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Social Representations as Cognitive-Emotional Processes: An Integrative Approach Proposal

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One of the main focuses of the theory of Social Representations (SRs) consists of examining its sensitivity to context immediacy. Arising from everyday life, emotions could be particularly relevant to this aim as they could constitute modalities through which SRs can emerge, be reinforced, or be transformed. The inherently unstable nature of reality requires a signaling system of this variability. The general assumption is that emotions provide, at an individual level, a signaling function of the relevance of SRs in the social integration of reality. Triggering this signal function, the role of tension lies at the heart of the process. With the emotion-driven tension, we approach SRs as cognitive-emotional processes of construction, conservation, and transformation of social knowledge. We, therefore, situate the study of the relationships between SRs and emotions in a conceptual approach to the dynamics of stability and change.

Considering SRs as dynamic objects of social change, this article proposes to conceptualize SRs as cognitive-emotional processes by promoting an integrative model grounded on a socio-constructivist as well as a discursive perspective. In this model, emotions are addressed as individual dispositions at the service of the sociogenesis of SRs. Occurring from individual experience, they contribute through their sharing to the construction of social knowledge. Implications of this conceptual proposal for SR theory are discussed.

Keywords: Social Representations, Emotions, Social Sharing of Emotion

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This paper is an attempt to make explicit the proposal by Marková and Wilkie (1987) to conceptualize SRs as cognitive-emotional processes. But what would an integrative approach to SRs and emotions be like? How can we relate the collective and stable structures of knowledge *about* the world such as SRs and the individual and varying states of experience *in* the world that are emotions? There is a great interest in bridging SRs and emotions because both are socially constituted, constitutive and sensitive to context immediacy. Indeed, the cultural pre-constructs and the common knowledge database about a given reality will determine the nature and intensity of the emotion felt, itself constitutive of the individual or shared meaning experience of this reality (Wagner et al., 1996). This idea suggests that SRs can be considered as both products and processes of emotional experience. The study of SRs as cognitive-emotional processes can then be approached from two different angles (for a review, see Piermattéo, 2021): first, a bottom-up line of research related to how emotions could influence SRs genesis and evolution (Banchs, 1996; Bouriche, 2014; Höijer, 2010; Smith & Joffe, 2013) and secondly, a top-down line of research corresponding to how SRs will potentially determine and influence emotions (Deschamps & Guimelli, 2002; Tavani & Collange, 2017). Our conceptual proposal will contribute to the first line of research by reversing the question of Moscovici (1988) such as: what grip do emotions have on our representations? It thus echoes the general proposal that "emotions can awaken, intrude into, and shape beliefs, by creating them, by amplifying or altering them, and by making them resistant to change" (Frijda et al., 2000, p. 5).

Referring to Kalampalikis and Apostolidis (2021) statement that "any representational object in the real environment is a tensional object" (p. 25) and de-Graft Aikins's recommendation to pay greater conceptual attention to the role of tension in the genesis of SRs (de-Graft Aikins, 2012), we assume that conceptualizing SRs as cognitive-emotional processes (Marková and Wilkie, 1987) comes down to associating them with the notion of tension. From this perspective, the cognitive-emotional process, closely associated with context immediacy, will serve the challenges of "restoring the sense of continuity in the group or individual threatened with discontinuity and meaninglessness" (Moscovici, 1984b, p. 28). Through this hypothesis of imbalance and continuity, we will first argue that conceptualizing SRs as cognitive-emotional processes amounts to examining the relationships between representations and experiences of the world, i.e., the tension zones between *thoughts about* and *thoughts in*

the world (Moscovici, 1988, p. 230). Analyzing the cognitive-emotional process is therefore a way to study SRs on the ground (Kalampalikis & Apostolidis, 2021). We will then propose an integrative model conceptualizing SRs as cognitive-emotional processes. This model describes the SR/emotion dynamic as a four-phase cognitive-emotional process (emotional-phenomenological, psychological, dialogical, and psychosocial) related to an SR object that governs the possible diffusion of tension through the different sections of the psychosocial triad ego-object-alter (Moscovici, 1984a). We conclude by discussing the respective and complementary roles of emotions and SRs in the social construction of knowledge and adaptation of human life.

SRS AS COGNITIVE-EMOTIONAL PROCESSES: TENSIONS BETWEEN KNOWLEDGE ABOUT THE WORLD AND KNOWLEDGE IN THE WORLD

Knowledge in Continuity

Defined as organized systems of ideas, opinions, attitudes, knowledge, and beliefs about an object in the environment and are shared within a social group, grounded on social communication and interactions (Rateau et al., 2011), SRs are symbolic forms of knowledge about the world with a practical purpose. Indeed, when they interact with the world, individuals need to be able to grasp and understand it. These interactions occur in daily experience, a space of encounter between the real and the represented, virtual world. The daily experience of the world is essentially an experience of the relevance of representations of the world. From its initial formulation, in asking why representations are created, Moscovici (1984b) proposed a theory of SRs emphasizing the *continuity* between the represented and the real world. He suggested the hypothesis of imbalance,

> that is all ideologies, all concepts of the world, are means of solving psychic or emotional *tensions* due to a failure or a lack of social integration. Thus, they are imaginary compensations which are aimed at restoring a degree of inner stability (*ibid.*, p. 23).

We want to point out that this continuity is not temporally ensured because of the unstable nature of the world (external variability) and of individuals (internal variability). To maintain their adaptive advantage facing this variability, human beings must adjust their knowledge

structures, and "where reality is concerned, representations are all we have, to which our perceptual, as well as our cognitive, systems are adjusted" (Moscovici, 1984b, p. 5). We, therefore, argue that individual experience plays a fundamental role in this adjustment**.** It is a suitable place where common knowledge structures can be tested. It is through individual experience of the world that the process of identifying variability is triggered, which warns of the discrepancies between structures of knowledge and reality (Rimé, 2005).

A Reality in Discontinuity and Meaninglessness

Emotions are specifically the markers of the individual experience of reality. They are the modalities by which significant discrepancies with reality are signaled (Carver & Scheier, 1990; Frijda, 1988). Emotions are distinguished from other affective states, such as mood or feelings, by their automatic nature, intensity, differentiating polarity on pleasantness, their suddenness, and their short duration. But their most distinctive trait is the *disruption of continuity* in the interaction between the individual and the world (Guimelli & Rimé, 2009; Rimé, 2005; Simon, 1967). This specific feature leads to addressing emotions as individual dispositions expressing the relationship of (dis)continuity between individuals and reality.

Extending this idea, Rimé (2005, 2009, 2020) and Bouriche (2014) suggested that emotions are signals for evaluating the relevance of representation systems in their function of anticipating reality. This proposal is based on the conception of an SR as a "system which pre-decodes reality and determines anticipations and expectations" (Abric, 1994, p. 13). Weick (1995) clearly explained the role of the expectations system as a cognitive and action strategy in experiencing reality. For him, the main asset of this system is "to reduce the need – which is cognitively demanding – to trigger sensemaking and to have easy access to the available resources" (Weick, 1995, p. 145-146). Yet, when this system fails, it reveals discrepancies in one's knowledge. This kind of situation creates *tensions* which, related to the need to evaluate and cope with the discrepancies, particularly motivate individuals to seek and make sense to maintain continuity with reality. Weick also clarified the link between sensemaking and emotional activation. He considers that emotional activation signals a flaw or a violation of the expectations system. This activation and the generated tension motivate individuals to mobilize their attentional resources essential to sensemaking (Weick, 1995). In this sense, sensemaking grows "along the signaling pathways of emotions as a system of proto-cognition" (Wagner, 2017, p. 26). It is the function of signaling a flaw or a violation of the expectations system that

contributes to assigning to emotions a role of monitoring and evaluating reality (Rimé, 2005) with an adaptive or defensive purpose (Livet, 2016). This statement leads us to consider emotions as the disclosers of the relationship of tension individuals and groups have with an (imaginary or real) object made salient by an unexpected or unfamiliar experience. By its most distinctive trait, i.e., disruptiveness, emotional experience may initiate inference pressure and focalization on social objects, two of the conditions for the dynamic of SRs (Rateau et al., 2011). This is how emotions may assist SRs to respond to a state of imbalance related to a failure or a lack of social integration of reality. Moreover, inference pressure and focalization are particularly sensitive to unexpectedness, novelty, strangeness, or unfamiliarity. Thus, we think that the emotion-driven tension, leading to inference pressure and focalization on an object, is a means of "opening up a way of thinking about the genesis of social representations and about human communications in general" (Moscovici, 1988, p. 236). We, therefore, agree with de-Graft Aikins's statement that "the proposal by Marková and Wilkie (1987) that social representations should be conceptualized as cognitive-emotional processes provides an important starting point for examining the structure and functions of tension" (de-Graft Aikins, 2012, p. 19).

SRS AS COGNITIVE-EMOTIONAL PROCESSES: AN INTEGRATIVE MODEL

Our theoretical proposal is grounded in the psychosocial triad by emphasizing the need for otherness to understand the object. As a situation of interaction involving mechanisms of social influence, the psychosocial triad is addressed as a central unit of analysis in the conceptualization of SRs as cognitive-emotional processes. In the triad, Ego and Alter can refer to different types of instances: an individual, a group, a community, or a nation. Through the tension that they generate, we consider emotions as potential triggers of the psychosocial triad dynamic. The presence of tension is the key element of the dynamic. It refers to the level of social integration of the reality of an object. We argue that the signaling function of flaws attributed to emotions is carried out through a differential potential of tension, the very beginning of the cognitive-emotional process at work in the psychosocial triad dynamic. By putting SRs in tension, it marks the move from "cold" to "hot" knowledge (Wagner et al., 1996, p. 344). This proposal supports Moscovici's hypothesis on tension as a driver of SRs (Moscovici, 1984b, 1988).

Considering both the three instances of the psychosocial triad and their tensional

relationships as a single unit of knowledge and communication, we want to promote a socio-constructivist as well as a discursive orientation.

We propose an integrative model of SRs as cognitive-emotional processes with a four-phase dynamic depicting the possible diffusion of the emotional tension through the different sections of the psychosocial triad (see Figure 1). To illustrate our proposal, we will take as specific context the example of a recent and still ongoing event, the appearance of COVID-19, and one of its related SR objects, vaccination. We want to point out that the cognitive-emotional process will exclusively depend on the presence and role of the Alter. Phase 1 (emotional tension) and phase 2 (psychological tension) relate to the Ego-Object (vaccination) relationship. These two phases may result in psychological anchoring (Doise, 1992). Phase 3 (dialogical tension) refers to the Ego-Alter communication process concerning the object related to the experienced emotions, i.e., a situation of social sharing of emotion (Rimé, 2005, 2007, 2009). Phase 4 (psychosocial tension) involves the Alter-Object relationship, whether the Alter experienced the emotion or was a recipient of social sharing of emotion. This fourth phase can result in a process of psychosocial or sociological anchoring (Doise, 1992, Spini & Doise, 1998). The four-phase cognitive-emotional process could repeat as many times as the tension spreads sufficiently to the Alter to trigger a new sequence through the secondary and tertiary social sharing of emotion (Christophe & Rimé, 1997). The Alter will then take on the role of the Ego and should in turn diffuse to one or several alters the emotional tension he/she shared. The process will end when there is no more Alter to share the emotional experience and diffuse the tension. Each phase must be considered in the context of the whole triad.

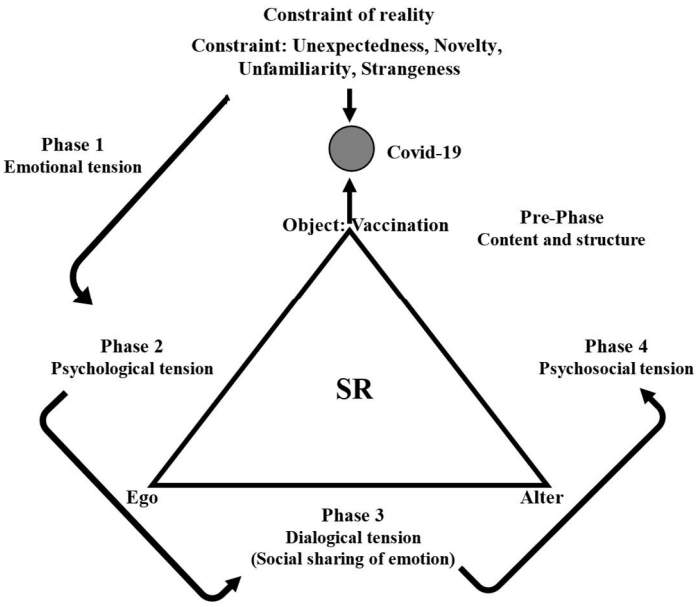


Figure 1. The Cognitive-Emotional Process Integrative Model.

Pre-Phase. Content and Structure of an SR Object

The pre-phase follows Jodelet's recommendation that we should not neglect that the process "is upstream and downstream of the product and that only by taking into account the contents can the process be systematically studied" (Jodelet, 2015, p. 24). Identifying the content and structure of an SR object is therefore a preliminary step to the study of the cognitive-emotional process related to this object. In analyzing an SR as a product, the structural model of SRs, and in particular, the central core theory (Abric, 1993; Moliner & Abric, 2015) examines more specifically the process of objectification. In doing so, the central core theory allows the identification of the status (central/peripheral) of the components of an SR object before associating it with an emotional experience, i.e., knowledge about the world, and the analysis of their dynamics in the cognitive-emotional process, i.e., knowledge in the world. With our illustrative example, the structural approach allows us to identify the elements composing the representational field of vaccination before the appearance of COVID-19. The important role of the pre-phase is to differentiate, among these components, those carrying the symbolic significance that organizes the representational field of vaccination (the central components) from those more sensitive to the immediate context allowing adaptation to reality and individual variations (the peripheral components). This analysis of the SR components of vaccination will then be used to study their dynamics in the cognitive-emotional process.

Phase 1. Emotional Tension Signaling Dissonance

This phase of emotional tension can be concretely illustrated by the context of the occurrence of COVID-19 we are still experiencing. Most of us have witnessed the global emotional impact of this disruptive event, provoking surprise, fear, sadness, or anger in many countries (Bouchat et al., 2020; Roe et al., , 2021; Xue et al., 2020). As mentioned earlier, emotions are markers of the subjective experience of reality. The reality of an object is first the result of a lived experience of that object. The appearance of COVID-19 has brought us to a concrete confrontation with the object 'disease' (Apostolidis et al., 2020), and in particular 'vaccination'. The first phase of the cognitive-emotional process corresponds to the phenomenal experience of a significant Ego-Object dissonance, i.e., a flaw or violation of the expectations system (Carver & Scheier, 1990; Festinger, 1957; Frijda, 1988; Weick, 1995). Emotions will result from this significant dissonance. The emotional impact of COVID-19 has particularly put under

tension knowledge frameworks about health-related SR objects, such as vaccination. The discovery and availability of a vaccine against SARS-CoV-2, regardless of its design technology, and later, the need for a vaccine passport in most daily activities, have been greeted with contrasting emotional states, such as joy or anger. The triggering motives of these two contrasting emotional states noted in the media are opposed arguments concerning the conditions of discovery and availability of a vaccine and its consequences on daily life. Joy is often associated with the rapid availability of a vaccine and the return to 'normal' life, while anger refers to the excessive precocity of this availability, going against the precautionary principle, and its consequences on freedom restrictions due to the vaccine passport. Made salient by the occurrence of COVID-19, the relationship to vaccination as an object of representation will depend on its association with the two contrasting emotions. Joy refers to an emotional tension due to a dissonance marked by a context more than favorable to expectations and leading to a state of achievement (positive dissonance). In contrast, anger corresponds to an emotional tension related to a state of frustration due to a reality unfavorable to expectations (negative dissonance). These contrasting emotional states related to vaccination define various differential potentials of tension and emerge from multiple social contexts expressing social insertions of individuals (healthcare, education, culture, economy, sport, family, etc.). These differential potentials of tension about vaccination constitute the very beginning of the cognitive-emotional process at work translating the move from a "cold" to a "hot" knowledge (Wagner et al., 1996, p. 344) about vaccination, thus constituting zones of tension at the heart of the socio-genetic approach (Kalampalikis & Apostolidis, 2021). Vaccination then becomes a complex object, an object endowed with an epistemic and identity stake (de-Graft Aikins, 2012; Jodelet, 2015; Kalampalikis & Apostolidis, 2021). Theoretically, the beginning of the cognitive-emotional process involves, at an individual level, the tension of the Ego-Object relationship related to the functional sequence of emotion (Tcherkassof & Frijda 2014). In this sequence, the appraisal process provides, on the one hand, knowledge about the object(s) involved in an emotional experience, and, on the other hand, emotional valence. Some scholars referred to this process when they stated that "emotions are thoughts somehow felt" (Rosaldo, 1984, p. 143), "beliefs are part of emotions" (Frijda & Mesquita, 2000, p. 52), thought-filled feelings (Ratner, 2000) or parts of meaning-making (Höijer, 2010). The nature of the emotion experienced will be related to the intensity and polarity of the tension (emotional charge) generated by the dissonance (Carver & Scheier, 1990). In this way, it puts the Ego-Object relationship under negative or positive tension. This first zone of tension, according to

the socio-genetic perspective, derives from the evaluation of the concrete object and its status in an individual's mind. At the heart of the socio-genetic perspective is the notion of ground, defined as a "real environment of the genesis and emergence of representations and natural experience in a situation" (Kalampalikis & Apostolidis, 2021, p. 32), i.e., following Moscovici (1988), a situation of *thoughts in the world*. This zone of tension, generated by emotional experience, is signaling variations in the Ego-Object relationship regarding its relevance to knowledge frameworks, goals, or plans, i.e., a disruption of continuity which could lead to a dissonance questioning the meaning and practice systems related to the object. Because of its fundamental role in triggering both the dynamics of SRs and emotions, one of the evaluative components of human experience is particularly important in the emergence of tension: unexpectedness. Unexpectedness is one of the main constraints that reality places on human beings. Both SRs and emotional dynamics are triggered by unexpectedness, unfamiliarity, novelty, or strangeness, which are all challenges to sensemaking (Joffe, 1996; Rimé, 2005; Voelklein & Howarth, 2005; Weick, 1995). This supports Moscovici's recommendation that "when studying a representation, we should always try to discover the unfamiliar feature which motivated it and which it has absorbed" (Moscovici, 1984b, p. 28). Emotions turn out to be good clues in the discovery of this dynamic.

Phase 2. Psychological Tension as the Need to Cope with Dissonance

By situating the factuality of the object at the heart of its analysis, the socio-genetic perspective (Kalampalikis & Apostolidis, 2021) allows the identification of tension zones generated by emotions that create the context from which the meanings and practices are elaborated about the object. If intense enough, the disruptiveness of emotional tension can lead to psychological tension related to the need to evaluate and cope with the dissonant SR object. In prompting cognitive work, disruption should provide an opportunity for clarifying and revising knowledge structures (Gillespie, 2020; Wagner et al., 1999). At an intra-individual level, an emotional tension could potentially question an SR anew and motivate a cognitive revision of the object (Livet, 2016; Rimé, 2020). Indeed, the need to vent this emotional tension can result in psychological tension that requires clarification and individual positioning towards the object. The essential calling for clarification and individual positioning towards the object is the second phase of the tensional dynamic. The emotional charge (intensity and polarity) will put the Ego-Object relationship under a positive or negative tension which could drive a cognitive work of

clarification of the object. This cognitive work of clarification of an emotion-related SR object constitutes a contextualization of its knowledge, i.e., a *thought in the world*. From his review of the literature directly related to the role of emotions in the dynamics of SRs, Piermattéo (2021) refers to two empirical studies showing the impact of emotional experience on the dynamics of an SR. Indeed, examining the effect of fear on the clarification of the SRs of work and unemployment, Méthivier (2012) has concluded that this emotion has an impact on the components of these SRs. In a study of the impact on the dynamic of SR of teamwork following emotions experienced in a real teamwork situation, Bouriche (2014) obtained data showing a differentiated clarification according to the structural status (central or peripheral) of the components of the SR field.

Thus, the emotion-driven psychological tension inherent in the Ego-Object relationship, as a challenge to an individual's knowledge structures, can call for a functional sequence of SR clarification. This functional sequence of SR clarification following emotional experience reflects the individual's positioning and his/her level of adherence to the SR object, i.e., a psychological anchoring process (Doise, 1992). Specifically, in the case of existing SR objects, as "no one can do away with it" (Moscovici, 1984b, p. 27), by disclosing an Ego-Object dissonance and by leading individuals to mobilize attentional resources to restore coherence, emotional tension would trigger psychological anchoring. Psychological anchoring then constitutes one of the adaptive responses to the emotion-driven psychological tension. It is through the adaptive response of a psychological anchoring process that emotional experience potentially constitutes an updating of SRs, and more broadly an enrichment of world knowledge. By giving anchoring a fundamental role, the socio-dynamic model (Doise, 1986) is particularly suitable for examining the cognitive-emotional process. Indeed, due to its role in assigning meaning to integrate the unexpected, the anchoring process is of primary importance in the study of the cognitive-emotional process. Regarding vaccination, on the one hand, joy would result in psychological tension leading either to reinforce SRs of vaccination if expectations about the efficacy of a vaccine against SARS-CoV-2 are confirmed faster than planned, either to revise them if expectations about the efficacy of a vaccine are unconfirmed. This possible reinforcement or revision of SRs of vaccination could take place by emphasizing SR components relating to the benefits of the vaccine (Gaymard & Hidrio, 2020). On the other hand, anger related to the frustration of expectations would produce psychological tension calling into question SRs of vaccination by highlighting components concerning risks associated with the vaccine. Thus, by signaling through tension the level of social integration

of the reality of an object and by being the first inputs of the phenomenal experience and potential triggers of the anchoring process, emotions could constitute "the affective motivational basis of social representations" (Moscovici, 1988, p. 234). Hence, the process of psychological anchoring resulting from an emotional experience confers on the individual the status of the bearer of *thought in the world,* i.e., *a* contextualized knowledge about an emotion-related SR object (Sen & Wagner, 2005). It is therefore a status that makes him/her the holder of an epistemic stake, i.e., an intra-speaker, who will be involved in the social world by his/her emotional experience of the SR object (Rosaldo, 1984). By conferring on an individual the status of intra-speaker and taking into account the importance of social interdependence in the regulation of emotions (Rimé, 2009), this epistemic stake will motivate the need for otherness. Indeed, the need to vent emotional tension is the most frequently observed motive for the social sharing of emotion (Duprez et al., 2014).

Phase 3. Dialogical Tension as the Need for Otherness to Integrate Dissonance

Psychological anchoring following an emotional experience of an SR object can lead an individual via his/her intra-speaker status to interact with others to share this experience of the SR object not only for socio-affective needs but also to talk about it. Motivated by epistemic needs, he/she seeks to associate with others in the evaluation and clarification of his/her emotional experience of an SR object. Indeed, an emotional experience only becomes a meaningful experience of the world, i.e., a *thought about the world*, as long as it is recognized, shared, and validated by others. This validation aimed at reducing the dissonance can only be achieved by communication processes at an interindividual or collective level (Rimé et al., 1991). According to his/her recognized identity and capacity as a social actor (Rimé, 2005), his/her status then changes from intra-speaker to potential inter-speaker.

The need for otherness will cause the emotion-driven psychological tension to evolve through communication into a dialogical tension. The dialogical tension arises from the asymmetry of knowledge between the members of the community and one of them who has had an emotion-driven psychological anchoring. The dialogical tension starts when the individual seeks social contact with the community that shares his/her world. Psychological anchoring will therefore prepare the Ego-Alter dialogical tension for social communication (Bauer & Gaskell, 2008) as dialogicality has an ontological value for humankind (Marková,

2003; Marková & Orfali, 2005). An emotional experience is thus called to be a shared, intersubjective, language-mediated experience, hence the contribution of emotions to the intersubjective nature of knowledge construction and social life (Gillespie & Cornish, 2010). By including emotional experiences, the cognitive-emotional process at work in SR dynamics feeds strongly into human communication. According to Moscovici (1984a), the Ego-Alter couple precedes and underpins the Ego-Object relationship because what matters is the relationship and the interaction, not the object itself. As mentioned by Jodelet (2015), if SRs involve an inseparable relationship between an object and an individual, this individual is always social in two ways: through his/her social insertion and his/her connection to others.

The need for otherness constitutes the main motive for the social sharing of emotion (Duprez et al., 2014). Defined in its strongest form as a communication process "involving the re-evocation of an emotion in a socially shared language and some addressee" (Rimé et al., 1991, p. 438), the social sharing of emotion is referred to a situation of SRs dialogicality because it constitutes a common process of updating and enriching knowledge (Rimé, 2005, 2020). As mentioned by Rimé (2009) "the process of social sharing is well-suited to respond to the quest for meaning aroused by an emotion and to contribute to meaning production" (p. 81). The social sharing of emotion is, therefore, the concrete illustration of a performative and constructive situation in which an emotional experience can constitute something real, supporting Moscovici statement that "creating' a reality means that we generally experience and think in terms of 'potential' worlds which are set in 'real' worlds" (Moscovici, 1988, p. 231). The need for otherness to understand an object is also at the heart of the dialogical model (Marková, 2003) which explores the communication processes at work in SRs dynamics. The dialogical approach of SRs specifically offers a conceptual framework that places the study of the cognitive-emotional process within a relational and communicational dynamic. Thus, sharing emotional experiences can have a critical role in social life in that "asymmetries and tension between dialogic components (or participants) drive social systems" (Marková, 2011, p. 395). In our proposal, a situation of social sharing of emotion is a situation of influence between two potential inter-speakers, and, precisely, the material manifestation of the discursive construction of knowledge about a given emotion-related SR object. This situation includes an intra-speaker, bearer of contextualized knowledge about an emotion-related SR object, motivated to communicate this knowledge to his/her community. The form and content in which this knowledge is shared and communicated will borrow from rules and social standards developed from the common database available in each culture. However high or

low, unstructured, or structured it may be, a stake is fundamental for a social sharing of emotion to be initiated. Otherwise, we would not understand why people seek to communicate their emotions. For an interlocutory situation like that of a social sharing of emotion, both identity and epistemic issues are at stake. Indeed, through its affiliative motives in responding to socio-affective bonding needs (Páez et al., 2015; Reis et al., 2010; Spoor & Kelly, 2004), the social sharing of emotion can contribute to the social identity function of SRs. Inter-speakers of primary, secondary, or tertiary social sharing of emotion are first and foremost intimates (Rimé, 2009), i.e., belonging to the same community. Concerning epistemic issues, such as calling for knowledge updates (Rimé, 2020), the social sharing of emotion may also assist the meaning-generating function of SRs in the sense that inter-speakers are mainly people who share knowledge, beliefs, and representations, i.e., the same vision of the world. Thus, communicating an emotional experience to others means mobilizing knowledge, beliefs, and representations for co-constructing 'worlds of life' (Jodelet, 2015). From this perspective, the social sharing of emotion could actively contribute to the social usefulness of SRs referring to communication, social identity, and epistemic functions (Bouriche, 2014). The social sharing of emotion seems useful insofar as it can account for the dialogical process of SRs and therefore their reinforcement or revision. What will potentially reinforce or revise the SR object within the community is the referential construction of the emotional experience of that object in the interlocutory space. Hence, "the intersubjective contact that is constituted by the sharing of emotion recreates social reality to which an individual can recharge" (Rimé, 2005, p. 357). Since the emergence of COVID-19, multiple dialogical situations occurred in everyday life constituting situations of social sharing of emotion and during which individuals express their joy or their anger concerning the vaccine against SARS-CoV-2 or the vaccine passport. These situations are not only phenomenological expressions of an individual or a group venting their emotion-driven tensions about vaccination, but they are also the place of reinforcement and revision of representations about it aimed at the adherence to a common identity and vision of the world.

Phase 4. Psychosocial Tension as Social Integration of Dissonance

The dialogical specificity of the social sharing of emotion is what will make the psychological tension evolve, through communication processes, into psychosocial tension. During the communication process at work in the social sharing of emotion, individuals talk about their

emotional experiences thanks to the interest of significant others, hoping to rely on common references for the revision of meaning. The individual has the conceptual capacity for the meaning revision, but he/she must refer to others to become concretely mobilized in this revision. The emotional experience he/she had, and of which he/she tries to make sense, is under the control of others and will have no other meaning than that they will be able to give it. The social sharing of emotion, whether it arises between two individuals, or in a group, presupposes knowledge, beliefs, and representations. As "representations are not grounded on the things and situations they mention, but on communications about these things and situations" (Moscovici, 1993, p. 167), the more emotional experiences are, the higher the tension, and the wider their diffusion (Luminet et al., 2000). After an important event triggering a particularly intense emotional episode, a member may share and renegotiate meanings with intimates – primary sharing – but so may his/her intimates with their intimates – secondary sharing – and the latter with their intimates – tertiary sharing – (Christophe & Rimé, 1997). It is first within the community that a renegotiation of meaning will begin. Indeed, as Lewin and Grabbe (1945) pointed out: "reality for the individual is, to a high degree, determined by what is socially accepted as reality" (p. 54). Through the social sharing of emotion, an emotional experience could thus reflect the relationship with an SR object in a way that carries the mark of social insertions (Doise et al., 1993). These social insertions could be expressed in the revision of an emotion-related object. It is then at an intersubjective level that a functional sequence of production of meaning can take place. This intersubjective functional sequence of meaning revision following situations of social sharing of emotion will reflect the psychosocial or sociological positioning toward an object, i.e., an emotion-driven psychosocial or sociological anchoring (Guttiérez Vidrio, 2019; Höijer, 2010, 2011; Pivetti et al., 2017). Psychosocial or sociological anchoring refers to particular social affiliations or positions held by individuals in a set of interindividual or intergroup and intercultural relationships respectively (Doise, 1992). Consequently, the referential revision of the same SR object involved in contrasting emotional experiences, as in our concrete example on SRs of vaccination, is largely subject to the social and cultural insertions of the inter-speakers of the social sharing of emotion, thus defining zones of psychosocial tension (Kalampalikis & Apostolidis, 2021). If the processes of interpersonal and group communication during the social sharing of emotion produce relational effects, they can also have socio-cognitive impacts. For positive emotions, these impacts may result in a revision of SRs if expectations are unconfirmed, or in a process of reinforcement of SRs if expectations are confirmed, thus

contributing, through capitalization phenomena (Gable & Reis, 2010; Langston, 1994; Rimé et al., 2020), to the consolidation of social identity. Gatherings, and especially rituals are good examples of matrices of SRs (Páez & Rimé, 2014; Páez et al., 2015). For negative emotions, the socio-cognitive impacts may lead to revisions of SRs by a process of accommodation or reconstruction (Duprez et al. 2014; Rimé et al., 1998; Stein & Levine, 1990). If "explaining the processes of communication is and should remain part of the general explanation of social representations" (Moscovici, 1993, p. 167), then the study of the social sharing of emotion could allow us to analyze how emotions shape and transform SRs. Thereby, as a specific situation of dialogicality updating shared knowledge, we can see the contribution that the social sharing of emotion may have in the formation of the social system. It is probably because human beings have emotions and can talk to others about them that they develop more and more efficient knowledge about the world, which enables them to deal with increasingly complex situations. Through the social sharing of emotion, each emotional experience can thus potentially contribute to the construction of social reality under a cognitive process largely conditioned, both by existing representations and by culture (Moscovici, 1984b). In our view, the social sharing of emotion constitutes a specific situation in and through which SRs are produced and actualized. Its analysis is therefore of primary importance in the study of SRs as cognitive-emotional processes.

The model presented above relates to situations corresponding to a private emotion, when only the Ego was exposed to a triggering event, such as a success, a failure, a bereavement, or a catastrophe. The psychosocial triad, therefore, is essentially activated by an exocentric dynamic (Rimé, 2007, 2009) characterizing inter-individual or individual-group cognitive-emotional processes. In situations corresponding to a collective emotion, referring to the collective as the entity that experiences emotion in a common temporal or physical context (Goldenberg et al., 2014; Rimé & Páez, 2019), Ego and Alter are exposed at the same time to the same triggering events. In these collective emotional situations, there are many sources, and the social sharing of emotion diffuses in several directions. The psychosocial triad is then expected to involve a dynamic referring to intra- or intergroup contexts, such as that seen in interactions between pro-vaccination and anti-vaccination groups in the public arena as well as in digital social networks (Johnson et al., 2020). Before concluding this paper, we want to emphasize again the view that the study of the cognitive-emotional processes must be considered in the context of the whole psychosocial triad as knowledge construction is a socio-cognitive process and a cultural product of social subjects. In that regard, conceptualizing SRs

as cognitive-emotional processes leads us to conceive SR theory as a dynamic model of social knowledge accounting for the co-determination of individual existence and social structure.

CONCLUSION

The main objective of this contribution was to propose a theoretical conception of the dynamics of SRs in response to the challenges posed by emotional experience. This issue may be particularly appropriate and relevant for social psychology given the importance of the crucial role played by emotions in everyday life. The daily individual experience of the world is an embodied experience, and the construction of social knowledge operates via the body and what sets it in motion, the emotions. Thus, we should consider the individual process of meaning production related to emotional experiences, and the collective genesis of SRs experiencing reality as belonging to a single purpose: the preservation or development of usual and comforting worldviews (Joffe, 1996; Rimé, 2005). Seeing emotion-driven psychological anchoring as a modality of sensemaking creates the opportunity to develop a psychosocial analysis of the social construction of knowledge based on the social sharing of emotion. Hence, when shared, any emotion is potentially relevant in the social world and is the particularly powerful means at an individual level that humanity has developed to test, strengthen, and adapt its foundations of meaning.

This paper more generally highlights the relationship between SRs and reality mediated by emotional experience. This has important implications for the consideration we should give to emotions in the study of the conditions of SRs evolution, specifically through their close link with the anchoring process. We have opted to conceptualize SRs as cognitive-emotional processes through triangulation because of its holistic approach to addressing a theory of SRs that questions the different meanings attributed to an object resulting from emotional experience. In this regard, the paper also highlights the interdependent relationships between representational dynamics and the social sharing of emotion. Indeed, the reason why individuals are particularly inclined to share their emotional experiences is essentially based on epistemic and identity issues. SR approaches offer a solid framework for carrying out future research that can test the validity of these assumptions and address the lack in this paper of empirical studies investigating the proposed model.

Finally, the main contribution of this paper suggests that SR approaches can provide the basis for a theoretical articulation between emotions and SRs by arguing that the fundamental

function of emotional experience is to contribute to the construction of common-sense knowledge and, hence, to culture, as "common-sense knowledge is highly necessary and important to communication and coexistence, but above all, for the cultural reproduction of human life" (Guerrero, 2017, p. 4.12). Therefore, emotions are not only detectors of the relevance of our private relationship with the world but above all, they unfold "in a world of life which is a common, intersubjective world, mediated by language" (Jodelet, 2015, p. 295). They are the disclosers of our identity, our systems of thought, and our worldviews constituting the social and cultural system that governs our conditions of existence. Thus, the social sharing of emotion appears essential to the dynamics of social knowledge and, hence, as an important vector of social and cultural construction (Kashima et al., 2020; Mesquita et al., 2015; Rimé, 2009, 2020). The analysis of the relationships between SRs and emotions can therefore contribute to developing societal social psychology (Himmelweit & Gaskell, 1990; Lopes & Gaskell, 2015) whose central object is the study of the relationship between individuals and emotional experiences that create social reality as they relate it. The psychosocial analysis of the relations between SRs and emotions, therefore, invites us to consider the social sharing of emotion as the expression of the Social both in its socio-affective and socio-cognitive functions. The process of sensemaking at work during the social sharing of emotion may thus be considered a factor of social change through the adaptation and transformation of SRs. It presupposes that human beings have a dialectical relationship to knowledge, built on the principle of change rather than of stability. Thus, in a world where change has become a constant, by giving the social sharing of emotion the means of embracing it, a community summons up its past, defines its present, and prepares its future.

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