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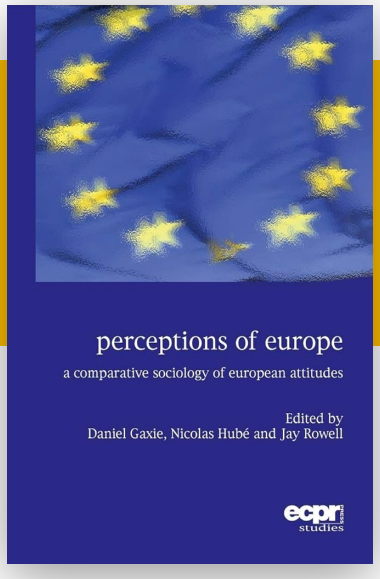

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CHAPTER 7

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Philippe ALDRIN & Marine DE LASSALLE

Most of the academic literature on the 'European citizen' or the 'European voter' investigates correlations between socio-demographic properties or nationality and support for the EU. As they rely on Eurobarometer data, studies on relationships of ordinary citizens to Europe traditionally tend to emphasise the correspondence between 'Europhilia' or 'Europhobia' and a series of social characteristics. Thus, level of education, income, occupation and age have emerged as the main variables discriminating attitudes towards political Europe (Cautrès 2001). The almost systematically observable link between level of education and 'Europhilia' has led certain scholars to interpret this correlation as causality; these variables are thought to exert a mechanical effect on the relationship to Europe. The causal link between variables is expressed in the claim that only the most educated citizens can accomplish the cognitive effort required to understand European issues – defined as remote, complex and technical (Inglehart and Rabier 1979). This theory of 'cognitive mobilisation' is coherent with other theses that also combine the same discriminating variables. Hence, individuals who feel physically, economically and professionally safe are supposed to be more able to face the challenges of European integration and subscribe to the 'post-materialist values' it embodies (Inglehart 1990).

Regardless of the explanatory model deployed,[1] all these studies are ultimately based on two postulates: the Europeanising, even Europhilogenic effect of a small set of socio-demographic variables (mainly, level of education); the individuals' psycho-cognitive ability to evaluate and judge Europe and to take a personal stance on the opportunities or risks it represents. These postulates are the main theoretical foundation of the systemic prism through which 'European public opinion' is usually studied, which holds that the European political space is both the matrix and the product of citizens' European attitudes.[2]

1. Three main models explaining European attitudes can be distinguished: the utilitarian (or economic) model, wherein citizens assess the cost/benefit ratio of European integration; the ethical-identity (or psychological) model, which investigates the values and identities through which citizens experience Europe; the configurational (or political) model, focusing on the effect of political factors, especially national ones, on the formation of European opinions. On these three traditions, with a different terminology and a different analysis but using a rather similar categorisation, see Hooghe and Marks 2005.

2. Since the beginning, the theoretical production on European public opinion has been largely inspired by the 'Eastonian analysis' (Belot and Cautrès 2008) and has therefore explained the relationship to political Europe first through inputs (the 'permissive consensus' acting as diffuse systemic support), then through outputs (perceptions of the efficiency and benefits of EU policies).

In this chapter, elements from individual and collective interviews are highlighted that corroborate or reveal limitations of the main theses developed in the specialised literature. By focusing on the different ways an interviewee produces a point of view on political Europe, we are not trying to establish direct links between social properties and the contents of opinions on Europe; rather, we aim to study the resources and techniques used, depending on their social environment, to respond to a solicitation to produce a discourse on Europe. Based on a predominantly qualitative material, we will observe the types of social knowledge and techniques mobilised by interviewees to talk about Europe, and we investigate correlations between the way they talk about Europe and their social position and environment (level of education, profession, job experiences and prospects, living standard, way of life).

TALKING ABOUT AN OFTEN UNFAMILIAR OBJECT

Solicited opinions as a sociological object of enquiry

When invited to answer questions in the form of an interview on European matters, interviewees react to the successive solicitations and express a point of view on Europe. The form of the exchange – semi-structured individual or collective interviews (see Chapter 3) – puts interviewees in a situation which allows them to verbalise opinions on Europe, a reputedly technical and difficult topic. Unlike surveys that rely on closed-ended questions, this method reveals a great variety of expressions and arguments; individuals elaborate on their own frames of understanding and judgement, as if the exchange was based on the following implicit demand: 'What stance can you take in public on political Europe?' If this type of solicitation – especially when addressed to people who have some degree of familiarity with the interviewer – has some similarity to ordinary conversations on political issues, the inscription of the verbal exchange in a survey produces effects on what is said, as the discourse is recorded and is thereby transformed into 'data' with sociological properties. The reliance on an interview template (which sets a theme, a vocabulary, a certain way of asking questions, and a specific order), the configuration of the exchange (assigning specific roles to the participants of the verbal exchange), the presence of a recording device, the reference to the university that commissioned the survey: all these elements contribute to making the interviewees' answers more formal and to lead them to try to be more coherent than they would be in an everyday conversation.

The survey method tends to produce individualising effects in the sense that it creates a context which implicitly rests on a socially defined framework – through socialisation and citizen status – favouring a formal expression of a personal point of view on political questions. In this regard, the semi-structured interviews conducted during our research can be explored in terms of how the interviewees interpret the solicitation, assert a posture and finally mobilise various resources in order to express a personal opinion on Europe.[3] From this point of view, it appears that

3. In Goffmanian terms, we can define this type of interview as a 'transformed frame', which refers a subversion of the social frame of conversation in a face to face or in a small group configuration.

the interview set-up does not exert the same degree of constraint for all interviewees. According to their occupation or social circles, some interviewees possess 'markets' where they can regularly exchange ideas on Europe and are accustomed to expressing their opinions (Bourdieu 1999). Others, on the contrary, seem to be ill at ease in an unfamiliar situation and sometimes even express embarrassment or their feeling of incompetence when faced with certain questions. Also, the difficulty, the discomfort or, on the contrary, the ease in responding to certain questions depends on the forms of public debates on Europe in each country and on the varying levels of interest and involvement in European issues of different social segments. The social factors which determine the interviewee's attitude towards the interview set-up – and therefore their aptitude –are a very important element of our research on opinions on Europe. By mainly focusing our attention on this attitude, we hope to denaturalise these opinions in order to analyse them not as an expression of a pre-existing individual judgement (determined by socio-demographics and cognitive abilities) but as the *operationalisation of the disposition to formalise a judgement in a given interaction (based on an experience of the social world and a socialisation to political exchanges)*.[4]

The constraints of producing an opinion in public

In following this logic, the ways of expressing political opinions on Europe will be analysed by comparing the argumentative and explicative material mobilised by the interviewees to the general posture they adopt. Attitudes do not only result from the interviewees' 'personality'. They also depend on social factors: being familiar with this type of social situation, feeling competent on the subject of the interview, the social distance with the interviewer. Furthermore, as the interview situation makes it nearly impossible to 'opt out', the interviewee is left with no outside resources, they have to make do with what they are and with what they know. On this point, qualitative studies emphasise the composite character of the techniques and the instruments used by interviewees in formulating their answers or in expressing their relationship to politics (Lane 1967; Eliasoph 1990; Gamson 1992; Bourdieu and Wacquant 2005). This literature highlights different effects, which vary according to the interviewees' profiles and the techniques used (speaking in public, debating with other individuals or expressing one's opinion at length to an interviewer) on the expression of a personal opinion. These effects are mainly due to three constraints imposed by this type of interaction: the necessity of justifying an opinion (based on a knowledge assumed to be subjective or rooted in a subjective, but incontestable experience); taking other opinions into account (as expressed by the interviewees or implicitly as part of the interviewer's questions); and maintaining a social face (every answer or every non-answer is

The codes of expression are only at face value identical to those of a 'normal' social framework. The presentation of self, the 'face work' is related to the mediate or immediate evaluation of the specialised interviewer (whose job often precisely consists in evaluating people). See Goffman 1974.

4. Pierre Bourdieu suggests that we should treat opinions 'not as things liable to being mechanically and passively added up, but as *signs that can be changed by exchange*, by discussion and confrontation' (Bourdieu and Wacquant 2005).

explained so as not to lose face, or be perceived as a violation of the 'interaction order' and thereby preventing its 'felicity').[5] This configuration of constraint therefore acts as a conformation of the individuals to an unwritten social norm for exchanging opinions. This compliance can be observed in the way interviewees attempt to render their ideas and arguments coherent and in the manner in which they interpret the solicitation and assess their ability to answer (Eliasoph 1990). In this perspective, our analysis of opinions collected for the Concorde programme focuses on the process in which the interviewees attempt to lend coherence to their position on Europe, both seeking to categorise the interviewees' postures (based on the resources mobilised) and linking these postures to their objective and subjective position in the social and political space. The indicators of this position are the social and economic situation, educational qualifications, occupation, the social environment, way of life and nationality. These indicators will be taken initially as localising operators, which the interviewees universalise to various extents (Boltanski *et al*. 1984), and then as signs of a socialisation to Europe *lato sensu* (as a geographical continent, cultural space or institutional edifice) or to the 'realities' through which the interviewees encounter Europe.

Postures and resources of opinions on Europe: three modes

Establishing the interviewee's posture allows us to describe and explain the way in which they hold (or do not hold) an opinion on Europe. To avoid reducing this question of posture to a purely psychological problem, we have tried to isolate distinct forms of social identification in the interviewees' discourse. In the expression and justification of their personal position on Europe, they are more or less likely to use 'I' or 'we'. And yet, the use of personal or collective pronouns is linked to social dispositions and not randomly distributed sociologically (Bernstein 2003). It proceeds from a practical sense of classification which allows interviewees to see and position themselves in a structured and hierarchical social space in which they can also perceive and locate others. This dimension, linked to social position (objectively assigned and subjectively occupied), is associated here to the perception of the position they occupy as more or less structured by Europe. Beyond the use of 'I' or of 'we' – which can both refer to one or several collective memberships (occupation, nationality, generation, etc.) – the register of identification favoured by the interviewee indicates several elements of their posture in relation to Europe. Through the registers of identification they use, interviewees always connect the self to a social locus (geographical origins, family structure, professional background, age group, way of life, etc.) that may (or may not) link them to Europe. Therefore, beyond the use of 'I' (which can be personalising or universalising) or the use of 'we' (which can refer to highly structured or loose group memberships), the register of identification refers to repeated indicators by which the interviewees express from where (reference to a social, geographical or cul-

5. Using a collective identity as a support which is more or less objective or substantialised indicates that we are dealing with the production of a *sameness* identity rather than a *selfhood* identity (more observable in the first mode), to summarise the distinction proposed by Ricoeur (1995).

tural locus) as who (reference to biographical individual properties) or as what (reference to social, professional, geographical or cultural groups) they express their judgement on Europe.

The posture is therefore not randomly chosen or distributed; it is determined by what every interviewee chooses – and can afford – to hold in public as a personal opinion on Europe given the objective and subjective constraints of the situation. Again, social standing, occupation, educational and cultural capital act as operators of connection, even as operators of the appropriation of European issues which partly differ from the usual forms of the relationship to politics and where belonging to a national space produces significant effects (in terms of political context, reference to a cultural frame or collective identity). For instance, Europe represents a possibility for change, a new horizon in new Member States; personal interest in European issues extends beyond socially 'homologous' categories of interviewees in founding countries. But, generally, the resources which the interviewees are capable of mobilising to help them express an opinion on Europe are the ones that condition the posture they adopt. We have observed that these resources vary. Answers combine elements of knowledge from school or university lessons, media discourse, anecdotes, etc. In order to classify these multiple resources, we have used the source of mobilised knowledge as the discriminating criterion. This allows us to distinguish between, on the other hand, impersonal knowledge based mainly on 'school' knowledge (including general technical knowledge such as the democratic principles, the history or institutional organisation of Europe) and on media discourse, and on the other hand, personal knowledge based on practical experience or anecdotes that the interviewees have retained.

Based on this double premise (register of social identification, source of mobilised resources), our analysis of the different ways to hold a solicited opinion on Europe aims at producing a sociological and typological interpretation of the qualitative material characterised by countless combinations of affects relating to personal experiences or to collective or universal values; apparently unrelated references to events or debates; various acquired dispositions (diversely acquired according to the interviewees' life experiences or to the effects of the national context) to think and talk in public about political topics. A close examination of the available interviews allowed us to identify three main modes of production of opinions on Europe:[6]

1) The first mode is that of the 'decentred' point of view, mainly characterised by the interviewee's tendency to place their comments on Europe on a general socio-political plane – therefore beyond the self – and to mobilise other points of view in and on Europe. This category of interviewees generally shows awareness of political games and issues through references to the mediatised, and therefore impersonal, frames of public debates on Europe as well as through a more or less ostentatious familiarity with the vocabulary and the concepts of these debates. The model of a singular concern for Europe (which

6. For a schematised representation of these modes, see Table 7.1 at the end of this chapter.

can lean towards Europhilia or Europhobia, or generally more composite perceptions) may stem from an activist engagement, or, more often, through certain types of university courses and/or professional activities where political Europe (as an object) makes sense. If the arguments put forward by these interviewees aim to universalise their point of view on Europe, they also aim to singularise it, i.e. to turn into a personal production.

2) This tendency to integrate otherness to one's own thoughts and rhetorical structures – in other words, to dialogism – is clearly less present in the second mode. The latter is characterised by the interviewees' more systematic reliance on their own personal experience: their point of view on Europe is inspired mainly by experience (specialised technical knowledge, travel or cultural exchanges, professional or family life). The point of view on European institutions and questions is based on a self that has an identified and identifiable location in the social space in reference to Europe. But talking about real life experience, their environment, and their reality allows the interviewees to refer to a social locus or to a 'we' from which they tend to generalise towards Europe. Although related to personal knowledge, the preferred register of identification tends to indicate an intention of embedding opinion on Europe in a collective situation (social, professional, geographic, political or cultural) rather than focusing on a personal dimension, where holding an original, independent viewpoint is an expression of social worth of well educated interviewees,[7] which leads us to refer to this mode as socio-centred point of view.

3) A significant number of interviewees do not succeed in embedding themselves and their opinions in the context of Europe. These interviewees present an external point of view to the interviewers in the sense that European affairs seem to remain a foreign entity. The interviewees show little inclination to mobilise knowledge (personal or impersonal) or to utilise a register of social identification allowing them to connect to Europe. The lack of opinion on the questions asked and the incomplete answers can also be explained by audience effects, which make it all the more difficult to express an opinion. Furthermore, the lack of an objective and/or subjective attachment to a social locus connected to Europe leads the interviewees to express, with more or less clarity, a feeling of foreignness in relation to the institutions or issues of Europe. Symptomatically, Europe is described in terms that attest to the abstract, or even fictional character it assumes in their eyes. In contrast to the first two modes, these interviewees cannot or do not try to establish a general, coherent opinion on Europe, and

7. Using a collective identity as a support which is more or less objective or substantialised indicates that we are dealing with the production of a *sameness* identity rather than a *selfhood* identity (more observable in the first mode), to summarise the distinction proposed by Ricoeur (1995).

they tend to deal with every question or subject from the interview template separately.

These three modes of holding an opinion on Europe can be perceived with varying degrees of clarity in all interviews. However they are shown here as tendencies – to decentre, socio-centre or externalise – insofar as, with the exception of a few interviews closely matching the archetypal form of one of these three modes, most of the interviews are somewhere between two modes, which will lead us to introduce interstitial modes.

THE DECENTRED POINT OF VIEW OR EUROPE BEYOND THE SELF

In an interview situation, decentred interviewees are characterised by three principal traits: a sustained interest in politics in general, from which a certain closeness to European questions ensues (high level of politicisation); a tendency to structure the point of view outside the self and therefore to universalise one's point of view on Europe (tendency to decentre); the assertion of their ability to express an autonomous opinion, by using political and media discourses but by opposing and criticising particular points of view to present personal opinion (singularisation of the point of view).

An affinity to politics…and to political Europe

Decentred interviewees strive to give a purely political opinion; this is the main element that sets them apart from the interviewees in the other two groups. Their investment in European issues comes out as a 'natural' extension of their open affinity with political questions, and reduces or cancels the inhibitory effects of the interview set-up. The interviewees respond with a certain dexterity, try to make their answers coherent, often anticipate the questions and subjects included in the interview template. Despite its relative artificiality, they interpret the interview situation as an invitation to give their personal point of view on Europe. Another distinctive feature in their posture consists in taking into consideration a variety of positions and arguments defended in the public debate on Europe on the subject discussed. In the process, not only do they show their knowledge of the debates, of the oppositions that structure them and the main actors involved, but they also reveal their ability to specify their personal point of view.

> I know the arguments Europe's detractors use, I know it upsets people that they feel they are no longer masters in their own home […]. Obviously, there are more of us now, so more people are involved in decision-making. You have to admit that sometimes you need to make an effort to accept the majority's opinion, that's what democracy is. And as a rule, I always stand behind European decisions, even if people might wrongly think they're going against the national interest.
>
> (FR, M, 47, engineer)

The tendency to decentre the point of view – in relation to the national prism in this extract – stems from the interviewees' habit of exchanging points of view on political questions in the course of private, activist or professional activities.

Participating in such markets of political conversations allows them to share information, to compare arguments on Europe, and to have a more or less precise overview of the available positions on the subject. The interview is seen as a continuation of previous conversations on European issues (decision-making process in the EU, problems of constitutionalising treaties, new Member States joining, etc.), which are less abstract to these interviewees than they are to others. By referring to their own opinions, they demonstrate to the interviewer both the anteriority and the consistency of their opinions.

> I had a good friend who was against Maastricht, I was for it and there was a debate on the subject […]. [At the time of the 2005 referendum campaign] I wanted to vote yes. And then I told myself it wasn't possible (because it was Maastricht all over again)… So I had arguments with all my friends who voted yes. And then I talked to a friend who's writing a PhD thesis on Community law and who is actually really clued-in on these subjects and he gave me a few ideas.
>
> (FR, M, 32, lawyer)

The regular confrontation of ideas on Europe mostly occurs with politicised interviewees, either through activist involvement and/or familiarity with activists, or through social relationships with others sharing a high level of education. Following a common sociological pattern, the members of upper categories, due to their social and professional position, are generally informed and interested by public political debates. These distinctive positions and dispositions give them access to debates on Europe, and also force them conform to the social norms of their milieu to be interested and to have something to say about political subjects. These interviewees have mostly graduated from university or elite schools, are mostly men with liberal (lawyers, doctors, consultants) or intellectual occupations (teachers, journalists) or more generally men who have executive or management positions; they assert an autonomous political point of view, simultaneously singular and universal.

Posture and resources of a singular point of view on Europe

The specific social and cultural capital of these interviewees gives them a certain legitimacy (objectively defined and subjectively accepted) to discuss and judge politics in general and Europe in particular.[8] With a systematic use of 'I', this legitimacy to give political opinions is linked to a process of singularisation of their point of view. They make an effort to mention the more or less diverging opinions of those close to them or of groups who are socially, ideologically and geographically further away, in order to differentiate or qualify their own position, thereby showing how easy it is for them to navigate Europe's political territory. Although singular, their point of view claims to be objective, in that it involves references to

8. This legitimacy implicitly refers to the dominant frames and the social principles of classification of public political stances, which value the use of a specific vocabulary and knowledge (see Bourdieu 1984).

universal categories. References to personal situations are only made to illustrate a more general point that often relies on concepts, key figures or events of the public debate on Europe. Yet, they make a point to avoid identifying themselves with particular analytical frames used by the media and political professionals on Europe. Likewise, when they refer to certain concrete subjects which encapsulate recurring debates on Europe (social Europe, political Europe, Europe of liberalism, Europe of regions, Europe of Nations, North/South relations, financial Europe and Europe of employers, of bureaucrats, etc.), they do so in order to emphasise their personal position. By establishing themselves on an equal cultural and cognitive footing with the professional producers of political positions, they display their self-confidence as a way to face the effects of the presence of an audience. Generally speaking, the manipulation and especially the mastery of diversified impersonal knowledge confers to their answers the efficiency of dominant discourses and works as a legitimate resource to guarantee that their point of view is well-founded and objective.

> [On the constitutional treaty] I voted yes and I was sure about it. What I found interesting was the campaign for the 'no', with opposition blocs which, to me, seemed extremely different, or even divergent. There was a bloc of, let's say, anti-liberal thought: 'We don't want liberal Europe'. To that I'd say they should have realised that earlier, because it's not exactly breaking news, that Europe is a group of countries that are part of a liberal economy. I think it's pretty striking that the socialist party is this strongly at odds with the other European socialist parties. There was this feeling that 'we want to go on doing what we like in this country', what you call the Europe of nations, national sovereignty.
>
> (FR, M, 60, retired researcher)

The strong denotation of the discourse, achieved thanks to the precision of the information mobilised, generally ensures its greater transparency.[9] Often, interviewees shift from the theme initially discussed to a related theme, or redefine the question asked, in order to link their answers and give a general coherence to their point of view. They free themselves from the wording of the question or even impose other concepts and ideas to be able to produce coherent conclusions, and sometimes adopt an authoritative tone. This posture sometimes involves mentioning key actors (founding fathers such as Konrad Adenauer, Jean Monnet, Alcide de Gasperi, Helmut Kohl or Jacques Delors) and more often key episodes of European history (the major 'crises' of the European project, the Single Market, Maastricht, the fall of the Berlin Wall and the enlargement in Eastern Europe, the constitutional treaty). This way of holding a decentred opinion on Europe through this relatively sophisticated use of European and national history legitimates (or attempts at legitimating) generalisations on European questions and the seeks to impose on the audience that these interviewees have a command of the 'big picture'.

9. In the sense that the speaker disappears from the discourse. Jean Dubois (1969) defines the degree of transparency of the enunciation as the social latitude of understanding the discourse, from the speaker to the entire society.

> This is a recurrent problem in the EU, we've seen it in an extreme form with the Kaczyńskis. Tusk smoothes out the edges, to take the Polish example, but ultimately his approach is still in the same direction, only more nuanced and a little bit more forward-thinking, but he says so very clearly. Poland wouldn't have made it alone, but then again, above all, he says the Poles should learn to become Polish again, not too nationalist, but as Polish as the French are French [laughs]. Well, I say French, but you could say Germans. But we don't really assert our national identity that much anymore, we stick to the EU level, and it's fine that way. And, of course, Poland has to go through that process extremely quickly. And within that context, I would have waited before the accession to the EU. Leave them alone first, support them and all that, obviously, but still, leave them alone a bit. I think it worked out well, anyway, and they're still better than the Italians, from that point of view, right?
>
> (FR, M, 60, retired researcher)

Decentring, which consists in expressing a point of view beyond the self, entails having the socially recognised resources to back up this claim for objectivity. Paradoxically, then, the highest social positions with the highest amount of cultural capital, singular life experiences (especially professional or activist ones), and socialisation to legitimate knowledge determine the disposition towards decentring. It is very much the position and the social trajectory that condition these interviewees' postures and resources on Europe. In this sense, this is more precisely a socially embedded point of view, but one that is expressed in a decentred form. For this reason, among interviewees who share the general characteristics of the decentred point of view (pre-eminence of impersonal knowledge, sensitivity to political questions, decentring and autonomy of the point of view), we observe significant variations in the posture according to the ethos, social origin, occupation, and nationality of the interviewees.

From an empathetic 'I' to a detached 'I' (interstitial postures of the decentred mode)

As far as political ideas are concerned, claiming to see the 'big picture' implies a form of selflessness, which these interviewees generally express by distancing themselves from expressing direct or and personal interests and valuing the common good. They also have a tendency to set their own situation aside and take into consideration the viewpoint those who are less privileged than they are. The construction of the decentred point of view is not aimed at objectivity based on knowledge of historical facts, but rather at objectivity through empathy, by displaying virtues such as compassion or indignation in the face of social and economic injustice. While they produce a singular judgement, some postures betray a socially determined disposition towards moral altruism.[10]

10. Similar to the gestures required by the imperative of 'noblesse oblige' (Elias 2006), this mode of expression contradicts the utilitarian hypotheses developed in some studies of European attitudes (Gabel 1998b).

> [Asked about the Euro] I travel around a lot, and I can say it's a good thing, overall. I think economically it was a very bad thing […] retailers didn't play the game, prices really increased quite a lot. […] And then there's a problem with all the people of a certain age. They don't realise that ten cents of Euro amount to sixty cents, almost seventy cents [in Francs]. But in terms of moving easily in Europe, it is really quite practical.
>
> (FR, M, 50, university professor)

This posture of the empathetic 'I' presupposes particular social properties, in the sense that it is based on a knowledge of diverse and sometimes contradictory consequences of Europe (in this instance the Euro). This posture can be rooted in a socialisation to other life experiences, as for interviewees with modest social backgrounds who have experienced various forms of upward social mobility or social workers who have regular contact with people who are affected by unemployment and economic problems. These individuals are often prone to moral activism (Agrikoliansky 2001) and assert their closeness (at least ideologically) with the man in the street. This posture can sometimes be expressed through the use of 'we', even if it is never completely subsumed by the group,[11] in which case it is closer to the socio-centred mode.

> The problem with Europe is that it's made for those who defend a certain level of wealth. We work in the social sector, our job is to support people, help them be less alone and suffer less. When your father and your mother are unemployed, or when your mother's husband has left her, or you've got kids, you've got three or four you have to look out for, etc. I'm sorry, but these people are not allowed to talk about Europe, they don't give a damn about Europe. [Louder] As long as there's so much unemployment, precarity, as long as people have no access to housing, you can't talk about Europe. […] I'm interested, I get paid at the end of the month […]. I'm doing fine so I can talk about it. If tomorrow, I'm unemployed, you can talk to me about Europe and I'll say 'Sorry, I've got no time for this, Europe is too far for me'.
>
> (FR, M, 40, community centre manager)

Conversely, other interviewees who seem to have the necessary resources to produce a decentred political opinion are less comfortable with European questions. These interviewees claim to care about Europe, but do not manage to singularise their point of view. Their authority in expressing an opinion is undermined by a feeling of incompetence on Europe in comparison to other political topics. This is the case for some students, executives whose sectors are not very 'Europeanised'; women from wealthy and educated social backgrounds who do not work, or no longer do. In spite of their command of 'legitimate' knowledge on Europe, they turn out to be more sensitive to the presence of an audience than other decentred interviewees. They delegate their opinions more often,[12] express

11. The posture of representation allows both social proximity and social distance. See Bernard Pudal's analysis of French communist party leaders (1988).

12. The delegation of opinion, or *fides implicita* (implicit faith), to people or groups who are consid-

their points of view with less self-confidence, have a tendency to admit incompetence on certain questions: this leads them to adopt a more distant posture when faced with the interviewer's solicitations, a sort of detached 'I' which brings them closer to the third mode (or excentered point of view).

> [About information on Europe] We're not very well informed. I watch the news on TV, I listen to the radio, I listen to foreign stations too. […] Given our social, educational and cultural level, I should know much more about how Europe works than I do. But I don't really try to. Normally it should be floating around and I should have absorbed it. […] After all, we do know how the French system works, by and large […]. I don't know if it's more complicated [for Europe], but I know less about it.
>
> (FR, F, 69, housewife)

THE SOCIO-CENTRED POINT OF VIEW OR EUROPE VIEWED FROM THE SELF

In contrast to the objectivity put forward by decentred interviewees, many interviewees mainly rely on their personal experiences or conversations to formalise and to hold a coherent opinion on Europe.[13] The interviewees who produce this socio-centred discourse are characterised by three principal traits: an interest limited to certain political questions, occasionally connected to Europe (a politicisation on specific issues or sectors); a tendency to construct their point of view on Europe based on their own social experience (tendency to socio-centre); the justification of an opinion referred to an often collectively experienced 'reality'– using 'we' – often used to stigmatise the lack of realism or the absurdity of political and media discourses (particularisation of the point of view).

A sectoral relationship to politics…and to Europe

The structure and the coherence of socio-centred interviews are built upon experience. Personal knowledge plays an important role, as a main source of arguments, as a principle of justification of a posture, and as evidence drawn from observation or from practical experience to support a point of view. These interviewees show and sometimes even admit that their interest in politics in general, and in Europe in particular, is limited to specific themes or moments of the public debate or to sectors of public intervention (fight against unemployment, rising prices, tax policy or crime). This differential interest to the subjects of the interview is demonstrated by a selective involvement in the questions asked by the interviewer. Lacking the 'statutory' political competence based on academic, media and purely

ered more apt at judging politics is most often observed in the more socially dominated categories (young people, women, poorly educated, the poor), and therefore those who possess the least authority to publicly express political considerations (Bourdieu 1993).

13. By 'coherent', we are not referring to ideological or intellectual coherence of political opinions, in the sense that they might be structured by objective knowledge and rational aims. Here, we refer to the process of attempting to formulate correspondences that are logical for the interviewee and for the interviewer, which does not preclude contradictions and dissonances.

political knowledge on Europe, they nevertheless have enough social self-confidence to produce, structure and defend a point of view on the subject. This self-confidence can derive from their professional situation, their life experiences or specific forms of social integration. It is therefore through the prism of profoundly personal knowledge that they succeed in coping with the constraints of an interview situation.

This socio-centred discourse consists in holding a shareable point of view on Europe based on personal or vicarious observations drawn from practical experience of the social world (social networks, professional circles), of the economy (consumption, wages) and cultural activities (hobbies, travelling, consuming cultural goods) which can be linked to Europe. Some of these interviewees may have professions for which EU laws and policies particularly matter, but others have 'inherited' dispositions to European citizenship from an unusual family history (children born to bi-national couples, descendants of concentration camp prisoners, experiences in other member states). For this reason, they are prone to use 'we', often referring to a community whose relationship to Europe is socially and culturally defined, and sometimes to a more uncertain group – facing an uncertain Europe – then mentioned with vague designations, like 'them' and 'they' generally referring to political elites or to European civil servants without naming them. Sometimes this 'we' is more structured, even defensive when it is rooted in a geographical territory (in the case of regionalist or nationalist discourses) or in a given economic sector described as affected or threatened by Europe, and conscious of its interests.[14]

> With the laws they gave us, in January, right, we had new laws on trawl net mesh sizes. They never go out to sea, they come up with laws that are, eh… […] Europe, no! Yeah, it's quite negative for us. Higher prices. […] They increase really, really fast. Gas… everything's increased. […] We went on strike two or three times but it didn't really have any effect. They promise us a lot of things and in the end we get nothing. […] Let them stop coming up with completely useless laws when they don't know anything about fishing.
>
> (FR, F, hairdresser, married to a fisherman)

The process of giving coherence to the successive answers aims – just as much as it does in the decentred mode – at proving the validity of the posture. In this instance, however, this process consists in listing motives of grievance or satisfaction towards Europe. Interviews are more fragmented, alternating between moments when a question elicits very long answers and others when the interviewer goes through the questions from the interview template without getting much reaction. This is due both to the varying levels of interest in the specific European issue discussed and to the fluctuations in feeling entitled to express an opinion on a given topic. While they are prone to discuss questions which make sense to them, because they echo their own life experiences as taxpayers, voters, fisher-

14. In the sense of the group 'for the self' (Marx), or of class as effectively mobilised following Bourdieu (1985).

men, farmers, gays, truck drivers or hunters, they become more withdrawn, less talkative as soon as the questions concern more distant technical or institutional domains.

Posture and resources of a particularist point of view on Europe

While decentred interviewees try to assert the singularity of their point of view, the socio-centred interviewees try to particularise a collective point of view in opposition to what they perceive to be dominant discourses. In both cases, the goal is to autonomise positions in relation to the media or political frames on Europe to which they have access; the first to assess their own position, the latter to mark their distance. Postures also differ. While decentred interviewees strive for universalism, socio-centred interviewees seek to share an opinion expressed from a specific locus in the social world and in Europe. When references to personal experience lead them to use 'I', is is linked to a position as a member of a professional or cultural group (e.g., farmers, young graduates, Italian citizens).

> I'm an administrator. I represent breeders at the [French] cattle breeding federation and so, precisely regarding the whole evolution of the common agricultural policy and all that, we went to meet the European commissioners to try to give them our point of view from the field. Because those people, they're completely disconnected from that.
>
> (FR, M, 50, cattle breeder)

Insofar as answers are mainly determined by personal knowledge, it is not always easy to articulate them with Europe. Yet, they often skilfully exploit this personal prism to shift towards political Europe, either by metaphor or by analogy, judgements based on less directly political dimensions of Europe by mobilising based on a linguistic, geographical, cultural or professional register. One of the interviewees extends the metaphor of industrial cooperation throughout the interview, based on his professional experience, which also conditions his concrete experiences of Europe. The failure of the Airbus project allows this interviewee to evoke 'national selfishness' based on his professional experience.

> Let me give you an example. What was originally going on with Airbus [several countries were involved in a common project] was a good thing. And once again, you can see Europe's limitations. Everyone tried to profit from the situation as much as they could. Maybe there are not enough exchanges, and in the end, you see that Airbus, even though it's a great project, is now struggling. Everybody wants to defend their own prerogatives. Once again, Europe is a good thing, there's still an awful lot of stuff to do, but I think there are also limitations that you can clearly see.
>
> (FR, M, 30, industrial executive)

Sharing socio-economic or professional features, however, does not equally determine the ability to generalise personal experience towards Europe, as the case of two small businessmen in north-eastern France shows. These two Alsatians of rural origin speak the Alsatian dialect, studied at the same engineering school and

both manage a small family business. Both reformulate the questions to suit their status as businessmen and the specific problems of their sector in a borderland. Whereas one maintains the socio-professional prism throughout the interview in order to respond on practical or general European problems ('The enlargement is like a business: when you grow, at some point you have to absorb the growth'), his counterpart does not manage to mobilise this experience which would have allowed him to grasp of the political aspects of Europe. He repeatedly admits his lack of knowledge on the institutions, and reacts to many questions as if he were being questioned by a severe schoolteacher ('Actually, I can see that I don't know anything'). The territories of the self, of experience, the 'field', 'reality' do not always allow the interviewee to deal with the interviewers' solicitations.

Attempting to link the social world experienced to Europe, the socio-centred discourse offers more diverse points of view than the decentred mode, where arguments more systematically refer to the political discourses and to the themes of the public debate. One interviewee, who often travels with her family in Europe in a camping car, evaluates Europe and the economic situation of the Member States in the light of the countries she visits. Other interviewees, of Algerian or Tunisian origin, mention discrimination as a reason to doubt 'Europe's bright promises'. Another interviewee forms analogies between the Europe of exchanges and the numerous bi-national marriages in her family. Less equipped with socially legitimate knowledge on political problems, these interviewees have more original opinions on the definition and the representations of Europe. The very characteristics of the socio-centred point of view (pre-eminence of experience, interest limited to specific political questions, particularisation of the point of view) make it easy to recognise it in interviewees despite their very diverse sociological profiles. Although these interviewees share a core of common features in the way they deal with the survey situation, the register of social identification allows us to identify two distinct variants.

From the globalised 'I' to the egocentric 'we' (interstitial postures of the socio-centred mode)

Depending on the interviewees' material and symbolic properties, their social identification can either tend to a universalising or a personalising point of view. In the first case, the interviewees, while relying on experience, adopt a posture close to the decentred mode (see above). Here, the territory of the self includes a sufficient quantity of social supports, economic, cultural and symbolic resources to allow them to take other points of view into account. The possession of educational and linguistic capital, of experiences of travelling and meeting people in Europe allow the formulation of a singular point of view (register of the 'I'), which nonetheless remains mainly based on experience.

> I was a European long before Europe. To me, London is just a Parisian suburb. It's not another country. Spain is home. […] And to me, Europe is self-evident. On Monday I'm not here, because I'm going to London. I don't say 'I'm going to England', I say 'I'm going to London', as if I was saying

> 'I'm going to Lyon'. […] When my children go to London, it feels like home to them. [Asked about European information] Well, on Europe, personally, I get my information mostly from people I work with, since I work with several European countries. So earlier I was on the phone with a Spaniard; as soon as we're done with the interview, I'll phone my English accountant.
>
> (FR, M, 49, CEO of a small business)

While this interviewee has the resources to universalise his opinion, the discourse is less transparent compared to the interviewees of the decentred mode insofar as it is never constructed outside of his own situation and his experience of the Common Market. Conversely, some interviewees attempt to produce a sociocentred discourse, but seem to lack the forms of experience and mechanisms of social identification necessary to make their point of view universal and shareable. While they manage, throughout the interview, to articulate a point of view on Europe based on their own experience, the lack of obvious or visible links to Europe forces them to hold a very personalised vision, one which cannot easily be generalised. While this ego-centring brings them closer to the interviews of the external mode, these interviewees, who distinguish themselves through their ability to overcome, rise to the challenges of the presence of an audience (including the necessity of justifying the opinion) and are capable of holding a particular opinion on Europe. This is clearly shown by the case of a worker in a meatpacking plant, who builds his entire point of view on his experience of the Euro, to which he relates all the questions, including those that have nothing to do with the subject.

THE EXTERNAL DISCOURSE OR EUROPE OUTSIDE THE SELF

This last category includes interviewees who are incapable of sustaining a point of view when interviewed. The reasons for their inability to respond politically to questions on political Europe are diverse, but mainly manifest themselves through a lack of school and media knowledge on the subject, coupled with the impossibility of interpreting personal experience and knowledge in relation to Europe. The self and the personal territories of these interviewees seem to be confined to the periphery of Europe, or even outside Europe, its issues and its problems. The effects of the presence of an audience, including maintaining social face, are also experienced as unusual constraints, which are hard to overcome. As a result, their discourse remains external, insofar as the fragments of opinion they provide remain outside the realm of Europe. Three principal traits characterise these interviewees: a material and symbolic sense of remoteness from politics and even more so with European questions (political distance); a tendency to define Europe outside the self, as a fiction (tendency to externalise); the absence of an affirmation of a personal and general opinion on the subject (deprivation of the point of view).

A remote, invisible Europe

The interviewees of the excentred mode are, or feel, powerless in the interview situation. Even beyond the theme on which their opinion is solicited, the idea of giving political judgements in public makes them uncomfortable. Talking politics is not something self-evident to them, especially on a distant and technical subject

such as Europe, on which they have no opinion prior to the interview. Seeing as they have to face the solicitation of the interviewer, they attempt to explain why the questions are beyond them. Because the subject has no political or practical significations for most of them, they are simultaneously forced to deal with (the interview situation, Europe) and to deal without (a point of view, knowledge, and experience of Europe). They try to piece together answers with snippets of everyday experience and generalities without ever really succeeding in linking them to Europe. Such argumentative improvisation, which is incidental in the sense that it is imposed by the interaction between the interviewer and the interviewee, does not produce a solid point of view on Europe.

> Europe really doesn't affect me. Well, except for the Euro. Of course! But otherwise, no, not at all. I don't really feel concerned. I told you, I don't feel European because Europe doesn't affect me.
>
> (FR, M, 27, unemployed cook)

The interview feels like a trial to them, and they ostensibly show their surprise and disarray when the questions are formulated. The interviewee's wait-and-see attitude and discomfort, contrasting with the interviewer's supposed authority, implicitly transform the interview into a school test, i.e., an evaluative and asymmetric interaction, far from ordinary political conversation.[15] This shift from the original framework of the interaction can be observed in the long silences following the questions or between bits of answers, as well as the many apparent contradictions[16] expressed in the interviews.

> [Europe?] It's something positive. Well, because it's nice to be more… hmm… amongst the big ones. Because there are many big ones, and they're going to swallow the small ones, so we need to… [later] After everything I told you, I think I probably don't have much of an opinion. Because I'm not interested… hmm… the word 'interest' isn't… maybe I'm uninterested…
>
> (FR, F, 70, former housewife)

Thus, interviewees give judgements which neither claim to the objectivity of dialogism (decentred mode) nor to the irrefutable character of concrete experience (socio-centred mode).

Expressions of an opinion without a point of view

These modes of reaction do not have the properties of a founded point of view on Europe. They appear fragile, fragmented, artificial, and are often ridiculed by their own authors. These 'opinions by eclipse' (Gaxie 1990) are indeed expressed

15. In collective interviews, this dimension is less present because of the social proximity of the respondents and the less central role played by the interviewer/evaluator. While most participants experience the same difficulties in replying to questions from the interview template, they manage to feel entitled to give their opinion by collectively shifting the frame and the vocabulary of the interview.

16. Contradictory only in relation to the dominant definition of opinion, i.e. the expression of a consistent attitude based on specific reasons.

with little self-assurance. This can be interpreted as a way of showing just how little they value what they say and of pointing out the fact that the interviewer's questions are not suited to their competences. If they conform to the interaction unfolding before them, they only do so on a superficial level and because they feel they are forced to. Often, these interviewees show goodwill when the interview begins. Progressively, the feeling of foreignness and abstraction they claim to have in relation to Europe affects their willingness to play the game of questions and answers. Some retreat and only reply to admit their incompetence, which they laugh off with a sometimes bitter self-mockery. The absence of a point of view on the subject forces them to give snippets of opinions throughout the interview without any overall coherence. Relying on ethical principles ('It is better to not go to war') and common sense assertions ('United we stand, divided we fall'), they stick to rather vague general statements, which ultimately do not allow them to sustain a point of view throughout the duration of the interview: little European countries united against the superpowers of the world or the noble original European idea.

> So, to me, Europe, in order to be able to counter the US or the other superpowers, like China, we need to be able to get together to be stronger, to me unity is strength.
>
> (FR, F, 30, accountant)

> The idea was to find a way to unite countries to prevent them from attacking each other. That was it, that's how Europe was born. And then there are details I don't know about.
>
> (FR, F, 25, teacher)

When they are expressed, positions are most often based on domestic experiences. The critique of the Euro, and specifically of its consequences such as the decline in purchasing power is thus mentioned in many interviews. However, this 'experience' is not always linked to European institutions; it is associated with a vague 'Europe'.

> [When among friends, would you say you discuss European issues often, occasionally or never?] Very rarely. There were some opportunities for discussion at the time when the media were talking about the introduction of the Euro […]. But it was about the Euro's effects; I can't say it was a discussion on Europe.
>
> (IT, M, 38, steelworker)

Some French interviewees refer to the constitutional text that they received in the post at the time of the referendum. But this experience also serves as an illustration of their distance from Europe: they did not read the voluminous, incomprehensible text and ultimately came to see it as a wasteful extravagance, a symbol of how out of touch with reality 'Brussels' is. And once the illustrative virtues of this failed encounter with Europe have been exhausted, the interviewees tend to switch off during the interview, and fall into laconism or even silence, which protects them from the symbolic violence of the interview. In addition to knowledge and experience of Europe, these interviewees also lack registers of social identifica-

tion. The 'I' does not allow any singular point of view to be structured, the 'we', which generally refers to politically and socially inconsistent and moving categories (peers, colleagues, friends or family members), does not seem to be embedded in any community of condition linked to any concrete situation and is only defined implicitly, as opposed to undetermined 'they' and 'them'.

> The Euro, all that stuff, well, I don't really care… I can't say whether I'm for or against it… […] Europe? We [me and my friends] we don't care about Europe, so… I never talk about it. The older people, though, they say 'Yeah, the Euro pisses us off' and all that.
>
> (FR, F, 27, unskilled worker)

While their embedded allegiances allow other interviewees to position themselves in relation to Europe, here, the interviewees' social worlds are completely separate from European problems. They generally belong to the most fragile and dominated sectors of society: unemployed, under-qualified workers, blue-collar workers, housewives, etc. Nevertheless, some of them are not totally deprived of all forms of educational, economic and social resources (graduates, teachers or executives). While they tend to have a distant relationship with politics, they are occasionally able to say something about national politics, and sometimes be interested in it. Yet, they suffer from the absence of material and/or symbolic links to Europe.

'Couldn't care less', guilty indifference and fragmented critique (interstitial postures of the external mode)

Some of the extracts quoted above express indifference towards Europe and a claim that it is not a personal concern. The feeling of exclusion thus leads to a 'couldn't care less' attitude, which characterises a certain popular outlook towards the serious, esoteric world of politics (Hoggart 1969; Eliasoph 1990). This attitude is mainly observed with blue-collar workers, employees, unemployed persons or those who have relatively little education – interviewees who are deprived of social, economic and cultural forms of capital allowing them to conceive Europe as a space of economic and cultural exchanges. As they lack the resources to travel (money, free time, command of a foreign language), Europe remains abstract to them, and its opportunities are seen as benefiting others ('bosses' or 'politicians'). Their exclusion from Europe should be first understood as a consequence of their economic, cultural and political marginalisation. Like many interviewees of the socio-centred mode, they belong to the middle and lower social segments, but do not identify themselves to a class, insofar as their position in the social space is not politically structured. The numerous young workers in industry or services in this category of interviewees have little politicisation.[17] They also tend to have irregular professional trajectories, marked by mobility and alternating periods of unemployment and employment, which prevents their genuine socialisation to the

17. This is obviously a consequence of the declining culture of collective and political action in working-class environments (Beaud and Pialoux 1999).

wage-earner's condition. Just as they are isolated in the face of precariousness and of their own aspirations (Schwartz 1990), they seem to have no ports of call on the territory of politics, let alone European affairs.

At odds with this 'couldn't care less' posture, lack of knowledge of Europe can also be experienced through a feeling of guilt. Other interviewees, who are objectively better equipped in terms of education and professional socialisation, perceive Europe as a political object, something they think deserves attention based on the prevailing social norms, which they are socially not likely to question. This posture is often adopted by women, who experience their lack of interest in Europe as an issue of citizenship ('I'm not a good citizen') and as a result of their personal laziness, which causes guilt ('I feel like It's not right when I say I'm excluded and I'm not informed, when I myself don't really seek out the information'). Beyond the gender-based interpretation – the theme of the interview activates a more deferential feminine relationship to politics (Achin *et al.* 2007) – for these interviewees, the impossibility of producing a point of view results more generally from the impossibility of identifying themselves with social groups that are mobilised or politically structured by Europe. Many interviewees attest to the key role of family and friends in the definition of the self, arguably due to the failure or the disenchantment of more socially integrative forms of identification (the Nation, the profession, the generation).

Lastly, unlike the indifferent interviewees who either 'couldn't care less' or feel guilty, some interviewees who do not have any actual point of view on Europe appear, however, to care about it. While they only sporadically trace back certain actions to Europe, they manage to say something about it by applying opinions they have developed on other subjects. Focused on the problem of unemployment, a young female employee in the hotel and restaurant sector relates all the questions to this issue:

> [Asked about the enlargement] I know that in terms of agriculture, we're going to have the first Polish farmers coming into France. [On public services] Precisely, there's going to be even more unemployment in France if we bring in foreign companies. [On business relocations] They have the right to relocate; supposedly it doesn't create unemployment in France but when you see all the factories closing, all the people who are unemployed… [On the VAT] So, with a 19.5 per cent VAT, there are no new jobs. If we weren't in Europe, France wouldn't need the others' opinion and would just do what it feels like.
>
> (FR, F, 24, receptionist in a hotel-restaurant)

In this type of posture, judgements are scattered throughout the interview without any attempt at coherence. Their reliance on partly politicised elements of identification brings these interviewees closer to the socio-centred mode, although their prevalent feeling remains that of being external to Europe.

CONCLUSION

When we set out to study the ways of talking about Europe, we focused on the existence of practical knowledge and non-specialised, everyday methods used to deal with political Europe. Rather than highlighting political opinions and attitudes, we wanted to investigate the process of articulating a point of view and its conditions of possibility, in a situation where respondents disposed of diverse (and often missing) resources. In this research perspective, two elements of conclusion should be underscored.

First, we have seen that unlike national politics, which produces a tangible world of administrations, systems, personalities and opposing programmes, Europe is often perceived by interviewees as a complex, invisible and elusive organisation. Hence, by imposing the theme of Europe and the problems related to it to solicit opinions, the interview template heightens the individuals' unequal dispositions to respond politically to political questions. The major inequalities we have observed in the ability to deal with audience effects and the symbolic violence of the interview show that the legitimacy in giving opinions on political Europe hinges on social factors, just as much as the legitimacy in giving opinions on national politics, but in a different way. Indeed, discussing and evaluating European problems entails having encountered them through access to legitimate knowledge (secondary and university education, information in media, activism) or through practical experiences (professional activities, trips, etc.). These possibilities of encountering Europe, however, are, on the one hand, reserved to certain social profiles, and on the other hand, limited by the relative invisibility of the interventions of the European institutions themselves. For this reason, the threshold of access to Europe generally seems very high, including for individuals who are well endowed with economic or cultural resources that usually help them to 'talk politics' more easily. This relativisation of the effect of assigning status partly contradicts the classic studies that link level of education, level of income and support for the EU.

Then, we have laid particular emphasis on the interviewees' identification with a number of social worlds and categories. By studying them as resources used to support, justify or withdraw a self defined in relation to Europe, we have shown how these worlds are likely to converge with Europe or not. Europe remains a vague political object, with few identifiable symbols, and there are therefore many available angles to formulate a point of view: the founding philosophical principles, economic imperatives, distributive policies (Common Agricultural Policy, ERDF), normative action, the cultural or geographical space, competition between social systems, economies, companies and workers… By observing the types of knowledge and personal experience used to discuss and judge Europe, we can see that it 'comes' to interviewees in various ways, and does not always have meaning in relation to their horizon of existence, even if they are educated and qualified. But while the ability to express a political judgement on Europe is less widespread than for other now routine national political objects, the ability to judge political Europe upon request is also more diversified than studies on the sociology of political opinion have claimed so far. The differences in exposure to Europe and

Table 7.1: Talking Europe Tendential and interstitial modes of solicited opinions on political Europe

		Decentred mode	Socio-centred mode	External mode
Registers of social identification	Posture towards Europe	Closeness to political Europe	Sectoral relationship to political Europe	Distant relationship to political Europe
		Consistent interest in political Europe	Intermittent interest in political Europe	Distance towards political Europe
		Involvement	Sectorised involvement	Detachment
	Uses of the self	Universalised 'I'	Personalised and socially embedded 'we'	Politically undetermined 'I-we'
	Type of support on the political 'territory'	Appropriation and ability to circulate on the political territory	Limitation or delineation of specific political territory	Lack of determination of a specific/political territory
Resources used to produce a point of view	Type of knowledge mobilised on Europe	Impersonal knowledge (Main sources: media, public debates, educational and academic knowledge)	Personal knowledge (Main sources: social experiences, the 'field', everyday life)	Knowledge and experience not relatable to Europe
		Mastery of different elements of the public debate (legitimisation)	Reference to some issues of public debate (justification)	Ignorance of European issues (distancing)
		Personal experience as illustration	Personal experience as evidence	Personal experience as anecdotes

(*Contd.*)

Table 7.1: (Contd.)

		Decentred mode	Socio-centred mode	External mode
Resources used to produce a point of view	Producing an opinion on Europe	Prone to hold a singularised point of view (decentring, dialogism) (tend towards) Objectivity Making opinions coherent with public debate (transparency) Generalisation	Prone to hold a particular point of view (socio-centring) (assert) Subjectivity Effort to justify with actual experience (personalisation) Relative generalisation from experience	Prone to hold opinions without specific point of view (externalising) (admit feeling of) Confusion Fragmentation of the opinions (opacity) Generalities
	Interstitial modalities	European 'I' Empathetic 'I' Locution with argumentative function/ production of a logic effect	Egocentric 'we' Fragmentary judgment Metaphors and analogies / production of a justification	'Couldn't care less' Detached 'I' or guilty indifference Digression/laconism
	Expectation towards Europe	Demand of clarity	Demand of materiality	Absent or confused demand

its identification with various social universes are probably too often neglected in studies based on the secondary interpretation of Eurobarometer data. Aside from the violence inflicted on raw data, the mechanics of big numbers tends to reduce the social contingency of people's lives to a small handful of variables. Yet, in practice, opinions remain to a large extent impermeable to statistical reasoning.