

Methods and Research Meetings 2010/2011*

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« Evolution d'une structure de pensée Dynamique de l'émergence des représentations sociales »

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Abstract :

Social Representations Theory focuses on an ubiquitous, dynamic phenomenon that permeates a culture at any given time. Being both socially produced by the group in which they emerge and a "base information block" on which said group may construct and / or reinforce its inner cohesion, Social Representations have extensively been studied both in experimental conditions and in their natural ecology, via questionnaires, text analysis, or anthropological research. Yet the dynamics of the appearance and growth of Social Representation in their natural ecology (i.e., the culture of a given group) remain largely theoretical.

We have therefore built a computer model in order to simulate the emergence and evolution of Social Representations. After extensively testing the model, we have run an experiment in order to explore the Toblerone Model of Social Representations (Bauer & Gaskell, 2008), in which SR are represented as a function of object, interrelations, and project (what Bauer & Gaskell call "future-for-us"). In our virtual populations, we have built a model that successfully reproduces some characteristics of both in-group construction and between-group distinction of Social Representations. We have also devised a way to follow such phenomena in real time.

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