

# Survival Strategies in Relation to the Social Representations of Global Supply and Demand

*Marcelo Di Grillo*

*(Universidad de la Defensa Nacional, Argentina)*

**Abstract:** People are governed by social representations (Moscovici, Jodelet) that express their survival and economic and social growth strategies both personally, family and social structure.

The hypothesis is that people reflect them from implicit theories about the equations of global supply and demand.

The empirical social indicators's battery (Stone, Richard) can be specified in continuous polar-preferences that express the implicit equation in each subject about economic life: sector of productive activity; role of the State; degree of opening of the structure itself; options on consumption, savings or investment; opinion on income distribution; ideas about the equation of public spending.

These latent preferences manifest sociological dimensions such as choices about urban rural, paternalism, closure, temporality, work, social solidarity, sociocultural currents. Everything allows us to see the background strategie's representations (Abric).

Inequations as indicators of ideological conflict deserve special attention. The paper provides for specification into few dominant models without claiming to perform a measurement.

**Key words:** economic sociology; lifestyle; social indicators; global supply and demand; economic ideology

**JEL codes:** D110, D130, D140

## 1. Introduction

This paper develops a hypothesis about the identification of the patterns of ideas on the economy, personal and national, that support the various individuals and social groups added, as a way of displaying the implicit strategies for their individual life projects and the consideration of the different groups social that are integrated into the social system.

It is proposed to conduct a study on the perception of people about the components of global supply and demand, related to the economy by the methodology of social representations about economic life that make up the population's habitus.

## 2. The Economic and Social Indicators

In the first place, it is necessary to consider the determination of the economy in general and then analyze the

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Marcelo Di Grillo, Ph.D. of Sociology, Universidad de la Defensa Nacional; research areas: economic sociology, psicho socio representations. E-mail: [m\\_digrillo@hotmail.com](mailto:m_digrillo@hotmail.com).

perceptions of individuals on the subject.

Global supply and demand was generated in UN by Richard Stone and others and the Social and Demographic Statistics System was applied in Argentina. Keynesianism graphs it in macroeconomics with the concept of implicit demand.

After World War II, the accounting system for the aggregate production of each country was generated as a means to assess the production of the countries and to establish their degree of development while establishing standardization parameters that would facilitate international comparisons. The pillars of this work were Ragnar Frisch and Richard Stone under the direction of Keynes who used the idea of product input matrices that allowed the establishment of a global comparative accounting on production. They were important modifications in 1953, 1968 and 1993 with some subsequent updates definitively establishing the National Accounts System.

They definitively establish the component elements of the equations of Global Supply and Demand, the basis of these calculations on the aggregate production of countries, (GDP) and their consumption patterns, aggregate investment (Fixed Internal Gross Investment), the per capita income and the balance of imports and exports.

Already in 1966 Bauer — Harvard sociologist — began the concern for the measurement of complementary indicators giving rise to the so-called Social Indicators Movement, with the intention of collecting social data series for planning purposes and construction of evaluation scenarios for them in the different countries of the world. The movement grew worldwide to the limit of the millennium.

Since 1998, the perspective has been broadened by adding social accounting that takes into account both the values of local demography — in Argentina the Sociodemographic Statistics System is applied — as well as the evolution of its components that meet the national population potential considering the accumulated social capital on the various areas such as vital statistics: birth, life expectancy at birth, age structure of the population; education: as a schooling rate, illiteracy; health: such as infant mortality and mortality and various morbidity rates; sanitary: as provision of drinking water, sewage networks, hospital coverage; Quality of life levels: such as the Human Development Index, the amount of poverty with the Gini index and others; of environmental problems such as levels of pollution and deforestation; of work: as levels of economically active population and unemployment; and other social indicators that broaden the perspective and give specificity to the description.

These magnitudes are counted as an element of social accounting in terms of economy, production and consumption.

### **3. The Habitus and Social Representations**

The social representations of the economy in the social groups vary with the perceptions of the economic and social system in which they are included.

The concern about the problem of the base of support of the positions of people and social attachments on economic issues leads to the issue of the ideologies of people and groups on the family economy itself and also on the general situation of the country in this thematic

This topic had several more or less formalized conceptualizations. Since the 1970s, the so-called survival strategies were discussed to refer to the ways in which poor families and social groups adapted and obtained ways of life that allowed them to survive satisfying their basic needs.

In parallel, several multinational-based studies elaborated detailed studies on lifestyles, with special emphasis on the consumption of the middle and upper sectors of urban society in almost all western countries. Several

international groups worked on the subject, especially the VALS in the US, the RISC in the European Union and the great ventures of Inglehart and Rokeach in the United States.

#### **4. The Methodologies for the Research**

The social representations and the habitus of Bourdieu are methods that serve to express the kind of everyday models of people's life strategy and are useful for this work.

Since 1950, the works of Moscovici, Jodelet and Abric have been dedicated to describing the mind maps built around topics of daily interest for people based on the studies of social representations that allude to economic life as thematic.

From the field of sociology Pierre Bourdieu was the one who worked the most related to the tastes and preferences of people in their various developments in social field theory in the specific notion of habitus.

“Social representations are a form of common sense knowledge, which through images condenses a set of meanings, systems of categories that allow classifying circumstances, phenomena and individuals themselves” (Jodelet, 1986).

Both Jodelet and Moscovici highlight the semantic and conative functions of social representations: engines of understanding and action. Abric (2001) updates the concept. Based on Asch's premise on the “first opinion” printing, the author extends the notion of social representation. It differentiates the “central nucleus” that is established around it and generates a system of assigning meaning to the entire representational field associated with each element, generating, rather than a system, a unitary structure of meanings.

These representational structures usually have roots in the common experiences of the history and culture of the social group in which they are generated. They tend to remain and exhibit resistance to change. They develop the principles of interpretation of reality and their meanings that are made prescriptive for the whole group. The author argues that they constitute the basis of the social consensus that brings together the population by granting membership and identity to its members, as well as the sense of differentiation with other outsiders.

As a complement to the central core, a “peripheral system” emerges that is constructed with the specific situations related to the theme of the core. It includes new contexts, new specific emergencies that demand their incorporation and deserve their own meanings not always consistent with the established base

The peripheral system fulfills, for the author, three functions.

On the one hand it provides a framework of what is considered "normal" as an adaptive meaning of the new towards the notion expressed in the nucleus. They can be integrated to the periphery of the representation such or such new information, or transformation of the environment. Elements likely to call into question the fundamentals of representation may be integrated, either by granting them a minor status, or by reinterpreting them in the sense of central significance, or by granting them a character of exception, of conditionality (Abric, 24).

Similarly, and from the sociological field, Bourdieu elaborates the concept of habitus as a system of durable provisions, which function as classification schemes to guide the valuations, perceptions and actions of the subjects. It also constitutes a set of structures, both structured and structuring. They are two processes: the one through which the subjects internalize the social; and the one that makes it work as a generating and structuring principle of cultural practices and representations obtained from the social context. Joint objectification and subjectivation.

Both methodologies are likely to be applied to the issue of perceptions of Social Supply and Demand in individuals.

## **5. The Implicit Theories**

Social representations as an implicit theory of global supply and demand express people's positions and are predictors of social behavior in the economic field.

The hypothesis posed in this paper argues that people, and relatively homogeneous social groups, maintain implicit theories about the components of the economic system that grant preferences to the components of their equations — including in these exclusions of concept — that sustain their social behaviors. in the economic and as such are predictors of their social behavior in the economic.

The idea of implicit theories has a limited development in the field of sociological theory that prefers other terms, but this one is interesting. For Nonaka and Takeuchi, social knowledge — they refer it to the organization — is generated through two simultaneous dimensions that are the epistemological one that elaborates the axis that goes from implicit knowledge to explicit knowledge; and the dimension of the level of knowledge that goes from the individual to the group, organizational and inter-organizational. The Cartesian plane of both dimensions allows to plot the joint level of the state and dissemination of knowledge of a specific topic. Tacit knowledge is personal, contextual and difficult to communicate. Explicit knowledge is encoded can be transmitted through some kind of language.

For the theory of learning, implicit theories are psychic representations that are part of the knowledge system of an individual influencing the processes of understanding, memory, reasoning and action planning. From the sociological approach, they are information connections implicitly learned by association from experiences in small social groups that allow interpreting events and planning action. They are cultural products that arise and are transmitted in the social by providing individuals with a shared discourse about the world.

The interesting thing about this perspective is that the implicit thing that happens is in the minds of the individuals or in the social representations and the habitus of the groups allow grouping diverse situations like “folds” that roll up elements either because they are assumed as “axioms”, like “assumptions” or simply condense to avoid their explicit inclusion in the speech.

## **6. The Dimensions of Global Supply and Demand in Social Representation**

The proposal proposes to measure ten pairs of preferences that configure various social representations and collective action purposes.

The idea here is that people have some mental strategy to face the path to obtain the necessary sustenance for their survival and development in a community that assumes the form of an organic social system in which all members coexist under a certain framework. normative and expectations of interaction.

These strategies are usually implicit but, to some extent, they reveal some explicit features.

The components of the global supply and demand that will be tested for the social representations correspond to the ten pairs that are plotted in the following Table 1.

**Table 1 Components of Global Supply and Demand as Social Representation**

Family consumption	NO											NO	Family savings
Productive investment of the country	NO											NO	Family consumption and savings
Industrial and service production	NO											NO	Agricultural production
Industry vs services: Industrial production	NO											NO	Industry and services: Service's Provision
Production consumed or invested in the country	NO											NO	Production or investment that is exported.
Consumption of national products	NO											NO	Consumption of imported products
Public expenditure on goods and services provided by the state	NO											NO	Amount of taxes payable to provide those goods
Higher occupation with lower salary	NO											NO	Higher unemployment with higher salary
Greater equal distribution of income	NO											NO	Investment in works and national companies
Higher level of equal pay	NO											NO	Lower level of wages: low product price and exports

On the first axis. Every individual in their daily lives has some idea on how to share their income between consumption and savings. Even the poorest usually think about keeping “something” for tomorrow, for whatever reason. Under conditions of constant income, all savings mean reducing consumption. Each person can assess whether they want to consume 70% to save 30%, or 80, or the proportion they want. The interpretation of interest is that the proportion intended for savings indicates future orientation as a life project.

This equation has two zones: a gradient of consumption-saving ratio that can be measured in any way, for example by percentages, and a zone of negation of any of the extremes.

They are the 0 points of the equation. A person can choose not to save anything and put a 0 at the end of the equation or directly reject the concept of saving, which is not the same.

Scarcity, from an analytical point of view, is hardly an evasion to avoid clearly stating the basic equation. In that sense the elusion is a fact of the implicit theory of the subject. It is not a question of the amount of income, which is defined as constant, but a strategy of life and project. Or you can reduce, less credible, consumption to 0 in which case you sacrifice everything for the future, your own or the family group. It may be the concept of a crudely cumulative individual.

Does the common person access this kind of concepts? The idea that we express that the equation is always present in people with regard to economic life, even if it often corresponds to an implicit theory that will be expressed in their social representations. The fact that economists have designed the Global Supply and Demand accounts is only incidental: they are only explaining intricate factors in everyday life in the economic area.

With respect to the second axis that divides family consumption and productive investment of society, people can opt, at least ideally, for the idea of distribution of the population product between family and personal consumption and the part dedicated to the development of productive investment: works of infrastructure, acquisition of machines and tools, reserves for credit development.

The individual person now submits to the vision of the economic system as a whole: even a simple worker can have the socialized notion of the amount of investment he is willing to sacrifice in the present as a social option for the development of production that will mean, in time, more and better products for consumption. It

includes the previous division, now socialized with the economic system incorporated in the mental scheme. Of course these proportions will vary from person to person and even, probably, there are many who refuse to reduce the investment to 0, or in the case of a capitalist, the consumption reduced to 0. These are extreme views of the productive apparatus of all the society.

Another necessary equation, the third one, is the vision of the people in the division between Industrial and services production and agricultural production. These are proportions estimated by the individuals that represent the structure of the economic system that is preferred to them.

Anyone can argue that agricultural production has a value of 0. In this case they are suppressing the same possibility of obtaining food for consumption, but it is a possible vision. Or conversely, the "pure naturalist" thinks that with the products of agriculture and the farm it is enough for everyone to live.

The fourth axis, subdivides, for convenience of measurement, the production between industrial products and services, as subsegments to complete the classic triad (Primary production, industrial and services). They are different visions of the productive system that do not exclude the emergence of 0. It is a vision of the economic system as a whole.

The fifth axis on the economic system is the equation between Production that is consumed or invested in the country vs. production or investment that is exported. It will be clear to the individual that all that is exported is consumption that is removed from the present and should opt as an individual and collective life strategy.

The sixth axis on the economic system makes choosing between the preferences for consuming national products or imported products. Other factors will intervene here, such as the presumed quality of both productions, which is what is evaluated.

In the fifth and sixth axes, it is assumed, in the model, that exportable products or investments have the same amount of acceptable imports for consumption or investment within the system. It is the option on the disposition of imported products in the present. These two measurements involve an idea about the margin of opening of the economy that is accepted as desirable for each person.

The seventh axis related to this evaluation is the level of desirable public spending. People should assess the level at which they want public spending to help the state provide goods and services to the population at the cost of each paying a higher amount of taxes. Do not forget that one of the assumptions of the model is the equal payment of taxes.

It is an equation that measures the degree of intervention assigned to the state in the regulation of people's public life. As always there will be a vision of the general economic system with an omnipresent state or minimum state or its intermediate grades.

The eighth axis of resolution is the level of occupation. The person must choose between their preference for full employment with minimum wages or a higher level of unemployment with better wages for those who are employed.

Here the concept of social solidarity is mixed with the desire to have a better standard of living. The fear of being dispossessed is also mixed. They are visions of the economic and social system.

Another equation, the ninth axis, is the one that opposes a complete distribution of all the income obtained or reserving a portion of them without distributing them to allocate them to public or private investments that potentiate the economy.

It is a disjunction that, in the case of equal distribution of income, provides a greater or lesser extent, a portion thereof for the development of productive capacities.

Finally, the tenth axis is another equation that faces between higher wages for all or the acceptance of lower wages for all in order to obtain better export opportunities for products and services that promise to result in lower prices for consumption.

## **7. Contributions or Models of Emerging Social Representations**

From the empirical results obtained, the emergence of several vital strategy models whose aggregation and denomination will vary conceptually according to the data and their interpretations are expected as results. It is assumed that there will be combinations of type “subsidiary” or “entrepreneurs” or “workers”, etc. The propensity to open, distribution, production, industry, future orientation, the autonomy of the individual and their corresponding opposite poles can be identified.

It will also be interesting to classify the impact of these strategies according to the objective position of the person in the economic apparatus, as a place in the economically active population, type of work and labor hierarchy.

It will be interesting to evaluate the place of the “0” as deletions in the equations that should be considered as current interests of the group of membership that may include the social exclusion of the denied pole as part of the discourse of the interests that a vision of the All social restricted.

The set of the conceptualizations allows to construct a social map of the project as temporality, as spatiality, as group exclusion, as independence of groups.

## **8. The Operational Model**

The operational model for the measurement of vital strategies consists in presenting a survey that, with a large battery of indicators, measures the equations of global supply and demand in individuals.

The questionnaire instruction consists in submitting it to an “ideal country model” in which the individual takes options both for his family group and for the economy of the country. The condition of the model is to keep production and aggregate economic income constant. Hold that everyone is subject to equal income as well as an equal tax burden.

The answers that fall on points “0” will be subject to qualitative inquiry to determine the meaning of the suppression expressed, promising to give interesting conclusions about the senses of disregard as a model, as well as the exclusion of groups in the social whole.

## **9. Conclusion**

In the context of the debate on conflicts and harmonies in Latin America as a whole, it is appropriate to clarify points related to economic sociology. This discipline is vastly traversed by the discussion about economic ideologies and their correlative therapeutic solutions.

The contents of the economic debate vary from country to country according to the demands of the social reality that each one goes through. They can assume different denominations such as growth, development, distribution, poverty, public spending, depending on the circumstance and state of situation in each country.

The ideologies that sustain individual people are a relevant issue in countries that inevitably go through a stage of democratic governments of one or the other sign and must undergo political debate for scrutiny by

citizens. And it should not be left obscured by the political labels of each occasion, because they add ambiguity, ideological contraband and certainly confusion.

Sociological theory provides the instruments for the typification of ideologies, their analysis and even for the inevitable proposal of alternative solutions in each case. Saying socialism, liberalism, populism means much more than the simple definition of concepts.

A problem that economic sociology is going through is the translation of these theoretical frameworks in intercultural terms for the various countries. Each platform, each historical circumstance establishes its phenomenal characters and permeates the analysis with the conditionality of the situation being experienced. This work does not discard this perspective but aims to establish a common comparative basis of an abstract and quite universal basis.

In this context, it is necessary to present a model that, through the debate on economic policies, proposes a common framework to compare the various economic strategies proposed. Especially since different economic ideologies cross countries with different terms, in addition to various proposals for solutions.

The proposal for the construction of a comparative theoretical framework that simultaneously serves these requirements is timely.

This modest contribution to analyze the various ideologies on the basis of the “case” only meeting point between all positions, which is based on the resolution of the equations that make the conceptualization of economic life.

The idea of subjective equations about the positions on life strategies around the productive and consumption cycle based on the concepts of global supply and demand is presented as promising.

The scheme is very simple but tries to establish the crucial points to understand the strategies of economic life that people and families adopt around a set of agreed concepts on the productive activity that everyone faces.

Each equation is implicitly or explicitly posed by every economic actor. There is no actor who does not solve theoretically or tactically the dialectic between, for example, public spending and taxes. The suppression of equitable terms acquire special value because they must be investigated in depth as significant elements of social representations of economic life. They are half solutions, not evaluated or intentionally omitted.

The whole of the equation system can constitute the founding framework of the social representations on the subject and very useful for a comparative analysis of the economic ideologies that sustain people.

It is not the purpose of this study to provide this tool as an element of economic education, nor as a factor of political indoctrination. It is constituted as a useful tool for the diagnosis of the social situation in Latin America.

We are talking about ideologies — implicit or explicit — that sustain people and even social groups on the modality of preference as a vital strategy to develop personal, family and whole social projects in different countries.

It is considered that the presentation presents a novel vision of the subject of the vital strategies of people that can result in an interesting tool of social diagnosis.

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