Conclusion: Rejoinder

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Introduction

I would first like to thank all the contributors for their commentaries and their thoughtful reflections, insights and critiques. I found all commentaries extremely useful in helping me to sharpen my proposal for a genetic social psychology. The development and presentation of the genetic social psychology framework have been a journey of intellectual exploration that started together with some of the colleagues that offered their commentaries whilst all pursuing our studies in Cambridge University in the 'triangle' reading group in the period 2000–2005. In this group, with Alex Gillespie, Flora Cornish and Tania Zittoun, we would discuss classical texts of psychology (mostly social and developmental psychology, American pragmatism and epistemology) all under the direct or indirect influence of the late Gerard Duveen. Later, Brady Wagoner would also join our discussions in this reading group. Some of these earlier explorations were published as Psaltis (2005), Zittoun et al. (2003), Zittoun and Psaltis (2006) and Zittoun et al. (2007) and more recently in Power et al. (2023).

In Part I of this volume I outlined the pressing need for an interdisciplinary social and developmental psychology with historical depth, poised to address the complexities of societal change and human development that can come into dialogue with anthropology, politics, sociology, economics and cultural evolution. What I propose as genetic social psychology is a holistic approach to understanding human development and societal change through a historical lens that integrates insights from key theorists like Piaget, Vygotsky, Moscovici, the social Genevans, Furth and Duveen, among others. Genetic social psychology emphasises the need for a multidimensional analysis that includes the intrapersonal, interpersonal, intergroup, ideological and inter-societal levels of analysis.

I believe that in the 21st century, considering the nature of polycrisis mentioned by Gillespie (Chapter 7 in this volume), such a discipline can

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contribute meaningfully to both understanding and changing the societal dynamics, marked by increasing conflict, inequalities, fragmentation and the spread of misinformation. My proposal is based on the case study of the Cyprus conflict. This deeply divided society in the Eastern Mediterranean where east meets west, Christians meet Muslims and share an island is a case study to explore a situation beyond what Henrich (2015, 2020) calls WEIRD societies. Cyprus, with its conflicting past, offers many opportunities to study various developmental pathways in a rapidly changing society (especially after joining of the EU in 2004) with a mix of characteristics that are neither eastern nor western (Uskul et al., 2023). However, I identify three distinct microgenetic paths as processes of social representing that I believe are universal, as they are based on the quality of human social relationships that can essentially take three forms independent of any part of the world one finds themselves in: (1) the submissive-traditional, (2) the dominant-individualist and (3) the co-operative.

In each society or country all pathways of development can be found, but some become more or less likely depending on the external intersocietal relationships, internal political economy of a country and the level of socio-economic development and historical trajectory of each society, with family, education (formal, informal and non-formal) and the media being the epicentres of socialisation. These three pathways are directly mediated by attachment style in infancy, parenting styles (authoritarian, laissez faire, authoritative), family dynamics, in-group norms (family, school and the wider context), threats and specific value priorities and configurations. In-group norms and intergroup contact regulate how wide the ethical horizon of an individual becomes, as well as collective identifications.

Ontogenetically, there are developmental constraints on how wide the ethical horizon is in the period from birth to age 10–11 years, but after this age the 'group nous' (Abrams et al., 2009) and quantity and quality of intergroup contact will regulate how wide or narrow the horizon of each individual will actually be. The role of history teaching and values attached to it is crucial, as it regulates semantic contact with the out-group perspective (Gillespie, 2020) and has a key role in formulating the developmental pathway to be taken in each nation state. The traditional submissive position is supported by one-sided victimisation narratives and religiosity which forms part–whole relations where the individual is submitted to the group. The domination-individualist one is a position where the individual–group part–whole relationship tilts towards an unchecked individualism, egocentrism and machiavellianism. The co-operative is the

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position of mutual respect at the interpersonal level, equality at the intergroup level and balance between the individual and the group in part–whole relations (Piaget, 1995).

Sociogenetic changes in historical time (period and cohort effects) of social representations largely depend on exogenous factors to the individual (war, ethnic conflict, geopolitics, economic development and relations of production, urbanisation, diminant denomination of religion in each country and how central religion is in society as an institution). However, changes in values can also support the emergence of new norms and institutions following the opposite evolutionary path (Henrich, 2020).

The real challenge, and the most complex task ahead for this proposal, is the innovation of new methods of data collection that will do justice to the study of the articulation of the processes of microgenesis, ontogenesis and sociogenesis in real-world contexts. Through the various commentaries run some common threads to which I would like to offer a rejoinder that follows.

Epistemological Issues, Different Developmental Pathways and Domains: Is There Linear Development?

In the commentaries by Marková (Chapter 6), Gillespie (Chapter 7), Zittoun (Chapter 8) and Barreiro et al. (Chapter 13) there seems to be the critique that given the strong Piagetian basis of genetic social psychology, we need to abandon the assumption of linear development. Marková views the dialectic epistemologies of Piaget and Goldmann I discussed in Part I as emphasising evolution and the transformation of knowledge. Just like the dialectic of Marx or Hegel, they assume the hierarchical development of less advanced into more progressive stages. These kinds of dialectic are based on the idea that evolutions and histories strive towards predetermined goals. For Piaget, the dialectic hierarchical progression is completed when the child achieves formal operations. Marková rejects this epistemological stance and proposes the alternative of an open-ended dialogical epistemology that rejects both the predetermined end of development and the hierarchies. She situates Moscovici's and Duveen's work in this camp. I think this argument is premised on collapsing ontogenetic and sociogenetic processes that need to be differentiated.

It is interesting to note that usually theoreticians do not challenge the notion of less or more advanced, progressed or powerful knowledge in discussions about ontogenesis of human beings. Even if they reject the idea of stage-like development and that the end state is what Piaget proposed as formal operational stage, they would still espouse some kind of more

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powerful knowledge in a trajectory from less to more differentiation, one-sided to more multi-perspectival view of the world and less to more complex understandings (Zittoun & Gillespie, 2022). It seems to be accepted that we expect and indeed find differences in cognitive and emotional development from birth to adulthood. It would simply be absurd to suggest otherwise, as it would be tantamount to disregarding the findings of developmental psychology.

When we move to sociogenesis, however, the issue can certainly be contested, and we should recognise that change is an open-ended process with no predetermined end, as it depends on the quality of norms and institutions and the kind of subject–object–other configurations they sustain. Nevertheless, certain structural historical changes (e.g. economic development, urbanisation, setting up institutions of formal education) as suggested by Patricia Greenfield can have predictable changes in the values of communities, quality of social relationships and learning environments (Greenfield, 2009). We argue this takes place through the mediating role of changes in the quality of social relationships between people or changes in the microgenetic processes of *subject–object–other* configurations within and between groups. In this sense Duveen was right to claim that microgenesis is the motor for ontogenesis and sociogenesis.

Protesting the idea of historical progress seems legitimate when stage-like ideas from the individual level of analysis are projected onto whole groups or countries to serve powerful group's interests, raising the spectre of ethnocentric or even racist views. It is when forms of knowing become an instrument for human rights violations, submission, domination or exploitation (e.g. colonialism, imperialism) that people legitimately object to the notion of more and less progressed knowledge.

From a process account of social representations (significant structures as forms of representing) like the one of genetic social psychology, there is no basis for one-to-one linkages between the three basic structural ways of representing that we identified (submission, domination, co-operation) and any collectivity, because these forms of representing can be identified in different institutions or social networks in various countries of the world, albeit in different proportions in varying domains of social life. For example, most countries have hierarchical institutions like the army. In such institutions in-group norms sustain forms of submission and domination, and to deny this would amount to negating the possibility of any ideological critique of institutions within each country or nation state.

In some domains of knowledge, especially under conditions of central control by governments like history teaching, it is again possible to locate a

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greater emphasis on submission to a romantic kind of master narrative controlled by a central authority. Barreiro, Castorina and Carretero (Chapter 13) offer a critique of traditional divisions in psychology. Their commentary underscores the need for a more integrated approach that bridges the often-artificial divides between cognitive, social and emotional domains of human experience. Their discussion of domain-specific vs. domain-general knowledge is very insightful and allows for further deepening of some of the connections between representations of the past or history and Piagetian thinking. The tension between domain-specific and domain-general knowledge is similarly discussed in some of the recent work by Zittoun et al. (2023), who propose that in adult learning and development both the processes of differentiation and distanciation are crucial. The process of differentiation and progressive integration entails some notion of development. In contrast to normative propositions, the 'norm' ('better' expertise or knowledge) is given by a criterion related to the system itself: it is about the acquisition of more stability of the system (e.g. equilibrium) or towards – at least locally – more stable organisation. The process of distanciation through semiotic elaboration can be said to occur on three main dimensions: progressive generalisation, relation to time and imagination (Zittoun et al., 2023).

In the case of representations of the past and history teaching, differentiation and distanciation from the concrete in a domain could be threatening to the self or collective identity. As a consequence, the potential for generalisation and more abstract thinking is obstructed. History teaching is a very good example. For example, in Cyprus a narration that threatens the master narrative which relativises the pain or the perspectives of the two communities would cause resistance to be accepted, and thus a multiperspective structure of thinking would become more difficult to achieve in this case. In contrast, in the case of mathematics, such resistances are somewhat less likely albeit not impossible as we know from the work of Guida de Abreau under the supervision of Gerard Duveen. As Barreiro et al. posit, this is an instance in which thinking cannot be separated from contents, or from the activities of which they are a part. The activities in this case could be school nationalist commemorations, reenactments of collective victimisation or participation in collective activities that serve national or patriotic interest and vindication. This would be an enunciation of what Barreiro et al. find in Piagetian thinking as precausal and transductive thinking according to which reasoning is constructed by going from particular cases to particular cases, without recourse to universality or logical necessity. As they say, there could be necessity

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here, but it would be the necessity to support the nation state and its cause, not a logical necessity. Agreement with this approach steers clear of the murky waters of postmodern relativism, as it recognises that this necessity to support the nation state through this instrumentalisation of history teaching will be consequential for various other dimensions of the significant structure under formation. In this way it fundamentally changes the way students will construct their collective self, feelings of threat, prejudice, distrust and a value system, in a way that undermines their critical thinking (Bermúdez, Chapter 12 in this volume).

Genetic social psychology is certainly not in favour of cultural relativism or postmodern ideas of the kind that 'everything goes'. On the contrary, one of the main aims of genetic social psychology, as mentioned by Gillespie (Chapter 7 in this volume), is emancipatory, to bring to the surface the submerged part of the iceberg of these significant structures so that a critical distance can be taken towards them and act on the world on the basis of the consequences of each one for human and societal development.

A particular example of the genetic social psychology perspective on this issue can be given from the sphere of history teaching in Canada. In 2015, the Truth and Reconciliation Commission of Canada (TRC) identified that education plays a central role in developing new, reconciliatory relationships between Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal peoples. This education would involve learning about residential schools and their assimilationist policies but would have a broader focus on transforming education into a place where Indigenous experiences would be integrated, racism and coloniality would be rejected, and equal respect for Indigenous and Western epistemologies could be demonstrated (TRC, 2015b).

The aim of reflecting on history teaching in Canada for reconciliation in this case is certainly praiseworthy; however, the reference to 'Indigenous and Western epistemologies' seems to me to be flirting with cultural relativism which can in fact end up undermining the aim of reconciliation in the first place. It seems like a recipe for 'fighting' colonialism by paradoxically appropriating its ideological machinery of essentialist thinking. For example, some Indigenous scholars, such as Marker (2011), claim that Western historiographies with an emphasis on historical evidence, human agency, progress and modernity disregard Indigenous understandings of the process of time and principles of ecological knowledge systems. Marker has identified four characteristics of Indigenous ways of knowing: (1) the circular nature of time and ways of telling oral histories, with recurring events merged in a non-linear fashion; (2) the central relationship between humans, landscape and animals as a source of knowledge and

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wisdom; (3) the emphasis on local landscape as containing the full meaning of time and place; and (4) Indigenous narratives as both physical and metaphysical journeys that challenge histories of colonization.

As rightly pointed out by both Peter Seixas (2012) and Stephan Levesque (2016, 2017), the historical thinking approach in Canada is well suited to develop the narrative competence of students by incorporating the voices and perspectives of aboriginals in teaching. But this, I would add, in no way implies accepting any voice or narration as true without evaluation or because the tradition and the chiefs of the community present it as 'true'. The historical approach should not be downgraded to a 'heritage' approach that essentialises the culture, historical consciousness or epistemology of aboriginals. First, as I mentioned in the previous paragraph, we should never assume homogeneity of any form of representing (submission, domination, co-operation) in any collectivity, and in that sense there is no homogeneous aboriginal culture, historical consciousness or epistemology, as there is no homogeneous western culture, historical consciousness or epistemology. In fact, when such an in-group–out-group grammar is evoked, essentialist identities imbued with feelings of realistic and symbolic threat take the upper hand that furthers antagonism, competition and conflict between the groups, taking us far away from the goal of reconciliation.

The words of Moscovici (1993) from his acceptance speech of the honorary PhD he was awarded from the university of Seville with the title "Reason and Cultures" here are germane:

> All cultures have good reasons, past, present or future, to believe they are incomparable. And indeed, they are. But when it is stated that they are so because of their identity, because of their mentality, because of their ethnocentrism or because of their incommensurability, or because of any type of attributions of the same style, deep down, it starts from the principle that they are separable or that they only see in the others what distinguishes them, defining themselves outside of all reflexibility. As if they kept asking themselves Goethe's question: 'How can I be myself if another exists?' which arouses the desire for absolute singularity or irreconcilable difference. For such a difference can only reveal fragility, hide the obsession of a closed 'self'. Organizing collective memory, transforming history into an instrument in charge of legitimizing separation, continues to be a permanent temptation.

The application of relations of co-operation could overcome essentialist ways of thinking and could fruitfully encompass a number of policies: (1) a joint committee for the writing of history textbooks by both Indigenous

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and Euro-Canadians; (2) the promotion of multi-perspectivity in history teaching; (3) reflecting on master narratives of various groups and their role in promoting essentialist identities, threats and prejudice; and (4) the role of colonialism, nationalism and various other 'isms' in instrumentalising narratives of the past for submission, domination and exploitation, and (5) mutual interactions and influence on values, and ideas and practices through contacts between members of different groups.

Marková (Chapter 6) also criticises the hierarchy of knowledge forms in the dialectical epistemologies of Piaget and Goldmann, proposing as an alternative the idea of heterarchy from Moscovici's work. Heterarchies are defined as decentralised organisations which safeguard a degree of freedom and establish reflexive relationships among components of the system. Here there seems to be a collapse of two different types of hierarchies into one. A hierarchy of knowledge, however, is altogether different from hierarchies relating to part–whole relationships in groups, so there is no reason why rejecting the one should also mean rejecting the other.

One of the major challenges for genetic social psychology is the articulation of these two types of hierarchies through microgenetic processes. This is something that we have explored experimentally with Duveen around social representations of gender and social interaction on Piagetian tasks between asymmetrical dyads in terms of knowledge on the same tasks in same and mixed sex dyads (Psaltis & Duveen, 2006, 2007). But even if the intention of Marková in her commentary is to reiterate Moscovici's reluctance to place scientific knowledge on top of common-sense knowledge, one has to recognise that from a processual account of *social representing*, Moscovici does favour more reflective and decentred ways of representing otherness. This is clear in his studies of representations of Gypsies with Perez (Moscovici, 2011) and his masterful talk for his honorary doctorate at the University of Seville quoted above (Moscovici, 1993) that we take as aligned with our idea (Psaltis, 2012) that a hierarchy of knowledge can be located in ways of thinking within cultures but not between cultures, since cultures are not homogeneous entities.

I thank Ivana for reminding me of the work by Galam and Moscovici (1991, 1994, 1995) because I believe there is a lot of inspiration to be taken from this work in unifying Moscovici's genetic models of social influence with his social representations theory, an idea discussed by Marková (2021) herself elsewhere. I take the main message of this work to be the importance of 'asymmetry breaking' as the process that leads to individual and societal innovations. Their complex systems way of thinking reminds us that there are processes of emergence at the group level that

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we need to account for on the basis of social interactions or social influence between people. In our work with Duveen we revealed exactly this complex process of emergence of a co-operative relationship in conditions of conflicting asymmetries of knowledge and status in what we identified as the 'Fm' effect. This was when non-conserving boys were interacting with conserving girls (6–8-year-olds). In these interactions we observed longer discussions, more socio-cognitive conflict, but also forms of inter-subjectivity that entailed reflection and novelty (Psaltis & Duveen, 2006, 2007; Duveen & Psaltis, 2008). More recently, in the context of inter-group contact in Cyprus, we applied an agent-based model (ABM) that simulated interaction between members of the two communities projecting aggregate reductions in prejudice at the communal level on the basis of varying impact of contact in prejudice reduction and percentage of people crossing the checkpoints.[1] There is certainly much more to be done in terms of capturing the complexity of transformations with the help of systems or complexity theory, and we have started exploring some of this complexity by mapping belief networks using a new method proposed by Carpentras et al. (2021).

The vision of Galam and Moscovici can easily be extended to be tested with ABM, as it includes agents who have internalised norms and social representations in various degrees. This internalisation creates a personal field that orients the agents into certain beliefs or actions. At the same time in-group norms create pressures to conform to certain beliefs or actions. One source of influence is a central authority figure (leader of a state, god, etc.) with which an aggregate of individuals may comply even if they do not actually interact with each other. Another source of influence is the idea of a small group where individuals know each other and interact on a regular basis. These two forms of social influence according to their view lead to two different forms of polarisation. They also identify three forms of power corresponding to three phases of group organisation that they call the 'paradigmatic, transitional and agonal' stages. Small groups can be seen as the prototypical case where conformity to in-group norms is the usual function. Then, as the group becomes bigger in a transitional stage, there is more conflict which leads to the emergence of power in the form of central forms of authority demanding compliance or conformity without the need for direct social interaction between members of the in-group. Finally, once groups learn to be resilient to conflict and appreciate diversity for its

[1] The model can be run from: https://modelingcommons.org/browse/one_model/7189#model_tabs_browse_in.

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generativity and innovation, then, in the agonal stage, conformity pressure lessens and reflexivity, novelty and innovation are favoured by conflicts of perspectives in societies. It could be argued that our post-industrial societies are now at this agonal stage where our historical wager is to promote the co-operative position described in Table 2.1, which overcomes the Scylla of submission-traditional and the Charybdis of rugged individualism-domination.

In the same 'Reason and Cultures' speech, Moscovici (1993) had a chance to explain with clarity the relationship between rationality and culture. He reiterated that we need a social psychology which resembles an anthropology of our everyday lives aiming to know how people elaborate their culture, resist it or dominate it. This is something that justifies a line of 'genetic research', as he says, and something that we described as the need for the study of part–whole relations in this book. It is a line of research capable of describing and understanding cultures when they are being developed. Once again, in this talk he believes there is something important in the ideas of Lévy-Bruhl regarding the opposition between collective representations stemming from beliefs and representations based on knowledge. He sees this distinction as constituting the seed of a social psychology of belief that can be verified and applied, which will give it its main attraction. We see asymmetrical relations as largely promoting representations based on belief and co-operative symmetrical social relations as largely promoting representations based on knowledge. However, real social interactions are always messy and are formulated as co-operative or asymmetrical in the process of negotiating various knowledge and status asymmetries in social interaction (Psaltis, 2005; Duveen & Psaltis, 2008).

The challenge for Moscovici consists in replacing what has been learned by comparing societies and cultures with each other with the most vivid contrast that exists within a society – a culture that is within ours and includes both representations based on belief and representations based on knowledge. What we need to do with our genetic approach, he argues, is to follow the transformations of one into another in order to capture the transformations of society and culture in themselves. Duveen (2007/2013) saw culture as a system of social representations, and in his last paper (Duveen, 2008) he further extended this discussion about heterogeneity in our current societies by proposing that the three communicative genres identified by Moscovici in the second part of his book on psychoanalysis support three different types of social groups. Propagation supports a way of relating that he calls communion, propaganda supports a group based on solidarity, and diffusion supports a group based on sympathy. For him

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this was a way to challenge the notion of a social group which became mainstream due to Tajfel's Social Identity Theory. The way to overcome the homogenisation of the notion of culture and nationalism or racism that promotes such homogenising notions of the collective is not only to recognise the heterogeneity of communicative genres or positions in the representational field of each community, country or society but, maybe more importantly, to render intelligible the processes of internal transformation from one position to the other (Psaltis, 2012). We see the proposal in this book as offering one possible answer to this challenge.

In this book what I proposed as submission, domination and cooperation can also be seen as being supported by different communicative genres or types of social groups. They are all living generative representations. They are not a 'representation of the world' but '*for* the world' as Moscovici (1993) argues. Even if the elements of each configuration are fleeting and illusory, they keep form, meaning and power of action that converge in a social reality. Different forms of historical consciousness relating to each position regulate connection between past, present and future orientations in different ways.

Social Representations and Conflict Transformation: The Role of Emotions

Both Zittoun (Chapter 8) and Alexopoulos (Chapter 9) suggest that genetic social psychology engages more closely with the role of emotions. Zittoun reproaches me when I claim that there is no place in genetic social psychology for individuation, as she argues that 'genetic social psychology can only account for human development if it accounts both for the development of knowledge and the development of person who builds, experiences, feels and lives through that knowledge'. Let me first give some context to my claim on individuation. I was referring to a word used by Castorina (2010) in one of his two commentaries on Duveen's work and genetic social psychology. Castorina (2010) wrote in his commentary something that both Patrick Leman (2010) and myself (Psaltis, 2024) found objectionable: he wrote about 'the significance of some of his [Duveen's] empirical studies which link psychological development to social identity' as describing a process of individuation in social psychology.

Leman (2010) replying to Castorina wrote that to cast the individual as a unit of theoretical interest is a mistake: the individual is often necessarily an empirical focus, but development is, always, a social process according to Duveen (1997/2013). This was the sense in which I wrote that there is

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no place in Duveen's writing where the process of internalising social representations could be described as individuation, and thus there is no place in genetic social psychology for individuation. There are at least two reasons for this: (1) Duveen was describing the process of the ontogenesis of social representations as the emergence of the social actor and the internalisation of a social identity, not a personal or ego identity – Duveen was interested in the social-psychological and not the psychological subject; (2) even in the original genetic psychology of Piaget his research interest was with the epistemic subject which is not an individual subject but a mere abstraction dealing with the coordination of actions irrespective of whether these take place intra- or interpersonally. In other words, the study of idiosyncratic or individual trajectories of individuals did not seem to be the priority for Duveen despite his own interest in psychoanalysis and the ethnographic method. There is no doubt that what is proposed by Zittoun in her study of diaries or Valsiner as idiographic science can offer a lot of insights in the service of developing our understanding of the articulation of microgenesis, ontogenesis and sociogenesis, but, at least for me, this is one of the various methodologies to help in this articulation and not an aim in itself. Indeed, I see the autobiographical method that I proposed in this book as valuable in helping to realise some important points about this articulation: (1) The image of Varoshia as 'hostage' in my early childhood is acting as a guiding principle for the rest of my life. My efforts to build the home for co-operation in the buffer zone could be seen as some kind of substitute for the loss of my home. (2) Technological innovation is crucial in life trajectories. Would I have been in a position to locate Duveen and his work and eventually study with him were it not for the internet that just appeared and made possible my locating his work. (3) Hierarchical relationships not only have superficial influence on people but can actually lead to the opposite results. Hazing in the army in Greece led me to develop a distaste for hierarchies and the army itself.

My autobiographical analysis also shows that both Zittoun and Alexopoulos are correct in requesting further integration of emotions in my theoretical framework. Although I am personally not vested in psychoanalysis in any way, it is important to recognise that foundational ideas for the formation of genetic social psychology directly relate to Freud's work through the influence of Hans Furth on Duveen. As I showed in Chapter 1 of this book, Furth, who was Duveen's first supervisor, was a psychoanalyst and offered Duveen a vision of genetic social psychology of the need to insert a role of identity/social relational dynamics in knowledge

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construction. I believe Duveen's turn to the study of social interaction and cognitive development in that sense was no coincidence. For him to understand the role of social interaction in cognitive development was a way to understand the role of emotions in cognitive development also. In fact, I was struck by some of the arguments made by Piaget in his *Intelligence and Affectivity*. He used the exact same argument about the role of emotions in cognitive development with the role of social interaction in cognitive development when commenting on the work of the social Genevans' (Doise, Mugny & Perret-Clermont, 1976) in the special issue for his 80th birthday (see Psaltis & Zapiti, 2014). In short, like social interaction, emotions are offering the energetics and dynamogenic dimension but not the structure of knowledge.

Now, from the perspective of the study of the epistemic subject that Piaget was interested in and his definition of changing knowledge as change in operatory structures, this is probably correct. However, from the perspective of genetic social psychology interested in the study of the social psychological subject, emotions have a more constitutive function in the three significant subject–object–other significant structures of representing identified (submission, domination, co-operation), as they are integral parts of a socio-emotional and cognitive configuration described in Table 2.1 of Chapter 2 in this book. The further and deeper step in the study of emotions requested by Zittoun that hinges on the study of extreme cases of emotions (child trauma, PTSD, etc.), which is certainly relevant in post-conflict settings, is a new avenue for exploration which I hope to explore more in collaboration with colleagues from clinical psychology in the future.

Genetic Social Psychology for World-Making and Its Application: The Limits of Intergroup Contact

Gillespie (Chapter 7) rightly recognises the need for a psychology that empowers humans to critically reflect on and collectively navigate changes, focusing on creating possibilities and distributing world-making tools fairly. In line with our recent proposal with colleagues (Power et al., 2023), social psychology as a historical science (e.g. Muthukrishna, Henrich & Slingerland, 2021) should focus on 'world-making' in two senses. First, people are future oriented and often are guided more by what could be than what is. Second, social psychology can contribute to this future orientation by supporting people's world-making as well as critically reflecting on the role of social psychological research in world-making. This endeavour is fundamental, for example, in Furth's work when he

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draws on Castoriades and his radical imaginary. In any emancipatory proposal, as also shown more recently by Zittoun and Gillespie (2015, 2018) and Glăveanu (2020), the role of imagination and creativity is crucial. Recent work by anthropologists and archaeologists (Graeber & Wengrow, 2021) shows that in the history and prehistory of humanity all possible forms of social organisation (egalitarian, hierarchical, matriarchal, patriarchal, etc.) were possible, many times co-existed and often varied seasonally even within a single society. There is no specific historical necessity for complexity to lead to power, and indeed Galam and Moscovici's work shows that more complex heterarchic organisations, resilient to conflict of ideas that view diversity as opportunity for innovation, novelty and richness, are possible in our post-industrial worlds. One does not need a lot of imagination to see the value in what Piaget was proposing in 1932 as co-operative relations (Piaget, 1932) in his *Moral Judgment of the Child* as a solution to post-industrial dilemmas. To the west of the Federation of Switzerland,[2] in New York, he witnessed the rugged individualism and the Wall Street Crash of 1929, and just next to his country he saw rising fascism in Italy and Nazism in Germany. About 100 years later the challenge remains the same. Let us hope that humanity will not need a nuclear holocaust to rediscover the importance of co-operation over competition, as this realisation was probably a phenomenon related to the shock caused by the Second World War (see Figure 5.1).

It is our belief that family structures, education and the media hold the key to cultivating what is 'possible' and the imagination of a better society. Genetic social psychology proposes interventions on the basis of direct and indirect forms of intergroup contact, semantic contact through media and co-operative relationships at all levels of analysis. Interventions like the ones proposed by Bermúdez, Sammut and Nicholson in this volume are at the heart of a way forward.

Bermúdez (Chapter 12) offers a compelling example of how integrating ontogenetic, microgenetic and sociogenetic analyses can enrich our understanding of societal change and the development of critical thinking about social conflict and violence. Her reflection on the evolution of her research underscores the importance of considering individual cognitive processes, relational dynamics and societal narratives collectively. Her perspective highlights the value of a holistic approach to theoretical frameworks that aims to address complex social issues. Her current research on how

[2] I often wonder about whether the fact that Switzerland is a successful federation could be related to Piaget's work and his social psychology in this country.

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collective narratives around violence are produced, disseminated and transformed at the societal level in the Spanish Basque country suggests more ways of applying our framework in various other contexts of post-conflict settings beyond Cyprus. For example, like the Basque country, in Cyprus there is also a secessionist feeling in a certain community that at some historical point took up arms to make this a possibility. Unlike Cyprus, in her example there was not a powerful neighbour to support this claim militarily, and therefore the situation evolved differently. In either case, the loss of life is a tragedy, and what is proposed by Bermúdez as a way to critically evaluate the normalisation of violence is compatible with our approach to promote co-operative relationships. Methods like the one proposed by Bermúdez and Sammut are desperately needed to connect theory to praxis. Sammut (Chapter 10) similarly reveals the complexities of reconciling divergent perspectives rooted in contrasting world views which shape social order and relations. Sammut argues that human action is inherently self-interested and oriented towards social relations that support collective projects. These projects are legitimised by common sense, which grants meaning to social objects and events. Overcoming conflict requires unpacking contrasting action strategies in terms of supported projects and logical perspectives. The argumentation analysis protocol proposed by Sammut is promising in identifying convergent claims in a contested terrain. While these claims do not reconcile contrasting projects, they provide building blocks for mutually satisfactory solutions and reveal targets for social representations interventions.

The possible limitations of contact theory and contact interventions are brought to the surface in Nicolson's commentary (Chapter 11) that focuses on the Israeli–Palestinian conflict through the lens of genetic social psychology, specifically examining the potential for societal change through various forms of intergroup contact. Nicholson explores the complexities of this protracted conflict by applying a multilayered analysis that considers individual, intergroup and societal ideological contexts. The commentary emphasises the importance of acknowledging asymmetry in intergroup perceptions and actions, using empirical findings to discuss the role of intergroup prejudice and its impact on the microgenesis, ontogenesis and sociogenesis of social representations of the conflict.

Nicholson advocates for a comprehensive approach to understanding the Israeli–Palestinian conflict, highlighting the need to consider individual experiences within broader intergroup and societal contexts and underscores the critical role of power asymmetry in shaping intergroup contact and its outcomes. Nicholson points out that this aspect is often overlooked

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in discussions of the contact hypothesis, yet it significantly influences how groups perceive and interact with each other.

Indeed a recent meta-analysis by Kende et al. (2018) of 660 samples across 36 cultures suggested that egalitarianism at country level moderated the expected contact-reduced prejudice association, as it led to stronger contact–prejudice associations. Higher cultural hierarchy values and social dominance orientation corresponded with weaker contact–prejudice associations. Nicolson's work shows that in unplanned encounters under conditions of military occupation the challenges could be even higher. Nicholson's sensitivity to the historical and geopolitical background of the conflict is setting the stage for a discussion on the possibilities and challenges of intergroup contact, the differences between unplanned and planned contact scenarios and highlighting differences in perceptions and outcomes between minority and majority groups.

Indeed, as we have seen in Cyprus, contrary to what one might expect on the basis of other findings where numerical minorities benefit less than numerical majorities from prejudice reduction through contact (Pettigrew & Tropp, 2005), prejudice reduction for Turkish Cypriots through contact was equal if not bigger compared to the one for Greek Cypriots in the period after the opening of the checkpoints. In a condition of a warm and escalating conflict like the 2023–2024 conflict in Israel and Gaza, one can easily see the limitations and maybe even failure of these unplanned interventions in earlier periods because of the highly asymmetrical and challenging situations of occupation in the Israeli–Palestinian conflict described by Nicholson. In such contexts planned contacts in safe environments would probably produce much better results.

All in all, commentaries from Nicholson, Sammut and Bermudez encompassing different conflict and post-conflict settings offer valuable perspectives on the complexities of intergroup relations and the potential for societal change through contact, argumentation and dialogue. By applying a multilayered analysis, all three commentaries enrich the discussion on genetic social psychology's applicability to real-world conflicts. They all emphasise the importance of considering asymmetry, societal context and the nuanced dynamics of intergroup contact in understanding and addressing protracted conflicts.

Conclusion

The proposal in this book of a genetic social psychology puts forward one way that psychology can be seen as a historical science (Muthukrishna,

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Henrich & Slingerland, 2021). What Henrich (2020) describes as the dark matter of psychology that prepares the ground historically for the emergence of new institutions is actually social representations. But there is a struggle between representations to define the future on the basis of different visions and projects that we identified as significant structures. They are significant structures in the sense that they are enduring forms of social interaction with a predictable pattern of relationships between values, ideas and practices. We proposed three distinct significant structures (submission, domination and co-operation) that can be mapped on positions in the representational field of a certain conflict. Our aim should be to understand the processes that lead to some of these structures becoming more or less strengthened due to historical, political and economic developments. In the early years after conflict it is expected that significant structures of submission and domination take the upper hand and form a certain equilibrium that will tend to freeze representations around a more traditional ethos of conflict (Bar-Tal, 2023). However, a process of conflict transformation must be put in place that will increasingly favour the co-operative structure. Such a process will probably be taking place in parallel with historical processes of socio-economic changes (urbanisation, rise in GDP) and unexpected events (financial crises, pandemics, wars) that also influence value change in certain directions discussed in this book. International non-governmental and intergovernmental organisations tasked with promoting peace and stability can offer external help when internal dynamics are very difficult. The motor for positive ontogenetic and sociogenetic change is microgenesis as predicted by Duveen and Lloyd (1990) and the major institutions that can support microgenetic processes of co-operation is family the educational system and the media with increasing importance of each in a human life trajectory.

As we are reminded by Duveen (2001/2013), social identities are a function of representations and are concerned both with identifications and being identified; they can be construed as positions within the symbolic field of a culture. Thus the three positions in the representational field that we identified in the Greek Cypriot community in 2007 and the four positions in 2017 form the 'thinking society' of adult expectations of the 'being identified' part for students in the microgenetic process of social interaction between parents and students and teachers and students depending on their social network. In Cyprus, as in other parts of the world, only a minority of people are close to political parties. Thus, only a minority of students would be exposed to views more or less politically articulated (as I was from my father; see my autobiographical note), but

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the majority will be influenced by some of the grassroots understandings that we have seen earlier. Given the multiplicity of positions, one could assume that students extract their sense of in-group norms from the stance of the majority of their teachers and the official policy and rituals of the school.

Microgenetic processes of social influence and the development of agency will be regulated by the forms of recognition between subject and other, with closer and deeper interpersonal relationships having a stronger influence on the consciousness of students in either direction although relations of constraint will be more likely connected with the 'superficial layer of beliefs' (Duveen, 2002/2013) in Piagetian terms than reconstructed knowledge as depicted in Chapter 2 here (Table 2.1).

Children in childhood and adolescence become agents in the field of ethnic identity in the sense that they start choosing their friends by seeking or avoiding intergroup contact. This makes clear the dialectic between social representations and identities. The role of gender is not unrelated to the emergence of ethnic conflict. Representations of gender and gender identities are ontogenetically formulated first and probably form a template of asymmetrical expectations formulated in the first two to three years of life that become the core on which later forms of asymmetry are formed. Challenging patriarchal structures of asymmetry equals challenging the heart of asymmetrical militaristic and nationalistic structures also (Hadjipavlou & Mertan, 2010; Demetriou & Hadjipavlou, 2020).

As noted by Duveen (2001/2013), Lucien Goldmann (1976) saw so penetratingly that the identities that emerge in the course of development constrain the representations which individuals or groups might accept. In his terms the limiting case was one where the conditions for the acceptance of a new representation entailed the dissolution of an existing identity. But identities here are not understood as simply a categorisation or the strength of identification or importance of belongingness to a group as in Social Identity Theory. As proposed by Duveen (2008) in his last published paper, we should reconceptualise our notion of group and identity in social psychology by recognising heterogeneity of social groups that depend on the communicative genre or position supporting each representation. This will lead to the realisation that there are in fact more similarities between certain social networks of people across societies or social divides and countries than social networks within societies, countries or communities. In Cyprus, for example, the pro-reconciliation positions in both communities share many similarities in the definition of the

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Cyprus history, current feelings and trust for the other community and reduced feelings of threat. Thus, a position of co-operation is an identity itself that might carry more social-psychological weight in the sociopolitical sphere than being Greek Cypriot or Turkish Cypriot.

As we have seen in Chapter 1, there has been some theoretical engagement with genetic social psychology beyond the positive commentaries by Moscovici (2013), Valsiner (2013) and Nicolopoulou and Weintraub (2009), by Juan Antonio Castorina (see Psaltis, 2024 for a more extended dialogue). Based on previous commentaries and the seven commentaries in this volume I see some avenues for further work on genetic social psychology and some contributions it can make to more traditional disciplines. There is certainly a need for more ethnographic work in the school context to understand everyday processes of constructing representations of ethnic conflict. Ethnographic work, mostly through in-depth interviews, can shed more light on autobiographical stories of people belonging in all birth cohorts of interest in a certain conflict case. Experimental ethnography that sets up conditions of social interaction under conditions of conflicting asymmetries is also needed. Analysis of how children and students give meaning to media news and social media that present aspects of a conflict is also of crucial importance for the future.

Hopefully, the genetic social psychology framework proposed here will facilitate theoretical expansions in various other disciplines and areas of interest. In social developmental psychology it could help to overcome the fragmentation of mini models of developments in various domains. The Piagetian tradition can turn its attention to further refinements of the work of Piaget and Weil (1951) that was stopped short due to concerns by the Genevan public in the Cold War climate of the times. Social representations theory can attain a more critical edge, as it often ends up just being a descriptive enterprise failing to find a place for power and its critique in its theoretical model. The field of history didactics can also enlarge its understanding of historical consciousness through an articulation of the processes of microgenesis, ontogenesis and sociogenesis. Finally, the field of conflict transformation can obtain a better understanding of both opportunities and challenges in the process of reconciliation in post-conflict settings from a better engagement with the developmental literature. At the same time further developments in these fields will naturally enlarge the purview of genetic social psychology itself.

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