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# What is collective singular thought?

Ludovic Soutif<sup>\*1</sup>

<sup>1</sup>Pontifícia Universidade Católica do Rio de Janeiro [Brasil] = Pontifical Catholic University of Rio de Janeiro [Brazil] = Université catholique pontificale de Rio de Janeiro [Brésil] – Brésil

## Résumé

This talk addresses the underexplored phenomenon of collective singular thought and aims to provide a definition. My argument is based on the observation that we often entertain thoughts commonly categorized as both singular and collective, like the one reported in: 'We think Emmanuel Macron will soon realize that he is responsible for the current political instability', for the simple reason that it is about a specific person and the first-person plural is used in the main clause. But things are not so simple. First, it is not enough for the thought to be singular that it is about one (or more) particulars. Suppose the coextensive definite description 'the eighth President of the Fifth Republic' is used (attributively) in the less deeply embedded clause instead of the proper name. The reported thought is still about Emmanuel Macron. But it is a general (quantified) one. Second, the use of 'we' in the main clause does not guarantee that the self-attributed thought is collective. This is only true if there is a non-distributive reading of the first-person plural. Third, 'we' does not always refer to particulars as particulars, as in: 'You own the music and we make it', stated by Archie Shepp on behalf of the African American community. This raises the question: under what conditions can the reported thought be classified as a genuine collective singular one? Focusing on the representational content of intentional attitudes, I propose that it is singular and collective if, and only if, the particulars referred to in a public or private medium fulfill the role that the purported referents of singular terms play in the cognition of individual subjects, the content has satisfaction conditions that covary with the identity of the referent, and it represents these individuals as co-thinking.

**Mots-Clés:** Singular thought, collective intentionality, representational content

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\*Intervenant