

The Anchors of the Social Representation of Tunisia: The Case of Expatriate Managers

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Abstract

The purpose of this research work is to analyze the origins of social representations that are anchored among expatriate managers about their host country in a context of global mobility of human resources. Given that very few studies on this subject have been carried out in Tunisia, qualitative research proved relevant. Forty-eight semi-directive interviews were conducted with expatriate executives working in Tunisia. They were transcribed and subjected to three types of analysis: a thematic analysis, an argumentative analysis and an analysis of discursive behaviour. The results revealed that representation systems are mainly determined by factors linked to the subject's activity. Ideological and cultural-historical factors are limited. French leaders are pragmatic people who have a realistic approach in their evaluation. They value interactions based on real activities and facts rather than biases and prejudices.

Keywords

Social Representation, Anchoring, Expatriate Manager, Host Country

1. Introduction

In a context marked by globalisation, companies are no longer limited by national borders and their international activities are intensifying. They are making the most of the advantages offered by the various countries of the world, setting up where they think they will find new customers and the best resources and tax advantages (Leroy, 2021). As a result, they use a variety of profiles, particularly expatriate managers, to ensure the best possible management of their activities and to set up group governance (Barabel & Meier, 2018).

The literature review on the mobility of these profiles has focused on the reasons for international mobility, the return from expatriation (Meier, 2019), and the adaptation of expatriates (Slama, 2014; Cooper, 2021; Boulaid & Yassafi, 2022;

Louzir-Ben Hassine, 2023).

Despite the fact that expatriates' social representations determine their behaviour and play an important role in interactions (Gaymard, 2021), we note that expatriation has rarely been studied in terms of social representations.

To bridge this gap, empirical exploration is essential. The aim of this research is to understand how expatriate managers construct social representations of a host country and what the mechanisms are for anchoring these representations. It will provide a better understanding of the positions taken by French managers, explain their behaviour in Tunisia and develop the levers that can be used to ensure better adaptation.

Understanding social representations, as a process of decoding the reality that determines action, makes it easier to identify the dynamics that influence individual behaviour and to adopt the most appropriate teaching strategies. To this end, we should emphasize the dynamic dimension of the relationship between social representations and practices, which create each other (Jeziorski et al. 2021).

2. Social Representation: A Multi-Faceted Concept

2.1. Definition of the Concept of Social Representation

Several authors have attempted to formulate definitions that take into account the different dimensions of the concept of social representation. However, it is not easy to present a definition common to these authors given the richness, complexity and mechanisms it encompasses (Gaymard, 2021). Social representation is a form of knowledge, socially elaborated and shared, having a practical objective and contributing to the construction of a reality common to a social group (Jodelet, 2003).

It is a grid that allows us to decode and interpret the world, and a matrix of meaning that is considered to be a process of arbitration of reality, which is generally approximate when it is not false (Mannoni, 2022). Social representations can also be defined as 'symbolic positions, organised in different ways (for example, as opinions, attitudes or stereotypes) according to their imbrication in different social relationships' (Doise, 1989: p. 228).

2.2. The Main Approaches to Representation

There are four ways of studying social representations. The first approach, initiated by Moscovosi, focuses on the conditions and processes that encourage the emergence of social representations. The second approach is structural. It is represented by Abric (1994), Flament (2003), Vergès (2003) and Moliner (1996). It is concerned with the content, organisation and dynamics of social representations. The third approach is sociological. It studies social representation 'as principles generating positions which are linked to specific insertions in a set of social relationships and organising the symbolic processes involved in these relationships' (Doise, 1986: p. 85). Individuals generally choose a frame of reference on which to base their thinking about an object that is linked to their social, ideological or

cultural insertions (Moliner et al., 2019).

Finally, the last approach, proposed by the work of Jodelet (2003), focuses on the role of language and communication in determining social representations. Social representations are found in language and function as a language, given the frameworks they provide for object categorisation (Mattelin Pierrard & Dubouloz, 2019).

On the basis of these elements, we believe that social representation is an appropriate methodological tool for studying and understanding the origins of social representations of a host country among expatriate managers. In line with some empirical research (Mounoud, 1997; Allard-Poesi, 1997; Serdyukov, 2006), developed in the field of management on the factors involved in the construction of representations, we also consider that the social representation of managers can be determined by the sociological context and individual or inter-individual differences. In other words, it may depend on the cognitive schema formed by the culture and ideology of the expatriates' country of origin, as well as their place in society and their social practices.

3. Anchoring Social Representations

3.1. Definition of Anchoring

Anchoring represents the possibilities of insertion into society and the resulting functions (Gaymard, 2021). It is a learning experience at some point in our lives, a trigger that triggers an automatic reaction in our thoughts, emotions and behaviour (Thomas & Micheau-Thomazeau, 2018: p. 159). It helps to make sense of the new images formed, in other words, to link the existing thought system to the new elements so that they become familiar (Dias et al., 2020).

3.2. The Different Types of Anchorage

3.2.1. Anchors According to Grize et al. (1987)

Grize et al. (1987) point out that the content of a social representation is produced by a set of social processes, each of which expresses a different locus of social determination. The first gives importance to the subject's everyday practice, the second places the representation in relation to the discourse circulating in society (ideology) and the third gives the representation its historical depth.

Several empirical studies have validated this postulate. For example, Vergès (2003) stresses the importance of the effect of these three types of anchorage on social representations. In his study of social representations of the economy, he suggests that economic representations are determined by the practice, ideology and cultural memory of social groups.

Furthermore, Serdyukov (2006) has shown that company directors' social representation of their profession and of themselves is determined by these three types of anchoring and that historical-cultural anchoring is the least important. Mounoud (1997), in his research on the environmental industry, shows that anchoring in practice is the most important and that cultural-historical anchoring is

limited.

3.2.2. Anchors According to Doise (2005)

Doise (2005) presented three types of anchors: psychological anchors, sociological anchors and psychosociological anchors. However, she states that the reality of anchors is not necessarily of three types. In the various studies of anchoring, the three approaches are mixed together and we can find them simultaneously within the same research.

4. Research Methodology: A Qualitative Analysis

We studied social representations of Tunisia based on data from the discourse of French expatriates. We chose the semi-directive interview as the method for gathering information, because in this type of interview we can conduct the interview in a flexible manner, allowing the interviewees to express themselves freely within a very precise framework (Sauvayre, 2021).

Our sample is made up of 48 expatriates who are heterogeneous in terms of age, status, experience and training, and fairly homogeneous in terms of gender. Indeed, the percentage of women in the contingent of expatriates within companies remains relatively low compared to that of men (Attia & Melin, 2017).

To conduct our interviews, we prepared a guide beforehand. This was not made available to our interviewees. We tried to cover all the topics in the guide and create a good atmosphere that allowed the managers to express themselves as they wished.

The interviews lasted between 60 and 150 minutes, during which two types of intervention were used: one focused on content, which enabled us to obtain additional information about what was said, and a second focused on expression, to help the interviewees express themselves better.

All the interviews were transcribed and subjected to a content analysis and an argumentative analysis. Argumentative analysis enables us to determine the important themes in the discourse by studying the process of forming object classes. It highlights the themes which structure the representation expressed by the individual (Grize et al., 1987, Mounoud, 1997).

We also conducted an analysis of discursive behaviours, taking into account the way in which the interviewee presents the content of the representation. The decision to study social representations using discourse data made this analysis necessary to carry out this analysis. Maingueneau (2021) emphasises that discourse is influenced by context and that all discourse is produced in a specific situation.

5. Presentation and Discussion of the Results

5.1. Components of the Social Representation of Expatriate Managers

The thematic analysis we have carried out has revealed that the social representation of Tunisia is multidimensional, comprising various characteristics that we will set out and illustrate with verbatims. Among these characteristics, some are

strongly representative of the Tunisian object while others are not. The first are shared by the majority of respondents. On the other hand, the second are not consensual (see **Table 2**). At this stage of our research, we cannot confirm the centrality of the elements shared by the managers because we do not know whether they are decisive for the meaning of the 'Tunisia' object. Indeed, the central core has a qualitative dimension. In other words, "it is not the importance of an element that defines its centrality, but the fact that it gives meaning to the representation" (Abric, 2003: p. 22).

The common perceptions of Tunisia among expatriates relate to the following elements: living conditions, administration, tolerance and human warmth, the importance of religion, the permission of the legal context, the good infrastructure, the quality of service offered by banks and the qualifications of human resources.

First of all, most expatriates stress that Tunisia is a simple country and living conditions are favourable. "For us French, the quality of life is better, in terms of food, here it's fresher and cheaper". In this respect, the results of a study by Louzir-Ben Hassine (2023) reveal that there is a similar structure between Tunisia and France in terms of food consumption practices.

Dahmani (2015) points out that more and more voices are being raised to criticize the fixed way in which the administration operates and to call for a reorientation centered on public agents and citizens.

In addition, tolerance and human warmth were demonstrated by the majority of respondents: 'During the month of Ramadan, we have no worries, we can eat, drink alcohol, there are restaurants open. For eight years, no Tunisian has ever reproached me for that. Tunisians are discreet and very tolerant, so there's no pressure. Some have even invited me to their homes. In this spirit, the results of Louzir-Ben Hassine (2023) reveal that human warmth, spontaneity, friendliness and tolerance towards other cultures are behaviours that are specific to Tunisians.

Tunisians, even those who are not fluent in French, make considerable efforts to remedy this problem in order to communicate and convey their ideas to expatriates (Béjar & Boudabbous, 2020). Furthermore, Slama (2014) states that the friendly and spontaneous nature of Tunisian locals makes it easier for expatriates to adapt to the subsidiary's environment and the behaviour of locals.

Furthermore, more than half of expatriates say that Tunisia has a good infrastructure. With this in mind, Coletto (2019) points out that the existence of infrastructure such as hangars, the airport and the port of Tunis makes it easier to transport goods quickly in and out of the country.

On the other hand, the heavy weight of religion is not appreciated by the majority of expatriates. In this respect, Nyobe (2014) confirms that since the Tunisian revolution, religion has taken on an increasingly important role in companies. But it does not necessarily represent a key element for employees. Other factors such as equality and fairness in terms of pay are just as important to them.

The qualifications of Tunisian employees attracted particular attention from expatriate managers. “The employees here are highly qualified. They know how to work in Europe, and they can do the same job in another country”. Indeed, it is the development of access to education that has led to growth in the supply of highly qualified labour (Grundke et Cassimon, 2022).

Finally, the majority of respondents emphasised the existence of a legal framework favourable to investment. “The legislative framework is excellent”.

The results also reveal the existence of a representation of Tunisia made up of a set of informational elements and attitudes. The main idea to emerge from the speeches is that there is a good perception of Tunisia. Indeed, a number of companies are looking to set up production subsidiaries in Tunisia, given its strategic location: in North Africa, at the junction of the eastern and western basins of the Mediterranean, and 140 km from Europe.

It is also well positioned geographically, with a 1300 km coastline in the centre of the Mediterranean, making it an economically open country (Bouhamed & Carnis, 2020). Tunisia’s proximity is a major advantage for rapid trade between the northern and southern shores of the Mediterranean. Moreover, Tunisia has a specific culture that is unique in the Arab world (Louzir-Ben Hassine et al., 2022). Indeed, since independence, it has made great efforts to improve the situation of women, particularly in terms of access to education and health, and to ensure equality between men and women at national and international levels (Boughzala et al., 2020).

5.2. Social Representation and Anchoring

The argumentative analysis shows that expatriates’ representations are determined by cultural factors, factors linked to the subject’s activity and ideological factors. Cultural-historical anchoring and ideological anchoring are limited. On the other hand, practical anchoring plays an important role in determining social representations. The results in Table 1 show that 90.24016% of the arguments relate to practical anchors, 6.59172% to cultural-historical anchors and 3.16811% to ideological anchors.

Table 1. Descriptive statistics for different anchor types.

Types of anchoring	Total Anchors	Frequency (%)
Practical anchoring	1766	90.24016
Ideological anchoring	62	3.16811
Historical-cultural anchoring	129	6.59172
Total	1957	100

These results do not confirm Abric’s (2003) statement that social representations are essentially marked by values that correspond to the socio-ideological system and by the history of the group that conveys them. We suggest as an explanation that

we worked on a particular population (expatriates who came for a very specific purpose, namely a professional one).

On the other hand, the interview situation with the managers does not allow for the activation of historical-cultural anchors and particularly ideological anchors. For them, the aim was to report on their essentially professional experience in Tunisia. We can assume that we would have been able to observe the activation of ideological anchors if the interview had taken place in the presence of a trade union representative, for example. “The interview situation is a finalised interaction situation and the characteristics of the enunciation situation (context, perceived objectives, status and image of the interviewer) can determine a specific discursive production in which it is not easy to distinguish between what is context-related and what states an opinion or attitude assumed by the speaker and having a stable character” (Abric, 1994: p. 61).

5.2.1. Cultural History and Social Representation

1) The historical aspect

The respondents do not seem to have many judgements formed from the internal and external history of the people and particularly the history of reciprocal relations between France and Tunisia. These results come as a surprise to us because Tunisia has passionately interested historians who have presented a discourse legitimising the French occupation and some of its assertions continue to influence the way many French people look at their former possessions (Bessis, 2019).

Furthermore, it has been argued in a series of studies that there is a positive relationship between social representations and the historical dimension (Jodelet & Moscovici, 1989; Roussiau & Renard 2003; Viaud, 2003; Flament, 1993; Guimelli, 1993; Gamby-Mas et al., 2012). The processes at work in the development of social representations are impregnated by the social and the historical, representations are formed as a function of historical determinants (Delouvé, 2018).

The fact that acquired knowledge does not play an important role in determining social representations reveals that memory has no effect on social representations of Tunisia.

2) The cultural aspect

The results of the argumentative analysis reveal that expatriates make few judgements based on their culture. Tunisian society has acculturated by opening up to French culture (Boukraa 2005). Long after its independence, Tunisia retained the concrete marks of the French protectorate (El Omari & Khlif, 2014).

The French occupation had very significant collateral effects in Tunisia (Bessis, 2019). Other forms of government and new intellectual and political references were introduced and helped to shape new generations of Tunisians (Bessis, 2019).

Moreover, these results come as a surprise, as several studies indicate the importance of culture in determining social representations (Moliner et al., 2019;

Fischer, 2020; Mannoni, 2022). A social group constructs a new representation by ensuring that it remains compatible with its pre-existing representations, norms and values (Moliner et al., 2019).

Moscovici (1998) points out that changes in social representations are due to cultural changes. These two concepts are closely linked. One of the main differences between society and cultures is the degree to which a representation penetrates relationships, behaviour and institutions.

5.2.2. Ideological Anchoring and Social Representation

The argumentative analysis showed that there was little affinity between the ideological dimensions associated with the representation of Tunisia. Indeed, few expatriate leaders expressed wishes in terms of liberal or ecological reinforcement, and no expatriate leader expressed wishes in terms of nationalist, anarchist or fascist reinforcement. This result surprises us because the notion of representation is associated with that of ideology (Boyer, 2021; Mannoni, 2022).

Guimelli (2015) shows that social representations are generally part of an ideological field. 'Each social group (defined by socio-demographic, socio-practical or ideological affiliations) has its own specific representations. On the other hand, Béal et al (2014) have shown, in their study of social representations of the judicial system, that ideological positions (conservatism, social optimism and pessimism) play an important role in the conception of justice.

1) Liberal ideology and representation

Ten respondents stressed the need for a more liberal Tunisian economy (more competition between banks, more freedom, a more permissive legal framework). This result reveals that few expatriates think a part of reality based on a liberal ideology that presides over the political deployment of Modernity, first in the context of the Renaissance and the formation of modern states, then in reaction to absolutism, and finally in a more radical way in the Age of Enlightenment (Dejaradin, 2022). This result could be linked to the characteristics of the Tunisian economy. Indeed, economic conditions in Tunisia have partially deteriorated over the last period (Boubtane & Rault, 2022).

State-owned enterprises and barriers to competition have a profound impact on business dynamics. Regulatory rules and procedures are complicated, the infrastructure deficit remains considerable and customs procedures are lengthy and expensive (Grundke et Cassimon, 2022).

2) Environmental ideology and social representation

Only six expatriates stress the need for ecological reinforcement. This shows that expatriates take little or no account of the environmental factor. Ecological ideology appears to be a secondary factor in the formation of social representations. On this subject, Landron (2023) points out that ecologist parties have only been able to influence French political life by forming alliances with the Socialist Party.

3) Ecologist ideology and social representation

Ecologists have taken advantage of the media coverage of environmental

protection issues to increase their audience. However, they have sometimes given the impression that they do not have the necessary skills to deal with sovereign issues.

Moreover, this result is of interest to us because the environment is a key concern and its preservation is essential (Ben Abdeljelil & Ben Ammou, 2017). Moreover, environmental protection has become one of the criteria for choosing a tourist destination (Debabi & Daouas, 2015).

Ajana et al. (2022) point out that in the Maghreb, as in other regions of the world, biodiversity is under threat, urban air quality is far from perfect and various forms of pollution threaten the health of inhabitants. This environmental degradation is caused by the increase in production activity and the relocation of highly polluting activities (Liouane, 2017). Companies must demonstrate environmental transparency to employees and all stakeholders (Peretti, 2019).

5.2.3. Practical Anchoring and Social Representation

Table 2. Descriptive statistics of professional practical anchoring and personal practical anchoring.

Type of anchorage	Total anchorages	Frequencies per to practical anchorage (%)	Frequency of total anchorages (%)
Ancrage pratique professionnel	955	54.0770	48.7991
Ancrage pratique personnel	811	45.92298	41.44098
	1766	100	90.24

Analysis of the expatriates' discourse shows that practical anchoring plays a key role in the construction of social representations. The results in **Table 2** show that 54.0770% of practical anchoring is linked to professional life and 45.92298% to personal life. They also show that 48.7991% of expatriates' representations are determined by practical professional anchoring and 41.44098% by personal anchoring.

The main themes developed by the respondents to justify and argue the information they develop and the judgements they make are:

In terms of professional experience: administrative experience, experience with human resources, experience with the French in Tunisia, experience with bankers, regulations, etc.

For personal anchoring: life in general, administration, culture, infrastructure, etc.

Moreover, this result does not surprise us given that several authors have shown that representation cannot be constructed without common practices linked to the object. (Delouée & Wagner-Egger, 2022) and that it can be organised and

evolve according to the “hazards” of everyday experiences (Flament, 1987, Guimelli & Rouquette, 1992; Gaymard, 2021).

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Furthermore, we note that practical international experience is less important than practical experience in Tunisia. This could be explained by the fact that not all the expatriates interviewed have had international experience in another country. This experience has a positive or negative influence on the expatriate manager’s social representation of Tunisia and therefore determines his or her adaptation. It fosters the development of their skills, knowledge and personality (Walter, et al., 2017). This is in line with Beddi and Nivoix (2017), who believe that international work experience enhances skills and expertise, raises cultural awareness, develops confidence in the challenges to be met and creativity through exposure to new ways of working.

Generally speaking, expatriates who have had international experiences argue their claims based on their experiences in other countries. They have a committed attitude: “People are more welcoming, which is very rare in the world, and they are tolerant: in most of the countries I know, I can’t talk about other subjects, whereas in Tunisia this is the case”. “Tunisia is exemplary when it comes to encouraging companies to set up here, but it’s more complicated to work with India or China”.

On the other hand, those who had no previous experience focused more on their practices in France or Tunisia. We see argumentative sequences that rely less on comparisons. I’ve also noticed that Tunisians are not tolerant of each other. For example, when I’m driving, by default people think I’m Tunisian. If anything happens, the Tunisian driver gets out and screams, but as soon as I speak to him in French and he notices that I’m not Tunisian, he changes his behaviour.

The experience of international mobility sometimes leads to a difference between the conception of Tunisia held by the people interviewed. From this perspective, Flament (1994) points out that social representations are fluid and flexible, as they are nourished by the experiences of individuals and encompass information about their lived experience and particular situation, and the development of social ties and practices.

For example, traffic is judged differently by the respondents. Those who had expatriated to other countries said that transport in Tunisia was not a problem compared to other countries. It is therefore important to distinguish between a good experience and a bad one, as the latter has an impact on the way expatriates process information about Tunisia.

One expatriate said: "Transport is fine. There are no security problems, unlike in other countries. It's easier. Tunisians complain about traffic, but it's nothing. In Bangkok, we couldn't make more than three appointments in a day. It's always a fight: who's coming to my office? No, no, it's nothing, believe me, compared to what's out there".

The results of the survey also show that practical professional anchoring is more important than personal anchoring. This could be explained by the fact that French managers have settled in Tunisia mainly for professional reasons. This involves transferring skills, know-how and technical expertise, controlling operations abroad and setting up group governance (Barabel & Meier, 2018). They therefore spend more time inside the company than outside.

By analysing the discourses, we also noted the importance of the social representation of Tunisia in conditioning the practices of French managers. This result converges with that of Singéry (1994), Serdyukov (2006), Fasanelli et al. (2014) and Guimelli (2015) who suggest that social representations determine practices. Jeziorski et al. (2021) show that we cannot dissociate representation, discourse and practice. They form a whole. There is no point in looking to see whether practice determines representation or vice versa.

5.3. Discussion of Discourse Behaviours

In what follows we will discuss the results of the analysis of discursive behaviours, namely the discursive mode and level of referencing used by expatriate managers.

5.3.1. Discourse Mode

The results of the analysis of discursive behaviours (Table 3) show that managers

Table 3. Descriptive statistics of the discursive mode.

	Total Mode	Mode statative	Mode axiological (judgment)	Mode projective	Mode prescriptive	Metadiscourse
Administration	186	68	92	13	13	0
Human Resources	423	210	162	3	48	0
Bank	263	114	131	9	9	0
Legal context	133	66	55	5	7	0
Transport	104	31	66	0	7	0
People	388	188	168	16	16	0
satisfaction	113	88	22	3	0	0
Quality of life living conditions	296	140	133	0	20	3
Adaptation	51	35	16	0	0	0
	1957	940 (48.0327%)	845 (43.1783%)	49 (2.5038%)	120 (6.13%)	1 (0.1532%)

use several discursive modes: The constative mode, the axiological mode, the projective mode and the prescriptive mode. The first two modes are present in the majority of speeches. On the other hand, the other modes are used less by the respondents.

Furthermore, the interviewees seem a little reluctant to give their opinion on what should or should not be done in Tunisia and to anticipate the future. This could show that the leaders do not control the Tunisian environment in which they operate and feel relatively safe. As a result, this result contradicts the result of the thematic analysis, which concerns satisfaction in Tunisia.

Another result that emerges from our analysis of discursive modes is that meta-discourse was almost not used. This shows that the leaders were interested in the subject and that the interview situation was favorable and allowed them to express themselves freely. In fact, it was the leaders who chose the location of the interview and some of them asked us to send them a copy of the thesis.

5.3.2. The Level of Referencing

The results of the analysis of discursive behaviors (**Table 4**) show that leaders mainly use the pre-theoretical level of referencing in their speeches, the individual level occupies second place. On the other hand, the group level is limited. This discursive behavior shows that leaders seek to be credible by referring to an individual discourse with a general scope. They don't think it's important to back up what they say with reference to the group's experience. They do not seek to "ensure the cohesion of the group" (Grize et al., 1987: p. 145) of expatriates in the host country in which they operate.

Table 4. Descriptive statistics of the level of referencing.

	Total sequence	Level individual	Group level	Level pre-theoretical
Administration	186	53	39	94
Human Resources	423	136	112	175
Bank	263	67	62	134
Legal context	133	38	14	81
Transport	104	29	5	70
People	388	99	99	190
Satisfaction	113	70	25	18
Quality of life living conditions	296	105	62	129
Adaptation	51	27	11	13
TOTAL	1957	624 (31.8855)	429 (21.9213)	904 (46.19315)

Moreover, this result does not surprise us because each manager has a particular

professional and personal experience in Tunisia. Expatriates cannot have a common practice or experience since there are different social affiliations (Moliner et al., 2002). Some are part of a sports club, others of a non-profit association, they do not frequent the same banks and do not deal with the same employees...

On the other hand, this result could be explained by the very nature of the question. Indeed, the way the question is formulated has a significant effect on the choice of reference levels (Grize et al., 1987). In the context of our research, the majority of questions are not general and concern the experience of managers. They therefore require answers focused on the individual.

6. Conclusion

The survey conducted showed that representation systems are determined mainly by factors related to the subject's activity. Ideological factors and historical-cultural factors are limited. French leaders are pragmatic people, who have a realistic approach in their assessment. They assess interactions based on real activities rather than on prejudices. The survey also showed that practical professional anchoring is more important than personal anchoring. Furthermore, the experience of international mobility sometimes leads to a difference between the respondents' conception of Tunisia. It seems to be an important element of social representation.

As a result, our research allows us to vigorously study the obstacles to the behavior of expatriate managers and develop the levers on which it is possible to act to ensure better adaptation. Indeed, the behavior of managers depends on the social representation of the host country. The company of origin must implement a communication policy focused on shared projects and success stories.

The original company must implement a communication policy focused on shared projects and success stories. This involves highlighting the obstacles overcome by former expatriate managers, the steps taken and the successes achieved. It must also raise awareness among managers about the importance of their personal adaptation in the host country. We will also invite managers to take into account international experience in candidate profiles when selecting expatriates.

7. Limitations

Some limitations of our research can be expressed regarding the data collection method. We used semi-directive interviews, which confronts us with the limitations of the interpretations of expatriates' speeches. Furthermore, the results obtained concern the representation of a social group that shares the same nationality (French) and the same professional activity (manager). The sample is not representative of the French population in Tunisia. The results are therefore relative to a given set of individuals.

8. Future Implications

In order to complete these results, future studies could take into account managers of different nationalities or other types of casual expatriation workers,

namely students, seasonal workers, and expatriates from temporary employment companies. Furthermore, it would be interesting to compare the similarities and differences between the representations of Tunisia among different social groups.

Similarly, it would also be very relevant to conduct interviews with female and male leaders. This will allow us to describe or rather explain the difference in the perceptions of men and women.

Finally, it seems important to us to study the transformation of social representations. Indeed, the social representation of an object is not stable, it can change.

Conflicts of Interest

The author declares no conflicts of interest regarding the publication of this paper.

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