

## STRUCTURE OF THE SOCIAL REPRESENTATION OF CULTURE: AN EMPIRICAL CONTRIBUTION

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### Abstract

According to Abric's (1983) structural approach, social representations (Moscovici, 1961) are made of a central nucleus surrounded by peripheral elements. This theoretical approach, based on a hierarchical structure, deals with the idea of a specific internal configuration of every representation. Abric (1994) and Flament (1994), moreover argued that social practices, related to specific social context, were a major factor in the co-construction of a representation. Starting from this theoretical framework, the purpose of this study is to identify the social representations of culture, circulating among young Neapolitan students. The aim is also to verify if these representations are different from each other, starting from the different social environments of production. Two groups of pupils (161 participants, in the age between 8 and 10 years old), belonging to opposite local contexts, both from structural and socio-economical point of view, took part in the study. We choose a quali-quantitative approach using a free associations questionnaire. In particular, we asked the children to freely indicate five words when they think about culture; then we asked them to motivate the words they choose and in the end to organize those words in order of importance. Collected data were analyzed by the Hierarchical Evocations Technique (Vergès, 1992). The results, discussed from their theoretical, methodological and applicative implications, confirm the presence of stimulating differences between the two SRs.

**Keywords:** Culture, Social Psychology, Social Representations, Development Age, Qualitative-quantitative research, Hierarchical Evocations Technique