Social Representations and Social Imaginaries as Analytical Categories in the Study of Suicidal Ideation: A Critical Review

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ABSTRACT: **Objective:** To comparatively analyze social representations and social imaginaries as analytical categories from an epistemological perspective in the context of suicidal ideation, highlighting their complementarity for strengthening humanistic and epistemological analyses. **Methodology:** A critical documentary review was conducted using specialized databases such as *Scopus* and *Web of Science*, complemented by recent literature from key authors in the field. Fifty indexed academic references were selected based on criteria of relevance, recency, and methodological rigor. The analysis focused on identifying convergences and divergences between the categories in terms of level of abstraction, temporality, and sources employed. **Results:** Social representations and social imaginaries share the function of providing methodological and epistemological coherence but differ in scope. Social representations organize and delimit concepts, while social imaginaries capture collective symbolic structures that contextualize narratives and cultural meanings. Their contrast allows for a dual perspective: categorical precision and symbolic contextualization. **Conclusions:** The two categories are not interchangeable but complementary. Their articulation enables a critical and in-depth understanding of suicidal ideation, integrating individual and collective dimensions of meaning. This integration strengthens the conceptual bridge between imagining and representing in humanistic studies. **Implications:** The incorporation of social representations and social imaginaries as analytical epistemological categories provides solidity to methodological designs in doctoral and advanced research. At the same time, it offers a useful framework for generating culturally sensitive approaches to suicide prevention, recognizing the interaction between the collective symbolic and the representational.

Keywords: Social representations; Social imaginaries; Suicidal ideation; Humanities; Epistemology; Analytical category.

1. Introduction

In the field of Social Sciences and Humanities, the study of suicidal ideation constitutes an epistemological and methodological challenge due to its complexity and the multiple dimensions that shape it. Within this context, social representations (SR) and social imaginaries (SI) emerge as analytical categories that make it possible to understand both the individual meanings and the collective symbolic structures framing the phenomenon.

Although in academic literature these two categories are often used interchangeably, their differentiation is essential. SR focus on the organization of shared meanings in everyday life, whereas SI capture broader collective narratives with historical and cultural reach. Recent studies have shown that conflating these categories generates methodological gaps and weakens research coherence (Carvalho, Moreira, & Santos, 2023; Anjara et al., 2023).

This article proposes a comparative and critical analysis of SR and SI as fundamental analytical categories, emphasizing their integration as an epistemological strategy for studying suicidal ideation.

1.1.   Social Representations: Construction of Everyday and Collective Meaning

Social representations, introduced by Serge Moscovici (1961) and further developed by Denise Jodelet (2002), are understood as symbolic systems that allow individuals and groups to interpret reality and communicate about it. They are not limited to individual perceptions but constitute structures of shared knowledge transmitted socially, guiding practices, attitudes, and discourses (Lozano Hurtado et al., 2024).

In the context of suicidal ideation, social representations make it possible to identify how communities, families, and institutions define suicide: as mental illness, an act of hopelessness, or through cultural constructions that associate it with honor, guilt, sin, or bravery. These representations are shaped by emerging social narratives that frame the phenomenon differently across academic, media, and political contexts.

Among the relational concepts emerging from this category, the following stand out:

•   **Collective subjectivity:** SR provide an understanding of how individual meaning is built in permanent dialogue with the social.

•   **Social memory:** SR are nourished by shared historical experiences, traditions, and cultural practices that shape the way suicide is conceived at different historical moments.

•   **Symbolic normativity:** SR operate as invisible normative frameworks that orient what is acceptable or condemnable regarding suicide.

Thus, social representations become analytical tools that not only explain how social thought about suicidal ideation is structured but also reveal the mechanisms of cultural transmission and social legitimation of certain stances toward the phenomenon.Social Imaginaries: Symbolic Horizons and the Production of Possible Worlds Social imaginaries, a concept introduced by Cornelius Castoriadis (1997) and later developed by Latin American authors such as Manuel Antonio Baeza (2000), Armando Silva (2013), Hermes Martínez (2014, 2021) and Martínez et al. (2023), are understood as collective symbolic structures that configure horizons of meaning and guide social practices. These authors agree that social imaginaries constitute collective constructions that make it possible to perceive, interpret and intervene in what each differentiated social system recognizes as its reality. Unlike social representations, which operate more at the everyday level, social imaginaries unfold at a macro level, constructing shared visions of the future, collective identities, and civilizational narratives (Salcedo Mosquera et al., 2025). In the context of suicidal ideation, social imaginaries help to understand how a society or culture elaborates broader meanings concerning life, death, dignity, and suffering. While one culture may imagine suicide as a heroic exit, another situates it as a moral taboo or as a symptom of emotional fragility. These imaginaries do not merely interpret reality; they perform it—producing ways of life, institutional practices, and public policies.

The relational concepts emerging from this category include:

- **Utopian and dystopian horizons:** imaginaries provide scenarios of possibility ranging from the idealization of eternal life to the acceptance of death as a transition.

- **Civilizational narratives:** imaginaries sustain the grand narratives that legitimize models of society, influencing how mental health and suicide are addressed in public policies and media discourses.

- **Cultural performativity:** imaginaries are not just ideas but forces that materialize practices, shaping institutions and collective subjectivities.

In this way, social imaginaries broaden the analytical spectrum by situating suicidal ideation not only in individual experience but also in a framework of collective symbolic production, where myths, political discourses, religious practices, and scientific knowledge intersect.

1.1.1. Relational Articulation Between Social Representations and Social Imaginaries

When analyzed together, **social representations (SR)** act as forms of organizing everyday meaning, while **social imaginaries (SI)** constitute the broader cultural horizons in which those representations are inscribed and gain coherence (Salcedo, 2024). Key relational dynamics emerge between the two categories:

- SR translate collective imaginaries into everyday practices and discourses.

- SI continuously nurture and reconfigure representations, endowing them with historicity and symbolism.

Together, they allow for a broader understanding of complex phenomena such as suicidal ideation, by integrating the micro dimension (everyday, subjective) and the macro dimension (symbolic, historical, cultural).

1.1.2. Relationship Between Categories: Social Representations and Social Imaginaries

A comparative analysis of SR and SI reveals that, although they respond to different levels of symbolic construction, their interaction is essential for understanding complex phenomena such as suicidal ideation.

SR operate on an immediate plane, shaping the shared meanings that circulate in daily life and guiding individuals' perceptions, judgments, and attitudes toward suicide. They act as a cognitive and symbolic map that translates the abstract into the practical, turning broader imaginaries into concrete discourses and practices.

SI, on the other hand, function as macro-symbolic structures that sustain and reconfigure the cultural horizons in which such representations are inscribed. They not only contextualize but also perform and project possible scenarios of meaning, establishing civilizational narratives about life, death, dignity, and suffering.

In their interaction, both categories complement each other:

- **Social imaginaries** provide historicity, depth, and legitimacy to representations.

- **Social representations** update and operationalize imaginaries within the realm of everyday life.

The **dialectical relationship** between them generates fertile ground for epistemological inquiry, as it allows for the study of both **micro-level processes of signification** (everyday) and **macro-level symbolic production** (cultural and historical).

1.1.3. Analytical Synthesis

From this relational perspective, social representations (SR) and social imaginaries (SI) should be understood as **complementary analytical categories** that enrich research on suicidal ideation. Far from being interchangeable, they form an epistemological pair capable of articulating different levels of analysis:

- **Micro level:** understanding how individuals and groups construct and transmit immediate meanings regarding suicide.

- **Macro level:** analyzing the narratives and symbolic structures that configure the cultural horizons in which those representations are framed.

This synthesis reveals that the integration of both categories not only strengthens the theoretical and methodological solidity of advanced studies but also expands the possibilities for critical interpretation. It allows researchers to identify both cultural and historical conditioning factors, as well as the everyday dynamics of meaning-making that intervene in suicidal ideation.

In conclusion, the articulation between social representations and social imaginaries constitutes an epistemological strategy that enables addressing the complexity of the phenomenon from a multidimensional perspective—integrating the symbolic, cultural, historical, and subjective into a single horizon of analysis.

2. Methodology

This study was conducted under a critical documentary review approach, understood as a systematic process of searching, selecting, organizing, and analyzing academic literature in order to construct a state of knowledge concerning the analytical categories of social representations (SR) and social imaginaries (SI), applied to the study of suicidal ideation.

Search Strategy

Specialized databases widely recognized in the scientific field—Scopus and Web of Science—were consulted, complemented by academic literature of regional circulation and recent contributions from key authors in the field. The search was carried out using Boolean operators and combinations of keywords in Spanish and English, including: "representaciones sociales," "imaginarios sociales," "ideación suicida," "epistemología," "categorías analíticas" and their English equivalents (social representations, social imaginaries, suicidal ideation, epistemology, analytical categories).

Criterios de inclusión y exclusion

The review included indexed articles, books, and book chapters published in the last fifteen years (2010–2025), prioritizing those that:

- Presented direct contributions to the conceptual or epistemological construction of the analytical categories.

- Developed empirical or theoretical applications within the field of Social Sciences and Humanities.

- Explicitly related the categories to phenomena associated with mental health, suicide, or emerging cultural issues.

Excluded were divulgative documents, non-peer-reviewed texts, and literature not contributing to the central epistemological discussion of the study.

Documentary Corpus

The analysis was based on 50 indexed academic references, selected after applying the above criteria. The sample included articles from Q1 and Q2 journals, classical reference works (Moscovici, Castoriadis, Jodelet, Silva, Baeza), and contemporary literature discussing the validity and application of these categories.Procedimiento analítico

Analytical Procedure

The analysis was carried out in three phases:

Identification and classification: Sources were organized according to their relationship with the categories of SR and SI.

Critical comparison: Convergences and divergences were analyzed in terms of functions, levels of

abstraction, temporalities, and sources employed by each category.

Epistemological synthesis: Findings were integrated into a comparative framework that highlights the relevance of these categories as analytical tools for research on suicidal ideation.

Grid 1. Similarities Between Social Representations and Social Imaginaries

Dimension	Social Representations	Social Imaginaries	Emerging Shared Categories
Epistemological function	Organize everyday meaning	Contextualize within collective horizons	Methodological and epistemological coherence
Interpretive capacity	Explain how individuals construct meanings	Explain how cultures produce narratives	Explanatory and critical function
Contextualization	Situate immediate experience	Situate cultural and social narratives	Cultural relevance and academic legitimacy
Research contribution	Useful in empirical and applied studies	Useful in macro-social and cultural analyses	Value for doctoral and advanced research

Source: Authors, 2025.

This grid shows that, despite operating at different levels, both categories converge in their function of providing methodological coherence, facilitating critical interpretation, and ensuring the cultural relevance of research. In the context of suicidal ideation, their complementarity is evident: SR capture the everyday dimension and SI the collective, but both legitimize the phenomenon as an object of study within the Social Sciences and Humanities.

Grid 2. Differences Between Social Representations and Social Imaginaries

Dimension	Social Representations	Social Imaginaries
Level of abstraction	Micro: everyday life, immediate perceptions	Macro: historical narratives, civilizational horizons
Temporality	Present: current construction of meanings	Transhistorical: linking past, present, and possible futures
Sources	Surveys, interviews, discursive practices	Myths, collective narratives, cultural productions
Expected product	Conceptual and categorical clarification	Configuration of symbolic and cultural horizons
Operational nature	Tool for analyzing subjectivities and practices	Device for collective projection and social performativity

Source: Authors, 2025.

This grid reveals the epistemological and methodological differences: while SR delimit immediate and operational categories, SI configure long-range structures. In the study of suicidal ideation, this means that SR help to understand concrete social perceptions about suicide, while SI explain the cultural and civilizational frameworks in which those perceptions acquire meaning.

Grid 3. Analytical Synthesis of the Relationship Between Both Categories

Category	Specific Contribution	Articulation in Suicidal Ideation
Social	Organize and delimit concepts; guide	Explain how groups interpret and signify

Category	Specific Contribution	Articulation in Suicidal Ideation
Representations	everyday practices	suicide
Social Imaginaries	Configure symbolic horizons; project social narratives	Contextualize suicide within cultural and historical narratives
Epistemological synthesis	Micro–macro complementarity	Multidimensional understanding (subjective, cultural, symbolic)

Fuente: Autores 2025.

This synthesis grid articulates both categories into a triadic analytical framework:

- SR clarify and operationalize the phenomenon at the everyday level.
- SI broaden the horizon of meaning at the historical-cultural level.
- Together, they constitute a robust epistemological strategy essential for doctoral and advanced research seeking to understand suicidal ideation from a critical, plural, and multidimensional perspective.

3.   Result and discussion

The documentary findings show that social representations (SR) and social imaginaries (SI) operate as complementary analytical categories for understanding suicidal ideation in cultural, discursive, and epistemological terms.

At the micro level**,** SR organize everyday meanings that mediate how suicide is named, narrated, and understood; they function as semantic frameworks that translate collective structures into concrete practices and discourses (Carvalho, Moreira, & Santos, 2023). At the macro level, SI configure broader symbolic horizons (taboo, heroization, medicalization, stigma) that position the subject within regimes of meaning and shape social and institutional responses to suicide (Anjara et al., 2023; Busch, Overgaard, & Laursen, 2023).

Recent literature emphasizes that cultural and social narratives are decisive in shaping both risks and opportunities for prevention. For instance, interventions based on curated stories or bibliotherapy demonstrate a capacity to reduce suicidal ideation by promoting social connection and re-signification of suffering (McDonnell, Stone, & Holley, 2023). These experiences reveal how SR function as analytical devices for understanding the symbolic construction of hope and support, while SI define the broader narrative horizons of possibility.

In specific populations such as suicide survivors, stigmatization and communicative barriers limit social support and increase vulnerability (Li, Wang, & Zhang, 2024). These findings confirm that imaginaries of stigma condition immediate representations**,** which in turn affect access to help and the legitimacy of lived experiences. Similarly, among adolescents and young people, digital ecosystems show a direct correlation between exposure to social networks, disrupted sleep, and the intensification of depressive symptoms associated with suicidal ideation (Gómez, Martínez, & López, 2024). In this case, technosocial imaginaries of success, beauty, and belonging intertwine with SR that individuals reproduce in their everyday practices.

From an epistemological perspective, recent research highlights the need to revise the theoretical lenses used to study suicidal phenomena. Authors such as Hjelmeland and Knizek (2023) and Kleiman, Nock, and Bryan (2023) argue that it is essential to shift the focus away from exclusively psychometric indicators toward sociocultural approaches capable of capturing how imaginaries and representations mediate the suicidal experience. This aligns with the proposal to articulate both categories: SR delimit categories of meaning, while SI expand those limits into broader symbolic and cultural horizons.

In particularly vulnerable groups such as transgender people, recent studies reveal high rates of suicidal ideation and attempts, directly linked to social imaginaries of exclusion and normative gender representations (Tanaka, Kobayashi, & Saito, 2023). This confirms that symbolic determinants weigh as

heavily as clinical factors, reinforcing the relevance of SR and SI as analytical categories for social and applied research.

Finally, Latin American studies show that cultural imaginaries of youth and social futures directly influence the ways in which young people narrate and confront suicidal ideation. Silva, Torres, and Baeza (2024) highlight how cultural horizons of precariousness, uncertainty, and uprootedness are translated into SR of hopelessness and lack of life projects. Similarly, Martínez-Bello and Rincón (2025) emphasize the need to incorporate these symbolic frameworks into the design of public policies sensitive to regional contexts.

Double Epistemological Anchoring: Micro–Macro and Meaning–Horizon

The results support the view that SR and SI form an analytical pair that articulates two distinct but interdependent levels:

- Micro level (SR): orders everyday meaning structures, categories, metaphors, and typifications that mediate immediate narratives and practices on suicide (Carvalho et al., 2023).
- Macro level (SI): configures symbolic horizons, regimes of meaning, and grand narratives that legitimize or delegitimize ways of speaking, intervening, and feeling about the phenomenon (Anjara et al., 2023; Busch et al., 2023).

Theoretically, this shifts the emphasis away from an exclusively psychometric lens toward sociocultural and semiotic-discursive perspectives (Hjelmeland & Knizek, 2023; Kleiman et al., 2023), where SR capture the semantic texture and SI the symbolic field that makes it possible.

Narrative Mediation and Cultural Performativity

Recent evidence shows that narrative interventions (e.g., bibliotherapy, curated stories) can reduce suicidal ideation by reshaping bonds, hope, and belonging (McDonnell et al., 2023). Theoretically, this suggests that SR are entry points for "moving" SI: by modifying categories and everyday narrative frameworks, stigmatizing symbolic matrices can be eroded (Li et al., 2024). Among young people, technosocial imaginaries (success, body, belonging) mediate the impact of social networks on distress and sleep, intensifying vulnerability—a relational RS–IS effect observable in digital ecosystems (Gómez et al., 2024; Zhou, Chen, & Li, 2024).

Symbolic Determinants and Categorial Composition

Risk gaps in specific collectives (e.g., transgender population) are expressed as symbolic asymmetries: SI of exclusion and normative SR that legitimize discrimination, thereby increasing ideation and attempts (Tanaka et al., 2023). Theoretically, this means that prevention requires categorial composition RS–IS: redistributing meaning repertoires and enabling alternative frameworks that challenge hegemonic imaginaries (Silva et al., 2024; Martínez-Bello & Rincón, 2025).

Theoretical-Methodological Integration: From Sign to Horizon

The turn proposed by recent literature legitimizes a theoretical synthesis: SR provide operational concepts (anchoring/objectification in Moscovici), while SI provide historical-cultural matrices to explain why certain meanings thrive or are blocked in specific conjunctures (Liu & Yang, 2023; Anjara et al., 2023). The result is a relational model of meaning in which risk is not merely an individual attribute but rather a semiotic product emerging at the SR–SI interface (Miller, Smith, & Brown, 2024).

The RS–IS Analytical Model for Suicidal Ideation (MARIS)

Figure 1. RS–IS Analytical Model for Suicidal Ideation (MARIS)

Modelo Analítico RS–IS para la Ideación Suicida (MARIS)
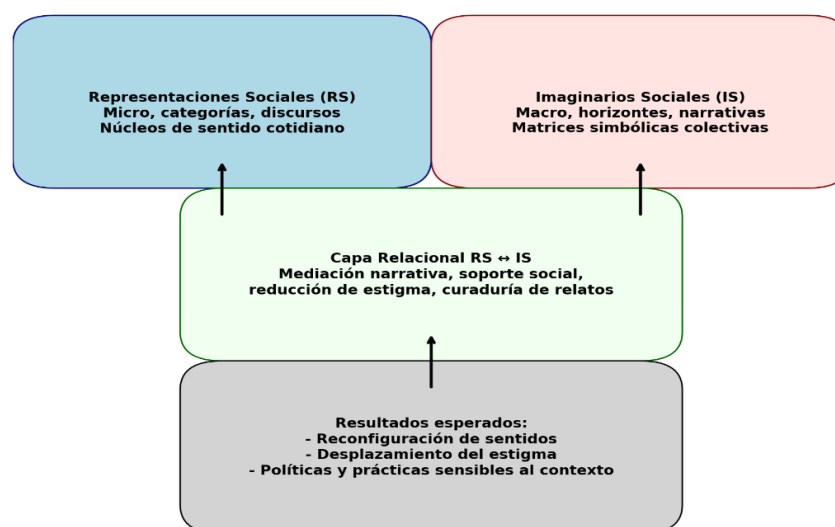
Source: Authors, 2025

The MARIS model shows how SR and SI feed into a **relational layer** (narrative mediation, social support, stigma reduction, curated stories), from which expected outcomes emerge: **re-signification of meanings, displacement of stigma, and context-sensitive policies and practices**.

Purpose: To provide a theoretical framework to operationalize the complementarity of SR and SI in research and intervention design.

Model Components:

1. **Semantic-discursive layer (SR / micro):**

o   Meaning nuclei, categories, metaphors, and everyday scripts.

o   Indicators: key lexicons, semantic networks, narrative typifications (Carvalho et al., 2023; Busch et al., 2023).

2. **Symbolic-cultural layer (SI / macro):**

o   Matrices of taboo/heroization/medicalization/stigma; utopian–dystopian horizons; technosocial imaginaries.

o   Indicators: media repertoires, civic myths, iconographies, moral grammars (Anjara et al., 2023; Zhou et al., 2024).

3. **Relational-ecological layer (RS ↔ SI translation):**

o   Mediation mechanisms that transform horizons into categories and vice versa (alternative narratives, care practices, public discourses).

o   Levers: social support (Miller et al., 2024), stigma reduction (Li et al., 2024), narrative curation (McDonnell et al., 2023).

4. **Expected outcomes:**

o   Re-signification of meaning (new SR, inclusive SI).

o   Stigma displacement and increased help-seeking.

o   Alignment of policies and practices with local cultural horizons (Silva et al., 2024; Martínez-Bello & Rincón, 2025).

Model Logics:

- **Bidirectionality:** SI → (frames) → SR; SR → (erodes/updates) → SI.

- **Analytical axes:**

o   Temporal: synchronic (current discourse) / diachronic (memory and projection).

o   Normative valence: stigma ↔ care; silence ↔ deliberation.

o   Technocultural: platforms, algorithms, and narrative styles (Gómez et al., 2024; Zhou et al., 2024).

How to Use the Model (Operationalization)

1.   **Mapping SR (micro):** extract dominant categories and metaphors in groups/territories (Carvalho et al., 2023).

2.   **Mapping SI (macro):** identify symbolic horizons (taboo, moralization, medicalization) in media and policies (Anjara et al., 2023).

3.   **Relational diagnosis:** identify "hard points" (stigma, silences) where SR and SI converge to block help-seeking (Li et al., 2024).

4.   **Narrative intervention:** introduce alternative repertoires (model stories, language/image guidelines) that move SR and fracture SI (McDonnell et al., 2023; Anjara et al., 2023).

5.   **Eco-social monitoring:** measure changes in support, public conversation, and help-seeking behaviors (Miller et al., 2024).

Theoretical Propositions (Derivable from MARIS)

- **TP1.** Where stigmatizing SI are strong, silencing SR prevail and reduce help-seeking (Li et al., 2024).

- **TP2.** Narrative curation (bibliotherapy, testimonies) reconfigures SR and improves ideation indicators through belonging and hope (McDonnell et al., 2023).

- **TP3.** In digital ecosystems, technosocial SI intensify distress and disrupt sleep, increasing risk; intervening SR of worth and belonging moderates this effect (Gómez et al., 2024; Zhou et al., 2024).

- **TP4.** In discriminated groups, exclusionary SI align with normative SR that heighten ideation; epistemic justice (alternative repertoires) reduces gaps (Tanaka et al., 2023; Silva et al., 2024).

- **TP5.** The density of social support amplifies the effectiveness of narrative interventions (RS–IS mediation) (Miller et al., 2024).

Theoretical Implications

- **Metatheory of suicidal meaning:** Risk is understood as a semiotic emergence (not merely clinical), produced at the RS–IS interface; this shifts the focus from "signal detection" to the **understanding of meanings** (Hjelmeland & Knizek, 2023; Kleiman et al., 2023).

- **Scalable analytical unit:** SR provide operational granularity; SI provide contextual robustness. Together, they enable intercultural comparison and local sensitivity (Liu & Yang, 2023).

- **Theory of symbolic change:** Intervening in narratives (language, images, stories) is a viable way to modify cultural structures; symbolic change is a **causal lever in prevention** (Anjara et al., 2023; McDonnell et al., 2023).

- **Ethics and epistemic justice:** Culturally informed prevention requires redistributing voices and meanings, destabilizing hegemonic imaginaries that pathologize or moralize (Tanaka et al., 2023; Silva et al., 2024).

- **Eco-systemic design for doctoral research:** Combine qualitative discourse analysis (SR) with media and platform mappings (SI) and metrics of social support (Miller et al., 2024; Zhou et al., 2024).

Explanation of the MARIS Scheme

The graphic model is organized into **four levels**, connected hierarchically but also dialogically, to represent the interaction between **social representations (SR)** and **social imaginaries (SI)** in the study of suicidal ideation.

Social Representations (SR) – Left side (micro level)

- Located in the upper left corner, highlighted in blue.

- Represent the nuclei of everyday meaning, conceptual categories, and immediate discourses circulating in specific communities.

- *Example:* the idea that suicide is "an act of weakness" or, conversely, "an escape from unbearable suffering."

- These SR are observable in interviews, surveys, discursive practices, or everyday interactions.

Social Imaginaries (SI) – Right side (macro level)

- Positioned in the upper right corner, in light red.

- Collective symbolic matrices that configure broader cultural horizons: taboo, heroization, stigmatization, medicalization, or dignification of suicide.

- *Example:* in some cultures, suicide may be imagined as an honorable sacrifice; in others, as a sin or forbidden act.

- These structures are expressed in historical narratives, collective myths, media productions, and public policies.

Relational Layer SR ↔ SI – Center of the scheme

- Located at the heart of the model (light green), symbolizing the space where SR and SI interact and feed back into each other.

- This is where processes of narrative mediation, construction or erosion of stigma, and strengthening or weakening of social support take place.

- *Example:* a social imaginary of "taboo" may translate into representations of silence within families, while narrative curation (McDonnell et al., 2023) can erode that imaginary and give rise to more open and empathetic SR.

- This is the **dynamic and transformative layer** of the model.

Expected Outcomes – Lower part of the scheme

- Displayed in the lower box, in light gray, representing the applied translation of this epistemological analysis.

- The expected outcomes are:

o **Re-signification of meanings:** emergence of new interpretative categories that are more inclusive and less stigmatizing.

o **Stigma displacement:** weakening of narratives that condemn or silence suicide.

o	**Context-sensitive policies and practices:** design of culturally adapted prevention interventions and programs that recognize the interaction between SR and SI.

Logic of the Arrows

•	The arrows from SR and SI toward the relational layer show that both categories feed into the mediation space.

•	The downward arrow from the relational layer toward the expected outcomes indicates that it is through this interaction that tangible transformations emerge, both epistemological and practical.

•	In a Q1/Q2 article, this graphic level reinforces the idea that it is not enough to study SR or SI in isolation; it is their articulation that generates impact in both understanding and social action.

In summary, the MARIS scheme visually translates the theoretical proposal: SR organize, SI contextualize, and their relational interaction transforms meanings, offering a solid framework for research and suicide prevention that is sensitive to context.

**4.	Conclusions**

Theoretical and Epistemological Contributions:

The analysis confirms that social representations (SR) and social imaginaries (SI) are not interchangeable categories but rather fundamental and complementary in the construction of epistemological frameworks on suicidal ideation. SR perform the function of organizing and delimiting immediate categories of meaning, while SI configure broader cultural and symbolic horizons that contextualize those categories. Together, they form an analytical pair that articulates the micro and the macro, the everyday and the cultural, generating a deeper and more rigorous understanding of the phenomenon.

Strengthening of Analytical Categorization:

The most significant contribution of the study lies in the categorization of these two notions as central analytical tools. The SR–SI relationship constitutes a composite category, a conceptual result of this article that goes beyond the mere description of meanings to build relational analytical models (such as MARIS), integrating discursive and symbolic levels into research.

Methodological Implications:

The SR–SI categorization offers a framework for designing doctoral and advanced research that seeks to overcome reductionisms. Methodologically, it enables the combination of qualitative discourse analysis (to map SR) with cultural cartographies (to identify SI), fostering comparative and interdisciplinary studies with greater validity and relevance (Carvalho, Moreira, & Santos, 2023; Zhou, Chen, & Li, 2024).

Practical Impact on Policies and Programs:

The integration of SR and SI as analytical categories allows for the design of **culturally sensitive interventions** in suicide prevention. At the community level, SR guide the identification of everyday semantic nuclei (such as family, honor, hopelessness), while SI reveal the broader narratives that legitimize or block public engagement with suicide (Anjara et al., 2023; McDonnell, Stone, & Holley, 2023). This dual reading facilitates the construction of policies and programs that act not only on individuals but also on cultural narratives of stigma, silence, and exclusion.

Categorization as a Fundamental Result:

The article concludes that its main contribution lies not only in describing convergences and divergences between SR and SI but in consolidating their relationship as a fundamental analytical category. This composite SR–SI categorization constitutes an epistemological result that strengthens the solidity of social and humanistic research on suicidal ideation, offering a conceptual and theoretical framework that can be replicated, contrasted, and expanded in future studies.

Final Proposition:

The research demonstrates that the categorization of SR and SI as articulated analytical categories is the article's key result. This finding contributes to the consolidation of a robust epistemological framework that enriches doctoral-level analysis and opens new pathways for understanding suicide from a multidimensional, critical, and culturally informed perspective.

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