SOCIAL CHANGE
AND
SOCIAL REPRESENTATION.

Yohan Bhatti

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ABSTRACT

The theory of social representations, originally formulated by Moscovici, is critically examined. It is argued that earlier critiques have not fully appreciated the complexity of the issues involved in Moscovici's attempt to explain social phenomena in terms of psychological mechanisms. These complex issues are the relationship between the individual and the social, and the implications of this relationship for the logic of social scientific enquiry. It is argued that Moscovici's formulation does not constitute a departure from the normative functionalist theories of Durkheim and Parsons, and is similarly over-reliant upon the internalisation of normative values to explain the relationship between the individual and the social. This normative emphasis implies consensus, and inevitably results both in an inadequate account of agency, and an inadequate approach to the observation of social phenomena. These problems are particularly apparent when dealing with issues relating to social change.

Giddens' structuration theory provides a more sophisticated analysis of the structuring of social action, and a fuller appreciation of the issues concerned. Giddens' work acknowledges the inherently contextual nature of social scientific enquiry, and provides a means to assess more recent attempts to develop the notion of social representation. It is seen that the inherently normative character of social representation, and also that of social psychological theories of identity, appear to preclude any possibility of relating social phenomena to psychological mechanisms, at least in terms of these approaches.

A consideration of the issues of nationalism and national identification demonstrates the relative weakness of social psychological contributions to an understanding of these phenomena, in comparison to approaches from other areas of social science. This is because the inherently dynamic and political aspects of social action in general are more readily apparent when considering nationalism and national identification, aspects which theories based upon normative consensus have difficulty accommodating.
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INTRODUCTION

The theory of social representations, originally formulated by Moscovici, attempts to explain social phenomena in terms of psychological mechanisms. However, this apparently straightforward objective implicates issues of formidable depth and complexity. In this thesis the very notion of social representation is critically evaluated through an appreciation of these complex issues, namely the relationship between the individual and the social, and the implications of this relationship for the logic of social scientific enquiry.

The thesis begins with an examination of an initial series of critical exchanges that influenced the development of Moscovici's theory. It is argued that Moscovici does not deal effectively with these critiques, and that attempts to refine his formulation are replete with contradiction and inconsistency. While these initial critiques are of an undoubtedly high calibre, there is a failure to identify the source of confusion as the relationship between the individual and the social and the implications for social scientific enquiry, and consequently a failure to appreciate the complexity of the issues involved.

Analysis of the initial critical exchanges continues in chapter two. It is seen that Moscovici's formulation does not constitute a departure from the normative functionalist theories of Durkheim and Parsons. This forces a reconsideration of the distinctiveness of Moscovici's contribution. The fundamental failing is the attempt to explain the relationship between the individual and the social through the internalisation of normative values. Such a formulation fails to provide an adequate account of agency. The normative emphasis inevitably implies a notion of consensus and consequent difficulty in dealing with variation in the interpretation of normative values. A further consequence is a unitary conception of social phenomena and a corresponding notion of essentially unproblematic observation. These problems are highlighted when attempting to explain issues of social change.
The next chapter focusses upon the work of Giddens. The critical debate that Giddens' work has generated is helpful when considering the relationship between the individual and the social and the logic of social scientific enquiry. The significance of Giddens' formulation is to transcend the dualisms of action and structure by providing a sophisticated analysis of the issues involved. This involves acknowledging the strengths and shortcomings of both action-oriented and structure-oriented approaches, and integrating these concerns through a notion of the duality of structure. A major conclusion of Giddens' theory of structuration is an acknowledgment of the inherently contextual nature of social scientific enquiry. Giddens' does not attempt to provide a unified programme of research; this is not feasible given the issues concerned. Instead, Giddens' insights are best used to appreciate clearly the nature of the issues involved in the formulation and interpretation of social scientific work.

The sophisticated understanding gained from Giddens' work provides a strong basis for assessing more recent attempts to develop the notion of social representation, and the attempt to explain social phenomena in terms of psychological mechanisms more generally. This is the focus of chapter four. It is seen that a failure to appreciate the implications of their inherently normative formulations similarly afflicts social psychological theories of identity as well as social representations. Normative consensus is assumed as a fundamental pre-requisite for social interaction, yet is then treated as empirically independent. The failure to appreciate this circularity limits attempts to theorise the social context and also ensures the continued production of apparently confirmatory empirical research. Consequently, it must be acknowledged that theoretical refinement is not forthcoming through the accumulation of empirical data.

Chapter five considers the issues of nationalism and national identification. This allows comparison of contributions from other areas of the social sciences, and also draws attention to the inherently political nature of social identification and social action more generally. On the basis of this comparison, social psychological approaches do not appear to provide substantial contributions to the analyses of these phenomena. These limitations are further illustrated in the findings of a empirical study.
considering these phenomena from a social psychological perspective, to be found in the Appendix.

It is concluded that attempts to explain social phenomena in terms of psychological mechanisms, at least in terms of social representation or social identity, are not viable.
CHAPTER ONE

SOCIAL REPRESENTATION THEORY - INITIAL CRITICAL EXCHANGES

Introduction.

Social Representation Theory (SRT) is accepted as a major theoretical perspective in social psychology. The theory has developed from work originally carried out by Serge Moscovici in France during the 1960's and 70's, though it was only in the early 1980's that Moscovici's ideas were first presented in the English language. It was in the collection edited by Farr and Moscovici titled "Social Representations" in 1984 that Moscovici gave the first comprehensive account of his theory. Since that time SRT has generated much empirical work and has been the subject of much critical analysis and debate.

It is difficult to provide a simple definition of social representations. Moscovici himself has argued that is necessary to retain a "ill-defined, intuitive" formulation in order to capture the complex, many faceted nature of the phenomena (Moscovici, 1984b, p.957). Nevertheless the description below gives at least an initial idea:

"Social representation (are) a set of concepts and explanations originating in daily life in the course of inter-individual communications. They are equivalent, in our society, of the myths and belief systems in traditional societies; they might even be said to be the contemporary version of common sense." (1981, p. 181).

Due to the large literature generated by SRT, much use is made of secondary sources in understanding the fundamental aspects of the theory. Indeed, Wagner has argued that "(n)owadays there is no need to introduce the very basic notions of the approach." (1996, p.95). Particularly following the publication of the Farr and Moscovici volume,
the theory provoked a number of critical evaluations of an exceptionally high calibre that were extremely influential in the shaping the development of SRT. In order to appreciate the many complex arguments implicated in the concept of social representation it is useful to trace the development of the theory through these early debates. This provides the necessary foundation for a critical appreciation and evaluation of SRT.

With this in mind, this chapter will present a detailed review of these initial critical exchanges. Beginning with Moscovici's chapter in the Farr and Moscovici edited volume as an introduction, a total of six critical papers covering the period 1984 to 1988, will be discussed in detail along with Moscovici's responses. These papers were chosen both for the strength of the critical arguments presented and for the response they each provoked from Moscovici. As mentioned, the first paper discussed is Moscovici's comprehensive introduction to the theory, "The phenomenon of social representations" (1984a). This is followed by Harré's paper, "Some reflections on the concept of 'social representation' " (1984), and Moscovici's response to Harré, "The myth of the lonely paradigm: a rejoinder" (1984b). The next exchange involves Potter and Litton's, "Some problems underlying the theory of social representations" (1985), and Semin's, "The 'phenomenon of social representation': a comment on Potter and Litton" (1985), followed by Moscovici's brief response. Parker's, "Social representations: social psychology's (mis)use of sociology" (1987), McKinlay and Potter's, "Social representations: a conceptual critique" (1987) and Moscovici's response, "Answers and questions" (1987) comprise the next exchange. The final critical exchange involves Jahoda's, "Critical notes and reflections on 'social representations' " (1988), and Moscovici's lengthy response, "Notes toward a description of social representations" (1988). Each of the papers that comprise this final exchange are presented in detail, as Jahoda's skilful critique is challenged by what amounts to an attempt to reformulate the notion of social representations in the face of its initial critical reception.

It will be seen that from its initial presentation (Moscovici, 1984a), the theory is subject to detailed analysis. However, it will be seen that the arguments by Potter and
Litton and Semin are particularly damaging. After this, it is only in his response to Jahoda (1988) that Moscovici attempts to provide a comprehensive reformulation to refute these initial arguments. With this in mind, much use is made of direct quotation particularly in Moscovici’s initial presentation (1984a) and in his reformulation (1988). This is necessary to capture the many aspects of Moscovici’s discussion and is absolutely essential for later critical commentary. It is also necessary to point out that Moscovici often uses the shortened “representation” interchangeably with “social representation”. When paraphrasing, the term that Moscovici used in that particular instance will be used.

The phenomenon of social representations; S. Moscovici (1984a)

Moscovici explains that social representations are “specific phenomena which are related to a particular mode of understanding and communicating - a mode which creates both reality and common sense.” (Moscovici, 1984a, p. 17). Social representations are specific ways of communicating and understanding what we already know: “They occupy, in effect, a curious position, somewhere between concepts, which have as their goal abstracting meaning from the world, and introducing order into it, and percepts, which reproduce the world in a meaningful way.” (1984a, p. 17). They have two facets, iconic and symbolic “which are as interdependent as the two faces on a sheet of paper.” (1984a, p. 17). In this way every image is equated with an idea and vice versa; different mental mechanisms are activated in each instance.

Social representations constitute the social environment as ideas and unquestioned realities, though they have a dynamic nature, “What is most striking to the contemporary observer is their mobile and circulating character; in short, their plasticity. We see them, more, as dynamic structures, operating on an assembly of
relations and of behaviours which appear, and disappear, together with those of the representations." (Moscovici, 1984a, p. 18).

Due to the rapid pace of current society, particularly the continual output of the mass media, there is not enough time for new ideas to become sedimented. Thus, it is necessary to link purely abstract sciences with our concrete activities, "In other words, there is a continual need to re-constitute 'common sense'." (1984a, p.19). In this way it is argued that social collectivities could not function if social representations were not formed; the theoretical and ideological are transformed into shared realities which constitute a separate category of phenomena. Social representations embody ideas in collective experiences and in behavioural interactions, "once the content is diffused and has become accepted, it constitutes an integral part of ourselves, of our intercourse with others, of our way of judging them, and of interacting with them; it even defines our place in the social hierarchy, and our values. If the word 'neurosis' were to disappear, and to be replaced by the word 'disorder', such an event would have consequences far beyond its mere significance in a sentence, or in psychiatry. It is our inter-relations, and our collective thought, which are involved and transformed." (Moscovici, 1984a, p.11).

Thus social representations respond to our need for a certain coherence. As Moscovici explains, "the theory of social representations...takes as its point of departure the diversity of individuals, attitudes and phenomena...Its aim is to discover how individuals and groups can construct a stable, predictable world out of such diversity." (1984a, p.44).

Conventionalising and prescriptive aspects.

Moscovici acknowledges that there an element of both autonomy and constraint in every environment. Thus, "representations have precisely two roles" (p.7) : they
conventionalise the world and they are prescriptive. With regard to their conventionalising role, Moscovici explains

“Nobody’s mind is free from the effects of prior conditioning which is imposed by his representations, language and culture....We can see only that which underlying conventions allow us to see, and we remain unaware of these conventions.... [However,] We may, with an effort, become aware of the conventional aspect of reality, and thus evade some of the constraints which it imposes on our perceptions and thoughts.” (1984a, p.8).

Representations are prescriptive in that “they impose themselves with upon us with an irresistible force. This force is a combination of a structure which is present even before we have begun to think, an of a tradition that decrees what we should think.” (1984a, p.9, emphases in original.) Thus, Moscovici explains, a representation is not “directly related” to our manner of thinking, but what we think depends on such representations (p.10).

All interaction presupposes representations and all information received is under the control of representations. Social representations are important for understanding social change as it is through representations that the behaviour of individuals is influenced. “Such representations, thus, appear to us almost as material objects, insofar as they are the product of our actions and communications.” (1984a, p.12). By being shared by all, they constitute a social reality “sui generis” (p.13). The less we are aware of them, the greater their influence. Representatives of science, cultures and religion create and transmit representations: “Once created, however, they lead a life of their own, circulate, merge, attract and repel each other, and give birth to new representations while old ones die out.” (1984a, p.13).

However, Moscovici also stresses the active involvement of individuals through his notion of the “thinking society”: “individuals and groups, far from being passive receptors, think for themselves, produce and ceaselessly communicate their own specific representations and solutions to the questions they set themselves. In the
streets, in cafes, offices, hospitals, laboratories, etc., people analyze, comment, concoct spontaneous, unofficial, ‘philosophies’ which have a decisive impact on their social relations, their choices, the way they bring up their children, plan ahead and so forth. Events, sciences and ideologies, simply provide them with ‘food for thought’.” (1984a, p.16).

The rise of scientific thought is seen as a consequence of the rapid pace of change in modern societies. Moscovici argues that until this century there was a common language for science and common sense. Now, however, there is no obvious relation between the “non-verbal” language of science, mathematics and logic, and the language of everyday experience. Language is in decline due to the power of science, and though it has lost its relation to theory, “it maintains its relation to representations, which is all that it has left.” (1984a, p.18). The language of representation is located halfway between the language of logic which is concerned with abstract symbols, and the language of observation which deals with pure facts. Thus, Moscovici states, science used to make common sense less common, now common sense is science made common (p.29).

**Consensual and reified universes.**

Moscovici argues that in primitive societies, there was a distinction between sacred and profane forms of knowledge and activity. The sacred was kept apart from purposeful activity, reserved for ritual, whereas the profane was used in a more utilitarian fashion. All knowledge presupposed a division of reality based on these “separate, opposed worlds.” (1984a, p.20). In modern societies, the sacred and profane have been replaced by a more basic distinction between consensual and reified universes, categories that are unique to our culture, and whose boundary splits both collective and physical reality in two (p.22).
Consensual

Moscovici explains that "In the consensual universe, society is a visible, continuous creation, permeated with meaning and purpose, possessing a human voice, in accord with human existence and both acting and reacting like a human being. In other words, man here is the measure of all things." (1984a, p.20). Thus each individual has an equal right to express their opinions and to speak in the name of the group an under its aegis. Through linguistic conventions, a "whole complex" of ambiguities and conventions are maintained which enable an implicit stock of images and ideas to be shared. Social representations are phenomena of the consensual universe, "the specific nature of such representations expresses the specific nature of the consensual universe of which they are the product and to which they pertain exclusively." (1984a, p.23).

The consensual universe is a sanctuary against "friction or strife". Beliefs and interpretations are confirmed and corroborated rather than contradicted. The dynamic of relationships is based on familiarisation; phenomena are perceived and understood in relation to previous experiences or paradigms, "As a result, memory prevails over deduction, the past over the present, response over stimuli, and images over 'reality'.....Before seeing or hearing a person we have already judged him; classified him and created an image of him. So all the enquiries we make and our efforts to obtain information only serve to confirm this image." (1984a, p 26-7).

Reified

By contrast, the reified universe is a system of different roles and classes where members are not equal. The degree of participation in the reified universe is dependent on competence judged according to established rules and regulations. "We are bound by that which binds the organisation and which corresponds to a sort of general acceptance and not to any reciprocal understanding, to a sequence of prescriptions and not to a sequence of agreements." (1984a, p.22). The mode of knowledge in the reified universe is science; the objective is to produce impartial information about phenomena outside our awareness. This information is independent of values and desires, and we must react toward it impartially and submissively.
Moscovici states that social representations should be seen as an 'environment' in relation to the individual or the group. In this way, the purpose of all representations is "to make something unfamiliar, or unfamiliarity itself, familiar." (1984a, p. 24, emphases in original). Thus Moscovici makes a sharp distinction between social representations and science, "science is successfully occupied in demolishing most of our current perceptions and opinions...In other words, its object is to make the familiar unfamiliar." (1984a, p. 23, emphases in original).

The tension between the unfamiliar and the familiar is always resolved in favour of the familiar in the consensual universe. Thus Moscovici states that in social thinking, "the conclusion has priority over the premise" and in social relations "the verdict has priority over the trial." (1984a, p. 27). In contrast science moves from premise to conclusion; due process has priority over the verdict.

Moscovici notes that the greatest psychic distress is caused through tension between the reified and the consensual. Moscovici argues that ideologies facilitate the transmission from one universe to another, especially from the consensual to the reified. Moscovici explains that every ideology involves two elements: content derived from below and a scientific aura from above. The task is to link the form of thought of individuals and the social content of those thoughts. It is worth noting that when describing his study on psychoanalysis, Moscovici states that the flow is from the reified to the consensual, involving a shift from one cognitive level to another. This suggests that transmission is not simply a one-way process. Moscovici's comments regarding ideologies will be discussed in more detail later.
Processes.

Anchoring

Social representations involve two mechanisms, Anchoring and Objectification, both based on "memory and foregone conclusions" (1984a, p.29). Moscovici explains that anchoring strives to reduce strange ideas to ordinary categories and images, and so set them in a familiar context. Moscovici explains that there is no thought or perception without anchor. Social representations are a system of categorisation, though this categorisation or classification (Moscovici uses both terms) is not neutral; through it we reveal our particular theories and confine it to a set of behaviours and rules. "To categorise something amounts to choosing a paradigm from those stored in memory and establishing a positive or a negative relation with it." (1984a, p.31).

Moscovici claims that our responses toward something depend on whether we "generalise" or "particularise". When we generalise we select a feature at random and use it as the criterion for inclusion to a category; the feature becomes "co-extensive" with members of the category. Moscovici gives the examples of "Jew", "mental patient", "play", and "aggressive nation". In contrast, particularising involves considering the object as a divergence from the prototype, while also attempting to detect the feature, motivation or attitude that makes it distinct. Moscovici explains how the choice between the two is made: "The tendency to classify either by generalisation or particularisation is not, by any means, a purely intellectual choice but reflects a given attitude toward the object, a desire to view it as normal or aberrant." (1984a, p.33).

According to Moscovici, when we classify the unfamiliar, we need to define it as conforming to, or diverging from, the norm, thus every classification "presupposes a position or point of view based on consensus." (1984a, p.37). Moscovici maintains that although it is impossible to classify without simultaneously naming, these are distinct activities. Naming an object places it within the "identity matrix" of our culture; thus " those who speak and those who are spoken of are forced into an identity matrix which they have not chosen and over which they have no control."
In this way, what was unidentified is given a social identity, so for example a scientific concept becomes part of common speech. Pre-existing representations are modified, and objects about to be represented are modified even more, and so acquire a new existence.

Objectification

Objectification strives to turn something abstract into something “almost concrete”, to transfer something that is in the mind to something that exists in the physical world, a process Moscovici describes as far more active than anchoring and involves two stages. As Moscovici explains, “To objectify is to discover the iconic quality of an imprecise idea or being, to reproduce a concept in an image”. (1984a, p.38). A “figurative nucleus” is a “complex of images that visibly reproduces a complex of ideas.” (1984a, p.38). Society selects those concepts to which it concedes figurative powers, according to its beliefs and to the pre-existing stock of images. That is why, Moscovici explains, the libido remains abstract even though it is a major component of psychoanalytic theory; unlike the conscious and unconscious, the popular image of which is one on top of the other, the libido cannot be so easily accommodated. Once a figurative nucleus has been adopted it facilitates communication concerning the concept.

The second stage occurs when the image is wholly assimilated, where what is perceived replaces what is conceived. Once popularised, the “figurative paradigm” may be detached from its “original milieu” and achieve a certain independence. “Thus, when the image linked to a word or idea becomes detached and is let loose in a society it is accepted as reality.” (1984a, p.39). Eventually the distinction between the image and reality is “obliterated”; the image is no longer a sign and becomes a replica of reality. Thus the original notion or entity “loses its abstract and arbitrary character and acquires an almost physical, independent existence.” (1984a, p.40). In this way, those who use it see it as a natural phenomenon. Thus images become elements of reality rather than elements of thought. In this way Moscovici argues, a representation can
detach from a groups' subjectivity, from its interactions and therefore from time; it gains permanence and stability.

**Comparison with other theories.**

Moscovici acknowledges that the notion of collective representations has been present in sociology, particularly in the work of Durkheim. Moscovici explains that he adopts the terms "social" representation in preference to "collective" representation to distinguish his dynamic, fluid concept from Durkheim's more static conception. Moscovici argues that for sociology collective representations have been seen as explanatory devices, essentially irreducible. In contrast, it is the job of social psychology to examine the structure and dynamics of representations. Also, Moscovici states that Durkheim's "collective representations" referred to a whole range of intellectual forms, "any notion of idea, emotion of belief was included" (1984a, p.17); whereas by the term social representation, Moscovici argues, refers to a specific phenomenon.

Moscovici also notes similarities between his theory and ethnomethodology, in that they both attempt to expose social norms and conventions, and acknowledge that reality is composed of generally shared rules and conventions. However, Moscovici argues that these social regularities cannot be understood independently, but require an understanding of the theories on which they are based. Moscovici explains that construction flows mainly from the reified to the consensual, everything else is subordinated. Conversations shape and are shaped by social representations; it is through social representations that they achieve a life of their own.

Similarly Moscovici criticises social psychology for maintaining an "overly scientific" perspective, in which thinking is dealt with simply in terms of information processing. Moscovici argues that we are seen to react to stimuli in an environment that is taken as given. However, as Moscovici has explained, the social environment is not given, but
depends on classification. Our reactions are related to common definitions. In this way social representations can be seen to define reality. Where reality is concerned "representations are all that we have"; we never receive information undistorted by representations (1984a, p.5).

Observation.

Moscovici argues that it is best to observe social representations during periods of social upheaval. During these times, there occur "revolutions of common sense" where taken for granted understandings may be more visible. Representations can be seen as independent variables in that they determine the character of a stimulus and its response, however they still require explanation. As described earlier, pre-established images determine our choice and restrict our range of reactions; we react to the category not the stimulus. The specific aspect an object assumes depends on the responses associated with it before defining it. Moscovici states that in laboratory settings it can be proved that representations shape behaviour. Representations whether inherited or fabricated ourselves, can change our attitudes.

Moscovici argues that naturalistic observation is preferable in the study of social representations. That is not to say that Moscovici denies the importance of experimental studies; however, "; only a careful description of social representations, of their structure and their evolution in various fields, will enable us to understand them and that a valid explanation can only be derived from a comparative study of such descriptions." (1984a, p.68).

Moscovici explains that it is necessary to examine the symbolic aspect of our relationships and the consensual universes we inhabit. "By saying that representations are social we are mainly saying that they are symbolic and possess as many perceptual as so-called cognitive elements. And that is why we consider their content to be so important and why we refuse to distinguish them from psychological mechanisms as
such... After all, how we think is not distinct from what we think. Thus we cannot make a clear distinction between the regularities in representations and those in the processes that create them.” (1984a, p.66-7).

It is necessary to convey that social representations are historical phenomena. Social psychological processes express a groups' collective norm and internal links. They are firstly social and public processes that gradually become interiorised to psychic processes. Their study would constitute a science of consensual universes in evolution (1984a, p.69).

Some reflections on the concept of “social representation”; R. Harré (1984)

Harré (1984) argues that despite Moscovici’s arguments to the contrary, Social Representations do not constitute a truly “social” approach. Harré believes that Social Representations research deals with aggregated individual responses rather than group-level phenomena and thus represents a version of individualism. Harré’s arguments mark a first appearance for a concern repeatedly expressed in critiques of SRT, for a more precise explanation of the relationship between the content and mechanisms of social representations.

Harré contrasts two approaches to group-level phenomena. The first is ‘collective’, where the importance of association is stressed. Collective groups are characterised by real, structured relations between members, such as the employees of a company. Here attributes may be ascribed to the group as if to a supra-individual entity, even though the attribute may not be a feature of any particular individual. Harré associates this type of approach with the collective groups of Durkheim. The second approach to group-level phenomena is “distributive”, where the influence of “the social” is restricted to its influence on individual actors. Here, attributes are seen to be distributed amongst group members. Harré argues that the distributive sense of group
is “in the last analysis a version of individualism” (1984, p. 931). This type of approach Harré associates with the “taxonomic” groups of Tajfel, where groups are brought together at the “behest of the psychologist....ideal entities whose reality is conceived extensionally as sets of similar individuals” (1984, p. 931). Harré argues that a collective sense of groups emphasises how social relations are displayed and maintained whereas a distributive sense explains phenomena in terms of individual attributes or needs.

Harré argues that a distributive sense of groups is inadequate as truly collective aspects of social phenomena are emergent properties and thus cannot be explained simply in terms of the attributes of individuals. To illustrate, Harré considers the attributes of weight and organisation of an army unit. It is possible to treat the combined weight of the unit in a distributive manner as the contribution each member makes to the whole is easily observable. However, this is not the case with a truly collective attribute such as the group’s organisation. Here the attribute is a property of the collective and cannot simply be partialled out amongst group members.

Harré further illustrates his point by considering a notion of scientific rationality. By adopting a distributive sense of groups, scientific rationality would be explicable in terms of attributes shared by individual scientists, such as their superior logic. However by adopting a collective sense of groups, scientific rationality would be seen as a social process not attributable to individual members but ascribed to the totality. Attention may then be directed toward understanding how the social conventions differ between scientists and other groupings with respect to the phenomena.

Harré argues that social representations research involves groups in only a distributive sense and thus are not fully social. The social representation is actually an aggregate of explicitly elicited individual versions distributed throughout a group. This, claims Harré, fails to capture the truly collective aspects of social phenomena. If representations were to be treated as truly collective phenomena they would not rely on the aggregation of explicit, individual versions. The representation may be implicit in the actions of group members and embodied in social practices which may
reproduce states of affairs that appear to embody the theory. There may not be an explicit version available to be elicited from individuals. For example, Harré argues that previous research has demonstrated that the process of nick-naming "defines and serves to promulgate locally valid standards of appearance and behaviour" (1984, p.935). This aspect is not explicitly intended by participants and therefore would not be identified by aggregating individual responses.

However, Harré does not propose that analysis be restricted to collective groups, though for taxonomic groups it is necessary to consider how public practices are linked to social representations. To do this Harré defines the collective aspects of a practice as its 'cognitive content' which may be determined by its effect. However, this cognitive content is a collective phenomenon and so cannot simply be distributed amongst individuals. The cognitive content is actually a feature of the belief systems of the investigators, though it may be ascribed to the collectivity as though to a supra-individual as a 'useful fiction'. This is useful for explanatory purposes to relate the effects of a practice to a group.

However, this cognitive content cannot simply be related to individuals. Harré argues that this is unlike the cognitive content ascribed to a collective group such as a team, where it is clear how members beliefs are connected. It is possible to relate a collective sense of representation to a group as though to a supra-individual. However it would not be legitimate to assume that such a representation is distributable and thus simply relatable to the mental processes of individual group members. Harré concludes that Social Representations are distributive rather than collective phenomena and thus represent a form of individualism similar to that found in the work of Tajfel.
The myth of the lonely paradigm: a rejoinder; S. Moscovici (1984b)

In his response to Harré, Moscovici takes the opportunity to provide a detailed description of SRT before explicitly engaging with Harré's arguments. This is perhaps understandable as the theory was still new to the English language social psychological literature. However, Moscovici does not provide a detailed examination of Harré's arguments. Moscovici appears to treat Harré's concerns about the feasibility of relating collective aspects of social phenomena to individual mental processes as primarily a methodological issue.

Moscovici defends his use of taxonomic groups by arguing that "such aggregates exist and indicate a certain state of association and interaction amongst individuals" (1984b, p.958). Dissemination of representations is epidemic, unlike in more homogenous, traditional societies where there was less differentiation and an individual could speak for a group. Moscovici states that there is a practical reason for using taxonomic groups, because the social representations studied have been social objects about which people have strong feelings. The study of taxonomic groups allows a more "objective stance" to be taken by not being concerned solely with a single structured group's own representation (1984b, p.958). Moscovici points out that it is also possible to study the Social Representations of structured groups through the content analysis of their publications. Moscovici also argues that the villages that Jodolet (1983) observed constituted a structured group; thus Jodolet's study of representations of mental illness in farming communities dealt only with structured groups (Moscovici, 1984b, p.960-1).

Moscovici argues that in his study of psychoanalysis, it was necessary to consider collective groups as well as distributive or taxonomic groups. To acknowledge how science is disseminated, it is necessary to understand the interiorisation process whereby for example, the concepts of psychoanalysis have "become part of everyone's mind" (Moscovici, 1984b, p.960). Moscovici argues that it is necessary to understand the change in attitudes.
There is a flaw in Harré's argument that facilitates Moscovici claim that the issue is primarily a methodological concern. This is the distinction between collective and distributive groups. In his discussion, Harré states that the cognitive content of a practice may be ascribed to a group as a useful fiction; for a collective group it is clear how members beliefs are related to the cognitive content, whereas for a distributive group it is not clear how members beliefs are connected. By considering Jodolet's groups as structured, or collective, Moscovici is able to preserve the notion that the 'cognitive content' of practices was unproblematically related to the internal, mental mechanisms of the villagers. Thus the issue has become one to do with the identification of groups. Harré's argument that there are aspects of social phenomena that cannot easily be related to the internal, mental mechanisms of individuals may now be considered to be a methodological issue. This is because Harré himself argues that in principle social phenomena can be related to the mental mechanisms of individuals.

However, there is an interpretative act on the part of the investigator when dealing with the collective group in the same way as that involved when ascribing a "useful fiction" to a group whether collective or distributive. This issue is part of a wider discussion relating to the observation of social phenomena which will be discussed more fully later. For the moment it is enough to note that this notion of the collective group (incorrectly) maintains the idea that it is possible, at least in some circumstances, to relate the collective aspects of social phenomena to internal mechanisms.

Nevertheless, Moscovici does acknowledge the necessity of elaborating more clearly the mechanisms involved in the interiorisation process. It is in response to Harré's arguments that Moscovici first defends the lack of precision in the formulation of Social Representations by arguing that they are "all embracing and ill-defined, and are best grasped intuitively" (Moscovici, 1984b, p.957). Moscovici makes similar entreaties throughout the Social Representation literature.

Of more interest is an apparent shift by Moscovici concerning the relationship between the content and mechanisms of Social Representations. In his chapter in the Farr and Moscovici volume, Moscovici states, "We consider their content and refuse to
distinguish them from psychological mechanisms...after all how we think is not distinct from what we think. Thus we cannot make a clear distinction between the regularities in representations and those in the processes that locate them.” (Moscovici, 1984a, p.66-7).

However, in a section that appears earlier in the paper than the explicit consideration of Harré’s arguments, Moscovici describes social representations thus, “Its predominant interest is in the contents of the “mind.” These contents make up the raw material of our thoughts and communications...It is only by taking a specific content in all its wealth of nuances as our starting point that we can hope to derive general principles or mechanisms” (Moscovici, 1984b, p.946, emphases in original).

This shift in emphasis is significant particularly in the context of subsequent amendments by Moscovici in the course of these initial critical exchanges. For the moment it appears that Moscovici acknowledges the need for conceptual elaboration in the face of Harré’s critique. However, he is not unduly concerned; the ill-defined nature of social representations is only seen to be a temporary situation. Theoretical precision is considered to be forthcoming, an outcome of the accumulation of descriptive accounts from which general mechanisms will be derived.


Potter and Litton’s paper of 1985 is extremely important to an understanding of the evolution of SRT. The main thrust of Potter and Litton’s critique rests on the issue of consensus, or sharedness of social representations. They draw on a number of empirical studies of social representations to question the assumption of a common representation within a group. They contend that the intra-group similarity and inter-
group variation found in these studies may be an artefact of analytic procedures. They also argue that it is necessary to reconcile the context-specific nature of representations implied in the individuals' potential for transformation, with the notion of a common representation.

Potter and Litton argue that in studies it is assumed that shared representations are necessary to establish group identity. However it is not clear that respondents actually identify with the analytic, group categories used by researchers. So, for example, in Hewstone et al.'s study (1982) it is not clear whether respondents are thinking of themselves in terms of the analytic categories “private schoolboy” or “comprehensive schoolboy” to which they are ascribed, when they are producing their responses. The more important, general point is that it should not be assumed that they are. Respondents could be thinking in terms of a grouping that cuts across that of the researcher, such as academically-oriented, or sports-oriented, perhaps. If this were to be the case, then it would not be expected that there would be a common representation within the category identified by the researcher as salient. It has to be clear that respondents identify with analytic, group categories.

Potter and Litton point out that no attempt is made to investigate broader social divisions that may be relevant with regard to the representation. It is simply assumed that members of particular categories as defined by the researcher will hold a common representation. Potter and Litton correctly advise that satisfying one index of membership need not determine an individual’s position on other indices. They argue that in the studies of Hewstone et al. (1982), Herzlich (1973) and Di Giacomo (1980), no attempt was made to investigate intra-group differences. Furthermore, reported intra-group similarity may be an artefact of analytic procedures. Individual responses were simply aggregated within groups with no attempt made to examine the distribution of aspects of the common representation.

This leads onto a more fundamental issue concerning the identification of social representations. Potter and Litton's argument that the observers' analytic categories are unproblematically applied is relevant not only to the assumption of consensus
across groups as already described, but more basically to the categorisation of responses from a single subject. Potter and Litton complain that researchers attempt to report "the" social representation of a particular group. However, this is at odds with contextual variation implied in the potential for individual transformation of Social Representations, a point at times stressed by Moscovici. With the potential for so much variability, it is not clear why a social representation should be assumed to be shared, nor what that sharedness would constitute.

Potter and Litton provide empirical support for this concern through a detailed analysis of a number of research interviews (collected in the aftermath of a civil disturbance, in the St. Paul’s area of Bristol.) Potter and Litton argue that respondents can alter the meaning of particular words in the course of an interview and are quite capable of reporting a point of view that they may not necessarily hold. Potter and Litton make a distinction between the ‘Use’ of a particular category by respondents when they act on the world, and ‘Mention’ where they simply report a point of view. They also point out that a distinction may be made between ‘Use in general’, where respondents may report a general view that they hold, and ‘Use in practice’ which corresponds to a particular situation.

The general point to be made is that individuals may be creative in their use of language. To assume that the meaning of words elicited from respondents corresponds to the meanings attributed by researchers is problematic. This is not just because researchers may simply fail to grasp the implications of a particular word, but because respondents themselves may alter the meanings of words as they use them. Potter and Litton speculate that this may not appear concerning if Social Representation are taken to be enduring group attributes, as is the case in the studies mentioned. They trace the problem to an unproblematic, neutral view of language whereby discourse is taken to correspond to some hypothetical internal state. Potter and Litton point out that the use of language is much more fluid and contingent. They argue that empirical studies of Social Representations cannot accommodate this context specificity. Thus, it is not legitimate to claim to report "the" social representation held by a particular individual or group.
Potter and Litton maintain that the identification of social representations is not unproblematic. It is not clear that the social representations identified by researchers correspond to the representations "held" by individuals and therefore any connection with internal mechanisms is compromised. Potter and Litton relate this problem to a fundamental flaw in the conceptualisation of social representations. They argue that context specificity is at times stressed by Moscovici, such as when talking of the transformation that individuals make to Social Representations, yet at other times is dismissed, such as when talking of "consensual universes". No means is provided for reconciling these two opposing concerns.

Potter and Litton conclude by stating that to study the transformative capabilities of individuals, it is better to dispense with the notion of social representation altogether and study "linguistic repertoires". A linguistic repertoire is a recurrently used system of terms. Research would be oriented toward the use of different linguistic repertoires in functionally different situations. These regular features could then be related to individuals' understanding of a situation. For Potter and Litton, the concept of linguistic repertoires offers a number of advantages over that of social representations. Potter and Litton argue that by restricting analysis to identifiable features of discourse rather than involving hypothetical internal mechanisms, it is possible to both analyse data without presupposing the nature of groups or the relationship between groups, and to draw a clear distinction between a linguistic repertoire and its uses. Potter and Litton maintain that this is necessary to account for context specificity: there is not necessarily an identity between social representation and social categorisation.

*The 'phenomenon of social representation': a comment on Potter and Litton; G. Semin (1985)*

Semin (1985) is broadly in agreement with Potter and Litton regarding the deficiencies in the conceptualisation of social representations. Semin argues that the major
problem is the assumption of consensus or sharedness: although Moscovici may wish
to shift the level of analysis from the individual to the social, the processes he outlines,
anchoring and objectification, are not consistent with that aim. Semin states that there
is no "conceptual armoury" to link the "contents of society" to social psychological
mechanisms (1985, p.93). This is a similar point to that made by Harré, that social
representations do not provide a means for relating the collective aspects of social
phenomena to internal mechanisms. Semin states that what is required is a
"..conceptualization of joint symbolic interaction, namely the co-ordination of social
action through reference to pre-established symbolic media and the dialectic that is
involved in their reproduction and transformation." (Semin, 1985, p.93).

Simply stated, Semin is arguing that social representations do not adequately
conceptualise the relationship between the individual (through the co-ordination of
social action) and social phenomena. Semin further states that this is because the
conceptual elaboration required to shift analysis to the collective is such a major
undertaking.

However, Semin argues that Potter and Litton's linguistic repertoires do not represent
an advance in terms of explicating the dynamic relationship between the individual and
the social. Semin concludes that increased indexicality does not provide a solution;
there is a need for conceptual elaboration, not simply descriptive elaboration.
Linguistic repertoires do not provide a means for understanding the dynamics of
collective beliefs.

Semin argues that the processes of social representation are conceived in terms of
information processing. Thus, though they appear ambiguous with respect to the level
at which they may be interpreted, social representations simply represent another
version of methodological individualism whereby "collective" phenomena are actually
aggregated individual phenomena. This is due to the failure to link convincingly the
contents and mechanisms of social representation. Semin concludes that social
representations do not constitute a departure, either empirically or conceptually from
mainstream social psychology.
Moscovici’s response to these criticisms is distinctive in the context of these debates in that it is by far the most brief, taking up only two pages. It is clear that some degree of reformulation will be necessary to deal with the criticisms levelled at social representations. Moscovici acknowledges the notion of levels of consensus via the figurative nucleus of a representation, though again provides little in the way of theoretical precision. However, of more interest are a number of revisions that Moscovici makes. These are made with little acknowledgement of their relation to statements Moscovici had previously made. Nevertheless they are of great importance to an understanding of the evolution of social representations. The first concerns the relationship between images and language, the second the relationship between contents and processes.

Moscovici again defends the vagueness of his formulation by arguing that the alternative would be the “unrelated, lonely paradigms” that characterise social psychology. He berates Potter and Litton for being overly concerned with control and replication, reiterating his expectation of clarity and precision as an outcome. In response to Potter and Litton’s notion of linguistic repertoires Moscovici distinguishes between the figurative and abstract aspects of Social Representations. Moscovici stresses the importance of figurative aspects arguing that “sometimes images are thought of as reality” (1985, p.91). Moscovici then suggests that each representation consists of a number of levels, at the centre of which is the figurative nucleus which consists of an image and some information. Moscovici further stresses the importance of figurative aspects by arguing that this nucleus can breed new meanings. Thus consensus is dynamic and holistic, and “there is not a precise consensus at each level.” (Moscovici, 1985, p.92).

Moscovici argues that Potter and Litton’s proposal to restrict analysis to discourse is unacceptable as “all that is image does not pass into language” (Moscovici, 1985, p.92) . This is slightly at odds with an earlier assertion concerning social representation, that “They have two facets, iconic and symbolic....In this way every
image is equated with an idea and vice versa.” (Moscovici, 1984a, p.17). This is not a direct contradiction, as equating an image with an idea does not imply an identity between image and idea. In fact to argue that, would be to collapse any distinction between iconic and symbolic aspects. However now Moscovici moves from a position where image and idea were unproblematically related to one where it is now necessary to provide more detail of the relationship, for example how adequately language captures the image with regard to a particular Social Representation. In effect, there are another set of processes to explain.

A more significant revision is that concerning the relationship between contents and processes. This amounts to outright contradiction. Consider the progression in Moscovici’s account of this relationship as he describes social representations:

“*We consider their content and refuse to distinguish them from psychological mechanisms....*After all, how we think is not distinct from what we think. Thus we cannot make a clear distinction between the regularities in representations and those in the processes that locate them.” (Moscovici, 1984a, p.66-7, my emphases.)

“*Its predominant interest is in the contents of the “mind”. These contents make up the raw material of our thoughts and communications....*It is only by taking a specific content in all its wealth of nuances as our starting point that we can hope to derive general principles or mechanisms” (Moscovici, 1984b, p.946, emphases in original).

“...*the content of thinking and talking matters less than the formal aspects of thought and language.*” (Moscovici, 1985, p.91. My emphases.)

This contradiction is explicable given the contexts in which the statements were made. As described earlier, Harré questioned the feasibility of explaining the collective aspects of social phenomena in terms of individual psychological mechanisms. However, Moscovici wished to maintain that the dissemination of representations could be understood through the interiorisation process; indeed if this were not the case then Social Representation would appear to have little to offer. However, it was
clear that Moscovici had no resources available for improving his explanation of the process. Thus he claimed that the predominant interest is in the contents of the mind. Moscovici proposed that explication of the processes, the formal elements, would be forthcoming through the accumulation of descriptive accounts, or the contents of social representations (Moscovici, 1984b, p.946)¹. This amounts to an admission that his earlier position (Moscovici, 1984a, p.66-7) at the very least required modification, though no acknowledgement is made of this, or of the implications of this modification for Moscovici's explanation of processes.

Having then claimed that theoretical precision would be achieved through the accumulation of contents, Potter and Litton's critique emphasising the problematic nature of accumulating contents must have appeared particularly unwelcome. From an initial claim that content and processes could not be separated, social representations were shown by Harré to require more explanation of processes. This was acknowledged and further refinement of processes was expected through the accumulation of contents. However, Potter and Litton now show through their critique of consensus that further explanation of contents is also required. This is extremely problematic. In its first real exposure to critical debate, Moscovici theoretical claims regarding both the contents and the processes of social representation have each separately been shown to be inadequate.

Moscovici responds by directly contradicting his earlier statement (Moscovici, 1984b, p.946). Potter and Litton had questioned the contents of social representation, so Moscovici claimed that contents are of less importance than formal elements. In the same way, when Harré had earlier questioned the formal elements of social representation, Moscovici had claimed that the predominant interests were in contents.

¹ This may also have been the basis for Moscovici's assertion that social representations were best grasped intuitively. Moscovici may have been guarding against an over-hasty rejection of social representations on the basis of their ill-defined nature, by arguing that theoretical precision would be achieved via the accumulation of contents. (Moscovici claimed that a general theory required an accumulation of facts, and that all the sciences that had followed this procedure had progressed. (1984b, p.955).
However, by claiming in his response to Potter and Litton that contents were less important than formal elements, Moscovici implies that explanations of the formal elements are adequate. This, together with an acceptance of theoretical vagueness means that there are effectively no means for assessing the adequacy of theoretical formulations, as Potter and Litton rightly point out in a final rejoinder.

As Semin states Moscovici lacks the conceptual apparatus to link the contents and processes of Social Representation. The problem of assuming consensus is a direct consequence of this and is not dealt with. Attention may have been deflected by Moscovici attacking the concept of linguistic repertoires. Nevertheless, Moscovici’s reassertion of figurative aspects and his claim that consensus is dynamic and holistic, must both be seen as an interim measures. More precise formulations of both the contents and the processes of social representation are still necessary.

'Social representations': social psychology’s (mis)use of sociology; I. Parker (1987)

Parker (1987) is in general agreement with Potter and Litton (1985) and Semin (1985). Parker argues that the central confusion in the conceptualisation of social representations concerns the role of the individual. SRT seeks to elaborate the "individual side of research” as a complement to the “social, ‘symbolic’ side.” (Parker, 1987, p.449). However, Parker contends that Moscovici’s (1985) emphasis on the formal aspects of thought and language rather than contents (described earlier) serves to endorse a reductionism, whereby the symbolic realm is reduced to individual processes. Parker continues that SRT does not challenge the positivism and individualism present in mainstream social psychology. As such, Parker concludes that SRT is destined to become another “lonely paradigm” (1987, p.464).
Parker points out similarities in the works of both Durkheim and Weber to Moscovici’s conceptualisation of social representations. Although it is Durkheim’s work that is more generally associated with the social representations literature, this is in role of foil, to demonstrate the distinctiveness and superiority of social representations. For example, Durkheimian collective representations are seen to imply an aggregating, external force whereas individual transformation is seen as an important aspect of Social Representations. Parker argues that although Durkheim has loomed progressively larger in the Social Representations literature, Weber’s emphasis on subjective meaning is also highly relevant to social representations.

Parker contrasts the relationship between the individual and society as theorised by Durkheim and Weber. For Durkheim modern society represents an “organic solidarity” comprising different roles and categories. As society becomes more differentiated, there is more scope for individual variation and therefore freedom. Weber described modern society in terms of “reification”, whereby human behaviour became more “mechanised” as bureaucratisation increased, as “the social world became less transparent, less open to undistorted communication.” (Parker, 1987, p.456). Whereas for Durkheim the situation is seen as positive, leading to the promotion of the individual, for Weber it is seen as negative, leading to the impoverishment of the individual.

Moscovici’s corresponding treatment of the relation between the individual and society is described in his distinction between the consensual and the reified realms, which Parker argues plays a crucial role in SRT. Both Durkheim’s and Weber’s positions described above, correspond to Moscovici’s reified realm, though Moscovici appears to show more agreement with Weber. For Moscovici, the perils of reification can be resisted through the consensual universe: “we always strike a blow against ‘reification’ when we converse.” (Parker, 1987, p.456). However, the role of the individual implicit in this, is one of autonomy, acting against the “social”, separate from society.

Parker argues that the thrust of SRT, particularly the reified / consensual distinction, separates the outer world from the inner world of the individual. When a person draws
upon a social representation, they depart from the consensus and give an idiosyncratic
twist to the public, shared knowledge. And it is the cognitive process of re-
presentation that makes social representations possible. Individual representations are
projected into the "Weberian", autonomous individual. Thus, Parker argues, the
subject in SRT is understood as an object operating (social) cognitions.

It is this notion that internal representations have a social nature that allows SRT to be
conceived in terms of individual information processing and thus incorporated into a
social cognition framework. Parker refers to this as a conceptual "sleight of hand"
whereby rather than emphasising the social world, the focus is on the individual
(Parker, 1987, p.461). As Harré argued, collective, shared phenomena are assumed to
be distributed amongst individuals. In effect, the symbolic level is seen as a simple
addition to cognitive processes.

Thus even though SRT claims to embrace both the social, symbolic level and the
individual cognitive level, Parker argues that one is forced to choose between the two
levels of explanation. Thus Parker distinguishes between "strong" and "weak" forms
of SRT. The strong form is presented by Moscovici in his "lengthy manifesto" and his
defence against Harré (Moscovici, 1984a, 1984b). Parker argues that here, "thinking
is public and the emphasis is on versions of theories present in discourse which
circulate, merge and transform each other regardless of individual action." The weak
form emphasises individual processes. Parker argues that here, social representations
"slide from what Harré (1984) terms the 'collective plurality' of social knowledge to a
'distributive plurality'": the representation is to be found in the head of the individual
(Parker, 1987, p.462). This makes the representation amenable to individualistic
methods.

Parker also notes the implications of the acknowledgement by Moscovici of levels of
consensus (Moscovici, 1985, p.92). Parker argues that the possibility of alternative
versions casts doubt upon the validity of the dominant account, and thus leads to the
notion of consensus eventually breaking down. However, researchers working in the
weak form of the theory are insulated from this consideration by their distributive
understanding of social phenomena, consensus is seen as a property of the individual representations. Thus, they are more likely to treat it as a primarily methodological problem. Parker argues that the notion of consensus will continue to be applied by "weak form" researchers, where it may have the consequence of ruling out different, contradictory explanations of reality.

Parker argues that research is more often conducted using the weak form of the theory. Parker also notes that this view is the one supported by Moscovici as seen in his then most recent statement emphasising "formal aspects" rather than "content" (Moscovici, 1985, p.91). Thus, rather than marking a radical departure from mainstream approaches in social psychology such as attribution theory, or intergroup relations, SRT can be integrated within them. Parker concludes that this is why the theory is set to become "yet another 'topic' in the discipline's "archipelago of lonely paradigms" (Moscovici, 1985, p.91)" (Parker, 1987, p.464).

Social representations: a conceptual critique; A. McKinlay and J. Potter (1987)

McKinlay and Potter (1987) provide a further, well-reasoned account of the ambiguities and contradictions involved in SRT. McKinlay and Potter's arguments derive from the apparently simple assertion from Moscovici that we can experience the world only through social representations (Moscovici, 1984a, p.36). McKinlay and Potter's arguments draw out important implications from this claim that show a number of aspects of SRT to be problematic. These include the distinction between scientific knowledge and social representations, the distinction between the reified and consensual realms, the perception of the unfamiliar, and the relationship between the prescriptive and dynamic aspects of social representations. McKinlay and Potter also argue that these conceptual confusions can lead to a cognitive reductionism and "the
institutionalisation of a research tradition which produces findings whose status cannot be properly assessed.” (1987, p.484).

McKinlay and Potter describe Moscovici’s various claims that social representations constitute reality, for example, “a representation constitutes a social reality *sui generis*” (Moscovici, 1984a, p.12). In explaining the importance of studying social representations, Moscovici claims that we experience the world only through social representations. McKinlay and Potter argue that Moscovici does not deny a world beyond social representations, but this world does not directly enter into social relations. McKinlay and Potter rightly point out that this reality can have no content since we have no means to access it other than through representations. Indeed there should be little reason to make reference to this extra-representational reality. However, this is repeatedly done, resulting in considerable confusion and contradiction.

Moscovici describes social representations at times as being both a veridical and an illusory experience (Moscovici, 1984a, p.38). However, if all experience is mediated through representations, it is not clear how to differentiate between the veridical and the illusory. McKinlay and Potter point out that on occasion Moscovici proposes science as a means to differentiate. Science is seen as the standard of correctness, as expressing pure facts. This though carries the implication that the correctness of social representations would reduce to whether or not it accurately reflected objective, scientific knowledge. McKinlay and Potter argue that the essence of social representations is a rejection of any notion that social life may be fully explained by reference to neutral, factual information; a rejection explicitly endorsed by Moscovici (1984a, p.4). In effect there are no means within the theory for ascertaining which social representations are “right”, or veridical, from those that are “wrong”, or illusory.

The claim that we can experience the world only through social representations also has important implications for the status of science. Moscovici himself has described science as a form of interaction, prey to the influence of history (Moscovici, 1984a,
p.28). However, if scientists must rely on social representations in the same way as anyone else, then science is not distinct from social representations. For the individual, whether layman or scientist, there are only social representations. The notion that science provides “pure facts” cannot be sustained. Thus the distinction between the reified and the consensual realms breaks down. This distinction is based upon the differentiation between knowledge based on social representations, the consensual realm, and knowledge based on non-social, objective knowledge, the reified realm. This must be seen as a direct implication of all experience being mediated through social representations.

McKinlay and Potter also examine implications relating to the processes of social representation. Anchoring involves unfamiliar objects being “anchored” to existing social representations. However, given that all thought and perception is based on social representations, McKinlay and Potter argue that this would rule out a cognitive or perceptual process. It is not clear how anchoring operates, if not by a process of pre-social perception. If recourse is made to cognitive processes, given that anchoring is an essential element of social life, Moscovici must explain more clearly why social cognitions cannot be understood solely in terms of non-social processes.

McKinlay and Potter sum up their arguments thus far: “if it is a necessary feature of Moscovici’s theory that some people (scientists) often experience the world independently of social representations, and most people sometimes experience the world independently of social representations (in taking hold of the unfamiliar), then why should social scientists accept Moscovici’s claim that talk of phenomena such as opinions and attitudes should be supplanted by talk of entities - social representations - which are in some way essentially social?” (McKinlay and Potter, 1987, p.482).

McKinlay and Potter argue that it is a consequence of these confusions regarding the processes of social representation, and the reified and consensual distinction, that these aspects, despite being central to SRT, rarely feature strongly in empirical research. Moscovici’s ideas are used selectively, a practice aided by Moscovici’s defence of vagueness as a virtue. McKinlay and Potter argue that there is a danger that this
conceptual confusion will lead to the institutionalisation of a research tradition whose findings cannot properly be assessed.

McKinlay and Potter conclude by pointing out a further confusion in SRT. At times Moscovici describes social representations as strongly prescriptive. For example Moscovici claims that social representations “impose themselves upon us with an irresistible force” in such a way that “nobody’s mind is free from the effects of the prior conditioning which is imposed by his representations.” (Moscovici, 1984a, p.10). However, Moscovici also claims that social representations are both changeable and open to individual influence. In the first claim, individuals are determined by their representations, there is no scope for individual influence; in the second they are full participants in the production of representations, yet there is no notion of prescription or constraint, the individual is free to produce whatever representations they wish. Moscovici does he provide any guidance for choosing between these two contrasting aspects of representation, nor any means for assessing the extent of each. Indeed, Moscovici doesn’t appear aware of the contradiction.

To conclude, McKinlay and Potter point out a number of conceptual confusions inherent in SRT. As a result of these, the status of social representations is uncertain. Also, the status of empirical findings based on a theory containing such fundamental contradictions is similarly uncertain.

Answers and questions; S. Moscovici. (1987)

Moscovici (1987) provides only the briefest considerations to the criticisms of Parker and McKinlay and Potter. Moscovici only refers to small aspects of each critique, preferring to provide further vague defences of SRT. In response to Parker, Moscovici states that he is flattered by the comparison with Weber. However,
Moscovici dismisses the main body of Parker’s arguments, that SRT does not represent an alternative to the dominant paradigm in social psychology, by simply stating that SRT is too metaphysical to be accepted as the dominant paradigm. He continues that if the individualistic mainstream were capable of accepting a more social framework they would have done so sooner with respect to dissonance theory. Moscovici also argues that the theory is not individualistic since all individual processes are bound up with the social; indeed, the notions of “individual” and “individualistic” are themselves social representations. Moscovici then goes on to describe different representations of the individual and to speculate on the historical periods that generated them.

However, Moscovici does state that social representations are collective phenomena with common features of no single individual. This indicates at least an awareness of charges of methodological individualism: Moscovici is arguing that social representations are not reducible to individual representations. However, he provides no adequate means for relating these “collective phenomena” to individual processes. Thus the thrust of Parker’s arguments, as to why SRT represents another form of methodological individualism, are ignored.

Similarly in the case of McKinlay and Potter, Moscovici describes their argument thus, “that we can dispense with social representations if we accept the existence of the “non-familiar.”” (Moscovici, 1987, p.519). The issue of the ‘unfamiliar’ is then dealt with by Moscovici describing the unfamiliar as something that is not entirely unknown, but as having only some unfamiliar feature. The refied / consensual distinction is defended on the grounds that it prevents social psychology being exclusively focused on interpersonal relations. (Moscovici, 1987, p. 520). The issue of prescription, or social constraint, is also hardly considered. Moscovici states that social representations are concerned with exchange rather than coercion, the latter being a feature of collective representations rather than social representations.

Moscovici does go on to describe a new means to distinguish social representations from science, that of “fiduciary” versus “legalistic” truth: “..social representations have
a *fiduciary truth* value which manifests our mutual trust in terms both of information content and of judgements. This type of truth is diametrically opposite to the *legalistic truth* of science, which keeps asking for proof and replications and which has more confidence in rules than in people." (Moscovici, 1987, p.518, emphases in original). Moscovici then goes on to speculate that this may be why social representations are more difficult to change, are biased toward verification and impervious to falsification. However Moscovici makes no attempt to respond to the conceptual confusion surrounding the assertion that all experience is mediated through social representations, the main thrust of McKinlay and Potter's argument.

Both Parker's and McKinlay and Potter's papers are well-argued and indicate severe problems in the formulation of SRT. However, while Parker notes the links between Moscovici and Weber, he fails to emphasise problems with the Durkheimian formulation that are shared by Moscovici. For example, Parker indicates Moscovici's desire for a more "Weberian" concern for social understanding. This is in opposition to Durkheim's more constraining notion of collective representations. However, Parker does not mention Moscovici's description of social representations as "imposing themselves with an irresistible force". This is certainly similar to Durkheim's notions, as pointed out by McKinlay and Potter. Also, Parker does not note the paradox in his presentation of Durkheim, whereby under conditions of organic solidarity there is more scope for individual expression, yet at the same time the individual must face the "entirely constraining" force of representations. In brief, Parker does not consider that Moscovici's presentation of Durkheim is inaccurate and mis-leading; and is an attempt to argue for the distinctiveness of social representations, that cannot be sustained.

Also, while Parker notes the important implications that an acceptance of levels of consensus entails, he does not relate this acceptance to Moscovici's reversal in his concern for form rather than contents. That the "dominant account" may be called into question, as noted by Parker, is extremely important. It raises the whole issue of how social representations may be said to be identified. Parker fails to state that the breakdown of consensus shows the issue of identification of representations to be a
fundamentally theoretical issue, not simply a methodological concern. Parker's apparent support for the claim that social representations can exist independently of individuals is a consequence of a failure to deal effectively with the issue. This issue concerns the logical status of social representations and will be examined in more detail later.

McKinlay and Potter also present their arguments well. Their pursuit of the implications of an apparently simple assertion, that all experience is mediated through social representations, is particularly well argued. However, while McKinlay and Potter note that aspects of SRT are used very selectively in empirical research, they do not link the conceptual confusions with the possibility of cognitive reductionism, as Parker does to great effect. Also, McKinlay and Potter do note the inconsistency between the prescriptive "irresistible force" and the emphasis on transformation. However, they do not recognise this issue, concerning the nature of social constraint, as central to any understanding of social representations influencing behaviour in any way. This may have been because the issue of social constraint is also unresolved in the discourse analytic approach favoured by McKinlay and Potter, thus they may have been less disposed to draw attention toward it.

Moscovici responses to the critiques of Parker and McKinlay and Potter cannot be seen as adequate. Moscovici only mentions brief aspects of each critique in isolation, yet still fails to provide a rigorous response. His introduction of another means of marking the distinctiveness of social representations, that of fiduciary and legalistic truth, is no less vague and speculative than his previous arguments. It appears that Moscovici has yet to provide the theoretical precision expected in previous papers. Moscovici's means of dealing with criticism, by either ignoring it or dealing with it in an extremely selective manner, has little to commend it theoretically. However, it is effective in buying Moscovici time to prepare a more rigorous formulation of SRT with which to answer criticisms.
Critical notes and reflections on ‘social representation’; G. Jahoda (1988)

Jahoda (1988) provides a comprehensive examination of SRT. Jahoda makes extensive use of direct quotation to identify internal inconsistencies and doubts concerning the logical status of social representations. Jahoda’s arguments offer another perspective on problems raised in some form in critiques already discussed, particularly those of Parker (1987) and McKinlay and Potter (1987).

The inconsistencies Jahoda identifies include the description of social representations as having both a restricted scope and being all-embracing, and as being prescriptive yet also emphasising the active role of individuals. The doubts concern the distinctiveness of social representations, both logically and through the failure to identify distinct processes. This is reflected in contradictions concerning the relationship of social representations to a number of phenomena, including ideology, culture and science; and the nature of both individual processes and empirical work. Jahoda concludes that SRT should either drop its many unsubstantiated claims and continue as a more generic label for a wide variety of social psychological work, or undergo intensive reformulation in an effort toward theoretical precision.

Prescriptive and transformative aspects.

Jahoda describes the contradiction apparent in the description of social representations as strongly prescriptive, while at other times emphasising the active involvement of individuals. Moscovici argues that social representations “impose themselves upon us with an irresistible force” (Moscovici, 1984a, p.9), yet also that “individuals, far from being passive receptors, think for themselves, produce and ceaselessly communicate their own specific representations...” (Moscovici, 1984a, p.16). Jahoda describes this as the problem of reflexivity, of how one is able to evade the “irresistible force”. Moscovici only acknowledgement of this problem is to simply state that “We may, with effort, become aware of some of the conventional aspects of reality, and thus evade some of
the constraints...” (Moscovici, 1984a, p.8). However, Moscovici does not elaborate on what this “effort” would entail. This leads Jahoda to argue that through this determination of individual thought Moscovici is, perhaps inadvertently, resurrecting a notion of “group mind” ². Indeed Moscovici does describe social representations as being autonomous, leading and active and independent existence, thus reinforcing the notion of an ‘irresistible force’. (Moscovici, 1984a, p.13).

Durkheim.

Jahoda identifies problems concerning the distinctions Moscovici draws between social representations and Durkheim’s collective representations. Moscovici argues that Durkheim’s notion was too global, embracing every kind of intellectual form, whereas social representations have a more restricted scope. Yet Moscovici also argues that social representations are all-embracing, for example: “every kind of cognition, to be communicable, must be converted into a social representation.” (Moscovici, 1983, p.7). Also, Moscovici complains that Durkheim treats representations as irreducible, explanatory devices whereas it is the job of the social psychologist to penetrate the structure and dynamics of social representations (Moscovici, 1984a, p.16). However, Jahoda points out that later in the same chapter Moscovici categorically states: “as far as social psychology is concerned, social representations are independent variables, explanatory stimuli” (Moscovici, 1984a, p.61. emphases in original). Jahoda does not go into detail about the implications of these apparent contradictions for SRT,

² Also, Jahoda argues “group mind” is present in the notion of the consensual realm: “In the consensual universe, society is a visible, continuous creation, permeated with meaning and purpose, possessing a human voice, in accord with human existence and both acting and reacting like a human being.” (Moscovici, 1984a, p.20). Jahoda argues that here, society is treated as a reification. Jahoda wishes to know how to identity the “voice of society”. Also, given that social representations are not uniform but vary across social groups, Jahoda asks what the relationship between social representations and this voice is (Jahoda, 1988, p.198).
preferring to simply describe them as the first of a series of problems concerning the logical status of social representations.

The distinctiveness of social representations.

Jahoda notes that the unwillingness of Moscovici to provide a formal definition of social representations is not, in itself, problematic. However, to examine the nature of social representations Jahoda considers the relationship of social representations to ideology and culture, which is problematic. When considering the influence of the media in his study of psychoanalysis, Moscovici describes three phases: the scientific phase, which refers to a new theory; the representational phase, which involves the diffusion throughout society and the creation of social representations; and the ideological phase wherein the representation is appropriated by some social group or institution and "is logically reconstructed so that a product created by the society as a whole, can be enforced in the name of science. Thus every ideology has two elements: a content, derived from below, and a form from above that gives common sense a scientific aura." (Moscovici, 1984a, p.58).

On the basis of this passage, Jahoda argues there appears to be an "extensive overlap" between the meanings of "social representation", "common sense" and "ideology"; and a distinction between them and "science".

This is in contrast to a passage earlier in the same chapter where Moscovici states: "At the same time we see more clearly the true nature of ideologies which is to facilitate the transition from the one world to the other, that is to cast consensual into reified categories and to subordinate the former to the latter. Hence, they have no specific structure and can be perceived either as representations, or as sciences" (Moscovici, 1984a, p.23).
Jahoda argues that in this passage there does not appear to be the sharp distinction between social representations and ideology on the one hand, and science on the other, as was evident in the previous passage.

It appears that Jahoda is arguing that when describing the relationship in the more abstract terms of the reified and the consensual, ideologies have a non-specific status; whereas when seeking to explain a specific case, such as psychoanalysis the distinction from science is emphasised. Jahoda points out that in a later paper (Moscovici’s response to Harré, 1984b), the transition of Marxism from social scientific theory to social representation is described, yet no mention is made of ideology. Jahoda argues that this is because Marxism could not be made to fit into the sequence of scientific to representational to ideological, i.e. that Marxism was not held by everyone and then appropriated by groups who called themselves Marxists.

Jahoda also notes that Moscovici treats culture as an active agent separate from social representations, such as when stating that our thinking is organised “both by our social representations and our culture.” (Moscovici, 1984a, p.8). Jahoda argues that culture cannot be distinct from social representations, as shared representations would appear to be a central aspect of culture. If they are distinct, Jahoda states that a more explicit analysis of the relationship between the two is required.

The distinctiveness of social representational processes.

Concepts and percepts
Moscovici describes social representations as occupying “..a curious position, somewhere between concepts... and percepts..” (Moscovici, 1984a, p.17). However, Jahoda argues, if concepts are likely to be based on folk theories taken over from the social environment, they are effectively social representations. Thus, the relationship with percepts is unexplained. Jahoda argues that in actual functioning, the heuristic
separation of concepts and percepts becomes blurred, thus all perceptual-cognitive functioning becomes equated with social representation. For example, while discussing anchoring, Moscovici points out that classification and category systems presuppose some theory (1984a, p.31). However, in the absence of a clear explanation of the relationship between concepts and percepts, this can lead to a position where anchoring is seen to be based on pre-theoretical perceptions which are then compared to social representations. It is not clear that percepts can be separated from concepts with regard to social objects.

**Iconic and symbolic aspects**

Jahoda also takes issue with Moscovici’s description of the symbolic and iconic aspects of social representations. When Moscovici argues that every image is equated with an idea and vice versa, he states: “Thus in our society, a “neurotic” is an idea associated with psychoanalysis, with Freud, with the Oedipus complex and, at the same time, we see the neurotic as an egocentric, pathological individual, whose parental conflicts have not yet been resolved. So on the one hand, the work evokes a science, even the name of the classical hero, and a concept and, on the other, it evokes a definite type, characterised by certain features, and a readily imagined biography.” (Moscovici, 1984a, p.17).

Jahoda questions this assumed co-presence between the iconic and symbolic. He argues that it would not be clear how this assumption would relate to abstract concepts such as democracy. Thus while one may associate a certain image with a particular aspect of democracy, it is unlikely that any image could cover all aspects. Thus Jahoda’s argues against the assumption of any discrete relationship between an image and an idea. This leads on to Jahodas complaint regarding the weakness of the hypothetical example, noting that it is quite simple to reverse the relationship between the two components; thus the clear image may be of Freud, and the neurotic may be seen as an abstract type. It is not clear which aspect will be represented in image or concept and each component may have particular connections to other images or concepts.
Jahoda reminds us that Moscovici claims there are distinct forms of mental functioning associated with social representations, as opposed to those involved in scientific theorising and logical reasoning. However, this statement is proposed without detailed justification. For example, reasoning by analogy, a fundamental aspect of the familiarisation process and therefore of social representations in general, is a pervasive feature of all thought, including scientific thought. There is no reason why it should constitute a distinct form of mental functioning when applied to social representations.

Also Jahoda notes, there is no reference by Moscovici to contemporary debates by philosophers and sociologists of science as to whether “scientific thought” could be considered distinct from other types of thought. Jahoda argues that the problem is that Moscovici makes sweeping statements about psychological processes without clearly considering the implications and without providing supporting evidence. In effect, Jahoda is agreeing with Semin (1985) that Moscovici may claim that he wishes to avoid a cognitive reductionism, yet his concepts are founded on cognitive processes. Jahoda draws a comparison between social representations and “folk models” in anthropology. He argues that discussion of “folk models” is carried out without any claims concerning distinctive psychological processes, and wonders whether such claims needs to be retained in SRT.

The unfamiliar and the familiar
Jahoda also takes issue with the nature of social representational processes. Jahoda questions Moscovici’s assertion that the unfamiliar is threatening and so is made familiar to reduce the threat. Jahoda suggests that the unfamiliar may be actively sought out, perhaps motivated out of curiosity or an attraction to novelty, or the unfamiliar may simply be ignored. Jahoda argues that the assumption of a motivational basis for the transformation of the “strange” into social representations is unsubstantiated; when Moscovici talks of “anchoring”, he essentially means naming and classification.
Jahoda also takes issue with Moscovici's claim that unlike the theories of predecessors such as Berger and Luckman (1976), SRT has been tested. Jahoda considers the notion of social representation as a means of making the unfamiliar familiar. Thus in Moscovici's study of psychoanalysis, it should be expected that those who know little about psychoanalysis will make the comparison with the presumably more familiar Catholic confession, and so render the unfamiliar familiar. However, Jahoda finds that of one consults the original source, it is those who are best informed about psychoanalysis who most frequently make the religious comparison. Indeed, Jahoda notes that the religious comparison is most often made by sophisticated writers on psychoanalysis. Thus the evidence does not provide support for Moscovici's claims.

Jahoda provides a further example concerning familiarisation. Moscovici (1984a, p.27), describes in Jodolet's study how the "mentally handicapped" people "continued to be seen as alien despite the fact that their presence had been accepted for many, many years." Thus Moscovici argues that the representations held by the villagers of the "mentally handicapped" derived from traditional views and notions; the tension between the familiar and the unfamiliar was settled, "as is always the case in the consensual universe, in favour of the familiar" (Moscovici, 1984a, p.27). As Jahoda points out, this could actually be understood as a contradiction of the familiarity thesis. Thus despite the long term familiarity of the "mentally handicapped", they continued to be seen as alien. If social representations continue to be based on traditional views and notions, it is unclear how familiarity is to proceed.
Reformulation

Jahoda argues that due to a general vagueness and lack of precision concerning concepts and processes, empirical studies have no distinctively social representational input. Thus Jahoda states that regarding the Farr and Moscovici volume, it is the covers of the book which hold the studies together rather than any theoretical orientation; had they been reported without mention of social representations, there would have been little discernible difference (Jahoda, 1998, p.204). Even studies formulated explicitly in terms of social representations provide little explanation for identifying their unit of analysis. Again, in Moscovici’s study of psychoanalysis, Jahoda notes that numerous individual interviews are reported and discussed in terms of social representations. However, no attempt is made to explain why the term social representation is applied; it is simple taken as axiomatic.

Jahoda concludes that reformulation of SRT is necessary, though specifies both “soft” and “hard” options. The soft option would be for the many unsubstantiated claims to be dropped and for social representations to be used heuristically as a generic label in social psychology, similar to the use of “developmental” in child psychology. To preserve a more distinctive conceptualisation would be the hard option, and would involve more explicit reformulation. Jahoda argues that the meaning of the term “social representation” requires more rigorous redefinition, to exclude some aspects and to determine its relationship to others, such as personal belief, science, religion, ideology and culture. With regard to processes, Jahoda argues that links with social cognition approaches should be formally recognised rather than attempting to circumscribe a distinctive domain. Finally, with regard to methodology, Jahoda warns against assuming that the genesis of social representations can be tracked, for example, simply on the basis of observing conversational social exchanges. Jahoda points out that conversations could not be observed extensively enough to account for influences from the structure of social relations between participants, such as age, power, prestige and culture.
Notes toward a description of social representations: S. Moscovici (1988)

There are a number of important aspects to both Jahoda's critique and Moscovici's response. Jahoda raises issues that have been identified in whole or in part in the earlier debates. These involve many aspects of social representations, including reconciling prescriptive and transformative aspects; relationships with science, ideology and culture; the nature of the processes, whether distinctive, and whether in fact constituting a form of individualism; and the non-distinctive nature of empirical research. However, Jahoda manages to bring together these many concerns in a single paper as well as providing his own particular perspective on these issues.

Of more significance perhaps is that Moscovici produces a detailed response to Jahoda. This would appear to indicate that Moscovici has had time to reflect on the various criticisms levelled at SRT, as presented earlier, and has had the opportunity to re-evaluate aspects of his theory. As a result, Moscovici's response to Jahoda may be described as an attempt to reformulate the notion of social representations. It is important to consider Moscovici's response, in the context of both his own work and the critical examinations discussed previously. Thus it would appear reasonable to expect at least initial steps toward theoretical precision and conceptual clarification. However, the failure to deal effectively with Jahoda's critique indicates that Moscovici has a less than comprehensive grasp of the relevant issues.

Detailed examination of Moscovici's attempt at reformulation is most easily achieved through extensive use of direct referencing; this allows for easy reference and enables further consideration of the more subtle implications of elaborations or amendments made by Moscovici.
Prescriptive and transformative aspects of social representation.

Jahoda notes Moscovici's failure to reconcile the "prescriptive" and "conventionalising" aspects of social representations. Moscovici acknowledges both aspects though affirms that the "guiding thread" in his research has been an interest in "change and creativity", or the conventionalising, transformative aspects (p.223). Moscovici continues that there is no contradiction in the tendency to maintain and the tendency to create new things. Moscovici argues that "the two terms of the opposition can only be understood in relation to each other" (Moscovici, 1988, p.223), and admonishes Jahoda for knowing better than to give "the impression that there is a simple solution to the tension between tradition and innovation" (p.225).

Thus it appears that Moscovici has dealt with Jahoda's argument. However, Jahoda's argument is not that social representations cannot possess each of the two aspects. On the contrary, Jahoda's argument is that Moscovici does not describe how one evades
the "irresistible force" of the prescriptive aspect. Jahoda refers to this as the issue of 'reflexivity'. This concern was also raised by McKinlay and Potter (1987); similarly they were concerned with assessing the extent, not the existence, of each aspect. Moscovici's response to McKinlay and Potter was to simply re-emphasise the transformative aspect, hardly an adequate explanation.

This issue of reflexivity concerns how aware one can be of both themselves and their conditions, and is of crucial importance when considering social representations. Its importance can perhaps be more readily appreciated by redescribing it more generically as involving the relationship between the "individual" and the "social", or the individual entity and the wider social reality, however conceived. This is an issue of fundamental concern within the social sciences. Theorisations of this relationship may briefly be described as ranging from the individual being entirely determined, as in more structurally-oriented approaches, to those where little attention is paid to social constraint such as in more action-oriented explanations (Giddens, 1992, p. 4).

The relevance of this concern to social representations is apparent in its claim to overcome the dichotomy of the individual and the social by explicating social phenomena, the "contents" of social representations (whether referring to thoughts or behaviours), in terms of individual mental processes. Concern for the treatment of the relationship between the individual and the social in SRT has been readily expressed in each of the critical examinations described earlier, though most notably perhaps in the papers of Harré (1984), Semin (1985) and Parker (1987), and in Moscovici's response to each.

Moscovici's detailed response to Jahoda indicates that Moscovici is presenting at least an initial attempt at providing an adequate "conceptual armoury", to borrow Semin's phrase. Thus despite Moscovici's attempt to deal with Jahoda's criticism in an offhand manner, it is necessary to investigate in more detail Moscovici's reformulation of social representations: Moscovici's treatment of the relationship between the individual and the social is accessible through discussion of the relationship between prescriptive and transformative aspects of social representations.
In his response to Jahoda, Moscovici not only explicitly acknowledges the importance of the "determinant aspect" of the content, but he recognises the tendency to neglect it as unacceptable: "In truth, the determinant aspect of the content tends to be disregarded in intellectual processes, though it deserves the greatest attention" (p.221). This is in contrast, for example, to the response to McKinlay and Potter (1987) in which Moscovici simply stated that the issue of "group coercion" was more a feature of Durkheim’s theory whereas he was more interested in "exchange" (Moscovici, 1987, p.516). While Moscovici does not acknowledge any contrast in this respect, through his acknowledgement of the comparative neglect of the "determinant aspect" it would appear that Moscovici now intends to explicitly address this issue.

Moscovici states that social representations should be thought of as: "a network of interacting concepts and images ....its social characteristics .. determined by the interactions between individuals and / or groups....By de-emphasizing each person’s distinctive features and internal details, we can bring out the social characteristics of the total operation, from both the intellectual and the emotional points of view. By analogy we could think of social representations as being produced by a collective decision committee. Its members cast their votes and can express a broad range of opinions. Each one knows how the others have voted so that he can change his mind, combine opinions. The final decision is the joint effort of the participants and expresses a sense of the meeting. There is no need to reach an explicit consensus or to submit to a rite; as long as the individual initiatives are in line with the social flow, nothing more is needed. Each individual proposition is thus tied in with the action of the group, which can give it a shape that is acceptable and comprehensible for all concerned. In these exchanges all representations are at the interface of two realities: psychic reality, in the connection it has with the realm of the imagination and feelings, and external reality which has its place in a collectivity and is subject to group rules...

"..(C)ertain generally accepted contents seem to keep the individual anchored in the collective element. Contents that are shared by a whole society lead each mind to draw its categories from them and these categories impose themselves on everyone....We rely on these contents in many cases, even at times when they have no
connection with the context in which the contents apply. From this viewpoint the content exerts a decisive pressure on our thinking and on the way we represent events and behaviours, because it makes us eliminate certain alternatives by branding them as implausible and uninformative. From our perspective, a representation always links a cognitive form with a content widely accepted by a group.” (Moscovici, 1988, p.220-221).

It appears that the prescriptive aspect of representations is explained in terms of a general acceptance and sharedness of collective contents. This is how the content exerts its “decisive pressure”, by effectively placing limits on the range of acceptable ways of thinking and behaving. This should not be thought of simply as coercive as these contents are “generally accepted”. However, Moscovici states that neither is it the case that ‘anything goes’. As Moscovici argues later in the paper, “There is nothing arbitrary in this process, since the regularities of thought, language and life in society all act together to delimit the possibilities.” (Moscovici, 1988, p.231).

From this it can be seen that Moscovici is also making an effort to deal with the issue of consensus. This was the issue emphasised by Potter and Litton (1985) and Semin (1985). Through the analogy with the collective decision committee, Moscovici emphasises the collective nature of representations. Allowance is made for a “broad range of opinions” which may be changed and combined, thus there is “no need to reach an explicit consensus”. However, it should be noted that it is through the notion of a general acceptance that a “range of opinions” is recognised; tolerable if “in line with the social flow”.

Moscovici explains that the opposition between collective and individual as “irrelevant” to social representations. Moscovici argues that the contrast between individual and social is less significant than that between various social relations. Moscovici explains that “(t)here are presumably three ways in which representations can become social, depending on the relations between group members.” (p.221). Thus social relations are the basis for a distinction that Moscovici draws between “hegemonic”, “emancipated” and “polemic” representations. Through this distinction,
Moscovici is able to categorise some of the different types of representations that have appeared in the social representations literature. Thus "hegemonic" representations correspond to Durkheimian collective representations, they are shared by all members of a highly structured group and seem uniform and coercive; the "emancipated" with the sense of representation perhaps most readily associated with social representations, emphasising exchange and transformation, such as the studies of mental illness carried out by Jodolet (1983) and Herzlich (1982); and the "polemic" with more actively contested representations, such as the social representation of Marxism in France. Moscovici claims that this differentiated view of social representations corresponds more closely to reality than the "uniform view" of collective representation.

Moscovici bases his claim that the opposition between the individual and the collective is irrelevant through the notion of general or widespread acceptance. Thus general acceptance is the means by which the individual is "anchored in the collective element". With regard to the relationship between the individual and the social, it must be noted that the individual appears somewhat subordinate to the group or collective, they are effectively bound by normative values of the group. This is expressed in a number of ways in the passage, with individual initiatives and propositions being "in line with the social flow" and "acceptable and comprehensible for all concerned", and with external reality being "subject to group rules". This deference to the group is also evident elsewhere in the paper, for example "a representation is constructive to the extent that it selects and relates persons, objects in such a way as to meet the stipulation of the group, enabling it to communicate and act in keeping with shared concepts and images." (p.230).

It should be remembered that Moscovici previously downplayed the opposition between the individual and collective when arguing for the importance of understanding the process of "interiorisation" of representations (1984b). Similarly, Moscovici has argued that social psychological processes express a groups’ collective norm and internal links; they are firstly social processes that gradually become interiorised to psychic processes (1984a).
In his response to Jahoda, Moscovici insists that social representations are at the interface of "psychic" and "external" realities. However, it should be noted from the passages presented earlier (Moscovici, 1988, p.220-1; p.231), that the discussion so far has involved the "de-emphasizing" of individual features and "internal details", in effect emphasising the "external reality". Even without critically assessing the arguments so far, it is still necessary for Moscovici to describe the interface between "psychic" and "external" realities, when individual features and "internal details" are emphasised. As Jahoda says, to simply say that thinking is derivative of social representations would be trivial (1988, p.197). However, more importantly, without the incorporation of the internal details, the "decisive pressure" would appear to be identical to that found in the Durkheimian formulation that Moscovici finds so unappealing.

To conclude, with regard to Jahoda's criticism regarding the issue of reflexivity, it may appear that Moscovici derogates the importance of the issue by treating it in an offhand manner. However, it can be seen that Moscovici does indeed recognise its importance and does address the issue. Moscovici denies both the need for an explicit consensus and the importance of the opposition between the individual and the social, with regard to social representations. This is explained in terms of the de-emphasising of the individual; the individual having accepted and internalised the normative values of the group or collectivity.

Durkheim.

This connects with another criticism Jahoda makes regarding Moscovici's criticism of Durkheim. Moscovici complains that for Durkheim collective representations cover a vast array of forms, yet as Jahoda points out, so do social representations. Moscovici does not explicitly respond to Jahoda on this point. However, Moscovici does re-state this criticism of Durkheim, and continues that for collective representations there is no effort to "spell out its cognitive characteristics in greater detail", thus "it is tantamount to concept of ideas" (Moscovici, 1988, p.218). This indicates the importance of the
explication of "internal details" or "cognitive characteristics", without them social representations are "tantamount" to a vague notion of collective belief.

The distinctiveness of social representations.

Jahoda examines the distinctiveness of social representations as phenomena through considering Moscovici's treatment of ideology, culture and science.

Ideology

Jahoda argues that sometimes ideology is seen as similar to social representations and dissimilar to science, and at other times it is seen as similar to both. Jahoda holds this as the reason why Moscovici discusses Marxism as a social representation rather than as an ideology: it cannot be made to fit into both frameworks, i.e. as being appropriated by particular groups from understandings generally held by "society", and as being appropriated by "society" from understandings generally held by particular groups. In response, Moscovici states that he could very easily have described Marxism as an ideology, but chose to describe it as a social representation as this was "more fruitful, [and] of greater scientific and even political interest" (1988, p.227). However, Moscovici does not comment on Jahoda's opposing frameworks, nor attempt to describe Marxism in terms of each.

Jahoda marks this inconsistency as the most significant aspect of Moscovici's treatments of ideology. However, Moscovici's description of stages, or phases in the relationship between ideology, social representations and science, is the more significant aspect. To recap, the ideological phase occurs after the representational phase and involves the appropriation of a shared representation by a particular group who then embellish the representation with a scientific aura, to make it more convincing. Moscovici's statement that ideology can be seen as representation or as science is not inconsistent with ideology actually being distinct from science, as Jahoda
claims. However, it is not clear that Marxism had a representational phase, involving it being shared throughout society, before being “appropriated” by Marxists. The sequence, science followed by representation followed by ideology, is not apparent. An ideology can be held by a small group and then more generally diffused, as will be more probable in the case of religious or political ideologies. In addition, any distinction between social representations and ideology is further called into question through Moscovici’s description of Marxism as a “polemic” social representation, as described earlier.

The general point to be made is that it is not apparent how an ideology may be distinguished from a representation. Moscovici himself declares that in the vast literature on ideology, it is exclusively treated as a system of representations (1988, p.227). It is ironic that in refuting Jahoda’s charge, Moscovici not only fails to differentiate between social representations and ideology, but actually reinforces the notion that the differentiation of social representations from ideology is not warranted.

**Culture**

Similarly, Moscovici does not answer Jahoda’s charge that culture may only be understood as representations, other than through a general insistence that social representations refer to specific phenomena. Moscovici does state that culture provides a framework for all thinking and behaviour (1988, p.232). However, it is not then clear how culture may be understood other than as representations. Indeed Moscovici states that he treated Marxism as a social representation, because it was better to treat it as “a part of the culture, or the ways of thinking and acting of a large number of people in their everyday life.” (Moscovici, 1988, p.227). These “ways of thinking and acting” must surely be thought of as implicating representations. This also links to McKinlay and Potter’s arguments: if all our experience is mediated through representations, culture must be thought of as representations. Thus, and in general support of Jahoda’s arguments, it is not apparent that social representations are distinct phenomena with regard to culture or ideology.
Science

A perhaps more significant distinction is drawn by Moscovici between social representations and science. Thus Moscovici states "that there is a sharp difference between scientific knowledge in the fields of physics, medicine, biology, economics and ordinary knowledge." (Moscovici, 1988, p.216). Jahoda argued that there was no evidence of distinct mental functioning separating social representations from science, and gave the example of analogic reasoning as pervasive to both. Moscovici does not explicitly acknowledge this criticism, though he does introduce a new means of marking the distinction. This is "the difficulty of visualizing the phenomena in question" (Moscovici, 1988, p.216). Thus Moscovici asks, "can we visualize the genetic code, black holes, the unconscious and monetary parity?"

It appears that Moscovici is attempting a similar strategy to the one he used against Potter and Litton's linguistic repertoires, that of stressing "iconic" aspects. Analogic reasoning may indeed be common to both science and social representations. However, by treating analogic reasoning as concerning only symbolic aspects, to stress differences relating to iconic aspects may have appeared an effective defence, hence the apparent importance of "visualising". The most obvious failing of Moscovici's argument is that analogic reasoning is relevant to iconic aspects also. Of course we may attempt to visualise the genetic code, black holes and the rest, most definitely, as Jahoda argues, through processes of analogic reasoning. In fact this notion that "images" are somehow distinct from "concepts" is one that Moscovici uses also when considering iconic and symbolic aspects of social representations. This is discussed in more detail below; for the present it is enough to state that it is not apparent that there is any basis for making this distinction, and the assumption that there is has led to a number of conceptual confusions.

By not explicitly acknowledging Jahoda's criticism, Moscovici avoids engaging in a direct discussion of analogic reasoning, and thus can continue to claim the "differences in intellectual processes" (Moscovici, 1988, p.216) between science and social representations, without effectively explaining what they are. It should be remembered that Moscovici also avoided discussing McKinlay and Potter's (1987) arguments
regarding the distinction between science and social representations. As described earlier, McKinlay and Potter cited Moscovici's earlier statement, that scientists also used social representations, to question the distinction drawn. Moscovici's statement was consistent with others by Moscovici claiming that all thinking is mediated by social representations; thus in Moscovici's framework, the thinking and behaviour of scientists, as presumably people also, must be seen as a result of social representations.

However, while Moscovici may not explicitly acknowledge such criticisms, it appears he is aware of them as evidenced in attempts to reinforce his position in this regard. Thus he argues, "What in science generally appears as a system of concepts and facts is converted in the corresponding representations into a network by which a greater or smaller range of concepts and facts of various sorts is held together coherently." (Moscovici, 1988, p.216, emphases in original). Quite what the implication of distinguishing between a "system" and a "network" is, is unclear. Both refer to "concepts" and "facts", though in the case of the network these may be of "a greater or smaller range" than the other. No further explanation of differences between systems and networks is given, so the significance of the distinction is not apparent.

Another noteworthy aspect of Moscovici's reaffirmation of the distinction between science and social representations is his mentioning of specific branches of science, such as physics, medicine, biology and economics. It would appear that they are more relevant to Moscovici's arguments concerning specific intellectual processes and "visualizing", although no explanation is given as to why these in particular should be distinguished from other branches of science. It does appear at least that when considering its distinctive nature, Moscovici realises that a blanket notion of "science" is inadequate. This is not simply to state that social representations are identical to science. At this stage it is enough to note that a clearer examination of the nature of each is warranted.
Concluding comments

Thus it must be concluded that Moscovici has not dealt with the arguments of Jahoda or McKinlay and Potter regarding the distinction between social representations and ideology or culture, nor explained effectively a clear distinction between social representations and science. These issues carry great significance, both for the distinction between the reified and consensual realms and for the possibility of identifying distinct processes: if there is no clear distinction between science and social representations, then both realm can be seen to be dependent on social representations; similarly if social representations cannot be distinguished from other types of thinking, the notion of distinct processes collapses. The implications for the reified and consensual will be discussed later as they do not directly refer to Jahoda’s critique. However, the issue of distinct processes will be discussed next.

The distinctiveness of social representational processes.

Concepts and percepts

Jahoda was critical of Moscovici’s claim that social representations occupy a position between concepts and percepts. Jahoda argues that the absence of a clear explanation of the relationship between concepts and percepts can lead to a situation where there is a non-social representation of social objects; for example in Moscovici’s description of anchoring, it is as though a non-social representation is then compared to a social representation. As McKinlay and Potter (1987) point out, this leads to the idea that the social representations are unproblematically present in individual representations, which in turn can lead to a cognitive reductionism.

Once again Moscovici does not respond directly to Jahoda’s criticism. However, Moscovici does approach this issue when comparing social representations to attitudes. Moscovici argues that attitudes have social representations as their precondition, as “We can become favourable or unfavourable towards something only after we have perceived and evaluated it in a different way.” (Moscovici, 1988, p.
Moscovici uses this statement to claim that attitudes are therefore inseparable from social representations.

This is curious. From Moscovici’s statement, an attitude is seen as being favourable or not toward something, whereas it is through social representations that something is “perceived and evaluated”. Quite how something may be perceived and evaluated without being seen as favourable or unfavourable (which happens after) is unclear. The notion that social representations intervene between concepts and percepts is unsustainable and leads to these types of confusion. This is a result of the mistaken notion that concepts must be conceived only in linguistic terms. Social representations must be conceived as some grouping of concepts; concepts that contain iconic as well as symbolic content.

Moscovici’s description of attitudes in his response to McKinlay and Potter is relevant also in this respect (Moscovici, 1987, p.522). Here, Moscovici argues that there are “mental formations” that intervene between attitudes and social phenomena. Social representations are an example of these mental formations, along with myths, religion, science and art. What is of interest here is not only that Moscovici himself, in his later response to Jahoda, argues that social representations are inseparable from attitudes. Also, given that all thinking is mediated by representations and in the absence of any means of clearly distinguishing exceptions, it is not clear how social representations are in fact separable from myths, religion, science and art (see arguments above concerning the relationship between social representations, ideology, culture and science.) Thus the notion of social representations constituting a distinct type of mental formation is unsubstantiated: each type of “mental formation” seems to be similarly based around some notion of analogic reasoning.

Iconic and symbolic aspects
Jahoda questions the assumed co-presence of the iconic and the symbolic, arguing that a concept is not necessarily connected to a discrete image and vice versa. Jahoda also objects to the “arbitrariness” of Moscovici’s hypothetical example in which the word
neurotic is argued to evoke psychoanalysis and perhaps Freud as a concept, and an image of an egocentric individual: Jahoda argued that the situation could just as easily be reversed, with the image being of Freud and the egocentric individual as the concept. The confusion in the example was a result of the conceptual confusion regarding the relationship between the iconic and symbolic.

Once again Moscovici does not directly comment on Jahoda’s argument. However, Moscovici does argue for the presence of the iconic aspect. Moscovici cites a study by de Rosa (1987) showing that the figurative component develops independently from the “intellectual” aspect. Moscovici also argues that the figurative component is more stable and more “directly social”. Moscovici stresses the importance of the figurative aspect by arguing that “images have the advantage of linking us to the past and of anticipating the shape of things to come.” (p.222). Quite how the figurative component can be more directly social is not explained, though it may be that it is shared more consensually perhaps, though how images are conveyed through “the constant babble” is unclear. However, to argue that images link us to the past and anticipate the future, presumably more so than concepts, is hard to fathom.

Moscovici argues that the iconic aspect was included in the definition of social representations because, “it enables us to understand an idea with the same vividness as a perception, and vice versa” (1988, p.237). It is possible to avoid debates concerning the possibility of separating images from concepts in our thinking, though this is by no means clear, by returning to Jahoda’s criticism. Jahoda is objecting to Moscovici’s assertion that every image is equated with an idea and vice versa. It will be recalled that in response to Potter and Litton’s (1985) proposal to substitute social representations for linguistic repertoires Moscovici argued that all that is image does not pass into language. As described earlier, if images are no longer directly equated with ideas and vice versa, then their relationship requires explanation: in effect there are another set of processes to explain.

Moscovici’s assertion, via de Rosa, that the figurative component develops independently implies that there is not a discrete image for each discrete concept and
vice versa, even given that transmission is not entire. (Indeed the notion of discrete concepts is at odds with the fluidity of thought implied in the transformative aspect to social representations.) If it is seen to be stabler, then it is possible that the figurative component may not actually relate to the faster developing "intellectual aspect". There are no means for deciding whether it is appropriate to consider both aspects as referring to the same representation or not. This relates to a larger issue concerning the observation of social phenomena more generally, which will be discussed later.

The present problem relates to the notion that images are distinct from concepts in thought. This notion was mentioned earlier with regard to difficulty in "visualising" marking a useful distinction between science and "ordinary knowledge". As stated, there is no apparent reason why analogic reasoning does not apply to the understanding of images as well as concepts. The notion that images could somehow exist without concepts and vice versa is not substantiated. With regard to the implications for social representations, it is necessary for Moscovici to clearly explain the relationship between images and concepts, and thereby explain convincingly the advantage in separating the two: to simply state that images are more "directly social" will not do.

For the present it is enough to state that it is the notion that there is a clear distinction between images and concepts that is responsible for the arbitrariness of Moscovici's hypothetical example, as argued by Jahoda. Not only is it not clear that the word neurotic would invoke any particular image or any particular concept, if Freud were to be invoked, it is not clear whether this would be as image or concept; similarly for the "neurotic individual". As was the case with the notion of the image as being more able to link us to the past, Moscovici seems to believe that the only way to understand a particular issue is his way; the possibility of alternative interpretations is not considered.

That Moscovici has not fully appreciated Jahoda's point is evident in that when describing the iconic aspect, Moscovici provides another "arbitrary" example. Moscovici argues that the computer "is now a dominant image, or what might be
called the figurative nucleus of certain representations.” (P.222). Moscovici then quotes a scientific paper in which modern computers are described as “late-comers to the world of computation”, whereas “biological computers - the brain and nervous system of animals and human beings - have existed for millions of years”. (p.222) The paper then describes how tasks such as reaching for a sandwich are computations just as much as for example, running video games. Moscovici argues that the representation “derives its meaning from the fact that the concept of the computer is one shared by our culture and thus can be converted from a specific device to a general model for the brain and nervous system.” However, it is arguably more likely that the brain is the more common idea or image, and that the authors of the scientific paper where connecting this to the less common idea or image of the computer, perhaps to make the unfamiliar notion of computing more familiar. This is in effect a reversal of Moscovici’s argument.

What is clear is that if image and concept are considered to be to some extent independent aspects, some analysis of the relationship is required. To this end, Moscovici states, “the variable extent that each aspect manifests itself depends on circumstances, the degree of literacy, beliefs.” (Moscovici, 1988, p.237). This is a circular argument: in other words, to know whether the figurative aspect is manifested we must to some extent know what it is that people think. The circularity is even more striking if it accepted that all information is mediated by representations; in that case, circumstances, literacy and beliefs are all aspects of social representations. Thus not only is the degree to which the figurative aspect is manifested dependent on what it is that people think; to take the statement to its logical conclusion, the degree to which the figurative aspect is manifested depends on how the figurative aspect is manifested.

Images may be empirically studied, but their relationship to concepts is not unproblematic: the image may not relate to the present state of conceptual understanding, so the image may no longer be said to be representing the same concept. Thus the usefulness of the distinction between the iconic and symbolic for the understanding of social representations is not clear: to know the extent to which each aspect is present in people’s thinking, one must know what it is that they are thinking.
It appears that the confusion between the iconic and symbolic aspects derives directly from confusions regarding the relationship between concepts and percepts, both of which appear endemic to Moscovici's thought. From this it must be concluded that Moscovici has not dealt effectively with Jahoda's criticism regarding the co-presence of the iconic and the symbolic.

The unfamiliar and the familiar

Jahoda makes several criticisms regarding Moscovici's treatment of the unfamiliar. Jahoda draws on examples from Moscovici's study of psychoanalysis and Jodolet's study of mental illness for support. The central concern is that the assumption of a motivational basis for the transformation of the unfamiliar to the familiar is unsubstantiated. In other words Jahoda doubts Moscovici's claim that the unfamiliar is seen as fearful and must be "tamed" through transformation into the familiar.

Moscovici does not comment on the examples that Jahoda provides. In response to Jahoda's argument that Moscovici's claim is unsubstantiated, Moscovici simply states that he does not consider it necessary to "list all the known facts when stating a proposition." (p.234). Moscovici then goes on to state that children's' fear of unfamiliar persons or objects cannot be separated from the "idea" that they have of them. This completely misses the point that Jahoda was making, that the "idea" that people hold of the unfamiliar need not be one of fear. Moscovici appears to simply take this for granted.

Moscovici continues that Jahoda identifies the unfamiliar with the novel, and that this "does not make much sense" (p.234). Moscovici makes this apparently contradictory statement in the context of defining the unfamiliar as based on affect rather than based on knowledge. Thus Moscovici provides two examples: "The reason why hypnosis is strange is not because its causes are unknown or because its effects fly in the way of common sense, but because of its unfamiliar, unusual, slightly magical aspects." (p.234), and "Irrespective of how detailed and down-to-earth our knowledge of
certain sexual practices, homosexuality, f.i. ³, may be, it always maintains its strangeness, because of its forbidden character.” (p.235). Moscovici then goes on to explain anchoring as the means by which we cope with a “strange” idea or perception.

This line of argument allows Moscovici to deal with Jahoda’s criticism and support Moscovici’s response to McKinlay and Potter on the same issue, where Moscovici stated that the unfamiliar was not entirely unfamiliar, but had some unfamiliar feature. Nevertheless this line of argument is flawed. With regard to the first example, hypnosis has “unfamiliar, unusual, slightly magical aspects” precisely because its causes are to some extent unknown and its effects fly in the face of common sense. That is the basis on which it is seen to have “slightly magical aspects”. This relates to a more general feature of Moscovici’s method of argument: he assumes that there is only one possible interpretation of phenomena, his. This in turn relates to further arguments regarding the observation of social phenomena, which will be discussed in more detail later. As for the second example, that of homosexuality, regardless of its questionable content, it appears that Moscovici is now dealing with the unusual or non-normative. Moscovici criticises Jahoda for identifying the unfamiliar solely with the novel, but Moscovici now appears to have no means at all for dealing with the novel.

The circularity that this entails can be illustrated by relating Moscovici’s argument back to Jahoda original criticism of Jodolet. Thus the ‘mentally handicapped people’ “continue to be seen as alien despite the fact that their presence had been accepted for many, many years..” presumably because they are thought of as unusual. This does not explain the processes of familiarisation: the reason why some things may continue to be seen as unfamiliar, despite our being quite knowledgeable about them, depends on what it is we think about them, presumably our social representations. This does not support the notion of a motivational basis for making the unfamiliar familiar, as it appears that “the unfamiliar” can just as often remain unfamiliar.

In attempting to deal with criticism of what may have appeared only a small issue, Moscovici has shown his larger argument to be flawed. Moscovici’s treatment of the

³ “f.i.” appears to refer to “for instance”.
unfamiliar seems to rest on a vague notion of analogic reasoning and little else: the unfamiliar is not always made familiar, indeed efforts may be taken to make it remain unfamiliar. Thus it can be seen that to argue that making the unfamiliar familiar is a distinct process of social representations is not supported. Moscovici has not demonstrated convincingly that there is a motivational basis for making the unfamiliar familiar, and therefore has not dealt effectively with the criticisms of Jahoda.

Concluding comments
Thus it must be concluded that the claim that social representations involve distinct mental processes is unsubstantiated. This is shown in the confusions surrounding the relationships between concepts and percepts, the unfamiliar and the familiar, and between iconic and symbolic aspects. Any explanation supporting a distinct type of mental process again seems based upon some notion of analogic reasoning and little else that can be substantiated.

Jahoda's suggestions for refinement.
Jahoda criticises Moscovici for claiming that SRT had been tested. In response, Moscovici states, "nowhere do I claim that the theory of social representations is already tested." (p.227). Thus it appears that Jahoda has perhaps made some error of interpretation. However, if one seeks out the original source, one finds that Jahoda is indeed correct: "Indeed, works such as that of Berger and Luckman (1967) refer to a theory of the origins of common sense and of the structure of reality, but I believe that this theory, unlike my own, has not been tested." (Moscovici, 1984a, p.55, my emphases). What is surprising is not so much the change in position as much as the failure of Moscovici to acknowledge his earlier position. From this it can be seen that Moscovici has indeed claimed that SRT has been tested, thus Jahoda's claim is
substantiated. This leads onto a number of issues relating to the empirical status of social representations.

As stated earlier, Jahoda’s main argument is that empirical studies have no distinctly social representational input, the term “social representation” is simply taken as axiomatic. Moscovici describes Jahoda as offering three options: “1) giving a rigorous definition of representations, 2) adopting more rigorous research methods, and 3) returning to the well established framework of social cognition.” (Moscovici, 1988, p.238). This is a misrepresentation of Jahoda’s argument. As described earlier, Jahoda specified “soft” and “hard” options. The three options described by Moscovici refer only to the harder options. Thus again Moscovici misrepresents Jahoda’s argument. Nevertheless, Moscovici’s response to these options is interesting, and demonstrates further inconsistency and contradiction.

A rigorous definition of social representations
Moscovici deals with the first option by swiftly stating that social representations have been defined by others, “boldly” and “successfully”. Moscovici states, “The first remedy has thus been discovered already.”(p.239). However, Moscovici does not go on to describe these “bold” and “successful” definitions. Given the context of Moscovici’s response within a body of critical evaluations and responses, that Moscovici could simply put to rest criticisms of the ill-defined nature of social representations, and would choose not to do so directly, is inexplicable and extremely unconvincing. At this point it is not in fact clear whether it is actually possible to construct a rigorous definition of social representation given its myriad inconsistencies and contradictions. What is clear is that Moscovici has yet to provide or even describe such a definition.

However, Moscovici attempts to make it appear that he has indeed dealt swiftly with perhaps the most pressing of Jahoda’s criticisms. In this context, the other two options appear rather minor, methodological quibbles. However, it must be seen that the “first remedy” has not been “discovered already”.
Adopting more rigorous research methods

With respect to the second of the options, the adopting of more rigorous research methods, Moscovici’s response implicates a number of issues, including the use of social representations as independent variables, Moscovici’s defence of the ill-defined nature of social representations, the equating of theoretical precision with rigorous research methods, the defence of social representations by virtue of its “prior existence”, the axiomatic use of the label social representations, and the assumption of unproblematic observation of social representations.

Moscovici restates his claim that SRT requires nurturing to “enrich its contents and refine its theoretical framework.” (1988, p.239). However, as Potter and Litton (1985b) pointed out, given Moscovici’s recurrent failure to engage fully with the critical evaluations provided, it is not clear how progress is to be made. This point may be illustrated by referring to another of Jahoda’s arguments, regarding Moscovici’s use social representations as independent variables.

Jahoda also argues that Moscovici criticises Durkheim for using collective representations as “irreducible, explanatory devices”, yet Moscovici himself treats social representations as independent variables. Moscovici does acknowledge this criticism explicitly: he claims to be “astonished” by it (Moscovici, 1988, p.223). As it is somewhat unusual for Moscovici to provide a direct response to any criticisms, his reply will be considered in some detail. As previously stated, this is an issue of some importance as it relates to Moscovici’s often mentioned defence of the ill-defined nature of social representations.

Moscovici explains that explanatory concepts are likely to be abstract and ill-defined though may still be useful for explanatory purposes, citing gravitational force, the atom, the gene and social classes as examples. Moscovici states that “something” must be first be conceived and endowed with an explanatory power, only then is it possible to advance and try to “grasp the reality” of the phenomena. Thus the exact nature of gravity and social classes are still not understood, whereas the gene and atom “have yielded a large part of their physico-chemical enigma” (p.223). Moscovici continues
that the structure and internal dynamics of social representations will be "unscrambled", once their impact on society has been recognised; just as the structure and dynamics of the atom were unravelled. Moscovici states that "progress can be made no other way" (p.223). Thus Moscovici concludes "discontinuity on the theoretical level never precludes continuity on the research level, which is intended to gain a deeper insight into the phenomena" (p.224).

On the face of it, this appears to be a sound argument. After all, it is easy to accept the usefulness of concepts such as gravity, the atom, the gene and social classes. However, description of progress is inaccurate. The "impact" of a phenomenon is not ascertained in the absence of speculation about its conceptualisation. The impact is continually reassessed as the concept is reformulated. Moscovici gives the impression that the concepts such as gravity and the atom, etc. have stayed static whilst their impact has been measured with increasing precision. It is through this dialectic of assessment and reformulation that explanatory concepts are also discarded as well as retained.

With regard to social representations, their impact has been recognised in that "all behaviour appears at the same time as a given and a product of our representing it." (Moscovici, 1988, p.214). However, it is not clear how progress is to be made. Moscovici does not really engage with critical evaluations of his theory. Those that have been reviewed in this thesis cannot simply be referred to as "hostile" or "negative". Virtually all have stated their appreciation for Moscovici's work, and have wished to engage in meaningful dialogue with Moscovici. In return Moscovici has appeared extremely guarded, selectively responding to various critical issues often misrepresenting them, if not ignoring them outright.

For example, Moscovici appears to equate theoretical precision solely with rigorous research methods (Potter and Litton, 1985b). Jahoda is described as blaming SRT for a "more or less qualitative, shall we say, cavalier approach." (1988, p. 239), and demanding more rigorous definition and research methods. But Jahoda predominantly describes logical flaws. That is the basis of the many inconsistencies concerning social
representations. It is not that more rigorous techniques will eventually reveal exactly why social representations are distinct from science; social representations cannot be distinct from science given the definitions of each (as shown in the arguments of and responses to McKinlay and Potter (1987) and Jahoda (1988) above.) This is a logical implication, based on internal consistency more than empirical revelation. To simply state that ill-definition is a virtue will not do; theoretical precision is not the same as methodological precision.

It is because Moscovici consistently fails to acknowledge the logical flaws in his formulation that he is so selective in his responses. Even so, he is often led into inconsistency and contradiction. A further example is Moscovici’s discussion of other theories. Moscovici states “I have trouble understanding how the development of research and theories in the field of cognitions, attitudes and the analysis of common sense can buttress arguments against my positions – which in fact are not only mine - when these developments merely catch up with them.” (1988, p.226). Moscovici makes much of the “prior claim” of his approach. The argument seems to be that by virtue of being prior, his approach has nothing to gain. This again reflects how Moscovici discounts the logical flaws of his approach. This notion of superiority simply through pre-dating is linked to Moscovici’s arguments regarding determining the impact of explanatory concepts, in order to progress: Moscovici does not have the means to effect further reformulation.

This position is unsustainable and leads Moscovici into contradiction once more. Moscovici dismisses claims of similarity between his approach and Durkheim’s by this analogy: “As though referring back to Democritus dispensed one from looking at subsequent atomic theories and especially at the work of other atomic theorists since his time.” (Moscovici, 1988, p.227). Here, Moscovici is suggesting that “prior claim” is no basis on which to compare theories, thereby reversing his earlier argument.

However, Moscovici returns to his initial line of reasoning immediately after, when he responds directly to Jahoda’s claim that empirical studies have no distinctive social representation input. Moscovici states that “it is a fact that the label was there prior to
other labels and that its presence made and continues to make a difference.” (1988, p.228). Of course it is the content of a theory or argument that is of significance when assessing its worth, not the pre- or post-dating of alternatives. What is required is critical engagement to resolve theoretical issues; simplistic arguments in terms of “prior claim”, as can be seen in these examples, are a poor substitute. Thus Moscovici has not responded effectively to Jahoda’s criticism.

Returning to more specific points raised by Jahoda regarding the empirical study of social representations, Jodolet’s unsatisfactory description of the unfamiliar has already been discussed. Jahoda also complains that the label social representation is taken as axiomatic, thus individual interviews are reported and discussed in terms of social representations with little effort to justify the application of the term. Moscovici does not respond directly to this criticism, though he does perpetuate the problem by once again describing a single interview in terms of a social representation: “The interviewee started out with: ‘I’ve got this theory’. He has thus elaborated a representation, which has actually been circulating for some time as a rumour. In this sense it is a social representation, and the interview unintentionally amplifies this social character.” (Moscovici, 1988, p.229). Once again, it appears that the label has been applied axiomatically. It is not apparent whether description in terms of social representations is warranted. If it is solely on the suspicion that the “theory” held by the interviewee had been circulated as a rumour, it is not clear what redescription in terms of social representations actually adds in this case.

Finally Jahoda argues against assuming an unproblematic observation of conversational exchanges, as it is not clear how such an approach would deal with the influence of structural relations. Again, Moscovici does not explicitly respond to this criticism, though he does appear to acknowledge this argument. Moscovici restates his confidence in observational studies: “For many years to come observation stimulated by theory and armed with subtle analytic methods will still give us the means of understanding the genesis and structure of social representations in situ.”(1988, p.241). However, Moscovici later states that “observation, no matter how systematic it is, is subservient to the characteristics of the population under observation and its
special problems.” (1988, p.244). Thus, Moscovici appears to have acknowledged that observation is not unproblematic. However Moscovici gives no indication of how these “special problems” are to be identified or addressed; a vague notion of “subtle analytic methods” is not sufficient. Since Moscovici has not resolved the theoretical or methodological issues presented to him, nor elaborated any new-found insight in this regard, it is not clear how the study of the genesis and structure of social representations “in situ” is to be accomplished.

Returning to the well established framework of social cognition.

For Moscovici to simply state that Jahoda suggests he tie up social representations with the work on social cognition is another mis-representation of Jahoda’s arguments. As described earlier, the context of Jahoda’s suggestion is the failure to demonstrate distinctive psychological mechanisms with respect to social representations, leading Jahoda to wonder whether this aspect of the theory need be retained. This is what prompts Jahoda suggestion that references to internal mechanisms should be tied up with the social cognition approach, rather than attempting to circumscribe a distinctive domain.

Moscovici’s insistence that social representations involve distinct psychological processes is asserted throughout the paper, for example “Is a representation in fact a distinctive psychic phenomenon? The answer to this question is decidedly yes.” (1988, p. 238), though in the absence of clear, supporting arguments. Moscovici supports the above quote by calling on the distinction between the consensual and the reified realms. However, Moscovici does not acknowledge any of the problems concerning this distinction raised by Jahoda and others, therefore this cannot be regarded as a clear, supporting argument. Indeed, Jahoda explicitly mentions Moscovici’s tendency to make sweeping though unsupported statements about psychological processes (Jahoda, 1988, p.202).

Nevertheless, Moscovici’s insistence on distinct psychological processes leads him to misrepresent a number of arguments, and thereby unwittingly undermine his own
position. In his response to Jahoda, Moscovici directs his argument toward undermining the social cognition perspective. Thus he quotes Levy-Bruhl in support, "After examining the hypotheses and postulates which 'allow only for the intervention of mechanisms of the individual human mind', Levy-Bruhl listed all the arguments militating against their transposition to collective representations. His objection was that they are 'social facts, like the institutions that they reflect' and, on this account, 'have their own laws, laws that the analysis of individuals as individuals can never reveal' (Levy-Bruhl, 1951, p.14)." (Moscovici, 1988, p.241).

As stated, Moscovici refers to Levy-Bruhl for support in undermining the social cognition perspective. However, Levy-Bruhl is actually arguing that collective representations cannot be understood in terms of "mechanisms of the human mind"; their laws are not amenable simply through the analysis of individuals. This is the same line of argument presented in earlier critiques of Moscovici, such as Harré's (1984) warning that the collective aspects of social phenomena cannot be understood in terms of distributive processes. Levy-Bruhl is arguing against the transposition of individual mechanisms to collective representations; this is in direct opposition to Moscovici's notion of distinctive mechanisms.

Moscovici again undermines his position as he describes the social cognition approach in order to show its shortcomings: "There is no doubt that social recognition's are representations in a general way....It is actually past experience that enables them to build forms, construct concepts and connect the diversity confronting them with schemata or frameworks already in their minds (Higgins and Bargh, 1987). We are thus dealing with forms of thought shaped by contents that are already available in the brain, that is, stereotypes of the situation or the self. Every new object is reduced to an old object in this way, and the unprecedented case is subsumed under a general category. The unstable world is stabilized, and recovers its routine appearance for the individual. Schemata, scripts and prototypes may be specific and concrete....or they may be abstract....They all provide a stock of learned behaviour or ideas with which to face the needs of daily life. These categorization processes are of great interest, especially those involving prototypes (Semin, 1987), because they reformulate in terms
of information theory processes that are very familiar to social psychology, first and foremost the process of categorization and stereotyping.” (Moscovici, 1988, p. 243).

These processes are exactly those which Moscovici associates with social representations. Consider the section, “forms of thought shaped by contents that are already available in the brain”. This is an accurate description of the prescriptive aspect of social representations. Consider the section, “Every new object is reduced to an old object in this way, and the unprecedented case is subsumed under a general category. The unstable world is stabilized and recovers its routine appearance for the individual.” This is an accurate description of Anchoring, of making the unfamiliar familiar. And the section “Schemata, scripts and prototypes may be specific and concrete...or they may be abstract....They all provide a stock of learned behaviour or ideas with which to face the needs of daily life” could just as easily be describing social representations.

Moscovici goes on to argue that such theories are inadequate for understanding the construction of reality, and how social representations adjust themselves to “the sinuosities of a given culture”. (1988, p.243). There is some merit to this observation, in that the processes described do not adequately explain the creation of new concepts, etc. However, the processes described in social representations do not meet Moscovici’s criteria either. Notions of social representations being somehow between concepts and percepts, or attempts to explain how the unfamiliar is made familiar do not stand scrutiny. Much of the “specific nature” of social representations seems to rest on vague notions of analogic reasoning, that new information or ideas are understood on the basis of existing information or ideas. Also, the processes that Moscovici describes in association with social representations are explicable in terms of information theory, that is why they are prone to cognitive reductionism, that the “social aspect” is somehow contained within the individual representation. This has pointed out on numerous occasions, for example Semin (1985), Parker (1987) and McKinlay and Potter (1987).
Moscovici also complains that social cognition models rely on an arbitrary standard when making judgements about people’s thinking. Moscovici quotes Kruglansky and Azjen (1983) in support: “This amounts to the naive assumption that there exists a norm for thinking to which one must conform and which takes logical reasoning and probability as its standards. For many judgements, however, ‘neither normative models nor direct verifications seem to be available. Here the investigator’s own judgement as to what would constitute a valid inference is frequently used as a standard of veridicality; and deviations from this standard are considered erroneous’ (Kruglansky and Azjen, 1983, p.3).” (Moscovici, 1988, p.242).

In the first part of this statement, Moscovici argues that a “norm for thinking” is a naive assumption. However, Moscovici makes frequent reference to norms for thinking when describing the prescriptive aspect of social representations. Moscovici may not take logical reasoning and probability as his standard, he refers instead to generally accepted contents that impose themselves; nevertheless he does subscribe to this “naive assumption”. In fact, it is not clear how the “standard” that Moscovici applies, that of general acceptance, is ascertained.

Moscovici states earlier in the paper, “When we are talking about individuals, it is possible to make a clearcut distinction between what is correct and what is incorrect, what is normal and what is abnormal. This is true because a society or scientific community has legitimate definitions for the criterion according to which something can be considered true, normal or real. The same cannot be done for groups, societies or culture...It presumes that one knows the true path of history, just as one knows the true trajectory of planets.” (Moscovici, 1988, p. 229). This is a very peculiar statement. Society or the scientific community are said to produce definitions that allow “clearcut” distinctions with regard to individuals, but these “clearcut” distinctions are not available for groups. That “clearcut” definitions are available to individuals but not to groups suggests that individuals are unrelated to groups; also that these definitions are individual and not social phenomena. This is also implied in the fact that there is no discussion of how individual transformations affect the overall
representation; any change is generally shared, effectively separating the individual from the group.

In his criticism of social cognition Moscovici also argues that what in social cognition may be regarded as errors, actually reflect a different representation of reality: "In this light, the fundamental errors of attributing an event to a person rather than a situation is not an error. It is an integral part of a moral and legal view of things that makes a person responsible for his or her actions." (Moscovici, 1988, p. 242-3). This appears to contradict the notion of clearcut definitions of what is “true, normal or real”. When Moscovici is arguing against social cognition he takes the view that errors reflect different representations, while in another context he argues that the definition of what is true, and therefore untrue also, is clearcut.

The entire notion of clearcut definitions implies that society or the scientific community have unitary, clearly observable positions on issues. This is an unlikely proposition and contradicts Moscovici’s arguments against representations as unitary or homogenous. However, it is not now clear how the “true, normal or real” are ascertained. In the absence of clearcut definitions and of any formal guidance, it appears that investigators must rely, at least to some extent, on their own judgement as to what these “clearcut” standards are; thus it is the investigators judgement that is used as the standard of veridicality. This is exactly the situation that Moscovici argues against with regard to social cognition.

Thus it appears that social representations are not dissimilar to the social cognition approach with regard to processes. Flaws in Moscovici’s theorisation continually lead to inconsistency and contradiction which weakens any claims for the distinctiveness of social representations. It has not been demonstrated that social representations either constitute distinctive phenomena or that they have distinct cognitive characteristics, despite Moscovici’s claims to the contrary.
Summing up Moscovici's response to Jahoda.

In conclusion, it appears that Moscovici's attempt at reformulation has not been successful. Moscovici has not resolved problematic issues concerning social representations and thus has failed to respond effectively to existing criticism. Also his attempts to introduce concepts have proved problematic and have not increased clarity. Much of the central argument in SRT seems to rest on a notion of analogic reasoning, that existing ideas and information affect how new ideas and information are understood. However, attempts to provide more precise arguments lead to circularity and contradiction. Also, Moscovici has not demonstrated convincingly a link between contents and processes; that is the relationship between the contents of social representations and social psychological processes. The processes of social representations can be understood in terms of information processing and so are prone to a cognitive reductionism. The content of social representations involve a notion of general acceptance or sharedness, with group values or norms being internalised by the individual, and the individual seen as synonymous with the group. Thus, Moscovici has not demonstrated the distinctiveness of social representations.

Conclusion.

Each of the critical papers that have been reviewed here, have been of a very high calibre. The authors have identified a number of critical issues with respect to social representations and have argued their cases clearly and concisely. Moscovici's arguments do indeed appear especially replete with inconsistency and contradiction, as Jahoda remarks, "One could give examples...but that would be unduly repetitive." (1988, p.203). However, I would argue that few of the authors have grasped Moscovici's vision, and none (with the possible exception of Semin) have recognised its full implications. While these critical works are of undoubted importance, it is not
enough to simply amass these contradictions. It is necessary to appreciate why Moscovici has been compelled to engage in such inconsistency and contradiction.

The fundamental concern of SRT is to link social phenomena with psychological processes. Moscovici has certainly been affected by the critical response to social representations. It is through his attempts to deal with the various criticisms directed at social representations that Moscovici appears to be generate even more inconsistency and contradiction, as seen for example in his attempts to explicate the relationship between contents and processes. However, this is acceptable to him in the pursuit of his aim. Moscovici believes he is attempting to "raise the level" of social psychology. That is why piecemeal criticism has appeared ineffective, any suggestion to narrow the scope of social representations as failing to appreciate the wider vision.

To link social phenomena with psychological processes has become the raison d'être of social representations. That is why for example Jahoda's suggestion to jettison reference to internal mechanisms is so unwelcome; as Jahoda himself notes, this would align social representations with existing approaches to collective belief, such as 'folk representations'. That is why Moscovici appears so reluctant to address individual critical concerns. That social representations appears to be little more than a vague notion of analogic reasoning is acceptable, by Moscovici and adherents to SRT, in the context of the pursuit of this grand aim.

Moscovici's objective may appear commendable, however the issues involved are formidable. It is the implications of these issues that have generally not been followed through in the critical evaluations of SRT. For example, McKinlay and Potter (1987) and Jahoda (1988) both note the failure to reconcile the prescriptive and transformative aspects of social representations, yet they do not recognise that this issue is a redescription of the relationship between the individual and the social. Similarly, the issues surrounding the assumption of consensus raised by Potter and Litton (1985a) and Parker's (1987) argument concerning the breaking down of the notion of consensus, implicate the whole issue of the observation of social phenomena.
These are very complex issues that are fundamental to the whole nature of social scientific endeavour. The authors reviewed have not indicated clearly the relation between their critiques and these complex concerns. Thus, inadvertently perhaps, they have let it appear that the concerns that they raise are resolvable given sufficient time and attention. At this point I will simply state that this may not actually be the case.

Having said that, it must be stated that it does not appear that Moscovici himself has fully grasped the nature of the issues he is dealing with. Moscovici is often led into inconsistency and contradiction precisely because he fails to fully appreciate the implications of his arguments, as seen, for example, in his attempts to criticise social cognition approaches, described earlier. What is required is an analysis that appreciates Moscovici’s concerns yet also incorporates an awareness of the complexity of the issues involved.
CHAPTER TWO

FURTHER DISCUSSION OF INITIAL CRITICAL EXCHANGES

Introduction.

In this chapter further commentary will be provided on the initial critical exchanges concerning social representations, discussed in the previous chapter. In particular, attention will be drawn toward the distinctiveness of social representations, the theorisation of the relationship between the individual and the social, and the implications of this theorisation for the observation of social phenomena.

To facilitate appreciation of the scope of these issues, Moscovici’s discussion of Durkheim is critically assessed. It is found that Durkheim’s arguments are considerably more sophisticated than Moscovici allows, and that Moscovici’s arguments share a great deal of similarity with those of Durkheim. A critical evaluation of Durkheim’s work also reveals similar shortcomings to those of Moscovici.

The work of Parsons is also considered, primarily through an appreciation of Giddens’ discussion of Parsons. The incorporation of Giddens’ insights are a useful device for swiftly introducing Parsons’ considerable body of work. Furthermore, Giddens’ arguments are relevant as they are more fully developed in the following chapter. Similarities are noted between Parsons’ and Moscovici’s work: both consider Durkheim as a theoretical antecedent; and both attempt to develop the notion of internalisation as the means to link the individual to the normative consensus. Thus it is argued that social representations constitute a version of normative functionalism.
It is further argued that a consequence of this normative emphasis is a unitary conception of social phenomena and a corresponding notion of essentially unproblematic observation. The normative emphasis inevitably implies consensus due to inherent limitations in dealing with the divergent interpretation of normative values. This results in difficulties in accounting for social conflict, and is evidenced in similarly unconvincing attempts at explaining social change by Durkheim, Parsons and Moscovici.

It is also argued that Moscovici's misrepresentation of Durkheim becomes progressively greater as Moscovici attempts to promote the distinctiveness of social representations during the course of the initial critical exchanges.

It is concluded that it is necessary to account for the relationship between the individual and society in a way that is not reliant solely upon the internalisation of normative values, and also to acknowledge the implications of theorising this relationship for the observation of social phenomena.

**The distinctiveness of social representations.**

I would agree with McKinlay and Potter (1987) that the fundamental problems associated with social representations, stem from the basic assertion that all our knowledge and understanding is mediated by social representations. However, the problem is not that this statement is incorrect, but that Moscovici has consistently failed to grasp the implications of this assertion. As a consequence, SRT is inherently beset by contradiction and inconsistency. This situation has been further exacerbated by Moscovici's attempts to refine his ideas in the course of critical debate without adequately attending to these inherent problems. The issues I would like to draw attention to are each implications of that initial assertion that have remained problematic. They are, Moscovici’s treatment of “facts” and veridicality; the
observation of social representations; and the relationship between social representations and the individual.

On the basis of the detailed description that appeared in the original Farr and Moscovici volume (1984a), it appears that Moscovici’s initial idea was actually quite simple. The aim of the theory of social representations was to understand how individuals and groups construct a stable, predictable world given the “diversity of individuals, attitudes and phenomena” (Moscovici, 1984a, p. 44). Social representations were the means by which the forms of thought of individuals were to be linked to the social content of those thoughts (1984a, p.52).

Moscovici objected to the unproblematic view of the social world characteristic of individualistic forms of social psychology. In contrast, Moscovici argued that the social environment should not be taken as simply given, but as dependent on how it was classified by individuals (1984a, p.4). This was the basis for the initial assertion that we never receive information undistorted by our representations (1984a, p.5). This notion was articulated in several different ways in that initial chapter, for example social representations were supposed to direct our behaviour (1984a, p.5), define reality (1984a, p.5), and constitute our environment (1984a, p.12).

However, as an indication of how Moscovici’s ideas altered over the course of these initial debates, it is worthwhile noting that in that initial presentation, Moscovici appeared to argue that social representations were not related to specific mental mechanisms: “Thus it is easy to see why the representation which we have of something is not directly related to our manner of thinking but, conversely, why our manner of thinking, and what we think, depend on such representations” (1984a, p.10). This is perhaps surprising given the strength of Moscovici’s later conviction that social representations do indeed constitute a “distinct psychic phenomenon” (1988, p.238). Instead in this early description, Moscovici argued that the distinction between social representations and other types of thought, such as science and religion was made on the basis of making the unfamiliar familiar (1984a, p.26), (though Moscovici did argue that different mechanisms were associated with ideas and images
Similarly, in that initial presentation Moscovici refused to distinguish the contents of social representations from their processes (1984a, p.66), a position which again is at odds with later statements (as described earlier).

Social representations and the individual.

Social representations were understood to be feature of the consensual realm. The consensual nature of social representations were described in a number of ways in the initial paper. For example, social representations were described as a system of categorisation that was based on consensus (1984a, p.37); that they constituted a reality shared by all; and that in the consensual universe representations only confirmed and did not contradict existing understanding (1984a, p.24). Social representations were also taken to be internalised, not simply registered but used as a criterion for evaluation "this is not, as we might be tempted to believe, a simple matter of analogy but an actual, socially significant merging, a shifting of values and feelings." (1984a, p.26).

Moscovici originally considered this process of internalisation, or "interiorisation" (1984b, p.944) to be unproblematic. In this way a given representation could be apprehended both on the basis of data elicited from individuals, or at a more collective level, perhaps through the content analysis of publications. As described earlier, Harré (1984) first noted that these two approaches were not synonymous; the former implicated a distributive sense of phenomena (produced through the aggregation of the responses of individuals), whereas the social content of the representation was a collective property and could not simply be ascribed to individuals in such a manner. It was to this criticism that Moscovici responded by arguing that there were specific mechanisms by which to relate individual and collective levels. Nevertheless, at this stage the notion of consensus remained intact.
However, Potter and Litton's (1985a) critique showed the notion of consensus to be problematic, thus Moscovici's response to Harré that formal mechanisms would be found through the accumulation of contents was shown not to be as straightforward as first imagined. As described earlier, Moscovici reversed his argument in order to refute Potter and Litton's claims, though again it must be noted that there had been significant alteration from Moscovici's original position which stressed that contents and mechanisms could not be separated.

The problem involves reconciling the sharedness of social representations with the myriad transformations that individuals may carry out. This was described earlier in terms of the tension between "prescriptive" and "transformative" aspects. Also described earlier, in response to Jahoda, Moscovici explained the prescriptive aspect of social representations in terms of a general acceptance and sharedness, by which the individual was "anchored in the collective" (1988, p.220). It was noted earlier that Moscovici's discussion had involved the "de-emphasising" of individual features and "internal details", thus in effect emphasising "external reality".

It appears that Moscovici considers this notion of general acceptance as sufficient explanation for the relationship between the collective and the individual. Moscovici goes on to argue that the contrast between various social relations is of more significance than any opposition between the collective and the individual. This is the basis for Moscovici's distinction between the hegemonic, emancipated and polemic representations discussed above. Moscovici explains: "(t)here are presumably three ways in which representations can become social, depending on the relations between group members" (1988, p.221).

This statement is characteristic of a greater emphasis on social relations evident in Moscovici's attempts at reformulation. For example, Moscovici refers approvingly to the similarities between social representations and Piaget's theory of child development: "Piaget's approach coincides very closely with the theory of social representations. Not only does the theory contend that prescriptions and obligations are woven into a vision of social relations....but it also endeavours to bridge the gap
between sociology and psychology, between the collective and the individual.” (1987, p.525).

The emphasis on social relations is also present in a greater concern for “social representation makers”, that is “the professionals who devote their lives to them” (1987, p.522). These people are of some significance to Moscovici, who argues that they are the counterpart to “science makers”, and correspond to the “myth makers” and “religion makers” in other civilisations. Examples of social representation makers include “all those who have the task of spreading scientific and artistic knowledge, doctors and social workers, media and political marketing specialists.” (1988, p.225).

Social representations are now explained in terms of a “division of labour that grants them [social representations] a certain autonomy....and are the outgrowth of a codified know-how that enjoys an undeniable authority.” (1988 p.225). Similarly Moscovici argues that social relations are implicated in the meaning given to a representation: “what is represented and how it is represented is given meaning in terms of the position of the person who enunciates it.” (1988, p.230).

It is apparent that the emphasis on social relations is a response to criticisms directed toward the relationship between “prescriptive” and “transformative” aspects of social representations. This may be seen in the similarities Moscovici draws between his work and that of Piaget. However, there are two main problems with this new position. Firstly, the emphasis on the elevated position of social representation makers is at odds with the notion of a consensual realm. Representations are no longer consensual in this sense, in that the representations of some are accorded an "undeniable authority" over those of others. Thus Moscovici is, perhaps unwittingly, undermining the consensual / reified distinction and thereby the notion of the distinctiveness of social representations.

Secondly, Moscovici does not have an adequate means of dealing with social relations (beyond unsubstantiated speculation.) This was evident in the distinction between the three different types of representation discussed earlier. It was also noted earlier that Moscovici’s means of “anchoring” the individual in the collective, be way of a “general
acceptance" involved a "de-emphasising" of individual features and "internal details" (1988, p. 220). Thus it was necessary for Moscovici to describe the interface between "psychic" and "external" realities in such a way that individual features and "internal details" were re-emphasised. Moscovici has failed to provide such a link and has consistently treated the internalisation of representations as unproblematic. As a result, the individual simply appears somewhat subordinate to, and effectively bound by, the normative values of the group. Thus, "social" relations are actually conceived as "group" relations, with the individual as subsumed within the group. Also, groups are taken to hold the same representation, a notion of consensus shown to be problematic by Potter and Litton (1985).

Observation of social phenomena.

Once more referring to the initial presentation of social representations, Moscovici argued that a representation was a system of categorisation (1984a, p.30). However, when describing the process of categorisation, there was some scope for confusion regarding Moscovici's imprecise use of the terms "categorising", "classifying" and "naming". For example, even though Moscovici acknowledged that it is impossible to classify and not name something, he argued that there are distinct activities (1984a, p.34). It is through the "naming" aspect of categorisation that the effects of social representations are manifested: it is through naming that an entity is placed within a "cultural identity matrix", acquires certain characteristics and becomes subject to a convention in such a way as to reflect a social attitude (1984a, p.34-5).

This separation of classification and naming allowed the "classification" aspect to be understood as unproblematic, such that individuals could be thought to initially observe phenomena in the same way, and then pre-existing representations would alter this content through the naming process. This separation is untenable and is the basis for the confusions surrounding both the distinction between concepts and percepts and the relationship between attitudes and social representations. In this initial paper,
Moscovici argued that the decision to treat an entity in a generalised or particular manner reflected a given attitude, i.e. the representation was dependent upon a "social attitude" (1984a, p.33, 35). Later, as described earlier, Moscovici argues that attitudes are dependent on social representations (1988, p.226-7).

It is clear that Moscovici has tended to not view the identification of representations as problematic. This is evident in his response to Harré, when Moscovici talks of the "principle of non-contradiction" as a rule with a "specific" content (1984b, p.947). Individual variation is not considered. Again, it is a consequence of the separation of classification and naming that this example is not seen as problematic. To use Jahoda’s phrase, social representations are taken as axiomatic, and little effort is made to justify any particular use of the term. Thus Moscovici states that a representation may be peculiar to the individual yet part of the common culture (1984b, p.945) and that a representation (simply) becomes part of everyone's mind (1984b, p.960).

There is therefore some irony when, in response to McKinlay and Potter (1987), Moscovici attempts to explain why social representations are more than simply attitudes. Moscovici argues that representations with "nearly identical" content may have different emotional charges depending on their particular links of association (Moscovici, 1987, p.523). Thus, Moscovici explains, we may observe a person as a stranger in a crowd and feel indifferent toward them, or as German or Jewish or English, and feel hostile toward them. Moscovici goes on to argue that social representations are important as they may engender different emotions.

The irony alluded to earlier comes from the fact that Moscovici has argued that an entity may engender different reactions dependent on particular links of association despite having, what Moscovici describes as, nearly identical content. Whether the person is seen as a stranger in a crowd, or a member of a more specific social category, depends on how they are categorised. It must be seen that these different categorisations then are different representations. The important point to be made is that the same referent may be represented in different ways. This seemingly obvious point may have been obscured by Moscovici’s notion of classification as
unproblematic. It is not unproblematic to simply state that representations have similar contents: if they have different "emotional charges" and different links of association, they are quite different representations.

It is ironic that in attempting to support his position regarding a more minor point, that of an affective component to representation, Moscovici himself has argued that the whole notion of sharedness, the assumption of consensus central to social representations, is problematic: a seemingly common referent is not classified in a "pre-theoretical" manner, thus the identification of commonality or sharedness is not straightforward; what may appear at one level to be "nearly identical" contents may involve very different links of association, and therefore be very different representations.

Similarly in response to Jahoda, Moscovici argues that shared categories may impose themselves even in unrelated contexts. However, if categories do impose themselves in different contexts, the contexts are related through these categories; they are not "unrelated". There is not simply one perspective (typically Moscovici's) to be accounted for.

Also in response to Jahoda, Moscovici refers approvingly to the work of Obereysekere (1981, p.169), to support Moscovici's argument that representations are "at the interface of two realities", psychic reality and external reality. According to Moscovici, Obersysekere's work shows that there is a difference between the public meaning of cultural symbols and the private meanings endowed on such symbols by people for their own private ends. Thus argues Moscovici, it is "possible to infuse a strong personal meaning into shared symbols which continue to be approved by a large part of society." (Moscovici, 1988, p.220-1). However, it is not apparent in what sense these symbols are shared other than as common referents. That they are widely approved does not necessarily mean that the grounds for this approval are shared, this is the implication of the strong personal meanings attached. It is not clear on what
basis sharedness is to be attributed\(^1\): apparent consensus may actually reflect a wide variety of individual variation.

Thus the link between psychic and external realities has not actually been demonstrated; the link is simply assumed to exist as the result of a common initial referent. Once again it is ironic that Moscovici has explicitly drawn attention to the possibility that there may be significant discrepancies between individual representations (as private meanings) and collective representations (as public meanings). That Moscovici appears once again to have unwittingly undermined his position is explicable given his assumption that social representations may be unproblematically observed.

It must be stressed that the problematic nature of observation is a direct implication of all knowledge being mediated through representations. In this case, it should not simply be assumed that the researcher's perspective is the "truth". This was the position taken by Potter and Litton (1985) when they questioned the assumption of consensus. However, it appears that Moscovici continues to apply the term axiomatically. As a consequence of an unproblematic notion of observation, Moscovici often seems to consider his particular perspective as the only possibility, which leads to some (wildly) speculative assertions which are not adequately substantiated. Examples that have been presented earlier include Moscovici's hypothetical example of the representation of "neurotic" (1984a, p.17); and the argument that the computer was a shared concept that was being used to understand the (presumably less familiar) concept of the brain (1988, p.222).

Another example is Moscovici's description of the three representations of individualism common to "our" culture\(^2\). Moscovici describes the "emancipated"

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\(^1\) Moscovici previously rejected Potter and Litton's distinction between "using" and "mentioning" a representation (the former presumably involving some degree of internalisation absent in the latter.) Moscovici argued that even to "mention" was to define an object in a certain way. (Moscovici, 1985, p.92).

\(^2\) Moscovici proposes this argument to refute Parker's (1987) claim that social representations are individualistic by claiming that this cannot be the case since "individualism" itself is a social representation (Moscovici, 1987, p.520-1). The weakness of this line of argument has been discussed earlier.
individual, who has escaped the servitudes of tradition and defines themselves in opposition to the collectivity; the "sublimated" individual who sacrifices his desires to carry out the goals of the collectivity; and the "outsider" who acts selfishly and impersonally, ignoring values and prior relationships with others. Furthermore, Moscovici adds that the emancipated individual is an outgrowth of the Renaissance and the French Revolution; the sublimated individual as a result of the Reformation; and the outsider as the product of the market economy. Moscovici concludes, "(e)ach representation helped to shape a certain type of human being, a vision of the "self", and the appropriate personal qualities and motivations." (1987, p.521).

Quite how these different senses of individualism were transmitted, to what extent they may have been held, and why they have persisted to the present, is not considered. It simply appears plausible to Moscovici that, given a contemporary perspective on these periods, individual self-awareness altered correspondingly. However, this assumption that these historical periods have resulted in distinct representations of individualism is unsubstantiated to say the least. For example, there is no explanation for why only these periods may have had this effect rather than any other; it is not clear why it is only these three versions of individualism that are available in "our" culture; and the distinctiveness of the three categories has not been demonstrated, in particular the emancipated and outsider appear substantively similar. The definitions could just as easily be described as "individualist" (emancipated and outsider) and "collectivist" (sublimated), a distinction presumably relevant to a wider variety of historical periods than those mentioned by Moscovici. Again, Moscovici simply assumes an unproblematic understanding of the phenomena in question.

A further example, similar in many respects to the three types of individualism are the three types of social representation that Moscovici describes in his response to Jahoda, based on the different social relations in each case (Moscovici, 1988, p.221-2). The "hegemonic", "emancipated" and "polemic" social representations have been

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1 Presumably these periods do not refer to modern societies (with the possible exception of the market economy which persists to the present day but may be traced back in some form for many centuries), so according to Moscovici's description of social representations as distinctly modern phenomena, these historical periods should be expected to understood in terms of homogenous, collective representations.
mentioned earlier, but will be discussed in more detail. "Hegemonic" representations are described as those shared by all members of a highly structured group, such as "a party, city or nation" (1988, p.221); "emancipated" representations are generated by different sub-groups, whereby "each subgroup creates its own version and shares it with the others" (1988, p.221); and "polemic" representations are determined by the antagonistic relations between members of society, "they are generated in the course of social conflict and society as a whole does not share them" (1988, p.221). Here, Moscovici does in fact state that "the point of view of the observer plays an important part" (1988, p.222), but makes no further comment to help substantiate the statement.

Again, the sharedness of the representations is assumed, thus the scope for variation in understood solely in group terms. The issue of identifying how and to what extent a group may be said to share a representation is taken to be unproblematic, yet it is the extent of this sharedness itself that marks the distinction between the different types. This leads to a situation of classification by fiat, which raises serious doubts as to utility of the classification. For example, given the capacity for individual transformation, it is not clear how widely a hegemonic representation should be expected to manifest itself either across situations, across individuals or across time. In some instances the scope for individual variation will manifest itself such that the representation may not appear to be hegemonic, and thus could be described as emancipated. Similarly it is not clear when the interactions between groups should be regarded as antagonistic and thus change from being emancipated to polemic, or vice versa.

The problem is that there Moscovici provides no means by which to specify the boundaries of these distinctions. One group of people may assume their representation to be widely held, whereas it may not only be narrowly held, but may specifically contradict the beliefs of others who may regard themselves as either ambivalent or even antagonistic to the first group. Thus to the first group of people, the representation may appear to be hegemonic, to the others it may appear emancipated or polemic. It is not clear by whose definition of "antagonism" any distinction is to be made. Any relationship between groups may entail a degree of antagonism; again the
identification of this level as one which leads to polemic representations or not, is not straightforward, particularly when the scope for individual variation between groups is taken into account. It is not clear how these distinctions are to be made. Again, this is not an issue if the observation of phenomena is taken to be unproblematic and the researches perspective is taken to reflect the "truth".

However, not only is it not clear how these distinctions are to be made, it is also not clear why these distinctions should be made. Moscovici does not provide any explanation for why a tripartite distinction should be more appropriate than any other. In fact, given the scope for individual variation it is not clear what a hegemonic representation could possibly entail; it is simply a representation held (in whatever way that could possibly be understood) by a larger group, than the sub-groups implicated in the other types of representation. Similarly with regard to the emancipated and polemic distinction, some degree of antagonism in the relations between groups is inevitable, so a distinction made on the grounds of "antagonistic relations" or "not" does not appear particularly useful. It is only due to the persistence of consensuality in Moscovici's thought, that such a simplistic distinction as antagonistic versus non-antagonistic group relations could possibly be viewed as worthwhile. The distinctions are based upon a simplistic, unipolar dimension of consensus versus conflict, that Moscovici has arbitrarily divided into three parts⁴. It is not apparent what use Moscovici's distinctions could actually be put to. They are of little theoretical use due to their thoroughly speculative nature, and their reliance upon group level consensus; and in the context of a specific research enquiry such a simplistic division would be of little use, due to its reliance upon a notion of unproblematic observation. It would be more worthwhile to think in terms of simultaneous conflict and consensus.

There is also confusion concerning Moscovici's comments regarding "facts". By asserting that all understanding is mediated by representations, it is not immediately apparent why some forms of knowledge may be accorded more importance that others and thus be termed "facts", given that all information is mediated through.

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⁴This is in some respects similar to the earlier example of different types of individualism, which was based upon a unipolar dimension of collectivism versus individualism, that again was arbitrarily divided into three parts.
representations. Nevertheless Moscovici makes continual reference to “facts”. For example, “We derive only a small fraction of our knowledge and information from the simple interaction between ourselves and the facts we encounter in the world.” (Moscovici, 1988, p.215).

Moscovici initially attempted to deal with this situation through the positing of a distinction between reified and consensual realms. However, as described by McKinlay and Potter, asserting that science is the basis for facts and truth cannot be reconciled with the notion that all thinking is mediated by representations, as scientists presumably also mediate the world through their representations.

In fact, in that initial chapter, Moscovici argues that science was formerly based on common sense, whereas now common sense is science made common (1984a, p.29). This change in the relationship between common sense and science was no doubt necessary for Moscovici to support the notion that science is distinct from social representations, thereby providing a means for privileging certain types of knowledge as science. This supposed distinction between science and social representations is the basis for the confusions surrounding the distinction between the consensual and the reified, as argued by McKinlay and Potter which show the distinction to be untenable. Moscovici’s later attempts to distinguish science from social representations on the basis of a “legalistic” as opposed to a “fiduciary” truth (1987, p.518) offer little improvement: rigorous thinking is not the sole province of science; similarly Moscovici’s notion of “visualising” (1988, p.216), was discussed earlier and shown to be untenable.

That Moscovici had not appreciated the implications of all thought being mediated by social representations is indicated through the many examples given for the importance of representations. Examples include, our understandings of urban space being utterly determined by our representations (1984a, p. 60); our representation of illness influencing our behaviour (1984b, p.951); that as “communists” move closer to other groups their representations change (1984b, p.950-1); that social representations are important for an aggregate of individuals to become a social movement (1987, p.515);
that each representation of money reveals a different social representation of money (1987, p.517); that drug use is a given and a product of representations (1988, p.214); and that representations determine the reality in which people live (1988, p.231). If Moscovici had fully appreciated his initial assertion, these examples would appear entirely unremarkable. Every thought or intentional action is a result of one's social representations, given the definition of social representations as mediating our knowledge and understanding.

Moscovici's discussion of Durkheim.

As described earlier, Jahoda gave a number of reasons why social representations did not actually appear to be distinct from Durkheim's "collective representations" (Jahoda, 1988, p.196-7). Moscovici responded by arguing that unlike social representations, for collective representations there is no effort to "spell out its cognitive characteristics in greater detail" (Moscovici, 1988, p.218). However, now that it can be seen that Moscovici attempts to describe the "cognitive characteristics" of social representations have not been convincing, it is worthwhile examining in some detail how distinct Moscovici's notions are from those of Durkheim.

Moscovici makes reference to the work of Durkheim as a theoretical antecedent, in particular Durkheim's concept of "collective representations". Reference to Durkheim was a consistent feature of Moscovici's papers in the critical exchanges discussed earlier 5. It is instructive to scrutinise Moscovici's appropriation of Durkheim as this allows important insights into the nature of Moscovici's project.

The references to Durkheim can be seen to provide support on two fronts. One is to legitimate the importance of studying collective representations in general; this is done through an acknowledgement of Durkheim's statement of the importance of such

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5 The only exception is the short, two page rejoinder to Potter and Litton's (1985a) strongly critical paper (Moscovici, 1985).
activity. The other is to legitimate the importance of studying social representations in particular, by stressing the progression Moscovici has made from Durkheim’s original conception.

However, by seeking to emphasise the distinctiveness of social representations, Moscovici has propagated a caricature of Durkheim’s position, involving gross distortion and simplification. It will be seen that great similarities in the fundamental features of each approach. Also, it will be argued that Moscovici’s conception is not only prone to precisely the same problems as Durkheim, but that Moscovici’s proposed solutions are also similar to those of Durkheim. This forces a reconsideration of the distinctiveness of Moscovici’s contribution.

Moscovici’s misappropriation of Durkheim
Moscovici states that it is “obvious” that the concept of social representations is a legacy of Durkheimian thought (1984a, p.16). Durkheim’s eminence is explicitly acknowledged many times, for example: “Durkheim was the first to focus on the importance of collective representations embedded in language, our institutions and our customs, showing at the same time to what extent this set of representations constitutes social thought as a complement to individual thought.” (Moscovici, 1984b, p.942)

The alignment of social representations with a respected, if overlooked, tradition is also made through this explicit association with Durkheim: “According to Durkheim, it is the explicit task of social psychology to study the nature and genesis of collective representations, to analyse “collective ideation,” and to take on this task as its main scientific objective.” (Moscovici, 1984b, p.942)

However, perhaps as a consequence of this proposed partialling out of responsibility within disciplines, the idea had not been “theoretically formulated” (Moscovici, 1987, p.526). It has thus been necessary to amend Durkheim’s conception by addressing its “intrinsic problems” (Moscovici, 1988, p.219). Moscovici describes Durkheim’s
position on a number of basic points, each of which allow Moscovici to provide a
counter position to distinguish social representations from Durkheim-ian sociology.

Moscovici’s argument may be broken down into four basic assertions, which may be
summarised as follows:

(1) For Durkheim, collective representations have a static, coercive and homogenous
character. They reflect Durkheim’s generally static conception of society. In contrast
social representations are more dynamic, and therefore more appropriate to rapidly
changing modern societies.

(2) Collective representations are distinct from, and defined in their opposition to,
individual representations; for Moscovici this distinction is, to a large extent, irrelevant.
Social representations seek to transcend the dichotomy of individual and social.

(3) It is the job of social psychology to study in more detail collective representations,
a point endorsed by Durkheim himself.

(4) Collective representations refer to a whole range of intellectual forms, including
science, religion, myth and categories of space and time. In contrast social
representations are more specific, referring to a particular type of knowledge.

Although Moscovici describes this characterisation of Durkheim’s work as “well
known” (1988, p.218), this assertion was questioned as early as the initial Farr and
Moscovici volume:

“Durkheim was a careful and systematic thinker, and social representations are an
integral part of a larger conceptual framework. I am not sure that Durkheim’s image
of society is the image entertained by the contemporary French School [i.e. those
working in Social Representations ]...” (Deutscher, 1984, p. 75).
Indeed each of the arguments proposed by Moscovici to demonstrate the distinctiveness of social representations may be called into question. It will be seen that Moscovici is often very selective in his use of references when referring to Durkheim. As a result it can be seen that often by considering such a reference in its original context, its meaning appears quite different to that attributed by Moscovici. On occasion, this difference in meaning is apparent by analysing just a paragraph from which Moscovici may have selected only particular lines. To this end, to examine each of Moscovici's arguments requires a more detailed analysis of Durkheim's work. Thus, each of Moscovici's assertions will be considered in turn.

(1) For Durkheim, collective representations have a static, coercive and homogenous character. They reflect Durkheim's generally static conception of society.

Durkheim defines the "conscience collective" as "the set of beliefs and sentiments common to the average member of single society [which] forms a determinate system that has its own life." 6 (1972, p.77) It is "by definition, diffused throughout the whole society.." and is "independent of the particular conditions in which individuals are placed; they pass on and it remains." (1972, p.77)

This would appear to correspond to Moscovici's description. However, the conscience collective was a concept relevant to less advanced, or "traditional" societies. These types of society were characterised by a "mechanical solidarity", where the individual was tied directly to society, their autonomy bounded by a strongly defined moral consensus. The term "mechanical" is used to indicate an analogy with the "mechanical structure" of simple organisms, where each cell is comparable to all others.

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6 Lukes (1973) points out that in translation, the French term "conscience" may refer to both "conscience" and "consciousness". "Thus the 'beliefs and sentiments' comprising the conscience collective are, on the one hand, moral and religious, and, on the other, cognitive." (p.4).
Mechanical solidarity is quite different from the solidarity characteristic of modern societies, produced through the division of labour. Modern societies are based on a more "organic solidarity". The term "organic" is used to indicate an analogy with the "higher animals", where "each organ, in effect, has its special character and autonomy; and yet the unity of the organism is as great as the individuation of the parts is more marked." Whereas mechanical solidarity implies that individuals resemble each other, organic solidarity presumes that they differ (Durkheim, 1972). Here the individual's attachments to the "conscience collective" are mediated by ties to other groups, such as those generated by the division of labour. Common understandings become more general. Normative understandings are not identical for different sections of a society; these are what Durkheim refers to as "collective representations".

"..Essentially, social life is made up of representations." (Durkheim, 1974, p.55)

"Indeed, what the collective representations convey is the way in which the group conceives itself in relation to objects which affect it." (Durkheim 1974, p.28)

Durkheim places much emphasis on collective representations. Lukes (1973) states that Durkheim made little use of the "conscience collective" as the saw this as too static and all-embracing; and that much of Durkheim's later work can be seen as the systematic study of collective representations. Thus to charge Durkheim with simply holding a static view of society is inaccurate.

To consider Durkheim's thought on the nature of society, particularly with reference to Moscovici's charges of "homogenous" and "coercive", it is necessary to briefly present Durkheim's definitions of "social fact" and "institution" and their relationship to collective representations.

Durkheim defines a "social fact" as "ways of acting or thinking with the peculiar characteristic of exercising a coercive influence on individual consciousness." (Durkheim, 1982, p.51) Social facts, are "mental", in that, they "consist of ways of thinking or behaving. But the states of the collective consciousness are different in nature from the states of the individual consciousness; they are representations of
another type.” (Durkheim, 1982, p.45). Also Durkheim describes “institutions” as “all the beliefs and all the modes of conduct instituted by the collectivity.” Thus collective representations are seen as social facts (Lukes, 1973).

However, it can be seen that Durkheim’s understandings are quite sophisticated from the following passages: the first relates to the coercive influence of the social fact, the second to the charge of homogeneity.

“The coercive power that we attribute to it is so far from being the whole of the social fact, that it can present the opposite character as well. Institutions may impose themselves upon us, but we cling to them; they compel us and we love them; they constrain us and we find our welfare in our adherence to them and in this very constraint....There is perhaps no collective behaviour which does not exercise this double action upon us, and it is contradictory in appearance only.” (Durkheim, 1972, p.80).

“Because beliefs and social practices thus come to us from without, it does not follow that we receive them passively or without modification. In reflecting on collective institutions and assimilating them for ourselves, we individualise them and impart to them more or less personal characteristics....There is no conformity to social convention that does not comprise an entire range of individual shades.” (Durkheim, 1972, p.70).

Thus it can be seen that to simply describe Durkheim’s collective representations as static, homogenous, and coercive with little further comment is a gross misrepresentation. In fact, on the basis of the above arguments, it appears that Durkheim’s conception is indeed very similar to that of Moscovici.
That collective representations are distinct from, and defined in their opposition to, individual representations.

Again, reference must be made to the distinctions between both mechanical and organic solidarity. Durkheim describes these types of solidarity are “two aspects of one and the same reality, but nonetheless, they must be distinguished.” (Durkheim, 1982, p. 80).

Durkheim describes the conscience collective as leaving open a space for individual consciousness to allow for specific functions to be fulfilled, however individual consciousness is still considered merely an appendage to the collective consciousness. Thus, the conscience collective may be described as distinct from, and defined in their opposition to, individual representations. But this is not the case with collective representations. Durkheim makes no claim of an opposition between collective and individual representations. As is evident in the following quote, Durkheim simply states that collective representations are not reducible to individual characteristics; that is, they are emergent phenomena.

“In fact, on the one hand, every individual depends more directly upon society as labour becomes more divided; and, on the other, the activity of every individual becomes more personalised to the degree that it is more specialised....Here, then, the individuality of all grows at the same time as that of its parts. Society becomes more capable of collective action, at the same time that each of its elements has more freedom of action.” (Durkheim, 1982, p. 54).

The transition from mechanical to organic solidarity constitutes a transformation of the social bond, leading both to an increased level of individuation, and an undermining of fixed, moral boundaries. Contrary to Moscovici’s claim, there is not a simple opposition between the collective and the individual, once again there appears to be much similarity between Durkheim and Moscovici.
(3) It is the job of social psychology to study in more detail collective representations. Durkheim himself endorsed this point.

Durkheim places great importance on the study of collective beliefs, describing them as "the vital knot of the whole society". As for example in Durkheim's account of social constraint, which occurs later in the same passage as that from which Moscovici's assertion is taken: "... this is the very essence of the idea of social constraint; for it merely implies that collective ways of acting or thinking have a reality outside the individuals who, at every moment of time, conform to it. .... in order that there may be a social fact, several individuals at the very least, must have contributed their action; and in this joint activity is the origin of a new fact....since this joint activity takes place outside each one of us (for a plurality of consciousnesses enters into it), its necessary effect is to fix, to institute outside us, certain ways of acting and certain judgements which do not depend on each particular will taken separately...(one can) designate as "institutions" all the beliefs and all the modes of conduct instituted by the collectivity. Sociology can then be defined as the science of institutions, of their genesis and their functioning." (Durkheim, 1982, p.45).

This seems to contradict Moscovici's claim that Durkheim considered the study of collective representations to be the job of social psychology. As described earlier, Lukes (1973) describes much of Durkheim's later work to be concerned with systematic study of collective representations. With regard to Durkheim's comments regarding social psychology, Durkheim had actually said that "Collective psychology is sociology, quite simply" (1974, p.34), and that "a special branch of sociology, which does not yet exist, should be devoted to research into the laws of collective ideation." (1974, p.32). It is with regard to this last point, concerning the laws of collective thinking, that Durkheim was referring when making the statement Moscovici draws upon: "Social psychology whose task it is to determine these laws, is scarcely more than a name, without a definite subject matter, and including all sorts of generalities, diverse and inexact." (Durkheim, 1982, p.41).
It appears that Durkheim is referring to social psychology as the name for a proposed branch of sociology whose task would be to study the "laws of ideation". This is far from providing an endorsement from Durkheim of what has now come to be known as social psychology. From this, it can be seen that for Moscovici to describe Durkheim as delegating the study of collective representations to social psychology is at best misleading. However, when also taking into account the selectivity of Moscovici's referencing, it appears that Moscovici is deliberately attempting to promote the legitimacy of social representations by illegitimate means.

(4) Collective representations refer to a whole range of intellectual forms, including science, religion, myth and categories of space and time. In contrast Social Representations are more specific, referring to a particular type of knowledge.

This argument does not involve a misrepresentation of Durkheim's position as such, though as described earlier when discussing social representations, it does involve a misrepresentation of Moscovici's position. The arguments of McKinlay and Potter (1987) and Jahoda (1988) in particular, showed that Moscovici does not appear to provide a convincing argument to differentiate social representations from "other forms of knowledge", consequently the reified / consensual distinction is not sustainable. Indeed as all information is mediate through representations, "science, religion, myth and categories of space and time" may all be understood as social representations.

With regard to social representations referring to a specific type of knowledge, concerns about the logical status of Social Representations expressed by Jahoda (1988) are relevant. In a section titled "What is not a Social Representation?", Jahoda complains: "(t)he open-ended application of the term seems to provide a license to treat everything except the 'reified universe of science' as a social representation. Already in Moscovici's original study of the image of psychoanalysis numerous individual interviews are reported, whose content is invariably discussed in terms of
social representations. Interesting and insightful as many of these discussions are, no attempt is made to justify the application of the label which is simply taken as axiomatic.” (Jahoda, 1988, p.204).

Thus, on the basis of earlier discussions, social representations do not appear to refer to a particular type of knowledge. Once again the distinctiveness Moscovici claims between his approach and that of Durkheim does not appear to be sustained.

Conclusion
It can be seen that Durkheim’s position is far more sophisticated than it would appear through Moscovici’s descriptions. I will later argue that this simplification of Durkheim became progressively more complete as Moscovici sought to defend Social Representations from mounting criticism. However this is not to say that Durkheim’s position is wholly satisfactory with respect to the phenomena with which he was concerned. It will be argued that Moscovici’s arguments do not constitute a departure from those of Durkheim, and are subject to similar shortcomings. To pursue this line of discussion requires further detailed analysis of Durkheim’s work, in particular the expression of social constraint through the concept of the “social fact”.

Re-introducing Durkheim

The two major concerns in Durkheim’s work were to deal with social change, particularly the transition between traditional and modern societies; and to mark out a specific domain for sociology (Lukes, 1973; Giddens, 1977). In “The rules of sociological method” (1982), Durkheim gives the following definitions of social facts:
"A social fact is any way of acting, whether fixed or not, capable of exerting over the individual an external constraint;

or:

which is general over the whole of a given society whilst having an existence of its own, independent of its individual manifestations." (Durkheim, 1982, p.59).

Durkheim did not regard these definitions as exhaustive or exclusive, but as preliminary definitions, to be used as a sign by which to recognise sociological phenomena, and so guide research. Thus Durkheim describes how the second definition may be understood as a reformulation of the first: "if a mode of behaviour existing outside the consciousness of individuals becomes general, in can only do so by exerting pressure on them." (Durkheim, 1982, p.44).

Lukes (1973) points out the particular nature of Durkheim's use of the word "fact" and its translation. Lukes stresses that "social facts should be understood to mean social phenomena, factors or forces." Durkheim emphasised the "objective reality of social facts" to be a basic principle; as realities external to the individual. However, there are a number of ways that social facts are described as being external to the individual. It is in attempting to reconcile these descriptions that some of the problems of Durkheim's approach may be seen.

Social facts are seen as external to the individual as they are refractory to the human will; that is they could not simply be altered by a "mere act of will". This was important to Durkheim as he wished to distinguish his position from a utilitarian standpoint. Briefly stated, the utilitarian position took the individual as the starting point of analysis; social life was seen as spontaneous and therefore entirely unconstraining; all human wants were seen as contained within the individual. In contrast to this, Durkheim's "moral individualism" took the individual to be an outcome of social processes.
Durkheim saw social facts as capable of exerting constraint, recognisable through the existence of pre-determined sanctions. Through the application or threat of application of these sanctions, individuals were obligated to act in particular ways. To capture the specific nature of "social" constraint as opposed to that of physical objects, Durkheim made a distinction between moral sanctions and mechanical sanctions.

Mechanical sanctions followed automatically from, and were therefore necessarily related to, a particular action. As an example, Durkheim gives the example of drinking poisoned water. The sanction which would follow automatically would be falling ill. Individuals would therefore orient their behaviour to avoid the sanction, and in this example, poisoned water would not be drunk.

In contrast, social constraint involves moral sanctions and obligations. Here the sanction is socially determined and has no definite connection to the action. This allows negotiation in the definition of an action, and also enables cultural or group variation to be accounted for. For example, in the case of ending the life of another, the action may be punished to varying degrees of severity depending on how the action is understood, as perhaps self-defence, neglect or as pre-meditated, and may even be rewarded, for example in times of war.

However, constraint was not seen solely as an external force. In his later writings, Durkheim increasingly emphasised the enabling character of the moral sanction rather than its constraining aspect, as his conception of society became more normative. This was described earlier when discussing the transition to "organic solidarity". The constraining aspect continued to be involved in the defining of goals and normative standards, though normative values were seen as internalised by the individual.

Durkheim described the externality of social facts in another sense when stating that they both pre-existed and post-dated the individual. For example, domestic, or civic or contractual obligations are defined externally to the individual in law and custom; religious beliefs and practices "exist prior to the individual, because they exist
outside him”; language and currency as well as professional practices “function independently of my use of them” (Durkheim, 1982, p.45).

Social facts are also seen as external as they refer to externally visible components or expressions of action. They are external to the individual flux of individual participants and may be found in social statistics representing rates of births, marriages and suicides. These statistics afford a means to isolate certain currents of opinion, “(s)uch currents are plainly social facts” (Durkheim, 1982, p.55).

“Since each one of these statistics includes without distinction all individual cases, the individual circumstances which may have played some part in producing the phenomenon cancel each other out and consequently do not contribute to determining the nature of the phenomenon.” (Durkheim, 1982, p.55).

Further social facts are independent of the individual’s conceptual apparatus, and are not to be confused with personal manifestations or what Durkheim refers to as “individual incarnations”, “What constitutes social facts are the beliefs, tendencies and practices of the group taken collectively. But the forms that these collective states may assume when they are refracted through individuals are things of a different kind.” (Durkheim, 1982, p.48).

Again with regard to “individual incarnations”, Durkheim states that “..to a large extent each one depends also upon the psychical and organic constitution of the individual, and on the particular circumstances in which he is placed. Therefore they are not phenomena which are in the strict sense sociological.” (Durkheim, 1982, p.49).
Critical evaluation of Durkheim

There are a number of conceptual difficulties in Durkheim's formulations that are directly relevant to Social Representations. They are related to the various notions of the externality of social facts, and concern both the nature of social constraint (the relationship between the individual and the social) and the logic of empirical enquiry. For clarity these will be explored first with reference to Durkheim's work only. The implications for Social Representations, particularly the distinctiveness and adequacy of the formulation, will be examined later.

The sense in which social facts are described as external to the individual, through being refractory to the human will, is problematic. As described earlier, to distinguish social constraint from geographical or environmental constraint, Durkheim differentiated moral sanctions from mechanical sanctions. Durkheim explained the peculiar enabling yet constraining aspect of moral sanctions through the internalisation of normative values, in effect, a sense of obligation or moral commitment to a norm. In contrast, with regard to mechanical sanctions behaviour is more utilitarian, oriented toward the risk inherent in the sanction; so for example in the case of the poisoned water, if the person is in desperate need of the water and is not certain as to its contamination, they may choose to drink.

The problem for Durkheim is that he cannot incorporate a "utilitarian" approach to moral sanctions. It is quite conceivable for action to be oriented toward moral norms without implying a moral commitment. Action that appears to conform to a norm may not actually involve acceptance of a moral obligation, but may instead be oriented toward the avoidance of a sanction. For example, a person may agree to be drafted into the armed forces during a period of conflict to avoid the sanctions involved in not complying, rather than by being committed to a particular cause. Alternatively, a person may be morally committed to a value but may disagree with a particular expression of that value. For example, they may be strongly patriotic, yet disagree with their country's involvement in a particular conflict, and so may appear to act against the national interest. As Giddens (1977) explains, this may seem an obvious
point, but though such orientations may be of decisive importance in social life, they cannot be dealt with within Durkheim's conceptualisation.

Thus the assumption that a social fact involves the internalisation of a normative value is problematic. Compliance may be secured among those who are indifferent, ambivalent or even outright opposed to a particular normative value, through the coercive measures some are able to apply against others. This bears directly upon issues of conflict and power that Durkheim, due to the normative bias in his work, cannot adequately deal with.

The deficiencies of Durkheim in this respect can again be demonstrated through the concept of "anomie", or social disintegration. The lack of normative regulation may be conceived of in two ways, as a lack of definite objectives or a lack of realisable objectives (Giddens, 1977). In the first sense anomie refers to a situation of "normlessness"; with social conflict seen in terms of imperfect socialisation. In contrast, the lack of realisable objectives can be conceived in terms of normative strain, where objectives may be clearly defined, but may be mutually antagonistic. A person may find the norms associated with "employment" in their "social environment" to be in conflict with those in their "work environment"; for example, in their social environment employment may be valued in instrumental terms, whereas their work environment may involve a work ethic of commitment. Here, conflict may be seen as arising from divisions of interest in society.

Durkheim generally considers anomie in the first sense, that of normlessness. However, when anomie is considered in the second sense by Durkheim, the lack of realisable objectives is seen to refer to the changeable nature of human wants rather than in terms of conflicting norms. This is a consequence of the reliance on the internalisation of values. Adherence to norms can only be understood through internalisation, however there are no means for dealing with degrees of internalisation or commitment to norms. Consequently, non-compliance can only be seen in terms of lack of commitment rather than as occurring through conflicting normative demands. Normative conflict cannot be dealt with theoretically, even though the issue of
normative conflict may be considered relevant. This leads to an essentially unitary conception of social phenomena: as internalisation is only conceived in terms of either having happened, or not having happened, adherence to norms is taken unproblematically to be the consequence of internalisation.

This is a crucial point, for the internalisation of values is at the heart of Durkheim's conceptualisation of agency; that is, of the relationship between the individual and the social, and it is found to be problematic. Lukes (1985) argues that Durkheim tended to ignore aspects of social life that he could not easily assimilate, such as interactions between individuals and relations between sub-social groups. Thus it can be seen that the relationship between groups' "specialised moralities" or collective representations in a situation of organic solidarity remains unclear; there is no means for dealing with possible conflict between those "specialised moralities".

A consideration of social change illustrates the problematic nature of Durkheim's formulation. This is evident in the possibility of alternative readings of Durkheim, both materialist and idealist (Giddens, 1977, p.280). A materialist reading emphasises how the change in infrastructure from mechanical to organic solidarity causes changes in moral conduct. An idealist reading would emphasise how changes in moral ideals, such as the growth of myths, may alter social life, (Durkheim explains how the original forms of collective representations may "bear the mark of their origin", but once formed they are partially autonomous.) Durkheim emphasises the interplay between the infrastructure and the conscience collective and collective representations, but provides no systematic treatment of the mechanisms mediating the relationship. Thus, as Giddens (1977, p.285) argues "there appear to be two independent sets of processes going on."

Also problematic is that Durkheim uses the term "individual" in different senses. He uses it in a specific sense to refer to any particular individual, or the "concrete individual"; yet also in a more general sense to refer to the "social actor", that is the individual as the outcome of social processes. This can be seen by considering Durkheim's examples of the externality of social facts to the individual. In the
description of externality referring to social facts as both pre-existing and post-dating the individual, the "concrete individual" is invoked. This can be seen in that it would not make sense in terms of the "social actor" given the involvement of the individual in the social fact, for example as described in the arguments concerning the development of moral individualism through organic solidarity. The problem is that Durkheim does not adequately describe the relationship between the concrete individual and the social actor; that is between the specific and the general case. The relationship may be assumed to be unproblematic due to reliance on the notion of internalisation which would tend to reinforce such a view. However, the implications of this problematic assumption may be illustrated by considering Durkheim's analysis of suicide.

Durkheim's study of suicide served to illustrate his conception of sociological method (Giddens, 1977, p.275). Primarily through the statistical manipulation of official statistics, Durkheim sought to investigate the social factors that govern the rate of suicide, rather than conceiving of suicide as a purely personal act. Durkheim acknowledges that his analysis identifies relevant social conditions, and does not allow one to predict specific cases, that being the task of a psychological theory. However, Durkheim, does allow that social conditions are likely to affect the incidence of "suicidal personalities".

The recourse to a psychological theory appears legitimate as "suicidal traits" are left at a "pre-social" level. However, the concept of the social actor emphasises the cognitive and motivational personality of the individual is shaped by social learning, through the internalisation of moral norms. Thus there is a tension between the "pre-social" impulses of the concrete individual and the moral commands of the social actor. The reliance on a psychological theory would only be legitimate if there were a clear distinction between "non-social" (presumably biological) suicides and "socially influenced" suicides.

However, a relationship is assumed between the specific and the general case, or between the "concrete individual" and the "social actor", though by not having the means to sufficiently explain it, this treatment of the external nature of the social fact
must be seen as wanting. The "concrete individual" is not distinct from the "social actor", thus social facts cannot simply be said to pre-exist and post-date the individual. It is necessary to more clearly explicate how the individual is implicated in the perpetuation of a social fact.

Similarly, each of the other explanations of the external nature of social facts can be seen as problematic. Durkheim explains the independence of the social fact from individual incarnations by arguing that norms are distinct from, yet govern social behaviour. Through the notion of individual incarnations acknowledges the notion of individual variation, however Durkheim does not clearly explain the relationship between a particular behaviour and the wider norms. This then can be seen to be a redescription of the problem relating the specific to the general case, or the "concrete individual" to the "social actor" described previously with respect to Durkheim's study of suicide. The only means Durkheim provides for relating the concrete individual and the social actor, through the internalisation of normative values, cannot deal effectively with this problem.

The externality of social facts described through official statistics as beyond the flux of individual participants is also problematic. While there are complex arguments concerning whether for example, the notion of a suicide rate itself should be accepted, for the present purposes it is sufficient to describe a contradiction within Durkheim's discussion of the use of official statistics. Durkheim seeks to improve upon common-sense notions of suicide by providing his own definition and supporting it with official statistics. However, it is not clear how close Durkheim's definition corresponds to those used by those involved in the construction of the official statistics. Thus it is not clear to what extent the statistics do in fact support what Durkheim proposes the term to mean.

That the use of the official statistics was seen as unproblematic relates to a basic conceptual confusion, whereby social facts are seen as both an element and a proposition of the social world. This confuses two senses of social facts as "the mode of thinking", and "that which is thought", respectively. Durkheim's theoretical
discussion seeks to establish social facts as "the mode of thinking" whereby social facts are taken to be features of society. However, that argument is also used to support social facts as "that which is thought", i.e., the content of a particular social fact. That may be considered legitimate when it is assumed that social facts can be neutrally and unproblematically observed. However, when doubt is cast as to the propositional content of a social fact, such as in the case of attributing Durkheim's definition of suicide to official statistics, Durkheim's theoretical discussion, which relates to social facts as "the mode of thinking" is not directly relevant.

Thus it can be seen that Durkheim's conception of social facts, based upon both social constraint through the internalisation of norms and a confusion between social facts as "the mode of thinking" and "that which is thought" is inherently flawed. These problems lead to a conception of social phenomena as unitary and unproblematically observed, respectively. However, it is important to note that the problems regarding the conception of social phenomena follow as a consequence of Durkheim's theorisation. Thus, even though reference may be made toward individual variation and different levels of attachment to norms, a unitary conception of phenomena is implicit in the assumption of internalisation of values. Similarly, the unproblematic observation of phenomena is implicit given the external nature of social facts. This is an important point to emphasise, that even though Durkheim acknowledged the complex nature of social phenomena, a unitary, unproblematic conception of social phenomena was a consequence of fundamental flaws in his theorisation.

Similarities between Parsons and Moscovici

Durkheim's discussion of social facts can be seen as an attempt to theorise the relationship between action and structure. As described earlier, the "social" world is
seem as distinct from the “natural world” due to its normative character. Action is oriented toward norms, which are seen as properties of collectivities.

The work of Parsons is also relevant to an investigation of social representations. Parsons’ arguments share a number of similarities with those of Moscovici. Both Parsons and Moscovici consider Durkheim as a direct theoretical antecedent, and they each seek to explain the relationship between the individual and society through the internalisation of normative values. However, both also similarly mis-represent Durkheim by over-emphasising the consensual character of his writing, to support their own projects.

Parsons attempted to transcend the individual / social distinction by investigating the nature of social action. This was seen as necessary to resolve what Parsons referred to as “the problem of order”; that is, how society is able to maintain stability given the diversity of individual wills. Parsons explained the purposive conduct of individuals through the internalisation of values. The values that constitute the normative consensus are also internalised as motivating elements in the personalities of actors. Thus social order is achieved through the integration of values and purposes, which ensures a “fit” between the individual and society.

However, as described in the discussion of Durkheim, the notion of internalised values as a means to link the individual with the social is problematic. With regard to Parsons, it can be seen that the freedom of the active individual is reduced to the needs-dispositions of personality. Furthermore, social conflict can only be seen in terms of a breakdown of the normative order resulting from a lack of motivational commitment to consensual norms. There is no means for dealing with conflict in terms of power struggles and sectional interests. Thus it is difficult to deal with the possibility of change in institutionalised value standards.

7 Giddens discussion of Parsons provides a useful reference which describes the relationship between the internalisation of values and personality in Parsons’ writing: “The main characteristics of human personality are “organised about the internalisation of systems of social objects which originated as the role-units of the successive series of social systems in which the individual has come to be integrated in the course of his life history” (Parsons and Bales, 1955, p.54).” Taken from Giddens, 1979, p.102.
These shortcomings may be illustrated through Giddens' discussion of Parsons' analysis of social change (Giddens, 1995, p.209). Despite Parsons' claims that he accounts for the purposive conduct of individuals, the reliance on the internalisation of values is based on the assumption that normative values are the most basic feature of social existence. Thus Parsons considers social change to be fundamentally based upon changes in cultural values and norms. Other factors, such as resource availability, are seen as exerting only a conditioning effect at best. Parsons may have recognised the existence of non-normative factors, but accorded them little importance and provided no systematic discussion of their involvement in the formation, maintenance and diffusion of cultural values and norms. Giddens argues that this amounts to an "idealist orthodoxy" (i.e. emphasising the primacy of systems of thought): cultural values are seen to change independently of other structural elements, thus social change is effectively under the direction of cultural values.

Consequently Parsons attempts at historical explanation contained very little in the way of actual explanation. Parsons' style of argument typically involved the positing of a logical relationship or "fit" between a specific value, norm or pattern of behaviour, and some more general value or set of values. This logical relationship was then taken as an explanation of the former. As Giddens demonstrates: "Thus, for example, at one point in his discussion of political power, [Parsons] traced 'political democracy' - that is, universal franchise - to 'the principle of equality before the law', which was a 'subordinate principle of universalistic normative organization', as if this were to explain how or why universal franchise came into being." (Giddens, 1995, p.209). It can perhaps be argued that such an "explanation" may be seen as acceptable given the assumption of an unproblematic acceptance and diffusion of normative values as a fundamental component in the constitution of society.

Giddens refers to the theories of Durkheim and Parsons as examples of "normative functionalism", whereby normative values are seen to be the fundamental constituents of society, and provide the means by which functions are fulfilled to meet various social needs. Giddens rejects functional theories, arguing that both the concept of
“function” and the notion of “social need” are either redundant or falsely applied. A detailed analysis of Giddens arguments regarding functional theories will be given later, when discussing Giddens’ theory of structuration. For the moment, Giddens arguments will be briefly described as the notion of “functional pre-requisite” is of particular significance to social representations.

Giddens argues that the notion of a functional need implies the necessity of an appropriate functional response, thus the identification of a functional consequence is taken to explain the existence of social phenomena. In this way, agency is endowed upon social systems, which are seen to somehow mobilise forces to produce a functional response. There is little concern for the intentional actions of individuals who are seen simply as the bearers of social relations that serve the functional need.

Giddens argues that agency should only be attributed to actors, not to social systems as a whole. Thus it is not legitimate to refer to society’s “needs” and the notion of “function” is superfluous. The identification of a functional consequence does not explain the existence of social phenomena. Instead it describes a relationship (between the functional need and the particular consequence) that requires explanation, rather than actually explaining it. Such an explanation would require the specification of a mechanism linking the functional need to the particular consequence. This mechanism would be in terms of the intended and unintended consequences of the actions of purposeful actors, for which it would not be necessary to resort to the term “function” at all.

Furthermore, Giddens explains that the notion of “functional prerequisites” is generally tautologous, in that they are logically implied by the particular conception of “society”. To illustrate this argument Giddens discusses two functional prerequisites identified by Aberle et al (1967), those of “shared cognitive orientations”, and “role differentiation and role assignment”: “In every society, members must share a body of cognitive orientations’ which, among other things, ‘make stable, meaningful and predictable the social institutions in which they are engaged’; and in every society, there must be

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8 For example see Giddens, 1977, ch. 2; Giddens, 1984, chs. 4, 5, 6; Giddens, 1992, chs. 3 and 4.
different roles that are regularly performed, 'otherwise everyone would be doing everything and nothing - a state of indeterminacy which is the antithesis of society'. But the authors have already defined 'society' in such a way as to make these conceptually necessary elements of it. A society is defined as a 'self-sufficient system of action', where 'action' is implicitly conceived of in the Parsonian sense as 'meaningful' conduct oriented by shard expectations, and 'system' as stably connected activities - exactly the characteristics later treated as if they were empirically independent." (Giddens, 1977, p. 112).

Giddens also argues that Parsons claimed that the problem of order was a major concern to Durkheim, which led Parsons to represent Durkheim's work as being progressively more dominated by the notion of moral consensus. However, Giddens claims, Durkheim actually showed little interest in the problem of order, and was far more concerned with analysing the relationships between traditional and modern societies. As argued when discussing Moscovici's misrepresentation of Durkheim, the notions of "mechanical solidarity" and "organic solidarity" demonstrate that the notion of consensus was not a primary concern. As described earlier, Durkheim argued that the further analysis of collective representations should be the task of a social psychology, conceived as a particular branch of sociology (and not to be confused with present day conceptions of social psychology); while Durkheim continued analysis of more "sociological" concerns such as the transition between "traditional" and "modern" forms of society.

It appears that both Parsons and Moscovici have each over-emphasised the consensual aspect of Durkheim's work to provide support for their respective arguments. However, there are more significant similarities between Parsons and Moscovici (and Durkheim) that I would like to draw attention to.

Durkheim explained consensus through the internalisation of values, though argued that further research was necessary to uncover "the laws of collective ideation" (Durkheim, 1974, p. 32). Parsons saw collective ideation as the solution to the problem of order through the internalisation of values. Parsons developed the link
between internalisation and normative consensus through describing values as also the motivating components of personality. Moscovici's concerns with regard to social representations are a re-description of the problem of order: "The theory of social representations...takes as its point of departure the diversity of individuals, attitudes and phenomena, in all their strangeness and unpredictability. Its aim is to discover how individuals and groups can construct a stable, predictable world out of such diversity." (Moscovici, 1984a, p.44). Moscovici also attempted to deal with this through relating the internalisation of values with normative consensus, initially through explaining the mechanisms of the internalisation process.

Both Parsons and Moscovici take norms to be the fundamental feature of social existence and therefore the means by which to explain the social world. Thus for each social change is explainable primarily in terms of changes in cultural values and norms. With Moscovici, the situation may appear more complicated as Moscovici appears to argue contradictory positions. Through the later emphasis on social relations, it may appear that social relations determine representations. For example Moscovici describes "hegemonic", "emancipated" and "polemic" representations, as the "three ways in which representations can become social, depending on the relations between group members." (Moscovici, 1988, p.221). However, as no means are provided for understanding "social relations" other than through representations, Moscovici's arguments can be seen to be typically circular; social change is seen in terms of changes in cultural values and norms⁹.

Durkheim failed to specify the mechanisms that mediated the relationship between the infrastructure and the conscience collective. As described earlier, this confusion led to the possibility of both materialist and idealist interpretations of the relationship. If the internalisation of values is emphasised as it is by Parsons and by Moscovici, an idealist interpretation is more appropriate, thus it is changes in values that directs social change.

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⁹ As described earlier, Moscovici's later emphasis on social relations is at odds with the notion of social representations as part of a "consensual realm", and appear to be another example of Moscovici making a statement to refute a particular criticism without acknowledging the contradiction and inconsistency that this may entail.
Giddens' example showed the inadequacies of Parsons' position when attempting historical explanation. As Giddens describes, the positing of a logical relationship between a specific value, norm or pattern of behaviour and a more general value or set of values, is taken as an explanation of the former. An almost identical situation occurs when Moscovici attempts historical explanation, as demonstrated in his explanation of the relationship between different types of individualism and historical periods. So, for example, "sublimated" individualism, involving specific values, norms and patterns of behaviour is logically related by Moscovici to the more general set of values embodied in the Reformation. Thus the Reformation is taken to be an explanation of sublimated individualism. With Moscovici's example, the argument is more tenuous as the very existence of a "sublimated" individualism is not clearly substantiated.

Another similarity between social representations and normative functionalist theories can be seen through the notion of "functional prerequisites". Aberle et al's (1967) notion of "shared cognitive orientation" appears to be very similar to the basic idea of social representations. However, what is important is not a detailed comparison of each, but the notion of each as logically implied in the respective conception of society. In Moscovici's scheme, society is to be understood in terms of shared representations, which are then treated as if they were empirically independent.

Thus social representations could be described as a version of normative functionalism, similar in some respects to the theories of Durkheim and Parsons. Social representations can certainly be couched in functionalist terms, with shared representations appearing as a functional prerequisite of society. Similarly, social representations and normative functionalist theories are based upon the notion of the internalisation of values. Thus they share an emphasis on the integration of the "individual" in "society", and a corresponding difficulty in dealing with sectional group interests and conflicts, leading to consequent difficulties in explaining social change. In the case of social representations, the only means for explaining conflict is in terms of opposing value systems but there is no means for understanding how such conflict
emerges, other than tautological statements, such as the following: "Representations adapt to the flow of interactions between social groups, as we showed in the case of psychoanalysis. As Communists, for instance, draw closer or move away from other ideological groups, the structure and content of their vision of psychoanalysis keeps changing." (Moscovici, 1984b, p.950-1).

This statement is circular as there is no means for understanding how "Communists", or any other group for that matter, could alter their relationships with other groups other than on the basis of their representations; that is, the "drawing closer" or "moving away" is only to be understood in terms of the similarities of differences between each group's representations. So to then argue that on the basis of "drawing closer" or "moving away" a group's representations change is tautological. Thus "explanations" of social change provide little in the way of specifying mechanisms other than a general notion of "changes in values".

Similarly, for social representations and normative functionalist theories, there are no means for understanding divergent interpretations of normative values. The respective emphases on internalisation preclude any notion of the adherence to norms and obligations being in terms of degrees of pragmatic acceptance, rather than internalisation. This further supports the notion of unproblematic observation of social phenomena common to both social representations and normative functionalist theories. With regard to social representations, action is assumed to be directed solely on the basis of the internalisation of the values that also constitute the normative consensus. Once the normative consensus is ascertained, for example through the analysis of collective phenomena, such as content analysis of group publications, its constituent normative understandings are then assumed to be internalised by individual group members. Conversely, it may be assumed that the normative consensus may be ascertained on the basis of individual responses, which are then taken to represent the normative consensus more generally. The problematic nature of observation of social phenomena has been discussed earlier, with respect to both social representations and normative functionalist theories (when considering Durkheim's work.)
Conclusion.

Both Parsons and Moscovici consider Durkheim to be a theoretical antecedent. Parsons considers the adherence to normative values to be the key to "the problem of order", and seeks to reinforce the notion of internalisation as the means to link the individual to the normative consensus, by elaborating the concept of the individual personality. Moscovici also considers the adherence to normative values to be the key to "the problem of order", and seeks to reinforce the notion of internalisation as the means to link the individual to the normative consensus. However, Moscovici pursues this though the notion of "social representations" and proposes a distinction between reified and consensual realms, necessary to sustain the consensual nature of social representations. Also due to the assumption of internalisation the observation of social phenomena is taken to be essentially unproblematic.

However, as Harré (1984) explained, aspects of collective phenomena may not be available at the individual level. Nevertheless, Harré expressed the notion that it was perhaps possible in principle to represent collective understanding at the individual level. This led Moscovici to argue that the formal mechanisms necessary to describe the internalisation process, would be arrived at through the accumulation of contents. This marked a shift in emphasis toward the specific cognitive characteristics of internalisation and a correspondingly greater necessity to differentiate social representations from other types of thought. However, the arguments of Potter and Litton (1985a) and Semin (1985) showed the contents of social representations to be problematic also. As both the mechanisms and the contents of social representations were now shown to be problematic, it was necessary for Moscovici to reformulate his ideas.

It is in the context of dealing with serious criticisms that Moscovici sought to emphasise the distinctiveness of social representations by progressively misrepresenting

10 As described earlier, this is in the case of a collective group where "the total set of beliefs which is required to perform some joint public activity, each subset of which has its ultimate being as the fragment of the beliefs of an individual member", may only be known as an explicit totality by the investigator, "but its components are members' beliefs and it is clear how they are located in a collective." (Harré, 1984, p.936).
Durkheim. In the initial chapter in the Farr and Moscovici volume, Moscovici (1984a), refers to Durkheim-ian “collective representations” as “irreducible” (p.16), as referring to a whole range of intellectual forms (p.17), and as “static” (p.18). In response to Harré, Moscovici (1984b) adds, “aggregating, constraining and coercive” to his description (p.949); that collective representations imply a separation from individual representations, an opposition that is less significant to social representations (p.945); and that “(a)ccording to Durkheim, it is the explicit task of social psychology to study the nature and genesis of collective representations”, (p.942).

It is only after these initial critiques that Moscovici refers to collective representations as “homogenous” (1987, p.516), presumably to refute Potter and Litton’s referral to social representations as just that. Also, in his response to Parker (1987) and McKinlay and Potter (1987), does Moscovici state that for Durkheim the relations between the individual and society are mechanical, and that group cohesiveness and conformity are always seen as positive (p.526).

And it is in response to Jahoda (1988), that Moscovici states that Durkheim assigns individual representations and collective representations to different universes, requiring psychological and sociological explanations, respectively (p.218); that Moscovici claims that collective representations are shared by several generations and reinforce reciprocal ties in a uniform way (p.218); and that collective representations are only modified in exceptional circumstances (p.218).

It is the context of ongoing critical debate that Moscovici progressively misrepresented Durkheim’s position, to emphasise the distinctiveness of social representations. This may have been considered necessary to ensure continuing interest in social representations, while necessary reformulation and theoretical refinement could be carried out. It is also in response to Jahoda (1988) that Moscovici criticises Durkheim for not attempting to “spell out” the “cognitive characteristics” of representations in greater detail (Moscovici, 1988, p.218). However, as has been argued throughout, Moscovici’s conviction that social representations involve specific cognitive characteristics has not been substantiated.
In light of this failure and the actual nature of Durkheim’s arguments, social representations do not appear particularly distinct from Durkheim-ian collective representations. This is made more apparent when Moscovici’s ideas are described as a variant of normative functionalism. The normative emphasis inevitably implies consensus, unless some mechanism is provided to explain adherence to norms other than through internalisation. The limitations of this normative emphasis can be seen in the difficulties in explaining social conflict and thereby social change. Even if attempts are made to deal with social relations through some notion of the differential power of groups, the individual is still connected to the social group, however conceived, through the internalisation of particular group values. The notion of unproblematic observation of social phenomena is also a consequence of the assumption of internalisation of consensual norms.

It is necessary to acknowledge that a unitary conception of phenomena is inevitable due to the failure to provide a means to explain the adherence to norms other than through internalisation of normative values. Thus despite Moscovici’s attempts to ward off the criticisms directed toward every aspect of social representations, and Moscovici’s conviction that theoretical refinement is forthcoming, the notion of social representations is inherently limited. Social representations are a fundamentally tautological formulation: shared values and understanding are taken at the outset to be the fundamental constituents of society, but are then treated as if they were empirically independent. That is the basis of the many circular arguments involved when attempting to say anything specific about social representations other than that new information, knowledge or understandings are understood to some extent on the basis of existing information, knowledge or understandings.

What is required is an analysis that recognises the necessity of theorising the relationship between the individual and the social, and also the nature of the observation of social phenomena, yet also incorporates an awareness of the complexity of the issues involved. To avoid according primacy to the normative it is necessary to conceive of power as fundamentally implicated in the very notion of action, and
thereby social interaction. These concerns are each dealt with by Giddens through his theory of structuration.
CHAPTER THREE

GIDDENS' THEORY OF STRUCTURATION

Introduction to Giddens.

This chapter further explores the ideas of Giddens, as introduced in the previous chapter. Giddens' theory of "structuration" touches upon many aspects of social science and is critical of both objective and subjective approaches to social phenomena. In this chapter, it is seen that a reliance upon a notion of internalised normative values to explain social phenomena cannot be reconciled with that of an active, purposeful social agent. Furthermore, a direct consequence of Giddens' sophisticated theory of agency is the acknowledgement of the inherently contextual nature of social scientific enquiry. In terms of reconciling objectivist and subjectivist concerns, Giddens' arguments are far more sophisticated than those of Moscovici and indeed those of normative functionalism more generally.

As a consequence of the far-reaching implications of the issues involved, Giddens' theory has generated a great deal of theoretical debate throughout the social sciences. However, the scope of Giddens' work has been restricted here, to focus attention to concerns more readily associated with social psychology. In order to develop an appreciation of Giddens' insights, critiques of Giddens work will be discussed.

Criticisms relating to Giddens' notion of the duality of structure will be considered first, followed by responses to Giddens' own critique of functionalist arguments. These areas of debate relate primarily to Giddens' notion of the structuration of social action. These are followed by critiques reflecting empirical and epistemological concerns. As stated earlier, such concerns relate primarily to the observation of social phenomena and are direct implications of a sophisticated theory of agency.
The relevance of these concerns to social psychology more generally is demonstrated by briefly considering the work of Wilson and summarising the shortcomings of Moscovici’s particular version of normative functionalism.

**Structuration Theory**

**Introduction.**

Giddens describes Parsons’ work as the most concerted effort to incorporate a theory of action within a functionalist framework. The primary concern for the ‘action frame of reference’ is to reconcile the potential diversity in individual, purposeful conduct with a wider social order. This is achieved through the values which form the basis for social consensus being accepted and internalised by members of society, and thus motivating their behaviour. As described earlier, this is identical to the situation with regard to social representations, whereby social representations resolve the problem of order by enabling action and communication; with normative values also being internalised by group members.

The internalisation of norms is not sufficient to explain the purposive nature of human conduct. Thus despite claims that action is successfully incorporated in each of these schemes, individuals are only treated in terms of ‘generally accepted’ roles and manners of thinking. Individuals in Parsons’ formulation have been described as ‘cultural dopes’ (Garfinkel, 1967). There is no theoretical means for distinguishing the specific from the general case as the individual is explained in terms of group attributes. Variations from the norm can only be dealt with as a failure to internalise correctly, though this remains at the level of a truism as ‘internalisation’ offers no means to deal with conflicting norms, or normative strain. This version of the
relationship between the individual and the social can therefore be seen as inherently limited. The emphasis on the social rather than the individual may be seen to represent a form of 'objectivism', whereby the object (the social grouping, or society more generally) predominates over the subject (the purposive, knowledgeable agent). From the perspective of the internalisation of values, there appears to be little advance from Durkheim's original formulation.

Giddens argues that attempts to provide a theory of action such as the approaches grouped together as "symbolic interactionism", (influenced by Blumer's interpretation of Mead,) are also inherently limited, due to a failure to deal with problems of institutional analysis and transformation, conflict and power. These approaches can be seen to represent a "subjectivism", where the predominant interest is in the subject rather than with the nature of more 'objective' social phenomena. Enduring features of the social environment, for example the status attached to particular social categories, are assumed to be generally accepted; it is against this taken-for-granted background that action is negotiated and meanings formed. Giddens argues that while these theories may be strong on action they are weak on structure, whereas the varieties of functionalism (in which I include social representations) are strong on structure but weak on action.

Giddens argues that it is necessary to conceptualise how action, meaning and subjectivity relate to notions of structure and constraint. Human agency cannot be convincingly explained without an adequate conception of social structure, and correspondingly social structure cannot be convincingly explained without an adequate conception of human agency. However, Giddens warns against a simplistic combination of these two approaches whereby a symbolic interaction-oriented approach deals with 'micro-level' phenomena involving small-scale social relationships and interactions, while the normative functionalism-oriented approach deals with more 'macro-level' phenomena. This is because both approaches, in different ways make the same fundamental error: each tends to treat norms or conventions as exemplifying 'the social'. (Giddens, 1979, p.256).
Thus neither symbolic interactionism nor normative functionalism can proceed beyond a notion of the ‘generally acceptance’ of norms. Giddens argues that this is a consequence of a failure to deal effectively with the issue of power. For Giddens, the notion of power is fundamentally implicated in human action: “‘action’ only exists when an agent has the capability of intervening, or refraining from intervening, in a series of events so as to be able to influence their course.” (Giddens, 1979, p.256). Giddens argues it is necessary to conceive of power as just as integral to social interaction as norms or conventions. However, power as a resource drawn upon in the production and reproduction of interaction must be related to power “deriving from” the structural characteristics of society; neither aspect of power is more fundamental than the other.

To simply amalgamate the existing treatments of action and structure would perpetuates the dualisms between action and structure and the individual and social. Giddens argues that to resolve these dualisms requires a reformulation of both action and structure to recognise the ‘duality of structure’; that is, the mutual dependence of structure and agency: it is through the active, purposeful participation required to engage in social interaction that individuals both draw upon and reconstitute the structural features of society. “By the ‘duality of structure’, I refer to the essentially recursive character of social life: the structural properties of social systems are both medium and outcome of the practices that constitute those systems.” (Giddens, 1982, p.36). The reformulation of agency and structure that Giddens proposes to reflect the duality of structure is presented in the theory of structuration.

Giddens argues that one of the major tasks of Structuration theory is to avoid either the “imperialism of the social object” found in macro-level theorising, such as that associated with functionalism, though also the “imperialism of the subject” associated with micro-level theorising, such as that associated with symbolic interactionism or ethnomethodology. For Giddens, neither forms of societal totality nor the experience of the individual actor is more fundamental than the other. Human social activities are continually recreated by social actors whereby they reproduce the conditions that make
these activities possible. The notions of "action" and "structure" presuppose one another.

**Action.**

Giddens states that "action", or agency should be thought of as a "continuous flow of conduct" rather than as a series of discrete acts combined together. Recognising the "continuous flow" emphasises that agency is located in time, in the temporality of day to day conduct. Giddens argues that human agents possess a specifically reflexive form of knowledgeability, grounded in a continuous monitoring of the continuous flow of social life: the recursive ordering of social practices occurs through the routine monitoring of the settings of interaction. The reflexive monitoring of action is dependent on the rationalisation of actors, whereby actors routinely maintain a level of understanding of their activity. For Giddens, it is essential to recognise that the description of an "act" or "an action" involves a reflexive moment of attention on the part of the actor, which breaks into the flow of action and separates any particular "act" from the lived-through experience of the actor.

However, most of what Giddens refers to as, mutual knowledge incorporated in encounters is not accessible discursively, but is practical in character. Thus Giddens distinguished between discursive and practical consciousness; discursive consciousness refers to the ability of actors to explain their actions if asked, whereas practical consciousness refers to what is known but not explicitly articulated in the capability to "bring off" social interaction. The boundary between discursive and practical consciousness is not rigid, and is dependent to some extent on the learning experiences of the individual agent.

Giddens explains that the notion of practical consciousness is related to the necessity of separating agency from intention. Actions may have consequences that stretch
beyond the intentions of actors. This can be appreciated by acknowledging the recursive character of social life: unintended consequences of acts may systematically feed back to become the unacknowledged conditions of further acts: "Thus one of the regular consequences of my speaking or writing English in a correct way is to contribute to the reproduction of the English language as a whole. My speaking English correctly is intentional; the contribution I make to the reproduction of the language is not." (Giddens, 1984, p.8). For Giddens the unintended consequences of intentional conduct is fundamental to the understanding of societal reproduction.

As described earlier, for Giddens action logically involves power: to be an agent is to be able to intervene in the world, to "make a difference" to a pre-existing state of affairs or course of events. Thus Giddens refers to power as "transformative capacity". Resources are media through which power is exercised; they are structured properties of social systems, drawn upon by agents and thereby reproduced as a routine element of the instantiation of conduct.

Structure.

Giddens argues that structure is understood in the functionalist literature as involving the "patterning" of social phenomena, as an external constraint to human action, and associated with imagery such as the girders of a building. However, in structuralist literature, structure is conceived as "an intersection of presence and absence", whereby underlying codes are inferred from surface manifestations (Giddens, 1984, p.16). For Giddens each of these aspects is to some extent relevant to the structuring of social relations. Giddens makes a distinction between 'structure' and 'system'. Structure refers to the structuring properties that are recursively implicated in the reproduction of social practices across time and space, or social systems. As Giddens explains, "social systems, as reproduced social practices, do not have 'structures' but rather exhibit 'structural properties' and that structure exists, as time-space presence, only in
its instantiations in such practices and as memory traces orienting the conduct of knowledgeable human agents.” (Giddens, 1984, p.17).

Thus it is through the drawing upon of structural properties that social practices may persist in various ways and which lend them “systemic” form. Giddens argues that the most important aspects of structure are rules and resources (explained below) recursively involved in institutions. As enduring features of social life, institutions may be understood in terms of the sedimentation of practices across time and space.

**STRUCTURE**

Rules and resources, organised as properties of social systems. Structure only exists as ‘structural properties’.

**SYSTEM**

Reproduced relations between actors or collectivities, organised as regular social practices.

**STRUCTURATION**

Conditions governing the continuity or transformation of structures, and therefore the reproduction of systems.

Figure 1 (Taken from Giddens, 1979, p.66).

The figure above aids understanding of each of the related concepts within, though Giddens’ succinct commentary further explains these relationships: “Social systems involve regularised relations of interdependence between individuals or groups, that typically can be best analysed as *recurrent social practices*. Social systems are systems of social interaction; as such they involve the situated activities of human subjects, and
exist...in the flow of time. Systems, in this terminology, have structures, or more accurately, have structural properties; they are not structures in themselves. Structures are necessarily (logically) properties of systems or collectivities, and are characterised by the 'absence of a subject'. To study the structuration of a social system is to study the ways in which that system, via the application of generative rules and resources, and in the context of unintended outcomes, is produced and reproduced in interaction." (1979, p. 66, emphases in original).

Thus, for Giddens, structure is conceived as "rules" and "resources"; these are drawn upon in the production and reproduction of social action and are simultaneously the means of system reproduction. Giddens acknowledges that his notion of rule is to some extent distinctive. Rules are not to be thought of as formalised prescriptions, as the knowing of rule is "to know how to go on" in social encounters without necessarily being able to formulate discursively what those rules are. Giddens draws on Wittgenstein to argue that such rules avoid rigid definition not because we fail to grasp their definition, but because there is no real "definition" to grasp: "'ad hoc' considerations...are chronically involved in the instantiation of rules, and are not separate from what those rules 'are'." (1979, p. 68). To explicitly formulate a rule, such as in codified law, is to offer an interpretation of the rule which may itself have an effect on its subsequent application. Thus it is important to emphasise that "rules and practices only exist in conjunction with one another". (1979, p.65).

The rules of social life may be understood as generalisable procedures drawn upon in the enactment/reproduction of social practices. These are generally held as practical knowledge rather than discursively by social actors, and are used routinely in the course of social activity. This knowledge does not specify all possibilities but is the basis for a generalised capacity to act in a range of social circumstances. As shown in Garfinkel's ethnomethodological studies, daily interaction may be more rigidly structured than may appear from the ease with which such prescriptions may be followed. Thus it is not necessarily the case that formally codified, abstract rules, such as those embodied in laws are the most influential in structuring social activity.
Also, Giddens argues that social rules are subject to chronic disputes of legitimacy. This is implied in the conjunction of rules and practices, as action logically implicates power, and serves to separate the notion of social rule from that of rules associated with games, such as chess (which feature strongly in discussion of rules.) Power is integral to social practices. Resources are the means whereby power is drawn upon by participants in social interaction. (Resources will be described in more detail when discussing power with respect to the "duality of structure".)

In this way, the structuration of social systems refers to the modes in which systems, grounded in the knowledgeable activities of situated actors who draw upon rules and resources in the diversity of action contexts, are produced and reproduced in the course of interaction. Structuration refers to the dynamic process whereby structures come into being.

Duality of Structure.

By the "duality of structure" Giddens explains that the constitution of agents and structures do not refer to independent sets of phenomena, but represent a duality. The structural properties of social systems are both the medium and the outcome of the practices they recursively organise, thus structure is not simply constraining but is simultaneously enabling. The knowledge that actors hold of themselves, others and of social conventions, is inherently implicated in the patterning of social life: "the moment of the production of action is also one of reproduction in the contexts of the day-to-day enactment of social life....Structure has no existence independent of the knowledge that agents have about what they do in their day-to-day activity." (1984, p.26). However, it must be remembered that knowledgeability is always bounded: unintended consequences issue forth from intentional activity and thus may become the unacknowledged conditions of further action.
Giddens relates the knowledgeability of agents to structural features through the 'modalities' of structuration. These refer to the central dimensions of the duality of structure in interaction and are drawn upon by actors in the production of interaction but are simultaneously media of the reproduction of the structural components of interaction. The modalities thus represent the "coupling elements" whereby strategic conduct may be related to institutional features. This is best explained by referring to how each may be subject of social scientific investigation; that is both the analysis of strategic conduct and institutional analysis.

To study empirically the constitution of social systems as strategic conduct is to study how actors draw upon structural elements (rules and resources) in the constitution of interaction as a skilled achievement. The modalities are treated as stocks of knowledge and resources; structure here refers to the mobilisation of discursive and practical consciousness. However, in the case of institutional analysis, rules and resources are treated as chronically reproduced features of social systems. It is important to stress that this is a methodological distinction, rather than a substantive one, necessary to express the duality of structure.

This is in contrast to functionalist theories or action-type approaches, each of which express a dualism rather than a duality. Thus for functional approaches, social causation and structural constraint are synonymous; there is no theoretical space for understanding social interaction as purposeful, reflexively monitored conduct. So for example, for Durkheim suicidal conduct could only be seen in terms of weak social integration. Conversely, for action approaches, institutional analysis is bracketed out and institutions appear as a taken-for-granted backdrop; there is no means for dealing with structural change. These points will be explained in more detail later when the notion of social roles will be examined. To reiterate the relevance of the modalities of structuration: "The level of modality thus provides the coupling elements whereby the bracketing of strategic or institutional analysis is dissolved in favour of an acknowledgement of their interrelation." (Giddens, 1979, p. 81).
The classifications in figure 2 show the dimensions implicated in various ways in social practices. For example, the communication of meaning in interaction does not occur apart from either the operation of relations of power or the context of normative sanctions. However, Giddens is quick to remind that although all social practices involve these three elements, no social practice engages a single type of rule or resource: “practices are situated within intersecting sets of rules and resources that ultimately express features of the totality.” (Giddens, 1979, p.82).

It is necessary to relate the constitution and communication of meaning to normative sanctions as these express two aspects of rules as implicated in the production of social practices. The relations between the identification of acts and normative sanctions may be most easily described by reference to criminal law where for example, the identification of an act as murder or manslaughter influences greatly the sanctions that may be applied, yet also knowledge of the sanctions may influence how different parties may wish the act to be interpreted. This in turn implicates necessity to incorporate an understanding of power transactions.
As Giddens explains, power is expressed in the capabilities of actors to make their accounts ‘count’ and to enact or resist sanctioning processes. However, as indicated in figure 2, these capabilities draw upon modes of domination structured in social systems. With respect to the previous example, discrimination structured as a mode of domination may influence the accountability of various parties; if discrimination is strong, a member of a discriminated group may be judged more harshly.

Nevertheless, it is important to remember Giddens warning against associating a practice with a single set of rules or resources, in this case other modes of domination will also be mobilised. While the two aspects of rules, constitutive and regulative, and the drawing upon of resources through which power is exercised, are analytically separable, they are each involved in the constitution of social practices. However separating them out analytically makes it possible to examine their interconnection: “Just as communication, power and morality are integral elements of interaction, so signification, domination and legitimation are only analytically separable properties of structure.” (Giddens, 1992, p.130).

Interpretative schemes
 Returning to the issue of the modalities of structuration, Giddens explains that “interpretative schemes” refer to the means whereby sense is made by actors of what they and others say. As Giddens explains: “Interpretative schemes form the core of the mutual knowledge whereby an accountable universe of meaning is sustained through and in processes of interaction.” (Giddens, 1979, p.83). An important point to be made here is that through the reflexive monitoring of conduct, the context of interaction is drawn upon in the sustaining of accountability. The context of interaction is shaped and organised as an integral part of interaction as a communicative encounter. The drawing upon of physical, social and temporal elements recreates them as contextual relevances. “Mutual knowledge is ‘background knowledge’ in the sense that it is taken for granted, and mostly remains unarticulated; on the other hand, it is not part of the ‘background’ in the sense that it is constantly actualised, displayed and modified by members of society in the course of their
interaction. Taken-for-granted knowledge, in other words is never fully taken for
granted...but is produced and reproduced anew by them as part of the continuity of
their lives." (Giddens, 1992, p.114). Meaning is sustained by actors routinely
incorporating ‘what went before’ and routinely anticipating ‘what will happen next’
into the ‘bringing off’ of an encounter. The means whereby communication is
routinely structured are modes of signification, as shown in the figure. Examples of
these would be the semantic rules of language.

Due to this recursive nature of social action, it can be seen that meaning does not
reside solely in communicative intent, as any act of communication, in common with
action more generally, may generate unintended consequences which may feed back to
become unacknowledged conditions of further action. Nevertheless, communicative
intent is not irrelevant to the meaning of an act, as any action involves the reflexive
monitoring of conduct. The interplay of meaning as both communicative intent and as
mode of signification represents the duality of structure in the production of meaning.

Norms
Giddens explains that the moral elements of interaction are inherently connected with
the constitution of interaction both as meaningful and as a set of relations of power,
neither is more basic than any other. It will be remembered that normative or moral
prescriptions feature strongly in the work of Durkheim and Moscovici, as described
earlier.

Giddens agrees with Parsons’ description of the normative character of social practices
in terms of a ‘double contingency’, whereby the reactions of participants in an
interaction depend on the contingent responses of the other or others, and thus is a
potential sanction upon each participant. Thus the normative constitution of
interaction may be seen as involving the actualisation of rights and the enactment of
obligations. However the characteristic error of the normative functionalism of
Durkheim and Parsons (and Moscovici) is to see normative expectation, as entailed in
the double contingency, as the determining feature of social interaction. By treating
norms as "exemplifying the social", there is no means for dealing with the possibility that the symmetry between the actualisation of rights and the enactment of obligations may be broken in actual social conduct. As Giddens explains: "what is a right of one participant in an encounter appears as an obligation of another to respond in an 'appropriate' fashion, and vice versa; but this tie can be severed if an obligation is not acknowledged or honoured, and no sanction can effectively be brought to bear. Thus, in the production of interaction, all normative elements have to be treated as a series of claims whose realisation is contingent upon the successful actualisation of obligations through the medium of the responses of other participants." (Giddens, 1992, p.114).

In this way it can be seen that the double contingency of interaction is connected to the actualisation of power as well as the normative institutionalisation of conduct. If norms are treated as somehow more basic than other aspects of social interaction, that norms must be sustained and reproduced in the flow of social encounters is lost. From a structural perspective, if strategic conduct is bracketed, rights and obligations simply appear to be two aspects of norms, but from the point of view of strategic conduct rights and obligations have to be continually realised.

However, the particular character of normative sanctions is indicated in the double contingency of interaction: normative sanctions do not inevitably follow the carrying out of an act, but are contingent on the reactions of others. This implicates another shortcoming of normatively-based approaches, that compliance with a normative claim may not entail a moral commitment to that obligation; in other words adherence to a norm may not reflect the internalisation of a value. An actor may accept an obligation to avoid the sanctions associated with non-compliance rather than through a moral commitment to that obligation. This was described earlier in the discussion of Durkheim, but its implications may now be more fully appreciated. There may be degrees of commitment to a moral obligation. As Giddens explains: "An actor may calculate the risks involved in the enactment of a given form of social conduct, in respect of the likelihood of the sanctions involved being actually applied, and may be prepared to submit to them as a price to be paid for achieving a particular end." (Giddens, 1979, p.87).
As Giddens describes, this point may seem obvious but it has wide ranging implications, particularly for notions of legitimation and conformity. These issues are relevant to Parsons’ problem of order, described earlier as reformulated in the notion of social representations. It shows the whole “internalised value-norm-moral consensus” theorem that links the individual to the social in approaches influenced by ‘normative functionalism’ to be unsustainable. Also it highlights the negotiated character of sanctions, one aspect of which is that the ‘calculative attitude’ toward norms may involve efforts toward self-presentation in an effort to affect the character of the sanction. This is possible as the production of a normative order is inherently connected to the production of meaning. Another aspect of the negotiated character of sanctions draws attention to relations of power, that is the capability of making a particular interpretation of a norm ‘count’ in interaction. Thus, Giddens explains: “The moral co-ordination of interaction is asymmetrically interdependent with its production as meaningful and with its expression of relations of power.” (1992, p.116). It is important to emphasise that the operation of sanctions is a chronic feature of all social interaction. Sanctioning need not be discursively articulated, but may involve subtle adjustments in the course of a social encounter.

Power
As described earlier, for Giddens the notion of action is logically tied to that of power. As Giddens explains: “The use of power in interaction involves the application of facilities whereby participants are able to generate outcomes through affecting the conduct of others; the facilities both are drawn from an order of domination and at the same time, as they are applied, reproduce that order of domination.” (1992, p.129). Power is a regular and routine aspect of action, thus even transient social encounters instantiate elements of the totality as a structure of domination. However, the exercise of power is not a type of act, but refer to the means whereby the meaningful and normative content of interaction are instantiated. Giddens treats power in terms of resources. This makes it possible to deal with power in the context of the duality of structure. Power may be seen to involve both as transformative capacity from the perspective of strategic conduct, yet also as domination from an institutional
Perspective. Resources are the media through which power is exercised and structures of domination reproduced. Example of resources may include "the superior linguistic or dialectic skills of one person in conversation with another; the possession of relevant types of 'technical knowledge'; the mobilisation of authority of 'force'.." (1992, p.120). It is important to emphasise here that power does not necessarily imply the existence of conflict. Power and conflict may appear synonymous because power is linked to the pursuit of interests, and people's interests may differ. Thus while power is a feature of every social interaction division of interest is not.

That power is inextricably linked with action again draws attention to the deficiencies of approaches that over emphasise the normative aspect of social interaction; this includes normative functionalist approaches, but also action type approaches such as ethnomethodology. The problem is that interaction is always seen as "the collaborative endeavour of peers", with each participant contributing equally to the production of interaction, in order to sustain the meaningfulness, or accountability of the encounter. It must be seen that distribution of power is directly implicated in 'what passes for social reality': "the creation of frames of meaning occurs as the mediation of practical activities, and in terms of differentials of power which actors are able to bring to bear." (1992, p.120). Thus Giddens states that the mutual accommodation of power and norms is of crucial significance to social theory.

As described earlier, for normative functionalist approaches such as those of Durkheim and Parsons, social order was maintained through a notion of moral consensus, with the individual linked to society through the internalisation of common values. Giddens explain why the notion of legitimation is preferable to that of normative consensus by reference to 'value standards', defined as "any kind of normative prescription that may be mobilised as a sanctioning feature of interaction." (1979, p.102). Legitimation does not imply any overall consensus regarding value standards, and it allows relationships between value standards and sectional interests in society to be noted. The assumption that normative integration is a pre-requisite for a stable society is difficult to sustain, of course such integration is not absolute and this raises the notion of a possible criterion level. This is expressed with respect to social representations when critics ask how
many people must hold a representation for it to be social, and with what level of consensus. As Giddens explains: “The level of normative integration of dominant groups within social systems may be a more important influence upon the overall continuity of those systems than how far the majority have ‘internalised’ the same value-standards.” (1979, p.103).

Social reproduction.

For Giddens, temporality is integral to social analyses; the notion of structuration transcends any distinction between static and dynamic analyses. Giddens argues that there is a tendency, particularly in approaches influenced by functionalist notions, to associate ‘time’ with social change and thus ‘timelessness’ with social stability. This leads to a notion that static analyses are necessary to investigate sources of social stability, while dynamic analyses are necessary to investigate sources of social change. Such views are mistaken since “time” cannot be removed from social analyses: social stability refers to continuity over time.

The notion that stability is associated with timelessness, Giddens argues, features in functionalist thought due to a tendency toward biological analogy. Whereas the structure of an organism may be said to exist separately from its functioning, social systems “cease to be when they cease to function” (1979, p.62, emphases in original). Images associated with functionalist notions of structure such as that of the girders of a building are unhelpful as they are perceptually ‘present’ in a way that social structure is not.

According to Structuration theory, the potential for change is inherent in all moments of social reproduction. The production of society incorporates the application of rules and resources by skilled, knowledgeable actors in situated contexts of social interaction which participants must contingently ‘bring off’. This occurs in the context of the
rationalisation of action, thus actors' understandings of the institutions they reproduce through their practices makes the reproduction of these practices possible. However, there is also a great deal concerning the conditions and consequences of their activities that affects the course of those activities. Thus, it is necessary to understand how both intended and unintended consequences of action are implicated in social reproduction: "every feature of whatever continuity a society has over time derives from such mixes (of intended and unintended consequences of action), against the backdrop of bounded conditions of rationalisation of conduct." (1979, p.112, emphases in original).

Furthermore Giddens argues that the very notion of system presupposes that of social reproduction. Any alteration in a social system, no matter how trivial, implicates the totality and thus implies some degree of structural modification. Giddens illustrates this through the example of linguistic modification: "modifications in the phonemic, syntactical or semantic character of words in language are effected through and in language use, that is through the reproduction of language; since language only exists in and through its reproduction, such modifications implicate the whole." (1979, p.114).

Role Theory.

It is worthwhile considering Giddens discussion of the use of "role" in social analysis, as this has important implications for social psychology which will be drawn upon in more detail later. The concept of role features in functionalist approaches, such as that of Parsons for whom role is the means for linking the individual to the structure of the social system. However, it is also relevant to approaches that may appear to be in some opposition to functionalist approaches, such as those influenced by symbolic interactionism, where the individual displays and thus maintains their autonomy through their 'performance' in the role. In each case the nature of the role is taken as 'given'. As Giddens explains, this "often tends to perpetuate the action / structure
dualism so strongly engrained in social theory: society supplies the roles to which actors adapt as best they might." (1979, p.116). This represents the over emphasis on normative aspects and a consensual view of society, as described earlier. Thus even when attempts are made to deal with conflict this is explained in terms of strain experienced by the individual actor to meet particular role expectations.

It should be apparent now on the basis of arguments presented earlier, that the concept of role is related to that of norm more generally and thus must be actualised in social interaction. The prerogatives and obligations associated with a roles must be analysed in relation to rules and resources according to the duality of structure. However, when role prescriptions are stripped of any "given" or consensual character; they lose much of their theoretical significance and must be studied as they are enacted and thereby reproduced, in the context of actual social practices. It is therefore not adequate to conceptualise the social solely in terms of roles. Giddens argues that role prescriptions may be thought of as a "social identity" associated with a particular social position. At this point it will simply be noted that this use of the term "social identity" is quite different from the way the term is used in the social psychological literature. The implications of this point will be discussed in more detail later.

Giddens describes various situations in which the behaviour of individuals may not conform to role-expectations: there may be a tension between the wants of actors and their particular role expectations; there may be tension between the various aspects of a particular role expectation; there may be tension associated with the various roles that a particular actor may undertake; and there may be tension deriving from the contestation of interpretations of a particular role expectation. Of these, the last is the one that is the most problematic for the existing treatments of roles. As Giddens explains, by conferring a primacy of the normative, there is no means to appreciate that "role-prescriptions, like any other normative elements, are potentially subject to diverse 'interpretations' in the context of the practical enactment of social life, and the power relations thus involved. All social positions, within social systems, are 'power positions' in the sense that they are integrated within reproduced relations of autonomy
and dependence; contestation of role-prescriptions is a characteristic feature of power struggles in society.” (1979, p.119).

Concluding comments.

The arguments Giddens makes with reference to structuration are primarily directed toward resolving various dualisms within social scientific theorising, such as those between the “individual” and the “social”; “action” and “structure”; and between “statics” and “dynamics”. Giddens achieves this through his notion of the duality of structure. However, in the course of these arguments Giddens also identifies problems associated with analyses based on both “objectivism” and “subjectivism”. Thus it is necessary to consider also the implications of Giddens arguments for social scientific analysis. Given that the reflexive monitoring and rationalisation of action are endemic to human social agents, the question arises of how these “stocks of knowledge” which are implicated in the constitution of society may be amenable to in social scientific investigation.

Empirical implications

Giddens gives his most detailed explication of the empirical implications of his arguments concerning structuration in the final chapter of “The constitution of society” (1984). This chapter has been described as a “tour de force” (Bernstein, 1989, p.27), and will be drawn upon in particular in this section.
The most relevant arguments concerning empirical research are the appreciation of the knowledgeability of human agents, and the fundamental nature of power to an understanding of action. Taking the first of these points, all human agents have sophisticated understandings of the conditions and consequences of their activities in daily life. However, much of that knowledge is embedded in practical consciousness and thus not immediately available in a discursive form. Nevertheless this knowledgeability is bounded recursively by unintended consequences, and unacknowledged conditions of action. The second point refers to the fact that power is inherently involved in the relations between action and structure. The significance of this is that power cannot be “tacked on” to more supposedly “basic” concepts, such as the “normative primacy” characteristic to both functionalist and action-oriented approaches.

Giddens argues that the arguments surrounding notion of structuration suggest several guidelines relevant to the undertaking of social scientific analysis. One of these is that all research involves an “ethnographic aspect”. This refers to the act of interpretation necessary to penetrate the knowledgeability of those whose activity constitutes the phenomena to be investigated. Thus it is necessary for researchers to be sensitive to the complex skills of knowledge agents.

As described earlier, Giddens describes two types of methodological bracketing. In the analysis of strategic conduct, the mode in which actors draw upon structural properties in their social interaction is examined and institutional properties are taken as given; whereas in institutional analysis structural properties are treated as chronically reproduced features of social systems. Giddens points out that this bracketing is purely methodological and is used to express the duality of structure rather than ontological reality. The “predictability” associated with even the most entrenched institutional forms must still be “brought off” through the enactment of social practices. Thus unacknowledged conditions and unintended consequences must be interpreted within the flow of intentional conduct.
Giddens illustrates his position by discussing the relevance of structuration-ist concepts using existing research. Giddens also anticipates that the usefulness of his arguments may be questioned when it is clear that such research can be carried out without reference to his arguments. Giddens counters this notion by stating that the relevance of structuration-ist concepts for research purposes is in their use as “sensitising devices”, useful in the formulation and interpretation of research by stimulating an awareness of theoretical considerations.

As will be seen, Giddens makes no attempt to assess the relative strengths and weaknesses of different approaches or methods. Giddens explicitly acknowledges this and explains that he is more concerned with exploring the relationship between social research and social critique. This issue assumes greater relevance due to logical difficulties in sustaining the ‘revelatory’ character associated with empirical models of science. In this vein, questions relating to epistemological issues such as the ‘assessment of validity’ and the notion of ‘generalisation’ will be noted, though will be discussed in more detail later.

Hermeneutic elucidation of frames of meaning (1)
Investigation of context and form of practical consciousness (2)
Identification of bounds of knowledgeability (3)
Specification of institutional orders (4)

Figure 3, (adapted from Giddens, 1984, p.327).

Figure 3 describes different levels of analysis relevant to social scientific research. Depending on the specific nature of the research endeavour, a researcher may ground their enquiry at each of the four levels. Giddens notes that a distinction between (1) and (2) on the one hand and (3) and (4) on the other is often the basis for a division
between quantitative and qualitative analysis. On the basis of arguments presented earlier relating to the duality of structure which described the need to transcend the subjective / objective distinction, Giddens explain why an appreciation of levels (1) and (2) are necessary for understanding levels (3) and (4) and vice versa. Each of the levels will be discussed below.

By the “hermeneutic elucidation of frames of meaning”, level (1) in figure 3, Giddens argues that all research involves a hermeneutic, or ethnographic “moment”. As mentioned earlier this refers to the act of interpretation routinely implicated when penetrating others’ frames of meaning. This consideration is inherent to any form of social interaction including the elicitation of empirical data. However, this may not be appreciated if researchers assume a common knowledgeability, or “a common cultural ‘milieu’.” (Giddens, 1984, p. 328) If this assumption is correct, a possible consequence is that findings may not be illuminating to those that are the subject of the research. If the assumption of a mutual knowledgeability is not correct, a possible consequence is that the research will fail to represent the knowledgeability of agents, and thus diminish the quality of the research. (The question of how the validity of such an assumption is to be assessed will be discussed later.)

Giddens states that those engaged in what they regard as purely quantitative research may not appreciate the significance of (1). They may view this level of analysis as purely descriptive rather than explanatory, and thus of little relevance. However, it must be accepted that research grounded in (1) may be generalising and explanatory if it is used to explain the activity of agents across a range of contexts. (The nature of generalisation will also be discussed later.)

Investigation of context and form of practical consciousness, level (2), involves grasping what it is that agents know as they engage in various forms of social activity. Here, research findings may be illuminating to subjects when expressed discursively, for example in ethnomethodological studies which investigate the tacit knowledge incorporated in routine forms of social interaction. In fact, this level may represent a
circumscribed field of study for ethnomethodology, though for other forms of research it is necessary to relate this practical knowledge to "broader" feature of social conduct.

Identification of bounds of knowledgeability, level (3), involves investigating the bounds of agents' knowledgeability and requires an understanding of levels (1), (2) and (4). Identifying unintended consequences and unacknowledged conditions of action involves the interpretation of discursive and practical consciousness in the context of the reproduction of an institutional order. Specification of institutional orders, level (4), involves analysing the conditions of social and system integration. However, it must be noted that institutional orders often cut across the boundaries of "societies".

As stated earlier, the distinction between (1) and (2) on the one hand and (3) and (4) is often taken as the basis for distinguishing qualitative from quantitative analysis. Giddens argues that this often corresponds to a further distinction between "micro" and "macro" levels of analysis. Those adopting a "micro-level" perspective study situated social encounters and are concerned with levels (1) and (2). Giddens argues that researchers here generally shun quantitative methods, seeing the imposing of artificial distinctions as failing to capture the intricacies of social encounters. Conversely, those researchers that are interested in "macro-level" phenomena generally favour quantitative methods. For them issues of individual variation are considered methodological issues, to be dealt with through the application of statistical techniques.

However, such distinctions reflect the dualism of action and structure, when it is necessary to appreciate the interdependence of each. To illustrate the duality of structure, Giddens discusses a transcript of a strip of interaction to demonstrate how aspects of this social encounter relate to the production and reproduction of social institutions.
The interaction takes place in a courtroom and the participants are a judge, a public defender (PD) and a district attorney (DA). They are discussing the sentencing of a person who has pleaded guilty to a charge of second-degree burglary.

PD: Your honour, we request immediate sentencing and waive the probation report.

JUDGE: What’s his record?

PD: He has a prior drunk and a GTA [grand theft auto]. Nothing serious. This is just a shoplifting case. He did enter the K-Mart with intent to steal. But really all we have here is a petty theft.

JUDGE: What do the people have?

DA: Nothing either way.

JUDGE: Any objections to immediate sentencing?

DA: No.

JUDGE: How long has he been in?

PD: Eighty-three days.

JUDGE: I make this a misdemeanour by PC article 17 and sentence you to ninety days in County Jail, with credit for time served.

(Transcript taken from Giddens, 1984, p.330).

As Giddens explains, the exchange is meaningful to participants through their tacit understanding of institutional features of the criminal justice system. These features drawn upon in turn by each participant who assumes them to be mutual knowledge held by others. Giddens argues that this demonstrates more than simply “proper procedure”. To “bring off” the interaction, the participants draw upon their knowledge of the legal system and thereby reproduce it as an institutional feature: “by evoking the institutional order in this way - and there is no other way for participants
in interaction to render what they do intelligible and coherent to one another - they thereby contribute to reproducing it. Moreover, it is essential to see that in reproducing it they also reproduce its 'facticity' as a source of structural constraint (upon themselves and upon others). They treat the system as a 'real' order of relationships within which their own interaction is situated and which it expresses. And it is a 'real' (i.e. structurally stable) order of relationships precisely because they, and others like them in connected and similar contexts, accept it as such - not necessarily in their discursive consciousness, but in the practical consciousness incorporated in what they do." (Giddens, 1984, p.331, emphases in original).

Giddens also discusses how fundamental "power" is to the "bringing off" of the interaction. The "acceptance-as-real" of institutional features demonstrated in the interaction is the basis for the legal system as an expression of modes of domination. Also the differential power of the participants is also reflected in the interaction. Thus rather than the more conventional turn-taking demonstrated in 'peer interaction', the judge is able to control the direction of the interaction more so than the others. This is accepted by the participants as it is mutually acknowledged: "The fact that the conversation does not have a conventional turn-taking form is made intelligible by the mutual acknowledgement that the judge has a certain institutionalised social identity, allocating him definite prerogatives and sanctions." (Giddens, 1984, p.332). Thus the duality of structure can be appreciated: the "facticity" of institutional orders is constituted through the situatedness of interaction, yet those institutional orders are also the condition of even the most transient social encounter.

In this way it can be seen that there is no opposition between quantitative and qualitative methods. Both involve an act of interpretation that applies to the collection and interpretation of data. Thus quantitative data can be seen to be composites of qualitative interpretations. As described earlier, this act of interpretation may not be fully acknowledged by researchers using quantitative methods, who may assume that it is possible to deal with the issue of interpretation solely as a statistical problem. Any notions of "methodological imperialism" are to be avoided, both types of approach can be justified depending on the context of enquiry: quantitative techniques will generally
be used when a large number of cases are to be investigated with respect to a particular set of characteristics.

As Giddens explains, "(1) and (2) are thus as essential for understanding (3) and (4) as vice versa, and qualitative and quantitative methods should be seen as complementary rather than antagonistic aspects of social research. Each is necessary to the other if the substantive nature of the duality of structure is to be "charted" in terms of the forms of institutional articulation whereby contexts of interaction are co-ordinated within more embracing social systems." (1984, p.334). Thus there is not one format for research, the choice of approach depends upon the specific nature of the research enquiry. This is the position implicated in the discussion of "methodological bracketing" described earlier.

Giddens argues that structuration-ist concepts imply neither a privileging nor a prohibiting of specific research techniques, whether surveys, questionnaires, interviews or any other. However, Giddens claims empirical research may be illuminated through the use of structuration-ist concepts and arguments. To this end, Giddens describes several pieces of research to illustrate the empirical applications of structuration theory (1984, p. 286 - 327). Giddens anticipates the possible criticism, that if such research may be carried out without reference to structuration theory then his arguments are of little use, through the following defence:

"There is of course no obligation for anyone doing detailed empirical research, in a given localized setting, to take on board an array of abstract notions that would merely clutter up what could otherwise be described with economy and in ordinary language. The concepts of structuration theory, as with any competing theoretical perspective, should for many research purposes be regarded as sensitizing devices, nothing more. That is to say, they may be useful for thinking about research problems and the interpretation of research results. But to suppose that being theoretically informed - which is the business of everyone working in the social sciences to be in some degree - means operating with a welter of abstract concepts is as mischievous a doctrine as one
which suggests that we can get along very well without ever using such concepts at all.” (Giddens, 1984, p. 327).

Thus structuration theory is intended neither to be simply “applied” in research programmes en bloc, nor as a distinct research programme in itself. In any particular research context, it may not be helpful to attempt to incorporate a large framework of abstract concepts. Structuration-ist concepts should be used as sensitising devices, selectively drawn upon to aid in the formulation and interpretation of research.

**Epistemological issues**

The notion that the social sciences have the same logical form as the natural sciences is the position expressed by Durkheim, particularly in “The rules of sociological method” (1982). This position is founded on a framework of inductive logic whereby theories are to be constructed inductively on the basis of observation. Thus observations are necessarily “pre-theoretical” as they are the basis of theory construction. However, when this position was applied by Durkheim, for example in his study of suicide (described earlier), the observation of phenomena was shown to be problematic: the assumption that the data were composed of observations made on the basis of Durkheim’s own definition is unlikely. The analytic category was simply assumed to reflect the data, leading to “classification by fiat” (Giddens, 1992, p. 139).

However, Giddens states that to argue that, for example a definition of suicide, could be constructed on the basis of elicitations from subjects is also misguided: both are based on a notion of the unproblematic observation of “reality”, in this case “reality” based on the ideations of participants; in Durkheim’s case, “reality” based on external features of conduct. In each case the framework of inductive inference remains intact:
observations are the basis for constructing theoretical generalisations, so are taken to be pre-theoretical in character. Intellectual effort is directed toward the "theoretical" level, the "pre-theoretical" is taken as unproblematic.

Giddens argues that the conceptual problem basic to either approach, whether based on subjective ideations or objective features of conduct, is an essentially passive relation between subject and object which reflects a dualism between subjectivism and objectivism. The inductive framework is grounded on the notion of unproblematic, theoretically neutral observation. This was the basis of "logical positivism" that was subject to "devastating critique" by Popper (Giddens, 1992, p.141).

**Logical positivism.**

Giddens acknowledges that 'logical positivism' refers not to a single body of ideas, but involves a number of shared concerns including a notion that the natural and social sciences share a logical form, influenced by the ideas of Comte (1975) who was the first to use the term "positive philosophy", and particularly stressed by members of the Vienna circle ¹. (Giddens, 1995, p. 136-7).

Initially, the differentiation between science and non-science was taken to correspond to that between what was "meaningful" and "meaningless", through the operation of the "Verification principle". Early formulations of the principle stated that the meaning of statements consisted in the method of their verification. This proved problematic as the possibility arose that through improvements in empirical techniques of validation, previously "meaningless" statements could become "meaningful". The "verification principle" was amended enabling a statement to be considered "meaningful" if there were some means of potentially testing it. However this then placed the status of the

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¹ Influential members of the Vienna circle included Neurath (1973); Carnap (1967); and Feigl (1969). Others, such as Schlick, Hahn and Gödel were also influential, though their works are less relevant in the present context.
"principle" into question, as its operation was no longer straightforward: the logic of the "principle" was founded on the notion that if a statement could not be tested then it should be dismissed as meaningless. As a result the "principle" was considered more in terms of a procedural rule than an actual principle. Nevertheless, the notion that the meaning of scientific concepts were always at least potentially reducible to empirical observations endured.

Giddens (1995) argues that the orthodox model of science derived from a liberalisation of the original logical positivist doctrines which involved a distinction being drawn between observational statement and theoretical statements. Thus the notion of "meaningfulness" was no longer made directly on the basis of observational statements, as stated in the "verification principle". This notion was replaced by the introduction of correspondence rules which would provide a link between the contents of both observational and theoretical statements.

The distinction between observational and theoretical statements greatly increased the creative scope of scientific innovation and the wide explanatory power of abstract theory by no longer restricting "meaning" to observation so directly. That part of a theoretical term which cannot be expressed directly in terms of the "observation language" is given meaning through its placement within a "deductive hierarchy" of statements, built upon a secure foundation of non-problematic observation. Giddens argues that the nature of correspondence rules has been controversial, precisely because of problems in maintaining the distinction between the theoretical and observation language: it has not been possible to sustain the notion that observation statements can be entirely "theory-free".
Post-positivistic philosophy of science.

Popper
Giddens argues that Popper’s work was in many ways a radical critique of logical positivism. The most significant of Popper’s (1959) arguments concerned the complete rejection of both induction and theoretically neutral observation, and the replacement of verification by the notion of “falsification”. Popper also stressed boldness and ingenuity in the framing of scientific hypotheses, and a recognition of science as a collective enterprise. Also, Popper argued that falsification allowed for a clear demarcation between science and non-science, rather than attempting to show metaphysics (non-science) to be meaningless.

For Popper, the principle of falsification provided the means for distinguishing the physical sciences from certain types of social theory, such as Marxism, psychoanalysis or forms of religion. Popper objected to the explanatory power of these types of social theory as they could be made to explain anything and everything. No type of empirical evidence could be used to refute the claims of these theories since they were each protected against counterfactual evidence, for example by concepts such as “false class consciousness” in the case of Marxism, “reaction formation” in psychoanalytic theory, or “the will of God” in the case of religion. Thus for Popper, the distinctive characteristic of science was not seen in terms of confirmation or verification, but in terms of the withstanding of empirical attempts to falsify it.

However, for Popper, falsification also addressed a major logical flaw of empiricism: science was supposed to be the means to certain knowledge, yet the logical form of the induction of laws from observations precluded certainty due to the possibility of a disconfirming instance. This was the basis for Popper’s famous example of a universal law, “all swans are white”. This “law” cannot be verified with complete certainty as this would require access to the total population of swans, past, present and future, and could be contradicted by the singular instance of a black swan.
Popper sought to avoid the process of induction entirely by accepting as inevitable that no abstract proposition in a science could ever be finally verified. However, although logically there was no way to attain ‘truth’, an approximation of certainty could be progressively achieved through the elimination of false theories. Thus scientific advance was possible through the empirical refutation of hypotheses. Popper believed that scientists should look for “unlikely” hypotheses as these would be the easiest to test.

The critique of inductive logic concerned not only the testing of theories but also the generation of theories. There was no longer any “logic of discovery”, new ideas could enter from any context, including the religious, or through introspection or intuition. This broke radically from the positivist notion of “metaphysics” as meaningless. The manner in which a theory was invented had nothing to do with its scientific status. By dispensing with the notion of inductive logic in this manner, there was also no longer any obligation to deal with any observation which was prior to theory as “pre-theoretical”. This was a major disjunction with logical positivism. All observations were now acknowledged to be theory-impregnated, and were interpretations of facts; what was important was that theories were open to empirical refutation.

Popper rejection of “positivism” in the natural sciences corresponded to his rejection of inductive logic in the social sciences. The notion that observations and measurements could be collected, and generalisations induced, leading to their incorporation within theories was rejected. The objectivity of science lay in its critical method of trial and error; this “critical rationalism” was seen as the most integral procedure of science. From this, the aim of the social sciences was seen as the explanation of conduct through the rational reconstruction of the circumstances (goals and knowledge) under which individuals acted, and of the consequences of their behaviour (Giddens, 1995).

Kuhn
Like Popper, Kuhn (1996) incorporated an understanding of the history and practices of science in his philosophy of science, for both science was seen as a collaborative
effort. Kuhn, however, noted a characteristic pattern of development within the natural sciences. Relatively stable "normal science", concerned with puzzle solving within a framework of accepted understandings was interspersed with periods of radicalism where previously accepted frameworks of understandings were reappraised and new frameworks introduced. Normal science and the periods of radical change were inextricably linked: through the puzzle solving activities of normal science, contradictions and anomalies in the existing framework emerged, which eventually resulted in the construction of a new framework.

Kuhn saw these frameworks, or "paradigms", as a distinguishing feature between the natural and social sciences. The social sciences did not show the pattern characteristic of the development of science due to deep-rooted disagreements about basic premises, hence they did not have the basic level of agreement to constitute normal science. Thus to describe the social sciences as "pre-paradigm" actually discloses very little as this was the basis upon which the definition of paradigm was made.

For Kuhn, normal science is integral to scientific progress. The constant critical assessment of basic premises of the substance and method of inquiry would serve to distract and detract from a concentration of effort upon clearly defined problems. This would block the development of knowledge of the form found in the natural sciences. A suspension of critical reason was a necessary condition for the successes of the natural sciences by enabling such a concentration of effort.

The notion of normal science is in direct opposition to the critical reason and the norms of critical exchange which demarcate science from non-science in Popper's philosophy. For Popper normal science is detrimental to scientific progress; for Kuhn 'normal science' facilitates scientific progress. However, normal science is a more accurate description of the actual practice of science than the "permanent revolution" implied by Popper (Giddens, 1995, p.172).
Falsification

Kuhn also drew attention to problems concerning the concept of falsification, particularly as it now had to account for both normal and revolutionary periods. In periods of normal science, scientists would often ignore or explain away results or observations inconsistent with the accepted paradigm. As Giddens explains, “Such results may be treated as compatible with a theory when initially produced, but appear to later workers as quite irreconcilable with it; or recognised as inconsistent with the theory in its current stage of development, but ‘laid aside’ as capable of explanation in terms of a revised version of the theory at a subsequent date.” (Giddens, 1992, p.144).

Although Popper introduced falsification in order to replace induction, the issue of pre-theoretical observation creates similar problems for both. This may be illustrated by reference to the earlier example, “all swans are white”. As described earlier, Popper’s argument is that such a statement cannot be verified no matter how many confirming observations are made as it may be falsified by a single non-confirming instance. However, Giddens argues that the consideration is considerably more complex, as the discovery of a “black” swan may not actually constitute a falsification. Following Feyerabend (1965), Giddens explains, “a swan that has been painted black or dipped in soot, may not be accepted as a falsifying instance; nor if this were possible, would the discovery of a black animal born of the union of a swan and a black eagle, since this would not count as a “swan” even in if it were like a swan in most important respects.” (Giddens, 1992, p.147).

Similarly the statement may not be falsified by simply refusing to acknowledge any case of a black swan that may be found as simply not being a swan, thereby placing the falsifying instance outside the scope of the law. Giddens argues that the statement “all swans are white” presupposes theories of the origins of colour-typing and biological form in birds. Thus the acceptance of a falsifying instance is dependent upon the theoretical system or paradigm within which the description of what is observed is couched; and as Kuhn shows in his characterisation of normal science, theoretical systems routinely accommodate apparently falsifying instances.
Lakatos (1970) attempted to reformulate the concept of falsification by identifying and separating out the implications of three versions of falsification. "Dogmatic falsification" refers to the simple acceptance that an observed event provides an adequate means to refute scientific theories. This is an "empiricist" version of falsification, in which observation is pre-theoretical in nature: the logic of falsification is taken to be the same as its practice. (Popper acknowledged some difference between the logic of falsification and its use in actual scientific procedures.) This type of falsification is taken to be unworkable due to its assumption of a pre-theoretical observation.

The two remaining types were "naive" and "sophisticated" methodological falsification. In both of these types of falsification it the theory-impregnated nature of observations is acknowledged. It is accepted that theory testing involved the acceptance of a theoretical framework as providing unproblematic background knowledge. In the case of "naive methodological falsification" it is maintained that theories could still be refuted by way of falsifying observation. However, this view is also untenable because as Kuhn showed, theoretical systems were capable of accommodating any number of apparently disconfirming instances without suffering abandonment.

"Sophisticated methodological falsification" involved additional criteria to support the notion of falsification by providing standards for the critical comparison of theories. Here, falsification would only occur where the abandoned theory was to be replaced by a "better" theory. A better theory would explain all that was explained successfully by its predecessor, yet also have "surplus empirical content" which could be corroborated and used to predict previously excluded or improbable facts. If these criteria were met, the abandoning of the previous theory would represent a "progressive problem shift". If not, the problem shift was considered "degenerative" and so would not constitute a falsification of the previous theory. However, in seeking to emphasise the notion of the progressive problem shift, Lakatos' position related the significance of refutation to falsification: "'Falsification' in the sense of naive falsificationism (corroborated counter-evidence) is not a sufficient condition for eliminating a specific
theory: in spite of hundreds of known anomalies we do not regard it as falsified (that is, eliminated) until we have a better one. Nor is ‘falsification’ in the naive sense necessary for falsification in the sophisticated sense: a progressive problem shift does not have to be interspersed with ‘refutations’. Science can grow without any ‘refutation’ leading the way.” (Lakatos, 1970, p.121, emphases in original).

Although Lakatos sought to support Popper, by arguing that refutation was no longer a necessary aspect of falsification, Lakatos’ sense of falsification is now quite different from that of Popper, and Popper’s sense of falsification (as the means for refutation) is now no longer a necessary criterion for the scientific status of a theory. As existing theories can largely accommodate anomalies, ‘falsification’ is no longer as distinct an alternative to the model of inductive logic it originally opposed. It is not clear how the criteria for sophisticated falsification are to be applied, for example how ‘surplus empirical content’ is to be corroborated, as a ‘paradigm shift’ may alter the status of information previously understood as fact. Also, as a consequence of the reduced status of falsification, the distinction between science and non-science becomes less clear-cut.

Giddens argues that regardless of the relationship between induction and falsification it is necessary to deny the possibility of theoretically neutral observation. In social scientific research it can be seen that the analytic categories used by a researcher imply a definite stance with regard to the phenomena under investigation. This is most noticeable when categories used by actors are contested, as for example in the decision to categorise actors as “terrorists” or “freedom fighters”. Here, even the use of a “neutral” term implies a critical distance on the part of the researcher from the mutual knowledgeability of actors.

**Paradigms**

Giddens takes issue with Kuhn’s notion of paradigm, particularly the clear demarcation and internal consistency implied in the use of the term. Giddens argues that the notion of paradigm seems to refer to a set of shared, taken-for-granted assumptions. In this
respects they may be more generically referred to as a “frame of meaning”. However, the notion of “paradigm shift” that is said to occur in revolutionary periods of science, implies that paradigms are not separate “closed” systems, otherwise it would not be possible to move from one meaning-frame to another. Giddens argues that all paradigms or meaning frames are mediated by others. This applies to both the successive development of paradigms within science, and for an actor “learning to find their way” within a paradigm.

The process of learning a paradigm or frame of meaning implicates also learning what the paradigm is not: “that is to say, learning to mediate it with other, rejected alternatives, by contrast to which the claims of the paradigm in question are clarified.” (Giddens, 1992, p.151). Giddens provides the examples of Einsteinian physics and Newtonian physics, and Protestantism and Catholicism: each set of examples involve clear divergence between each element, yet also retain direct continuities, and to some extent each is only fully appreciated though an understanding of its relationship to the other.

The process of learning a paradigm through the mediation of rejected alternatives implicates the contestation of interpretations, thus the boundary between what is “internal” to the frame of meaning and what is “external” to it must be seen as permeable or fluctuating. Giddens argues that analogy and metaphor play an important part in this process: “To become acquainted with a new paradigm is to grasp a new frame of meaning, in which familiar premises are altered: elements of the novel scheme are learned through metaphorical allusion to the old. Metaphor both produces and expresses... a ‘displacement of concepts’: the connection of disparate frames in a way which is initially ‘unusual’.” (Giddens, 1992, p.155).

In a similar vein it can be seen that there is some degree of continuity between the natural and social sciences, while at the same time significant discontinuities. Common to both is the necessity of acknowledging that there are no theory-free observations or data. Also, a scheme of sophisticated falsification may provide an initial “but not wholly adequate” means to deal with testability (Giddens, 1992, p.158).
However, the discontinuities include that the social sciences stand in a subject-subject relation to their “field of study”, not a subject-object relation as is the case with the natural sciences. By this is meant that the social sciences are concerned with studying aspects of “pre-interpretated” phenomena, where the meanings developed by active, purposeful agents actually enter into the constitution (and reconstitution) of phenomena. Thus, Giddens concludes, the social sciences involve a “double hermeneutic”. This refers to the “intersection of the two frames of meaning, the meaningful social world as constituted by lay actors, and the metalanguages invented by social scientists” (Giddens, 1984, p.374).

Social scientific research depends upon a mastery of the mutual knowledge held by those that, through their activities, constitute the subject matter under investigation. This mutual knowledge can be understood as a frame of meaning, and the task of the researcher as involving, to some degree, “the hermeneutic elucidation of frames of meaning” (level (1) of the levels of analysis described earlier.) This is the basis for the generation of descriptions of those forms of interaction that, though the notion of the duality of structure, constitute the phenomena under investigation.

However, the generation of descriptions of acts by actors is integral to the constitution of social interaction and thereby social institutions: “the characterisation of what others do, and more narrowly their intentions and reasons for what they do, is what makes possible the intersubjectivity through which the transfer of communicative intent is realised.” (Giddens, 1992, p.158).

Thus every competent social actor (i.e. capable of “bringing off” interactions) is in some respects a social scientist, who routinely interprets their own behaviour and that of others in the context of social interaction. “There is no clear dividing line between informed sociological reflection carried on by lay actors and similar endeavours on the part of specialists.” (Giddens, 1984, p. xxxiii).

The recursive nature of social life also has implications for generalisations in the social sciences. Such generalisations concern the outcomes of human activity; as a result the
causal mechanisms are inherently unstable, dependent on standard patterns of reasoning producing standard patterns of unintended consequence. This is not the case with natural sciences where the boundary conditions of laws or generalisations refer to causal relations that are immutable given the meeting of those conditions. In the social sciences, “the causal relations always refer to ‘mixes’ of intended and unintended consequences of reproduced acts. Laws in the social science are historical in character and in principle mutable in form....The boundary conditions involved with laws in the social sciences include as a basic element the knowledge that actors, in a given institutional context, have about circumstances of their action.” (Giddens, 1979, p.243-4, emphases in original). There are no universal laws in the social sciences because generalisations are mutable in respect of the knowledge actors have of the circumstances of their own action.

Critical response to Giddens

As stated earlier, Giddens' concept of structuration touches upon many aspects of social science, and is critical of both objectivist and subjectivist approaches to social phenomena. Consequently it has generated a great deal of critical debate throughout the social sciences. It may be due to the wide-ranging issues involved, but there does appear to be great scope for misunderstanding the nature and implications of Giddens' structuration theory. With this in mind the following passage by Giddens may aid the discussion of aspects of the critical literature to follow.

“Structuration theory is not intended to be a theory ‘of’ anything, in the sense of advancing generalisations about social reality. While this emphasis has infuriated some critics, it is quite necessary to any attempt to provide an ontology of social activity in the sense noted previously. In seeking to come to grips with problems of action and
structure, structuration theory offers a conceptual scheme that allows one to understand both how actors are at the same time the creators of social systems yet created by them. Critics who argue either that structuration theory provides too little space for free action or, alternatively, underestimates the influence of structural constraint (both types of criticism have been made) miss the point. The theory of structuration is not a series of generalisations about how far ‘free action’ is possible in respect of ‘social constraint’. Rather, it is an attempt to provide the conceptual means of analyzing the often delicate and subtle interlacings of reflexively organized action and institutional constraint.” (Giddens, 1991, p.204).

Critiques relating to the duality of structure.

Giddens’ notion of the duality of structure has provoked much debate. However, argument has been particularly directed toward Giddens’ conception of structure as rules and resources, and toward Giddens’ alleged over-emphasis on agency rather than structural generalities. It is these two issues that the discussion below will be directed toward.

As described earlier Giddens conception of rule is similar to Wittgenstein’s (1972) notion of rule as knowing how to ‘go on’ with social activity, without requiring discursive formulation. However, in contrast to Wittgenstein, unlike the rules of games, the rules which are drawn upon as structural properties are chronically contested, subject to rival interpretation and transformed in their very application. A rule has two aspects, relating to the constitution of meaning and the sanctioning of conduct, though a rule cannot be drawn upon in isolation from resources which facilitate the exercise of power.
Thompson (1989) argues that Giddens' notion of rule generates more confusion than clarification. Thompson states that it is not clear which are the rules which comprise social structure, neither is it clear what would count as a relevant rule. Thompson contends that Giddens is forcing a framework onto the notion of social structure that is inappropriate; Thompson states that the study of rules is not the same as the analysis of social structure.

Thompson provides a number of examples to illustrate his concerns. He argues that, for example, while there may be rules governing the use of the noun "the Left" in contemporary Britain, to study these rules is not to study the social structure of Britain. Thompson argues that these rules may be differentiated across groups, but this implicates structural points of reference that are not in themselves rules. Similarly the restriction of opportunity may operate independently of the rights and obligations of agents. Thompson argues that such restrictions may operate differentially, but again this differential distribution cannot be understood in terms of rules. Thompson also states that while large organisations may operate according to rules, their structural features, for example as capitalist organisations, cannot be understood in terms of rules; the structural features may delimit the kinds of rules available.

Thompson argues that it is due to an over emphasis on the enabling aspects of structure, that Giddens fails to explain how rules operate as constraints. Thompson argues that structural constraint may reduce the options available to an individual to one, such as in the situation facing propertyless individuals who must accept a job. In such a situation, the individual cannot "do otherwise", as Giddens states in his definition of agency, thus agency is dissolved. Thompson finds Giddens' notion of a "feasible option", given an individuals' wants and desires, as a means to deal with the situation where there is only one option, unconvincing. Thompson argues that it is Giddens' definition of agency is at the root of the problem: Giddens implies that every individual must be an "agent"; this is why the differential distribution of options is not captured in Giddens' conceptualisation.
Bauman (1989) similarly questions Giddens' use of rules to convey the notion of structure. Bauman argues that in Giddens' scheme action is governed by rules, thus the notion of structure is outside the realm of human action, which is now simply normatively given. Bauman argues that rules may be negotiated and questioned, but Giddens cannot deal with this provision due to the external nature of rules.

Bauman also argues that Giddens over emphasises agency at the expense of constraint. According to Bauman, Giddens assumes that the lack of control that actors may experience over their circumstances is due to the bounded nature of their knowledgeability. Bauman claims that the implication of this is that if actors were to gain knowledgeability, they would then be able to control their circumstances. Bauman suggest that Elias' (1978) notion of figuration provides a preferable alternative. Bauman argues that the notion of figuration stresses the interdependency of actors and their contexts such that the knowledgeability of actors does not affect the figurational logic of a situation. Bauman continues that the notion of interdependency constrains different actors in different ways. Even though knowledgeability may in principle be evenly distributed, some actors may be more able to "structure" their environments than others. Thus, it can be seen that Bauman's critique shares a basic concern with Thompson that the differential operation of constraint cannot be captured by the notion of rule.

Boyne (1991) similarly argues that by focusing on the knowledgeability of individual actors, Giddens places too little emphasis on the notion of constraint. Boyne argues that the emphasis on agency is in accord with the demand of late capitalism for the "total adaptability and multifunctionality of individuals." (Boyne, 1991, p. 58). Jary (1991) also registers his concern that Giddens shows an ontological and epistemological bias toward agency. According to Jary, Giddens assumes that "because agents construct and can and do re-construct social arrangements", that this reconstruction "cannot be captured by law-like propositions or general mechanisms" (Jary, 1991, p.144-5). Jary argues that the question of generalisation should be left open, and settled in individual cases rather than in a "once and for all" manner (1991, p. 146).
Giddens' response

In response to Thompson, Giddens explains that with regard to structuration, "structure" does not refer to descriptive features of social life. The continuities of form normally associated with the notion of structure in the social scientific literature, refer to the reproduction of human social processes, described by the notion of "system". The rules involved in social life can be thought of as "generalisable procedures" or conventions which agents follow. Giddens suggests Goffman's (1981) notion of displaying agency as a useful illustration: according to Goffman, to be a human agent one must, in some sense, be in control of oneself and also display to others that one is in control. Thus, Giddens explains, the display of agency is not a rule as such, but implicates a number of conventions which agents may follow. These may involve posture, gesture, or perhaps vocal intonation. The display of agency is fundamentally implicated in the accomplishment of social activities.

However, rules are not just involved in specifying the constituting features of social conduct, but are also involved in the application of sanctions. Sanctions may be very diffuse, as for example are many of the sanctions involved in the displaying of agency. Nevertheless, failure to follow conventions may also involve very formal sanctions, for example if such behaviour is identified as constituting mental incapacity. Agents draw upon rules to reproduce practices that may be strongly institutionalised; that is, deeply embedded in space and time. Such practices may be directly relevant to more "macro" phenomena, for example procedures for the displaying of agency may underpin pervasive aspects of social institutions, through their invoking of trust and confidence in particularly influential social encounters.

Thus Giddens argues, it does not make sense to ask which are the rules which comprise social structure; structure only exists in and through the activities of human agents. Contrary to Bauman's suggestion, structure cannot be outside the realm of human activity. I would argue that Bauman has misunderstood Giddens' and considered the notion of rule solely in terms of formalised prescription; in this way structure may indeed be seen as external to human action. However, this is in contradiction to the whole notion of the duality of structure which stresses the creative
grasping of rules, which are applied, interpreted and transformed in particular contexts. All moments of reflexive attention draw upon and reconstitute rules (and resources). Actors may indeed distance themselves from formalised systems of rules, as Bauman suggests when he notes that rules may be negotiated and questioned. It is necessary to understand that rules that are drawn upon by actors only exist through their activities; with regard to the notion of distancing oneself from them, there is no stepping outside the flow of action.

Bauman and Thompson use the term “social structure” to refer to the structural properties of social systems. Systems of interaction and social relationships reproduced across space and time have a stability that derives from their institutional character. Thus the differential capabilities, that Bauman describes as some people being more able to “structure” than others, or Thompson’s restricted opportunities and options, refer to structural properties of social systems. These are not themselves rules and cannot be studied as rules. Bauman and Thompson are referring to relationships of differential power. Giddens argues that power is a fundamental characteristic of social systems, “although its analysis is complex, and it has both generative and distributive aspects” (Giddens, 1991, p.257). Power is implicated both at the level of strategic conduct and at the level of social systems, though the duality of structure, and thus does not compromise the concepts of structure and system.

Giddens further explicates the notion of structure as rules and resources by considering the examples provided by Thompson. The use of the noun “the Left”, Giddens suggests, could be analysed as it appears in the talk of particular groups such as trades union leaders, or business leaders. It is doubtful that the varied use of the term could be subsumed under a single “rule”. However, by analysing the “texture” of these uses, aspects of the production and reproduction of unions as organisations, and other aspects of industrial relations, such as relations with different levels of management or other trades unions, may be illuminated. Analysis of uses of the word could also be used to draw attention to aspects of power relations in and between such collectivities.
As regards restriction to the range of opportunities of actors, such as restricted entry to organisations such as universities, this again cannot be subsumed under the operation of a single rule. System reproduction implicates complexes of rules and resources involved in the “given-ness” of the actor’s environment. These involve the acceptance of certain conventions as appropriate. For example, the possession of a qualification would be implicated as a resource to be drawn upon to enable a selection interview to be successfully “brought off”. This may more easily be illustrated by considering more generally the notion of constraint.

Further comments
Bauman, Boyne and Jary each argue that Giddens over-emphasises agency. Both Bauman and Boyne each interpret structural constraint in terms of knowledgeability: the options of actors are seen to be restricted due to their bounded knowledge; thus if agents were to acquire sufficient knowledge of the conditions and consequences of their actions, their options would no longer be restricted. Such a notion would indeed seem to over-emphasise agency, however Giddens does not argue that constraint is to be understood solely in terms of agents’ knowledgeability. Structural constraint derives from the institutionalised nature of social practices in a given context of action in which agents find themselves. The recursive character of structure implicates the nature of institutions. The constraining elements are features of the given-ness of the social environment of action to particular agents, which through the duality of structure implicate structures of signification, domination and legitimation.

Giddens only briefly responds to Bauman’s suggestion that Elias’ concept of figuration captured the interdependencies of situations more effectively than structuration. Giddens simply states that figuration offers no particular advantage. However, Bauman’s suggestion was based on his assumption that Giddens conceived of constraint solely in terms of knowledgeability. In fact, the “figurative logic” of situations appears to be very similar to Wright’s (after Cohen) notion of dispositional fact, mentioned when discussing functional arguments in the next section. I will not
pursue this similarity here, the main point to be emphasised is that Bauman's argument is based upon a misrepresentation of Giddens' position.

Jary's argument that the question of generalisation be left open to be settled in particular cases is puzzling in that this is the position that Giddens actually takes. The alleged bias toward open agency refers to the potential for transformation, not actual transformation. Giddens argues that institutional analysis is based upon reproduced patterns of social relationship and unintended consequences. As the social relationships that constitute institutions must be continually produced (and reproduced), such generalisations are mutable in principle, though not necessarily in practice. The embeddness of practices in time and space is the basis for the apparent regularities of social life (and for the definition of institutions). Thus, the question of generalisation is indeed "to be settled" with regard to particular cases.

Thompson also argues that Giddens fails to fully appreciate the nature of constraint, though his line of argument is slightly different to those already discussed. Thompson argues that in certain situations, structural constraint may reduce the options available to an agent to one, in other words to no option. In such a situation, agency would be dissolved. Giddens argues that the notion of feasible option presumes a range of wants and motivations. In this sense, constraint may indeed appear to dissolve agency. However, such wants and motivations are open to redefinition which may lead to the opening up of several courses of action. As Giddens argues that this is not simply a logical point but may have profound substantive implications as the basis for many forms of contestation and active attempts at social (structural) transformation that may occur as a result of such redefinition.
Responses to Giddens' critique of "Functionalism".

Giddens' criticism of functionalism has been presented earlier, in the discussion of Moscovici's relationship to Durkheim and Parsons, and throughout the description of structuration theory, via discussion of the limitations of normatively-based approaches. In this section, critical examinations of Giddens' rejection of functionalist arguments will be considered. It is generally accepted by critics that functional arguments are not satisfactory explanations in themselves, however it is claimed that functional arguments may constitute an aspect of proper explanation. This is the basic position taken by Wright and also Bryant and Jary whose arguments will be discussed below. These arguments will be discussed quite thoroughly as they have particular relevance to many theories in social psychology which I will argue, in a later chapter, are based on functionalist-type arguments.

Giddens main contention with functionalist arguments is that they involve the imputing of needs to social systems (e.g. 1984, p.294). In this way the knowledgeability of actors is derogated as they become the mere bearers of social relations. Giddens also argues that functional arguments that claim to be merely descriptive tend to slide surreptitiously into explanation. Giddens claims that functional arguments are only permissible if used "counterfactually"; that is, to identify conditions that must be met if certain consequences are to follow. It directs attention to a problem that requires explanation rather than providing an explanation itself. Giddens provides an example of a counterfactual use of a functionalist argument: "In order for the occupational division of labour to be maintained, the educational system has to ensure that individuals are allocated differentially to occupational positions'. The force of 'has to' here is counterfactual;...understood as asking a question rather than answering one, it is entirely legitimate." (1984, p.296). Giddens argues that counterfactual thinking is "one of the main procedures of all intellectual inquiry" but must not be thought of as constituting an explanation in itself (1989, p.262).

Wright (1989) illustrates his defence of functionalist arguments through the use of a number of examples. In the first of these he describes Marxist discussions of racism in
terms of their negative consequences for working class unity. Wright acknowledges that even though the term “function” is not present, the argument presented is functionalist as the phenomenon is explained in terms of the meeting of system needs; that is, racism is explained in terms of its beneficial effects for capitalism. Wright argues that in the absence of this beneficial effect, racism would disappear much more readily. Thus the functional consequence, the beneficial effect, can be considered part of the explanation for the persistence of racism.

Wright anticipates that Giddens may accept this point but request that the explanation be based on the discursive and practical consciousness of the bourgeoisie whose actions help to support racism, rather than in terms of functional relations. However, Wright argues that the effects are not a property of the consciousness of the bourgeoisie but of the social system: racism is a “dispositional fact” of the social system.

Wright acknowledges that the term “dispositional fact” is taken from Cohen (1978) and borrows one of Cohen’s examples to describe the notion. Wright explains that functional explanations in the social sciences are similar to those in biology. “The causal explanation for the long neck of the giraffe (Cohen’s favourite example) is a series of specific mutations that changed the genes of short-necked giraffes. The sense in which a functional explanation is still appropriate here is that unless it was a dispositional fact of the situation of short-necked giraffes that their chances for reproductive survival would be enhanced by long necks, those same mutations would not have led to the gradual increase in the length of the giraffe’s neck.” (Wright, 1989, p.80).

Thus referring to his earlier example, Wright argues that if racism did not have these beneficial effects, the strategies of specific actors which result in racism would not persist as they do. However, Wright concedes, though dispositional facts are real properties of social systems, they may be difficult to defend empirically, so counterfactual arguments may be used as support in the way described by Giddens. “But this does not imply that such analyses have the status simply of heuristic exercises
designed to point the way toward questions; claims about dispositional properties of
social systems are a part of many answers. Functional argument, thus, can at least
constitute part of a legitimate social explanation.” (Wright, 1989, p.81).

Wright continues by claiming that functional explanation is also relevant to situations
that do not rely on actors' beliefs in the beneficial consequences of a given practice.
Following Elster (1978), Wright argues that a functional argument is appropriate when
explaining the profit-maximising strategies of capitalist firms. Wright explains that the
market acts as a selective mechanism which eliminates sub-optimal strategies, such that
eventually only firms which operate profit-maximising strategies survive. Thus a
functional relationship is structurally ensured through the operation of the market: a
non-intentional selective mechanism operates to produce functional relations.

Giddens' response

Giddens does not respond in the manner Wright had intended with regard to the
"racism" example. Giddens argues that the identification of racism as a dispositional
fact does not account for nor explain the persistence of racism, without additional
explanatory support. "Racism simply happens to have the consequence of being
'beneficial to the bourgeoisie'. The 'happens to' remains to be explained." (Giddens,
1989, p.261). Giddens describes two possible types of explanation: the consequences
may be intended and deliberately pursued by individuals or collectivities; or unintended
and the result of a feedback process no-one reflexively monitors. In actual practice
these two types are complexly inter-related; this constitutes the 'mix' of intended and
unintended consequences of action that characterises the constitution of social
phenomena, as described earlier. In Giddens own words: "Identifying what in fact
'happens' constitutes the explanation of the phenomenon in question." (1989, p.261,
emphases in original).

Similarly, Giddens maintains his rejection of functionalist arguments when considering
Wright's example of profit-maximising strategies. Thus, that firms “must” adapt to
survive remains counterfactual if no further grounds are supplied. Giddens argues that
it could be the case that no firm pursues profit maximisation; it would only be if some firms did so that others would have to do also. Thus Giddens concludes that an explanation for profit-maximising is still lacking.

Further comments
I would agree with Giddens' arguments, but I believe that his response to the profit-maximising example could draw attention to another aspect of functional-type explanations. Wright assumes that "profit-maximising strategies" may be unproblematically identified. This refers not simply to a methodological issue, Wright acknowledges that dispositional facts may be difficult to defend empirically, but to a more theoretical concern. The "functional relation" between profit-maximising and the capitalist marketplace is actually implicit in the definition of what the capitalist marketplace is. Any company that survives will have by definition developed profit-maximisation strategies as this is the basis by which the market, as defined, operates. (This is similar to Aberle et al’s (1967) definition of society discussed earlier.)

However, what actually ‘counts’ as such a strategy is unclear. Wright’s argument implies the unproblematic application of criteria that constitute profit-maximisation. But there are many possible permutations and combinations of such criteria depending on the parameters involved in different types of business concern. That a company survives does not necessarily mean it is operating optimally; even if it were this would not necessarily guarantee success. For example profit maximisation in the short term could lead to a greater susceptibility to alterations in wider market conditions, thus ending a firm’s “survival”. The functional relation Wright specifies between profit-maximising and survival implies that there was only one possible means to achieve the outcome: that strategy must therefore have been profit maximisation.

This point may be further illustrated with reference to Wright’s functional explanation for the long neck of the giraffe. Wright argues that if it were not a dispositional fact of the situation of short necked giraffes that long necks would result in reproductive survival, long necks would not have developed. Again, this argument implies an
inevitability to the outcome. The development of long necks is not the key to reproductive survival, otherwise all creatures would develop long necks. Following Giddens' point, identifying what in fact "happened" would constitute the explanation. The related point I would like to emphasise is that the development of a long neck need not have been the only possible outcome for the giraffe's short necked ancestor. Development may have occurred along a range of parameters, leading to possible "outcomes" that may no longer appear closely related to the giraffe, (as evidenced by the variety of ungulate species native to Africa that share a common ancestor with the giraffe). Wright's argument implies that such outcomes may be unproblematically observed, but the identification of these outcomes is dependent on his (flawed) characterisation of the situation, i.e. of what constitutes a descendant of a short-necked giraffe; or in the earlier example, what constitutes profit-maximisation. The significance of this point may not be immediately apparent but the unproblematic observation of phenomena is very relevant to social psychology and will be discussed later.

Bryant and Jary also question Giddens' "anathematization of functionalism" (1991, p.23). They acknowledge Giddens criticisms, though defend the utility of functional arguments as an aspect of a "proper" explanation. Bryant and Jary discuss the example, "industrial capitalism "needs" large numbers of people either to work in unrewarding manual labour or to be part of an industrial reserve army of the unemployed" (1991, p.23). Bryant and Jary argue that functional argument is acceptable as long as function is separated from cause; thus a function does not explain the existence of a phenomena, but the existence does serve the function. Bryant and Jary also acknowledge the necessity of taking account of the purposive nature of actors. They argue that functional argument need not "eclipse interpretative understanding and the analysis of purposive action" (1991, p.23).

Giddens does not explicitly respond to Bryant and Jary, though it is not difficult to evaluate their arguments. Bryant and Jary's argument that the existence of, for example, large numbers of manual labourers or unemployed, serve a function is identical to Wright's argument of dispositiveal facts. Following Giddens it can be seen
that this does not constitute an explanation; what in fact happens would constitute the explanation. However, by following Bryant and Jary's suggestion to incorporate interpretative understanding and purposive action, the utility of the functional argument is greatly reduced. The functional argument is now being used counterfactually in the manner endorsed by Giddens as an important feature of intellectual inquiry: the functional argument identifies a situation which requires explanation; this explanation will be in terms of the meshing of both intended and unintended consequences of action.

Functional arguments may be helpful when used counterfactually to aid in the initial formulation of a problem that requires further explanation. However, beyond this heuristic capability, their utility has not been substantiated.

Critiques relating to empirical issues.

Held and Thompson (1989) state that while structuration theory has generated much theoretical debate, it has been received less enthusiastically by those engaged in empirical research who tend to feel that structuration-ist concepts are too abstract and formal to be directly incorporated into empirical research (1989, p.9). This is the general position taken by Gregson (1989) and Jary (1991) whose criticisms are discussed below.

Gregson's criticism is directed predominantly at chapter six of "The constitution of society" in which Giddens provides his most comprehensive discussion of empirical research to date. (This chapter was also the primary source for the description of the empirical issues related to structuration theory, presented earlier.)
Gregson points out that Giddens himself states that structuration theory must “help to illuminate problems of empirical research” to be of any value to social science (Giddens, 1984, p.xxix). Gregson argues that Giddens’ guidelines for research, which include acknowledging both the “ethnographic moment” implicated in all social science research, and also the complex knowledgeableability of individual agents (described earlier), reflect Giddens’ views as to what is central to an ontology of human societies.

Gregson claims, by emphasising the ethnographic moment, Giddens is arguing “that individuals’ knowledge and understanding is not just alluded to but elucidated in the course of empirical research projects” (Gregson, 1989, p.240). Similarly, Gregson claims that the emphasis on the complexity of the skills of individual agents reflects Giddens’ model of human agency and “suggests that empirical work be alive to all that is contained in [Giddens conception] of agency”; thus “discursive consciousness, practical consciousness, the unconscious and the unacknowledged conditions and unintentional outcomes of action are all implicated” (Gregson, 1989, p.240). Gregson argues that the guidelines lack the necessary specificity. For empirical work, the key questions concern “which ‘actors’, which skills... and how we investigate these, where and when.” (Gregson, 1989, p.241, emphases in original). Thus, Gregson claims, Giddens’ guidelines reflect ontological rather than empirical concerns and thus are of limited use to empirical research.

Gregson also criticises Giddens’ use of existing research, which makes no reference to and does not appear to have been informed by structuration theory, to illustrate the relevances of structuration-ist concepts (as described earlier.) Gregson argues that this lead to a curious situation whereby “rather than structuration theory being used to inform empirical work, it is certain isolated aspects of a range of projects which are used to illustrate certain aspects of structuration theory.” (1989, p.242). As a result, Gregson argues, it is not clear what the distinctive character of a structuration-ist programme of research would be: structuration-concepts are either not specific to structuration theory or are so general that they are compatible with a variety of different approaches.
Gregson also argues that in Giddens' scheme empirical research questions alone determine the use of theoretical arguments. Gregson claims that this leaves no place for the interrogation and development of theory through empirical work: Giddens' use of existing empirical studies seems to illustrate structuration-ist concepts rather than to interrogate structuration theory. Thus Gregson refers to structuration theory as a "second order" theory, concerned with conceptualising general features of society, such as agency, structure and power. Gregson distinguishes this level from "first order" theory, which suggest concepts with immediate empirical application, to direct research projects and to be modified in the course of such work.

Gregson argues that in this way it can be seen that structuration theory does not constitute a critical social theory. As it has no specific substantive implications, it cannot specify substantive alternatives. Gregson argues that any genuinely critical social theory must demonstrate its connection to empirical research by engaging with the concrete social world, "in a permanent rather than transitory, glancing manner" to explain not only what exists but also what might exist and indicate how this transformation is to proceed (Gregson, 1991, p.237). Consequently, Gregson argues, structuration theory slides into theoretical relativism. Gregson claims that concrete application is the only means by which structuration theory may justify its worth and so avoid being "just one more voice in a theoretical sea." (Gregson, 1989, p.248).

Jary (1991) bases his arguments around Giddens' "Contemporary critique of historical materialism" (Giddens; vol. 1, 1981; vol. 2, 1985). These are more substantive works, though Jary also discusses the empirical implications of structuration theory. It is the latter aspect which will be considered here. Jary's criticisms are of interest as they draw attention to the notion of methodological bracketing described earlier.

Following a similar line of argument to Gregson, Jary complains that structuration-ist ideas do not specify historical conclusions. Such conclusion, Jary argues, would require detailed empirical work and the construction of specific theories. In contrast, the duality of structure is "not automatically an operational model or one from which a single set of answers can ever be expected." (1991, p.147, emphases in original). Jary
maintains that this is due to difficulties in conducting analysis in terms of both agency and structure.

However, Jary argues that Mann's analysis of the "sources of social power" (1986) covers broadly the same grounds as Giddens, yet Mann's conceptualisation is more empirically straightforward for historical analysis. Jary praises Mann for placing more emphasis on the detailed testing of substantive claims and suggests that this may be because unlike Giddens, Mann's analyses need not maintain links to the general theory of structuration.

Giddens' response
In response to Gregson, Giddens reiterates that structuration theory is not in itself a distinct research programme, that structuration-ist concepts should be used as sensitising devices, used selectively when formulating research or interpreting findings. Giddens argues that theoretical thinking should not be expected to be linked at all points to empirical considerations. Empirical work requires abstract notions and theoretical concepts, but Giddens argues, these are drawn upon selectively and cannot be continually present as the term "empirical work" covers a multitude of concerns and objectives. Giddens' argument that research responds to contextualised enquiries is reflected in his refusal to privilege any particular method: "For some purposes, detailed ethnographic work is appropriate, while for others archival research, or the sophisticated statistical analysis of secondary materials, might be more suitable." (1991, p.296).

However, Giddens points out that theory is also contextual in that some theories and concepts are more abstract than others. Giddens argues that structuration theory is relevant to empirical research as it draws attention to necessary considerations when formulating research or interpreting findings. Giddens makes this point clearly with respect to the ethnographic moment of research: "Since this is a logical point, by definition it does not disclose anything directly which is an option for a researcher; it sets out what all social investigation, without exception, involves. Yet it would be
wrong to say that it is without direct relevance to the conduct and interpretation of research. Thus someone who believes she or he is dealing only with ‘hard facts’ - say in the shape of a mathematical analysis of quantitative variables - might both misconstrue what those ‘facts’ are and other conclusions to be drawn from them, if the point is ignored.” (1991, p.296).

Giddens points out in the chapter from which Gregson bases her critique, that structuration-ist concepts were important to draw attention to “‘the logical implications of studying a “subject matter” of which the researcher is already a part’ and to elucidate ‘the substantive connotations of the core notions of action and structure’.” (1991, p.296). The studies Giddens describes were selected as they displayed an awareness of “key emphases” formally elaborated in structuration theory, and, importantly, did not require recourse to functionalist assertions of any kind.

Giddens concludes that “(s)tructuration theory is a broad perspective upon the study of action, structure and institutions. Its relation to empirical research is much the same as that of competing perspectives and schools of thought.” (1991, p.297). Thus, while there is no structuration-ist programme of research, structuration theory is relevant to social scientific research.

Further comments
Giddens does not directly respond to Jary’s criticisms. Nevertheless, as stated earlier, they merit further discussion as they implicate the notion of methodological bracketing. Jary’s arguments overlap to some extent to those of Gregson in the call for greater empirical specification, however those aspects have been covered in the previous section so will not be discussed further.

Jary draws attention to the difficulty of conducting analysis in terms of both agency and structure. This suggests that Jary has not fully acknowledged the implications of the duality of structure, particularly with regard to methodological bracketing. As described earlier, Giddens links the analysis of strategic conduct to institutional
analysis through "modalities" of structuration: "The modalities of structuration are
drawn upon by actors in the production of interaction, but at the same time are the
media of the reproduction of the structural components of systems of interaction.
When institutional analysis is bracketed, the modalities are treated as stocks of
knowledge and resources employed by actors in the constitution of interaction as a
skilled and knowledgeable accomplishment, within bounded conditions of the
rationalisation of action. Where strategic conduct is placed under an epoche\(^2\), the
modalities represent rules and resources considered as institutional features of systems
of social interaction." (Giddens, 1979, p.81, emphases in original).

Giddens brackets strategic conduct and institutional levels of analysis precisely because
both levels cannot be captured in the same empirical moment. This is a direct
implication of the notion of the duality of structure. Jary seems to be arguing that
theory should link to empirical considerations at all points in much the same way as
Gregson. As discussed in the previous section this fails to acknowledge the autonomy
that exists to some extent between theory and specific empirical application. However,
as described in some detail earlier when introducing structuration theory, this
bracketing does not represent two sides of a dualism but is a methodological device to
deal with the duality of structure.

Jary also states a preference for the work of Mann (1986) over that of Giddens. A
comparison of the historical analyses of each is beyond the scope of this study.
However, a brief description of the main points of Mann's framework merits attention
as Mann's conception of "sources of social power" does indeed share a number of
general concerns with Giddens' work. For example, both are ambitious and wide
ranging in their scope: Mann's intention is no less than to provide "a history and theory
of power relations in human societies." (1986, p.1). Also, Mann argues that as
societies are not unified totalities, individuals are not constrained by social structure as
a whole, thus it is not useful to make a distinction between "social action" and "social

\(^2\) In this context, "epoche" refers to some type of bracketing.
Mann argues that societies are much “messier” than our theories of them, but it is possible for theories to attempt to deal with this diversity. (1986, p.4). Mann argues that a general account of society can be achieved in terms of what are referred to as the four “sources of social power”. Mann explains that in their perpetual creation and pursuit of goals, human beings continually construct and reconstruct a multiplicity of social networks that variously implicate “ideological”, “economic”, “military” and “political” aspects. These are overlapping networks of interaction that refer to organisations or institutional means of attaining human goals: “Their primacy comes not from the strength of human desires for ideological, economic, military or political satisfaction but from the particular organisational means each possesses to attain human goals, whatever these may be.” (Mann, 1986, p.2, emphasis in original).

Mann operates at an organisational level of analysis, emphasising the capacity to organise and control people, materials and territories. Mann endorses Giddens’ treatment of power in terms of “resources” which are the media through which power is exercised. However, in Mann’s framework, these media are referred to as “power sources”. Thus Mann’s treatment of the “problem of order” is in these terms: “it does not concern value consensus, or force, or exchange in the usual sense of these conventional sociological explanations. The masses comply because they lack collective organisation to do otherwise, because they are embedded within collective and distributive power organisations controlled by others. They are organisationally outflanked.” (1986, p.7). Again, Mann echoes Giddens’ rejection of normative consensus and an emphasis on the constraining aspects of structure.

Though Mann acknowledges the purposive nature of individuals, he makes no attempt to theorise individual motivations and goals. This allows Mann to concentrate on emergent organisational power sources. Mann states that purposive individuals form a multiplicity of social relationships whose causal sequences are too complex for any general theory. Thus Mann argues that the key to the importance of the power sources is that “(t)hey give collective organisation and unity to the infinite variety of social existence. They provide such significant patterning as there is in large-scale social structure (which may or may not be very great) because they are capable of generating
collective action. They are “the generalized means” through which human beings make their own history.” (Mann, 1986, p.28).

It can be seen that Mann’s approach seems broadly compatible with structuration theory in general. Mann emphasises the inherent link between power and action, and the purposive nature of human social activity. Mann’s framework could be described in terms of the duality of structure as representing an institutional level of analysis, where strategic conduct is bracketed out as “too complex to be theorised”. Mann’s reluctance to describe in any great detail the multiplicity of social relationships is entirely appropriate given the nature of his research enquiry. Nevertheless, Mann’s framework expresses the duality of structure, not a dualism, as Mann does not attempt to explain social action solely on the basis of the institutional level of analysis. Thus Mann’s approach can be seen as an example of the utility of a methodological bracketing which demonstrates that such a bracketing need not simply reinstate a dualism between action and structure.

Gregson’s and Jary’s criticisms draw attention to important issues concerning the relationship between theory and empirical research. Giddens is correct to note that theory does not connect at every point to empirical concerns. This is implied in the discussion of the development of logical positivist philosophy. As described earlier, the “verification principle”, which implied that theoretical concepts were reducible to empirical observations, was abandoned in favour of a separation between theoretical and observational statements, which greatly increased the explanatory power of abstract theory. Theoretical and observational statements were related through their positioning within a deductive hierarchy. Also described earlier, the fundamental flaw with this theory of science was that it was grounded upon a notion of non-problematic observation. That there is no theory-free observation has profound implications for the very notion of science, whether “social” science or “natural” science.

Gregson’s critique appears to be grounded within an empiricist framework, involving an unproblematically recurring sequence of empirical refutation and theoretical refinement. There is an inherent separation between theoretical and observational
statements and the relation between the two is not unproblematic, due to the theory laden nature of observation.

Also, both Gregson and Jary (albeit to different degrees) argue that theory should be connected at all points to the empirical. Gregson claims that Giddens' emphasis on the "ethnographic moment" means that the knowledgeability of individuals must not just be alluded to, but elucidated also (1989, p. 240). This is not what Giddens claims, and as Mann's work demonstrates, while the knowledgeability of individuals must be "alluded to", whether it need be "elucidated" depends on the nature of the research enquiry. Similarly Gregson claims that Giddens' guideline referring to the knowledgeability of agents "suggests that empirical research be alive to all that is contained within [Giddens'] model of agency", which Gregson describes as including "discursive consciousness, practical consciousness, the unconscious and the unacknowledged conditions and unintentional outcomes of action." (Gregson, 1989, p.240). Jary argues that the notion of the "duality of structure" is problematic for research as it implies that agency and structure need to be incorporated within empirical studies. Mann's framework shows that this can be done; it would only appear problematic if Giddens' concepts regarding agency and structure were attempted to be transferred en bloc.

It must be acknowledged that at a fundamental level theory cannot link at every point to empirical considerations. Thus, as Giddens argued, in the context of a particular empirical investigation, the entirety of concepts associated with a particular theory cannot be continually present.

Giddens' argument that theory is also contextual is also important. Structuration theory is wide-ranging and many of its concepts operate at a high level of abstraction. Less abstract theories may appear more open to refutation, but that need not be the case. Certainly more abstract theories may have more scope for discussion regarding aspects of operationalisation and thus the interpretation of what may appear as either supportive or contradictory. However, this is still relevant to more "grounded"
theories and must be seen as a consequence of the necessarily theory-laden nature of observation.

Gregson's empiricist perspective is also demonstrated in the arguments given for a critical grounding to theory and the notion of an empirical grounding as the only means to avoid a slide into relativism. These arguments have been discussed in previous sections but are worthy of restatement here.

Critiques relating to epistemological issues.

Bernstein (1989) and Bryant and Jary (1991) each express concern toward Giddens' treatment of the critical aspects of Structuration Theory. Their arguments concern the epistemological basis of structuration theory and by implication, social science more generally. These arguments will be discussed below and their implications for social scientific theory and research considered.

Bernstein notes Giddens' apparent commitment to a notion of critique by way of reference: "structuration theory is intrinsically incomplete if not linked to a conception of social science as critical theory" (Giddens, 1984, p.287). However, Bernstein claims, Giddens' arguments are beset by ambiguity, vagueness and contradiction. Bernstein notes that Giddens' conception of theory draws upon the post-empiricist philosophy of science. Bernstein argues that the characteristic feature of Giddens' work is a detailed critical evaluation of the strengths and weaknesses of alternative approaches as a means to both support and articulate his notion of structuration: "In this respect, Giddens's [sic] approach reflects a point which has been forcefully made in the post-empiricist philosophy of science, i.e., we can judge the adequacy of a
theory - such as structuration theory - by its ability to explain what is valid and invalid in rival theories.” (Bernstein, 1991, p.23).

However, Bernstein again quotes Giddens as stating that while he is not in favour of grounded critique, neither is he in favour of ungrounded critique: “I don’t think that I’d support any programme of trying to ground critical theory, but nor will I support the opposite, that is the idea of a purely immanent critique or ungroundable form of critique. I would probably work more from within a sociological conception which would seem to me to suggest that some things are clearly noxious and other things are clearly desirable and that it isn’t necessary to ground them in order to proclaim this to be so.” (Giddens, 1982, p.72).

Bernstein refers to this position as “foxlike” and accuses Giddens of dodging tough issues (1991, p.30). Bernstein argues that either the norms that we appeal to when making critical social judgements cannot be rationally justified, or else they are based on rational grounds. Thus, Bernstein continues, if there is a way of resolving this conundrum, Giddens has not shown it. Giddens displays only, what Bernstein refers to as a “minimalist” level of critique, such that any theoretical orientation will rule out some others and thus has some “critical import” (p.30).

Bernstein argues that it is necessary to clarify precisely the relation of social science to critical judgements so as to provide criteria for evaluating the practical connotations of social scientific research. According to Bernstein issues such as the ends to which social scientists apply their knowledge, to what uses their work may be put and by whom, must be considered. Thus Bernstein concludes, “What, if anything, is the basis for our critical judgements and proposals? How are we to warrant these critical judgements? (And who is or ought to be this ‘we’?)” (Bernstein, 1991, p.33).

Bryant and Jary (1991) argue that as a consequence of Giddens’ refusal to provide grounds for the justification of social science, the grounds for privileging social scientific findings over other claims to knowledge such as those of journalists, politicians or prophets may not appear apparent. A further consequence is that it may
also not be apparent why social scientists should accept Giddens’ framework above any others.

Bryant and Jary state that Giddens does not attempt to ground his justification for social science by using what they refer to as, “one of the commoner gambits of the ontologist.” (1991, p.25. This argument claims that the world must be as it is said to be, if not we would not have the knowledge of it that we have. Bryant and Jary rightly point out that such an argument is not sufficient, as it is based upon the prior justification of some claim to know, whether “based on experimentation, prediction, technological application, vindication in social practice or whatever” (1991, p.25).

Bryant and Jary argue that Giddens’ “middle position”, between the notion that there can be no epistemologically secure position and that it is futile to reject epistemology altogether, is not sufficiently justified (p.26). For example, Bryant and Jary mention McLennan’s criticism that Giddens does not specify “which structure, what agencies, in what sequences go to make up the object of enquiry of social theory” (McLennan, 1984, p.125, emphases in original). Bryant and Jary do not themselves advocate such a strong view, noting that Giddens’ concepts are not unclear, though are not expressed clearly enough to test them. In Giddens’ defence, Bryant and Jary quote Cohen (1986, p.127) to the effect that structuration theory does not provide substantive explanatory propositions as such. Bryant and Jary then argue that it is only through substantive theorising that questions such as those of McLennan will be answered, as for example in Giddens’ “A contemporary critique of historical materialism” (1981).

Bryant and Jary argue that Giddens work is consistent with what is now known as the “post-empiricist” position (deriving from the debates generated by the post-positivistic philosophies of, among other, Popper, Kuhn and Lakatos, as described earlier.) Bryant and Jary summarise the major aspects of post-empiricism by quoting passages by Giddens and Turner (1987) and Cohen, (1986), both of which they express agreement with. It is instructive to reproduce those passages here as they help to orient the discussion to follow.
"(T)he idea that there can be theory-neutral observations is repudiated, while systems of deductively-linked laws are no longer canonized as the highest ideal of scientific explanation. Most, importantly, science is presumed to be an interpretative endeavour, such that problems of meaning, communication and translation are immediately relevant to scientific theories." (Giddens and Turner, 1987, p.2).

On the basis of this summary, it can be seen that Giddens' arguments, as presented thus far, may indeed by placed within a "post-empiricist tradition". However, Cohen's discussion of post-empiricism is also instructive:

"(O)ne of the most important results of post-empiricism has been to overturn the Cartesian duality of objectivism and relativism. While no neutral algorithm exists for the choice between theories...this does not assume that science is an irrational enterprise. Rather scientists are obligated to submit good reasons for the acceptance of their programme in preference to competing schools of thought. The criteria to which these reasons refer are established as a result of the historical development of the community of inquiry within which justificatory arguments are made. This implies a rejection of the thesis of the incommensurability of meaning between theories...On this basis the rational appeal to scientific criteria involves a limited degree of rational persuasion" (Cohen, 1986, p.129).

Bryant and Jary argue that it is in the context of the post-empiricist tradition that Giddens' ambivalence toward epistemology and his defence of social science may be understood. According to Bryant and Jary this suggests a division of labour whereby Giddens develops structuration theory while others debate the principles and practices of justification.
Bryant and Jary also refer to the work of Hesse (1980), again within the post-empiricist tradition. According to Hesse, Bryant and Jary argue, the underdetermination of theories and the theory laden nature of accounts creates the possibility for theories to be justified on value-related grounds. Bryant and Jary claim that while in the natural sciences it may be possible to seek justification in terms of successful prediction or control, social scientists should refer to ethical values and political goals. As the “post-empiricist community” has yet to develop criteria for the assessment of different values, Bryant and Jary argue that it is Giddens responsibility to specify particular values or any other means by which to justify the claims of structuration theory. Bryant and Jary state that Giddens' ambivalent advocacy of his own theory may have hindered its reception and conclude that Giddens must establish a more rational grounding for the ontological claims of structuration theory.

Giddens' response

In response to Bernstein, Giddens distinguishes between different levels of critique (1991, p.288). As emphasised by Popper, Giddens argues that at the most basic level disciplined inquiry implicates a community of researchers rather than isolated individuals, and all findings are in principle open to critical dissection and assessment. Giddens states that positivistic perspectives view the social sciences as a means of generating information about an independently given social world. Such knowledge is seen to be cumulative in the same way as the natural sciences, and may then be applied in the form of practical interventions in society. However, as they involve a “double hermeneutic” (described earlier), Giddens argues that social science concepts, theories and findings may be routinely incorporated into the events or phenomena they were originally intended to explain. In this way, social scientific findings may not appear profound because they are, in part, constitutive of society. This dramatically alters the

\[3\] By underdetermination of theories, I take it that Bryant and Jary are referring to arguments similar to those presented earlier when discussing post-positivistic philosophies of science, namely “that no amount of accumulated fact will in and of itself determine that one particular theory be accepted and another rejected, since by modification of the theory, or by other means, the observations in question can be accommodated to it.” (Giddens, 1979, p.243). Also, with respect to social sciences Giddens argues that underdetermination is likely to be greater due to problems relating to operationalisation such as the replication of observations, or ethical constraints on experimental procedures (1979, p.243).
nature of cumulative knowledge in the social sciences compared to the natural sciences, though by no means precludes it.

Giddens states that the very process of social scientific research is in principle critical of the belief claims and activities of members of society, as described by Bernstein's minimal level of critique. Giddens argues that researchers cannot control the uses to which their findings may be put, as he explains: "'Openness to criticism' among social scientists inevitably implies 'openness to utilization' on the part of others." (1991, p.290). Nevertheless, the way in which knowledge from a particular study may be incorporated within existing systems of domination may itself be a topic for research in its own right.

Giddens argues that the previous arguments do not directly address the issue of "moral critique", which Bernstein is most anxious to discuss. This level of critique involves the assessment and evaluation of different courses of action, what Giddens refers to as "the classical problem of the relation between 'is' and 'ought'." (1991, p.290). Giddens states that while there may not be comprehensive rational grounds for moral critique, this need not imply an untenable relativism between any and all possibilities. Giddens argues that we necessarily operate between these two "apparently mutually exclusive alternatives" (1991, p.291). It is worthwhile quoting at length Giddens description of his position of "contingent moral rationalism", as it indicates clearly that his arguments are located within the post-empiricist tradition:

"According to this perspective, as practising social scientists, we may legitimately make moral criticisms of states of affairs, although we must seek to justify those criticisms when called upon to do so. We cannot ground moral critique in the mode of such justification (or argumentation) itself, and in the sense of finding 'pure foundations' cannot ground it at all. But this does not mean that moral critique derives merely from whims or feelings, or that we are at the mercy of a particular historical conjuncture. Dialogue with any and every moral standpoint is possible, and always involves a fusion of moral and factual dispute. Most of the time, most of us do not find ourselves in circumstances of moral puzzlement when confronted with particular
states of affairs, in the way in which philosophical accounts of the difficulty, or the impossibility, of grounding moral evaluations might lead us to suppose.” (Giddens, 1991, p.291).

Further comments

Giddens' position can be seen as consistent with the post-empiricist tradition in both the rejection of pure foundations to knowledge, and in the acknowledgement of what Cohen referred to as “a limited degree of rational persuasion” in the submitting of good reasons for the acceptance of particular programmes of research (Cohen, 1986, p.129, as quoted earlier). Further discussion of the implications of placing Giddens arguments within the post-empiricist tradition is relevant to the criticisms of Bryant and Jary.

Giddens does not respond directly to Bryant and Jary’s criticism. However, their work raises issues of importance and considerable complexity. The main thrust of Bryant and Jary’s argument is that Giddens does not sufficiently justify his “middle position” between an acceptance and a rejection of epistemology. Bryant and Jary acknowledge the relevance of the post-empiricist tradition, and make reference to the arguments of Hesse regarding the possibility of justification on value-related grounds. I would argue that Hesse’s recourse to values has more relevance to substantive theorising; with regard to structuration theory, that would be the application of structuration-ist concepts to substantive enquiries, more so than the theory itself. The issue of value-related grounds of rationalisation cannot be irrelevant to structuration theory, however given the theory laden nature of observation, I would argue that the adequacy of structuration theory may be supported through its capacity to explain what is valid and invalid in rival theories. This is the argument Bernstein makes, described earlier, with respect to Giddens’ critiques of evolutionism, objectivism, subjectivism and naturalism, and is consistent with the notion of a “sophisticated methodological falsificationism” (as described earlier) in that an alternative framework is supplied.
Bryant and Jary's notion of a "division of labour" between those that develop theories and those that debate the issue of justification, together with their observation that post-empiricists have yet to arrive at a settled means for assessing different value claims, implies that Bryant and Jary imagine that it may actually be possible to devise such a means. This appears to misapprehend the most fundamental aspect of post-empiricism, that there cannot be theoretically neutral observations. That point is the basis for Popper's rejection of induction. To argue that there may be a means by which to ultimately ground comparison between competing value claims is akin to arguing that there may be ultimate foundations of knowledge. The central concern of the post empiricist tradition is to attempt to deal with the implications of there not being ultimate foundations for knowledge. However, that there is no "neutral algorithm" does not imply a slide into relativism. It is quite obvious that "anything" does not "go", certain "versions" of reality are accorded more significance than others; conversely, the evaluation of rival theories cannot simply be made on the basis of a critical experiment. There is no absolute alternative to Giddens' "middle position". Despite Bernstein's entreaties, it is to Giddens credit that he acknowledges that he is in no position to supply moral guarantees. Justification cannot be conferred ultimately: it is continually open to review in the light of competing knowledge claims.

The empiricist approach to science, in which theories are simply refined on the basis of empirical findings is not sustainable. Of course empirical findings are an important and necessary element to any notion of science, but their relation to theory, whether in terms of refinement or refutation is considerably more complicated than that presumed by empiricist approaches. However, the notion that the only alternative to empiricist models is an untenable relativism is also not sustainable; again the situation is considerably more complicated.

Whereas the logical positivist philosophies of science may have appeared more prescriptive, as those involved in their formulation sought to clearly demarcate the boundaries of science, the post-empiricist models appear more receptive to how "science" is actually carried out. (This may be a consequence of the institutionalisation of science globally, though it is beyond the scope of this discussion to pursue this
matter more fully.) The theory laden nature of observation cannot be ignored, neither can it be escaped. This does not imply relativism such that there can be no notion of science. Everything that has been achieved under the aegis of science, all manner of innovation and technological accomplishment, has occurred on the basis of theory-laden observation.

The relativist argument implies incommensurability; that each frame of meaning, or "theory", is separate from every other and thus equally valid. However, Giddens demonstrates that we routinely penetrate others' frames of meaning in the course of social interaction. As Giddens explains, the appeal to relativism "denies to us the possibility of doing what we know we can do - translate from one language into another, analyse the standards of other cultures, talk of 'false consciousness', etc. The possibility of doing these things derives precisely from the rejection of the self-negating character of the relativistic position" (Giddens, 1992, p.152). The positivist argument also implies incommensurability; in this case that each theory can be clearly demarcated and thus unproblematically compared to any other. This line of argument is flawed due to the impossibility of theoretically neutral observation; thus the comparison between rival theories may become problematic.

Writing in 1987, Giddens and Turner argued that the orthodox mainstream in the social sciences, broadly characterised by a logical empiricist influence, had been weakened, particularly over the course of the previous two decades. This was attributed to the influence of writers such as Kuhn, Lakatos and Hesse. The effect of this new "post-empiricism" has been a diversification of approaches: whereas before structural-functionalist theories had only been considered examples of social "science", now the contribution of perspectives such as phenomenology, critical theory, symbolic interactionism and ethnomethodology were accorded more respect.

This proliferation of perspectives has generated much theoretical debate. Giddens and Turner argue that one response to this situation has been disillusionment on the part of some whose prime commitment is to empirical research: "[They] find in the array of squabbling schools and traditions confirmation of what they have believed all along:"
theoretical debates are of little interest or relevance for those conducting empirical work. If social theorists cannot agree amongst themselves about the most basic issues, what possible relevance can questions of social theory have for those primarily engaged in social research?" (1987, p.3).

Giddens and Turner argue that this has led to a division between those researchers who favour the "certainty" associated with the empiricist approach, and those less committed to positivistic criteria and more open to "the divergent claims made by varying theoretical traditions." (1987, p.3). However, divergent claims notwithstanding, Giddens and Turner argue that these rival theoretical perspectives involve a number of common concerns. Among these are included a reconceptualisation of the nature of action, and an appreciation of the complexity of the relationship between "meaning" and social scientific explanation.

Wilson's discussion of mathematical models
Wilson's (1987) discussion of the role of mathematical models in social science is relevant here, as he describes more specifically both the role of "meaning" in the natural and social sciences, and also the relationship between theory and empirical findings in the natural and social sciences.

Wilson argues that the natural sciences are based on an "extensional idiom", in which description is concerned only with the truth or falseness of statements, and for what objects a statement is true, "i.e. the statements extension", rather than its meaning. (Wilson, 1987, p. 388). This restriction enables fundamental concepts and propositions to be expressed in a standardised form, such as mathematical formulae or standard logic. Thus, Wilson argues, the "extensional idiom" is the foundation of the universality and generality of scientific concepts and laws, and the basis of scientific objectivity.

In contrast, the "intensional idiom" is concerned with meaning rather than reference. Intensional statements include what Wilson refers to as "so-called 'propositional
attitudes', such as 'believes that', 'says that', 'wishes that', 'endeavours that', 'urges that', 'fears that', and related expressions such as 'wants', 'is looking for'” (1987, p.390). Intensional statements cannot simply be reduced to standardised formulae because their meaning cannot be separated from their use in particular situations.

Wilson argues that abstraction is the essence of the natural sciences, through the “extensional idiom”. However, Wilson claims, the social sciences are inherently intensional as social phenomena are constituted through the purposeful, meaningful actions of knowledgeable agents. Wilson himself acknowledges the convergence between his arguments and Giddens' notion of the duality of structure (Wilson, 1987, p. 396-7). Thus, social phenomena cannot be expressed solely in terms of abstract propositions such as mathematical formulae, as mathematics pre-supposes extensionality.

However, Wilson argues that mathematical models may be appropriate to investigate regularities of social life; expressible in Giddens' terminology as involving patterns of interaction that have a degree of embeddedness in space and time. In these cases, intensional idioms are still involved, but are bracketed out to allow formal calculations. In this way, mathematical models may be powerful tools in the investigation of social phenomena, as Wilson explains: “we can represent certain aspects of social phenomena by mathematical models, sometimes very sophisticated ones, and in so doing contribute substantially to our understanding of how things work. However, the possibility of such a model arises from the fact that people in the course of their everyday lives employ social-structural categories as an essential resource in organising their activities: it is on this fact that, directly or indirectly, both the concepts employed in and the regularities described by a mathematical model depend.” (1987, p.398).

Nevertheless, Wilson stresses that however rigorously data may be manipulated, such computations have no meaning without the absorption of intension, both at the input or coding stage, and when interpreting results. Thus Wilson argues, mathematical models may have a heuristic use, but cannot be used as a basis for formulating fundamental concepts and propositions that may be expected to eventually lead to a
“natural science of society”. It is important to acknowledge that Wilson accords great significance to this heuristic role. However, it is equally important to acknowledge the role of mathematical models is inherently limited in this way.

Wilson supports his arguments by discussing the role of mathematical models in social science more specifically, namely in economics and social psychology. This aspect of Wilson’s argument is very important as it describes the relationship between empirical research and social scientific theory.

Wilson argues that economists tend to regard their discipline as a “positive science”, and acknowledge that it may appear that fundamental concepts are indeed expressed mathematically. However, economic theories are effective only to the extent to which relations between basic concepts, such as between market conditions and behaviour, remains stable. Wilson claims that the laws of economics are strict logical consequences of the conditions necessary for the theory to apply. Consequently, failure of economic predictions to correspond to data does not necessarily lead to the abandonment, or even the modification, of the theory. It may simply be argued that the theory did not apply to the situation in question. “Thus, the theory of rational market behaviour is not viewed as disconfirmed when its predictions fail, for in that case it would have been jettisoned long ago; instead the conclusion is that the actors were not behaving rationally or that there was no market.” (Wilson, 1987, p.400).

Similarly, Wilson states that mathematical models are often developed in social psychology to represent aspects of cognitive and affective phenomena. However, the use of such models necessitates that all descriptions must be treated as though extensional. Wilson argues that the empirical relevance of the model and the cogency of the results depend on the researcher absorbing intensional elements such as meaning, at the coding stage and at the interpretation stage, for example when substantive interpretations are given to factor loadings. Thus, Wilson concludes, the value of such models is primarily heuristic, rather than as representations of fundamental processes.
I will argue in the next chapter that particular social psychological theories, primarily those relating to "social identity" share a similar relationship between empirical findings and theory as that described by Wilson with respect to economics; namely that the empirical support for such theories are a logical consequence of the assumptions regarding their application. However, at this stage, the important point to make is that the relationship between theory and empirical findings is not necessarily straightforward. As Cohen (1986) argued, the rational appeal to scientific criteria involves a limited degree of rational persuasion, on the basis of a historically developed community of inquiry.

Conclusion

Giddens' work is extremely relevant to any attempt to analyse social phenomena. Giddens provides a sophisticated theory of social action, yet also pursues the implications of his theorisation for the logic of social scientific enquiry.

Giddens' notion of the duality of structure attempts to transcend dualisms such as those of action and structure, micro and macro, and static and dynamic approaches or levels of analysis. The relevance of Giddens' concepts to an evaluation of social representations is perhaps aided by focusing upon the relationship between action and structure (although of course the other dualisms mentioned are necessarily implicated.) Giddens argues that structural approaches tend not to account adequately for intentional conduct, such that social causation is taken as synonymous with structural constraint. In contrast, more action-oriented approaches do not deal effectively with the structuring of social action and have difficulty accounting for unintended consequences of intentional action, and thereby structural transformation.
A crucial aspect of Giddens attempt to transcend the dualism of action and structure is the notion of methodological bracketing, and an appreciation of the contextual nature of any research enquiry. Thus if analysis is concerned with investigating interaction as strategic conduct, the focus is upon how structural elements, such as stocks of knowledge, are employed by actors in the constitution of that interaction. If that is the case, institutional analysis is bracketed. Conversely, if the focus is upon institutionalised features of social interaction, structural elements are treated as chronically reproduced; in this case strategic conduct is bracketed. It is important to recognise that this bracketing is a methodological device: action and structure are necessarily interrelated through what Giddens refers to as “modalities of structuration”. However, in order to carry out a specific research enquiry, such bracketing is entirely appropriate.

The normative functionalist theories of Durkheim and Parsons perpetuate the dualisms of action and structure by failing to adequately account for intentional conduct. By explaining the adherence to normative values through the internalisation of such values, the individual is subsumed within the social group. Furthermore, the consequent assumption of group consensus reinforces the notion of the essentially unproblematic observation of social phenomena.

As described in the previous chapter, Moscovici’s theory of social representations shares many similarities to the work of Durkheim and Parsons, and may itself be described as a version of normative functionalism. In this way it can be seen that Giddens work is far superior to that of Moscovici. Moscovici’s failure adequately account for the structuring of social action is readily apparent in the confusion and contradiction generated when attempting to reconcile the transformative and prescriptive aspects of social representations.

The consequences of this failure were in turn apparent in the failure to proceed beyond a notion of group-level consensus. Again, it is important to remember that Moscovici may well have been aware of the necessity of dealing with issues such as intra-group variability, but like Durkheim and Parsons before him, was unable to do so effectively.
This failure was a direct consequence of fundamental flaws in the theorisation of the relationship between the individual and society. Again, in common with Durkheim and Parsons before him, attempts to analyse social change demonstrate clearly the shortcomings of Moscovici's reliance upon the internalisation of normative values.

Furthermore, the notion of methodological bracketing suggests that the attempt to relate social phenomena to psychological processes is an inherently limited endeavour. If social representations are understood, at least in some respects, to refer to stocks of knowledge, they may readily be treated as structural elements when analysing strategic conduct in situated interactions. However, to analyse such stocks of knowledge more generally, they must be treated as institutionalised features of social systems; that is, as chronically reproduced (within the scope of the particular enquiry.) Attempting to explain such stocks of knowledge in terms of psychological mechanisms will simply lead to reiteration of the initial assumptions made regarding the chronic reproduction of the stocks of knowledge. The work of Wilson reinforces this suggestion.

Giddens has been criticised for not providing a “structuration-ist” programme of research. However, Giddens’ refusal to privilege any particular methodological approach is entirely appropriate given a clear appreciation of the implications of the duality of structure. Correspondingly, there is not a simplistic dichotomy between either an acceptance of an unproblematic observation of social phenomena, or else the acceptance of a radical relativism. Giddens explains that the situation is considerably more complex than a simple choice between these two alternatives.

Consideration of Giddens’ arguments provides, at the very least, a sound theoretical basis from which to assess attempts to develop the concept of social representations, and the attempt to relate social phenomena to psychological processes more generally. These concerns are dealt with in the next chapter.
CHAPTER FOUR

SOCIAL REPRESENTATIONS THEORY AND SOCIAL IDENTITY

Introduction.

Attempts to further develop the concept of social representations have continued since the initial critical exchanges discussed earlier, and much empirical research continues to be formulated in terms of social representations. Perhaps as a consequence of the ill-defined nature of social representations, the various attempts at refinement may appear quite diverse. This has led Ibanez to suggest that the concept of social representations has developed a “protective belt” against criticism (1994, p.365-6). This is because arguments directed at a particular formulation may appear to be dealt with by another formulation, whose own particular shortcomings may in turn appear to be dealt with by another, and so on. In order to avoid this possibility, the insights gained from the discussion of Giddens’ work in the previous chapter are invaluable. They allow both the merits of each particular formulation to be evaluated, and more generally the possibility of relating social phenomena to psychological processes.

The attempts of Doise, Marková, Jovcholovitch and Wagner to develop the concept of social representations are considered. These works were chosen both for the eminence of the authors, but also to reflect the different directions in which development has been pursued. It is argued however, that each of these formulations suffers the same inherent limitations, due the normative emphasis implied by the very notion of social representation.

The broad notion of social identity is also considered as it has been suggested that integrating social psychological theories of identity with social representations would result in a more powerful theory and ultimately predictive capability. It is shown that
the scope of such prediction is inherently narrow. The arguments of Smedslund are also briefly considered as they draw attention to the tendency of social psychological theories to simply redescribe their initial theoretical assumptions, and then to mistakenly treat such redescription as theoretically or empirically distinct. It is argued that both social representations and social identity theories provide little more than redescription and speculation.

Doise

The work of Doise is important when considering the continued endorsement of social representations. Doise has written extensively on both theoretical and methodological aspects, and has attempted to promote the empirical applications of social representations. To this end, particular attention will be drawn to the arguments of Doise, Clémence and Lorenzi-Cioldi (1993) as featured in the jointly edited volume on social representations. The arguments made are attributable to Doise, as evidenced in the considerable repetition to be found when comparing Doise’s contribution to the volume “Empirical approaches to social representations” (Breakwell and Canter, 1993). This latter chapter is also of interest as in it Doise responds to criticisms of the social representations approach. Both of these sources will be drawn upon in the course of this discussion. It appears that Doise attempts to reconcile the notion of social representations with procedures for empirical research. In this way, it can be seen that Doise tends to deal with theoretical issues by treating them as primarily methodological concerns.
Doise et al. (1993) state that "social metasystems" involve normative, social regulations which organise the symbolic processes involved in social relationships (p.2). Doise et al. argue that social representations may be understood as "organising principles", which vary according to specific "insertions" in sets of social relations and which are seen to "control, verify and direct" cognitive functioning (p.2). As Doise et al. explain, "there is a symbolic interiorization of this complex interplay of social positioning - interiorization which is always a certain intention to achieve overall co-ordination from one's own viewpoint, more or less shared by the holders of similar positions" (p.156). Thus Doise argues that researchers "are not looking so much for underlying mental structures as for communicative structures" (1993, p.164).

Doise et al. explicitly deny the charge that social representations imply a consensual view of social reality by arguing that "social representations are therefore organising principles varied in nature, which do not necessarily consist of shared beliefs, as they may result in different or even opposed positions taken by individuals in relation to common reference points." (1993, p.4). Doise et al. reinforce their argument against a "consensual view" by also stating that the research of social representations involves methods that explicitly look for differences between individual responses (p.1). Similarly they argue that studies do not find consensus, thus attempting to understand social representations in terms of consensus is limited (p.8).

Doise et al. also discuss the processes of objectification and anchoring, relating these to a research strategy. Objectification, which involves the concretising of the abstract, facilitates communication by dissociating a concept from its original context, whereas anchoring refers to the inclusion of new elements into familiar networks. Doise et al. describe anchoring and objectification as "poles apart": "objectification aims to create truths obvious to everyone, independent of social or psychological determinism; anchoring denotes the intervention of such determinisms in their genesis and transformation." (p.6).

Doise et al. argue that organising principles common to groups of individuals must be pieced together from the raw material of collections of individual opinions, attitudes
and prejudices. Thus they describe three phases of data analysis. In the first phase, social representations are “objectified”, “as a kind of collective map, common to a given population.” (p.154). Secondly “variations in individual positioning with respect to common reference points” are to be dealt with (p.154). Lastly, phase three “focuses on the anchoring of individual variations in sociological and psychosociological characteristics of individuals.” (p.154).

Doise (1993) argues that researchers in social representations are actually looking for communication structures and that the empirical validation of a finding is its capacity to organise groups of people. Doise also responds to the criticism of circularity in definition of the group; that is where social representations are identified from the group, and the representations also taken to define the group. (This argument has been described earlier in the discussion of Potter and Litton’s (1985) critique of social representations.) Doise denies this charge by arguing that there is nothing in the theory of social representations that prevents researchers from using other means to define groups, for example by using identity cards to define groups on the basis of nationality (1993, p.167).

Discussion.

Doise’s formulation adheres quite closely to “social representations” as described by Moscovici earlier. Co-ordination within the social “metasystem” is achieved through the internalisation of normative social regulations as expressed in the notion that cognitive functioning is governed by social regulations (Doise et al, 1993, p.2). This is the basis of the notion of “common reference points”. However, Doise emphasises that this internalisation is expressed through social relations. This diminishes the importance of explaining the internalisation process, enabling attention to be directed instead toward “communication structures”. So for Doise, the emphasis is placed upon observable manifestations of this internalisation. Research indicates that there is
indeed individual variation, though as this itself is amenable to further investigation, there is no need to insist on consensus.

However, Doise's position is not as straightforward as it may appear. There is some confusion as to the nature of the relation between the individual and the social group. The notion of "common reference points" implies that the individual is, to some extent, treated as synonymous with the group. This is evident in that organising principles are taken to be common to groups of individuals. In contrast, the acceptance of individual variation precludes such an implication: to some extent the individual is not synonymous with the group. Acknowledging the scope for individual variation makes it necessary to explain how social representations co-ordinate social relationships in the face of such variation. It is not clear how adherence to "social regulations" is achieved. With regard to "common reference points", adherence is explained by assuming that members of a group will represent phenomena similarly. As described above, that is the basis of their commonality. The problem is that, on the basis of individual variation, it is not clear that "common reference points" are in fact common.

Doise's descriptions of "anchoring" and "objectification" can be seen to be methodologically oriented. As described earlier when discussing Moscovici's work on social representations, it is not clear how separable these "processes" actually are. Doise describes objectification as dissociating a concept from its original context, and anchoring as incorporating a new element into an existing framework. However, when a concept is dissociated it is done so by incorporating it into an existing framework: that is the basis of its dissociation. A dissociated concept is not simply held in some sort of stasis, independent of social and psychological determinism, as Doise implies; such "determinisms" are inescapable.

Similarly, when an element is anchored, if this is done in such a way that the element takes a concrete form, this could be understood as objectification. A possible counter-argument could take the form that objectification refers to the concretisation

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1 This of course is not to assume that by "determinisms", Doise is implying full determination. Doise is referring to the prescriptive aspect of social representations.
of abstract concepts, whereas anchoring refers to more concrete elements; thus objectification is necessary to transform a concept into a form amenable to the anchoring process. There is some indication that Doise may take this position himself in that he refers to "concepts" when describing objectification, and "elements" when describing anchoring. However, such an argument implies the separation between concept and percept shown earlier to be indefensible. The "concretising" described by objectification does not somehow reduce that concept to an object devoid of conceptual aspects; similarly the influence of conceptual understanding is not confined to the classification (or naming) aspect of the anchoring process, but to the very perception of "objects". Doise himself argues as much when he states that anchoring may involve a change not only to the element to be anchored, but to the anchor itself (1993, p.163).

Thus the attempt to differentiate between anchoring and objectification on the basis of the presence and absence, respectively, of "determinisms" is not supportable. As argued earlier both anchoring and objectification refer to the notion that new belief, knowledge or information are understood to some extent on the basis of existing beliefs, knowledge or information. A new concept must be dissociated from its original context to some extent by virtue of being perceived at all, and that dissociation will be influenced by existing frameworks of knowledge, however conceived. It is not simply that anchoring and objectification are not separable in their actual operation, they are analytically indistinct. For Doise to refer to objectification and anchoring as "poles apart" is not supportable.

As mentioned above, Doise’s description of objectification and anchoring can be seen as a means to justify his particular methodological approach. Doise describes his first phase of research as "objectification", which treats social representation as a collective map, common to a given group or population. Phase three corresponds to anchoring whereby variations are investigated through association with other characteristics. The first phase is therefore seen as independent of social and psychological determinism as the social representation is taken to be commonly held by the particular group under
investigation, these determinisms are only seen to affect the later stages where variation is investigated in its own right.

As argued above, it is not clear on what basis this definition of commonality is to be made, given the scope for variation. Commonality is assumed, as the only means by which to explain the co-ordination of the group. This is the very basis of social representations as a solution to the "problem of order". Thus the organisation of social relationships is seen as a manifestation of the internalisation of common values. Such a view is a consequence of the normative emphasis inherent in the very notion of social representations. The structuring features of society cannot be understood simply on the basis of the internalisation of normative values, however described.

Thus Doise's "first phase" does not describe a social representation if social representation is taken to be the means by which groups co-ordinate themselves. Doise appears to be investigating some notion of collective belief, for which the notion of individual variation is unproblematic. In these terms, Doise's methodological approach may have some merit. However, if consensuality, however defined, is taken as the basis for social structuring, such variation becomes more problematic and Doise's interpretations must be questioned.

In this respect, Doise's claim that an assumption of consensuality is an indefensible position actually serves to undermine his own position. Doise rejects claims that social representations are based on consensuality by arguing that empirical studies do not actually find consensus. However, given that consensual values are the very basis of social representations as an explanation of "the problem of order", to say that studies do not find consensuality actually undermines Doise's approach.

Similarly, Doise's point that researchers may define groups in ways that are not dictated by social representations theory, also undermines his position. Doise argues that groups may be defined by other means. However, unless commonality is assumed within the group, there are no means for explaining the adherence of individuals to group norms. That Doise argues that groups may be defined with no reference to the
theory draws attention to how problematic it may be to assume similar representations within a group. Any belief, or common representation found through data analysis need not be the means by which individuals co-ordinate their actions either within the group or between other groups.

Doise appears to be investigating some notion of collective belief. That in itself is not problematic. However, Doise seeks to support his interpretations by drawing upon social representations theory, this is problematic. Doise’s explains the three phase approach to research as a means of understanding how cognitive functions are governed by social regulations. This it fails to do, the reasons for which are consequences of inherent failings in the social representations approach. It is important to recognise these limitations to correctly appreciate what merit there may be in any empirical study. Doise’s approach may be useful for investigating some notion of collective beliefs; however, to claim significance for any such findings on the basis of social representations as an explanation of the “problem of order” is not supportable.

Marková also considers social representations as a response to “the problem of order”: “It aims to discover how individuals and groups construct a stable, predictable world out of a set of diverse phenomena” (1996, p.180). Marková acknowledges the interdependent nature of action and structure, arguing that treatment of either as independent represents an inadequate, “pre-Hegelian mode of thinking” (p.179). Marková defines social representations as “a symbolic social environment... expressing itself through the activities of individuals” (p.179-180). Thus the theory of social
representations is concerned with the interdependencies of processes of both conscious, reflexive thinking and unconscious, habitual thinking (p.180).

In drawing attention to reflexive and habitual thinking, Marková is acknowledging the transformative and prescriptive aspects of social representations as described earlier. However, Marková discusses these aspects in the first instance by reference to the “social environment”. For the sake of clarity in later discussion, it is worthwhile quoting Marková’s descriptions in some detail. Marková argues that such social environments exist for people as their “ontological reality” the force of which is given by “people’s complete lack of awareness of their existence”, such that they are questioned “only under quite specific circumstances” (p.180). This appears to refer to prescriptive aspects of the social environment. Marková also describes the transformative aspect: “Yet people are also agents. They have specific ways of understanding, communicating and acting upon their ontological realities. Once these realities engage their thought, people no longer re-produce and re-cycle their social environment unconsciously and automatically. They also cognize and experience it with awareness. In other words, they not only reproduce their ontological realities but they also engage in epistemological processes and, as a result, they change their ontological realities by acting upon them.” (p.180).

Marková also states that in her view, “the theory of social representations is primarily a theory of lay knowledge” (p.180), which “attempts to explain how lay knowledge is formed, maintained and changed” (p.181), and “is also concerned with lay ontological realities and with lay epistemological processes” (p.181). This marks a distinction between social representations and “philosophical and social-scientific theories of knowledge” (p.181). Marková explains that the latter are concerned “with establishing whether or not phenomena are ontologically or epistemologically objective”, “whether it makes sense to examine social objects in the same way as natural objects; whether social entities are ontologically independent of people...and so on” (p.181). In contrast, Marková argues that “(t)he theory of social representations makes no claims relating to such issues” (p.181). So for example that social representations are concerned with the relationship between scientific and lay concepts,
is unrelated to the concerns of a "social psychological theory of scientific knowledge", which "would include such areas of study as the social factors that influence discovery, scientific communication, co-authorship and so on... Both kinds of matter are valid areas of study in their own rights, yet, they are clearly different." (p.182).

Marková states that social representations may appear to be similar to philosophical and social-scientific theories on the basis of terms that appear common to each, for example, "objectification", which is also used in ontological realism; and "construction" which is also used in social constructivism. However, Marková claims that "(t)heir meanings are most certainly different, being parts of different networks of concepts; and indeed referring to different kinds of phenomena" (p.182).

Marková does acknowledge a "complementarity" and "compatibility" between social representations and what Marková refers to as "socio-cultural theories of knowledge" (p.183-5). Marková describes socio-cultural theories of knowledge as "critical of individualistic theories that ignored the social origin of human knowledge" (p.183); included in this category are the works of writers such as Mead, Vygotsky and Jahoda. These types of theory are compatible with social representations in their acknowledgement of the social origin of human thought. However, according to Marková, they are also complementary in that socio-cultural theories "imply that in order to become an independent thinker, [one] must conceptually free themselves, at least partially from the constraints of their social environments. Education and scientific research encourage independent thinking, critical judgement and self-reliance." (p.184, emphases in original). By contrast, "the focus of the theory of social representations is on the opposite process: it is the study of how socially shared knowledge ensnares the individual in existing forms of thinking, prohibiting him or her from free thought and enforcing a particular manner of conceiving of the world, events and objects. The force of social representations is in their implicitness, and in the lack of awareness, on the part of the individual, of their existence: the less aware the individual is, the more powerful representations are" (1996, p.185, emphases in original).
Thus, Marková explains, the individual finds themselves “torn between two sets of processes”: those of education and scientific thinking on the one hand, which “encourage independent thinking and an explicit expression of concepts”; and those of social representation on the other, which “discourages independent thinking and encourages a circulation of relatively stabilised and implicit ideas” (1996, p.185).

Marková emphasises the “implicit” nature of social representations by marking a distinction between “unconscious” and “conscious” thought processes. “Unconscious thought processes refer to such processes that take place largely without awareness. They include such forms of thought that can be described as habitual, automatised, unreflected upon and unconscious” (p.185), and are characterised by “implicitness and consensus” (p.186). Conscious thought processes “are those of which the individual is aware. They can be described as being based on reasoning, reflexion and as being conscious”, with an emphasis upon “explicitness and rational judgement” (p.186). Marková does not insist on a rigid division between unconscious and conscious thought processes, arguing that all forms of knowledge involve both explicit and implicit knowledge.

Marková argues that socio-cultural theories focus on the development of reflexive thought which “grows from unconscious or unreflexive thought” and thus results from “cognitive self-differentiation”(p.187): “All knowledge is embedded in the socially shared cognitive experience of the social group in which the individual lives. Each private self-contained thought results from subtle processes of cognitive differentiation.” (p.187). In contrast social representations focuses primarily on “forms of thought and their products of which people are largely unaware”, and therefore is more concerned with “cognitive globalisation” (p.187).

Marková explains the meaning of “cognitive globalisation” with reference to anchoring and objectification. Anchoring is described as making the world “simpler and more manageable” by “grouping events and objects together and treating them as similar or equivalent” (p.187). Objectification “re-constructs an event” that may have been scientific or complex into something similar to what we already know, or “something
conventional” (p.187). “Cognitive globalisation” can be seen as complementary to “cognitive differentiation” in that “(o)nce simplified, the thought will become less reflexive, automatised and will sink under the level of awareness. Incorporated into the symbolic social environment, it will circulate and re-cycle itself through unconscious activities of individuals.” (p.187). Both anchoring and objectification are globalising in that they involve the simplification of diverse, complex thoughts into an implicit consensus. Marková describes anchoring and objectification as “characteristic of human knowledge in general and social representations in particular...In the acquisition, maintenance and change of knowledge, globalisation and cognitive differentiation occur. However, while in the development of intellect and scientific knowledge the focus is on cognitive self-differentiation, in the formation of social representations the focus is on globalisation.” (p.189).

It can be seen that Marková characterises social representations as being concerned with the unconscious and habitual as opposed to the conscious and reflexive, and with lay knowledge as opposed to that of specialised groups such as scientists. Marková brings both of these characteristics to bear in her discussion of religious ideology. Marková’s discussion was provoked in response to a criticism of objectification raised by Billig (1988, p.7). According to Marková, Billig argues that “the common sense of religious societies illustrates the opposite of objectification” (p.188). Billig describes that when observing an ordinary bush, a “pious Jew” may be reminded of the burning bush that appeared to Moses and thus transform the concrete into the abstract. This is a reversal of the course thought is assumed to take, from abstract to concrete, on the basis of objectification.

It is worthwhile presenting Marková’s response in some detail as it implicates a number of problematic issues. Marková dismisses Billig’s example as having “little to do with objectification as conceptualised in the theory of social representations...a religious belief which is an expression of explicit commitment and of a consciously re-cycled and re-experienced ideology is not a social representation in Moscovici’s sense. Objectification in the theory of social representations means that an explicit commitment and a consciously re-cycled and re-experienced ideology turns into an
implicit commitment and an unconsciously re-cycled ideology. When such an ideology becomes a social representation, a pious Jew, seeing an ordinary bush, may no longer be reminded of the "burning bush" and he or she no longer experiences a religious revelation. Now, his religious belief becomes his ontological reality, his taken-for-granted and unquestioned experience." (Marková, p.188).

Marková continues by discussing ideology more generally. "Ideology aims at explicit pronouncements of particular (political, religious) groups in power. In this sense, ideology clearly differs from social representations that are implicitly shared by lay people (and not by powerful groups). If, however, ideologies spread amongst lay people and become implicitly shared, one might consider them in terms of social representations. Let us remind ourselves again of the earlier example of Darwin's struggle both with the official religious ideology and with the social representation of a 'god-created-world'....Here we have both an official religious ideology coinciding with a publicly held social representation." (p.188).

Marková also argues that the fact that human thought operates simultaneously at different levels of awareness has methodological implications. What at one level may appear to be agreement between people may actually be revealed to be disagreement when the subject matter is explored in greater detail. Correspondingly, what may appear to be disagreement at a surface level may be revealed to be agreement when explored in greater detail. By combining empirical methods it is possible to evoke thought at different levels.

As Marková explains: "In word association tasks the respondents produce the first words that come into their minds immediately and unreflexively....Such responses are likely to be stereotypes and culturally shared beliefs: something that is not thought about but evoked more or less automatically" (p.191, emphases in original). Marková adds that respondents may also be explicitly questioned to reveal their point of view in general terms; or they may be asked to apply their point of view in dealing with a specific problem. In these ways it may be possible to examine the different levels of an individual's awareness. Thus, "with respect to the structure of social representations,
one might be able to discover those thought contents that are relatively stabilized and those that are more volatile and easily accessible to consciousness." (p.192).

Marková concludes by stating that due to its multilayered nature, "human thought and human communication will always contain residuals in terms of what is taken-for-granted as a shared social reality, and what is a presupposed commonality with respect to interpretation. All one can do is approach these residuals rather than hope they will be captured in their entirety." (p.193).

Discussion.

Marková’s arguments maintain the normative emphasis that is the fundamental flaw in the social representations approach. Thus despite Marková’s acknowledgements of the interdependent nature of action and structure, and of the agency of individuals, the individual is still treated as synonymous with the social group. This may be observed in Marková’s description of cognitive differentiation and globalisation, whereby “All knowledge is embedded in the socially shared cognitive experience of the social group in which the individual lives.” (p.187). This “shared cognitive experience” is the basis for both cognitive differentiation and globalisation. Even though the notion of cognitive differentiation appears to acknowledge individual variation, it is not clear how the simplification of an object or event such that it “sinks under the level of awareness” will allow it to be incorporated in the social environment, as described by cognitive globalisation. The equating of “implicit” with “consensual” is not unproblematic, as will be seen later when considering Marková’s definition of social representations.

Returning to the treatment of the individual as synonymous with the group, by reference to “objectification” and “constructivism”, Marková acknowledges that the same word may have different meanings by belonging to different networks. By arguing that the social group has socially shared experiences Marková implies that the
thinking of group members involves common networks. As has been discussed previously, conceptualising social groups in terms of the internalisation of normative values is problematic. Marková appears to incorporate human agency, to acknowledge individual variation through the notion of cognitive differentiation and even to appreciate that "what is taken-for-granted as a shared social reality" (p.193) cannot be ascertained with complete certainty. Nevertheless in attempting to reconcile human agency with the "forceful nature" of ontological realities, Marková essentially follows Moscovici (and Parsons) in treating the "individual" as synonymous with the group and thereby diminishing the notion of human agency.

Marková's conception of social representations emphasises the prescriptive aspect: how the individual is "ensnared" and prohibited from free thought. This is the basis for the distinction between social representations and "education and scientific thinking". However, it is not clear that any particular type of thinking can be described as either entirely constraining or entirely enabling, as Marková refers to social representations and scientific thinking respectively. It should be apparent from the earlier discussions of Giddens' duality of structure that the social environment is simultaneously enabling and constraining.

Marková associates social representations with "unconscious thought processes", with the habitual and constraint, and with implicitness and consensus. This is contrasted with "conscious thought processes" which are associated with reflexion, rational judgement and freedom from constraint, and with explicitness and differentiation. However, the individual requires conscious, reflexive thought processes to accomplish any thought or action, whether habitual or not. Habitual forms do not constrain in isolation from conscious thought; correspondingly conscious thought is not simply free from the constraints of existing socially shared knowledge. Marková does acknowledge that all forms of knowledge involve both explicit and implicit knowledge; however to argue that social representations are concerned only with the constraining aspects of thought implies that the conscious thoughts of individuals are not relevant. This reflects an impoverished notion of reflexivity characteristic of approaches such as social representations which ultimately accord the "social" primacy over the
"individual". The implications of this flaw may be illustrated with respect to Marková's particular formulation by referring to Marková's discussion of religious ideology.

Marková dismisses Billig's argument on the grounds that the "burning bush" is consciously re-cycled and re-experienced and therefore is not a social representation. Marková implies that for the religious ideology to become taken-for-granted it does not enter one's conscious thoughts, so for example the ordinary bush may not remind one of the "burning bush". According to Marková if the religious ideology does enter one's conscious thought processes, and the "burning bush" is brought to mind, then it is a "consciously-recycled" ideology and not a social representation. However, it is not clear how habitual knowledge manifests itself if not through the conscious activities of individuals. Marková argues that the religious belief becomes the individual's "ontological reality", or unquestioned experience when the ordinary bush no longer evokes the "burning bush". However, if the religious belief were to become one's unquestioned experience, it would be more likely to be evoked than not. Marková's argument implies that someone who had less of a religious conviction, such that it was not an unquestioned reality, would be more likely to evoke the "burning bush" than someone who had accepted the religious belief as an unquestioned reality.

Marková is led into such a nonsense proposition as a consequence of her interpretation of the notion that the more powerful the representation, the less aware the individual. As argued earlier, an individual's awareness is necessarily bounded in that there may be unacknowledged conditions and unintended consequences associated with their actions. Nevertheless the individual's conscious awareness cannot simply be separated from their activities. For Marková to imply this reflects an unsophisticated notion of agency and reflexivity. It must be reiterated that because a belief, religious or otherwise, may become habitual and unquestioningly accepted does not mean that it does not influence conscious thought.

Marková continues her discussion of religious ideology by referring to Darwin. Marková argues that Darwin had to struggle against the official religious ideology and
the social representation of a "god-created-world". However, by questioning the
social representation of a "god-created-world", Darwin brought the notion into the
conscious awareness of people. According to Marková's arguments against Billig, the
notion of a "god-created-world", would then cease to be a social representation, even
though such a notion was still shared, to some extent. In this way, it is not clear what
Marková's interpretation of social representation could actually refer to: to manifest
itself in any way, shape or form implicates some notion of purposeful social conduct,
thus anything that may be referred to as a social representation is open to simultaneous
exclusion on the grounds of implicating conscious awareness. This allows Marková to
reject Billig's example as not referring to a social representation, while accepting her
example of Darwin as doing so. Marková may mention that all forms of knowledge
involve both explicit and implicit thinking, however this assertion is not apparent in her
arguments, and does not appear to be a useful means of distinguishing what is a social
representation from what is not.

The distinction of social representations as a theory of specifically "lay knowledge" is
similarly problematic. Again, Marková's discussion of ideology may be used as
illustration. According to Marková, shared understandings that may exist within
powerful groups are not social representations, but ideologies. One possibility for this
exclusion may be that there exists some threshold of "power" beyond which the shared
understandings of a group can no longer be referred to as a social representation. This
does not appear to be a defensible argument as there are no available means for
understanding the operation of a such a threshold; it is doubtful that Marková
subscribes to such a view. The only alternative concerns Marková's definition of
ideology in terms of "explicit pronouncements". Thus it appears that Marková equates
the shared understandings of powerful groups only in terms of "explicit
pronouncements", which presumably involve conscious thought processes, while those
of "lay people" do not. This relates to Marková's association of social representations
with unawareness, described above as problematic.

Marková appears to use the notion of "lay", such as when referring to "lay knowledge"
and when describing "lay ontological realities", in a similar way to Moscovici's
consensual realm; that is as an unproblematic, taken-for-granted feature of society. This is the basis for Marková’s rejection of “philosophical and social-scientific theories of knowledge”. Marková implies that the theory of social representations takes no position on ontological and epistemological issues. This is simply not the case: by virtue of being a social-scientific theory, some ontological and epistemological position is taken. Marková’s claim that such issues are not relevant to social representations implies that “lay ontological realities” are essentially unproblematic, perhaps by virtue of their being generic. However, such issues are of undoubted relevance to social representations. This is evident in Marková’s description of the aim of the theory of social representations as the discovery of how individuals construct a stable, predictable world: ontological and epistemological concerns such as those referred to by Marková are necessarily implicated.

The untenability of Marková’s position is evident as earlier in the paper, Marková quotes Bhaskar (1986) approvingly to reinforce her argument of the interdependence of action and structure, yet later dismisses Bhaskar’s “ontological realism” as essentially irrelevant. More objectionable, perhaps, is that Marková herself draws upon widely disparate sources in her work, such as Plato, Aristotle, Descartes, Bakhtin, Hegel, Mead and Bhaskar, yet sees fit to simply deny the relevance of particular approaches in so casual a manner. A fuller appreciation of ontological and epistemological issues would no doubt expose the inadequacies of Marková’s notion of reflexivity and also perhaps the whole notion of social representations.

Further problems are evident when considering the methodological implications of Marková’s formulation. Marková describes the unreflexive elicitations from word-association tasks as “stereotypes and culturally shared beliefs” (p.191). However, according to Marková’s description of social representations as unreflexive, word-association should be the most adequate method for studying social representations. Of the methods that Marková describes, word-association is the only method that does not involve explicit questioning. The other methods that Marková describes involve explicit questioning, which would cause respondents to become consciously aware of their unconsciously-held social representations, in which case they would
cease to be social representations. Why Marková chooses not to refer to the results of word-association tasks as social representations is not clear: "stereotypes and culturally shared beliefs" would appear to be describable as "lay ontological realities" and therefore, according to Marková’s arguments, social representations. It may be that to do so would cause the other methods to appear irrelevant and therefore draw attention to the inadequacies of Marková’s definition of social representations in terms of unawareness.

Marková also accepts anchoring and objectification as distinct notions. Marková describes both anchoring and objectification as globalising processes that simplify the world: anchoring on the basis of grouping entities together and treating them as equivalent; and objectification as reconstructing entities into something conventional. As has been described earlier, these are not distinct processes. The treating of entities as equivalent, which Marková associates with anchoring, involves some degree of reconstruction, which Marková associates with objectification; if the purpose is simplification, in both cases reconstruction will tend toward the conventional. Also, Marková’s attempt to apply her particular notion of objectification is shown to be untenable.

In conclusion, Marková’s interpretation of social representations is problematic. Marková’s attempts to define social representations, on the bases of "unawareness" and "lay" understanding, cannot be supported. The fundamental flaw in Marková’s formulation appears to be an unsophisticated notion of reflexivity. Thus despite an acknowledgement of the interdependency of action and structure, Marková’s formulation retains an essential opposition between the individual and the social, whereby the individual strains toward autonomy against the constraints of society. This is a consequence of the failure to consider power as fundamental to social action: social activity is seen as peer interaction, reflected in the subsuming of the individual with the group.
Jovchelovitch

Jovchelovitch’s work is of interest as she has also attempted to deal with the theoretical issues concerning social representations. Of particular interest is a consideration of Jovchelovitch’s position compared to that of Wagner, whose work is discussed next. Jovchelovitch argues that social representations involve an inherent separation between subject and object, which the representation bridges. Conversely Wagner argues that the representation is the object, in that a representation is realised in a constructive event which involves the simultaneous creation of the social object; consequently it does not make sense to refer to different representations of the same object.

Jovchelovitch states that social representations are “concerned with the possibilities of common life” (Jovchelovitch, 1995, p.82). Jovchelovitch also appears to recognise the ambitious scope of Moscovici’s ideas by arguing that social representations theory “aims to resolve many dichotomies, such as those between (a) subject and object, (b) individual and society and (c) theory and method that have continued to plague social psychology.” (1995, p.81). Jovchelovitch also notes that the individual and social are not reducible to each other (1996, p.122); that social representations involve both constancy and change, (1996, p.124); and that processes and structures of social representation may only be properly understood in relation to each other (1996, p.123). Indeed, Jovchelovitch appears to have appreciated the complexity of the issues implicated in a notion such as social representations, as evidenced, for example, in the following statement: “The interplay between subjective and objective, and between agency and reproduction, which constitutes the social fabric is at the very heart of how social representations are formed. The theory must conceptualise the interplay and draw on consistent methodological devices to investigate it.” (1996, p.123).

Jovchelovitch argues that social representations “cannot simply be equated with representational activity”, as they “are more than an aggregation of individual representations”; it is necessary to consider “the social as a whole” (1995, p.92-3). By
considering social representations to be more than simply an aggregation of individual representations, Jovchelovitch asks, "how can the genesis of wholeness be explained?" (1995, p.93). Jovchelovitch states that the structure of social representations "can only be understood in relation to how they are formed and transformed" (1995, p.93). Jovchelovitch argues that the processes involved in their formation and transformation are embedded in communicative and social practices, "in short, social mediation" (1995, p.93). Thus it is social mediation which generates social representations; however, "social representations not only emerge through social mediation, but themselves constitute that mediation" (1995, p.94).

Jovchelovitch describes "objectification" and "anchoring" as "specific forms of social mediation of social representations, which elevate to a "material" level the symbolic production of a community....To objectify is to condense different meanings - often threatening, unnameable meanings - into a more familiar reality. In doing so social subjects anchor the unknown to an institutionalised reality, and displace the established geography of significance which society, most of the time, struggles to maintain. They are processes which both maintain and challenge, which both repeat and overcome, which are shaped by, and yet also shape, the social life of the community." (1995, p.94).

Thus Jovchelovitch argues that contrary to the criticisms of Potter and Litton (1985), "it is not the theory of social representations that confers a stable, indeed practically consensual dimension to significance in social life", the theory simply acknowledges "the tendency of societies and institutions (and even individuals) to perpetuate themselves - a process which also works within symbolic fields" (1996, p.124).

Jovchelovitch marks a distinction between these symbolic or "representational fields" and "semantic networks". Jovchelovitch's argument is not entirely clear, but it appears that representational fields refer to "the particular stock of meanings and practices that, in each given society, will circumscribe the action and speech of social actors" (1996, p. 124). However, representational fields also "vary according to the positionings that different actors hold in relation to the social fabric and the web of interactions they
produce.” (1996, p.124, emphases in original). Representational fields are organised by “semantic networks”, which “retain a degree of constancy in accordance with the historical features of the societies in which they emerge”, though which can acquire “diverse configurations, which differ in their complexity and in how immediate experience is drawn upon to represent a given object.” (1996, p.124). Thus “constancy and change” are seen as “integral to the formation of social representations. They allow for the existence of contradictory representational fields, which interact and compete in the public sphere.” (1996, p.124-5).

The notion of social mediation is taken to be extremely significant, and allows Jovchelovitch to trace a number of implications for various social psychological concerns. Thus Jovchelovitch notes the mutuality of social identity and social representation: “(t)he complex interactions between self and other are the basis for both phenomena. There is no possibility of identity without the work of representation, just as there is no work of representation without an identificatory boundary between the me and the not-me.” (1996, p. 125).

Jovchelovitch also attempts to deal with the issue of power. Jovchelovitch by arguing that social representations are “permeated permanently by relations of power”, such that “domination operates in symbolic fields”(1996, p.127). Jovchelovitch notes that “the construction of accounts, for instance, is never a neutral business...what they express is already the outcome of symbolic struggles that are related to the larger struggles of any given society. Some groups have a greater chance than others to assert their version of reality. The asymmetrical situation of different social groups must be considered seriously, for different people bring different resources to bear when it comes to imposing their representations.” (1996, p.127). Jovchelovitch does not attempt further analysis of the operation of power, and simply states that empirical findings will hopefully translate into further theoretical development.

Jovchelovitch also responds to criticisms of the notion of representations by those social psychologists who adopt a “post-modern stance” (1996, p.128). Jovchelovitch notes Gergen’s (1985) challenge to the “concept of knowledge as a mental
representation", and his argument that the explanatory locus of human action should shift "from the interior region of the mind to the processes and structure of human interaction." (Jovchelovitch, 1996, p. 128). Similarly, Jovchelovitch refers to Shotter and Gergen (1993) as emphasising the difference between "what happens "within" individuals, "in their heads", and what happens "between individuals" in the outside social world." (Jovchelovitch, 1996, p.128).

Jovchelovitch agrees with Shotter and Gergen (1993) that "the explanatory locus of human action is human interaction or the "between"", though contends that she does not understand why Shotter and Gergen "fail to use the explanatory power of human interaction to conceptualise the "within"." (Jovchelovitch, 1996, p.130). Jovchelovitch argues that Shotter and Gergen simply reinstate the dualism "between the subject and the social world". This is regarded as a "false problem for social representations" as psychological phenomena both construct, and are constructed by, social reality. (1996, p. 131-2).

This leads Jovchelovitch to forcefully argue for the importance of the notion of representation: "A representation, and I will repeat for the sake of argument, is the activity of someone, who constructs a psychic substitution of something which is alter, other, to oneself. The subject and object therefore do not coincide. There is a difference between them and in order to bridge this difference a representation emerges...To suggest that they accentuate the dichotomy between the individual and society is the same as suggesting that the individual and society are either reducible to each other or unrelated to each other." (1996, p.132-3).

Discussion.

Jovchelovitch's approach is noteworthy in that while it may appear to deal with the many complex issues relevant to social representations, it actually provides very little in the way of theoretical advancement and perpetuates a number of conceptual
confusions inherent to a normative social-scientific theory, including the notion of normative consensus.

The fundamental problem is Jovchelovitch’s insistence on the separation between subject and object. As should perhaps be apparent by now, arguing that a representation emerges to bridge the difference between subject and object implies a “pre-theoretical” object, and perpetuates the confusion surrounding the separation of concept and percept discussed earlier with reference to Moscovici. Jovchelovitch attempts to deal with this problem through the notion of the “representation field”: that is, the common ground of shared meanings that is taken to exist within a society. This is the basis for Jovchelovitch’s retort to Potter and Litton, that it is not the theory of social representation that “confers a stable, indeed practically consensual dimension” to social life, the theory simply acknowledges the consensus that is there, the presence of which is evidenced by the tendency of societies, institutions and representational fields toward perpetuation. Thus it can be seen that Jovchelovitch assumes that a common ground of shared meanings is the only means by which societies, institutions and representational fields could persist; that they persist is then taken as evidence for that common ground of shared meanings. In this way, social entities are treated as objective on the basis of the consensus that exists within societies.

Jovchelovitch attempts to deal with the different positions that may be taken toward these objective social phenomena through the notion of semantic networks. These may acquire diverse configurations according to how “immediate experience is drawn upon to represent a given object.” (1996, p.124). It was remarked earlier that Jovchelovitch’s formulation was not clear in this respect. That is because Jovchelovitch refers to representational fields as common to a society, yet also as varying according to the positionings of different actors. The notion of representational field is sometimes taken to refer to some notion of “societal” consensus, as in the response to Potter and Litton; and at other times to refer to a notion of group consensus, organised into various “semantic networks” on the basis of social mediation, such that contradictory “representational fields” interact and compete in the public sphere.
As stated earlier, Jovchelovitch bases her assumption of a society wide level of consensus, as the only means of understanding social mediation. Attention may be drawn to the various problems associated with this formulation in the first instance, by considering Jovchelovitch’s discussion of power. There it is acknowledged that the construction of accounts is “never a neutral business” (1996, p.125). However, it is an inherent assumption of the unproblematic separation of subject and object that Jovchelovitch proposes, that the construction of accounts is neutral: social objects are taken to be consensually understood, variation occurs in the positions people take toward these “given” objects. The “version of reality” that groups may assert cannot simply be understood on the basis of society-wide common understandings of social objects; that is inherent in the notion of the “construction” of accounts.

To acknowledge the full implications of the construction of social phenomena would require an understanding of the structuring of social action that is not normatively based, such that various constructions of social reality can be incorporated. Social representation cannot do this as it conceives of social structuring fundamentally in terms of the internalisation of normative values; consequently the potential for social diversity is curtailed as any such diversity must still adhere to the underlying consensus assumed to be necessary for social interaction to take place. This is the basis of the difficulties that are fundamentally insurmountable for Moscovici, and indeed for any normatively based theory: to reconcile the prescriptive aspects of social existence with the transformative capabilities of human agents.

Jovchelovitch makes little progress in dealing with these issues, simply noting the relevance of both constancy and change, and the maintaining and challenging of “established significances” (1995, p.94). Indeed, beyond asserting the notion of a fundamental level of consensus, Jovchelovitch’s arguments amount to little; when this assertion is shown to be problematic, Jovchelovitch’s arguments amount to even less.

Jovchelovitch insists that social representations should not simply be equated with representational activity; that it is necessary to consider the social as a whole. Jovchelovitch moves directly from this assertion to a discussion of the genesis of this
"wholeness" in terms of the structure of social representations. Thus rather than consider whether it is actually appropriate to treat "the social as a whole", Jovchelovitch assumes that social representations indeed do so. Jovchelovitch's argument, that the formation and transformation of social representations are embedded in communicative and social practices, actually reveals very little in terms of how the individual, and individual representations are implicated in such practices: the individual is effectively subsumed within the social. However, when the notion of an underlying stock of societally-shared meanings and practices is rejected, little remains beyond Jovchelovitch's acknowledgement that the social cannot be understood on the basis of simply aggregating individual representations.

Similarly, Jovchelovitch's claim that "social representations not only emerge through social mediation, but themselves constitute that mediation" reveals very little. "Social mediation" itself is understood solely in terms of social representations, as constitutive of the "social whole"; thus to state that social representations emerge through, and constitute that mediation, is not enlightening. Once again, the argument is based upon the notion that consensual understanding, as embodied in social representations, is a fundamental requirement for social mediation. When that notion is rejected, it remains necessary to explain the relationship between individual representations and social mediation; in effect to explain the relationship between the individual and the social.

The assumption of consensus is apparent also when Jovchelovitch refers to anchoring and objectification as reflecting (or representing) "the symbolic production of a community" (1995, p.94). Jovchelovitch's descriptions of anchoring and objectification appear to undermine the distinction between the terms: Jovchelovitch acknowledges that when social subjects objectify they also anchor; and that both concern the understanding of the unknown and unfamiliar on the basis of existing understandings. Once again, when the assumption of consensus is seen to be problematic, all that remains is an idea that new beliefs or knowledge are understood on the basis of existing beliefs or knowledge.
Returning to Jovchelovitch’s consideration of power, it is not apparent that further theoretical development is possible given that the notion of consensus severely curtails any conceptualisation of divergent interpretations. The elemental role of power in social interaction, as understood in terms of the securing of compliance, is fundamentally opposed to any theorisation of the social in terms of the internalisation of normative values. Furthermore, as described earlier when discussing the failings of normative functionalist theories in conceptualising change, such a conceptualisation of the social cannot easily incorporate any notion of sectional interests; as a result social change can only be explained in terms of a society-wide alteration to the consensus. This is evidenced in Jovchelovitch’s formulation in that, theoretical discussion of social change is only alluded to briefly in the notion that the “degree of constancy is in accordance with historical features of societies” (1996, p.124).

Finally, Jovchelovitch’s response to Shotter and Gergen must also be considered. According to Jovchelovitch, both Shotter and Gergen argue that human action cannot be understood in terms of mental representations, and that it is necessary to consider the processes and structure of human interaction. Jovchelovitch acknowledges that this is the basis of her own arguments also, though argues that human interaction may also be used to conceptualise what happens “within” individuals, i.e. mental or psychological phenomena. However, Jovchelovitch provides little in the way of elucidating what in fact happens within individuals, beyond an assertion that psychological phenomena both construct and are constructed by social reality. Again, the mechanism that mediates this relationship between psychological phenomena and social reality is seen to be consensus, in the form of internalised normative values. If the notion of such consensus is rejected, even that assertion is seen to require further explanation.

In conclusion it appears that Jovchelovitch’s formulation is fundamentally ill-equipped to deal with the ambitious scope of social representations theory. The basic flaw appears to be Jovchelovitch’s contention that it is legitimate to separate subject and object. Once such a position is taken, social representations simply revert to a notion of collective belief or attitude, as positions taken by individuals or groups toward
objectively given phenomena. This appears contrary to any notion of social representations as constitutive of social phenomena. However, the separation of subject and object is explicable, if not acceptable, if seen as necessary to explain the consensus, considered by Jovchelovitch, to be a prerequisite for social interaction. In that case to acknowledge that social representations involve the very construction of social phenomena, not simply positions taken toward them, would make that notion of consensus problematic. As mentioned earlier, Wagner’s arguments are interesting in this respect as he argues that social representations indeed involve the construction of social phenomena.

Wagner

As stated above, Wagner attempts to incorporate a strong commitment to social construction within a social representational framework. Such a claim appears particularly intriguing, not only on the grounds that many of those critical towards social representations maintain broadly constructionist perspectives (for example, Harré (1984); Potter and Litton (1985); Billig, Parker), but also given Jovchelovitch’s failure to reconcile such a commitment to social construction with a notion of social representations.

Wagner maintains that a concern for the constructed nature of social life is fundamental to the notion of social representation, and clearly separates social representations from more individualistic approaches: “Thinking about how social representation relates to the local world of a group sets this approach sharply apart from social cognition and connects it closely to current strands of theorising in social constructionism.” (1996, p.95).
Wagner argues that a separation of subject and object entails a "strong ontological commitment" where the object remains external to the symbolic realm "as part of the so-called real world". (1996, p.103). Wagner notes that this separation of subject and object is characteristic of the "vast majority" of research on social representations, and is reflected in the titles of such studies, for example "social representations of mental illness, of intelligence, of AIDS, of poverty, etc." (1996, p.99, emphases in original).

Wagner argues that the separation is explicitly endorsed by Jodolet, though is explicitly rejected by Moscovici, at least on occasion (Wagner notes that Moscovici also appears to endorse such a separation.)

Wagner argues that "objects" do not exist in a socially meaningful way independent of social actors. Wagner refers to the act of representation as a "constructive event", in the course of which "something in the world is named, equipped with attributes and values, and integrated into a socially meaningful world." (1996, p.110, emphases in original). Thus, Wagner continues, "(t)here are not different social representations of one and the same object....There are only different representations, full stop... representations are realised in a constructive event and this event simultaneously creates the "object". Speaking of an object independent of the representation, such as saying "there are various representations R1 to Rn of the object X", does not make much sense, since representation and object are ontologically indistinguishable within the constructive event. As paradox [sic] as it may sound, there is no object resulting from a constructive event. What is constructed is not an object, but once more an evidence for the intrinsic "truth" of a specific world view in a long series of ongoing equivalent performances." (1996, p.110-1, emphases in original).

It appears that Wagner is indeed demonstrating a strong commitment to a notion of construction. Also, although Wagner does not explicitly comment, his position places into question the "vast majority" of social representations research, which reports the social representations "of" various entities. Nevertheless, it is not immediately apparent how Wagner can reconcile such a strong commitment with the notion of social representations; that is, to explain the structuring of these "multiple truths" within the ongoing production of the social realm.
Wagner's solution is simply to re-assert a notion of group-level consensus, such that the notion of "multiple truths" reduces to a single consensual truth. Thus, an entity "becomes a social object only within the group's system of common-sense in the course of the interactions in which actors, pertaining to a group and sharing a common representation with regard to what is relevant in a given context, engage in." (1996, p.110). Thus Wagner simply perpetuates the subsuming of the individual within the group characteristic of normative theories such as social representations. Presumably this again reflects a failure to conceive of social interaction in terms other than a normative consensus.

The fundamental flaw in Wagner's position is that there is no attempt to deal with the challenges raised by a construction-ist approach in attempting to understand the structuring of social action, namely the incorporation of an adequate conceptualisation of human agency. To conceive of interaction only in terms of consensus diminishes the notion of agency, as individual action is oriented solely toward the perpetuation of consensus. Wagner makes no attempt to deal with the issue of reconciling competing interpretations, or rival "truths". To fully incorporate human agency would require an understanding of how social interaction is achieved through the purposive actions of individuals.

Wagner's reliance on an assumption of consensus effectively removes intentionality from the individual and attributes it to the group. This is evident in Wagner's discussion of economic breakdown, "(s)uch events require that the affected group collectively copes with them by making "the unfamiliar familiar"...Collective coping will be first symbolical and then material. At the symbolic level it consists in initiating a comprehensive discourse to anchor the event and then to develop a system of meanings which allows to assign the event a place in the group's social world." (1996, p.112).

That there is no means for dealing with non-agreement, or the disputing of the "truth of a specific world view", when considering the individuals that constitute the group, there is no means for understanding inter-group interaction. Wagner's only means of
dealing with social interaction is in terms of shared understandings, thus the notion of group consensus is acceptable to him as the means by which group members interact. However, Wagner's commitment to social construction makes the assumption that such understandings are shared with other groups unacceptable, thereby confining his version of social representations to an intra-group phenomenon. This is evident in the opening reference above, when Wagner states that social representations refer to the "local world of the group" (1996, p.95).

However, Wagner's formulation is not a convincing theorisation of the intra-group, primarily due to the assumption of a group level consensus. The narrowing of the notion of agency inherent in such a position is further demonstrated by Wagner when he states that "(s)ocial construction is always an unintended process." (1996, p.110, emphases in original). This is a very particular notion of social construction indeed, that conceives of construction as unintended. To incorporate a notion of intention would require an appreciation of social interaction as contingently "brought off" by purposeful agents. However, Wagner apparently has no means for understanding interaction other than through normative consensus. As mentioned above, beyond perpetuation of the consensus, intention is effectively removed from the individual agent and attributed to the group. Wagner makes no attempt to explain the formation of the group consensus, simply referring to it as a process of "socio-genesis" (1996, p.112).

Wagner also rejects any notion of social representations as "things in the minds of people", and conceives of representation as "the significant structure exhibited in a series of constructive events" (Wagner 1996, p.111). This requires a "quite demanding" process of interpretation on the part of the researcher to observe socially relevant events, such that "(w)hat appears as a relative constant across different contexts and people in a group makes up the representation." (1996, p.111). Wagner refers to this relative constancy as "the significant core of the social representation." (1996, p.112). However, given the assumption of consensus across group members, the "interpretation" required of researchers would appear to amount to little more than an assessment of cross-situational reliability. This can be seen in Wagner, Valencia and
Elejabarrieta’s investigation of the “stable core” of social representations (1995), which Wagner refers to as supportive of his formulation (Wagner, 1996, p.112).

Wagner et al define a social representation as a “mental construct” that is “shared by the members of reflexive groups” (1995, p.331). They admit that the intricate links between the individual and collective levels are yet to be fully understood, though they claim there is “an emerging agreement on how to envisage the socio-genetic process leading to the formation of collectively shared representations”; this is in terms of “some form of collective discourse” (1995, p.332). Wagner et al argue that groups cope with “unfamiliar” or “disquieting” phenomena by adapting the groups’ practices. Wagner et al refer to this as “collective problem solving”, accompanied by a process of “collective symbolic coping”, achieved through “social discourse on an interpersonal level and at the level of the mass media of communication.” (1996, p.332, emphases in original).

Wagner et al argue that different elements, such as ideas, characteristics, attributes and evaluations play different roles with regard to the represented object. Thus, Wagner et al argue that a “central core” of stable elements gives meaning to the whole representation, while peripheral elements serve to adapt a representation to different contexts as their “meaning and relation to each other and to the core elements...undergo situational change” (1995, p.333). Thus “it is the interplay between core and peripheral elements which allows social representations to serve their pragmatic functions in everyday communication processes.” (1995, p.346).

The notion of consensus is deeply embedded in Wagner et al’s formulation. Thus while Wagner et al acknowledge that “contexts do influence the content of verbal data”, they only influence the wider periphery (1995, p.346). However, Wagner et al also acknowledge that subjects may not offer any one element of the stable core at all; this raises, what Wagner et al refer to as, “the old problem of what is meant by consensus in social representation theory” (1995, p.346). Thus Wagner et al’s use of the term “consensual representation” requires theoretical justification. However as no further comment is made relating to this concern, presumably Wagner et al consider
their "socio-genetic" arguments to provide at least a preliminary foundation for further development.

However, Wagner et al "socio-genetic" arguments cannot be accepted. Their notion that a common representation is a direct consequence of interpersonal and mass media communication explains little in the way of process. Also the acknowledgement that group members may not offer elements of the "stable core" draws attention to the deficiencies of assuming a group-level of consensus: such individuals should presumably not be considered part of the group, furthermore as they do not hold the same understandings, their interpersonal communication with group members becomes problematic.

Wagner et al defend the notion of the stability of the "core", by arguing that "(i)t would be utterly incomprehensible as to how elements which are themselves context-sensitive, i.e. which change their structural relationships with varying contexts, could form a central core and have an organising effect upon peripheral elements." (1995, p.346). Once again this reveals the fundamental reliance upon a notion of consensus to explain the social world, inherent in the notion of social representation. As a result, to redescribe Wagner et al’s above statement, it is indeed "utterly incomprehensible" how social interactions may be organised without a notion of context invariant understanding, i.e. consensus. It must be reiterated that Wagner et al’s notion of consensus is problematic. Their assertion that there is an "interplay between core and peripheral elements that allows social representations to perform their functions in everyday communication" (1996, p.346), offers nothing in the way of explaining how this in fact happens.

In describing the rationale for their study Wagner et al argue, "that if an object is relevant and salient in a specific group, and as such a topic of extensive discourse, we should find a well-structured domain of knowledge, i.e. a social representation." (1995, p.333). Their method consists of various word-association tasks, "to give relatively unrestricted access to mental representations". (1995, p.334). The "objects"
to be studied are the words "war" and "peace", and the subjects are described as "convenience" samples taken from Spain and Nicaragua (1995, p.334).

Wagner et al state that of the "objects" studied, the word "war" will be salient to subjects from both areas because "war" is mentioned in the media and "therefore part of the everyday discourse of many people"; whereas "peace" will be relevant only to the Nicaraguan subjects because they have recent experience of war, and not to the Spanish subjects "as peace is the norm and therefore not a salient 'object' for public discourse." (1995, p.333). This is a very weak argument, particularly as Wagner et al state earlier in the paper that the concepts of "war" and "peace" make sense only as the opposite of the other, thus "on a conceptual level they do not exist independently of each other" (1995, p.333). Furthermore, the Spanish samples are taken from Basque and Catalan regions, each of which has been associated with a degree of inter-state conflict, if not on the scale of that in Nicaragua; therefore "peace" may be expected to be salient. No mention is made of any efforts to confirm whether these "objects" are in fact present in public discourse in the manner in which Wagner et al claim.

When discussing the results of the study, Wagner et al argue that "(T)he present research was conducted to investigate the role which a phenomenon's relevance and consequent collective discourse plays in the formation of social representations." (1995, p.345). However, Wagner et al do not actually perform such an investigation. The rationale for their study is that if an object is salient, it will be "well-structured"; however, there is no means for understanding salience of an object, other than through it being "well-structured". This is a circular argument. Furthermore the study is only superficially related to Wagner et al's notions of "socio-genetic" processes: subjects are grouped solely on the basis of nationality, thus Wagner et al's "social representations" are taken to be held by the whole nation, presumably reflecting a nation-wide consensus. For the individual to be treated as synonymous with the group is unacceptable in itself; in this instance the "group" refers to the whole nation. Wagner et al's study is little more than an investigation into the structure of free word associations with regard to the words "peace" and "war".
Therefore it must be seen that Wagner et al's (1995) study provides little in the way of support for Wagner's (1996) differentiation between core and peripheral elements. Wagner et al's study has very little to do with their own "socio-genetic" arguments, flawed as they are, and has even less to do with social representations as a means of understanding the structuring of social action. The notion of a core relates to the reliance on consensus as the means to explain social action and interaction. However, rather than relying on a generic notion of core understandings, it is more relevant to an attempt to conceptualise the specific understandings implicated in the accomplishment of particular social practices. Such a view cannot be incorporated within a normative theory such as social representations as there are limited means for incorporating the specific with the general: variation from the general, normative consensus can only be understood through a failure to internalise normative understandings.\(^2\)

In conclusion Wagner's claim to incorporate a strong commitment to social construction within a social representations framework is disappointing. Wagner's claim cannot be substantiated; due to an inherent reliance on group-level consensus as the only means to explain social interaction, Wagner's theoretical arguments effectively reduce social representations to an intra-group phenomenon, and provide little in the way of describing specific processes; the existence of group-level consensus is simply taken as given. Furthermore Wagner's theoretical arguments are not consistent with their empirical application. Wagner's fundamental failing can be traced back to an inability to deal with "the old problem of what is meant by consensus in social representation theory" (Wagner et al, 1995, p.347).

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\(^2\)The limited utility of the notion of "core" is also relevant to alternative conceptualisations, such as those of Abric (1994); the reliance upon consensus as a fundamental prerequisite for social interaction is still implicated.
Social psychological theories of identity

It is noticeable that each of the formulations discussed in this section tend to emphasise the communicative aspect of social representations rather than attempting to refine the internalisation process. However, it has been argued that mechanisms of internalisation may be incorporated by linking social representations to psychological theories of identity, (for example, Doise, 1990; Breakwell, 1993). The most popular of these theories are Social Identity Theory, associated most strongly with the work of Tajfel; and Self Categorisation Theory, associated most strongly with the work of Turner. These theories will be briefly evaluated, primarily to ascertain their possible contributions to the development of social representations. It will be argued that these theories are similarly founded upon a normative account of social relations and therefore share similar limitations as SRT in attempting to theorise social phenomena.

Social identity theory.

Social identity theory is most strongly associated with the work of Tajfel, though many others have been associated with what is sometimes referred to as “the social identity tradition”. Tajfel reacted against the limited utility of individualistic approaches in social psychology for understanding significant social issues, such as those arising from intergroup conflict (Tajfel, 1981, p.403; Graumann, 1988, p.17). Tajfel objected to the “hollowness of explanations of international conflict, genocide, and so on, purely in terms of individuality without any consideration of socio-historical factors” (Hogg and Abrams, 1988, p.13). Tajfel sought to take account of intergroup relations in terms of group processes rather than simply individual processes: “group behaviour - and even more so intergroup behaviour - is displayed in situations in which we are not dealing
with random collections of individuals who somehow come to act in unison because they all happen to be in a similar psychological state” (Tajfel, 1981, p.403).

Tajfel’s concern with understanding inter-group conflict led to the development of the “minimal group paradigm” (MGP), initially intended to investigate the minimum conditions required to elicit intergroup discrimination. The archetypal MGP study involved subjects being arbitrarily allocated to groups and then being asked individually to distribute hypothetical rewards between members of their own group and those of an opposing group. The example often quoted is the assigning of groups on the basis of an alleged preference for the artistic work of either Kandinsky or Klee (Tajfel et al, 1971). The general finding is that the mere act of allocating people into groups, however arbitrary the criteria, is enough to elicit biased judgements and discriminatory behaviour in favour of the in-group. This is expressed as a marginal favouritism rather than a blatant disregard for the out-group; there is a propensity toward fairness, though a definite favouring of the in-group.

The initial explanation for this in-group bias provided by Tajfel et al, was in terms of norms. A norm of competitiveness was thought to be made salient, perhaps due to associations with competitive team sports; this would lead to a desire to ensure that the interests of one’s own group prevailed. That discrimination was not more extreme could also be explained in terms of norms; for example, through the operation of a countervailing norm of fairness. However, the limitations of this type of normative account soon became apparent. The fundamental problem is that in the absence of a means of predicting normative salience, it is only possible to explain post-hoc why a particular norm prevailed in a given situation. As Brown explains, “the so-called ‘explanation’ becomes little more than a redescription of the experimental findings.” (Brown, 1989, p.397).

However, an alternative means of explanation was developed, which in turn formed the basis of Social Identity Theory (SIT). “Social identity” is understood to be that part of an individual’s self-concept (or identity) that is defined in terms of group (or social) affiliations. The basic argument is that individuals favour their own group when
making inter-group comparisons in order to preserve or promote a positive self-concept; Tajfel refers to this as "the establishment of positive distinctiveness" (1978, p.83). Thus the results of the MGP may be explained in terms of subjects favouring the in-group in order to raise their self-esteem.

The main advantage of the social identity approach over the normative account is that a degree of prediction would appear to be available: a positive correlation would be expected between the strength of identification with a group and inter-group bias, each of which could be measured independently. So for example, if an individual did not identify strongly with a particular group, there would not be as great an opportunity to raise one's self-esteem through association with that group in a situation of inter-group comparison; consequently discrimination in favour of that group would not be expected to be great. Correspondingly, if an individual were to identify strongly with a particular group, then the bias would be expected to be more marked.

The social identity approach was supported by studies carried out in more naturalistic contexts. For example, Brown (1978) found evidence of in-group favouritism when investigating wage differentials, based upon comparisons between different groups of workers. Brown adapted the MGP to investigate allocation of hypothetical wage differentials and found that workers were willing to sacrifice an increase in absolute terms to their own groups' wages in order to maintain a differential advantage over a rival group. This would appear to support the importance of inter-group comparison.

Similarly, Skevington's (1981) study of hospital nurses showed that higher status registered nurses tended to consider themselves as superior concerning task-related attributes such as intelligence, confidence and responsibility compared to lower-status enrolled nurses; though the latter group of nurses tended to see themselves as superior at the more interpersonal aspects of their work. However, of interest in Skevington's study is that each group also acknowledged the relative superiority of the other group on particular attributes. This is explicable within the social identity framework if it is accepted that specific attributes are valued by members of a particular group. In that case, it could be argued that task-related attributes are more significant to the high-
status registered nurses, whereas interpersonal attributes were more significant to the lower-status enrolled nurses. This would lead to in-group favouritism only on those attributes considered important to each particular group; the other attributes were less significant for maintaining self-esteem, and so superiority could be conceded to the rival group.

It is through consideration of the differential significance of attributes that the limitations of the social identity approach become apparent. The strength of in-group identification is expected to be the relevant factor in explaining bias amongst group members; however, in the example of the groups of nurses above, the differential significance of attributes to each group is also relevant. The social identity approach does not offer any reason to expect groups to consider particular attributes as more significant than others other than in terms of self esteem. Therefore to explain this differential significance of attributes in terms of self esteem, and then to explain bias on those attributes also in terms of self-esteem, offers little in the way of actual explanation: even contradictory findings may be accommodated in this manner.

This argument may be more clearly illustrated by referring to the studies of Brown and Williams (1984), Brown et al (1986) and Oaker and Brown (1986); each of which investigated intergroup differentiation amongst groups of workers. The general finding in these studies was that the relationship between group identification and intergroup favouritism showed great variation depending on the attribute concerned, ranging from positive (as would be expected from a social identity perspective), to non-existent, and even to negative. However, a much more powerful and reliable predictor of inter-group bias in these studies was perceived conflict with the out-group. As Brown et al explain, “what we have uncovered is that social identification can have quite different meanings in different group settings and is not the unidimensional process implied by SIT....It now seems clear that researchers using this approach should pay more attention to the apparently multi-dimensional character of group identification and comparison...What seems to be implicated here is some form of group ideology which determines which dimensions of evaluation are most central for each group’s identity” (1986, p. 310).
What these studies show is that inter-group bias was not demonstrated indiscriminately; it depended on the particular attribute and the particular situation. It appears that an explanation of inter-group differences must deal with the meanings each attribute has for members of each group. However, if it is accepted that some understanding of the meanings held by each group is necessary to explain in-group bias, it can be seen that there has actually been little progress from the original explanation of Tajfel et al (1971) in terms of norms: without some understanding of which norm or meaning will predominate in any given situation, any explanation will simply be a redescription of research findings. Furthermore, it would appear that an explanation of group conflict would be better served by investigating the nature of these “group meanings” without privileging a recourse to notions of self-esteem, and thereby social identity.

Tajfel’s appeal for the incorporation of an understanding of socio-historical factors when considering inter-group relations appeared to recognise the limitations of an “objective” view of social phenomena, as found in individualistic approaches. However, attempts to apply the Social Identity approach to actual situations of inter-group relations do not incorporate an adequate understanding of the social context. For example, in the study of wage differentials described earlier, the significant finding is the apparently perverse consequence of inter-group comparison, whereby group members forego an advantage in absolute terms to preserve a relative advantage over a rival group. An attempt to understand the nature of the social context would require at least some consideration of the workers’ own understandings of their inter-group relations. This would presumably implicate the importance of relative differentials; that the maintenance of differentials has a meaningful significance in industrial relations was most likely a contributory factor in the formulation of the study.

The reason the hypothetical allocation appears perverse is that it does not correspond to an “objective” view of the situation. However, it may not appear at all perverse in the context of ongoing systems of industrial relations in which the maintenance of differentials is a significant consideration; in fact, given such a context it is not inconceivable that the pursuit of absolute gains with no concern for the maintenance of
differentials could be seen as perverse. It is precisely the limitations of an "objective" approach to phenomena that provoked Tajfel's initial reaction against individualistic methods; yet it is only with reference to an "objective" view that the study is remarkable at all, and that the notion of self-esteem can be thought to have explanatory significance. To avoid an objective view, the meaning of the social context to subjects must be taken into account: an explanation for the workers' concern with maintaining differentials would need to incorporate these meanings; the notion of self-esteem itself offers little in the way of actual explanation.

Social Identity Theory has nevertheless generated a great deal of interest amongst social psychologists, presumably due to the possibility of explaining significant social phenomena on the basis of psychological mechanisms. Thus there would appear to be a parallel with the situation concerning social representations; similarly each approach is fundamentally misconceived. The limitations of the SIT approach can be traced to the MGP. As described earlier, the MGP was originally intended to provide a baseline by which to observe the minimal conditions for group bias, and it was found that the mere act of categorisation of individuals was enough to engender bias. In the arbitrary world of the MGP the only consideration when investigating inter-group relations may indeed be the servicing of identity needs, such as self-esteem. However, to extrapolate from this that identity needs are the only consideration when dealing with actual inter-group relations is misconceived. To appreciate the complexities of the social context it is necessary, at the very least, to incorporate some notion of the meanings, regarding the particular group relations, of those concerned; if this is done, to privilege the contribution of some notion of self-esteem, a priori, is unnecessary.
Self Categorisation Theory

The failure to proceed beyond a theory of norms is also evident in Self Categorisation Theory (SCT), predominantly associated with the work of Turner (for example, Turner et al, 1987). SCT can be seen as an attempt to further develop the notion of social identity, and shares with SIT the basic notion that individuals may define themselves in terms of their group memberships. However, SCT emphasises the role of the self-concept or self-categorisation in understanding group-level processes: "(t)he theory explains the emergence of group level processes in terms of the functioning of the self-concept and at the same time assumes that group processes reciprocally mediate self-categorisation and cognition" (Turner et al, 1994, p.454).

The notion of the "group" is theoretically and empirically central to SCT; group formation is seen as "an adaptive social psychological process that makes social cohesion, cooperation and influence possible" (Turner et al, 1987, p.40). From this it can be seen that Turner et al are attempting to explain the relationship between the individual and the collective or social, and so provide a solution to the problem of order. Turner et al refer to the group as the "psychological group", defined in terms of a shared self-categorisation, which is seen as an indispensable condition for a collection of individuals to feel as a group: "psychological group formation takes place to the degree that two or more people come to perceive and define themselves in terms of some shared ingroup-outgroup categorisation" (Turner et al, 1987, p.51).

For SCT, the salience of a particular self-category is determined by an interaction between "accessibility" and "fit". Accessibility refers to the tendency to use those categories that are meaningful in terms of past experience and current expectations, goals, needs and values: Turner et al speak of the "readiness" of a perceiver to use a particular self category" (1994, p.455). Fit has two aspects, "comparative fit" and "normative fit", each of which are inseparable in their operation. Comparative fit is defined by the principle of meta-contrast, according to which "a collection of stimuli is more likely to be categorized as an entity to the degree that the average differences
perceived between them are less than the average differences perceived between them and the remaining stimuli that comprise the frame of reference.” (Turner et al, 1994, p.457). Normative fit refers to the notion that the similarities and differences observed in the operation of comparative fit must be consonant with “normative beliefs and theories about the substantive meaning of the social category.” (Turner et al, 1994, p.457).

Turner et al stress the dynamic nature of social judgement, such that categorisations vary according to the frame of reference. In this way they argue that it is not meaningful to think of the self as a fixed mental structure: “self categories are generated from an interaction between psychological principles of categorization, perceiver readiness, background knowledge and the social context of the perceiver.” (Turner et al, 1994, p.461). Thus the content of a particular social category is shaped by the context of its application.

However, while Turner et al recognise that self-categorisation is context dependent, the scope for variability is subject to constraint: “the use of categories and their meanings are governed by social norms and therefore anchored in group memberships...it is the shared social identity of group members which makes it possible for them to produce socially validated knowledge, shared beliefs about ways of perceiving, thinking and doing which we assume to be appropriate in terms of the demands of objective reality...Categories are not only cognitive structures, they are also implicit social norms.” (Turner et al, 1994, p.461). This notion of “objective reality” is used by Turner et al to distance their arguments from social constructionism: Turner et al state for SCT “the emphasis on variability [is] reality-based rather than essentially arbitrary” (1994, p.460).

Turner et al also argue that self-concepts are not simply a reflection of the individual’s social roles within a normative social structure, and thereby distance themselves from more objective social theories: “the social identity tradition of which self-categorisation theory is a part looks at society from a different perspective. The structural-functionalist conception of society as an organized institution characterised by
normative consensus is rejected for a conflict model in which the social group, not the social role is the basic unit. From this perspective, conformity to roles and norms is an aspect of psychological group membership (Turner, 1991). It is assumed that people define themselves in terms of their social group memberships and that they enact roles as part of their acceptance of the normative expectations of ingroup members. The concept of role is therefore subsumed under the concept of group rather than vice versa” (Turner, 1994, p.461).

Turner et al acknowledge that much of their empirical work is concerned with investigating the role of fit, even though “sufficient explanations” of the salience of social categories must also incorporate the notion of accessibility (1994, p.456). However, this imbalance reflects inadequacies in Turner et al’s formulation. As stated earlier, a central concern is the notion of group; as seen above, the individual is treated as synonymous with the group, as the use of self categories are seen to be governed by social norms, anchored in group memberships. It can be seen that normative understandings play a central role in Turner et al’s formulation. In fact, Accessibility and Fit may be redescribed in terms of normative influences (as constituting both accessibility and normative fit), and comparative fit. Again, Turner et al acknowledge as much when they state that “self categories are generated from an interaction between psychological principles of categorization, perceiver readiness, background knowledge and the social context of the perceiver.” (Turner et al, 1994, p.460).

Given that “perceiver readiness”, “background knowledge” and “social context” are to be understood in terms of group norms, the “psychological principles of categorisation” would appear to refer to the notion of comparative fit. As described above, Turner et al describe comparative fit in terms of the operation of “the principle of meta-contrast”, according to which “a collection of stimuli is more likely to be categorized as an entity to the degree that the average differences perceived between them are less than the average differences perceived between them and the remaining stimuli that comprise the frame of reference.” (1994, p.456). However, this “principle” actually reveals very little, and may be redescribed simply as “entities that are seen as similar are more likely to be grouped together than those that are not.” This is an
entirely logical statement that reveals nothing of so-called “psychological principles of categorisation”. The meta-contrast principle can only be considered insightful compared to a notion of the social context as a fixed entity; even so, it simply redescribes the notion that the social context is not to be treated as simply given.

Thus, Turner et al’s formulation may be redescribed as expressing (once more) the apparently fundamental necessity of normative understanding for social action, and an assertion that entities considered as similar are more likely to be grouped together. Turner et al’s arguments may appear innovative in that there is an attempt to acknowledge constructionist notions such as the dynamic, context-dependent nature of social action, and that the notion of identity as some sort of stored mental entity is explicitly dismissed. However Turner et al do not appreciate the implications of their constructionist concerns. In this respect parallels may be drawn with Wagner’s attempt to explicitly acknowledge similar concerns with regard to social representations: both circumscribe their constructionist tendencies to accommodate their reliance upon a notion of shared group norms. For Turner et al, contradiction is apparent in the assertion that the variability of context is “reality based”, with reality taken to be understandable in terms of group norms. Turner et al’s argument that their formulation is not based upon normative consensus, because “conformity to roles and norms is an aspect of psychological group membership”, reveals a failure to grasp the nature of social phenomena common to social representations researchers also: the notion of group consensus is unquestioned and unassailable, so much so that the fundamental grounding of social representations and social identity theories in notions of normative consensus is not acknowledged.

It is precisely the unproblematic attribution of group norms by researchers that dramatically diminishes the scope for appreciating the complexities of the social context. As stated earlier, Tajfel argued that social psychological theories should account for the socio-historical features of social behaviour. However, theorisation of the relationship between the individual and the social context has not progressed beyond a notion of the shared acceptance of group norms. It is therefore ironic that Tajfel should have argued that “group behaviour - and even more so intergroup
behaviour - is displayed in situations in which we are not dealing with random collections of individuals who somehow come to act in unison because they all happen to be in a similar psychological state" (Tajfel, 1981, p.403), given that the social is conceived solely in terms of groups, which in turn are conceived solely on the basis of similar psychological states.

However, Turner et al do make an important point when they note that “self-categories are social representations of the individual-in-context” (1994, p.458). Indeed, given that categories, whether they are described as identities or not, refer to some notion of content, the content of social identities would appear to be readily describable as social representations. Jovchelovitch makes the point also, when stating that “social representations are a network of mediating social meanings which lends texture and material to the construction of identities” (1996, p.125). It is not apparent how social representations could be described as distinct from social identities, particularly since both concepts are based upon a shared acceptance of group norms: social representations are readily describable as referring to the contents of social identities; conversely, the content of a social identity is readily describable as a social representation.

Identity theories such as SIT and SCT may have appeared to provide a means for explaining significant social phenomena, such as inter-group conflict, in terms of psychological mechanisms; however it is not clear that they actually do so. As described earlier when considering social identity, the explanatory reliance upon a notion of self-esteem could only be justified if “identity needs” were the only relevant consideration. This may have appeared acceptable on the basis of the MGP, however in real world situations individual needs are not the only consideration; the failure to deal effectively with the notion of constraint, as described for example in notions such as compliance and domination, is a consequence of conferring a primacy to normative aspects that is characteristic of the social identity approach. Privileging the explanatory power of self-esteem is only justifiable given an acceptance that social phenomena are reducible to identity processes or principles. However, self-esteem is meaningful only in terms of how it is manifested in the understandings of those
involved; if it is necessary for those understandings to be investigated then the notion of self-esteem loses much of its explanatory significance and simply becomes one of number of considerations.

**Integrating social identity theory with social representations theory.**

Nevertheless, research in the social identity tradition has continued to treat identity processes or principles with explanatory significance and predictive power. This is the basis for Breakwell’s (1993) argument for an integration of social representations theory with Social-identity theory. Breakwell argues that researchers should attempt to understand how “intra-group dynamics and inter-group relations will direct the formation of any specific social representation.” (1993, p.180). The integration of social identity theory and social representations would enable this, as “(s)ocial identity theory makes direct predictions about behaviour”, for example “why a particular social representation takes the form that it does” (1993, p.181). Breakwell argues that Social identity theory would also benefit from such an integration: “(b)y addressing the issue of social representation, [Social identity theory] can provide a model of the broader role of identity processes in directing the social construction of what passes for reality” (1993, p.182).

The capability of Social identity theory to provide direct predictions of behaviour is also the basis for Breakwell’s claim that Social Identity theory and Social Representations theory reflect different paradigms. According to Breakwell, Moscovici “has rejected the need for formal definitions of the constructs he uses in the model, and avoids prediction on the basis of the model. Social-representation theory is
concerned largely with describing the content of representations, not with predicting what that content will be in any particular group context.” (1993, p.181).

On the basis of the arguments presented throughout this thesis, it should be apparent that Moscovici has not rejected formal definition and prediction as much as he has proved incapable of producing formal definition and prediction, given a persistent failure to fully appreciate the nature of the issues he is dealing with, and the consequent failure to resolve the many inconsistencies and contradictions in his formulation. Also, given the arguments of Turner et al (1994) and Jovchelovitch (1996) described earlier, that social identities and social representations refer to fundamentally the same phenomena, shared group understandings, the argument for an integration between Social Identity theory and Social Representations theory would appear to rest upon the possibility of prediction that Breakwell claims is provided by Social Identity theory.

It is not necessary to discuss the specific nature of Breakwell's interpretation of Social representations theory, it is sufficient to describe it as involving social representations as a type of collective belief, rather than dealing with social representations as a means to explain adherence to norms and thus resolving the "problem of order". This is apparent in the clear separation between subject and object, such that Breakwell's discussion is directed toward issues such as understanding the diffusion of a social representation within a group, and the relationship between a group and the object of representation. The problems inherent in such an interpretation have been described earlier, for example in the discussion of the work of Jovchelovitch. However, the basis for Breakwell's claim that Social Identity provides direct prediction of behaviour merits further discussion. The notion of prediction regarding social psychological explanation is an important issue that will be discussed in more detail later. For the present, it is sufficient to briefly describe Breakwell's claim regarding prediction.

Breakwell provides an example of such a prediction when discussing the salience of representations: "One fairly uncontentious prediction would be: the more significant the social representation is to the group, the more likely it will be that group membership will affect the individual’s involvement with the representation.” (1993,
However, it is not clear how a representation could be described as significant to a group if it did not affect members of that group: that group members will be involved with the representation is directly implied in the description of the representation as significant. Breakwell’s statement is not a prediction at all, the statement is necessarily true by virtue of the meaning of the constituent words. Breakwell does describe this prediction as “fairly uncontentious”, however it is not apparent that any other type of prediction is possible.

Breakwell provides further examples, including “(e)ven if a social representation is very salient to a group and thus to a social identity, it is unlikely to be used in a particular situation unless that social identity is seen to be relevant to the situation.” (1993, p.193). Even given Breakwell’s assertion that social representations and social identity are distinct, this statement provides little explanatory content: if a social identity is not seen as relevant to a situation then is not salient, and neither are associated social representations, which are therefore not used; conversely, if a social identity is very salient then it is relevant to a situation, and the associated social representation will be used. It is not clear how a social representation can be described as “very salient” when it is not relevant, its relevance is assured by virtue of it being “very salient”. Breakwell’s statement recalls the earlier discussion of Social identity theory in that Breakwell’s statement is only remarkable given an “objective” view of the situation, whereby the social representation is seen as objectively relevant, even if it is not so in a particular situation. As has been argued, a fundamental flaw of the social identity approach is the failure to develop a means for understanding the operation of “socio-historical factors” beyond an essentially unproblematic attribution of shared normative understandings to a group; in effect substituting the “objective” view of social identity theorists for the more individualistic notion of “objective”. If a social representation is not relevant to a situation, it is by definition not salient in that particular situation; that it may be “very salient” in other situations is unremarkable.

As mentioned above, the notion of prediction will be discussed more fully in the next section. For the present, it is enough to state that Social Identity theory does not provide adequate means for predicting behaviour. In discussing Tajfel’s initial
formulation it was shown that identity processes were mediated through the understandings of those under investigation. However, if those understandings were investigated, there was no need to privilege explanation in terms of the identity process. This argument is relevant to any notion of explanation or prediction of behaviour, however those identity processes may be conceptualised. The notion of prediction apparent with respect to identity processes, discussed here in relation to Breakwell, is not prediction at all; it is simply an expanded redescription of the constituent concepts; prediction or explanation would require, at the very least, some account to be taken of the situated understandings of those under investigation.

Thus an integration between social identity theory and Social representations theory would appear to be unnecessary. Both approaches ostensibly deal with social phenomena in the same way; that is, in terms of shared understandings, with the “group” exemplifying the social, and the individual as essentially synonymous with the group. The motivation behind an attempt at integration would appear to be a misconception of the nature of both social phenomena and of each respective approach.

Smedslund.

At this point, it is worthwhile referring to the arguments of Smedslund (1995). Smedslund examines the semantic constraint implicated in natural language categories as the means for understanding how individuals make sense of the world. Smedslund argues that all knowledge of the world, including knowledge about psychology, follows from the meanings of the words used by individuals: the meanings determine what can and cannot be said. In this way, the conceptualising of psychological
phenomena is heavily constrained by language: "It makes sense to say 'I want to eat that food because it tastes good', but it does not make sense to say 'I want to eat that food because it tastes bad'. In order to make sense of the latter statement, one has to add something, for example, 'I want to eat that food (which tastes bad), in order to demonstrate my superior willpower'. Note that constraints are encountered at every level. For example, it does not make sense to say 'I want to eat that food (which tastes bad) in order to demonstrate my weakness of will'. In order to make sense of this, one has to add yet another piece of context, and so on." (1995, p.197-8).

Smedslund argues that in its aspirations toward scientific status, psychology attempts to improve upon the "common sense" used by individuals, by empirically testing its assumptions and showing the extent to which they are true or false. However, Smedslund argues, researchers do not acknowledge the influence of the conceptual or meaning relationships between the words they use to construct their hypotheses: the common sense that individuals draw upon is embodied in the language that researchers draw upon. Smedslund claims that as a consequence, psychological research is "pseudoempirical", "that is, it tends to involve empirical studies of relationships which follow logically from the meanings of the concepts involved." (1995, p.196).

To illustrate Smedslund provides a further example, "A person at a given time, wants to achieve a goal, and has no other wants at that time. The person knows that there are two alternative acts, A1 and A2 leading to the goal. A1 and A2 require the same amount of effort and the person can perform them equally well, but the person believes that A1 is more likely than A2 to lead to the goal. No other beliefs of the person are involved. Given the above information, it is common sense to predict that the person will choose alternative A1 over alternative A2. It does not make sense with the given information, to predict that the person will choose alternative A2, or to predict that the person will refrain from doing anything. It can also be said about the example that if the person, nevertheless, chooses A2 over A1, then the information given must have been erroneous or incomplete. We cannot accept that people act senselessly. The preceding example illustrates how common sense is built into language and allows for psychological predictions." (1996, p.198).
Smedslund continues that what may be regarded as common sense is in fact semantically unavoidable rather than being based on shared experience, and is therefore not susceptible to empirical testing: "(f)ailures to predict do not weaken it and successes do not strengthen it" (1995, p.198). Smedslund argues that what makes a hypothesis plausible is the logical relationship that exists between the variables involved. Smedslund states that it is because psychological hypotheses are so overwhelmingly compelling that they are retained even in the face of disconfirming data. If this is the case, as shown in the above example, the procedures for testing the hypothesis may be seen as unreliable, such that a vital piece of "context" is seen as having been absent. Thus Smedslund claims, "the outcome is known in advance and empirical investigation is futile" (1995, p.199).

Smedslund continues: "The difficulty in practical prediction does not stem from ignorance of psychological laws, as hitherto thought, but from the lack of concrete information. You cannot predict what a particular person will do next because you don’t know the person and his or her subjective situation sufficiently well. The better you know the person and his or her situation, the more accurate are your predictions. There are no laws to be discovered." (1995, p.206). Thus, according to Smedslund, the role of empirical work lies in the investigation of local, specific conditions, not as a means for the discovery of laws. The only invariant principles are those that make sense because they follow from the meanings of the words involved and thus are not empirical.

It is not necessary for present purposes to dwell on Smedslund’s particular formulation. Briefly, Smedslund describes the inherently mutable nature of generalisations in the social sciences, as discussed earlier through Giddens’ notion of the double hermeneutic. However, Smedslund does appear to over-emphasise the constraining aspect of language, such that language is seen as static, immutable and entirely determining. Also, it is important to know what knowledge would be required of a particular situation to enable at least some degree of prediction. Nevertheless, Smedslund makes important points regarding the nature of, particularly social
psychological theorising, that are extremely relevant when considering the notions of social representation and social identity.

Final comments regarding social identity.

As was argued earlier, the notions of social identity and social categorisation provide little in the way of predictive capability. Regarding social identity theory, the notion of self-esteem may be sufficient to explain the MGP, but not to explain real-world situations, where there is more to consider than simply individual needs. It is the result of a normative over-emphasis, and the consequent failure to appreciate notions of constraint and domination, that individual needs should feature so prominently: social action is then understood in terms of "peer interaction". However, the notion of self-esteem is retained as a "compelling" notion (in Smedslund's sense), which results in the theoretical focus shifting to an explanation of the maintenance of self-esteem rather than inter-group conflict. An example of this was Skevington's (1981) study of hospital nurses, described earlier, where it was argued that attributes may be differentially significant to various groups: this may be redescribed as "different groups have different understandings".

As a further example of paucity of predictive capability, consider Tajfel and Turner's (1979) description of the strategies available to those in subordinate groups who cannot simply leave and join the dominant group. Tajfel and Turner argue that members of subordinate groups may either restrict their comparisons on the basis of groups, such that comparison is made only to groups of similar status (however conceptualised) and the outcome of these comparisons is more favourable to the in-group; restrict their comparisons on the basis of attribute, such that the importance of
dimensions on which the group may be regarded as inferior are derogated; or they may directly challenge and confront the dominant group's superiority, though for such "cognitive alternatives" to exist there must be some perception of instability of illegitimacy.

Tajfel and Turner's strategies may appear to provide the basis for analytic explanation, however they actually disclose very little. According to the strategies, members of subordinate groups may either accept their subordinate status or not. If they accept their subordinate status, they restrict their inter-group comparisons on the basis of group or attribute. However, given that inter-group comparison is described only in terms of those two dimensions, to say that group members may restrict their comparisons on either of these dimensions is not enlightening. If subjects reject their subordinate status, the dominant group's superiority must to some extent be seen as illegitimate, this is the logical implication of it being challenged. However, if subjects don't directly engage in challenge, and do not restrict their comparisons, it may be argued that a perception of instability was not sufficient to prove a cognitive alternative. This does not constitute prediction; it can be readily seen that every contingency is logically implicated, given the meanings of the terms involved. There is no need to resort to empirical investigation. The utility of such a framework for understanding inter-group relations is severely restricted as it is also logically implied that the individual need for self-esteem is an insufficient means for explanation, in that individuals are not simply free to join whichever group would most adequately serve those needs.

Similarly, Tajfel's (1978) notion of the functions of stereotypes, referred to by Breakwell (1993), can also be described as "pseudo-empirical". The functions Tajfel identifies, social causality, social justification, and social differentiation, are so broad as to, again, logically cover every contingency: every conceivable thought regarding social phenomena could be classified within these categories. Again, this does not constitute prediction, but a description of the logical implications of the meanings of the constituent theoretical terms, and as such are empirically irrefutable given an acceptance of the theoretical framework. The important point to make is that the
theoretical framework is not accepted on the basis of empirical validation, but due to the "compelling" nature of its concepts, as a means to explain social phenomena in terms of psychological mechanisms.

It is not clear that these compelling notions, however identity needs may be conceptualised, do actually refer to psychological mechanisms. As logical implications of the meaning relations between theoretical concepts, they are seen to refer to both individuals and groups. This may be argued to reflect the general shortcoming of normative approaches, in that the individual is treated as synonymous with the group, but is underlines the logical, "common-sensical" (in Smedslund's use of the term) nature of the formulations.

Conclusion

It was argued earlier that Moscovici did not demonstrate that social representations involved distinct psychological mechanisms; also that the processes of social representation, anchoring and objectification, were circular and disclosed little more than a general contention that new knowledge, information or beliefs are understood on the basis of existing knowledge, information or beliefs. The attempts to refine the notion of social representations discussed in this chapter do not provide grounds for altering these arguments. In light of Smedslund's comments it can be seen that social representations are "pseudo-empirical", based around the compelling notion that existing knowledge influences thought and behaviour.

Nevertheless, regardless of whether they refer to internal mechanisms or explanatory principles, the fact that a detailed knowledge of the particular social context is required
to assess how or whether these "compelling" notions may be manifested in a particular situation, severely limits their explanatory potential. This applies to whether these compelling notions are formulated in terms of social representations or social identity processes or principles: as described earlier, it is unnecessary to privilege explanation in terms of any of these notions. Furthermore, in each approach, the "social context" is understood solely in terms of group norms; given this conceptualisation, the attempt to link psychological processes to social phenomena may be seen as acceptable. However, as has been argued throughout this thesis, such a normative approach is fundamentally flawed.

The failure to appreciate these flaws, or to appreciate the nature of the issues involved in conceptualising actual social phenomena, is apparent in the persistent failure to recognise the consensual nature of their respective formulations, by either social identity or social representations theorists. This is shown for example in Turner et al's (1994) argument that their social categorisation approach was not based on consensus, because conformity to norms is seen in terms of social groups and not social roles, from a social identity perspective; or Wagner et al's acknowledgement of "the old problem of what is meant by consensus in social representation theory" (Wagner et al, 1995, p.347) in the case of the latter approach. It is apparent that a notion of consensus is considered to be a fundamental requisite for social interaction, there is no other means for explaining the relationship of the individual to the collective or social other than through the shared acceptance of group norms. This leads to the circularity in the attempts to explain the processes involved. The notion of consensus is so compelling, that it is not questioned. In the same way, other compelling notions are logically implied in the formulations, but not acknowledged; and are subsequently treated as empirical discoveries. In the cases of social representations and social identity, it may appear that these approaches are empirically supported, but empirically they are irrefutable.

The notion of social psychology as pseudo-empirical is reminiscent of Wilson's (1987) arguments regarding the use of mathematical models in the social sciences, discussed earlier in reference to Giddens and post-empiricism. Wilson argued that the value of
empirical work in social psychology was reliant upon the theorisation involved in the formulation of studies and in the explanation of findings. With regard to social representations and social identity theories, the theorisation is based upon an inadequate notion of normative consensus and circular arguments regarding logically related concepts.

There is little to guide substantive explanation beyond "compelling notions", such as that more similarity is to be expected within groups than between groups; and that new knowledge, information or beliefs are understood on the basis of existing knowledge, information or beliefs, in the case of social representations; or that group members tend to favour their own, in the case of social identity. These notions can very easily be described as "common-sensical" (in Smedslund's terms). This leads to substantive studies using these formulations providing little more than description and speculation. Furthermore, that speculation is largely ill-founded due to the assumptions of consensus, and the lack of a theoretical framework to understand social phenomena other than through putative psychological processes such as anchoring and objectification, or self-esteem.

It must be seen that the accumulation of empirical research will not lead to the refinement of social representations or social identity theories. This is a consequence of the contradiction and circularity inherent in the respective theoretical formulations, which enables apparently confirmatory research to be continually produced. However, whilst these theories have proved resistant to empirical refutation, they have also proved resistant to theoretical refinement. Despite considerable theoretical debate and empirical accumulation over many years, neither approach has fulfilled its initial promise and successfully linked psychological processes to social phenomena. That is due to the inherent limitations in the conceptualisation of the social in terms of internalised normative values, common to both approaches.
CHAPTER FIVE

THE NATION AND NATIONALISM.

Introduction.

The substantive issues of nationalism and national identification provide a means to consider the contribution of social psychological theories to an understanding of social phenomena. This is because the issues of nationalism and national identification have generated theoretical debate and reflection from throughout the social sciences. Such alternative approaches provide a wider perspective from which to consider the attempt to analyse such phenomena in terms of psychological processes, than would be afforded from within social psychology. As described in the previous chapter, it must be acknowledged that to some extent, social representations and social identity approaches would provide a similar substantive contribution: the content of a social identity category of nationalism is readily describable as a social representation of the nation and vice versa.

After introducing the concept of nationalism, functional approaches are considered. These are seen to provide little in the way of explanation, as demonstrated in earlier discussions of functionalism. Next the political aspect of national identification is explicitly considered. The arguments of Breuilly in particular demonstrate the necessity of acknowledging the dynamic and inherently political nature of nationalism as it is incorporated in systems of social (inter)action. It is precisely due to the dynamic and inherently political aspects of social phenomena in general that approaches that rely upon the internalisation of normative values have such difficulty accounting for. That is why explicit consideration of issues of social change make such shortcomings appear more obvious. Attempts from within social psychology to deal with national identification, by Billig, Hopkins and Reicher, and Condor are briefly
considered. They are seen to compare poorly with anthropological approaches to these issues, which are generally less reliant upon the internalisation of values. The shortcomings of a social psychological approach to national identification are further considered in an empirical study, which may be found in an Appendix to this thesis.

Nations and Nationalism.

Nations are often considered to be a natural feature of social existence and have been described as the most universal and legitimate political value of our time (Anderson, 1983). It is often accepted that there is commonality amongst members of a nation, a common consciousness or national identity. This is typically manifested as a congruence between a country's name, territory, citizens and political system that administers the country (Banks, 1993). Quotes such as the one below may be thought to be representative of such thinking: "The nation is a historically evolved, stable community of language, territory, economic life and psychological make-up manifested in a community of culture." (Stalin, 1912, as quoted by Hobsbawm, 1992, p.9).

However, Nairn (1988) has described nationalism as "Janus-faced", meaning that it embodies multiple meanings. Nationalism can manifest itself as an ideology oriented toward the left or right of the political spectrum; as oppositional or supportive of the status quo; and as expansionist or isolationist. Perhaps as a result of its multi-faceted nature it has been analysed from many perspectives, across many disciplines within the social sciences. For example, it has been theorised in terms of primordial group identities; local identity needs; individual identity needs; societal needs; class interests; sovereignty and citizenship rights; and political rationality.

Most writers on nationalism agree that the modern sense of nation is not older than the 18th century, developing first in Europe and then spreading around the world (e.g.
Mann, 1986; Giddens, 1985; Breuilly, 1992; Hobsbawm, 1992; Banks, 1993). Before this time there existed identifiable states which engaged in trade, commerce and war with each other, but there was no emphasis upon standardisation of culture beyond an allegiance to a monarch. As Banks (1993) points out, members of such states "...spoke different languages, had different 'cultures', and were often rigidly separated." The administrators, aristocrats and clerics had more in common with their counterparts in other states than they did with their subjects. In contrast, nationalism stresses a commonality between the rich and the poor, the urban and the rural and the capitalists and the property-less (Erikkson, 1993). The sole principle of political exclusion and inclusion is based on the national boundary, that category of people defined as members of the same cultural unit.

Gellner (1983) argues that nationalism arises from the perpetual innovation and social movement characteristic of industrial society. For Gellner, nationalism is "about entry to, participation in, identification with, a literate high culture which is co-extensive with an entire political unit and its total population." (1983, p.12). Processes of rapid change remove people from previously established roles and identities, thus cultural definitions based upon an established, or reified, high culture disseminated through mass education and the mass media, provide the means on which to base identities. The high culture may draw upon real or imaginary elements of "folk" culture, though any "invention" is concealed in order to appear "natural". The education system offers the potential of access to the high culture and the population becomes more culturally homogenous as socio-cultural barriers are blurred. Gellner adds that the major ideological difference between a nation and a pre-national grouping is that members are part of the nation directly, rather than through some subordinate grouping (such as kin-group, class or occupational group.) "Nationalist" thinkers simply describe the social conditions that give rise to nationalism.

While Gellner speaks of cultural homogeneity, Anderson (1983) refers to a sense of "simultanaiety", as the individual gains a sense of being part of a wider community. This feeling is fostered by the rise of literacy and the development of the mass media. However, Anderson’s most powerful contribution is to characterise the nation as an
"imagined community", whereby “even members of the smallest nation will never know most of their fellow members, meet them or even hear of them, yet in the minds of each lives the image of their communion.” (Anderson, 1983, p.15). It is through the mass media and the conjunction of general and specific issues, through sharing the experience of unknown others, that individuals gain a sense of being part of the imagined community of the nation. Anderson explains that it is through a combination of political legitimation and emotional power that the idea of nationhood derives its force. The strength of the concept is evident in that people are willing to die for their nation.

However Anderson identifies three paradoxes regarding nationalism: “1. The objective modernity of nations to the historian’s eye vs. their subjective antiquity in the eyes of nationalists. 2. The formal universality of nationality as a socio-cultural concept - in the modern world, everyone can, should, will “have” a nationality, as he or she “has” a gender - vs. the irremediable particularity of its concrete manifestations, such that, by definition, “Greek” nationality is sui generis. 3. The “political” power of nationalism vs. their philosophical poverty and even incoherence.” (Anderson, 1983, p.14; emphasis in original).

Thus, while nationalism may glorify an ancient tradition and stress its joint ownership by members of a nation, it does not thereby recreate that tradition. When practices are reified as symbols and appropriated as national traditions, their meaning changes. Nationalism reifies culture by treating it as a constant, definable entity. The creation of an authentic national culture involves the inventive use of history to create an impression of continuity, to reinforce its legitimacy. The construction is directed toward specific, present concerns. In this way national symbols can take on very different meanings in the modern context than they may originally have had. (See Hobsbawm and Ranger, 1983, for examples of the construction of traditions.) The nation-state draws much of its legitimacy from demonstrating to its population that it represents their particular interests as a cultural unit (Erikkson, 1993).
Functional explanations of Nationalism.

Many explanations of nationalism may be expressed in functional terms. For example those grounded in a Marxist or psychological orientation may explain nationalism as an instrument of class interest or as fulfilling identity needs, respectively. As Breuilly (1992) explains, the main functional account is in terms of modernisation, with nationalism providing simple, concrete labels for friends and enemies at a time of rapid change. As described earlier, the basic shortcoming of these types of explanation is that they actually set up a relationship that requires explanation rather than actually providing an explanation. With regard to nationalism, there are many functions that it could be said to serve in different situations. So, for example, to explain nationalism in terms of fulfilling a need for social solidarity, unless it is argued that social solidarity could not exist without nationalism, then it is necessary to explain how nationalism contributes to social solidarity. This would then constitute the explanation, which would not require formulation in terms of functions.

Psychologically-oriented approaches to nationalism, such as that of Gellner (1983) stress the importance of a special cultural group identity, which was always there, but may need to be recovered. The concern is how this common identity may be sustained or created as traditional authority is eroded. As Breuilly points out, a contrast is often drawn between the warm, intimate spontaneous relationships characteristic of traditional communities and the cold, distant, calculating relationships characteristic of modern, industrial societies.

For Marxist-oriented approaches, nationalism is a consequence of the uneven development of regions within the world-capitalist economy. For less developed societies, nationalism is used to mobilise the natural resource that is the population, politically. A common identity is created to support such action, though this is manipulated to serve class interests.

An obvious criticism of the psychologically-oriented and Marxist-oriented explanations is that they are empirically unsupported; they simply do not fit the facts (Breuilly,
Nationalism does not receive its strongest support from those groups thought to be most psychologically or materially damaged; neither is there a simple relationship between nationalism and economic exploitation or under-development. For example, nationalist movements such as the Quebecois in Canada or the Lombardy league in Italy represent powerful business interests, are predominantly supported by the middle-classes and the skilled, mobile working class. As described in earlier chapters, the positing of functional needs leads to a reduction of agency and a circularity of argument. For the psychologically-oriented explanations identity crisis is assumed, and nationalism is then seen as both an index of, and a response to, that crisis. Similarly for the Marxist-oriented approaches class interest both creates the problem and provides the answer. However, if the notion is not accepted in the first place, there is no “problem” and no need for an “answer”. Each type of explanation is wedded to a particular form of explanation, and the theoretical baggage proves too cumbersome.

The political aspects of nationalism.

As Hobsbawm explains, the desire for group identity is not in question, but nationalism is not the only possible expression. There is no agreed pattern of social, cultural and economic circumstance that can explain without exception why some groups have become nations and others have not: “We are trying to fit historically novel, emerging, changing, non-universal entities into a framework of permanence and universality.” (Hobsbawm, 1992, p.10).

Breuilly argues that many theorists of nationalism fail to appreciate its political rationality; that nationalism is invoked in a variety of ways for a variety of purposes. The success of a nationalism is not simply related to its power. For example the more weakly developed movements of the Ottoman empire achieved more than the stronger movements of the Habsburg empire. Similarly the nationalist movements of Germany
and Italy were more effective than the stronger Polish national movement. The development of nationalism is dependent on much more specific sets of conditions.

Industrial development and expansion, the development of mass literacy and communications technology, and greater geographical and social mobility all created the conditions for standard national cultures. However, the general condition for the emergence of nationalism was the incorporation of sections of society hitherto excluded, into political life. So, for example, much of the development of standard national cultures took place after the formation of nation-states in western Europe. Nationalism is one response to the distinction between state and society and is an attempt to discard that distinction. Nationalism is not the expression of nationality.

The defining of the nation state as the normative political unit by the most advanced and powerful states has had a global impact on political development, particularly through the legitimising of nationalist claims. In this way, regional or ethnic tension within states and border disputes would be expressed in nationalist terms. However, it is important to recognise that nationalist ideology can be seen as both a rationalisation of certain forms of political action and as an instrument of such action; thus it shapes and is shaped by the way in which political conflict is conducted.

Breuilly rejects the notion that cultural identity can be passed down through generations without being affected by, or having an effect on, politics, the economy and the social structure. He stresses the point made by Billig and others, that identities and values are preserved only through action. Nationalist ideology is not simply the product of political calculation but it is only in terms of political action that it is clearly related to objectives. National identity is related to existing cultural practices, but the decisions as to what is relevant and how it should be used rest with the state.

The appeal to cultural identity is often made to connect politics to significant social interests. Breuilly continues that nationalist rhetoric can easily be applied as the nation state is globally accepted as the normative political unit. Thus the proto-nationalisms of separatist movements in advanced, industrial societies are a blend of emotion and
pragmatism. Nationalism can be a major political asset. The "naturalness" of nation-state means that it can be drawn upon as a powerful resource to support political action through reference to a "national interest".

The difference between rhetoric and reality is often concealed through the intuitive link between cultural identity and self-determination. The implication is that the cultural group is a basic political unit, however there is no 'natural' basis to politics. New nationalist movements may seek to generate support by stressing the legitimacy of their particular claim. Political capital may be made by stressing distinctiveness in terms of name, territory, language, culture and/or race. Thus in the case of Ireland, appeals for self-determination by nationalists may appear intuitively plausible. However, there is no simple reason to assume that the island should be administered by a single political system that would abolish regional variation. Breuilly points out that the intuitive appeal of cultural identity accompanied by policies of self-interest by major powers, has been more significant in determining the outcome of particular nationalist movements than the capacity of the movement to co-ordinate political elites and mobilise popular support. Conversely the appeal to cultural identity makes it possible for administrations to deflect criticism by blaming internal conflict on ancient rivalries rather than defective policy.

An example of this is the collapse of the USSR. The subsequent applications to cede from the USSR have lead some to an explanation of the collapse emphasising the strength of national identities. However, Hobsbawm argues that changes in the Soviet system were not due to national tensions, but were due to the efforts of the Soviet regime to reform itself. This involved the withdrawal of military support from satellite regimes; an undermining of the central command and authority structure; and a subsequent undermining of the independent communist regimes in Balkan Europe. According to Hobsbawm, the USSR collapsed under economic difficulties, i.e. the failure of perestroika; nationalism was the beneficiary of these developments, not the cause.
As stated earlier, nationalism is one response to the relationship between the state and society; in other words between the administration and those administered. Breuilly reminds us that the liberal model of the sovereign, territorial state competing with other states in a global economic order based on a free market, and with a strong distinction between state and society, is itself an ideology. It does not fully describe reality. In the same way if there were cultural nations which, through self-determination, could overcome the distinction between state and society, then distinctive nationalist politics would continue to operate after it had achieved state power. However, nationalism takes two major forms: (1) strong states with market economies and a standard national culture. Here people identity with their state in situations of international conflict, but do not expect politics to be about national issues. (2) weaker states which cannot contain the bulk of the political community resulting in constant outbreaks of conflict. Stronger states may attempt to intervene and ensuing political conflict may be framed in nationalist terms, but it will be difficult to identify nationalism as a distinct type of political movement.

Breuilly concludes that nationalism is too broad a category to be used effectively. It is used to refer to consciously formulated ideas, unarticulated sentiments and purposeful actions. These are distinct phenomena which do not stand in any necessary relationship to one another. As a result arguments must remain at a general level, or be contradicted in numerous cases. This makes it difficult to move beyond generalisations. Breuilly would rather the term “nationalism” was restricted to politics, with analysis involving the comparative analysis of specific contexts.

National Identification.

Gellner and Anderson both stress the “constructed” nature of the nation; for each, nationalism is seen to precede nations. It is this constructed-ness and the potential for
further construction and elaboration that is implicated in the dynamic nature of national identity and serves to illustrate the shortcomings of social psychological identity theories, described in more detail in the last chapter. Social psychological identity theories tend to concern themselves with universal principles of identification. With regard to national identification, to maintain a positive self-identity members of a nation will tend to produce favourable stereotypes of themselves which emphasise the importance of attributes on which they may claim superiority; and unfavourable stereotypes of other, "competing" nationalities, downplaying the importance of attributes at which that group may excel (as described by Billig, 1995).

The critique of identity approaches presented earlier indicated the fundamental flaw to be their normative basis, manifesting itself as an unproblematic apprehension of normative understandings and the wider social reality. This line of argument may be connected to national identification by considering Tajfel’s assertion that a nation will exist only if a body of people feel themselves to be a nation (Tajfel, 1981, p.55). This is a specific example of the more general claim that groups only exist if members identify themselves with the group (Billig, 1995, p.78). This more general claim is based upon self-identification and appears particularly problematic in the case of nationalism where the ascription of identity can be seen more tangibly. As shown earlier, identity theories cannot deal adequately with the ascription of identity.

Discourse oriented researchers such as Billig are more concerned with the content of national identity. Billig deals with the apparent surge and decline in the strength of national identification through his notion of “banal nationalism”. Billig contends national identity is constantly flagged in routine activities implicating both what the nation “is” and what it “isn’t”. Billig points out that even though explicit recognition of nationalism is usually reserved for particular ceremonial or ritualistic practices, if national identity were simply an individual concern there would be far more forgetting.

"The apparently latent identity is maintained within the daily life of inhabited nations. The ‘salient situation’ does not suddenly occur, as if out of nothing, for it is part of a wider rhythm of banal life in the world of nations. What this means is that national
identity is more than an inner psychological state or an individual self-definition: it is a form of life, which is daily lived in the world of nation-states.” (Billig, 1995, p.69).

Billig suggests that the psychological study of nationalism should involve the collection of common-sense assumptions and ways of talking in which national identity is 'flagged up'. This data could then be used to construct taxonomies where “different genres and their customary rhetorical strategies” could be listed. This would allow the extent of flagging in different domains and in different nations to be classified and calculated.

The call to construct taxonomies echoes similar suggestions from those working from a Discourse-analytic perspective and those from a Social Representations perspective. As discussed earlier, the collection of data will not simply result in an improved understanding of phenomena. A taxonomic approach relies upon an unproblematic observation of phenomena to allow reliable classification. It is not obvious how the dynamic nature of national identification will be captured through placement in a taxonomy. This is not to say that a taxonomic approach is of no use, but it is not viable as an end-point to research.

Similar problems are found in the work of Hopkins and Reicher (1996). Their paper on the negotiation of national categories describes instances where the meanings of national categories are contested in the context of political debates. Like Billig they include a review of identity theories, but no link is made between these and their empirical work which remains at a descriptive level. This is perhaps not surprising given that identity theories are founded on an internalisation of normative understandings while Hopkins and Reicher emphasise the negotiated and contingent nature of such understandings. The data they present are interesting, and demonstrate the constructed nature of social categories, but once one is convinced of the constructed-ness there is little more to be done other than express once again the vague expectation of future refinement of existing theories.
Condor (1996) similarly expresses the inability to incorporate various relevant issues when attempting to deal with national identification, "A comprehensive analysis of national identity would have to take account of complex contextual variation. This would include variation due to the social location of individual subjects (in concrete social networks, family structures); geographical, historical and ideological variations in the significance and meaning of national identity, and the intersections of national identities with gender, generational, ethnic and class identities. Such analyses would have to consider context-specific norms in the expression of national identity and contextual variations in salience. A full analysis of national self-identity would have to take account of the various ways in which identity may be symbolized (visually as well as verbally), and the possibility that, for the individual subject, national self-identification may exist at various levels of consciousness...... However, it is beyond the scope of a single chapter to engage fully with the subtleties of national identification. Rather I shall confine myself to discussing (as is usual amongst social psychologists) a set of data drawn from a few rather specific research contexts." (Condor, 1996, p. 66).

It is not clear how all of these considerations could be incorporated into a coherent notion of national identification; however, it is clear that Condor does not have the answer. Condor’s statement is particularly noteworthy as it illustrates clearly that simply stating an awareness of relevant issues is inadequate, if such issues cannot be integrated theoretically. The failure to effectively incorporate such concerns into a coherent theoretical formulation is directly comparable to the similar shortcomings of Moscovici, Tajfel and Turner in this regard.
Anthropological approaches to nationalism.

The issue of identification is also explored in anthropological literature. Here nationalism is usually related to the concept of ethnicity, though for the present purpose, ethnicity may be thought of as a type of group identification. The anthropological approaches generally show a greater degree of cultural awareness than those of social psychology, drawing widely on different cases of nationalism to investigate the nature of group identification. They may be helped by not having to accommodate their analyses within (flawed) abstract theoretical schemes such as SIT or SRT. Anthropological studies of nationalism are of great relevance to the study of nationalism and national identification.

Smith (1986) states that while modern nationalism is dependent on certain social circumstances, it ultimately derives from the cultural homogeneity of the ethnic community. Smith introduces the concept of “ethnies”, defined in terms of a collective name; a common myth of descent; a shared history; a distinctive shared culture; an association with specific territory; and a sense of solidarity, to explain this commonality (Smith, 1986, p.21-2). The ethnie is transmitted throughout communities and across generations through a “core” of myths, memories, values and symbols; a “myth-symbol complex”. However, Smith does not see the ethnie as some sort of cultural universal present in all contexts, but for the purposes of nation-formation, “it is vital to create and crystallise ethnic components”. Smith’s arguments seem to have much in common with a social psychological type of approach in that the continuity of the group implies an unproblematic transmission of the ethnie. This is related to an emphasis on self-identification at the expense of the possibility of ascription of ethnic identity.

Ardener (1989) examines the relationship between self-identification and ascription through the concept of “taxonomic space” (p.69-70). Ardener uses this concept to highlight the relational and contingent nature of classification. An awareness of how political and social factors are implicated in classification leads to the concept of “hollow categories”: “ethnic groups” that are needed by other “ethnic groups” for classificatory purposes. Thus while an identity may exist, its membership and cultural
contents are subject to change in response to "out-group" concerns. In this way the majority identity, taken to be an expression of the nation, can create a minority identity within the 'taxonomic space' of certain classifications (Banks, 1993). Ardener suggests that "Norman", "Jew", "Gypsy" and "Irishman" are each examples of hollow categories (p.70). However, Ardener does assert that ethnicities must be viewed from the "inside", now matter how tenuous their claims in objective terms.

Chapman (1978) discusses Gaelic identity as a hollow category, "symbolically appropriated" by Scottish and English society and then re-appropriated and elaborated through the self-conscious efforts of the "Gaels" themselves (p.262). He argues that the Gaels and other Celtic, but generally more peripheral, groupings were originally identified as oppositional categories to the emerging state nationalisms of Britain and France. A romantic notion of their "wildness" and "primitiveness" was elaborated through literature and served to highlight the civilised nature of the British and the French. Thus, Chapman argues, British national identity is really only concerned with 'English-ness', it is their values, their language and their institutions that are accepted and celebrated. Lowland Scots can be accommodated within this identity, but the "highlanders" and the "Gaels" are too different, and so are used through their opposition to define "British-ness" or "English-ness" (p.208-17). So, for Chapman, the nation's defining group is not simply another ethnic group, it is deliberately and self-consciously everything and nothing, its name is synonymous with the national name.

Similarly McDonald (1989) notes the importance of the national centre in the invention of the "Celts" (p.20). She argues that particularly in France, centralist tendencies on the part of the government have resulted in efforts to reinforce national unity that have actually served to enhance the Celtic movement by feeding into their self-identification as an oppressed minority. Thus through the self-conscious efforts of "young, middle-class proto-nationalists", an ethnic identity may be reified into a minority nationalist identity (p.21).
Chapman also notes how the oppositional pairing of Gaelic vs. English with regard to language has come to mean Scottish vs. English identity via a presumed correspondence between language and race. He comments how strange it is that “a language not understood by 98 per cent of Scottish people ......and spoken by a people who have been regarded by their southern [Scottish] neighbours as barbarians, should now be regarded as the quintessence of Scottish culture.” (1978, p.12). McKechnie (1993) concurs that the whole of society participates in the creation of peripheral identities and that “images of otherness located at the peripheries have played a definitional role for centres of power in Europe down the centuries.” (p.118).

Cohen’s (1982, 1985) anthropological studies of rural communities in Britain stand in some opposition to the anthropological work discussed so far. For Cohen, there is no national culture but many diverse, local cultures founded on a sense of belonging. The nation is seen as a vague impersonal force that imposes itself on local communities and demands linguistic and other forms of homogeneity (Banks, 1993). This is contrary to Anderson’s claim that it is the very impersonality and transcendence of national identities that makes them powerful. Cohen argues that the symbols and institutions of the nation are only powerful to the extent that they can be imbued with local significance and meaning.

For Cohen these communities are self-aware social formations that subordinate their complexity “within shared and relatively simple forms for the purpose of ....interaction with the outside.” (1985, p.107). An important point Cohen makes is that although these communities may appear to share common features such as access to “British culture” of “soap operas, newspapers and politicians' rhetoric”, mass media and even words and actions are invested with locally specific meaning. In this way the boundary between “us” and “them” may be invisible to the outsider who invests such media, words and actions with what they assume to be universally shared meanings. This can easily be overlooked by assuming that the use of common symbols necessarily entails a common interpretation (1986, p.2).
Cohen argues that people assert community, whether as locality or ethnicity, when they recognise it as the most adequate expression of their whole selves. For example, Cohen states that the participation of Whalsey fishermen in a blockade of Lerwick harbour was not the focal point in the construction of a Whalsey identity; the Whalsey identity had been there all along. The creation and manipulation of the external boundary does not require a specific external threat.

Cohen's work can be criticised for assuming local identity to be more authentic than any other. Any social grouping based on more than face-to-face interaction is to some extent imagined, so it is not clear whether the community level should automatically be privileged. Also, there is a presumption of the continuity of the local community in a similar way to Smith, thus the possibility that identities may have been ascribed before being appropriated, as described by Chapman and McDonald, is not considered. However by arguing that people may refer to and manipulate the same symbol under the misapprehension that others refer to it in the same way, Cohen's analysis connects to theoretical arguments regarding the problematic nature of observation discussed earlier.

In the present context, it is enough to state that by explicitly acknowledging the implications of ascription and reappropriation of identity and variability in the interpretation of common symbols, the anthropological studies highlight the inherently political nature of identification, through the manipulation of identities and the pursuit of objectives. This shows the necessity for a more contingent, and thereby dynamic, view of national identification and its implications. It is not simply a question of whether Anderson or Cohen is correct regarding the strength of national symbols. It should be clear that a definitive answer is not to be expected. What is of interest is understanding how national identities may be mobilised to achieve particular ends.

It is this political nature of identification that prompts Erikkson to compare and contrast "nationalism" and "ethnicity" (1993, p.109). Both concepts are based upon a metaphorical kinship, such as common ancestry or ties to the mother or fatherland; and both are constituted in relation to others in the ways described earlier. However,
nationalist movements incorporate a claim to political self-determination that is not a feature of ethnic groupings. So, for example in McDonald’s work on the “hollow category” of Celt, the pursuit of political self-determination galvanises an ill-defined ethnic identity into a political proto-nationalist movement. However, groups such as Irish-Americans and Italian-Americans may pursue particular concerns, but they do not demand state control or wish to cede from the United States of America to form a new state. He concludes that theories of group or “ethnic” identity cannot explain the emergence of nationalist movements without reference to the state.

Conclusion.

Breuilly’s arguments emphasise the political rationality of nationalism. It is through action that nationalism becomes specific, as nationalist arguments are used to achieve particular ends, and shape and are shaped by political opposition. That is why national identity and its implications are dynamic. This relates to theoretical arguments in the previous chapters where the inherently political and contingent nature of social identification, and social interaction more generally, were examined. There it was seen that assuming the internalisation of normative values was problematic, and theories based upon such assumptions were correspondingly limited. Social psychological theories such as those associated with social representations and social identity were identified as being based upon such assumptions and their limitations discussed.

By considering nationalism and national identity the limitations of such theories are more readily apparent. Nationalism may appear more obviously political (as seen in the necessity to account for political opposition) but consideration of the political aspect of (inter)action is fundamental to any type of social identification. Similarly, just as any conception of “primordial identity” was seen as particularly flawed when dealing with national identities, so an internalised conception of identity more generally
is seen as theoretically problematic. A more adequate conceptualisation of social phenomena requires a more sophisticated treatment of agency, such as the recursive model of structured action proposed by Giddens, and a corresponding acknowledgement of the implications of such a treatment for the observation of social phenomena.

I would argue on the basis of arguments presented within this thesis that the source of these difficulties is a failure to move beyond a conceptualisation of the social that relies upon the internalisation of normative values, and a corresponding failure to acknowledge the implications for the observation of social phenomena.
CONCLUSION

The theory of social representations has generated much theoretical debate and empirical research within social psychology since its initial formulation by Moscovici. The major significance of social representations theory is that in seeking to investigate social phenomena in terms of psychological mechanisms, it attempts to deal with "the problem of order"; that is, how social order is possible given the diversity of individual wills. The development of the theory was strongly influenced by a series of critical exchanges that followed shortly after its introduction. These exchanges were examined in order to evaluate Moscovici's treatment of the formidably complex issues implicated in the notion of social representations: these are no less than the relationship between the individual and the social; and the logic of social scientific enquiry.

It is argued that Moscovici does not deal adequately with these issues, and despite claims to the contrary, his formulation does not constitute a departure from the normative functionalist theories of Durkheim and Parsons. The fundamental failing is the explanation of the relationship between the individual and the social in terms of normative consensus. The adherence to consensual norms is dealt with through the internalisation of normative values, such that social causation and social constraint are effectively treated as synonymous. This leads to circular arguments concerning the processes of, and distinctiveness of, social representations, as attempts are made to reconcile the acknowledged notion of individual variation with the inherent assumption of consensus.

The tautological nature of social representations formulations leads to difficulties regarding the second of the complex issues, that of the nature of social scientific investigation. The notion of consensus is assumed, thus social representations are treated as axiomatic. Furthermore, as social representations are not convincingly linked to individuals, they are seen to be autonomous in some respects. This lends credibility to the notion that social representations may be unproblematically observed
since the representation is taken to be "out there" in the public domain. As a result, constructionist concerns are not adequately reflected and empirical research tends to constitute little more than the description of collective beliefs regarding particular objects.

An important issue regarding the notion of social representations is that in appearing to acknowledge both objective, realist concerns and subjective, constructionist concerns, the impression may be given that social representations theory represents some kind of theoretical breakthrough that it has yet to reveal its full potential. However, a more sophisticated awareness of the issues involved, and of the work of Moscovici's theoretical antecedents, forces a reassessment of the distinctiveness of Moscovici's contribution. Social representations are readily identifiable as a version of normative functionalism, and share many of the fundamental shortcomings found in the work of Durkheim and Parsons. The reliance upon normative consensus is shown to be especially problematic when attempting to deal with social conflict, and social change more generally. Moscovici's theory may appear to promise more than it can deliver as a consequence of the contradictory positions Moscovici takes when describing social representations. Moscovici has continually failed to resolve this confusion; on the contrary, Moscovici has tended to further exacerbate such confusion.

Giddens provides a more sophisticated treatment of these fundamental issues: the relationship between the individual and the social, and the nature of social scientific investigation. The significance of Giddens' formulation is the dismantling of the dualities of objectivism and subjectivism with respect to both these fundamental issues. Through a clearly argued theoretical engagement with the issues involved, Giddens successfully incorporates an appreciation of the constraining and enabling aspects of social structure, and the contextual nature of empirical research. The deeply involved treatment of these issues warns against a simplistic expectation of certain knowledge with regard to social phenomena. However, Giddens endorsement of post-empiricism denies the counter-claim that to deal effectively with the interpretative element of any research enquiry necessitates a slide toward an untenable relativism. Giddens' notion
of structuration is best used to sensitise researchers to the nature of the issues involved in the formulation and interpretation of social scientific work.

It is seen that the theories of social representations and social identity are similarly based upon notions of normative consensus, and are fundamentally tautological in their formulation. However, due to the failure to appreciate the nature of social phenomena, and the unquestioned assumption of normative consensus as a fundamental requisite of social action and interaction, their inherent circularity is often not acknowledged. Consequently, empirical work simply redescribes these flawed, initial assumptions: when considering social phenomena, the salience of categories is assumed at the outset and then treated as though empirically independent. In order to provide convincing explanations of social phenomena, a detailed understanding of the social context is required; that understanding is inherently constrained due to the normative approach to social phenomena. As a result, it must be seen that refinement is not forthcoming simply on the basis of accumulating empirical data.

Attempts to explain social phenomena in terms of psychological mechanisms are inherently limited due to the failure to appreciate the involvement of power as a fundamental constituent of social action and interaction: explanations of social phenomena in terms of "peer interaction" are often inadequate. A consideration of nationalism and national identification clearly demonstrates the limitations of psychological approaches to social phenomena, and allows comparison to be made to other social scientific approaches. The inherently dynamic and political nature of national identification draws attention toward the inherently dynamic and political nature of all social identification (and thereby social interaction more generally), characteristics that normative theories find difficult to capture.

Thus it must be concluded, on the basis of the theories of social representations and social identity at least, that it has not been effectively demonstrated that social phenomena can be adequately explained in terms of psychological mechanisms.
REFERENCES


STUDY

Introduction

The aim of this study is to investigate national identification. This issue has been operationalised in a number of different ways within the social scientific literature, though perhaps the most common approach within social psychology has involved the direct questioning of subjects about their views as to what constitutes the national or cultural identity of their country or others' (for example, Condor, 1996). Such methods could more accurately be described as investigations of national stereotypes, or of collected beliefs regarding the nation. When considering the issue of national identification, it is relevant to investigate whether subjects characteristically think in terms of the nation, that is actually make use of some kind of national identification. The relevance or salience of the category should not simply be assumed. The term "national identification" is preferred to that of "national identity" because of the associations of the term "identity" with a fixed, internal construct; the term identification more clearly implies an active, ongoing process.

To avoid an assumption of the salience of national identification it is necessary to avoid direct questioning of the nation or national characteristics. Instead, the salience of national identification may be investigated with regard to a particular issue. In the present study it was decided that a suitable issue was the European Union, or EU. There were a number of reasons why the EU was considered suitable. Firstly, the EU has been the subject of much media attention, so subjects could be expected to have some understanding of it. Secondly, as a trans-national grouping, the EU been discussed in the mass media with reference to explicitly national-ist concerns such as sovereignty and international relations, thus it is to some extent relevant to the notion of national identification. Thirdly, the continuing integration of Europe through the expansion in size and powers of the EU, may be regarded as an example of ongoing social change; as discussed earlier, issues of social change are useful to draw attention
to the limitations of normative approaches; the assumption of shared norms and their salience becomes more obviously problematic.

The issue of salience is also relevant when considering the EU, as well as when considering national identification. It could easily be assumed that the EU is to some extent, uniformly salient by virtue of its presence in the national mass media. However, the EU would be expected to impinge on people's lives most directly through the effects of its policies. These policies may have a differential effect on areas of the country, for example the EU ban on British beef in the wake of the BSE crisis, would be expected to be most strongly felt in rural areas dependent on cattle farming; similarly the Common Fisheries Policy with regard to coastal regions where fishing is a major concern. Percentage turnout in European Parliamentary (EP) elections may be seen as an index of the relevance of the EU. Even though percentage turnout in EP elections is lower than that in British Parliamentary (BP) elections, there is still considerable regional variation, indicating differential regional significance of the EU.

The incorporation of a notion of regional variation allows another means for investigating national identification. Critiques of the notion of national identity as an internal construct often contend that reference to the nation or national interests may be an important resource when attempting to gain support for a particular argument. On the basis of these arguments, it would be expected that the more salient the EU, the more use would be made of national identification as a resource by subjects as they explain their views concerning the EU. By gauging salience at a regional level, it is possible to draw a sample that is not restricted to a grouping for whom the EU is directly relevant, such as farmers or fishermen, for whom the presence of national identification may be more marked.

Nevertheless, it is important to gauge whether subjects have some knowledge of the EU, such that their responses are not simply artefacts of the research instrument. In effect, it is important that an assumption that national identification is salient is not simply replaced by an assumption that the EU is salient. With this in mind it was
decided to investigate whether there would be an effect if the EU were referred to either in consistently positive terms, or consistently negative terms. The effects of this framing could also be used to further investigate regional variation with regard to level of agreement with both positive and negative statements.

It was decided to sample subjects from two regions matched for voting turnout in the 1992 BP elections (this was the most recent election at the time of the study), but with very different rates of voting in the last EP elections (held in 1994.) The matching for voting in BP elections was crucial as this provided some measure of control for general political activity and awareness between the two regions, thus variation was more likely to reflect the differential relevance of the EU.

The regions chosen were Truro in Cornwall and Crosby in Merseyside. Turnout for BP elections was 82.3 % in Truro, and 82.5 % in Crosby; UK average was 77.7 %. Turnout for EP elections was 44.8 % in Truro, and 32 % in Crosby; UK average was 34.4 %. It can be seen that both areas showed above average turnout in BP elections; for EP elections Truro was well above the average, whereas Crosby was below. (Information was obtained from the Electoral Registration Officer from each area.)

Truro is close to many fishing communities, and the salience of the EU may be explained in part due to the media coverage surrounding the Common Fisheries Policy, which is often portrayed as being against the national interest. In contrast Crosby is not particularly associated with any EU related issues. It is important to emphasise that Truro itself is not a fishing community, though it may be expected that as a whole, people in the region may be less favourable toward the EU than those in Crosby.

A postal questionnaire was chosen as the research instrument to allow access to a large, randomly selected sample. Also, two versions of the questionnaire were produced, to allow the framing of the EU to be manipulated.
The aims of the study were to investigate how and whether the nation was drawn upon by subjects to explain their views concerning the EU; and to examine the effects of regional variation with regard to national identification and in attitudes toward the EU.

**Subjects**

A sample of 300 was randomly selected from each area using electoral role information. There were a total of 160 returns, 82 from Crosby and 78 from Truro. This was a response rate of 27%. All further mention of subjects will refer to the 160 subjects that returned questionnaires only.

The mean age of subjects was 53.4 years, and 55% were male and 45% female. Sixty per cent of subjects had been educated to secondary level, 40% had been to college or university. There were no significant differences between the samples on any of these subject variables.

**Design and Materials**

The study used a 2 x 2 quasi-experimental design. Subjects were randomly selected from two regions and were also randomly selected to receive one of two versions of the questionnaire.

The research instrument was a postal questionnaire. The survey used mainly likert-type scales, though effort was taken to minimise shaping of responses by inclusion of a "don’t know" response and a recognisably neutral response, e.g. "neither for nor against". There was also some provision for open-ended responses. Questions and statements were constructed to loosely correspond to Mann’s four dimensions of social power: the ideological, economic, military and political (or IEMP). Mann’s formulation was discussed earlier, however it is not necessary to pay it more than the briefest regard here. The IEMP dimensions were used heuristically in the construction of questions to provide a structured format to the questionnaire. No attempt was made to evaluate the correspondence of questions and statements to Mann’s formulation, as an assessment of Mann’s formulation was not the purpose of the study.
To consider national identity, direct reference to the nation or any national grouping was avoided. A question was constructed to correspond to each of the IEMP dimensions. Each question asked subjects to consider various effects the EU was having for people. The phrase "people" was used to allow respondents to frame the questions as they pleased. Also up to this point in the questionnaire no mention had been made of any national category. The idea was to provide an opportunity for any type of response to be made, via both a scaled response and an open-ended explanation for any effect the EU may be seen to be having.

Two versions of the questionnaire were produced. The difference between the versions was a section manipulating framing of the EU in either a consistently positive or consistently negative manner. This section consisted of a statement constructed on the basis of recent newspaper reports to correspond to each of the IEMP dimensions. In version 1 of the questionnaire the four statements were unfavourable toward the EU, in version 2 the four statements were positive. Each statement was followed by a number of questions, these questions were identical in each version of the questionnaire. First there was a check question to make sure that the statement was understood by the subject to be correctly favourable or unfavourable toward the EU; then a question referring to the subject's level of agreement with the statement; and then 3 further questions related to the statement, responses to which were the means to ascertain whether there had been a framing effect. (A copy of each version of the questionnaire may be found at the end of this Appendix.)
Results

Before considering any regional differences in responses, initial analysis considered whether people draw on the nation when explaining how they felt about the EU.

Open-Ended Responses

Subjects were asked to further supplement a scaled response to a question regarding possible effects of the EU, loosely based around each of the IEMP dimensions.

Table 1: Response rate for comment on open-ended questions.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Dimension</th>
<th>Rate of Response (%)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Economic</td>
<td>75.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Military</td>
<td>66.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Political</td>
<td>76.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ideological</td>
<td>75.0</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The rate of response was high, ranging from 66.1% to 76.2%

For the open-ended questions, responses were coded on the basis of whether the respondent was considered to be drawing on some kind of national identification or not. If any explicit mention was made of "England" or "Britain", this was taken as evidence of drawing on the nation. Also, if any reference were made to non-specified collectivities such as "us", "we" or "them", in the absence of any further elaboration regarding grouping, such as for instance occupational or regional, this was also taken as evidence of drawing on the nation. So, for example, a response such as

"It is stabilising prices across countries to a level where less developed economies are gaining fairer rewards for their efforts."

would be coded as not drawing on any kind of national identification; whereas a response such as

"We seem to be paying more to look after others."
would be coded as drawing on some kind of national identification. Responses were coded by two judges independently and a small number of conflicting cases were discussed and resolved. Initial inter judge reliability was 79%.

Reference to Nation

The majority of the responses made reference to a collective or group. Where collective responses were made, these largely drew upon the national group. The descriptive statistics of responses for the following are reported:

a. non-collective / collective responses
b. number of collective responses referring to the nation

Table 2: Percentage of responses using non-collective or collective terms, and level of responses specifically using reference to National group.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Question</th>
<th>Valid responses</th>
<th>%age non-collective</th>
<th>%age collective</th>
<th>National group responses as %age of valid responses</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Economic</td>
<td>119</td>
<td>35.3</td>
<td>64.7</td>
<td>56.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Political</td>
<td>117</td>
<td>35.9</td>
<td>64.1</td>
<td>63.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Military</td>
<td>103</td>
<td>26.2</td>
<td>73.8</td>
<td>72.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ideological</td>
<td>116</td>
<td>29.3</td>
<td>70.7</td>
<td>66.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mean</td>
<td></td>
<td>31.7</td>
<td>68.3</td>
<td>64.7</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Whilst this would suggest that national identification is salient, further analysis of the nature of the national grouping responses (below) clarifies the exact use of nation.
**Nature of Reference to Nation**

The descriptive statistics above suggest that reference to nation is common in responses to questions concerning the EU. However, to clarify the nature of the reference to the nation or national grouping, responses were rated as either referring to the nation in an instrumental manner, or drawing on it as a group identity. Instrumental use of the national category refers to responses where a national grouping is mentioned but the subject does not appear to identify with the category. For example, a response such as

"The EU is making people a bit better off, because they are freeing up trade amongst member states."

makes reference to national groupings, but does not do so in a way that could be described as identifying with the national grouping. However, a response such as

"We have less say as regards our food, the seeds we sow in our gardens and how we name things."

would be described as drawing upon some form of national identification. In practice it was found that any other grouping apart from the nation was explicitly referred to, such as occupational or regional groupings.

To investigate how the nation was referred to, frequencies of national grouping statements as opposed to instrumental reference to Britain in relation to the EU were calculated.
Table 3: Frequencies of instrumental and group identity references to Nation, in open ended responses

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Question</th>
<th>Total Number of National Grouping Responses</th>
<th>Instrumental</th>
<th>Group Identity</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>N</td>
<td>%age of total</td>
<td>N</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Economic</td>
<td>67</td>
<td>35</td>
<td>52.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Political</td>
<td>74</td>
<td>39</td>
<td>52.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Military</td>
<td>75</td>
<td>51</td>
<td>68.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ideological</td>
<td>79</td>
<td>57</td>
<td>72.2</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Instrumental references to Britain were made more frequently than national/group identity references in all cases.

Statistical analysis compared differences between responses for all 4 questions individually to assess whether these differences were statistically significant. Chi square comparison between instrumental and group identity responses yielded the following results:
Table 4: Results of Chi-Square analysis of frequencies of instrumental and group identity responses

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Question</th>
<th>Chi-Square Value</th>
<th>df</th>
<th>Significance</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Economic</td>
<td>0.134</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>p = 0.714</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Political</td>
<td>0.216</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>p = 0.642</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Military</td>
<td>9.720</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>p = 0.002</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ideological</td>
<td>15.506</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>p &lt; 0.0005</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Whilst people did use collective references to the nation when expressing their opinion concerning the EU, these references more often instrumental in nature (significantly so in the cases of the military and ideological questions) in comparison with drawing on a notion of national group identity.

**Regional variations**

**EU-related activity**

There was a significant difference between areas for only one of the questions regarding EU-related activity. That was for the question “Do you think about the EU at all?”, where respondents from Truro reported doing so significantly more often than those from Crosby.
Table 5: Results of t-test analysis of Regional differences for question ‘Do you think of the EU at all?’

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Area</th>
<th>No. of cases</th>
<th>Mean</th>
<th>sd</th>
<th>t-value</th>
<th>Significance (two-tailed)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Crosby</td>
<td>80</td>
<td>2.89</td>
<td>0.94</td>
<td>2.01</td>
<td>0.046</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Truro</td>
<td>77</td>
<td>2.58</td>
<td>0.95</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

$t$-value (df 155) = 2.01, $p < 0.05$

Evaluation of the EU

There was a significant difference between areas on overall evaluation of the EU. Respondents from Truro evaluated the EU less favourably than those participants in Crosby.

Table 6: Results of t-test analysis of Regional differences for Evaluation of the EU.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Area</th>
<th>No. of cases</th>
<th>Mean</th>
<th>sd</th>
<th>t-value</th>
<th>Significance</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Crosby</td>
<td>74</td>
<td>2.49</td>
<td>0.93</td>
<td>-2.07</td>
<td>0.04</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Truro</td>
<td>73</td>
<td>2.84</td>
<td>1.11</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

$t$-value (df 145) = -2.07, $p < 0.05$

Voting Attitudes and Overall Views of the EU

There were no significant area differences for how strongly the overall view of EU is held, for attitudes toward the European Parliament (EP) or voting in EP elections nor for attitudes toward the British Parliament (BP) or voting in BP elections.
Effects of EU

There were significant differences between areas when considering possible effects the EU may be having. There were four questions corresponding to each of Mann’s sources of social power; significant regional differences were found on three. Also it is worth pointing out that these questions provided the scaled response which subjects were asked to supplement through the open-ended response discussed earlier.

1) Economic

Respondents from Truro felt the EU was making “people” more well off to a greater extent than those in Crosby.

Table 7: Analysis by t-test of regional differences to economic issue question.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Area</th>
<th>No. of cases</th>
<th>Mean</th>
<th>sd</th>
<th>t-value</th>
<th>Significance</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Crosby</td>
<td>80</td>
<td>2.89</td>
<td>1.03</td>
<td>2.01</td>
<td>0.05</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Truro</td>
<td>77</td>
<td>2.58</td>
<td>1.15</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

t-value (df 155) = 0.02, p < 0.05

2) Military (interpreted in this instance in terms of state approved authority.)

No significant regional difference in opinions about how the EU may be making it more difficult to maintain law and order or less difficult.

Table 8: Analysis by t-test of regional differences to military issue question.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Area</th>
<th>No. of cases</th>
<th>Mean</th>
<th>sd</th>
<th>t-value</th>
<th>Significance</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Crosby</td>
<td>69</td>
<td>3.26</td>
<td>1.18</td>
<td>1.01</td>
<td>0.32</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Truro</td>
<td>64</td>
<td>3.06</td>
<td>1.10</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

t-value (df 131) = 1.01, p > 0.05 (not significant)
3) Political

Respondents from Truro felt that the EU gave people less say in how things are decided to a significantly greater extent to those respondents in Crosby.

Table 9: Analysis by t-test of regional differences to political issue question.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Area</th>
<th>No. of cases</th>
<th>Mean</th>
<th>sd</th>
<th>t-value</th>
<th>Significance</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Crosby</td>
<td>70</td>
<td>3.51</td>
<td>1.31</td>
<td>-2.12</td>
<td>0.04</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Truro</td>
<td>73</td>
<td>4.00</td>
<td>1.21</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

t-value (df 141) = -2.12, p < 0.05

4) Ideological

Respondents from Truro felt that the EU is leading to less co-operation between people to a significantly greater extent than those in Crosby.

Table 10: Analysis by t-test of regional differences to ideological issue question.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Area</th>
<th>No. of cases</th>
<th>Mean</th>
<th>sd</th>
<th>t-value</th>
<th>Significance</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Crosby</td>
<td>73</td>
<td>2.70</td>
<td>1.24</td>
<td>-2.12</td>
<td>0.04</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Truro</td>
<td>69</td>
<td>3.20</td>
<td>1.35</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

t-value (df 140) = -2.12, p < 0.05

Regional variation in Open-Ended Responses

The following analysis considers whether there was any regional variation in

i) the use of the Nation in response to questions on the EU

ii) responses to the pro- and anti-EU framed questions
Variation in responses couched in terms of Nation.
Considering those open-ended responses couched in terms of Nation, analysis of the use of instrumental vs group reference of nation was performed to assess whether there was regional variation in the type of National group responses.

Group-wise (area) analysis of instrumental vs identity responses was performed applying ANOVA to data on non-collective and national grouping responses for each of the questions with the factor of area (Crosby / Truro). There were no significant effects of area on the types of references made to nation when respondents expressed their opinions of the EU.

Framing effects
Level of agreement
Regional differences in level of agreement with the pro and anti-EU statements were investigated using ANOVA procedures. Of main interest were significant area effects and interaction effects between area and frame. Significant main effects by frame would indicate a difference between the pro-EU and anti-EU statements, but it is not clear how equally matched each pair of pro and anti-EU statements were; thus main effects by frame are of less interest.

Considering the question of agreement with the statements, a 2 (area) x 2 (framing) ANOVA was applied.

Table 11: Summary of results for ANOVA (area/framing) analysis of questions 4 to 7.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Question</th>
<th>Effect of Area (Crosby/Truro)</th>
<th>Effect of Framing (Anti EU / Pro EU)</th>
<th>Interaction Effect</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Economic</td>
<td>No significant effect</td>
<td>No significant effect</td>
<td>No significant effect</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Military</td>
<td>No significant effect</td>
<td>p = 0.012</td>
<td>No significant effect</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Political</td>
<td>No significant effect</td>
<td>No significant effect</td>
<td>p = 0.016</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ideological</td>
<td>No significant effect</td>
<td>p = 0.003</td>
<td>p = 0.04</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
The following Figures 1 to 4 illustrate the data for each of the statements:

Figure 1: Measures of level of agreement with statement (1=strongly agree, 5=strongly disagree) under conditions of Anti- or Pro-EU framing, for economic issue.
Figure 2: Measures of level of agreement with statement (1=strongly agree, 5=strongly disagree) under conditions of Anti- or Pro-EU framing, for military issue.

Figure 3: Measures of level of agreement with statement (1=strongly agree, 5=strongly disagree) under conditions of Anti- or Pro-EU framing, for political issue.
Figure 4: Measures of level of agreement with statement (1=strongly agree, 5=strongly disagree) under conditions of Anti- or Pro-EU framing for ideological issue.

There were significant interaction effects when considering level of agreement with the statements. These were in the expected direction, and were present for the ideological statements ($p = 0.04$, $df=1$, $F=4.305$) and political statements ($p = 0.016$, $df=1$, $F=6.03$), though not for the economic and military statements.

There was also a main effect of frame for level of agreement with the military ($p = 0.012$, $df=1$, $F=6.503$) and ideological statements ($p = 0.003$, $df=1$, $F=9.227$).

There were no significant regional differences.

Subsequent Questions
Framing effects regarding responses to questions following the framing statements were also investigated using ANOVA procedures. There were no significant effects. So, other than level of agreement, there were no significant effects associated with the framing of the ideological, economic, military or political statements.
Discussion

When considering the general area differences, perhaps the most important finding is that there are differences between the areas on overall evaluation of the EU. Respondents in Truro were more likely to see the EU as a bad thing rather than good. This is in line with pre-suppositions based on the press coverage associated with the Common Fisheries Policy, which was generally unfavourable toward the EU.

Also respondents from Truro thought about the EU more often than those from Crosby. However, there was no regional difference in terms of attitudes toward, and actual voting in, either BP or EP elections. This may appear strange given that initial selection of regions was in terms of differential rates of voting, though is explicable in terms of response bias. Those motivated to respond may have been more politically active or aware than those that did not. This result is actually quite useful as it removes political activity or awareness as a possible explanation for differences between subjects that responded from the two areas.

The significant differences between areas when considering possible effects of the EU are also of interest. For the political and the ideological questions, the Truro respondents saw the EU as being less beneficial (leading to people having less say, and to less co-operation, respectively). However, for the economic question, the Truro respondents were more likely to see the EU as “making people more well off” than those from Crosby. On the basis of the generally less favourable attitudes shown by the Truro respondents, it would appear that the “people” that are being made more well off are not those that the respondents identify with.

As for the framing effects there were significant interactions between area and frame when considering level of agreement with statements based on ideological and political dimensions, though not for the economic and military dimensions. For the ideological and political dimensions, respondents from Truro showed more agreement with the anti-EU statement and less agreement for the pro-EU statement than those from Crosby to a significant extent. This is in line with expectations. However, the lack of
any effect of framing upon responses to the subsequent questions suggests that respondents have some knowledge of the EU, since responses were not affected simply by the presentation of the EU as either consistently positive or consistently negative.

As for the open responses, the response rate for each dimension was high, though no significant area differences were found. The finding that respondents, whilst often referring to nation in some respect, were more likely not to draw spontaneously on some aspect of national identification than they were to, is important. This is particularly so in light of the general assumption of the salience of national identification in the social psychological literature. It would have been very easy to question respondents directly about their national identities with regard to Europe; no doubt evidence could have been found for them. It would be very simple to assume such a salience, and allow this assumption to affect the formulation and interpretation of empirical research such that the assumption would appear to be supported. As such, this study was not concerned with examining in detail the content of subjects’ responses, but with a more general notion of how and whether they draw on the nation.

In the present study, it was found that when questioning respondents about a topic that is associated with national groupings, and to which they often respond by referring to national groupings, there is not conclusive support for a spontaneous national identification. Also, when questioning respondents from different regions which were found to differ significantly in how they thought of the EU, there were no regional differences in national identification. This result urges caution in assuming that the nation is necessarily drawn upon as a resource to support one’s arguments.
Conclusion

To conclude it would appear that even when considering a multi-national confederation such as the EU, national identification is not necessarily characteristic of people’s thinking. This is shown to be the case even when comparing areas that differ significantly in their attitudes toward the EU, and thus would appear to provide scope for national identification to be used as a resource to bolster one’s arguments. These results support the contention that salience of a particular category or identification should not simply be assumed.
Your views on the European Union (EU)

Instructions

We have tried to make the questions quick and easy to answer. Most of the questions have boxes for you to put a cross in. Please read all of the different ways to answer. Then cross the box that is closest to how you think or feel.

As an example, look at this question.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Overall, is the EU a good thing or a bad thing?</th>
<th>Very good</th>
<th>Good</th>
<th>Neither good nor bad</th>
<th>Bad</th>
<th>Very bad</th>
<th>Don't know</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>[Cross]</td>
<td>[Cross]</td>
<td>[X]</td>
<td>[Cross]</td>
<td>[Cross]</td>
<td>[Cross]</td>
<td>[Cross]</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

If you think the EU is "neither a good thing nor a bad thing", cross the box under that reply. This is shown in the example. Or if you think the EU is "very good", cross the box under that reply. In this way we can quickly get an idea of what you think.

Some of the questions give you more of a chance to write down what you think. With these questions, you can explain why you crossed one of the boxes. Remember there are no right or wrong answers. It's what you think or do that is important. Please answer all of the questions.

Some people are quite interested in the European Union, or EU, and follow any news about it. Other people find that they haven't the time or they aren't interested. Below are some things that people do. Please tell me how often you do any of them.

Q1

Think about the EU at all

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Very often</th>
<th>Often</th>
<th>Some times</th>
<th>Hardly ever</th>
<th>Never</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>[Cross]</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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</tbody>
</table>

Read about the EU in newspapers

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Very often</th>
<th>Often</th>
<th>Some times</th>
<th>Hardly ever</th>
<th>Never</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
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</table>

Talk about the EU with other people

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Very often</th>
<th>Often</th>
<th>Some times</th>
<th>Hardly ever</th>
<th>Never</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
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</tbody>
</table>

Contact public officials or politicians on matters related to the EU

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Very often</th>
<th>Often</th>
<th>Some times</th>
<th>Hardly ever</th>
<th>Never</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
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</tbody>
</table>

Q2 Overall, is the EU a good thing or a bad thing?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Very good</th>
<th>Good</th>
<th>Neither good nor bad</th>
<th>Bad</th>
<th>Very bad</th>
<th>Don't know</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>[Cross]</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Q3 How strongly do you hold this view?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Very strongly</th>
<th>Strongly</th>
<th>Neither strongly nor weakly</th>
<th>Quite weakly</th>
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<tr>
<td></td>
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</table>
The EU has been around for some time. Some people may think that it is having a big effect on things. Others may think that it is not having a big effect on things. Let me know what you think by answering the next set of questions. Each question has two parts. For the first part cross a box. For the second part you can write some more. Please answer both parts. If there is not enough room to write what you want, there is space on the last sheet of the questionnaire for you to carry on. If you do, please show which question you are answering.

Q4 Do you think the EU is making people more well off or less well off?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Much more</th>
<th>A bit more</th>
<th>Doesn't really make a difference</th>
<th>A bit less</th>
<th>Much less</th>
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</table>

How?

Q5 Do you think the EU is giving people more say in how things are decided or less say?

<table>
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<th>Much less</th>
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How?

Q6 Do you think the EU is making it more difficult to maintain law and order or less difficult?

<table>
<thead>
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<th>Much more</th>
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How?

Q7 Do you think the EU is leading to more co-operation between people or less co-operation?

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How?
You may sometimes read about the EU in newspapers. The EU may be connected to different things in different ways. Newspapers say things that you might agree with or disagree with. Below are four statements that have been written in newspapers. After each statement are some questions. Please read each statement and then answer the questions below.

**Statement 1**

*Britain gives more to the EU than it gets back. Britain is losing out.*

Q8 Do you think this statement is against the EU or for it?  
- Strongly against
- Against
- Neither for nor against
- For
- Strongly for
- Don't know

Q9 Do you agree with this statement?  
- Strongly agree
- Agree
- Neither agree nor disagree
- Disagree
- Strongly disagree
- Don't know

The following questions are about changes the EU may be making to the country.

Q10 Is the EU making it harder or easier to keep prices down?  
- Much harder
- A bit harder
- Doesn't really make a difference
- A bit easier
- Much easier
- Don't know

Q11 Is the EU making it harder or easier to protect jobs?  
- Much harder
- A bit harder
- Doesn't really make a difference
- A bit easier
- Much easier
- Don't know

Q12 Is the EU making it harder or easier for you to be better off?  
- Much harder
- A bit harder
- Doesn't really make a difference
- A bit easier
- Much easier
- Don't know

**Statement 2**

*This nation will never give up its right to control its own armed forces. Britain should protect its own interests wherever it decides.*

Q13 Do you think this statement is against the EU or for it?  
- Strongly against
- Against
- Neither for nor against
- For
- Strongly for
- Don't know

Q14 Do you agree with this statement?  
- Strongly agree
- Agree
- Neither agree nor disagree
- Disagree
- Strongly disagree
- Don't know
The following questions are about changes the EU may be making to the country.

Q15 Is the EU making it harder or easier for the country to have strong armed forces?

Q16 Is the EU making it harder or easier to stop armed conflict?

Q17 Is the EU making it harder or easier for you to feel safe and secure?

---

Statement 3

EU leaders want a say in deciding working conditions. British bosses say it should be up to workers and management to sort out details.

Q18 Do you think this statement is against the EU or for it?

Q19 Do you agree with this statement?

---

The following questions are about changes the EU may be making to the country.

Q20 Is the EU making it harder or easier for people to have a say in decisions at work?

Q21 Is the EU making it harder or easier for people to have a say in decisions of the government?

Q22 Is the EU making it harder or easier for you to have a say in these decisions?
Statement 4  The government should protect us from the threat of a European super-state.

Q23 Do you think this statement is against the EU or for it?  
Strongly against  Against  Neither for nor against  For  Strongly for  Don't know  
☐  ☐  ☐  ☐  ☐  ☐

Q24 Do you agree with this statement?  
Strongly agree  Agree  Neither agree nor disagree  Disagree  Strongly disagree  Don't know  
☐  ☐  ☐  ☐  ☐  ☐

The following questions are about changes the EU may be making to the country.

Q25 Is the EU making it harder or easier to work with other countries?  
Much harder  A bit harder  Doesn't really make a difference  A bit easier  Much easier  Don't know  
☐  ☐  ☐  ☐  ☐  ☐

Q26 Is the EU making it harder or easier for this country to be like other countries?  
☐  ☐  ☐  ☐  ☐  ☐

Q27 Is the EU making it harder or easier for you to be friendly and co-operative?  
☐  ☐  ☐  ☐  ☐  ☐

The next questions are about the European Parliament.

Q28 Do you think what goes on in the European Parliament is important to you?  
Very important  A bit important  Doesn't really make a difference  Not very important  Not at all important  Don't know  
☐  ☐  ☐  ☐  ☐  ☐

Q29 Do you think it is useful to vote in European Parliamentary elections?  
Very useful  A bit useful  Doesn't really make a difference  Not very useful  Not at all useful  Don't know  
☐  ☐  ☐  ☐  ☐  ☐

Q30 Did you vote in the last European Parliamentary elections?  
Yes  No  Don't know  
☐  ☐  ☐

Q31 Will you vote in the next European Parliamentary elections?  
Yes  No  Don't know  
☐  ☐  ☐
The next questions are about the British Parliament.

Q32 Do you think what goes on in the British Parliament is important to you?

- [ ] Very important
- [ ] A bit important
- [ ] Doesn't really make a difference
- [ ] Not very important
- [ ] Not at all important
- [ ] Don't know

Q33 Do you think it is useful to vote in British Parliamentary elections?

- [ ] Very useful
- [ ] A bit useful
- [ ] Doesn't really make a difference
- [ ] Not very useful
- [ ] Not at all useful
- [ ] Don't know

Q34 Did you vote in the last British Parliamentary elections?

- [ ] Yes
- [ ] No
- [ ] Don't know

Q35 Will you vote in the next British Parliamentary elections?

- [ ] Yes
- [ ] No
- [ ] Don't know

The last few questions are about you.

Q36 Have you travelled to another country in the last 12 months?

- [ ] Yes
- [ ] No
- [ ] Don't know

If yes, please say which countries and the purpose of your visit, for example "holiday", "shopping" or "business".

Q37 How old were you on your last birthday?

- [ ] Years

Q38 Are you male or female?

- [ ] Male
- [ ] Female

Q39 At what stage did you finish your education?

- [ ] Primary or Junior school
- [ ] Secondary or high school
- [ ] College or University

What is your occupation?

Please cross this box if you DO NOT wish to be included in the lottery syndicate.

Thank you for your help.

If you have any comments about the questions, please write them below.

Also, please use the space if you did not have enough room to write what you wanted to for questions 4, 5, 6 and 7.

Please return the questionnaire using the Freepost envelope provided. (You do not need a stamp.)
Your views on the European Union (EU)

Instructions

We have tried to make the questions quick and easy to answer. Most of the questions have boxes for you to put a cross in. Please read all of the different ways to answer. Then cross the box that is closest to how you think or feel.

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Q1

Think about the EU at all
Read about the EU in newspapers
Talk about the EU with other people
Contact public officials or politicians on matters related to the EU

Q2 Overall, is the EU a good thing or a bad thing? Very good

Q3 How strongly do you hold this view?

Very strongly
Strongly
Neither strongly nor weakly
Quite weakly
Very weakly
Don't know
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**Q4** Do you think the EU is making people more well off or less well off?  

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How?

**Q5** Do you think the EU is giving people more say in how things are decided or less say?  

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How?

**Q6** Do you think the EU is making it more difficult to maintain law and order or less difficult?  

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How?

**Q7** Do you think the EU is leading to more co-operation between people or less co-operation?  

<table>
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<tr>
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How?
You may sometimes read about the EU in newspapers. The EU may be connected to different things in different ways. Newspapers say things that you might agree with or disagree with. Below are four statements that have been written in newspapers. After each statement are some questions. Please read each statement and then answer the questions below.

**Statement 1**  
*When it comes to being well off, Britain is in 11th place in the EU. We cannot afford to stand alone and must co-operate to survive.*

Q8 Do you think this statement is against the EU or for it?  
- Strongly against
- Against
- Neither for nor against
- For
- Strongly for
- Don't know

Q9 Do you agree with this statement?  
- Strongly agree
- Agree
- Neither agree nor disagree
- Disagree
- Strongly disagree
- Don't know

The following questions are about changes the EU may be making to the country.

Q10 Is the EU making it harder or easier to keep prices down?  
- Much harder
- A bit harder
- Doesn't really make a difference
- A bit easier
- Much easier
- Don't know

Q11 Is the EU making it harder or easier to protect jobs?  
- Much harder
- A bit harder
- Doesn't really make a difference
- A bit easier
- Much easier
- Don't know

Q12 Is the EU making it harder or easier for you to be better off?  
- Much harder
- A bit harder
- Doesn't really make a difference
- A bit easier
- Much easier
- Don't know

**Statement 2**  
*There can be no doubt that a joint EU armed forces will be more effective than any provided by a single state or country.*

Q13 Do you think this statement is against the EU or for it?  
- Strongly against
- Against
- Neither for nor against
- For
- Strongly for
- Don't know

Q14 Do you agree with this statement?  
- Strongly agree
- Agree
- Neither agree nor disagree
- Disagree
- Strongly disagree
- Don't know

Survey: 26  
Serial: 16  
Page: 3
The following questions are about changes the EU may be making to the country.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Q15</th>
<th>Is the EU making it harder or easier for the country to have strong armed forces?</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Much harder</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>□</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Q16</th>
<th>Is the EU making it harder or easier to stop armed conflict?</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Much harder</td>
</tr>
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<td></td>
<td>□</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Q17</th>
<th>Is the EU making it harder or easier for you to feel safe and secure?</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Much harder</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>□</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

Statement 3  
EU leaders wish to increase co-operation between bosses and workers over key decisions by setting up work councils.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Q18</th>
<th>Do you think this statement is against the EU or for it?</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Strongly against</td>
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<tr>
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<td>□</td>
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</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Q19</th>
<th>Do you agree with this statement?</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Strongly agree</td>
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The following questions are about changes the EU may be making to the country.

<table>
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<tr>
<th>Q20</th>
<th>Is the EU making it harder or easier for people to have a say in decisions at work?</th>
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<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Q21</th>
<th>Is the EU making it harder or easier for people to have a say in decisions of the government?</th>
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<table>
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<tr>
<th>Q22</th>
<th>Is the EU making it harder or easier for you to have a say in these decisions?</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Much harder</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>□</td>
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</tbody>
</table>
### Statement 4

*With the EU working together, a more prosperous future for each country is a certainty.*

**Q23** Do you think this statement is against the EU or for it?  
- Strongly against
- Against
- Neither for nor against
- For
- Strongly for
- Don’t know

**Q24** Do you agree with this statement?  
- Strongly agree
- Agree
- Neither agree nor disagree
- Disagree
- Strongly disagree
- Don’t know

---

The following questions are about changes the EU may be making to the country.

**Q25** Is the EU making it harder or easier to work with other countries?  
- Much harder
- A bit harder
- Doesn’t really make a difference
- A bit easier
- Much easier
- Don’t know

**Q26** Is the EU making it harder or easier for this country to be like other countries?  
- Much harder
- A bit harder
- Doesn’t really make a difference
- A bit easier
- Much easier
- Don’t know

**Q27** Is the EU making it harder or easier for you to be friendly and co-operative?  
- Much harder
- A bit harder
- Doesn’t really make a difference
- A bit easier
- Much easier
- Don’t know

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The next questions are about the European Parliament.

**Q28** Do you think what goes on in the European Parliament is important to you?  
- Very important
- A bit important
- Doesn’t really make a difference
- Not very important
- Not at all important
- Don’t know

**Q29** Do you think it is useful to vote in European Parliamentary elections?  
- Very useful
- A bit useful
- Doesn’t really make a difference
- Not very useful
- Not at all useful
- Don’t know

**Q30** Did you vote in the last European Parliamentary elections?  
- Yes
- No
- Don’t know

**Q31** Will you vote in the next European Parliamentary elections?  
- Yes
- No
- Don’t know
The next questions are about the British Parliament.

Q32 Do you think what goes on in the British Parliament is important to you?

Very important  A bit important  Doesn't really make a difference  Not very important  Not at all important  Don't know

Q33 Do you think it is useful to vote in British Parliamentary elections?

Very useful  A bit useful  Doesn't really make a difference  Not very useful  Not at all useful  Don't know

Q34 Did you vote in the last British Parliamentary elections?

Yes  No  Don't know

Q35 Will you vote in the next British Parliamentary elections?

Yes  No  Don't know

The last few questions are about you.

Q36 Have you travelled to another country in the last 12 months?

Yes  No  Don't know

If yes, please say which countries and the purpose of your visit, for example "holiday", "shopping" or "business".

Q37 How old were you on your last birthday?

[ ] Years

Q38 Are you male or female?

Male  Female

Q39 At what stage did you finish your education?

Primary or Junior school  Secondary or high school  College or University

What is your occupation?
Please cross this box if you **DO NOT** wish to be included in the lottery syndicate.

Thank you for your help.

If you have any comments about the questions, please write them below.

Also, please use the space if you did not have enough room to write what you wanted to for questions 4, 5, 6 and 7.

Please return the questionnaire using the Freepost envelope provided. (You do not need a stamp.)