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in
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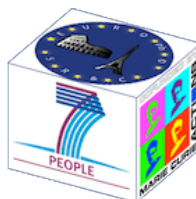
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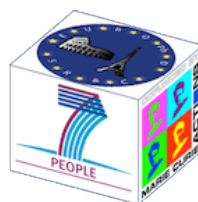
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1. Abstract

The present paper is included within a wider research program launched by de Rosa in 1994, aimed at performing the meta-theoretical analysis of the scientific literature published on Social Representations Theory (SRT), and representing the unified framework of the EC-funded project (ITN-People MSCA-IDP 2013, no. 6072799 <http://www.europhd.eu/SoReComJointIDP>)¹ and explores the state of the art of the Social Representations Theory (SRT) in the geo-cultural contexts of North America (Canada and the United States of America - USA), Australia and New Zealand, Asia and Africa, spatially and temporally, as well as from a conceptual, disciplinary, theoretical, empirical and thematic point of view. For all four geo-cultural papers, the *Grid for Meta-Theoretical Analysis* was applied on publications extracted from the So.Re.Com “A.S. de Rosa” @-library and meta-theoretically analyzed. The size of the samples was: 395 for North America, 107 for Australia and New Zealand, 194 for Asia and, respectively, 103 for Africa. The findings of the meta-theoretical analysis were then explored based on absolute and relative frequencies, lexicometrically (Hierarchical Descending Classification) and through clustering algorithms (Hierarchical Clustering on Principal Components analysis). Results for North America revealed that SRT was employed differently in Canada as compared to the USA, in the sense that while used empirically to study objects of high social relevance in both countries, there seems to be a distinct trend of reconceptualization and reformulation of SRT in the USA that we did not find in Canada. All in all, SRT appears to have been adopted in this area due to its applicability in studying a wide range of social phenomena, thus being pragmatically useful in obtaining information about lay knowledge. However, the low penetration rate of SRT in the USA may be indeed due to its epistemological and methodological traditions (socio-constructionism and qualitative research), incompatible with the existent publishing tradition in the USA, which favors individualistic approaches to social phenomena as well as quantitative research. For Australia and New Zealand, our findings revealed that SRT has most likely permeated this geo-cultural area in the context of Social Psychology, which was highly developed along the lines of Social Cognition and Social Identity Theories, influences which we found in the scientific production on SRT as well, especially around the time when SRT was first adopted here. More recently, the attempts at integrating SRT within

¹ More details regarding the larger project, meta-theoretical analysis, and previous publications on these issues may be found on the website europhd.eu as well as in de Rosa, 1992, 1994, 2002, 2003, 2006^{ab}, 2008, 2011^{abcde}, 2012, 2013^{ab}, 2014^{ab}, 2015^{ab}, 2016, 2017; de Rosa & d'Ambrosio, 2003, 2008; de Rosa, Dryjanska & Bocci, 2015; de Rosa, Dryjanska & Forte, 2015; de Rosa, Panzaru, Dryjanska, 2015; de Rosa et al., 2016; de Rosa, Ramazanovna & Dryjanska, 2016; Ramazanovna et al., 2016; de Rosa et al., 2016; de Rosa & Dryjanska, 2017; de Rosa, Dryjanska & Bocci, 2017; de Rosa, Arhiri & Dryjanska, 2015; de Rosa et al., 2016; Bocci et al., 2016; Arhiri, de Rosa & Dryjanska, 2016; Gherman, de Rosa & Dryjanska, 2016).



mainstream social psychology seem to have declined. Thematically, SRT has been mainly employed in studying identity issues and objects of high social interest for this context. We also found differences between Australia and New Zealand in terms of their preference for employing qualitative and quantitative methodologies. Our findings support the originality of the SRT contributions from this geo-cultural area, both in terms of theoretical as well as empirical advancement of SRT. For the Asian geo-cultural context, our results revealed that SRT was adopted by Asian social psychologists due to its epistemological and empirical compatibilities with their purpose of creating an original Asian social psychology, interested in indigenous social phenomena specific to their cultures (Liu & Ng, 2007). Thus, our findings show a vast array of diverse social objects for which empirical research with SRT was conducted, in line with both the cultural background and the societal interests in the region. All in all, the development of SRT in Asia seems to be linked to the desire to construct an indigenous social psychology, which supports the versatility of the theory in studying lay knowledge and social phenomena of high interest across a wide range of contexts. Finally, for the African geo-cultural context, our results revealed that SRT was adopted by social psychologists due to its epistemological and methodological compatibilities with the demands of this geo-cultural area, namely for a conceptual framework that is apt to capture social phenomena in context, free from the bias of having been tailored on Western populations and thus carrying implicit assumptions not pertinent to this area. Our findings also reveal that SRT was applied in accordance with its original premises, especially the trans-disciplinary ones, and that it fulfills its critical potential of addressing issues having to do with social oppression and inequality (Howarth, 2006), specific to this area.

Key words: social representations theory, North America, Asia, Australia and New Zealand, Africa, meta-theoretical analysis

2.Introduction and background

Born in 1961 in Europe (Moscovici, 1961) as a social constructionist alternative to the mainstream individualistic approaches to social psychology (Moscovici & Markova, 2006), Social Representations Theory (SRT) situates itself beyond and between psychological-mentalism and sociological reductionism by seizing the perpetually shifting dynamics of the exogenous - endogenous fluctuations evinced in the framework and practices of social communication, the coding “force” that shapes and disseminates the individual, cultural and societal dimensions of the discourse of Social Representations (Laszlo, 1997). Nowadays, after more than 55 years since its inception, SRT is being used theoretically and empirically at a global scale (de Rosa, 2013b), mainly due to its epistemological value, which enables it to study all forms of social knowledge in context without bias or prejudice, but also to its empirical versatility, which renders it applicable to a wide range of different settings and social objects (Garnier, 2002; Aikins, 2014b).

Aside from the intrinsic worth of the theory, other factors have contributed to its dissemination in the international scientific milieus as well. Thus, The Laboratory of Social Psychology (LPS, EHESS Paris) was created in 1965 to develop two European traditions of research in social psychology: social representations and phenomena of influence, its activity having been reinforced in 1976 through the creation of the European Laboratory of Social Psychology (LEPS) by Serge Moscovici himself, with the purpose of overcoming the global isolation of European researchers, of promoting their original work (among which, the one focused on SRT) – all in all, for providing *autonomy* for European social psychology from the dominance of North American social psychology (Kalampalikis, 2003; Madiot, 2013). These efforts received recognition and further support from other European organizations, such as the European Doctorate on Social Representations and Communications (implemented by de Rosa in 1992 at the La Sapienza University in Rome, with the purpose of longitudinally diffusing SRT to the training of students) and the bi-annual series of International Conferences on Social Representations, an opportunity for researchers from all over the world to share their conceptual and empirical findings for the advancement of the theory.

The current paper is the result of an initiative of A.S. de Rosa, the creator of the European Doctorate on Social Representations and Communications, who founded an ample research project aimed at performing the meta-theoretical analysis of the entire corpus of scientific publications employing Social Representations Theory (SRT) in 1994ab, a project that resulted in a European Commission approved and funded PhD program during 2013-2017 (ITN-People MSCA-IDP 2013, no. 6072799

<http://www.europhd.eu/SoReComJointIDP>)², within the framework of the European/International Joint PhD articulate in 13 research lines around three main axes: a) development of different paradigmatic approaches, b) dissemination across different continents and geo-cultural contexts, c) application to different thematic domains and subtopics. The current paper is included. Mapping the impact and dissemination of the Social Representations Theory in different geo-cultural contexts will enable the scientific community on the one hand to comprehend the effects of the cultural and ideological differences between researchers on their different interpretations and applications of Social Representations Theory, while on the other hand, to address both the “pertinence–coherence between the scientific paradigmatic formulation definition of the problem addressed in the literature inspired by the S.R. theory and the methodological operationalization” (de Rosa, 2013, p. 112) and the “possible paradigmatic re-definitions operating explicitly or implicitly through recourse to inappropriate methodological designs (because they were modelled on other theoretical constructs)” (de Rosa, 2013, p. 113). These differences may be approached at several levels of the multi-perspective analysis proposed by de Rosa, the purpose of the current paper being to address these issues in four geo-cultural scenarios: North America, Australia and New Zealand, Asia and Africa.

Previous meta-theoretical analyses (de Rosa, 2002, 2009; de Rosa, 2013b; de Rosa & d'Ambrosio, 2003, 2008) have shown that in terms of spatial dissemination, SRT is most widely diffused in Europe and Latin America, and more narrowly in North America (specifically in the USA, as SRT has permeated the Canadian scientific community quite well, according to de Rosa, 2013b), Oceania, Asia and Africa. Interpreting these results, de Rosa (2013b) argued that the diffusion of the Social Representations Theory has been met with resistance in certain cultural contexts due to several reasons that mainly pertain to the heterogeneous cultural backgrounds of the researchers, which were at times less conducive of embracing the socio-interactionist and socio-cultural premises of this theory. Moscovici also adverted to this fact in 1988, when he poignantly remarked that American social psychologists “live in a culture that offers no alternative to individual representations, no language for expressing needs and concerns that transcend those of individuals and express those of groups. [...] There seems to be emptiness for them where there is fullness for me, and vice versa. This gap between us explains why it is difficult to explain the value and scope of the theory [...]” (Moscovici, 1988, p. 245). Detailing his observations, de Rosa showed in 1994b that Social

² More details regarding the larger project, meta-theoretical analysis, and previous publications on these issues may be found on the website [europhd.eu](http://www.europhd.eu) as well as in de Rosa, 1992, 1994, 2002, 2003, 2006^{ab}, 2008, 2011^{abcde}, 2012, 2013^{ab}, 2014^{ab}, 2015^{ab}, 2016, 2017; de Rosa & d'Ambrosio, 2003, 2008; de Rosa, Dryjanska & Bocci, 2015; de Rosa, Dryjanska & Forte, 2015; de Rosa, Panzaru, Dryjanska, 2015; de Rosa et al., 2016; de Rosa, Ramazanov & Dryjanska, 2016; Ramazanov et al., 2016; de Rosa et al., 2016; de Rosa & Dryjanska, 2017; de Rosa, Dryjanska & Bocci, 2017; de Rosa, Arhiri & Dryjanska, 2015; de Rosa et al., 2016; Bocci et al., 2016; Arhiri, de Rosa & Dryjanska, 2016; Gherman, de Rosa & Dryjanska, 2016).



Representations Theory is either *ignored* by its detractors (as it happened, for instance, in Fiske's and Shelley's volume from 2007, after seven years from de Rosa's initial observation) or considered for *integration within the mainstream cognitivist paradigms*, as suggested by, for instance, Augoustinos and Innes (1990) in their plea for integrating or at least articulating Social Representations Theory and Social Schema Theory, as well as by Latané (1996), who argued that Social Representations Theory should be converged with his Dynamic Social Impact Theory, which describes how culture is created and how it resists being reduced to a sum of factual elements. On the one hand, the debates surrounding the *compatibilities* (be they *differences* or *similarities*) between distinct theories are actually of enormous value as they contribute to the crystallization of the *meta-theoretical level* of the theory and to the progressive *integration of both quantitative and qualitative methodologies*, as well as to Social Representations Theory becoming a truly *unifying theory* (de Rosa, 2013a). However, tendencies to incorporate one theory into the other (and thus, re-formulate the core foundations of the incorporated one) or to reduce a theory to the other by artificially trimming conceptual systems and forcefully equating distinctive, albeit overlapping notions, are of no particular value for the scientific development of either.

All in all, the purpose of the current paper is to shed light on how SRT was adopted and employed in the above mentioned geo-cultural areas, while taking into account the specificities of each one, in terms of culture, tradition and socio-historical factors. We aim to articulate the development of the theory in the unique context represented by each of these geo-cultural scenarios. Each of the following papers explores the North American, Australian and New Zealander, Asian and, respectively, African area and examines the current state of the art of SRT conceptually, in articulation with other constructs, concepts, theories and approaches from Social Sciences, paradigmatically, thematically and methodologically.

3. Social Representations Theory in North America

3.1. Abstract

This paper explores the state of the art of the Social Representations Theory (SRT) in the geo-cultural context of North America (Canada and the United States of America - USA), spatially and temporally, as well as from a conceptual, disciplinary, theoretical, empirical and thematic point of view. It is part of a larger research project, launched by de Rosa in 1994, aimed at performing the meta-theoretical analysis of the scientific literature published on Social Representations Theory (SRT), and representing the unified framework of the EC-funded project (ITN-People MSCA-IDP 2013, no. 6072799 <http://www.europhd.eu/SoReComJointIDP>). The *Grid for Meta-Theoretical Analysis* was used on 395 publications which referenced SRT, all extracted from the *So.Re.Com* “A.S. de Rosa” @-library and meta-theoretically analyzed until 2015. The findings of the meta-theoretical analysis were then explored based on absolute and relative frequencies, lexicometrically (Hierarchical Descending Classification) and through clustering algorithms (Hierarchical Clustering on Principal Components analysis). Results revealed that SRT was employed differently in Canada as compared to the USA, in the sense that while used empirically to study objects of high social relevance in both countries, there seems to be a distinct trend of reconceptualization and reformulation of SRT in the USA that we did not find in Canada. All in all, SRT appears to have been adopted in this area due to its applicability in studying a wide range of social phenomena, thus being pragmatically useful in obtaining information about lay knowledge. However, the low penetration rate of SRT in the USA may be indeed due to its epistemological and methodological traditions (socio-constructionism and qualitative research), incompatible with the existent publishing tradition in the USA, which favors individualistic approaches to social phenomena as well as quantitative research.

Key words: social representations theory, North America, Canada, United States of America, meta-theoretical analysis, social psychology

3.2. Introduction

The present paper is included within a wider research program led by A.S. de Rosa (European/International Joint PhD in S.R. & C. Research Centre and Multimedia Lab, University of Rome Sapienza. Italy) and EC-funded (ITN-People MSCA-IDP 2013, no. 6072799 <http://www.europhd.eu/SoReComJointIDP>), within the framework of the European/International Joint PhD and articulated in 13 research lines around three main axes: a) development of different paradigmatic approaches, b) dissemination across different continents and geo-cultural contexts, c)

application to different thematic domains and subtopics. The goal of the project is to perform the meta-theoretical analysis of the entire corpus of scientific literature published on Social Representations Theory (SRT) with the aim to evaluate the state of the art regarding the diffusion, dissemination and development of the theory across time and geo-cultural areas³. The current findings are the result of the meta-theoretical analysis of the sample of scientific papers employing SRT that have been first authored by a researcher affiliated to an institution located in the geo-cultural area denominated “North-America” by de Rosa (see de Rosa, 2013) and comprising geographically Canada and the United States of America (USA). This decision was based on the cultural differences between Canada and USA on the one hand, and on the other, the Latin American countries, which lead to distinctive epistemological traditions in conceptualizing and employing SRT, as argued by de Rosa & d’Ambrosio in 2008, according to the arguments made by Moscovici & Markova, 2006. The theory’s dissemination across the globe has been the subject of great disparity between different geo-cultural contexts, as shown by de Rosa and D’Ambrosio in 2008 and by de Rosa in 2013, who systematically reviewed the diffusion of SRT both from a spatial and from a temporal standpoint. According to their findings, while *from a longitudinal perspective*, SRT’s diffusion grew exponentially all across the world, the rate of this growth was very much different if we take as criterion for this analysis *the geo-cultural context*; thus, the dissemination rate of the theory was significantly higher in Europe and in Latin America than in North America, Oceania, Asia and Africa. While this trend may not be surprising for Europe, given that SRT first emerged in that context and that it was considered to be a European alternative to the socio-psychological American theoretical and empirical individualistic approaches found in the dominant social cognition paradigm (Augoustinous, Walker & Donaghue, 2014), it is certainly surprising for Latin America, where the number of publications employing this theory is now comparable to the one in Europe. Thus, the low penetration rate of SRT in North America, Asia, Africa and Oceania must be motivated by factors that overcome mere “geographical borders”. Before being able to pinpoint the exact factors that have caused this lower rate of diffusion of SRT in North America (especially the USA), it is necessary, in our view, to examine the rationales and the manners in which (the why’s and how’s) scientists here have decided to employ it; in other words, we set out to study what precursory conditions and factors “have fertilized” the North American area for the existent developments of SRT. Through meta-theoretically analyzing the scientific literature

³ More details regarding the larger project, meta-theoretical analysis, and previous publications on these issues may be found on the website europhd.eu as well as in de Rosa, 1992, 1994, 2002, 2003, 2006^{ab}, 2008, 2011^{abcde}, 2012, 2013^{ab}, 2014^{ab}, 2015^{ab}, 2016, 2017; de Rosa & d’Ambrosio, 2003, 2008; de Rosa, Dryjanska & Bocci, 2015; de Rosa, Dryjanska & Forte, 2015; de Rosa, Panzaru, Dryjanska, 2015; de Rosa et al., 2016; de Rosa, Ramazanov & Dryjanska, 2016; Ramazanov et al., 2016; de Rosa et al., 2016; de Rosa & Dryjanska, 2017; de Rosa, Dryjanska & Bocci, 2017; de Rosa, Arhiri & Dryjanska, 2015; de Rosa et al., 2016; Bocci et al., 2016; Arhiri, de Rosa & Dryjanska, 2016; Gherman, de Rosa & Dryjanska, 2016).

employing SRT published by North American first authors we intend to shed light on how SRT has permeated this scientific geo-cultural context according to the objectives of de Rosa's project and meta-theoretical analysis: mapping the diffusion and the application of SRT in North America, identifying how the theory has been conceptualized and operationalized methodologically in the publications from this geo-cultural area, and implicitly, distinguishing potential paradigmatic re-definitions of SRT, either at a conceptual and/or a methodological level (de Rosa, 2013b).

Previous results of the meta-theoretical analysis of the world-wide issued publications on SRT have revealed that in terms of degree of diffusion of SRT, North America ranked third, after Europe (the geo-cultural context where the theory was created by Moscovici, 1961) and Latin America (the geo-cultural context comprising countries in the two Americas with a Latin background, a area where SRT has expanded considerably), with fluctuating discrepancies between Canada and the USA (see de Rosa, 2009; de Rosa, 2013b; de Rosa & d'Ambrosio, 2008). In 2003, de Rosa & d'Ambrosio found that the publications from North America (largely first authored by Canadian institutions-affiliated researchers) are highly dedicated to the development of SRT in a meta-theoretical sense, while their applied research is focused on thematic areas pertaining to development and education (especially in Canada). Conceptually, they were more likely to share similarities with European rather than Latin American researchers, as the latter tend to employ SRT as a heuristic tool for the study of societally pressing issues without furthering the development of SRT as a main concern. In 2008, de Rosa & d'Ambrosio report the same proportion of empirical (78%) and theoretical papers (22%) for Europe and North America, different from Latin America, with only 17% theoretical publications and 78% empirical ones. Thereupon, the trend found in 2003 by the authors seemed to have persisted. Further comparisons between Europe, Latin and, respectively North America made by de Rosa & D'Ambrosio in 2008 reveal that Latin American authors tend to employ SRT in empirical researches and treat it generically, as opposed to the European ones, who are more focused on paradigmatic aspects of SRT and hence, employ it more specifically in their studies. As compared to these two geo-cultural contexts, North American publications focus the most on theoretical communications, which means that they articulate SRT with other constructs or theories more. About half of the North American corpus of publications studied employed SRT more generically, which made the authors place the North American geo-cultural context in-between the European and Latin American on the dimension of paradigmatic developments brought to SRT probably due to their focus on positioning SRT in social sciences in general (de Rosa & d'Ambrosio, 2008). These findings were consistent over time, as shown by a meta-theoretical analysis performed by de Rosa (2013) on a larger and updated corpus of SRT publications, where she found the same geo-cultural patterns: the North American literature was more focused on the

thematic area of *social psychology paradigms and other disciplines* as opposed to the other two areas. Regarding the thematic areas and their respective objects of study, particularly relevant for the meta-theoretical analysis of SRT literature due to the concept's nature (SRs are both products and processes and they are studied only if relevant for the community in which they emerge), by 2008, the European publications seemed to be more focused on meta-theoretical aspects as opposed to the North American ones (de Rosa & d'Ambrosio, 2008). All these previous results reveal that SRT may have been appropriated differently from a theoretical, thematic and empirical point of view, which was the initial assumption of de Rosa when she started her meta-theoretical analysis project (see de Rosa, 1994^{ab}), arguing that a systematic review of the literature in order to uncover potential reformulations of its original conceptualizations was necessary. From a geo-cultural point of view, we can sum up that in North America, SRT was adopted less than in other contexts, that is – Europe and Latin America, but more than in Asia, Africa and Oceania); furthermore, social psychologists employed SRT by articulating it with other theories and approaches in a certain type of relation (be it integration, differentiation, comparison or replacement), with significant differences both from Europe and Latin America, and between the USA and Canada. De Rosa commented on these issues (de Rosa, 2002; 2013; de Rosa & d'Ambrosio, 2003; 2008) by also remarking that despite the integrative approach of the researchers in SRT regarding other concepts/constructs/theories, such as attitudes, the theory itself has not permeated the scientific USA literature on social psychology in a significant way, as evinced by the fact that in 1993 (after more than 30 years from its inception), SRT was not even mentioned in the handbook *The psychology of attitudes* (Eagly & Chaiken, 1993), even though S. Moscovici is referenced twelve times with his Minority Influence Theory. She interprets this phenomenon of low diffusion by the long standing scientific tradition of favoring more experimental work (along with traditional and cognitivist approaches) as if its objective character gave it a greater scientific standing. Another reason de Rosa touches upon is the linguistic aspect (the opus prima in SRT was published in French, and most of the initial research was published in this language as well): “Canada - a country where the theory of Social Representation has largely penetrated, also thanks to the linguistic links with the French culture). [...] Hopefully the diffusion of the English translation (2008) of Moscovici's seminal work *Psychoanalysis Its Image and Its Public*, appeared as first edition in France almost fifty years ago (1961, second revised edition in 1976) will contribute to remove some barriers for the penetration of the Social Representation theory among the monolingual English-speaking scientific community of social psychologists.” (de Rosa, 2013, pp. 110-111). However, she adds, the reasons for ignoring SRT in this area have to go beyond language barriers: “The general oblivion of the Social Representation theory in the US handbooks of social psychology is even more puzzling after

the publication in 1984 of Farr and Moscovici's edited volume on 'Social Representations' and in 2001 of Kay Deaux and Gina Philogene's book 'Representations of the Social: Bridging Theoretical Traditions' (de Rosa, 2013, p. 110).

Rateau et al. (2011) have also noted a lower expansion of SRT in the USA, despite efforts on behalf of its creator (Serge Moscovici) and others (e.g. Gina Philogène) to popularize the theory in the American social psychology research community. They attribute this lower diffusion to several factors: the linguistic barrier mentioned by de Rosa (2013b), the initial theoretical looseness of the theory, the meta-theoretical discrepancies between SRT (focused on inter-individual phenomena) and social cognition (describing the intra-individual factors which regulate social interaction). Cultural, historical and social factors have been proposed as an explanation for the US reluctance to embrace socio-constructionist and social interactionist premises in social psychology, as well as economic and political ones; a comprehensive analysis of them is beyond the scope of our paper, but for the interested readers, we may recommend Moscovici & Markova, 2006; Greenwood, 2003^{abc}; Farr, 1996. We will briefly mention a summary review: since the inception of social psychology, this field was polarized around the importance that the social (e.g. Ross, 1908; Lewin, 1931) versus the individual factors (e.g. McDougall, 1908; Allport, 1924) ought to have in the creation of this branch of psychology. One of the consequences of this dispute was the crisis of social psychology, signaled by social psychologists since the late 1960's up to date (Parker, 2015), which refers to the chasm between the declared epistemological mission of social psychology (the comprehension of the constant duality between the social and the individual) and its universality-focused implementation that has translated into the creation of methodologies without theories and individualistic paradigms, a.k.a the under representation of the social (e.g. Tajfel, 1972; Moscovici, 1972; Gergen, 1973; Greenwood, 2003^{abc}; Parker & Shotter, 2015; Squire, 2015). SRT has become the choice of those who situated themselves firmly against individualistic and mentalist approaches to social psychology as too parochial and thus embraced and adopted the social constructivist alternative proposed by Moscovici in 1961. Another consequence of the individual/social dispute was the epistemological debate surrounding the drift between social constructionism (supported by the socially-oriented researchers) and experimentalism (mainly advanced by the individualistically oriented researchers) in social psychology, noted time and again as a potential historical and cultural reason for the weak diffusion of SRT in the US mainstream social psychology (Jost & Kruglanski, 2002), which has been traditionally focused on individualistic and quantitative approaches to social psychology, at the expense of the contextualization of human experiences (e.g. Greenwood, 2003^{abc}; Moscovici & Markova, 2006). On the other hand, SRT "captures the dialectical, multi-dimensional, and dynamic dimensions of the social world—all qualities which the mainstream perspectives in American social psychology

have had a difficult time to shed light on.” (Philogène, 2014, p. 5). Philogène (2014) also mentioned other potential factors that lead to a weaker diffusion of SRT in the USA, such as the institutional pressures toward conformity to the rigid set of rules set forth by the American Psychological Association (APA), the propensity toward overspecialization in social psychology promoted by grants and rewarded via professional licensing, the pressure to publish in order to obtain tenure and thus, secure one’s financial and professional status, and last, but not least, the normative influence of citation indices as a measure of quality of research. In 2016, Baumeister added that the ways in which “the newest” crisis faced by social psychology (briefly surmised by failures to replicate findings and fabricated data – see Lilienfeld & Waldman, 2017 for a comprehensive analysis) is addressed – employing larger samples and increasing the number of replications – will lead to the plummeting of explorative and creative research endeavors.

As we stated above, the purpose of our current paper is to explore how SRT has permeated the North American scientific arena by meta-theoretically analyzing the literature on SRT published here. We applied the *Grid for Meta-Theoretical Analysis*, a content analysis tool created by de Rosa in 1994 – de Rosa, 1994^{ab} - and last updated in February 2014 on the papers on SRT from Canada and North America (for a detailed description of the *Grid*, please consult de Rosa, 2002, 2013a). Since meta-theoretical analysis is an exploratory research endeavor, we did not formulate any directional hypotheses prior to the meta-theoretical analysis, but did rely on the general research questions at which we alluded below: How was SRT employed from a theoretical, thematic and empirical point of view in the North American geo-cultural area? What are the differences (if any) between the appropriation of SRT in Canada and, respectively, the USA? Are there any paradigmatic re-definitions of SRT, either at a conceptual and/or a methodological level?

3.3.Method

The sample of publications used for this article consisted of 359 publications extracted from the *So.Re.Com “A.S. de Rosa” @-library*, “a digital platform integrating scientific documentation, networking and training purposes in the field of Social Representations and Communication” (de Rosa, 2015^a, p. 4938), based on the criterion of the geographical location of the institution to which the first author was affiliated (a comprehensive listing of full publications may be found at the European/International Joint PhD in Social Representations & Communication Research Center and Multimedia Lab, P.za Cavalieri di Malta 2, Rome-Italy or may be consulted upon request to A.S. de Rosa).

All of the publications were meta-theoretically analyzed: upon reading each of them, the researcher filled in the *Grid for Meta-Theoretical Analysis*, by writing down the presence / absence of all categories and subcategories present in the *Grid*: bibliographical and bibliometric data (e.g. year of publication, indexation in ISI and SCOPUS), specific references to SRT concepts and

constructs (e.g. genesis of SRs, with the subcategories micro-genesis, onto-genesis and socio-genesis), references to other concepts, constructs, theories and approaches (e.g. attitude, common sense, Social Identity Theories, Developmental Approaches), thematic areas and objects of study (e.g. Identity as a thematic area, with gender identity as an object of study), methodological profile (e.g. types of research design), paradigmatic aspects. Thus, in order to answer to the research questions stated above, the data obtained from the corpus of publications was analyzed in three ways:

- First, a descriptive profile was compiled based on absolute and relative frequencies for each of the categories present in the *Grid*.
- Secondly, the entire corpus of abstracts and their key words was subjected to a textual analysis conducted with the IRAMUTEQ software 0.7 alpha 2.
- Thirdly, the data compiled with the *Grid* was subjected to Hierarchical Clustering on Principal Components analyses conducted with the R software 3.3.2, the package FactoMineR.

3.4.Results and discussion

- Descriptive profile of the data (a comprehensive listing of full results may be found at the European/International Joint PhD in Social Representations & Communication Research Center and Multimedia Lab, P.za Cavalieri di Malta 2, Rome-Italy or may be consulted upon request to A.S. de Rosa)

Our sample consists of 359 items – 200 first authored by *Canadian institutions* affiliated authors (55.71%) and, respectively, 159 first authored by *USA institutions* affiliated authors (44.28%), of which 57.38% *articles in journals*, 28.97% *conference presentations*, and 13.65% *book chapters*, mostly published in *English* (59.33%) and *French* (38.44%), all following an overall upward trend, from 1973 up to 2015, when the data collection for the current paper has ended. More than a half of our sample consisted of *empirical publications* (57.1%), followed by *theoretical papers* (41.23%) and *thematic reviews* (1.67%), of which 89.14% referenced SRT specifically, which refers to the fact that the publication employed SRT as a framework for empirical research or discussed it at large in theoretical papers rather than merely mentioning it, as was the case in only 10.86% of our sample. Regarding *the specific references to SRT concepts and constructs*, the *functions* of SRT were by far the most referenced category (82.5%), with the highest emphasis placed on the orientation and control of social reality (66.9%) and SRs as guide for behavior and inter-group relations (55.7%). These results are in line with de Rosa's 2013b findings, when, on a global sample of publications, she found the functions of SRs to be the most referenced conceptual category (with the same proportion between the two subcategories mentioned above), and thus argued that SR functions should be included in the definition of the construct and that the focus on their social utility supports the societal relevance of the SRT literature. The second most referenced category was the *transformation* of SRs

(43.7%), followed by their *genesis* (33.4%), the *processes* through which they are formed (27%), the ways in which they are *transmitted* (23.7%) and their *structure* (13.6%). Thereupon, we observe in the North American scientific literature the same focus on the dynamic nature of SRs evinced by de Rosa in 2013b on a global corpus of publications employing SRT.

Meta-theoretical considerations were made in 33.7% of our sample, echoing past findings by de Rosa & D'Ambrosio (2008), who found a North American tendency of comparing and contrasting SRT to other theories; regarding *paradigmatic approaches to SRT*, most of our papers focused on the structural approach (8.4%), followed by the socio-dynamic one (4.7%), the anthropological and ethnographic approach (4.5%) and the dialogical, conversational and narrative approach (4.2%). Compared to previous findings which revealed a decreasing trend in the popularity of the structural approach as compared to the others (de Rosa, 2013b), our results may suggest that the more mentalist and cognitivist premises of the structural approach (Quenza, 2005) are preferred in North America, in line with the alleged reluctance of North-Americans to embrace the socio-constructionist premises of SRT (Rateau et al., 2011; Philogène, 2014). The *constructs and concepts pertaining to other theories mentioned with a frequency higher than 50%* were, in a decreasing order: cultural knowledge, practice, context, language, social processes, value, behavior, belief system, while the most popular *theories and approaches* in our sample (>5%) were, in a decreasing order: Philosophical Approaches, Sociological Approaches, Social Cognition Theories, Social Identity Theories, Social Constructionism, Anthropological Approaches, Developmental Approaches, Behaviorist Theories, Socio-Cultural Theories, Attribution Theories, Attitude Theories. *Thematically*, the preferred areas were: Health-Illness (23.4%), Social Representations Theory, Meta-theory and Methodological Issues (18.1%), Social Psychology and other disciplines (12.5%), Identity (12%), Development and Education (11.7%), Economics-Work-Organization (8.6%), Gender and Family Roles (6.1%), Politics-Ideology (5.3%), Communication and Multimedia (5%), Environment (4.5%), Culture (4.2%), Deviance (3.9%), Interpersonal Relations and Dimensions (2.5%). Both the favored thematic areas and the articulations of SRT with other approaches are in line with previous findings regarding North America, as detailed in our introduction.

Regarding *empirical publications*, most of them employ a *descriptive research design* (75.6%) and are conducted in *laboratory settings* (49.3%). *Intergroup research* is chosen most often (36.6%), while participants are usually studied as *groups without a previous history of interaction* (39%) or as *individuals without a social positioning* (37.1%), after having been mostly selected through *convenience sampling* (71.2%). *Structured instruments* were used in 29.3% of the empirical papers, while *open instruments predominated* (63.4%). *Qualitative data analysis techniques* were employed in 62.4%, while the *quantitative ones* – in 41% of the empirical papers. All in all, we may notice an

inclination towards a more quantitative methodology, specific to SRT (Rateau et al., 2011), which could suggest that the empirical use of the theory in this area is in line with its epistemological formulations. More analyses are required to confirm these assumptions.

Concerning *journal articles*, it is noticeable that there is a high diversity with regards to choices available to researchers publishing in this field. As such, the 206 articles in our sample have been published in 145 journals. Only four journals registered more than 5 publications: *Papers on Social Representations* ($N = 15$), a journal dedicated to SRT, edited in Europe; *Culture & Psychology* ($N = 6$), edited by Jaan Valsiner, currently affiliated to Clark University in the USA and active at Aalborg University in Denmark and focused on Multidisciplinary Psychology; *Journal International sur les Représentations Sociales* ($N = 6$), edited by researchers affiliated to the University Toulouse - Jean Jaurès in France and to the Université du Québec à Montréal in Canada and focused on advancing SRT research; *Social Science Information* ($N = 5$), edited by researchers affiliated to the University of Ottawa in Canada and the Catalan Institute for Research and Advanced Studies (ICREA) and University of Barcelona in Spain and focused on theoretical and methodological controversies, comparative and cross-cultural research in social sciences. Most of the other journals have a more *applied thematic* focus (Health, Education, Environment), which may suggest that the choices of journals for the researchers in this area may somewhat be conditioned by both the theoretical choices and their thematic ones, as argued by Philogène (2014).

- Textual analysis of abstracts and keywords (a comprehensive listing of full results may be found at the European/International Joint PhD in Social Representations & Communication Research Center and Multimedia Lab, P.za Cavalieri di Malta 2, Rome-Italy or may be consulted upon request to A.S. de Rosa)

The corpus was made up of 359 abstracts and their respective keywords, Initial Context Units (ICUs), which were initially analyzed lexicometrically with the Iramuteq (Interface de R pour les Analyses Multidimensionnelles de Textes et de Questionnaires) software 0.7 alpha 2. The sample was found to be fit for further analysis (43.36% HAPAX < 50%; 10.88% type/token ratio < 20%).

Lemmatization of the corpus was performed using the English dictionary of the software to group plural and singular forms under a single one, as well as return the conjugated verbs to their infinitives. We then separated the forms into active and illustrative ones, keeping as *active forms* adjectives, adverbs, nouns and verbs, and as *illustrative* – demonstrative, indefinite, interrogative and possessive adjectives and pronouns, *removing* from the analysis numerical adjectives, definite and indefinite articles, auxiliary verbs, numbers, conjunctions, prepositions, onomatopoeic forms and unrecognized forms, according to the pertinence criterion: since our corpus represents scientific knowledge, the excluded forms could not add any significant gain in meaning, but could reduce it (Reinert, 1983). Following the same logic, since our

publications were chosen based on the fact that they dealt with SRT, we chose to exclude the expression “social representation(s)”. The findings of the lemmatization demonstrated a reduction in the number of HAPAX forms to 41.61%, and the type/token ratio to 8.4%, hence increasing the stability of the subsequent text analysis.

We then performed a Hierarchical Descending Classification (HDC) of the ICUs based on the entire lexical table (Reinert, 1983), considering the following variables: *country of institutional affiliation for the first author* (Canada / USA), *indexation in ISI and, respectively, SCOPUS databases* (absent/present), *type of resource* (article / conference presentation / book chapter), *decade and language in which the item was published*, in order to explore if certain clusters were significantly associated with a certain country, period of time, resource type, language of publication and, respectively, more likely to being indexed in ISI and SCOPUS.

The 359 ICUs were processed based on the distribution of vocabulary in 1878 text segments, Elementary Context Units (ECUs), of which 996 (53.04%) were kept in the clustering solution proposed, illustrated in Figure 1. Reinert has argued that, as a rule of thumb, in order for an analysis to be relevant, the stable portion of the corpus ought to go over 50% of the ECUs (Reinert, 2001), so we proceeded with the interpretation of the clusters. In Figure 2, the same clusters are illustrated, along with the most representative words for each of them; the size of the words varies according to the chi square coefficients: the higher the value, the higher the contribution of the word to the organization of the cluster. Thus, the first words represent their respective clusters best.

Upon performing the HDC, a factorial correspondence analysis is conducted by IRAMUTEQ, which presents the results of HDC in a diagram, as shown in Figure 3, depicting the most representative words for each class, marked by different colors. This provides the researcher with the opportunity to contextualize the typical units for each class and then interpret them through content analysis (Chaves et al., 2017). The diagram reveals that the clusters may be grouped further, based on their distribution on the axes, best revealed in Figure 4: thus, the x-axis reveals an opposition between clusters 1 and 2, and respectively, clusters 3 and 4, while the y-axis reveals an opposition between classes 1, 2 and 3 and, respectively, 4. At this point, we should also note that IRAMUTEQ offers the option of visualizing the ECUs from which the clustered words originate, thus providing the researcher with the possibility of retrieving the initial ICUs and interpreting the results by also referencing the publications from which the abstracts and keywords were selected.

Cluster 4 is the largest cluster, accounting for 38.65% ($N = 385$ ECUs) of the corpus, and is best represented by forms that point toward the thematic area of health (*health, intervention, food, prevention, management*), a topic found to have been intensively researched in all geo-cultural areas by de Rosa & d'Ambrosio in 2008. The cluster is significantly associated with *Canadian first authorship* ($\chi^2 = 89.41$, $p < 0.001$; 49.61% of the ECUs from papers first

authored by Canadian institutions affiliates may be found in this cluster) and *French language of publication* ($\chi^2 = 46.97$, $p < 0.001$; 49.69% of the ECUs from publications in French are here), as well as with the *2010-2019 decade of publication* ($\chi^2 = 7.72$, $p < 0.05$; 41.46%), *conference presentations as a format* ($\chi^2 = 4.3$, $p < 0.05$; 42.33%) and *SCOPUS indexation* ($\chi^2 = 3.96$, $p < 0.05$; 43.39%). These results reveal that the largest trend of research identified in our North American sample is mainly advanced by Francophone Canadian authors and is thematically oriented towards topics of high societal demand, namely *health*. To name just a few, we have contributions from several authors, such as Catherine Garnier with her research on the SRs of the body and their impact on medical training (Garnier, 2001), as well as her investigations on the SRs of medication and their impact on medical practices (Garnier 2002ab, 2003), the connection between eating practices, health and illness (Garnier, Marinacci & Quesnel, 2007) and the doctor-patient relationship (Garnier, Quesnel & Rouquette, 1997); Francine Dufort with her research on SRs of pregnancy, menstruation and menopause (Dufort, Lemelin & Charron, 1998; Dufort et al., 2000; Dufort et al., 2002); Marguerite Lavallée and her collaborators with their studies on the connection between eating practices and the generation gap (Lavallée et al., 2000; Lavallée et al., 2002; Lavallée et al., 2004). In addition to this, we also find other thematic areas, such as *work*, which has been extensively studied by Lilian Negura (e.g. Negura, 2006) from several angles of social relevance: the well-being of independent workers (Negura, 2009), the socio professional integration of drug abusers, (Negura & Maranda, 2004, 2008), the social integration of young fathers (Negura & Deslauriers, 2010) and young people in general in the context of the changing work environment (Negura & Samson, 2008; Negura & St-Armand, 2008).

The second most substantial line of research in the North American area is represented in Cluster 1, which accounts for 31.12% ($N = 310$ ECUs) of our corpus. This direction of research seems to be specific to the *USA* ($\chi^2 = 91.92$, $p < 0.001$; 49.86 % ECUs from the USA), to *English publications* ($\chi^2 = 68.25$, $p < 0.001$; 42.88 % ECUs in English), *indexed in ISI* ($\chi^2 = 28.09$, $p < 0.001$; 44.11 % ECUs from publications indexed by ISI), published as *articles* ($\chi^2 = 13.86$, $p < 0.001$; 36.49 % ECUs of articles), and *book chapters* ($\chi^2 = 4.9$, $p < 0.05$; 44.07 % ECUs of book chapters). The words that were found to be most representative for this cluster are *psychology, theory, science human, contemporary, process, methodology, sense, construction, social, knowledge*. Upon examining the publications from which the ECUs were extracted, we found a high prevalence of the contributions of Jaan Valsiner, affiliated to both the Clark University in the USA and to the Aalborg University in Denmark, who proposed further theoretical advancements of SRT (Valsiner, 1996) by including SRs in his original reformulation of SRT, the Theory of Enablement (Valsiner, 2002, 2003a, 2003b, 2003c, 2013a), included in Cultural Psychology (Valsiner, 2003b, 2007a, 2009a, 2009b, 2013b, 2014ab). Valsiner's *Theory of*

Enablement (2002, 2003a) aims to add to Social Representation Theory by drawing attention on the dynamic aspect of Social Representations, defined as semiotic mediators which act as macro-level cultural limitations of people's conduct in its passage from present to future. Based on the postulate according to which all life-forms, including people, connect to their environments in the parameters of temporal irreversibility, humans' strivings to adapt to the foreseeable future are actually preliminary adaptations to changes, which translate into the socially guided construction of signs that delineate the uncertainty to come. Valsiner considers the creation of those signs to be *the process of social representation* (the *functional dimension* of Social Representations Theory), *the products* of which are meaning complexes of data on psychological adaptation, diffused from one generation to another. These products are Social Representations of the objects that make up the world around them, constituting the *structural dimension* of Social Representations Theory. As they depict a wide variety of adaptations, they are inherently *heterogeneous*, thus creating potentialities for (extreme) divergence between individuals and collectivities from the perspective of their roles as social actors, therefore connecting social representations to *action*, and imprinting *dialogicality* to *the process of social representing*. Hence, the Theory of Enablement proposes that Social Representations Theory focus on creating "formal models of the transformation of the current construction of oppositional structures into something new" (Valsiner, 2003a, p. 14), a perspective which shares common views with European conceptualizations, such as Markova's (2000), who focuses on the dialogicality of SRs. Other US authors have meta-theoretically debated SRT as well and its role in the global arena of social psychology, among whom John D. Greenwood, who argued that the American (US) mainstream social psychology is too individualistic in its focus and proposes SRT as an alternative, among many others, in order to address the need for a constructivist and sociological component in psychology on the one hand, and on the other, to counter-balance the dominance of American mainstream approach to social psychology (Greenwood, 2003^{abc}). A different US-based line of theoretical development was proposed by John T. Jost, who argued for the articulation of SRT with different concepts, constructs, theories and disciplines, among which *ontological realism* from *philosophy of science* (Jost, 1992, 1993), and *experimental psychology* (Jost & Kruglanski, 2002). Finally, Rom Harré argued that SRT should become more sociological and expand its social constructionist premises in 1984 and 2002, 2009, while in 2015, he explicitly made a case for the integration between SRT and Positioning Theory, "a development of Vygotsky's conception of the person in an ocean of language, in intimate interaction with others in the construction of a flow of public and social cognition" (Harré & Moghaddam, 2015, pp. 232-233).

A third direction of SRT research in North America is surmised in Cluster 3, accounting for 18.78% of the corpus ($N = 187$ ECUs), significantly associated

to *USA first authorship* ($\chi^2 = 21.75$, $p < 0.001$; 26.46 % ECUs from the USA), the *book chapter format* ($\chi^2 = 33.83$, $p < 0.001$; 47.46% ECUs of book chapters) and *English as a language of publication* ($\chi^2 = 8.24$, $p < 0.05$; 22.22 % ECUs from the ECUs in English). The most representative forms for this clusters are *black, identity, minority, immigrant, race, ethnic, group, name, culture, identification*, thus revealing the focus on issues regarding the connection between SRs and social identity specific to the US context, where they are both popular and societally relevant, issues related to *race, (ethnic) minorities, immigrants, and multiculturalism*. Upon inspecting the publications from which the ECUs were extracted, we identified the research of Deaux (e.g. Deaux, 2006; 2008), who portrayed the Social Representations of immigrants in the U.S. in their social positioning functionalities for the American citizens (the *macro* level) and in their impacting the everyday lives of immigrants (the *micro* level), as well as the line of investigation initiated by Philogène, who revealed how the Social Representation of African Americans emerged and developed in the U.S. by focusing on the SRs processes of *anchoring, objectification* and *naturalization* (e.g. Philogène, 1994; Philogène, 1999^{abedefghij}, 2000).

Finally, our narrowest trend was evinced in Cluster 2, which accounts for 11.45% of our sample ($N = 114$), and is thematically focused on matters related to education, as emphasized by its most representative forms: *teacher, education, teach, school, student, art, learn, speech, secondary (school)*. The cluster is significantly associated with *Canadian first authorship* ($\chi^2 = 27.05$, $p < 0.001$, 15.38% of the ECUs from papers first authored by Canadian institutions affiliates may be found in this cluster) and *French language of publication* ($\chi^2 = 29.81$, $p < 0.001$, 17.19% of the ECUs from publications in French are here), as well as with the *2000-2009 decade of publication* ($\chi^2 = 5.48$, $p < 0.05$, 15.05%) and *conference presentations as a format* ($\chi^2 = 8.82$, $p < 0.05$, 14.88%). The cluster is representative for the line of research advanced by Canadian researchers interested in topics pertaining to education, such as Catherine Garnier, who envisioned the objects of study within the thematic area of education in their context of emergence and developments, that is in a network of meanings stemming from multiple contexts linked to didactic settings, professional orientations as well as family and community relationships. The global system on which the formation of the SR is dependent takes into account social objects, social involvement and social relationships alike, which allowed her to deduct, for instance, the positioning of students regarding science and technology in their societal context (Garnier, 1998, 1999, 2000; Garnier, Cucumel & Quesnel, 1996; Garnier & Sauvé, 1999; Garnier, Schleifer, Carbonneau & Sykes, 1998). Nicole Carignan and her collaborators (Carignan, Feza & Pourdavood, 2008; Carignan, Pourdavood & King, 2004; Carignan, et al., 2005; Carignan, Sanders & Pourdavood, 2005) have studied the relationship between culture and educational practices, while

Suzanne Vincent and her collaborators have investigated educational practices in sciences and technology, as well as the development of political SRs in the educational context (Vincent, S., 2000, 2002; Vincent, Garnier & Marinacci, 2006). Moreover, François Larose and his collaborators have explored the educational practices and impact of several actors involved in teaching (Larose, 1998; Larose et al., 2009; Larose, Lavallée & Demers, 1996), while Bolaji Laflamme-Lagoke, in collaboration with Lilian Negura, investigated the SRs of Afrocentric schools in Toronto newspapers (Laflamme-Lagoke & Negura, 2013, 2014).

After a closer examination of the composition of the clusters followed by a content analysis which included referencing the publications from which the corpus of abstracts and keywords were extracted, as well as their significant associations with the variables proposed, we may conclude that the clustering algorithm has differentiated between different trends in research mainly based on thematic criteria. Along this dimension, SRT appears to be differently diffused and disseminated in Canada and the USA. Thus, as Clusters 1 and 3 reveal, SRT was appropriated in two ways in the USA: either in a meta-theoretical way, in the sense that it was re-formulated/integrated with other theoretical perspectives, or in an applied manner, in the sense that it was used to study issues of high societal relevance, such as identity, minority groups, immigration etc. Here, we see a confirmation of our descriptive results, in which Social Psychology and other disciplines, along with Social Representations Theory, Meta-theory and Methodological Issues and Identity were among the six most investigated topics of research, as well as with past findings of de Rosa and her collaborators, mentioned in our introduction. In Canada, as Clusters 2 and 4 show, SRT is mainly employed thematically, in a wide range of areas, such as health, education and work, which again are comprised within our six most investigated topics of research. Our textual analysis does not reveal a specific way in which SRT may have been conceptually adopted in Canada, which could (cautiously) lead us to believe that no paradigmatic reformulations took place. The following analysis should shed more light on this topic.

- Hierarchical Clustering on Principal Components analyses conducted with the R software 3.3.2, the FactoMineR package (a comprehensive listing of full results may be found at the European/International Joint PhD in Social Representations & Communication Research Center and Multimedia Lab, P.za Cavalieri di Malta 2, Rome-Italy or may be consulted upon request to A.S. de Rosa)

We analyzed the data obtained by applying the *Grid for Meta-Theoretical Analysis* on the 359 publications through Hierarchical Clustering on Principal Component analyses, a clustering algorithm which combines Ward's Hierarchical Clustering with k-means (Husson, Lê, & Pagès, 2010; Husson, Josse, & Pagès, 2010). The categories of the *Grid* were used as *illustrative (bibliographic data)* and *active variables (references to SRT related concepts)*,

references to other concepts, theories and paradigmatic approaches, thematic areas, paradigmatic approaches, typology of SRs) in the pre-processing step, which consists in running a Multiple Correspondence Analysis (MCA). The MCA was performed on the categories from the *Grid* with a frequency higher than 5. Ward's Hierarchical Clustering was applied on the MCA results (the first 69 dimensions, which explain 90% of the inertia) to determine the number of clusters to be later consolidated with the k-means algorithm. The results of the HC are represented in Figures 5 and 6, and they show that the data is best divided into three clusters of publications, which were then consolidated to engender the final solution, illustrated in Figures 7 and 8.

Cluster 1 groups 151 items (42.06% of our sample) and comprises mainly *empirical* publications (64.24% of the cluster) with *little to no reference to social sciences or SRT* (as shown by the negative associations with concepts pertaining to SRT and to other theories), on the topics of *culture* and *health*, published between 1992-2001 (60% of the total, 41.72% of the cluster elements) in *Canada* (66.89% of the cluster) mainly in *French* (51.65% of the cluster items). It has to be noted that Cluster 1 comprises most of the *conference presentations* (86.53% of their total), which are more often than not submitted as abstracts only, which could partially explain the scarcity of references to concepts and theories in this Cluster. Also, a little over a quarter of Cluster 1 (25.83%) is made up of papers presented at the 5th International Conference on Social Representations, which took place in Montreal, Canada in 2000, which goes to support previous research findings that reveal the important role played by international events in diffusing SRT (e.g. de Rosa & D'Ambrosio, 2008; Madiot, 2013).

Cluster 2 ($N = 154$; 42.9% of our sample) appears to be made up of *empirical* (67.53% of the cluster) *articles* (78.57% of the cluster) which *employ SRT specifically* (92.85% of the cluster) as a tool to study phenomena of social interest and do not necessarily focus on the meta-theoretical level (development of the theory, comparing or contrasting SRT with other theories), as evinced by the fact that the cluster correlates *positively* with the *absence of theories other than SRT* (e.g. Behaviorist Theories, Socio Cultural Theories) and *negatively* with *SRT and Social Psychology and other sciences* as thematic areas (thus opposing the third cluster), as well as with *theoretical* publications. Regarding the way that SRT was employed, we found positive correlations with the *transformation* of SRs (via communication, social change, knowledge, social identity, practices), their *transmission* (via communication, social identity, practices, knowledge), their *functions* (familiarization, social identity related functions, guide for behavior, orientation and control of social reality, facilitate communication), their *genesis* (micro-genesis, ontogenesis), their *processes* (anchoring, objectification), and with *SR structure* related aspects. The first five constructs and concepts pertaining to other theories with which SRs are articulated are, in the order of the strength of their positive association: *social processes* (83.77% of the cluster), *value* (78.57% of the cluster), *attitude*

(70.78% of the cluster), *belief system* (73.38% of the cluster), *communication* (69.48% of the cluster). Regarding thematic areas, Cluster 2 comprises 62.79% of all the papers on *Identity*, 75% of the papers on *Environment*, 66.67% of the publications on *Communication and Multimedia*, and, respectively, 63.64% of the publications on *Gender and Family Roles*.

Cluster 3 ($N = 54$; 15.04%) seems to comprise the papers focused on positioning SRT among the social sciences; thus, it mainly comprises *theoretical publications* (92.45 % of the elements of the cluster) from *USA* (68.52% of the cluster), published in *English* (87.04% of the cluster), not focused on topics of social interest (negative correlations with Health, Economy, Gender, Identity, Development) but rather on *analyzing the theory itself* (82.22% of all the publications on Social Psychology and Other Disciplines are here, while the thematic area dedicated to SRT is present in 46.30% of the items in Cluster 3). Thus, SRT is projected among *Philosophical* (in 74.07% of the cluster items) and *Sociological* approaches (66.67% of the cluster elements), specifically *Behaviourist Theories* (44.44% of the cluster), *Social Cognition Theories* (57.41%), *Socio-Cultural Theories* (35.19%), *Developmental and Anthropological Approaches* (each in 37.04% of the cluster), *Gestalt Theories* (24.07%), *Social Identity Theories* (44.44%), while SRs are discussed in relation with a wide variety of concepts and constructs, such as *emotions*, *self*, *change*, *projection*, *action*, *cognitive schemata*, *metaphor* and others. In what regards references to SRT concepts, *SRs seem to be analyzed from a meta-theoretical point of view* in 59.26% of the publications, as well as their *function to facilitate communication* in 31.48% of the papers. Given its negative associations with *conference presentations*, *Canadian first authorship*, 1992-2001 as a decade for publication, *thematic foci* (e.g. Health), *French language of publication*, and *empirical papers*, we may assume that Cluster 3 evinces a research line opposed to the one drawn by Cluster 1, with its generic treatment of SRT.

Taking all three clusters into consideration, we may notice how the *temporal trajectory of SRT* in this area articulates with the *conceptual frameworks* investigated. Thus, the only significant associations with our clustering solutions were found between Cluster 3 and the publication decade of 1982-1991, and, respectively, between Cluster 1 and the decade of 1992-2001. In the context of the other significant associations of the clusters, we may presume that SRT has first permeated this area through Canada in an *empirical* manner (as underlined by the paragons for Cluster 2, which employ SRT in applied research: Quesnel, Garnier & Hall, 2001; April et al., 2010; Beres et al., 2013; Winskell, Obyerodhyambo, & Stephenson, 2011; Harrison, Morgan & Chewning, 2008), potentially due to its pragmatic utility in studying phenomena of high social interest (as shown by previous research: de Rosa & D'Ambrosio, 2003, 2008), and only later “arrived” in the USA, where its epistemological and conceptual premises have been more likely to be questioned within meta-theoretical debates rather than employed for empirical

study (as underlined by the paragon for Cluster 3, which focus on meta-theoretical aspects: Valsiner, 2007bcd, 2005; Harré & Sammut, 2013). Further studies are needed to confirm this hypothesis; however, we should note that these findings are also in line with our textual analysis results, which have also suggested that SRT has been re-conceptualized and re-positioned by a significant number of researchers in the USA (e.g. Jaan Valsiner). All in all, the HCPC has shown three directions of research in the North-American area; the largest proportion of scientific literature on SRT was dedicated to *empirical research* (Clusters 1 and 2, which account for 84.96% of our sample) that either tends to use SRT as a tool of investigation with little regard to its conceptual formulations (Cluster 1) or employs the theory in the spirit in which it was formulated (as shown by the vast number of positive associations between Cluster 2 and theoretical references to SRT) to study mainly Identity, Environment, Gender and Family Roles, Communication and Multimedia (Cluster 2), while a narrow, yet significant trend (Cluster 3) consists in analyzing SRT critically, by comparing it with theories and constructs from the social sciences in general and social psychology in particular pertaining to the mainstream traditions developed and promoted in North America (specifically, USA), such as Social Cognition, thus confirming previous assumptions about the US tradition in social psychology, as well as the reasons for SRT's low rate of penetration in this area (e.g. Greenwood, 2003^{abc}; Moscovici & Markova, 2006; Rateau et al., 2011).

To be able to take into account the methodological profile of the publications, another HCPC was performed on all the empirical publications (70 dimensions of the MCA, 90% inertia) employing the same *illustrative* and *active* variables, with the addition of the ones regarding methodology (such as *open instruments*, *structured instruments*, *qualitative data analysis techniques*, *quantitative data analysis techniques*, *research design* etc.). Results revealed a three cluster solution (Figures 9, 10 for the HC, and Figures 11, 12 for the *k-means* consolidated clusters).

Cluster 1 groups 90 elements (43.90%), 66.67% of them *conference presentations*, 64.45% of them on *convenience* samples, with 10% having been conducted on *individuals without social positioning*, 17.78% on *Economy-Work-Organization*, and 75.56% first authored by researchers affiliated to *Canadian* institutions and published in French (61.11%). No other significant associations were found for this cluster 1992-2001 (45.56%).

Cluster 2 groups 39 elements (19.02%), and is focused on research conducted with *structured instruments* (89.74% of the cluster): questionnaires or structured interviews in 79.49% and scales in 17.95%, employing *quantitative data analysis techniques* (92.31%), with *quasi-experimental research designs* (33.33% of the cluster), in the *USA* (69.23%), published in *English* (79.49%), in the *laboratory* (66.67%), on *Identity* (28.21%), *Social Psychology and Other Disciplines* (5.13%), *Communication and Multimedia* (12.82%), *Interpersonal and Intergroup Relations* (12.82%). 71.80% of the empirical research in this

cluster was conducted on *individuals without social positioning*. Regarding references to SRT, we found significant associations with SR *genesis* (46.15%) (*ontogenesis* 17.95%), while among other concepts or theories, *social processes* were referenced in 84.62%, *attitudes* in 82.05%, *perception* in 66.67%, *belief system* in 71.80%, *projection* in 25.64%, *self* in 53.85%, *cultural knowledge* 79.49%, *Attitude Theories* were mentioned in 17.95% of cases, *Social Identity Theories* in 35.90%, *Attribution Theory* in 17.95%, *Cognitive Representations* (15.38%), *Social Cognition Theories* (20.51%), to mention just a few.

Cluster 3 groups 76 items (37.07%), mostly *articles in journals* (88.16%), first-authored by *Canadian* affiliated researchers in 76.32% of the time, of which 93.42% applying *qualitative data analysis techniques* (content analysis – 56.58%, discourse analysis – 7.89%), with 92.11% employing *descriptive research designs*, and comprising the majority of the empirical publications published after 2012 (59.26% of the total). *Open instruments* were the method of choice in 72.37% of the cases, with *semi-directive interviews* in 56.58% publications, while *structured instruments* were absent in 93.42% of the cluster (*questionnaires* were not used in 94.74% of the cases, and *scales* – in none of the publications in Cluster 3). *Meta-theoretical* considerations regarding SRT were made in 39.47% of the papers, while the *functions of SRs* were referenced in 93.42% of the cases (*orientation and control of social reality* - 85.53%; *guide of behavior and intergroup relations* - 76.32%, *social identity related functions* – 65.79%, *facilitate communication* – 35.53%, *familiarization* – 21.05%,), their *transformation* in 63.16% of the publications (via social changes – 34.21%; via knowledge – 32.89%; via communication – 27.63%; via practices - 28.95%; via social identity – 18.42%), their *transmission* in 30.26% (via communication – 21.05%, via knowledge – 10.53%, via practices – 9.21), their *genesis* in 43.42% of the papers (*micro-genesis* – 27.63%), and their *processes* in 40.49% of the cases: *anchoring* - in 39.47% and *objectification* – 23.68% of the publications in Cluster 3. Among the concepts and constructs pertaining to other theories that are positively associated with Cluster 3 and present in more than 75% of its papers, we have *practices* in 90.79% of the cases, followed by *value* and *behavior*, each in 81.58% papers, *language* in 82.89%, *social processes* in 78.95%. Finally, concerning other theories, we have a positive association with *Social Constructionism* (14.47%) and with the *absence of Attitude Theories* (100%).

Upon introducing as active variables the methodological characteristics of the empirical publications (and thus excluding the theoretical papers from the database), we note that the use of structured instruments is the variable which has the highest association with the clustering solution, and which basically defines the orientation and composition of Clusters 2 and 3. From the generic Cluster 1, we see a departure in use of the theory, well articulated with the choice of methodology: Cluster 2, significantly associated with *quantitative methodologies and numerous other concepts and theories*, is only associated

with the *genesis* of SRs, while Cluster 3, significantly associated with *qualitative methodologies and Social Constructionism*, is also associated with *all the categories of references to SRT* from the *Grid*. Thus, other than the generic research trend presented by Cluster 1, we have two other trends, which reflect the quantitative-qualitative opposition that we have detailed in our introduction, with the quantitative being characteristic for the USA (as evinced by the paragon for Cluster 2: Philogène, 1999g), and the qualitative – to Canada (as evinced by the paragon for Cluster 3: April et al., 2010).

In 2014, Philogène argued that one of the obstacles standing in the way of a wider diffusion of SRT in the USA is the citation indexes culture, which limit the researchers' choices in adopting new theories (see de Rosa, 2013b; de Rosa 2014b; Philogène, 2014). In order to explore the articulation between how SRT is conceptualized, used empirically and indexed in ISI and SCOPUS, a HCPC was performed on all the empirical articles ($N = 122$), on the first 51 dimensions of the MCA, retaining 90% of the inertia and adding to the previously used variables whether the publications were indexed in both, one, or none of the two databases.

The three cluster solution (Figures 13, 14, 15 and 16) is most highly associated with *methodological choices* and *country of affiliation for the first author*, which suggests that the empirical articles in North America seem to be differentiated mainly by their methodological profiles and that there are again differences between Canada and the USA regarding how SRT was employed in these areas. *Qualitative* data analysis techniques oppose more *quantitative* approaches, while in terms of theory, SRT's association with *Attribution Theories*, *Social Identity Theory* and *Social Constructionism* seem to be relevant in the grouping of the empirical articles.

Cluster 1 comprises 48 empirical articles (39.34%), of which 45.83% are empirical researches conducted in the *field*, 22.92% within the thematic area of *Economics-Work-Organization*, 18.75% mentioning *Social Constructionism*, 16.67% having been conducted on *individuals without social positioning*, 14.58% using *focus groups*, 12.5% - *free interviews*. No significant associations were found with *references to SRT*, while among other concepts, we only found *metaphor* (20.83%). Cluster 1 is similar to the first clusters found in the other two HCPC analyses, which would suggest that a more generic trend in research on SRT in North America is indeed present and quite large.

Cluster 2 consists of 25 publications (20.49% of the sample), mainly published by *USA* institutions first authors (84% of the cluster), *indexed in both SCOPUS and ISI* (84% of the cluster), and mostly issued in *English* (92% of the cluster). Regarding the methodological profile, most of the articles employ *structured instruments* (92%), namely *questionnaires / structured interviews* (80%) and *scales* (24%), and *quantitative data analysis techniques* (96%), namely *bivariate statistics* (64%), *descriptive statistics* (64%), *multivariate techniques of data analysis* (48%); 80% are conducted on *individuals without social*

positioning, 72% are *inter-group researches*, 32% employ an *experimental research design*. No significant associations with *SRT references* were found; regarding other theories, *Attribution Theory* was employed in 20% of the papers, while SRs were articulated with *social processes* in 92% of the cases, *attitudes* – 84%, *cultural knowledge* – 80%, *self* – 64%, *cognitive representations* – 20% and *stigma* – 40% of the elements of Cluster 2.

Cluster 3 groups 49 empirical articles (40.16% of our sample), mainly published in *French* (53.06% of the cluster), by *Canadian* institutions affiliated first authors (75.51%), of which 44.90% are *not indexed in SCOPUS or ISI*, but 24.49% were indexed in *SCOPUS only*. Regarding the methodological profile, *qualitative data analysis techniques* were employed in 91.84% of the papers in Cluster 3, *semi-directive interviews* in 65.31% of the cluster, while 48.98% of the research was conducted on *members of groups with history* and 69.39% – in *laboratory settings*; the following are significantly *absent* from Cluster 3: *structured instruments* (93.88%), namely *questionnaires / structured interviews* (95.92%) and *scales* (100%), and *quantitative data analysis techniques* (69.39%), namely *bivariate statistics* (95.92%), *descriptive statistics* (79.59%), *multivariate techniques of data analysis* (48%). No significant associations with *other theories* were found, but we did find a positive association with *SR processes* (40.82%) and with *the socio-dynamic paradigmatic approach* (used in 10.20% of the papers), while SRs were articulated with several *concepts*, of which we mention the ones present in more than 80% of the cluster: *action* in 83.67% of the cases, *values* – 89.80%, *cultural knowledge* – 85.71%, *practice* – 95.92%, *language* – 85.71%, *social processes* – 87.76%, *context* – 83.67%, *behaviour* – 85.71% of the elements of Cluster 2. Thematically, *Health-Illness* was present in 46.94% of the studies, while *Politics-Ideology* was employed in 16.33% of them.

Based on these results, we can cautiously draw some preliminary conclusions regarding SRT and indexation in citation databases: the manner in which SRT is conceptualized is not significantly associated with the clustering solution, which groups separately the articles indexed in the databases and the ones not indexed there; indexation in either of the two databases is not associated with field research, nor with the articulation between SRT and Social Constructionism, but it appears to be, however, more associated with quantitative methodologies as compared to qualitative methodologies; SCOPUS appears to be more likely to index qualitative research on SRT as compared to ISI⁴; Canadian first authors are more likely to publish in French

⁴ The Journal Impact factor is a measure of the amount of citations per year of articles published in a certain scientific journal and hence, a measure of how important a scholarly journal is as compared to its peers from the same field as well as a measure of the scientific evolution of said journal, always in its field. An alternative manner in which to assess the citation impact of an academic journal proposed by Elsevier is the SCImago Journal Rank (SJR Indicator), computed based on an algorithm which takes into account both the amount of citations a journal receives, and the amount of citations of the journals by which it is cited (from the Elsevier's SCOPUS database), thus operationalizing the prestige of the journal through its relevance within the larger network of scientific journals. The SJR indicator aims to go further than the Impact Factor, in that it allows comparisons of publications from different fields of research, and

and to conduct qualitative research with SRT; the better part of the North American empirical research on SRT is not indexed in SCOPUS and ISI. We have to stress out again that our research is exploratory and the data analysis technique used does not allow us to draw definitive conclusions; all of our interpretations have to be further investigated with confirmatory analyses.

3.5. Conclusion

The purpose of our paper was to explore the diffusion and impact of SRT in the North American geo-cultural area by meta-theoretically analyzing the available scientific literature published by (first) authors affiliated to institutions from this context. In other words, we aimed to address both the “pertinence–coherence between the scientific paradigmatic formulation definition of the problem addressed in the literature inspired by the S.R. theory and the methodological operationalization” (de Rosa, 2013, p. 112) and the “possible paradigmatic re-definitions operating explicitly or implicitly through recourse to inappropriate methodological designs (because they were modelled on other theoretical constructs)” (de Rosa, 2013, p. 113). Given the categorical nature of our data, we were limited at exploratory analyses, hence all of our conclusions should be tested with confirmatory analyses in future studies.

The three types of data analysis techniques we employed to address our research questions revealed similar trends for our sample, which lends support to our findings. Thus, we consistently encountered a generic trend of application of SRT, which points toward the fact that there are researchers who employ the theory instrumentally as a framework for the investigation of socially relevant objects; this result was also found by de Rosa in her past meta-theoretical analyses (e.g. de Rosa, 2002, 2013b; de Rosa & D’Ambrosio, 2003, 2008). Other than this line of research, we found that the scientific literature on SRT from Canada and, respectively, from USA may differ in several aspects: the research from Canada is more empirically oriented towards objects of social relevance, yet it appears to be employing SRT in its original formulations and conceptualizations, while the research in the USA appears to be divided between authors who apply the theory consonantly with its formulations empirically (thus, similarly to Canadians) and another trend, which consists in researchers who seem to re-formulate SRT or integrate it in existent theoretical and methodological frameworks. Thematically, SRT is employed to mainly study issues related to health, education and work in Canada, while in the USA, it is used more for researching identity issues. In addition to this, we also found that researchers in the USA seem to favor a quantitative, experimental approach over a qualitative, descriptive one, more present in Canada, according to our findings and in line with their longstanding tradition in social psychology (e.g. Farr, 1996; Greenwood, 2003abc; Jost &

it accounts for the quality of the citations as well. Basically, the Impact Factor may be considered a measure of citation, whereas the SJR indicator – a measure of prestige of the journal.

Kruglanski, 2002; Moscovici & Markova, 2006). Interestingly, when we inserted the indexation in ISI and SCOPUS as variables in HCPC, the clustering solution was not significantly associated with the way in which SRT was conceptualized, but rather with the type of methods employed and with the language used (French vs English). This might suggest that the reluctance of North American journals to publish SRT research might be due to methodology more than epistemological premises, an aspect which should be investigated by future studies. Our research is not without limitations. Thus, as mentioned before, most of our conference presentations were present in abstract form only, which may have influenced our results. Moreover, our sample was extracted from the *So.Re.Com* “A.S. de Rosa” @-library (which was enriched itself with publications for the current research), so future research should replicate our findings on other databases. Finally, since it is the first systematic meta-theoretical review dedicated to the geo-cultural scenario of North America, the nature of our research was exploratory rather than confirmatory. However, we are confident that it has rendered constructive findings in comprehending the status of SRT directly and social psychology indirectly in the North American context, since it sheds light on the complex network of factors surrounding the debate regarding the role played by “social” in social psychology (de Rosa, 2013b, Greenwood, 2003abc).

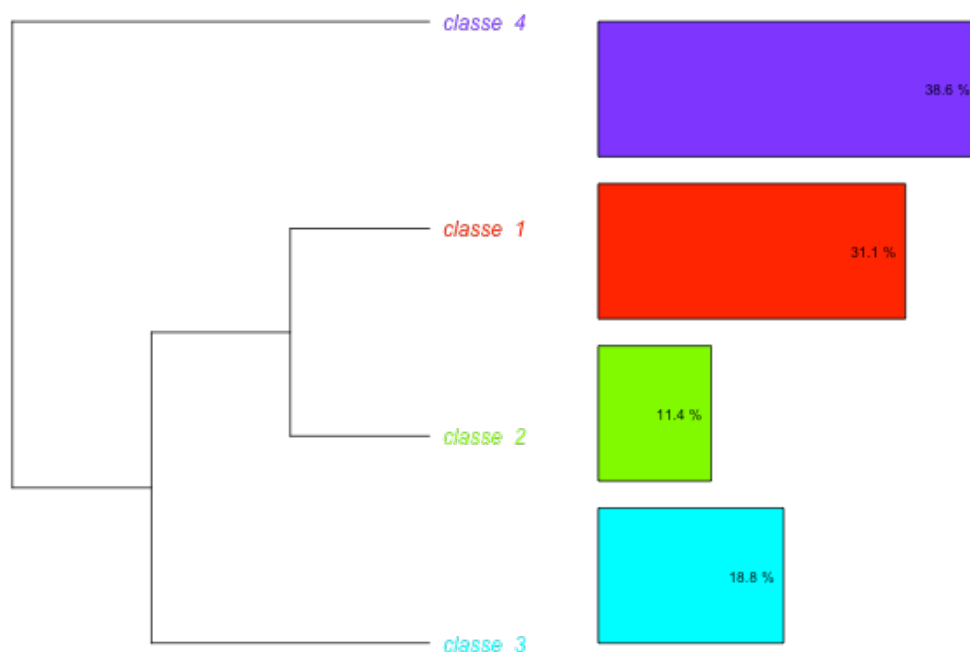


Figure 1: Dendrogram of the clusters issued by the Hierarchical Descending Classification performed on the abstracts and keywords of 359 publications

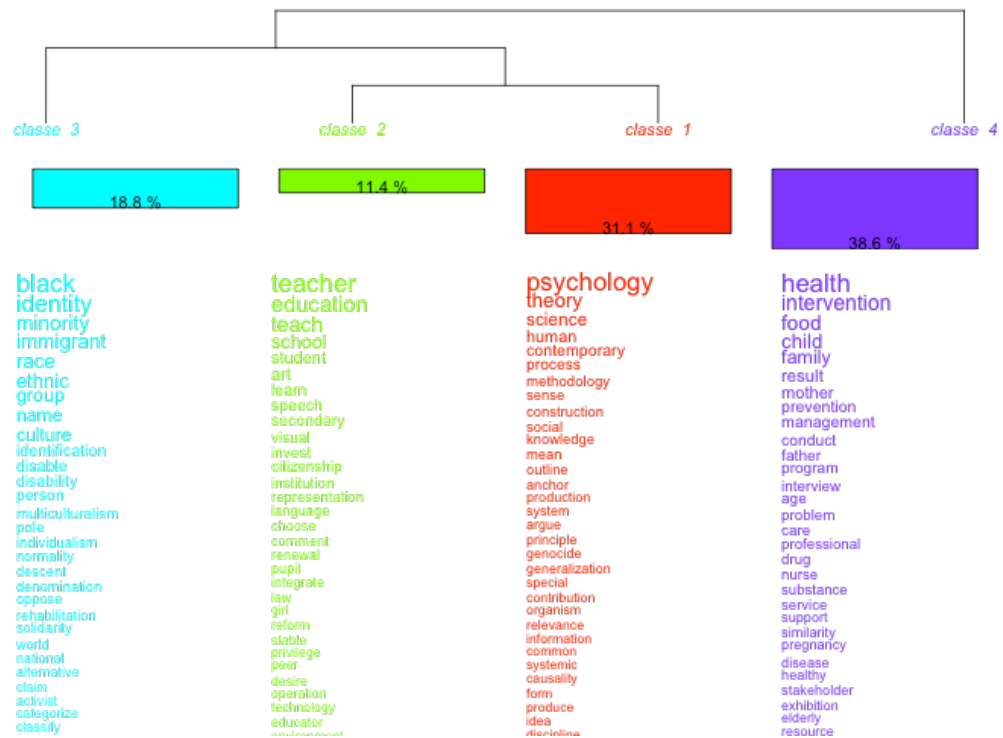


Figure 2: Dendrogram of the clusters issued by the Hierarchical Descending Classification performed on the abstracts and keywords of 359 publications with a brief summary of their content

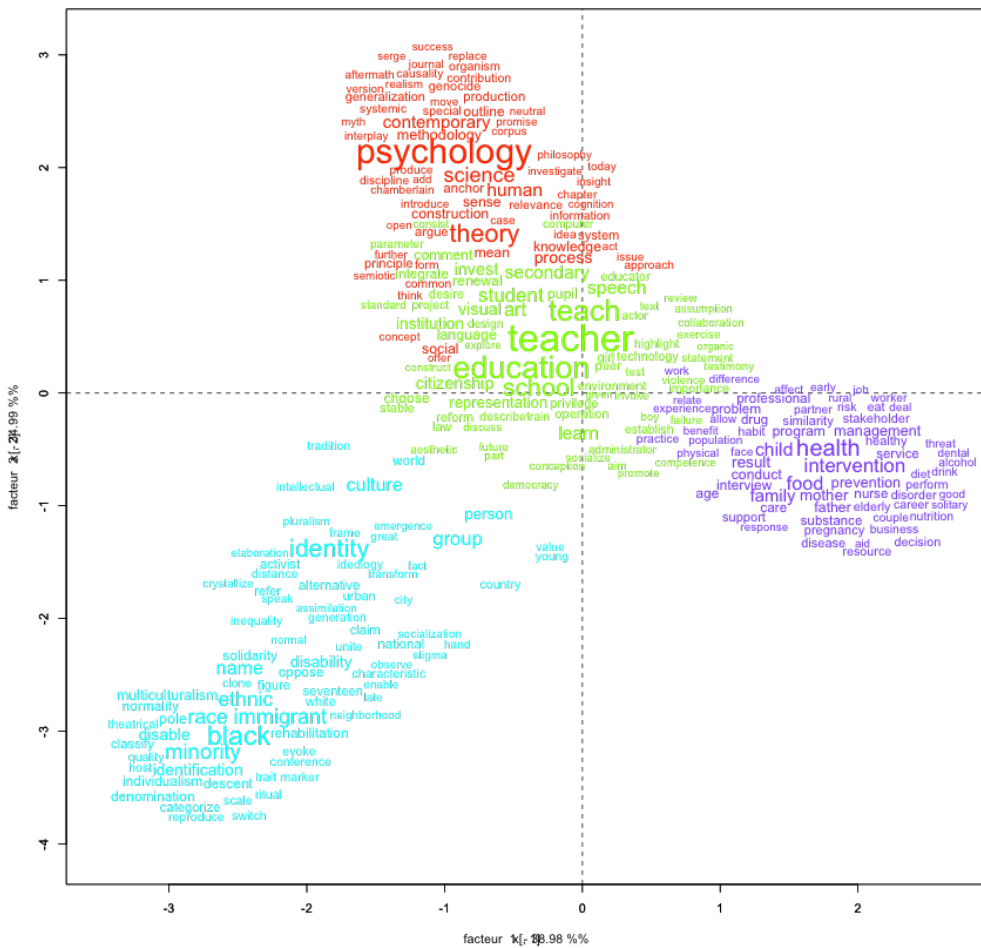


Figure 3: Factorial Correspondence Analysis based on the Hierarchical Descending Classification

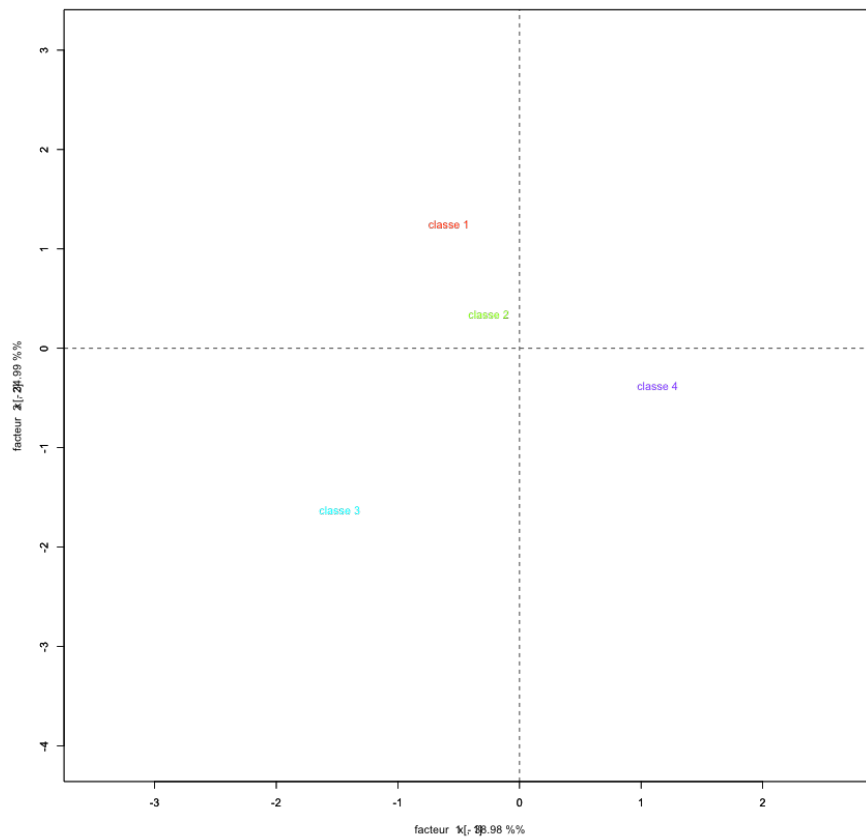


Figure 4: Factorial Correspondence Analysis based on the Hierarchical Descending Classification – plotting the clusters

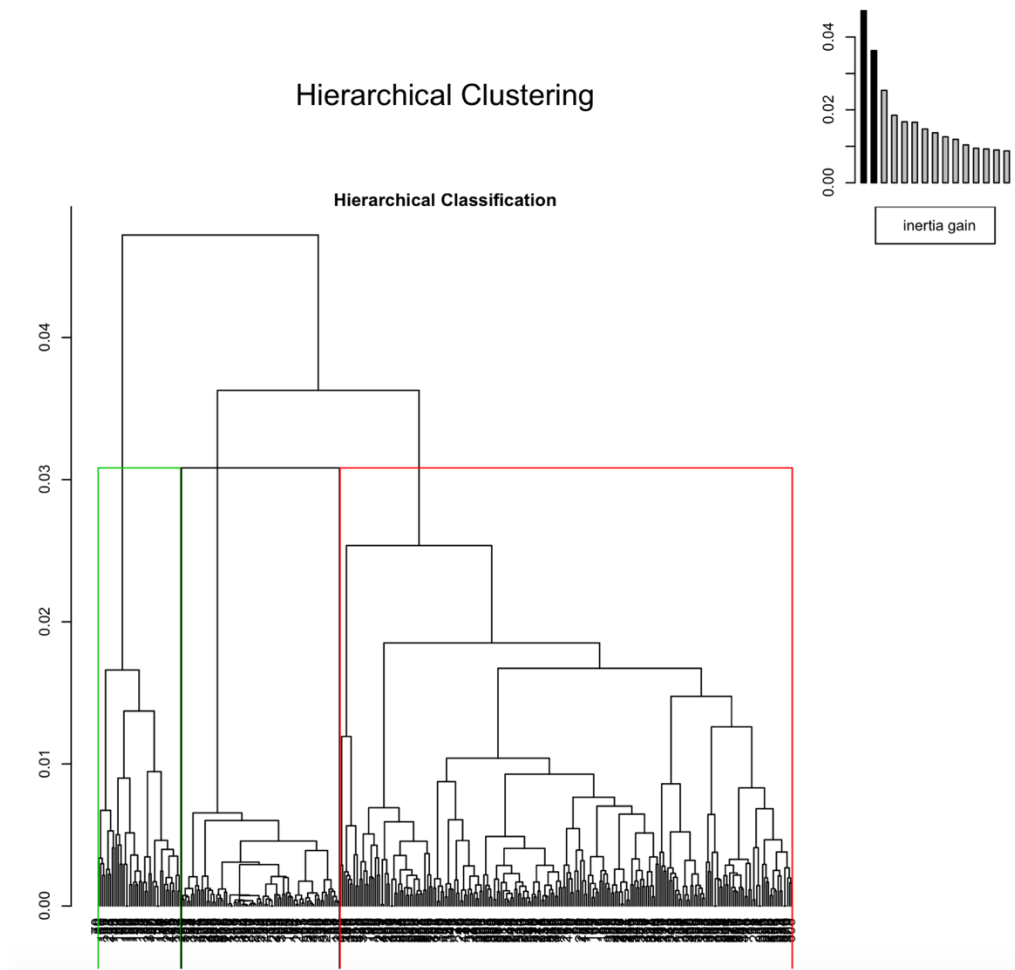


Figure 5: Hierarchical Clustering (Ward's criterion) illustrating the inertia gain for the HCPC on the entire sample of publications

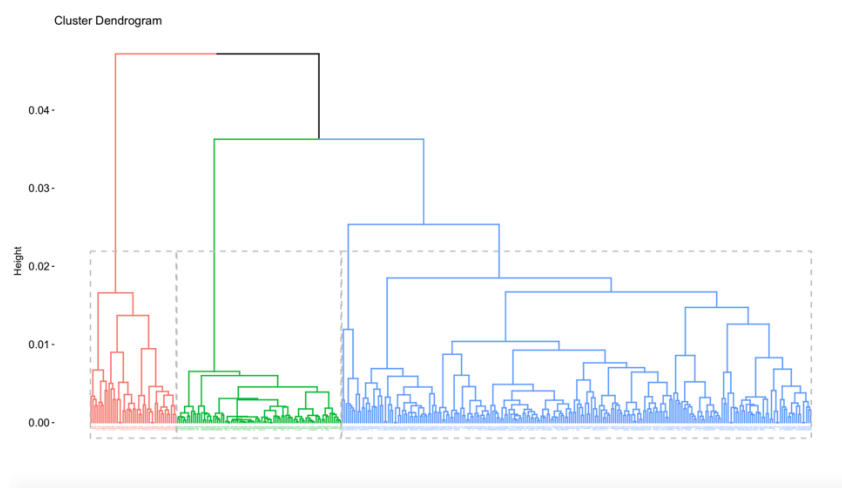


Figure 6: Hierarchical Clustering (Ward's criterion) – initial partitioning for the HCPC on the entire sample of publications

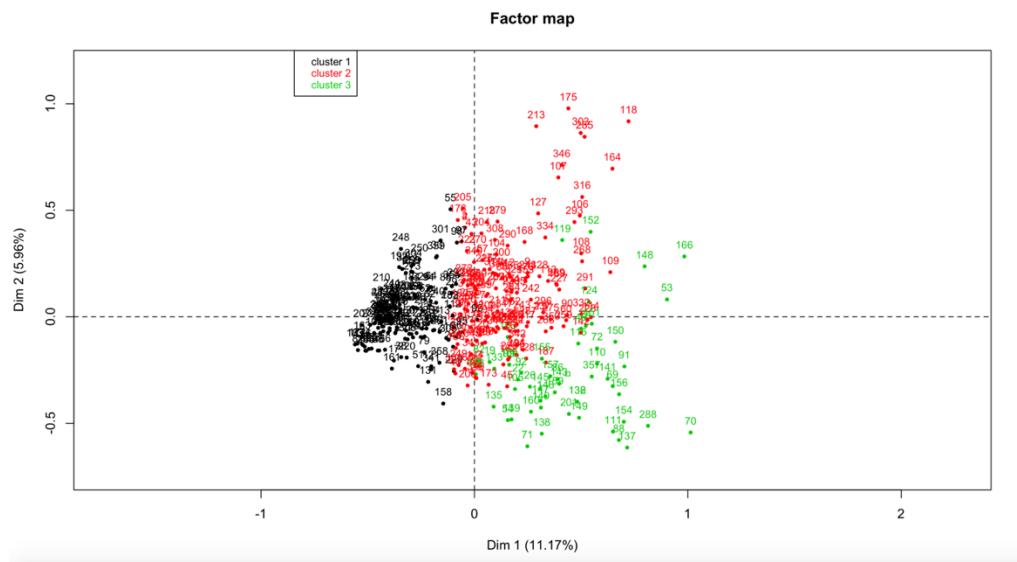


Figure 7: Factor map and clusters after consolidation for the HCPC on the entire sample of publications

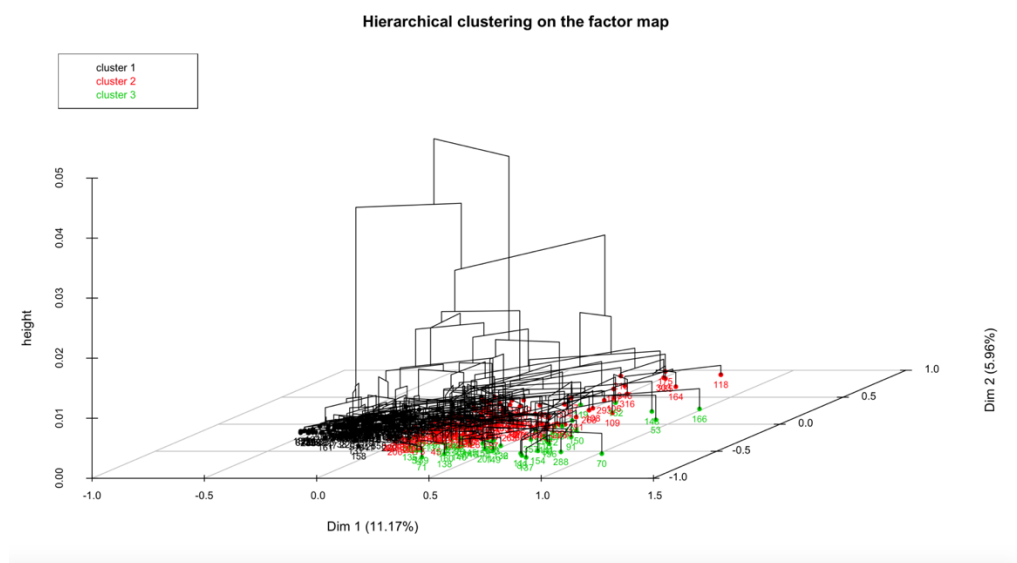


Figure 8: Factor map, clusters and tree after consolidation for the HCPC on the entire sample of publications

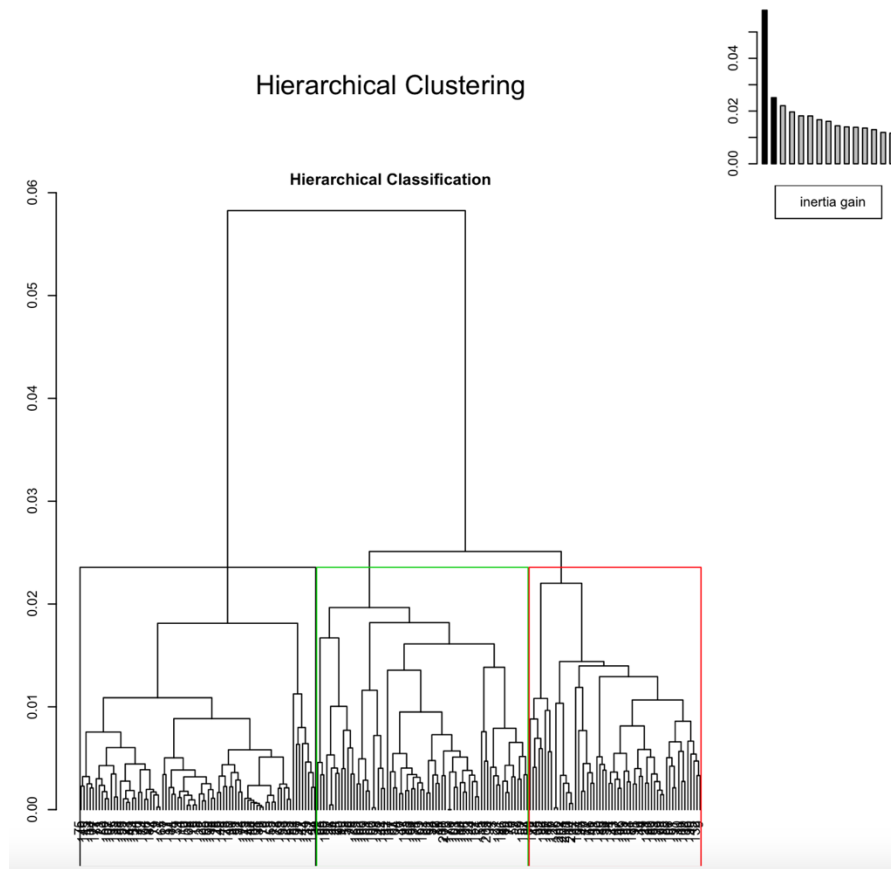


Figure 9: Hierarchical Clustering (Ward's criterion) – initial partitioning illustrating the inertia gain for the HCPC on the empirical publications

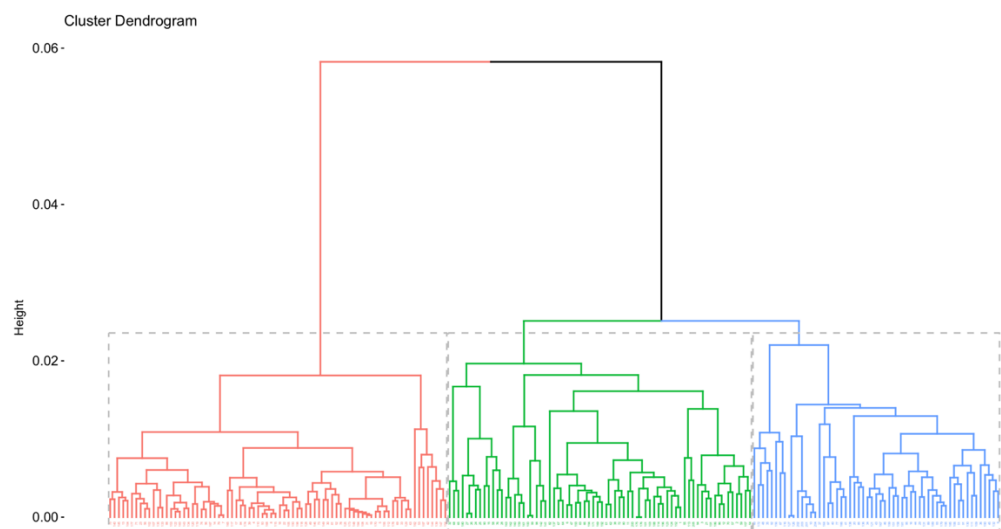


Figure 10: Hierarchical Clustering (Ward's criterion) – initial partitioning for the HCPC for the empirical publications

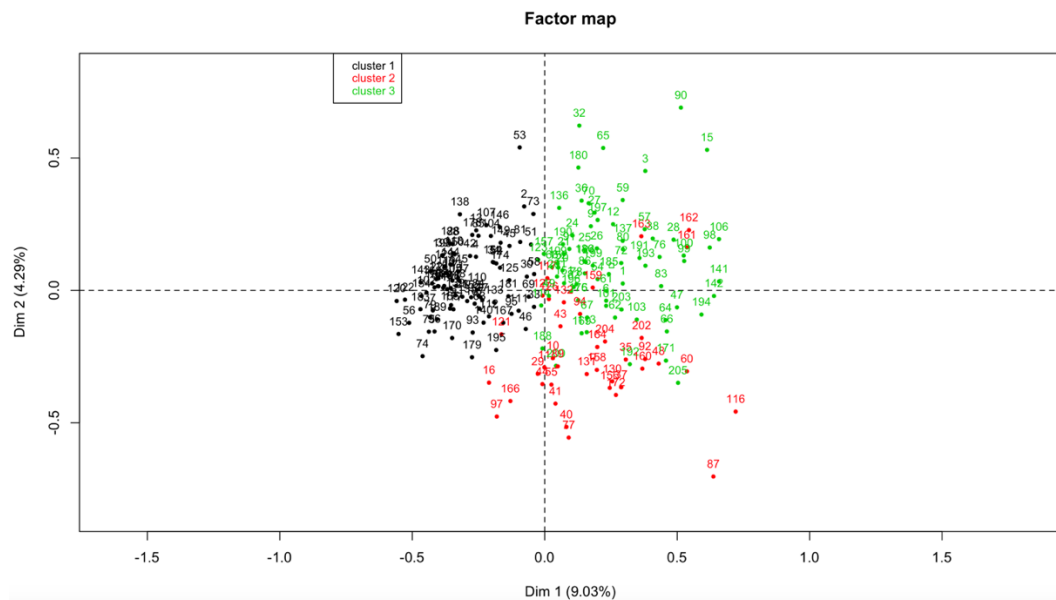


Figure 11: Factor map and clusters after consolidation for the HCPC for the empirical publications

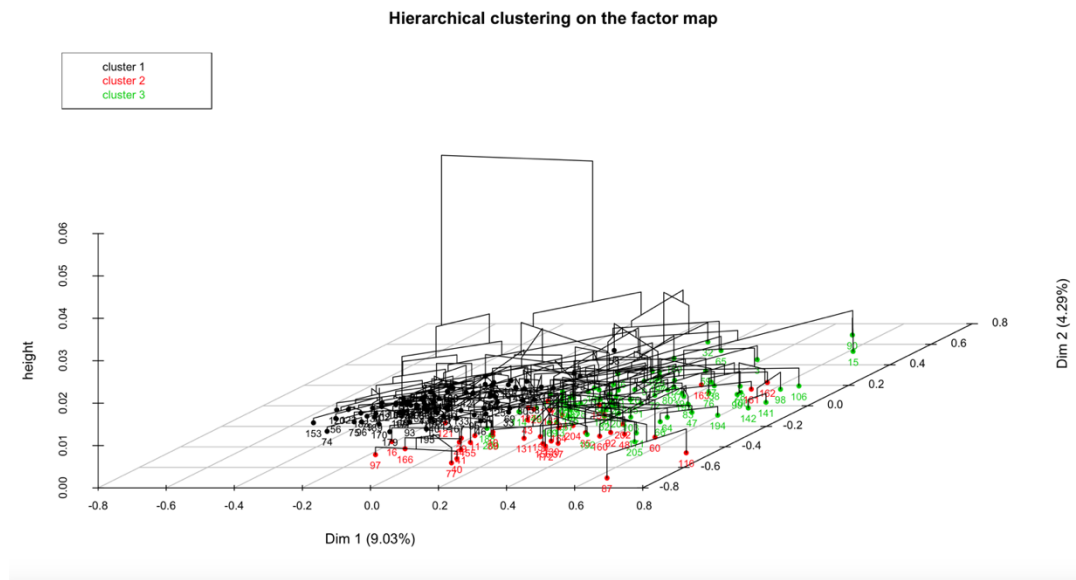


Figure 12: Factor map, clusters and tree after consolidation for the HCPC for the empirical publications

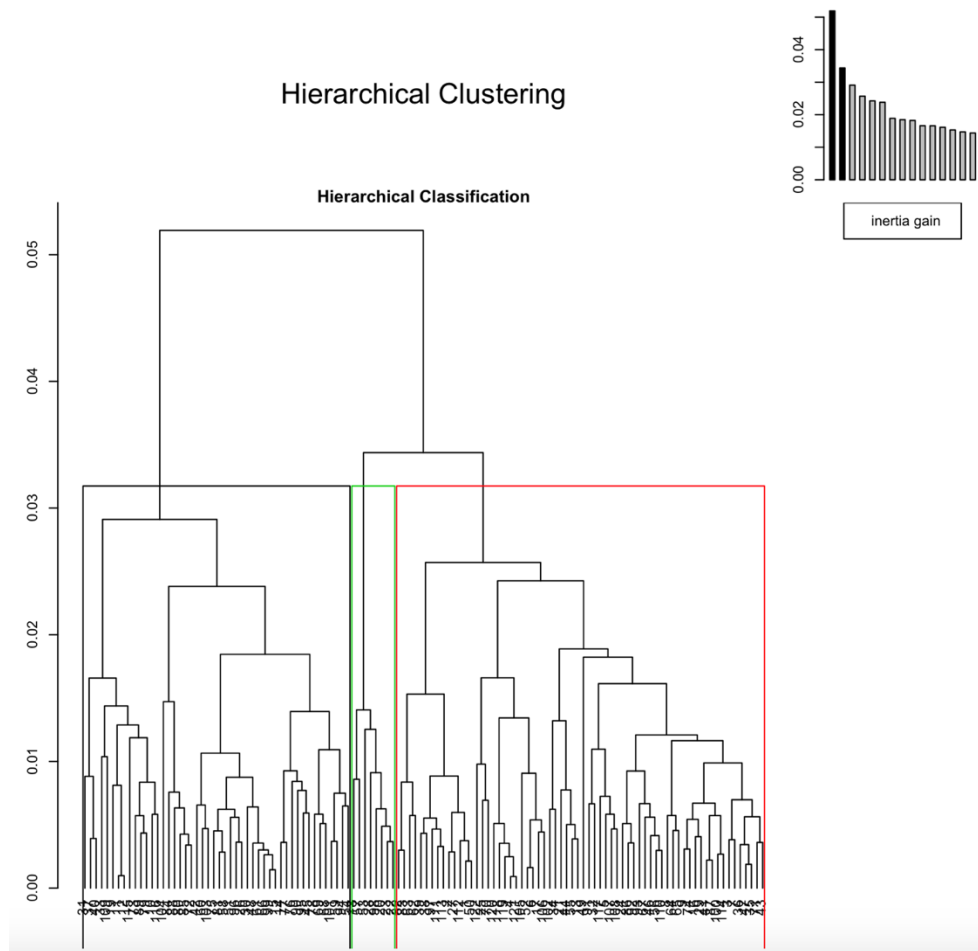


Figure 13: Hierarchical Clustering (Ward's criterion) illustrating the inertia gain for the HCPC for the empirical articles

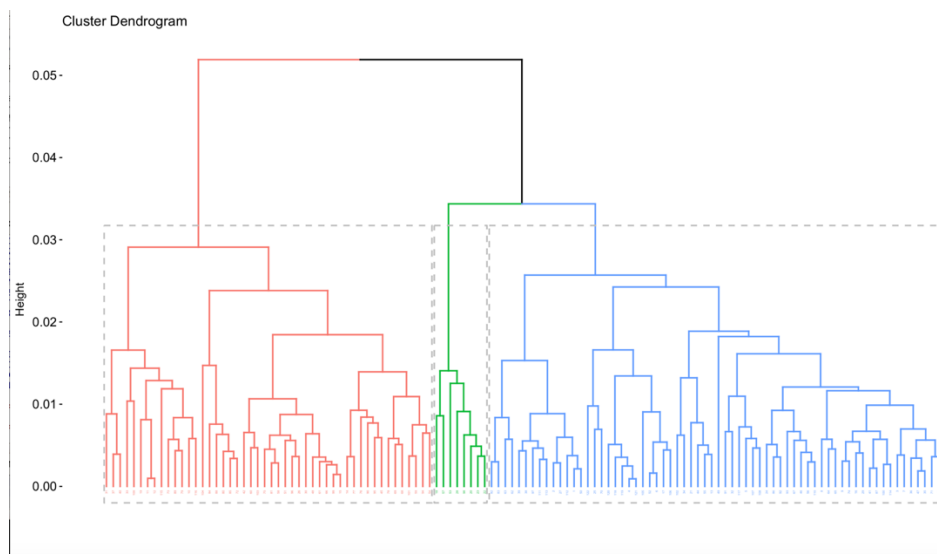


Figure 14: Hierarchical Clustering (Ward's criterion) – initial partitioning for the HCPC for the empirical articles

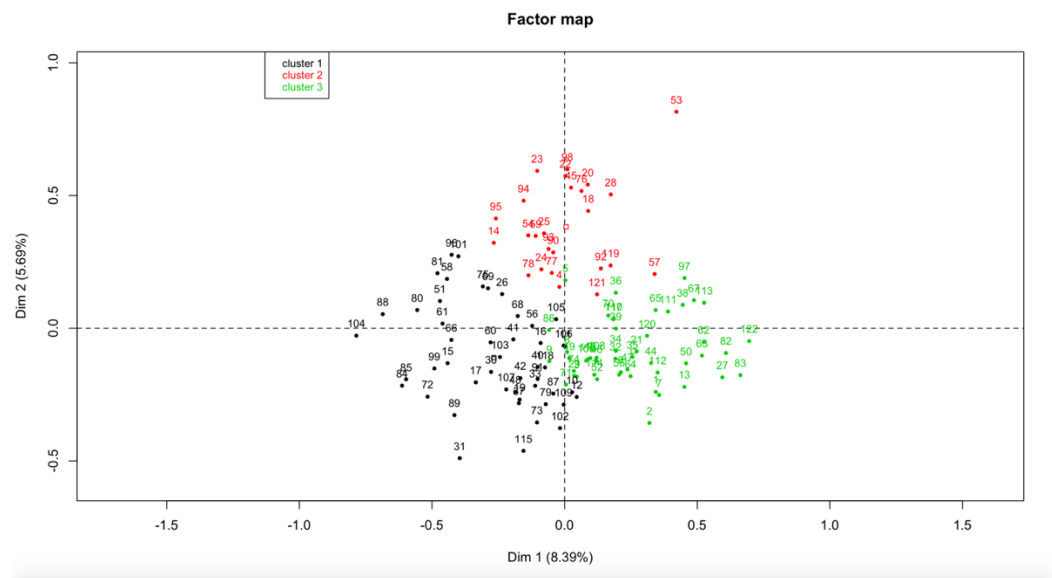


Figure 15: Factor map and clusters after consolidation for the HCPC for the empirical articles

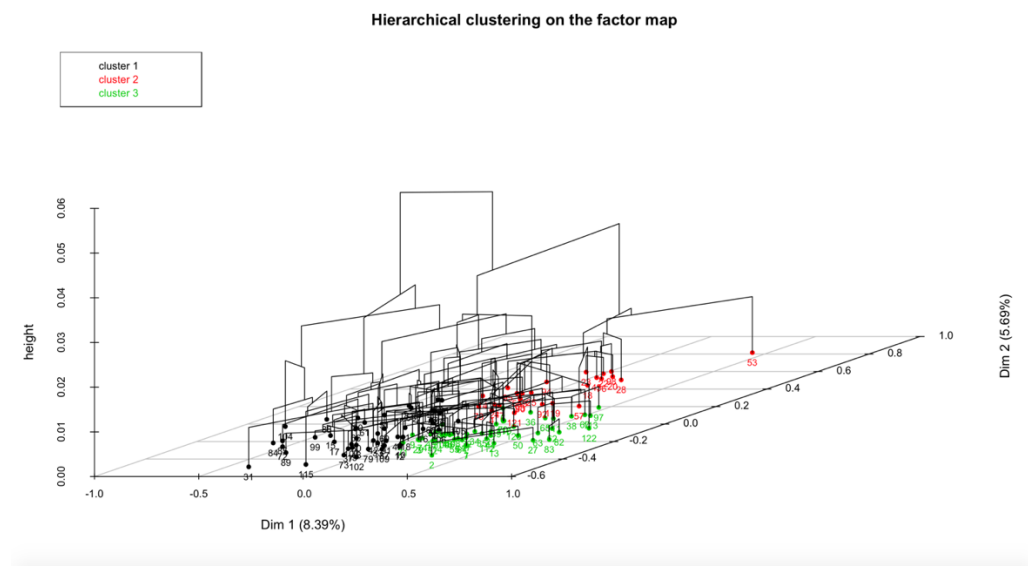


Figure 16: Factor map, clusters and tree after consolidation for the HCPC for the empirical articles

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4. Social Representations Theory in Australia and New Zealand

4.1. Abstract

Part of a larger research project, launched by de Rosa in 1994ab, aimed at performing the meta-theoretical analysis of the scientific literature published on Social Representations Theory (SRT), and representing the unified framework of the EC-funded project (ITN-People MSCA-IDP 2013, no. 6072799 <http://www.europhd.eu/SoReComJointIDP>), this research explores the state of the art of the Social Representations Theory (SRT) in the geo-cultural context of Australia and New Zealand, spatially and temporally, as well as from a conceptual, disciplinary, theoretical, empirical and thematic point of view. The *Grid for Meta-Theoretical Analysis* was used on 107 publications which referenced SRT, all extracted from the *So.Re.Com "A.S. de Rosa" @-library* and meta-theoretically analyzed until 2016. The findings of the meta-theoretical analysis were then explored based on absolute and relative frequencies, lexicometrically (Hierarchical Descending Classification) and through clustering algorithms (Hierarchical Clustering on Principal Components analysis). Results revealed that SRT has most likely permeated this geo-cultural area in the context of Social Psychology, which was highly developed along the lines of Social Cognition and Social Identity Theories, influences which we found in the scientific production on SRT as well, especially around the time when SRT was first adopted here. More recently, the attempts at integrating SRT within mainstream social psychology seem to have declined. Thematically, SRT has been mainly employed in studying identity issues and objects of high social interest for this context. We also found differences between Australia and New Zealand in terms of their preference for employing qualitative and quantitative methodologies. Our findings support the originality of the SRT contributions from this geo-cultural area, both in terms of theoretical as well as empirical advancement of SRT.

Key words: social representations theory, Australia, New Zealand, geo-cultural, meta-theoretical analysis

4.2. Introduction

The current research is the result of a larger research project⁵ launched by de Rosa in 1994ab, aimed at meta-theoretically analysing the current scientific

⁵ More details regarding the larger project, meta-theoretical analysis, and previous publications on these issues may be found on the website europhd.eu as well as in de Rosa, 1992, 1994, 2002, 2003, 2006^{ab}, 2008, 2011^{abcde}, 2012, 2013^{ab}, 2014^{ab}, 2015^{ab}, 2016, 2017; de Rosa & d'Ambrosio, 2003, 2008; de Rosa, Dryjanska & Bocci, 2015; de Rosa, Dryjanska & Forte, 2015; de Rosa, Panzaru, Dryjanska, 2015; de Rosa et al., 2016; de Rosa, Ramazanov & Dryjanska, 2016; Ramazanov et al., 2016; de Rosa et al., 2016; de Rosa & Dryjanska, 2017; de Rosa, Dryjanska & Bocci, 2017; de Rosa, Arhiri & Dryjanska, 2015; de Rosa et al., 2016; Bocci et al., 2016; Arhiri, de Rosa & Dryjanska, 2016; Gherman, de Rosa & Dryjanska, 2016).

literature produced within the field of Social Representations Theory (SRT) according to 13 foci of interest, which reflect how SRT is employed thematically, paradigmatically and, respectively, geo-culturally. In particular, the present study is a part of EC-funded project (ITN-People MSCA-IDP 2013, no. 6072799 <http://www.europhd.eu/SoReComJointIDP>) led by de Rosa, within the framework of the European/International Joint PhD articulate in 13 research lines around three main axes: a) development of different paradigmatic approaches, b) dissemination across different continents and geo-cultural contexts, c) application to different thematic domains and subtopics. In this case, meta-theoretical analysis is used with the purposes of obtaining a comprehensive picture of how SRT is employed in the geo-cultural context defined by Australia and New Zealand, a “new emerging scenario” with regard to the adoption and diffusion of SRT in this area. The interest in this field of research lies within specific characteristics of SRT, among which its world-wide diffusion despite being positioned outside of “mainstream” social psychology (Laszlo, 1997) and its longevity among Social Sciences theories (from 1961 up to date), which is surprising because of the short-lived lifespan of theoretical assumptions from this disciplinary realm (Moscovici, 1993). Previous research has been conducted in order to explore facets of this phenomenon, either by employing de Rosa’s meta-theoretical analysis (de Rosa, 1994^b, 2002, 2013) used in the current paper or other approaches (e.g. Eicher et al., 2011; Madiot, 2013; Wachelke et al., 2015) such as comparing the scientific diffusion and temporal trajectories of SRT and Social Identity Theory (SIT; Tajfel & Turner, 1979) based on their commonalities: they were created around the same period of time in Europe and have known ever since a world-wide, cross-disciplinary diffusion (Eicher et al., 2011). However, to our knowledge, no one has specifically explored how SRT was employed in the geo-cultural area of Australia and New Zealand, which we set out to address through our exploratory research.

When positioning Social Representations Theory (SRT) within Social Psychology, we are faced with a paradox stemming from an overlapping of scope among the two: as Doise argued in 1993, SRT may be more accurately described as a framework designed for studying social psychological phenomena, a grand theory which aims at unifying two distinct systems traditionally researched separately: the cognitive operational system (specific to mainstream social psychology) and the social level of analysis, targeted by sociological or phenomenological disciplines (Laszlo, 1997). Thus, SRT is generally best understood as a backlash against the dominant cognitive behavioural, experimentally focused theories, proposed by the “US-American Social Psychology” (Voelklein & Howarth, 2005), as, metaphorically speaking, it reintroduces the social in Social Psychology (Greenwood, 2003), while successfully avoiding sociological reductionism as well (Cranach, 1992). Its longevity (from 1961 up to date) and expansion beyond its initially delimited conceptualizations (Kalampalikis & Haas, 2008), are surprising,

given the short-lived lifespan of theoretical assumptions from this disciplinary realm (Moscovici, 1993).

So what makes SRT relevant today? The answer lies in its applicability to studying “knowledge in context” (Jovchelovitch, 2007), a line of research in high demand nowadays, as shown by the movement against the traditional western de-legitimization of Indigenous knowledge - the so-called decolonization of science (Akena, 2012). SRT successfully addresses this demand as it is primarily focused on uncovering how lay people co-construct their shared realities, thus implicitly removing the categorization and hierarchization of different forms of knowledge and allowing the researcher (both methodologically and conceptually) to explore freely the socio-cultural influences that shape up people’s understanding, because knowledge is seen as a product in itself and not a mere reflection of reality (Macleod & Bhatia, 2008). Also, it enables considerations about the power relations present in society, thus making it an appropriate approach for the decolonizing project in psychology (Kessi & Kiguwa, 2015).

To sum up, the versatile character of SRT renders it conceptually apt to study phenomena in culturally diverse contexts without disregarding their socio-cultural components; on the contrary, the socio-cultural factors are recruited as necessary conditions in understanding the objects of study. Moreover, the methodological framework of SRT was left intentionally loose by its creator, in order for the researchers to not be constrained, but helped, by the methods employed, in that there may be a perfect accordance between the purposes of the researchers and the means they use to achieve their results (Moscovici, 2000). This enabled SRT to be used all over the globe in investigating a vast array of phenomena in a vast array of ways (de Rosa & d’Ambrosio, 2008; de Rosa, 2013). Hence, at this point, after more than 55 years since the introduction of SRT in social sciences, another question arises: “Is it possible that the same theory is differently referred to when used by researchers adopting so different approaches or working in different cultural scenarios? If so, what does this mean?” (de Rosa, 2013, p. 95).

In 1994, A.S. de Rosa signalled a need for the crystallization of the meta-theoretical level of SRT, by conducting a systematic critical review of the existing publications in this field, in order to provide answers as to the coherence of the theory, challenged by some authors, who found issues with its theoretical formalizations and methodological looseness, perceived as a vulnerability rather than a resource (de Rosa, 1994^a). In the same year, she launched an ample research project aimed at providing “an organic, comprehensive understanding of the overall development of this theory over time and across continents” (de Rosa & d’Ambrosio, 2008, p. 73). The declared goals of this project are the mapping of the theory and of the ways in which it was employed around the globe (according to the socio-cultural specificities) and over time, as well as providing an analytical overview of its various theoretical and methodological articulations; in addition to this, meta-

theoretical analysis aims to shed light on potential paradigmatic reformulations of SRT which might occur when drawing upon constructs specific to other theories (de Rosa, 2013). To this end, de Rosa developed the *Grid for Meta-Theoretical Analysis* (created by de Rosa in 1994^b and last updated in February 2014), which is a content analysis tool meant to be applied in its entirety or partially to publications related to SRT in order to shed light on how the theory was used in those respective publications. Thus, the *Grid* is structured in two parts, which correspond to two levels of analysis:

- **Bibliographic and bibliometric data:** the collection of identification information about a certain paper, used for mapping the diffusion and development of SRT, which include:
 - a) **data common to all publications**, such as the *type of resource* (book chapter, journal article, conference presentation, manuscript etc.), *type of paper* (empirical, theoretical or thematic review), name(s) of the *author(s)* and their geographical location according to their *latest institutional affiliations*, *title*, *year* and *language* of publication, *keywords* and *abstracts*;
 - b) **data specific to the type of resource analysed** (e.g. for *journal articles*, measures of their scientific diffusion as presented in the SCOPUS and ISI databases, for *book chapters*, details regarding the publishing houses, while for *conference presentations*, aspects concerning the events at which the papers were presented).
- **Meta-theoretical data:** the collection of information regarding how SRT was employed in the analysed publication from five points of interest:
 - a) **Theoretical reference(s) to SRT constructs:** a section dedicated to assessing whether the author(s) employed SRT as a main framework for their paper or whether it was referred to marginally, in a generic manner (i.e. when SRT is mentioned in passing, and not developed on either empirically or theoretically). Thus, when the publication makes *specific reference to SRT constructs*, it expands on elements representative for SRT (i.e. the *genesis*, *processes*, *functions*, *structure*, *transmission*, and *transformation* of social representations, with sets of subcategories for each of the aforementioned dimensions) and / or whether the contribution refers to SRT in a critical manner, comparing it to other theories or discussing its theoretical and methodological particularities (*meta-theory*).
 - b) **Theoretical references to constructs and theories related to SRT:** a section dedicated to identifying concepts and theories presented in the publication in relation to SRT. The type of relation between SRT and the respective concepts and theories (e.g. Social Identity Theory) may be one of integration, differentiation, comparison or replacement.
 - c) **Thematic analysis:** a section which aims at including the publication into a thematic area and, respectively, at identifying its specific object of study (e.g. thematic area: Health, object of study: AIDS), along with the typology of the social representations (closed, open or polemic).

- d) **Methodological profile** for the empirical publications: a section dedicated to gathering data related to the research design, instruments for data collection, techniques for data analysis, characteristics of the sample used.
- e) **Paradigmatic implications**: a section which gathers the author(s)' summaries of statements relevant for SRT, as presented in the publication verbatim.

Since 1994, several papers on meta-theoretical analysis of the SRT scientific literature have been published (e.g. de Rosa & d'Ambrosio, 2008; de Rosa, 2002, 2013), as the nature of this research project is intrinsically on-going (the production of publications on SRT has not ended). The previous findings articulate relationships between the two aforementioned levels, meta-data and meta-theoretical data, and seem to be consistent over time (de Rosa, 2013). As such, previous results reveal, for instance, how SRT is being employed by authors: e.g. "the definition of the Social Representation includes its function" (de Rosa, 2013, p. 104), the theoretical elements in which the authors seem to be most interested: e.g. "the dynamic nature of Social Representations" (de Rosa, 2013, p. 105), the paradigmatic trends in SRT (as revealed by a decrease in the production of publications employing the Central Nucleus Theory over time, which revealed, according to de Rosa, a departure from mentalist and cognitivist epistemic principles), a tendency to integrate concepts pertaining to other theories in SRT, as well as to integrate qualitative and quantitative methodology, an opposition between papers focusing on different thematic fields (e.g. health, identity) and papers focused on developing SRT (theoretical publications). These considerations on previous results obtained from meta-theoretical analysis are meant to illustrate the ample potential of this method in covering multiple aspects of how SRT has been employed, in an exploratory fashion.

Following the goals of meta-theoretical analysis presented by de Rosa (1994^{ab}, 2002, 2013) and presented above, the current research was driven by exploratory questions, formulated in a general fashion, so that no a priori assumptions on the part of the researcher might have influenced her while conducting meta-theoretical analysis. In short, we set out to see how SRT was applied in the geo-cultural context of Australia and New Zealand: What were the spatial and the temporal trajectories of SRT in this context? What was the preferred type of publications? What are the concepts employed to describe social representations? How is SRT positioned in the social sciences? What are the main thematic areas in which SRT has penetrated this geo-cultural area? What type of methodology is mostly preferred by Australian and New Zealand authors? Finally, the goal of this research paper may be summed up at attempting to grasp the nuances of how SRT was appropriated here from a conceptual point of view, as well as epistemological, epistemic, thematic and methodological.

As we previously mentioned, SRT emerged within the context of Social Psychology and conceptually pertains to Social Sciences. The current

bibliometric evaluation culture assesses the quality of research based on the scientific impact of the journal in which the research paper is published, on a criterion dependent upon the citation of the journal itself, a procedure which has been highly controversial, since bibliometric indicators are designed to show the scientific impact of a journal rather than its quality (Moed, 2002). The details of this controversial practice and its impact on the diffusion of SRT are discussed elsewhere (see de Rosa, 2014, 2015^b) and are beyond the scope of the current paper. For the purposes of our research, we chose two of the most popular measurements or rankings of journal quality, both based on citation impact. The Journal Impact factor, devised by Eugene Garfield (Garfield, 1955) and presently available in ISI Web of Science Thomson and Reuters database, is a measure of the amount of citations per year of articles published in a certain scientific journal. Thus, it is often considered a measure of how important a scholarly journal is as compared to its peers from the same field as well as a measure of the scientific evolution of said journal, always in its field. An alternative manner in which to assess the citation impact of an academic journal was proposed by Elsevier. The SCImago Journal Rank (SJR Indicator) is computed based on an algorithm which takes into account both the amount of citations a journal receives, and the amount of citations of the journals by which it is cited (from the Elsevier's SCOPUS database), thus operationalizing the prestige of the journal through its relevance within the larger network of scientific journals. The SJR indicator aims to go further than the Impact Factor, in that it allows comparisons of publications from different fields of research, and it accounts for the quality of the citations as well. Basically, the Impact Factor may be considered a measure of citation, whereas the SJR indicator – a measure of prestige of the journal. Hence, for the purposes of our research, we employed these two measures in order to obtain a picture of how widely SRT is disseminated in academic journals within its disciplinary parameters (Impact Factor) and, respectively, how prestigious these journals are across disciplines (SJR indicator).

4.3.Method

The sample of publications used for this article consisted of 107 publications extracted from the *So.Re.Com* “A.S. de Rosa” @-library, “a digital platform integrating scientific documentation, networking and training purposes in the field of Social Representations and Communication” (de Rosa, 2015^a, p. 4938), based on the criterion of the geographical location of the institution to which the first author was affiliated (a comprehensive listing of full publications may be found at the European/International Joint PhD in Social Representations & Communication Research Center and Multimedia Lab, P.za Cavalieri di Malta 2, Rome-Italy or may be consulted upon request to A.S. de Rosa).

All of the publications were meta-theoretically analysed: upon reading each of them, the researcher filled in the *Grid for Meta-Theoretical Analysis*, by writing down the presence / absence of all categories presented in the previous

section. Most of the items in the *Grid* are not mutually exclusive; for instance, a paper may refer to thematically at “Health” as well as “Identity”, which, along with the categorical nature of most of the variables, restricted the choices for data analysis techniques. Thus, in order to answer to the research questions listed above, the data obtained from the corpus of publications was analysed in three ways:

- a. First, a descriptive profile was compiled based on absolute and relative frequencies for each of the categories present in the *Grid*.
- b. Secondly, the entire corpus of abstracts and their key words was subjected to a textual analysis conducted with the IRAMUTEQ software 0.7 alpha 2.
- c. Thirdly, the data compiled with the *Grid* was subjected to Hierarchical Clustering on Principal Components analyses conducted with the R software 3.3.2, the package FactoMineR.

4.4. Results and discussion

- a. Descriptive profile of the data (a comprehensive listing of full results may be found at the European/International Joint PhD in Social Representations & Communication Research Center and Multimedia Lab, P.za Cavalieri di Malta 2, Rome-Italy or may be consulted upon request to A.S. de Rosa)

The entire data corpus consisted of 107 items, a majority of them being *articles published in scientific journals* (74.77%), followed by *book chapters* (14.95%) and *conference presentations* (10.28%), most of them *empirical* (54.2%), with 43.9% *theoretical publications* and only 1.9% *thematic reviews*. Most of these works were published *between 2002 and 2011* (43.93%), with the first ones published in 1990, and the last ones in 2016, mainly in *English* (94.39%), by first authors affiliated to institutions in *Australia* (58.88%) and *New Zealand* (41.12%).

The sample of publications references SRT mostly in a *specific* manner (85%), which means that it develops on its specific constructs, such as SRs *functions*, mentioned in 72.9% of the publications, the *processes* through which a SR is formed (43.9%), as well as focusing on SRs from a *genetic* perspective (34.6%). Moreover, the publications describe how SRs are *transformed* (44.9%) and *transmitted* (26.2%), referencing *structure-related* elements (17.8%) and making *meta-theoretical considerations* (39.3%). Only 20.6% of the publications may be included in a *specific paradigmatic approach* to SRT, mainly in the *structural* and *dialogical* ones. *SRT is presented in connection with other theories*, largely Social Identity Theory (28.04%) and Social Cognition Theories (24.3), as well as theories from Philosophy (19.63%) and Social Constructionism (18.69%).

Most of the publications treat *practical topics* focused on *environment* issues (20.6%), such as *tourism*, and in equal proportion (20.6%), aspects pertaining to *SRT itself* (*meta-theory*, *methodological issues*). Then, we deal with publications on *cultural* phenomena (17.8%), such as *history*, as well as *identity* issues (16.8%), like national and supra-national identity, cultural

identity, and social identity. *Other thematic foci* which are dealt with to a lesser extent are represented by issues from the political and ideological sphere (15%), interpersonal or intergroup relations and dimensions (12.1%), Social Psychology and other disciplines (12.1%), and health and illness phenomena (11.2%).

The data corpus of *articles* comprises 80 publications. The most recurrent journal is *Papers on Social Representations* (12.50%), a journal specialized on SRT, published by an Austrian university until 2009 and by a United Kingdom one ever since. The second journal chosen by Australian and New Zealand authors is the *British Journal of Social Psychology* (6.25%), owned by the British Psychological Society and meant to illustrate representatively the works of

British psychologists
([http://onlinelibrary.wiley.com/journal/10.1111/\(ISSN\)2044-](http://onlinelibrary.wiley.com/journal/10.1111/(ISSN)2044-8309/homepage/Society.html)

8309/homepage/Society.html). Then, we have the *Journal of Community and Applied Social Psychology* (6.25%), a thematically oriented journal edited by authors in Ireland, the UK, New Zealand, China and Italy. The selected articles are published in journals mainly indexed in *SCOPUS* (75%) and *ISI* (70%), with *SJR* values ranging from 2.262 to 0.267 (in 2015), and, respectively, *Impact Factor* values from 5.450 to 0.466 (in 2015). The *main thematic subject areas*, as indexed by *SCOPUS*, are Psychology (37.5%), followed by Arts and Humanities (8.3%), and Business (8.3%). According to the *ISI* database, the most encountered *subject categories* are Social Psychology (28.1%), Multidisciplinary Psychology (9.4%), and Environment (6.3%).

The *conference presentations* ($N = 11$) were found to have been only submitted to *International Conferences on Social Representations*, a bi-annual serial dedicated scientific event on social representations (100%), and were mostly submitted as individual contributions (63.64%). Concerning the *book chapters analyzed* ($N = 16$), most of them were published in the UK (50%), followed by Italy (31.25%), Japan, New Zealand, USA (each making up for 6.25%).

The *empirical publications* ($N = 58$) mostly have a *descriptive* research design (70.7%), and were conducted in a *laboratory* setting (69%). The nature of research was mainly *inter-group* (41.4%), followed by *longitudinal* studies (20.7%). The sampling strategy preferred was *convenience* sampling (74.14%), and the size of the sample ranged mostly from 101 to 500 participants (31%), followed by samples over 500 participants (25.9%). The studies were generally conducted on *subjects without a pre-existing social positioning* (51.7%), followed by studies conducted on *members of groups constituted for the purposes of the research and without a previous history of interaction* (24.1%). Regarding the *methodology* employed, 53.4% of the studies used *structured instruments* (namely, questionnaires, structured interviews and scales), while 39.7% were conducted using *open instruments* (semi-directive interviews, open ended questionnaires, word association techniques, free interviews). *Figurative-graphic techniques* were only used in 6.9% of cases, while

observant techniques – in 3.4% of them. The techniques for data analysis preferred were mainly *quantitative* (70.7%): descriptive, bivariate and multivariate statistics. *Qualitative data analysis techniques* were found in 39.7% of the publications: content analysis, discursive and discourse analysis, as well as thematic analysis.

Based on the descriptive profile of the data, the majority of Australian and New Zealander authors tend to publish in scientific journals indexed in SCOPUS and ISI, a common trend nowadays due to the fact that the evaluation of the scientific quality of research is now performed in relation to citation impact, which is applicable only to journal articles (for more details, see de Rosa, 2015^b). The journals of choice reveal the professional ties of this geo-cultural area with the European scientific community in general and the one in the UK particularly in line with the findings of Feather (2005) and Kruglanski and Stroebe (2010); also, according to the disciplinary areas of the journals, the main disciplines in which SRT has been applied here may be ascertained: the majority of articles were published within (social) psychology, followed by applied disciplines, such as environment. These results support the high empirical applicability and relevance of SRT in studying phenomena of high social interest (Jovchelovitch, 2007), while also revealing that SRT may have pervaded this area via the professional connections between the academic social networks of European social psychologists and, respectively, Australian and New Zealander social psychologists. In addition to this, it should be noted that SRT is widely disseminated through specialized channels, such as the journal *Papers on Social Representations* and the International Conferences on Social Representations, which reveals that the authors who publish on SRT from Australia and New Zealand are not isolated, but rather actively involved in the international community of researchers dedicated to studying SRs. Most of the publications in our sample reference SRT specifically, thus developing on its specific theoretical elements, such as the functions and processes of SRs, and position the theory in relation with SIT and Social Cognition theories. Methodologically, we see a preference for quantitative approaches (both in terms of methods and data analysis techniques), which may reflect the proximities between SRT and mainstream social psychology specific to this geo-cultural area.

- b. Textual analysis of abstracts and keywords (a comprehensive listing of full results may be found at the European/International Joint PhD in Social Representations & Communication Research Center and Multimedia Lab, P.za Cavalieri di Malta 2, Rome-Italy or may be consulted upon request to A.S. de Rosa)

The corpus comprised 98 abstracts and their respective keywords, Initial Context Units (ICUs), which were first analyzed lexicometrically with the Iramuteq (Interface de R pour les Analyses Multimensionnelles de Textes et de Questionnaires) software 0.7 alpha 2. Initially, the corpus was found to be fit for analysis (48.58% HAPAX < 50%; 18.39% type/token ratio < 20%).

Lemmatization of the corpus was conducted based on the English dictionary incorporated in the software in order to group plural and singular forms under a single form, as well as revert the conjugated verbs to their infinitives. Also, it allowed the grouping of the forms into two categories, active and illustrative ones, according to the subsequent manner in which the data analysis will be conducted. For the purposes of our analysis, we kept as active forms adjectives, adverbs, nouns and verbs, and as illustrative – demonstrative, indefinite, interrogative and possessive adjectives and pronouns, excluding from the analysis numerical adjectives, definite and indefinite articles, auxiliary verbs, numbers, conjunctions, prepositions, onomatopoeic forms and unrecognized forms, based on the criterion of pertinence to our data corpus: as the abstracts and keywords focus on scientific knowledge, the excluded forms could not add any significant gain in meaning, but could decrease the latter (Reinert, 1983). Based on the same rationale, we chose to exclude from analysis the expression “social representation(s)”. The results of the lemmatization showed a decrease in the number of HAPAX forms to 44.37%, and the type/token ratio to 14.63%, thus rendering the text analysis more stable.

Afterwards, a Hierarchical Descending Classification (HDC) of ICUs was performed based on the entire lexical table (Reinert, 1983). This analysis took into consideration the following variables: *country of institutional affiliation for the first author* (Australia / New Zealand), *indexation in ISI and, respectively, SCOPUS databases* (absent/present), *type of resource* (article / conference presentation / book chapter), *decade in which the item was published*, with the purpose of exploring if certain clusters were specific to a certain country, period of time, resource type, and, respectively, more likely to being indexed in the two databases.

The 98 ICUs were processed based on the distribution of vocabulary to engender 522 text segments, Elementary Context Units (ECUs), of which 387 (74.14%) were kept in the clustering solution proposed, illustrated in Figure 1. In Figure 2, the same clusters are presented, along with the most representative words for each of them; the size of the words varies according to the chi square coefficients: the higher the value, the higher the contribution of the word to the organization of the cluster. Thus, the first words represent their respective clusters best.

Upon performing the HDC, a factorial correspondence analysis is conducted by IRAMUTEQ, which presents the results of HDC in a diagram, as shown in Figure 3, which depicts the most representative words for each class, marked by different colors. This provides the researcher with the opportunity to contextualize the typical units for each class and then interpret them through content analysis (Chaves et al., 2017). The diagram reveals that the clusters may be grouped further, based on their distribution on the axes (Carman, 2015), best captured in Figure 4: thus, the x-axis reveals an opposition between clusters 5 and 3 (closer to the negative pole) and clusters 1, 2 and 4, closer to the positive pole, while the y-axis reveals an opposition between classes 3 and

2 (the positive pole) and, respectively, 1, 4 and 5 (the negative pole). At this point, we should also note that IRAMUTEQ offers the option of visualizing the ECUs from which the clustered words originate, thus providing the researcher with the possibility of retrieving the initial ICUs and interpreting the results by also referencing the publications from which the abstracts and keywords were selected.

The polarization along the y-axis groups clusters 2 and 3, while dividing them from clusters 1, 4 and 5. According to Figure 2, this opposition corresponds to the division of the corpus into two sub-corpora, which were subsequently refined in six classes. Thus, Cluster 2 (accounting for 32.8% of the total ECUs of the corpus) and Cluster 3 (accounting for 15% of the total ECUs of the corpus) were obtained from one of the sub-corpora, while Clusters 1 (30%), 4 (10.3%) and 5 (11.9%) represent the refinement of a different sub-corpora. This translates into the fact that the vocabularies of Clusters 2 and 3 will be similar to each other on the one hand, and on the other hand, different from the lexicon of Clusters 1, 4 and 5 (Chaves et al., 2017). Upon re-reading the corpus and referencing back to the original publications, the logic between the classification performed by the software became apparent, and we proceeded to interpret the results based on this type of content analysis, in line with the procedure employed by Chaves et al in 2017.

Clusters 2 and 3 are focused on two of the main thematic areas presented in the *Grid for Meta-Theoretical Analysis: Identity* (Cluster 2) and, respectively, *Interpersonal or Intergroup Relations and Dimensions* (Cluster 3). This line of research has a long-standing tradition in the geo-cultural area defined by Australia and New Zealand, as Kruglanski and Stroebe (2010) point out in the *Handbook of the History of Social Psychology*. According to them, Australian and New Zealander social psychologists have always had close affiliations to the UK, US and European scientific communities, explained by the fact that the first generation of social psychologists from this area had migrated from Europe and North America. Moreover, the professional relationships with these geo-cultural areas were maintained along the years, as evidenced by the famous collaborations between John Turner (an Australian social psychologist) and Henri Tajfel (a British social psychologist), who together developed Social Identity Theory (SIT) and its related constructs. In addition to this, Turner had gone on to create his own Self-Categorization Theory, rooted in Social Identity Theory, which aims at explaining group phenomena based on a conceptualization of the group departing from the personal self as the basic unit of analysis (Turner & Onorato, 1998). In this manner, through a subsequent propagation of SIT aided by the contributions of Michael Hogg, Australia has gained a place in the global social psychology arena as one of the major international centers of research into SIT and Self-Categorization Theory (Kruglanski & Stroebe, 2010). Evidently, due to the geographic proximity and cultural affinities, New Zealand social psychologists took part in this tradition, by being involved in the actual research projects and even forming an



incorporated organization with Australian social psychologists in 1995, the Society of Australasian Social Psychology, as well as being consistently present at the annual Sydney Symposium on Social Psychology (Kruglanski & Stroebe, 2010). Since SRT originates and primarily resides in Social Psychology from a disciplinary point of view (although it has been employed in other disciplines as well, such as Applied Linguistics, Community Health Sciences, Tourism, and Ecosystem and Forest Sciences⁶, to name just a few Australian researchers who used SRT despite being active in other disciplines), we may assume that SRT was appropriated in this geo-cultural area mainly through Social Psychology. As such, it was mostly employed and conceptualized within a field where the main thematic areas were traditionally the study of social identity and intergroup relations, which explains the focus of Clusters 2 and 3 on these dimensions.

The influence of the pre-existent research traditions in Social Psychology in Australia and New Zealand was exerted both at a theoretical level and on a thematic one. Thus, from a theoretical point of view, Australian authors were sensitive to the similarities between SRT and Social Cognition Theories, and pleaded for an integration of SRT into Social Schema Theories, as argued by Augoustinos and Innes in an article published in 1990, which was actually based on Martha Augoustinos 1991 PhD paper, *Social representations and social cognition: a convergence of different traditions*, where she amply described the parallels among the two approaches and suggested that the integration of SRT in the mainstream would provide an optimal response to its criticism as well. This tendency is illustrated in the Clusters 3 and 2 by the significant chi-square results of words such as *identity, attitude, attribution, representation*. From a thematic point of view, identity and intergroup relations have also been a privileged thematic area in Australia and New Zealand: Martha Augoustinos went on to research specific objects of study, such as the Australian National Identity (1993), the process of reconciliation (Augoustinos & Penny, 1992), and the intergroup relations between humanitarian Sudanese refugees and Australians, where she employed both self-categorization theory and SRT (Augoustinos, Hanson-Easey, & Due, 2015), as illustrated by the following lexical units: *reconciliation, group, nation, identity, society, category, dominant, identification, cohesion, exclusion, resistance, conflict*.

Of course, the choice of objects of study is in line with the social issues that this geo-cultural context has been facing, such as the multi-national and multi-cultural character of its population, as well as the social integration of several groups of humanitarian refugees. Thus, in cluster 3, the top five words associated, *ideology, negation, inequality, exclusion and policies* point to a

⁶ Applied Linguistics (Stephen H. Moore, Macquarie University)
Community Health Sciences (Cherry Russell, University of Sydney)
Tourism (Philip L. Pearce, James Cook University of North Queensland)
Ecosystem and Forest Sciences (Nerida Anderson, University of Melbourne)

line of research conducted by Chris G. Sibley, a New Zealander social psychologist who studied how in post-colonial nations in general and in New Zealand in particular, the socio-structural conditions lead to the development of two types of *ideology*: one of historic recognition or *negation*, and one of symbolic projection or *exclusion* of the Indigenous populations (the Maori one, in this case), an ideological duo that shapes up the intergroup relations between the former colonizers and the Indigenous population, often formalized in political and social policies. Social representations of the nation and of its history have a considerable contribution in creating the identity of the group (here, the nation), thus positioning the Indigenous populations within or outside of the shared national identity according to the social representation of the dominant group regarding past events; this is how social inequality becomes legitimized – through the historical negation of the contribution of minority groups to the national identity (Sibley, 2010). Here, the potential of SRT in capturing post-colonial phenomena of high social relevance, to which we adverted in the introduction part of the article, is very well represented.

In cluster 2, we find one of the main thematic areas studied in this geo-cultural area, namely *social representations of history*, an area highly explored by James H. Liu in his studies, who authored 23.47% of the publications in this corpus. The words in this cluster describe several aspects of his research, such as the context in which it was conducted, how it is positioned within SRT conceptually, as well as thematically and methodologically. Below, we provide a brief description of his contribution to SRT as captured within Cluster 2; in order to facilitate the reading, the words which are significantly associated with the cluster are marked in italic.

He describes himself as a *Chinese-American-New Zealander*, as he worked in all of these contexts, but has currently settled in New Zealand (the variable *country of institutional affiliation for the first author* is significantly associated with this cluster, in the sense that over 50 % of the publications from New Zealand are here). His work may be situated in the broader thematic area of Social Representations and *Identity* as he explored the content of people's *collectively* shared beliefs about *national/world* history *cross-culturally*. His research shows that the nature of history is inherently representational, as it is created through the dynamics of *group* interactions, and not on an individual level (Liu & Sibley, 2015), and it basically acts as a series of cautionary tales embroidered with *symbolic* or iconic *past figures*. Moreover, the *narratives* provided to a group by its *remembered* history, as reflected in its social *memory* contribute to the construction of the group's *identity* and of the manners in which it interacts and relates to other groups (Liu & Hilton, 2005).

The research Liu has conducted on social representations of history has extended over a large array of cultural contexts (24 by 2015), as he wanted to investigate whether the main *events* that people remember regarding history are *universal*. He was indeed able to draw a few general conclusions, among which the fact that people tend to remember historical events surrounding *conflict*,

*fight*s and *war*, rather than periods of conflict *resolution* and *reconciliation*, *calamities* rather than economic *progress*, and that when thinking about the world history, people recollect prototypical cases of international conflicts, such as World War II, and specific villains, like Hitler (Liu & Sibley, 2015). These representation of history make up and consolidate people's positive identities of the self and of the in-group, as they perceive themselves as fundamentally opposed to the *traits* attributed to the great villains of history, which they also extend by generalization to whole other nations, such as Germany (Liu *et al.*, 2005). Also, via his prolific cross-cultural research, Liu has been able to identify a general narrative structure of the representations of history: they are organized as stories, based on extraordinary events set in motion by heroes and villains. Methodologically, Liu's research was mainly carried out on *university* students, and used open-ended questionnaires with two *items* as a preferred method of data collection (Liu *et al.*, 2005). It added to the literature on SRT by introducing the use of survey methods for studying social memory and collective remembering, a field which had been before tackled by using interpretative methods only (Liu, Sibley, & Huang, 2014).

Regarding the variables introduced in the HDC analysis, significant associations were found with *country of institutional affiliation for the first author* (Australia / New Zealand), *indexation in ISI and, respectively, SCOPUS* databases (absent/present) and *type of resource* (article / conference presentation / book chapter), in the sense that both Clusters 2 and 3 mainly comprise ECUs from abstracts of New Zealander publications, conference presentations for Cluster 2 and journal articles in Cluster 3, which were not indexed in SCOPUS and ISI databases. No significant associations were found between the *decade in which the item was published* and the clusters. These results reveal that the impact of *identity* and *intergroup relations* on the way SRT is conceptualized and employed has relatively stayed the same across time, as well as the fact that these topics do not influence the scientific dissemination of the theory as measured bibliometrically.

To sum up, Clusters 2 and 3 reflect both a theoretical and an empirical line of research into SRT which focuses on identity and intergroup relations theories and objects of study, in accordance with the pre-existent tradition of research in Social Psychology best represented in Australia and New Zealand. It shows how SRT was appropriated in this area, and thus addresses the goal of the meta-theoretical analysis as stated by de Rosa in 2013, by providing a distinct answer: in Australia and New Zealand, SRT has been adopted and employed through the lens of mainstream social psychology, namely social cognition.

On the other hand, we have an alternative direction of research, made apparent by Clusters 1, 4 and 5 (the negative pole of the y-axis). The vocabulary employed in these clusters reveals the applicability of SRT in studying social objects of contemporary relevance, the so-called "hot topics" which pervade the media and the public attention at different times in history. The lexicon in Cluster 1 best describes it: this *psychological theoretical approach* (SRT) is

employed to *research* social *practices* and their *meaning*, in order to provide an *explanation* to several issues of actuality for this geo-cultural context, issues pertaining to *health*, environment (*landscape, mountain, plantation, place, forestry, rural areas*), *economy, organizations*. While Cluster 1 reveals more isolated thematic foci, Clusters 4 and 5 depict research areas that have been consolidated over time in this geo-cultural area. Thus, Cluster 4 focuses on *organ donation*, a topic introduced by Gail Moloney and Ian Walker almost 20 years ago (e.g. Moloney & Walker, 2000) and still relevant today (Moloney et al., 2015), while Cluster 5 shows a picture of the impact of *tourism* on *communities*, dealing with environmental issues such as sustainability, socio-economic aspects, such as the context-specific social issues that affect the *development* of tourist *destinations* (e.g. *the Gold Coast*), like the “Schoolies week”, an Australian “annual high school-leaver celebration characterised by extensive partying and drinking” (Weaver & Lawton, 2013, p. 165).

Regarding the variables introduced in the HDC analysis, significant associations were found with *country of institutional affiliation for the first author* (Australia / New Zealand), *decade in which the item was published* and *type of resource* (article / conference presentation / book chapter). Thus, Cluster 1 is significantly associated with the decade of publication, in the sense that most of the ECUs were extracted from abstracts of papers from 2000-2009. This supports our interpretation according to which SRT is employed to study “hot topics”, as this social interest associated to a social phenomenon is temporary-specific. All three clusters comprise units extracted from mainly Australian publications, which again do not have significant associations with the two bibliometric indexes analyzed. Since most of the articles included in this analysis were actually indexed in the two databases, the current results might suggest that their indexation does not depend on the thematic focus of the publication, as this was the apparent criterion for the clustering procedure.

To conclude, Clusters 1, 4 and 5 comprise works of both Social Psychologists and researchers who employed SRT in order to apply a socio-psychological perspective in different disciplines, such as tourism, health, and environment. As elsewhere in the world (see Sammut, Andreouli, Gaskell, & Valsiner, 2015, for a comprehensive overview), SRT has proven its empirical utility for tackling the study of social concerns through its trans-disciplinary applicability in Australia and New Zealand as well. Therefore, although it has migrated to this geo-cultural area through the lens of Social Psychology broadly and Social Cognition specifically, which still exert a significant influence over it nowadays, it is important to note that SRT has also surpassed these disciplinary and conceptual boundaries to expand to other fields of inquiry.

- c. Hierarchical Clustering on Principal Components analyses conducted with the R software 3.3.2, the FactoMineR package (a comprehensive listing of full results may be found at the European/International Joint PhD in Social Representations & Communication Research Center and Multimedia Lab,

P.za Cavalieri di Malta 2, Rome-Italy or may be consulted upon request to A.S. de Rosa)

Given the exploratory character of this research, the categorical nature of most of the data obtained via meta-theoretical analysis and the high number of variables resulting from applying the *Grid* for Meta-theoretical analysis, the statistical analysis techniques employed aimed at reducing the data by identifying homogenous subgroups of publications that best reflect the inherent relational structure between the variables. To this end, we have chosen a clustering algorithm, which allowed us to split the dataset into several categories based on high intra-group similarity and, respectively, high inter-group dissimilarity. Hierarchical Clustering on Principal Components (HCPC) combines the two classical approaches to clustering: Hierarchical Agglomerative Methods, namely, Hierarchical Clustering based on Ward's criterion, which implies choosing the clusters from the hierarchical tree based on the increase in between-cluster inertia and Partitioning Clustering, namely, k-means clustering, which involves specifying a number of clusters a priori, and then iteratively dividing the sample into clusters randomly, until an optimal solution is found (Husson, Lê, & Pagès, 2010). In HCPC, the initial clustering solution is obtained via Hierarchical Clustering, after which the number of clusters found through this procedure is employed as the first step applying the k-means procedure, referred to as the consolidation of the clusters (Husson, Josse, & Pagès, 2010). The advantages of this method are twofold: first, as compared to using HC alone, the clusters obtained after the consolidation with the k-means algorithm are more robust in what concerns the inertia criterion, and second, as compared to using only k-means clustering, the number of clusters is not decided by the researcher, but revealed by a statistical procedure, which makes HCPC apt for exploratory research (Argüelles, Benavides, Fernández, 2014). Another advantage of this procedure is that it may be applied on the principal components obtained with a Multiple Correspondence Analysis (MCA), which means clustering can be applied to categorical data. In addition to this, HCPC also functions as a "de-noising method" for large sets of data with multiple variables: usually, in MCA, when the data is high-dimensional, the first dimensions comprise the essential information, while the last ones are considered to be "noise", that is, information irrelevant for the purposes of the research; by performing the clustering algorithm only on the first dimensions in terms of amount of inertia explained (70%-90%), the clustering solution is more robust and stable (Husson, Lê, & Pagès, 2010).

We first conducted a HCPC on the entire corpus of data, using the variables from the *Grid for Meta-Theoretical Analysis* that applied to all of our publications, and thus excluding the variables that only characterize certain types of resources (e.g. bibliometrical indexes, which only apply to articles) and certain types of paper (e.g. the methodological profile only applies to empirical publications). Our purpose was to explore the research questions

referring to the way SRT was adopted in Australia and New Zealand from a conceptual point of view, in relation with other theories and disciplines and, respectively, thematically, as well as to explore any potential relationships between these areas. HCPC can provide insight into these areas of interest by dividing the corpus of publications into groups of publications similar among themselves and different from the other groups, which would reveal to us the different directions of research into SRT in the geo-cultural context of Australia and New Zealand. Hence, in line with the description of the meta-theoretical analysis procedure and the use of its Grid, as outlined by de Rosa in 2013 and supported by her previous research (e.g. de Rosa, 2013; de Rosa & d'Ambrosio, 2008), we selected from the entire corpus of data specific variables that address the aforementioned research questions:

- a. **Bibliographic and bibliometric data:** *type of resource* (book chapter, journal article, conference presentation), *type of paper* (empirical, theoretical or thematic review), *country of latest institutional affiliation for the first authors* (Australia or New Zealand), *decade in which the paper was published* (1982-1991, 1992-2001, 2002-2011, 2012-2021). The language in which the papers were published was eliminated from the analysis as an outlier (due to the high discrepancies between the frequencies of its modalities: we had 101 publications in English, 5 in Italian and one in French)
- b. **Meta-theoretical data:**
 - **Theoretical reference(s) to SRT constructs:** *type of reference to SRT* (generic or specific), theoretical elements representative for SRT (absent/present): the genesis of SRs- *ontogenesis, socio-genesis, micro-genesis*; the processes through which SRs are formed: *anchoring, objectification*; *elements related to the structure of SRs*; the functions of SRs: *familiarization, facilitate communication, guide for behaviour, social identity related functions*; *transmission through: communication, practices, knowledge, social identification, social changes*; *transformation via: communication, practices, knowledge, social changes via interaction, social identity, emotions*; *whether the contribution refers to SRT in a critical manner (meta-theory)*. Most of these subcategories were further classified into other subtypes in the *Grid*, subtypes which were excluded from the present analysis as outliers.
 - **Theoretical references to constructs and theories related to SRT:** *attitude, belief system, cognitive representations, cognitive schemata, collective representations, common sense, cultural knowledge, image, individual representations, opinion, perception, practice, themata*; *Attitude Theory, Attribution Theory, Behaviourist Theories, Discursive Psychology, Field Theory, Game Theories, Gestalt Psychology, Social Cognition, Social Constructionism, Social Identity Theories, Social Influence Theories, Socio-Interactionist Theories, Socio-Cultural Theories, Structural Theories, Symbolic Interactionism, Anthropological Approaches*,

Developmental Approaches, Ethnographic Approaches, Philosophical Approaches, Sociological Approaches.

- **Thematic analysis:** 13 thematic areas were kept– *Communication, Culture, Deviance, Development, Gender and family roles, Economics, work and organizations, Environment, Health & Illness, Identity, Interpersonal and intergroup relations and dimensions, Politics & Ideology, Social Psychology and other disciplines, SRT meta-theory and methodological issues*, along with the typology of the social representations (*closed, open or polemic*).

MCA was performed as a pre-processing step of the data on all the above-mentioned variables, which were inserted as active, in order to reveal the articulations between the Bibliographic data and, respectively, the meta-theoretical data. Then, Ward's Hierarchical Clustering was applied on the MCA results (the first 42 dimensions, which explain 90% of the inertia) to determine the number of clusters to be later consolidated with the k-means algorithm. The results of the HC are represented in Figures 5 and 6, and they show that the data is best divided into three clusters of publications, which were then consolidated to engender the final solution, illustrated in Figures 7 and 8.

The clustering solution suggests that there are three manners in which SRT is employed by the authors in Australia and New Zealand. The first one, represented by the publications in Cluster 1 concentrates 43.92% of the publications from the initial corpus and comprises *all the conference presentations* (100%) and all the papers which reference SRT in a *generic* way (100%). It should be mentioned that the conference presentations in the data corpus were mainly present in the form of an abstract, due to the unavailability of the full-text versions, which makes them similar to generic publications due to the inherent limit of space specific to abstracts. Thus, this cluster is characterized by the *statistically significant absence of references to the functions of SRs, the way they are transmitted and transformed, as well as their relation with other constructs and theories*. Thematically, we find here all the publications which studied objects from the fields of *Economy, Work and Organizations*, as well as 68.18% of the publications which addressed SRT in a critical fashion (meta-theoretically). 42.53% of the publications in this cluster were published between *1992 and 2001*, very close to the time when SRT was first adopted in this geo-cultural area (the first publications in our sample were published in 1990). Hence, we may draw a few conclusions about the temporal trajectory of SRT in Australia and New Zealand, namely that when it was first adopted in this geo-cultural area, it was employed either generically in empirical research (such as the one focused on *Economy, Work and Organizations*), or briefly referred to within critical theoretical debates. However, upon a closer inspection of the elements in Cluster 1, we see that this trend is still present in empirical (e.g. Moloney et al., 2015) as well as theoretical works (Liu & MacDonald, 2016). The nature of this line of research

is best exemplified by the paragons for this cluster (the publications closest to the centroid), the most representative publications: the first two closest to the centroid are an empirical generic article (Riggs, Delfabbro, & Augoustinos, 2010) and, respectively, a generic theoretical article (Lawrence & Valsiner, 2003).

A second direction of SRT in Australia and New Zealand is represented by the publications grouped in Cluster 2, which is the largest sub-corpus identified, as it comprises almost half of the sample analyzed (45.79%). It opposes the trend depicted by Cluster 1, as it consists of most of the *empirical* publications (62.07%) as well most of the papers which reference SRT in a *specific* manner (53.84% of the entire corpus); also, it is *positively associated with the absence of Economy, Work and Organizations and, respectively, SRT as thematic areas*. Moreover, in contrast with Cluster 1, it comprises publications which make *specific* reference to SRs *functions* (orientation and control of social reality, social identity related functions and guide for behavior and intergroup relations), their social *transmission* through communication, as well as their *typology* (polemic and emancipated). *Conceptually*, SRs are described in relation with perception(s), attitude(s), opinion(s), belief system(s) and cognitive schemas and processes, while the theory itself is positioned only in connection with SIT. Cluster 2 comprises publications mainly *published between 2002 up to the present time* (2016 being the latest year of publication in our sample), which shows there has been a shift from the trend that dominated the first chronological period revealed in Cluster 1: from employing SRT generically and debating its critical value, several researchers moved on to employing it in empirical research by studying the functions of SRs as delineated in its original conceptualization, as well as how SRs are transmitted through communication and their typology, a line of research first set forth by Moscovici himself in his opus prima (Moscovici, 1961). The *conceptual* closeness of SRT to Social Cognition and SIT in this geo-cultural area that was apparent in the results of the analysis of abstracts may be noticed here as well, both through the reference to SIT as well as to the high association with *social identity related functions*. Consistent with the results from the previous analyses, Cluster 2 mainly comprises publications from the thematic areas of Environment (72.7%) and Culture, a category which encompasses the publications focused on *history* (73.68%), as evidenced by the most representative publications for this cluster: Liu & Sibley, 2015; Liu et al., 2010; Pearce, Wu, & Chen, 2015; Lai, Hsu, & Nepal, 2013; Callaghan, Moloney, & Blair, 2012.

The third and final trend in SRT research in Australia and New Zealand is represented by Cluster 3, which accounts for 10.28% of the sample and represents a small sub-corpus focused on meta-theoretical issues, namely positioning SRT in the larger field of Social Sciences, as evinced by the strong association with the thematic area *Social Psychology and other disciplines*. Thus, 81.82% of the publications in this cluster are *theoretical*, mostly

published as *book chapters* between 1992 and 2001, when, as also revealed by Cluster 1, SRT was still trying to find its conceptual place here. Once again, the connection between SRT and Social Psychology in general and Social Cognition in particular is made apparent, as *SRT is positioned in relation with Social Cognition Theories, Attitude Theories, Attribution Theories and Behaviourist Theories*, while SRs are discussed in connection with *concepts* such as *cognitive schemas and processes, cognitive representations, attitudes and perception*. However, *alternative traditional conceptualizations* of SRT are discussed as well; thus, these publications reference the socio-constructivist premises of SRT (Socio-Constructivism), as well as its sociological orientation (Symbolic Interactionism) and its connections with developmental approaches (Socio-Cultural Theories). The controversial relationship between SRT and Discursive Psychology is also addressed, as well as epistemological issues (Philosophical Approaches, collective representations). The *theoretical elements specific to SRT* that are best highlighted in this line of research are the *transformation* of SRs (through all the subcategories analysed), their *functions* (familiarization, guide for behaviour and intergroup relations, facilitation of communication) and *micro-genesis*. Hence, the theoretical debates surrounding SRT in Australia and New Zealand focus more on the dynamic nature of SRs and how they are influenced by (micro-genesis) and how they influence individuals. We might better understand this individualistic focus if we consider the influence of the US social psychology in this area, an aspect documented by Feather, 2005.

In order to ascertain how widely SRT is disseminated in academic journals within its disciplinary parameters (Impact Factor) and, respectively, how prestigious these journals are across disciplines (SJR indicator) in Australia and New Zealand, and how these aspects may be articulated with the methodological profiles of the empirical publications, we performed another HCPC by extracting from the initial corpus the empirical articles published in journals ($N = 58$). For MCA, we kept the same variables as before and added as measures of the scientific diffusion of SRT its presence in the journals indexed by the SCOPUS and ISI databases as well as the values of the SJR and the Impact Factor coefficients. We also included in the analysis variables pertaining to the methodological profile of the first study presented in each of the publications of our corpus, as follows: *type of research design* (Descriptive, Experimental, Quasi-Experimental, Not Mentioned), *whether the study was conducted in the field or a laboratory setting*, *whether the study was longitudinal, cross-cultural, cross-national or inter-group*, *whether the study was conducted on individuals without social positioning, groups with / without a history*, *the type of instruments employed and the type of data analysis technique*.

Ward's Hierarchical Clustering was applied on the MCA results (the first 33 dimensions, which explain 90% of the inertia) to determine the number of clusters to be later consolidated with the k-means algorithm. The results of the

HC are represented in Figure 9, and they show that the data is best divided into three clusters of empirical articles, which were then consolidated to engender the final solution, illustrated in Figures 10 and 11.

The three cluster solution has the strongest association with the *first authors' countries of institutional affiliation*, which shows that there are significant differences between the empirical articles from Australia and New Zealand. Thus, Cluster 1 comprises only publications from New Zealand (100%), 76.19% of all the New Zealand articles, while Clusters 2 and 3 comprise together all the publications from Australia (64.52% for Cluster 2 and, respectively, 35.48% for Cluster 3).

In Australia, we can identify two trends of empirical research published in journals, one in which SRT is employed more *generically* and which is the most developed in this geo-cultural area (Cluster 2, which accounts for 48.08% of all the publications), and a second line of empirical research, where SRT is employed *specifically*, that is, with reference to SRs *functions, processes, genesis, transformation* (Cluster 3, which accounts for 21.15%). The differences between these two directions from Australia lie only within this aspect, whether SRT is treated more generically or specifically. It is notable that the largest part of the journal-published empirical research in our sample as identified in Cluster 2, mainly from Australia, but also from New Zealand (23.81%), does not place a specific focus on *conceptual elements characteristic to SRT*. This would seem to provide support to the claim according to which SRT is not a mainstream approach in social psychology (Laszlo, 1997), and is in line with previous findings, which showed that SRT is not very widely diffused in prestigious academic journals (Eicher et al., 2011), a reason for which authors might avoid getting into the more specific elements of the theory when publishing in a journal.

Thus, Clusters 1 and 3 oppose how SRT is applied in Australia and New Zealand in a specific manner, as Cluster 1 only comprises empirical articles from New Zealand, while Cluster 3 – only from Australia. *Methodologically*, the research conducted in New Zealand is of a *quantitative* nature, in the sense that it uses both structured methods (scales, questionnaires) and quantitative data analysis techniques (bivariate statistics), while in Australia, we have mainly *qualitative* research (content analysis as a data technique). The opposition between these two approaches to research is strengthened by the negative associations between their respective elements; for example, Cluster 3 is significantly associated with *the absence of structured instruments* (scales, questionnaires) and *quantitative data analysis techniques* (descriptive statistics, bivariate statistics). Also, for New Zealand, we have a significant association with *quasi-experimental designs* and *cross-national research* conducted on *individuals without social positioning*. *Thematically*, research in New Zealand is focused on Culture, Identity, Interpersonal and intergroup relations and dimensions, and Politics, while research in Australia centers around Environment. *Conceptually*, SRT is treated similarly in these two contexts, as

the articles in both of them develop on the functions, transformation, transmission of SRs. Regarding the ways in which *SRT is positioned among other theories*, Cluster 1 is associated with Social Identity and Social Influence Theories, while Cluster 3 is associated with Social Constructionism and Social Cognition elements (cognitive schemas and processes, attitude). The *citation measurements* are not significantly associated with the clustering solution, which means that the three groups of empirical articles are not significantly different in terms of their diffusion in scientific journals, either within their discipline, or across other disciplines as well. Given that Clusters 1 and 3 oppose qualitative instruments and data analysis techniques to their quantitative counterparts, this would mean that the ways in which SRT is employed in Australia and New Zealand are not associated with its scientific popularity.

The textual analysis of the abstracts and keywords supports the trends evidenced by the descriptive profile of the data, and provides an insight into how SRT was employed thematically in identity and intergroup issues as well as environment, health and tourism, thus identifying different directions of research according to the objects of study. On the other hand, the clustering analyses performed on the data obtained through meta-theoretical analysis directly reflects a classification of the literature on SRT from Australia and New Zealand according to how SRT was employed – generically or specifically, empirically or theoretically. Basically, a generic employment of SRT was crystallized as a line of research in our sample, markedly present in the empirical articles, although the majority of the corpus referenced SRT specifically. This may be indicative of a certain reluctance on the part of the authors in delving into the deeper aspects of the theory, possibly indicative of an underlying pressure towards publishing in prestigious journals which may be inclined to reinforce the use of theoretical approaches from the mainstream psychology, in line with the findings of Eicher et al., 2011.

4.5. Conclusions

The general research question we set out to address in our exploratory study concerns how SRT was employed in the geo-cultural area defined by Australia and New Zealand, and represents one dimension of the wider scope of the research project in which it is included, a project which explores the world-wide dissemination of SRT across time, paradigms and thematic areas (<http://www.europhd.eu/html/onda01/10/03.02.00.00.shtml>). Our results reveal that SRT has pervaded this geo-cultural area through the discipline in which it originated, social psychology, a conceptual and theoretical context which was traditionally focused on studying issues pertaining to identity and intergroup relations (both thematically and theoretically). After initial attempts to integrate SRT in the mainstream Social Cognition approach to social psychology, SRT was eventually employed theoretically in its original conceptualization, while maintaining a special focus on the aspects touching

upon identity and intergroup issues (e.g. social identity functions of SRs, transformation and transmission of SRs through social identity). Thematically, SRT was used to investigate social phenomena of high interest for this specific geo-cultural context, ranging from identity and intergroup phenomena to environmental and economic issues (e.g. tourism). Thus, we may conclude that the answer to our research questions is that when appropriated in Australia and New Zealand, SRT has adapted to it both conceptually and thematically, while keeping close to its original tenets. Confirmatory analyses should follow, in order to provide us with more definitive answers to the areas of interest identified in our study. Also, in order to formulate specific hypotheses, larger samples of publications should be analyzed, as the production of scientific literature is on-going, and the collection of data for this study has ended in 2016. All in all, we are confident that our research is of a significant contribution both for adding to the current understanding of how SRT has permeated this geo-cultural space, as well as to the current corpus of knowledge regarding the evolution of social psychology in Australia and New Zealand, given that the adoption of SRT could indicate an openness towards accepting research premises that go beyond the individualistic mainstream approaches to social psychology (de Rosa, 2013b).

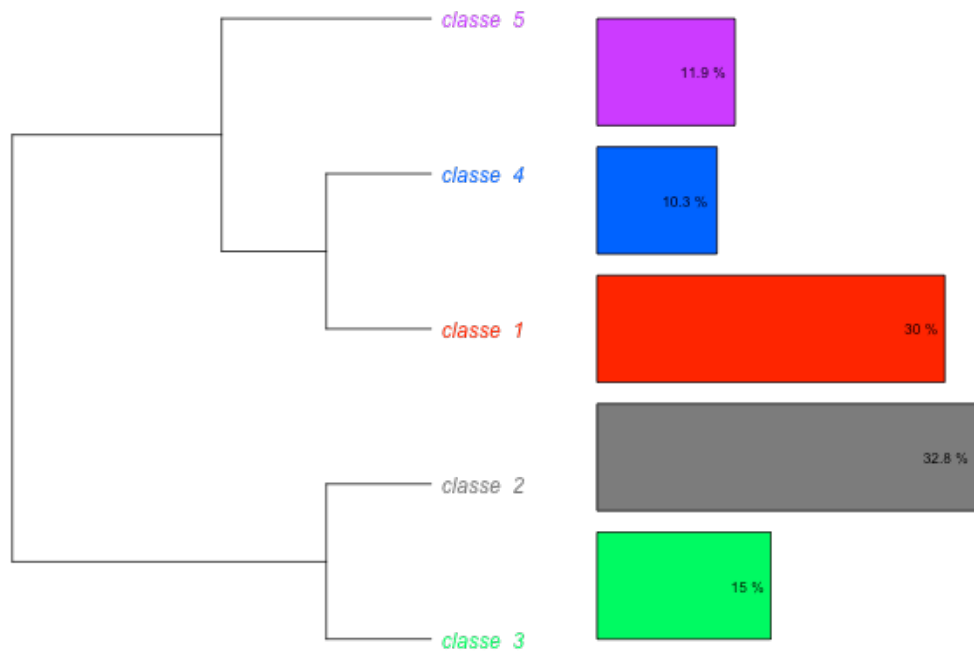


Figure 1: Dendrogram of the clusters issued by the Hierarchical Descending Classification performed on the abstracts and keywords of 98 publications

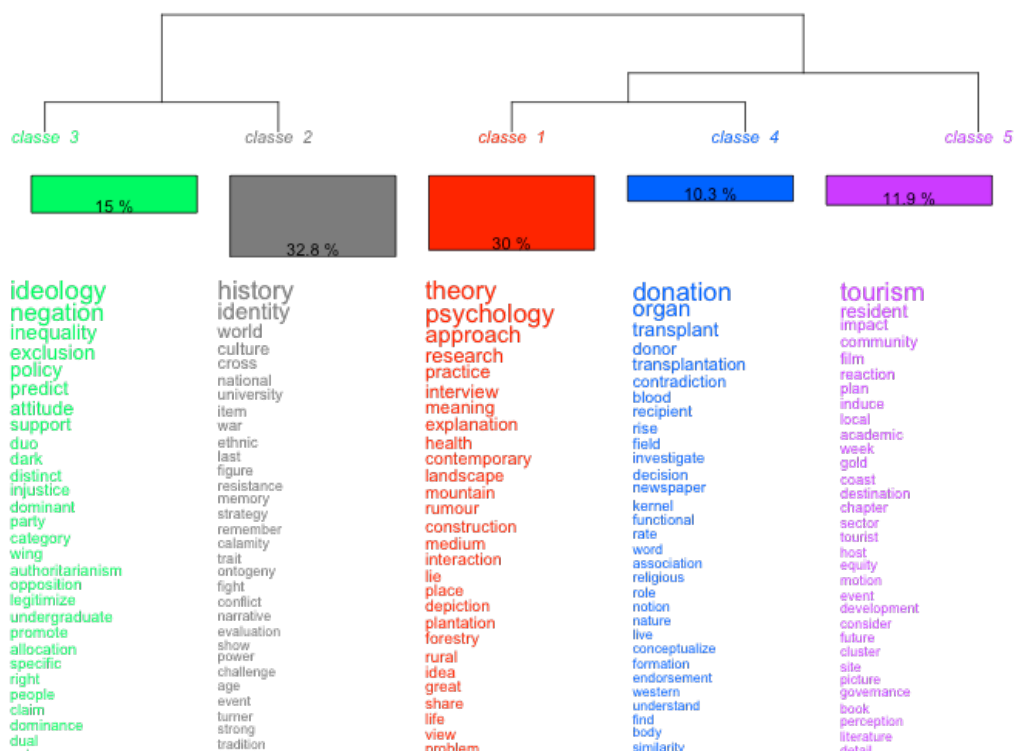


Figure 2: Dendrogram of the clusters issued by the Hierarchical Descending Classification performed on the abstracts and keywords of 98 publications with a brief summary of their content

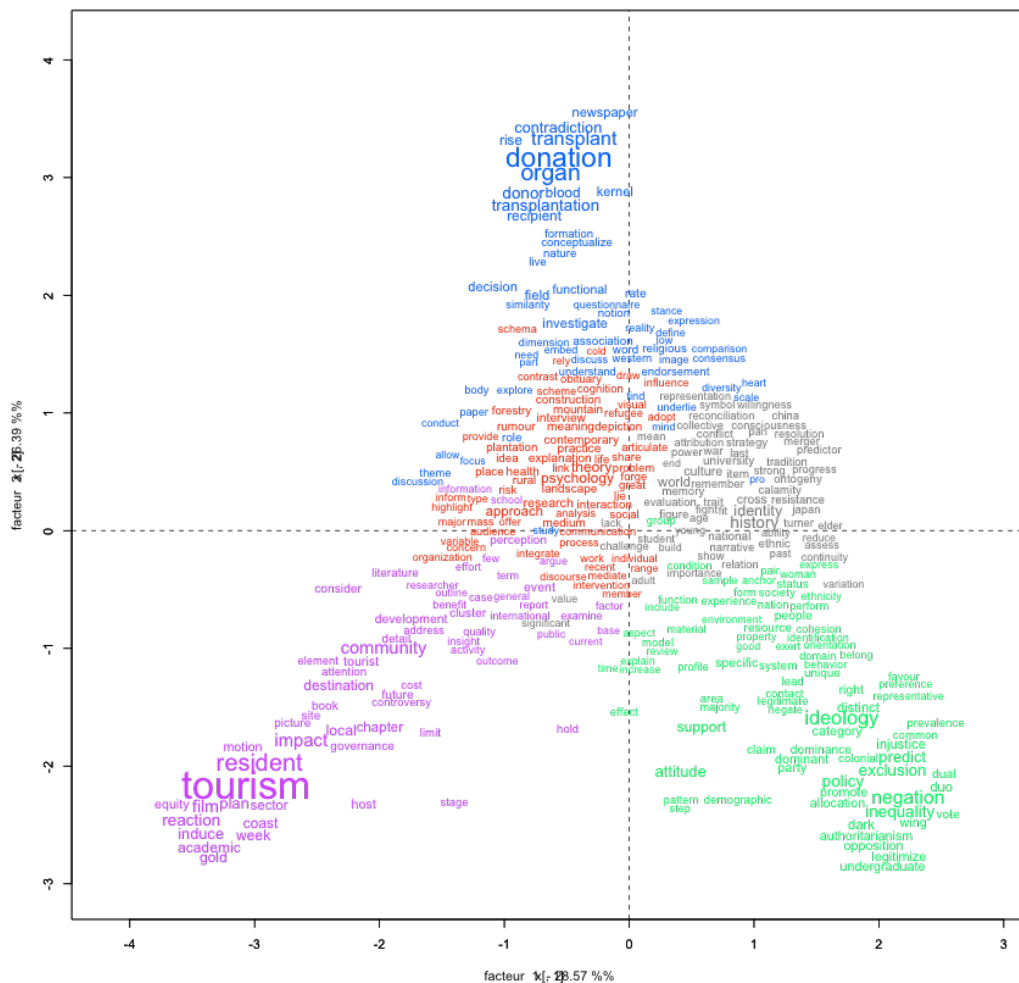


Figure 3: Factorial Correspondence Analysis based on the Hierarchical Descending Classification

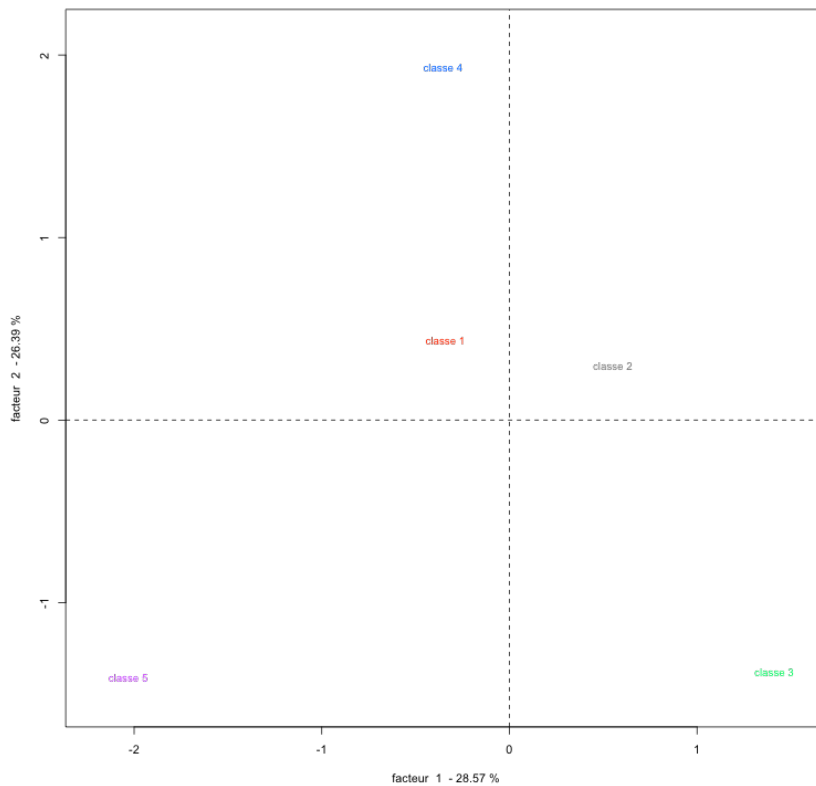


Figure 4: Factorial Correspondence Analysis based on the Hierarchical Descending Classification – plotting the clusters

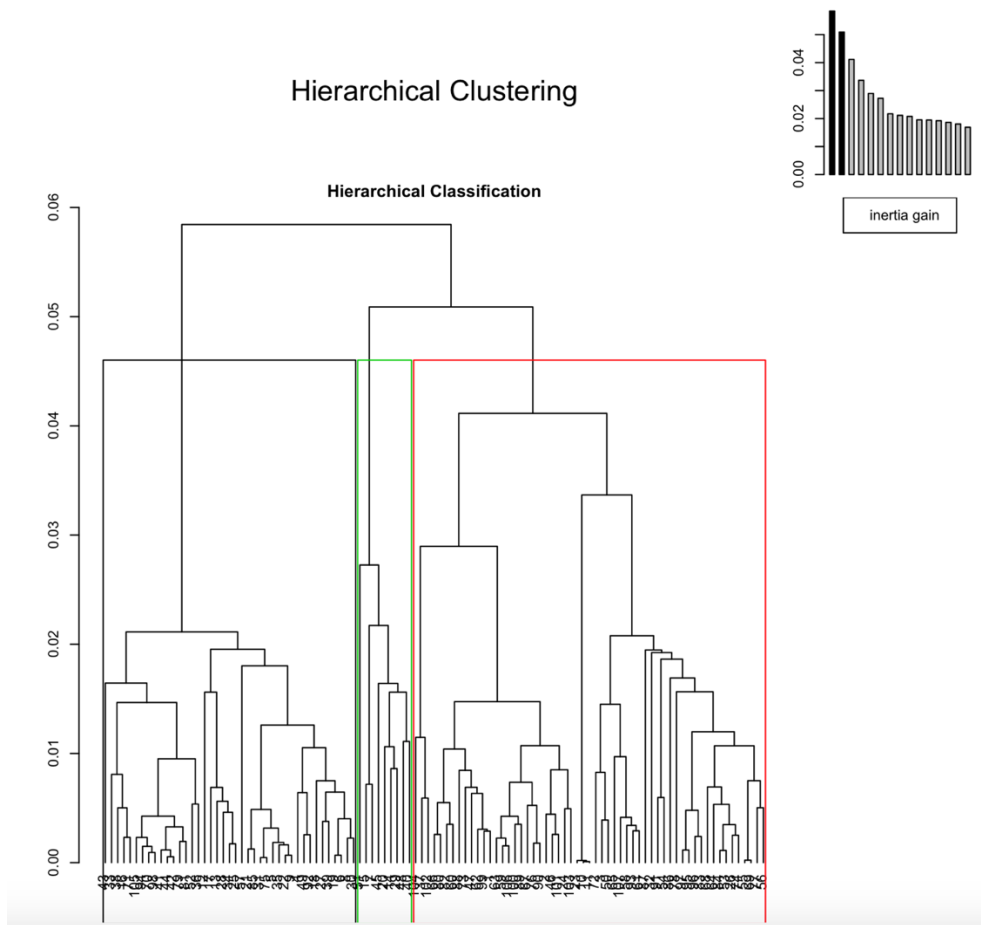


Figure 5: Hierarchical Clustering (Ward's criterion) illustrating the inertia gain for the HCPC on the entire sample of publications

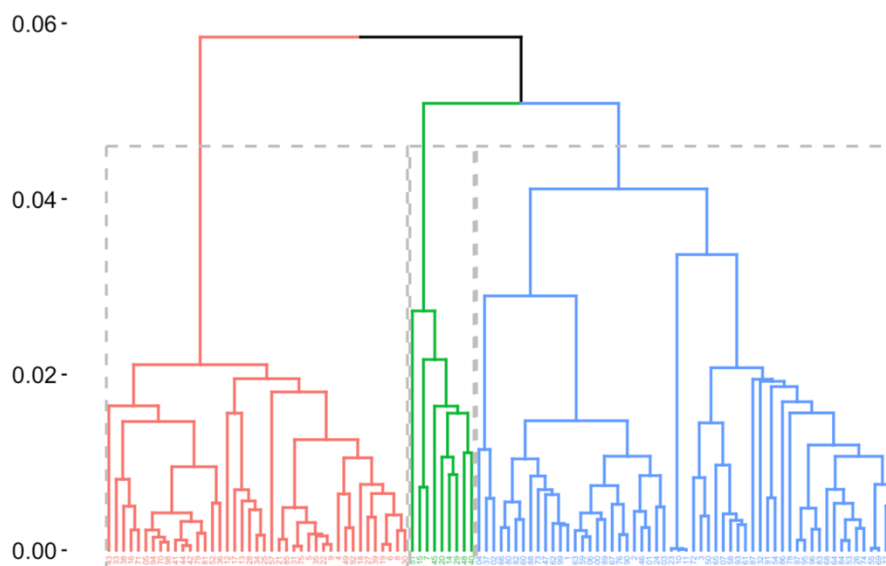


Figure 6: Hierarchical Clustering (Ward's criterion) – initial partitioning for the HCPC on the entire sample of publications

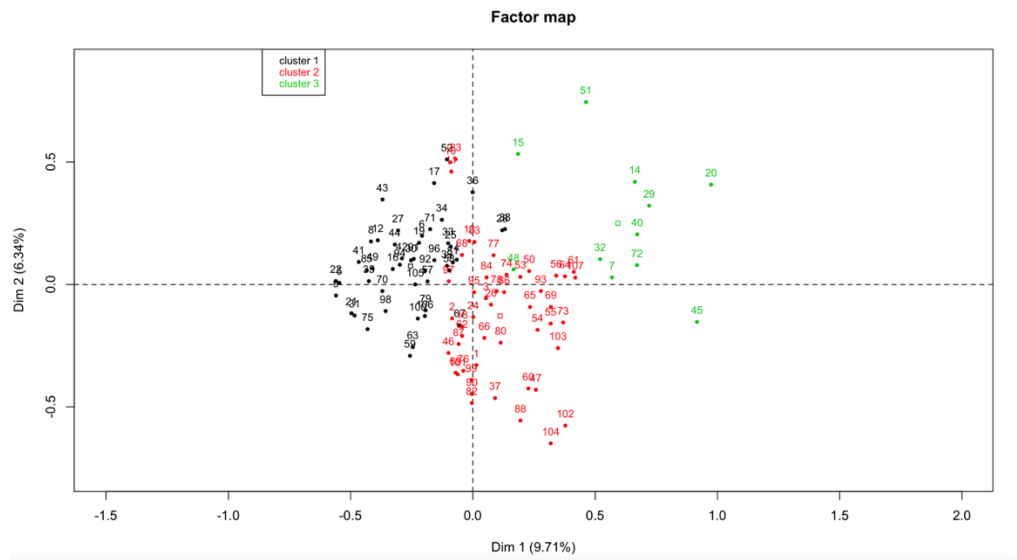


Figure 7: Factor map and clusters after consolidation for the HCPC on the entire sample of publications

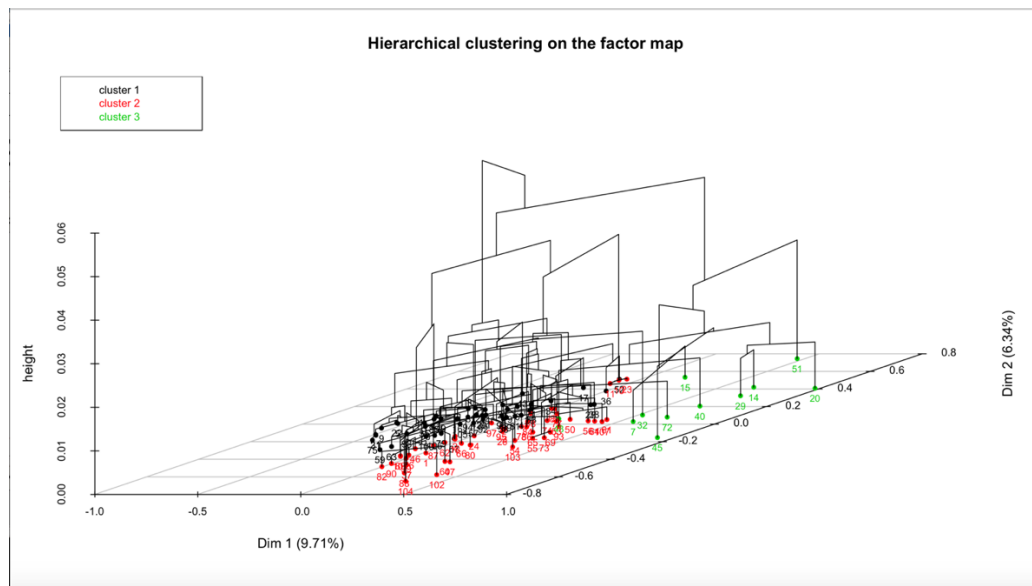


Figure 8: Factor map, clusters and tree after consolidation for the HCPC on the entire sample of publications

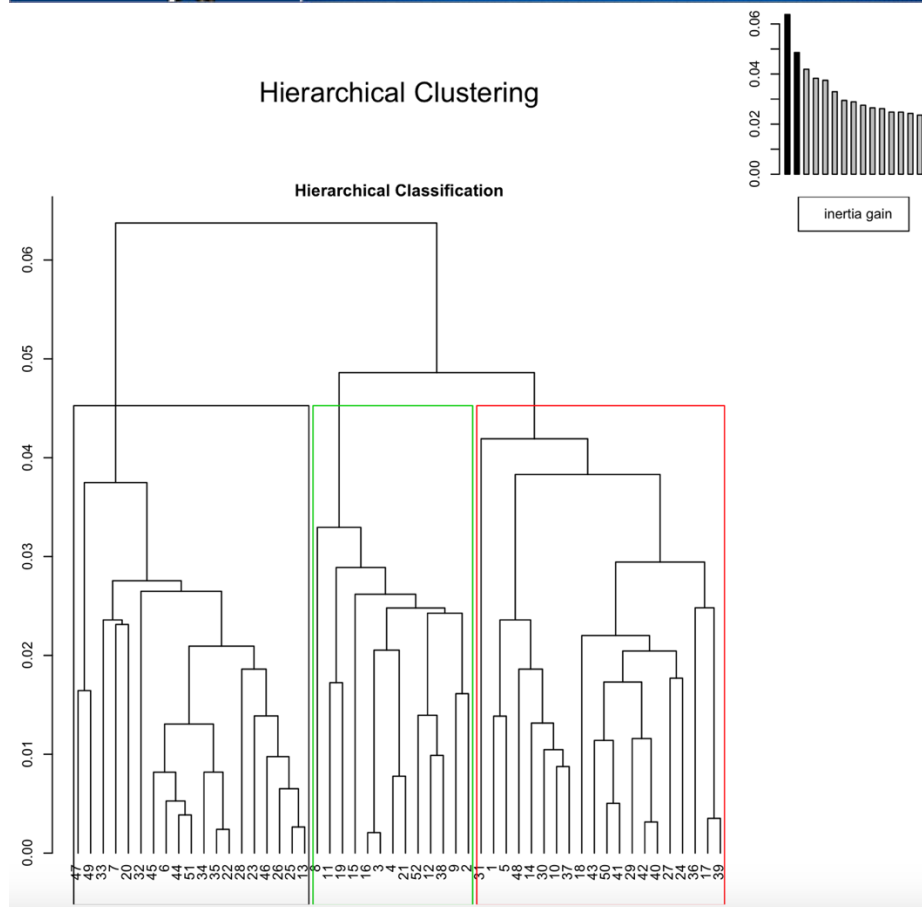


Figure 9: Hierarchical Clustering (Ward's criterion) – initial partitioning illustrating the inertia gain for the HCPC on the empirical articles

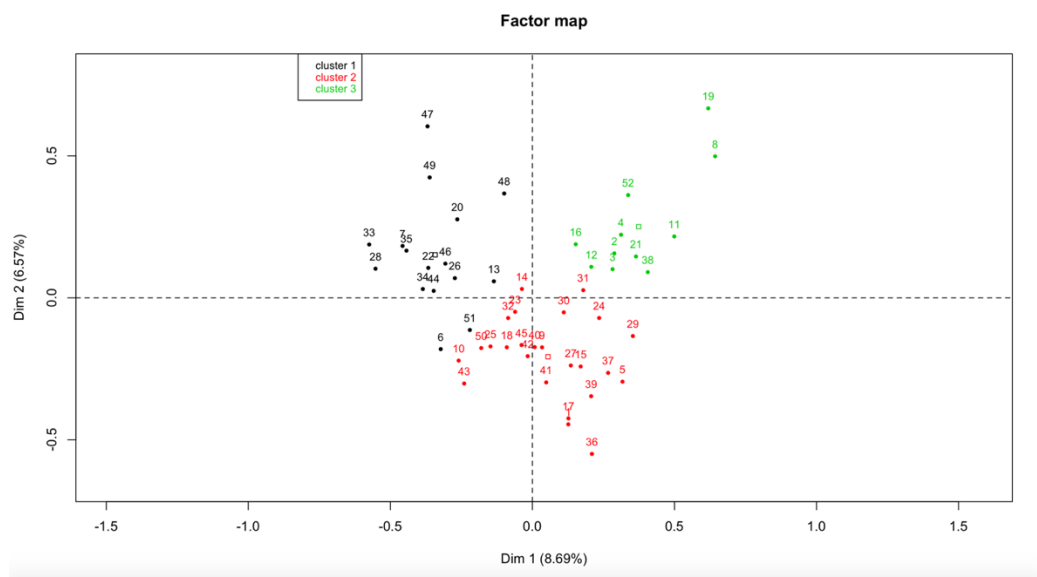


Figure 10: Factor map and clusters after consolidation for the HCPC on the empirical articles

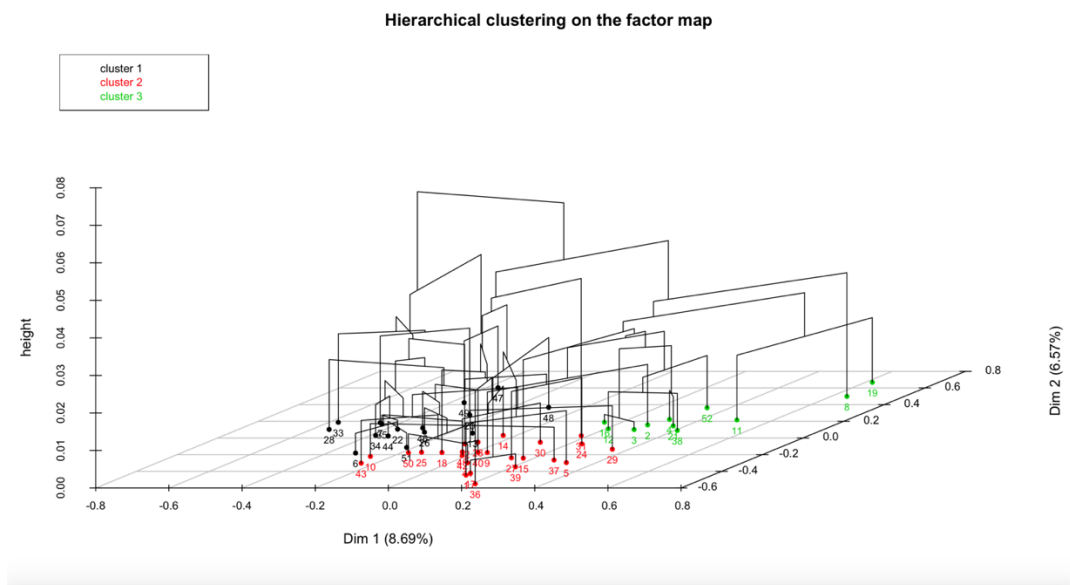


Figure 11: Factor map, clusters and tree after consolidation for the HCPC on the empirical articles

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5. Social Representations Theory in Asia

5.1. Abstract

Part of a larger research project, launched by de Rosa in 1994, aimed at performing the meta-theoretical analysis of the scientific literature published on Social Representations Theory (SRT), and representing the unified framework of the EC-funded project (ITN-People MSCA-IDP 2013, no. 6072799 <http://www.euophd.eu/SoReComJointIDP>), this paper explores the state of the art of the theory in the geo-cultural context of Asia, spatially and temporally, as well as from a conceptual, disciplinary, theoretical, empirical and thematic point of view. The *Grid for Meta-Theoretical Analysis* was used on 194 publications which referenced SRT, all extracted from the So.Re.Com “A.S. de Rosa” @-library and meta-theoretically analyzed until 2016. The findings of the meta-theoretical analysis were then explored based on absolute and relative frequencies, lexicometrically (Hierarchical Descending Classification) and through clustering algorithms (Hierarchical Clustering on Principal Components analysis). Results revealed that SRT was adopted by Asian social psychologists due to its epistemological and empirical compatibilities with their purpose of creating an original Asian social psychology, interested in indigenous social phenomena specific to their cultures (Liu & Ng, 2007). Thus, our findings show a vast array of diverse social objects for which empirical research with SRT was conducted, in line with both the cultural background and the societal interests in the region. All in all, the development of SRT in Asia seems to be linked to the desire to construct an indigenous social psychology, which supports the versatility of the theory in studying lay knowledge and social phenomena of high interest across a wide range of contexts.

Key words: social representations theory, Asia, geo-cultural, meta-theoretical analysis, social psychology

5.2. Introduction

The present paper is the result of a larger research project launched by de Rosa in 1994, aimed at performing the meta-theoretical analysis of the scientific literature published on Social Representations Theory (SRT) with the purpose of assessing the state of the art regarding the diffusion, dissemination and progression of this theory across time and geo-cultural contexts⁷. In particular

⁷ More details regarding the larger project, meta-theoretical analysis, and previous publications on these issues may be found on the website [euophd.eu](http://www.euophd.eu) as well as in de Rosa, 1992, 1994, 2002, 2003, 2006^{ab}, 2008, 2011^{abcde}, 2012, 2013^{ab}, 2014^{ab}, 2015^{ab}, 2016, 2017; de Rosa & d'Ambrosio, 2003, 2008; de Rosa, Dryjanska & Bocci, 2015; de Rosa, Dryjanska & Forte, 2015; de Rosa, Panzaru, Dryjanska, 2015; de Rosa et al., 2016; de Rosa, Ramazanovna & Dryjanska, 2016; Ramazanovna et al., 2016; de Rosa et al., 2016; de Rosa & Dryjanska, 2017; de Rosa, Dryjanska & Bocci, 2017; de Rosa, Arhiri & Dryjanska, 2015; de Rosa et al., 2016; Bocci et al., 2016; Arhiri, de Rosa & Dryjanska, 2016; Gherman, de Rosa & Dryjanska, 2016).

the present study is a part of EC-funded project (ITN-People MSCA-IDP 2013, no. 6072799 <http://www.europhd.eu/SoReComJointIDP>) led by de Rosa, within the framework of the European/International Joint PhD articulate in 13 research lines around three main axes: a) development of different paradigmatic approaches, b) dissemination across different continents and geo-cultural contexts, c) application to different thematic domains and subtopics.

Thereupon, the current research presents the findings of the meta-theoretical analysis of scientific papers employing SRT from Asia⁸. Asia does not represent a homogenous geo-cultural area given the high cultural diversity that characterizes this continents (Matsumoto, 2007), as well as its socio-political conflicts, as underlined by Liu and Ng (2007), in an editorial comment published in the Asian Journal of Social Psychology, where they argued for the challenges posed by unifying the scientific contribution from this area under a single label of “Asian Social Psychology”, such as the lack of a political and economic motivation for unifying the Asian geo-context similar to the one characterizing the European Union, the multiple definitions of “Asia” and the vast array of national and supra-national identities in this continent. In the authors’ view, Asian social psychology is more accurately “a network of affiliations and relationships with a shared orientation rather than as an essentialist construct determined by physical geographies or genetic heritage” (Liu & Ng, 2007, p. 2).

Indeed, “the vast array of national and supra-national identities”, claimed by Liu & Ng (2007) for Asia, also applies also to Europe - despite the role played for many decades by the European Union after the second world war to harmonise countries – as well for any other continent and geo-cultural context. Not only may we encounter inter-countries differences at continental levels, due to language, history, politics, economics etc., but we more often than not

⁸ According to the United Nations, there are 48 countries in Asia today. The full list, with current populations and subregions (based on the United Nations official statistics), may be consulted on the website <http://www.worldometers.info/geography/how-many-countries-in-asia/>. Within this categorical frame, the assignment of countries or areas to specific groupings is for statistical convenience and does not imply any assumption regarding political or other affiliation of countries or territories by the United Nations, being based on the Methodology “Standard Country or Area Codes for Statistical Use”: <https://unstats.un.org/unsd/methodology/m49/>

Due to the intersection of many factors (geographical, political, historical, cultural, linguistic etc.) the attribution of country to continent is in some cases questionable and it may vary according to different criteria over time. Two cases in point of controversial exclusion/inclusion are Russia, belonging to the so called Euro-Asia (not included in the list of Asia continent based on the United Nations official statistics) and Israel, assigned to Middle-East Asia in the same list, which may also be considered controversial when taking into account other factors beyond purely geographical delimitations (e.g. Leung, 2007; Haslam & Kashima, 2010).

Given the focus on the dynamic of knowledge production-dissemination, and the determinant factor of the author’s institutional affiliation country/continent, this variable has been coded in the *SoReCom* “A.S. de Rosa” @-library filtering the information through the official source of Universities and Research Institutions *MyWHED* (linked to the *International Association of Universities’ Worldwide Database of Higher Education Institutions, Systems and Credentials*) that allows an advanced search on a database filtered according to Institutions (Criteria: Institution, Region, Country, Field of study, Officer, Level of study, Student Services, IAU Member). Finally, the countries included in the geo-cultural Asian context were: Afghanistan, Bahrain, Bangladesh, Bhutan, Brunei, Cambodia, China, East Timor, Hong Kong, India, Indonesia, Iran, Iraq, Israel, Japan, Jordan, Kazakhstan, Kuwait, Kyrgyzstan, Laos, Lebanon, Macau, Malaysia, Maldives, Mongolia, Myanmar (Burma), Nepal, North Korea, Oman, Pakistan, Philippines, Qatar, Saudi Arabia, Singapore, South Korea, Sri Lanka, Syria, Taiwan, Tajikistan, Thailand, Turkmenistan, United Arab Emirates, Uzbekistan, Vietnam and Yemen.

come across significant and varied disparities across the same country (for example, in Indonesia, more than 700 languages are spoken nowadays). Therefore, adopting a “cultural” approach (in some tradition considered as “indigenous” - see for example APA Division on Indigenous Psychology) - rather than a cross-cultural one⁹, would be more adequate with our vision inspired by SRT, moving from the assumption that geographical areas and geo-cultural areas do not overlap only according to spatial criteria, seeing as the very practice of attributing countries to continents on geo-graphic maps is a controversial issue.

For the purposes of this paper, we will be referring to Asia as a “*geo-cultural area*”, which refers also to *societal context* and not only to the geographic *space* in line with de Rosa’s conceptualization (de Rosa, 2013b) and with the ambition of many Asian researchers who seek to attain an identity for Asian social psychology (e.g. Atsumi, 2007; Chiu, 2007; Leung, 2007; Liu & Bernardo, 2016; Liu & Ng, 2007; Liu & Sibley, 2009; Matsumoto, 2007; Ward, 2007).

The attention dedicated to the first author’s country of institutional affiliation in the *Grid of the Meta-theoretical Analysis* reveals the interest and the attention dedicated not only to diverse countries within a same continent, but also the interest from one side to look at different specific institutions within the same country where research centre and authors produce knowledge and from the other side to explore the dynamic of the theory diffusion through people (ex. co-authoring), and institutional settings for networking (ex. the role played by the conferences dedicated to this scientific field). To look at the identity of SRT, from its genesis to its development travelling through different geo-cultural areas, it is always a question of “zoom” and focusing the lens through which we read the reality.

Researchers who define themselves as Asian social psychologists have repeatedly argued that SRT is representative of the specific of European social psychology (e.g. Chiu, 2007; Leung, 2007; Liu & Ng, 2007; Liu & Sibley, 2009). Thus, in tracing the dissemination of SRT in this geo-cultural area, we must first review the development of social psychology itself. As Kruglanski and Stroebe document in the 2010 *Handbook of Social Psychology*, social psychology has extended to the Asian context in its Western conceptualizations

⁹In her lecture “Social Psychology Scenario in India, Importance of Common Sense, Understanding of Social Phenomenon in India and Envisaging Social Representations Theory in the Coming Times in India”, held on April 18, 2017 at the *European/International Joint PhD on Social Representations and Communication Research Centre and Multi-Media Lab* (Rome, Italy), Jyoti Verma (former Professor from Patna University, India) argues that until the 1980s (the later years of post-independence in India), social psychology was conceptualized and empirically employed in a manner “consistent with individual social psychology of the American variety” (Dalal and Misra, 2002, p.16) leading to a growing disillusionment with the applicability of western theories and thus starting the movement towards “indigenization” - overcoming the “mono-cultural” nature of modern psychology and posing a serious challenge to its claim of universality. Citing Sinha (1998, p.44) Jyoti Verma observed that “the goal of indigenization is the development of appropriate psychology and not parochial psychology” making the discipline appropriate/suited to the socio-cultural soil of the country.” (http://www.europhd.eu/html/_onda02/07/35.01.00.00.shtml).

via cross-cultural studies which compared indigenous populations with Western ones, a trend which continued until the late 1960s, when Asian researchers started a movement toward a distinct Asian social psychology. It was not until the 1990s that Asian social psychologists have achieved visibility in the international scientific arena, when the *Asian Association of Social Psychology* was also created with the purpose of promoting the development of original research and theories in this geo-cultural area, an activity considered by many as best accomplished through the creation of an indigenous social psychology (Kim & Berry, 1993). Indigenous psychologies approach human behaviour and experience from a culture-specific angle in two ways: either departing from a certain cultural context and building theory and methods based on observed real life phenomena, or by departing from pre-existent theories and methods and adjusting them to the specific features of a certain cultural context (Enriquez, 1990^{a,b}). The dangers of employing the latter lie in an uncritical export of constructs for testing their external validity or for cross-cultural comparisons (Ward, 2007), which has actually happened in the Asian context when social psychology first permeated this area, making the local study of culture more apt for comprehending culturally sensitive phenomena. The current situation of Asian social psychology was documented in an ample bibliometric study covering 46545 scientific articles from 1970 to 2008 with at least one author affiliated to an Asian institution (Haslam & Kashima, 2008); its findings revealed a steep growth in scientific production over time, a dominance of Hong Kong, Japan, India, Taiwan, China, Singapore and South Korea in terms of volume, significant collaborations with USA-based researchers primarily and other Anglo-phone spaces secondarily (Canada, Australia, UK, New Zealand), an increasing trend in terms of local content and indigenous perspectives paired with a decrease in cross-cultural comparisons, and a thematic focus on *personality and individual differences, culture, interpersonal relations, social cognition, emotions and applied topics (e.g. health)* in the detriment of *theoretical papers*. Nevertheless, indigenous Asian approaches to theory and methods, and respectively, local empirical research are still scarce as compared to the use of theories and methods created and tested in other geo-cultural contexts (Haslam & Kashima, 2010). One potential explanation for this trend is stated by Ward (2007) as she echoed the crisis of social relevance undergone by psychology as a reason for the reluctance of developing nations to encourage research in this field. Thereupon, one of the defining traits of Asian social psychology is its focus on obtaining pragmatic results, specially in the developing countries, such as Malaysia and Indonesia (Ward, 2007).

In order to better understand the manner in which SRT was appropriated by the Asian scientific community from social psychology, it is worth noting how they position Asian culture and the subsequent manners of empirically addressing it within the global arena. Thus, while American social psychology was considered to be individualistic, European social psychology – societal,

Asian social psychology has been branded as “cultural” (Kim, 1998), which implied that it was regarded in terms of its propensity and not its essence. As Liu and Ng (2007) argue however, a truly Asian social psychology should describe cultural objects and social practices specific to this area and function for the improvement of this context in terms of practical ends. Basically, the authors argue that Asian social psychology may develop both from within and from outside the Asian context; no matter the case, the contributions have to be pertinent and applicable to this geo-cultural context and not mere replications of findings from mainstream psychology or field studies claiming to having been conducted within an indigenous framework, but with no theoretical or practical applicability.

Adding to this debate, Atsumi (2007) explains that mainstream social psychology corresponds to the corpus of scientific literature on social psychology created in the geo-cultural area of the USA. Atsumi (2007) describes it as nomothetic, as it aims to find universally applicable theories while disregarding the influences exercised by cultural and historical contexts. Moreover, Atsumi (2007) argues that it is based on logical empiricism and uses indigenous findings in cultural comparisons with the purpose of acquiring a universal comprehension of social behaviours and ultimately, human nature. Finally, mainstream social psychology remains epistemic, as it concentrates on understanding reality rather than finding manners to change it. On the other hand, indigenous social psychology is narrative, which entails that it is grounded in social constructionism and attempts to understand phenomena in their respective socio-cultural and historic settings, while also seeking for ways to challenge the status quo. This difference is best reflected in the methodological choices of the two: the mainstream social psychology is focused on quantitative methods, while the latter employs a more qualitative methodology; this difference is of course also conceptual, as nomothetic sciences take as units of analysis individuals, considered to be representative for their respective groups and populations, whereas indigenous sciences are more likely to employ groups as units of analysis or individuals as case studies, as they focus on narratives and unique life events, as opposed to universality. Given the natural, political, cultural and ethnic problems with which the Asian context is faced, Atsumi (2007) recommends that empirical research should transition to a nomothetic approach from an established corpus of knowledge obtained from field-oriented empirical research. In overviewing the cultural, historical, economic and political contexts in Asia, Atsumi (2007) argues that there are multiple tensions and conflicting issues among and within the nations, which makes it an ethical duty for social psychologists to focus more on humanitarian issues and hence create an applied social psychology. SRT has already proven its utility in explaining the dynamic interplay between ethnic, national and supra-national identities specific to this area, mostly modelled by past events and collective memories, which has made Asia “a natural laboratory for integrating and extending” (Liu & Ng, 2007, p. 5) the premises

and applicability of the theory, as it articulates harmoniously with indigenous historical knowledge.

At the 9th International Conference on Social Representations that took place in Bali, Indonesia in 2008, Permanadeli further developed on the applicability and utility of employing SRT for the empirical studies on social objects indigenous to the Asian geo-cultural area. Thus, she argues that Asia has always had a distinct tradition in knowledge production that has differed significantly from the ones originating in Europe and South America. She notes that since the creation of SRT in 1961 by Moscovici, the theory has developed in both theoretical and applied aspects, not only in its “homeland”, Europe, but also in the Americas and more recently, in Australia, Asia and Africa mainly due to its ability to transcend the individualistic approach to social psychology by offering a holistic perspective of both social and cultural dimensions in the study of common sense knowledge, highly relevant for culturally diverse contexts, such as the Asia ones. This is due to both its conceptualization and methodology, as the latter permits the researchers to highlight the relevance of respecting all of the meanings and perspectives which are present in a certain community, thus facilitating research into local knowledge by questioning universality and globalization in its epistemological and ontological premises. At the same scientific event, Liu (2008) added that SRT is under-utilized in the Asian context, as the constructs uncovered by research within indigenous approaches to psychology are actually social representations in nature, which reveals a significant set of similarities between SRT and indigenous psychology, an area full of potentialities for both, which is currently insufficiently exploited. Moreover, Liu (2008) continues, the Asian tradition of conducting research in social psychology does not promote method over content, which is in line with Moscovici’s prescriptions for SRT: “methods are only means towards an end. If they become an end or a criterion of the selection of topics and ideas, then they are just another form of professional censorship” (Moscovici, 2000, p. 268). Furthermore, in 2009, Liu and Sibley underlined once again the value of SRT for empirical research in the Asian geo-cultural area: “In Asia in particular, where issues of culture stand at the centre of psychology, and where Asian peoples share a legacy of historically contingent reactions to Western colonization, analysis of the intermediate layer of representations and the institutions that maintain them are essential to the development of better forms of teaching, politics, and research practice that create new representations and improved intergroup relations.” (Liu & Sibley, 2009, p. 26). Thus, according to the authors, employing a SRT based perspective in empirical research in this geo-cultural context could also lead to fulfilling Atsumi’s (2007) standard for psychological research: in order for social psychology to truly become Asian, it must also aim to produce results that are truly useful for the development of the social communities under study. Given all of these aspects which should make SRT apt for the study of social phenomena indigenous to Asia and the prescription for its use, we conducted a

meta-theoretical analysis of the scientific publications employing this theory primarily authored by researchers affiliated to Asian institutions. The purpose of meta-theoretical analysis, as stated by de Rosa (2002, 2013) is to assess how SRT is employed conceptually, in relation with other constructs and theories, thematically, empirically and paradigmatically. Moreover, the method also involves the collection of bibliographical and bibliometric data, with the purpose of analysing the development of SRT over time and across contexts, as well as with the purpose of articulating the temporal and spatial trajectories with the conceptual findings. In line with the purpose of meta-theoretical analysis as well as with the specificities that characterize the Asian geo-cultural area, we set out to address the following research questions: How did SRT develop in Asia across time and space? How was SRT appropriated conceptually and in relation to other theories? How was SRT used empirically? What are the thematic areas addressed by SRT in the Asian context? Previous research conducted by de Rosa provided a comprehensive picture of the development of SRT globally, across time, space, thematic areas and paradigms (see de Rosa, 2002, 2013; de Rosa & d'Ambrosio, 2008). Regarding the Asian geo-cultural area, she found in 2009 an upsurge in the number of publications subsequent to the 5th International Conference on Social Representations, as well as a majority of publications primarily authored by Chinese researchers, followed by Japanese and South Korean ones (de Rosa, 2009). In 2013, she found that SRT is used less frequently and more generically in the Asian and African context (de Rosa, 2013), while in 2015, de Rosa found that the articles first authored by researchers affiliated to institutions in North America, Asia and Oceania tend to be included in journals indexed in SCOPUS and ISI more frequently as compared to articles first authored by researchers affiliated to institutions in Europe and Latin America (de Rosa, 2015^a). Since these results were found on publications employing SRT from all geo-cultural contexts, we aim to provide a comprehensive picture on the state of the art of SRT in Asia, so as we may know both where we stand presently and what future developments may follow.

5.3.Method

The corpus of publications used for this article consisted of 194 items extracted from the *So.Re.Com* “A.S. de Rosa” @-library, “a digital platform integrating scientific documentation, networking and training purposes in the field of Social Representations and Communication” (de Rosa, 2015^a, p. 4938), according to whether the first author was affiliated to an Asian institution (a comprehensive listing of full publications may be found at the European/International Joint PhD in Social Representations & Communication Research Center and Multimedia Lab, P.za Cavalieri di Malta 2, Rome-Italy or may be consulted upon request to A.S. de Rosa).

All of the papers in our corpus were subjected to meta-theoretical analysis, performed using the *Grid for Meta-Theoretical Analysis* (created by de Rosa in

1994 – de Rosa, 1994^{ab} - and last updated in February 2014), which requires the researcher to note the presence / absence of six categories: bibliographic and bibliometric data, references to concepts related to SRT, references to concepts and constructs pertaining to other theories and approaches, thematic areas (and objects of study), methodological profile and, respectively, paradigmatic aspects. Each section is divided in subsections, which at times, are further refined; for example, in the category *references to concepts related to SRT*, we have a section dedicated to the processes undergone by SRs, which is further divided into *anchoring* and *objectification*, each of them having sub-categories of their own (*naming and classifying* for *anchoring* and, respectively, *figurative nucleus and naturalization* for *objectification*). Thus, most of the items in the *Grid* are not mutually exclusive, because all these aspects pertaining to the processes of SRs may be (and most often are) discussed together (for a comprehensive description of the sections in the *Grid*, see de Rosa, 2002, 2013).

In order to explore the research questions above, the data obtained from the meta-theoretical analysis of the corpus of publications was analysed in three manners:

- First, a descriptive profile of absolute and relative frequencies for each of the categories present in the *Grid* was compiled.
- Secondly, the entire corpus of abstracts and their key words was subjected to a textual analysis conducted with the IRAMUTEQ software 0.7 alpha 2.
- Thirdly, the data compiled with the Grid was subjected to Hierarchical Clustering on Principal Components analyses conducted with the R software 3.3.2, the package FactoMiner

5.4. Results and discussion

- Descriptive profile of the data (a comprehensive listing of full results may be found at the European/International Joint PhD in Social Representations & Communication Research Center and Multimedia Lab, P.za Cavalieri di Malta 2, Rome-Italy or may be consulted upon request to A.S. de Rosa)

The sample of papers consisted in 194 items, with more than a half of them being *articles in scientific journals* (55.15%), followed by *conference presentations* (42.78%) and only 2.06% *book chapters*. The *timeframe* from which the papers were collected ranged from 1992 to 2016, 68.56% of them having been published between 2002-2011. The vast majority of papers were published in *English* (78.35%), followed by *Chinese* (20.1%), *French* (1.03%) and *Japanese* (0.52%), and primarily authored by researchers from: China (33.51%), Israel (25.26%), Indonesia (15.98%), Japan (6.7%), India (5.15%), Philippines (4.64%), South Korea (4.12%), Taiwan (2.58%), Iran (0.52%), Lebanon (0.52%), Turkey (0.52%), United Arab Emirates (0.52%). Regarding the high prevalence of Chinese publications found in our sample, the same trend was found by Liu and Bernardo (2016) and explained as reflecting the

ample and ascending influence of China, arguably the most developed economy in Asia and the second most developed economical force at the global scale. Interestingly, the most employed language for publication was English. In 2007, Liu and Ng offer several reasons for this state of affairs, commonly found in Asian social psychology: the access to the scientific literature from other geo-cultural contexts is conditioned upon an advanced knowledge of English, most of the prominent researchers in Asia have taken their studies in Europe or the USA, and last, but not least, there is an increasing pressure in this context for researchers to publish in social science citation indexed outlets.

The majority of our publications were empirical (68%), followed by theoretical papers (31%) and 1% thematic reviews. The reference to SRT was specific in most cases (84.02%), with an evident focus on the *functions* of SRs (68%), specifically *orientation and control of social reality* (58.24%) and *guide of behavior and inter-group relations* (42.3%), followed by the *transformation* of SRs, present in 38.1% of our papers, *genesis* related aspects (29.4%), *process* related data (28.9%), and how SRs are *transmitted* (24.2%). The *structure* of SRs was only mentioned in 13.9% of our sample, and we found very few papers employing *paradigmatic approaches* as defined by de Rosa (2013b): 6.2% of them were conducted within the anthropological and ethnographic paradigmatic approach to SRT, followed by the dialogical, conversational and narrative paradigmatic approach (4.1%), with only 3.6% of them included in the structural approach to SRT, and, respectively, 2.1% on the socio-dynamic approach. The most referenced *constructs and concepts* in our sample were: cultural knowledge (63.92%), social processes (53.09%), context and practice (each found in 50.52% of the total number of papers analyzed). Concerning *other theories and paradigmatic approaches*, Social Identity Theories was mentioned most often, in 25.26% of the publications, distantly followed by Social Cognition Theories (13.92%) and Social Constructionism (10.82%). Thematically, the most popular area of study was *identity* (18.6%), followed by *politics-ideology* (16.5%), *SRT, meta-theory and methodological issues* (13.4%), and *culture* (11.9%).

These results reveal that since the publication of results based on meta-theoretical analysis of 2065 bibliographic sources (de Rosa, 2013b), some changes might have occurred in the scientific production on SRT in Asia, as most of the papers treated SRT specifically, rather than generically. However, the trend observed by her was in comparison with other geo-cultural areas, so future research should address this aspect. Regarding the prevalence of the references to the function of SRs, this result is similar to the one published by de Rosa (2013b) on the worldwide publications on SRT, when she argued that the functions of SRs are mentioned so frequently that it may be time we introduced them in the definition of SRs. The focus on the *anthropological and ethnographic paradigmatic approach to SRT* as opposed to the other paradigmatic frameworks, together with *cultural knowledge* as the most

referenced construct and *culture* as a main *thematic area*, may be due to the fact that this paradigmatic approach studies people's knowledge in context, which was prescribed for the Asian social psychology in its entirety by several authors mentioned in our introduction (e.g. Liu & Ng, 2007; Ward, 2007). Thus, we may say that SRT lends itself well to the study of cultural specific, indigenous phenomena occurring in this area. Also, we should add that the focus on *culture as a thematic area* was also found by Haslam and Kashima (2010) in his bibliometric analysis of articles from Asian social psychology in general.

Most of the journal articles in our sample were published in *Papers on Social Representations* (12.15%), a journal dedicated to SRT, which was published by the Austrian Linz university until the year 2009 and by and by *the London School of Economics* in the United Kingdom. 4.67% of the journal articles were issued in *Asian Journal of Social Psychology* ($N = 5$), a journal focused on promoting the social psychological research in the Asia-Pacific region and published by the Asian Association of Social Psychology and Beijing Normal University. Each of the following journals were chosen by 2.80% of the authors in our sample: *Culture & Psychology* (a Journal focused on Multidisciplinary Psychology, edited by Jaan Valsiner, who was in the past active and is now affiliated to Clark University in the USA and currently active at Aalborg University, Denmark in the Europe) *European Journal of Social Psychology* (an European journal dedicated to Social Psychology), *Journal of Pacific Rim Psychology* (edited by Chinese Universities, focused on issues related to the indigenous and minority populations and the developing world, with an emphasis on the regions of Oceania, Australasia, East Asia, the Western Seaboard of the Americas, the Hawaiian Islands and Pacific Island Nations) and, respectively, *Youth Studies* (a journal published in Hong Kong dedicated to research on youth policies, with a stated mission of improving legislation for the youth). In the full list of journals related to the selected corpus of bibliographic resources for this study we may identify the same tendencies revealed above: the articles in this geo-cultural area are published both in journals focused on scientific or applied issues pertaining to the Asian region as well as in European and North American journals. This may be indicative of the network of professional collaborations in this geo-cultural area, as it shows the same trend as the one in the Asian Social Psychology: close relationships with Europe and North America, as well as a focus on local contexts, in the Pacific region (see de Rosa, 2016). From a disciplinary point of view, we find that the *thematic areas* range from theoretical issues (Social Psychology, SRT, Cultural Psychology) to more applied ones (e.g. youth studies, indigenous and minority populations issues), in line with the interdisciplinary character of SRT, documented by Rateau et al., 2011, and preferably conceptualized as "supra-disciplinary" by de Rosa (2013a, 2014b). Most of the journals were not indexed in the *SCOPUS* database (only 43.93% of them were found there in 2015), a trend even steeper as far as the *ISI*

database is concerned, where only 37.38% of our sample was indexed in 2015. This confirms the trend of results published by de Rosa in 2015^a and in 2016, in the sense that even if the empirical articles in Asia are more published in journals indexed in ISI and SCOPUS as compared to Europe and Latin America, they are still mostly published in journals not indexed in the two databases. The main *thematic subject areas*, as indexed by SCOPUS, are, in the order of their frequencies: Psychology, Social Sciences, Arts and Humanities, Business, Economy, Medicine and Computers, whereas in ISI, we find the following *subject categories*: Social Psychology, Multidisciplinary Psychology, Applied Psychology, Economy, Leisure, Area Studies, Business, Communication, Education, Ethnic, Social Sciences, Information, International Relations, Clinical Psychology, Experimental Psychology. This gives support to the fact that SRT may have been appropriated and mainly developed within the discipline of social psychology, as well as to the theory's utility and versatility in investigating a wide range of applied phenomena.

Book chapters from the corpus analyzed in this article were published in three geo-cultural spaces, respectively Asia, Europe and North America (we see here the same trend of professional collaborations evinced by the scientific journals), while *our conference presentations* were largely submitted to the *International Conferences on Social Representations* (96.39%), almost equally as part of *collective* activities (50.6%) and *individual* contributions (49.4%), which shows that Asian researchers are an active part of the international scientific community of researchers affiliated to SRT.

Investigating the *methodological profile* systematically detected through the meta-theoretical analysis of the empirical papers ($N = 132$) from Asia, we found that the researches were mainly conducted in *urban* areas (28.8%), followed by *rural* areas (6.8%), *islands* (2.3%) and *metropolitan* areas (0.8%). The most popular research design was *descriptive* (77.3%), followed by *quasi-experimental* (9.8%) and *experimental* (2.3%), with the most research conducted in a *laboratory* setting (54.5%) and *comparatively* between groups (36.4%). The preferred sampling technique was *convenience* (78%), while the size of the samples mainly exceeded 100 participants (52.3%), who were, in most studies, *subject without social positioning* (44.7%). *Open instruments* were employed in 50.8% of the studies, with semi-directive interviews and free interviews having been used in 14.4% each, followed by word association techniques (11.4%) and open ended questionnaires (9.8%). *Structured instruments* were employed in 43.9% of the studies (questionnaires / structured instruments in 42.4%, while scales in 12.9%), whereas *observant techniques* were employed in 9.1% of the cases, and *figurative-graphic techniques* - in 2.3% of the papers. The data analysis techniques were mostly *quantitative* (42.4%), followed by *qualitative* (38.6%). Liu and Bernardo (2016) argue that the Asian context is marked by a positivist and quantitative empirical trend, partly due to the fact that most research comes from developing countries (e.g. China), where science and societal progress are construed in a modernist

framework (a top-down approach, implemented in all public areas) as opposed to a post-modern and post-industrial one. As a consequence, the Asian empirical papers in social psychology tend to merely describe the phenomena of high social interest rather than theorize them, which, in the authors' opinion, makes them resemble more closely the mainstream and applied social psychology rather than creating psychological theories departing from the empirical analysis of local experience. The authors argue for richer and thicker descriptions of local settings, processes and issues in order to proliferate original contributions to theoretical frameworks.

- Textual analysis of abstracts and keywords (a comprehensive listing of full results may be found at the European/International Joint PhD in Social Representations & Communication Research Center and Multimedia Lab, P.za Cavalieri di Malta 2, Rome-Italy or may be consulted upon request to A.S. de Rosa)

The corpus comprised 192 abstracts and keywords, Initial Context Units (ICUs), analyzed lexicometrically with the Interface de R pour les *Analyses Multimensionnelles de Textes et de Questionnaires* (Iramuteq) software 0.7 alpha 2. The corpus was found to be fit for further analysis, as the number of HAPAX forms was below 50% (44.91%) and the type/token ratio was below 20 (13.36%).

The corpus of texts was lemmatized based on the English dictionary provided by the software in order to group plural and singular forms under a single form, as well as revert the conjugated verbs to their infinitives. Also, this procedure enabled us to group the forms into two categories, active and illustrative ones, according to the way in which the data analysis will be carried out. For the goals of our analysis, we defined as active forms adjectives, adverbs, nouns and verbs, and as illustrative – demonstrative, indefinite, interrogative and possessive adjectives and pronouns, excluding from the analysis numerical adjectives, definite and indefinite articles, auxiliary verbs, numbers, conjunctions, prepositions, onomatopoeic forms and unrecognized forms, based on whether certain forms were relevant or not to our corpus of scientific knowledge (Reinert, 1983). Based on the same logic, we chose to exclude from analysis the expression “social representation(s)”. The results of the lemmatization procedure lowered the number of HAPAX forms to 41.75%, and the type/token ratio to 10.56%, thus making the text analysis more stable.

A Hierarchical Descending Classification (HDC) of ICUs was conducted based on the whole lexical table (Reinert, 1983). This analysis took into account the following variables: *country of institutional affiliation for the first author*, *indexation in ISI and, respectively, SCOPUS databases*, *type of resource* (article / conference presentation / book chapter), *decade* and, respectively, *language in which the item was published*, with the purpose of exploring if clusters were more representative for publications from a certain country, period of time, resource type, language, and, respectively, more likely to being indexed in the two databases.

The 192 ICUs were processed based on the distribution of vocabulary to elicit 1054 text segments, Elementary Context Units (ECUs), of which 935 (88.71%) were retained in the five clustering solution proposed, illustrated in Figure 1. In Figure 2, the same clusters are illustrated, along with the most representative forms for each of them; the size of the words differs according to the chi square coefficients: the higher the value, the higher the contribution of the word to the cluster. The comprehensive list of chi-square coefficients, their degree of significance, along with the specific words which they describe may be found the European/International Joint PhD in Social Representations & Communication Research Center and Multimedia Lab, P.za Cavalieri di Malta 2, Rome-Italy or may be consulted upon request to A.S. de Rosa.

After conducting the HDC, a factorial correspondence analysis is performed by IRAMUTEQ, which gives out the results of HDC in a diagram, as depicted in Figure 3, which shows the most representative words for each cluster, differentiated by color. Thus, we can contextualize the typical units for each cluster and interpret them via content analysis (Chaves et al., 2017). The x-axis reflects an opposition between clusters 2, 4 and 5 and clusters 1 and 3, while the y-axis reveals an opposition between cluster 3, 4 and 5 and, respectively, 1 and 2. Given that IRAMUTEQ provides the opportunity of visualizing the ECUs from which the clustered words were extracted, we retrieved the initial ICUs and interpreted the findings by referencing the papers from which the abstracts and keywords were taken.

Cluster 3 ($N = 363$ ECUs) accounts for the largest part of the total corpus, more than a third of it (38.82%), and is significantly associated with first authors affiliated to a Chinese, Indian and Turkish institution, *journal articles*, Chinese as a *language of publication*, and 2000-2009 as the *decade* in which the papers were issued. This finding is in line with the massive Chinese production in social psychology noticed by Haslam and Kashima (2010), given that the most ECUs in this cluster were extracted from Chinese publications (65.82%). It also contains ECUs from Indian publications (58.33%), which shows that although facing a general decline in scientific publications on social psychology (Haslam & Kashima, 2010), Indian authors still have visibility in the realm of SRT. The direction of research presented by Cluster 3 is focused on several dimension. First, we may identify a dimension regarding *social* issues from the realm of interpersonal relationships, such as *stigma*, *stereotyping*, *relationships*, *categorization*, *identification*, *consensus*, *society / individual or self*, *obedience*, *cohesion*, *discrimination*, *belonging*. Secondly, we find a vast array of applied thematic concepts of relevance for communities, such as: *social behavior* (mainly referring to practices specific to the context under investigation), *aid*, *illness*, *health*, *consumption*, *risk*, *migrant*, *hope*, *user*, *transformation*, *competence*, *body*, *mass*, *photo*, *lay (knowledge)*, *future*, *innovation*, *infection*, *rural*, *worker*, *orgasm*, *rich*, *naïve*, *optimism*, *money*, *engineer*, *biological*. Third, we encounter a dimension which deals with theoretical issues, as evinced by “theory” as the second representative word for

the cluster, as well as by references to *representations, psychology, understand, context, system, communication, analysis, study, investigation, definition, assumption, sense, cognition, approach, research, concept, paradigm, line, scholar, conceptualization*, revealing a preoccupation with the epistemological articulation of SRT with the phenomena studied, as well as an articulation with other theories. Therefore, we may conclude that the research in China, India and Turkey tends to focus on pragmatic thematic areas of high societal interest locally, as well as on the theoretical implications of SRT and on the relational dimensions it may investigate.

Cluster 2 ($N = 270$ ECUs) comprises over a quarter of the corpus (28.88%), making it the second largest sub-class identified. It is significantly associated with conference presentations, first authors from Taiwan, Lebanon and Japan, having been extracted from publications mainly published between 2010-2016. Most of the representative words for this cluster may be grouped in a research direction focused on education as a thematic area: *students, rights, school (year), learn, child, campus, guidance, solve, activity, value, human, small, teach, schema, teacher, graduate, undergraduate, education, university, college, lesson, access, science, program, intellectual, class*. Similarly to Cluster 3, we also find forms suggesting the presence of research focused on diverse issues relevant locally: political issues (*native, civilian, government, south, discriminate, military, involvement, force, institution, settlement, protest, security, stratification, territory, exclusion, conservative, employment, disability, care, work*), gender and family issues (*family, home, senior, father, daughter, desire, sexuality, mother, marry, obligation, duty*) and other apparently more isolated topics of social relevance connected to natural and generic places, transportation and communication, and a set of emotional or psychological dimensions (*forest, train, radio, spend, live, principle, place, happiness, faith, commitment, connection*). We find here a few methodological details about the papers from which the ECUs were extracted, such as *questionnaire, item, respondents, data, variable, question, scale, participant, correlation, sample, replicate, experiment, demographic, test, technique, result*. All in all, Cluster 2 reflects a research trend within SRT that focuses on socially relevant issues in a cultural specific manner (e.g. the study of obligation-based and duty-based perspectives of the children's family role in Taiwan), thus emphasizing the potential of SRT in studying social objects in context (Jovchelovitch, 2007).

Cluster 5 ($N = 134$ ECUs) comprises 14.33% of the corpus and is significantly associated with publications first authored by Filipino researchers, mainly published between 2010-2016, in an article format, indexed in the SCOPUS database. The content of this cluster seems to be organized on three dimensions, as follows: social-cultural life of community for resident and tourism (*resident, game, community, tourism, festival, community participation, development, heritage, event, art, village*), political issues (*ethnic, conflict, siege, territorial, victim, violence, resolution, war, agreement*,

land, warfare, nonviolence, woman, past, border, peaceful, transition, nation, struggle, national, tribe, oppression, justice, state, world, history, west, leader), manners in which SRs are researched and conceptualized (as *perceptions, locally*, by investigating people's *mentality*, their *beliefs, stories, discourses, narratives, memories*). The thematic concerns prevalent in this cluster are specific to the Asian geo-political arena, as stated by Atsumi (2007), and Liu and Ng (2007), who emphasized the need for social psychology to focus on the socio-political conflicts in this area. Regarding the direction of research focused on tourism development and impact, this is in line with the observation of Ward (2007), who spoke about the applicability of the crisis of relevance undergone by social psychology in general to the Asian context, adding that in order for social psychology to be considered a priority in academia, it should address issues of societal and pragmatic relevance. Cluster 1 ($N = 96$ ECUs) comprises 10.27% of the corpus and is significantly associated with publications first authored by Israelis, issued between 2000-2009, in English. It is mainly focused on a line of research conducted by Orr and his collaborators (see Orr, 1994, 1998, 2006; Orr, Assor, & Cairns, 1996; Orr & Ben Asher, 2000; Orr, Ben Asher & Gorodetski, 1997; Orr, Sagi & Bar-On, 2000; Orr, Wagner & Ben Asher, 2000; Orr & Yosi, 2000), and which examines from the perspective of SRT an Israeli social conflict regarding whether the traditional in-kibbutz high school should be kept as an education institution or replaced by public schools. This matter was controversial due to the fact that the type of education received by children in the kibbutz became a symbol for a collective identity and set of practices, and deliberations regarding it often involved a style of communication resembling propaganda rather than propagation and diffusion. The research program was ample; apart from studying communication style, it also focused on the structure of parental SRs according to group membership and identified two different identities, the Kibbutz identity (ruled by a collectivist-egalitarian ideology, in line with kibbutz traditions and prescriptive of the attendance of a traditional unique kibbutz high-school), and the Israeli identity (ruled by an individualistic-family focused ideology, in line with competitive and excellence-based values and prescriptive of the attendance of a regional conventional Israeli high school), which were both present at the individual level, but manifested separately in discourse. All in all, Cluster 1 is focused on the cultural and identity dimension of SRs, as well as their structuring group life.

Finally, Cluster 4 ($N = 72$ ECUs) comprises 7.7% of the corpus and is significantly associated with publications first authored by Indonesian researchers, issued in conference presentation and book chapter format, in French. The cluster is mainly centered on political (*citizenship, colonize, practices of power, reform, poverty, state, activism, movement, country, independence*) and cultural issues (*life cycles, ritual, birth, belief, religion, existence, life, spirit, secularism, tradition*), followed by considerations regarding the impact of western influence on sciences in eastern countries

(*western influence, modern science, world, west*) and, lastly, issues concerning gender and family roles (*marriage, polygamy*).

The clustering solution we obtained reveals a very diverse range of thematic objects that have been researched with SRT, vastly context-specific. Thus, these findings provide a partial answer to our research question regarding the thematic areas and objects mainly studied in Asia with SRT. Although some trends are common, like a focus on education, gender family roles, political and social issues, other are highly region-specific, such as the kibbutz research in Cluster 1. As we already mentioned, two factors may be at play: SRT's applicability to analyzing cultural specific social phenomena and the need for research on societally and pragmatically relevant objects in social psychology (Ward, 2007). Chiu (2007) already highlighted the importance of research into several objects we have found in our results and provides further insight on this trend. Essentially, Chiu (2007) argues that American social psychology is erroneously regarded as mainstream social psychology, as it was based on the study of phenomena specific to the USA, which in fact makes it an indigenous social psychology; following the same trend, European social psychology has also emerged in the global arena based on the study of phenomena specific to this area. What these two directions in social psychology have in common is exactly what Chiu claims that Asian social psychology lacks: "a rich collection of theoretically interesting social psychological phenomena", adding that "this limitation has impeded the development of empirically grounded theories of social behaviours in Asia. Interesting phenomena abound in Asia. For example, poverty, low literacy, the lack of occupational and relationship mobility, and political control pose many social, economic, and political constraints on Asians. Programmatic research on how these individuals manage their goals amid these constraints will provide rich empirical materials for constructing theories of social actions under constraints." (Chiu, 2007, p. 43).

- Hierarchical Clustering on Principal Components analyses conducted with the R software 3.3.2, the FactoMineR package (a comprehensive listing of full publications may be found at the European/International Joint PhD in Social Representations & Communication Research Center and Multimedia Lab, P.za Cavalieri di Malta 2, Rome-Italy or may be consulted upon request to A.S. de Rosa)

For the purpose of addressing our research question focused on how SRT was appropriated conceptually and in relation to other theories, as well as gain further insight into a. the theory's spatial and temporal trajectory beyond the descriptive profile and b. the main thematic areas in which SRT is employed in Asia, we analyzed the data obtained by applying the *Grid for Meta-Theoretical Analysis* on the 194 publications through Hierarchical Clustering on Principal Component analyses, a clustering algorithm which combines Ward's Hierarchical Clustering with k-means (for more details, see Husson, Lê, & Pagès, 2010; Husson, Josse, & Pagès, 2010). The classical *bibliographic categories* included in the first part of the *Grid* (like resource type, author, 1st

author institutional affiliation country, year of publication by decades, language, empirical/theoretical/thematic review type of paper) were used as *illustrative variables*, whilst the categories and modalities included in the following sections of the Grid specifically related to the meta-theoretical analysis (*references to SRT related concepts, references to other concepts, theories and paradigmatic approaches, thematic areas, paradigmatic approaches, typology of SRs*) were used as *active variables* in the pre-processing step, which consists in running a Multiple Correspondence Analysis (MCA). Ward's Hierarchical Clustering was applied on the MCA results (the first 61 dimensions, which explain 90% of the inertia) to determine the number of clusters to be later consolidated with the k-means algorithm. The results of the HC are represented in Figures 5 and 6, and they show that the data is best divided into three clusters of publications, which were then consolidated to engender the final solution, illustrated in Figures 7 and 8. Chi-square tests of association between the variables presented above and the three-cluster solution reveal the modalities of the variables which are significantly associated with each cluster, as well as whether the association is positive or negative (a comprehensive listing of full results may be found at the European/International Joint PhD in Social Representations & Communication Research Center and Multimedia Lab, P.za Cavalieri di Malta 2, Rome-Italy or may be consulted upon request to A.S. de Rosa).

The clustering solution reveals that there may be three manners in which SRT is used by the authors in Asia. The first one, represented by the publications in Cluster 1, concentrates 55.15% of the publications from the initial corpus and comprises almost all *the conference presentations* (95.18%) and most of the papers which reference SRT in a *generic* way (90.32%). All the Indonesian publications may be found in this Cluster (100%), and more than a half of the items found here were issued between 2002-2011 (63.16%). Thematically, this cluster comprises most of the publications on *Gender and family roles* (84.62%), although these publications make up for merely 10.28% of the total number of items in Cluster 1. Regarding the *language of publication*, Cluster 1 is significantly associated with *English* (89.72% of all its items are in this language). Moreover, we have significant negative associations with *references to SRT related concepts* as well as with *concepts, constructs and approaches pertaining to other theories*. The research direction presented in Cluster 1 shows that in the Asian geo-cultural context, SRT is often employed instrumentally for the study of socially relevant phenomena, with less focus on theoretical development.

Cluster 2 concentrates 17.01% of all the publications in our corpus and is mainly made up of articles published in journals (90.91% of the items in this cluster are articles). More than a half of the publications here are theoretical (51.52%) and all of them treat SRT specifically (100%). They were mainly first authored by Chinese researchers (66.67% of all publications in this cluster) in Chinese (54.56%) and issued very recently, from 2012 up to 2016.

This line of research is focused on studying the processes through which SRs are formed (both anchoring and objectification), as well as their functions (familiarization with the unfamiliar, facilitating communication, aiding in orientation and control of social reality), their genesis (socio-genesis) and the way they are transmitted (via communication). Regarding other concepts and theories, we find significant associations with individual representations, common sense, value, collective representations, belief system, image, language, cultural knowledge, practice, metaphor, themata, attitude and motivation, and, respectively, Social Cognition Theories, Discursive Psychology, Social Constructionism, Value Theories, Behaviourist Theories, Dissonance Theories and Common Sense Theories. Thus, given the theoretical orientation of this cluster and the fact that it comprises 50% of the papers on the topic of *SRT*, *meta-theory*, *methodological issues*, we may conclude that recently, mainly in China, there has been a narrow focus on the conceptualization of SRT (mainly the way they are formed through processes and socio-genesis) and on a meta-theoretical debate, in the sense that SRT was compared to the other approaches in Social Psychology with which previous research has found epistemological ties (e.g. Augoustinos & Innes, 1990 for Social Cognition Theories, Potter & Edwards, 1999 for Discursive Psychology; Moscovici, 1988 for Social Constructionism).

Cluster 3 represents 27.84% of our sample and is mostly made up of articles (92.59% of the items in the cluster), most of them presenting empirical research (81.48%), specifically referencing SRT (94.44%), first authored by Israeli researchers (40.82% of all the articles from Israel are in this cluster) from 2012 to 2016. This research direction references the functions of SRs (social identity related functions, SRs as guide for behaviour and intergroup relations, SRs facilitating orientation and control of social reality), their genesis (micro genesis), their transformation (via social influence through interaction, via social identity, via knowledge, via communication, via social changes), their transmission (via social identification). Regarding other constructs and theories, we have significant associations with self, behaviour, change, motivation, attribution, context, value, action, symbol, emotions and feelings, attitude, identity, social processes, practice, language, categorization, consensus, schemas and processes, opinion, communication, perception, development, cultural knowledge, ideology, belief system, judgement, image, assimilation, coping, norm, myth, metaphor, stigma, projection, common sense, collective representations and prototype and, respectively, Sociological Approach, Social Influence Theories, Attribution Theories, Stereotype, Attitude Theories, Social Interaction Theories, Philosophical Approaches and Anthropological Approaches. The research is mainly conducted in the *anthropological and ethnographic paradigmatic approach to SRT* (58.33% of all the papers on this approach are in Cluster 3). Thus, the research direction in cluster 3 is of a more applied nature, as reflected in the type of theories with which SRT is presented in conjecture. As such, as compared to Cluster 2 which

was significantly associated with theories that share epistemological ties with SRT, we find here theoretical frameworks that lend themselves easier to instrumental empirical research of social dynamic phenomena and social objects (e.g. Sociological Approach, Social Influence Theories, Attribution Theories, Social Interaction Theories). An additional difference between Clusters 2 and 3 is that while Cluster 2 is associated with theoretical aspects of SRT highlighting how a SR is formed (via processes, for example), Cluster 3 is more focused on the impact of SRs on social life – people and groups' identity (social identity related functions, SRs transformation via social identity, SRs transmission via social identification), group dynamics (micro-genesis, SRs as guide for behaviour and intergroup relations, SRs transformation via social influence through interaction).

All in all, our findings provide further insight into our research questions. Thus, they reveal a temporal shift from a more generic and applied tradition of research on SRT in 2002-2011 (also noted by de Rosa in 2013) to a more theoretically oriented empirical research trend starting from 2011 (evinced in Cluster 3) and paralleled temporally by a narrow distinct research line which deals meta-theoretical aspects, and hence, a recent preoccupation with theoretical developments. Spatially, these research trends are associated with the scientific production in Indonesia (Cluster 1), China (Cluster 2) and Israel (Cluster 3), which is partially in line with Haslam and Kashima's (2010) findings, according to which there is a preponderance of Chinese scientific literature in Asian social psychology. Regarding the conceptual appropriation of SRT, apart from the generic trend specific to older publications, our results show that the theoretical references to SRT cover all the categories proposed by de Rosa in her Grid for Meta-Theoretical Analysis, as well as the vast majority of concepts and constructs pertaining to other theories, which may show that SRT was appropriated in a fashion similar to the one proposed originally.

For the purpose of addressing our research question focused on how SRT was employed empirically in the Asian geo-cultural context, as well as gain further insight into how the theoretical aspects articulate with the methodology choices in certain thematic areas, we employed the main theoretical categories, along with the main thematic areas and data about methodology from the *Grid for Meta-Theoretical Analysis* as variables in another HCPC analysis conducted on the 132 empirical publications in our sample. Results revealed a three cluster solution (Figures 9, 10, 11 and 12). The MCA, employed as a pre-processing step of the data, was performed on the list of variables presented above, to which categories related to methodological profile were added (e.g. type of *methods*, *data analysis techniques*). The HCPC subsequently took into account the first 36 dimensions from the MCA (90% of the inertia).

Cluster 1 concentrates 42.42% of our sample, and presents empirical research conducted between 1992-2001 (81.25% of the empirical items issued in this time frame are in Cluster 1), mainly by Israeli first authors (65% of all these

publications are here), who employed mostly structured instruments (questionnaires or structured interviews, scales), as 82.48% of all the papers using these methods are in Cluster 1, and quantitative data analysis techniques (descriptive statistics, bivariate and, respectively, multivariate techniques), as 83.93% of all the papers using these statistical tests are in Cluster 1. The research was carried out in laboratory settings, on convenience samples and was of an inter-group and cross-national nature, with a quasi-experimental research design.

Cluster 2 concentrates 17.42% of our corpus, and presents generic papers (42.11% of all the generic papers are here) issued as conference presentations (73.91% of all the items in Cluster 2 were presented at conference events), mainly first authored by Indonesian researchers (60% of the total number of papers) between 2002-2011 (21.74% of the total number of papers issued in this period from our sample), with no statistically significant associations for any theoretical, thematic or methodological aspects.

Cluster 3 concentrates 40.15%, and presents empirical research conducted by Indian first authors (85.71% of all the publications first authored by Indian researchers may be found here) and published in journal articles in 71.70% of the cases, within the anthropological and paradigmatic approach to SRT (81.82% of all the empirical research conducted within this approach to SRT from our sample is concentrated in Cluster 3). The reference to SRT was specific in 96.23% of the elements of the cluster, focused on SRs genesis related concepts, SRs functions, transmission and transformation and mainly on identity and deviance as thematic areas. Methodologically, Cluster 3 groups empirical publications employing qualitative data analysis techniques (content analysis, thematic analysis) – 88.24% of the publications employing this type of statistical analysis are here, open instruments (free and semi-directive interviews) – 62.68% of the publications employing this type of method are here, and observation techniques – 75% of the publications employing this type of method can be found in Cluster 3, in descriptive research designs, longitudinal studies conducted in field settings on convenience samples.

Therefore, we may conclude that three different lines of empirical research are delineated by each of the clusters, mainly differentiated through the methodology employed, which was found to be articulated with the use of SRT only for the last two clusters. Thus, when SRT was employed generically, we do not have any significant associations with a certain type of methodology or data analysis technique, while when it was employed specifically (Cluster 3), the methodology was more anthropologically oriented, and more qualitatively inclined. Cluster 1 represents the “oldest” empirical research line in Asia, conducted more in the spirit proposed by the mainstream tradition in social psychology, which reflects how the latter penetrated the Asian area, via North-American influences and standards (Kruglanski & Stroebe, 2010). It opposes Cluster 3, as it does not contain any publication employing observant techniques (0.00%), and only 7.14% of the publications employing qualitative

data analysis techniques, and, respectively, 35.71% of the papers using open instruments. On the other hand, Cluster 3 only comprises 13.21% of items employing quantitative data analysis techniques, and, coincidentally, the same percentage of items employing structured instruments (13.21%). If we take into account the fact that many empirical papers employ mixed methods and, consequently, mixed data analysis techniques, we may notice that the opposition between Clusters 1 and 3 reflects the debate between the use of quantitative and qualitative in SRT (see Garnier, 2015; Laszlo, 1997; Wagner et al., 1999), and, combined with the temporal trajectory, our findings reveal the same trend noticed by de Rosa's meta-theoretical analysis from 2013 on a global sample of SRT papers, which revealed a trend toward the integration of quantitative and qualitative methodologies. This may point towards the fact that the evolution of SRT in the Asian context shares similarities with its development in other geo-cultural contexts and can be an indicator that the scientific community inspired by the social representation theory – after many decades of cultivation of distinct paradigmatic approaches guiding separate research practices – is more ready to welcome a more integrative epistemological and methodological vision as expressed by the “modelling approach” overcoming the fragmented sub-circle of diverse schools of thought and the polytheism of methods and moving even beyond the traditional multi-method approach (de Rosa, 1990, 2013a, 2014c). In the light of the “modelling approach” the integration of methods implying different channels of communication for data collection (verbal, textual but also iconic and media channels) instead of a methodological juxtaposition, needs to be justified according to the different theoretical dimensions, constructs and paradigmatic approaches orienting the research designs based on specific hypotheses about the interaction between theoretical dimensions, research tools and data strategies analyses - aimed at overcoming the traditional quantitative-qualitative dichotomy (de Rosa, 2013a, 2014c; de Rosa et al., 2016).

5.5. Conclusions

The objective of our research was in line with the larger goal of the project from which it originates, tracing the development of a European theory across time, space and disciplines, to identify, among others, whether the theory has undergone conceptual and/or methodological transformations while transcending to other cultural areas over time, as summarized by de Rosa: “Is it possible that the same theory is differently referred to when used by researchers adopting so different approaches or working in different cultural scenarios? If so, what does this mean?” (de Rosa, 2013, p. 95). Thus, we first looked at the pre-existent socio-cultural conditions in which SRT was adopted in the Asian geo-cultural area, so that we may get a glimpse into the reasons for which they have chosen to adopt SRT according to their cultural academic agendas. Thereupon, a review of the literature on this topic reveals that the researchers from the Asian geo-cultural area are interested in creating an

original Asian social psychology based on their context-specific cultural and social phenomena, hence they favor a basis in indigenous psychology as opposed to one in a social psychology created in and for other cultural areas: “As an evolving intellectual movement, the significance of ‘Asian’ social psychology has less to do with the yearning for social identity distinctiveness or self-respect, although that remains important, but more to do with its historical mission as a social psychology in, of, and for Asia. This parochialism is deliberate, reflecting our faith in the prospect that a social psychology that is in, of, and good for Asia would also be good for social psychology as a global academic endeavour. Conversely, it is our belief (and fear) that a social psychology that omits Asia will do so at its own peril however mainstream or global it may seem at present. As the next 100 years unfold, it is hard to imagine a social psychology that does not have a centre stage in Asia, wherever else its other centres may lie.” (Liu & Ng, 2007, p. 2). This type of social psychology should also have a practical orientation, in the sense that it should be promoting ways of dealing with contemporary social issues: “As I indicated above, it is time for us, as Asian social psychologists, to contribute more to the current historical, cultural, economical and political situations in our own region, Asia. We researchers are now facing something strange according to tacit assumptions in the field of social psychology and in the region of Asia - the movement of Asia from a colonized region to a sphere of sovereign but interdependent activity. “(Atsumi, 2007, p. 28). SRT, albeit created in the European space, is versatile and highly flexible, and designed specifically for capturing culture-sensitive lay knowledge, which explains why the Asian social psychologists employ it in order to attain their goal of the creation of an original Asian social psychology: “Unlike the standard theoretical repertoires of social psychology, social representations of national history are in large part unique to a culture and its people. This is particularly relevant for peace psychology in Asia, because as Montiel (2003) notes, 107 of the 131 conflicts in this region in the last 30 years were internal to a state.” (Liu & Sibley, 2009, p. 5). Thereupon, the state of the art of SRT in Asia, as revealed by our findings, has to be regarded while taking into consideration these two aspects: the strive for a unique Asian social psychology and, respectively, the social utility and applicability of the empirical research. In doing so, we may understand the weak focus on theoretical developments (Liu, 2008) found in our HCPC analyses and the over-abundance of diverse thematic foci evinced by our textual analysis of abstracts and key-words, in line with Chiu’s (2007) listing of pressing social issues in this geo-cultural area. Regarding the latter, the lack of homogeneity of Asia visible from the controversies surrounding the territories and cultures considered as defining for an Asian identity, detailed in our introduction, is also apparent in our textual analysis findings, as the data corpus was divided in five clusters, each significantly associated with diverse countries. Our results reflect the fact that

SRT is indeed employed for a wide variety of objects of study, mainly focused on the socio-cultural issues specific to this geo-cultural area.

First, although the *So.Re.Com "A.S. de Rosa" @-library* is the most comprehensive specialised repertory in social representation (de Rosa, 2015b - our sample was extracted up to March 2016), which was enriched over time by native speakers of Asian languages, as well as by students who travelled to this space with the purpose of collecting publications employing SRT that are not readily available in online databases or have not yet analysed. However, we must take into account that the Asian space is very vast and multilingual, and our sample may not be representative for all the nations in this continent. Future research should focus on conducting this type of research on larger samples. Furthermore, defining the Asian space is itself a controversial topic, as discussed in the introduction and some authors, who choose to exclude the Middle East region (e.g. Leung, 2007) from Asia, may do not share the criteria adopted for this research and above justified. Also, many of our conference presentations were available in abstract form only, which may have biased our results regarding the generic employment of the theory in this space. Then, our research was exploratory, not confirmatory in nature, but – inspired by the Moscovici's vision that research in social psychology is for "improving, not for proving" (de Rosa, 2003) - we are confident that it is quite unique in its meta-theoretical approach and methodology used, thus providing a basis for further studies on the continuously growing literature.

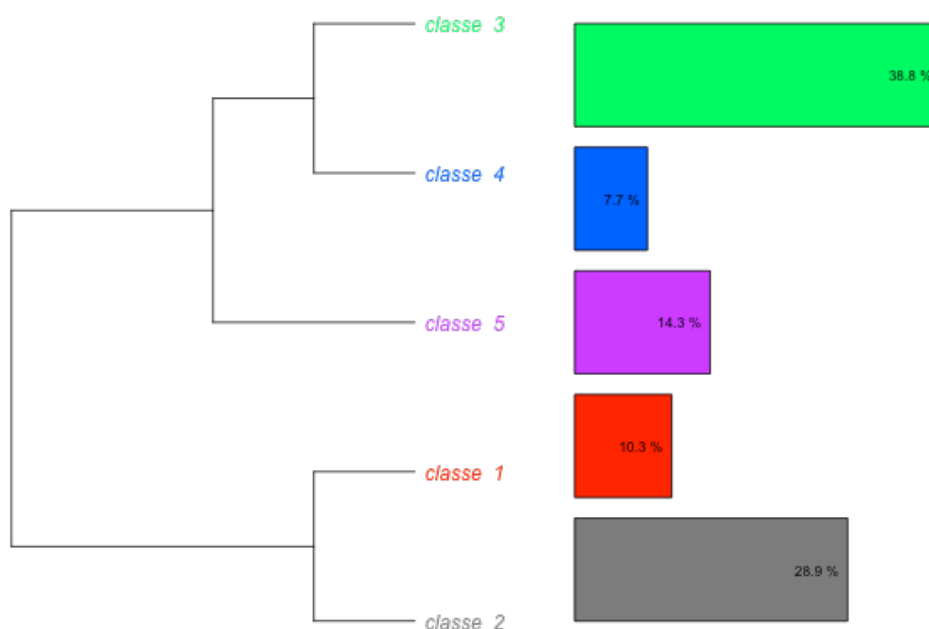


Figure 1: Dendrogram of the clusters issued by the Hierarchical Descending Classification performed on the abstracts and keywords

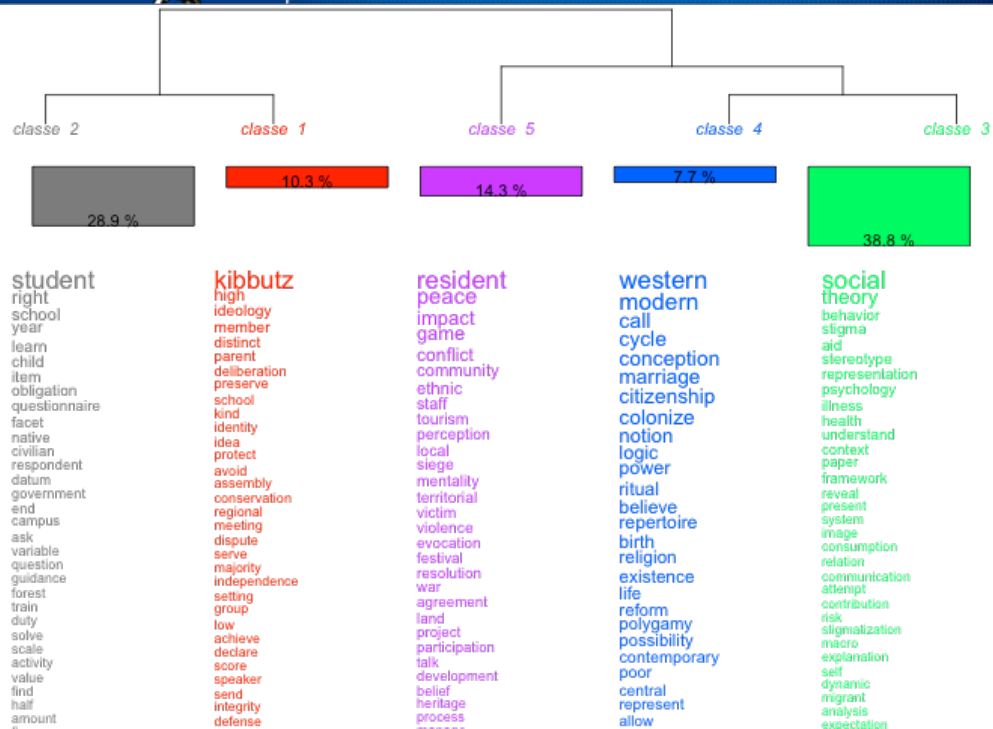


Figure 2: Dendrogram of the clusters issued by the Hierarchical Descending Classification performed on the abstracts and keywords with a brief summary of their content

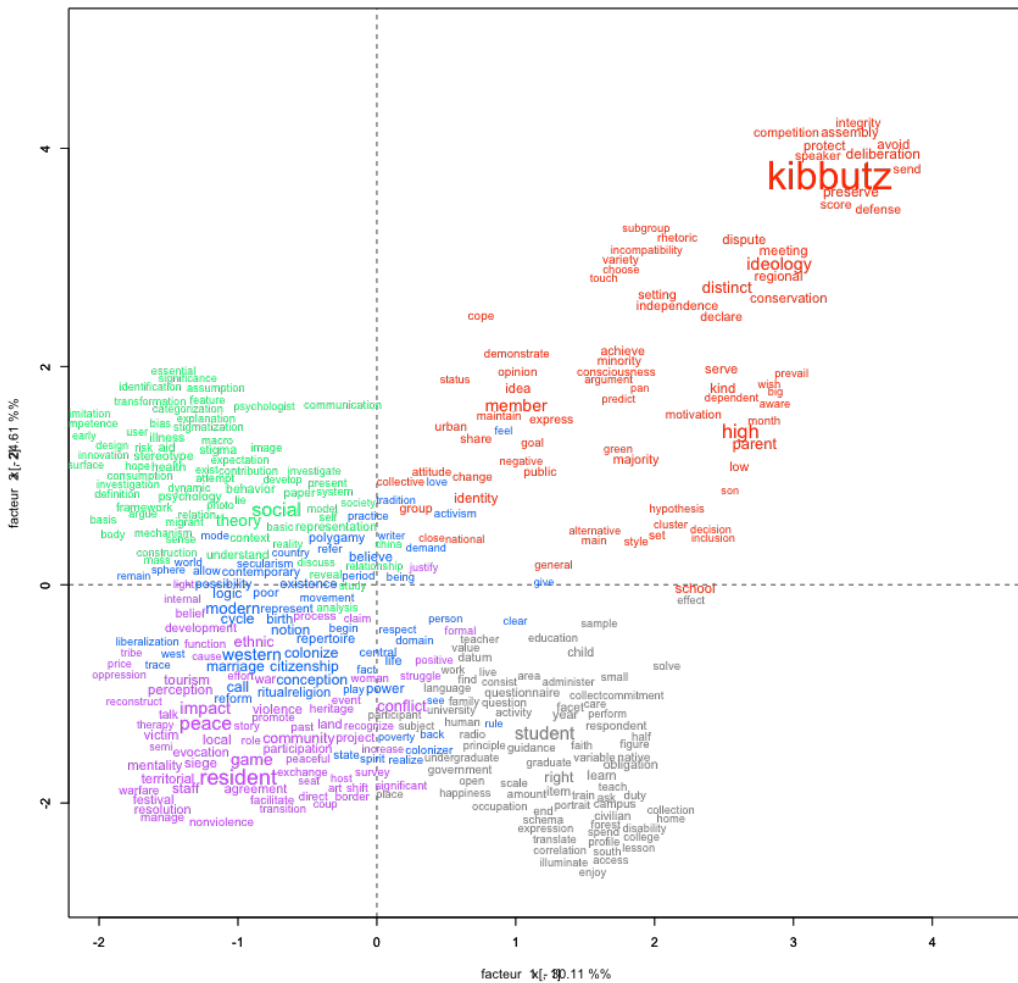


Figure 3: Factorial Correspondence Analysis based on the Hierarchical Descending Classification

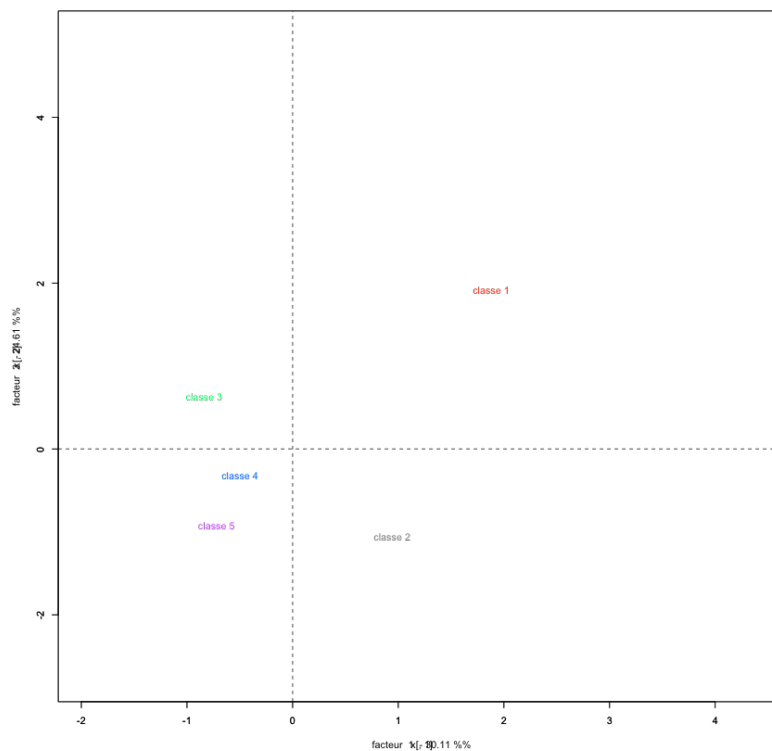


Figure 4: Factorial Correspondence Analysis based on the Hierarchical Descending Classification – plotting the clusters

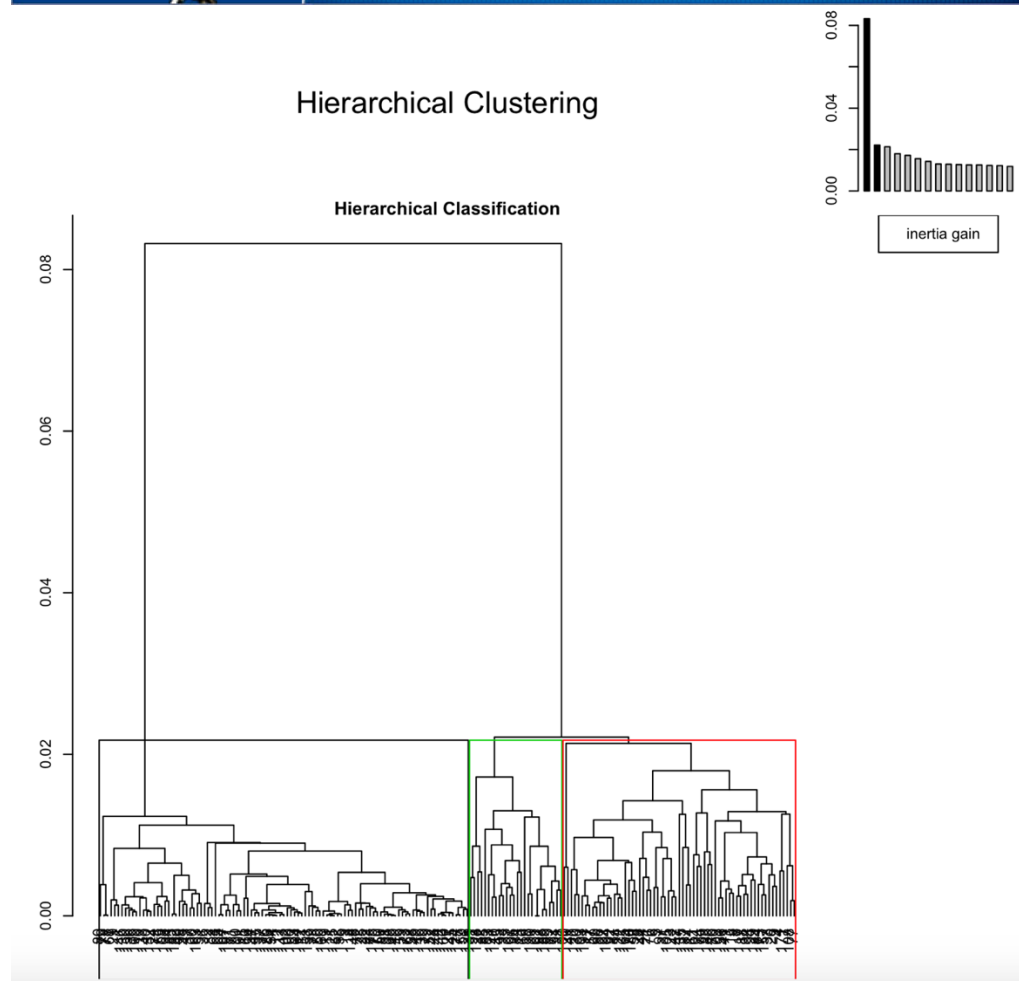


Figure 5: Hierarchical Clustering (Ward's criterion) illustrating the inertia gain for the HCPC on the entire sample of publications

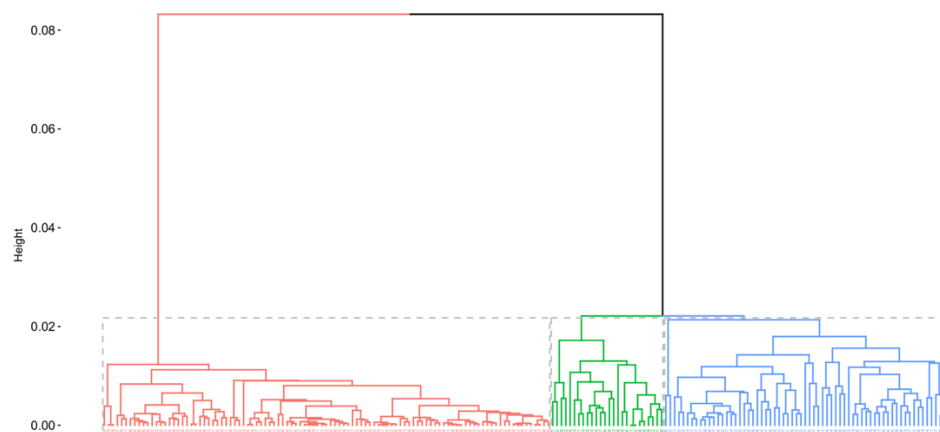


Figure 6: Hierarchical Clustering (Ward's criterion) – initial partitioning for the HCPC on the entire sample of publications

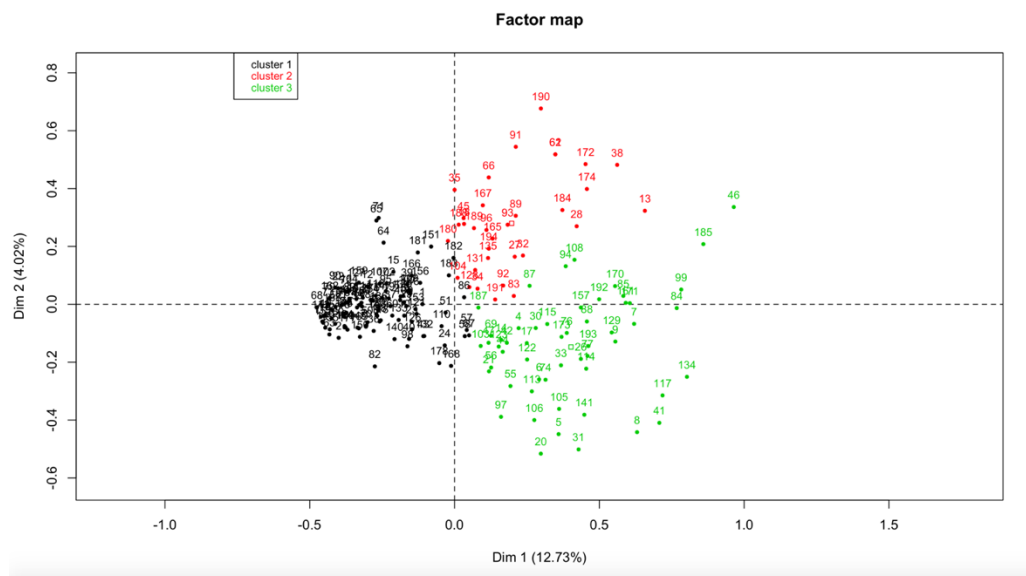


Figure 7: Factor map and clusters after consolidation for the HCPC on the entire sample of publications

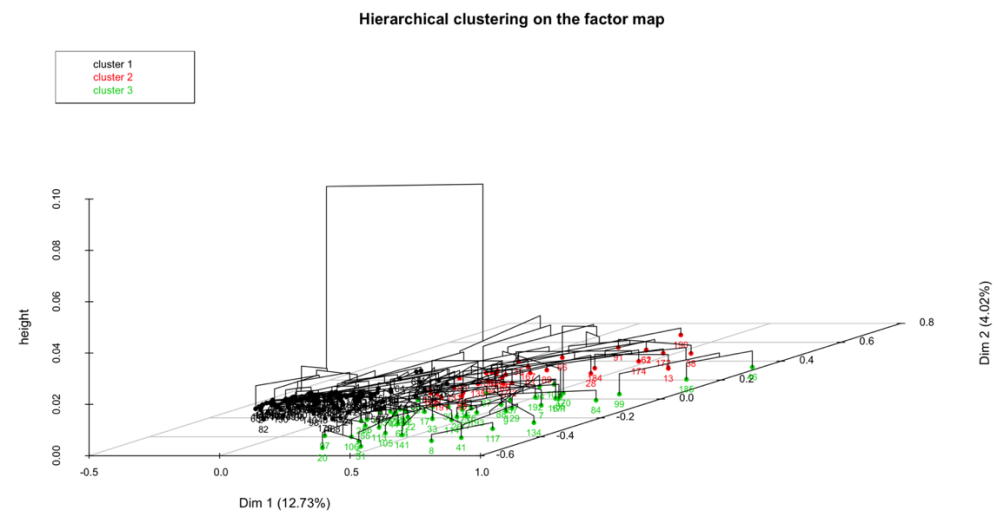


Figure 8: Factor map, clusters and tree after consolidation for the HCPC on the entire sample of publications

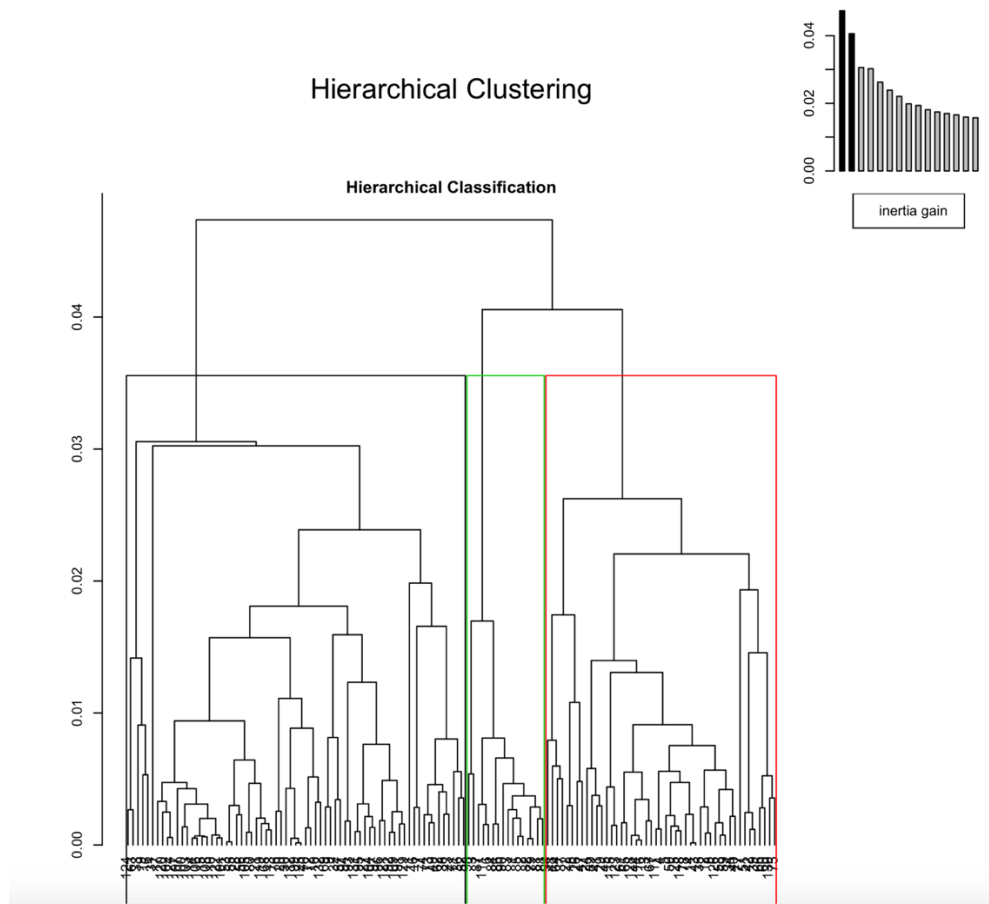


Figure 9: Hierarchical Clustering (Ward's criterion) – initial partitioning illustrating the inertia gain for the HCPC on the empirical publications

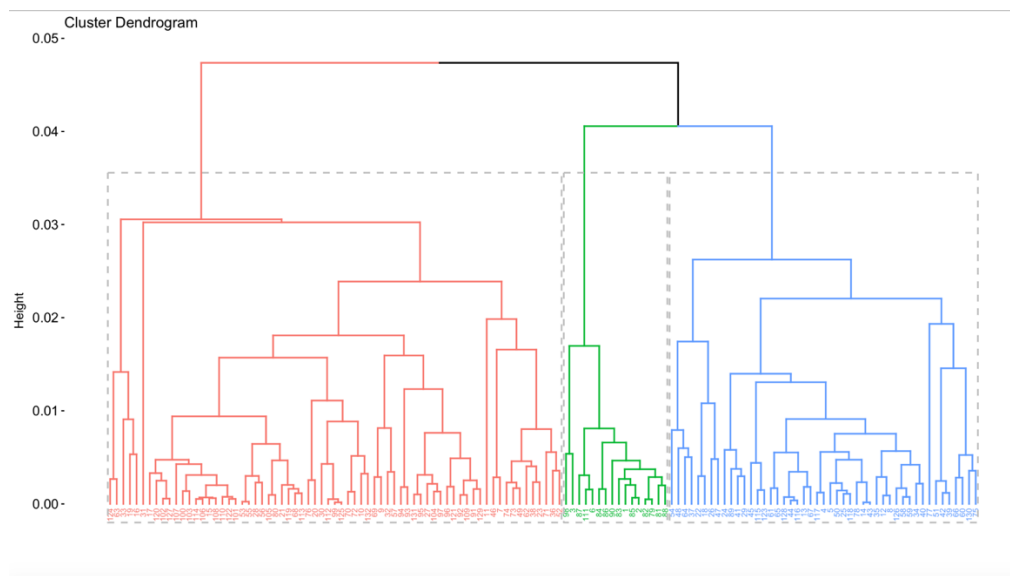


Figure 10: Hierarchical Clustering (Ward's criterion) – initial partitioning for the HCPC on the empirical publications

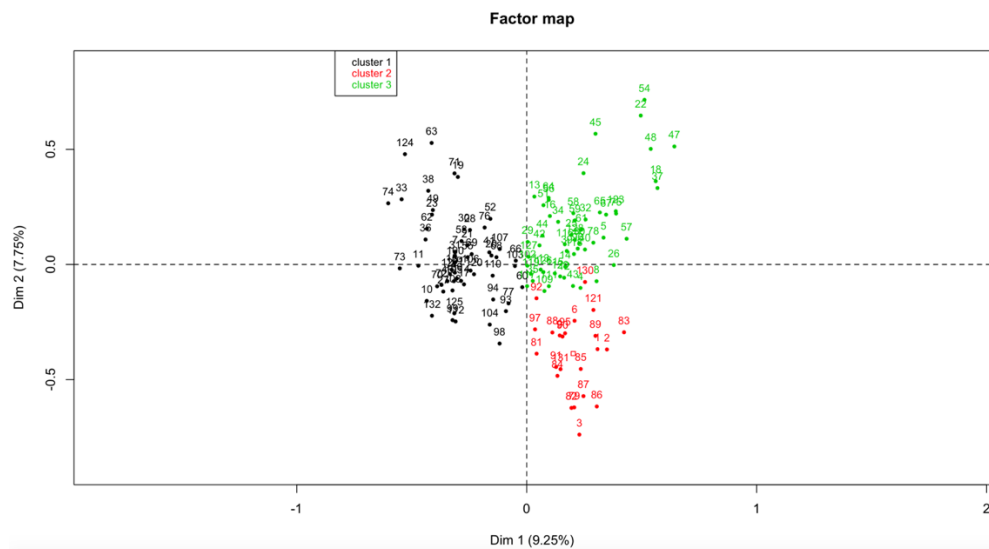


Figure 11: Factor map and clusters after consolidation for the HCPC on the empirical publications

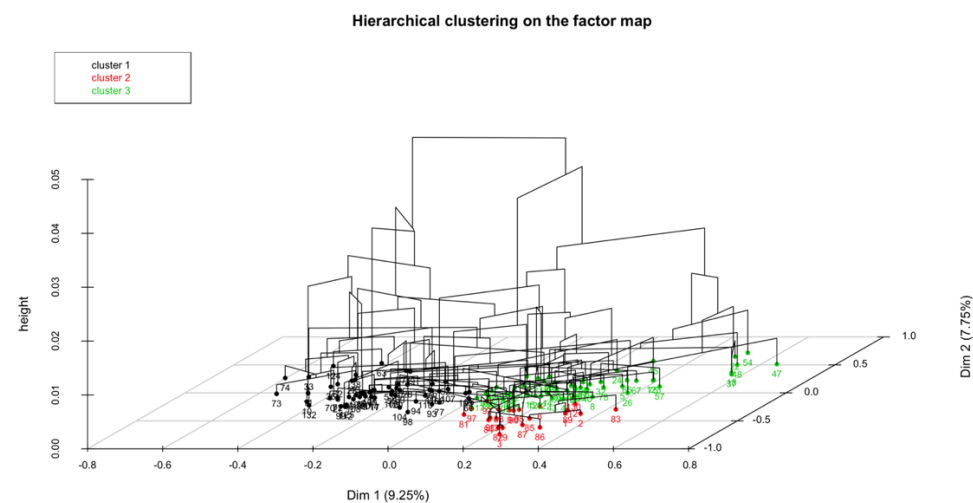


Figure 12: Factor map, clusters and tree after consolidation for the HCPC on the empirical publications

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6. Social Representations Theory in Africa

6.1. Abstract

This paper explores the state of the art of the Social Representations Theory (SRT) in the geo-cultural context of Africa, spatially and temporally, as well as from a conceptual, disciplinary, theoretical, empirical and thematic point of view. It is the result of a larger research project, launched by de Rosa in 1994ab, aimed at performing the meta-theoretical analysis of the scientific literature published on Social Representations Theory (SRT), and representing the unified framework of the EC-funded project (ITN-People MSCA-IDP 2013, no. 6072799 <http://www.europhd.eu/SoReComJointIDP>). The *Grid for Meta-Theoretical Analysis* was used on 103 publications which referenced SRT, all extracted from the So.Re.Com “A.S. de Rosa” @-library and meta-theoretically analyzed until 2016. The findings of the meta-theoretical analysis were then explored based on absolute and relative frequencies, lexicometrically (Hierarchical Descending Classification) and through clustering algorithms (Hierarchical Clustering on Principal Components analysis). Results revealed that SRT was adopted by African social psychologists due to its epistemological and methodological compatibilities with the demands of this geo-cultural area, namely for a conceptual framework that is apt to capture social phenomena in context, free from the bias of having been tailored on Western populations and thus carrying implicit assumptions not pertinent to this area. Our findings also reveal that SRT was applied in accordance with its original premises, especially the trans-disciplinary ones, and that it fulfills its critical potential of addressing issues having to do with social oppression and inequality (Howarth, 2006), specific to this area.

Key words: social representations theory, Africa, geo-cultural, meta-theoretical analysis, social psychology

6.2. Introduction

This research is part of a larger research project¹⁰ which aims to explore the worldwide diffusion, dissemination, impact and application of Social Representations Theory (SRT) by meta-theoretically analyzing the scientific literature which addresses this theory as an empirical or theoretical framework.

¹⁰Lead by A.S. de Rosa (European/International Joint PhD in S.R. & C. Research Centre and Multimedia Lab, University of Rome Sapienza, Italy) and funded by the EU FP//20 13 PITN-GA-20 13-607279 (<http://www.europhd.eu/SoReComJointIDP>). More details regarding the larger project, meta-theoretical analysis, and previous publications on these issues may be found on the website [europhd.eu](http://www.europhd.eu) as well as in de Rosa, 1992, 1994, 2002, 2003, 2006^{ab}, 2008, 2011^{abcde}, 2012, 2013^{ab}, 2014^{ab}, 2015^{ab}, 2016, 2017; de Rosa & d'Ambrosio, 2003, 2008; de Rosa, Dryjanska & Bocci, 2015; de Rosa, Dryjanska & Forte, 2015; de Rosa, Panzaru, Dryjanska, 2015; de Rosa et al., 2016; de Rosa, Ramazanov & Dryjanska, 2016; Ramazanov et al., 2016; de Rosa et al., 2016; de Rosa & Dryjanska, 2017; de Rosa, Dryjanska & Bocci, 2017; de Rosa, Arhiri & Dryjanska, 2015; de Rosa et al., 2016; Bocci et al., 2016; Arhiri, de Rosa & Dryjanska, 2016; Gherman, de Rosa & Dryjanska, 2016).



The framework-projet was launched by de Rosa in 1994ab, and is now EC-funded (ITN-People MSCA-IDP 2013, no. 6072799 <http://www.euophd.eu/SoReComJointIDP>) within the framework of the European/International Joint PhD articulated in 13 research lines around three main axes: a) development of different paradigmatic approaches, b) dissemination across different continents and geo-cultural contexts, c) application to different thematic domains and subtopics. The current paper is dedicated to the meta-theoretical analysis (de Rosa, 2002, 2013b) of the publications on SRT from the geo-cultural context of Africa¹¹, where de Rosa's previous meta-theoretical analyses found that SRT was less diffused and employed more generically as compared to the European, Latin American and North-American geo-cultural contexts (de Rosa, 2013b). The past meta-theoretical analyses were conducted on global samples of scientific publications employing SRT and hence treated the African geo-cultural context in a comparative framework; our study addresses this geo-cultural scenario in depth by specifically examining the wider social sciences realm currently present in Africa and articulating it with SRT's diffusion and application.

First, although since its 1961 inception SRT has transcended its disciplinary bounds due to its high theoretical versatility and empirical applicability to socially relevant phenomena of public interest (Garnier, 2002; Rateau et al., 2011), the theory was created within and for social psychology (Madiot, 2013, Moscovici, 1961), in order to provide the latter with a social constructionist alternative to its mainstream social cognitivist premises (Rateau et al., 2011). Thus, it is useful for our analysis to shed light on the historical and current development of social psychology itself in Africa. In 2010, Kruglanski and Stroebe argued that although social psychology was taught in most African universities, social psychology research was only found in South Africa (problem-driven, focused in 80% of the cases on race relations, using contemporary methods and theories) according to their search in the two Pan-African journals dedicated to psychology: *Journal of Psychology in Africa*

¹¹ According to the United Nations, there are 54 countries in Africa today. The full list, with current populations and subregions (based on the United Nations official statistics), may be consulted on the website <http://www.worldometers.info/geography/how-many-countries-in-africa/> Within this categorical frame, the assignment of countries or areas to specific groupings is for statistical convenience and does not imply any assumption regarding political or other affiliation of countries or territories by the United Nations, being based on the Methodology "Standard Country or Area Codes for Statistical Use": <https://unstats.un.org/unsd/methodology/m49/> Given the focus on the dynamic of knowledge production-dissemination, and the determinant factor of the author's institutional affiliation country/continent, this variable has been coded in the SoReCom "A.S. de Rosa" @-library filtering the information through the official source of Universities and Research Institutions MyWHED (linked to the International Association of Universities' Worldwide Database of Higher Education Institutions, Systems and Credentials) that allows an advanced search on a database filtered according to Institutions (Criteria: Institution, Region, Country, Field of study, Officer, Level of study, Student Services, IAU Member). Finally, the countries included in the geo-cultural of Africa are: Algeria, Angola, Benin, Botswana, Burkina, Faso, Burundi, Cameroon, Cape, Verde, Central, African, Republic, Chad, Congo-Brazzaville, Congo-Kinshasa, Djibouti, Egypt, Equatorial, Guinea, Eritrea, Ethiopia, Gabon, Gambia, Ghana, Guinea, Guinea-Bissau, Ivory, Coast, Kenya, Lesotho, Liberia, Libya, Madagascar, Malawi, Mali, Mauritania, Mauritius, Morocco, Mozambique, Namibia, Niger, Nigeria, Reunion, Rwanda, Sao, Tome, and, Principe, Senegal, Seychelles, Sierra, Leone, Somalia, South, Africa, Sudan, Swaziland, Tanzania, Togo, Tunisia, Uganda, Western, Sahara, Zambia and Zimbabwe.

(1990-up to date) and *African Journal for the Psychological Study of Social Issues* (1994-up to date). In organizational terms, the authors did not find any formal institution dedicated to social psychology itself, nor any journal specifically focused on this discipline; however, the Universities of Cape Town, Kwa-Zulu Natal, Witwatersrand and Stellenbosch (all in South Africa) do have research groups working on social psychology research, with ties to USA and UK universities. A study from 2014 mapping the status quo of social psychology in Africa within the larger international network revealed that there are very few researchers working in social psychology in this continent (approximately 500), although the population of this context is larger than Europe's and North America's combined (Quayle & Greer, 2014). More than a half of these researchers are in South Africa alone, as already pointed out by Kruglanski and Stroebe (2010), while the other half seem to be concentrated in four other countries (Nigeria, Kenya, Uganda and Egypt) and sparsely scattered in the rest of the continent; very few collaborations among African social psychologists were found– they appear to be working more with scientists from all the other geo-cultural contexts: Europe, North America, South America, Asia, Australia, Oceania (Quayle & Greer, 2014). All in all, these findings reveal that research in social psychology is itself not widely proliferated in the African geo-cultural context, while as a discipline, social psychology is still striving to crystallize, as evinced by the absence of formal organizations of African psychologists and social psychology focused African journals; these factors are very likely to have contributed greatly to the low rate of SRT diffusion observed by de Rosa (e.g. de Rosa, 2002, 2013b; de Rosa & d'Ambrosio, 2002, 2008). Thereupon, we will present a brief examination of the factors that may have led to the current state of affairs in African social psychology, based on our review of scientific literature that has examined this phenomenon.

We will start with the relevance crisis with which social psychology has been faced when transplanted from the mold of the Western world and transposed to other geo-cultural contexts. It has been long argued that social psychology has an exacerbated focus on issues that lack social and public relevance, probably stemming from glorifying the importance of internal consistency as a criterion for assessing the value of research over other aspects, such as novelty of topic and pragmatic utility (e.g. Bandawe, 2010; Fishbein, 1997; McGuire, 1997; Moscovici, 1997). This issue becomes pivotal when we address the development of the discipline in third world countries, where resources are scarce and only allotted to research when its results are of clear consequence in solving pressing matters, such as poverty, low life expectancy, the prevalence of disease and so on (Omari, 1983). Hence, although the scope and mission of social psychology would make it of great use especially in contexts faced with so many social concerns, its application in its current form renders it unfit, superfluous and intellectualist to the point of elitist, as in those contexts, it is devoid of its stated purpose of social significance (Bandawe, 2010;

Moghaddam et al., 1999). This is particularly true for the African geo-cultural scenario, where the history of psychology is said to coincide with the history of colonialism (Akin-Ogundeji, 1991), in the sense that due to the influence of the colonial era, psychology as an applied science is not evolving at the same pace as the socio-political and economic changes unfolding here, specifically due to the artificial imposition of experimental designs in a context in which field research is imperative (Bandawe, 2010). Even in cases where social psychological research has targeted objects of social relevance (e.g. Raubenheimer, 1993), which even resulted in positive and significant public outcomes (Carr & MacLachlan, 1993), there was still a great disparity between the theoretical paradigms employed (molded on Western standards - Moghaddam et al., 1999) and the objects of study themselves (Ager, 1993), which at times led to dire consequences, such as inadvertently supporting the apartheid system in South Africa (Foster, Nicholas & Dawes, 1993).

Regarding this last point, experts in the field have been arguing that psychology as a science has been employed to serve certain interests of privileged groups through its Eurocentric approach (e.g. the intelligence testing projects from the beginning of the 20th century - Howitt & Owusu-Bempah, 1994; neuro-scientific discoveries being used as an avenue for promoting specific values, ideologies and social divisions – Bangerter & Heath, 2004; Green & Clémence, 2008; Joffe & Staerklé, 2007; McCabe & Castel, 2008; O'Connor, Rees & Joffe, 2012; Racine et al., 2010; the research on hierarchization differences between people in mainstream psychology leading to justification for the stigmatization of social groups – Macleod & Bhatia, 2008). Other approaches to mainstream psychology (in which SRT may be included, according to Kessi & Kiguwa, 2015), such as feminist, colonial, indigenous and liberation psychology, have challenged such Eurocentric approaches by addressing psychological issues more critically and socially: acknowledging the importance of the social, economic and historical *context* in shaping up knowledge, behavior and morality, conceptualizing *identities* as varied, non-linear and intersecting, providing methods for studying *power relations*. Such movements for alternative frameworks in psychology have also led to the current project of decolonizing psychology (Kessi, 2015; Mbembe, 2015), which advocates for dramatically increasing the relevance of the discipline with the purpose of promoting its development in the world beyond the West, by featuring “a less individualistic focus on the effects of current social milieus towards a more politically-focused analysis of subjectivity, representation, practice and intervention.” (Kessi & Kiguwa, 2015, p. 4). One of the ways in which this can be accomplished in the context of Africa is to employ critical engagement and introduce *interdisciplinary* endeavours within social psychological conceptualizations and research in order to gain a more accurate and comprehensive understanding of, on the one hand, the *actual lived experiences* of people's social world (e.g. the subjective emotional and affective correlates of belonging/exclusion in postcolonial settings, the

intertwining of material, structural and psychological realities specific to this area), and on the other, of the *context-specific social phenomena* that mark this area, such as social exploitation, dispossession, stigmatization, colonial and postcolonial motivated structural violence. Basically, to make social psychology relevant in Africa, we would need (among other things) to critically examine intersectionality (Bilge, 2013; Kessi & Kaguwa, 2015) in order to truly explore the hybridisation of subjectivities, a decolonizing project of social psychology for which Kessi and Kaguwa (2015) propose the use of SRT, as it would turn social psychology into a bridge science with the potential to question the legitimization of mainstream knowledge systems as well as the societal power relations; Moscovici himself argued in 1990 for bridging between disciplines to increase relevance: “[...] anthropology, psychology, economics and the rest. These sciences should become more permeable to one another, more attuned to the events and problems which arise within the historical context. In an expanding world like ours, those sciences which are congealed within their ancient frontiers are destined to lose more and more of their relevance and reach.” (Moscovici, 1990, p. 3). SRT acknowledges the existence of alternative systems of knowledge without privileging one over the other, as it holds that all knowledge is constructed (and none of it reflected directly by “reality”) and it serves the purpose of navigating one’s environment (Duveen & de Rosa, 1992), which makes it an important avenue for the advancement of social psychological research in the African geo-cultural area (Kessi & Kaguwa, 2015).

Other researchers have attested the value of SRT upon employing it in research in African contexts; Van Niekerk and Boonzaier (2015) argue that SRT “has great value for a nation in which the individual is intrinsically linked to the social. Its application has the potential to instigate social change if emphasis is placed upon not only overt forms of power, but also those that are hidden and serve to repress individuals and groups.” (Van Niekerk & Boonzaier, 2015, p. 5.19). Thus, they emphasize the theory’s potential to explore how power and equality facilitate social change, a potential given by its dynamic conceptualization of representations and by not separating the individual from the social in exploring social experience. Adelowo (2015) adds that it would be very useful to advance an African social psychology which would permit researchers to reshape the mainstream representation of the world which portrays African people as *the others* rather than including them in the making of psychology as a science, and, for instance, defining concepts such as *identity* after taking into account the specific way in which this concept is operationalized in all the geo-cultural areas in the world. The first step would be, she adds, employing SRT to study the current power relations operating in psychology: “Viewing African psychology through a social representations framework can serve to challenge the hegemonic social representations that invade our realities; highlight the reification and legitimisation of knowledge systems and consequent exclusion of African people from psychological

theorising.” (Adelowo, 2015, p. 6.17). Other empirical researches reveal the applicability of SRT in studying context specific social objects in different parts of Africa: Howard-Payne (2002) investigated SRs of HIV/AIDS in Johannesburg, South Africa and stated that this theory was the optimal framework due to the uniqueness of the South African space; Aikins has amply explored SRs of chronic illness (diabetes, mental illnesses) and nutritional practices in African communities in order to come up with the most context-appropriate strategies to be employed in treatment plans (Aikins, 2002^a, 2002^b, 2003, 2006, 2008, 2009); Falade has explored the SRs of the polio-vaccine in Nigeria, and his results showed that they were constructed in the media as impure and as “a weapon” against this population used by the Western and anti-Islamic conspirators (Falada, 2015). From all these examples listed above, we can deduct that SRT is of particular interest for social psychology in Africa for two main reasons: its empirical utility to study local phenomena without methodological restrictions that would limit the scopes and value of research or theoretical assumptions tailored on Western populations, and its potential to contribute to the decolonization of psychology.

Based on the results of previous meta-theoretical analyses, which showed that the production of scientific literature on SRT is more modest in Africa as compared to the other geo-cultural scenarios (e.g. de Rosa 2013b), we set out to explore the status of SRT’s most associated discipline, social psychology, in the African context and found that it was very scarcely disseminated in its empirical component. In light of this, we may argue that the production on SRT in Africa should not be compared in terms of volume of production or date of adoption of the theory with the other geo-cultural areas, but rather considered on its own. This is the objective of this paper, which, through meta-theoretically analyzing the scientific literature on SRT issued by African institutions affiliated first authors, aims at exploring how SRT is conceptualized theoretically and used methodologically to fit the demands of the social milieus in Africa. The purpose for which meta-theoretical analysis itself was created (de Rosa, 1992; 1994ab, 2002) was to see whether the theory has undergone conceptual and/or methodological transformations while transcending to other cultural areas over time, as summarized by de Rosa: “Is it possible that the same theory is differently referred to when used by researchers adopting so different approaches or working in different cultural scenarios? If so, what does this mean?” (de Rosa, 2013b, p. 95). Thus, through our analyses, we should be able to see whether SRT may indeed contribute to the development of African Social Psychology by revealing the ways in which it was already used: conceptually, in articulation with other concepts and/or theories, thematically, paradigmatically and methodologically.

6.3.Method

The corpus of publications used for this article consisted of 103 items extracted from the *So.Re.Com* “A.S. de Rosa” @-library, “a digital platform integrating

scientific documentation, networking and training purposes in the field of Social Representations and Communication” (de Rosa, 2015^a, p. 4938), according to whether the first author was affiliated to an African institution (a comprehensive listing of full publications may be found at the European/International Joint PhD in Social Representations & Communication Research Center and Multimedia Lab, P.za Cavalieri di Malta 2, Rome-Italy or may be consulted upon request to A.S. de Rosa). All of the papers in our corpus were subjected to meta-theoretical analysis, performed using the *Grid for Meta-Theoretical Analysis* (created by de Rosa in 1994 – de Rosa, 1994^{ab} - and last updated in February 2014), which requires the researcher to note the presence / absence of six categories: *bibliographic and bibliometric data, references to concepts related to SRT, references to concepts and constructs pertaining to other theories and approaches, thematic areas (and objects of study), methodological profile and, respectively, paradigmatic aspects* (for a comprehensive description of the sections in the *Grid*, see de Rosa, 2002, 2013b).

In order to explore the research questions above, the data obtained from the meta-theoretical analysis of the corpus of publications was analysed in three manners:

- First, a descriptive profile of absolute and relative frequencies for each of the categories present in the *Grid* was compiled.
- Secondly, the entire corpus of abstracts and their key words was subjected to a textual analysis conducted with the IRAMUTEQ software 0.7 alpha 2.
- Thirdly, the data compiled with the *Grid* was subjected to Hierarchical Clustering on Principal Components analyses conducted with the R software 3.3.2, the package FactoMineR.

6.4.Results and discussion

- Descriptive profile of the data (a comprehensive listing of full publications may be found at the European/International Joint PhD in Social Representations & Communication Research Center and Multimedia Lab, P.za Cavalieri di Malta 2, Rome-Italy or may be consulted upon request to A.S. de Rosa)

Our sample consists of 103 publications first authored by researchers affiliated to African institutions, of which 52.43% conference presentations, 35.92% articles in journals, and 11.65% book chapters. The publications collected in this sample range from having been issued in 2003 up to 2016, which reveals an ascending trend in the production of scientific literature on SRT in this geo-cultural area. More than half of our sample was published in English (56.31%), followed by French (37.86%), Portuguese (3.88%) and Spanish (1.94%). Most of our sample was first authored by researchers affiliated to institutions in Ghana (24.27%), followed by South Africa (21.36%), Tunisia (18.45%), Ivory Coast (14.56%), Morocco (5.83%), Mozambique (3.88%), Algeria (2.91%),

Cameroon (1.94%), and Botswana, Kenya, Mauritania, Mauritius, Senegal, Tanzania and Zimbabwe (each with 0.97%) – see Figure 1. As compared to the analysis undergone by Quayle and Greer in 2014, which showed that research in social psychology in Africa is mainly concentrated in South Africa, Nigeria, Kenya, Uganda and Egypt, we found that SRT research does not necessarily only take place in the renowned centers for social psychology. Most of our sample presented empirical research (74.76%), with 23.30% theoretical publications and 1.94% thematic reviews, which is in line with the societal demands from research in this context, focused more on practical relevance. SRT was mostly referenced specifically (87.38%), with functions of SRs as the most mentioned category (68.9%): orientation and control of social reality in 60.2% papers, followed by guide for behavior and intergroup relations in 44.7% of the publications, social identity related functions in 40.8% of the papers, familiarization in 9.7% and facilitate communication in 8.7%. Then, we have the transformation of SRs as the second most referenced category (26.2% of our sample): via knowledge in 9.7% of our papers, via communication in 4.1% of our sample, via social identity in 3.9% of our publications, via social influence through interaction in 2.9% of our sample and finally, via emotions in just 1% of our papers. Another conceptual category related to SRT refers to their structure and was present in 18.4% of our sample; the processes through which SRs are formed appear in 17.5% of our sample, with anchoring in 14.6% and objectification in 11.7%, while the genesis of SRs was mentioned in 15.5% of the cases, with socio-genesis and micro-genesis accounting each for 15.8% of our sample, and onto-genesis for 4.9%. The transmission of SRs was mentioned in 15.5% of the cases: via communication in 6.8% of the papers, via knowledge in 3.9% of our sample, via practices and via social identification – each in 2.9% of our papers, while cognitive polyphasia appeared in 8.7% of the papers and meta-theoretical considerations regarding SRT were made in 32% of our sample. Concerning the typology of SRs, hegemonic representations are mentioned most often (6.8%), followed closely by emancipated representations (5.8%), and finally, polemic representations (1.9%). With regard to paradigmatic approaches to SRT, the structural approach was the most popular (22.3%), followed closely by the anthropological and ethnographic approach (20.4%), and distantly by the socio-dynamic paradigmatic approach (4.9%) and, respectively, the dialogical, conversational and narrative approach in just 1% of the cases. These results reveal that SRT is no longer necessarily used more generically in this context, as deduced from previous meta-theoretical analysis (de Rosa, 2013b); actually, the pattern of references to SRT specific constructs and concepts was now found to be quite similar with the one presented by de Rosa in 2013b on a sample of publications from the entire world.

Concerning concepts and constructs pertaining to other theories, the following were referenced in more than 40% of the papers: practice (58.25%), context and cultural knowledge (each with 55.34%), behavior (52.43%), social

processes (51.46%), attitude (47.57%), development and identity (each with 43.69%), action, belief system and change (each with 42.72%), and communication (40.78%). Regarding other theories, the following ones were mentioned in more than 1% of the papers: Ethnographic Approach (11.65%), Attribution Theory, Philosophical Approaches and Sociological Approach (10.68% each), Social Identity Theories (9.71%), Attitude Theories and Social Cognition Theories (8.74% each), Anthropological Approaches (7.77%), Behaviorist Theories and Social Constructionism (3.88%), and Discursive Psychology and Socio-Cultural Theories (2.91%). These findings reflect a focus on local practices and knowledge, as well as a preference for investigating phenomena with larger-scoped theories that may capture the specificity of local contexts, as evinced by the prevalent articulation of SRT with Ethnographic Approaches.

The more popular thematic areas were: Health-Illness (33%), Development-Education (14.6%), Politics-Ideology (12.6%), Gender and Family Roles (10.7%), followed by SRT, Meta-Theory and Methodological Issues (9.7%), Economics-Work-Organization (8.7%), Interpersonal or Intergroup Relations and Dimensions (6.8%), Social Psychology and Other Disciplines (5.8%), Culture (3.9%), Deviance, Identity and Environment (each with 2.9%), and Communication and Multimedia (1.9%). We see here again a focus on socially relevant topics, common to “the developing worlds”, as summed up by Omari (1983).

Concerning empirical publications, most of them had a descriptive research design (72.7% of the empirical papers), and we have an almost equal proportion of field research (31.2%) and laboratory research (33.8%). Most of the empirical investigations compared groups (32.5%), followed by longitudinal studies (9.1%). Regarding sampling strategies, convenience samples were favored (59.7%), followed distantly by representative samples (6.5%). As units for analysis, groups without history were preferred (33.8%), followed by individuals without social positioning (31.2%). Open instruments were employed in 63.6% of our empirical papers, more than structured instruments, which were used only in 28.6% of the cases. Among open instruments, the semi-directive interviews were preferred (28.6%), followed by focus groups (24.7%), word association and hierarchical evocation (each in 10.4% of cases) and free interviews (9.1%). Among structured instruments, questionnaires / structured interviews were employed most often (18.2%), followed by scales (5.2%), and characterization questionnaires (3.9%). Figurative graphic techniques were only employed in 7.8% of our empirical publications, while observant techniques were employed in 10.4% of our empirical sample. The data analysis techniques were mostly qualitative (41.6%), with content analysis being employed in 18.2% of the papers and thematic analysis – in 16.9% of our empirical research corpus. Quantitative data analysis techniques were used in 27.3% of the cases, with descriptive statistics in 24.7%, followed by bivariate statistics (6.5%) and multivariate

statistics (2.6%). These results reveal a preference for qualitative methods and data analysis techniques, probably due to their applicability when dealing with problem-driven empirical research, as Aikins pointed out: “Methods that capture depth and complexity of knowledge, experiences and social practices, such as [...] qualitative approaches [...], will be most appropriate to these research issues.” (Aikins et al, 2012, p. 555).

Most of our articles were published in *Papers on Social Representations* (18.92%), a journal specialized on SRT, published by an Austrian university until 2009 and by a United Kingdom one ever since, followed by *Journal of Health Psychology* (8.11%) edited in the UK and presenting research in health psychology from around the world, *BMC Public Health* (5.41%) and *Globalization and Health* (5.41%). Less than a half were indexed in SCOPUS (46%), while less than a quarter was indexed by ISI (21.62%). The subject areas listed by SCOPUS were Medicine and Psychology ($N = 4$ for each), Arts and Humanities ($N = 3$), Health, Multidisciplinary, Social Sciences and Immunology ($N = 1$ for each), while the subject categories for the journals indexed by ISI were: Health ($N = 3$), Clinical Psychology ($N = 2$), Gerontology, Social Sciences, Multidisciplinary Psychology ($N = 1$).

Most of our book chapters were published by Palgrave Macmillan from New York, USA (75%), followed by Digibooks Ghana Ltd. (Tema, Ghana), Springer Dordrecht Heidelberg (New York, USA), and Sub-Saharan Publishers (Legon, Ghana), each accounting for 8.33% of our book chapters.

The majority of our papers were presented at the International Conferences on Social Representations (90.74% of the conference presentations in our sample), as part of collective activities (74.07%), with more than a half at events held in France (51.85%), followed by events in Tunisia (18.52%), Brazil (7.41%), Ghana (7.41%), UK (5.56%), Indonesia (3.70%), and Mexico, Portugal and South Africa (each with 1.85%). It should be noted that the highest rate of participation at ICSRs was in 2016, which goes to support the increasing trend in the adoption of SRT as a research framework in Africa.

- Textual analysis of abstracts and keywords (a comprehensive listing of full publications may be found at the European/International Joint PhD in Social Representations & Communication Research Center and Multimedia Lab, P.za Cavalieri di Malta 2, Rome-Italy or may be consulted upon request to A.S. de Rosa).

The corpus comprised 103 abstracts and keywords, Initial Context Units (ICUs), analyzed lexicometrically with the Interface de R pour les Analyses Multimensionnelles de Textes et de Questionnaires (Iramuteq) software 0.7 alpha 2. The corpus was found adequate for analysis, as the number of HAPAX forms was below 50% (47.19%) and the type/token ratio was below 20 (15.94%).

The corpus of texts was lemmatized based on the English dictionary provided by the software in order to group plural and singular forms under a single form, as well as revert the conjugated verbs to their infinitives. Also, this procedure

enabled us to group the forms into two categories, active and illustrative ones, according to the way in which the data analysis will be carried out. For the goals of our analysis, we defined as active forms adjectives, adverbs, nouns and verbs, and as illustrative – demonstrative, indefinite, interrogative and possessive adjectives and pronouns, excluding from the analysis numerical adjectives, definite and indefinite articles, auxiliary verbs, numbers, conjunctions, prepositions, onomatopoeic forms and unrecognized forms, based on whether certain forms were relevant or not to our corpus of scientific knowledge (Reinert, 1983). Based on the same logic, we chose to exclude from analysis the expression “social representation(s)”. The results of the lemmatization procedure lowered the number of HAPAX forms to 44.11%, and the type/token ratio to 12.69%, thus making the text analysis more stable.

A Hierarchical Descending Classification (HDC) of ICUs was conducted based on the whole lexical table (Reinert, 1983). This analysis took into account the following variables: *country of institutional affiliation for the first author, indexation in ISI and, respectively, SCOPUS databases, type of resource (article / conference presentation / book chapter), decade and, respectively, language in which the item was published*, with the purpose of exploring if clusters were more representative for publications from a certain country, period of time, resource type, language, and, respectively, more likely to being indexed in the two databases.

The 103 ICUs were processed based on the distribution of vocabulary to elicit 688 text segments, Elementary Context Units (ECUs), of which 508 (73.84%) were retained in the three clustering solution proposed, illustrated in Figure 2. In Figure 3, the same clusters are illustrated, along with the most representative forms for each of them; the size of the words differs according to the chi square coefficients: the higher the value, the higher the contribution of the word to the cluster. The comprehensive list of chi-square coefficients, their degree of significance, along with the specific words which they describe may be found at the European/International Joint PhD in Social Representations & Communication Research Center and Multimedia Lab, P.za Cavalieri di Malta 2, Rome-Italy or may be consulted upon request to A.S. de Rosa.

After conducting the HDC, a factorial correspondence analysis is performed by IRAMUTEQ, which gives out the results of HDC in a diagram, as depicted in Figure 4, which shows the most representative words for each cluster, differentiated by color. Thus, we can contextualize the typical units for each cluster and interpret them via content analysis (Chaves et al., 2017). The x-axis reflects an opposition between Cluster 2 and Clusters 1 and 3, while the y-axis reveals an opposition between Cluster 3 and, respectively, 1 and 2. Given that IRAMUTEQ provides the opportunity of visualizing the ECUs from which the clustered words were extracted, we retrieved the initial ICUs and interpreted the findings by referencing the papers from which the abstracts and keywords were taken.

Cluster 2 ($N = 208$ ECUs) accounts for the largest part of the total corpus, more than a third of it (40.94%) and is significantly associated with *first authorship from South African* institutions ($\chi^2 = 68.4$, $p < 0.001$; 92.73% of the ECUs from papers first authored by South African institutions affiliates may be found in this cluster), *Morocco* institutions ($\chi^2 = 17.28$, $p < 0.001$; 74.29% of the ECUs from papers first authored by Moroccan institutions affiliates may be found in this cluster), *Botswana* institutions ($\chi^2 = 13.21$, $p < 0.001$; 100% of the ECUs from papers first authored by Batswana institutions affiliates may be found in this cluster), *Tunisia* institutions ($\chi^2 = 10.09$, $p < 0.05$; 54.05% of the ECUs from papers first authored by Tunisian institutions affiliates may be found in this cluster), *Cameroon* institutions ($\chi^2 = 7.77$, $p < 0.05$; 81.82% of the ECUs from papers first authored by Cameroonian institutions affiliates may be found in this cluster), *French* as a language of publication ($\chi^2 = 7.71$, $p < 0.05$; 47.77% of the ECUs from publications in French are here), *book chapters* as a format ($\chi^2 = 4.51$, $p < 0.05$; 83.33%) and *absence of SCOPUS* indexation ($\chi^2 = 4.47$, $p < 0.05$; 51.16%). The composition of Cluster 2 tells us that it is focused on issues of high public interest, such as *gender roles* and *violence against women* (Kessi & Kiguwa, 2015). Thus, the research of Yomb (2016) reveals how in the rural Cameroon, SR's regarding women enable discriminatory practices, founded on beliefs that they are immature beings unable to reach the same degree of "adulthood" as men, and are thus excluded from decision making in issues such as education, health, land management etc. Van Niekerk and Boonzaier (2015) reveal how SRs of violence within couples towards women cater to continuing the practices of gender role based performances for the two sexes, thus enabling men socially to engage in violent behaviors towards women, as these forms of punishment are condoned within their communities. Dorra Ben Alaya has also conducted research on the SRs of gender roles, focusing on the social construction of gender (Ben Alaya, 2002), Tunisians' SRs of marriage (Ben Alaya & Moliner, 2008) and gay rights (Ben Alaya, 2010).

Cluster 3 ($N = 158$ ECUs) accounts for the second largest part of the total corpus, a little less than a third of it (31.1%) and is significantly associated with first authorship from *Ghana* institutions ($\chi^2 = 265.97$, $p < 0.001$; 84.62% of the ECUs from papers first authored by Ghanaian institutions affiliates may be found in this cluster), *Mauritania* institutions ($\chi^2 = 15.72$, $p < 0.001$; 100% of the ECUs from papers first authored by Mauritanian institutions affiliates may be found in this cluster), *Tanzania* institutions ($\chi^2 = 7.31$, $p < 0.05$; 75% of the ECUs from papers first authored by Tanzanian institutions affiliates may be found in this cluster), *Kenya* institutions ($\chi^2 = 7.25$, $p < 0.05$; 66.67% of the ECUs from papers first authored by Kenyan institutions affiliates may be found in this cluster), *English* as a language of publication ($\chi^2 = 129.56$, $p < 0.001$; 54.3% of the ECUs from publications in English are here), *articles* as a format ($\chi^2 = 31.71$, $p < 0.001$; 47.13%), as well as with the *2010-2019* decade of

publication ($\chi^2 = 8.91$, $p < 0.05$; 32.31%) and *absence of ISI* indexation ($\chi^2 = 18.72$, $p < 0.001$; 45.65%). Most of the ECUs in this cluster are from the publications of Ama de Graft Aikins (76.59% of the cluster), who worked on exploring high social interest issues in the African context within the framework of SRT, issues such as mental health, nutritional beliefs and practices, chronic disease risk and impact and homelessness, while also providing historical reviews of the development of psychology in Africa and Ghana, specifically (Aikins, 2002^a, 2002^b, 2003, 2005, 2006, 2008, 2009ab, 2010, 2012ab, 2014ab, 2016ab; Aikins et al., 2010; Aikins et al., 2012a; Aikins et al., 2012b; Aikins, Dzokoto & Yevak, 2015; Aikins & Kessi, 2015; Aikins & Ofori-Atta, 2007; Aikins et al., 2014; Aikins, Owusu-Dabo & Agyemang, 2013; Aikins et al., 2012). Through her work, she highlighted the importance of adjusting methods and theories to the population and object of study investigated, and revealed the utility of a SRT approach in highlighting the contribution of culture, ethnicity and larger social conditions in elaborating efficient health interventions for chronic illnesses. She relied on the concept of cognitive polyphasia to gain insight into how different sets of knowledge regarding the same topic may coexist in the absence of the negative psychological effects of cognitive dissonance (which are more typical for the Western context than for the populations she investigated), a topic she argues was pivotal in understanding the reluctance of certain groups of people in complying with treatments proposed (Aikins et al., 2012a).

Cluster 1 ($N = 142$ ECUs) accounts for the narrowest part of the total corpus, a more than a quarter of it (27.95%) and is significantly associated with first authorship from *Ivory Coast* institutions ($\chi^2 = 85.75$, $p < 0.001$; 78.33% of the ECUs from papers first authored by Ivorian institutions affiliates may be found in this cluster), *Mozambique* institutions ($\chi^2 = 25.27$, $p < 0.001$; 73.91% of the ECUs from papers first authored by Mozambican institutions affiliates may be found in this cluster), *Senegal* institutions ($\chi^2 = 13.02$, $p < 0.05$; 100% of the ECUs from papers first authored by Senegalese institutions affiliates may be found in this cluster), *Tunisia* institutions ($\chi^2 = 9.63$, $p < 0.05$; 39.64% of the ECUs from papers first authored by Tunisian institutions affiliates may be found in this cluster), *Mauritius* institutions ($\chi^2 = 4.43$, $p < 0.05$; 75% of the ECUs from papers first authored by Mauritian institutions affiliates may be found in this cluster), *French* as a language of publication ($\chi^2 = 49.65$, $p < 0.001$; 43.75% of the ECUs from publications in French are here), *Portuguese* as a language of publication ($\chi^2 = 25.27$, $p < 0.001$; 73.91% of the ECUs from publications in Portuguese are here), *Spanish* as a language of publication ($\chi^2 = 6.79$, $p < 0.05$; 80% of the ECUs from publications in Spanish are here), *conference presentations* as a format ($\chi^2 = 17.63$, $p < 0.001$; 34.15%), as well as with the 2000-2009 decade of publication ($\chi^2 = 25.49$, $p < 0.001$; 78.95%) and *absence of both ISI indexation* ($\chi^2 = 15.08$, $p < 0.001$; 33.53%) and *SCOPUS* indexation ($\chi^2 = 15.08$, $p < 0.001$; 33.53%). This cluster is focused on thematic

areas pertaining to *development and education*, and is significantly associated with words pointing towards the use of a *quantitative methodology*: methods of investigating the structure of SRs (*free evocation and association, central core/nucleus, similarity analysis, characterization questionnaires, content of representation*), *comparative analyses, surveys, scales, questionnaires, experiment, variables*. Upon inspecting the ECUs grouped here, we encounter the research done by Azoh (2010, 2012, 2014) within the structural paradigmatic approach to SRT on issues such as students' SRs on citizenship and globalization in the context of a high rate of immigration in the Ivory Coast. Other ECUs reflect a wide range of specific issues dealing with *education*, such as students' attributions for failure (Assy, 2002), students' evaluative biases (Lazare, 2002), students' SRs of corruption (Flore Bende, Meite, & Yao, 2016) and sport (Meite, 2016), how social exclusion impacts education in the city of Quelimane (Lourenço, 2016) and with *development*, such as the experience of mothers after birth (Lourenço & Lourenço, 2016), juvenile delinquency and work experiences in street children (Lourenço & Filho, 2005), children's SRs of money and socio-economic status (Mahjoub & Ben Alaya, 2002), and the influence of the iconography of tales on the children's SRs of good students (Souissi, 2016).

Our findings reveal a high diversity of thematic areas adopted by authors affiliated to African institutions, problem-driven and context-specific, which supports the assumption that SRT is being employed in this geo-cultural area for the purpose for which it was intended, mapping out the realities of specific social groups – how they are created and how they are unfolding in social interaction (Jodelet, 1989). The clustering solution has grouped ECUs extracted from abstracts and key-words of publications from different countries mainly based on *thematic areas* (Clusters 2 and 3), but also on *methods* employed, as it separated Cluster 1, comprising references to quantitative methods and to the structure of SRs, from the other two clusters.

- Hierarchical Clustering on Principal Components analyses conducted with the R software 3.3.2, the FactoMineR package (a comprehensive listing of full publications may be found at the European/International Joint PhD in Social Representations & Communication Research Center and Multimedia Lab, P.za Cavalieri di Malta 2, Rome-Italy or may be consulted upon request to A.S. de Rosa)

We analyzed the data obtained by applying the *Grid for Meta-Theoretical Analysis* on the 103 publications through Hierarchical Clustering on Principal Component analyses, a clustering algorithm which combines Ward's Hierarchical Clustering with k-means (Husson, Lê, & Pagès, 2010; Husson, Josse, & Pagès, 2010). The categories of the *Grid* were used as *illustrative (bibliographic data)* and *active variables (references to SRT related concepts, references to other concepts, theories and paradigmatic approaches, thematic areas, paradigmatic approaches, typology of SRs)* in the pre-processing step, which consists in running a Multiple Correspondence Analysis (MCA).

Ward's Hierarchical Clustering was applied on the MCA results (the first 42 dimensions, which explain 90% of the inertia) to determine the number of clusters to be later consolidated with the k-means algorithm. The results of the HC are represented in Figures 6 and 7, and they show that the data is best divided into three clusters of publications, which were then consolidated to engender the final solution, illustrated in Figures 8 and 9. Chi-square tests of association between the variables presented above and the three-cluster solution reveal the modalities of the variables which are significantly associated with each cluster, as well as whether the association is positive or negative.

Cluster 1 groups 54 items (52.43% of our sample) and comprises mainly *conference presentations* (87.04% of the cluster), published after 2012 and up to 2016 in 66.67% of cases, first authored by researchers affiliated to Tunisian institutions (in 31.48% of the cases), 16.67% of them on *Economics-Work-Organization*, mostly issued in *French* (62.96% of the cluster items). Regarding references to SRT, we found a significant positive association with *concepts pertaining to the structure of SRs* in 27.78% of the cases, as well as with *the structural paradigmatic approach to SRT* (38.89%) and significant positive associations with the *absence of: the anthropological and ethnographic approach to SRT* in 96.30% of the cases, *meta-theoretical considerations* in 83.33% of the cases, *SR genesis* in 94.44% of the cluster, *SR processes* in 92.59% of the cases, *SR transmission* in 92.59% of the papers, *SR transformation* via different channels (social changes – 100%; knowledge – 98.15%; communication – 100%; social identity – 100%), *SR functions* (facilitate communication – 100%; familiarization – 98.15%, social identity related functions- 72.22%). No significant associations were found between Cluster 1 and *other concepts, constructs and theories* with which SRT may have been articulated, but several of them were significantly *absent*, such as: *norm, motivation, metaphor, collective representations, prejudice, social memory, myth, Behaviorist Theories* (100% absent from the publications in Cluster 1), *the Ethnographic Approach and Attitude Theories* (absent in 98.15% of the cases), *Sociological and Philosophical Approaches, Attribution Theory, Social Identity Theories* (absent in 96.30% of the cases). Due to the fact that most of our conference presentations were available to us in abstract form only, the high associations between Cluster 1 and a more generic use of SRT may have been influenced by this factor. Hence, our interpretations must be verified with future studies.

Cluster 2 ($N = 46$; 44.66% of our sample) comprises *journal articles* in 60.87% of the cases, with *English* as a favored language for publication – 86.96% of the cluster, significantly associated with *South African first authorship* (41.30% of the cluster) and *Ghanaian first authorship* (34.78% of the cluster), most of them published between 2002-2011 (63.04%). *Meta-theoretical considerations* were made in 50% of the cases. Regarding *references to SRT concepts and constructs*, we have significant associations

with the presence of: *SR functions* (social identity related functions – 54.35%, familiarization – 17.39% and facilitate communication – 15.22%), *SR transformation* (via communication – 10.87%, via knowledge – 17.39%), and *SR processes* (anchoring – 23.91%). Concerning *other concepts, constructs and theories often articulated with SRs and SRT*, the most prevalent ones associated with Cluster 2 were: change (78.26% of the cluster), value (71.74%), belief system (76.09%), behavior (84.78%), cultural knowledge (86.96%), attitude (76.09%), development (71.74%), context (82.81%), practice (80.43%), social processes (71.74%), Ethnographic Approach (23.91%), Attitude Theories and Social Identity Theories (17.39%), Attribution Theories (19.56%), Behaviorist Theories (8.69%), Social Cognition Theories (15.22%). *Thematically*, we have 45.65% of the cluster on *Health-Illness*, and 23.91% on *Development-Education*. Paradigmatically, Cluster 2 is significantly associated with *the presence of the anthropological and ethnographic paradigmatic approach* (39.13% of the cluster) and *the absence of the structural paradigmatic approach* (95.65%).

Cluster 3 ($N = 3$; 2.91% of our sample) consists of articles (100%) focused on the dynamic aspects of SRs, as they all treat matters pertaining to *the genesis of SRs*, respectively their onto-genesis and socio-genesis, *their processes* – objectification, and *transformation* (100%). Moreover, we find all the publications from our sample referencing *Gestalt Psychology, semiotic triangle and archetypes* (100%), as well as the publications on the *dialogical, conversational and narrative paradigmatic approach to SRT* (100%). Due to the small sample of African publications available to us and the exploratory nature of the current research, we decided to keep the publications making up this cluster rather than eliminating them as outliers due to their small number, as they may shed light on initiatives set forth in this geo-cultural context towards a more diverse and profound take on SRT rather than be exceptions, especially since the publications in this cluster were first authored by Ama de Graft Aikins and Dorra Ben Alaya, who both have made important and substantial strides in the popularization of SRT.

Our HCPC analysis reveals a clustering solution based on several factors, among which the most apparent would be the paradigmatic approaches to SRT employed; thus, while Cluster 1 comprises papers using the structural approach, Cluster 2 gathers the publications on the anthropological and ethnographic approach to SRT, and Cluster 3 comprises papers on the dialogical, narrative and conversational approach. We may also observe a progression in the application of SRT, from a more generic approach (Cluster 1), to a more specific one (Clusters 2 and 3), in which SRs are treated in a more complex fashion that takes into account their functions, processes, transmission, transformation and genesis and that articulates them with numerous other concepts, while SRT is itself articulated with several other theories and approaches. In terms of size, although Cluster 1 makes up for more than half of our sample, we may not draw a definitive conclusion stating

that SRT is employed more generically in this area due to the limitation of having had conference presentations in abstract form only in our sample, especially since the descriptive profile of our data revealed that according to the *Grid*, most of our papers employed SRT specifically. Another difference between our clusters is in terms of language; thus, while the publications more likely to employ a structural approach to SRT are mostly in French, the ones most likely to employ an ethnographic approach are in English. This may be explained by the linguistic connection, as the structural approach to SRT was created in France (Rateau et al., 2011), and would suggest that international networking has contributed to how SRT was disseminated in the African geo-cultural area.

Next, to be able to take into account the methodological profile of the publications, another HCPC was performed on the 77 empirical publications from our sample (42 dimensions of the MCA, 90% inertia) employing the same *illustrative* and *active* variables, with the addition of the ones regarding methodology (a comprehensive listing of full publications may be found at the European/International Joint PhD in Social Representations & Communication Research Center and Multimedia Lab, P.za Cavalieri di Malta 2, Rome-Italy or may be consulted upon request to A.S. de Rosa). Results revealed a three cluster solution (Figures 10, 11, 12, 13).

Cluster 1 groups more than a half of our sample, 42 elements (54.54%), 92.86% of them *conference presentations*, 76.19% issued in *French*, 30.95% of them first authored by *Ivoirian* institutions affiliated researchers and 28.57% of them first authored by *Tunisian* institution affiliated researchers, 50% employing the *structural paradigmatic approach to SRT*, with a fifth of them on the topic of *Economics-Work-Organization* (21.43%). *Inter-group studies* make up for 42.86% of Cluster 1, while 11.90% of them employ *representative samples*.

Cluster 2 groups 17 elements (22.08%), all published in *English* (100%), 64.71% of them *articles* and 17.65% *book chapters*, 76.47% first authored by *Ghanaian* institution affiliated researchers (specifically, Ama de Graft Aikins), 82.35% of them on *Health-Illness*, with 58.82% of them employing the *anthropological and ethnographic paradigmatic approach to SRT*, and 47.05% employing *observant techniques* and 70.59% - *semi-directive interviews*, while *free interviews* were used in 23.53% of the cluster. *Qualitative data analysis techniques* were used in 82.35% of the cases (*content analysis* in 41.17% of the cluster) and 70.59% of the studies were conducted in the *field*. The sampling strategy employed was mostly *convenience* (94.12%), while the *research designs* were *descriptive* for all the publications in Cluster 2. Most of the publications were issued *between 2002 and 2011* (76.47%). Concerning *concepts, constructs and other theories*, significant associations were found with practice (88.24%), self, change, (82.35%), development and cultural knowledge (76.47%), action (70.59%), belief system (64.71%), ideology (58.82%), stigma, emotions and feelings (52.94%), coping (23.53%) and

Ethnographic Approach (29.41%) and Behaviorist Theories (17.65%). The cluster comprises 23.53% publications that reference SRT *generically*, and is significantly associated with the *absence* of several of the categories of SRT concepts: SR *functions* (absent in 52.94% of the cluster), SR *structure* and SR *processes* (absent in 100% of the publications).

Cluster 3 groups 18 items (23.38%), 88.89% of them *articles in journals*, 83.33% of them in *English*, with 44.44% first authorship from *South African* institutions. Regarding the methodological profile, the significant associations of Cluster 3 revealed that this group of papers mostly employed mixed data analysis techniques: *qualitative* ones in almost all the publications (88.89% of the cluster), with *thematic analysis* employed in 50% of the studies, while *quantitative* ones – in more than a half of the papers (55.56% of the cluster), with descriptive statistics used in 50% of the studies here. Concerning methods, we found only one significant association, with *open-ended questionnaires*, present in 27.78% of the cluster. Most of the studies were conducted in *laboratory setting* (61.11%), and the prevalent sampling strategy was *convenience sampling* in 88.89% of the cluster. Regarding references to SRT concepts and constructs, we found *meta-theoretical considerations* in half of the cluster (50%) and positive associations with: SR *processes* (66.67% of the cluster), with *anchoring* having been referenced in 61.11% of the cases, and *objectification* in 44.44% of the papers; SR *functions* in 94.44% of the cluster, with *social identity related functions* in 72.22%, *familiarization* having been referenced in 38.39% of the cases, *facilitate communication* – in 27.78% of the papers, *guide of behavior and intergroup relations* in 72.22%; SR *transmission* in 33.33% of the papers, with *transmission via communication* in 22.22% of the cluster; SR *transformation* in 50% of the publications, with *transformation via social changes* in 27.78%, *transformation via communication* in 22.22% of the cluster, *transformation via knowledge* in 27.78% of the cases; SR *genesis* in 44.44% of the cluster, with *socio-genesis* and *onto-genesis* each in 16.67% of the cluster. Regarding *concepts and constructs with which SRs were articulated*, we found the following significant positive associations present in more than 60% of the cluster: value and social processes (each in 88.89% of the cluster), opinion, ideology, action and image (each in 61.11% of the cluster), communication, behavior and cultural knowledge (each in 83.33% of the cluster), attitude and context (each in 94.44% of the cluster), perception and belief system (each in 77.78% of the cluster), symbol and identity (each in 66.67% of the cluster), language and change (each in 72.23% of the cluster). The *structural paradigmatic approach to SRT* was found to be significantly *absent*, as well as intergroup studies (each absent in 88.89% of the cluster). Concerning *theories with which SRT was articulated*, we only found one significant positive association of Cluster 3 with the *Sociological Approach* (22.22%).

The clustering solution for our empirical publications reveals three lines of empirical research in the African geo-cultural area. The largest one (Cluster 1)

employs SRT more generically (although, since the cluster is mostly made up of conference presentations available in abstract form only the same limitation applies to interpreting the results unequivocally as for the first HCPC analysis performed) and mainly under the framework of the structural approach. The other two directions of research distinguish themselves mainly through the *type of methods and research designs* employed: Cluster 2 uses a more qualitative methodology under the paradigmatic framework provided by the anthropological and ethnographic approach to SRT, with fewer references to SRT specific constructs as compared to Cluster 3, which employs a mixed methodology, more qualitatively inclined, and treats SRs and SRT more in-depth conceptually. Another difference between Clusters 2 and 3 is that the former uses SRT in articulation with Ethnographic Approaches, while the latter – with Sociological Approaches, which reveals two manners in which SRT is used empirically in the African geo-cultural area, coinciding with two different epistemological positions. Thus, the ethnography oriented approach, mainly used by Aikins, is argued to be most adept to studying *problem-driven issues*, such as general illness practices: “Both individual and group interviews are inadequate as tools to examine the social interactions and practices that shape subjective worlds. Ethnographies facilitate powerful analysis of these processes, as their object of study is locally produced <<through the activities of particular people in particular settings.>>(Kitzinger, 1995)” (Aikins, 2005, p. 1). Given the very applied and pragmatic nature of such research, we may conclude that SRT functions as a theoretical tool for empirical study considered to be highly relevant socially and societally for this line of research; however, this would be a reductionist interpretation. Ama de Graft Aikins (2014b) points out that intervention-based research on health issues in Africa, albeit successful at health promotion in certain cases, is epistemologically flawed, as it is based on social cognition models, models which have three major limitations: assuming that individuals function according to the dictate of rationality and are lead by the goal to maintain health when studies have already shown that people often exhibit irrational behaviours when making health choices (e.g. Crossley, 2000); assuming that information-based interventions will automatically lead to better choices when it has been shown that the interplay between behaviour, knowledge and attitudes is not linear, but rather multi-faceted – in African contexts, for instance, people’s knowledge regarding AIDS does not decrease their stigmatizing behaviours towards the affected (Campbell et al., 2007; Deacon et al., 2005); last, assuming that individuals are not affected in their health choices by the larger cultural and social framework in which they are inserted and thus focusing health interventions solely on the individual taken alone rather than on groups (Crossley, 2000; Aikins & Marks, 2007). Instead, she recommends (and employs in her SRT research) the social knowledge approach, which “focuses on the relationships between the social environment, culture and shared meanings and how these factors shape individual experience and influence the

ways in which individuals make sense of their environment and adopt behavioural strategies in response to it. Models shaped by this perspective lie in the sociological social psychological domain.” (Aikins, 2014b, p. 260). Through different approaches and by employing SRT more in-depth, the studies in Cluster 3 also challenge existent assumptions regarding African social phenomena made within mainstream frameworks (e.g. the first three paragons for this cluster: De Kock & Wills, 2007; Howard-Payne, 2002; van Niekerk & Boonzaier, 2015). All in all, the common trend observed in our empirical sample is the one we described in our introduction, which is creating an African social psychology that takes into account both theoretically and methodologically the contextual particularities encountered here.

6.5. Conclusions

The purpose of our paper was to meta-theoretically analyze the scientific literature on SRT issued by African institutions affiliated first authors in order to explore how SRT is conceptualized theoretically and used methodologically in this geo-cultural area. We aimed to detect how SRT was formulated and operationalized conceptually, in articulation with other concepts and/or theories, thematically, paradigmatically and methodologically, in order to find out whether the theory has undergone conceptual and/or methodological transformations (de Rosa, 2013b). We started out by exploring the scientific context in which SRT was adopted and found that research on social psychology is still a growing field in Africa, which may be responsible for the more diminished diffusion of SRT in this area (de Rosa, 2013b). The African scientific community is quite reluctant to adopt scientific branches that are not fit theoretically and methodologically to explore contextual social phenomena and/or do not engender pragmatic results of public relevance.

The analyses performed on our data revealed that SRT is not necessarily employed more generically than in other contexts, and that the structural and the anthropological and ethnographic paradigmatic approaches to SRT are largely employed in this context. Moreover, the research on SRT is indeed focused on problem-driven topics of study, as well as on challenging epistemological assumptions proposed by individualistic mainstream frameworks, as explained by van Niekerk and Boonzaier in 2015: “As a social psychological theory, it is necessary that social representations theory be applied broadly across various social arenas and that it be developed as a critical tool with which to expose and address social oppressions and inequalities that pervade and infiltrate social research, and become a tool for social change (Howarth, 2006; Voelklein & Howarth, 2005).” (Van Niekerk & Boonzaier, 2015, pp. 5.4-5.5). Thematically, the areas of high interest include development, education, health-illness and economical aspects, in accordance with the assumptions of Omari (1983); this may suggest that SRT has largely permeated this area for the study of high-relevance social objects, as argued by van Niekerk and Boonzaier (2015), who pointed out that in South Africa, SRT

was first adopted and employed specifically for the purpose of conducting HIV/AIDS research, citing two studies as examples: (Joffe, 1995 and Winskell, Obyerodhyambo & Stephenson, 2011), the (first) authors of which were affiliated to University College London, UK, and, respectively, Emory University, USA. Although these studies were not conducted by first authors affiliated to African institutions, this finding reveals the compatibility between the societal and social needs of this context and SRT's proposals for approaching social phenomena. Methodologically, qualitative approaches seem to be preferred, probably due to their applicability in studying social interactions and practices as they unfold and create social knowledge (Aikins, 2005). We found that the general trend is to apply SRT close to its original delineations (as shown by our descriptive profile of the data), a trend which shows great adaptability as a function of specificity with regards to the different objects of study (as evinced by our HCPC analyses). All in all, we may conclude that SRT is unlikely to have been reformulated in this context, as its fundamental epistemological and methodological tenets may be retrieved when systematically analyzing the scientific literature on SRT in this geo-cultural area. Moreover, SRT is employed in its trans-disciplinary formulations (with a predilection towards bridging the gap between social psychology, anthropology and sociology), which was central to the theory in the view of its creator (Moscovici, 1961, 1997; Moscovici & Markova, 2006).

Our study is not without limitations. As mentioned previously, most of our conference presentations were present in abstract form only, which may have influenced our results. Moreover, our sample was extracted from the So.Re.Com "A.S. de Rosa" @-library (which was enriched itself with publications for the current research), so future research should replicate our findings on other databases. In addition to this, the publications in our sample are not representative for all the languages spoken in Africa, which are over 1500; future studies should replicate our findings on more multi-lingual samples.

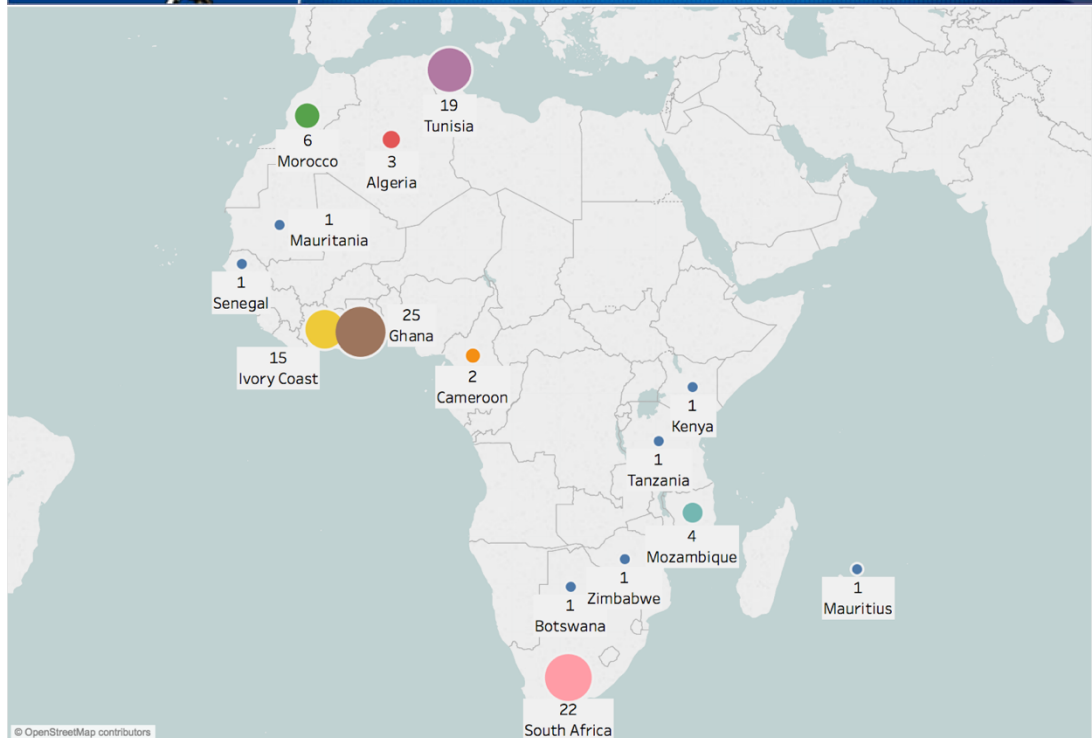


Figure 1: Geo-mapping revealing the relative frequencies distribution of the publications related to SRT in Africa

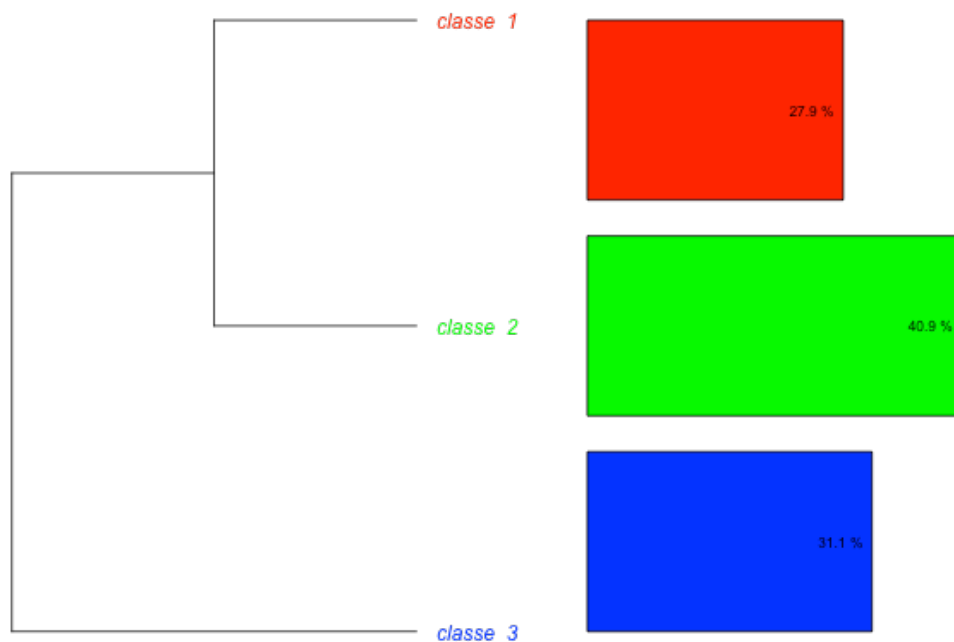


Figure 2: Dendrogram of the clusters issued by the Hierarchical Descending Classification performed on the abstracts and keywords of 359 publications

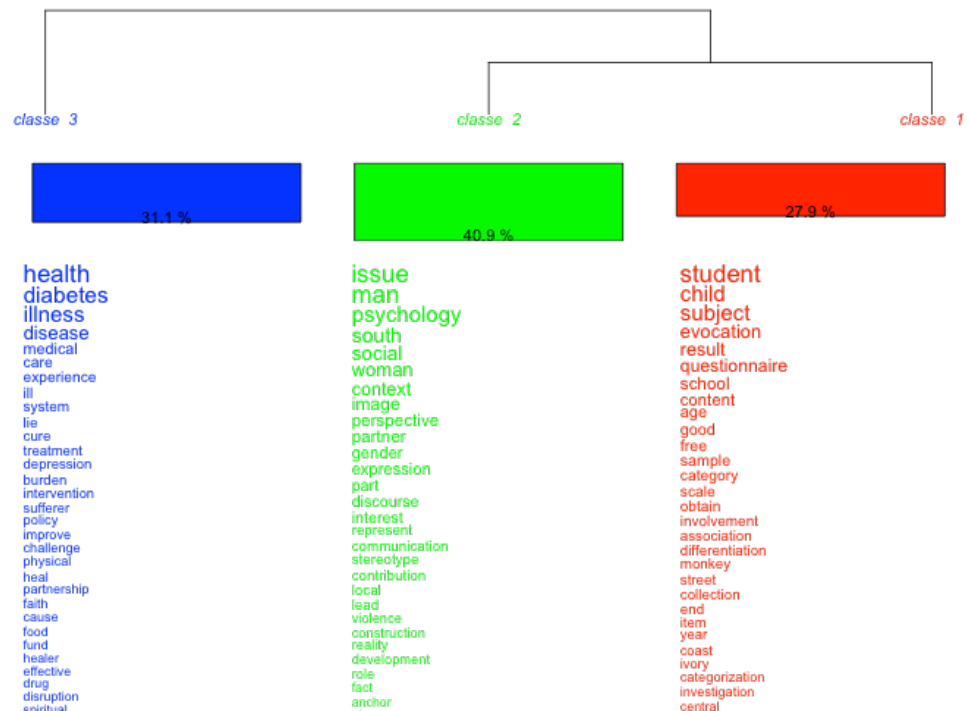


Figure 3: Dendrogram of the clusters issued by the Hierarchical Descending Classification performed on the abstracts and keywords of 359 publications with a brief summary of their content

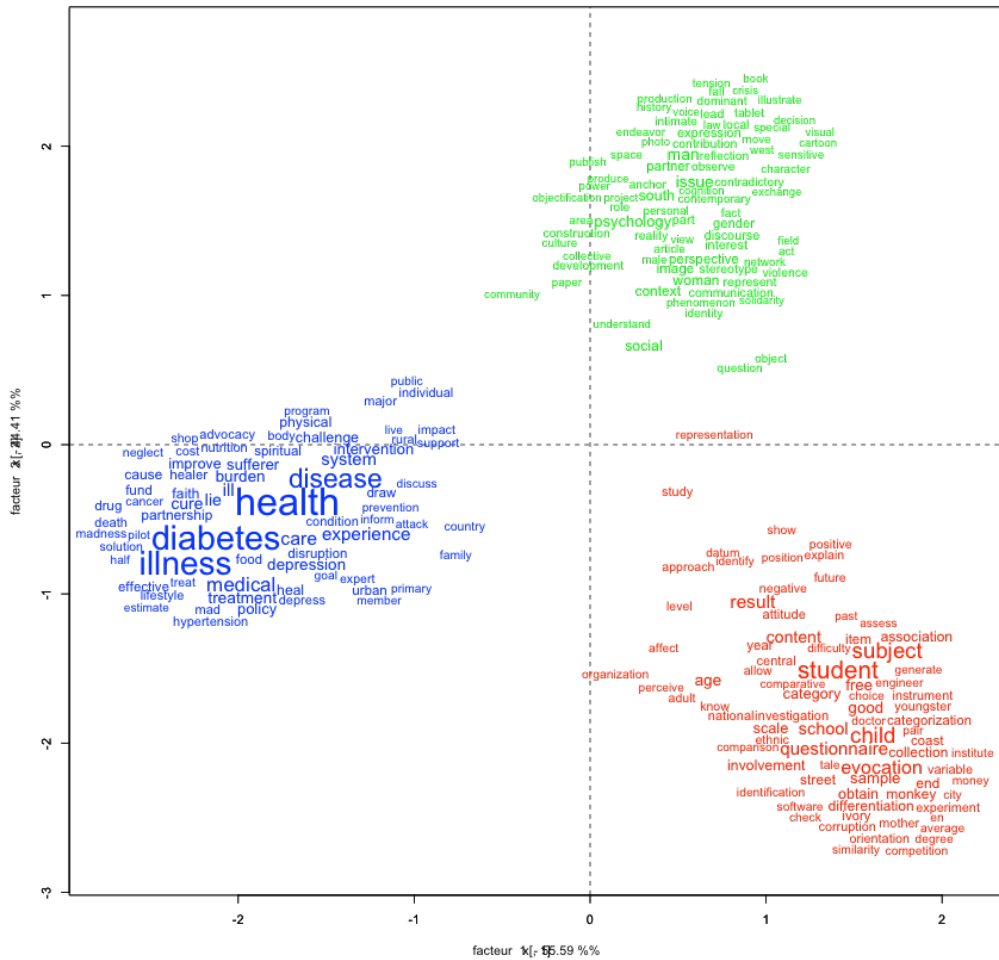


Figure 4: Factorial Correspondence Analysis based on the Hierarchical Descending Classification

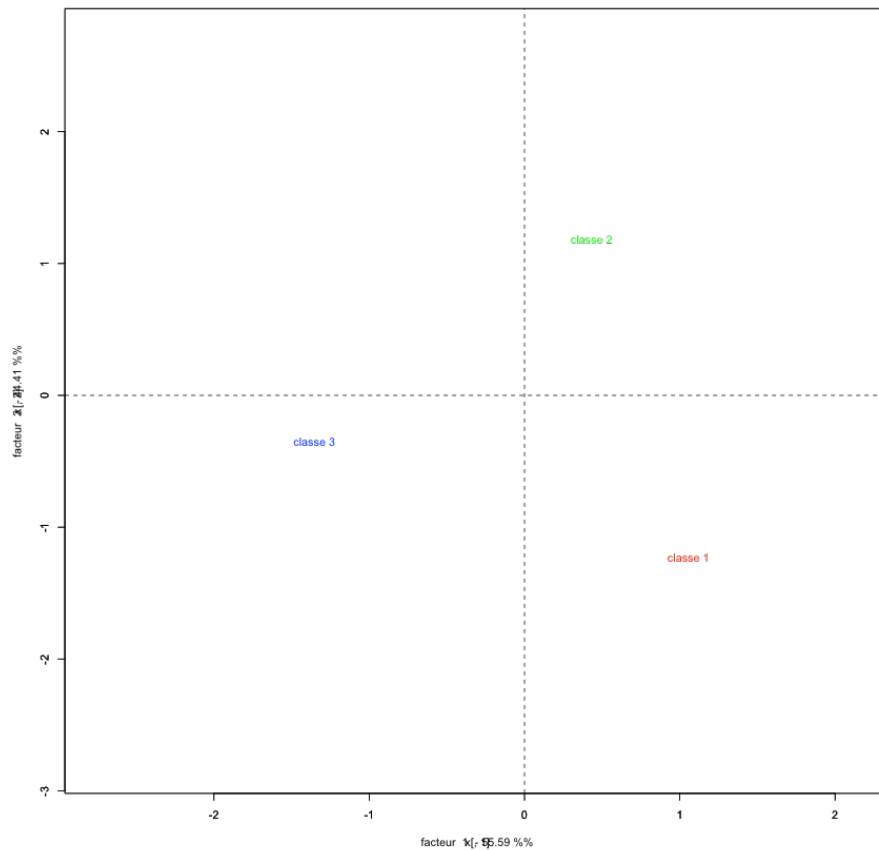


Figure 5: Factorial Correspondence Analysis based on the Hierarchical Descending Classification – plotting the clusters

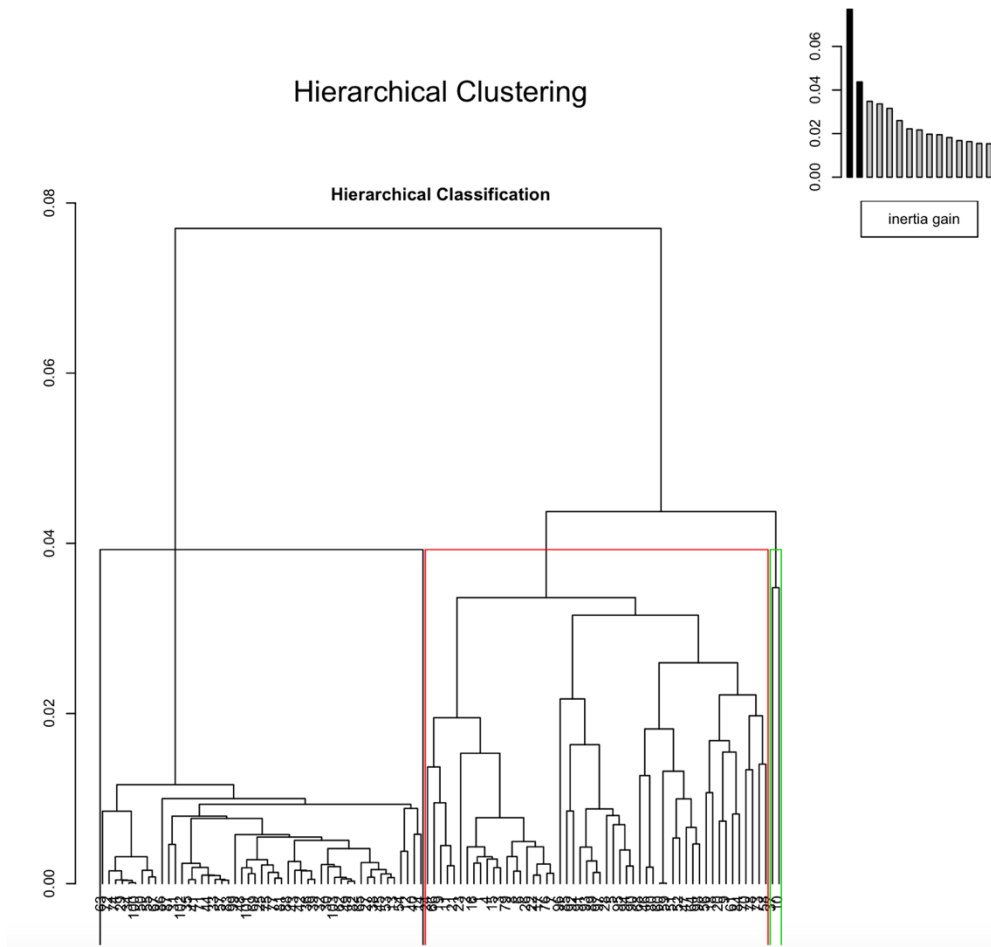


Figure 6: Hierarchical Clustering (Ward's criterion) illustrating the inertia gain for the HCPC on the entire sample of publications

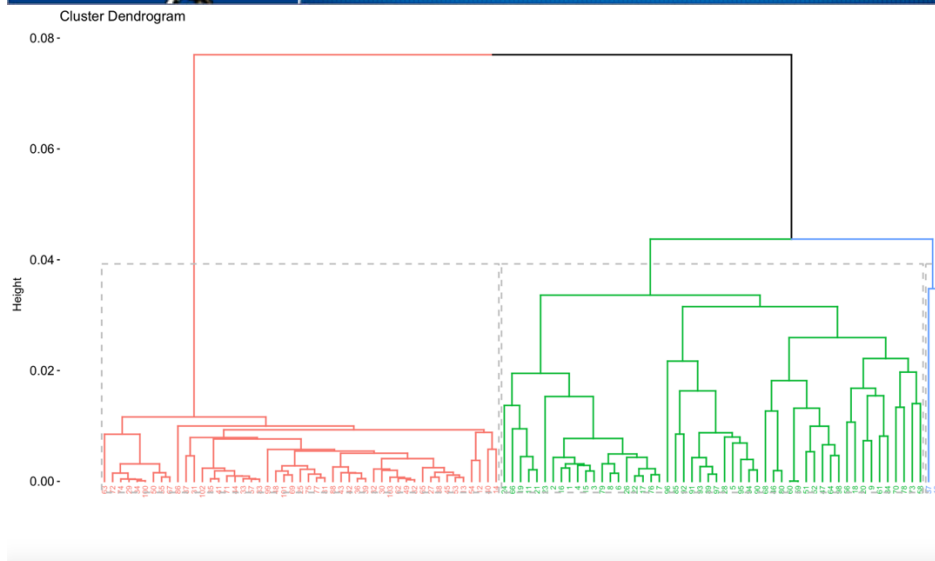


Figure 7: Hierarchical Clustering (Ward's criterion) – initial partitioning for the HCPC on the entire sample of publications

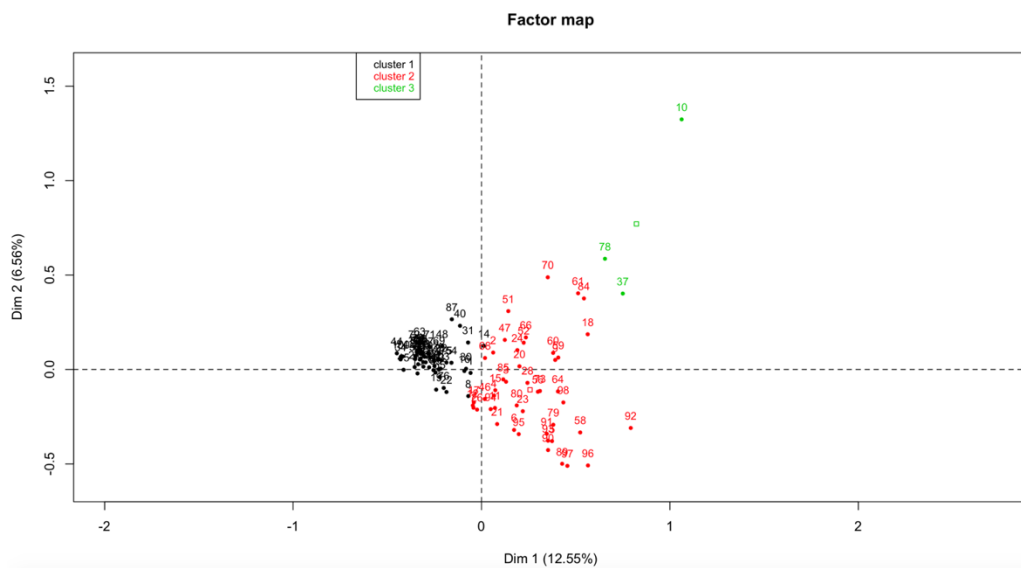


Figure 8: Factor map and clusters after consolidation for the HCPC on the entire sample of publications

Hierarchical clustering on the factor map

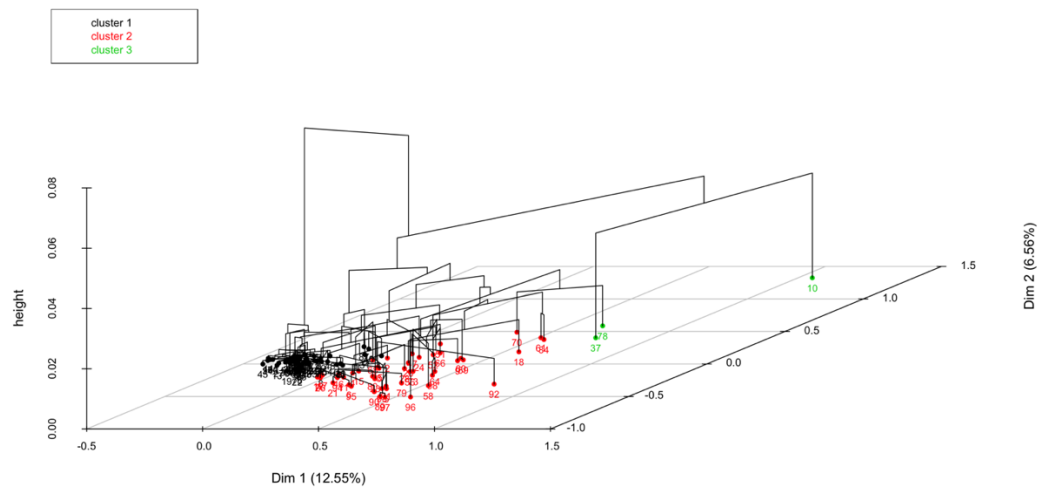


Figure 9: Factor map, clusters and tree after consolidation for the HCPC on the entire sample of publications

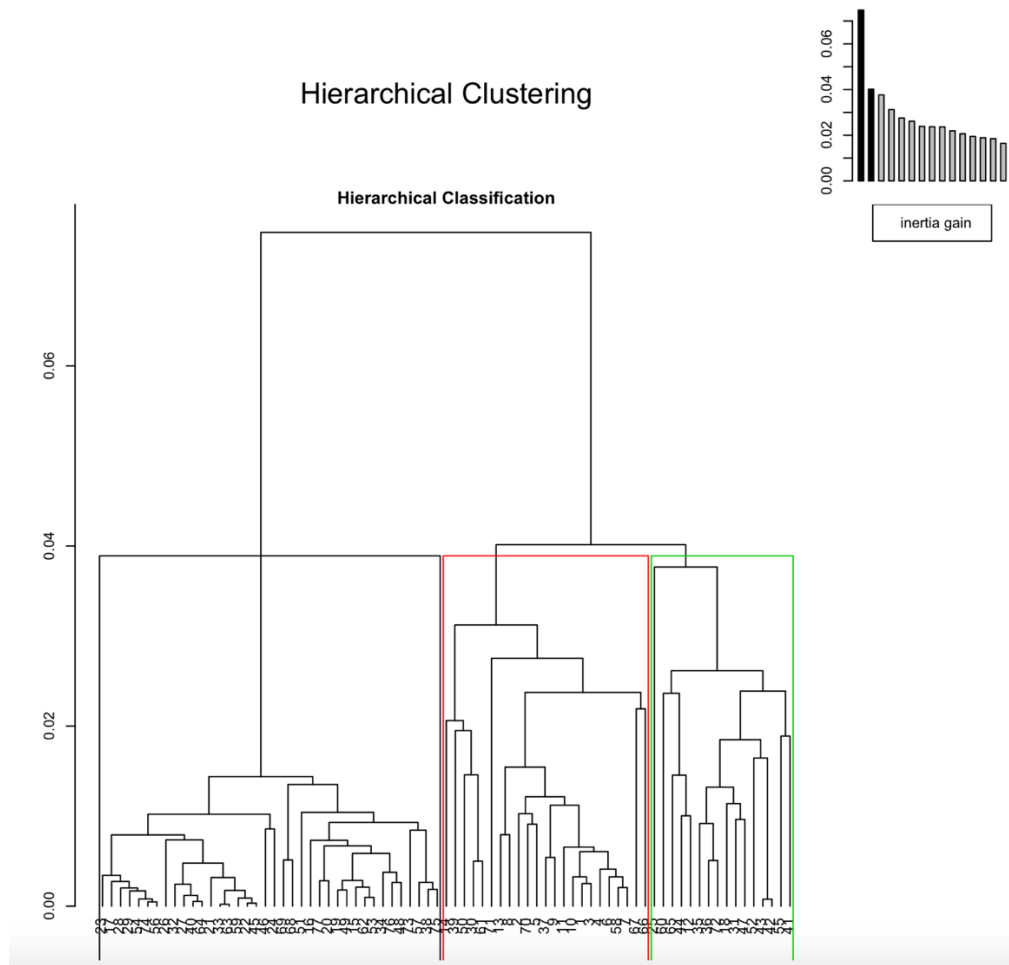


Figure 10: Hierarchical Clustering (Ward's criterion) – initial partitioning illustrating the inertia gain for the HCPC on the empirical publications

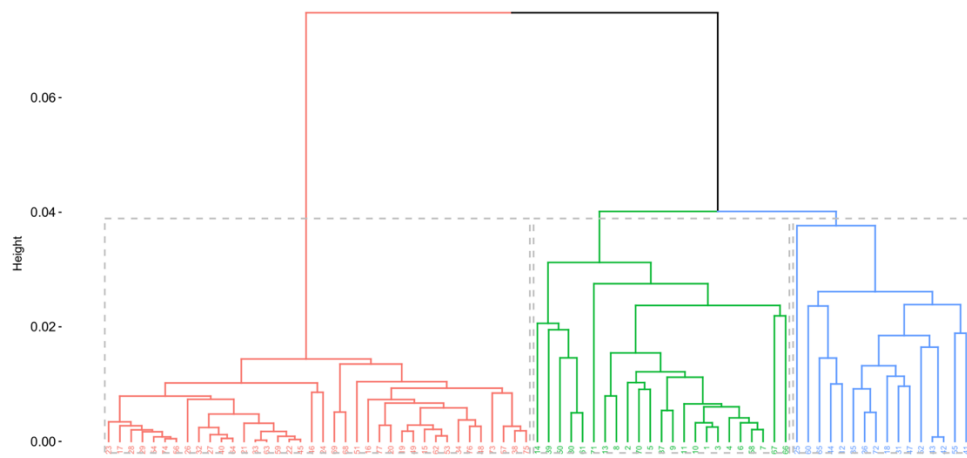


Figure 11: Hierarchical Clustering (Ward’s criterion) – initial partitioning for the HCPC on the empirical publications

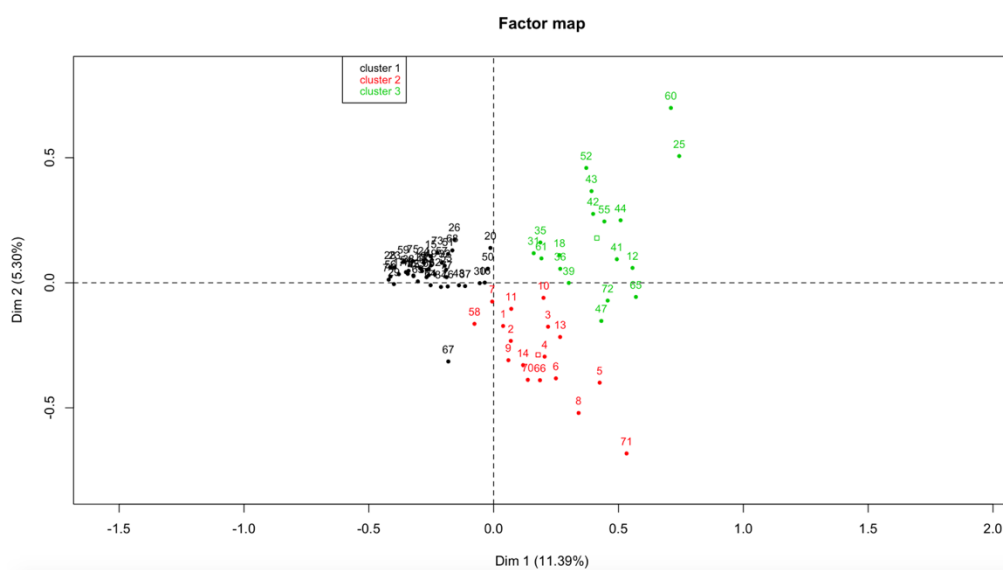


Figure 12: Factor map and clusters after consolidation for the HCPC on the empirical publications

Hierarchical clustering on the factor map

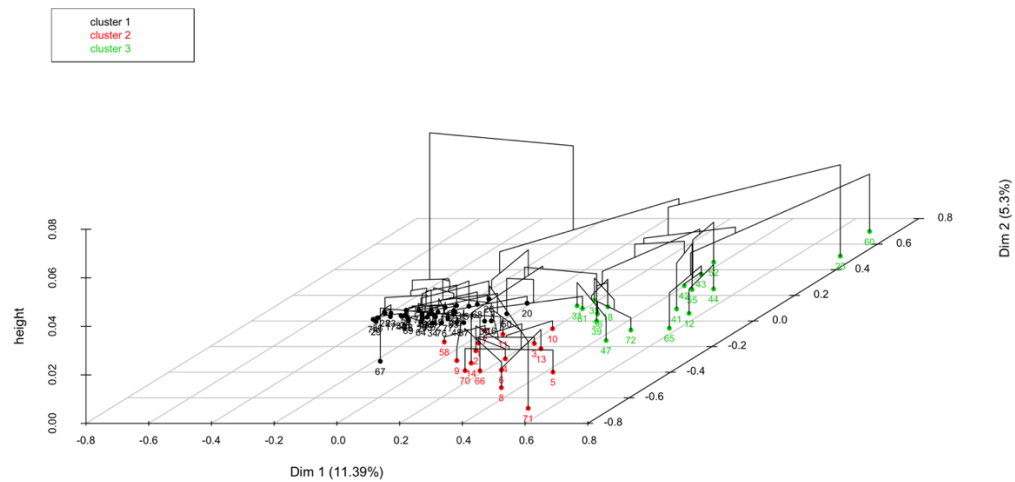


Figure 13: Factor map, clusters and tree after consolidation for the HCPC on the empirical publications

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7. Conclusion and implications for future research

The purpose of our paper was to explore the diffusion and impact of SRT in the geo-cultural areas of North America, Australia and New Zealand, Asia and Africa by meta-theoretically analyzing the available scientific literature published by (first) authors affiliated to institutions from these contexts. We aimed to detect how SRT was formulated and operationalized conceptually, in articulation with other concepts and/or theories, thematically, paradigmatically and methodologically, in order to find out whether the theory has undergone conceptual and/or methodological transformations when transplanted to other cultural scenarios (de Rosa, 2013b). Given the categorical nature of our data, we were limited at exploratory analyses, hence all of our conclusions should be tested with confirmatory analyses in future studies.

The three types of data analysis techniques (descriptive profiles, textual analyses, HCPC analyses) we employed to address our research questions revealed similar trends for all our samples, which goes to show that SRT has been adopted and employed in similar fashions around the world. Thus, we consistently encountered a generic trend of application of SRT, which points toward the fact that there are researchers who employ the theory instrumentally as a framework for the investigation of socially relevant objects; this result was also found by de Rosa in her past meta-theoretical analyses (e.g. de Rosa, 2002, 2013b; de Rosa & D'Ambrosio, 2003, 2008). Other than this line of research, we found that the scientific literature on SRT is generally divided into two other types of directions, one which employs SRT empirically with references to its own concepts and constructs, and one which employs it in a more meta-theoretical fashion, that is it articulates SRT with other theories and approaches from social sciences. Regarding empirical publications, we found an opposition between qualitative and quantitative methodologies, while thematically, SRT has been consistently used for a vast array of different social objects, of relevance to the populations investigated; across our samples, we did however find a predilection for *development-education* and *health-illness* as thematic areas, the both of which have a long-standing tradition of research within SRT in Europe and Latin America as well (Garnier, 2002).

A context in which SRT was employed differently was the USA (as expected, based on previous publications: e.g. de Rosa, 2013b, Rateau et al., 2011; Philogène, 2014; Greenwood, 2003abc). The research here appears to be divided between authors who apply the theory consonantly with its formulations empirically and another trend, which consists in researchers who seem to re-formulate SRT or integrate it in existent theoretical and methodological frameworks (e.g. Jaan Valsiner), an approach to employing SRT which we only found in the USA. For example, in Australia and New Zealand, after initial attempts to integrate SRT in the mainstream Social Cognition approach to social psychology, SRT was eventually employed

theoretically in its original conceptualization, while maintaining a special focus on the aspects touching upon identity and intergroup issues, which were traditional for social psychology in this area. Another noteworthy aspect we encountered in North America is that when we inserted the indexation in ISI and SCOPUS as variables in HCPC, the clustering solution was not significantly associated with the way in which SRT was conceptualized, but rather with the type of methods employed and with the language used (French vs English). This might suggest that the reluctance of North American journals to publish SRT research might be due to methodology more than epistemological premises, an aspect which should be investigated by future studies.

In Asia and Africa, we encountered the tendency to employ SRT in order to contribute to the foundation of original Asian and, respectively, African social psychologies, as SRT, albeit created in the European space, is versatile and highly flexible, and designed specifically for capturing culture-sensitive lay knowledge. Another socio-cultural feature that these two areas share is their pressing demand for social utility and applicability of empirical research in general, which has contributed to the development of SRT research in these areas, as this theory easily renders itself applicable to diverse social phenomena (Jodelet, 1989).

Our research is not without limitations. Thus, most of our conference presentations were present in abstract form only, which may have influenced our results. Moreover, our sample was extracted from the So.Re.Com “A.S. de Rosa” @-library (which was enriched itself with publications for the current research), so future research should replicate our findings on other databases. Next, especially for the African and Asian geo-cultural areas, future research should take into account publications in native languages that were not available in the library. Then, our research was exploratory, not confirmatory in nature, but – inspired by the Moscovici’s vision that research in social psychology is for “improving, not for proving” (de Rosa, 2003) - we are confident that it is quite unique in its meta-theoretical approach and methodology used, thus providing a basis for further studies on the continuously growing literature.

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ANNEX 1

Contract Agreement about the Intellectual Property Right (I.P.R.)

The Social Representations and Communication Research Centre and Multimedia Lab's policy on **IPR issues** is in accordance with European Commission recommendations on the management of intellectual property in knowledge transfer activities and the **Code of Practice for Universities and other public research organisations**. This IPR contract is an integral part of the *Research Trainee Agreement* as clear statement about IPR issues, including protection to background or foreground for carrying out the project, to be signed by the Early Stage Researcher (ESR) recruited. In particular, to prevent any potential tension about *Intellectual Property Right* connected to the involvement of the ESR and co-supervisors on top of previous multiyear work conducted by the project leader (prof. A.S. de Rosa) and by offering the access to its related tools and data sources (meta-analysis grid, SoReCom "A.S. de Rosa" @-library, multi-media documentation etc. not yet published or open-access), the *Research Trainee Agreement* includes this clear statement about IPR issues to be signed by the ESR since the beginning of his/her enrolment. This contract will also make clear that the secondment period at the co-supervisor's institution for complementary training does not grant any right to the co-supervisor to access to the project leader's (prof. A.S. de Rosa) data and tools that aren't yet published (including the web tools with restricted access) or to automatically participate in the scientific publications related to the core of this individual research project (whether it be a publication of the sole project leader or a joint publication of the project leader with the ESR).

Moreover, both ESRs and trainers must ensure that the research conducted is relevant to society and does not duplicate research previously conducted elsewhere, avoid plagiarism of any kind and respect the principles of intellectual property and data ownership in all circumstances, including in collaboration on research programs led by tutors, other researchers and ESRs. The ESR must abide by the principle of intellectual property and joint data ownership since the research is carried out in collaboration with a supervisor and/or other researchers. In accordance with European Commission recommendations on the management of intellectual property in knowledge transfer activities and the Code of Practice for Universities and other public research organisations [Brussels, 10.4.2008 C (2008)1329] and some of the basic IPR principles of the European Charter for Researcher (<http://ec.europa.eu/euraxess/index.cfm/rights/europeanCharter>):

- a) "Researcher should recognise the limitations to this freedom that could arise as a result of particular research circumstances (including supervision/guidance/management) or operational constraints, e.g. for budgetary or infrastructural reasons or, especially in the industrial sector, for reasons of intellectual property protection. Such limitations should not, however, contravene recognised ethical principles and practices, to which researchers have to adhere."
- b) "Researchers at all levels must be familiar with the national, sectoral or institutional regulations governing training and/or working conditions. This includes Intellectual Property Rights regulations, and the requirements and conditions of any sponsor or funders, independently of the nature of their contract. Researchers should adhere to such regulations by delivering the required results (e.g. thesis, publications, patents, reports, new products development, etc) as set out in the terms and conditions of the contract or equivalent document."
- c) "Employers and/or funders should therefore develop strategies, practices and procedures to provide researchers, including those at the beginning of their research careers, with the necessary framework conditions so that they can enjoy the right to be recognised and listed and/or quoted, in



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the context of their actual contributions, as co-authors of papers, patents, etc, or to publish their own research results independently from their supervisor(s)". In particular:

- Given that - in agreement with the specific call for vacancy of the So.Re.Com. Joint-IDP - the So.Re.Com. Joint-IDP project leader and creator of the Meta-theoretical Analysis of the Social Representations Literature will contribute substantially to an ESR's individual research project by assisting in the formulation of hypotheses, providing tools on top of previous multiyear work and by offering the access to data sources (meta-analysis grid, SoReCom "A.S. de Rosa" @-Library, multi-media documentation etc. not yet published or open-access), also providing human/technical resources, etc., the So.Re.Com. Joint-IDP project leader name (A.S. de Rosa) should appear in any publications or conference papers or any other sort of dissemination of the research.
- The ESR will be collaborating on the unifying research project aimed at ***Evaluating the impact of the scientific production driven by the Social Representations theory in the social arena faced with social demand*** already developed by the So.Re.Com. Joint-IDP project leader A.S. de Rosa, and in particular on the ***research focus n°7 "Mapping the impact and dissemination of the social representation theory across different geo-cultural contexts: "North-America and other continents (Oceania, Asia, Africa)", the new emerging scenarios"***. The ESR therefore understands that as creator of the study, the research supervisor and project leader is the owner of the intellectual property rights for the entire research programme. As for any research he/she may develop under the research director's lead and supervision, the ESR commits to participate in the research in accordance with the time and modalities established by the research director and not to divulge or publish in any way or form (including via Internet) anything concerning the study without the express permission of the research director. With his/her written permission and upon approval of the text, conference papers, publications or any other sort of dissemination of the research can be released jointly, respecting the research director's (A.S. de Rosa) intellectual property rights as the primary author.

Date: 06/05/2014

Signature of the Early Stage Researcher

Recommendation 12: Presenting individually-authored research papers at summer schools

While respecting Professor de Rosa's own intellectual property rights, please propose an amendment to the wording in the SoReComJoint!DP Annex 1 which would ensure that the rules relating to Intellectual Property Rights enable the Fellows to publish their research as primary authors and, where relevant, independently of their supervisor(s), possibly also as individual authors.

The Fellows already present individually-authored research papers at summer schools and of course they will sign as primary author their thesis, as provided by the provisions of the Intellectual Property Rights agreement which each Fellow has stipulated with Sapienza (document that will be included in their thesis). In order to welcome the REA recommendation, the above mentioned agreement will be amended as follows.

“The project leader – upon mutual agreement – may be listed as second author, in order to promote the higher ESR’s visibility and responsibility as primary author, subject to the respect of the background and intellectual property right owned by Professor de Rosa, in accordance with the above mentioned discipline provided by the European Charter of Researchers concerning the IPR for joint publications”

Indeed the ESR are already enjoying and will continue to enjoy the right to be recognised and listed and/or quoted, in the context of their actual contributions, as “co-authors” of conference presentation and future publications (if they will collaborate for this future steps, as planned).

The Fellows will be co-authors of joint publications and conference presentations, thus valorising their collaboration to the project, thus having the chance to publish on the top of previous multiyear research work research with the creator of the study.

The theoretical and methodological knowledge acquired during this process will represent a solid basis for other autonomously research works created and developed by the ESRs that can lead them to publications as first authors.

The above mentioned IPR agreement is included in the Annex 1 (see section B.4.3.4. pages 31-32) a document that in the phase of the contract negotiation has been attentively examined by the REA before its approval as integral mandatory part of the Grant Agreement.

In agreement with the principle of the European Charter for Researcher and with our doctoral program policy for IPR regulated in a Trainee Agreement (as mentioned even in the original proposal at page 26), the project leader Professor de Rosa agrees and recognizes the fundamental right of the any young research trainee to publish autonomously when based on their own project and results.

The same European Charter for Researcher foresees different conditions that apply in the specific case of the approved project. In fact here it is essential once again to clarify that there are not two different researches (the individual ESR’s research and the project leader’s research program). The Fellows have been recruited on the basis of a call (in agreement with the Annex I) and they are collaborating on an on-going research program on which the project leader is working since 20 years. To data and materials not yet accessible to the public, including the SoReCom A.S. de Rosa @-library and its integrated research tools, the ESRs have been offered access and use of unpublished materials including:

- a) 3855 meta-theoretical analyses already filled in the server (and that they revised),
- b) more than 9500 literary sources already filed in the bibliographic repositories before the ESRs started to collaborate on the project,
- c) the research tools and methods including quantitative and qualitative techniques specifically designed for this research (a. the “grid for the meta-theoretical analysis”; b. the “interviews with the protagonists of the theory”).

The access to these sources has nothing to do with a traditional consultation of a public library, but implies use of a research material, that requires respect of intellectual property right.

For this reason since the attentive negotiation with the REA of the Annex 1, the IPR agreement is an integral part of the call and of the ESR contract. It has been approved in agreement with three principles from European Charter for Researcher (<http://ec.europa.eu/euraxess/index.cfm/rights/europeanCharter>) that in this specific case are applicable (see complementary information in the attached document).

In particular:

- A. as regards General Principles and Requirements applicable to Researchers
 - Research Freedom; Professional responsibility; Contractual and legal obligations:
- B. as regards : General Principles and Requirements applicable to Employers and Funders:
 - Intellectual Property Rights; Co-authorship

For the amendment of the amendment to be added to the IPR signed by the Fellows see the document “Complementary information” (point G)

G. Complementary information about the recommendation 12: Presenting individually-authored research papers at summer schools

Following the attentive negotiation with the REA of the approved Annex I, the IPR issue has been an integral part of the call and of the ESR contract. It has been approved in agreement with three principles from European Charter for Researcher (<http://ec.europa.eu/euraxess/index.cfm/rights/europeanCharter>) that in this specific case are applicable. In particular:

A. as regards General Principles and Requirements applicable to Researchers

- **Research Freedom**

“Researchers should, however, **recognise the limitations to this freedom** that could arise as a result of particular research circumstances (including supervision/guidance/management) or operational constraints, e.g. for budgetary or infrastructural reasons or, especially in the industrial sector, for reasons of intellectual property protection.”

- **Professional responsibility:**

“They must avoid plagiarism of any kind and **abide by the principle of intellectual property and joint data ownership in the case of research carried out in collaboration with a supervisor(s)** and/or other researchers.”

- **Contractual and legal obligations:**

“Researchers at all levels must be familiar with the national, sectoral or institutional regulations governing training and/or working conditions. This includes **Intellectual Property Rights regulations**, and the requirements and conditions of any sponsor or funders, independently of the nature of their contract. Researchers should adhere to such regulations by delivering the required results (e.g. thesis, publications, patents, reports, new products development, etc) as set out in the terms and conditions of the contract or equivalent document.”

B. as regards : General Principles and Requirements applicable to Employers and Funders:

- **Intellectual Property Rights:**

“**Policies and practices should specify what rights belong to researchers and/or, where applicable, to their employers or other parties**, including external commercial or industrial organisations, as possibly provided for under specific collaboration agreements or other types of agreement.

- **Co-authorship:**

Co-authorship should be viewed positively by institutions when evaluating staff, as evidence of a constructive approach to the conduct of research.

Employers and/or funders should therefore develop strategies, practices and procedures **to provide researchers**, including those at the beginning of their research careers, with the necessary framework **conditions** so that they can enjoy the right to be recognised and listed and/or quoted, in the context of their actual contributions, as co-authors of papers, patents, etc, or **to publish their own research results independently** from their supervisor(s).

Intellectual property (as in the Annex I and in the contract signed by the ESRs)

The Social Representations and Communication Research Centre and Multimedia Lab's policy on **IPR issues** is in accordance with European Commission recommendations on the management of intellectual property in knowledge transfer activities and the **Code of Practice for Universities and other public research organisations**.

The **Research Trainee Agreement** includes a clear statement about IPR issues, including protection to background or foreground for carrying out the project, to be signed by each ESR recruited. In particular, to prevent any potential tension about **Intellectual Property Right** connected to the involvement of the ESR and co-supervisors on top of previous multiyear work conducted by the project leader and by offering the access to its related tools and data sources (meta-analysis grid, SoReCom Virtual Library, multi-media documentation etc. not yet published or open-access), the **Research Trainee Agreement** includes a clear statement about IPR issues to be signed by the ESR since the beginning of his/her enrolment. This contract will also make clear that the secondment period at the co-supervisor's institution for complementary training does not grant any right to the co-supervisor to access to the project leader's data and tools that aren't yet published (including the web tools with restricted access) or to automatically participate in the scientific publications related to the core of this individual research project (whether it be a publication of the sole project leader or a joint publication of the project leader with the ESR).

Moreover, both research trainees and trainers must ensure that the research conducted is relevant to society and does not duplicate research previously conducted elsewhere, avoid plagiarism of any kind and respect the principles of intellectual property and data ownership in all circumstances, including in collaboration on research programs led by tutors, other researchers and research trainees. The ESR must abide by the principle of intellectual property and joint

data ownership since the research is carried out in collaboration with a supervisor and/or other researchers. In accordance with European Commission recommendations on the management of intellectual property in knowledge transfer activities and the Code of Practice for Universities and other public research organisations [Brussels, 10.4.2008 C (2008)1329] and some of the basic IPR principles of the European Charter for Researcher (<http://ec.europa.eu/euraxess/index.cfm/rights/europeanCharter>):

- a) “Researcher should recognise the limitations to this freedom that could arise as a result of particular research circumstances (including supervision/guidance/management) or operational constraints, e.g. for budgetary or infrastructural reasons or, especially in the industrial sector, for reasons of intellectual property protection. Such limitations should not, however, contravene recognised ethical principles and practices, to which researchers have to adhere.” In: **General Principles and Requirements applicable to Researchers à Research Freedom**
- b) “Researchers at all levels must be familiar with the national, sectoral or institutional regulations governing training and/or working conditions. This includes Intellectual Property Rights regulations, and the requirements and conditions of any sponsor or funders, independently of the nature of their contract. Researchers should adhere to such regulations by delivering the required results (e.g. thesis, publications, patents, reports, new products development, etc) as set out in the terms and conditions of the contract or equivalent document.” In: **General Principles and Requirements applicable to Researchers à Contractual and legal obligations**
- c) “Employers and/or funders should therefore develop strategies, practices and procedures to provide researchers, including those at the beginning of their research careers, with the necessary framework conditions so that they can enjoy the right to be recognised and listed and/or quoted, in the context of their actual contributions, as co-authors of papers, patents, etc, or to publish their own research results independently from their supervisor(s)”. In: **General Principles and Requirements applicable to Employers and Funders à Intellectual Property Right**

In particular:

- Given that – in agreement with the specific call for vacancy of this SoReCom IDP – the SoReCom IDP project leader and research main supervisor will contribute substantially to a trainee's individual research project by assisting in the formulation of hypotheses, providing tools on top of previous multiyear work and by offering the access to data sources (meta-analysis grid, SoReCom Virtual Library, multi-media documentation etc. not yet published or open-access), also providing human/technical resources, etc., the SoReCom IDP project leader name should appear in any publications or conference papers or any other sort of dissemination of the research.
- Therefore the research trainee will be collaborating on the project (*Title of the project to be filled:*) already developed by SoReCom IDP project leader and research main supervisor (name of the SoReCom IDP project leader and research main supervisor to be filled:.....) the research trainee understand that as creator of the study, the research supervisors and project leader is the owner of the intellectual property rights for the entire research programme. As for any research he/she may develop under the research director's lead and supervision, the research trainee commits to participate in the research in accordance with the time and modalities established by the research director and not to divulge or publish in any way or form (including via Internet) anything concerning the study without the express permission of the research director. With his/her written permission and upon approval of the text, conference papers, publications or any other sort of dissemination of the research can be released jointly, respecting the research director's intellectual property rights as the primary author.

Amendment to be added to the signed IPR:

- “The project leader – upon mutual agreement – may be listed as second author, in order to promote the higher ESR’s visibility and responsibility as primary author, subject to the respect of the background and intellectual property right owned by Professor de Rosa, in accordance with the above mentioned discipline provided by the European Charter of Researchers concerning the IPR for joint publications”