

Alternative Production of Knowledge and Social Representations
(Proceeding of the 9th International Conference on Social Representations)
Permanadeli, R., Jodelet, D., Sugiman, T., (Eds). (2012).
Jakarta: Graduate Program of European Studies-University of Indonesia.

Since its beginning, the Social Representation theory that was formulated by Serge Moscovici in 1961 was meant to break the boundary of Social Psychology which is purely inspired by the individualistic approach. This theory offers as well the integration between the social, individual, and cultural dimensions by emphasizing common sense and understandings of socially contextualized knowledge, which are to be translated into social communication tools as a frame to understand the social phenomenon in any place. Thus the theory of Social Representations bring a basic knowledge to understand the position of common people in coping with divers situation as it is called as “the lay thinking” which come from people’s perspective. For that purpose, history, culture, habit, linguistic practices and emotion that have been ignored from scientific knowledge in modern society, on the contrary are considered by the theory of Social Representations as the fundamental elements that build the structures of the people’s thinking and social logic as well.

The theory of Social Representations approach, therefore, is also viewed as an important source for the study of local knowledge and logical formulations related to a choice that is suitable to each cultural context in its complexity, including its epistemology and ontological status that develops along with it. The Social Representations approach also makes it possible to have a bargaining position to refuse the enforcement of a certain logic under the justification of universal thinking, which would eventually produce a principal single truth and the diversity of thought. Within this framework, then, Social Representations theory facilitates dialogues about knowledge in this global era, which eventually provide an intellectual space for respecting cultural differences. As a matter of fact, this theory has grown in both the aspect of theory as well as implementation mostly in Europe and South America. This book is aimed to introduce the theory of Social Representations to academic scene in Asia.

Certainly with the encounter of Asia with global trend, this theory will help to understand how Asian find their own way of transforming and progressing its “Asianity” since usually we tend only to use single lens coming from Western optic for explaining these phenomenon. The possibility of questioning the universal and local, therefore, bonds the Social Representations theory with the intellectual of Asia. The fact that this theory brings new perspective in social sciences, will likely change completely how we should perceive Asia in framing and integrating its development and its insertion to globalization. This will certainly change the frame of the program for social transformation in Asia which is usually done under the flag of Social Development as well.

By inviting the scholars working with this theory from Europe and South America, this book is the promising picture that illustrate the possibility of dialogue to embrace Asia in the existing forum.

Content of the book:

Part I: Denise Jodelet and Risa Permanadeli - The background of the 9th International Conference on Social Representations in Bali

Chapter 1: Denise Jodelet - The impact of the theory of Social Representations).

The introduction of the Social Representations theory in academic scene was in coherence with the context of social sciences movement post 68' student movement in Paris. She shows how the theory gave rise to innovative models and to studies using different methodologies (experimental, qualitative, and quantitative studies) to highlight the social and historical determination of the content and the structure of representations, and the dialectical relationship both between social relations and intergroup, and between practices and performances.

Chapter 2 : Risa Permanadeli - In search of Asia. Historical trajectory to re-discover Asia. A case of social psychology.

The need to emancipate the right to articulate Asia on its cultural platform, is one crucial point that pushes the need for Asian to establish their own approach to understand Asia. Permanadeli shows the map from which we can identify why such enthusiasm. She divides three academic zone that produce such movement, India, East Asia, South East Asia.

Chapter 3: Toshio Sugiman - Social Psychology in Asia from the view point of Social Representations.

He shows the boundaries of the theoretical assumption and methodological application from which the Social Psychology in Asia is ignoring its epistemological nature. By considering the peculiarity of Asian culture, he proposes the Social Representations theory as an alternative approach to understand Asia

Part two: Perspectives and Models of Approach to Social Representations Studies

Chapter 4: Serge Moscovici - The social representations of victims.

Moscovici invite us to pursue his reflection on the humanity which was the foundation of social sciences developed in Europe. By re-exposing himself on the iconic researches done in the field of social psychology and in the shadow of actual phenomenon that confront constantly human race to the exploration of the moral and ethical platform of thinking, he revisited his earlier study on the rapport between majority and minority, from which he reformulate the conflict by redefining the notion of repentances and sacrifices.

Chapter 5: Denise Jodelet - Social Representations study and the interlocution between knowledges in a globalized space.

Denise Jodelet explains the position of Social Representations theory in the actual map of social psychology currents. Under the nature of Social Representations theory to understand the complex phenomena, she shows how the phenomena of globalization embrace the social, cultural, cognitive, psychic, emotion and imaginary dimensions that allow the theory to develop

its heuristic nature to understand the social reality. It is in this perspective that she opens the discussion and invites the transcontinental exchange for this book.

Chapter 6: Saadi Lahlou - Innovation, Social Representations, and Technology.

Considering that the world is an “installation”, in the artistic way of assembling pattern, Saadi Lalou propose the Social Representations perspective as the instrument to change the social world based on his mentalist and experimental study using the Subcam-film. These approach invite us to see how this world, which is created in physical, mental and institutional dimensions, can be decrypted, de-installed and therefore directed to adapt with the need of contemporary society and to solve the actual problem.

Chapter 7: Jean-Claude Abric – A structural approach to Social Representations. Central core theory.

Jean-Claude Abric has introduced the structural perspective which allow us to see the dynamic of social representations from which we witness the unyielding relationship between the social and individual, the central core and the peripheral core, the past and the present. He insists his arguments on the fact that social representations have its structure and its organization. The organization of a social representation presents a specific characteristic since it is organized around a central core made up of one or several elements which gives the representation its meaning.

Chapter 8: Annamaria de Rosa – Is Barrack Obama Black or White enough, or Neither? and For How Long? Intriguing research question from the Social Representations perspective.

In the heat of Obama’s pre-presidential election phenomena that agitate the stereotyping and prejudice world of black and white, Annamaria de Rosa try to show the most dynamics aspect of the production of social representations in the world. She presents the vast discussion of Obama’s fever that can fit to understand the currents developed by the Social Representations theory, from central core approach that brought the discussion on the hegemonic power of the White, to narrative approach that led to religious issues.

Chapter 9: Angela Arruda – Transit of Knowledge: a View from Brazilian Literature.

Under the crisis of the social psychology in 70’s, where Brazil underwent a period of questioning and searching for new paths, the theory of Social Representations was introduced and attracted attention from Brazilian social psychologist. Angela Arruda shows how this theory brought new interest in symbolic and the conscience due to new theoretical frameworks allowing to renew objects of study, as well as the new studied populations that began to include usually marginalized or disadvantaged groups and segments that characterize the anthropological nature of Brazilian approach for this theory.

Part III: Social Representations and Historical Trajectory of Modern Social Sciences in Asia

Chapter 10: Ragini Sen – Divided societies: Macaulay’s Children and Intimate Enemy.

Colonialism in a way is also the tool that allows us to see how the construction of National identity and “other” are made possible under the sustained and strengthened mechanism of power, as much by cultural technologies of rule to domesticate the natives. Ragini Sen present the complexity of historical legacy of colonialism in confrontation with indigenous aspiration of being India and being “West” at the same time as the embodiment of Macaulay’s syndrome which represent the bi-personality of modern India.

Chapter 11: Christina J. Montiel and Marshaley J. Baquiano – Colonial Representations in Philippine Society.

In this chapter, Christina Montiel and Marshaley J. Baquiano showed how the language can be used as the instruments for producing the social representations. The politic of language by Spanish to introduce the Catholicism by immersing them to local language, and on the contrary English as mandatory language during the American occupation to incite the Filipino to conform to American thoughts, both continuously maintain the colonial legacy and produce the social representations of West domination.

Chapter 12: Risa Permanadeli – Indonesia and its Modern History of Knowledge Production. Colonialism and its Social Representations.

The long domination of colonial power does not necessarily shift the existing structure that already present before the coming of Europeans although the colonialism represent unavoidably transition of power to the foreign occupation which was the result of the power of superior arms, military organization, political power which is in general aimed to gain mainly the economic wealth. She shows the magnitude of daily life practices of the particular rapport between the colonial power with Javanese people that protect the notion of power and the ideal notion of being modern in Javanese society.

Chapter 13: Guan Jian – Production and Transfer of Knowledge. Soviet Colonialism and Chinese Psychology.

Although sharing the similar inspiration from Western psychology, China shaped the formation of psychology in its peculiar way and totally different from their neighbors countries in Asia. Guan Jian give explanation on how the psychology was formed under the auspices of rigid ideological platform – the Communist party, and only after the ideological collapse in West that Chinese psychologist start to reformulate their path. However she highlight that the social environment linked to government policy and practical applications remain intact.

Chapter 14: Lili Huang – Indigenized Psychology as the Way to Decolonize the Production of Knowledge. An example of Chinese Indigenous Psychology in Taiwan.

Lili Huang tells the Taiwan’s experience of constructing scientific identity after two decades of questioning and searching the psychological platform which suitable to reach the deep structure of Chinese culture and to understand the complexity of Chinese civilization. The journey to find the path emphasized over this stage was to search the root from the cultural tradition and,

through the “creative transformation”, to create the indigenous psychological theories. Under the need to unite the process of localization, sinicization, and globalization, Taiwan’s experiences has initiated the movement of indigenous psychology in Asia.

Part IV: Asian gazes on Social Representations.

Chapter 15: Melani Budianta – From Positivism to Post Structuralism. A Cultural Studies approach in Social Sciences.

The introduction of post-structural approach, facilitate the insertion of Cultural Studies in Asia, which in majority exploit the French post-68 student movement theories. This current attracts many researchers to study the contemporary social phenomenon in Asia focusing on the brutal change after the ideological collapse in West. Melani Budianta shows on her chapter how the mushrooming trend of using the Cultural Studies approach can lead to welcoming the Social Representations theory in academic scene in Indonesia that will enrich the local production of knowledge.

Chapter 16: Toshio Sugiman – Three Trends in Modern Japanese Society from Viewpoint of “Collectivism-Individualism”.

Toshio Sugiman intricate the latest trend in Japanese society by exposing how the desire to return to the past should be explained according to socio-historical context in which we can not merely rely on the movement from existing individualism as the product of modernization, to ancient collectivism as the representations of Japanese peculiarity. Inspired by Japanese sociologist Masahi Osawa theory’s – the third body, he explains the decline of collectivism and its transformation to mild individualism by elaborating his gaze at the third body.

Chapter 17: James Liu – Social Representations and Culture: Opportunities and Constraint.

The Asian forum of Social Psychologist (AASP) which harbors the currents of researches in Asia and nurture the need for opening the dialog to develop critical regards that fit with Asian production of knowledge, is the platform from which James Liu takes the critical stance on the Social Representations Theory. He challenges the Social Representations Theory by exposing it with Asia’s need and its tradition of intellectual engagement from which the theory should provide outcomes that yields practical benefits to local society.

Chapter 18: Abdul Malik Gisamar – Self and National Identities in Post Colonial State: the Experience of Indonesia.

Identity and the construction of self, remains the most attractive object on social representations studies. Through the lens of post colonial experience in Indonesia, Abdul Malik Gisamar present his research on how the political and social order during the colonial period influence the construction of self and identity. Despite the strong political effort to build new national identity after independence, his research witness that Indonesian have internalized the residual colonial representations of “others”. Interestingly, women have greater inclination to liberate themselves from that construction of otherness.

Chapter 19: Li Liu – HIV/AIDS related Stigma. Its Origin and Manifestations in China.

Despite the fact that AIDS is always framed as the stigma that lies mainly in the stereotype, prejudice or discrimination across culture as it is showed by previous studies, Li Liu is able to show the anchoring process of stigma production in his study on AIDS which is not simply related to moral judgment. By contextualizing stigma to local notion of body, Li Liu confirms how the Chinese produce their own social representations of AIDS that they preserve from cultural and spiritual platform on harmonious life.

Chapter 20: Johana E. Prawitasari – Behaviour Approach a Social Representations in Health. From Research to Action.

As it is highlighted in the introductory part, the Asian scholars are tending to involve in transformation social of their society. It is this dimension that Johana A. Prawitasari presents on her chapter by showing how the behavioral approach, somehow is needed to introduce the new discourse and practices in mental health, especially the public health service and community development. What she has been developing in her studies on health characterize the action-research perspective which propose one alternative approach of knowledge production.