence and liking go hand in hand. So much of the research on attitude change made the assumption that what makes you liked makes you persuasive. Liking can be an advantage but, as students of minority influence, we learned that dissenters do not have that luxury. If they compromise, they will be better liked but they will also be less effective. Persistence in the face of clearly being disliked – this is what leads to persuasion.

The research on influence also became broader and deeper than simple persuasion. The original study and those that followed showed that minorities persuade more than is evident in public. It may occur later or when asked in a different way as people are reluctant to show that they have been persuaded by the minority.

### *Minority influence makes you think*

My own research over the past three decades shows still a different, and powerful, kind of influence. Majorities and minorities affect the way we *think* about the issue more broadly, whether or not we agree with their position. In a nutshell, majorities narrow our thinking. We look at the issue from their perspective so we read information that supports their position. We take their approach in solving problems – and we think in less creative ways (Nemeth 2012). Minority views open our minds. We read on all sides of the issue. We use multiple strategies in problem solving. We think in more original ways. *Even when wrong, even when they do not persuade*, minority views help us to be better decision makers and more creative problem solvers.

### *Minority influence research liberates you*

Whether it is my work or that of more than 50 colleagues I could name, we owe a debt to Serge Moscovici. It was he who taught us that we didn't need to 'fit'. We didn't need to conform to the majority. Even if we were not born in the 'right' categories, we could in fact persuade. There was an art to persuasion. It heavily depended on our own consistency and conviction.

In many ways, Serge liberated us. We all know the pain of being 'different'. We all see the advantages for people whom everyone likes and who seem to be so agreeable. Most of us want to 'belong', like they do. We want to be liked. Especially in your teens, these can be overwhelming concerns. We all had them and we all still have them.

A recent trip to Japan made this evident. I gave a talk to 19 year olds at a women's college about thinking differently and its value. Do you know the first question asked at the end of the talk? It was not an intellectual distinction raised by the research. It was 'I worry so much about what everyone thinks. I don't know what to do about it'.

Speaking up, daring to tell the truth, raising questions when everyone else is in agreement is not easy. It is the stuff of courage. It is also a great benefit for we know that many of the financial scandals, many incidents of corruption and many abuses would have been avoided had people spoken up.

Serge would love the fact that teens in the UK are studying his work. He always believed that teachers have the most influence during those formative years when you are still reflecting on who you are and who you want to be.

Serge Moscovici imparted a wisdom –and, yes, a conviction in his beliefs. For those of us privileged to be 'close in', he made us care. He made us think. He instilled the belief that we all can exert influence. He urged us to have the courage to express those beliefs. We will miss him.

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## Serge Moscovici's vision of social psychology

*Ivana Marková, University of Stirling, United Kingdom*

I learned about the work of Serge Moscovici in the late nineteen seventies. By that time some of his books and articles had been published in English, and some of my friends, like Rob Farr, were already deeply involved in the study of Moscovici's theory of social representations. Critiques of this theory were published in the UK as early as in the nineteen eighties, and they raised a number of questions, for example: how does one define social representations? How many people should share a representation for it to be social? How are attitudes different from social representations? Do social representations differ from discourse analysis? I did not read French at that time and from what I understood about the theory of social representations, I was not particularly taken by it. My main interest was in the epistemology of psychology, and in the psychology of thinking and language. After the collapse of communism in Eastern Europe I was also working with a number of colleagues on the socio-psychological problems of individualism and democracy in post-Communist Europe. Rob Farr was my main collaborator and he was very knowledgeable about Moscovici's work. In studying individualism and democracy we used the term 'social representations', which for me, at that time, was no more than a convenient term.

I became interested in the theory of social representations quite suddenly. Serge Moscovici invited me in 1996 to Paris, to work for one month in the European Laboratory of Social Psychology in the Maison des Sciences de l'Homme. One Sunday morning we were discussing social psychology in the Café Française in front of la Bastille and he spoke with great knowledge about the Prague School of Linguistics and the relevance of language and communication for the study of social representations. That question interested me enormously, because I viewed the dynamic structuralism of the Prague School, which pursued the cultural and communicational basis of language, as different from other forms of structuralism, e.g. French or Danish. Moscovici was puzzled how it was possible that social psychology paid no attention to language, and that it showed little interest in communication. We continued talking about language and social representations during my stay in Paris. I had many questions about social representations, and the editor of *Culture & Psychology*, Jaan Valsiner had suggested that I conduct a dialogue with Serge Moscovici about his work. This gave me the opportunity to ask Moscovici questions about social representations, attitudes, knowledge, beliefs and language – in other words, to ask him questions that were also of interest to others. The dialogue was

published in *Culture & Psychology* in December 1998. Serge Moscovici never published the same thing twice and when Gerard Duveen edited in 2000 a selection of Moscovici's papers, Moscovici insisted that our dialogue was included, but in a largely extended version. The dialogue, or its different parts, was later published in Romanian, Russian, French and Portuguese. Serge liked conversations and discussions and in 2004 he asked me to participate with him in a dialogue on the historical issues relating to the building up of the post-War social psychology at an international level including the establishment of the European Association of Social Psychology. We proposed a book, based on a dialogue, to the Polity Press in Cambridge, but the Polity did not like the idea of a dialogue, and they requested a full text. Our work was based on archives held at the Rockefeller Foundation and the Ford Foundation in New York, the US Social Science Research Council, and on the documents from Michigan Historical Collections. The European resources included the UNESCO archives in Paris and the archives of the European Association in Leuven. This story of post-War social psychology expounded Moscovici's effort, together with Leon Festinger, to build social psychology in and through Transnational Committee of Social Psychology. The work of the Committee included the construction of social psychology in Western Europe during the Cold War, as well as in the totalitarian regimes of Latin America and of Eastern Europe. Among other intolerant events during that time, Moscovici was particularly remembering his personal crisis when the Soviet army invaded Czechoslovakia which was building 'socialism with a human face', and the Congress of the European Association was supposed to take place in Prague soon after the invasion. The dilemma for the Committee of the European Association was: should they hold the Congress in the occupied country? On the one hand, holding the Congress could be seen as approving of the occupation; on the other hand, holding the Congress could boost the morale of Czechoslovakian social psychologists who had demanded that the Congress was held. In the end the Congress took place in Prague and the members of the Committee made personal decisions. Moscovici, who was at that time the President of the European Association, was among those who did not attend the Congress, and Henry Tajfel, the Vice-President went instead. After the collapse of Communism we went to Prague during the 1990s when we carried out an international project on individualism and democracy in post-Communist Europe. Moscovici, who always liked cities of the 'Mitteleuropa', was fascinated by Prague and in particular by his visit to the Jewish cemetery, by the history of Czech secret societies and their relationships with esoteric Kabbalah in Prague, as well as by the famous 'Prague ham'.

During the last years of his Moscovici's life we spent a lot of time discussing the intellectual resources of the theory of social representations in the 1950s and 1960s, including common sense thinking, the idea of social communication in Wiener's cybernetics, the 'bourgeois' and 'proletarian' science during the Communist rule and its effect in France, phenomenology, and many others. We hoped this would be a dialogue about the beginnings of the theory of social representations. Unfortunately, because of Serge Moscovici's illness we could not finish this piece together.

Since my discovery of Moscovici's knowledge of the Prague school of linguistics which changed my perspective on the theory of social representations, I became interested more broadly in Moscovici's vision of social psychology. He was convinced that social psychology occupies a unique place within the social sciences, and specifically, in its position between sociology and cultural anthropology. He thought that this strategic position gave social psychology the potential to act in response to contemporary political, historical and social phenomena. It was because of this vision that Moscovici attempted to build social psychology as an international social science first through the Transnational Committee and then through the UNESCO, as well as through his theoretical and empirical work, the ecological movement and through his work on the history and philosophy of science.

From the beginning of his career in Paris, Moscovici viewed social psychology as a discipline in movement. It was far away from conceiving it as a structured science with plans, genealogy and selected authors who gave the discipline precise directions. He thought that it would be a mistake to see social psychology as a discipline that was trying to reduce uncertainties and insecurities within its field. He viewed social psychology as doubly orientated with respect to several kinds of dyadic micro-social and macro-social relations in tension, such as individuals and groups, personality and culture, psychology and sociology, among others. As a hybrid discipline in movement, social psychology has to cope with tensions produced by these dyadic relations; the study of these tensions constitutes the challenge and specificity of social psychology. He pursued the study of these tensions throughout his career; in my view, this vision of social psychology is the principal legacy of Moscovici's work and a formidable challenge for the future.

## Serge Moscovici: An innovative minority view of social influence

*Gabriel Mugny, Juan Manuel Falomir-Pichastor & Alain Quiamzade  
Social influence research group, University of Geneva*

Serge Moscovici had strong ties with Geneva. He was visiting professor at the Jean-Jacques Rousseau Institute in the early 70', and he was fascinated by Jean Piaget and his multidisciplinary approach, the first who made him understand social representations (in his own words). He has also been a major source of inspiration for the so-called Genevan school of social psychology, and as an acknowledgment of the importance of this collaboration he received his first Doctor Honoris Causa award from the Faculty of Psychology and Educational Sciences of the University of Geneva in 1981. Our social influence research group benefited from, and was largely involved in this partnership, with tangible outcomes in terms of scientific publications and PhD theses in which he was directly or indirectly involved. With this short homage we would like to remind some of the important Moscovici's insights into his social psychology of influence processes and the impact they had on social psychology in general and on the research conducted by our research group in Geneva in particular, in which we should notably include Stamos Papastamou, Juan Antonio Pérez, Fabrizio Butera and Margarita Sanchez-Mazas, among others.

Since the beginnings of social psychology, social influence has been recognized as essential to group functioning. The dominant functionalist approach demonstrated social influence to be a mechanism of social control allowing group locomotion as well as the very definition of (social) reality. To achieve the needed consensus, groups exert pressures toward uniformity, in a form of power of the group (or of powerful members of the group) over the other members in order to establish and reinforce common norms as well as shared (and thus valid) knowledge. The psychological pendant of this understanding of social influence is targets' dependence toward a given source which motivates the former to conform to the latter, be it for normative (regarding mainly affiliation and approbation needs) or informational (regarding uncertainty reduction needs) reasons.

In the 70' Moscovici had the merit to challenge such a mere functionalist approach to social influence in at least four ways. First, he suggested that powerless (minority) groups and individuals have the possibility to influence prevailing majority groups and individuals, even if a priori the latter are not dependent from the former. Even if this proposition nowadays appears quite

reasonable, it represented a revolution in the way to understand society and group life, and to account for social change. His genetic or interactionist model conferred to deviance and dissent a fundamental and adaptive function, namely that of challenging existing norms, in considering innovation as the cornerstone of the evolution of the social system. Dissent is no longer considered as a mere deviance from the norm, and rather the majority looks most like the guardian of the status quo, as a brake of social evolution and change.

Second, and given that dependence alone could no longer explain social influence, a major Moscovici's contribution was to introduce the notion of *conflict* as a key explanatory notion of social influence. Accordingly, minorities challenge social norms and induce social and individual change to the extent that they create a conflict. One of the most relevant consequences of this paradigmatic change is that any source, regardless the power it may have, can constitute a potential source of influence grounded on processes of creation and management of conflict under given conditions. Another innovative aspect of Moscovici's contribution was the notion that conflict creation and maintenance rely to a large extent on behavioral styles (mainly consistency). Thus, minorities induce some influence not merely on the basis of their counter-normative propositions, but also if not mainly on the basis of the way they communicate such innovative stances (i.e., their rhetoric, or the way they create and maintain conflict).

Third, it is worth noting that Moscovici's interactionist approach did not aim at supplanting the functional approach, and he rather integrated both perspectives by proposing a straightforward but essential and fruitful distinction between different levels and natures of influence. He suggested that minorities activate a validation process of the counter-normative content shaping a more latent level of influence that is observed through unconscious, indirect and temporally distant indicators (i.e., conversion). Conversely, majorities activate a more relational and identity-related process (i.e., social comparison) that in his view is more limited to a manifest level of influence (i.e., mere compliance).

This theoretical upheaval was strongly based on original and challenging experimental studies, as Moscovici considered the experimental method as a way of thinking, a mean to discover new phenomena and to test risky predictions (see facsimile of a letter in the handwriting of Serge Moscovici). These ideas on minority influence were not only a kind of intellectual revolution because they were new but also because this way of thinking was in itself a challenge to more straightforward and easy to confirm predictions. In agreement with this understanding of social influence, he advanced the

strong prediction that a minority should have more (latent) influence when perceived as unreasonable and being denied than when perceived as credible and being accepted. The complexity of his thinking as well as the methodological difficulty to prove such tortuous processes may explain why some researchers in social psychology initially considered latent minority influence to constitute an apparently magic property of minorities difficult to believe in.

pour me en parler, des suites, etc' se plus grave, quel est le  
sens de la méthode expérimentale? Moi j'ai appris que son  
sens est découvrir de nouveaux phénomènes, de vérifier  
des prédictions risquées! or le plus part des temps on commence

..] [...] what is the sense of the experimental method? I have learnt that its sense is to discover new phenomena, to verify risky predictions. [...]

Indeed, a fascinating fact about this theory is that it applies to its own history: As an epistemic novelty it challenged the mainstream as a minority does, with similar effects. As before mentioned, Moscovici and colleagues' innovative stance initially faced a strong resistance in the social psychology field. The ideas and the experimental illustrations were so unbelievable that a seminal paper published in the *Journal of Experimental Social Psychology* in 1980 was followed in the very same issue by two papers describing research conducted by two different teams that intended to replicate the findings. How challenging an idea should be to generate such an attempt of confirmation or disconfirmation? For the record, these two papers were not successful in replicating the difference between majority and minority influence, which casted serious doubts about Moscovici's ideas in the mainstream psychology of social influence.

However, in the next decades intensive work using different materials and issues allowed observing dynamics corroborating the existence of specific influence processes for minorities compared to majorities. Even if the diversity of studies implied a proliferation of methodological approaches and theoretical explanations, one has to acknowledge that Moscovici's consistency in his claims succeeded to influence the scientific community to the extent that his thoughts have largely inspired current views of social psychology. Nevertheless, and despite this overspread acceptance that minorities can obtain some influence, Moscovici's explanation in terms of

conflict was not. One illustration of this mitigated position among the scientific community can be found in a meta-analysis published in the 90' that marginally confirmed the existence of latent minority influence, but noted that Moscovici's explanation could appear somewhat 'mystical' to some researchers.

In sum his theory followed the same stages as those he described for minority influence: a long and costly process of integration, from denial to conversion. Is conversion to Moscovici's ideas on minority influence totally achieved? Probably not, and the process might be still on its way. Indeed, despite his general thoughts are currently acknowledged in the social psychology literature, many of his proposals may still need further understanding and development (e.g., the notion of conflict). This is why it may be seen as a theory that still has a future.<sup>1</sup>

Indeed, Moscovici's thoughts substantially fed different lines of research and still does. As an example let us simply summarize the ones conducted in Geneva by our research team. With Willem Doise we extended his conceptualization of conflict to intellectual development in children. Intellectual development was no longer seen as the mere result of intrapersonal conflict and homeostatic correction through assimilation and accommodation of cognitive schemes as it was in Piaget's model, but additionally and even mainly as the result of interpersonal conflicts. According to Moscovici's propositions on majority and minority influence, conflict resolution appeared to be a consequence of the (a)symmetry between the partners in the interactions. Thus, conflict between non-conserving children and conserving peers or adults (i.e., asymmetrical relationships between actors of different cognitive levels) often results in a relational resolution of the conflict that may be associated to compliance. Conversely, conflict between non-conserving children (symmetrical relationships between peers of similar cognitive level; or even between non-conserving children and adults when compliance is impeded) often results in cognitive structuration according to Piaget's levels, that is a change at a deeper level. In that case children are cognitively processing the task at a more epistemic level, in a way similar to that observed in minority influence studies.

As refers specifically to social influence, Moscovici's thoughts inspired our research in three additional ways. First, and given that Moscovici's

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<sup>1</sup> See F. Buschini & N. Kalampalikis (Eds.), *Penser la vie, le social, la nature. Mélanges en l'honneur de Serge Moscovici* (pp. 355-367). Paris : Editions de la Maison des Sciences de l'Homme.

proposition on minority's influence can be extended to any kind of powerless source, we were informed by his proposals in order to investigate the influences of sources with low credibility and status, and of outgroup sources, that rely on distinct processes but lead to similar outcomes. Second, Moscovici's validated his main predictions about minority influence as a factor of social change focusing on the well-known blue-green paradigm. We reasoned that this paradigm relies on an objective task in which the correct answer appears obvious and in which people expect total consensus, allowing for the study of numerically majority vs. minority sources that are both breaking the expected unanimity, even if they lead to distinct conflict regulations. Accordingly, we investigated influence processes taking into account the possibility that different kinds of sources are more or less relevant as a function of the nature of the tasks. Extensive research led to the notion that specific processes of influence are in correspondence to particular sources in specific tasks. For instance, in tasks in which aptitudes are at stake, competence is the relevant dimension of the source, whereas in (opinion) tasks in which social identity and intergroup relations are predominantly at stake, source categorization as ingroup vs. outgroup appears to be the relevant dimension of influence. In all cases, this work is based on Mosovici's articulation between conflict and influence levels according to the nature of the source.

If we look retrospectively we can appreciate that a considerable amount of work in the recent social influence literature, as well as a significant part of our own research in Geneva, stem from Moscovici's innovative ideas. When a scientist's insights motivate other researchers to work so intensively on his ideas, it says a lot about their intellectual worth. Thus, Moscovici does not need much additional tribute for his work: its legacy speaks for itself.

## A Remembrance of Serge Moscovici

*William D. Crano, Claremont Graduate University, USA*

It is self-evident that Serge Moscovici must be counted among the preeminent intellectuals of the 20<sup>th</sup> century. The breadth and range of his intellectual contributions, along with the sheer force of his personality in carrying his ideas to the scientific community and the public at large leave no doubt of his remarkable impact on our world. His curiosity, intelligence, and wit helped form or change many features of the intellectual landscape. One of his many important contributions involved his insights into the influence of minorities on the majority, which fundamentally changed our conceptions of social influence, and in so doing changed and enlarged the scope of social psychology. Moscovici's insights did not merely contribute to what was known, but pointed to possibilities that most had never even thought to consider. My most personal remembrance of Serge occurred when as a younger man I wrote Serge and asked if I might visit him in Paris. I was nervous about doing so, as he already had established his reputation as one of the keenest minds of our time, and some thought, incorrectly I learned, that he did not particularly fancy Americans. His response was rapid and very kind. On my arrival, Serge was the soul of hospitality, and generously spent most of a day discussing the intricacies of some of his ideas, many that seemed contrary to the established "wisdom" of the time, but all of which were firmly based on fundamental psychological laws. This was one of the most memorable experiences of my life, intellectually and personally, and I have cherished the warm memory of that meeting for more than a quarter-century.

## Memories of Mosco

*Nicholas Emler, University of Surrey, United Kingdom*

The name Serge Moscovici is not immediately associated with theorising and research on the childhood development of social knowledge, and perhaps not at all. But it should be. Let me explain why, and along the way share some recollections of possibly the most extraordinary person I have ever known. I first met Serge Moscovici, or Mosco as we all seemed to call him, relatively early in my career. I had a period of sabbatical leave and was fortunate to be invited by Mosco to spend this in Paris at Ecole des Hautes Etudes en Sciences Sociales, then based at the the Maison des Sciences de l'Homme (MSH). He was fairly scornful of my then developing enthusiasm for studying gossip, reputation and social networks though he did later invite a contribution on reputation to a book he produced on social relations (Moscovici, 1994). My great good fortune, however, was that my search for a sabbatical host in Paris coincided with his interest in moral judgement and more specifically the ideas of Lawrence Kohlberg.

At that time, the beginning of the 1980s, the prevailing wisdom was that socio-cognitive development was a process of constructing progressively more objective representations of social reality and progressively more logical instruments of social problem solving. This seemed to me improbable. The child's immersion in a social world, and more particularly the specifics of that world, surely had some part in these processes, shaping their progress but also their content. On this point, I discovered, Mosco and I were in full agreement. The challenge was how to demonstrate this. In the course of a series of conversations, and working closely with his research officer, Jocelyne Ohana, we began to work out a strategy of inquiry. I should say of those conversations with Mosco that they happened anywhere and everywhere we were together – in his office, walking in the street, in the MSH cafeteria, in his apartment, driving in the car, in bars and bistros. He had an astonishing, and to me almost overwhelming enthusiasm for ideas, and the generosity to share them at every opportunity.

For my own career, it was for me a hugely productive relationship. We secured the only grant awarded to a psychology project in a joint ESRC-CNRS programme. Several studies were completed. And some fifteen publications emerged (ESRC take note; this was real value for money – the grant was very modest), including think pieces, conceptual analyses and critiques, and reports of empirical studies. The name of Moscovici appears on only one of these – that of his research officer on rather more – but

Mosco's intellectual input profoundly shaped every one of them. The most important were Emler, Ohana and Moscovici (1987), Emler (1987), Emler, Ohana and Dickinson (1990) and Emler and Ohana (1993).

In these and other publications we sketched out an analysis of the childhood development of social knowledge from the perspective of social representations. The empirical basis for the analysis came from studies of children's understanding of economic inequalities and institutional roles. In these we found the clear influence of social environments, environments shaped by national culture and social class, upon the views that children articulated. At a time when a child's socio-economic background was thought to influence pace of development but little else, we demonstrated that it affected the content of children's views about the social world.

What the foregoing does so little to convey is the intellectual fellowship that Serge Moscovici so generously extended to me and out of which this work emerged. It is that fellowship, and the many ways in which it was expressed that remains particularly vivid for me. Walking down the street, he suddenly stops, turns to me and poses a question that had never previously occurred to me. He was often great company. At a small conference we are organising in Paris, at the end of the day we go for a drink. American delegates hopefully approach a near empty bar. Mosco insists on the almost identical bar next door, already packed to the doors. He had a mischievous sense of humour. In the course of translating a presentation I am making on reputation to his graduate class I advance the notion that reputation is a uniquely human phenomenon. He gleefully pounces, announcing (in French) that of course cats have reputations. At a conference on the joint ESRC-CNRS programme, someone asks of one team from Warwick University why they chose Rouen to compare with Coventry in a study of unemployment. Mosco cries out from the back of the room "Because the English burn Joan of Arc in Rouen!"

My favourite Mosco anecdote reminds me of a joke told about the character from the title of Malcolm Bradbury's novel, *Dr. Criminale*, a mysterious and elusive East European intellectual. Mosco was invited to a conference on minority influence in New York. I have seen the text of the paper he prepared for this conference. It began with a story about the last Doge of Venice, brought to Paris by Napoleon. The Doge was asked what he thought most remarkable about Paris. He replied "The fact I am here." Mosco's text continues, "the most remarkable thing about this conference is that I am here." The *Dr. Criminale* joke: "What is the difference between Dr. Criminale and God? God is everywhere. Dr. Criminale is everywhere

.... but here." Mosco never turned up at the New York conference. I like to think he found a more interesting one to attend.

Unlike the lead character in Bradbury's novel, I did not have to search in vain for Mosco. He was always, and this still surprises me, welcoming. Who do I remember? Someone who was kind, funny, and frighteningly well informed on the most arcane of topics. I miss him of course.

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## Serge Moscovici: A personal reflection

*Miles Hewstone, Oxford University, United Kingdom*

It does not feel possible, but I first met Serge Moscovici nearly 35 years ago. I was finishing my doctorate in Oxford and was keen to go and work with him in Paris to learn more about his (to me) new work on social representations. Jos Jaspars arranged an introduction at the EASP meeting in Sussex, and this star-struck student came face-to-face with one of the giants of social psychology. I still remember that unruly shock of curly, silver hair, the mischievous sense of humour and his warm invitation to come to the Maison des Sciences de l'Homme to work with him. All these years on I reflect on how fortunate I was; this demi-god could so easily not have bothered with a young unknown, but he was genuinely delighted and encouraging.

Having duly obtained funding for a post-doc, I arrived in September 1981, and ended up spending 15 months with him. The start was not auspicious – it took some weeks to arrange a face-to-face meeting, and I still recall pushing many coins into the telephone at the Cité Universitaire and leaving yet another message on his answerphone in my elementary French – but when we did get to meet he showed me real kindness and our exchanges were windows-of-opportunity to pose the many questions I had, and to learn more about the ideas of this brilliant man. He was not a man to pin down to rule-following and weekly meeting slots; he did things his own way, and who could carp at that when you look at what he produced? We, in fact, almost never met in an office, but almost always in his local restaurant. The lunch was always long, there was always wine, and he always paid. He would lean back, in a particularly languid manner that is somehow characteristic of him, and talk very quietly and at length of great things. Struggling both to hear and to comprehend his French, I would lean further and further forward, trying to grasp some brilliant insight. And he was brilliant. He was not the kind of post doc adviser who pored over your drafts, let alone corrected your statistics, but he thought on a big level, and it was the greatest privilege to have spent such time with him.

When I first heard that Serge had died I felt that we had lost a Colossus, someone who contributed especially with his work in four areas: social representations, group polarization, minority influence, and crowd psychology. Although he trained many doctoral students he did not, in my view, have the influence of Festinger or Lewin, or even Tajfel, through the legacy of students who then became leaders in the field. Rather, it was the

pure originality of his thought and the breadth of his vision that had such a wide and enduring influence. Ironically, I personally ended up only flirting with social representations, writing a couple of pieces with Serge, which were delightful collaborations. But that work has taken off more than even he could have imagined, with especial influence throughout the southern Mediterranean countries and South America, and a significant centre at the London School of Economics, for whose birth Rob Farr was the devoted midwife.

I did, however, end up devoting quite a bit of research time to the study of minority influence. We never talked much about this work at that time, as I recall, so the influence must have been indirect. Later, however, my colleague and good friend Robin Martin and I conducted many studies on the cognitive processes involved in majority and minority influence, very much inspired by Serge's brilliant ideas. One of the challenges of his writing, both a strength and a weakness, was that he wrote in rather florid prose, which was not always conducive to clarity, but was highly creative because it left so much open to interpretation. Robin and I would read and re-read some of the long classic pieces (the two pieces in the *Advances in Experimental Social Psychology*, Moscovici & Faucheux, 1972; and Moscovici, 1980; and the Handbook chapter of 1985), even taking them with us, on occasion, to 5-day cricket matches and beaches in Queensland, in case we felt the need to delve once more into the gnomonic sayings in search of new insights.

I often wondered what would have been the outcome if Serge had taken his ideas to a large American university (with a large subject pool) and its eager and highly-trained graduate students. I think it would have been a brilliant marriage, and would have resulted in the detailed tests of his theory that it deserved. But while Serge went often to the U.S., it was mainly to the New School for Social Research, whose reputation was not for experimental social psychology.

Robin and I often talked of Serge, and corresponded with him regularly. In an age of emails it was the greatest pleasure to receive a hand-written note from Paris, commenting on a paper we had sent him (letters that we have faithfully retained). Three things stand out from this correspondence. First, to our great amusement, he always confused Robin's first name and surname (Martin being a first name too in both English and French), so he would write to us as "Dear Miles and Martin". Second, he always bothered to read and comment on the often long pieces (e.g., our own *Advances* article, published in 2008) that we sent, a response that gave us huge encouragement in our work, especially when we were encountering initial

difficulty getting key studies published. Third, he could take criticism. We published a chapter in 2001 which provided a critique of his famous blue-green afterimage studies. We had always been fascinated by that paradigm, and we really wanted to believe the results, but on methodological rather than theoretical grounds we could not be convinced. Far from acting like a *prima donna*, Serge engaged with us over the issues and was neither offended nor bore any animus to either of us, far from it.

Yet Serge did feel that some had failed to treat his work with respect, and this rankled with him. Robin Martin and I wrote to him personally to invite him to attend the Small Group Meeting on Minority Influence we organized in Oxford, in 2003. Sadly, Serge did not attend, but he took the trouble to write to us to explain why: he felt some of those due to attend had not treated his work with respect, and he therefore felt unable to attend himself. Later, in 2010, Robin and I published a book on minority influence, which we dedicated to Serge in honour of his major contributions in this field. We wrote that Serge merited the honorific that the French reserve exclusively for their leading intellectuals, *maître à penser* (literally a ‘master for thinking’). This term denotes a teacher from whom one learns not simply a set of facts or even a point of view, but rather a *way* of thinking, which is particularly apposite given the empirical evidence that minorities can change not just what we think, but *how we think*. We always intended to visit him in Paris and present him a copy of the book; it is a source of great regret, that for family and health reasons, we were unable to do that.

Over these many years of friendship there are many stories that one could relate. Perhaps my favourite (told to me by Jos Jaspars) conveys what it must have been like, occupying the position of a (European) minority, challenging the (North American) majority perspective, as he did himself with his brilliant studies of social influence in minorities. Moscovici was infuriated at an editorial comment from a leading US journal that he should “use ANOVA” to analyse the data, to which he replied “what’s wrong with French computers?!”

Serge Moscovici was one of the most brilliant figures of our European Association, and a pioneer of European social psychology. Pioneers break the first ground; those of us who follow just till the soil – we will not see his like again.

## Serge Moscovici, I remember...\*

*Alain Clémence, Université de Lausanne, Switzerland*

I remember the first time I met him in 1982. I was at first impressed by his messy hair and his small blue eyes that twinkled merrily all the time.

I remember the first time I read one of his seminal books, in 1988: *La machine à faire des dieux*. This book revealed to me a way of thought, a dynamic way to really think in a social psychological perspective.

I remember a discussion I had with him in his office of the Ecole des Hautes Etudes en Sciences Sociales. I had the project of writing a book on everyday thinking, following the theoretical differentiation he suggested with Miles Hewstone in a book chapter published in 1984. It was a curious moment, because he told a long and fantastic story of the German philosophy to the social cognition. Finally, I concluded that I would need to read many complicated books before I could write even the first line of my book.

I remember when Willem Doise introduced me to his approach to social representations, and the strong attention he devoted to the comments of Serge Moscovici when he developed his work.

I remember the keynote he presented in the Piaget/Vygotsky conference held in Geneva in 1996. The Piagetian perspective strongly influenced his work on social representations, by noting the persistence of the childish thought in adulthood, and he delivered a surprising talk by saying that Piaget was perhaps more Marxist than Vygotsky!

I remember his work on minority influence, and more generally his elegant and clear theory of the three models of influence (normalization, conformity, innovation), which were already discussed in *La Psychanalyse, son image et son public*.

I remember the conference on social representations in Mexico in 1998. It was a very alive, very intense moment, of exchanges between people coming from very diverse places and ways of thinking. Moscovici appeared as the master of the ceremony, in particular when he chaired an assembly to create a scientific association on social representation.

I remember some of his interventions during different conferences. He had an extraordinary talent to discuss varied communications, as much

regarding their contents as regarding their quality, and to suggest a new way to discuss results, or to develop a theoretical idea.

I remember how he described to me the atmosphere of New York in 2000. He drew the city like a strong movement and a deep rustle, which pushed people to move, to create, to make something.

And finally, I remember a great and brilliant intellectual, one of the most knowledgeable scholars I have met in my life.

*\* Inspired by : Perce, G. (1998). Je me souviens. Paris : Hachette.*

## Building European Social Psychology as a Science of Movement

*Steve Reicher, University of St Andrews, United Kingdom*

My first international meeting was in Barcelona in 1978. It was a small group addressing minority influence presided over by Serge Moscovici. Henri Tajfel had been invited from Bristol but couldn't go. Henri asked John Turner but John couldn't go either. So John asked me, a tender postgraduate, and of course the prospect of a free trip to Spain was too much to resist. My contribution was as discussant to Gabriel Mugny's paper. Essentially I sought to demonstrate that social identification processes underlay the effects described by Gabriel (an argument later developed and illustrated empirically by John with Barbara David). I ran my argument past John and he simply said 'fine'.

When I got to Barcelona, Gabriel presented his paper, I responded for 15 minutes or so. Then Serge intervened and spoke, without pause, for almost an hour. When I returned back to Bristol, I described to John what had happened. 'Yes', he said (with a smile), 'I thought that might happen'. And over the years I began to learn quite how naïve and presumptuous I had been to go to Moscovici's meeting and claim minority influence for a social identity approach. 'Thanks John', I thought then. I still do.

At one level, this story might seem to confirm the idea of opposition, perhaps even antagonism, between Bristol and Paris, between the proponents of social identity and those of minority influence as well as social representation. But I think that would be wrong. For even in argument, there was a fondness. More importantly there was deep intellectual respect for Moscovici's work.

One of the foundational texts that we all drew upon, especially the group of us around John Turner (myself, Mike Hogg, Penny Oakes, Margaret Wetherell) was Serge's 'Social Influence and Social Change' published in 1976. It provided a profound critique of mainstream models of the group and of social influence. If social influence follows lines of dependency, it can only reproduce existing inequalities of power. It can only be conservative. Change is taken off the agenda. We may have sought to challenge such views in different ways, but we took inspiration from Moscovici. We saw ourselves as involved in a common enterprise.

More profoundly still, I think, all of us took the 1972 book by Israel and Tajfel – *The Context of Social Psychology* – as the nearest thing to a manifesto for the new social psychology we sought to develop. And in that book, I have always thought that the most significant chapter is that by Moscovici. Out of its many profound insights there are just two I will pick out.

One put him at odds with Tajfel's chapter in the book. Serge argued that any discipline which puts its methods before its questions cannot remain healthy for long (that was over 40 years ago). I think history bears out his argument as against Henri's claim that experiments constitute the sole royal road to the truth.

The other put him and Henri squarely in the same camp. Writing in the aftermath of May 1968, of the Tet offensive and Vietcong victory in the Far East, Moscovici drew inspiration from Gramsci, arguing for a science of movement. Social change may be fleeting and the promise of the new may frequently turn to disillusion. But any discipline which ignores or even excludes change is necessarily wrong. All of Moscovici's work, whether on minority influence or on social representation was about change. Equally, the most important thing to understand about Tajfel's work is that he transformed our understanding of the group from being the source to being the solution to issues of oppression and inequality – a quite remarkable stance for one who saw the holocaust up close. Remember that for Henri the notion of social identity was not as an abstract object of enquiry but as a factor in the explanation of social change.

The last time I heard from Serge was a few years back when I had written a chapter on nationalism in an interdisciplinary text. I had been arguing that the question is not what a national identity 'really' is but rather how it is constructed in order to mobilise people to create particular forms of national reality. Serge wrote me a kind note about the chapter, stressing how he always agreed with Henri that identity was critical to explain change and how he was interested in a dynamic conception of identity which would achieve precisely that.

I never got to discuss the issue with Serge, and now I never will. But I do believe that social identity and social representations theorists have much to gain in working together to advance our common goals.

## Remembering Serge Moscovici

*Sandra Jovchelovitch,  
London School of Economics and Political Science, United Kingdom*

I met Serge Moscovici in 1992, when I had just arrived in Europe. The setting was Ravello, the beautiful Italian town in the Amalfi coast where the *I International Conference on Social Representations* was taking place. For me, the occasion was thrilling because I was coming face to face with European social psychology, something that my generation of Latin American psychologists had learned to admire and value. My formative years, in a world troubled by social inequalities and political unrest, had taken me from clinical to community and then social psychology. Under the influence of Silvia Lane, Martin-Baró, and Mimi Langer I was drawn to the contribution of the Europeans and their foundational work on social representations, social identity, and inter-group processes.

In listening to Serge Moscovici back then, I was reminded and reassured of what inspired me and brought me to social psychology: the conviction that it is in society and culture, not out of it, that we become psychological beings. His intervention conveyed a tremendous power, which for me relied in the breadth of his intellectual vision, in his capacity to link social psychology to multiple disciplines and wider debates, in connecting us to pressing, sometimes urgent social problems. His voice carried the wisdom of the scholar but also the depth of experience of a man who had seen and survived the moral and political devastation that followed WW II. This experience permeated his social psychology, and gave his thinking a certain melancholy and dystopian edge. However, there was also in him a conviction that there is good and intelligence in the ordinary men and women who go about the business of living life each day. He remained a humanist and believer in the power of everyday life and saw common sense as more than a source of wrong beliefs and distortion. His theories of active minorities and social representation are grounded on this conviction.

From Moscovici's work on social representations, I learn that all thinking is social and always-already situated in a wider context of social thought. He taught me that history and culture offer, as much as the body and perhaps more than the brain, a generative starting point to theorise and research psychological constructs. And yet, his work on active minorities and the magisterial book *The Invention of Society* (Polity Press, 1993) taught me that individuals are equally important and must not be forgotten because they can and do change the world, sometimes in a minority of one. In this

book, for which he received the prestigious European Amalfi prize, he sets out to explain why society cannot be understood without recourse to psychological explanations. Social factors clearly matter and must not be forgotten, but societies and histories are created by human beings, by their representations, interests, passions and behaviours. The individual and the idea are productive and transformative forces in society. Social and psychological explanations are not identical and cannot be reduced to each other; rather, they are both required and need one another. Indeed only together they can achieve a fuller picture of the complexity and potential that lies in human individual and social life.

This balance between the individual and the social remains at the heart of Serge Moscovici's contribution and is central to what makes social psychology relevant and necessary in the past, today, and in years to come. As we mourn his passing and celebrate his life and contribution, we are reminded of what is essential in the vision and in the promise of a substantive social psychology. His influence on us will continue.

## Meeting Moscovici: My Encounters with the Grand Theorist of Social Representations

*John T. Jost, New York University, USA*

*Every man, in as much as he is active, i.e. living, contributes to modifying the social environment in which he develops (to modifying certain of its characteristics or to preserving others).*

Antonio Gramsci (1971, p. 265)

My very first publication focused on the theory of social representations, which enthralled me as a graduate student 25 years ago. I was drawn instinctively to Moscovici's audacious style of theorizing, which gleefully synthesized such eclectic influences as Marx, Weber, Durkheim, Gramsci, Freud, Simmel, Mead, Wittgenstein, Piaget, and Vygotsky. These were my intellectual heroes, too, and I desperately wanted to see them working together rather than apart. Maybe "splitters" can be perfectly happy all alone, but "lumpers" need to stick together. So when I read this—and perhaps a dozen similar passages—I knew that I had to meet Moscovici: "Nobody's mind is free from the effects of the prior conditioning which is imposed by his representations, language and culture. We think, by means of a language; we organize our thoughts, in accordance with a system which is conditioned, both by our representations and by our culture" (Moscovici, 1984, p. 8).

In a paper that originated as a class project for William J. McGuire's seminar at Yale, I suggested that Moscovici's writings about anchoring, objectification, and the transformation of scientific knowledge into "common sense" led to the hypothesis that scientific experts would be less likely to subscribe to the ontological reality of theoretical constructs in their own area of specialization than in other areas (Jost, 1992). Unfortunately, I never found out whether psychologists would indeed be more likely than physicists to assume that the concept of a "quark" refers to a physical entity (as opposed to a hypothetical construct) or whether physicists would be more likely than psychologists to believe that "cognitive dissonance" is something that could be observed directly using brain scans. At any rate, my theoretical contribution was deemed worthy of publication by the gracious and esteemed Wolfgang Wagner, the editor of *Papers on Social Representations*.

To my delight, this article won me an invitation to participate in a small group meeting on the theory of social representations that was held in

London in 1996. It was there that I had my first opportunity to meet the legendary figure of European social psychology. I recall first grasping his imposing, rotund silhouette just as dusk was settling in. The grand theorist was seated in a chair in the middle of a room, surrounded by a dozen or more young admirers, who were on the floor in concentric circles around him, hanging on every word. This is how I remember him still. I was unsure about how to enter the collective scene, but I scored points with Moscovici by being the only other person in the room who had read Berger and Luckmann's (1966) treatise on *The Social Construction of Reality*.

I was surprised to learn that Serge was even more charismatic and audacious in person than I had expected on the basis of his writing. He smoked and made sexual innuendoes and was eager to argue with anyone who expressed opinions that were disagreeable to him, including me. Boldly I gave him copies of my own recent papers on stereotyping, false consciousness, and system justification, and I spoke about his theory as if he were not in the room, because that was the only way I could give my talk.

When I returned home to the U.S., I was flabbergasted to receive the following FAX: "Dear John, It was nice to meet you in London. I read also the articles you gave me and which I found very interesting. I still have a lot of problems with the concept of stereotypes, maybe because of my classical background and my marxist reading of false consciousness. I do not believe that LUKACS saw it as an error or a simplified way of thinking, nor actually just as a rationalization, but that is another matter. My best regards, Serge MOSCOVICI, Professor." I was deeply flattered to think that he deemed it worthwhile to resume our arguments and to do so in such a charming way.

Our next meeting was in late 1998, when Kay Deaux and Gina Philogéne organized a conference on the theory of social representations at the City University of New York. I spoke about Marx and Gramsci and Wittgenstein and the need for experimental evidence to support Moscovici's writings about the functions of social representations. I suggested, perhaps too brazenly, that social constructionist meta-theory and purely descriptive approaches to the study of social representations were inhibiting progress on empirical assessment and validation of the most interesting parts of the theory (see also Jost & Ignatow, 2001). When I returned to my seat in the front row, Serge leaned forward and whispered in an exasperated tone that I was "50% wrong!" Those who knew him well advised me to take these words as a compliment.

I probably did not realize the extent of his influence at the time, but Moscovici's writing must have inspired my own efforts to develop a theory

of system justification. In one article, he distinguished among three different types of ideological social representations: (a) hegemonic representations, which were described as uniform, coercive, homogeneous, and stable; (b) emancipated representations, which were said to be autonomous, group-specific, interpretive, and coordinated; and (c) polemical representations, which were conflictual, controversial, antagonistic, and oppositional (Moscovici, 1988). It seems clear to me now that hegemonic representations are of a prototypically system-justifying nature, insofar as their function is to legitimize the status quo. Emancipated representations, on the other hand, are group- rather than system-justifying; they are system-challenging devices that function like Gramsci's counter-hegemonic ideologies. Polemical representations overlap considerably with the other two categories, but they take place only in highly contested ideological environments.

At the same time, I was completely thrown off by Moscovici's assertion—in contradiction to Gramsci (and a number of social psychologists such as Allport and Lewin)—that: "dominating and dominated classes do not have a similar representation of the world they share, but see it with different eyes, judge it according to specific criteria and each does so according to their own categories" (1984, p. 51). I was never able to square this type of claim with other remarks of his, such as this one, which made far more sense to me: "Contents that are shared by a whole society lead each mind to draw its categories from them and these categories impose themselves on everyone" (1988, p. 221). At some point I simply stopped trying to resolve the apparent inconsistencies in Moscovici's theory and to instead pursue my own set of theoretical consistencies and, no doubt, inconsistencies.

The passing of Serge Moscovici, the grand theorist of social representations and one of the 20<sup>th</sup> century's leading figures in social psychology, marks the end of an era. I do not expect that we will again see such an iconoclastic, unabashedly eclectic theorist; in nearly every way, the field has been moving away from the kinds of concerns that drove him. Serge knew this already in 1987, when he protested that social psychologists were becoming addicted to "instant science." His was a strong personality, to put it mildly. He openly advocated for the subordination of technical and methodological considerations, which he regarded as largely parochial, to the intoxicating power of big ideas, even if those ideas did not always fit together neatly. Social psychology probably could not function as a scientific enterprise if every researcher did things the way Serge did, but I worry that it will not function well when there is no one left who does it his way, either. I, for one, will miss his bravado intellectual style and that the fact that he always lead with urgencies of a theoretical or meta-theoretical nature and a

sophisticated, stubborn penchant for criticizing both science and society, with an abiding commitment to the improvement of both.

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## Serge Moscovici: A leader by social representation

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I never met Serge Moscovici, and I never heard him speak. Nevertheless, from my first experiences as an undergraduate it was clear that he was a giant figure in social psychology and, as such, he had an enormous impact on my academic life. In particular, this was because my two main mentors as a student — Margaret Wetherell and John Turner — both had immense respect for him both as a scholar and as a founding figure of European social psychology. Thus as a student I was exposed repeatedly to his work and his ideas, and it was impressed upon me at an early stage in my training that this was someone whose ideas demanded to be taken seriously.

Upon engaging with those ideas, it was also clear why this was the case. Thus whereas with many legends of our discipline one may sometimes be struck by the shallowness of their scholarship and the narrowness of their analytic gaze, in Moscovici's writings one is immediately struck by the richness of the intellectual traditions upon which he draws and the desire to tap into, and do justice to, the richness of human social experience.

For me, nowhere was this more clear than in Moscovici's writings on stereotypes and stereotyping. In particular, where, at the time of doing my PhD, so much social psychology was fixated on the idea that stereotypes are distorted pictures in individuals' heads, for Moscovici the key fact that needed to be explained was how they became living breathing parts of the social world 'out there'.

He was also interested in their functional aspects — not in the narrow sense of allowing people to save cognitive resources, but in the broader sense of structuring experience and interaction and lending meaning and purpose to social life. As he put it "the ideas and beliefs that allow people to live are incarnated in specific social structures (clans, churches, social movements, families, etc.)". Accordingly, he argued that beliefs are adopted — and need to be understood — in the context of those structures.

To be sure, there were aspects of Moscovici's own analysis of these processes and of social representations that my colleagues and I found unsatisfactory. But we never had any doubt that his analysis was important and that it had much to offer. Much too, that was not readily available elsewhere. This is no less true today than it was then.

But of course the point about social structures creating the space for people to live is best exemplified by Moscovici's own role as a founder of the European Association of Social Psychology. As an organization, this created the space for particular forms of thought and expression that were not available elsewhere, and it allowed for distinctive forms of social and intellectual life.

These are forms from which I and all social psychologists (whether European or not) have profited massively and for which there is reason to be extremely grateful. Moreover, I am confident that the benefits of Moscovici's intellectual and social legacy will reverberate through our discipline so long as there are structures, cultures and groups to hold it in place.