

25th International Lab Meeting – 20th Summer School 2014 13th – 19th July 2014, Rome (Italy)

Key Lecture

Genesis, development and actuality of the Social Representation theory in more than fifty years (1961-2011 and beyond): the main paradigms and the "modelling approach"



European/International Joint Ph.D.
in Social Representations and Communication

Key research lines developed at the LACCOS

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Postgraduate Program in Psychology

The PPGP / UFSC comprises three areas with different lines of research:

- 1 – Organizational psychology.
- 2 - Cultural practices and subjectivity processes.

3 - Health and psychological development.

Psychological processes in the context of interactions between health and individual and social development.



Research lines from area 3 and **LACCOS**

Line 1- Health and psychological development contexts.

Psychological development and their relationships with the health in the environmental, familial, institutional and community contexts.



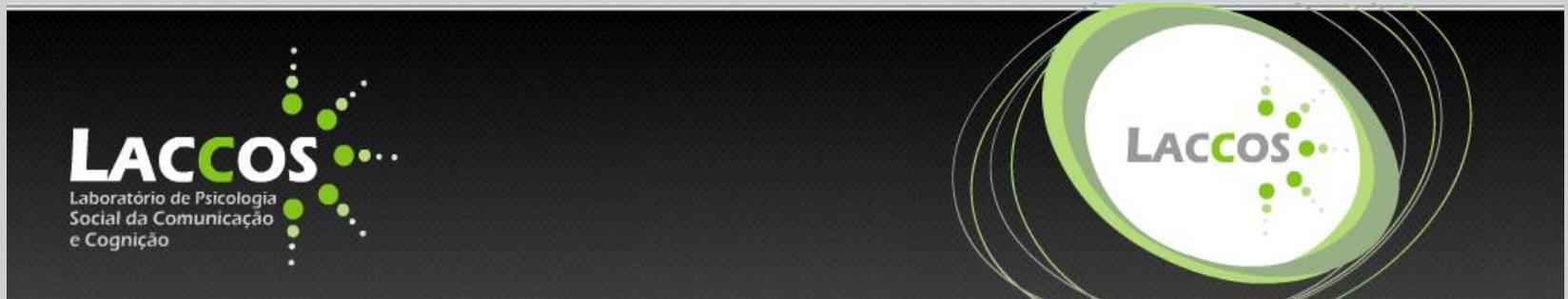
Line 2- Representations and social practices related to health.

Shared social knowledge and health practices.

Line 3 - Health and development evaluation.

Measurements and evaluation of psychological phenomena and processes in health and development.

Social Psychology of Communication and Cognition Laboratory - LACCOS



Created on – 05/24/1991
carrying the name of Communication Psychology Laboratory;
(Portaria nº 225/ PREG/91)

International Relations

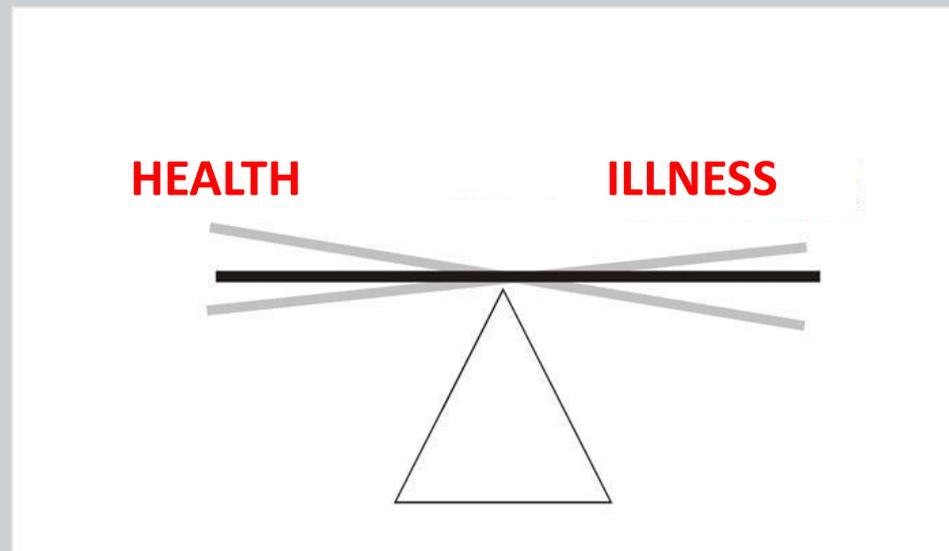
- 1- Dipartimento di Psicologia Applicata – **Università Degli Studi di Padova – Itália** (Representações sociais do envelhecimento).
- 2- European/ International Joint PhD in Social Representations and Communication / Social Representations and Communication Research Centre and Multimedia Lab - **Università Degli Studi di Rome “La Sapienza” – Itália** (Representações sociais do envelhecimento).
- 3- **Fondation Maison Sciences de l’Homme** – Centre Mondial Serge Moscovici - Paris (Teoria das representações sociais).
- 4- Centro de Investigação em Ciências e Tecnologias da Saúde – **Universidade de Évora – Portugal** (Envelhecimento e saúde).

Research lines developed at LACCOS

- 1- Social representations of **health and illness**: prevention, risks, health care and treatment.
- 2- Social representations of **aging**, intergenerational relations, welfare of elderly people.
- 3- Social representations of **body**, beauty and health.

Line 1

Social representations of health and illness: prevention, risks, health care and treatment.



Researchers: Andréa Barbará S. Bousfield, Andréia Isabel Giacomozzi, Brigido Vizeu Camargo, Juliana Fitaroni, Jean Paulo da Silva, Larissa Papaleo Koelzer, Mariana Becker da Silva.

Social representations of health and illness.

This line involves research on naïve theories of health and illness, focusing on **chronic diseases** such as hypertension, diabetes mellitus (type 2), Aids, chronic disease and others.

It aims to understand the role of shared knowledge about health and disease, from **the perspective of the social representations theory (SRT)** by Serge Moscovici, for the care and risks involving chronic diseases.

Social representations of health and illness.

Chronic non-communicable diseases (NCDs) are responsible for most of the deaths nowadays, identified as the cause of **63% of deaths** reported worldwide in 2008.

In the Brazilian context, 72% of deaths in 2007 were caused by chronic diseases, particularly those related to the circulatory system, diabetes, respiratory disease and cancer; because of alcohol consumption, smoking, physical inactivity and inadequate nutrition.

Social representations of health and illness

Studies on social representations, by **Claudine Herzlich**, **Denise Jodelet** and **Michel Morin**, contribute to understand how people deal with health and illness.

For Herzlich in despite of diseases are represented in a negative way by most people, the maintenance of social function and value of health are seen as important ways for coping.

For Morin the use of social representation approach values the importance of different points of view of social subjects about the subject health and illness.

Two studies from LACCOS related to health and illness:

SR of AIDS



SR of arterial hypertension



The role of interaction in the acquisition of scientific knowledge about AIDS

(Bousfield & Camargo, 2011)

Goal: To study the impact of different ways of dissemination of scientific knowledge about HIV / AIDS attitudes toward condom use and knowledge about the disease

To this aim, two studies were made:

- 1) one about **two types of reception** of an informative video (active and passive) with 378 students (mean age 16 years and eight months, 51.05% of male participants).
- 1) another on a **simulated case** involving a scientific controversy, where 100 students, divided into 5 groups, with mean age 16 years and nine months, participated in the actual construction of the information.

Procedure

Method: A field experiment in high schools.

Instruments: Test scientific knowledge of HIV/AIDS (TCCHA) and attitudes scale toward condom.

Procedure: Pretest and posttest. Two meetings (Time 1 and Time 2) were conducted with each group of students with seven days of interval between them.

Types of interaction with the information:

View the Video (passive) (study 1)

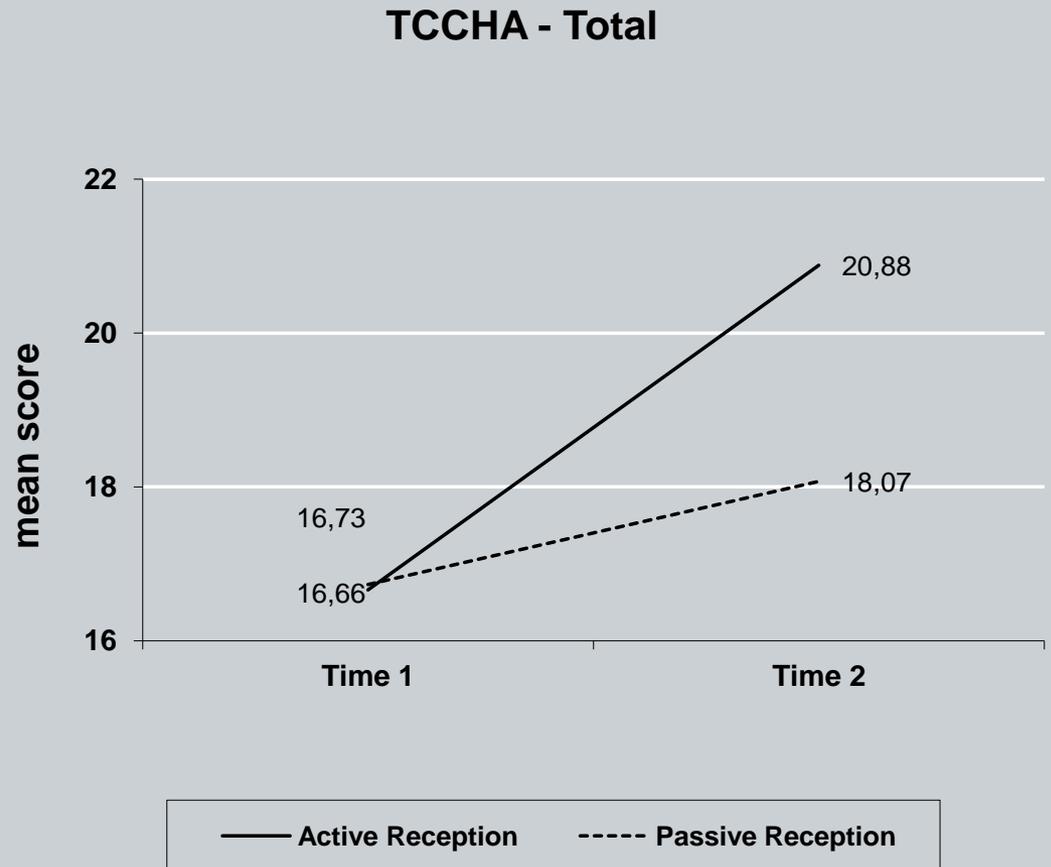
View + Discussion (Active) (study 1)

Simulated case with construction of information (overactive) (study 2).

Results of the test of knowledge in the types of reception of the informative video (active and passive)

Active reception group: The participants at Time 2 had a clearly higher mean than at Time 1, and the dispersion of the scores of participants decreased (initial standard deviation was 2.52 and after it was 1.97 points).

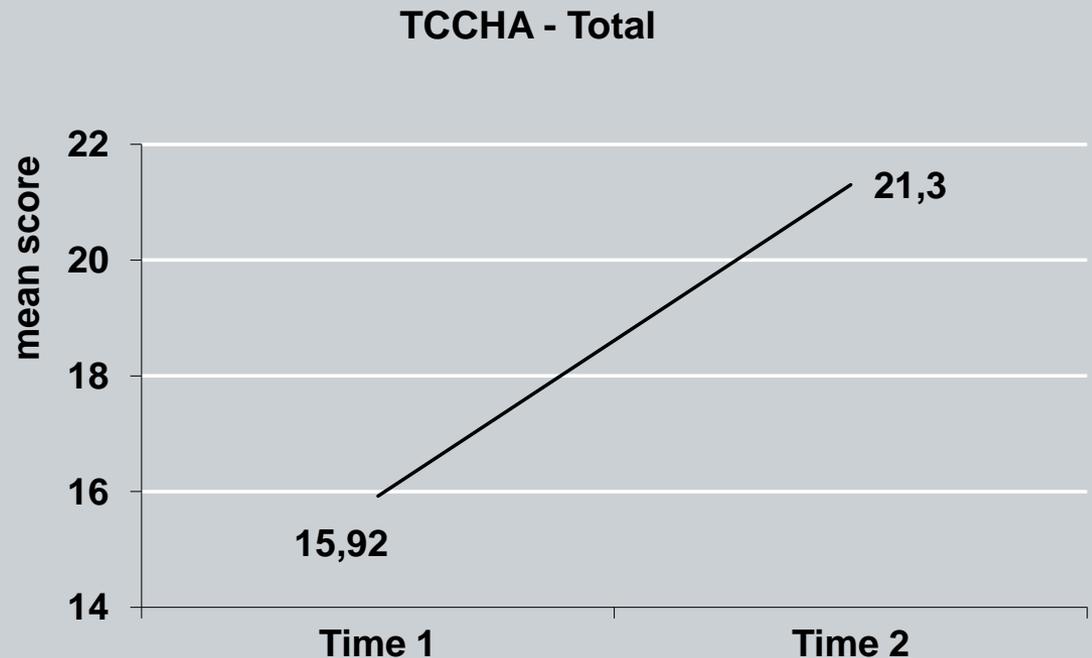
Passive reception group: There was also an increase in the mean, but lower compared to what happened in the previous group, and the dispersion remained the same (standard deviation of 2.35 points).



Simulated Case Results

Simulated Case: scientific controversy in experiments with vaccines developed to combat HIV/ AIDS.

The difference of the initial mean score for the final one showed a statistically significant difference [$t = 17,445$; $gl = 99$; $p < 0,0001$].



Social representations of hypertension and practices related to disease control (Silva & Bousfield, 2014)

Method: An exploratory and descriptive study.

Goal: To analyze the relationship between social representations of hypertension and practices to control the disease in people living with this chronic condition.

Participants: 60 users of Public Health System (Sistema Único de Saúde – SUS) living with systemic arterial hypertension in Jaraguá do Sul – SC – Brasil.

Instrument: Semi-structured interviews conducted in the participants' residence.

Data analysis: descending hierarchical classification of text segments with the software IRAMUTEQ.

Results

- The **medication becomes a key element**, which requires a daily commitment that prevents the occurrence of major illnesses such as heart attack and stroke.
- When representing the **disease**, people also use the treatment to organize the **knowledge** related to the object.
- Modification of lifestyle and the requirement **to incorporate new behaviors** reflects a practice that occupies the social imaginary about the disease.
- The social representation of hypertension is characterized by a **strong connection with the context of the practices** surrounding the disease.

Line 2

Social representations of aging, intergenerational relationships, welfare of the elderly.



Participants: Brigido Vizeu Camargo, Alberta Contarello, Andréa Barbará S. Bousfield, Adriana de Aguiar, Amanda Castro, Daniela Xavier Morais, Bruna Berri.

Social representations of aging

This is a line of research on the importance of **naïve conceptions of old age to the process of aging**, intergenerational relationships involved therein, and the implications of this type of knowledge for aging well.

The theoretical basis of this line of research involves the interface between a psychological approach, as reflected by the works of **Paul Baltes** with "successful aging model", and **Anita Neri**; and a more sociological approach expressed in the contribution of **Alberta Contarello**, among others, with the SRT.

Social representations of aging.

The last Census (IBGE, 2012) revealed that the Brazilian population profile has been undergoing a process of intense shift towards an increasingly aging demographic profile.

According to the "*Report on the State of World Population*", published by the United Nations Population Fund - UNPF, among the 7 billion people in the world, 893 million are elderly. **By 2025, Brazil will be the sixth country in the world in number of elderly.**

Old age is defined as a stage of human development; while aging is the process that runs across these steps.

Two LACCOS studies on aging:

Aging



Spirituality



SR of aging in different age groups (Magnabosco-Martins, Camargo & Biasus, 2009)

Method: A descriptive and comparative study.

Objective: To compare the social representations of old age between different age groups.

Participants: 23 adolescents, 21 adults and 27 elderly people; children, parents and grandparents of the same families.

Instrument: Semi-structured interviews carried out involving two topics: elderly and old age, held in a middle class leisure center.

Data analysis: descending hierarchical classification of text segments with ALCESTE software.

Results related to the term "elderly".

- Most participants reported maintaining **intergenerational relationship**, especially within the family.
- Older people associate the idea of "elderly" to family relationships; the notion of activity that differentiates **to be elderly (active) or be old (passive)**.
- Teens and adults build a sense of "elderly" linking it to **need and suffering**, but also to **experience and wisdom**.

Results related to term "Old age".

- The elderly group shares the ideology of the "**good old age**", considering that being old or being elderly depends on the "**spirit**".
- Nonelderly groups (teenagers and adults) have an idea of aging linked to **losses (organic and psychological transformations) and gains (knowledge and experience)**.
- Aging seems to be understood as synonymous with old age. **The objectification of the social representation of old age: "elderly"** has as main feature the polarization between activity and inactivity.

Aging and spirituality (Gutz & Camargo, 2013)

Method: Case studies.

Objective: To study the relationship between spirituality and coping with life situations in old age.

Participants: 30 elderly people matched by gender, aged 80 years or more.

Instrument: Conducted in-depth interviews involving two topics: old age and elderly, held in a middle class leisure center.

Data analysis: descending hierarchical classification of text segments with ALCESTE software.

Results: gender differences

Social representation of **elderly women** about spirituality is anchored on the ideas of:

- religion;
- divine protection;
- and matter transcendence: the existence of a place that will house human being after death.

Social representation of the **elderly men** is anchored on the ideas of:

- connection with God;
- mundane existence transcendence;
- virtues: importance of honesty in interpersonal interaction and human responsibility before choices.

Results: Spirituality and coping with old age

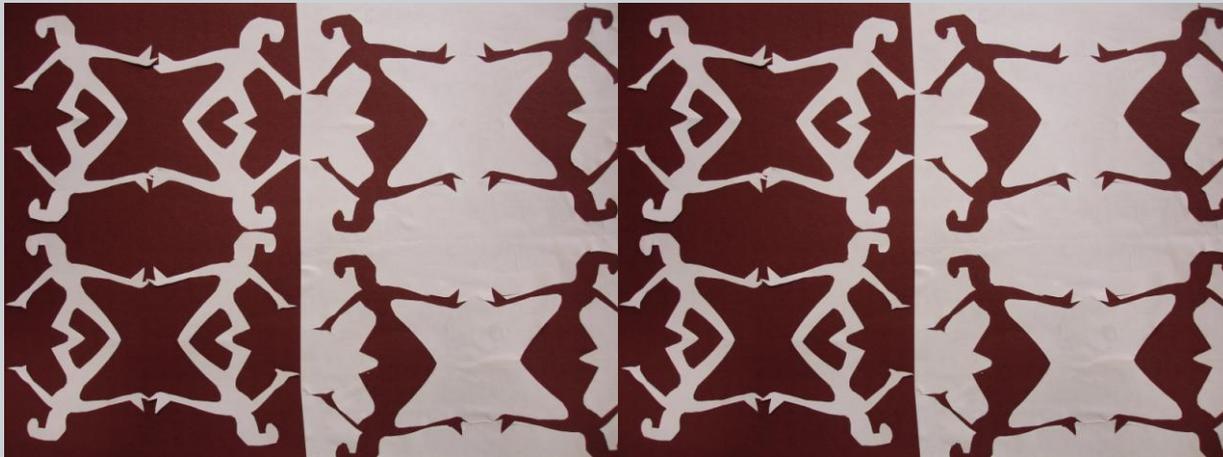
Spirituality is linked to coping with **everyday situations in old age** and a source of **preparation for death**.

Faith and prayer were mentioned as means of accessing a rapprochement with the sacred in favor of protection and support when facing adverse situations.

The ideas of **heaven, hell, resurrection and reincarnation** guided and justified the practices of elderlies who maintain religious practices.

Line 3

Social representations of body, beauty and health.



Participants: Brígido Vizeu Camargo, Ana Maria Justo, Adriano Schlösser e Mariana Bittencourt de Los Santos.

Social representations of body.

This research line consists of studies on social representations linked to the **body and care practices** related to it, in health and beauty contexts.

According to **Denise Jodelet**, TRS may contribute to the comprehension of the body beyond the individual and psychological dimension, clarifying the role of the shared knowledge on recovering the importance of beauty and health care and their consequences for people.

Social representations of the body.

Practices related to the body, in order to maintain **health or beauty**, are generally supported by individuals or shared representations of the body in general, and of the body image.

One focus of this line is the relationship between body and health. In recent years it has been evidenced **the rise of obesity in the world**, including developing countries. It was found that almost half of the population are overweight.

Social representations of the body.

The body has an important role in the relations between people, and is associated with the seductive power and the influence in interpersonal relationships.

Relevance of the study of the body from the social representations theory: integration of the private individual dimensions and those who are socially shared.

The work of **Denise Jodelet** on social aspects of the body, and the work of **Annamaria De Rosa** on beauty body are examples of the SRT contribution to the study of this social object.

Two studies from LACCOS about body:

Context of the object

Beauty and cosmetic surgery



Social representations of the body and implications of the insertion context (Justo, 2011).

Method: Laboratory Experiment (quasi-experimental design).

Goal: To understand the role of the context on social representations of body for different generational groups.

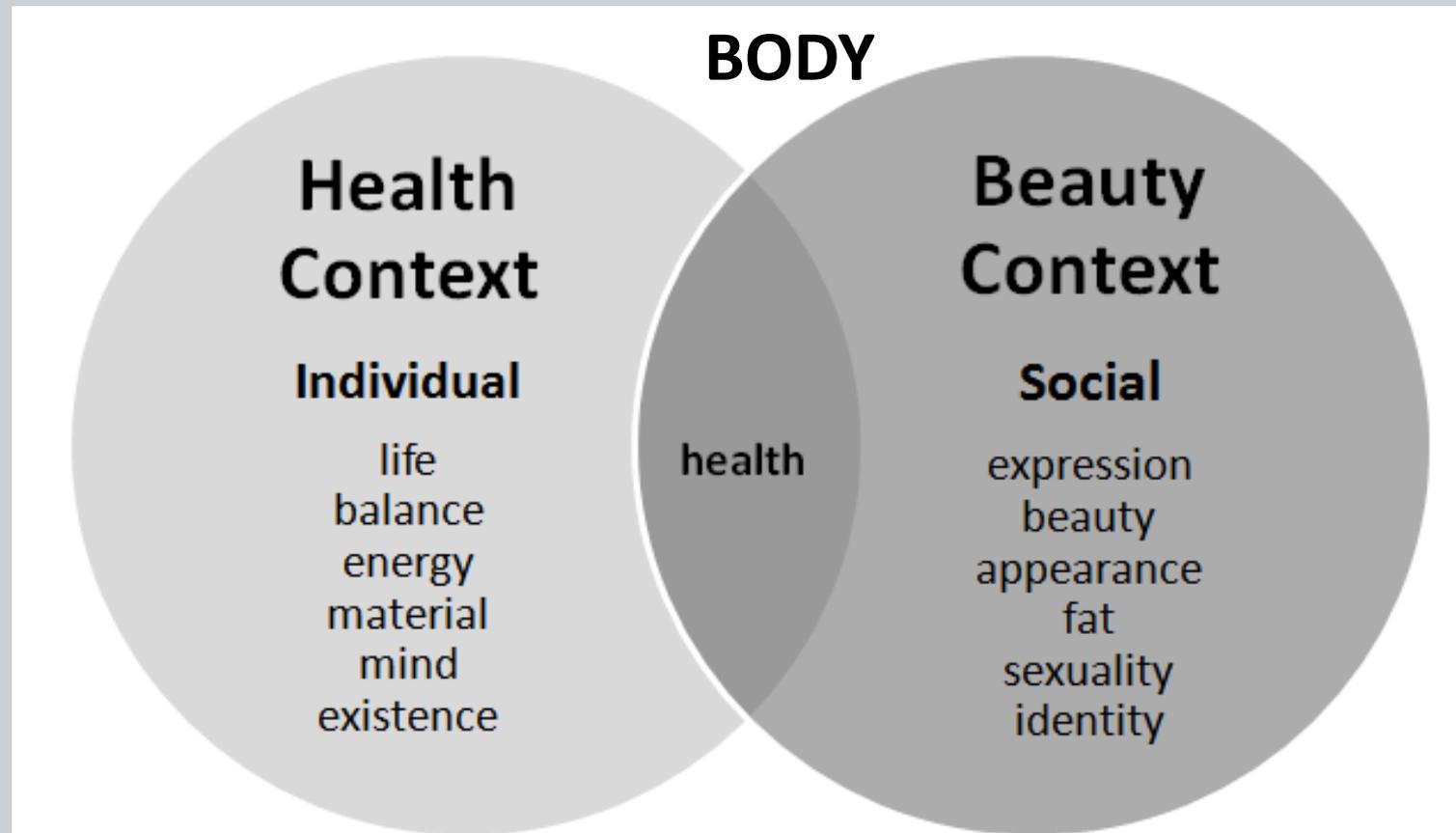
Participants: 79 persons, members of the university community, matched between young and old, men and women, divided into 16 groups of five participants each.

Instruments: 2 videos to manipulate the context (health and beauty); focus group, evocation test for the word "body".

Data analysis: descriptive and relational statistics, descending hierarchical classification, lexical analysis, similarity analysis and factorial analysis of correspondence.

Results

Health is the major structural axis of the SR of body. However, in all groups when connected with other representational elements, it reflects two different notions of the body, depending of the context.



Beauty and cosmetic surgery: social representations of college students (Vilas Bôas, 2012) *.

Method: Descriptive and comparative study, with cross-sectional design.

Goal: To identify the social representations of men and women with different academic backgrounds, about beauty and cosmetic surgery.

Participants: 120 university students of Physical Education, Arts and Exacts Sciences distributed equivalently by sex and area.

Instrument: Semi-structured and self-administered questionnaire.

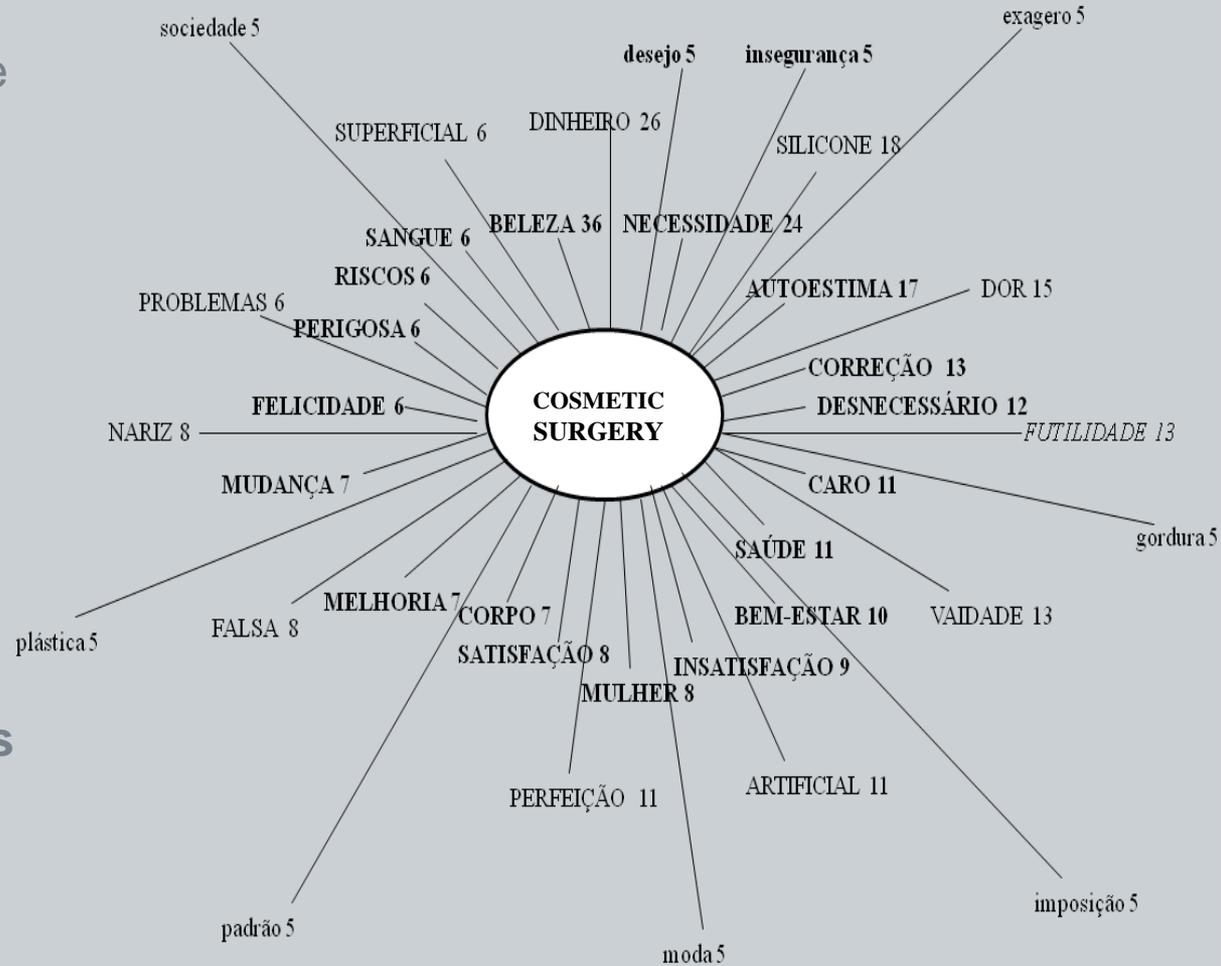
Data analysis: descriptive and relational statistical analysis, and also textual analysis of associative networks.

** This is a survey conducted in parallel in other countries (Italy, Romania, Spain and China), **coordinated by Annamaria De Rosa**. It involves a cooperation agreement between the Federal University of Santa Catarina-UFSC and the University of Rome (La Sapienza).*

Results

Women and Physical Education students have a greater repertoire in the semantic field of representations of beauty and cosmetic surgery; more favorable attitudes toward dimensions facing the body and beauty; worry about their appearance and reveal greater intention cosmetic surgery.

Men and Arts and Exacts Sciences students evidence lower relation with body and beauty in their representations.



Subjects in perspective at LACCOS

- SR of chronic diseases and **communication between providers and users of health services.**
- SR of **care and interpersonal relationships** on health.
- SR of **anti-aging practices.**
- SR of wisdom, aging and wellness.
- SR of overweight, **obesity** and practices of body weight control.
- SR of **body markings** and its relation to beauty practices
- **Epistemology of Social Representations Theory.**

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* **Note: References to the underlined authors are available as PDF files.**

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