

## Chapter #1

### CONVERGING MULTIPLE PHILOSOPHICAL PARADIGMS FOR THE ADVANCE OF SOCIAL PSYCHOLOGY Epistemological bases for further developments

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#### ABSTRACT

The present work belongs to a massive literature revision of the historical landmarks of Social Psychology from its philosophical roots at the end of the nineteenth century to the present day. A deep reflection of its epistemological background is made, both considering the unit perspectives (individual, group, institutional, and transactional) and historical profiles (psychoanalytical, behaviourist, cognitivist, socio-biologist, and ethogenic) of the discipline onset. Within the revision, bases for a convergent paradigm are proposed so as to overcome the enduring discipline crisis and to provide lines for further development by surmounting Kuhnian terms and limitations. Special attention is given to ease the discipline shift from the atomist-Watsonian rationalist model to the limited rational model of social sciences, (so called, Simon's bounded rationality – Simon 1976). The convergent paradigm nests its rationale in this transformation process which is determined by the following features: (1) political awareness, (2) eclecticism, (3) vulnerability of study object, (4) methodological pluralism, (5) circular world vision, (6) disengagement from quantitative tendency, and (7) scientific relativism. These features are sufficiently well-described to apprehend the complex nature of our discipline and, at the same time, to connect them with meta-theoretical views of Social Psychology.

*Keywords:* epistemology, social psychology, paradigm, historical landmark, meta-theoretical theories.

#### 1. INTRODUCTION

We are obliged to avoid losing track of our steps in our scientific production and, from the point of view of an outsider, to be aware of what we are doing. As warned by anthropologist Clyde Kluckhohn, "*It would hardly be fish who discover the existence of water*" (Kluckhohn, 1944, page 11). At a certain point in time, science forces us to rethink the contents and methods we use in order to grasp our signs of identity signs. This is a must in a discipline such as Social Psychology, which is considered to be an interstitial area between Psychology and Sociology, among other similar disciplines. The search of our inner understanding is part of the defense of our professional identity and it serves as a springboard to the future activity. As stated by Spanish philosopher Ortega y Gasset, "*in order to overcome the past it is important to maintain its contact because we are travelling on it*" (Ortega y Gasset, 1962, page 314). This chapter stems from an in-depth historical revision of the discipline of Social Psychology and considers philosophical tendencies of the past century. Both epistemological roots (individual, group, institutional, sociobiological, and transactional) and historical profiles (psychoanalytical, behaviourist, cognitivist, socio-biologist, and ethogenic) of its origin are reflected, to end up in present times. Feuerbach's point of view is adopted in a double attempt: at first, a hermeneutical task by which we search for the essence of the psychosocial phenomenon throughout philosophical and meta-theoretical contributions, and secondly, a *pars destruens* task in

which these contributions are to be constructively criticized whilst bearing in mind current internal and external science production constrictions. Moreover, bases for a *convergent paradigm* are set to overcome disciplinary crises and to contribute towards the on-going theory and practice of the discipline under Kuhnian terms, by which a dominant corpus of theory—named as paradigm—is said to be substituted by a new revolutionary corpus that excels in encompassing explained phenomena.

## 2. BACKGROUND

A *deconstruction* view is mainly taken to guide the present work. In this sense, each selected theoretical perspective or medium-range theory is critically analyzed from the outside as a social construction product, and therefore, subjected to personal wishes and weaknesses. In doing so, this article reflects in and on the content and process of developing knowledge in Social Psychology, and thus, in meta-theorizing on the discipline. Coherent with this view, my personal opinion as the author must also be considered because my thoughts and past work determine the message of this chapter. Consequently, it is to say that my research has moved from the quantitative approach, through which I was taught as a student and researcher, to a set of qualitative methodologies, which were found to be more suitable to control both research subjectivity and data analysis ‘manipulation’ (Germán Morales, 1997). Moreover, the impact of my qualitative research outcomes on participants or on my previous knowledge is greater and more enjoyable compared to past research experience. Along these lines, I do consider that most quantitative results derived by experimental designs remain largely inapplicable to society and serve strictly within the academic realm.

## 3. THEORETICAL PERSPECTIVES IN SOCIAL PSYCHOLOGY

Social Psychology is an interstitial discipline, i.e., it stands between Psychology and Sociology. In this sense, we can describe two types of bidirectional dyadic relationships: individual-group and individual-society (and *vice versa*<sup>1</sup>). Consequently, the various conceptualizations of Social Psychology as a discipline can be grouped into the following perspectives (Blanco, 1988, 2000; Staeuble, 2001): (1) group, (2) individualist, (3) institutional, and (4), transactional. This classification might sound rather artificial because authors’ ideas can be ascribed to more than one perspective, but complex analysis allows double categorization (Philogène, 2012). In the following, historical landmarks that contributed in some way towards the development of Social Psychology as a discipline are revised within each of these classifications.

The *group perspective* is strongly influenced by the holistic tradition in French Sociology. This perspective considers that social life can be explained by references to a supra-individual psychological entity with its own features. Hence, Social Psychology would be the study of group psychic phenomena (group mind, group conscience, collective memory, group thinking, and so on) whose effects condition both social events and individual behaviour. This kind of *psychologization* process of small to medium-sized group characteristics is seen as autonomous from the group-individual dyadic. The biggest contributor to this perspective is Emile Durkheim (1858-1917) whose anti-psychologism, equally supported by A. Comte (1798-1857), rejects any interpretations that undermine

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<sup>1</sup>In both cases, the relationship can be unbalanced, i.e., individual affecting the group (e.g. a leader) *versus* the group affecting the individual (e.g. group polarization).

underlying psychic facts. Durkheim's wish to develop a new discipline – i.e. Sociology – stands as a starting point for the onset of a psychosocial point of view that would feed the relevant literature on the so-called *Collective Psychology*, i.e., *Mass Psychology* and W. Wundt's *Völkerpsychologie*<sup>2</sup> (popular or socio-cultural psychology).

The *individualist perspective* is historically represented by ideas of W. McDougall (1871-1928) and F. H. Allport (1890-1978) and promotes the individual as the study object in the psychosocial analysis (Parkovnick, 2000; Blanco, 1988). Social Psychology would be part of General Psychology and its study nature should be *psychologist*, i.e., prone to be located intra-individually. The oldest known root of this vision is placed in Aristotle's aphorism of "*man is by nature a political animal*" and thus, there is no need to relate to external, extra-individual entities to explain (his) behaviour in society. Various contributions stem from McDougall's instinctivist perspective, W. Dilthey's ideographic approach, Allport's group fallacy, and, more recently, H. Simon's science of design and artificiality, among others (Simon, 1976; Parkovnick, 2000; Blanco, 1988, 2000; Allport, 1923).

From an *institutional perspective*, the individual is simply a socio-cultural product since human behaviour is determined by his/her belonging to certain (ethnic) groups. Most explanations of social behaviour from this vision drive us to *social determinism*, by which individuality is subjugated to society, but without being the same entity (G. Tarde, E. Durkheim). The individual does not act in isolation but is instead a social emissary of the position in social and family structures in which (s)he has been embedded since birth. Many theories on outlying social determinism can be traced from greatly differing scientific roots. Known for a long time as *spiritual science* by W. Dilthey (1833-1911), Psychology splits human nature into body and mind, and therefore divides its structural elements into static, non-temporal, disaggregated elements. For instance, a vast number of proposals from the *social conflict theory* have directly or indirectly mentioned the determined character of human behavior and named as pathological any type of behaviour differing from socially agreed behavior (Machiavelli, Hobbes, Marx, Freud).

By adopting a pan-cultural dimension approach, social determinism can also be found in the epistemological attempt of *indigenous psychology* (Allwood & Berry, 2006), which, based on the "one-mind, many mentalities" principle, aims to develop theories representing both the universal mind of human beings and also the particular mentality of people in a given society (Hwang, 2012). The universal mind of ontological realism would be rather an institutional product of human beings while indigenous communities would develop their own subcultural products. In a cultural system approach, Hwang (2015) advocates then for the construction of culture-inclusive theories by multiple philosophical paradigms separate from positivism or constructivism.

Finally, our historical journey through the onset of the Social Psychology discipline, which refers to the individual-group dyad, can provide a fourth perspective. The *transactional perspective* allows bilateral relationships between the two dyadic entities. Supporters of this perspective understand social behaviour as stemming from collective and individual factors that are in constant interaction and never isolated. According to Serge Moscovici (1970, 1978, 1984), psychosocial nature is defined as the interaction between individuals sharing a common environment, both symbolical and real. Instead of listing discipline contents, *transactionists* would prefer to adopt a specific way of looking at the surroundings and thus, in Lewinian terms, extend the study object to the understanding of

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<sup>2</sup>Wundt's *Völkerpsychologie* would be more devoted to the society-individual dyadic and anthropological perspectives but presented a relatively collateral production in comparison with his vast literature in Experimental Psychology.

social behaviour and problems. In other words, the psychological (the individual) and social (the collective) nature are both embedded in any social issue, so it is the *interaction* between these two entities that really defines the object of study of Social Psychology (Rodrigues, 1976; Newcomb, 1960; Asch, 1952; Bogardus, 1932). The oldest support in this perspective might be found in *Plato's utilitarianism* through which individuals search for interactions in their attempt to satisfy basic needs (Plato, 428-348 B.C). In the philosophy of Hans Berger (1873-1941), man is defined as a relational human being and his internal structure is changed by (external) relationships. In this sense, the individual is perceived as a *radar man* in search for his identity by relating wishes and behaviours to others. An interaction approach is also perceived by H. Mead (1863-1931), later on by G. Tarde (1843-1904) and by many theorists of mind/brain evolution (Spencer, Luria, Piaget, and Vygotsky) who do not apprehend human development in isolation from social or environmental processes (Infante & Irizo, 2009).

#### 4. HISTORICAL PROFILES IN SOCIAL PSYCHOLOGY

It was once stated by the father of Psychology, W. Wundt (1832-1920), that our (general) discipline would never be complete if we fail to consider the social environment surrounding the psychic productivity of human beings. In fact, his experimental psychology was just one side of the same coin that represented the nature of Psychology that also enclosed the study of *higher mental processes* such as culture, language, and even attention. These processes are collective constructs to be analyzed by historical approaches and were labeled as *Völkerpsychologie*, i.e. a kind of Folk Psychology.

However, Psychology, as a "scientific" discipline, was born within *behaviourism* thanks to the significant contributions of J. B. Watson (1878-1958) and E. Thorndike (1874-1949), and later on those of Albert Bandura (b. 1925) and B.F. Skinner (1904-1990). This perspective was thoughtfully embedded in Cartesian dualism, in John Locke (1632-1704) empiricism and associationism, in Comte's positivism, in the hedonist vision of Thomas Hobbes (1588-1679), and also in Charles Darwin's (1809-1882) evolutionist theory. Therefore, its early connections with intra- or supra-individual entities were purposely limited (*see* Bandura, 1982). However, sound contributions to the emergence of Social Psychology were made by neo-behaviourists, such as E.C. Tolman (1886-1959) and C.L. Hull (1884-1952) who adopted a less radical position in positivism. Their influence is clearly shown in the theories of aggression by L. Berkowitz (b. 1926) and Bandura (1982), in the social facilitation theory of Zajonc (1965), in the learning theories of Miller and Dollard (1941), in those of Hovland, Janis and Kelly (1953) on persuasive communication, and even in the interpersonal attraction theories of Lott and Lott (1965), Byrne (1965) or Newcomb (1960).

*Psychoanalysis* is also worth mentioning. Although it is clearly intra-individually centered, there is interactive, dialectical, and slightly psychosocial support in S. Freud's (1856-1939) theories. Somehow, Freud pointed out the psychosocial nature of any endopsychically-rooted Psychology by indicating that there is always an *alter entity* in the emotional life of an individual which serves as a model, adversary or object and from whose relationships psycho-affective equilibrium is derived. In the psychoanalytic profile, a human being is determined by the conflict, produced between his/her animal nature and society, which is driven by the compulsion of pleasure and reality principles. Psychoanalytic proposals have long influenced other psychological perspectives and sub-disciplines close to Social Psychology, such as those provided by L. Lanwell, A. Maslow, J.P. Sartre, Th. Adorno, T. Parsons, R.F. Bales, and E. Berne, among many

others. Controversies amongst neo-psychoanalysts have triggered an internal debate, mainly between those that consider society as the source of conflict for human beings (so-called *left-sided* Freudians, such as Fromm, Horney, Thompson, Sullivan), while others admit a kind of individual adjustment to his/her social environment (*right-sided* Freudians, such as Reich, Marcuse, Roheim).

There is also a long tradition of *cognitive approaches* in Social Psychology that were especially strengthened during the 60s of the last century (Moskowitz, 2001). In fact, according to Zajonc (1980) and Fiske and Taylor (1984), Social Psychology has always been cognitive. At least two approaches can easily be identified within this historical profile. On the one hand, there is the *intra-individual approach*, which is based on the influences the subject receives from his/her social environment that cause certain cognitive effects. Therefore, the effects of certain social variables (for instance, group belonging) were studied on the appearance of the cognitive processes involved (such as membership). The concerns of how human beings apprehend and capture social reality is a tradition rooted in Gestalt contributions, continues in Lewin's field theory, and currently resides in the socio-cognitivist perspective. On the other hand, the *interpersonal approach* of this cognitive profile seeks significant research products that emerge from social and cultural interactions, irrespective of the states or mental processes that might be involved. Both symbolic interactionism and social constructivism inspire this second approach.

Another epistemological contribution in the history of Social Psychology can be traced in *sociobiology*, which is based on Darwinist theoretical roots. Since Edmund O. Wilson's (b. 1929) book of 1975 "*Sociobiology: the new synthesis*", and "*On human nature*", 1978, this science has made riveting efforts to link anthropology, sociology, ethology and social psychology. The Socio-biologist perspective admits that social behaviour is genetically determined and its statements are strongly evolutionist and biologicist. Initially centered on the description and explanation of gregarious animal behaviour, socio-biologists have expanded their theories to the understanding of human behaviour by applying Darwin's theory of the evolution of species.

Once the paradigmatic crisis of Social Psychology had ended, several theoretical and methodological alternatives were proposed for future advancement (Parker, 1989). According to Ibáñez (1988, 1990, 1991), most of these alternatives, although different, share features of the so-called *ethogenic approach*, i.e. the rejection of positivism, the recognition of human beings as active agents, the historical character of psychosocial events, the consideration of a practical rationality, and also the interest in daily aspects of life including reflection on available knowledge. R. Harré (1995) defined ethogenics as an interdisciplinary social science that attempts to explain how individuals attach meanings to their daily actions, and hence how they create their identities by linking themselves to social structures, norms and roles. This view sees human beings as socially determined by experience and social roles. Therefore, their social scope would not be imposed but naturally created.

## 5. THE CONVERGENT PARADIGM

In general, modern Social Psychology is portrayed as ethogenic *in content* and emancipatory *in process*. It is sustained in the pragmatism of William James (1842-1910) as stated in "*Pragmatism: a new name for some old ways of thinking*", later strengthened in the experimentalism and instrumentalism of John Dewey (1859-1952), and more recently found in neo-pragmatics, which states that a statement is true when it works. Due to methodological constraints, pragmatism is rather irrational, subjective, and leans

towards scientific relativism. However, structural analyses are enriched by neo-pragmatics by introducing previously ignored variables, such as race, social class, and gender (Musolf, 2001). New scientific proposals are supported by thoughts of modern philosophers, such as Nietzsche, Heidegger, Wittgenstein, Foucault, Popper, Lakatos, and Derrida (Infante & Irizo, 2009). From rather different points of view towards science, all of these philosophers agree on postmodern, post-positivist, and/or post-industrial ideas. While admitting the value of theory construction (Hwang, 2012), the key element in a post-positivist perspective is that which admits that theory precedes observation, the lack of theories in any fact, and that theories are socially constructed (Good, 2000; Torregrosa, 1989; Blanco and De la Corte, 1996).

A revision of the literature enables the following features to be identified in the so-called "convergent paradigm": (1) political awareness, (2) eclecticism, (3) vulnerability of study object, (4) methodological pluralism, (5) circular world vision, (6) disengagement from quantitative tendency, and (7) scientific relativism. The following pages explain each of these aspects, and other meta-theoretical proposals are discussed in connection with them (Good, 2000; Lubek, 2000; Parkovnick, 2000; Munné, 1989, 2005; Lamo de Espinosa, González & Torres, 1994). In an abridged content effort, the main characteristics of the foreseen convergent paradigm that promote epistemological changes can be described as follows (Infante & Irizo, 2009):

- *Political awareness*: psychosocial science aims to have an impact on society/community more than ever before in order to solve real, down-to-earth problems. The revolutionary attitude of Marxism is recovered and can be found in many contemporary lines of research, such as feminist theories, gender theory, and phenomenological approaches. This provides a game of *deconstruction*<sup>3</sup>, where one starts with a Foucauldian critical analysis prior to building practical alternatives full of political or self-serving interests that reinvent (*re-construct*) social reality. This evidence forces researchers to position themselves within the topic under consideration and encourages institutions to check internal organizational life that constrains its production. Since a strict control of research variables is impossible, I. Lakatos proposes the selection of favourite topics of social changes to the detriment of scientific rigor. In this sense, social research becomes more applicable and social-friendly.

- *Eclecticism*: the non-determinist criterion of knowledge, by which it is admitted that there cannot be a unique theoretical model explaining social reality, is gaining supporters. Instead, we opt to apprehend reality in small approaches with the aid of multiple and diverse perspectives. Theoretical eclecticism encourages us to evaluate any point of view without prejudices and to research inside multidisciplinary work groups. Social reality would be like a Necker cube whose image can be altered quickly according to the chosen angle but the cube is, in essence, the same entity with all the colored faces composing its nature. Consequently, the creation of a theory is simply a collection of forms for the organization of ideas and facts, and involves different ways of looking at the world (Feyerabend, 1975, 1978). However, it is not just a mixture of ideas, but also offers reconciliation between different perspectives of the same complex reality.

- *Methodological pluralism*: paradigmatic crisis of our discipline helped to broaden epistemological, methodological, and technician selections. Many researchers are in favor of adopting a flexible mind in methodological issues and to erase traditional limitations of

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<sup>3</sup>Although there is a timid presence in the phenomenological methodology, the concept of deconstruction was coined by French philosopher Jacques Derrida (b. 1930) in an attempt to subtly dismantle all knowledge built from Plato to Hegel.

laboratory experiments and statistics (Wallach & Wallach, 2001; Stam, Radtke & Lubek, 2000). Along these lines, research in natural settings is fostered with new complex techniques and criteria (Infante, 2011; Munné, 2005; Cassell & Simon, 2004). Essentially, it is the methodology at the service of researchers, and not *vice versa*. Others, such as Gergen (1973), defend a methodological approach contingent with the problem to be investigated, first in *ideographic* terms, and then *nomothetically*.

- *Vulnerability of study object*: predictability in social sciences is certainly limited because of the freedom of human behaviour and its multi-causality (Munné, 2005, 2007). Consequently, a good theory is not that which best predicts but best describes social complexity in a certain situation and at a certain moment. Moreover, the value of the theory will depend on the quality of the behaviour proposed for the actors in the social scene. Positivists' procedures to prove the truth of a theory were placed on logic and their chances of being empirically tested. However, this scientific replicability was criticized by Sir Karl Raimund Popper (1902-1994), who unveiled the limitation of social sciences in the prediction of facts by means of rationality. He introduced the *falsifiability principle* by which a scientific statement can be empirically false but is capable of being tested.

- *Circular world vision*: science is cyclic, like history. Its products and relationships are always the same in essence and they appear from time to time in periods of fashion or fads. All ideas seem to have already been invented, at least in the epistemology of the social knowledge; theories might change in words but the hidden messages are already known. For instance, the materialist consumption in the late twentieth century was a renewed presentation of classical hedonism mentioned by Greek philosophers. Work stress, long studied in the 80s, has 'passed the baton' to fads of a more contemporary nature, such as the organizational mobbing that captures our serious attention today. Cases involving stress or mobbing cannot be denounced in cultures where human rights are limited, and therefore those cases appear to be more invisible for their sciences and societies. In fact, they are probably perceived as normal working conditions or even opportunities for self-challenging.

- *Disengagement from quantitative tendency*: following Nietzsche (1869, read from Maudemarie, 1990), the madness of mechanical positivism strives to reduce all quality to quantity, and thus builds a fixed, lifeless world. The quantification attitude was humorously criticized by *The Little Prince* character (Antoine de Saint-Exupéry, 1943) who complains about the social obsession for numbering people's life (salary, age, children...). As stated by Gergen (1973, 1997), the display of empirical data to justify and evaluate a theoretical proposition is no longer laudable. As a reaction, many social sciences scientists and researchers are opting for qualitative methodologies in order to apprehend the vast complexity of the social world and its subjectivities. This might imply the abandonment or limitation of statistics, at least of parametric analysis, together with the emergence (or rebirth) of other methods more in line with the nature of psychosocial phenomena (discourse analysis, group discussion, ethnomethodology, grounded theory, phenomenology, etc.) (Infante, 2013; Cassell & Simon, 2004). Nevertheless, it is also true under Bhaskar's philosophy of Critical Realism (*see* Hwang, 2015; Collier, 1994), that if culture-inclusive theories for social mechanisms can be constructed, then those theories can be used for either qualitative research on social events or quantitative research on empirical experiences.

- *Scientific relativism*: we must admit the impossibility of creating a universal model of reality because any proposition can be potentially true depending on how it is presented or advertised (Infante & Irizo, 2009; Munné, 1993). In fact, a given theory can only explain those aspects that are coherent with its epistemological framework. This relativism is part

of a current on-going social movement that is expressed in many issues (morality, politics, religion...) (Simon, 1976; Rojas, 1996; Savater, 1997). In summary, the validation of theories and models cannot be carried out in terms of absolute, objective truth but according to social, temporal consensus between scientists, agents, and practitioners.

## 6. FUTURE RESEARCH DIRECTIONS

We must remain hopeful in the wish to see more research performed in the realm of qualitative investigation that could enrich past decades of positivist heritage. The *new* Social Psychologies, such as chaos theory, historical Social Psychology, emancipatory lines, and complex theories, are exploring riveting content areas that join theory and methodology with flexibility. However, high-profile journals are still reluctant to shift away from empirical studies that employ statistics and research methods as in the 'pure' scientific disciplines from where they were inherited (e.g. physics, engineering, and chemistry). At least in the social sciences, the role that statistics has played within experimentation – once defined by Robert E. Park as the *talking magic*—is nowadays an exhausted role since we have learnt to use it for our own internal purposes of pseudoscience with little positive impact in the social world apart from (university) captive samples. Qualitative research is being fostered in the effort to approach social science close to communities. However, we need to search for adequate criteria of reliability to better assess qualitative investigations in order for them to be shown as more than just ethnographic reports full of value judgments. In doing so, it is important to consider the new principles that are beginning to define and support research practice in our discipline (Jiménez Burillo, 2005; Lamo de Espinosa, González & Torres, 1994; Barriga, 1993):

- *Naturalization*: in future research, there is little or no distinction between context of discovery and context of justification, and thus, it is society that proposes and provides 'raw material' for research.

- *Relativism*: as we have seen, there is no universal criterion to prove the truth of a statement / hypothesis. In this sense, the advance of science is only a continuous process of negotiation between researchers and its immediate community and not a product of paradigmatic confrontation and shifts as indicated by Kuhn in 1962.

- *Constructionism*: scientific knowledge is not a pure representation of reality and does not emerge from it. Research experience is never neutral because it is produced inside a specific environment with personal constraints (past learning, culture, politics, etc.). In fact, many sound discoveries in Social Psychology appeared in relation to the identification of bias during the research process, such as the Rosenthal effect, the Hawthorne effect, and severity *versus* benignity in selection processes. Swiss psychiatrist Pichon-Rivière (1985) even identified 'epistemological anxieties' of researchers when trying to apprehend their study object.

- *Social accusation*: as stated previously, research activity is conditioned by previous theories and the internal interests of both the researchers and supporting agents (investors, institutions, sponsors). Impartiality cannot be taken for granted and this evidence is not an inner constriction of the present research but an honest declaration of hidden worries and limitations, mostly external, which drive our daily work.

- *Instrumentality*: scientific knowledge is similar to any other kind of knowledge but has potentially greater decisive ability and/or options of applicability.

## 7. CONCLUSION

Social Psychology is a complex social science because it was born in the middle of interrelated classical disciplines that study society and mind in its various forms or strata. The long-standing historical debate, regarding into which entity the discipline is to be incorporated, concluded by admitting its embedded nature in the realm of social behaviour. In this sense, is it not what we look at but how we look at it that defines Social Psychology. Although the discipline reflects many scenarios, it almost always declares interdependence between human beings and their social surroundings in mutual enrichment relationships.

The ephemerality of (scientific) knowledge affects both social life and, consequently, our discipline (Torregrosa, 1989). In fact, it is proved that the research process is a *serendipitous* outcome that is conditioned by the research agents and their own environment. Notwithstanding this inevitable limitation, a Social Psychology researcher would rather take an active part in the process for the sake of positive impact in the study object or community. Active participation should be half-consciously controlled and it may enhance greater discoveries than the post-facto manipulation of the study object data from disguised subjects that are being left isolated, passive, and unanswered. The will to act on people is part of the deconstruction duty of social practitioners and researchers. The deconstruction process invites us to intervene while researching, to assess the impact of all our research steps and to provide consequent feedback to society. This convergent paradigm frees our discipline from strict internal rules and enables researchers to act with creativity and practical attitudes. For instance, consider the *photo-elicitation technique* used in the study of organizational attitudes and expectancies, which combines projective testings with discourse analysis (*see* Cassell & Simon, 2004). The technique helps those employees with problems of written expression to portray their thoughts and working attitudes by observing significant pictures. It is a creative and pragmatic attempt for which research success is guaranteed; the (positive) effect created during the interaction arises in a given social context and not under the hazardous game of numbers and jargon talks of disconnected and socially desirable participants.

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