

Editorial

Dear Friends and Colleagues,

The Bulletin is entering a new era! We decided to publish it electronically and this is the first such edition! This move will make the bulletin easily accessible from the website, will economize postage, will make room to our bookshelves and last but not least will save some trees! In addition, we will publish electronically older issues and keep an archive of the information published in the bulletin. I hope that you will still enjoy reading it and send us material for publication.

As promised, we are publishing a conversation I had with Prof. Claude Flament, past president of the EASP. It was with great pleasure that I did this interview and I learned a lot about the beginnings of the association, the politics involved and the tasks and missions people had. Having the past in mind we can build a better future! The interview was done in French and translated in English afterwards. Both because it is a conversation and because oral discourse was translated I would ask you to be lenient with the language!

From past president's responsibilities we move, as usual, to present president's corner, a must-read of every issue that brings us back to the present and the future of EASP.

Prof. Flament said, among other things, that one of the major goals of the EASP (previously EAESP) was to foster contacts between social psychologists in Europe. This great tradition was kept till now as you can see from the various meetings planned and from the reports of the meetings already held.

I will draw your attention to the reports of the 68 terrific young scholars that participated in the Summer school and their devoted teachers. Organizing and participating in the summer school was one of the most enriching experiences I had in my life as a social psychologist and I would not praise enough the association for organizing this event. In this issue we publish the announcement of the next Summer Institute of SPSP another great opportunity for young social psychologists!

In the bulletin you will also see the new members and read the reports of activities and grants and the announcement of new books. Please send us information you wish to see published. Those of you who wish to do a review of a book please do not hesitate to contact me.

Last but not least, the Executive committee in its current form will end its activity at the Stockholm meeting this summer. I will like to draw you attention to the call for new executive members nominations (deadline 15th of March) and the call to host the next general meeting.

Wishing you an enjoyable (and probably well-deserved) winter break, I leave you with the content of the Bulletin

Xenia Chrysochoou
Athens, December 2010

**Conversation with Claude Flament
Executive Committee 1969-1975 and
President 1972-1975
by Xenia Chrysochoou**

XC: Thank you for accepting to see me to discuss about the association and about social psychology. Let's begin from the association; how you've got involved with, what were the preoccupations when you became president?

CF: I became president in 1972, the association started in 1963, perhaps not officially but the process was there. It has not been highlighted sufficiently, I think, that initially the initiative was American. It was Lanzetta who, as a representative of the Psychology of the American Navy he had a kind of sabbatical in London and went to see Tajfel wondering "what we can do to help social psychology in Europe?" He was the American who saw Europe as a whole... And indeed there was not much in Europe at the time. On the contrary Americans had money. So, Henri Tajfel suggested to invite social psychologists in Europe, to create an occasion that social psychologists can meet in Europe, and to give them the opportunity to see each other in Europe and not only when they were visiting the US. I remember very well this argument. Social psychologist in Europe got to know each other when they travelled to the US; of course those in Paris knew each other, but from one country to another they didn't. It seems an exaggerated image but it corresponded very well to reality. That's how this idea came; The Ford foundation then financed a meeting for the European social psychologists. And the first meeting took place in 1963 at Sorrento...

XC: and at that time the association did not existed as yet...

CF: They were people. As regarded France, practically all experimental social psychologist were there, we were five.

XC: five all social psychologists in France...

CF: Yes, there was Moscovici, Germaine de Montmollin, Robert Pages, a colleague that I lost track professionally later: Lambert and me. It is not very important but those who took care later of the association were Moscovici and me. There were three colleagues from Paris because I was already in Aix en Provence but we knew each other. So the first meeting took place. We exchanged, we made some presentations, I cannot remember anymore the details; one should look at the archives... We decided to meet again in Italy, at Frascati in 1964 or 1965, I can't remember if it was next year or two years later. There it was decided to create an association and some people offered to help. I did not propose myself because I did not have any material resources for assistance, because you know psychology in general at Aix was almost inexistent at the time. I don't know how it was in

Greece, here in France psychology was a branch of philosophy so we did not have the same environment that we have now. Hence, an association was created that was registered in the Netherlands because the colleagues there offered to do that, and the first president was Moscovici. Three years later was Tajfel and in 1972...

XC: In 1972 it was you

CF: I was not candidate. Tajfel proposed my name with an argument whose importance would be perhaps difficult to understand now; he had a political argument; he suggested that as I was known to be a communist I would be perhaps better accepted than somebody else by the East European countries. He had a point; indeed we had great difficulties, because our colleagues from these countries, perhaps with the exception of Yugoslavia, had problems in order to get authorizations to come. The president had as a task to enable the "door opening" so they would be able to come. In addition, we organized East-West meetings that took place in an East European country. These were international meetings and there were questions of political diplomacy. We went only a few from the West to these meetings trying not to invade, we tried to keep a numerical equilibrium at least, and we tried to develop contacts in favor of the East European colleagues. So, in that respect I had a certain action. It was what I was expected to do. I went to Hungary, I was received by the minister etc...and the colleagues at the corridor were saying "Ah you have been received for an hour and a quart whereas Tajfel last year was received only for $\frac{3}{4}$ of an hour..." It was a sign of interest... It is an atmosphere that is difficult to imagine now. So we were able to make a first East-West meeting. This meeting was in Budapest and there was another, later, when I was not anymore responsible, in Poland I think. You can check the archives, there were several such meetings; the idea was to facilitate the relationships with the colleagues.

I have been to Moscow, where I have been received by a psychologist that was not a social one, Leontiev, whom I knew from one of his visits to Paris. He travelled a lot. He was from the Academy of Educational Sciences. I have met him in Professor's Wallon home. Wallon was very well known as a psychologist, not a social one, and as a communist. Thus, I had both scientific and political links. Leontiev obtained without much difficulty a visa for me and I have been received, this was the objective, by the editorial committee of the official review "Questions of Philosophy". This was the ideological review of the USSR. So, the idea was whether the fact that this committee received the President of the European Association could have been interpreted as a kind of recognition from our "Soviet Brother" that would have enabled our colleagues to come over.

In Moscow, in fact in all Soviet Union, there was only a woman (I can't remember her name) that was a professor of social psychology. It was really the beginnings of social psychology. There was psychology in general caught in ideological conflicts. We did not care about that. What we cared was that the existence of the European Association of Social Psychology was mentioned in the Review as something

acceptable. So among my other duties as president I made a lot of trips to East European countries.

Of course, it was not the only thing we were doing. There were several important issues at the time as in any time. For example, when the Olympic Games in Munich took place, with the hostage taking of Israeli athletes by the Palestinians and the massacre, we phoned each other in the Executive Committee and I sent at the Israeli Embassy in Paris a letter of condolences. The Ambassador replied with a thanking letter saying how happy they were that we supported their policies; which was not true at all. We've just condemned the massacre. The Association as an international association found itself in many occasions to make political decisions, notably regarding East-West, that had nothing psychological, in so far that they enabled contacts with the East European colleagues and not only with them. We even did a meeting in which I was involved, in 1968 during the "Spring of Prague" we had planned one of these East-West meetings. I was not yet president, but I was in a small group of Americans and Europeans that met, we were 6-8 people. It was a very small working group that met, totally independently of the European Association, but Moscovici was in it.

XC: was this transnational committee?

FC: Well, it was a group that never had statuses and that wasn't institutionalized and again the Americans paid. It was a scientific group on conflict resolution. During this period of conflicts the Americans paid as if they thought that social psychology could resolve all conflicts. Among the Americans there were people like Kelley, Thibault, Morton Deutsch, you see people that worked not only on conflict resolution but who worked experimentally. And from France we were Moscovici, Faucheux and me and there was Jaap Rabbie from the Netherlands and Henri Tajfel from Britain. And we met. The Europeans knew each other from the Association but this group was not part of it. And it happens that we met in San Francisco in September, the moment of the Soviet intervention in Prague, and as Tajfel and Moscovici were there, we discussed whether we should keep the meeting in Prague or not. The colleagues from there wanted us to go to have as they said "some fresh air". We arrived there after the battles; in fact we saw the traces of the battles. Anyway, within this political framework, the people of the European Association like me had the aim to develop contacts with the East European colleagues in a purely scientific spirit. It was not either pro or against communism, in any case there were different opinions amongst us, it was the idea to develop contacts. So the main preoccupation and the matter I dealt with as a president was that. So the spirit of the association was to develop contacts to realize scientific work.

The problem is whether it was efficacious or not. Around 10 years ago in the European Bulletin, a German colleague looked at the names, the number of publications and inter-citations before the creation of the European Association and after to see whether these meetings had an impact. His conclusion was very clear. It would be possible to find these two papers in the archives of the Bulletin.

So, at that time for the French and I guess for most of the Europeans, independently of these contacts with the East European countries that was only one aspect of the issue, the main question was to develop the contacts among Europeans in order to develop social psychology that was almost inexistent. For example in the first meeting in Sorrento all French social psychologists were there and we were five of us.

XC: But how you recognized yourselves as social psychologists?

CF: This is another aspect that was evoked when it was decided to change the name of the Association and take out the word “experimental”. This was always discussed in the association. I remember the argument of our Dutch colleagues who said that faced, for example, with a person who worked in an organization, who did applied work and wanted to join the association, we could not say to this person that his work was not good, that we were not interested. We could ask however whether it was experimental. The use of the word “experimental” it was a barrier inside social psychology. Indeed, what were developed at the time were interventions within enterprises and the association wanted to stay a scientific association. Of course there is applied work that is scientific but for the Dutch, as far as I remember, it was not very often a good work; not always, but very often. Thus, the word “experimental” was a polite way to leave out these “bad” social psychologists. This was the idea for a long time. So taking out “experimental” did not bother me now because social psychology has been sufficiently developed in many countries with a scientific status and we do not need to defend ourselves as we needed to do at the beginning when, at least numerically, we were not very strong.

When I say that all five French social psychologists were at the meeting at Sorrento I meant experimental social psychologists. Because there was also another person that I knew well and who was a person of great quality, Maisonneuve, but he wasn't an experimentalist. There was a little bit of sectarianism in that. As far as I remember there weren't the French that had asked to put forward the word “experimental”. The Dutch did, at least some of them. I don't know if they had particular problems in Holland, we did not have in France.

For the Americans that financed the association the idea was to develop contacts not only between East and West but also among western social psychologists in Europe in the spirit of scientific social psychology, the dominant model being the American model. There were conflicts, let's say debates among the French, like Pages, who said that this was American Imperialism with their British representatives, speaking about Tajfel, to invade Europe. He made a parallel of what happened in the association with what happened internationally at a political level. So there was a political dimension but with the exception of the organization of East-West meetings, it wasn't fundamental.

There were also other issues like whether Israelis could be part of a European Association. In the first meetings of the association there were Israelis and

Palestinians. We had some discussions and we said that Israel was not part of Europe and so Israelis and Lebanese were excluded. You see, the idea that we had was to facilitate gatherings among people in Europe, instead of focusing on what sort of social psychology we were doing. It was of course necessary to do a good job, at least what we thought to be a good job scientifically, in collaboration with others and in a stimulating way.

The cold war signified the problems. When we met in Prague only some days after the Soviet invasion it was meaningful. We can interpret that in a way or another but for us, Festinger was there ... it was a conference with important people. There was also a political meaning. A Russian was also invited. But when we had our meals together- we were in a Grand Hotel-the Russian was alone in his table. He was boycotted by everyone. And at the discourses at the end there were some allusions about small countries that were dominated by stronger countries. No names of countries were given but everybody understood. So you see the idea to make Europeans meet within the framework of American inspired social psychology led to political problems because the situation was political. So when we moved beyond borders, but even within each country, these political problems became apparent.

XC Do you think that there is an American social psychology and a European social psychology?

CF This is an important issue. Doise must have talked about that because when the question was to remove the word "experimental" there were discussions and exchanges and I discussed with Willem when I met him at a thesis. For him, the argument is that the association is about the development of European social psychology. So we need not to be sectarian; others where stricter, more rigorous.

So the difference between European and American social psychology... When I was in Moscow I met a woman, the only social psychologist there at the time, who had studied in Sweden or Norway. Anyway, she told me that she gave once a conference in Sweden about social psychology in USSR and there a colleague in the audience asked her why she was doing such an American social psychology implying that it was a capitalist social psychology. This Swedish colleague found odd that a Russian colleague could do the same kind of social psychology as he was doing. So we had for a long time the question of doing differently from the Americans or not doing differently.

I have a personal view on that. It may not be shared by all social psychologists in France or in Europe. The social psychology in the US is very individualistic. This is due to their university curriculum that might have changed now. At the time, to take social psychology one needed to learn about personality and this is also reflected in the dominant journal, the JPSP. It is totally legitimate to do this. However, it leaves out the social, the societal part. So if you have been in Paris you know Moscovici, we are a certain number of us working on social representations that try to do a "social" social psychology. And this social psychology can be

experimental and rigorous but also finds itself at a more societal level. The insertion of the individual in the social, I think that has been developed more in Europe than in the US. However, in Latin America social representations are growing and a lot of people are interested. This issue was not important when I was president. In fact, even then it started to exist but the international problems were more important.

We did not have money problems. The Ford Foundation was extremely generous. Each year we had to solicit reporting to the next year the sums left because we did not spend everything. This is not the case now! Well, before becoming president, I was a member of the executive committee presided by Tajfel and I had as a responsibility to distribute money to those who wished to travel. I did not have any money problems. The only question was whether the applicant was going somewhere for tourism or for doing psychology. It happens that I refused a grant but it was never on money grounds. So we had a total freedom financially speaking. For our activities we had more than enough money. And this was American money. So one could say, and certainly some said so, that it was American imperialism.

However, to my knowledge, our American colleagues that came over several times and animated the start of the association, never and none of them tried to impose a scientific point of view. I remember a kind of personal anecdote; in 1968-69 with this independent group of colleagues, formed by Americans, we made experiments in parallel in different countries. It concerned conflict resolution so there were experiments using the prisoners' dilemma paradigm. We did the same experiments in Paris, New York, Los Angeles, Aix etc. We added to the usual research protocol a small questionnaire of six questions asking subjects why they behave as they did in the dilemma and trying to measure issues like reciprocity etc. At the time I was doing my *These d'Etat* on the mathematical study of questionnaires. Kelley did this experiment in Los Angeles, Lanzetta in New England, Joseph Nuttin in Belgium, and I did it in Aix. Tajfel did it as well but he introduced other variations and it was not anymore comparable. So for the four of us it was exactly the same experiment done of course in the language of each country. I analyzed the results. Of course as I was doing an important mathematical job on questionnaires it was evident that I could apply it in this research. And I found that the subjects' responses were oriented mainly in relation to reciprocity. Some refused it and others accepted it but reciprocity in general organized the responses. Of course I do not remember every detail. I divided the sample in relation to the median on this variable and I realized that the behaviors were very different but predictable from the responses on the questionnaire.

At this point I wrote to the three other colleagues and asked them to send me their data. So I did the same analysis and what I found was that in Los Angeles it was like in Aix whereas in New England and Belgium the important variable was the "gain": to have more for oneself. Some people refused the "gain" other accepted it but their preoccupation was not reciprocity as in Aix and Los Angeles but "gaining". Again this was predicting the behaviors. So in these four places we were

able to predict behaviors from responses to questionnaires which were different in the North from those in the South.

These results merited to be published. My mistake was at the time... I was exhausted. It was just after May 1968 in France and we were reforming the university and I had meetings all the time... So I published in French with the agreement of the colleagues, I think in "Psychologie Francaise". Anyway, with Kelley, after, we tried to publish in the US but it was refused because it was already published and therefore not anymore original. I remember Kelley had my article at hand and said "The Americans will never know this".

So, you see, we consider very often that experiments are a good picture of what happens in reality in terms of conflicts. However, the results of the questionnaire which in fact were a social representational issue brought a societal dimension to the experimental work. And Americans, like Kelley, believed that it would be good that other Americans were made aware of this. So you see there was a difference between American social psychology and European. We had these differences, not conflicts etc.

The old generation of Americans spoke French, not necessarily to speak but at least to read technical documents, because before in order to have a PhD in the States one should spoke a foreign language and it was mainly French and sometimes German. So most of them spoke and read French. So, it happened that I asked why you do not read papers in French. People like Kelley and Thibault replied that they did not have the time. They had to read all American papers in psychology so when in the next APA conference they met a young colleague they could say that they had read this person's paper. As they were describing it, this was a social necessity more than a scientific one. And they did not read the British papers because they did not meet with the British. So it was not a question of language. It was a question of time. This is, at least, what they said and, if somebody like Kelley explained how it worked in the US one should trust that he knows what he was talking about.

As far as I am concerned the difference that I find with American social psychology... You know Moscovici and his work. He worked on social representations and also on minority influence. Minority influence is a social psychology that was likeable in the US and Moscovici was many times invited there. Social Representations had zero impact in the North American continent. Perhaps Moscovici could have made an effort to present things differently... The fact is that North American colleagues are formed in Personality and Social Psychology which is different with what was done in Europe. May be this has changed in the last 10-15 years that I had not the opportunity to go to the U, but I don't think so.

XC: Well there are some Americans now that are interested in Social Representations but of course this is not a...

CF: It is not mainstream anyway.

XC: You, however, you work on social representations but you have also worked on intergroup relations. You collaborated with Tajfel notably in the case of the famous matrices...

CF: Well, you see, I am a social psychologist, I am not personality and I also do mathematics. I am not only social psychologist. You know the Ecole des Hautes Etudes en Sciences Sociales in Paris, where Moscovici had his laboratory. I have been director of studies in EHESS and my field was "studies of social psychology and mathematics". Sometimes, in France, my old doctoral students when they were candidates for a job a colleague defending them mentioned that this person did his thesis with me; those who were against them would question whether I was really a psychologist... I do not have the reputation to be a "normal" psychologist, because I did a lot of mathematics.

For what concerns the matrices, in 1968 we discussed with Tajfel in the plane coming back from San Francisco. What I am saying now was published in the "*Cahiers Internationaux de Psychologie Sociale*". Sometime ago, Canadian colleagues called me to ask me details about that. I have found a letter of Tajfel in my papers and I had faxed it to them (no internet at the time). So they published the letter at the beginning of their paper on the use of Tajfel's matrices, in French. I am not at the origins of these matrices but I worked a lot on them. The idea is that each matrice tests two variables at the same time. How he tested each variable? It was by crossing the different results. For the point of view of logic it is a routine. Tajfel was perfectly able to do it himself but we have talked, he had asked me and I had told him what I thought. It is anecdotic. Indeed, these are things that interest me. But the fact that I am a co-author of the paper Tajfel, Bundy, Flament... is because Tajfel imposed it. I did not know. He did not ask me. So you see I was a little bit external to this path of research but I was interested. And of course I am quite proud to be associated, even without knowing, to this publication that is so important. But I do not have much merit.

As far as I am concerned, the last years I have been really specialized in the domain of social representations. I did this certainly because... this is personal; when I was a student psychology was part of philosophy... I think that what interested me, what I wanted to do was "Social Philosophy". Of course it does not mean much... It was the young student who was interested in this... What interested me was sociology, psychology... And if I became a psychologist and not a sociologist or a philosopher it was because the university system at the time, this idea comes back now, had a first general year, a preparatory year if you see what I mean. We were so bored, it was horrible and without any interest. And several of us where asking where I can study without this foundation year. And in Paris was this Institute of Psychology at rue Serpente, it is now at Boulogne-Billancourt...

XC: I know this place, I did my PhD there

CF: Well, I had an office there for 5-6 years. In this institute anyone could be enrolled without exams. It was this old idea of Pieron wanting to form professional psychologists to go on the ground. So I became a psychologist because I could enroll without exams. And I found in social psychology a place of interest for the social. If the structure of studies in France was different I could have been a sociologist. So I am interested in everything societal. And in my research for 30 years now social representations are the privileged domain. I don't think that this was by chance. I knew the work of Moscovici... But I found two young researchers in Aix that did their thesis on social representations, one is Abric who was an assistant in Aix and did his thesis with Moscovici and the other is Kaes, a clinician, psychoanalyst who did clinical social psychology but who was responsible for the Institute of Work in Strasbourg.

The institute of work was a university structure that existed in France we had one in Aix and there was another in Paris, I don't know whether it still exists, for the education of union leading cadres. We were some of us that intervene in these structures, we also distributed questionnaires etc. We respected the ideology of the unions, we did not mix the unions, the program was organized with the agreement of those responsible for the unions, but it was a university structure for the formation of workers that wanted to be union leaders. In this place the main word was "social". Continuously in the discussions or the questionnaires, these people were interested by the syndicalism. So there was this young colleague in Strasbourg who worked in these structures and had collected quite a lot of material on the representation of French workers about culture. He did his PhD thesis on that and then he came as an assistant here in my lab. I had two assistants that worked on social representations. Thus, this created a climate that had duration. So my involvement with social representations was a little bit by chance.

That's why intergroup relations, with the exception of this collaboration with Tajfel, were not in the centre of my interest; mainly because of these circumstances. On the contrary, Willem Doise did his thesis on that. I think it is a little bit the circumstances that lead us to follow one path of research or another. The position that Doise occupied in Geneva, Piaget had asked me to present myself as a candidate in 1970. I did not want to go in the North, it is cold, and there is fog, no sun... Doise in this job he did some work that he said he could not avoid doing. You know the work developed with Perret-Clermont; what happens when a child of a certain age passes Piaget's test to a younger child and he found "social" again. I knew very well Geneva. I have taught there for 6 months. Piaget was omnipresent and he was "heavy"... Doise had to work in this context. To be able to collaborate with others he developed a line of research that now is developed by Perret-Clermont. Each of us can have circumstances and when we specialize in one domain it is often by chance. So for me, my specialization is social representations without of course ignoring what happens outside my area.

The work done in parallel in Los Angeles, Aix and Belgium I talked about earlier, was a way to explain quite directly, not completely, but quite directly the behaviors of the subjects in the prisoners' dilemma from their representations of

the situation. If I had published it directly in English at the time it might have had a greater impact in the US. But it happened like that. They would have met something that resembles social representations and which interfered with the classic prisoners' dilemma which was extremely inter-individual and not at all societal. For me this is the visible part of the difference between North American and European or South American, for that matter, social psychology. The US was not open to that. This is why the question was asked whether the European Association had a reason, whether the European social psychology was different...

As I said, the European Association was founded with the money and the initiative of American colleagues; this was very clear at the beginning. I don't know whether European social psychology benefited but there is a clear difference between some of us, Europeans, and the Americans. Personally, I prefer social representations to personality and social psychology. I was only a student when the important journal was the *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology*. From what I understood from Kelley it was compulsory to do personality if one wanted to do social psychology in the American system. It was evident that those things matched. This is marking them still. I can see this through social representations that I know better.

*XC: and in the book you recently wrote with Rouquette, *Anatomie des idées Ordinaires (Anatomy of Ordinary ideas)*, unfortunately I was not able to get it before coming, are you talking about all this?*

CF: In fact I am not so happy about this book. I have insisted that Rouquette was the first author because he is the one who did the most in this book. He asked me to do some chapters we discussed and in the introduction written by Rouquette I think that either of us is in total contradiction with what the other says. I suppose we are only a little bit in contradiction! The part about the hierarchy of ideological structures is Michel-Louis that wrote it. It is a way to look at the issue. I don't disagree totally. Serge Moscovici is trying for many years now to convince me to write a book. It is a lot of work... I might do it one day. Anyway, I am not sure I would have presented things like that. By doing a hierarchy of ideology etc Social representations become quite individualistic in its functioning and I think that he did not integrate completely the social aspect of social representations.

There are several directions one could possibly take. There is Saadi Lalhoul who came to visit us last year with a perspective of social constructionism; but this way of treating the problem was also disappointing for me, it was too individualistic in my point of view. When I talk about social representations I have the tendency to forget the individual. It is not what exists in common. Of course there are common things. It is a little bit what it was attempted to address with cognitive polyphasia. What I am trying at the moment to work at is the internal structure of representations with facets that are eventually contradictory. It is a way to come back to Herbert Mead and the Me as the intersection of the different groups one belongs to. It is not the intersection that interests me. It is the functioning, the

process. So in a certain way, the outcome of these processes, the individual aspect does not interest me really.

Since we are always sectarian, for me social representations are the “normal” domain of social psychology. In abstract, the experiments that we are doing are indeed cultural with also contradictory aspects. For example, if we ask now in France people what they think of Muslims there are discourses in favor and discourses against. Both aspects are present but people will not say both at the same time. So I believe that most of the studies on social representations are missing something. Why there is a negative prejudice against North Africans, one can give a multitude of reasons. Why we forbid ourselves from expressing it at least completely? It is around problems like this that we see, to embrace Rouquette’s terminology, the play of ideologies. This is what I am trying to develop at the moment and we will see if something comes out. But I think that studying this will enable us to see how social representations are structured within society.

XC: Are you studying this contradiction, the fact that we refrain from saying these things together with the technique of substitution?

CF: Among other things. We have several techniques. And when we do fine-grained studies with different techniques, we have quite a few results now, we can see in the natural responses of the subjects some traces of their ideological position. It is very delicate. We need to know what we are looking for. It doesn’t come like that. We are covering individual differences within a social framework.

XC: A general criticism of social representations is expressed through the question “how many people I need to interrogate to know that I am in front of a social representation?” However there is variation in social representations.

CF: Of course; if I take three people, if there are in discordance I cannot say much but if they are in agreement, I am in presence of something. Of course for the studies it depends. If you are doing an experiment, so you compare conditions, 20 people may be enough for each condition. If you are doing one study this is not enough because of this multiplicity of orientations, of different components. It is a legitimate question that students have because it makes the job much heavier!

XC: to come back to this idea of method that often divides social psychologists. You have done experiments. Have you worked with Correspondence Analysis that some people say that is quite descriptive?

CF: I did not work personally with Correspondence Analysis because simply did not happen but I did a lot of factor analysis. Let’s say that I have a way of thinking, of course it depends of the problem... my education was fundamentally experimental. I also did a thesis on the mathematical study of questionnaires so I know surveys as well. Sometimes the problem imposes the method and for example it could be meaningless to do an experiment. But I find myself most of the

times with situations that can be treated experimentally. For example I can pass the same questionnaire to a population of North Africans and one researcher is visibly North African whereas the other is not. These are invoked and non provoked variables. For me this is also an experimental study. We do a lot of experiments by questionnaire and make subjects think. It is a long time that I haven't work in a laboratory. It is not a problem for me. The research I was telling you I did with Thibault and Kelley on the prisoners' dilemma where we introduced social representations is for me an experimental approach.

XC: Well, these are the sort of things I wanted to discuss with you. We talked a lot about social psychology, what it was, what you think of it. A last thing I wanted to ask. How you feel about the discipline today? What is its future? What you see the future of the Association?

CF: For the Association I cannot say much because I have not been to the meetings the last 15 years. I can see that there are quite a few affiliate members and it is possible that some Americans are in the meetings. I don't know whether this changes the atmosphere... I don't know where the association stands now. The fact that "experimental" was taken out is not an issue for me. My impression is that European social psychology on the whole is differentiated from American social psychology. We do not need to try to be different in a general sense. What our American colleagues do is often very interesting. However, these societal aspects are neglected and they are not sufficiently developed. Maybe we are too much Americanized.

XC: Do you mean that these aspects are not developed in Europe as well?

CF: Not as much as I would like.

XC: Is it a problem of people, or of theory or even of methods?

CF: It is perhaps an issue related to our education. I don't know what happens in Europe in general or even in France but one thing is true: social psychology is taught by psychologists whose sociological education is very thin. So it is quite normal that they do a psychology at an individual level. If you take a few people you believe it is social...

XC: As a discipline can you see a theoretical future, an applied future or it would reproduce itself?

CF: Applied I don't know. There is certainly research that could have applied outcomes. There was a time that social psychology was associated with Occupational psychology. It is a different approach than personality. I don't know the future perspective perhaps because the last years I am not going to meetings etc. I miss information to express an informed opinion about the future.

XC: Well, I have asked all the questions I had in mind and I would like to thank you very much for spending this time with me and for all the things I learned about the association and social psychology and I am sure that others will find this conversation interesting.

Aix en Provence, November 2009