The Palgrave Macmillan Citizens' Reactions to European Integration Compared

Overlooking Europe

Sophie Duchesne, Elizabeth Frazer,
Florence Haegel and Virginie Van Ingelgom

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Softcover reprint of the hardcover 1st edition 2013 978-0-230-35434-0

First published 2013 by
PALGRAVE MACMILLAN

Palgrave Macmillan in the UK is an imprint of Macmillan Publishers Limited, registered in England, company number 785998, of Houndmills, Basingstoke, Hampshire RG21 6XS.

Palgrave Macmillan in the US is a division of St Martin's Press LLC, 175 Fifth Avenue, New York, NY 10010.

Palgrave Macmillan is the global academic imprint of the above companies and has companies and representatives throughout the world.

ISBN 978-1-349-34640-0 ISBN 978-1-137-29726-6 (eBook)
DOI 10.1057/9781137297266

This book is printed on paper suitable for recycling and made from fully managed and sustained forest sources. Logging, pulping and manufacturing processes are expected to conform to the environmental regulations of the country of origin.

A catalogue record for this book is available from the British Library.

A catalog record for this book is available from the Library of Congress.

10 9 8 7 6 5 4 3 2 1
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Preface and Acknowledgements

On Tuesday, 17 January 2006, at 2.40 pm, Aline arrived at the seminar room in the basement of the Cevipof building, Sciences Po, Paris. She was smiling, looking at ease, more so than we were. She was early and we were late, although we had been working on this project, discussing the script, testing the moderation, recruiting group members and organising the sessions, for four months. Half an hour later, she was seated with Samira, Paul, Pablo and Martin, facing the moderator. The sixth invited participant had not shown up, and our first focus group on Europe was about to begin. Over the following five months, 172 people selected from 411 volunteers would come and spend three hours with us, in Paris, in Brussels or in Oxford, discussing matters to do with European integration.

Our first debt is to all the citizens who applied to participate in our focus groups and in particular to all of those who participated in group sessions. They are necessarily anonymous; readers can get an idea of the range of individuals who helped us in this way from our presentation in Appendix 3 of the sociological characteristics of the 133 participants who took part in the 24 groups that have been transcribed and analysed for this book. Something of their real personalities comes through, we hope, from our presentations of their words and analyses of their interactions with their fellow participants, throughout the following chapters.

Before the point of meeting Aline in Paris, the research project was already well under way. In June 2005 we began a close collaboration between colleagues at Sciences Po, Paris (Sophie Duchesne – coordinator, Florence Haegel and Guillaume Garcia), the University of Oxford (Elizabeth Frazer, with the participation of Linda Pialek) and the University of Louvain (André-Paul Frognier and Virginie Van Ingelgom). The high degree of coherence of the research project, and more specifically of the contributions to this book, owes much, though, to earlier collaborations. The project was designed to continue the work begun by Sophie Duchesne and Florence Haegel on politicisation of discussion. In that research, the use of focus groups was central, and the earlier work of Elizabeth Frazer using focus groups for sensitive topics and for exploring conflict was important to their design. In the same spirit, agreeing to

pursue Europe as the discussion topic allowed us to position the research as a development from the analyses of European identity carried out jointly by André-Paul Frognier and Sophie Duchesne. The coherence of the project owes much to these long-term relationships and friendships. It also owes much to the time that the entire team has spent together in Paris, Oxford, Brussels and Louvain.

We also owe thanks to a number of people who assisted us with the research, at the group organisation stage and at the stage of transcription, handling and conducting analysis of the data that resulted from more than 72 hours of discussion, 24 DVDs and 3,000 pages of transcript: Patty Chang, Paul Honey, Adam Humphreys, Gemma Hersh, Géraldine Thiry, Anouk Lloren, Vanessa Hick, Vincent Guilluy, and Viviane Le Hay.

Guillaume Garcia, Linda Pialek and Virginie Van Ingelgom worked on the recruitment and organisation of focus groups in Paris, Oxford and Brussels and on subsequent transcription and data analysis. Their individual and joint reports on our research protocols and procedures have made a significant contribution to this book. Guillaume Garcia is now including our project data in the French qualitative data archive (http://www.sciencespo.fr/dime-shs/content/dime-shs-quali), so colleagues will be able to conduct new analysis of it. Re-analysis by other researchers will be a way to continue the adventure that every collaborative research project becomes.

We were supported by the administrative staff at Cevipof, Sciences Po, Paris, at the Department of Politics and International Relations, University of Oxford, and at the Institut de Sciences Politiques Louvain-Europe, Université Catholique de Louvain. We are very grateful to the UCL–Cliniques Saint-Luc in Brussels (Woluwé) who allowed us to use the welcoming Salle des Toges for the Belgian group sessions.

The project was funded thanks to many institutions: the French Ministry of Research (ACI grant INT0040); Sciences Po European Studies Centre (CEE); Fonds de la recherche scientifique – FNRS; the Leverhulme Foundation (grant F/01 089/B); the Nuffield College Research Fund; Programme Tournesol (grant 18123NK); the Department of Politics and International Relations, University of Oxford; and New College, Oxford. The website for the project was hosted at the University of Oxford DPIR at: http://oxpo.politics.ox.ac.uk/projects/past_projects.asp#Citizens.

In the last five years, we have presented work from this project at seminars, conferences and workshops: at the *Séminaire de Sociologie Politique*, Cevipof, Sciences Po, October 2006; at the *Séminaire du Centre de Politique Comparée*, ISPOLE, UCLouvain, November 2006;

French Political Association Congress , Toulouse, Septembre 2007; second conference of the European Studies Group of the French Political Science Association, Grenoble, December 2007; at the ECPR Joint Sessions, Rennes, April 2008; European Studies Centre, Sciences Po, May 2008; conference European Citizenship Revisited, University of Oxford, June 2008; UACES, Edinburgh September 2008; EPOP Conference, Manchester, September 2008; European Union Studies Association biannual conference, Los Angeles, May 2009 and Boston, March 2011; Conference '*Modes d'expressions de la citoyenneté européenne', Institut d'études européennes*, UCLouvain, March 2010; Midterm Conference ESA Research Network 32 – Political Sociology, CERAPS, Lille 2, November 2010; Nation Europe Monde (NEM) seminar at the European Studies Centre, Sciences Po, January 2012; at the ECPR Joint Sessions, Antwerp, April 2012. We are most grateful to discussants and participants at all of these events, for helpful comment and criticism.

We would also like to thank more particularly colleagues who supported, discussed and criticised our research at different stages of the work: Céline Belot, Renaud Dehousse, Florence Delmotte, Juan Diez Medrano, Claire Dupuy, Adrian Favell, Daniel Gaxie, Justine Lacroix, Kalypso Nikolaïdis, Olivier Rozenberg, Julien Weisbein and Jonathan White.

Finally, we are very grateful to Véronique Comte Kasmi, who let us use her work *Conversation* on the book cover. More of her work is to be found at http://vcomte.blog4ever.com/blog/index-486067.html.

The chapters that follow were drafted by us individually, although their argument and analytic presentation is the result of long, if necessarily intermittent, collective engagement with our data. The final typescript is the result of collaborative writing, revising and editing between the four authors, with Guillaume Garcia making a particular contribution to the drafts of Chapter 6. André-Paul Frognier has written the postscript to the finished project. We are collectively responsible for the arguments about the disciplines of political sociology and social theory and about how to understand the relationships between citizens, politics and governments.

Contributors

Sophie Duchesne is Research Director at the French National Centre for Scientific Research (CNRS), based at Nanterre University in the Institute for Social Sciences of Politics (ISP). Her main research interests deal with issues of citizenship and political identities in France, the UK and Europe, as well as qualitative research methods.

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Introduction

Sophie Duchesne, Elizabeth Frazer, Florence Haegel and Virginie Van Ingelgom

The analysis and arguments in this book are based on data gathered from 24 focus groups, 8 conducted in each of Paris, Oxford and Brussels in the period January–June 2006. It was impossible not to begin, during the fieldwork period itself, to analyse the class and national differences that were at the heart of our research design. In Brussels group members showed strikingly high levels of sociability – invariably, they began immediately to converse and to find out about their fellow group members' identities. They tended to achieve a level of group solidarity with no difficulty – checking that each other was able to get home at the end, and offering lifts. They also exhibited, by any standards, strikingly high levels of knowledge of multi-level politics. Working-class participants engaged in serious discussions of voting systems and appropriate distributions of competence. We didn't know, and still don't, how to explain Belgians' particular competence in discussing European integration. Is it the quality of citizenship education in schools? A public political culture that is more transparent about political structures than the other two? In any case, the effect was evident at the time of the fieldwork and is borne out in our subsequent close analysis of the data.

The Oxford group members both exhibited very low levels of acquaintance with any concrete information regarding Europe and also tended to be troubled by this. From one group, members contacted the research team afterwards, to ask for answers to the questions we had put – and in one man's case, a reading list – as they were so upset at it being made clear how little they knew. One problem we detected in these groups was that members who did have concrete knowledge found it very difficult to speak – they anticipated that their fellow group members wouldn't like a show-off, we think; there is something of a stigma in some sections of British culture about any display of knowledge. The

discussions in the Oxford groups are measurably shorter than in Brussels and Paris – the moderator was at times doing her best to string things out until the refreshments were on the table for the break. And researchers in conversation analysis might find some interesting data pertaining to the structure, dynamics and management of silences from our Oxford corpus.

The French were not much more knowledgeable about the European Union (EU) than the British, but they seemed not to care much, if anything, about it. Our moderation technique left them the opportunity to get the discussion rolling on other topics; they took it and talked at length about their situation in France. They also made great use of the opportunities offered to express disagreement and engage in conflict with one another. The Paris groups are clearly more conflictive than their Brussels and Oxford counterparts. In Paris, no member of a group chose to use a pseudonym for the purposes of the group discussion, although we offered them the option to do so, as an extra step in the anonymisation process. Many participants did use one in Oxford. In Brussels, one man who wanted to keep his North African origin undetectable took a pseudonym.

Each of these 24 groups gathered from 4 to 6 participants, selected as socially close but politically diverse. The discussion lasted about three hours and was organised around five questions only, in order to leave enough room for participants to lead the discussion in the directions that would interest them most. The five questions tried to cover different aspects of European integration: identity, institutions, benefit and membership, as well as political sophistication.

We aimed to foster conflict and to set up contexts in which individuals would feel the need to take a political stance in relation to the positions taken up by their fellows. We engaged in careful ethical discussion of the risks involved in this kind of work. Our plan for the sessions involved an initial section designed to allow participants to get to know each other and to take a view about each other's social and political positions, with questions that might generate alliances and antagonisms between them. This was followed by an intermission for food and drink. A potentially sensitive and conflictual couple of questions after the break were followed by a final task that called for cooperative working and humour. To end, we organised the closure of the session in such a way – with the chance to take another drink or snack, general conversation between team members and group participants, the distribution of the financial reward for participation which allowed for one to one talk between a team member and an individual – that we maximised the opportunities

for group members to leave any negative feelings behind in the research room and not to take them out with them into the world. In fact, it wasn't only the Belgian groups who struck up friendly relations with each other. From all of them, people seemed to go away in a positive mood, often in pairs or groups.

The themes of identity, institutions and benefits were selected because they've been at the core of european studies debates in the last decades. But the project was also meant as the continuation of a long-term research project on politicisation of discussion. Hence, our theoretical framework is at the cross-roads of the specific field of european studies and general political sociology. Chapter 1 of this book will provide the reader with our reading of european studies analysis of citizens' attitudes towards integration followed by an explanation of how our hypotheses and research design were constructed.

These striking national differences that we've underlined above echo in a palpable way one of the most well-documented results in european studies: the profound and enduring national differences regarding citizens' attitudes towards integration. Chapter 2 analyses these differences and deals with the national frames that embed all of our respondents' engagements with the European question. It shows how citizens, although differently in each of our three country cases, find it difficult to single out the European level: they look at it through the lenses of national institutions and narratives, but hardly see it as it is blurred by globalisation.

In each city, we convened four categories of groups: the first gathered workers, the second employees, the third managers and the fourth activists. Although national differences are striking, differences of behaviour, interests and content of the discussion are also most notable when we compare groups along these categories. Chapter 3 deals with the patterns we find in our data that relate European attitudes to social class. It concludes by considering the lack of saliency that characterises European issues in workers and employees groups by comparison with the others and challenges the importance given to identity in order to understand how citizens related to the European political system.

Focus group research like ours positions participants such that complexity, of policy matters, of party choice, of judgement, confronts them, and such that they are constrained to deal with it. Thus, it stages politics. The resulting discussions enable us to examine the complex questions of the legitimacy of European institutions, and of the related material and legal constraints that bind citizens and other individuals, in a manner that is impossible in the context of a straight

question-and-answer interview or questionnaire. Chapter 4 explores the themes of ambivalence and indifference, and the way class and national positions relate to articulations of these, by looking in detail at the way citizens who, in a preliminary questionnaire, declared they were neither in favour nor against the EU participate in the discussions. It concludes that the growing politicisation of European issues in the media and around does not necessarily result in a growing polarisation of citizens opinions.

Although our analysis emphasises the fuzziness of the EU, citizens nevertheless have opinions about normative issues related to government and democracy. Chapter 5 engages with how our respondents do or do not attribute legitimacy to the European level of governance and to other levels. It is striking that for all our respondents a clear version of popular sovereignty underpins their attempts to evaluate political processes. We find both class and national differences in our groups' engagement with questions of representation and legitimacy. In this analysis, the social difference between the activist groups and the others is significant and, again, the national differences between our activists are as important as the differences between the activists and the rest.

In qualitative analysis, the reflexivity of researchers, in addition to the systematicity of their implementation of their techniques, constitutes the essential criterion for validating their methods. This is why in a long final chapter (Chapter 6), we set out a detailed account of our methods and methodology, including our recruitment strategy and procedures. We have also included, as further appendices, the key documents relating to our research design and implementation: the complete list of participants in the groups analysed here, the discussion schedule and an account of how it was constructed. Here, too, we set out how we have tackled the problems of comparability across countries, and across social classes, in interpretive and qualitative research. Each chapter contains some references to our methods and methodology – but the minimum necessary for the material and the analysis to make sense (we hope). Readers who want a very detailed account of the research methods, protocols and methodology in order to frame our presentation of our analysis and findings might wish to read Chapter 6 first.

Finally, we want to add here a word about the sub-title of the book: 'overlooking Europe'. The power of focus group method is that it, precisely, gives space and capacity for respondents to genuinely focus on a topic. An extended session format also means that, as well as depth and concentration, research can achieve a wide-ranging, synoptic, overview

of many aspects of a question. It was in this sense that the idea of 'overlooking' – overseeing, taking a wide view – began to enter our thinking about our research design. Ironically, though, at the time of the fieldwork it was apparent to the research team that most of our respondents were overlooking Europe in the sense of ignoring, not seeing it, not keeping it in view. In the chapters that follow, our analysis often focusses on moments when there is effort by group members to bring attention back to the question that has been put and passages in which the relationship between overlooking in the sense of taking a wide view and overlooking in the sense of not seeing is apparent to the group members themselves and to us as analysts.

1

Concepts and Theory: Political Sociology and European Studies

Sophie Duchesne, Elizabeth Frazer, Florence Haegel and Virginie Van Ingelgom

Citizens' reactions to European integration have attracted a good deal of attention from social scientists over the last decades. Work conducted by researchers in the academic field of european studies has partly been inspired by the search for ways to solve Europe's so-called democratic deficit. In most of this work, citizens' opinions of the European Union (EU) or the integration process are analysed in relation to expectations regarding citizens' support and legitimating attitudes (Van Ingelgom, 2010). Our standpoint in this book is mainly empirical, although it also takes into account the implications of sociological analysis of citizens' political understanding and behaviour for democratic theory. European studies largely relied on statistical analysis of survey data before undergoing a qualitative turn by the end of the 1990s. Mixed methods are usually received positively in this field, as in other public opinion research areas (Risse, 2010). But, with regard to European attitudes, the discrepancy between the findings from the two distinct methodological traditions has become so striking that work is needed to reconcile them. This book aims to take a step in that direction. Contrary to other recently published works based on qualitative research (White, 2011; Gaxie, Hubé & Rowell, 2011) *Overlooking Europe* was not conceived as an alternative to statistical research but rather as a complement to it.

Our project design is built on four decades of European public opinion research. In the first section of this chapter, we aim to provide readers with an overview of research on citizens' attitudes towards european integration. We present an account of the 'state of the art' which integrates the findings of the recent qualitative turn in european studies. Our research team though was only partly constituted by european studies researchers. So our hypotheses and research design were also strongly influenced by more general references from political sociology and from

democratic theory that were relevant to the study of ordinary citizens' relationships with politics and politicisation.

Literature review: European studies and citizens' attitudes towards integration

Our review of social scientific research on citizens' reactions to european integration distinguishes four main periods. In the 1970s, Lindberg and Scheingold (1970) accounted for citizens' reactions towards european integration by way of the notion of 'permissive consensus'. This framework, based on a utilitarian conception of citizens' attitudes, lasted for more than two decades. It was challenged in the 1990s by the ambiguous results of the referenda related to the Maastricht Treaty ratification. This opened the way for a series of research projects that looked into a supposedly more affective dimension of the European political link, including the first qualitative research projects carried out in the field. The notion of 'European identity' was introduced at this period. By the time the French and the Dutch rejected the Constitutional Treaty by referendum in 2005, more and more research was being devoted to the analysis of the negative evaluations that sections of the European citizenry were expected to have developed, in line with the projects of extreme political parties. This third period of research was dominated by the notion of 'euroscepticism' and the thesis of growing polarisation of citizens' opinions regarding european integration. This thesis, though, has recently been challenged by a growing number of qualitative research projects, whose results converge on the lack of salience of European issues for European citizens and their fundamental ambivalence on these issues.

System support and permissive consensus

From the very beginning, analysing European attitudes to integration forced researchers to cope with the difficulties of national comparison, raising numerous problems, epistemological as well as methodological. Eurobarometer surveys, funded by the European Commission since 1973 for 'monitoring the evolution of public opinion in the Member States, thus helping the preparation of texts, decision-making and the evaluation of its work',[1] early on came to constitute an invaluable source of data for European public opinion researchers, all the more for being freely available to academics despite the fact that they are not collected for academic purposes (Aldrin, 2010). Consequently survey research

became dominant in the field. Analyses of attitudes to integration from the 1970s up to the turn of the century share common characteristics. In particular, they are mainly based on an analytical framework inspired by Easton (1965, 1975).

In his work on political systems and more particularly in the seminal *Systems Analysis of Political Life* (1965), Easton developed the concept of 'support' as a key element that permits the political system to perform its function of satisfying demands and thus to persist. Basically Easton distinguishes two categories of support. Specific support is generated by satisfaction with output, that is by the capacity of the political system to provide citizens with what they want. Diffuse support refers to the more general evaluation of what the political system represents for citizens. Diffuse support acts as a reservoir of support when the political system is no longer able to satisfy demand. It is a consequence of political socialisation that gives legitimacy to the system and/or its actors. Lindberg and Scheingold (1970) imported and adapted Easton's framework in order to account for the distribution of attitudes towards the new European communities (Niedermayer & Westle, 1995). They distinguished utilitarian from affective support, a terminology that is still commonly used. They observed that in the Eurobarometer series the level of negative attitudes towards integration was quite low and that positive reactions dominated, but that there were a large remaining number of indefinite answers. They successfully labelled this distribution 'permissive consensus', and predicted that support could grow and become more consistent because of a spillover effect from specific (or utilitarian) to diffuse (or affective) support. The Eastonian framework they introduced dominated european studies for a long time.

Support has been measured thanks to the series of questions (called trend questions) asked regularly in all Eurobarometer surveys, allowing for systematic and comparative diachronic analysis (Schmitt, 2003; Schmitt & Scholz, 2005). Four questions – usually labelled 'unification', 'membership', 'dissolution' and 'benefit' (Niedermayer, 1995) – have mainly been used for this purpose, 'benefit' being more specifically considered the measure appropriate for utilitarian support.[2] However, a close look at the literature shows that these four questions have been interpreted and used in different ways. 'Unification' has been the most frequently used measure (Gabel, 1998) but many other configurations can be observed: for example 'unification' and 'membership' used together (Gabel & Palmer, 1995) or combined with 'dissolution' (Anderson & Kaltenthaler, 1996); 'membership' and 'benefit' together

(McLaren, 2002) or complementing other trend questions regarding the desired speed of the integration process[3] (Hooghe & Marks, 2004). Other researchers have used the four questions together under a single indicator constructed by factor analysis (Cautrès & Grunberg, 2007).

Analyses of citizens' opinions regarding integration have covered a relatively large number of countries comparatively. A series of explanatory factors have emerged – at both the system and the individual levels – that account for the variation in support between countries. These include, for instance, individual and collective levels of expectation regarding benefits from integration (Anderson & Reichert, 1995; Gabel & Palmer, 1995); the structure and efficiency of national economies (Eichenberg & Dalton, 1993; Anderson & Kaltenhaler, 1996); the assessment of national economies and political systems (Anderson, 1998; Brigenar & Jolly, 2005; Kitzinger, 2003); the cognitive mobilisation and frequency of post-materialist values (Inglehart, 1990; Janssen, 1991) and more recently, perceptions of cultural threat, immigration and possible loss of welfare rights (McLaren, 2002) as well as geographical distance from the EU centre (Berezin & Diez Medrano, 2008).

European studies has also accumulated a solid knowledge of factors that influence support at the individual level. At this level, debates focus on socio-political processes, as analysts have demonstrated that individual support depends on the sociological characteristics of individuals and also on political orientations. The first major point of consensus here is the strong influence of social class on citizens' opinions regarding the EU. In this sense, integration is indeed an elite process – citizens are all the more in favour of the EU if they are more educated, have a higher professional status and a higher income. These factors are obviously related to each other, but their effects also reinforce each other (Belot, 2002). Moreover, political interest and sophistication also seem to play a role: with similar levels of educational qualification, citizens interested in politics are more likely to support integration than are their uninterested counterparts. Political interest and sophistication provide citizens with the ability to make the EU, a changing and remote political object, their own. Jannssen in particular contested Inglehart's thesis by showing that citizens who endorse post-materialist values are more likely to support the EU not because of these values but because they tend to be politically more sophisticated (Inglehart, 1990; Janssen, 1991). Political orientation and ideology, measured by party preference, also influence European support (Wessels, 1995b).

The emphasis on the socio-political processes that influence individual support for european integration highlights both similarities

between EU member states and diversity within them. However, most authors acknowledge that nationality remains the most important explanatory factor in support for the EU, as the average level of support varies tremendously and stably from one country to another. A problem is that survey research is not the most appropriate technique for adequately taking context – national context – into account in explanation. This limitation was one of the incentives for the development of qualitative research in the field.

Maastricht and the end of the permissive consensus

By the beginning of the 1990s, support for integration seemed to be on the decline, as far as Eurobarometer data suggest. (Wessels, 1995a). The contested results of the referenda organised for the ratification of the Maastricht Treaty were interpreted as a confirmation that no spillover had occurred and that the 'permissive consensus' was falling apart. However, the notion of support remained central in european studies in particular because of the theoretical framework developed by Scharpf (1999). He introduced another dichotomy opposing two kinds of legitimacy: input-oriented versus output-oriented, referred to by him as 'governing by the people and for the people'. Instead of linking the two as the Eastonian framework had, by postulating that specific or utilitarian support would produce diffuse support, Scharpf discussed the shortcomings in the legitimacy of a political system that relies only on outputs and does not have the elements required for input legitimacy. These would include, for instance, collective identity and stable significant levels of political participation.

Empirically, the research focusses on the actual relationship between evaluations of output – policies, laws and administration, by the EU institutions – and support for integration. Gabel (Gabel & Palmer, 1995; Gabel, 1998) considers that individual attitudes to integration do depend on rational calculation, where citizens evaluate costs and the benefits they can expect. He documents this with long-term data analysis. Although Gabel's work is widely quoted, his analyses – and the corresponding expectation, according to which integration could move forward solely on the basis of output-oriented legitimacy – remain contentious. While he and others reacted to the failure of the spillover thesis by intensifying research on economic and utilitarian evaluations of the EU, others by contrast went on to investigate more closely the affective dimension and to look for any sign of a European identity in the making.

The Maastricht Treaty introduced European citizenship, and so it was considered to have intensified the direct relationship between citizens and the EU. To begin with, attitudes in favour of the EU were expected to conflict with former national allegiances. A series of works supporting the thesis of a growing antagonism between support for european integration and national identities was published in the second half of the 1990s (e.g. Mayer, 1997; Blondel, Sinnott & Svensson, 1998). Empirically, the growing interest in identity was accompanied by the introduction of a new question in Eurobarometer surveys, the so-called Moreno question (Moreno, 2006): 'Do you in the near future see yourself as (nationality) only, (nationality) and European, European and (nationality), or European only?' This replaced a former question where being European was proposed as a future possible complement to nationality.[4] Despite the opposition suggested by the Moreno wording between the senses of national and European membership, the relationships here are far from simple. The statistical relationship between indicators of national and European attachments is almost always significant, but it varies in sign and intensity depending on the context (between European nations, and over time) and can even produce opposite results when alternative question wordings are used to measure the sense of membership at the two levels (Duchesne & Frognier, 2002, 2008). Indeed, by the end of the 1990s, Hooghe and Marks showed that national identity, as measured by Eurobarometer surveys, had opposite effects on support for european integration (Hooghe & Marks, 2004).

This complexity gave rise to opposing interpretations. Carey and McLaren (Carey, 2002; McLaren, 2006) have argued that these identities are conflictual, that is, a strong identification with one's own national community prevents the development of European attachment. To the contrary, most analysts have come to support the thesis of a partially cumulative relationship between national and European identities at the level of the individual. They suggest diverse explanatory models in order to account for this partial overlap.

Some focus on the way different levels of identification interact, as in 'nested identity theory' (Herb & Kaplan, 1999; Diez Medrano & Gutierrez, 2001), the 'marble cake' metaphor (Risse, 2003) or the notion of 'plural identity' (Citrin & Sides, 2004). Others presuppose the multidimensionality of the notion of territorial identity itself. Schild distinguishes between evaluative and affective identities and considers the European level to be more evaluative and the national to be more affective (Schild, 2001). Bruter opposes the civic versus cultural dimensions of territorial identity (Bruter, 2005). Duchesne and Frognier, who argued

early on that European identification complements the national, suggest distinguishing between a sociological and a political dimension of both national and European identification (Duchesne & Frognier, 1994, 2002, 2008).

This focus on the relationship between national and European feelings of belonging culminated in a series of publications directly dedicated to the search for European identity. Theoretically, these works mainly refer to social psychology. Indeed, the first book in the series was *Changing European Identities: Social Psychological Analysis of Change* (Breakwell & Lyons, 1996). Anthropologists and social psychologists were pioneers in the exploration of the notion of identity and more particularly collective identity, referring to groups such as classes, genders and ethnicities (Howard, 2000). *Transnational Identities* (Herrmann, Risse & Brewer, 2004) was clearly in line with this social psychological tradition. The question of any groups' subjective borders is put at the core of the analysis, although it does not address the question of the specificity of political groups such as nations or continental unions (Duchesne, 2008; Gillespie & Laffan, 2006 are an exception).

Because identity is a subtle notion and because of the complexity of the statistical relationship between indicators of national and European senses of belonging, more and more questions have been posed against Eurobarometer surveys, and an increasing number of researchers have turned to alternative methods. The first influential book on attitudes towards integration based on a qualitative research project was *Framing Europe* (Diez Medrano, 2003).[5] Combining analysis of press publications, public speeches and books with a large number of interviews with citizens and local elites in Spain, Germany and the UK, and with secondary analysis of Eurobarometer data, Diez Medrano offers the first in-depth investigation into the black box that holds the long-term strong influence of nationality on citizens' attitudes towards integration. His own interest is not identity as such, but rather the cognitive and political processes that lie beyond representations of Europe and that involve prior identities like the national one. Diez Medrano shows vividly how integration has been framed very differently in the three countries he investigates, in close relation with their own post war history, in such a way that when people from different European countries answer Eurobarometer questions, they picture quite different objects when reacting to a common wording.

Two years later, Bruter published *Citizens of Europe?*, another mixed methods' book which focusses on identity (Bruter, 2005). Sticking with standard psychosocial definitions of (European) identity, Bruter's work

is methodologically innovative, with experimental questionnaires and focus groups. He concludes that something like a European identity is in the making, more civic than ethnic in comparison with national identity. However, the focus groups he analysed consist mainly of students.

By the end of the twentieth century, european studies had broken out of the framework of spillover. Research was focussing on Europeans' support for integration in two dimensions: utilitarianism and outputs on one hand, affect and identity on the other. However, the unexpected failure of the referenda on the Constitutional Treaty in France and the Netherlands also opened the way to new research questions.

Euroscepticism and politicisation: The spectre of 'euro-clash'

The thesis of the growth of euroscepticism, although mentioned from the mid 1990s as a corollary to the end of the permissive consensus, has received more attention from the beginning of the twenty-first century.[6] Following Szczerbiak and Taggart (2003), who distinguish between hard and soft euroscepticism – rejection of integration as a whole versus opposition to certain aspects of it, especially policy related ones – the notion of euroscepticism covers a wide range of critical positions. Its most visible manifestations are the emergence and reinforcement within EU member countries of political parties who challenge integration and the failure of the French and Dutch referenda. Hence studies of euroscepticism deal mainly with two kinds of actors: political parties on the one hand (Taggart, 1998; Szczerbiak & Taggart, 2003; Hooghe, 2007) and European publics and their opinions on the other (Franklin, Marsh & McLaren, 1994; Gabel & Palmer, 1995; De Vries & Van Kersbergen, 2007; Wessels, 2007; Magni-Berton, Roger & Rucht, 2009).

Analysis of public attitudes towards integration had, over the previous decades, been mainly dedicated to the explanation of support; subsequently it focussed on the logics of rejection. Substantially, though, the two are closely related, as euroscepticism is often defined as the lack of support (e.g. McLaren, 2007). Empirically, the link is even more straightforward as support has commonly been analysed by using a measure of net support – that is, the ratio of positive to negative answers to trend questions. Support and euroscepticism are considered as the two ends of one continuum. Moreover, the Eastonian model remains influential (e.g. Wessels, 2007). As such, the change of focus from support for integration to support for euroscepticism is more a reflection of the transformation

of the political context than a paradigmatic change in European public opinion studies. Explanations of the growth of euroscepticism emphasise citizens' lack of knowledge of the EU and the integration process (Karp, Banducci & Bowler, 2003). Following Anderson who suggested earlier that it is important to take into account satisfaction with democracy and policy performance at the national level when analysing support for integration (Anderson, 1998), authors now emphasise the consequences of dissatisfaction with national democracy and of fears related to the future of national identity and symbols (Carey, 2002; McLaren, 2006; Hooghe & Marks, 2009). And of course, the way negative evaluations of personal benefits influence eurosceptical attitudes is also documented in great detail (Gabel, 1998; McLaren, 2006).

If the replacement of support by euroscepticism in European public opinion analysis is clearly a continuation of the long-term tradition of support analysis, there have been diverse attempts to provide european studies with a renewed theoretical framework over the last few decades. Bartolini, in *Restructuring Europe* (2005), suggests that integration is the sixth phase in the long-term process of political development in Europe.[7] He discusses in sophisticated ways the possibility and consequences of a general politicisation of European issues. In 2006, the think tank Notre Europe hosted a debate between Bartolini and Hix regarding this question, in which Hix supported politicisation – roughly understood as the introduction of left–right conflict within European politics – as a remedy against the growth of euroscepticism, while Bartolini dismissed it as too risky for the European political system in its current state (Hix & Bartolini, 2006). This debate was a continuation of an ongoing discussion of the EU democratic deficit published in major European journals which also involved other important contributors (Follesdal & Hix, 2006). The debate was reflected empirically in the more and more widespread thesis of the polarisation of European publics.

Beyond the importance granted to euroscepticism, the polarisation thesis was fuelled by two important books. First, Fligstein, in his influential *Euroclash* (2008), analyses the transformation of Europeans' economic and social behaviour in the framework of integration and shows that although the changes are impressive, only a section of European citizens are involved in this transformation and directly benefit, in work and leisure, from the opening of national borders. Furthermore, those who benefit are, generally speaking, the more educated and the wealthier, while the rest, on the contrary, see their living standards deteriorating. Using Eurobarometer data, Fligstein prognosticates a

growing conflict between the winners and the losers of integration. Second, Kriesi and his team, looking at the transformation of party systems in Europe and electoral mobilisation, also end by emphasising a growing opposition between winners and losers from globalisation – or more precisely, from denationalisation (Kriesi et al., 2008). According to them, this opposition is becoming a cleavage, that is, a politically articulated translation within the political system of an economically and socially grounded conflict that is structuring citizens' political and electoral behaviour. Although Kriesi and his colleagues argue that european integration is only part and parcel of globalisation, and not a major autonomous cause of this transformation, they nevertheless acknowledge a growing polarisation on European issues.

Hooghe and Marks close the loop, suggesting, within the framework of neo-functionalism, that the EU has entered an era of 'constraining dissensus' (Hooghe & Marks, 2009). According to them, Europe's growing visibility, in particular through the successive debates on the treaties (Maastricht, Amsterdam, Nice and Luxembourg), has polarised public opinion regarding the integration process and contributed to the increase of fears. More importantly, resistance to european integration has been institutionalised by political parties and 'the decisive change is that the elite has had to make room for a more eurosceptical public' (Hooghe & Marks, 2008, p. 9). The polarisation of opinions, mobilised by the parties, now constrains governing elites who have lost the consensual support that accompanied the first decades of european integration. This constraint might impact on the speed, the depth, the range and the borders of integration as well as its mere existence. In terms of legitimisation of the integration process, by the end of the first decade of the twenty-first century, this has been put vividly into question.

The qualitative turn and after: New challenges for european studies

By 2010, the conclusions of a number of qualitative research projects were reached and, notably, those conclusions did not match the thesis of a general and increasing polarisation of European publics. This was quite unexpected. Neither Diez Medrano's nor Bruter's studies had broken with mainstream quantitative results. Diez Medrano's analysis of the diversity of national European frames offered an explanation of the influence of nationality on attitudes towards integration. It was not interpreted, as it could have been, as any kind of refutation of the mainstream practice of dealing with attitudes of Europeans as a

whole.[8] A chapter published, though, in the 2004 *Transnational Identities* (Meinhof, 2004; Herrman, Risse & Brewer, 2004), went against the grain of the rest of the chapters in that volume. It clearly questioned the consistency of attitudes towards the EU. Meinhof analysed ethnographic data from research she had carried out at the German–Polish border. Her interviewees were constantly confronted with European symbols and they experienced European policies on a daily basis. However, they never mentioned the EU unless directly asked about it. Furthermore, they did not seem to grant it any importance in their lives. Recent qualitative research on integration, published since 2010 by using quite different research designs, supports Meinhof's analysis.

Gaxie and his team interviewed numerous Europeans in France, Germany, Italy, Poland and the Czech Republic (Gaxie et al., 2011).[9] Their method is not explained in detail, but it appears that they used a mixed interview protocol. Interviewers asked at the beginning, in a quite open way, what Europe means, positively or negatively, to the interviewees; then they questioned the interviewees more specifically about European issues and their direct experience of the EU and its policies. Lastly, they asked a few Eurobarometer trend questions, to which their interviewees clearly had difficulties responding, suggesting a gap between their perceptions of Europe and those of people involved in the design of Eurobarometer surveys.[10] This project emphasises the diversity of European attitudes and the way this diversity is produced by the range of citizens' resources: general resources such as social skills and educational attainment as well as specific knowledge gained from personal experience of European policies. Moreover, the work argues that the main difference between interviewees is not whether they are in favour of or against Europe but whether they can talk about it at all.[11] As a general conclusion, it seems that Europe is, for the average European citizen, a political issue like any other. Citizens do not pay any more attention to it than they do to any other complicated issue – no more and possibly less. Gaxie's team suggests that the degree of sophistication required to discuss Europe is of a greater order because of the rarity and fuzziness of personal experiences related to integration.[12]

White comes to a similar conclusion with a more sophisticated and systematically implemented research design. *Political Allegiance after European Integration* (White, 2011) is the result of a risky strategy: to observe citizens' attitudes to integration without asking them about it. Theoretically, his interest lies in the way citizens' representations might construct a political bond at the European level. White argues that there would be such a bond if, in different countries, citizens cared about

the same problems without considering other EU citizens as a source of these problems, and to the contrary, if they believed that their fellow European citizens shared their concerns. A political bond at the European level also needs European citizens to consider that something can be done about their problems, that they are not only a question of individual responsibility and that collective actors and political institutions, including EU ones, are potentially influential regarding the issues that matter to them. In order to find out if there is anything like a political bond emerging along these lines, White chose to interview taxi drivers, collectively, in cities in the UK, Germany and the Czech Republic. Instead of asking them about their opinions regarding the European political system, he got them to discuss issues in public life that they considered most important. He also asked them about the causes of these problems, what they thought could be done about them and by whom.[13]

White acknowledges that his results are deceptive. The research design worked, as long as his interviewees were able to discuss issues that mattered to them. The main problems identified in the different cities were quite similar: economics, society and the law, relations between people. But the taxi drivers did not acknowledge their fellow Europeans as 'people like them', that is, as people who experienced the same problems as they did. Furthermore, their attributions of agency did not include the European level as a potentially influential actor at all. They hardly mentioned the EU during the discussion, and White had, at the very end of the interviews, to ask his taxi drivers directly about it. The results of this very different approach support Meinhof's and Gaxie et al.'s conclusions regarding the lack of salience of the EU in people's lives.[14]

So, how can we reconcile the distant and absent-minded European citizens interviewed in qualitative research with the constraining eurosceptics and europhiles investigated by Eurobarometers? In the literature, when the hiatus is acknowledged,[15] authors follow one of the two different routes. Some choose to revisit Eurobarometer to test whether mainstream analysis has tended to overinterpret the polarisation of European publics. Others try instead to assess the consequences of Europe's low saliency among Europeans in terms of legitimisation of the EU.

Regarding the first strategy, the central element is the (re)discovery of indifference as well as ambivalence and indecision, as attitudes that are widespread among Eurobarometer interviewees. It is fair to note that these attitudes had not always been overlooked, despite the fact that scrutiny of the net support ratio has been the major focus of analysis. Franklin, Marsh and McLaren, in particular, suggest that the

surprise provoked by the results of the Danish, French and Irish referenda on the ratification of the Maastricht Treaty was due to the fact that analysts had not sufficiently taken into account undecided answers in the Eurobarometer series (Franklin, Marsh & McLaren, 1994). They argue that citizens who have no fixed opinion on european integration play a decisive role when these questions are intensively and openly debated. Anderson, building on Janssen (1991) challenges the widespread thesis that rational calculation informs European attitudes towards integration. He emphasises the lack of knowledge recurrently displayed by respondents and shows that national cues – that is, support for domestic political actors and institutions – are actually the best predictors of European support (Anderson, 1998). More recently and in the same vein, Sauger, Brouard and Grossman show the strong impact of the switch from indecision to choice in the French referendum of 2005 (Sauger, Brouard & Grossman, 2007). More generally, indecision, ambivalence and indifference have been discussed in relationship with Europeans' well-documented lack of information regarding the EU and the integration process. However, in mainstream work, undecided citizens have for long, and frequently, been evoked only in footnotes. Wessels, for instance, briefly notes that dissatisfaction and scepticism are not the opposite of support, as non-support might as well be indifference (Wessels, 2007), but continues to work with the dichotomy of support and rejection.

Quite recently, though, a series of analyses have been carried out on what we will call euroindifference.[16] Following work dedicated to ambivalence in political opinions (Zaller & Feldman, 1992; Alvarez & Brehm 2002), Steenbergen and de Vries examine ambivalence regarding European issues. They define this in terms of opinion variability. Using survey and media data from the 2009 European Election Study, they show that European mass publics hold ambivalent views on European unification and that this response variability can be explained by individual attributes as well as by national political environments (Steenbergen & de Vries, forthcoming). Undecided party preference and/or the lack of identification of differences between parties lead to higher response variance. Moreover, increasing media attention to European issues boosts response variation. Following their work, Stoeckel works out a new measure of ambivalence based on variation between answers on different survey items gauging EU support (Stoeckel, 2011). He produces empirical support for the idea that subjective as well as objective knowledge about the EU impacts on ambivalence in EU support.

Regarding euroindifference, Van Ingelgom shows that European citizens have not only become more ambivalent but also more indifferent in the last couple of decades. Her research questions the thesis of the switch from 'permissive consensus' to 'constraining dissensus'. She produces a new longitudinal analysis of Eurobarometer data, using different statistical techniques, indicators and periods, and shows the limitations of over-reliance on a one-dimensional understanding of the change in citizens' attitudes to integration from support to rejection. These attitudes are actually far more complex, and it is necessary to take indifference and indecision into account, as well as ambivalence (Van Ingelgom, 2010).

While these authors fill the gap between quantitative and qualitative approaches to European attitudes by revisiting or at least complementing survey analysis, others respond in a more theoretical fashion. They question the way european studies have been trying, over the years, to analyse the legitimacy of the integration process by way of the search for citizens' support. Schmidt in particular challenges the old dichotomy between output- and input-oriented legitimacy (Schmidt, 2011; Schmidt, 2012). This, as we saw, is reflected in the dichotomy between utilitarian, specific support and affective, diffuse support. Schmidt emphasises a third component of legitimacy. In the age of governance of multilevel polities, she suggests that in addition to governing for, and governing by, the people, we must attend also to governing with the people. This throughput legitimacy, as she calls it, is what EU officials have tried to promote, claiming to develop the efficacy, accountability, transparency, openness and inclusiveness of the decision-making process. Empirically, although they cannot compensate for deficits in input and output, throughput processes must be analysed in detail if we are to understand european integration's success and failure.

Similarly, Favell questions the way european studies have been obsessed with input legitimacy, understood as political support for the European political system. In a sequel to *Eurostars and Eurocities* (Favell, 2008), in which he studied Europeans who have left their country and live in another European city (the case studies being Brussels, London and Amsterdam), he returns to the relationship these 'Eurostars' maintain with the EU (Favell, 2010). He concludes that they exert their European citizenship in quite apolitical ways: they neither care to vote at European elections nor do they particularly identify with the EU or as Europeans. Nevertheless, they are pure products of european integration as they imagine and live their own lives beyond national

boundaries and make full use of the opportunities opened by european integration. Hence Favell together with Guiraudon (Favell & Guiraudon, 2009) claims that sociology must be given more space in the analysis of european integration. According to them, classical political science, because it is too focussed on the political aspects of integration and has not taken proper account of the major changes in European societies that occurred with integration (Favell & Guiraudon, 2009; Favell et al., 2011). Europeanisation should not be limited to political participation and attachment.

Overlooking Europe presents results that are clearly in line with Gaxie's and White's. However, because the research design and the hypothesis were in part worked out on the basis of four decades of quantitative research on attitudes towards integration, they allow us to frame the puzzle of the contradiction between quantitative and qualitative research on this matter in quite different terms. In contrast to White's approach, we were in a position to compare the way citizens from different social backgrounds deal with European issues, and we, contrary to Gaxie and his team, did this in a systematic way. Moreover, we chose a strategy intermediate between them regarding the way Europe is introduced in the discussion with participants. We neither forced them into it nor waited to see if they would eventually mention it. We have subtitled the book *Overlooking Europe*, as we remarked in the introduction, because our focus group method asked participants to take a synoptic and wide-ranging, as well as focussed, view of aspects of EU organisation, authority and efficiency. In the event, many of our participants tended to 'overlook' Europe in the other sense of ignoring or not seeing it. However, our focus group method was designed to 'focus' participants on the complexity, the constraints and the conflictual aspects of political power at the European level in relation to other levels. We now turn to an introduction to the theoretical basis for our research questions.

Theoretical background and research questions

Our research project and its design emerged from discussions between team members about a number of distinct methodological and theoretical problems in political science and sociology, building on previous focus group work and on a particular shared approach to questions of political perception, action and deliberation. In this section, our concern is mainly to present these elements of our research design. We mention aspects of our methods of recruiting, convening and conducting focus groups, and of handling and analysing the resulting data,

as they are relevant to the present discussion. A more detailed and systematic account and analysis of our methodological choices and their consequences are presented in Chapter 6.

The research questions stem, in the main, from the controversies within european studies that we have just outlined. These, in turn, are related to some major theoretical problems of political sociology. In line with stimulating recent works (Favell & Guiraudon, 2009), our position is that the field of european studies should be de-compartmentalised and more tightly connected to the broader field of political sociology. Europe should be analysed with the same theoretical categories, research questions and methodological tools as any other political topic. In this connection, we make five major points.

First, we argue that the way citizens deal with Europe should be conceptualised, and hence researched, as a matter of reactions, rather than attitudes. Of course, our choice of focus group study is connected with this point. Focus groups register reactions and interactions constructed in a collective context.

Second, our research addresses the issue of politicisation. In modern societies politics is a specialised field, involving specific kinds of action in particular institutional settings. The question arises how ordinary citizens apprehend, negotiate, and deal with this field, and in particular how they understand and deal with its boundary. That is to say, do they consider themselves to be outside politics? Is the boundary a barrier to them? Are they ready to enter the field? The boundary itself, its location, its nature and, of course, its very existence are contested in political theory and in political practice.[17] In modern societies politics is also conflictual – centred on party competition for the power to govern and to influence policy and administration. It involves the articulation of disagreement and an explicit understanding that the process involves winning and losing. The question arises how ordinary citizens engage in or disengage from this conflict, and how, in interaction with others, they deal with disagreement. Conversations and discussions might be politicised – interlocutors might, or might not, enter into politics when talking. Opinions might be expressed; stances might be assumed and taken up. When a position is taken, individuals are personally implicated in their speech; their ideological, social and political location is disclosed.[18]

Third, we hypothesise that, as a political issue, Europe reinforces the social gap between socio-economic classes – that is, of course, a classical structure of politics – and is articulated in citizens' and politicians' reactions to political matters.

Fourth, we resist any view that the European level is clearly autonomous. Our research design puts European matters in a multi-level context. This includes both national frames and the global scale. Our respondents, as will be shown, react to questions connected with Europe on the basis of their national membership. But this national membership is profoundly connected with their consciousness of the global context and their articulated views that global dynamics should be considered the driving forces of what happens in Europe.

Fifth and finally we listened to citizens talking about Europe, aiming to register both how they react positively to European matters and how they refer to ideal considerations while criticising the EU as it actually works. In sum, we wanted to document normativity as well as positivity in our citizens' reactions and understandings.

Reactions, not attitudes

European studies, driven by internal dynamics, risks disconnection from the general debates of political sociology. It tends to take for granted some notions that should be treated as highly theoretical and controversial. For example, it evades major controversies such as the nature of mass opinion and the relevance of the concept of attitude. From Converse (1964) to Zaller (1992) and Sniderman (Sniderman et al., 2001), scholars have interrogated this concept. It is argued that the way opinions are collected impacts strongly on what is measured. Many so-called political opinions are highly ambivalent or undecided. Also, the matter of salience – meaningfulness and significance for the respondent – and also the place of the matter under question in public political debate and in the more general political culture are critical parameters. Thus, Zaller argues that individuals get contradictory signals about issues, they process these and express fundamental ambivalence – not because they lack something, but because the excess of relevant considerations is, naturally enough, disorienting. When they are forced to produce an opinion in response to a questionnaire, respondents pick between those considerations which seem to be most salient in context, in relation to whatever happens to be at the top of their minds. Yet, Zaller acknowledges, not everyone is ambivalent to the same degree; ambivalence varies across individuals, depending on the issue. We will not address here the question of the universality of this model, but take it, on the evidence of the major opinion surveys in Europe, that citizens' reactions are consistent with this process.

Our foregoing presentation of the relevant literature supports this sceptical view regarding the validity of the concept 'attitude' in connection with citizens' understandings of and discussions of Europe. The gap between statistical and non-statistical, interpretive research is basically related to contrasting assessments of the salience of European questions and the consistency of citizens' discourses on them. The question why genuine attitudes to Europe are relatively unformed, or are not well delineated, overarches the scope of our inquiry. We might simply hypothesise that weak consistency is explained by the lack of daily life experience, of long-term socialisation or intergenerational transmission of knowledge and experience. This also raises the question of the weakness of political party mobilisation. For a long time, the European issue has been marginal to national political arenas, and citizens have not had many political clues or cues to aid them in making up their minds about the matter. This may change or may be changing as the propulsion of European questions into national public disputes by marginal parties is accepted by mainstream ones for national electoral purposes.

These considerations also account for our choice of the focus group method. Attitude research has traditionally been methodologically individualist, based on questionnaires and sometimes more discursive interviews. Early developments of the 'extended' and the 'focussed' interview maintained the individualist method. Merton (1987) put people sharing a common experience together in groups, but he asked them to answer questions individually, and he paid little attention to the collective dimension of discussion. Later on, focus group researchers claimed instead that opinions, ways of talking and what it is possible to say are co-produced rather than developed by isolated individuals (Frazer, 1989; Cameron & Frazer, 1989; Billig, 1989). Among the sources for articulated views are elements of the public culture and discourse, but also, and crucially, the local context, the immediate conversational dynamics. Billig claims that we should understand 'thinking as arguing' (Billig, 1989). We consider 'thinking about Europe' as 'arguing about Europe'. We attend to the way people position themselves, vis-a-vis each other as well as vis-a-vis the wider world as they see it, in any discussion. When confronted with the stimulus of a focus group, individuals pay attention to others' reactions and in turn react to others' positions. Focus group research enabled us to collect reactions to Europe and to examine interactions between participants.

On the one hand, we argue that even in the pure setting of one interviewer putting survey questions to a respondent (or even in the setting

of alone individual filling out a multiple-choice questionnaire on paper or on screen), responses do not have a uniform underlying structure of resources and cognitive processes. Focus groups make this diversity more visible and open to study. This version of interactionist political sociology, attentive to the impact of methodological context as well as of social interaction, distinguishes our work from ethnographic research in so-called natural settings. Our focus groups were so far from natural that they were tantamount to a form of experiment. We arguably subjected our participants to a 'test of politicisation' (Duchesne & Haegel, 2009). Gamson (1992, p. 19) rightly points out that every focus group discussion, including those taking place in familiar surroundings with familiar people, yields a social public discourse, and cannot claim accurately to reflect the conditions of everyday conversation. The method that we used reinforced the experimental dimension of the process. It was based on an especially designed series of exercises, which explicitly put participants in a situation in which they had to react.

Stances, not opinions

Our enquiry raises the matter of the concept of politicisation. As we have remarked, the political realm, historically, is differentiated from the generality of the social world – it is specialised and professionalised. Knowledgeable citizens are expected to understand political categories and political logics. Sophisticated and competent citizens generally feel closer to processes of government, administration, public policy and the competition for the power to govern, and might feel able to move into this realm, participating directly in these processes. On the other hand, this political world consists, of course, of social ingredients and is suffused with social identifications and conflicts. Our aim was, in part, to pay attention to these components – political and social – in an examination and exploration of how they intertwine and counter-balance in the context of citizens being asked to react to Europe.

One major advantage of focus group research is that it offers an 'opportunity to observe the process of collective sense making' (Wilkinson, 1998, p. 193). Focus groups afford many clues about how citizens elaborate, negotiate, consolidate or sometimes change their views on specific issues. Ours, indeed, generated rich data about people's understandings of Europe, and we were able to analyse the range of mechanisms leading to various participants' reactions. In doing so, we referred to a distinctive research tradition which addresses the question of how lay citizens talk about social and public topics (Gamson,

1992; Cramer Walsh, 2004; Harris-Lacewell, 2004). These contributions to research underline the fact that while people are discussing social and public issues, their exchanges are sometimes limited, distanced and light, while at other times, they stake themselves to more demanding utterances, the expression of more definite understandings and propositions. Gamson considers that, at such points, participants' involvement is based on collective identification (the capacity to say 'we') and is fuelled by feelings of injustice. Cramer Walsh, for her part, uses the term 'perspective' to designate the fact that people react according to their own vision anchored to their social location. In this tradition, we were looking for this kind of stance, expecting instances to occur during specific sequences of the discussion. To put it differently, in our vocabulary, a stance is a 'mobilised opinion' in the sense of Bourdieu (1993) or what Billig (1992) designates as 'holding a view'. Bourdieu's approach connects stances taken to social structures – 'the position one holds in a given field'. Billig relates them to everyday positions and interactions within primary groups, in his markedly different argumentative perspective rooted in socio-psychology. For our part, we assume that these stances refer to social and ideological structures, while being also directly connected to localised and contextual interactions. Stances taken in a discussion are connected to what political scientists used to call cleavages. In the meaning associated with Rokkan, cleavages classically refer to collective and historical conflicts, crystallised by political organisations. They also impact individual politicisation, in so far as subjects and citizens are forced 'to ally themselves across structural cleavage lines and to set up priorities among their commitments' (Lipset & Rokkan, 1967, p. 5).

Far from being mechanically reproduced, stances are informed by personal implication and vary according to the fluid dynamics of interaction. So compared with opinion surveys which register short and limited answers, the specific advantage of focus groups lies in their ability to record stances and the processes by which they are taken up, rather than in mere opinions. Taking a stance in a discussion, especially in a semi-public setting such as a focus group, puts participants at risk not only of being contradicted and thus being brought into disagreement or even conflict with others but also of feelings of inadequacy, of the revelation of ignorance or confusion. In line with our previous works (Duchesne & Haegel, 2007, 2009), we hypothesise that these reactions are structured but are neither fixed nor predetermined. Some issues generate deep and salient division and raise conflict within the group, but others do not. The former are evident in sequences when people take

a stance at the risk of disagreeing bluntly with others. The latter are evident in sequences when participants avoid conflict and exchange opinions in lighter conversational turns.

To test the intensity of citizens' reactions to Europe, we introduced into our focus group schedule several techniques in order to prompt conflict and to test to what extent and in which conditions Europe might be a controversial and conflictual topic. For instance, the focus group schedule was fashioned so as to facilitate the expression of disagreement, especially on European matters. The first two sections of the session posed questions about identification with Europe ('What does it mean to be European?') and about the complexity of the European system. We asked, in connection with the latter, 'How should power be distributed?', offering participants as a starter four options: elected representatives, experts, nations and markets. After this we moved on to a potentially more conflict-laden second part of the discussion. We posed a question about the winners and losers in european integration ('Who profits from Europe?') and another, which was preceded by a public vote, 'Should Turkey be a member of the EU?'. Thus, we had at our disposal a good test that allowed us to gauge to what extent Europe is or is not a conflictive issue (See Appendix 4).

Of course, many research topics refer to a plurality of cleavages. Europe is likely to be one of those. Statistical surveys give evidence of this multidimensionality. At the macro level, the question of whether the issues arising from european integration hang together as a single dimension, and to what extent the European issue is connected to pre-existing structures of conflict, has been at the heart of the literature (Marks & Steenbergen, 2004). Some leading scholars claim that certain parts of european integration are likely to be absorbed into the left–right dimension, but they generally agree on the fact that contemporary EU politics is two-dimensional (Hix & Lord, 1997; Hix, 1999; Hooghe & Marks, 1999, 2001). We could take advantage of our focus group data in order to address this question of cross-cutting cleavage at the micro-level. Faced with an overt situation of cross-cutting cleavages, our participants had to 'to set up priorities among their commitments', as Rokkan and Lipset put it. They did so according to the specific situation and interactions within the group.

More precisely, as we established in previous work (Duchesne & Haegel, 2007), participants choose between their conflicting views and minimise the risk associated with disagreement with others by forming alliances within the group. In practice, taking up a conflictive stance usually (not invariably) requires at least two persons to engage against

the rest. Focus groups enable observation of this process and give us the opportunity to analyse the impact of local interactions and the dynamics of alliance formation on the way participants do or do not assume a stance on European issues. As such, focus groups can be taken as a kind of scaled-down version of what occurs in public political life. By emphasising micro-mechanisms of discussion, we are able to understand macro ones, since we can extrapolate to the larger scale in order to analyse how European issues are activated, or hidden or blurred.

Inequality and politicisation

So far, we are assuming that questions of European political allegiance are at stake. But, this assumption is not yet validated. At the time of our fieldwork in 2006, Europe was by no means a genuine polity. European questions must more modestly be taken as political issues like any other. One of the major and unquestionable findings of research in political sociology is that the way citizens deal with politics remains marked by strong social inequalities. While politics is a specialised arena, some citizens, notably those with less formal education, experience a lack of knowledge. While politics is a professionalised field, it generates a widespread feeling of dispossession among the less wealthy, who feel that they are not only politically ruled but also socially dominated by elites. The matter of political competence includes questions not only of knowledge but also of confidence (Delli Carpini & Keeter, 1996; Lupia & McCubbins, 1998). The importance of political knowledge is controversial in democratic theory. It might be thought, for instance, that the point of democratic electoral systems is that everyone gets a say, irrespective of their understanding. In any case, it is a most difficult problem to specify what counts as an adequate understanding of any matter. Further, the unequal distribution of the resources and capabilities that allow a socially sanctioned level of understanding of politics goes hand in hand with the subjective feeling of efficacy, and hence of legitimate presence in political life. This feeling is strongly related to social location (Bourdieu, 1993). These are old and classical questions, addressed by political sociology to politics in general. They are even more relevant when European issues are at stake. What Lippman wrote in 1925 about how lay citizens perceived politics fits in particularly well with their current reactions to Europe:

> The private citizen today has come to feel rather like a deaf spectator in the back row, who ought to keep his mind on the mystery off there

> (on the stage), but cannot quite manage to keep awake. He knows he is somehow affected by what is going on. Rules and regulations continually, taxes annually and wars occasionally remind him that he is being swept along by great drifts of circumstance. Yet the public affairs are in no convincing way his affairs. They are for the most part invisible. They are managed, if they are managed at all, at distant centers, formed behind the scenes, by unnamed powers.
>
> (Lippman, 1925, p. 47)

The currency of Lippman's diagnosis and its relevance regarding citizens' reactions to Europe are corroborated by both quantitative and qualitative research in european studies. The former has given strong evidence of the impact of social differences on the way citizens deal with European questions. The latter has emphasised its distance from what is going on at the European level.

In fact, the European issue is not exactly a political issue like others, because it emphasises the key features of politicisation, in an exaggerated, magnified way, to the extent that it might be considered an atypical case. It remains a quite new, still distant and especially complex matter. In terms of the long span of processes of social, national, cultural and political formation, european integration is very recent and novel. For citizens the EU is unsurprisingly perceived as a highly complex system requiring specialised knowledge. European integration is also seen not only as a process partly disconnected from their daily life experiences shaped by national frames but also as a one-way street – largely ineluctable in so far as it can hardly be reversed.

The impact of social inequality on citizens' reactions to Europe is largely taken for granted. What is still animatedly discussed are its consequences. Recent researchers have argued that a long-established social gap is on the way to being transformed into a real cleavage, leading to a genuine clash. For instance Fligstein, studying the construction of European markets and the corresponding transformation of social behaviour, shows the very uneven europeanisation of citizens and, using survey research, predicts a rising conflict between direct beneficiaries of european integration and the remaining masses (Fligstein, 2008). In the same vein, Kriesi's team emphasises a political conflict produced by globalisation (where europeanisation incarnates globalisation for western European countries) that opposes 'winners' to 'losers' (Kriesi et al., 2008). Risse (2010) argues that the opposition between winners and losers of european integration – the former being the elite, educated, mobile and cosmopolitan; the latter being working-class people lacking

the skills to engage in broader job markets and political communities – has become a new cleavage between 'modern Europe' and 'fortress Europe'. This means that some former opponents of european integration have become supporters of it, but in a way that opposes the enlightened European project of long-standing europhile elites.

Our research puts us in a position to address the issue of the political consequences of the social gap on European matters. To what extent does this lead either to a 'euroclash' or to political polarisation? In our sampling strategy, we set out to assess the strength of social factors and to compare social differences across three countries. We constituted focus groups from distinct socio-economic strata: working class, white-collar employees and managers. It is a notable advantage of our focus group method that it is particularly well suited to the articulation and the taking up of positions by members of the least socially and politically endowed categories of the population (Haegel & Garcia, 2011). In addition, in another dimension to our complex research design, we sampled among political activists. This allows us to assess how those with the greatest political insidership and those with the most proximity to the political competition talk about Europe, frame the issue, and the level of knowledge and understanding that they take for granted. We sought two advantages from this stratified sampling. First, the data from our political activist groups gives us a kind of control by which we can assess the levels of information deployed by the other social groups. Second, we are able to distinguish between political differences and social inequalities. Of course, political inequalities are tightly connected to social ones, but we know also that mechanisms of compensation based on political involvement do exist. So our activist groups also act as a control that enables us to assess the degree of – and impact of – politicisation of our respondents' articulated positions.

Multi-level analysis

A good deal of research devoted to European issues tends to focus exclusively on the European level. For our part, we challenged the assumption according to which the EU is clearly seen by citizens as autonomous and clearly distinguishable from the national or global levels. We assumed that citizens' perceptions were phenomenologically multi-scalar and blurred, and we hypothesised that they would find it difficult to distinguish between the various effects of national, European and global dynamics. Therefore, in our conduct of the focus group discussions,

we did not have any aim of systematically keeping the discussion on Europe, but preferred to let participants talk about what was significant and important for them. This element of our research strategy results from our reading of european studies, and especially of works sharing what might be labelled a political sociological approach. Actually, we distinguish three main approaches to the question of the links between nation-states, Europe and the global level.

The first approach focusses on citizens' perceptions, and how these are shaped by national framing. One major lesson of the numerous statistical surveys that have been carried out in the field of european studies is that the national variable remains the more powerful explanation of attitudes to european integration. We chose to compare focus group research carried out in England, France and Belgium (French-speaking), because of the diversity of their respective positions within the EU. In Belgium, a small country at the very heart of the Union, political elites have always been fully supportive of closer integration. France, Germany's partner pillar of European construction, remains torn by its desire for sovereignty. Although supporting the EU has for several decades been the official line of French parties in government, parties of the extreme left and the extreme right maintain positions that are generally eurosceptic, as the ambivalent or negative results of referenda organised on Europe show. Great Britain, with its position on the edge of the continent, entered the Union late, and its media and a section of its political forces maintain a hostile discourse on the european project. Its refusal to adopt the euro is often interpreted as a sign of enduring resistance to any project of real integration.

As we remarked earlier, few researchers have opened the black box of national framing, Diez Medrano being a notable exception (Diez Medrano, 2003). In line with his analysis, our own data analysis supports the argument that national legacies and frames are key elements for the understanding of citizens' reactions to Europe. As far as perceptions are concerned, socialisation basically takes place within national frames. Citizens, in large part, are socialised within nation-states, and they draw from this socialisation the basic features (information as well as cognitive schemes) which help them to conceive of Europe and the EU. In sum, national frames predate european integration and thus shape perceptions of it. The impact of nationally framed socialisation on citizens' reactions to Europe depends on both national historical trajectories and on the degree of homology between the national political system and the European one. Following Schmidt,

we can hypothesise that unitary political national systems align with the complex and multi-level European political system with more difficulty and that more fragmented and interlocked political national systems fit better with the European one (Schmidt, 2006).

The second approach applies theoretical categories forged to understand the formation of European nation-states in order to analyse what is at stake in european integration (Bartolini, 2005). Bartolini, together with other neo-Rokkanians, aims to de-compartmentalise european studies by reintegrating it within broader political and historical sociology. For the purpose, he revised Rokkan's key concepts, which were already influenced by Hirschman's exit-voice-loyalty scheme (Hirschmann, 1970). Bartolini analyses the structuring of Europe in terms of the emergence of new boundaries, where 'boundary' includes any demarcation line referring either to a territorial definition (in this case, one might use the usual terms of borders) or a functional one which delimits membership. Exit is the act of transcending boundaries; at the micro-level, it takes the form of strategies of mobility. Loyalty refers to all mechanisms 'forcing the components of the system to stay within' (Bartolini, p. 31). It is built upon the formation of identification and solidarity ties. Lastly, according to Bartolini's revision of Hirschman, voice refers to established institutional channels of participation. These theoretical concepts help to explain nation-state formation, and they have been reconsidered in order to analyse the structure of the EU. We argue that they are also relevant for interpretation of our empirical data.

The third approach focusses on the question of globalisation and its impact on European cleavages. Kriesi et al.'s hypothesis is that globalisation, which they also call a process of denationalisation, is the major driving force at work in the deep transformation of European party systems (Kriesi et al., 2008). Globalisation puts the social subsistence of ordinary citizens under pressure by strengthening economic competition. It also transforms the national polity from the inside, by introducing a new cultural and ethnic diversity. Behind the so-called 'euroclash' Fligstein, 2008), they argue, is a global clash, with europeanisation as the local version of globalisation. Therefore, they deny the idea that the EU might be a counter force protecting citizens against globalisation or a brake capable of bearing down on the functioning of capitalism at the transnational or transcontinental level. In sum, they directly challenge the assimilation of Europe into a 'fortress' (Delanty, 2006; Risse, 2010) and eventually into a space of protection.

Positive and normative analysis

As well as enabling us to examine national and social differences in discourses of european integration, our research design allows us to examine how respondents negotiate with competing constructions of what Europe is, and how it ought to be. We should emphasise here that this distinction, between positive and normative, between what is and what ought to be, was posed directly by us in our design. Some questions were posed in deliberately descriptive terms – for instance, 'What is it to be European?'. To be sure, the considerations of this question could not be said to be anything like 'value free', for questions of ethics and processes of evaluation are inevitably engaged. Some questions were explicitly couched in normative terms, for instance, 'How should power be distributed in Europe?'.

So our data allows us to examine the ways in which our respondents grapple with these levels of analysis, or more properly these modalities. As we shall see in the chapters that follow, the modalities of how things are versus how they might be or how they will be in a time that is inevitably to come are at the heart of uncertainty, and ambivalence, in our participants' understandings of Europe. States and other political institutions ostensibly are, or at any rate ought to be, built on principles of democracy and popular sovereignty. Our respondents wonder how the world might be if these principles were properly realised. These gaps between 'is', 'ought to be', 'might be' and 'could be' – actuality, normativity, possibility – are frequently rehearsed, and often explicitly pointed to, by our participants. Of course, these gaps and distinctions are at the heart of political action and political relations. Politicisation, in our conceptualisation, involves taking a stand, articulating a position, in competition with other stands and positions. This position is frequently, of course, aspirational, or principled – irrespective of how things are, this is how they should be. But in politics, equally often, actors are held back by the constraints of possibility. The difficulty of holding this multiplicity of levels of analysis straight is part of the complexity of political discourse.

Focus group research like ours, which positions participants such that this complexity confronts them, and such that they are constrained to deal with it, thus stages politics. The resulting discussions enable us to examine the complex questions of the legitimacy of European institutions and of the related material and legal constraints that bind citizens and other individuals in a manner that is impossible in the context of a straight question-and-answer interview or questionnaire.

We mainly recruited citizens of each of the three countries into our groups – not migrant workers, nor visitors, nor applicants for citizenship. It is not that we believe that questions of political power and legitimacy are any less pressing for those and other categories of individuals. But citizens have rights to all kinds of political action – such as running for office, voting, being called on for various forms of national service – that others do not have. It was a central assumption of our initial framework that the office of citizenship is not one that is free of friction and that friction might be felt as a corollary of the alienation which is undoubtedly experienced by many citizens. Alienation might be felt in the emotion that accompanies conversation with an individual whose views are abhorrent. For many, it is felt, surely, in the very nature of political relationships, with their complexity of levels of causal power and authority, with their gaps between what is and what ought to be, with the difficulties of seeing any way from getting where we are now to where we want to go (even if we can agree where we want to go), with the non-optional need to decide (even if one's decision is not to decide, not to vote). Citizens are not wrong to experience political interactions as alienating and frictional. As students of politics, and like many who are politically engaged, including several of our respondents (and not only the activists), we are committed to the particular energy that the friction of political interaction and action can generate.

2
National Frames: Reactions to a Multi-Level World

Florence Haegel

Introduction

Research has established that the national dimension must be placed at the heart of the analysis of European integration. On the one hand, statistical analysis of the Eurobarometer surveys regularly provides evidence that national differences are still paramount in the analysis of citizens' representations of Europe (Risse 2003; Citrin & Sides 2004). On the other hand, studies of elites (Wodak 2004; Schmidt 2006) confirm the importance of national frames in the way in which European elites understand Europe. Furthermore, both theoretical and empirical studies stress the importance of national legacies. Bartolini argues that 'The problem and the fate of the EU cannot be studied adequately without considering the historical legacies of its ingredient: the nation state' (Bartolini 2005: 116). This is as relevant to the analysis of citizens' relationship to integration as it is to the study of nation-states and Europe.

Diez Medrano compared attitudes to European integration in Spain, Germany and the UK at the end of the 1990s (Diez Medrano 2003). His analysis emphasised the importance of national historical trajectories in the ways national actors in his survey (of inhabitants and local leaders in six selected towns) think about Europe. In some situations, the European narrative continued the national narrative, when, for example, national influence or power was transferred from the national to the European level. In others, the European narrative compensated for the national one, when, for example, involvement in Europe resulted in helping to forget a difficult, authoritarian, national past. The frames of perception of Europe were, that is, shaped by the historical trajectories of the countries concerned – they were circulated by schools and

the media and could be reappropriated by the citizens according to the classic mechanisms of political socialisation.

Studies of Europe, then, recognise the strength of the national frame. But connection of the European with the national level must also be supplemented by inclusion of the infra-national and supra-European levels. For example, the regional level proves to be particularly relevant as soon as we deal with some sectors of public policy, such as the social sector (Ferrera 2005). The global level seems to be decisive in view of the opening up of economic and social exchanges and the global transformations this has produced (Kriesi et al. 2008).

Research questions

Accordingly, this chapter is positioned at the intersection of studies of national framing in perceptions of Europe and studies which link the European level to the phenomena of globalisation. It considers Europe in relation to both the national and the global levels. Our data do not allow us to include the regional level, although we are aware that it also is a relevant piece of a multi-level world. Following the first type of study that deals with national framing, we compare how different national groups speak about Europe. Our data collection and processing themselves of course, favour the national comparison. We have, in fact, compared three cities, Paris, Brussels, Oxford, rather than three countries, and we are conscious of the limits of valid inference to the national level. But the survey carried out by Diez Medrano produced evidence that regional differences are not so conclusive that they make all national inferences unjustified. His original idea was to take account of both regional and national differences. So his sample was made up of six cities located in contrasting regions – in Britain, English and Scottish towns; in Spain, Castilian and Catalan towns; and in Germany, one town in the west and another in the east. Significantly, he concluded that in connection with the matter of Europe, only the two German towns differed, each influenced by different national histories. By contrast, in the British and Spanish cases the views held by the inhabitants of the different towns did not differ at all. The analysis led him to conclude that the national frame remained the one which structures representations of Europe and that regional differences do not challenge the strength of national membership. That is why we assume that data gathered in cities are largely relevant to the analysis of national differences, even though at some points the distinction between urban and rural contexts might need to be addressed.

Our comparative design includes three countries similar in some respects and different in others. France, the UK (some Welsh, Scots and Irish people participated in our Oxford groups) and Belgium share common features: they are all rich countries, for instance. They differ along two major dimensions: their size and geopolitical positions, and their degree of support towards Europe. Two 'big' countries (France and the UK) are compared with a 'small' one (Belgium); two countries supportive of the EU (France and Belgium) are opposed to one of the most distant (the UK) among European countries. Indeed, in summer 2006 (Eurobarometer 66.1), at the time when we were finishing our fieldwork, 70% amongst French-speaking Belgian respondents declared they felt European. This was the case for 55% of French respondents and for 32% of the British ones.

Following studies of the impact of processes of 'europeanisation' and 'globalisation', we consider that these two processes mainly cover a movement towards opening borders that is similar to the logic of denationalisation. Denationalisation is based on three main transformations: economic, marked by the increase in international commercial trade; cultural, brought about by migration movements and involving the ethnic and cultural diversification of national societies; and political transformations which are expressed by transfers of sovereignty, partly depriving nation-states of their prerogatives. This chapter addresses the question of the salience of these dynamics for citizens. To what extent do they acknowledge the impact of both europeanisation and globalisation? Do they perceive them as common or distinctive dynamics?

Actually, scholars tend to diverge on the interpretation of these two phenomena. On the one hand, Fligstein (2008) has emphasised the pressures and conflicts generated by the social inequalities resulting from europeanisation. On the other hand, Kriesi and his team (Kriesi et al. 2008) while agreeing with the statement that denationalisation corresponds to a new 'critical juncture' which produces a cleavage between winners and losers, slightly modify the assumption. For them, europeanisation does not appear to be the main motivation or the engine of changes in progress – globalisation appears to be much more fundamental. If we follow their line of thought, we should therefore talk about a euro-clash (Fligstein 2008) much less than a global-clash, since European integration represents only a sounding board for fundamental shifts that are located at a higher level. In fact, although the transformations are produced at the global level, the political impact of Europe intervenes and, consequently, this is reflected in the national arena.

To interpret our data, we will use a common model, used by a group of authors who can be styled neo-Rokkanians (Bartolini 2005; Ferrera 2005; Kriesi et al. 2008). They provide evidence of the topicality and the potential of Rokkan's theoretical model in thinking about European integration or more broadly the mechanisms of denationalisation. This model has the advantage of combining an economic, sociological and political approach focussed on the concept of boundaries. It allows us to take into account both the economic and social perspectives which underlie the dialectic of the opening and closing of boundaries and the political perspectives which are at work in what Bartolini calls 'system building' – the formation of collective identity and solidarity ties, of institutions combined with participation rights (Bartolini 2005: 54).

Rokkan analysed the structuring of the nation-state as a process of closure of both territory and membership. Closure, a kind of national confinement, is based on the establishment of national sovereignty, control of cross-border mobilities and nationalisation of social risks by setting up welfare states. For the neo-Rokkanians, denationalisation is understood as an inverse process of opening, expressed, at the macro level, by a greater porosity of boundaries and, at the micro level, by strategies of individual exit. These authors also highlight the tensions and the cleavages that this process of denationalisation created, depending on the sectors, the social categories and even the countries considered. The Rokkanian framework is highly complex. For our purposes, the concepts of exit, voice and loyalty (Hirschman 1970), revisited by Rokkan and Bartolini in order to analyse the problem of boundary control, as outlined in Chapter 1, are most suggestive. We don't employ any hypothetical-deductive strategy aiming to test what might be called 'neo-Rokkanian' hypotheses, of course. Rather, we use the theory as a heuristic in order to better understand our data according to an inductive inferential strategy. In our analysis, we applied neo-Rokkanian concepts in this way in asking two main questions of our data: What is the impact of national frames on how citizens talked about Europe? What is the place of the European level in their discourse, compared with the national and global ones?

Methods

In this chapter, we report the results of two analyses. First is a quantitative content analysis of our Set 1 group transcripts. Set 1 consists of our 12 most cross-nationally comparable social class groups. We used the software package Alceste.[1] A separate analysis was conducted for each

country. We are unable to conduct a single analysis of the class groups as such because our class categories consist of some anglophone and some francophone groups. Inspired by the textual statistics developed on the basis of the work of the French mathematician Benzecri, Alceste carries out an analysis of the co-occurrences of words known as 'content' words (i.e. verbs, nouns and adjectives, as opposed to the 'function' words, articles, pronouns, modal verbs) within basic text units whose size and/or syntactical structure are defined by the researcher.[2] The distribution of co-occurrences then serves as a basis for a hierarchical downward classification of the basic elements of the text, a classification whose stability is guaranteed by intersecting two analyses. These two analyses differ in that they group the units of analysis according to a variable number of content words. Results are therefore made up of the categories of units of analysis characterised by their proximity. These categories are accompanied by a list of words which are present in significant numbers. According to Reinert (Reinert 1993), who created the method, these lists of words constitute 'semantic universes' or 'classes', which help to characterise the meaning that topics assume for different categories of speakers, as the texts analysed can of course be classified by the properties of the speakers.

In sum, Alceste begins by separating the corpus – ours, of course, was already divided by country – into basic units of analysis which are roughly sentences or quasi sentences. The units of analysis are then grouped, according to the co-occurrences (using the Chi Squared test) of their content words. Alceste generates distinct classes determined by co-occurrences and supplies a 'description' of these classes in the form of a list of strongly associated words and units of analysis. The researcher intervenes at this stage, when she produces a substantive interpretation of the various classes and labels them. Finally, Alceste supplies information about the contribution of various groups or individuals to the formation of these 'semantic universes'. Variables such as the names of social groups can be located in factorial space, in order to assess to what extent they contribute to the formation of the different 'semantic universes'. Figures 2.1, 2.2 and 2.3 illustrate this procedure and the resulting analysis.

The advantage of this kind of content analysis is that it provides a global and objective account of the corpus. The analysis does not select or focus on any specific question from our group sessions. The procedure is entirely automatic, so the analysis is not biased by any researcher's subjective coding. Nevertheless the risk of this sort of automatic analysis lies in over-interpretation. The software ignores or discards those parts of the corpus that are not characterised by sufficiently strong word

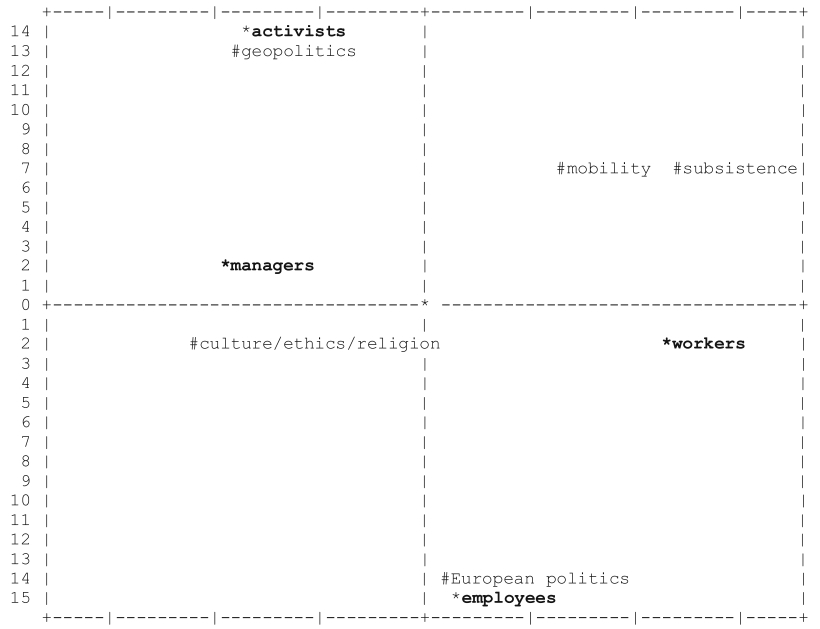


Figure 2.1 Correspondence analysis of Set 1 Brussels groups
Note: Corpus: 121, 984 occurrences
Percentage classified: 62.21%
Horizontal Axis, Factor 1: 24.4% of variance
Vertical Axis, Factor 2: 21.74% of variance

association. In our case, Alceste has taken account of 62.2% of the French-speaking Belgian corpus, 61.7% of the British and 75.56% of the French. Generally, analysis can be considered significant when it includes more than 50%. So our results look interesting. But it is important to bear in mind the corollary that between 25% (in the case of the French) and 40% (Belgian and British) talk was not strongly structured by word association. Analysis should never be reduced to counting words, anyway. The use of Alceste requires, and cannot replace, interpretive analysis of the data. Therefore, we complement the Alceste analysis with a second analysis, consisting of textual interpretation based on our reading of the dynamics of discussion, taking the whole session as our unit of analysis, and on close reading of particular passages of talk that are relevant to national frames. Our presentation of this interpretive analysis pays attention to how stances are taken and to the sequences within which conflict occurs. Using these two methods of data analysis allows us to present a comparative account of the semantic structures of

Figure 2.2 Correspondence analysis of Set 1 Oxford groups
Note: Corpus: 83, 695 occurrences
Percentage classified: 61.7%
Horizontal Axis, Factor 1: 36.33 % of variance
Vertical Axis, Factor 2: 35.05% of variance

the entire corpus of discussion data, while also paying sufficiently close attention to the dynamics of interaction.

If we were asked to present a very general view of the comments made in these 12 focus groups, we could begin by emphasising the fact that all the French, French-speaking Belgian and British participants say pretty much the same thing when they are asked about Europe. As Table 2.1 shows, they mainly mention two kinds of topic: on the one hand, economic, financial and social problems and, on the other hand, political and geopolitical questions which are sometimes linked to cultural and religious issues. However, they do not attach the same importance to these different topics, and above all they do not systematically talk in the same way.

It is worth noting, first, that the Alceste analysis does not replicate our focus group session schedule. The semantic universes generated by this automatic and statistical procedure do not correspond to the five questions we put to our participants (Appendix 4). Hence, we can say that the content of the discussions was not overly determined by the researchers' own vocabularies and frameworks. The classes identified by Alceste pick

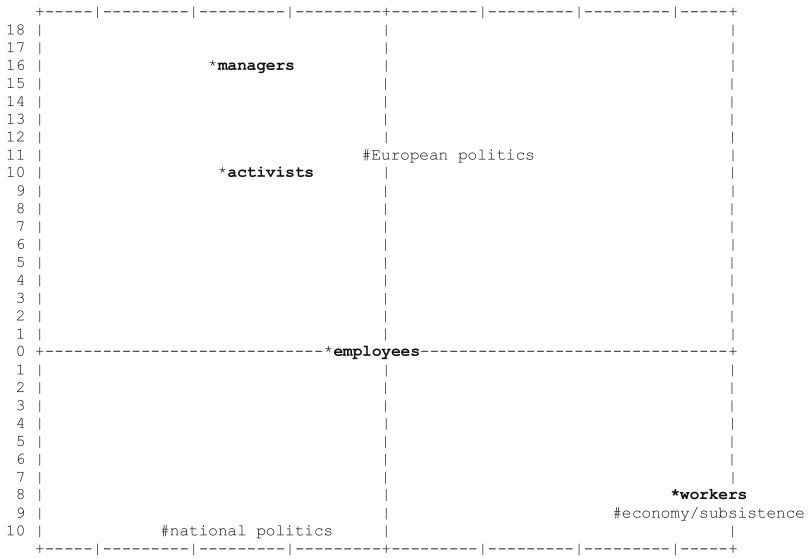


Figure 2.3 Correspondence analysis of Set 1 Paris groups
Note: 149, 077 occurrences
Percentage classified: 75.56%
Horizontal Axis, Factor 1: 40.87% of variance
Vertical Axis, Factor 2: 32.43% of variance

out semantic universes dealing with broad themes such as economic, social and political issues. We organise this chapter according to the Alceste results, considering first the categories that combine economic and social vocabulary, then those combining political and geopolitical vocabulary. The results of the descending hierarchical classification allow us to establish, first, that the economic and social categories are linked in all three corpuses and, second, that the political, geopolitical and what we have called culture, ethics and religion (in the Belgian corpus) are also linked.

In the next section, we will defend the view that discourse about economic and social problems mainly refers to the dynamics of the opening and closing of boundaries and that the heart of these dynamics refers to the process of globalisation. If this is so, then the importance and the special nature of the trend towards europeanisation are downplayed. Then we highlight the importance of national frames of reception for these economic and social questions by isolating the French case. Here we find that discourse on mobility is linked to defensiveness about

immigration – any other discourse on mobility is only very faintly present. We also differentiate the British and the Belgian cases by contrasting their respective discourses of mobility. In the subsequent section, we focus on political and geopolitical discourse, pointing out the links between, on the one hand, understanding of European cultural identity and, on the other hand, the system of solidarity that the EU puts in place. We defend the ideas that the cultural identity and the system of solidarity are strongly connected and that they are shaped by the use of historical narratives. Further, modes of appropriation of the European political system cannot be understood without taking into account the uses of analogy with the national system and with the configuration of the nation-states.

Table 2.1 Alceste analysis of focus group discussions by country

	Paris	**Brussels**	**Oxford**
Economic and social	**39%** **Subsistence** Africa, China, Muslim, India, Italy, Poland, France, Paris, province.	**17%** **Mobility** French, Italian, Luxembourg, Spanish, Swiss, German, Dutch, Belgian.	**35%** **Mobility** Country, English, French, Spanish, Australia, Poland.
	Money, pay, poor, work, expensive.	Bank, crisis, merger, school, university, student, factory, currency, dollar.	Job, skill, tradesmen, business, market, drugs, illegal.
	Parent, child, family, daughter, son, husband.	Border, mobility, travel, install, language, tourism.	Border, abroad, move, freedom, immigrant, choice, holidays, territory, authority.
		10% **Subsistence**	**12%** **Distorted economy**
		China, African, Czech, American world, American.	Chinese, Indian, eastern, Oxford, city company, industry, factory, work.
		Expensive, work, money, tax, rich, poor, business, unemployment, social.	Pay, sell, destroy, industry, dollar, directive, destroy, comply, compete, protection.

Politics and geopolitics	**12% European politics**	**23% European politics**	**40% National identity, politics**
	English, German, national, Nordic, Portugal, Spain, Anglo-Saxon, Brussels.	Regional, global, national, Flemish.	
	Fiscal, liberal, national, protection, participation.		
		Civil servant, Parliament, technocrat.	
			Boundaries, unity, belong.
		Decision, opinion, project, influence, defend.	Join, member, state, terrorism.
	10% National politics	**16% Geopolitics**	
	Extreme, left, right, centre, party, green, communism, fascism, populism, worker.	Army, bloc, axis, space, continent, empire US, America, Iraq, UK, north, south, Russian, war, peace, power, christian, culture, value, close, common, united.	
Culture, ethics and religion		**14%** Turkey, Cyprus, Asia, Lithuania, Albania, Iran, Asia, Muslim, Islam, Christianity, religion, church, Catholic, secular, abortion, euthanasia, communism, humanism.	

Percentages measure the % of words, from all text units analysed, belonging to the category. Classes highlighted in grey are those associated with the words 'Europe', 'European'.
The most significant words (for which the Chi Square is the highest) in each of the classes have been selected for illustration.

National understandings of global socio-economic problems

When they are asked to talk about Europe, our participants mainly mention economic, financial and social problems. Whatever the country, the more working class the group, the more the participants talk about economy, addressing the issue of the means of subsistence (see Figures 2.1, 2.2 and 2.3 for the association between class and this topic of subsistence). They talk about money, work and unemployment, retirement and the economic and financial dynamics involving companies and banks. Most often they explicitly link these economic and social issues to the question of the opening of borders. This opening manifests itself in the increase in migratory flows as well as other forms of transnational mobility. Most of the economic and social flows at issue are located at the global, not the European, level.

Table 2.1 shows the importance of socio-economic topics in all three corpuses, as well as national differences. These topics dominate the discourse of the British (47%) and the French (39%) and to a lesser extent that of the French-speaking Belgians (27%). This lower proportion of socio-economic topics in the Belgian case is linked to the diversity of the discourse of the Brussels groups and, in particular, to the relative importance for them of political and geopolitical topics. This will be addressed in the next part of this chapter. To begin with, we can confirm the relevance of the 'neo-Rokkanian' frame in interpreting the reactions of our participants to the topic they were presented with. Not only does the opening and closing of borders appear to be a structuring theme in their discourse, but the phenomenon, as they envisage it, largely exceeds the strictly European frame as it is fundamentally involved in the process of globalisation.

Boundaries and globalisation

Table 2.1 clearly shows that discourse on economic and social questions is linked to the topic of the opening of borders. Our interpretive analysis of the focus group transcripts reveals that references to border crossing in our groups mainly refer to economic flows based on the circulation of goods and capital, and to social flows involving the circulation of people. Indeed the absence of reference to technological transformations, or to flows of information across the internet, is notable. Social flows include movements by labour (including illegal workers), students, tourists and holiday-makers, but also by traffickers (the Mafia, drug dealers), prostitutes and those who are ill (e.g. AIDS

sufferers). In other words, flows are both legal and illegal and give rise to both positive evaluations (based on recognition of the benefits of opening) and negative evaluations (emphasising the disadvantages of destabilising or dangerous flows for national stability, and the need for protection mechanisms). We will return to this theme of negative and positive evaluations in Chapter 3.

The neo-Rokkanian model appears to be all the more relevant precisely because the opening of borders is expressed clearly in our groups, both in terms of the piercing of 'territorial boundaries' and the transgression of 'membership groups'. The latter is mainly based on the definition of social rights and raises the central question of 'who has the right to what?'. Rights to medical care, to receive social security, to have a job, paid holiday, a pension are at the centre of very many discussions. Issues raised by migratory and capital flows advert to the transgression of territorial boundaries and also to that of the definition of membership groups, by questioning the distribution of social rights between nationals and foreigners. Beyond this, any form of mobility, even the most banal, such as that of going on holiday to another European country, also challenges the question of national social rights. Thus, for example, the Oxford workers raise the question of reciprocity between countries: a foreigner would be medically treated in the UK whereas a British person would not be treated in another European country, one of them complains, supported by the others.

The neo-Rokkanian view links the concept of boundaries to that of exit, considering that the concept of 'boundary' can be seen as the macro equivalent of the individualistic concept of 'exit' (Bartolini 2005: 12). If we agree, we then will not be surprised to note that in the focus groups the boundary-crossing theme most often echoes that of individual exit strategies. Opening borders is related to the overlapping strategies of social exit and fiscal exit. Social exit refers to the phenomenon of migration, which is explained logically by the differential of social rights (the right to work, to health, to a pension) which attracts individuals (described either as poor people or as foreigners) to countries offering more generous social protection. For some of our participants, this is not only logical but also legitimate. Fiscal exit refers to the mobility of the richest people who avoid the national tax burden. This coming and going between rich and poor, natives and foreigners is at the heart of the vision that our Parisian workers group have of economic and social questions. In this group, in which many members are of foreign origin, France is praised for its social welfare (health rights, including for immigrants without a residence permit, public hospitals, unemployment benefits) which is lacking in many other countries (in the US and

England in particular). It therefore appears logical that the poorest people are attracted by the social rights that the French welfare state offers them: they 'do not come for the sake of it' but to survive. Later, they emphasise the reverse forms of mobility when they mention the flight of the richest people for tax reasons or with the aim of making the best financial use of their degrees.

Extract 2.1: Set 1, Paris, workers

Habiba: Where are the French? There's no-one. (*turns to her right, shakes her head*)
Moderator: Where are the French?
Albert: What did she say? (*laughing*)
Yasmina: (*to Habiba*) They're at home.
Habiba: (*to Yasmina*) No, they've left. (*despondent gesture, shaking her head*)
Yasmina: *(to Habiba)* But who are the French? Why are they leaving? Those who have a business, they go abroad to avoid paying tax. That's all.
Moderator: So they're abroad to avoid paying tax . . .
Geoffroy: Taxes and then perhaps the salary level. It's higher in Canada and all that, they no longer recognise degrees and professional experience, I think.

Here is a vision that acknowledges, with obvious resignation, the opening of borders and the strategies of individuals. Rich people are notably here assimilated to the category 'French' by these participants of Maghrebi heritage.

Clearly, when economic and social questions are combined with the challenge of open borders, the European level does not seem to be the most relevant. Problems and possible solutions are located at the global level, confirming the argument of Kriesi and his team (Kriesi et al., 2008): for the citizens questioned, globalisation is particularly important and supersedes the effects of European integration (see also White 2011). The Alceste analysis provides evidence for this marginalisation of the European level in connection with socio-economic problems. In the three corpuses, the socio-economic categories that are automatically established by the software are not associated with the words Europe, European, and so on (Table 2.1).

The focus group participants share the conviction that 'companies do not ask Brussels for their opinion' (Paris, managers), that 'the market goes beyond Europe' (Brussels, managers), that unemployment 'does

not affect Europe but the world', that 'workers are global' (Paris, workers). They are clearly sceptical about the relevance of the European level and do not consider the EU to be any kind of 'fortress' (Delanty 2006) likely to protect them from global forces. Some even call for the formation of a 'global power' (Paris, workers). Only the Belgian groups occasionally mention the protective dimension of the EU through the topic of European protectionism, referred to as 'European nationalism' by Aurélien, who claims to be 'proud to say (that he) prefers to buy Polish or Czech (goods) than Chinese' (Brussels, activist). But the feeling of being dominated by global economic perspectives overwhelmingly prevails as Europe is 'subject to' the market and through it to 'the rest of the world':

Extract 2.2: Set 2, Brussels, employees

Faissal: Yeah but we, well Europe, I think that it's in the process of giving in, that's all. No, you don't think so? (*to Fabien*)
Fabien: Giving in?
Faissal: Giving in to the market, that's it but . . .
Fabien: The rest of the world?
Faissal: The rest of the world, yes, in general. We aren't creating our own market to say there you are: 'that's the European market', 'we don't work like that'. You like it: you buy; you don't like it: you don't buy; all things considered you win. We're not quite there yet, you know! We're giving in, yeah. Like recently metal or I don't know what. (*Fabien nods*)

Mobilities

Comparison of the three corpuses from Table 2.1 shows differences which are clarified by our interpretive analysis. Together the two analyses underline the particular character of the Parisian groups, who do not value mobility, and emphasise the divergence between the Brussels and Oxford groups, who differ as regards the geographical frame for mobility and as regards the position and the role they attach to Europe.

The particular character of the French groups is shown by the fact that only one economic and social category was created by Alceste, compared with the other two corpuses, each of which has two (Table 2.1). Significantly, this single category does not include any vocabulary of mobility, with the notable exception of that which refers to immigration. Border opening refers to the effects of migratory flows on the

national community, not to the question of the mobility of French people outside the national territory. The strong association between the vocabulary of economic, financial and social subsistence (pay, money, poor, work, expensive) and family vocabulary (parent, child, family, daughter, son, husband, etc.) and to sub-national references (Paris, province) is notable. The link between the sub-national level and the vocabulary of economic subsistence is found in the other corpuses, but the presence of the vocabulary of family is indeed a French characteristic according to Alceste. We might draw a set of concentric circles including the family, the local and national levels as areas of subsistence and possibly protection which are not – this is most notable – integrated into the European space. The countries mentioned here, those from which citizens or products enter the French national space, are mainly outside Europe (except for Italy): African countries, India, China, more broadly the Muslim world. Poland and eastern European accession countries are associated in the discourse with these others – a sign of their status as outsiders at the time of the research (Duchesne & Van Ingelgom 2008).

Our interpretive analysis of the dynamic of discussion allows us to establish that each time a participant highlights the advantages the EU offers in terms of mobility he or she is contradicted by another participant who emphasises the social inequalities linked to having such opportunities. For example, when the advantages that can be derived from the euro are mentioned on the grounds that, from a strictly practical point of view, it makes travel easier, this assertion is challenged: 'the European Community is for people who move around, who travel; as for us, we don't travel' (Paris, workers). Likewise, when the example of Erasmus is quoted to illustrate the advantages that can be derived from the construction of Europe, the argument is challenged on the grounds that these exchanges only concern students who are financially privileged (Paris, managers) or that they are more like holidays than real university education (Paris, activists). Of course, this kind of argument is present in the other countries as well as France. The Oxford employees are reminded that 'freedom affects some more than others, those who travel and trade', or in the Oxford managers group, Bansuri adds, 'some people have taken advantage, travelled, gone to Europe to work, but that's outside my world'. But the criticism of mobility in the name of equality is comparatively marginal in the British and Belgian corpuses.

We must emphasise that we are unable to measure objectively the degree of transnationalism of the French (Mau 2010). But, our transcripts clearly indicate that mobility is not a practice and a concept that is considered to be positive, *a priori*. For all, mobility is seen

as a form of social capital which introduces deep inequalities that they denounce, even if some can also use the consideration of mobility to distinguish themselves in the discussion. From the viewpoint of group dynamics, the question of travel can appear to be an instrument of social differentiation. Thus, in this Paris workers group, when Yasmina tries to strengthen the solidarity of the group by asserting that the advantages of the euro 'don't concern us because we don't travel', she is not supported by the other participants, in particular, not by Habiba, a North African like her, but of a higher social class, who claims 'to have been to eighteen countries'.

In the cases of Oxford and Brussels, the Alceste analysis singled out two categories. In some ways, one (12% of the Oxford corpus and 10% of the Brussels one) is similar to that of Paris as it incorporates the vocabulary of financial and economic and social subsistence (pay, money, work, etc.). The other (35% of the Oxford corpus and 17% of Brussels) is distinct because it includes the vocabulary of mobility (borders, mobility, move, travel, freedom, abroad, holidays, etc.). Compared to the Parisian discussions, here the topic of mobility is mentioned both in more practical terms and more positively. The participants talk about different forms of movement, whether tourism and holidays (a form of mobility favoured by the British), or mobility in the labour market (mentioned in the Belgian groups). However, the mobility space outlined in each of the two marks a clear difference between them. In the Belgian case, mobility is mainly within a European space marked by strong proximity: countries cited are France, the Netherlands, Switzerland, Germany, Luxembourg, as well as Italy and Spain. In the British case, the European countries concerned are mainly holiday destinations (France and Spain) and exchanges are far from being limited to Europe. Indeed, a much larger space is outlined, including English-speaking countries (e.g. Australia). Furthermore, this priority of Europe as a space for mobility is explicitly denounced in the Oxford managers group, who note that Europe is only one option amongst others. In this group, when Bansuri says that Europe might be a good idea and that some people might take advantage of it by travelling and working abroad, she is directly challenged by Derek for whom Europe is not a priority destination.

Extract 2.3: Set 1, Oxford, managers

Derek: But in that sense, isn't Europe just like part of the rest of the world? I mean from a point of view from Britain it's geographically closer but in all other respects well why should I be interested

in Europe more than any different to say Africa America Southern Hemisphere countries?

In the Oxford groups, border opening, when it is evaluated positively, is connected to an increase in consumption choices (in shops today you can find products which did not exist before), and in the circulation of people (the fact of being able to take holidays in sunnier countries). But the positive side is reduced, really, to these two aspects. Negative aspects include competition in the labour market and invasion by a whole range of traffickers. Whereas in the Brussels groups, Europe can sometimes be mentioned as a possible protective area, in the Oxford groups it is a vehicle for destabilisation. Far from being considered as a fortification, it is more like an opening, a Trojan horse. Whereas the UK could protect itself by itself, Europe weakens it by opening the door to all the wrongs of globalisation, the bad flows: clandestine immigration, diseases (AIDS), trafficking (drugs, Mafia, prostitution).

Extract 2.4: Set 1, Oxford, workers

Robert (*to Brenda*): You can't really deny a legal immigrant because they're here legally but it's the illegal ones.
Brenda: The ones that just come over from France and just yeah.
Ron: Hide in lorries and all that.
Brenda: But they're bringing lots of diseases and stuff that comes with these people (*hesitates*) that isn't being horrible about anybody by the way.
Robert: No no see health wise . . . illegal immigrants coming over on the back of lorries the male ones coming over and some of them might have HIV and could be sleeping with girls.
Brenda: (*to Robert*) Well girls that will . . . who are stupid . . . but there's also the sex trade has happened with that there's lots of girls being forced over here to sleep with forty men.
Robert: That's actually quite big now here in England.

Moreover, in an ambiguous way the EU is both likened to an accelerator of globalisation and seen as a hindrance to the free dynamic of the British economy through the increase in directives. This establishes a 'distorted market' – which, further, has the objective of 'subsidising poor countries' (Extract 2.7). The two economic and social categories created by Alceste show this dual face of the views collected in the British focus groups: on the one hand, a dominant discourse (35% of the corpus), especially associated with the workers, focussed on opening

and the consequences of mobility, understood in a positive (holidays in the south) and a negative (traffickers crossing the English Channel) way, and on the other hand, a discourse hostile to European regulation (12% of the corpus) – here we find the words directive, destroy, comply, protect, impose, etc. This comes mainly, but not only, from the groups of activists, and included interventions by conservatives and eurosceptics. From this, we can conclude that there has indeed been a transformation, compared to the scheme that was drawn up ten years ago by Diez Medrano (2003). In that study, the economic dimension mainly fuelled arguments in favour of European integration, in particular, in the case of the UK (the emergence of criticism of intra-European labour market competition was evident from the German interviews). By the time of our study, the free market was no longer given credit for European integration.

In Paris, Oxford and Brussels, participants all shared the feeling that the economy really impacts their welfare. They generally agree on economic dysfunctions, more often than not blaming the opening of borders. But this is seen differently, depending on national frames. The Alceste results show that the three corpuses are distinct, depending on how national groups value mobility. French participants appear to put less value on external mobility: first and foremost, for them, mobility refers to migrants' flows within domestic territories and they hardly consider themselves as potential mobile actors. Our data also suggest that while talking about economy participants do not refer to the European level. Asked about Europe, they answer by designating globalisation as the driving force of economic dynamics. In this respect, national framing has more to do with a frame of reception than production. The EU is not seen as a barrier or a protection.

Loyalty to a European political system

The political category identified by Alceste (Table 2.1) includes institutional vocabulary, a vocabulary of geopolitics and one of values and religion. We should first emphasise that national differences appear to be even stronger than those we found between the social and economic categories. Economic and social questions largely reflected transversal and global dynamics, even if their modes of reception were filtered nationally. Political questions reflect more directly national and even European levels, the two being combined differently depending on the corpus.

The Belgian corpus is particularly interesting here. The Alceste analysis distinguishes between three categories. The first, particularly large

(23% of the corpus analysed), includes the terms of European institutional politics: we find here the vocabulary of representation, of administration and of decision. A second category (16% of the corpus) falls within geopolitics. A third category (14%), strongly linked to the previous one, brings together the semantic world of culture, religion and ethics. The Alceste analysis reveals that the activist groups are the main source of the geopolitical category, while the category of institutional politics is attributable significantly to the employees groups (Figure 2.1).

In comparison, the British and French corpuses appear to be much thinner, and much less connected to Europe. In the French case, a first category (12% of the corpus) is specifically devoted to the European institutional and political field, while a second (10%) brings together the specific vocabulary of national politics. This division is strongly indexed to social differences, as the first category is largely fuelled by comments made by the groups of Parisian activists and to a lesser extent by the managers. The British corpus is still less varied insofar as the semantic world of politics is brought together in a broad category (40% of the corpus analysed) combining elements arising from European and national politics and referring to the theme of national identity. The lack of semantic differentiation in the politics category of the Oxford corpus mirrors the lack of semantic differentiation in the economic and social category in the Paris corpus.

Cultural identity and solidarity ties

To analyse these results in more detail, we again turn to the concepts deployed by 'neo-Rokkanians' to think about the construction of the European political system and the barriers to that. The concept of 'system building' describes a group of processes participating in the formation of loyalty ties which refer to the mechanisms and structures 'forcing the component of the system to stay within' (Bartolini 2005: 31), 'to secure the allegiance of the ruled to the rulers' (Bartolini 2005: 211). The formation of these ties consists of different kinds of mechanisms: on the one hand, the construction of a cultural identity and the introduction of a system of solidarity and, on the other hand, the establishment of political institutions and rights. Regarding the first, we emphasise that these two mechanisms are connected and that cultural identity and solidarity ties are shaped by common historical narratives, from which emerges the reference to the Judeo-Christian heritage, to the Second World War, to the Cold War and to colonisation, each of these

narratives theoretically asserting the forms of identity and solidarity which, empirically, often appear to be blurred.

The first question posed to our focus group participants was 'What does it mean to be European?' Later in the session, after the break, sub-groups were asked to work together to consider the question 'Who profits from Europe?', and their responses were then discussed in a plenary. In responding to these questions, our participants articulated the elements, and the basis, of what may or may not be their feelings of loyalty towards the European political system. The feeling of loyalty is based on the feelings, interests and values which contribute to shaping cultural identities and logics of solidarity, according to Bartolini (2003: 31). These two elements are generally linked in the comments we have collected from the focus groups. Identification with groups with whom one believes one shares a common destiny opens the possibility of agreeing to a system of solidarity with them. Or, if one prefers, the fact that a political system establishes solidarity ties with others leads us to consider them as members of our political community. In the European case, the claimed political community, cultural identity and system of solidarity have been built from national components. Consequently, it is easy to understand that the forms through which loyalty ties are expressed (or not) are linked to historical narratives, which are themselves connected to national historical trajectories. In addition, this predominance of national groups also allows us to understand that the political world attaches great importance to questions of geopolitics and the definition of alliances and systems of supranational solidarity.

Our interpretive analysis allows us to identify four main historical narratives. These narratives are far from being consensual – mention of them usually gave rise to lively discussions and even real conflict. From this, we conclude that none of them is really established or favoured. The first historical narrative is built around the Judeo-Christian religious reference. In an initial version, this is based on the cultural identity of Europe, which differentiates insiders from outsiders and, indeed, distances countries of Muslim culture (like Turkey), and groups referred to as 'Muslims', from the European community and therefore from an area of solidarity. In a second version, not exclusive of the first, it links this religious relationship, which it can claim to be of a secular nature, to values of solidarity. The Christian heritage somehow represents the heart of the European cultural, social and political heritage and is embodied in welfare states, which therefore must be preserved.

These arguments are absent from the Oxford groups but are central in the Brussels corpus and are also present in the Paris ones, especially in

the more politicised, managers and activists, groups. The importance of the religious dimension in the Belgian corpus is demonstrated by the results of the Alceste analysis, since the software has created a specific category which includes religious vocabulary, including references to Catholicism, to Islam and to secularism (Table 2.1). This category is largely fuelled by the discussions provoked by the question of Turkey. The straight question 'Should Turkey be a member of the EU?' formed the penultimate section of our focus group sessions. This produced between the Belgian managers a very fierce dispute on the matter of secularism, involving the issue of the relationship that the religions, Catholicism as much as Islam, have or should have with power. But there is also a wider incidence of references to the Judeo-Christian heritage as a basis for European values, which has at its heart a model of solidarity, in response to the question 'What is it to be European?' This link was very strongly emphasised in the Paris and Brussels activist groups. For example, the Brussels participants responded to the question immediately with a discussion of the values of solidarity embodied in a social model. As this argument is challenged by Maxime, Aurélien intervenes to endorse it:

Extract 2.5: Set 1, Brussels, activists

Aurélien: Me, I agree to a certain extent with my neighbour (*points to Simon*) on the left here – well, if you'll allow me. Even so there is in fact . . . I'm repeating a kind of taboo with that, there is, nevertheless, a common value which is our Judeo-Christian roots. I won't go into the history of it . . . but in fact we find, and that's what's so good about the construction of Europe, we still find a desire for what Charlemagne did, to have a continent based on a common value. At the moment the common value is not necessarily religion because religion is fading, religion is different. What is it? It's social security, it's the great socio-economic debates, about welfare, about peace. So we have accepted ten poor states, people are getting poorer so there is nevertheless a certain idea of social security *(Maxime smiles, seems to be sceptical*). Well for me that's it, there is even so a Judeo-Christian idea, whether we like it or not, don't you think?

The second historical narrative refers to the Second World War as a source of European identity. Loyalty goes beyond the fight against Nazism which places Germany at the heart of the process of integration. It leads to the conviction that Europe should be an area of peace

based on strong solidarity between the main protagonists of the war. This narrative, which forms the matrix of the official discourse on the legitimisation of the EU (Foret 2008), is present in our corpus, although in much lower proportions than might be expected. It comes mainly from the Paris and Brussels groups, the most educated who know the official history, and is not taken up by the Oxford groups. In the Oxford group mention of the Second World War is one of the few historical references present – there are rather few references to the Cold War for instance. However, references to the war contribute to the expression of a form of anti-Germanism and to emphasise regret at the creation of a Europe generated by the Franco-German entente. This marginalises the UK, even though it can claim the enviable status of victor in the Second World War. Significantly, Brenda observes that the English are not much liked in the continent of Europe and attributes this bad reputation to their role in the Second World War (Oxford, workers). Someone else observes that European integration benefits the German economy (Oxford, employees), and Germany is incidentally referred to as a hotbed of terrorism as 'two of the 9/11 hijackers were based in Germany' (Oxford, employees).

The narrative of pacification is also questioned. When the argument that European integration has allowed the construction of a space for peace is put forward, it can be opposed either by the counterexample of the war in Kosovo (Oxford, activists) or by the idea that Europe has only avoided war at the cost of exporting conflicts outside its borders, to Algeria, Indochina, to the Falklands (Brussels, managers).

The third historical narrative references the Cold War. In this, cultural, ideological and political identity and solidarity are based on the alliance between Europe and the US against communism. However, the use of this example is subject to strong tensions as we shall see. In the Belgian case, the example of the Cold War divides the managers and the activists, for whom this narrative remains a source of European identification and solidarity, from the employees and workers for whom, on the contrary, Europe only acquires substance by distinguishing itself from the US. With the former, the birth of the construction of Europe is often compared to the rivalry between the US and the USSR: Stalin is designated as the 'great founding father of Europe' and the Marshall plan as the first stage, accepting that it was better to be 'in the English camp than in that of the Russians' (Brussels, activists).

The vision is different in the Belgian working-class groups and in all the French groups. Of course the US is here a ubiquitous example, most often mentioned negatively, to the extent that we can consider

that Europe only really takes on meaning and substance for them by opposing the US social and cultural model and its deep inequalities. The groups most marked by anti-Americanism are often those which idealise American power the most, both from an economic and a geopolitical viewpoint. The US is thus acknowledged as 'managing the global economy' (Paris, workers), as thinking that they are the 'rulers of the world' (Paris, employees), as those who have the *de facto* power (Paris, managers). As for the Paris activists, whatever their party affiliation, they very often reason by stigmatising 'anglo-saxon culture'.

The Cold War narrative is also blurred by enlargement. The inclusion of post-communist countries in the EU transforms, even destabilises, the vision of European identity and solidarity. Destabilisation arises from the fact that the post-communist countries which were, at the time of the survey, still seen as outsiders are linked in the Alceste analysis with non-European countries which were considered to be destabilising for national economies and societies. These outsiders, moreover, are well known to be the main beneficiaries of the system of intra-European solidarity.

The final historical narrative is built around colonialism. In this perspective, European identity is based on the fact that Europe has been a colonising power and that it should therefore establish systems of solidarity, including the former colonies and, *de facto*, going beyond the European level. In Diez Medrano's study, his explanation of the British framing of the EU has the place of colonisation in the national discourse at the centre (Diez Medrano 2003). The EU appears to be marginal, even useless, for the British, because they have already, with some success, developed a supranational project through the construction of Empire, the establishment of the Commonwealth and the maintenance of ties and networks outside Europe. However, colonialism is here mainly an element of Diez Medrano's interpretation and is not very present in the discourse of his interviewees themselves.

By contrast, in our corpus, explicit references to colonialism and to its consequences in terms of solidarity are frequent. We can account for this in three ways. First, the UK, Belgium and France are three colonial powers; references to colonialism therefore result directly from their national trajectories. Second, the focus groups formed were multi-ethnic. In Set 1, on which the analysis of this chapter is based, only the Brussels managers group does not include participants representing visible ethnic minorities. But this does not explain everything, and mention of the colonial past is far from being exclusive to ethnic minorities, although we should consider that the mere presence in a group of people with

a colonial heritage provokes such a discourse. Third, the question of Turkey's entry is at the heart of the European agenda and at the heart of our focus group schedule, and that leads to this kind of framing. However, this does not explain most mentions of colonialism in our discussions, which were by no means confined to the question of Turkey.

For example, to the first question 'What does it mean to be European?', the answer came from the Paris managers that 'for a whole era that meant being a white coloniser'. In the employees group, again in response to that question, colonisation is mentioned with regard to the relationship maintained between poor countries and the cancellation of their debts (Extract 2.6). In the Oxford groups, the fact that European countries share a 'very bad history', consisting of colonialism and imperialism, can, moreover, justify distancing from Europe (Oxford, managers). For others, it calls on them not to judge a country on what it has done: certainly Turkey is not a role model in terms of human rights, but European countries, Nazi Germany or colonial France, have not always been role models in this field, argues Patrice (Paris, employees). European culture cannot claim to embody the values of openness, in view of the cultural destruction caused by colonisation (Brussels, managers). The Paris and Brussels groups – unlike the Oxford ones – take up a position of guilt, and support the need to compensate former colonised countries. The burden of the colonial past fuels a discussion on the duty to return to the colonised countries what was taken from them, in particular by a policy of development aid. Europe, referred to as a 'wealth thief' (Brussels, workers), has to pay its debts with regard to the countries formerly colonised, in particular in Africa. This proposal to globalise the solidarity regime provokes controversies in all the groups in which it is mentioned, but the presence of the argument shows that colonisation is at the heart of the struggle to define European loyalty:

Extract 2.6: Set 1, Paris, employees

Laetitia: (*to Patrice*) But I think that we are already helping the poorest countries because we're removing their debts. So we are really removing quite a lot of things, it's still helping, isn't it . . .
Patrice: (*to Laetitia)* We're increasing ours as well, aren't we?
Laetitia: How's that?
Patrice: We're increasing ours as well. *(smiling*)
Hadia: (*to Laetitia*) Hmm, we're removing their debt after colonising them for years, it's easy, you see?
Laetitia: Yeah but no I'm not saying that.

National understandings of European institutions

Taking all in all, we can say that our respondents have little knowledge of the working of the EU. This is with the exception of the Belgian groups, who alone appear to be competent. They know the history and institutional mechanisms of the EU and refer to a certain number of public policies. Incompetence is inevitably associated with distance. To remedy this, from the moment when the citizens participating in our focus groups were asked to talk about Europe and its political system, they borrowed models and above all tried to reason by analogy. The models borrowed were sometimes non-political. The EU can be compared to a 'club' (Oxford, activists) or to a 'local neighbourhood group' (Paris, managers). But these were exceptions – analogies with national political systems dominate. European actors referred to are most often national – either countries (France, Germany) or their executive heads (Adenauer, de Gaulle, Blair, Mitterrand, etc.). Only the French activists and the Belgian managers and activists mention purely European institutional actors. Our argument here is that these analogies provide our participants with diverse resources for articulating the EU. These, together with the diverse ways in which they construct relationships between the nation-state and the EU, mean that the forms of appropriation or understanding (or, taking the British case, the lack thereof) are quite different.

In this connection, the Belgian case is very specific. Not only does the EU appear to be a useful substitute for a small and weak nation-state but also the socialisation of Belgian citizens in a multi-level system gives them the resources to adapt to the complexity of the European system. Furthermore, the internalisation of Belgian national powerlessness is expressed in the focus groups by the fact that they self-identify Belgium as a small country, necessarily 'more European' and 'more diplomatic' but also subject to the power of the biggest countries (Brussels, managers), and they acknowledge that Belgium is unknown to the Chinese and therefore that belonging to Europe becomes the only business card to be used (Brussels, employees). All these considerations make the need to take one's place in a system of alliances more salient. It is in this corpus that the geopolitical model is the most prominent (Table 2.1). Moreover, the Brussels groups appear to be by far the most sophisticated on European matters. This Brussels competence doubtless has something to do with proximity to the European institutions as inhabitants of this particular city. In fact, though, this experience is judged differently, depending on social category. The managers may know European

officials and experts and are pleased that their presence in Brussels contributes opportunities and energy. The employees and working-class groups complain about high rents. Our guess is that the high competence levels must also be explained by education in schools and general political socialisation – this is referred to in the discussions. Whatever the case, their competence also, and above all, results from the fact that the Belgians can incorporate the European political system by analogy with their own national system. If the EU is more disruptive for the unitary system (Schmidt 2006), conversely political socialisation in a complex, multi-level system clearly helps with understanding of the EU.

Familiarity is clear, for example, in long discussion sequences devoted to evaluating the comparative advantages of the different ways of electing representatives to the European Parliament (Brussels, employees). Should one vote for a Belgian European representative, or one from another country? In the first case, should one elect a representative in each country by area of public policy? How should the leader of this team of European elected representatives be chosen then? By organising a hierarchy of the number of votes that each obtained in his country? But should this not be weighted by the size of population? This kind of exchange is completely absent from the two other corpuses. For some of our Belgian participants, the European system has directly affected national fragmentation: Europe has strengthened regionalism and contributed towards reviving Flemish national feeling (Brussels, activists). In short, the Belgians are included in the European political system because of their recognition of the powerlessness of the Belgian nation-state and by way of the resources provided by national political socialisation. To be sure, these mechanisms are clearer in the discourse of the activists, managers and employees than of the workers.

By contrast, in the British corpus, Europe is a kind of out-group. The EU is considered to be an intrusive system, provoking a reaction of defence of national identity. Ten years after the survey by Diez Medrano, our groups' discussions, analysed quantitatively and interpretively, support his account of the British frame for understanding Europe as a matrix of national identity and sovereignty. The Alceste analysis shows the integration of vocabulary referring to Europe with vocabulary of national identity. Unlike in the Belgian and French cases, analysis of the British corpus has not produced a category specifically devoted to European politics. Rather, words referring to Europe are combined with those referring to the competition between national politics and cultural identity. They are also associated with terms like Muslim, Islam and terrorism, indicating the fact that Europe is likened to an out-group.

With the support of these quantitative results, our interpretive analysis has many instances which confirm the strength of identification with the nation and the foreignness of the European system. The British groups demonstrate a strong feeling of identification with the nation expressed, significantly, in terms of pride, as in the Oxford employees group ('you'd be quite happy to go and say I'm British because I'm basically proud of my country'), or discussions, also absent from the other corpuses, about what it means to die for your country (workers and managers groups).

Consequently, the EU is firstly seen as a foreign and intrusive body. European integration is at best 'listening to Brussels' (Oxford, employees), at worst 'being told by the French government' (Oxford, workers). In all cases this is a fact over which British citizens do not have any influence ('Do you think we've been forced to be European?' asks an Oxford manager). Yet what they value is precisely the satisfaction gained from a cultural identity deemed to be special – and established as a symbol of their sovereignty. The signs of their special character (the currency, the system of measurements) are recognised as proof of British sovereignty:

Extract 2.7: Set 1, Oxford, employees

Kenneth: Why do we want to keep the pound? (*Pat and Kenneth laugh, Nina and Kamal smile*). I mean . . . I just my hobby horse . . . I mean yeah weights and measures: why on earth does this country hang on to pounds and miles and anything? You know I'm a great believer in tradition in a lot of areas but if you want freedom of travel and things like that then economy of scale. Is it really that important how you measure things?

Pat: I think it's nice to have something where our country decides on something. And part of Europe, everything else is the same . . . It would be nice to have one thing for each country to have that they feel they've got some power over. It's the one area that I would like to hang on to.

It is significant that the Oxford managers in Set 1 are no less outside Europe than the more working-class groups, as they see it as 'something we compete with':

Extract 2.8: Set 1, Oxford, managers

Ian: Does anyone feel European at all?
Alexander: (*laughs*) No, not at all.

> Derek: (*to Alexander*) No I tend to think of Europe or the rest of Europe as being something we compete with rather than being completely on the same side. If you like I think that's what comes to mind maybe it's the rest of Europe is a competitor rather than for Britain . . . it's something we kind of have to find our place in Europe but we have to be assertive about it, it's not something that comes naturally if we've been part of Europe.

Foreignness is such that some participants even question whether the UK is part of the EU. Non-participation in the euro clearly fosters this confusion. For example, the workers group express doubts about their understanding of the EU, mention the consequences that entry into the EU would introduce, expressing the wish that, in such an eventuality, the European centre would be transferred to London (Extract 2.9). Brenda, post-office worker, displays her lack of knowledge in an unembarrassed open way and Robert, bricklayer and former military, tactfully shows greater knowledge – of the EU, of geo-politics, of parties – than the others. But they consensually agree on their lack of understanding of EU history:

Extract 2.9: Set 1, Oxford, workers

Robert (*to Brenda)*: Who started the EU, where did it come from?
Brenda: Someone wanted to benefit themselves that's why they did it.
Robert: And why was Brussels chosen as the head quarters of it?
Brenda: (*to Ron*) Do you know why Brussels was used as the head place for it?
Ron (*straight away*): I've no idea, my knowledge of the EU is not very good.
Brenda: (*to Mina*) Do you know?
Mina: Say again . . .
Robert: Why was the . . .
Brenda: (*to Mary*) Do you know why . . .
Mary: No.
Robert: (*to Mina*) Why is Brussels like the main headquarters of the European Union? Is there any reason for it or what? Why? Do you have any idea why it is?
Mina: It's been decided long time ago.
Robert: Yeah yeah it's been like that quite a while.
Brenda: So if we join would it come here?

This ignorance is not unique to the less educated groups, since we find the same question arising for the Oxford managers, who also confuse membership of the EU with the euro and question the intentions of their leaders ('Tony will take us into Europe regardless of what we say'). For the British, the national analogy hardly allows European institutions to be appropriated at all. Some try to hang on to the national/local analogy, calling on the example of Scotland and Wales, attempting to assimilate the relationship with Europe to this model. But overall, our British participants understand the European system as something quite different from the British.

The Belgian and the British corpus generate sharply contrasting interpretations. The French case is more difficult to unravel. Unlike the Belgian groups, the French do not share familiarity with the European institutions; unlike the British, their discourse on Europe is not part of the matrix of national cultural identity. Of course, the existence of a semantic world completely devoted to national politics, where they talk about national political competition, its actors and its ideological categories, proves the fact that the Parisian groups are most often located in the national arena mentioned. But in the French Set 1 corpus, there is only a hint of a discourse that could be identified as 'sovereigntist'. Whereas in the British corpus, the defence of British regulations and customs is essential, and in the Belgian case, standardisation is also denounced, not to defend a fragile national community but to preserve local characteristics, the discourse of defending identity and sovereignty remains very marginal in the French corpus. It is present occasionally in the workers group (by criticism of the EU as a 'mixed salad') and the employees group (by the refusal to fit into a 'mould').

The Alceste analysis of the French corpus gives two categories – one concerning European politics, the other concerning national politics. Interpretive analysis suggests that this is mainly due to a difference between the activists and to a lesser extent the managers, on the one hand, who provide the vocabulary of European institutions, and the working-class groups, on the other, who, when asked about Europe, quickly turn to talk about the national arena. This shift is confused because they do not have a sovereigntist discourse to draw on (see also Chapter 2). So, the European system is not, as it is in the British case, constructed in opposition to national sovereignty. Rather, it can hardly be identified and set apart. So there is a continuous projection of the national onto the European. The lack of sovereigntist reactions among French participants was unexpected, because some parties certainly do make sovereigntist claims within public debate. Our finding,

then, calls for testing by other data and especially by data gathered outside Paris or the major cities. One might hypothesise that nationalist reactions are more likely to be registered outside Paris on the grounds that radical right votes are less numerous within the capital city. At this stage, it indicates that French citizens' reactions towards the EU should not be understood as a reaction of defensiveness but as one of projection.

Another unexpected finding is the weak impact of the 2005 public debate on our data – the French focus groups were held about six months after this. The referendum debate has been analysed as a genuine sequence of politicisation of European issues. In fact, the same division between groups is found when we examine mentions of the 2005 referendum on the Constitutional Treaty. The French discussions feature no kind of satisfaction at having been able to vote or at having been able to articulate distrust about the Europe building project. Notably, the Brussels groups express their regret at not having been consulted. For the Paris groups, any sense of political action and participation is eclipsed by the conviction that Europe is part of a fait accompli. The feeling of 'giving in' to it is present, as well as 'the fear of being involved in decisions that we don't agree with' (Paris, employees). Once again, only the activists are an exception, the referendum campaign made Europe their business, even if the losers express a great weariness, having been overwhelmed by the intensity of the debate, and probably by its outcome.

In sum, the impact of national socialisation is particularly obvious in the political field. Modes of understanding and appropriation differ greatly. Our comparative design allows us to conclude that these differences, and the very unequal level of competence on Europe which characterises the national groups, partly depend on the effects of the analogy or disanalogy between the European and the national systems. These differences are also explained by the variable combination between national historical narratives, forms of cultural identification and the solidarity ties that they assume. We have seen various modes of appropriation of the European political system and the suggestions of embryonic forms of possible loyalty or disloyalty. It is no exaggeration to characterise Belgian incorporation of the EU into their complex political system, which compares with the exteriorisation of it by the British who construct themselves as out-groups, and with the blurring and projection between the national and European arena that is typical of the French discussants. An indication of the significance of these forms of appropriation can, moreover, be found in the way in which they are

spread socially. In the following chapter, we analyse more deeply the impact of social class differences.

What is the impact of national frames on how citizens talked about Europe? What is the place of the European level compared with the national and global ones? More than 60 years after the launching of European integration, 10 years after Diez Medrano's fieldwork, national framing still matters. National specificities have not vanished; not only that but citizens' reactions are still shaped by national memberships fuelled with historical legacies. This striking resistance of national frames is not unexpected, in light of the long history of national formation. At the same time, we cannot conclude that no hints of europeanisation are visible. For many citizens (especially in Paris and Brussels), europeanisation is taken for granted. But in citizens' perception, the European level finds itself caught between the national political scale which resists and the global economic scale which is expanding. The outbreak of the economic crisis shows once again that citizens were not misled. European inter-governmentalism has been the main riposte to global economic shocks.

3

Social Gap: The Double Meaning of 'Overlooking'

Sophie Duchesne

Introduction

European studies acknowledged what is usually considered the elitist bias of European integration long before Fligstein, in *Euroclash,* concluded that

> Europe as a social and cultural project is clearly a social class project. The class aspects of European economic and social integration explain some of the anti-EU national politics that have emerged.
>
> (Fligstein, 2008: 251)

The bias concerns first the unequal benefits that different social groups gained from market integration and from the corollary reforms. Second it concerns the persistently unequal support that citizens give to the European political system, depending on their social class, whether this is measured primarily by income, wealth, occupational status or educational attainment (Belot, 2002; Cautrès & Grunberg, 2007).

Fligstein's conclusions, however, are not as straightforward as the above quotation suggests. He does not simply mean that because European integration is a class project it is logically opposed by those who benefit less or even suffer from it. The euroclash thesis is more sophisticated. It first confirms, by analysis of extensive socio-economic data, that those who benefit from integration are managers, executives, some white collars and technical workers, the highly educated, the wealthy and the young. It goes on to show that these people, because of the increasing mobility and communication capacity offered by the European Union (EU), have developed new relationships with their fellow Europeans, through work and leisure. As a consequence,

and in conformity with the theoretical framework that Deutsch developed regarding nation building (Deutsch, 1969), they tend to feel that they are Europeans at a much greater rate than do others – blue-collar workers, the less educated, the poor and the old. These groups remain embedded in national societies and, more than ever, 'feel national' or identify with their nations. These differences in feeling can become confrontational: they can translate into opposing political wills and directions in political action. According to Fligstein, citizens who are positioned in the middle classes, and who benefit only partially from the new opportunities offered by integration, also tend to display 'middling' identities. They feel both national and European. They, thus, are destined to be the arbitrators of the euroclash.

The idea that identity and affect play a central role in public opinion of the EU has become widespread. By identity is understood the self-identification of people as members of a political community, in this case as national citizens or as European. By affect is meant the range of feelings associated with identification, including in particular in-group preference. Hooghe and Mark's leading work supports this thesis. They consider that exclusive national identity – measured in Eurobarometer by way of the question 'Do you in the near future see yourself as only (national), (national) and European, European and (national) or European only?' – is a key element in European politics which can be, and is, mobilised by political entrepreneurs and parties against the EU. In the article that develops the influential notion of 'constraining dissensus', they conclude that

> the European Union is part of a system of multi-level governance which is driven by identity politics as well as by functional and distributional pressures. Conceptions of the political community are logically prior to the decision about the regime form. In the European Union, the debate about who 'we' are is politically charged and causally influential.
>
> (Hooghe & Marks, 2009: 23)

So the elite bias that has accompanied European integration from the founding era is now interpreted as both interest and identity grounded and is considered to be of paramount importance for the future of Europe. Working-class people are expected to be (potentially) against further integration, not only because they feel economically and socially threatened by the changes that EU decisions bring to their lives, but also because they feel emotionally attached to their nation and do not

want its sovereignty limited. Evidence for this is mainly taken from Eurobarometer survey analysis and is based on social identity theory (Herrmann et al., 2004).[1] But Eurobarometer, like any other survey, is not best suited for the analysis of identity or affect.

Our own project was not designed specifically for identity analysis. Political sociologists have used focus groups this way, though. Gamson, one of the first authors to reintroduce focus groups into the discipline (Morgan, 1996) wanted to explore the potential for political mobilisation in the working class. In his influential *Talking politics* he analyses how participants, in the course of discussion, define themselves as 'we' against others. He puts this 'we' talk together with a sense of injustice and a sense of agency as the key elements of collective action frames (Gamson, 1992). Ten years later Cramer Walsh went further. In *Talking about politics*, she analysed the discussions that occur regularly between acquaintances who meet in the mornings, in a corner store, drinking coffee and casually chatting. She argues that

> . . . the fundamental politically relevant act is the communication of information about the kind of people individuals perceive themselves to be and the collective envisioning of group and community boundaries.
>
> (Cramer Walsh, 2004: 42)

Cramer Walsh suggests that political discussion is a matter of 'perspective' – a point of view shared by participants; this point of view depends on social location, experience and identity.

> As with other topics, when people talk about political issues, they are relating to each other with the aid of social identities. Thus, they are neither interacting entirely as individuals nor as members of the community as a whole. Instead, through their interaction, they are collectively defining who constitute 'one of us'.
>
> (Cramer Walsh, 2004: 52)

Following Gamson and Cramer Walsh, we intended to examine the dynamics of politicisation, but this time between unacquainted participants in a quasi-public setting.[2] We wanted to observe how participants would publicly discuss, agree and disagree about European issues. The time looked right, as european studies was emphasising the politicisation of European questions. In the French case, our research design came shortly after the referendum campaign that was commonly taken to be

an important moment of public controversy and to evidence the fact that French citizens had become politically mobilised on the future of integration (Brouard & Tiberj, 2006).

We designed the discussions in order to facilitate the expression of disagreement. Fear of conflict and the reluctance to have one's opinion challenged by others are major reasons for avoiding political talk in public (Conover et al., 2002). The dynamics of politicisation depend on participants taking the risk of publicly acknowledging disagreement with people they do not know, and whose opinions they do not know either. We suppose that people will take this kind of risk, and affirm views that might be challenged by others, only if the opinions at stake matter enough to them or if they involve, explicitly or implicitly, some kind of commitment to people they like, who share their views, or are affected by them. Politicisation involves stances more than opinions and cleavages that are the long-term product of social and political structuring. So politicisation is involved with membership of social and political groups and classes, and it involves affect. Emotion and feeling, indeed, can be taken to be elements of motivation, the reason for participants' involvement in conflict or potential conflict. Instead of defining collectively who constitutes 'one of us', as did the participants in self-selecting groups of acquaintances studied by Gamson and Cramer Walsh, our participants could confront concurrent and conflicting accounts of who they are. These diverse and possibly antagonistic perspectives, of course, can generate anxiety and, sometimes, hostility. Analysis of our group discussions, thanks to the video recordings, is in this respect most interesting. Whether they speak or remain silent, the body language of our participants tells the analyst a great deal about their emotions. It is observable when they are upset or anxious; it is possible to see them wishing to react to what is said, but being unable to make their point verbally – in particular, when they do not identify a potential ally in the group (Duchesne & Haegel, 2007).

So the discussions we organised are particularly appropriate for examining identity issues related to European integration. Following and building on existing statistical analysis, we selected participants so that we could compare citizens not only from different countries but also from different social backgrounds. We are able to compare how workers and unemployed people, employees, managers and activists deal with emotion in the course of discussion with strangers. We can also examine whether their sense of self as national citizens, or as Europeans, is at stake when they discuss European issues. Our data seem thus

particularly suited for addressing Fligstein's, and Hooghe and Marks's, theses on the identity dimension of working-class euroscepticism and elite europhilia. Do our discussions confirm that working-class people exhibit strong emotional attachment to their nation and its sovereignty, while executives display feelings of European membership?

More generally, does our research project improve our understanding of the European 'elitist bias'? Yes, indeed it does. However, this is not exactly as predicted by the literature. Our analysis does not suggest that less privileged people dislike the EU because they fear a loss of national sovereignty and the breakup of the welfare state. They do have these fears, but they are related more generally and profoundly to globalisation, not specifically – or in some cases, at all – to European integration. Regarding integration, what distinguishes workers – and, to a lesser extent, employees – from their managerial and activist counterparts is their sheer lack of interest in Europe, the strong sense from the recordings that they simply do not pay attention to it, that they overlook it. European issues are not salient. This seems to be due to a lack of a sense of political agency and to the certainty that nothing can be done about it. Being in favour, or not, of the EU is just not an important question in these groups, not a question that can induce workers and employees to disagree with others on the subject. It certainly does matter, by contrast, to the managers and the activists, and they have emotional arguments about it.

We will try to demonstrate this in two ways. First, we analyse the answers the different groups of participants – workers, employees, managers and militants – gave to the third question we put to them in the focus group sessions: who profits from Europe? We present this analysis, showing the structure and content of arguments related to the distribution of EU benefits. This consolidates our findings on national differences presented in Chapter 2, as well as confirms the magnitude of social class differences. In this analysis, one group – a group of French managers – emerges as more eurosceptic than any of the others. A detailed analysis of their answers will challenge the idea that attachment to national sovereignty is a major component of opposition to Europe. Second, we broaden the scope of analysis and look at the dynamics of the whole discussion session for each group, examining the role that European issues play in these dynamics. We find wide variation, depending strongly on social class, and show that European issues are salient only for activists and managers. Third and finally, we discuss how this analysis challenges the thesis of growing identity conflict regarding European integration.

Before any of that we need to emphasise one specific feature of our group design. Because we wanted to analyse the (potential) politicisation of European issues, we chose to gather, in each group, participants with diverging views on European integration. To achieve this, we asked people who applied to participate in the discussions two questions about the EU adapted from Eurobarometer (Appendix 2). We aimed to include in each group both individuals who said that they were and who said that they were not in favour of integration. So our research design does not allow us to compare the rate of pro- and anti-EU arguments for the different social class groups. We cannot make any judgement about the recurring observation that working-class people are on average less europhile than elites. In fact, we found support for this hypothesis at our recruitment stage, when it was sometimes difficult to find working-class applicants, but not difficult to find managers, who declared themselves in favour of the EU. Our comparison, at any rate, focuses on the nature of interactions in the different class groups, seeking to analyse what they can tell us about the relative salience of European issues for them.

Who profits from Europe?

This question was the third one in the group session schedule and the first of the second half of the session, just after the break (Appendix 4). Participants were asked to group together in twos or threes. We gave them cards and markers and asked them to form about six answers to the question 'Who profits from Europe?' They weren't aware of the question before they began work on it. Preparing the answers took about ten minutes on average. Then the moderator collected the cards, shuffled them and posted them on the board, one by one. Participants commented on each card as it was posted, and these comments in turn were written and displayed using cards of a different colour (Appendix 6 for an example of what a board, at the end of this part of the session, looks like; Appendix 7 for a complete transcription of all cards prepared in this part of the session). Most of the time, participants identified who were – or even who, within the sub-group, was – the author/s of each card and elaborated a bit about the point they tried to make. The rules, otherwise, were the same as for the rest of the discussion: any comment was recorded and written up, and a 'flash' was indicated on demand, if a card or a comment was subject to question or disagreement. Flashes were discussed once all the cards were up (Chapter 6 for detail on group moderation).

This series of answers seems thus particularly meaningful: they are not 'top-of-the-head' replies quickly provided by people in isolation. Each of them was elaborated and negotiated by (at least) two participants who had, beforehand, discussed the topic for about an hour and a half. We moderated the sessions in such a way that participants were free to turn the conversation to the subjects they found most interesting – obviously this carried the risk of them discussing anything but European issues. In this context, these answers and this particular passage of discussion are clearly the more focussed on the research topic. So, although they are not the liveliest parts of our sessions, this question is certainly the one which allows us more easily to keep to the european studies debate. We can provide in-depth analysis of those whom Brussels, Oxford and Paris citizens consider to be the winners of integration. It might seem paradoxical to look for identity from discussion of interest, but this is what the euroclash thesis is about (Fligstein, 2008).

The question generated 353 answers distributed between the 24 focus groups, with about 330 cards written in total. Participants were asked to write one idea per card but did not always follow the rule. We here analyse the whole set of cards produced by all 24 groups – both our Sets 1 and 2 – in order to achieve a number of answers sufficient for statistical analysis (Table 3.1).

The number of answers per group varies according to the city and social category: activists and managers tend to give more answers than employees and workers, which is not unexpected. However, the Oxford groups are more prolific than Brussels ones, and this does not reflect the general length and animation of the discussions. As for the Paris groups, the level of prolixity on the cards reflects the generally high levels of prolixity in the discussions. However, these city differences are by no means exact: in Oxford the distribution of number of answers ranges

Table 3.1 Frequencies of answers to the 'who profits' question, by group

	Brussels		**Oxford**		**Paris**		**Total**
	Set 1	**Set 2**	**Set 1**	**Set 2**	**Set 1**	**Set 2**	
Managers	15	16	10	18	14	22	95
Employees	10	11	23	11	14	17	86
Workers	15	9	6	9	18	19	76
Activists	13	12	17	21	19	14	96
Total	101		115		137		353

from 6 (Oxford Set 1 workers) to 23 (Oxford Set 1 employees). The length and precision of what is written on the cards also vary quite a lot.

Europe profits the economy

Responses are quite diverse, as Table 3.2 suggests, although the coding was relatively straightforward, with the exception of some jokes and some obscure answers. The answers we got do not look like a series of clichés.

The response that 'Brussels' profits (BXL) – a typical cliché in public political discourses – is quite rare. Putting that answer together with TECH, which codes answers referring to the people who work for the EU, technocrats, commission members and bureaucrats, including lawyers and translators, we have about 6% of the total – important, as expected, but not paramount. Farmers and agriculture (AGRI) are also mentioned, but are not central in the discussions.

Three major categories sum up the positive influence of European integration. About 10% of the answers refer to the participants themselves – citizens, Europeans, consumers, workers (CIT): 'It profits us', say Set 1 Brussels employees; 'in principle to anyone', reply Set 2 Paris employees; 'people', add Set 2 Oxford workers. The idea that the EU profits all of us is complemented by numerous references to values (VAL) like peace, culture, rights, environment, exchanges and diversity. More concretely, Europe benefits mobility (MOB), in particular for students, through the Erasmus programme, and tourists, and thus profits the travel industry, as well as workers. But immigration is also mentioned as such in a third of the groups with simple words like immigration, immigrants, emigrants or foreigners (IMM). We saw in Chapter 2 that boundaries are central in these discussions. These cards confirm it as these two categories – MOB and IMM – are complemented by two others that put the EU in the picture of the global world. Code EXT gathers 12 cards that refer to the external world, like 'all countries' (Set 2 Oxford workers), 'extra Europeans = the first cooperating' (Set 2 Brussels activists) including clear references to post-colonialism: 'it profits the non-European world, Africa, former colonies' (Set 1 Brussels employees). Moreover, the US and the anglophone world (USA) are mentioned as a beneficiary of integration by a third of the groups.

Another support for the analysis of Chapter 2 is the number of references to the economy. Cards which suggest that Europe profits the economy were so numerous that we split them into two categories. The first (ECO) gathers references to economic actors; for instance, 'that

Table 3.2 Frequencies of coded responses to 'who profits', answers, queries and challenges (flashes)

Code	N	Examples	Flash
LIB	37	Capitalism, liberalism, big companies, world companies, Disney, L'Oreal, the world market	5
CIT	34	Us, to the citizens, the Europeans, those who are inside, equality between Europeans, consumers, workers, any word that would refer to the participants	20
ECO	31	The economy, business, enterprises, retailers	4
MOB	29	Travels, mobility, translators, students and Erasmus programme	3
VAL	26	Rights, environment, associations, peace, culture, or other values	7
POL	24	Politicians, MPs	4
PAUV	20	Poor countries, inside or outside the EU	5
NEG	18	Any explicit negative answer, for example, unemployment or vicious circle, including not us, not me, not the farmers, or sceptical answers, for example, profit???	7
TECH	18	Experts, technocrats, Commission people	1
NOUV	17	Eastern countries, new EU countries, former new countries	2
XXX	14	Other: very varied. May be a joke, or a topic that was quoted once only, for example, Eurovision, media	0
BANK	13	Banks, bankers, finance, money	2
EXT	12	Countries outside the EU, the world	6
AGRI	11	Agriculture, farmers	2
IMM	8	Immigration, to foreigners	4
RICH	8	Rich countries, the rich	3
USA	8	United States, the Anglo-Saxon world	4
CRIM	7	Mafia, crime, terrorism	2
RECH	7	Research or researchers	0
LOB	5	Lobbies, lobbyists	1
PAY	5	Specific country names except the US	0
DEF	3	Defence, the military	2
BXL	2	Brussels, Brussels' inhabitants	0

profits the economy' (Set 1 Brussels, managers), 'import/export. Profit for European economy' (Set 2 Paris, workers) or 'organisations, businesses: companies within the EU trade' (Set 1 Oxford, employees). The other category (LIB) puts together answers that imply a power or size element such as 'big business', the world market and answers related to economic liberalism and capitalism in general that imply winners and losers. For instance, 'to foreign industrial investments with lower costs, tax advantages' (Set 1 Paris employees), 'cheap labour' (Set 1 Oxford managers), 'political class that represents the interest of multinationals' (Set 2 Brussels activists). Banks and bankers (BANK) are kept apart. These three categories together represent more than one in five of the answers.

A final important category is constituted by numerous references made to politicians (POL). Be they M(E)P's, political leaders, heads of state, these people are overwhelmingly considered beneficiaries of the integration process: only 5 groups out of 24 (Set 1 Brussels managers, Set 1 Paris managers, Set 2 Brussels workers, Set 1 Oxford activists, Set 2 Paris activists) do not mention them on a card.

For anyone familiar with the discussions in these groups, it is striking that the tone of these cards is generally neutral or even positive. Cards that can be coded negative (NEG = 18) are rather rare. Cards referring to crime, the mafia and so on are even rarer (CRIM = 7). By contrast the general tone of the sessions overall was much less positive and more sceptical. This may first be considered a consequence of the question itself, which already includes a negative nuance. Indeed, participants sometimes asked, orally or by writing it on the cards, whether the question should not have been 'Who benefits from Europe?' We had included the provocation in the question deliberately; it looks as though the result might have been to induce participants to moderate their answers. However, these cards were submitted, like the rest of the discussion, to the 'flash' rule whereby participants let the moderator know if they had any question for or challenge against any card. These cards, which we should remember were written directly by the participants rather than scribed by the moderators, were flashed quite often: 63 times, which means almost 1 in 5. The flash rule, which was meant to make the expression of disagreement almost attractive, was used by our participants here to balance or challenge the positive view of integration. As Figure 3.1 shows, codes that correspond to the more positive answers, citizens and values are the ones which were 'flashed' more often. The most negatives answers – crime, mafia and the negative category – were also contested, but not as much.

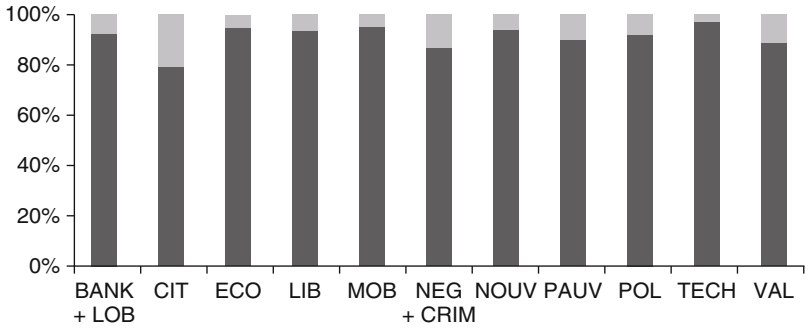


Figure 3.1 Percentage of flashed cards by code
Note: A square of the dark grey: Not flashed; a square of the light grey: Flashed.

How are these different conceptions of winners and losers of integration distributed among categories of groups? In order to get an overview of how our participants understand the consequences of European integration, as evidenced by these responses, and to get an idea of how these understandings relate to social class, we proceeded to a principal component analysis of the codes distribution (Figure 3.2).[3]

In this analysis, two factors together explain 35% of the variance. The first factor (horizontal axis on the figure, about 20%) can be called 'Profit or Benefit' as it reflects the ambiguity of the question wording, where profit could be interpreted as serving material interests, presumably of some people more than others, or alternatively as benefiting people in general and in principle. The factor opposes the benefits of value, mobility, equality and openness at one end to profit for politicians, the US and the economy in general, at the other. Analysis of the distribution of flashes between groups confirms that the former conception of profit – profit as benefit and value – is more contested and debated than the latter conception – material profit taken by particular groups. The themes of values and citizens' benefit are associated with an emphasis on openness – Europe profits not only its new members but also the rest of the world. Cards coded NOUV have no negative denotations or connotations, even if they often link being a new member with being a poorer member. A card written by the Set 2 Oxford managers clearly states this: 'poor countries, benefit not profit'.

The second factor (about 15%, vertical axis on the figure) is structured by the opposition between general references to the economy and references to big business. We can call it 'Capitalism or Market'.

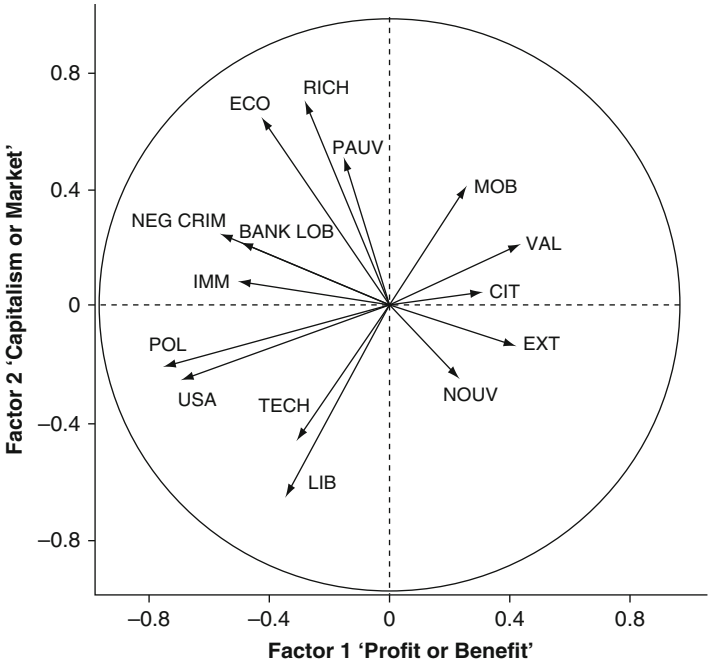


Figure 3.2 Principal components analysis of coded responses to 'Who profits from Europe?'

Participants are ambivalent in their understanding of the economy. Economic exchanges are both beneficial (to poor countries and poor people as well as rich ones) and damaging (growth goes together with the increase of crime for instance). Immigration – and this comes out clearly in the discussions – embodies this ambivalence. It is beneficial for the people who migrate as they get a chance to avoid poverty; however, this costs them a hard life as migration means leaving behind you people, places, habits you like and you are not likely to be welcome in the host country. Moreover, it damages the life of people in host countries because of the pressure on the labour market and the resulting low wages. Mobility contributes to this, in particular because of the tourist industry. Opposed to this is an understanding of the economy driven by big businesses, by multinationals, by capitalism. References to the US also contribute to this. What is interesting is that the technocrats – EU people in particular – and to a lesser extent politicians in general are closely related to this latter understanding of the economy.

The picture that emerges from this analysis thus also confirms what we saw in Chapter 2. The positive evaluation of European integration,

based on values, mobility and citizens' advantages, is challenged by the negatively evaluated power of economic processes and flows which seem to dominate. Moreover, integration does not happen in a vacuum: participants are strongly aware of the global world, and the benefits of integration cannot be dissociated from what is happening, in particular, to emerging countries and to former colonies. Lastly, and we will return to this, euroscepticism seems less to be related to the loss of national sovereignty through the integration of political institutions and public policies than to the belief in the irresistible power of capitalist economy.

Low working-class levels of europhilia

According to recent work in european studies, working-class people are expected to be more eurosceptic than other groups. We have seen that the way we designed the groups, each including both pro- and anti-integration participants, should have neutralised any such effect in our sample. However, the different social class groups are still distributed unevenly in respect to the expressed understandings of the benefits and burdens of European integration. We can see this clearly by locating our class groups in the space structured by the two factors.

Figure 3.3 supports our finding in Chapter 2 of strong national differentiation. European integration is framed differently in the three cities. Parisian and French-speaking Belgian groups are clearly opposed to each

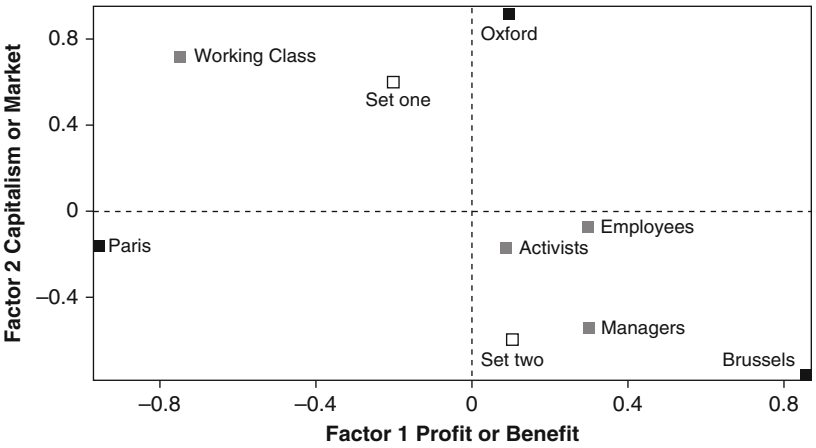


Figure 3.3 Principal component analysis of 'who profits' responses: location of national and social class groups in relation to factors 1 (Profit or Benefit) and 2 (Capitalism or Market)

other on the 'Profit or Benefit' factor. Brussels participants refer more often than others to European values and citizens as beneficiaries of integration – even if this was frequently contested. Parisian groups, by contrast, consider the EU as mainly oriented towards or by the economy. Regarding the 'Capitalism or Market' factor, the Brussels and Oxford groups are opposed. When referring to the economy, Oxford participants are more inclined to refer to the free market that, with its own dynamic, brings Europeans growth and crime at the same time and might advantage the poor as well as the rich. Brussels responses relate more often to globalised capitalism, which benefits big business more than others. National frames are clearly prevalent here. This reminds us that, as Cautrès and Grunberg put it, if social differences of opinion regarding European integration remain strong in all countries, the social bias operates within the countries (Cautrès & Grunberg, 2007). In this way national differences are first and social differences second.

However, this figure also shows a clear differentiation between working-class groups and others. Workers' representations of the consequences of EU integration are more embedded in an understanding of economics that does not give much consideration to any European achievements concerning mobility, citizenship or values. But their understanding of the economic influence of the EU is not particularly negative or cynical, by contrast to the managers. Employees, like the activists, are located between working-class groups and managers on the two dimensions 'Profit or Benefit' as well as 'Capitalism or Market'. This result suggests that our respondents' understandings of the benefits and burdens of EU integration are not exceptional, given what we know about distributions of opinions in the population. But we must not over-interpret this picture of national and social differences. Within each group, positions on each factor are contested and a more detailed analysis of the position of each individual group in relation to these factors shows that there is less organisation than the foregoing analysis might suggest (Figure 3.4). From this analysis, we can also see that the positions of some of the individual groups have a strong influence on this whole structure of national and social differences in understandings. Notably two Parisian groups – the Set 1 workers and the Set 2 managers – make a strong contribution to the national differences on the first, Profit or Benefit, axis. They are far less sensitive to any EU benefits.

Later in this chapter, we compare the way the groups we gathered in Set 1 react in the context of the whole discussion of Europe. Before that,

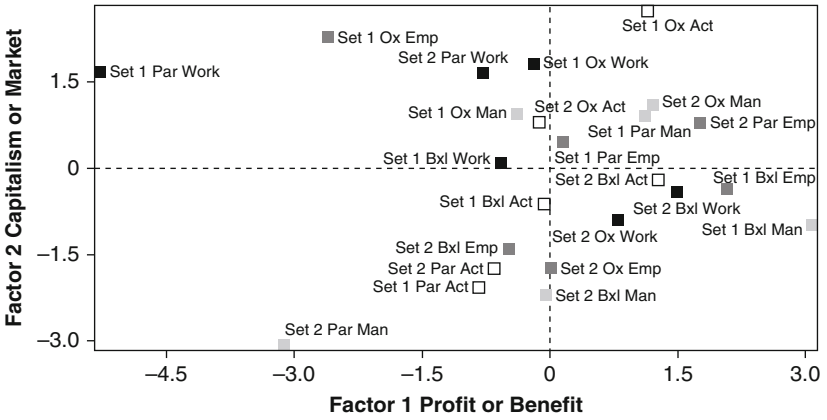


Figure 3.4 Principal component analysis of the 'Who profits' responses: location of individual social–national groups in relation to factors 1 (Profit or Benefit) and 2 (Capitalism or Market)

we will examine more closely the Set 2 Paris managers. This is the group that contributes the most on the 'capitalism' end of Factor 2. It emphasises the role of Brussels bureaucrats of the US and of big business in Europe. We might expect this group to provide us with a good example of euroscepticism. We want to examine whether and how national identification plays a role in this.

The limits of sovereignty

The Set 2 Paris managers gathered together six middle-aged men, with jobs such as professor, lawyer, IT manager. On paper, they seemed to be politically very heterogeneous and hence a potentially conflictual group. Participants' past votes ranged from Besancot – extreme left – to National Front. Their attitudes towards the EU were similarly heterogeneous: three declared that they had voted in favour of the Treaty, two against, and one had not voted in the referendum that had taken place about six months earlier. We know from the questionnaires that one of the group members was of North African descent. However, they had the appearance of six white men and they behaved like a bunch of tipsy old friends.

First, they reacted against the two moderators (both women) quite strongly, calling them 'mademoiselle' and making sexual jokes which became heavier and heavier as the discussion proceeded.[4] At the end

of the second section, when they were asked to put stickers up on the board and choose between the four suggested sources of power in Europe – the market, the nations, MPs and experts – one said it would have been funnier using darts. The moderator didn't know whether to interpret this as a provocation, given that she was in the line of fire, as it were. Second, they refused to obey the rules of the discussion. They kept chatting, shouting short sentences without explanation, making endless allusions that made it difficult for the moderators to catch their meaning and transcribe it, dropping names and laughing out loud. They became even more animated once the discussion turned to the entry of Turkey into the EU. They lost control and jokes, on top of being sexist, became overtly racist. All of this explains why we have left this group out of the main analysis, putting it into Set 2 with others that are less comparable. Other groups were either ethnically or gender mixed, or both, and this clearly influenced the way participants exchanged views and perspectives regarding their identities. In addition, this group discussion was technically almost impossible to transcribe, as they were so often chatting together and shouting at the same time.

This is a pity, as this group is indeed the most 'sovereigntist'– the term used in French public political discourse – of them all. Although three participants declared beforehand that they had voted in favour of the Constitutional Treaty, the tone of the discussion is at first sight clearly hostile to Europe. This hostility explicitly emphasises a particular French perspective. They comment at length on the corruption of European elites, note that the French central bank does not have a word to say any more, complain that nobody cares if a majority of French voters rejected the Treaty and suspect that more and more European countries are happy to go on without taking any notice of the opinion of the French. They recall how De Gaulle used to call the United Nations 'le grand machin' (the big what's-its-name). They suggest that 'Europe' – they are like most of the French participants in referring to the EU this way – is just a 'big and distant ectoplasm', a 'chaos'.

The 'Who profits from Europe?' exchange is no exception in this group discussion; it is as chaotic as the rest of it. Four participants lead the game, hardly paying attention to the moderator who puts up the cards on the board and solicits comments but mainly gets jokes in return. They either make fun of French politicians or, when going back to the discussion, they challenge each other about the cards that they have written, mimicking school children and even dunces. One of the participants, Patrick, a civil servant who voted extreme left, and in favour of the Constitutional Treaty, hardly speaks. For the 'who

profits' exercise he was partnered with Michel, a Chirac voter who declared a no vote in the referendum. At one point he tries to intervene in the talk to explain why they wrote 'older members' as well as 'new entering countries'[5]; the others object that Patrick and Michel are 'changing sides'. They insinuate, as a joke but in a pretty offensive way, that Patrick has been illegally paid by the (centre national de la recherche scientifique (CNRS)) that is funding the discussion, or is a friend of the moderator. Patrick insists; he says he wants to justify the card and evokes Renault's subsidiary company in Romania, Dacia, and financial profits for firms in older countries. He is strongly rebuffed by François, ICT manager, who makes them all laugh (apart from Patrick) at the idea that French Renault workers will be fired in Alsace but offered a job in Romania instead, with a 110€ monthly salary – 'or in Mauritius', he adds. François, a Chirac voter, is one of the leaders in the group. Although he declared that he voted 'yes' at the referendum, he constantly opposes any positive appreciation of EU benefits and finds support for this from the others, quite independently of whether they voted against or in favour of the Treaty. François, together with Louis, leads the game against the moderators, who represent Sciences Po and CNRS, both suspected of supporting integration.

Outsourcing in Eastern European countries and Eastern immigration into Western Europe are recurring topics in this as well as in other groups. When Patrick suggests that it is a good thing that entering countries gain social benefits 'after all', Louis acknowledges that integration indeed boosts smaller countries but adds 'on the opposite side, for the French, the average French guy, it's not obvious'. However, the difficulties for the 'average French guy' are, more generally speaking, considered a consequence of outsourcing and immigration. In the sequence described above, François seems to consider that French workers being transferred to Romania or to Mauritius would be exactly the same (only that in Mauritius, at least they would get the sun). What stands out from this group's discussion of the 'who profits' cards is not that the French are specifically affected by European integration; if or when they are, it is explicitly said that this is the same for other big and old members of the EU. In contrast with Jonathan White's findings (White, 2011), French participants do sometimes mention the Germans, in relation to enlargement at least, as almost fellow citizens who experience the same kind of problems as they. Rather, what stands out is the role that politicians play in the game. Politicians (French politicians) are unanimously considered beneficiaries of Europe. The third card put up on the board in this group 'M(e)P's'(*les élus*)[6] is

the first which gains attention. It generates fierce comment: 'Yes, of course, MP's. And their court', replies François. Louis adds that together with experts, MPs form a nomenklatura, and they all laugh and agree. They take great pleasure in denigrating French political leaders. François and Louis, again, compete with absurd details about prominent French politicians. Moreover, there is no distinction between European and national leaders: European positions are considered consolation prizes taken by national leaders when their career becomes less successful. Valery Giscard d'Estaing is thus a target of mockery for his involvement in the European convention which is compared to his desire to be elected to the French Academy. 'Looking a fool does not kill anymore', concludes Louis.

Clearly, European governance is not understood by this group of managers as an autonomous level of decision, which might get in the way of the French government's ambitions and will. If the average French citizen suffers from the EU, it is not because French plans are thwarted by other European members. It is first and foremost because politicians, French politicians, do not fight for or even try to represent French people's interests, be it in Brussels or in Paris. Earlier, when discussing how we should distribute power in Europe, Michel notes that a fifth power is missing, the citizens. Stanislas suggests that they are represented by MP's but the others contest this; Jean-Paul asks if they are not with the market. They briefly agree that the citizens are everywhere, but that they don't know where they should best be located; they call them 'the fifth element'. Most strikingly, nobody in this group suggests that citizens, the people, might be included in the nations.

This kind of confusion between national and European political leaders, and a consequent absence of any vision of European governance as such, might seem specific to the French situation. In France, opposing Europe is mainly a non-governing party attitude, from the far right and the left. Within governing parties, until recently, leaders who tried to develop eurosceptic arguments had to leave or give up (Rozenberg, 2007). So in public discourse, the rejection of Europe tends to go hand in hand with a denunciation of the legitimacy of governing leaders, of their lack of consideration for the people. But as we will see below, such relative invisibility of the European power, linked to a complete distrust of national politicians, is not confined to our French participants. What is specific to the discussion presented here is that it is produced by a group of managers. In Brussels and Oxford, this kind of representation (albeit without the hysteria) instead is characteristic of working class, and to a lesser extent, employees, groups.

It is also clear that this group's euroscepticism is not based on exclusive nationalism in the sense that Europe is rejected because it limits national sovereignty. They might doubt that 'the French average guy' profits from Europe. However, the nation as a whole, as a community, as a source of solidarity and of power is notably absent from this discussion. This absence is all the more striking for the fact that the topic of national power had been explicitly raised in the question 'How should power be distributed?' half an hour previously. It is also absent from the whole series of cards produced by the 24 groups (see Appendix 7) The few mentions of 'us' that we encounter in these answers refer to the citizens, the Europeans themselves as participants (or as young people by the Set 1 Brussels employees) but never 'us' as the French, the Belgians or the British. Our detailed analysis of this series of answers has been intended to provide some kind of objectivisation of the unexpected relationship that our participants maintain with the EU. In order to explore this relationship more deeply and to delve further into the question of social differences, we now return to an interpretive analysis of the general dynamics of the Set 1 groups' discussions.

The double meaning of overlooking

The discussion schedule was elaborated so as to favour the development of conflict on Europe in the course of the session. Things did not go exactly as planned. Although conflictualisation occurred, not all the categories of groups engaged in any conflict on European issues. This is where the social gap is significant. The two questions in the first half of the session were designed to allow participants to take the measure of each other's opinions and to give us an idea of participants' degree of knowledge and comprehension of the integration process. Then came the break, with the provision of food and drink, which favoured sociability and a degree of conviviality. At the return, we planned to divide the participants into sub-groups of two or three, and ask them to work together on responses to our provocative question 'Who profits from Europe?' Our intention was to get participants with some similarity of opinion and attitude on European questions to work together. The idea was to maximise differences between sub-groups so that when the whole group came together to discuss the written responses, the differences would have to be confronted.

In the event, our scheme did not work. At least, it did not work in the working-class nor the employees groups. Far from being a moment of escalating conflict, the response to 'who profits?', although interesting,

was actually the least lively part of the discussion. First, it proved almost impossible, notably with the working-class and employees groups, to detect from the first half of the discussion individuals who matched, or paired, in respect of their attitudes to Europe. After an hour and a half of discussion on the subject, we found it more or less impossible to distinguish the opinions of one participant regarding European integration from another, or at least to say with any clarity who was for and who was against the EU. To be sure, we had the pre-collected responses from the two questionnaires. But the responses given there proved to be singularly poor predictors of the positions taken or not taken in the discussion. This is by contrast with other issues, where responses given to the questionnaires, and positions taken in the discussion, clearly matched (Haegel & Garcia, 2011). It was difficult to know what to do. If we asked participants to choose with whom they would work after the break, they felt uncomfortable about this and tended to 'choose' the person they were speaking to when we asked them to choose a partner; or they simply returned to the seating order from the first session and worked with their neighbour/s. Sometimes we made pairs on the basis either of the questionnaires or of the moderator's evaluation of participants' opinions. But in this case, as in the others, we ended up with sub-groups that never particularly mapped on to any kind of disagreement on Europe. Further, the responses produced on the cards by the sub-groups of participants, even when they seemed to voice contradictory opinions regarding who were the beneficiaries of European integration, didn't really drum up any animated discussion when they were put up on the board.

Nevertheless, our procedures were well able to generate conflict. The question on entry of Turkey into the EU, which was preceded by an individual vote (with the aid of a sticker which was put on the board), generated passionate discussions in all categories of groups. These, though, were fuelled mainly by contradictory opinions about Turkish culture and democracy, about religion and xenophobia, not to mention geostrategic questions and political economy. Only a very limited number of opinions expressed with any intensity bore on the consequences of Turkish entry for the future of the EU. How far can enlargement get – in the sense of, how many countries might enter the EU without putting it at risk, as a political system – was never an issue. It might be mentioned, but was not debated.

This does not mean that these groups were a failure, generally speaking, regarding conflictualisation. We did get quite a lot of emotion and openly expressed disagreements, but rarely on Europe. Our

non-directive moderation technique did allow participants to engage in conflict, but on issues that were important to them. These included immigration and people's welfare: How many incomers can a society absorb? How can we calculate the relative cost of immigration for those who come and those who receive? How incompatible can cultures be? How much are Europeans as former colonialists responsible for poverty in ex-colonies, and hence for migration? Individual responsibility and state intervention was a similarly lively theme – Is unemployment related to parents' education? Who is responsible for incivility, petty crime and long-term benefit claims? What can governments do in a globalised economy? Who suffers the most in today's society? These debates support public opinion research findings regarding the main cleavages in Europe. They also support White's results: what matters to people, on top of the economy, are issues related to 'society and the law' and 'relations between people' (White, 2011). But questions that are supposed to be at the core of eurosceptic positions and fuelled by attachment to national sovereignty – like 'Do we need more or less European power? Do we want European federalism or a supranational state? How far can the EU go in imposing legislation in the member states? Who are these European leaders who prevent our national elected politicians from governing our country according to our wishes?' – never generated strong feelings and conflict in our groups. There are some very brief exceptions in some managers groups and the more important exception of our activists.

In order to demonstrate the relationship between salience of European issues and group category, we will go briefly through each. We begin with the groups who played their parts more or less to the script – the activists. In all three cities, European integration and the current state of the EU was the main topic of discussion between the activists, for the full three hours of the session. The pro- and anti-EU stances evident in these discussions not only were based on high levels of knowledge of the issues but also reveal the significance of other identifications and cleavages. Within the British Set 1 activists group, disagreement on European integration is deeply rooted in fundamental disagreements about social justice and market regulation. One of the two Conservative participants, James, is opposed in his vehement euroscepticism to a Liberal-Democrat (Lib-Dem) European Parliamentary candidate who accordingly voices a strongly europhile position. Two Labour activists, one of whom, Bethany, is an elderly and respected local councillor, and the Green party member, although they are far from enthusiastic about the EU, clearly take the side of the Lib-Dem in opposition to the

assertive and aggressive stances against any kind of economic or social regulation taken by James. For him, the EU mainly is a limitation to the free-market and employers' rights. His complete rejection of any kind of social consideration turned the others against him, although the other Conservative participant backed him up to a limited extent. Bethany, in particular, invoked with emotion the suffering that working people went through before the institution of the welfare state. The dynamic of the discussion was such that, as they opposed James and his virulent euroscepticism, the majority of the participants found themselves supporting the EU more or less willingly and explicitly.

Among the Belgian activists, the conflict on European integration also developed through the session and remained quite central up to the moment when the question on Turkey's entry into the EU changed the tone of the debate. During the break, the participants discovered their respective political affiliations and they addressed the 'who profits?' question, quite cheerfully, as political opponents for whom Europe affords a pretext for confronting arguments and positions rather than as a profound reason for opposing each other. But with the question on Turkey, the playful disagreement turned into a fundamental conflict where identity came into play. The cleavage between Judaeo-Christian legacy on one side and secularism and tolerance for diversity on the other reveals a profound antagonism between the Ecolo participant, whose North African origin was not noticeable,[7] supported by the Parti Socialist participant and the two rightist parliamentary attachés. The other two participants, although also activists, are less professionalised than these four and for the most part are listeners. At the point where the discussion of the compatibility between Turkish society and the values and habits of European societies engages the participants' emotions and self-identifications, the discussion sometimes almost got out of hand. The opposition between the pro-EU attitudes of the pro-entry participants and the more sceptical attitude of the two Mouvement Réformateur and Centre Democrat Humaniste activists gained an unexpected strength in this discursive context.

The discussion of the French activists was particularly animated, partly because two of them – the Green representative, who happens to belong to an older generation than the other five participants, and one of the two Union pour un Mouvement Populaire (UMP) members – talked too much and irritated the others. Moreover, the referendum campaign had happened only a couple of months previously, and all the arguments were still fresh. At some points, they even acknowledged that they were replaying the campaign and the only female participant,

one of the two socialist members, expressed her lassitude. However, they strongly opposed each other about the role of the EU. Regarding globalisation – is it a Trojan horse or a protection for Europeans? Enlargement – does it empower or weaken European integration? Above all, they argued about Turkey's entry. Their debates were not only livened up by well-rehearsed arguments but also fuelled by personal disclosures.

Being pro- or anti-EU also means something to the managers, but their positions in this respect are not always sufficient to animate their discussions. In Oxford, one shop manager, Sundai, stood alone against the others. He is Black, strongly expressed his feeling as British but argued at length that Britain has to be more European and that the EU is good for the economy as it facilitates goods' and people's mobility. He challenged the others and one by one they joined in a confrontation with him. The discussion remained thus centred on this conflict to the end. The others, by the way, found it difficult to believe in Sundai's europhilia. At the end, after he had left, one of them asked whether he was a plant in a covert experiment. The Belgian managers were very knowledgeable regarding the EU and their discussion ran smoothly. Valerie, general practitioner, was slightly more engaged than the others and defended a more optimistic vision of the EU. But they generally agreed on a positive assessment of the European project and a more critical evaluation of the current state of the EU. The real conflict occurred at the end of the discussion and left Europe aside as Valerie, backed up by the other female participant – both are practicing Catholic – confronted Roger's strong atheism. The French managers also exchanged knowledge about European integration, but it was not as accurate as the Belgians' understanding, and the discussion was more chaotic. This was all the more as it became more and more influenced by a growing antagonism between a young communist doctoral student, Fabienne, and an engineer in his fifties. Fabienne's explicit euroscepticism was only one among many other arguments in their long-lasting conflict, but it contributed to keeping Europe at the core of the discussion.

In the three cities, then, activists and to a lesser extent managers discuss European integration on the basis of their more or less positive appreciation of it. For the managers, though, real conflicts, when they occur, are only partly related to European positions. The activists, by contrast, deploy strong arguments that strictly relate to the speed and nature of European integration. Europe is what they agree and disagree about. This is far less the case in the employees groups.

In the British employees group, the discussion never really began until the question on Turkey's entry was posed. Then the conflict between Mike, white middle-aged office manager, and Kamal, young Asian Muslim catering team leader, did not refer to Europe at all, but to Islam and Islamophobia. Before that point, Mike had led the discussion. His knowledge about political economy and institutions generally speaking, and regarding Europe in particular, exceeded the others' very much, and this made it difficult for them all. This is one of the groups where sovereignty and euroscepticism were addressed quite a lot, especially by women, by a middle-aged receptionist in particular. But this was not in vehement terms. This might be because they all feared disagreement, although Mike and Kamal's conflict about Turkey shows that they could overcome this when they felt strongly about an issue. Nina (care worker in her thirties) made a final comment regarding the fact that she had talked about Europe in this discussion more than she ever wished to, illustrating how strength of feeling could not be generated by the EU.

The French employees kept sidetracking. The discussion of the question 'How should we distribute the power in Europe?' shows how little they know about the EU. It seems that they did not even know about the direct election of members of the European parliament (MEP's). The two important conflicts occur about the welfare state and Islam. Hadia, who was looking for a job in advertising, tried several times to go back to the topic, Europe – she calls it the 'CEE' (EEC) – but eventually reaches the conclusion that what matters is not that France belongs to Europe but the fact that it's a rich country. By contrast, the Belgian employees were capable of carrying on talk about Europe during the three hours of discussion. They first hit a quite positive note, looking clearly pro-European, and indeed, we did not manage to invite a declared eurosceptic participant to join this group. But as the discussion proceeded, the overall positive appreciation weakened. Their reservation increased with the 'Who profits from Europe?' question. They clearly indicate that what they said was what they had been told to believe. In reality they consider the current price for the EU is high, that they are paying, and they doubt they will ever experience the benefit of it. Although they are all quite young, they mention future generations who will have become Europeans because they would have been made so – they use the metaphor of a computer chip that will have been implanted into younger people. In different ways, the Oxford, Paris and Brussels employees all maintain a kind of distance from Europe and the EU. This distance does not prevent them from discussing it or trying to in the case of the British and French groups, but it cannot generate strong disagreement. The image of the computer chip, used by the

Belgians, evidences a striking sort of detachment. They feel that becoming European is something that is going to happen because it is what has been planned. They expect it will not be painful, although the cost that they are bearing in the preparations for the transformation is.

By contrast, pain, resentment and even despair sometimes resonate through the working-class discussions. The British are certainly the group which resembles most the euroclash picture of working-class attitudes. The group gathers together five participants, although three of them are leaders in the conversation. Robert, bricklayer and ex-military, is the more knowledgeable. He suggests recurrently in a quite articulate way that Britain should join the Euro. Brenda, a post-office worker, does a lot of group work. She prompts others to participate, to keep the conversation going, but also has strong opinions. Mina, a care assistant of Indian birth, is sometimes isolated because her grammar and syntax are difficult to understand, but she doesn't hesitate to expresses her sometimes quite idiosyncratic views. Both of them resist Robert's commitment in favour of the EU. They do not want change and they refuse to be told by the French what they should do. They do not want Britain to become similar to continental countries that they suspect have no welfare state: 'Do the French have pensions?', asks Brenda, sincerely.

However, during the card exercise, the tone changed slightly. Their answers emphasise the power of big entrepreneurs and businesses, as well as politicians, in a way quite similar to the Set 2 Paris managers discussed above. The managers, though, said that 'the average guy' is losing, making it clear simultaneously with this displacement that they are not this guy; while the working-class participants identify with him. 'Everyone but us' profits from Europe, says one of their cards. In the Oxford group, when the moderator reads the card 'government', Ron, Asian and Muslim, who works in a car factory and who remains silent for most of the discussion, answers first, probably because he was the one who wrote the card:

Extract 3.1: Set 1, Oxford, workers

Moderator (*showing another card*): Government we've got here
Ron: 'cause they make all the decisions.
Brenda: Good one (*Silence. We can hear the moderator writing the answer*)
Mina: (*With a move of her hand showing how evident this is and looking at the others*) They got authority to make the decisions, power to make the decisions. Then people like us it's nothing. Whatever they want to do they all do it.
Ron: We are just a number.

Brenda: Yeah
Ron: (*smiling, apparently satisfied with others approval*) We're a dot. (*Silence. They all seem to agree*)

So they might want to keep Britain independent but they make perfectly clear that its power is not theirs: it is government and politicians' power, MPs who 'get big fat cigars, more trade, more profit'. The three group leaders reaffirm quietly this feeling of domination a few minutes later, when the moderator, after having read all the cards again, insists that they explain why 'the normal public', as Mina said, is losing:

Extract 3.2: Set 1, Oxford, workers

Brenda: Power it's all about power isn't it. *(Silence*) We do what we're told really don't we?
Mina: (*looking at Brenda*) We have to follow whatever their rule they make.
Brenda: Yeah if they make a law we follow that law.
Robert: Whether we like it or not.
Mina: (*smiling, incomprehensible utterance*) . . . so we have to follow their rule whatever they will make. (*Long silence, the moderator introduces the next question*)

The normal public loses because of government, and immigration is part of the explanation: business wants mobility and immigration because it lowers wages. The normal public suffers either, for British natives, because they do not earn enough money anymore and find it difficult to get jobs; or, for immigrants, because they have to leave their country if they want to find work and earn a bit of money. Entrepreneurs and politicians win, people suffer.

The French workers also incriminate immigration but in a lower voice. Two of the women in the group are North African immigrants – the third is Black. This group was particularly lively, thanks to the constant, brave and humorous but sometimes chaotic interventions of Yasmina, a middle-aged Muslim woman wearing a headscarf. She is unemployed and we contacted her through the *Restos du Coeur*, a meal centre. Instead of a frontal conflict on immigration, the discussion turned to a strong opposition between Yasmina and Habiba, who was also born in North Africa but is from bourgeois descent and owns a shop with her husband in the suburbs of Paris. They opposed each other on social integration. Yasmina claimed that immigrants' children are victims of racism and cannot integrate, while Habiba blamed their parents. This conflict is clearly quite remote from European issues and indeed the group tended

to sidetrack. More precisely, they focussed on what is happening in France, as France from the beginning is said to be part of Europe and being European is to belong to a European country. They shared some degree of euroscepticism, but this was only loosely related to national sovereignty – apart from Lionel, a security guard, who suggested that the EU is a kind of 'mixed salad'.[8] European integration did not interest them because they consider major issues to be global. Moreover, they all agreed that things are not going well, and as the EU has been in existence for a while this is proof that it does not work. Their discussion also resounded with a strong and shared feeling of disempowerment. They did not so much focus on politicians as evoke a globalised world dominated by the rich, a few people (they mention 'the 200 families', a traditional populist French image, and the 'barbarians of finance'), those who profit from everything to the detriment of people like them.

Once again, the Belgian workers, in contrast to the French and the British, demonstrated knowledge of how the EU works as a political system. This group, quite heterogeneous in terms of political sophistication, also gathered participants from North African and African descent as well as European. Immigration and the way immigrants are treated in Belgium were major topics. The ethnic minority members were openly eurosceptic, the others not. However, they knew the EU exists, and will remain. Europe as it should be, Europe as the ideal they have been told about, is still to come. Rose, a young receptionist, who suggested that her family is not Belgian (we guess it is probably Eastern European although she did not say explicitly) evoked a couple of times Europe as a dream of solidarity, a proper union that would make Europeans stronger. This group often mentioned the US as a negative other. They all agreed that if integration is going to happen – they also agree that it would take a long long time – the constituent European countries should remain as an origin and a source of identity and diversity. But identity means security in the most concrete sense of the term as Ali, a social worker who seems to be also a union leader, and whose influence on the discussion is strong, explains:

Extract 3.3: Set 1, Brussels, workers

Ali: Yes, I would like to come back to what the young lady (*indicates Rose*) was saying about her identity. (*Moderator says yes*) It's really important to keep it I mean. We here, in Belgium, we are relatively happy to live considering our social security system. We have to keep it, more importantly we have to defend it because if…

Rose: (*interrupting)* We should keep it of course!

Ali: We want a more generous system and, I don't know, that health costs are better reimbursed I would say. This is this kind of things we need to keep as Belgians here, in Belgium, there are the most positive things.

This group considered the market very negatively: free market means insecurity, it should be controlled, and people like them have to be protected. Thus, Belgium is the political community they refer to as it provides protection against unemployment and social security. However, as in the case of the Belgian employees, but more strongly, they all agreed on the fact that they are currently paying for European integration. The cost of living has become intolerable for people like them. Like the French and the British workers, this is what matters, and European integration seems, by comparison, non-salient.

So a major difference between working-class and employees groups, on the one hand, and managers and activists, on the other, lies in the salience of European issues. European integration is hardly an issue for the former while it is matter of debate and openly expressed conflict for the latter. Activists and managers overlook Europe as we hoped they would do in the sense that, during these three hours of discussion, they gave an overview of European integration. They discussed the consequences of the current state of integration and its future. They confronted each other on these issues, especially when the stances taken regarding the EU traced the lines of political cleavages such as economic liberalism versus state intervention or cultural and religious heritage versus civic and democratic integration. Most of them defined themselves as European, although some of them explicitly differentiated between being and feeling European and supporting the EU.

Workers and to a lesser extent employees, by contrast, overlooked Europe in the sense that they hardly paid attention to it. The French and the British clearly did not know much about it and this might also explain why they took every opportunity to change the subject. The Belgians were more knowledgeable. However, the EU was not an issue for any of them as they consider it as a done deal. The EU is there, it is somewhere – on the other side of the Channel, in the future, all around. It does not do particularly well, as all complain about the present situation, and obviously, the EU has not prevented things from getting worse. But they do not identify it either as a particular source of power or a nuisance compared to what really damages society: constant change (newcomers, job market, education, currency, etc.), the failure of political elites (that nobody trusts) and globalisation. As workers

and employees do not particularly care about the EU, it seems difficult to argue that their reactions to Europe put identity at stake. More particularly, we clearly see that (exclusive) national identity does not particularly fuel euroscepticism on their part.

Conclusion: Identity as a red herring

Our project confirms both the enduring national and social differences in citizens' attitudes towards integration. Regarding the social gap, it neither confirms nor falsifies the thesis that working-class people are more eurosceptic than elites. The number of cases we analysed, as well as the way we designed the groups and selected participants, does not allow any inference about this. However, as we put together eurosceptics and europhiles in groups, we are in the position to analyse the explicit and implicit arguments of participants when (if ever) they confront each other on European issues. In particular, we can examine the arguments workers and employees use when they refer negatively to the EU. Our research design enables us to evaluate the salience of Europe issues, by examining the frequency and intensity of conflict within each category of groups. Lastly, we can analyse, when (if) conflict happens, what kind of 'perspective' is involved, what kind of 'us' they – workers, employees, managers and activists – construct in this interaction, if any. In the terms of the current debate in european studies, we can ask what kind of identity, if any, is at stake.

What mainly characterises workers and employees, in comparison with managers and activists, is their lack of interest in the topic of Europe. They express negative opinions, but these are not strong opinions, they are not stances taken against pro-european attitudes defended by others. They are reactions. Further, they are weakly related to declarations made in response to items in the recruitment and participants' questionnaires. They are reactive, also, to feelings on subjectively more important issues. It is important to stress that these negative opinions are not fuelled by exclusive national identification. First, the collective identity, the 'us' and the 'we' who do not profit from Europe are not national but 'the average guys', the little, the poor, the 'numbers'. In this sense, our participants clearly articulate the view that Europe is a class project. Second, the idea that national sovereignty is limited by Europe hardly appears in the picture, as the EU is not perceived as an autonomous policy level. Workers and employees barely differentiate between national and European political leaders. In 1998 Anderson, using quantitative data, already found that

> citizens predominantly rely on broad notions of diffuse support for democratic institutions as proxy for evaluating the integration process.
>
> (Anderson, 1998: 593)[9]

Anderson further suggested:

> If, as can be expected for the foreseeable future, attitudes towards domestic politics continue to play a key role in the formation of citizen's attitudes towards European integration, a sense of supranational community or identity as conceptualized by scholars such as Deutsch and Inglehart may not be necessary to generate high level of integration support among the publics of the member states – so long as there is significant support for key domestic political actors and institutions.
>
> (Anderson, 1998: 594)

Clearly, our focus groups show that support for domestic political leaders is missing. It is missing notably because participants consider that national political leaders prove unable to protect citizens from globalisation. European integration appears in these focus groups as part and parcel of globalisation. They both profit politicians and the economy. European politicians are not distinguished from national ones, and firms that benefit the most are global.

This lack of support for national leaders might explain why, following Anderson, european studies are searching so hard for European identity. However, our results suggest that trying to account for the persistent elitist bias of European attitudes with identity is on the wrong track. It gives rise to normative comment, as being nationalist is obviously worse than being cosmopolitan – losers are condemned for being closed and the winners admired for being open (e.g. Risse, 2010). But, if there is a euroclash, according to our groups, feelings of domination by their own national elites and political leaders are more likely to be responsible for it than any lament for lost sovereignty. Just as national and European 'governments' are not perceived as autonomous levels, European and national identities or identifications cannot be considered separately.

These focus groups also confirm both quantitative and qualitative findings in this respect: people feel European because they feel French, Belgian or British, not the contrary. It took time for european studies to acknowledge that national identification does not prevent citizens from feeling European (Schild, 2001; Diez Medrano & Gutierrez, 2001;

Risse, 2003; Citrin & Sides, 2004; Bruter, 2005). On the contrary, the 'we' feeling constructed by national belonging, in an era of growing individualisation, is the template for European identification (Duchesne & Frognier, 1994, 2002, 2008). Nevertheless, Eurobarometer surveys keep asking citizens if they feel more European or national, and European scholars keep using this question in order to explain attitudes towards European integration. But the question creates, for most respondents, artificial data (see Chapter 1) and contributes to distortion in analysis of the connexion that European citizens are (or not) establishing with their new political community. These discussions among workers and employees, but also among managers and activists, confirm the results accumulated by qualitative research.[10] European identity, when citizens are concerned, is the wrong concept. In play is a long-term process of europeanisation of national identities that varies importantly depending on nationality and social class. Whether this process will end up with a European identity similar to current national identities is not anything that can be foretold. Perhaps we can say it is unlikely, as the context differs so widely from what it was when national identities were constructed.

The fact that our 2006 data confirm an observation made by Anderson in 1998 does not mean that nothing has changed in the last 15 years. Hooghe and Marks' suggestion that a 'constraining dissensus' has developed over the last decades is not incompatible with our observations. If workers and employees do not care about the EU, this is not the case for activists nor (to a lesser extent) for managers. According to these discussions, the dissensus that constrains political leaders might not so much be the consequence of a growing identity conflict between lower and higher classes: it might rather be the reflection of elites' own dissensus about European integration.

But the major finding discussed here is the significance of indifference and non-interest regarding European integration in workers' and employees' groups in the three cities. The next chapter takes a closer look at participants who acknowledged from the beginning, in the recruitment questionnaire, that they did not have a fixed opinion on these issues. This lack of interest cannot be interpreted as a deficit – the same participants took clear stances on other issues that were more important to them. Our final substantial analytic chapter will go on to address the normative and theoretical understandings of representation and legitimacy that lie beyond euroindifference.

4
When Ambivalence Meets Indifference

Virginie Van Ingelgom

Introduction

In Chapter 1 we discussed the need for reconciliation of the findings of statistical analysis of Eurobarometer and similar surveys with the findings of recent interpretive analysis of interview and focus group data. In Chapter 3 we highlighted the uncertainty and indifference which characterised our participants' reactions when they were asked to discuss European questions. In this chapter, we propose to analyse the particular category of citizens who, when they are surveyed by Eurobarometer, say that they evaluate their country's membership of the European Union (EU) as being 'neither good nor bad'.[1] On average, they represent 30% of the European population and 33 out of the 133 participants in our groups.

Focussing on this specific category is important in more than one respect. First, qualitative work has revealed that European issues are not prominent for ordinary citizens and has emphasised the difficulty, even impossibility, for ordinary citizens to appropriate, for themselves as it were, the EU. More recently such work has also highlighted the fact that attitudes towards Europe, often uncertain, are based on diverse evaluations and feelings of varied intensity. This leads to a rebuttal of the assertion that the European public is simply divided into two categories, one 'europhile' and the other 'eurosceptic' (Dakowska & Hubé, 2011: 85–100; Van Ingelgom, 2010, 2012). Of course, our data can make only a contribution to criticism of this binary interpretation. But we believe that our discussion transcripts suggest strongly that the interpretation of Eurobarometer data is often rather hasty.

According to the Eurobarometer survey data, from the time when our group interviews were conducted in spring 2006, 28% of European citizens (EU15) considered that their country's membership of the EU

was 'neither a good nor a bad thing', while 55% considered it was 'a good thing' and 13% considered it 'a bad thing'. Researchers who analyse the Eurobarometer data have often labelled those who answer 'a good thing' europhile and labelled those who answer 'a bad thing' eurosceptic. They have tended to ignore the 'neither-nors'.[2] In the Standard Eurobarometer survey conducted in spring 2006, the percentage of 'neither-nors' is 25% for the Belgians, 32% for the French and 28% for the British (European Commission, 2007). Moreover, there is a striking increase in the percentage of respondents in this category between 1990 and 2006. The percentages increase from 19% to 25% in Belgium, from 25% to 32% in France and from 24% to 28% in Britain, while the European average went from 21% to 28% (Schmitt & Scholz, 2005; European Commission, 2007).[3]

The interpretive analysis reported in this chapter shows that this response should not be ignored or discounted, that it is, indeed, a specific response characterised sometimes by uncertainty in the sense of ambivalence and sometimes by indifference, based on alienation or based on fatalism, regarding the European integration process. We assume that we can examine the category as through a microscope (Guiraudon, 2006) in order to improve our understanding of the significance, the persistence and the increase in the uncertainty and indifference of ordinary citizens towards European integration. So we wish to link our own operationalisations, for the purposes of this part of our analysis, firmly to those of mainstream studies. As we have said, they frequently take responses to the question 'Do you think your country's membership of the EU is a good thing . . . ?' as indicating an individual's support for or rejection of the integration process. Therefore, in the questionnaire completed by all our focus group applicants, we explicitly posed this classic question.[4] Recruitment procedures explicitly aimed to classify our participants on European questions – broadly pro and anti – so as to secure a balanced, and potentially antagonistic, discussion. But we had multiple recruitment criteria, including wanting groups to be diverse in age and ethnic heritage and homogeneous with regard to education and employment. So in the end we selected a number of participants whose attitudes regarding Europe were more uncertain. Of course, this is not surprising – given that they are about 30% of the population. We were also keen to recruit citizens who usually elude surveys, particularly those from the working classes, and it is notable that in these groups we had the highest recruitment of those who answered 'neither-nor' to this question. Table 4.1 presents the list of participants in this category.

Table 4.1 Participants evaluating their country's membership of the EU as 'neither good nor bad' ($N = 33/133$)

City	Group	N	Pseudonym
Workers and temporary workers, and employees ($N = 20$)			
Brussels	Workers and temporary workers	3	Marco, Farouk, André
	Employees	1	Fabien
Paris	Workers and temporary workers	5	Jean-Marie, Cédric, Zahoua, Geoffrey, Habiba
	Employees	2	Magali, Patrice
Oxford	Workers and temporary workers	8	Mina, Ron, Mary, Brenda, Vicas, Esther, Ruth, Bridget
	Employees	1	Kylie
Managers and activists ($N = 13$)			
Paris	Managers	3	Michel, Jean-Paul, Louis
	Activists	3	César, Jules, Pascal
Oxford	Managers	6	Alexander, Derek, Ian, Bansuri, Sanjay, Rebecca
	Activists	1	Bethany

Out of our 133 participants, 82 participants are categorised as favourable to their country's membership (or europhile), while 18 are categorised as disapproving or eurosceptic, according to this measure. In this chapter we focus on the positions of the 33 'neither-nors'in the discussion of European issues. Representativeness in qualitative research is typological, not statistical, so the limited number of cases is not in itself a problem. But we do want to maximise our understanding of the logic of these participants' positions and, as far as possible, to understand their motivations. So, to put their words and positions into context, we here present interpretive analysis (produced using the software package Atlas.ti) of all 24 of our focus groups, both Set 1 (which consists of the 12 best-matched cases from each social group across the countries) and Set 2 (the 12 groups with a less good cross country match). Two-thirds of our 'neither-nor' respondents are in the most working-class categories – of the 33, 20 belong either to the category workers or employees; 16 individuals in the category are British, 13 are French and only 4 are Belgian. Our Brussels corpus here is particular – it does not include a single 'neither-nor' respondent from among the groups of managers and activists.

This chapter aims specifically to analyse and try to understand the motivations at work in these respondents and to attempt to explain their position. Initially, with a view to refuting a minimalist

interpretation of this response category, we will show that these respondents do have cognitive frameworks that allow them to think about Europe. These frameworks are relatively homogenous among these interviewees, whatever their social class and national characteristics. Then our analyses will focus on the specific references to Europe made by them. We distinguish between three kinds of reaction: first ambivalence, then distance and exteriority and finally fatalism. Finally, these three kinds of reactions are scrutinised in order to assess whether they should be perceived as a tonic for or a poison of European democratic legitimacy. We also ask how they can be related to the hypothesis that questions of Europe are becoming increasingly politicised.

The (non-) explanation from ignorance

If respondents in the 'neither-nor' category really can be understood as indifferent to their country's membership of the EU or ambivalent about it, as opposed to stating a position that is equivalent to 'don't know', then we need to show that they do have the cognitive resources to evaluate the process of European integration. It is important that we show that their response is not attributable to greater than normal ignorance of European matters. As Zaller emphasises, in another context:

> the impact of people's value predispositions always depends on whether citizens possess the contextual information needed to translate their values into support for particular policies and candidates, and the possession of such information can . . . never be taken for granted.
>
> (Zaller, 1992: 25)

An obvious hypothetical explanation of this response might be that respondents are unaware, or unacquainted, and therefore are unable to react to or evaluate the fact of their country's membership, unlike their 'europhile' and 'eurosceptic' counterparts. This classic hypothesis is fully in line with the 'minimalist' interpretation. This implies that 'opinions' gathered from this category of respondents would be superficial, unstable and inconsistent – classifiable as 'pseudo-' or 'non-attitudes'. This kind of interpretation has for long justified limited interest in the opinions of European citizens within european studies (Belot, 2000; Van Ingelgom, 2010). Our empirical response to this initial explanation leads us to examine to what extent our 'neither-nor' participants actually talked about Europe in the discussions. We know that talking about Europe was pretty difficult for all our participants, even including our

activists. But were these participants less able to take part in discussion, less talkative, than the others?

In the first instance, using the Atlas function 'Query Tool' we identified all the passages of discussion which include any participant from the 'neither- nor' category, as indicated by our questionnaire, and which count as discussion of European issues, broadly defined. Next, from this corpus of text extracts, we counted all the references to Europe – that is, all passages of discussion that had been coded as bearing on European themes, and/or all occurrences of the words 'Euro', 'Europe' and 'European' in the text. The result is shown in Table 4.2.

As Table 4.2 shows, the participants in our groups in the category 'neither-nor' do not stand out from their counterparts in the categories 'good thing' (europhile) and 'bad thing' (eurosceptic). In general they talked almost as much about Europe as the others did, using words including the prefix euro- (European, Europe, etc.) only slightly less. The difference is not as marked as would be expected were the hypothesis of ignorance to be supported. As we know, Europe is a topic that our respondents frequently digressed from. Only a fifth to one quarter of

Table 4.2 Distribution of occurrences of the words 'Euro-', 'Europe' and 'European' plus related codes, as a percentage of total words spoken

	Total words spoken	**Discussions of Europe (Words)**	**Discussions of Europe (%)**	**Euro- (Words)**	**Euro- (%)**
Participants evaluating their country's membership in the EU as…					
'Neither a good nor a bad thing'	150,998	34,844	23.07	732	0.0048
'Good thing'or 'bad thing'	672,329	146,723	21.82	3788	0.0056
Activists	229,434	61,492	26.80	1587	0.0069
Managers	200,434	41,305	20.61	1424	0.0071
Employees	196,123	43,930	22.40	817	0.0041
Workers	197,336	34,840	17.65	692	0.0035
Brussels	274,539	69,853	25.44	1891	0.0069
Oxford	184,564	39,247	21.26	1188	0.0064
Paris	364,224	72,467	19.89	1441	0.0040
Total	823,327	181,567	22.05	4520	0.0055

our total recorded discussion is specifically about European themes. The proportion of words uttered by our 'neither-nor' respondents that are specifically about Europe is no different from their pro- and anti-Europe interlocutors (23.07% against 22.05%). National and social differences are, however, more striking. The participants in our Brussels groups talk more about Europe (25.44%) than those in the Paris (19.89%) and Oxford (21.26%) groups. The activist groups, as would be expected, are more focussed on Europe (26.80%) than the groups of workers (17.65%). With regard to the terms relating to Europe, the differences here are also relatively minor – a ratio of 0.0048 for our 'neither-nor' citizens compared with 0.0056 for participants in the 'good thing' and 'bad thing' categories. However, the ratio for the managers is 0.0071, while for the workers and temporary workers it is 0.0035. Notably, the Belgian average is 0.0069, compared to 0.0040 for the French corpus.

Are our 'neither-nor' participants less knowledgeable than the others? We have coded all explicit references to European institutions, to European policies and to its history. For example, every reference to the European Commission has been coded in this way, and also every reference to the Common Agricultural Policy, every mention of a European politician, Jean Monnet for example, and every reference to a treaty, like the Maastricht Treaty or the draft Constitution.

As Table 4.3 shows, overall our 'neither-nor' respondents are shown to be appreciably less knowledgeable in relation to European matters, as indicated by the frequency of their specific mentions of European institutions or policies. Again, social and national differences are quite strong. A difference of 3.46 references is found between the activist groups and the workers and a difference of 1.81 between the Belgian groups and the British. This gap is only 1.54 between the category 'neither a good nor a bad thing' and the two other categories 'good thing' and 'bad thing'. More detailed cross-referencing, together with our interpretive analysis of the transcripts (not shown in a table), allows us to report that although the 'neither-nor' participants are noticeably less knowledgeable at the aggregate level, this effect is above all due to the British participants, whose level of knowledge is lower, with a general average of one reference per individual. In particular, within our British managers groups we count seven individuals in the category 'neither-nor', and these are shown to be particularly less inclined to contribute explicit references to the EU and its institutions to the discussion – with an average per individual of only 0.85.

It is important here to state that explicit references to the EU, its institutions and its policies do not, in any case, mean that participants feel

Table 4.3 Distribution of explicit references to Europe, its policies, history, institutions ($N = 133$)

	Explicit references	Number of respondents	Average no. references by respondent
Respondents evaluating their country's membership in the EU as…			
'Neither a good nor a bad thing'	77	33	2.33
'Good thing' or a 'bad thing'	387	100	3.87
Activists	191	34	5.61
Managers	117	34	3.44
Employees	80	32	2.51
Workers and temporary workers	72	33	2.18
Brussels	175	41	4.27
Oxford	106	43	2.46
Paris	183	49	3.73
Total	464	133	3.49

themselves to be knowledgeable on European questions. On the contrary, and very frequently, a feeling of ignorance and uninformedness is explicitly expressed by our participants. But, Europe is no less present for this group than for the other participants, even if in the end it is not very present. Apart from the particular British case, all these considerations, then, lead us to contradict the hypothesis by which the category of citizens opting for the response 'neither-nor' would be understood to consist of individuals less able to talk about Europe and less knowledgeable on European themes. It is important that our research design and our focus group schedule allowed participants not to talk about Europe, or, indeed, to be uninvolved in any discussion. So, this category of participants might have participated much less than the others. But this is evidently not the case. The great majority of 'neither-nor' respondents, in particular those from the most privileged social categories, do possess frameworks for perception and evaluation of European integration. So it remains to understand the logic behind their responses.

Between ambivalence and indifference

To better understand how meaning is constructed by the participants in our 'neither-nor' group, we must study their words. Analysis of these

leads us to distinguish two distinct kinds of reaction: ambivalence and indifference. In the tradition of interpretive coding, we have used the Atlas.ti software with a view to understand how codes are organised and related to each other so that we can identify and characterise distinct positions.

Ambivalence

Our 'neither-nor' participants canvass, rehearse and develop many and varied views with regard to European integration in the course of their discussions. Notably, they exhibit a strong fluctuation between positive and negative in their evaluations. We characterise this way of not clearly opting for either a positive or a negative evaluation as ambivalence.[5] First, we show that the respondents from the 'neither-nor' category are characterised in particular by a higher level of ambivalence than the others. Then, we consider various ways in which this ambivalence is managed by them.

Table 4.4 shows the number of contributions, positive and negative in their evaluation of Europe, by the 'neither-nor', the 'good thing' and the 'bad thing' participants. As it illustrates, for our 'neither-nor' participants the ratio of favourable to unfavourable arguments is more or less identical to that of all participants taken together (0.74 vs 0.73). The group of respondents who say that their country's participation is a bad thing, has a ratio of favourable to unfavourable arguments of 0.63. On the face of it, this result might be surprising. It can better be understood by interpretive analysis of the transcripts.

Table 4.4 Distribution of favourable and unfavourable evaluations in participants' contributions ($N = 133$)

	No. particiPants	**Favourable arguments**	**Unfavourable arguments**	**Ratio**
Participants evaluating their country's membership in the EU as…				
'Neither a good nor a bad thing'	33	150	202	0.74
'Good thing'	82	293	76	3.8
'Bad thing'	18	88	138	0.63
Total	133	388	529	0.73

One of the Oxford activist groups (Set 1) was particularly lively because of a clash between Allison, a 'membership is a good thing' participant, and James, a 'membership is a bad thing' participant. James declared himself to be close to the Conservative Party, but was interpreted by the research team as close to the UK Independence Party. Allison, a pro-European party candidate in the next scheduled European elections, spoke out very clearly in favour of European integration throughout. In Extract 4.1, in response to the question 'What does it mean to be European?' Allison very clearly articulates the advantages that she sees in the EU, whereas James questions the very existence of the EU, which he perceives to be a creation in the minds of a few politicians.

Extract 4.1: Set 1, Oxford, activists

Allison: The question was what does it mean personally and to other citizens. That's why I think that we are enormously privileged; we are protected as I say by law. The whole ethos that is within the European Union protects us and looks outwards as well. So I don't see that by being members of the European Union we become Aunt Sallys (*directs this at Charles*). If you look globally who else is threatening us? It gives us a strength that we wouldn't normally have had that say Africans people who live in India and Asia don't have that protection enshrined in laws as we do in the European Union.

James: I don't agree with anything (*gesticulates*) such as a European . . . Europe is just a collection of nation states and a few misguided politicians are trying to persuade the rest of us that Europe is a state and it isn't.

Allison: (*to James*) No I don't think anybody is trying to persuade us that it's a state.

James: I think they are.

Allison: Any more than all counties of the UK are having their identity taken away from them because we look to Westminster to be our nation state's government.

James: *(to Allison)* I think that's a totally wrong analogy.

Allison: (*gesticulates towards James*) You're allowed your opinion.

James: Counties are all part of England there is no state called Europe.

Allison: I think if you went to Fife they would say that this has nothing to do with . . . Dunfermline or part of the United Kingdom and we have a . . .

James: But there is no state called Europe.

Allison: (*shaking head*) I know. I never said there was one.

James: I do not feel myself to be a European. I am English and the strange thing is and strange thing is the stronger your replies become the more English I feel the less citizen of the United Kingdom.

If our unit of analysis is the discussion sequence (which for some purposes it is), this extract must be coded as both positive and negative. On that basis, James is associated with positive as well as negative, and Allison with negative as well as positive, coding. If the unit of analysis is the speaker, then we have here an open, conflictual, polarised dispute with James in the negative and Allison in the positive positions. This degree of clarity and this level of antagonism are relatively unusual in our corpus. More usual is the following kind of exchange. Vicas belongs to our 'neither-nor' category.

Extract 4.2: Set 2, Oxford, workers

Vicas: They are taking the profits out and taking it back to their country while they are in a different continent. They are profiting from Europe.
Anthony: Absolutely.
Vicas: But then we are profiting as well.

Here Vicas articulates a negative evaluation of capital outflow but follows this up with a positive evaluation of citizens' benefit from economic activity and trade. We can only code Vicas, and this sequence of discussion, as both positive in his evaluation of Europe and negative. But this has a very different significance from that which applies in the cases of Allison and James in Extract 4.1. Double coding can pick up open discussion, or it can pick up ambivalence.

Table 4.4 then reflects the fact that individuals in the category 'neither a good nor a bad thing' tended to propose arguments both in favour of and against the process of European integration. These participants have in mind many, and often contradictory, evaluations of the European integration process. This multiplicity of arguments, as well as their complexity, leads to ambivalence and prevents them from taking a definite position on European issues.

Past, present and future

This ambivalence can be connected to considerations of time. First, from the point of view of the individual speaker, their own previous or past

evaluation may give way dialectically to the opposite. Thus, seeds of doubt are sown in the mind of the arguing individual. This process was sometimes noted by the participants themselves during the discussion:

Extract 4.3: Set 2, Oxford, managers

Rebecca: Well, that's why I thought it was a good thing initially that we joined the EC but from what I read a lot of it, it seems that lots of . . . that are meant to benefit everybody. I know I'm probably being very biased here but it seems to me from what I read that a lot of the European countries twist the laws very much to suit their own favours. I'm not sure how true it is. From what I read, we tend to follow laws strictly, to the letter, very religiously whereas the others have a much more flexible interpretation on a lot of things.

. . .

Rebecca: Of course in our papers we always hear you know about the Spanish fishing kind of stealing stuff in our waters and putting up an English flag and all that sort of thing. But we always hear, you tend to hear negative things don't we? Well often we do. [. . .]

Rebecca: I don't know. We don't know . . . Don't we all know so little about . . . ? It's frightening. I mean, we are quite intelligent . . .

Rebecca attributes a change in her position to her exposure to the British media, which, she says, promotes an almost exclusively negative picture of the integration process. In all the comments made by this participant, there is a strong sense of uncertainty about her evaluation of European integration. This is reinforced by her feeling of a lack of knowledge, which overtly upsets her.

A specific kind of ambivalence, centred on the idea of the future, is found in the Belgian corpus. In Chapter 2, we highlighted our Belgian participants' tendency to justify the process of European integration in terms of benefits for future generation. Table 4.5 details references to this theme by distinguishing our participants in the category 'neither-nor' from participants in the two other categories. It also presents a breakdown of the results by country in order to recall how this framework of perception is characteristic of our Belgian participants.

Of 28 occurrences of the future generations' argument, 17 are from the Belgian discussions. Even more interesting, of these 28, 14 relate to individuals in the 'neither-nor' category. This argument, linked to the benefits that their children will derive from European integration,

Table 4.5 Distribution of the occurrences of the argument 'benefit for future generations' ($N = 133$)

	'Benefit for future generations' argument	**Number of individuals**	**Average references per individual**
Participants evaluating their country's membership in the EU as…			
'Neither a good nor a bad thing'	14	33	0.42
'Good thing' or 'bad thing'	14	100	0.14
Brussels	17	41	0.41
Oxford	5	43	0.12
Paris	6	49	0.12
Total	28	133	0.21

introduces a certain measure of ambivalence into the evaluation of the European political system. The contrast between the present and the future amounts to a contrast between a direct negative experience of the effects of the market now and a national frame which articulates an ideal for future generations. On the one hand, they themselves feel the harmful effects of the opening of borders and the single market; on the other hand they accept these, assuming that future generations, for their part, will benefit.

To illustrate this reaction tinged with ambivalence, we reproduce a short extract which presents Marco, one of the Brussels workers. At the time of the discussion, he was unemployed and was indeed concerned by questions of employment and, in particular, cheap labour. He denounces the harmful effects of this throughout the discussion. However, he often seems confused about his evaluation and finds it difficult to express an opinion which is clearly against Europe.

Extract 4.4: Set 1, Brussels, workers

Marco: To a certain extent I am following his project *(referring to Said's previous discussion of the United States of Europe)*, the project for the future, but it's our grandchildren who will compensate for this future prospect because it's they who will reap the rewards. In any case, we're paying to some extent for the damage from the past. Rental

charges have increased and then now there's the freeze. There's talk of indexation and then now there's talk of planning wage increases. So I think that the problem with the Far East commercially and with labour, there should be compensation for this. Personally I think that it is our grandchildren who will enjoy the benefits of this.
Saïd: If there are any.

The picture our Belgian participants have of European integration centres on the promise for future generations. For some, this national framework conflicts with their personal interpretation of the effect of European integration in the present. Marco expresses this clearly. Saïd seems sceptical about the benefits that future generations will derive from this, but the wider context of the transcript shows that Marco has learned this cognitive framework, although it does not correspond to his (Marco's) personal experience of the current European reality. In some cases, these promises of a better future for future generations are reinforced by the 'ordinary' experience of European integration; in others, as is the case here for Marco, they reduce the credibility of these same promises and sow seeds of doubt. Torn between the political discourse which surrounds him and his own experience, Marco finds it really difficult to position himself in relation to European integration.

Ideal and actual

This position in the Belgian discussions leads us to consider the ambivalence which arises from the gap between an idealised representation, of European integration as a noble idea, and the actual experience. This kind of ambivalence is frequent in our discussions:

Extract 4.5: Set 1, Oxford, managers

Bansuri: To me, it's like an ideology. Really, I still don't think in practice, it's really there. But it's a good idea.
Sundai: But I think it is. It's the only relevance depending on where you are on the social level. Whether you're affected by the system which encompasses all the countries of Europe or it does not affect you at all. So it depends on the level where you are. At a certain level you can't have weight talking about Europe. At a certain level, you can have weight talking about Europe. It all depends where you are.
Bansuri: I agree yeah.

Sundai: Whether it should be under Europe or under Britain.
Bansuri: Because some people have taken advantage of it, they've gone to Europe. They've taken advantage of the possibility to travel and work abroad. Yet it doesn't affect me at all. It's not even my world. It's outside the world that I sort of live in or operate in. But yes, I've heard that other people have taken advantage of it if you like and people coming here because of it.
Derek: But you said a moment ago you thought Europe was a good idea, what do you mean by that? (*Bansuri, Alexander and Ian smile*)
Bansuri: It's an ideal isn't it? All these countries working together towards a sort of same objective and yet they're not working together you know. Their sort of group is there. The framework is there but within that group of countries everyone is pursuing their own thing.

Here, Bansuri's ambivalence is so obvious that it is highlighted by Derek, who is also uncertain about his evaluation of Britain's involvement in European integration. Bansuri's ambivalence originates in the gap she perceives between the idea of Europe, which she evaluates positively, and the reality, which at best does not affect her. This emphasises a central aspect of ambivalence – the contrast between representation and direct experience that is clearly discernible in Bansuri's words is also apparent with other members of the 'neither-nor' category:

Extract 4.6: Set 2, Paris, workers

Zahoua: The euro, for me, it helps businesses more.
Jean-Marie: Yes, well.
Zahoua: It doesn't help us at all. Not even with quality of life. *(Shakes her head)* On the contrary, we can do less at the financial level. Already, small savers are going to spend less. It helps large businesses more.

Later on in the discussion, as the advantages linked to mobility are set out, particularly in terms of employment, Zahoua again puts this positive aspect into a more negative perspective: 'it's not as easy as that to go and work abroad' – once again emphasising the gap between the idea and the actual reality. Jean-Marie, another participant in this Paris workers group, emphasises a further, intrinsically linked, aspect of ambivalence. On several occasions, while discussing some particular

argument, most often a positive one, he immediately clarifies his comments by adding a caveat best summarised as 'in theory':

Extract 4.7: Set 2, Paris, workers

Jean-Marie: Being part of a group of markets to have a better life. At least so that all the inhabitants of the community . . .
Moderator: Being part of a group, I'm sorry, I didn't understand.
Jean-Marie: Being part of a group of countries which improves the life of every country at the same time. In theory.
Margot: Yes (*laughs*). It's made for that in any case.
Jean-Marie: That was the aim at the beginning.
Cédric: Being interested in the European market, in everything that is economic. In other words the market.
Jean-Marie: Having better solidarity as well at the level of, in the world. To work for peace in the reunited world. At least I'm talking theoretically. (*Quick look at Margot, laughs*)

This exchange occurs after only a few minutes discussion and is already the opportunity for complicit laughs. Cédric, the third participant in the 'neither good nor bad' category in this Paris group, repeatedly agreed with Jean-Marie's remarks, notably by saying that 'there is in a way an enormous gap between the reality on the ground and Europe'. This gap between the 'good ideas' of Europe that the participants value and the reality on the ground is emphasised to a large extent. Bansuri (Extract 4.5) and Zahoua's (Extract 4.6) reasoning could be summarised as follows: 'Europe certainly benefits people, but not me directly'. Jean-Marie (Extract 4.7) and Cédric reason that 'Europe is a good thing in theory, but in reality, it's difficult to be aware of this'. This kind of reasoning, torn between reality and experience, is largely to be found in the discourse of our 'neither-nor' participants, in particular those from the working classes.

It is interesting to note that we also find this type of argument with ambivalent respondents from the upper class and activist groups, once they take on the discourse of 'ordinary' people. This is particularly the case with Jules, a French activist from the extreme Left, who also emphasises this gap between people's daily experience of Europe and the different benefits that are promoted by European integration, through the completion of the common market, in terms of mobility or of benefits for companies. Emmanuelle, a Union pour un Mouvement Populaire (UMP) activist who is in favour of France's membership of

the EU, and who voted 'yes' in the referendum on the Constitutional Treaty, had emphasised a few minutes before that the average French citizen doubtless did not have the opportunity to travel, and Jules was keen to come back to this point:

Extract 4.8: Set 2, Paris, activists

Jules: I think that Europe, if you want it to make progress, because most people were against liberalism, that's true, but they were also against this European technocracy. So many people, on a daily basis, people who live with Europe every day that meant nothing to them. Not because they don't have the opportunity to travel, because they see on a daily basis what Europe does not give them. Because on the news, it's Bolkenstein, it's VAT. Then every day, what does that mean? *(critical tone)* For them, not a lot, they don't notice.

Bertrand: *(to Jules, smiling)* Thank you, that's what we said at the beginning: Europe is nothing, it's an illusion, really.

Jules: No, it's not an illusion because it exists.

Emmanuelle: *(to Bertrand)* No, no, there is a reality.

Jules: *(to Bertrand)* The economic reality, the entrepreneurs didn't expect us and there, with the Europe that is being built today, they are even happier.

Jules in this passage presents the criticism that is present in abundance within the French left, in particular with reference to the Constitutional Treaty. This can be roughly summarised as 'yes to Europe, but not to that kind of Europe'. Here the ambivalence is explicit and politically structured and is largely to be found in the comments made by the French activists belonging to the 'neither-nor' category. They think that taking a position on European integration in terms of for or against is complicated, insofar as they are 'for' the European integration plan and 'against' its realisation.

Indifference

So far, we have argued that what might look like 'uncertainty' is in many cases better interpreted as 'ambivalence'. And, in setting out these variations within the category ambivalence, we are emphasising heterogeneity in attitudes to Europe. Further, though, our participants' comments might also be attributable to a reaction of indifference. This mainly takes two forms in the discussions: indifference by distance

(of which exteriority is a specific variant, associated with our British groups) and indifference by fatalism.

Distances

Distance between the EU and the citizen has several dimensions. It can be understood in physical terms: 'Brussels', to which is assimilated the power of Europe, appears to be a distant city (Berezin & Diez Medrano, 2008). But the feeling of distance that is mentioned is above all symbolic and refers more widely to distance in relation to politics. In the British case, this distance is expressed by a strong feeling of exteriority in relation to the process of European integration. Table 4.6 shows the distribution of the arguments which are linked to this theme.

In the discourse of our 'neither-nor' participants, there is a greater number of explicit signs of this distance. This distance is often cited and criticised but is difficult to analyse using statistical data. At the same time, the Commission is regularly concerned about 'bringing the Union closer to its citizens' (Prodi, 2003). The distance, and the indifference to which it leads, prevents the EU from enjoying the direct legitimacy which it seeks. This criticism of European institutions inevitably raises the question of the democratic governance of the EU; we discuss this further in Chapter 5. Interpretive analysis of our discussions does in fact allow us to analyse this distance and to describe it.

Louis, a Parisian executive belonging to our 'neither-nor' category emphasises the fact that most French people would be unable to give the name of their Member of European Parliament (MEP), as he or she appears to be quite distant from them. Later, he expresses his difficulty in linking with this Europe, precisely because of its distant and complex

Table 4.6 Distribution of occurrences of arguments related to distance ($N = 133$)

	Argument related to distance	**Number of individuals**	**Average per individual**
Participants evaluating their country's membership in the EU as…			
'Neither a good nor a bad thing'	10	33	0.30
'Good thing' or 'bad thing'	12	100	0.12
Total	22	133	0.17

nature. Later still, he asks where is the love story between the French citizen and Europe?

Extract 4.9: Set 2, Paris, managers

Louis: No, but in fact, deep down, between each of us and France there is a kind of love story or a story of dislike: or I don't know what. Deep down we ask where is the love story between the French citizen *(he stresses the word French)* and Europe. Frankly, currently, this Europe, we want to love it but we don't really know.
Francois: *(looking at Louis)* It's difficult.
Stanislas: *(to Louis)* What form does it have? *(Sceptical)* Does it have forms?
Francois: It's difficult to look at this.

Louis expresses his inability to love a Europe which has a vague outline, sometimes described as a 'very remote thingamajig' sometimes as an 'ectoplasm'. Here we can see how the distance which separates the citizen from European integration, implicitly compared to the nearer distance to the nation, involves an inability to love, an indifference at the heart of Louis's lack of position. The distance produces indifference and a lack of interest in European issues, reinforced by the complex nature of the construction of Europe.

In the same way this feeling of distance in relation to the European reality was apparent with Bansuri of the Oxford managers (see Extract 4.5). When she mentions the help for mobility and the benefits of the common market, particularly for businesses, Bansuri says almost automatically that this only affects her very slightly, that all that was irrelevant to her world (which consists of links between the Asian sub-continent and Britain). In such words, we find signs of the distance between the EU and the lived diurnal world. Later, in the discussion of the question of the distribution of power in Europe, Bansuri explicitly expresses this idea of distance when she says:

Bansuri: maybe that's because the European bargain is too far out there. Because there are things at home that you can do.

This clearly emphasises the role played by the relative distance between Europe and the citizen, especially when it is put into perspective with the national level. Above all it is clear that this is about a symbolic

distance. The exercise of power in Europe is widely perceived to be the privilege of a closed world, where the decisions are taken far from the citizens. The following extract illustrates the relative and symbolic nature of this distance from Europe.

Extract 4.10: Set 1, Brussels, employees

David: But OK, if there had been a referendum in Belgium: that would have been, well, I don't know (*shrugs his shoulders)* there would have been a result, that's all (*shrugs his shoulders)* (*laughter)*. Yes or no (*Jokingly)*.
Victor: Yes, there's a result, yes (*still jokingly) (makes as if to throw away some papers)*
Faissal: There you go, you want it or no, you don't want it.
Moderator: That would have changed things.
Faissal: Perhaps yes, I don't know. I don't know.
Fabien: I don't know. I prefer referenda on things that happen nearer to us.

The distance perceived by Fabien is not geographical or physical. As an inhabitant of Brussels, he is in close contact with the reality of the European institutions every day. Furthermore, he has very largely assimilated the European terminology and shows that he is able to argue in favour of and against the ongoing process. But distance is always discernible in his words. What is happening in Europe is not happening 'near him'. Thus, there is indeed always a symbolic distance between the 'ordinary' citizen and the EU.

Doubtless, the distance felt by Fabien can be more widely understood in relation to a general 'political-style' distance, which remains, as in the case of Bansuri, the privilege of a closed world. Exclusion from politics affects a substantial proportion of citizens at the national level, functioning all the more fully at the European level as Europe becomes political. If the characteristics of the EU make it into a distant, non-identified object, its politicisation does not necessarily go together with any rapprochement. European institutions can become political objects, like others – from which a significant part of the population are excluded and exclude themselves.

In the groups held in Oxford, the question of distance assumes a different character. It combines a relatively greater ignorance of the process of integration, already highlighted, with a strong feeling of exteriority and otherness. As Table 4.7 illustrates, this is particularly the case in the comments made by our 'neither-nor' participants.

Table 4.7 Distribution of occurrences of arguments related to British otherness and exteriority ($N = 133$)

	Argument related to British otherness and alienation	Number of individuals	Average per individual
'Neither a good nor a bad thing'	17	33	0.51
'Good thing' or 'bad thing'	24	100	0.24
Brussels	8	41	0.19
Oxford	21	43	0.49
Paris	12	49	0.25
Total	41	133	0.31

In general our interpretive analysis tells us that the British 'neither-nor' respondents feel themselves to be outside Europe. It is notable that the score per person for the Oxford respondents is very close to that per person for the 'neither-nor' group. Overall, our 'neither-nor' participants mention British distinctiveness 0.51 times per person, whereas the europhile and eurosceptic participants together mention it 0.24 times per person. The latter is much the same rate as we find in the Belgian and French groups in general, who do mention that 'the English [*sic*] are not like the others'.

Foreignness implies that the British participants perceive the European system as very different from the British one, without this difference necessarily being evaluated negatively.[6] Distance and alienation are here intrinsically linked to the question of sovereignty, the importance of which we highlighted in Chapter 2. Europe is foreign and different, and consequently it should not take decisions for Great Britain. This feeling of distance and alienation, based on the acknowledgement of differences between them and those on the continent, is apparent in the conversation of Sanjay and Rebecca, participants in one of the Oxford managers groups, when they address the question what being European means.

Extract 4.11: Set 2, Oxford, Managers

Rebecca: Of course we are farther away from it. Much easier to sort of go with the flow between France Belgium and you're just across a border you're in and out. Whereas we still, I know it's so much easier now to get across and fly across to other . . . , we're still a little bit insular, isolated from . . .

Sanjay: Yeah.

Rebecca: You know still tends to be geographically a bit more them and us then other countries.
William: I think so.
Sanjay: There is still a lot of resistance.
Moderator: Sorry what did you say?
Sanjay: I mean from the geographical point of view we're still an island *(murmurs of agreement)*
William: It's the island that's the important bit.
Rebecca: Yes it's like my friends in Lille they spend an afternoon in Belgium. They spend an afternoon somewhere else. They hop between borders and they buy their washing powder over the border there. They buy something else over the border there and they're just they go and pick around.
William: But when you're there, don't you find it exciting to say let's go and have lunch in Italy. We'll come back via Belgium.
Rebecca: No I'm saying they've got an advantage on us in that way in that you know they there's more flowing between them

This suggests clearly the extent to which the abolition of political borders does not have the same impact in Great Britain as it can for citizens who live on the continent. The physical and symbolic barrier of the Channel is still very much in existence. The process of European integration does not remove this border, still considered to be natural. The insular nature of Britain and the UK is therefore key in understanding the sense of distance in the British groups. Further, the feeling of alienation described by Sanjay and Rebecca in particular is also related to distance with respect to identity. The differences between the British and continental cultures are emphasised. Indifference therefore appears to be the result in this case of this feeling of otherness, based on the perception of a marked distance between Britain and the continent. This distance, physical as well as relating to identity, leads these British participants to develop a feeling of alienation about the construction of Europe; so evaluating Britain's membership no longer makes much sense because it is barely any part of it.

This framework of perception relating to European integration, based on the feeling of distance and alienation, is significant if we are to understand those respondents who prefer not to take a position in relation to the EU. The distance which separates the citizen from Europe increases their feeling of individual powerlessness. In particular, the strong feeling of alienation that is clear in the British case allows us once again to put into a new kind of context any appearance of uniformity between

citizens' attitudes to European integration, or any common underpinning to their voicing an opinion. Once again, we assert the importance of the national variable, already highlighted in Chapter 2 – in particular for this specific 'neither-nor' category of citizens.

Fatalism

The second variety of indifference is anchored in a feeling derived from fatalism.[7] Among the comments gathered from our 'neither-nor' participants, expression of the feeling that it's a foregone conclusion is prominent. Europe is already a fact, there, for some, and it will be, sooner or later, for the others. No retreat seems possible. The inevitability of the process seems undeniable. To take a position concerning the integration process assumes not only that the European issues are known and that the European question is of interest in the eyes of 'ordinary' citizens but also that these citizens believe that decisions should and could be taken – in other words, that things could still change. Many of our participants do have a propensity to try to understand European issues and to evaluate them positively or negatively. However, our 'neither-nor' participants are, in contrast, characterised by a profound feeling of fatalism. For them, evaluating European integration negatively or positively is not the point, since Europe exists, no matter what. The process of European integration and its inevitability leads them to disengage. Table 4.8 presents the distribution of arguments marked by a fatalistic logic, showing very clearly how the fatalist argument is particularly characteristic of our 'neither-nor' category. These participants account for 24 out of 33 occurrences of this argument.

The underlying feeling of an inability to have an influence on European decisions has several dimensions. First, the finger is pointed

Table 4.8 Distribution of the occurrences of arguments related to fatalism ($N = 133$)

Participants evaluating their country's membership in the EU as . . .	**Argument related to fatalism**	**Number of individuals**	**Average references per individual**
'Neither a good nor a bad thing'	24	33	0.72
'Good thing' or 'bad thing'	9	100	0.09
Total	33	133	0.25

at the lack of information. Some participants in our groups denounce the lack of information and develop the idea that things are being done behind their backs:

Extract 4.12: Set 2, Paris, managers

Michel: Not enough information.
Stanislas: Too much information.
Michel: *(to Stanislas)*: No, not enough information. Not enough, I insist.
Stanislas: I would say both.
Michel: Because when for example I look at information from another country, I notice that when there is a European project, they are informed about it. We aren't. They tell us at the last minute to make us swallow it.
Francois: *(Looking in front of him, as if he was thinking)* Hm hm.
Louis: Oh that's true it is
Stanislas: Yes, it's true
Michel: It's deliberate. It's deliberate so that we don't react.

This idea of deliberate evasion of citizens' power is also found in the British groups. Kylie emphasises this aspect, while Emily addresses the subject of British citizens' general lack of understanding regarding the process of European integration and the deliberate fostering of this by authorities.

Extract 4.13: Set 2, Oxford, employees

Emily: Yeah but it's got a different . . . It has a different meaning really doesn't it? Than the way we're expected to understand that we are European. I don't think that we do understand in this country (*Kylie agrees*), generally speaking, I don't think we've been informed sufficiently to know what's involved.
Kylie: I feel personally it's a bit deliberate. Actually I think they're deliberately not telling us quite what's going on. I think in about twenty years' time we'll probably . . . they're probably kind of half hoping that we will class ourselves as European (*Stephanie agrees*).

The end of this extract underlines the fatalistic aspect of this position: 'they' hope that in 20 years' time citizens will feel themselves to be European. This aspect is highlighted by Mary, a participant in a British

workers group, when she says concerning the adoption of the Euro that 'it's going to happen anyway I think'. Mary has said very little in the discussion, but when she does speak it is to emphasise this inevitability. In Extract 4.14, it's the turn of Bridget, who participated in a workers group, to stress that it is only a question of time.

Extract 4.14: Set 2, Oxford, workers

Bridget: But this is it, perhaps because it's quite new and we're not, everyone is quite adjusting quite as they should be and it's just something that's will eventually build up and adjust and it's probably just going to take a while and probably mo: probably all the countries feel as we feel you know it's probably we're all feeling a bit like this and: eventually it will come right and if you think about the market it would be absolutely fabulous if we could all pull together.
Anthony: Mmm absolutely yeah.
Ruth: Yeah I think so yeah.
Esther: Much better.

We see then that the possibility of feeling European one day is envisaged by our indifferent participants, since Europe will happen, no matter what. The influence of a longer or shorter timeframe is here essential. Citizens are well aware of the process, and seem to consider that the elites have the necessary means to 'impose' this European reality on them. Europe is there or will be there, whether this is a good or a bad thing. In the words of our 'neither-nor' participants we perceive a certain kind of disaffection towards politics which largely transcends the European framework alone. Louis, a participant in one of the Paris managers groups, who had already emphasised the distance he felt regarding the EU, continues by denouncing the pointlessness of the French referendum.

Extract 4.15: Set 2, Paris, managers

Louis: So much so that at the present time, you really have the impression that France said no, well, I don't know any more how many 54% of French people said no, but you really have the impression that they don't give a damn about the opinion of those who said no. If we read the press, we notice that little by little many European countries would be happy to (*hesitates*) do without

France's opinion, France's decision. OK, France said no, we don't care. We'll continue to go forward.

...

Louis: If I remember correctly, Denmark voted no. They made them vote again a year after: yes. Where's the respect for the popular voice?

Jean-Paul: If they are asked the same thing, yes. In France, they wouldn't have asked the same thing.

Louis: It's rigged. It's rigged. You can't vote again a year after *(pulls a face)* otherwise...

Jean-Paul: It's true.

Louis: *(smiling towards Jean-Paul)* In that case, they would re-run all the elections every year.

On several occasions, Louis denounces the lack of citizens' influence over the process of European integration, pursuing this line to the point where he denounces a deception. In the second extract, he meets with Jean-Paul's agreement – also a participant who has evaluated his country's membership as 'neither-nor'. The impression of impotence derived from fatalism is palpable. It is essential to emphasise this insofar as the efforts undertaken by the EU to get closer to its citizens, here through introducing a referendum, produce the opposite effect with a category of citizens who denounce the machinations of politics. Louis denounces both citizens' impotence, but also more widely the loss of the autonomy of political power to the power of economic interests. The supremacy of the economy is widely denounced by our 'neither-nor' participants, as the following extract shows:

Extract 4.16: Set 1, Oxford, managers

Alexander: Do you think we've been forced to be European?

Derek: Yeah I think in a sense I am a bit suspicious. For example as they talk about there being a referendum at some point in the future and I always feel as if Tony Blair the government is trying to manipulate opinion and wait for the right time to get the right decision. Whereas if we had a genuine democracy, we could have an opinion at least an opinion on a referendum now to ask about different attitudes on Europe whether it's the Euro or European court and all these different actors: and have a referendum now and shape policy according to that to reflect what people actually want. Rather than trying to wait until the government feels the time is right to get the decision that they want. I mean why not ask us now and then shape

> policy? I think that that is I mean the fact that maybe the government is more interested in what big business wants in the future in Europe rather than what people want.

Derek's feeling of being manipulated by politicians is clear in this extract. But his words are more radically part of a discourse denouncing the supremacy of economics over politics. On the whole, this denunciation is the sign of certain fatalism, insofar as the participants in the category studied here only note this reality. They do not imagine that it can be any other way, both because they do not think they have access to elected representatives and also because the political representatives are perceived to be impotent, or worse, submissive, or even corrupted by economic power. Thus, they doubt the possibility of changing the order of things, and besides, they think that Europe does not really offer a different alternative; consequently taking a position will not change any of this.

This tacit although very critical acceptance is particularly discernible in the fact that many of these citizens realise that one day, in the medium- or long-term, they could become European. We find this to a large extent in our data, whatever may be the socio-economic category of the individual. Kylie, for example, remarks that politicians doubtless hoped that in about 20 years citizens would feel European; Sanjay emphasised that the fact of being European would be in conflict with his British identity, without explicitly rejecting the fact that one day he might feel European. Europe will happen, no matter what, with them or without them.

Politicisation and democracy

The ambivalence and the indifference that are illustrated in this chapter should not be considered to be inherent, or necessary, underpinnings of the expressed views of those survey respondents who say that their country's membership of the EU is neither good nor bad. On the other hand, they are certainly not surprising. First of all, we argue that this analysis suggests that ambivalence and indifference, fatalism and the variability in distance between citizens and the EU, must be considered by any analyst who wishes to understand citizenship and integration. This category of responses to the Eurobarometer question should be considered independently of the others, should not be attributed straightforwardly to lack of knowledge and cannot be assimilated to lack of support. Second, we wish to emphasise the tangle and overlapping of ambivalence and indifference which characterises the 'neither-nor'

response. Ambivalence and indifference regarding integration can be combined and confounded in one respondent.

This analysis leads us to a reconsideration of the view that the increased visibility of European issues – in the sense of a greater presence of pro- and anti-, positive and negative arguments in public political debate – would lead to a polarisation of opinions (de Wilde, 2011). This chapter emphasises how greater politicisation could also lead to greater ambivalence and indifference. It also leads us to qualify the view that political rivalry and politicisation of the European issue will favour information that can change citizens' perceptions and preferences (Hix & Bartolini, 2006). None of the reactions described in this chapter is incompatible with the thesis of increased visibility of European issues in the post-Maastricht era, nor with the essence of the post-functionalist model (Hooghe & Marks, 2009). However, they invite us to reconsider the impact of the process of European integration on the attitudes of ordinary citizens. Indeed, we have been able to observe that making the EU more visible is also to complicate the issue, as European integration is a flexible reality. Informing oneself involves taking cognisance of existing arguments, which are both positive and negative. The growing politicisation of European issues has led to, or strengthened, ambivalence about the process of european integration, whether that process is implicit and administrative, or explicit and politically structured. It is not unusual for supporters of increased politicisation, in a normative perspective that links integration with democratisation, to believe that if citizens knew more, were more knowledgeable and better informed, then they would take positions in relation to the ongoing process, seeing what the EU does, either good or bad, and for or against their future interest.[8] But our analyses indicate the need to consider the hypothesis that a greater visibility of European debates and issues, as well as a more direct experience of the EU, may itself lead to ambivalence, itself be a source of unpredictability and uncertainty.

We should also consider that politicisation, a political normalisation of European integration, may transform support into indifference, rather than into informed or qualified opposition. In our reading, there are two distinct forms of indifference: distance and fatalism. Here, politicising European integration leads ordinary citizens to more generally assimilate this 'into politics'. We agree with Bartolini's argument that politicisation (we would be tempted to add: and the daily experience of European integration) could give rise to expectations that are greater than can be satisfied in reality, which in the long-term would deepen the gap between the EU and its citizens (Hix & Bartolini, 2006:

53). But this gap, like that which exists in the national context, results in a significant category of citizens abandoning politics – abandoning a politicised Europe rather than opposing it. Finally, the consequences for the democratic game are not the same, depending on whether we talk of ambivalence or of indifference. Ambivalence leads to a degree of unpredictability which European elites find difficult to adapt to, particularly those who are anxious to bring citizens closer to their EU in a democratic framework. Indifference produces apathetic behaviour. One might also think that it blocks any good reception for political information proposed by actors or the media. It is clear that the tangle of reactions of ambivalence and indifference renews the classic questions of the EU's democratic deficit. At best it strengthens apathy and produces extremely low electoral participation. At worst the ambivalent citizens go to the ballot boxes and the indifferent ones become politicised selectively, leading to instability and unpredictability in European political life. The next chapter will analyse precisely and more broadly the question of legitimacy.

5
Representation and Legitimation

Elizabeth Frazer and Virginie Van Ingelgom

Introduction

The second item in our discussion schedule was designed to focus participants' attention on the complexity of the political world of government and decision making in the specific context of the European Union (EU). The question posed was 'Comment répartir le pouvoir en Europe?'/'How should power be distributed in Europe?' We gave our groups four options – the nations, the market, elected MPs and experts – inviting them to consider the advantages and disadvantages of power being wielded by each. In setting the question up this way we were, of course, following standard accounts of EU governance and legitimacy and adverting to the matter of democratic deficit.

In this chapter, we show how our groups typically approach the questions of how government – both at the level of nation state and at the EU level – works, and how it ought to be. The themes that arise in the course of their deliberations include an acknowledgement of the complexity we drew their attention to. They relate this to the theme of the remoteness of the EU from citizens' lives. Then there is a pervasive concern with corruption – both of officials and of elected representatives or officers and also with the generalised domination of corporate and moneyed interests over governmental processes. Throughout the discussion in this part of the session, we find more or less explicit references to national sovereignty – these follow the pattern of difference between the three countries that has been detailed in Chapter 2. In this part, though, a theme of 'popular sovereignty', the power of the people, emerges as a norm from which corruption and plutocracy are a deviation or shortfall.

Analyses of legitimacy as a (contested) concept, legitimation as a set of practices and judgements of legitimacy as an important subset of

citizens' attitudes range across the field of social and political study. In european studies, the theme has become prominent with developing critiques and disputes around the proposition of a democratic deficit in the EU and its threat, at the limit, to the future of the union at all.[1] Within european studies, as in political study more generally, two distinct questions are posed: First, to what extent is the system legitimate in the eyes of its citizens? Second, to what extent does the system conform to independently specifiable normative criteria? That these questions are distinct is clear; so also is that holding them absolutely apart in practice is extremely problematic. The first question about subjective legitimacy cannot be quite independent of responses to the second question about objective criteria (Beetham, 1991). Studies, though, tend squarely to set themselves within the framework of one question or the other. Either they focus on Eurobarometer and similar large-*N* datasets or on interviews and discussions with citizens and explore the extent to which citizens think the EU is legitimate (Lindberg & Scheingold, 1970; Eichenberg & Dalton, 1993; Franklin, Marsh & McLaren, 1994; Gabel & Palmer, 1995; Obradovic, 1996; Anderson, 1998; Blondel, Sinnott, & Svensson, 1998; Carey, 2002; Hooghe & Marks, 2005; Ehin, 2008; Hooghe & Marks, 2009; Down & Wilson, 2008). Or, they discuss the complex details of criteria for legitimacy, in the framework of political and legal philosophy and history (Beetham, 1991; Beetham & Lord, 1998; Majone, 1996; Moravscik, 2002; Bellamy & Castiglione, 2003).

In the presentation of our analysis in this chapter, we pay particular attention to how our activist groups treat these matters, using them as a kind of control group to which we compare the other social groups. Our activist groups consist of individuals who, we hypothesise, are likely, more completely than their lay counterparts in the other groups, to have assimilated the categories of public discourse by which questions of legitimacy, democracy and efficiency are judged in their particular political context. The national political order is part of their everyday reality and is invoked routinely in their interactions with their fellows. The acceptance of the particular hierarchies of power that characterise modern polities and the critical negotiation of how these hierarchies should, might, be addressed, changed and in the meantime worked within are part and parcel of a politically engaged life. Our activists explicitly and consciously occupy a complex subject position: as citizens like everyone else, as political experts with a grasp of the conceptual structure of political study and as elite actors whose participant status situates them such that they have the aspiration, at least, to influence the institutions, and to frame perceptions, of Europe.

Hence, we consider our activists' discussions as both frames and as cues. The starting point for the construction of mass opinions is the discourse of elites (Fuchs, 2011: 44–7). Following Zaller, given that mass opinions tend to be characterised by cognitive fuzziness and low salience (even more true in the case of opinions about european integration), such opinions predominantly can be treated as a construction of political elites (Zaller, 1992: 14). That is to say, elite discourse provides the cues that get ordinary citizens going when they are called upon to express an opinion or engage in discussion. Cues provide shortcuts for individuals, and this means that they are effective mechanisms for the simplification of complexity. (Researchers in european studies have examined the relative roles of interests, identities and cues in the structure underlying citizens' support for European integration (Hooghe & Marks, 2005).) By contrast, frames provide an interpretative package for individuals, a means to say what is perceived or to be understood, and how it is to be evaluated. They also are generated and promulgated in elite discourses (Diez Medrano, 2003). So, in what follows we pay particular attention to how our activists address questions of European integration and its legitimacy. Notably, the activists shift between the elaboration of their own particular discussions of integration and legitimacy, is and ought, and the taking up of the perspective of 'ordinary' people. Later in the chapter, we go on to examine whether and how the other groups of 'ordinary' citizens seem to make use of the frames and the cues that are evidenced in the activist groups' discourse. We hope, then, to make a modest contribution to the rapprochement between the examination of subjective legitimacy beliefs and the examination of and reasoning about independent criteria for legitimacy.

The concept of political representation and related terms – political representatives and their trials and shortcomings, election and selection of representatives to various institutions, communication between representatives and electorates and constituents – recur in this part of the focus group sessions. These themes are no more common among the activists than among the others. For all, the questions of whether, how and to what extent citizens are represented in the institutions of government are the ones that recur in the discussion. Notably, the activists discuss the corruption of MPs and MEPs less than the other groups do.

Before we present analysis of our discursive data, we turn to a more detailed account of the questions of legitimacy and political representation within european studies, in particular emphasising the complexity that was at the heart of our research design.

Legitimacy and representation in the EU

There is disagreement among participants and commentators about how the EU should be understood (Jachtenfuchs, Diez & Jung, 1998; Ehin, 2008; Lacroix & Magnette, 2008; Neyer, 2010). Minimally, it can be understood as a kind of technical agency, operating at the supranational level, with the authority to solve certain problems. Of course, the possession of authority, no matter how limited in scope, gives officers discretion. In any case, there is a politics to the technical task – just as there is with any administrative authority – as consent has to be secured for any decisions and authorisation has to be maintained by the agency. So inevitably, technical agencies take on some governmental aspects and become 'technocracies'. This logic applies to any such technical agency; in the case of the EU the politicisation is all the more enhanced.

Less minimally, the state and governmental authorisation for the EU's functions is emphasised, and it can be understood as an inter-governmental body of nation states. In this view, the EU is inevitably political in the sense that it is the business of governments. Constituent governments have to engage in competition and negotiation with each in this inter-governmental arena, and they also have to justify their actions in this arena to their domestic constituencies. Here, normatively, the authority of the experts (technocrats) is de-emphasised in favour of the sovereign authority of each national government individually and their cooperative conduct of projects collectively.

Even more minimally than either of these alternatives, the EU can be understood as simply a market: a series of exchanges of goods and services by independent actors who meet each other in a series of spontaneous, autonomously organised encounters. Of course, market 'spontaneity' is only possible given a particular set of material, legal and cultural conditions. Fair contracts have to be honoured and enforced, transport of goods and services has to be possible, and so on. So, as with any fair or market, organisation, regulation and policing are necessary. However, according to its proponents, the 'governmental' and 'political' action of EU institutions and officials is, should be, confined to the function of enabling the market to proceed.

According to all these views, the EU is legitimate insofar as the governments that authorise it are themselves legitimate in their respective positions as sovereign, or authoritative, in their own states. The EU institutions and officers must be bound by law to conduct themselves within certain limits, of course – legitimacy could be forfeited under certain circumstances whether the authorising governments were aware or not.

But the main point is that there is a chain of authorisation, to the EU, and insofar as each link in the chain is legitimate, the EU is legitimate (Moravcsik, 2002; Majone, 1996, 2005). Contrary to these views, a good deal of the critical commentary on the EU, of course, seeks to apply the norms of democratic political authority, based on a direct relationship of authorisation, and accountability, between the sovereign people and the officers and institutions that govern, to the EU (Beetham & Lord, 1998; Siedentop, 2000; Schmidt, 2012).

There are many variations on this theme. First, there is the ideal of constitutionalism and the fully sovereign rule of law, based on popular sovereignty. It can be argued that these, together with their necessary cultural and political corollaries, are the only sufficient legitimation of the kind of coercive power that EU institutions seek to wield (Siedentop, 2000). Second, more weakly, there is the view that founding moment or not, constitutional treaty or not, any exercise of authority, any command of public money and resources requires a series of procedural and substantial relationships to be set up between officers and citizens, between authorised agencies and the individuals and populations from whom the resources are taken and to whom (or away from whom) they are disbursed. Critically, in contrast to the idea that it is the several state governments who are engaged in these procedural and substantial relationships, the more democratic version insists that the procedures and relations have to engage voting citizens directly (Beetham & Lord, 1998). Following Follesdal and Hix, the 'democratic deficit' of the EU has been identified with the increase in executive power (both at the national and the European levels) at the expense of legislative (by implication in constitutional theory, sovereign) power; with the distance between the EU and its issues, and the sovereign citizens; with the resulting, widening, gap between citizens' preferences and policy interests and with the policy of the EU (which is more indebted to corporate interests and similar than to sovereign citizens) (Follesdal & Hix, 2006: 536–7).

In turn, one set of proposed solutions to this deficit focusses on the European Parliament, as the critical possible link between citizens and governmental and administrative functions (Follesdal & Hix, 2006). This is in the sense that competitive elections to the European Parliament (EP) should be more meaningful, that the business of the EP should be part of the normal political currency of public political discourse and that European issues should be salient in national parliamentary elections (rather than, as is currently the case, European Parliamentary elections being just another re-run of national governmental elections). In contrast to this parliamentarianism, an analytically distinct approach

emphasises, just as much, the possibility of a European civil society. Within such a formation, it is envisaged that citizens are linked to each other and to the European as well as to the national levels of government and administration, by way of their membership of and relationships with associations and non-governmental organisations (Nicolaïdis, 2007; Greenwood, 2007).

All of this begs the question what is meant by legitimacy. Within political theory, this is a concept that negotiates the boundary between normative and positive. The normative criteria for legitimacy can be located in justice construed abstractly and ideally, as in the neo-Kantian tradition, where coercive state laws are legitimate only if just, and just only if such as could or would be agreed to by rational citizens under ideal conditions (Rawls, 1971; Habermas, 1996).[2] Or, it can be grounded in a more realist conception of legality (d'Entreves, 1963). Either way, on this construal, legitimacy is a matter of conformity to concrete, prescriptive and normative criteria. So the legitimacy of an institution or of an act of authority or power is determinable independently of what people – anyone – think about it. On the other hand, such an objective construction seems to tend to the limit of the concept: even if an act or institution is strictly just or strictly legal, but the relevant people do not believe it to be so, it looks as though its legitimacy is (at least) compromised.[3] Just as we resist the idea that if people believe it to be so, if they accept it as so, an institution or act is legitimate even if egregiously unjust, so we justifiably resist the idea that legitimacy is wholly objective (Beetham, 1991). This objective versus subjective distinction can be construed as two dimensions of the concept.

Beyond this, further cogent distinctions can be drawn. The category of relevant persons whose beliefs, or acceptance, are salient can also be divided into insiders (those who participate in the system or institutions whose legitimacy is in question) and outsiders (those who are outside, and observe, it) (Bellamy & Castiglione, 2003: 8–10). This might be thought to map nicely onto the objective versus subjective scheme – but of course outsiders might be deploying their own subjective standards for judgement. Next, informal, pragmatic, perhaps incompletely articulated, socially based, acceptance of a system, institution or act can be distinguished from formal, codified, criteria (Weiler, 1992). Formality, here, might be assimilated to 'legality' – although, again, this is not strictly valid. Custom and practice, cultural conformity, can be every bit as formal and sanctionable, for instance, as compliance with legislation or directive. So, these internal–external, formal–informal, distinctions can be thought of as further dimensions to the concept of legitimacy.

In politics and in philosophy, of course, this multi-dimensionality of the concept is one ingredient in its contestation.

As we have mentioned, one aspect of the controversies about legitimacy in the EU is centred on the possibility of political representation of EU citizens, as such, in the governing institutions, among which the European Parliament is key. The lack of effective representative mechanisms is central to the charges of democratic deficit (Abromeit, 1998; Eriksen & Fossum, 2000; Nentwich & Weale, 1998; Scharpf, 1999; Schmitter, 2000). A further thesis argues that the EU needs legitimation by elected parliaments (Lord & Magnette, 2001). If the European Parliament can be seen as the repository of democratic legitimacy for the whole EU, then the low turnouts that have characterised EP elections seem to indicate failure (Obradovic, 1996: 203). These elections can be classified, in any case, in Reif's terms, as 'second order' (Reif, 1984). Others argue that the EP is not constituted as a representative assembly or that it does not have the powers of a true parliament (Weiler, 1992; Hix, 1999; Niedermayer & Sinnott, 1995; Obradovic, 1996). Particularly among those for whom the formation and energy of civil society is as important to political power and legitimacy as the formal institutions of representation and government, the question of the EP's representative credentials must be a less critical factor.

Lord & Pollak (2010) consider the argument that the very wide variety of representational processes, mechanisms and institutions that are present in the EU mean that there is a dispersal of power and an openness of form, which redeems the EU in the face of charges against its democracy. Their analysis is that this proliferation of forms of incomplete representation doesn't add up to anything like a representative system that satisfies the criteria of democratic equality. The determination of the terms on which different opportunities for representation should combine in the European arena remains very much 'top–down' is their verdict. (Lord & Pollak, 2010: 131; also Lord & Magnette, 2004)

In the matter of a formal relationship between voters and citizens, those elected to the European Parliament, and the officers who discharge the executive function of the EU, the results of statistical surveys suggest that European citizens certainly expect the EU to be democratic (Ehin, 2008). However, what respondents exactly mean by this adjective and related terms, and what, if anything, they have in mind as representative, participatory and/or deliberative institutions, procedures, systems or mechanisms, which would satisfy this demand for democracy, are all very unclear from that research. Our focus group discussions clearly

support the view that citizens and activists apply criteria of democracy in their deliberations and judgements about the EU. In our analysis, we hope to be able to look more deeply into the question of what democracy means to them.

Complexity and legitimacy

The question that we put to our focus group participants was designed to ask them to engage with a representation of and a series of puzzles about political complexity. Our focus group technique, utilising large boards facing the arrayed group, was explicitly designed to enable us to represent complexity to them. In the case in point, the complexity is considerable. When we asked them how power should be distributed, the four-fold scheme of experts, nations, parliaments and market was represented as four quadrants. This explicitly put before participants the vertical distinctions, as it were, between bureaucracy (experts) and parliaments. It also represented the horizontal distinctions between markets and societies, and national states and the European level. It also explicitly raised the normative versus positive distinction: the matter of how power is distributed as against how it should be was inescapable when our participants addressed the question. The facilitator's script (Appendix 4) introducing this problem included:

> Of course, Europe is complicated. We can say that there are different places or people with power in Europe: the nations, the elected rulers, experts, or the markets. We'd like you to think about each of these, and say what are the advantages and disadvantages of them having power in Europe. We'll take them one by one. Which one would you like to start with? *If no choice is made* . . . Ok, let's start with the nations. Why is it good, and why is it bad, for the nations to decide matters in Europe? thus explicitly emphasising the 'is/ought' distinction.

From the point of view of the political theory of citizenship and our interest in politicisation in discussion, one of our underlying thoughts was that the complexity of political questions is simultaneously attractive and off-putting. The logic of political discussion and decision making pushes participants to simplification, to finding platforms which can accommodate a number of parties in alliance. But it also pushes them to a wider appreciation of the viability of quite other platforms

and alliances. From the point of view of our focus group schedule as a whole, this part of the session served the function of opening up the diversity of points of contention in the field of European politics and encouraging our participants to bring into view multiple aspects of complex questions. It also explicitly raised the matters of legitimacy and democracy – in power relations in general as well as in the matters of the EU in particular.

Our analysis for this chapter had two stages. First, we read through the interpretive narrative account of each group session (see Chapter 6 for more details of this). In conjunction with this, we read the transcripts of this part of the session. So we were able to put our analysis of articulation of opinions and positions and the group dynamics during this part of the discussion, into the context of the whole group session and its formations of alliances and antagonisms. Our reading of the transcripts was explicitly designed to ask certain questions of the data: whether, to what extent, and in what senses, the group articulates questions or judgements about the legitimacy of the structures that govern them, including those of the EU. For this purpose, we used an analytic grid of items, the main headings of which were 'What legitimation processes are adverted to?', 'What institutional and system levels (national, European, global) are adverted to?' and 'What sources of legitimate and illegitimate power are mentioned?' One of these grids was completed for each group.

Table 5.1 presents a summary of the results of this interpretive analysis for the activist groups. This is the result of a highly simplifying process, in which the detailed codes in our grids are themselves read and grouped into a much smaller number of categories.

There is a notable pattern evident here. All our activists advert to, mention, criteria for legitimacy. We have analysed these under the two headings 'input' and 'output', following a standard scheme in the political science literature (Scharpf, 1999; Schmidt, 2012).[4] Strikingly, our Brussels and Paris groups emphasise a range of democratic 'input' processes: democratic deliberation, participatory democracy, democratic election. In the case of the Brussels Set 1 group, a more complex range of procedural matters is mentioned. Such references are absent from the discussion of the two Oxford activist groups who certainly talk about matters that can justify the EU – but these are without exception on the 'output' side, and include peace, prosperity and the right regulation of the economy. It's equally striking that the Paris and Brussels activist groups don't, at all, mention output factors in connection with justification or legitimation.

Table 5.1 Analysis of legitimacy themes in activist group discussions

Activist group	Legitimacy construction		Levels	Sources of power	
	Input	Output		Legitimate	Illegitimate
Brussels Set 1	Procedures, Democratic deliberation		National, regional, European	Parliaments, EP Citizens	Corrupt MPs
Brussels Set 2	Democratic deliberation		National, regional, European	Parliaments	Markets to be regulated
Paris Set 1	Participatory democracy		Nation state		Capital markets
Paris Set 2	Elections		Nation state	Parliaments	Capital markets
Oxford Set 1		Peace, prosperity	Nation state vs. Europe	Market society	Market
Oxford Set 2		Good regulation	Subsidiarity	Citizens and parliament	

We also report in this table the 'levels' of political organisation that are explicit in the discussions. Again, there is a striking national pattern. The Brussels groups explicitly discuss the circulation of power and concomitant complexities of legitimation between the national, regional and European levels. They tend to take it for granted, actually, that a quasi-technical, functional, solution to the problem of what power and authority should legitimately be wielded at each level is possible. The Paris activist groups focus on the matter of legitimacy entirely from the perspective of the nation state and French citizens. By contrast, our Set 1 Oxford activist group was highly polarised between the europhile and eurosceptic positions. The relationship between the nation state and Europe, and what could and could not be justified, dominated their conversation. The Set 2 activists took it for granted that the principle of 'subsidiarity' is a legitimate principle, needs to be argued about, but could work.[5]

Finally, we report a summary of their remarks that can be interpreted as adverting to legitimate and illegitimate sources of power over people's lives. For the most part this follows a very clear 'politics: legitimate, markets: illegitimate' (or at least, of suspect legitimacy) pattern. This is with the exception of the Oxford Set 1 group – but there the argument that

markets are the key legitimate source of power is attributable to just one eurosceptic participant.[6]

Table 5.2 reports the same analysis for the rest of the groups, organised by country and then by occupational status. There are fewer very clear patterns here, and the construction of synoptic categories is more difficult because there is a much more wide-ranging set of topics raised and dropped, more vague discussions of whether arrangements are justified or not, acceptable or not, and a good deal of cloudiness regarding whether the discussion is about Europe at all or not. If the cognitive fuzziness is clear, some striking patterns do emerge.

First, the vast majority of groups do talk about procedural, input-side, criteria for legitimacy – or, let us note, for illegitimacy.[7] Similarly, the vast majority of groups mention outputs: welfare, living standards, social equality, security, social security, peace, justice, among them. The Paris groups stand out here for an emphasis on illegitimacy and on bads rather than goods. Where other groups suggest that there would need to be democracy in the form of elections, or equal representation in the governing institutions, or a proper division and sharing of power, were European governance to be legitimate, the Paris employees argue that the reason why it is not legitimate is that these democratic political processes are corrupted or non-existent. The Paris workers and employees only mention bad things as outputs: prices, unemployment, poverty. One of the Paris managers groups speaks of living standards, peace and equality – but also of inequality.

Second, when we turn to the matter of sources of power, legitimate and illegitimate, that are invoked or adverted to in these discussions, we find that there is an emphasis overall on the illegitimate. We have coded as 'corruption in politics' all references to MPs and others taking money out of the system, to the domination of the electoral system by party (rather than social, or national, or European, or ethical) interests and to the domination of the policy and administration systems by lobbies, corporate interests and so on. Second, there is a range of references that we have here coded as 'market failure'. Participants mention illegal markets (e.g. the markets for prostitution, and the markets for labour which are outside of the tax and regulatory systems). Here we have also included discussions of unjustly low wages and the like. Obviously, the category 'market failure' is highly contestable here – some economists might see these phenomena precisely as market solutions. But the point is that our participants discuss these matters in a way that emphasises that these are bad things, injustices, the costs of which are borne by ordinary people while, somewhere, someone is taking profit, and hence

Table 5.2 Analysis of legitimacy themes by group

Group	Legitimacy (Illegitimacy)		Levels	Sources of power	
	Input	**Output**		**Legitimate**	**(Illegitimate)**
Paris Workers 1	Legislation	(Prices)	European level obscure		(Corruption in politics; corporations; plutocracy)
Paris Workers 2	Equality in institutions		Sceptical about common markets; national level legislation		
Paris Employees 1	(Corruption)	(Unemployment, poverty)	Nation		(Corruption in politics)
Paris Employees 2	(Corruption, economic interests)		National identity in global context	Need for non-corrupt assemblies	(Corruption in politics)
Paris Managers 1		Welfare and living standards; equality (and inequality) peace	National interests		(Market failure; corruption in politics)
Paris Managers 2	Representation, referenda		Europe analogised to UN; State must defend against market	European Parliament?	(Corruption in politics)
Brussels Workers 1		Development; security; social security		Democracy	(Lobbys; market failure)
Brussels Workers 2	Democratic elections		Distinctions between levels obscure; Global institutions referred to	Vague references to democratic and governmental institutions	(market failure)

Table 5.2 (Continued)

Group	Legitimacy (Illegitimacy)		Levels	Sources of power	
	Input	**Output**		**Legitimate**	**(Illegitimate)**
Brussels Employees 1	Shared power	Taxation; common market	Nation state must be overcome for some purposes	Democratic division of power	
Brussels Employees 2	Representative procedures (failures of identification and representation)	Employment (unemployment)	National and European		(Market failure); (Political failure)
Brussels Managers 1	(Non democratic procedures)	Security	Nation states, regions, European		(Lobbys corrupt expertise)
Brussels Managers 2	Elections; Unity and diversity	Peace	Nation states, regions, European	Democracy	(Market failure)
Oxford Workers 1	Democracy	Justice	Nation state vs other nation states		(Market failure)
Oxford Workers 2	Democracy; citizenship		Nation states; Europe; global		(Political corruption)
Oxford Employees 1	National state democracy		Nation state vs Europe		(Political corruption)
Oxford Employees 2		Equality; peace	Concern about their ignorance of Europe		(Political corruption)
Oxford Managers 1	Democracy, national or European		Nation state vs Europe; Global level	Markets	(Political corruption)
Oxford Managers 2	Democracy	Peace	Nation state; Europe; global		(Political corruption)

has a continued interest in the system operating as it does. There are sites of power, which coerce ordinary people, and are very difficult to even identify accurately, let alone resist, and they are illegitimate. References to legitimate sources of power are strikingly fewer than those to illegitimate. They, again, overwhelmingly can be coded as 'democracy': democratic assemblies, parliaments, democratic division of power.

From these analyses, we argue, a dominant normative position emerges from our group conversations – an idea of democracy. The activists specify deliberation and participation. The others mention citizenship, elections, representation, referendums. To be sure, many of our participants are cynical about the realisation of the democratic ideal. However, in our reading the cynicism operates to endorse, not at all to displace, the ideal. Both the corruption of politics and the overweening power of economic interests undermine democracy; but they don't, of course, destroy it as an organising principle. The phenomena of market failure – poverty in Europe and on other continents, spoiled environments, labour power going to waste – are lamented, not just for their intrinsic badness, but because they are a betrayal of the idea of democracy.

Representation

In the course of the discussions of the organisation of power in Europe, and in the context of their observations about the dearth of democratic legitimacy in the EU, the theme of representation is variously articulated. In our second stage of analysis, we coded the transcripts of the discussion of this question in order to examine patterns in the use and negotiation of the idea of political representation. It arises in several guises. First, there are explicit references to MPs, MEPs and other elected officers, and remarks on the quality of their representation of constituents' interests. Second, there are questions and comments about the position and performance of state governments and their representation of 'national interests' in the EU. Third, there is critical interrogation of the way special interests are represented by corporate market actors. Fourth, there is the question of how individuals are represented, or not, as citizens.

Just as interestingly, the representation of politics and of the participants themselves by the research team is often called into question in the discussion. The tone of these moments is invariably lighthearted, but there are interesting serious points underlying the smiles or laughter. This turns our attention to another aspect of political representation

in theory and in political science. Our activists, in particular, speak for others in speaking for themselves – they came in to the discussions with particular positions which then had to be articulated according to the context and dynamics of the group. But in engaging all our participants in political discussion, as we have emphasised, we have obliged them to decide whether and when to take a stand. Many of our participants do, indeed, take a stand – as a critic of markets, or an endorser of social equality, or pro- or anti-European, for instance. This requires a particular representation of self. From the point of view of traditional accounts of political representation, in invoking this phenomenon we are straying across an analytic line. It might be argued that we are in danger of muddling our representational phenomena, and hence confusing debates about the quality of political representation in the EU institutions. In what follows, we address that conceptual and theoretical concern and defend our position.

In order to clarify the interpretive frame through which we have read our participants' comments on and judgements about representation, we turn now to a brief account of the two conceptual and theoretical schemes that have been most helpful to us. To begin, we are influenced by Mansbridge's four-fold scheme of models of political representation (Mansbridge, 2003). First, in the classical promissory relationship, the elected representative is held to a promise by the electors. This is forward-looking from the electors' point of view. This promissory relationship is less realistic (in systems with regular election and re-election) than the second anticipatory relationship. Here the representative anticipates how voters will judge him at the next election, and voters look backward over the representatives' performance and judge after the event. In Mansbridge's third (gyroscopic) model, these forward- and backward-looking processes are combined. Electors are thought of as predictors; their predictions are based on the representative's past behaviour and reputation based on other signs, including crucially character and party allegiance. Representatives are not straightforwardly held personally to account by the represented people; rather the citizens have to focus on the system, and how it operates when peopled by those they elect to representative office.

In Mansbridge's fourth model of surrogate representation, even the direct electoral link between representative and represented is not necessary. It is a feature of contemporary political systems that assembly members and others take, indeed have, responsibility for the interests of

citizens who have not directly been involved in their election. Of course, the extent and significance of this varies with the electoral system. In first past the post systems, parties will feel some responsibility for the interests of their supporters in constituencies where the party lost. In most systems, representatives from special social interest groups – such as sexual minorities, ethnic minorities – will take wider responsibility than simply that mandated by those who directly voted for them. For example, party choice does not exhaust electors' political choice.[8]

Mansbridge's analysis has the virtue of de-clarifying the norms that govern relationships between electors and elected. It shows how judgements regarding promises kept or broken, the reasonableness of anticipating and trying to head off the judgements of voters, the propriety of voting according to social identity rather than political allegiance, or of finding alignment of political allegiance across the boundaries of constituencies, are invariably negotiable and always contestable. Mansbridge's scheme then opens up the idea of a network of representative relationships. According to her, all four of these models of representation have some currency, and some presence, in contemporary democratic polities. So the varying emphases on accountability, the varying normative criteria – promise keeping, deliberation, authorisation, presence of persons with particular social identities in the relevant institutions, and so on – are all at work at once in any actual system.

This theme of pluralism links Mansbridge's scheme to our other major source for conceptualising representation. In Saward's (2003, 2010) analysis, focussing on the lines of election, selection, judgement, accountability and decision is insufficient for analysis of political representation. Critical to any representation is precisely that representation is a process, a practice, which involves conduct and action. Crucially, anyone who seeks to represent another in any context has to act in a certain way to proclaim themselves to be acting in a certain way. In doing so, they implicitly or explicitly claim to be so doing. And this means that those who are purportedly represented may endorse, accept, the representative claim or they might contest it – protest about it, disavow it, quibble about it. Furthermore, there are audiences for representation claims other than those purported to be represented – and those audience members may question or challenge the representation claim too.

Saward's emphasis on the performance, the production of a representation and on these as social processes introduces the inevitability of

contestation. Mansbridge's scheme also accounts for contestation. Voters may complain about their representative's performance if she falls short on the relevant normative grounds, and, in any case, these normative grounds are somewhat indeterminate – at least, they have to be established as they vary according to the kind of representation relationship and that is not obvious. But Saward's analysis goes beyond this to the all but inevitable discontent that anyone will feel when they are represented in any way. Representations are inevitably partial for one thing. The normative criteria here are even more indeterminate and contested.

Saward also emphasises that we have to deconstruct the representative/represented opposition. Voters have to represent to candidates who they are and what their preferences are. They have to examine and evaluate the representations of themselves by activists, by journalists and by those who seek their votes. Both voter and candidates are author and addressee of representation claims in this scheme. As we mentioned earlier, Lord and Pollak focus on the representational failures that the kind of pluralism theorised by Mansbridge and by Saward bring about. They accept, indeed begin from, Saward's idea of a plurality (cacophony) of representation claims. Their concern is that although there are multiple opportunities to be represented and multiple opportunities to represent oneself and others to elected and appointed officers in the EU, this very multiplicity threatens democratic equality. First, opportunities for these diverse forms of representation are by no means equally distributed among populations. Second, because representation claims are plural, representation duties, we might say, are weakened, and there is ample opportunity for officers to shirk. Third, central players can monopolise representation (in all its forms) and can monopolise influence; and the inequality and unevenness is not at all compensated for by the explicit and formal integration of those who are marginal (Lord & Pollak, 2010: 128).

As we have already seen, many of our participants take it that Lord and Pollak are correct here: they see monopoly, and they do not see any practical or proximate way to break it. They also protest, quibble and dissent from how they are represented by MPs, by governments, by the EU. They also evaluate the performance of MPs and others in representing them, in the traditional sense of acting for them in assemblies. In the course of the discussions, our participants also engage in representative claims and counter-claims.[9] This is particularly true of our activists, as we have said, for whom representing a particular position in the discussion was, for the most part, unproblematic.[10]

Voters and representatives

We begin our analysis by showing some moments at which the research team's representation of the political system of power was challenged. Our setting of the problem for this part of the session was quite often remarked on, objected to, very early in the proceedings:

Extract 5.1: Set 1, Brussels, activists

Moderator: So, Europe is complicated . . . (*introduces the question*)
Simon: Well, we can say that something's missing. You've left out citizens. You've left out the associational sector, civil society.

Extract 5.2: Set 1, Oxford, activists

Allison: Can I just? There is a huge one missing . . .
Lewis: Yeah, what's that then?
Allison: The citizens.
Charles: Sorry who?
Allison: The citizens. Us.
. . .
Moderator: Where would you like me to put it?
Allison: Right in the middle.
Annabel: Right in the bottom corner.
Allison and Annabel laugh, Charles joins in
Allison: We're the most important.

Such amendment of our scheme was by no means confined to the activists:

Extract 5.3: Set 1, Oxford, working class

Robert: Yeah at the end of the day, you know what I mean, before you come to any of these other four things it all starts with the people doesn't it?
Brenda: And democracy.
Robert: Yeah.
Brenda: I think the power should be with the people. (*general nodding*)
Mina: Yeah through votes.
Brenda: Yeah.

Arguably, this insistence on including 'citizens' or similar as a separate site of power shows how discourses of civil society and non-parliamentary forms of representation and political power are pervasive in the public political cultures from which our groups are drawn. They might be thought to insert an initially sceptical note vis-a-vis standard accounts of the workings of representative democracy, the authorisation of officials in bureaucratic and governmental institutions and the interactions of governments and market actions.

Between the activist groups and the rest, though, as Tables 5.1 and 5.2 show, this insistence on popular sovereignty takes on a different complexion. The activists emphasise participatory and deliberative democracy. The others are vaguer and by them concern about corruption is marked. Here is one example:

Extract 5.4: Set 1, Oxford, working class

Moderator: What about the advantages and disadvantages of MPs deciding?
Robert: Well some MPs are a waste of time.
Brenda: Yeah.
Mary: Yeah I second that.
Brenda: I'll third it. (*Laughs*)
Robert: Some of them fair enough yeah they are good yeah but a lot of them are a waste of time I think.
Mina: To me they seem to be all selfish, they just thinking about themselves, I don't think they're thinking about public or anything.
Brenda: We do have a chance to pick our MPs though don't we? So that's up to people to get rid of them if they're not happy.
Robert: A lot of people have the attitude that, my folks think it doesn't make any difference so they don't vote. You know what I mean?
Brenda: It does, don't it?

By contrast, our activist groups, and some others, do voice an endorsement of the principles of representative government (albeit in some cases we can explain this by reference to their own aspirations):

Extract 5.5: Set 1, Paris, activists

Déborah: Well, if we get back to Europe, I am very much in favour of elected persons: having more power, really. (*laughter, notably from the moderator)*
Dimitri: Yes regarding Europe. (*pointing to the board)*

César: Me too.
Moderator: Well.
Dimitri: Because we should perhaps begin there. Power, in a democracy, is with the elected persons, who are designated by the vote of all the people.

This kind of classical representation claim – consistent with the position that underpinned our design of the exercise – is articulated more or less explicitly in all the activist groups. Annabel, in Oxford, underlines the fact that she thinks 'the citizens have their voice through their elected members'. But the quality of this democratic representation is also discussed in the other groups:

Extract 5.6: Set 1, Paris, managers

Fabienne: No but the problem with Europe actually is that the European Parliament doesn't have any power. It only has a consultative power, and so one of the demands must be to give the European Parliament real power, so that the European deputies are elected by the people of the different member countries, and to sort out the Commission, which has all the power, and which consists of people nominated by the elected governments of the State; that is to say, they can nominate whoever, so that (*Gabriel quietly gets up to get a drink)*: the power of the European Commission shouldn't be more than consultative. In my view, it's essential that the Parliament is supreme, and sorted out so that there is real democracy at the heart of Europe.

However, it is also noticeable that another opening gambit for many was to address, or voice, the confusion between national MPs and European MEPs. For example:

Extract 5.7: Set 1, Oxford, activists

Moderator: The question here is how should we distribute the power in Europe, and we've come up with four possible centres of power or places where power could be wielded; first of all by the nations, by MPs, elected persons . . .
Lewis: Elected to what?
Annabel: Is it MEPs?

The moderators' response to such enquiries was to put the question back to the group to discuss: should power lie with elected representatives or

officials, and if it should, in which locations should they work? There was very little detailed consideration of representation in the sense of questions regarding discretion, promise keeping, accountability, in these groups, whether activist or other. One reason, evidently, is that the relationships between European electors and their MEPs are exceedingly faint, and some of our activists were explicit about this.

Extract 5.8: Set 1, Paris, activists

Dimitri: The problems are with the link between the people and their European deputies; they are too little there, they are too cut off
Pierre-Antoine: Yes, quite
Déborah: But . . .
Dimitri: But there is, there was an attempt at the last European elections to change that, to re-draw the constituency boundaries, but I don't think that change made any impact on people, people don't know their European deputy.

Functional representation and multi-level government

Our groups are drawn from one consensual and two majoritarian political systems. As Table 5.3 shows, our three country cases can be considered as 'most different'.

Table 5.3 EU member countries consensus-majoritarianism dimension score

Country	Consensus-majoritarianism score
Belgium	**4.22**
Finland	3.71
Italy	3.70
Denmark	1.10
The Netherlands	0.99
Sweden	–0.29
France	**–0.50**
Germany	–0.64
Austria	–2.64
Ireland	–3.55
Luxembourg	–4.28
United Kingdom	**–10.41**

Source: From Mair (1994: 120) cited in Beetham & Lord (1998: 88).

These contrasts make a discernable difference to the conversations about legitimacy and representation. In France, when talking about MEPs and representation, the institution of the presidency comes into the picture. It is relevant both to the matter of direct elections and to the matter of the relationship of representation. In this case, the symbolic relationship with a figure who embodies the whole, the relevant universe, is key.

Extract 5.9: Set 1, Paris, activists

Dimitri: You can talk about the commissioners, about experts – they don't symbolise or embody Europe. There isn't one elected figure, who you know to represent Europe, nobody knows their European deputy. There isn't a European president. So, perhaps it's that that must be . . .

César: Yes, that's missing from the European level, so when Europe goes to international meetings, there are 10,000 individuals representing Europe, and in my view that's no good. It's not OK that each negotiation of the WTO there's the European representative and then that each country individually sends their's . . .

Later on, this same group of French activists returns to the question of the presidency. That it is a preoccupation for them (and not for their counterparts in the UK or Belgium) is clearly interpretable by way of the national frame. For them, the presidency represents (symbolically) the polity; if Europe is to be a polity, such clear symbolic representation is also needed. And further, such a figure acts back on the people – people know who they themselves are because of the figure of the president. This is in a reversal of the classical relationship, whereby the people elect, and the president or equivalent is appointed to occupy some kind of promissory or accountability relationship with the electors. Here, the status of the president constitutes the people as such.

Extract 5.10: Set 1, Paris, activists

Charles: So right now I don't understand what the President would represent. Who would the European President represent?

Dimitri: It's all to be defined, that's true. Who would elect him? Would it be citizens directly, in a global vote held in all the countries at one time? That's all to be worked out. It's a really important question. Whose power, what power can be given to the President?

César: Direct or indirect suffrage?
Dimitri: Myself, I stand by the principle that says that it's imperative that this European edifice has to be incarnated, and the best way to embody it would be by a human person. So, we have to have a man or a woman who embodies it, symbolically.
Charles: Well, and what power should the European president have?
Dimitri: But: well look, that's got to be defined, we start from the basis of the nations, really (*gestures to the board)*.

In the context of European integration, the functional representation of 'national' interests by governing bodies and institutions has been at the heart of the intergovernmental model since the beginning. The frame of nationhood, and the place of discourses and practices of sovereignty within that frame, is crucial to understanding how representation is framed. France and Britain are member states for whom democracy and nationhood are regarded as self-reinforcing and indivisible. By contrast in Belgium, regional representation is more obvious, democracy and nationhood are fragmented and the European level is just another extension of normal democratic arrangements.

Extract 5.11: Set 1, Paris, activists

César: They've taken the money, anyway. We've seen them. Then (*makes a sign of filling his pockets*).
Pierre-Antoine: They've sent young politicians, who've got no career (*makes a sign suggesting powerlessness*).
César: Quite, that's what I say. It's a gold card; so we must send people who want, and are going to properly defend . . . there you can effectively talk of sovereignty.

Here, our French activists appraise the quality of representation by representatives' ability to defend the national interest, the sovereignty of France. In the next extract, the talk of the Belgian activists contrasts strongly with this line. They link the quality of representation to the European, not the national, level – MEPs should defend the European ideal.

Extract 5.12: Set 1, Brussels, activists

Simon: Better European representatives (élus). Who (*hesitates)* have a real idea of what . . .
Moderator: Better European representatives.

Stéphane: Yes, I agree.
Simon: It must be Europe, not part of a scheme, or a representation (une représentation) of the national interest, effectively someone who's perhaps in the middle of their career, and who, we can say must perhaps have come from another different job, so who has rapport with the electors, who can justify what he's done, and the benefits in practical terms that he can get for his state.

In Britain, state sovereignty is clearly present as an idea in ordinary citizens' representative claims.

Extract 5.13: Set 1, Oxford, working class

Mina: I don't think, I think every country hate each other and it is hard, too difficult to live as a unity.
Brenda: Not everybody wants to, that's what half the problem is, I don't want anyone telling me what to do.

For the Belgian activists, and indeed other Belgian participants, by contrast, the European level only extends their political experience, their polity. It is evaluated in exactly the same manner as any level – city politics, regional – and invariably with a generous admixture of laughter.

Extract 5.14: Set 1, Brussels, activists

Stéphane: It costs a lot, for what it does.
Aurélien: But all parliaments are like that. The same with the provincial parliament, the local council – they're really expensive, comparatively speaking.
Stéphane: It's always the way.
Maxime: Especially the provincial . . .
Aurélien: Particularly the provincial, but the local councils too.
Stéphane: You know, for what a local council does (*Maxime laughs)* compared with what a European elected MEP does, I think that the local council is loads cheaper, and it does much more than the European parliament.

The Belgian groups have no trouble comprehending, and discussing, complex regional and multi-level representation, government and administration. The next extract brings into view a group of Brussels activists who joke about national identity:

Extract 5.15: Set 1, Brussels, activists

Stéphane: What's meant by nations?
Moderator: You can work it out, I'm not directive here.
Maxime: That's true! *(laughs)*
Stéphane: No, the question is what do we mean by nations, by states – the people collectively, or the citizens separately?
Aurélien: The Flemish nation!
Stéphane: Yeah, that's it – the Flemish nation, the nation of Liége (la nation liégoise) . . .
Aurélien: Me, I vote for more power to the Flemish nation! (*laughs)*

In Belgium, Europe is just an extension of normal democratic practices, as usual thought of in terms of a multiplicity of levels. By contrast, our French discussants seem incapable of thinking in terms of regional representation, or multiple levels, at all. Here's an (admittedly extreme) example of the kind of mystification that was expressed as our respondents tackled the matter of 'how power should be distributed':

Extract 5.16: Set 1, Paris, managers

Gabriel: So, one could say, this is just on the spur of the moment, that in each country we can think of the separation of powers, at least let's think about the three powers – can one imagine any of them being transferred to the European level? Because in fact, power, the separation of power in each country, what would be the repercussions at the European level if the elected members in fact had the executive power? There's also the legislative power, the judicial power. So, there you have power. The market has the financial power we might say (*Approval from the others, especially Céline)*. And the nations, I don't see what they are.

Extract 5.17: Set 1, Paris, activists

Guy: What is a nation? (*laughs*)
Dimitri: No, power – that's like the power of the nations in Europe.

It was also difficult for the British participants to catch on to the idea of multi-level government:

Extract 5.18: Set 1, Oxford, working class

Robert: If Britain was part of the EU who rules it? Who makes the decisions for each country? Who's making the decisions? Who's pulling the strings? I suppose you'd have it in the votes, instead of voting in England, you'd be voting in the European election.
Brenda: There wouldn't be... You think the government would be different? It would be run from Brussels, is that what you're saying?
Robert: Yeah.
Brenda: And we wouldn't have our own government is that what you're saying?
Robert: Well no. You would still be England and you'd have an England parliament.
Brenda: Well not necessarily, if you're European.
Robert: At the end of the day if you're in the EU, there'll be some decisions made from Brussels or wherever. You know what I mean?

Robert's unitary construction of the polity – England – is all the more striking because he had a strong Northern Irish accent, stated an Ulster identity and declared British citizenship.

In this section, we have underlined how the construction of citizens' legitimation claims is influenced by contextual factors. It addresses the conflict or compatibly between supranational governance and national sovereignty. The political predispositions of citizens to accept or reject the legitimation claims are anchored in the national political context as much as in political discourses. So there is another dimension of complexity that we have identified here and that involves the impact of EU legitimation claims on the conception of political legitimacy in the national context. The EU legitimation claims can strengthen or weaken the legitimacy of the member states and vice versa, as it is the case in Belgium where they are compatible. On the other hand, EU legitimation claims can hurt the definition of sovereignty and nationhood, intensifying the democratic deficit.

Informal representation

So far, we have examined our participants' constructions of popular sovereignty in relation to representation and their accounts of unitary state and multi-level models of government and accountability. We have distinguished between the formal representation of voters' interests, via

the political processes of election to a legislative and governing assembly and the functional representation of national interests by governing bodies and institutions. We also focussed our participants on the pursuit and representation of interests by actors in markets and bureaucracies. As has been remarked, the idea of Europe as a regulatory state, a technocracy, is one with currency, both positively and normatively, in political science and in the public political culture. There is room for this kind of model even in the world of euroscepticism as represented by James (Set 1, Oxford, activists; see Extract 4.1, also Chapter 3) for instance. One proposal is that in consultations, whether about policy design, legislation or implementation, there are points for citizens' and organised interest groups' voices to be heard, and taken account of, by governmental executives and administrators, and, indeed, for accountability as they respond to questions and criticism about their actions and performance. This is, as Schmidt emphasises, one aspiration that has been voiced by EU officials themselves (Schmidt, 2012). However, as the following extracts show this idea did not have much currency in our groups of democrats!

Extract 5.19: Set 1, Oxford, activists

Allison: I'm quite intrigued by the term experts and that we should even sort of think of power and Europe and experts in the same sentence really.
Bethany: What did you mean by experts?
Charles: As somebody becomes more and more expert he gets to know more and more about less and less till eventually he knows everything about nothing.

Extract 5.20: Set 1, Brussels, activists

Simon: That depends what you mean by experts.
Stéphane: Yes, but in democracy . . .
Maxime: You might consider citizens to be experts.
Stéphane: In the end, democracy . . .
Simon: Or you could say Jacques Delors is an expert, or they are in the universities, or they are the lobbyists, in the lawyers' offices. All of these are experts in something, so there you are – the term is ambiguous, which is why it's an important one, in my view
Aurélien: Everyone's an expert in something.

We have numerous sceptical remarks about expertise: 'You choose the thesis you want to defend, and then you find an expert to defend it' (Set 1, Brussels, activists). They are people who can be corrupted (Set 1, Paris, Managers); 'the connotation of scientificity and impartiality . . . doesn't correspond at all to reality. Experts work in the service of economic interests. And there are conflicts of interest' (Set 1, Paris, activists).

Extract 5.21: Set 1, Paris, activists

Pierre-Antoine: Look, it's because of what experts say that there are all these lies (un mensonge) in politics.

Extract 5.22: Set 1, Paris, activists

Dimitri: The basic problem is with the relation between the experts and the ones we are going to talk about later – the elected representatives. Who has the power in a democracy? It's the MPs. An expert can be there as an aid for the analysis, but it's the MP who has to decide, and decide completely independently.

Our activists' judgements about scepticism re-rehearse the traditional political competition between the government and the bureaucracy, and as Dimitri pronounces, politics must trump other sources of authority.

Representations of Europe and citizenship

The discussion of expertise also turns our attention to contests within our groups about representations of the EU. Here is one example:

Extract 5.23: Set 2, Oxford, employees

Mike: I think sometimes the experts don't take into account how difficult it is for . . . their decisions to be implemented at the basic level: I used to work for a company . . . helping with compliance with the directive for environmental compatibility and it's a total nightmare for the small business man, it's . . . the most complex piece of legislation in European history . . . they seem quite incapable for actually producing intel . . . that can be actually implemented . . .

Kamal: (*to Mike)* I heard it's quite straightforward . . . one of my friends turned up with some business and got it straight away, license and everything. (. . .)

Mina: *(to Mike)* Doesn't it take time, though, to kind of: find itself out?

This group is difficult to read, because of the very awkward dynamics between the members. On the other hand, these awkward dynamics make for an interesting episode of near conflict here, which however dies away in silence. This group transcript has far fewer words than any other; the silences in the session were extremely long. One problem was that Mike had quite a lot of knowledge of European institutions and the dilemmas of sovereignty and democracy they pose, but he found it extremely difficult to deploy any knowledge in the discussions because of how it made him stand out from the rest and because of undoubted embarrassment on the part of the others about how little they knew. One thing that is happening in this episode is that the group is making an effort to have a good debate. The debate consists of producing different pictures of Europe: as a complex bureaucratic regulator which produces impossibly complex unimplementable directives; as an enabling agency which helps businesses; as a developing system which has yet to reach a state of efficiency (and hence legitimacy) but is on its way. Nothing comes of this conflict: Mike adds more detail to his story, including dates and elapsed time, in an overlong (in context) turn; there is some embarrassed laughter, and the group lapses into silence.

The next extract shows a very common way, in our experience, to deal with disagreement:

Extract 5.24: Set 1, Brussels, Managers

Valérie: In the end I hang on to those who the times when they defend the . . .

Claire: (*interrupting*) Yes that's it.

Valérie: Ideas that basically support the union . . . the European union, which is . . .

Claire: (*interrupting again*) The union of hepatitis C sufferers!

Alban: Why must they support the European Union?

Valérie: Because I think at the moment, I think there is a full blown crisis, and the nations are putting the brake on, and so . . .

Alban: To me it seems to represent the political idea that we voted for them.

JF: After all, they can represent, they can oppose it, can't they? they are sent to the European Parliament, they can perhaps there be for: for other things (*laughs)* not that I think it's normal, at all normal

that in the European parliament there are europessimists, but there are europessimists, it's logical.
Franck: There are some, there are some.
JF: (*speaking at the same time*) It's logical.
Valérie: (*idem*) Well yes, that's democracy, it is after all democracy
Franck: And there are cowards there, as well. (*laughs)*
Valérie: Yes, true, there are cowards everywhere.

Here Valérie argues that MEPs should endorse and support the EU; Claire mocks the idea of a EU at all; Alban argues that democratic principles involve MEPs who don't support the union, whose legitimacy is determined simply by the fact that they were voted for. So here we have competing accounts of the nature of the European parliament and its fundamental constitution and principles. It is interesting that Valérie concedes the point about democratic theory and that her defeat in argument is smoothed over by a social commonplace (there are all kinds of people in the Parliament) and by laughter, so her face is saved. But our main interest here is in a serious competition between ideas of the duties of MEPs. Valérie here is making a particular claim about what an MEP has to do to represent her, which MEPs she could consider to be her representatives. She is also making a claim about multi-level functional representation: national MPs represent citizens' interests in national matters; European MEPs represent citizens' interests in European matters. Alban's challenge might also be thought to challenge this idea: the political antagonisms that structure conflict and partisanship, which are rooted in society, economy and polity, will result in political antagonism anywhere or everywhere.

Extract 5.25: Set 1, Paris, employees

Patrice: While they ask us to go to the ballot box, to say yes, or no: The question is, is it really us?
Hadia: (*to Patrice*) Yes, except that we have seen the debate that it raised isn't at all clear, between countries, those that say no, they have set a limit: they're trying to get them to say yes. Nobody has read it, nobody knows what it is in the end what it is as . . .
Patrice: (*to Hadia*) There you have ...
Hadia: It's a sales pitch. It's more or less a sales pitch, that's how I see it. At the same time . . .
Patrice: It was as big as a paving slab, what they asked us to read. (*mimes the size, laughs)*

Hadia: That came up fully in the debates, but, after all that.
Clélia: (*to herself, to nobody in particular*) But the nations are represented by the MPs, so it's consolidated (*mumbling indistinctly*).
Hadia: (*to herself, interrupting*) And on the contrary I think something different.
Moderator: Where? 'We are the nations'?
Victor: Hum
Moderator: Yes?
Clélia: (*to moderator*) It's us, but we are represented by MPs (.)
Hadia: (*to moderator*) But that came out a lot in the debates on the referendum. But the problem is that we don't only have all this to do we have to go to the market every day (*laughs*) and that's the point I think. We have to rely a bit on the experts. We don't believe in the MPs any more. At the moment, we forget that we were involved in Europe, and all these stories.

Here we see an extract from a very confused passage of discussion, with much hesitation and cross talking, which nevertheless throws light on the confusion that is felt about representation. First, there is the problem that referenda votes, which ought to be decisive, ought to be taken as the limit of the political process, are not so taken: in the case in point, state governments try to persuade no-sayers to vote 'yes'. The elites are trying to sell a position to the people. Furthermore, the document that the voters were asked to judge was ridiculously long. These can be read as complaints (albeit articulated in laughter) about two kinds of violations of popular sovereignty. But this line of thought meets the rejoinder (very tentative, to be sure) that actually the point of democracy is that citizens cannot attend to such matters. Either because of technicalities or because of shortage of time. We need to be represented in this function of constitutional decision. But we come round the circle: there is no trust in MPs (and the experts that Hadia suggests here don't fare any better in this group's judgement either).

Ambiguity and representational legitimacy

In conclusion, we want first to review what this focus group data suggest about the problems of political representation in the European context. To begin with, political legitimacy and, in particular, the representational element of that can only be understood as an interactive process between the European, the national, sub- and super-national levels, and indeed, the global context. Mainly, the point is that each national

political system has embedded its own way of defining and practicing political representation. Hence, the French participants emphasise the popularly elected president. The Belgian citizens take it for granted that their interests are represented at different governmental levels. As citizens, they need to discuss whether these divisions of responsibility are appropriate and they need to understand the system. Our UK respondents express high levels of suspicion and scepticism regarding 'politicians', by which they mean MPs mainly. Our UK groups are aware that the system also includes Scottish Parliament members (MSP), Members of the Welsh Assembly (AM) and members of the Northern Irish Legislative Assembly (MLA). The activist groups were more clearly conscious of this; the others were much vaguer even though some members clearly had regional allegiances or heritages. But it was Westminster MPs who were in the frame for various kinds of accusation of corruption.

Thus, the first point we want to endorse is that what is called 'the legitimacy of the EU' cannot be assessed alone. It can only be understood as part of a multi-level process: the nation state and its relevant sub-state levels in relationship with the EU. People's understandings of political matters and their conduct in reference to them depend on frames and representations. So structures of perception and understanding of the EU are of primary interest as we study patterns of acceptance and rejection of it as a political order. Second, though, despite the clear national differences that our research, like that of others, exposes, the details of our participants' apprehensions of and articulations of the criteria for the legitimation of power do not vary markedly. At least, there are some striking variations, but we need to consider their theoretical and normative significance.

As we have seen, our participants have pretty clear views of the circumstances in which political power is corrupted. As a matter of logic, the implication is that our participants have a concept of political power uncorrupted, even if they might find it more difficult to clearly state what that consists of and under what conditions it could be said to be realised (Philp, 1994). For our participants, taking money out of the political system, and even using the political system in order to further one's material interests – business interests, one's occupational prospects after office – delegitimises the actions and conduct of politicians, whether these are elected, appointed or advisory. Our participants, also, emphasise procedural, 'input', factors in their normative discourses about how power should be organised. As Tables 5.1 and 5.2 show, only 5 groups out of the 24, in this part of the discussion, do not advert to or discuss such matters of uncorrupt democratic procedures of elections,

representation and the like. Of these five groups, three are from Oxford and two of those are the two activist groups. We also looked into our data for more explicit adversions to or discussions of 'legitimate sources of power'. Given the vagueness of much of the discussion, the fact that the moderators did not, at all, force groups back to the topic posed and the fact that all groups – including the activists – found the assignment of a discussion of Europe a very tough one, it is not surprising that passages that can reasonably be coded as adverting to legitimate sources of power are fewer in number and more patchily distributed among the groups (Tables 5.1 and 5.2). Only 11 of the 24 group transcripts have passages that we have coded this way. Of those, five are activist groups. Six of the eleven are from Brussels, including the two activist groups; three are from Paris (one activist group). No Oxford groups apart from the activists are coded this way.

Legitimacy and legitimation of the EU, then, always need to be examined and understood as one level in a complex and multilevel system. But the criteria of legitimacy, those that are deployed by our participants, as well as those that are developed in political philosophy, have at their heart the democratic political regulation of power structures. And 'democratic' has, at its heart, a concept of popular sovereignty: 'The power should be with the people' (Brenda, Set 1, Oxford, working class).

This is adding the complexity of horizontal distinctions between levels to an already existing complexity of vertical distinctions between functions. A 'legitimacy trilemma' has been discerned in the tension between the models of the EU. If it is a technocracy, then a particular set of outputs might be the legitimating criterion; if it is an intergovernmental organisation then the respective governments' legitimacies (and demands on the technocracy) are what counts; if it is a supranational authority, then both the input and output criteria for legitimacy are different again. The trilemma arises because institutional reforms designed to target any one of these legitimacy sites tend to weaken the others (Horeth, 1999).

Our evidence of the haziness of many of our respondents' views of the EU, and the power of the national frames when the EU does come into focus, compounds this theme of the unclarity of boundaries of polity and policy, ambiguity regarding what should be legitimated for whom and the matter of who should be represented by whom for what purpose. From the citizens' point of view, as they evaluate and practice political representation in the EU, the tension between the 'indirect' representation of their interests and views by their own national governments, and the 'direct' representation of their views either by the

pressure of associations and civil society groups with which they identify (whether national, European, or global) or by procedures of election to offices and to representative assemblies, is clearly felt.

Further, we endorse the added complexity of diverse normative criteria for different representational relationships. Mansbridge's surrogate representation contrasts to the forms of representation that demand mechanisms and practices of accountability or of deliberation. According to Mansbridge, there can be no single *a priori* answer to the question what a representative should do. Saward's social practices of representing and challenging representations bring yet further normative criteria into play, whether the representation in question is of oneself and one's interests or political aspirations, or of another, or of a polity like the EU.

Disciplinary and methodological matters arise here. A theme that we have stressed throughout is the need to collapse any clear distinctions between political science and european studies in particular, and the more general field of political sociology. The construction and enforcement of normative criteria for judging representation claims and performances are irreducibly social – these are social practices that are deeply implicated in social identities and bodies. Saward conceives of three nested fields of representation: state institutions of representative democracy at the centre, surrounded by concentric circles of social practices of representation, and general political representation on the outside (Saward, 2010; Figure 6.1). We don't dissent from this scheme, except to emphasise that state institutions of representative democracy can only work through social and general political practices, and so should not be thought of as completely distinct. Given the tenor of the rest of his analysis, it would be surprising if Saward would really argue that representation in democratic state (or equivalent) institutions was quite different in kind. However, it is undoubtedly true that there is a lingering sense that indeterminacy, ambiguity and particularism might be all very well in the polity and society, but that there are arenas where they must give way to consistency, transparency, formality, universality, in the institutions and procedures of the state. Lord and Pollak follow Habermas in arguing for a two-stage theory of democracy: self-organisation in civil society and informal forms of representation have to be completed with a representation system that is formal and that embodies equality – equal consideration and equal access – in its procedures (Lord & Pollak, 2010: 128).

We are sceptical of this general line. Before we defend a particular commitment to the ambiguity of social relationships, all the way down,

as it were, we should specify two forms of ambiguity that we would not wish to endorse. The first is the idea of the sacred mystery of the state and of particular societies that are attached to particular states. The idea that obscurity is a necessary condition for a state's legitimacy, associated with conservative thinkers, most notably in the anglophone tradition with Edmund Burke (1790), is one that must be rejected. Political education is possible, in our view; state institutions should be open; individuals' conduct within them should be visible and so on. The second is a certain version of the idea that societies are radically particular and that participating in them requires deep immersion; that the practices of governing them, and participating in governance, participating in and reforming the relevant institutions and procedures, are not anything that can be known scientifically or even studied. This idea, with the displacement of scientificity by craft training, and an emphasis on the radical internality of any understanding of rules and procedures, is associated with Michael Oakeshott, and we would also want to reject it (Oakeshott, 1956, 1962; also MacIntyre, 1985).

However, rejecting these views is consistent with arguing that the norms that govern any social interaction, including the most formal and codified, are always negotiable. If philosophers cannot agree on the norms governing judgement in public law cases, or governing how a particular representative should act with respect to a particular constituent, or what norms should govern a voter's deliberation at the point of the ballot, then why should we expect that people should agree or that social institutions should be unambiguous? This process of negotiation is an aspect of all social relationships. Ambiguity, uncertainty, disagreement are not pathologies of social life. Politics divides people up, but in politics and in social life is a space for argument about the divisions.

Now, this emphasis on contestation, negotiation – politicisation in the sense of bringing conflict into articulation and taking a stand with some, against others – still leaves the doubt that the weak will go to the wall. Unless we constitutionalise and institutionalise formal equality in participation and a measure of substantial equality in welfare, this political antagonism will have a terrible level of casualties and will allow others to get away with murder and all the spoils of the war. Well, the experience of our focus groups shows that there are indeed some people who are very disadvantaged, in the distributions of material goods and in the conduct of the political conflict. Representation of people's needs, and the continued effort to include, should undoubtedly be the first principle of all of the political institutions of states, regions, cities,

the EU and the global level alike. We understand well enough that the corruption of the political process and the insufficiently trammelled and constrained pursuit of profit undermine the institutions of representation, as they undermine the institutions of politics, society and civilisation in general.

6
Reflections on Design and Implementation

Sophie Duchesne, Elizabeth Frazer, André-Paul Frognier, Guillaume Garcia, Florence Haegel and Virginie Van Ingelgom

Introduction

Generally speaking, we believe that the scientific character of social research mainly depends on the reflexivity involved in the research design and its implementation. So, we have decided to dedicate a whole chapter to methodological issues. More particularly, we aim to discuss, and we hope to cast light on, a recurring difficulty of cross-national qualitative methodology: the comparability of the data on which the analysis is based.

Our project analyses data from 24 focus groups in France, French-speaking Belgium and the UK, convened between December 2005 and June 2006. We compare eight groups from each of three cities: Paris, Brussels and Oxford. Each group brought together 4–8 participants – all were citizens of their respective countries. Our focus groups were experimental, gathering together participants – volunteers – who we ensured did not know each other beforehand and did not know any of the research team. The groups were intended to reflect a simplified model of social stratification, based on education and occupation. The resulting cross-cutting national and social comparability of the groups has to be assessed. In particular, we want to consider the question how far researchers conducting this kind of study should go in the construction of comparability.

The study focusses on reactions to European integration, and we wanted to examine this in the framework of a theory of 'politicisation'. Each group had to bring together participants with common social categorisation but with contrasted political orientations. The practical implementation of this sampling therefore required effective

recruitment of volunteers and the rigorous selection of participants. We will return to practical aspects of these stages of the work in more detail in later sections. We will then outline how the conduct of these focus groups was designed, in a quasi-experimental way, and relate this to the tradition of social scientific study centred on the focus group technique since the 1980s. We also explain how, and on what theoretical and methodological basis, we drew up the focus group schedule. Finally, we discuss our procedures and our substantive interpretive frameworks for handling and analysing our data.

It is important for us to go back over all the methodological choices that we have made and their implementation. Our analysis in this chapter reveals four criteria which we believe determine the quality of qualitative comparative research: the rigour of the sampling, the verification of comparability, reflexivity and methodological innovation. Respect for these criteria is not only essential to ensure the reliability of the data collected but it is also needed to establish the validity of the results, which depend directly not only on the research strategy adopted but also on the detail of its implementation. By aiming to collect data of high quality, by trying to innovate and test techniques that are precisely adapted to the research questions asked, by striving for a constant reflexivity towards them and by reporting on this, we hope to have constructed the right conditions needed to renew our knowledge of the attitudes of citizens of the countries studied to European integration.

Research design

In this section, we will go back over the origins and the objectives of the project. This detour via the beginning will allow us to explain many of the methodological choices made. Our research project was at first entitled: 'How discussions become political: French, English and French-speaking Belgians talking about Europe'. It was carried out from June 2005. The project was designed to continue the work on politicisation of discussion begun by Sophie Duchesne and Florence Haegel which used data from discussion groups focussing on delinquency (Duchesne & Haegel, 2004). In a context marked by citizens' growing disaffection with institutional forms of politics, understanding how their conversations become political is an original way, and one with support from certain strains in political theory, of reflecting on the potential for the repoliticisation of these societies. Publication in English of the results of this exploratory research allowed the authors to assess the influence of the French context on their concept of politicisation and, in particular,

on their focus on conflictualisation (Duchesne & Haegel, 2007). So the decision was made to carry out a comparative project, conducting focus groups in several countries. The topic chosen for discussion was Europe – that allowed us to position the research in line with the analyses carried out jointly by André-Paul Frognier and Sophie Duchesne on European identity (Duchesne & Frognier, 1994, 2002). And crossing these two research dynamics was justified by the fact that at the time when the research programme was launched, the question of politicisation was placed at the heart of the controversies in the field of european studies.

The project therefore had a dual objective, and it split into two series of analyses and publications. On the one hand, it was about constructing a general model of politicisation at the level of the individual actor and at the level of group settings. This combines three ideal-type processes of the emergence of politics in democracy: conflictualisation, deliberation and competition. It also aimed to examine social and national differences in political culture, and therefore in the nature of legitimate forms of politicisation (Duchesne & Haegel, 2009). On the other hand, it comprised an in-depth analysis of the diversity of normal relationships with European integration that citizens reveal when they talk about Europe. This book sets out to report on the results of this second dimension of the survey. But we think these cannot be understood independent of the dual objectives of the work, as our research design has been marked so much by its origins.

Experimentation

Focus groups became prominent in the social sciences in the 1980s, having been developed and standardised over a few decades within the market research profession (Morgan, 1996, 1997). The take up of this interview technique in social studies was thanks to two factors. First, researchers on the margins between the social sciences and marketing pushed for the focus group to be used as a method that was likely to collect, in a more economical way than the individual interview, a substantial number of opinions in a limited period (Krueger, 1994). Second, researchers in the social sciences saw this as the way of departing from an essentialist approach to opinions, to use Wilkinson's term (Wilkinson, 1998). The focus group method enables the analysis of the co-construction of meaning, thanks to the recording of interactions between participants. This dual heritage is still evident today. The method is both easily accepted and promoted in its canonical form by social scientists who use statistical methods, although they see in the

group dynamic a potential source of bias compared with the expression of individual opinions. But it is also particularly valued by researchers who emphasise the interpretive nature of data analysis, and who see in it an instrument adapted to innovation and to methodological experimentation (Morgan, 1993; Barbour & Kitzinger, 1999). Our project is firmly part of this second tradition. The experimental dimension of our activity is not second-best. We have deliberately put in place a situation which in many respects is artificial. This choice was justified by the idea that to study the mechanisms of politicisation, whether this concerns the politicisation of Europe or any other subject, we should create a political situation.

In accordance with other authors, in particular Lagroye (2003), we take the concept of politicisation to refer to the process by which citizens confront themselves with and challenge the well-established differentiation of the political field from other social activities. Our project, which explicitly takes up the standpoint of citizens rather than elite and organised agents of politicisation, put our participants into a situation in which they would react to this differentiation, to the specialisation of political action. We wanted to see how actors, invited to discuss together a political subject, 'tinker' and negotiate, invent rules, practices, ways of talking together. We wanted to see how participants in discussions adapt (or not) to the fact of being confronted with the 'border' of politics. By this we mean that in a world in which politics is a specialised activity, practised by professionals and dedicated enthusiasts, ordinary citizens have to take a step 'into' politics, or they can desist from this step and remain in an a-political place. We wanted to analyse how these participants deal with this setting – whether or not they cross the border, enter into political discussion and action. To this extent, our focus groups were designed to be a test of politicisation (Duchesne & Haegel, 2009).

The term test can, incidentally, be taken in its proper meaning, insofar as the experience of the situation was not easy. Our participants' expressions of unease, which in particular punctuate the moments which precede the beginning of the discussion and the break as well as their reactions of relief and satisfaction at the end of the session, prove this. This choice of constructing 'artificial' groups, in which participants do not know each other, in addition to enabling us to control recruitment, also corresponded to our wish for an experimental dimension to our project.

Since politicisation regarding European questions was at the heart of the project, the sampling for the groups had to be based on the political

heterogeneity of participants, in general ideological terms (left or right) and also specifically in their position on European integration (pro or anti). Our first priority was to guarantee a minimum representativeness of the participants – not in the statistical sense of reproduction in miniature of the structure of the base population but rather in the qualitative sense of representing the diversity of opinions with regard to the topic of the discussion. Second, we needed to encourage a group dynamic that is conducive to debate. This is difficult in a social order that does not favour conflictual behaviour, particularly in its relationship with politics (Hamidi, 2006).

But our sampling and selection strategy would mean that in the discussion the divisions between positions on European integration were activated and made visible. So, recruitment that crosses social homogeneity with political heterogeneity was joined with methods of organising the group sessions and the schedule for discussion (to which we will return).

Comparisons

As with every project of comparative research, we have in part been dependent on our professional networks. But we were also concerned to conduct the groups in the two languages spoken by the members of the research team, French and English, wishing to reject national and technical specialisation and wishing that everyone should participate in the whole of the research process. Methodologically, we believe that this involvement of all the members of the team at every stage of the work contributes to the comparability of our data and the validity of our analyses, thanks to triangulation between researchers. Comparing points of view at each moment of the survey produces a de facto reflexivity and avoids falling into such classic traps as national methodologism or the juxtaposition of national cases framed by general introductory considerations which do not have any genuine comparative results (Hassenteufel, 2000: 107).

As several statistical studies have shown, we know that the attitudes of citizens towards the European Union (EU) vary greatly around two main criteria of differentiation – national and social. So our groups were constructed so that we could compare reactions on these two dimensions. There is marked contrast between our three national cases which have diverse positions within the EU, and there are also differences in popular support for integration, in any case as measured by the Eurobarometer opinion polls. In summer 2006, (EB 66.1), 61%

of Belgians (70% amongst French-speaking respondents against 55% amongst Dutch-speakers) and 55% of French respondents declare that they feel themselves to be European often or occasionally; the figure is only 32% in the British case, where 67% of respondents declare that they never feel European.[1] In the matter of evaluation of one's country's membership of the EU, there too France has a median position between Belgium and Great Britain. At the time of our research, 54% of French respondents declared that their country had benefitted from its membership of the EU, against 71% in the Belgian case (69.6% for French-speaking respondents and 71.5% for Dutch-speaking respondents) and only 43% in the British case.[2] The percentages of respondents evaluating membership of their country as being a good thing was, respectively, 69% in Belgium (65.8% for French-speaking and 71.3% for Dutch-speaking respondents), 49% in France and 42% in Great Britain (EB 66.1).[3] As Figure 6.1 shows, these contrasts hold for the whole post-Maastricht period.

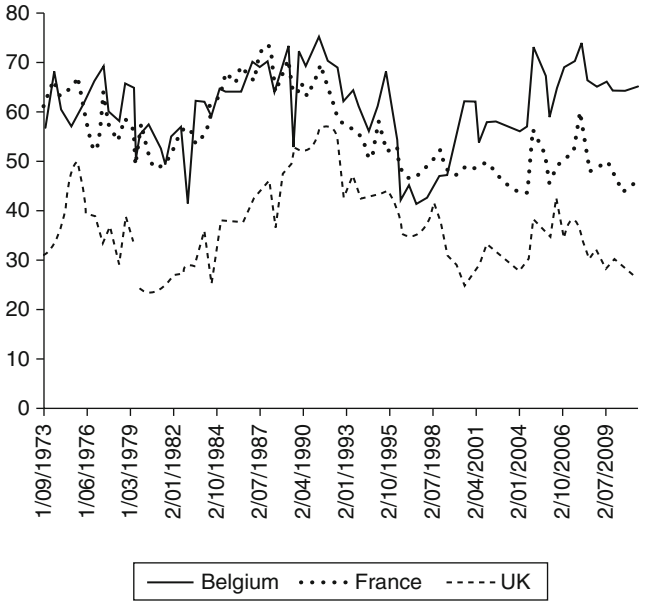


Figure 6.1 Changes in support for membership of one's country in the EU (Belgium, France and Great Britain)
Source: *Eurobarometer Interactive Search System*.

Our comparison was more precisely between the three cities where the focus groups were convened: Paris, Brussels and Oxford. In Brussels, our participants were all French speakers, most came from the Brussels-Capital region, with some from further away (Namur, Charleroi or Liège). In other words our survey refers exclusively to the French-speaking part of Belgium. Moreover, Diez Medrano's results (Diez Medrano, 2003), which show that national frames are on the whole homogenous from one city to another in his research, led us to believe that the regional differences are not such that conducting research in these three cities threatens our national comparison.

Although the formation of national cases is straightforward, we also had to implement a social stratification of our groups that is comparable from one country to another. This social stratification is first justified by the fact that the relationship of citizens with the EU is strongly determined by social affiliations and education levels. It is also made necessary by the focus group method. Speaking in public, especially on political subjects, is socially determined. There is the matter of greater or lesser ease of expression, of confidence in the ability to say what one is feeling and to convince others about what one believes. There is also the matter of the use of words, the structures of language, of codes of behaviour and cultural references. One of the golden rules when conducting focus groups is to secure social homogeneity, to minimise domination, within the groups as much as possible. We therefore organised our groups according to a simplified social stratification: for each country, two focus groups brought together 'workers and temporarily unemployed' (where unemployed participants had a history of 'working class' jobs), two brought together 'employees' (our label for the groups that consist largely of 'white-collar workers'), and two consisted of 'managers'. Two other groups were organised in each city by bringing together political activists, as a kind of control group for politicised discussion, in general and of European questions in particular.

This social sampling had to be rigorous. It required meticulous recruitment and the considered selection of candidates. Our need to control the sampling as carefully as possible in order to ensure the best social comparability of data led us to reject the recruitment methods that are most frequently used in focus group research. A common method is to use a key informant, who is sometimes paid to be an organiser and who convenes a group of acquaintances – friends, neighbours or co-workers, and so on. As Gamson remarks, interviewees who use personal contacts tend to recruit from amongst their acquaintances people whom they believe to be the most likely to talk in public, and who accordingly are

mainly found to be amongst the most educated (Gamson, 1992). By delegating the composition of the groups to them, we risked weakening the social typification of the groups and, in addition, their comparability from one city to another. Another common strategy for selecting participants consists in general of delegating recruitment to specialists, for example opinion poll companies. But we know that such organisations tend to work with files of volunteers who often end up by being almost focus group specialists, something we also wanted to avoid.

Recruiting 'ordinary' candidates

The first stage of recruitment consisted in communicating with potential voluntary participants. Throughout this initial stage, we were keen to make contact with a public which most often eludes opinion surveys and also eludes focus groups when these are recruited by professional research agencies. We wanted to widen recruitment beyond the circles of those who tend to agree to take part in this kind of study – that is basically those who are either in personal contact with the researcher or who take an interest in research. Besides arousing their interest, we had to obtain detailed socio-political information from them, in order to select from these candidates those who would in the end take part in the groups. A questionnaire was therefore given – by phone – to all those who replied to our advertisements (Appendix 2, part A). The process presented us with a practical problem of comparative qualitative methodology, namely the harmonisation of techniques of making contact and forming a sample in areas of recruitment which had varied characteristics.

Contacting potential participants

Recruiting participants who on the one hand do not know each other and on the other hand are not experts in opinion surveys by focus group necessitated a costly recruitment system. It was carried out in each country by a single researcher,[4] using various publicity channels, such as classified ads, internet, posters and leaflets. To increase the likelihood that all kinds of people would contact us, we were keen to remain very general in our presentation of the topic of the survey, to avoid eliciting particular interests or conversely (and more probably) discouraging those who were not particularly interested in the subject or were positively put off by it. The advertisement, therefore, did not mention the term Europe, nor the political nature of the research, referring to a

discussion 'on social issues'. But we did mention that participants would be kept anonymous. Introducing a financial incentive was judged to be essential from the start in order to attract the public who most often elude opinion surveys, particularly members of the working class. Having to speak for three hours in front of strangers and on potentially political subjects, while being filmed, is obviously an unusual experience. It might indeed provoke reserve, as some candidates in fact confided to us on the telephone, and as some participants said on the day of the discussion. To offset this reluctance, we engaged to pay them a sum at least equivalent to the minimum daily wage in each country. The level of pay was €50 in Paris and Brussels and £40 in Oxford (see Appendix 1).

We also had to make the advertisement as visible as possible. At the beginning we explored the least expensive solution, namely publication on the internet. Using sites for 'casual work', the most flexible method, was effective in terms of the volume of responses. However, it produced results that were quite socially discriminatory, generating many applications from young people from intermediate social categories. This was particularly the case in Brussels. The lack of this kind of widely used internet site made recruitment of this category of respondent more difficult in Oxford. An alternative solution was to publish the ad on distribution lists likely to consist of a large number of employees and managers in tertiary sector organisations (publishing companies, charities, etc.). The disadvantage of that, however, was the high rate of unusable response. We aimed to get together people who did not know each other, so we could select only one candidate from each company, even though in many cases we received many applications.

In order to restore social balance in the sample of candidates, and therefore to increase our freedom of choice in selecting participants, we also published the ad in free newspapers. However, this method only imperfectly reached the categories that were most lacking. First higher social categories are less affected by the financial incentive and do not often read this kind of newspaper. Then, working members of the working class proved strikingly impervious to this kind of offer. In addition, a pernicious effect of this kind of appeal was that it attracted a large number of candidates who were difficult to categorise, particularly in Oxford, where a large proportion of responses came from non-workers, including housewives, retired people and some whom we judged to be downwardly mobile. Classifying these individuals on the social scale sometimes proved difficult. Finally, we tried to distribute leaflets and to display posters in carefully chosen places, so as to more accurately

target the social categories which were lacking. It is here that the purely practical constraints linked to the city areas to be researched and the deadlines set for the teams to recruit participants and organise groups came into play.

Terrain

The size of recruitment areas plays an important role. It proved difficult to physically cover the whole of the terrain in Paris and Brussels, as we were working on the basis of a single recruiter per city. It was therefore almost impossible to reach working populations living in the (outlying) suburbs by going directly to meet them. Moreover, in Brussels, we excluded respondents working closely with the European institutions, and that deprived us of a major recruiting pool for the higher social classes. In comparison, the city of Oxford covers a much less extensive area, as the historical city centre, which is small, is easy to cross on foot and residential areas and factories are close. Here it was possible to carry out a major poster campaign in very different locations – newsagents' windows, public libraries, hospitals, community centres, churches, town halls, factories, department stores and banks, and so on. Intensive leafleting was also carried out, on several occasions, outside places that might recruit workers – the car factory, Royal Mail depots, the central bus depot, several schools, in particular in Cowley, a district with a high working class and ethnically mixed population. Despite everything, and in conformity with most sociological research projects, it was really difficult to recruit typical workers with jobs in industry, transport, and so on, and we had to widen this category by including temporary workers and even some unemployed people – groups who can more easily be mobilised because of time availability and are more attracted by the financial incentive. In Paris and in Brussels, we organised leafleting and posters near to employment agencies or metro stations in working-class and ethnically mixed districts (for instance, the 18th arrondissement in Paris, as well as on the premises of the *Restos du cœur* – a charitable organisation which distributes food and meals to those in need).

To recruit managers, who were not very attracted by the offer of payment and who claimed to be short of time, particularly in Oxford, we had to go and find people face to face – that is to directly approach accountants or solicitors in their offices, and bank managers in their branches, to try to persuade them to take part. In Paris and in Brussels, we also had finally to mobilise our networks of acquaintances, taking

care to maximise the degrees of separation between the team members and the potential participants.

If we leave to one side problems posed by the non-equivalence of the indicators used in different national statistics, every research terrain, without being fundamentally idiosyncratic, still has special characteristics which cannot be ignored. From the start of the work, we were well aware of the particular characteristics of the population living in the Oxford region – because of the relative importance of the University as an employer. Certainly, London would have been a better research site in many respects – more comparable to Paris and Brussels, if only from the viewpoint of its status as a political capital. But logistical constraints – London's size, the difficulty of securing a venue in a suitable building and related costs – made this impossible in the end. Research settings that differed from each other, in cities with contrasting social geographies, were the trade off for the practicality – well possibility, at any rate – of recruiting socially accurate samples of respondents. That we needed a relatively small number of participants and that our recruitment criteria were clear meant that our efforts in the end did achieve a good standard of comparability.

Time

Fieldwork took place successively in Paris, Brussels and Oxford. Although pilot groups were conducted in each of the three cities beforehand, decisions made for recruitment in Paris had consequences on the way we proceeded in Brussels and Oxford. Another constraint which influenced the recruitment work was the time scale. We were constrained – by professional commitments in teaching and administration – in team members' stays in the research locations. In Paris, where our fieldwork began, recruitment took place in two stages (because of the end of year holidays) and over quite a long period of about seven weeks (during the first two weeks of December 2005, then between the beginning of January and the beginning of February 2006). As a result, we had quite a substantial period of time to reflect and refine the selection of candidates. Time constraints were more pronounced in Brussels. Here the fieldwork took place over four weeks, which had a significant effect on the selection process. The recruitment stage was only able to begin after the end of the Paris fieldwork, at the beginning of February 2006, as the moderators were the same in both places. In order to be as efficient as possible and to cope with a lack of time during the last few days of the fieldwork, shortlisting of candidates, by telephone,

on the basis of their profession alone also became necessary, in particular to bring together groups of managers. In Oxford, the recruitment campaign started when the Brussels fieldwork ended, at the beginning of March, and it was carried out over a total of eight weeks, divided into two distinct stages. Because of time constraints (we had planned two weeks between the beginning of the recruitment and the organisation of the first groups), and the special characteristics of the place, we were not at first able to refine the selection of candidates as much as we wanted to. We decided to halt the fieldwork and restart it a bit later. We were therefore able to make greater use of leafleting. Altogether, the specificity of the recruitment stage in each city is reflected in the characteristic of the candidates we got.

Candidates' characteristics

We received 411 applications, 137 in Paris, 93 in Brussels and 181 in Oxford (Table 6.1). The size of the Belgian sample is significantly smaller than those in Paris or in Oxford, mainly because of the shorter amount of time devoted to the fieldwork, and conversely, the Oxford one is larger as we spent more time there.

The Belgian candidates also proved to be younger than the others, with the mode in the 25–30 age range (Table 6.2). This characteristic doubtless is explained by the importance of contact by internet. Thus, many temporary workers responded,[5] or at least young people (in fact mainly men[6]), whose professional position was less connected to their initial education, compared with older respondents. EU managers (civil servants, lobbyists, etc.) were systematically eliminated from the sample, in order to reduce bias from closeness of participants to the subject of discussion. In addition, unsurprisingly, the Belgian sample appears to be the most pro-European (if we measure this position by the hypothetical vote to ratify the European Constitutional Treaty ECT), and the British

Table 6.1 Sample size by city

	Paris	**Brussels**	**Oxford**	**Total**
Length of recruitment stage (in weeks)	7	5	8	20
Total applicants	137	93	181	411
Number of participants (incl. pilots and non-analysed groups)	58	46	68	172
Number of participants in the eight analysed groups Set 1 and Set 2	49	41	43	133

Table 6.2 Socio-economic characteristics of respondents to ad ($N = 411$)

		Paris (%)	**Brussels (%)**	**Oxford (%)**
Sex	Male	50.4	58.1	52.5
	Female	49.6	41.9	47.5
Age	18–24	13.1	14.0	15.5
	25–34	27.7	57.0	28.2
	35–44	26.3	14.0	16.0
	45–54	17.5	6.5	21.0
	55–64	13.9	7.5	12.7
	65 and over	1.5	1.1	6.6
Occupation	Tradesmen, shopkeepers and similar	–	2.1	3.3
	Company directors, liberal professions, senior managers	13.9	15.1	9.9
	Middle managers, junior managers	32.8	30.1	39.8
	Office employees	22.6	28.0	14.9
	Retail or service employees	23.4	11.8	21.0
	Workers	4.4	9.7	6.1
	Non-workers	2.2	1.1	3.9
	Others	0.7	2.1	1.1
Occupational status	Full-time employee	60.6	49.5	34.3
	Part-time employee	10.2	11.9	22.1
	Unemployed	16.1	29.0	21.5
	Student	1.5	1.1	3.3
	Retired	5.8	3.2	8.8
	Housewife (house husband)	2.2	2.2	6.1
	Other non-working	0.7	3.3	3.9
Auto-positioning on political scale	Extreme left	9.5	9.7	5.0
	Left	29.2	31.2	38.7
	Centre	16.8	23.7	26.0
	Right	21.2	24.7	17.1
	Extreme right	1.5	2.2	0.6
	Don't know/refuse to answer	21.9	8.6	12.7
Choice (hypothetical) in referendum	Yes	21.9	41.9	33.1
	No	34.7	24.7	25.4
	Don't know/no answer	6.6	16.1	33.7
	Did not vote/would not have voted	37.2	17.2	7.7

sample is characterised by a substantial number of non-responses on this question.

Selecting focus group participants

The next stage of the work was to select participants from the pool of candidates who applied. By taking their profiles, using the selection questionnaire, we constructed our groups so as to harmonise their social composition and diversify their political composition. Political orientation was measured not only on a political left–right scale and voting declarations but also on the basis of a question on European integration. The selection of candidates to be invited, and therefore the actual composition of groups, had an improvised, bricolage quality in the end. Our choice of participants was dictated by a series of requirements that it was not always easy to reconcile.

Retaining political diversity

The major practical constraint of focus groups is trying to bring selected participants together, in the same place, at the same time. Finding a time slot that simultaneously suited several people who did not know each other – six on average – but who were carefully chosen often proved to be extremely difficult. That had a substantial influence on the choices we had to make: the most suitable candidates, those who together would have made up the ideal group, socially homogenous and politically contrasted, with a good ethnic and gender diversity, were rarely able to convene at one time. We therefore had to choose replacements who were not always completely suitable (we thought of this as 'upgrading') and sometimes the choice of replacements meant that individuals who had been selected, and were available, had to be stood down (or 'downgraded').

The simple structure of occupation, in three categories, that we adopted to construct the social homogeneity of the groups, can be presented as follows: (1) The 'managers' category comprises liberal and intellectual professions, individuals engaged in freelance technical work, intermediary health professions (such as nurses or physiotherapists) and teachers in secondary and primary schools in supervisory roles and company middle managers such as department heads in small- and medium-sized businesses, IT experts, engineers, and so on. (2) The category 'employees' consists of white-collar workers, at the lower fringes of the intermediary professions (technicians, foremen, etc.) as well as

office, retail and service employees. (3) The category 'workers' includes temporary workers and brings together blue-collar working-class occupations with tradespeople, shopkeepers and other 'small independents' but also more broadly people without a stable profession and not very qualified.[7]

More importantly, we avoided identifying candidates simply from their profession, as that is far from exhausting their social affiliation. We took other indicators into account: first, the level of education, as a substitute indicator of the cultural level likely to be correlated to the professional position; second, family origin because a person does not belong to a given social class in the same way when he himself comes from a comparable home environment, as when life-time mobility puts him in a position different from his origins. We tried, as much as we could, to avoid participants who would be between our pairs of categories. This meant that we looked, in conformity with qualitative sampling, for 'highly typical' participants in each category.

The composition of these groups was also complicated by the fact that, when possible, we took into account the ethnic and sexual diversity of each group (or at least of each category of groups meaning that if one group was constituted only of white males, we would make sure that the second one would be ethnically and sexually diverse). This also explains some adjustments in the social homogeneity of groups. As well as the fact that ethnic diversity was likely to make parts of the discussion more interesting – in particular, the question of Turkey's possible entry into the EU – we also wanted to recruit participants who often elude surveys. Our aim was also to make these discussions closer to the real conditions of public interaction in our societies. However, ethnic diversity, like taking into account the sex of the participants, raises a problem of domination. Ethnic minority participants, and women, are more likely to adopt passive or recessive positions in discussions in mixed groups (Crawford, 1995; Monnet, 1998: 9–34). We had to ensure that they were not alone in a group facing a bloc, as it were, of white men. An alternative solution was to select female and ethnic minority participants with a slightly higher sociocultural profile than that of the male and ethnic majority counterparts in the same group. Finally, we note that this selection of invited participants was complicated further by anticipating the risks of non-attendance, which, we assumed, was more likely in some categories of our invitees than others (women in particular).

Finally, the logic of sampling for focus groups should tend towards appropriate diversity relevant to the topic of the discussion (Duchesne &

Table 6.3 Autopositioning on left–right scale: respondents to the ad and participants selected

	Paris (%)	**Brussels (%)**	**Oxford (%)**
Extreme left	(9.5) 5.6	(9.7) 6.7	(5) 6.1
Left	(29.2) 25.0	(31.2) 30.0	(38.7) 21.2
Centre	(16.8) 16.7	(23.7) 20.0	(26) 33.3
Right	(21.2) 25.0	(24.7) 33.3	(17.1) 30.3
Extreme right	(1.5) 2.8	(2.2) 3.3	(0.6) 3.0
Don't know	(21.9) 25.0	(3.2) 0	(12.7) 6.1
Refuse to answer	(0) 0	(5.4) 6.7	(0) 0

Haegel, 2004b: 48). The point is to encourage the development of group dynamics that favour discussion. We chose to create the conditions for political opposition within each group. At the time when they were contacted, our applicants therefore were asked to indicate their ideological orientation, their vote in the last general elections in their respective countries and their position in relation to the European Constitutional Treaty (Appendix 2). Table 6.3 shows, in aggregated form, the distribution of the volunteers and the participants selected in the three cities in terms of ideological orientation.

Because what mattered was first to create the conditions for politicisation, and not to produce a strict equivalence in terms of political structuring by group, the comparability of the ideological scale across the three countries is not so important. Beginning with a pool of applicants that tended to be left-oriented, we tried to rebalance things with a view to forming the most clear-cut left–right oppositions possible. However, we remained dependent on the categories of respondents who refused to respond or answered 'don't know' to these items as this tends to be the case among lower social and less-educated categories. Here, representing genuinely social groups was the most important, and political diversification was second in our priorities.

Finally, still concerned to facilitate discussion, we decided to bring together people whose opinions on Europe were on paper divergent. In the recruitment questionnaire, we had two items which allowed us to determine the attitudes of citizens regarding European integration. A first question concerned the vote, real or hypothetical, on the Constitutional Treaty. Although the position in relation to the ECT referred to an actual situation in France, since a referendum on the subject had taken place slightly more than six months before, it assumed a different meaning in Belgium (where the treaty was simply ratified

Table 6.4 Vote or hypothetical vote in European Constitutional Treaty referendum: respondents to ad and selected participants

Vote or hypothetical vote in referendum	Paris	Brussels	Oxford
Yes	(21.9%) 39.2%	(41.9%) 26.6%	(33.1%) 32.6%
No	(34.7%) 41.5%	(24.7 %) 42.6%	(25.4%) 27.9%
DK/ Did not/would not have voted	(43.3%) 19.3%	(33.3%) 31.2%	(41.5%) 39.5%

by parliament) and in Britain (where the ratification of the ECT, after France's rejection, was hardly discussed). Nevertheless, this is the question we used for selecting participants.Other questions on Europe, taken from Eurobarometer and posed in the second questionnaire that all participants had to fill in before the discussion begins (also in Appendix 2), also proved in the end to be poor predictors of opinions expressed by the participants in the discussions.

As Table 6.4 shows, although our 'bricolage' attempts to select participants optimally did not perfectly result in our balancing the groups' composition between europhiles, eurosceptics and those who declare themselves to be indifferent, we did achieve diversity.

Test of social homogeneity

In all, we conducted 32 focus group sessions, more than the 24 groups that are analysed in this book. We had four pilots in total, two in Paris and one each in Brussels and Oxford. They were too large, or the participants not well matched enough in socio-economic terms, and some key members skewed the discussion with their singular ways of relating and talking. However, running these groups helped us work out how to word our questions to the groups and how the session overall should be ordered, and above all confirmed how important it would be to carefully recruit our participants.

Later, towards the beginning of our main fieldwork in Oxford, we convened a group of interesting individuals whose endeavours to grapple with the alien topic of Europe were interrupted by the collapse of the moderator (literally, she had to take her jacket off and lean against the wall; she then slid down to the floor and the world went dark – one of those awful viruses). The bewildered participants were convinced that the whole thing was staged and that they were embroiled in some kind

of mysterious social experiment. We reconvened that group later in the fieldwork period, taking the discussion on from the point where it had been interrupted first time. But only three of the original participants came back, and knowing what the topic was, they had done their homework! They had newly gathered information about Europe, which made the group dynamic very different from the others – very nice material for a single case analysis, but not appropriate for comparison.

Our initial analysis of the results (scrutiny of our summaries and reports on the sessions, and scrutiny of the DVDs) led us to discard some other groups on the grounds that either the social composition of the group or the group dynamic, or both, made them incomparable or unusable. In addition to the 2 groups of political activists from each city, we have ended with 18 socio-economically homogeneous, and comparable, groups: 2 working class, 2 employees and 2 managers, in each of Paris, Brussels and Oxford. These 18 involved 99 participants in total (36 in Paris, 30 in Brussels and 33 in Oxford). Although as our description of our recruitment and convening procedures emphasises, we did everything we could to ensure that the groups convened corresponded to our design, the number of criteria to be taken into account in real time was such that we could not be certain that we had achieved comparability. In hindsight, therefore, we sought to verify the effectiveness of our work. We have chosen to represent our participants' values for a range of variables in the form of a multiple correspondence analysis, which allows the visual representation of the position of the groups along two factorial axes.[8]

Figure 6.2 shows only those individual-level variables which, in the analysis, make a greater than average contribution to the construction of the two axes. The first, horizontal, axis is structured by a continuum between a series of occupational and educational variables, participant characteristics, such as 'senior manager', 'junior manager', 'father manager', 'mother manager' and 'higher education' on the minus or left-hand side, and 'workers', 'father worker', 'higher education' on the plus or right-hand side. It is notable that the variable 'mothers' profession' shows up on this graph. Although our sample contains many non-working mothers, so we have fewer data points on this variable, it strikes us as interesting that having a mother who is a manager is far from insignificant. It helps us to identify typical individual participants from that part of our socio-economic spectrum. The second, vertical, axis shows an opposition between the variables 'small independent father', 'small independent mother', 'Baccalaureat or equivalent' at the top, positive end of the axis and 'worker', 'mother employee', 'secondary

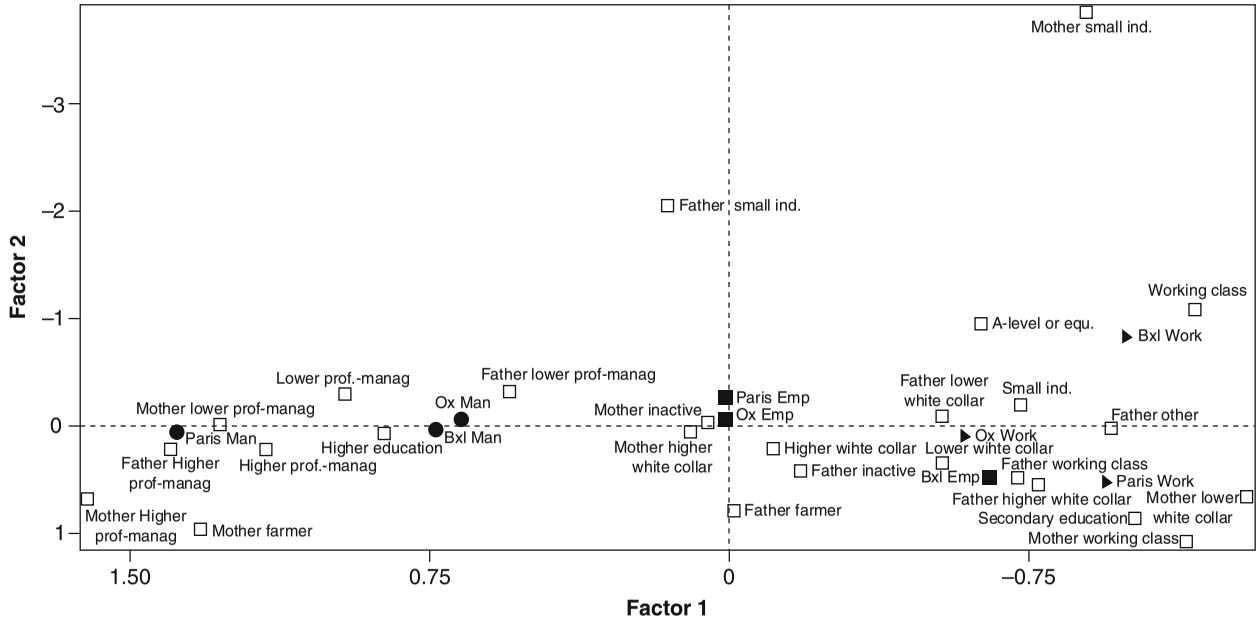


Figure 6.2 Multiple correspondence analysis of participants' characteristics showing position of Belgian, French and British managers, employees and working-class groups along two factorial axes

Note: □: Participant characteristics; •: Participant category; manager; ▲: Participant category worker; ■: Participant category employee.

education' at the bottom, negative end of the axis. Here is an opposition between social origin 'small independent' and the working-class world.

The graph thus shows us a world of higher socio-professional categories to the left. On each side of the vertical axis, towards the centre of the horizontal one, are the intermediate social worlds proximate to the world of small independents. Further right are the working-class milieux and right at the edge of the north east quadrant is the 'worker' variable itself.

We can locate our socio-economic and national groups – our participant group categories – on this graph. The French, UK and Belgian managers' groups are all located very near to the horizontal axis. However, they are arrayed along the axis – with the French managers appearing to have family origins that are higher, in socio-economic terms, than their Belgian and above all British counterparts who are positioned nearer the centre of the graph, therefore closer to the world of the middle classes. Our employees groups appear to be less homogenous on both axes. The French and British groups are very close on the horizontal axis, but more distant from each other on the vertical axis; the Belgian employees, close to the British employees vertically, are themselves located much further to the right horizontally, close to the working-class world. Finally, although the Belgian, French and UK working-class groups, located on the extreme right of the graph, are clustered fairly closely, they are separated both on the horizontal, with our British working-class groups being positioned slightly closer to the employees groups; and on the vertical – with the Belgians being located closer to 'Baccalaureat or equivalent', 'junior employee', and even the zone of 'small independent'.

Figure 6.2 shows the three pairs of French groups to be quite distinct from each other, ranged quite separately on the graph. This suggests that in Paris our operation of typifying our sample, and recruiting socially homogeneous and distinct groups, worked very well. The distances between various categories of groups in the Belgian and British cases are less clear, although there is a visible distinction within both. In the Belgian case, the distinction between employees and workers is less marked, while the managers' groups are clearly separated from the rest. In the British case, the distance between each of the three categories is certainly clear, but they are ranged over a much reduced area, the groups being gathered together more. Although our typification procedures worked well in Britain and Belgium, the result is less clear than in France. Our interpretation is that these variations are an upshot of the order in which the fieldwork was carried out and more specifically the role of the Paris fieldwork in setting our procedures

and criteria for participant selection. Because Paris was our first case, it became our base case, and the task in Brussels and then in Oxford was to conform to the Paris categories (as measured by parents' occupations, current occupation, educational qualifications and the rest). However, social stratification and particularly the role of educational qualifications in access to jobs are different in the three cities. We were, as it happens, quite aware of this at the time, being struck by the way job titles and educational qualification seemed not to synchronise in the expected way in Oxford, compared to Paris. So, our strategy and procedure of modelling the Brussels and Oxford groups on the constitution of the Paris ones, quickly found its limits. The results are visible in Figure 6.2. Nevertheless, the distribution of groups according to these social variables and their distinctness from one another are satisfactory, in our judgement, despite the pressures of selection according to multiple criteria in real time that we have described.

Recruiting activists

In addition to these 18 socially diverse groups, we needed to test our diversity in politicisation. In each country, we added two groups of political activists, thus taking the total number of groups to 24 and participants to 133. A topic like Europe is particularly sensitive to the effects of political competence. So it seemed appropriate to assess how very politicised individuals react to the questions we put to them in a group. We knew from experience (Duchesne & Haegel, 2007) that it is difficult, when analysing group discussions, to identify what comes from partisan politicisation, as in ordinary discourse ideological schemas are largely weakened. The discussions in the activist groups were therefore useful because they enabled us to record the most politicised ways of understanding the topic and prosecuting a competitive argument about it. Then we were in a position to check whether and to what extent such schemes were found in the other groups.

To recruit activists, we used different methods. At first we thought that recruitment would be relatively easy for this category of respondents. Activists are most often prepared to talk in public, they would be tempted by the exercise; we could make direct contact with the party and political organisations' offices and ask them to circulate our message via the internet. In addition, sampling requirements were less restrictive as it was enough for us that the participants have distinct and definite partisan affiliations.

However, recruitment turned out to be complicated. We had a disappointing response rate and had to make several attempts before

we could assemble groups which represented all the significant political parties and groups in each city. Quite frequently, we resorted to the tactic of sending the message that the party we were calling was the only one not yet represented in the group, and this often worked. The time constraint was such that it proved impossible to visit local branches of parties and to explain the project. Moreover, because Oxford is not the capital, we had less access to party or pressure group headquarters which made things even more difficult. Parties of the far right and far left were particularly suspicious of the project. In every case, it was not uncommon for us still to be lacking a representative of an important party the day before a group was due to convene, and last-minute defections happened with activists as well as other categories of participants.

Finally, the activists groups are heterogeneous. Not so much in social terms as party activists, as we know from sociological work, tend to belong to lower middle classes. But regarding the degree of involvement in the party, the activists we gathered are quite diverse. They can include simple activists in party branches, party workers (young parliamentary assistants, administrators) and even elected representatives or candidates. We were not able to control the selection of the participants who were sent to us by the parties. As an example, in the Belgian case, the activists taking part in our groups were all in their thirties and were managers in the party, with the exception of a very young activist in the Socialist Party who therefore ended up in a situation of de facto inferiority in the group. Moreover, they were also quite heterogeneous regarding their ideological relationship with their own party: some of our participants were explicitly part of the party minority. However, we tried to control for this heterogeneity when selecting half of the groups in order to increase the comparability of our groups.

Comparability: Set 1 and Set 2

Our procedure was to duplicate each of the socio-economic group categories so that for our final analysis of social differences we could choose the set of groups that was most comparable across countries, while putting to one side groups that were socially heterogeneous, or untypical, or too dysfunctional in terms of the discussion dynamic. A discussion of almost three hours results in a transcript of several hundred pages. For many analytic purposes, limiting the analysis to 12 discussions seems reasonable, especially as we aimed to combine several methods of analysis. And we judged that ex post selection was likely to better ensure the comparability of the groups on which such analysis would be based.

So, once the groups were complete, in summer 2006, and on the basis of all the data, we constructed two sets. The first brought together the nine most comparable and consistent groups from a social point of view, those where it did not seem that one or more participants had had any dysfunctional effect, as well as the three most comparable groups in political terms for the activists. Of course, the notion of dysfunction here is very intuitive, although research team members pretty much agreed that they knew it when they saw it. It meant, generally, that one person (sometimes more) dominated the discussion, forcing others essentially to react to his positions. This process of organising the groups into sets was carried out in quite a short and tense period of the research, based at the time on our initial reports and analyses of the sessions. So we wished to confirm, later, that our distribution of groups between these two sets was appropriate. Again, we conducted multiple correspondence analysis, analysing each group's individual-level variable values and measuring their correlation with the set into which we had put the group.

Figure 6.3 shows how the 18 socio-economically based focus groups and the 9 we selected in Set 1 (underlined) are arrayed on the axes of Figure 6.2. It shows that in the Belgian and British cases, we have clearly picked out the most typical groups for Set 1. We have selected the British group most marked by working-class characteristics, that is to say, furthest to the right on the horizontal axis, and we have excluded the Belgian group which was in the world of small independents, that is, out in the top right quadrant. The three working-class groups in Set 1 are quite close to each other – close from the point of view of factor analysis and positioned in the 'working-class world' of this spatial analysis. The employees' groups are similar. Those allocated to Set 1 are closer graphically and positioned in the centre. Again, the most atypical Belgian employees group, because it brings together individuals that have less education, and who come more from the more working-class world – the bottom right quadrant on the graph – were rejected in favour of the group that is more comparable with the French and British.

With regard to the managers' groups, though, the British one we allocated to Set 1 is not, at the factorial level, the most obvious. It is close to the employees' world, although we did have another group, more typical and closer to the world of managers, shown on the left of the horizontal axis. The characteristics of the groups help to explain this choice. The Set 2 British managers' group, although socially typical and comparable, consisted only of individuals who either positioned themselves in favour of Britain's membership of the EU or who simply did not position

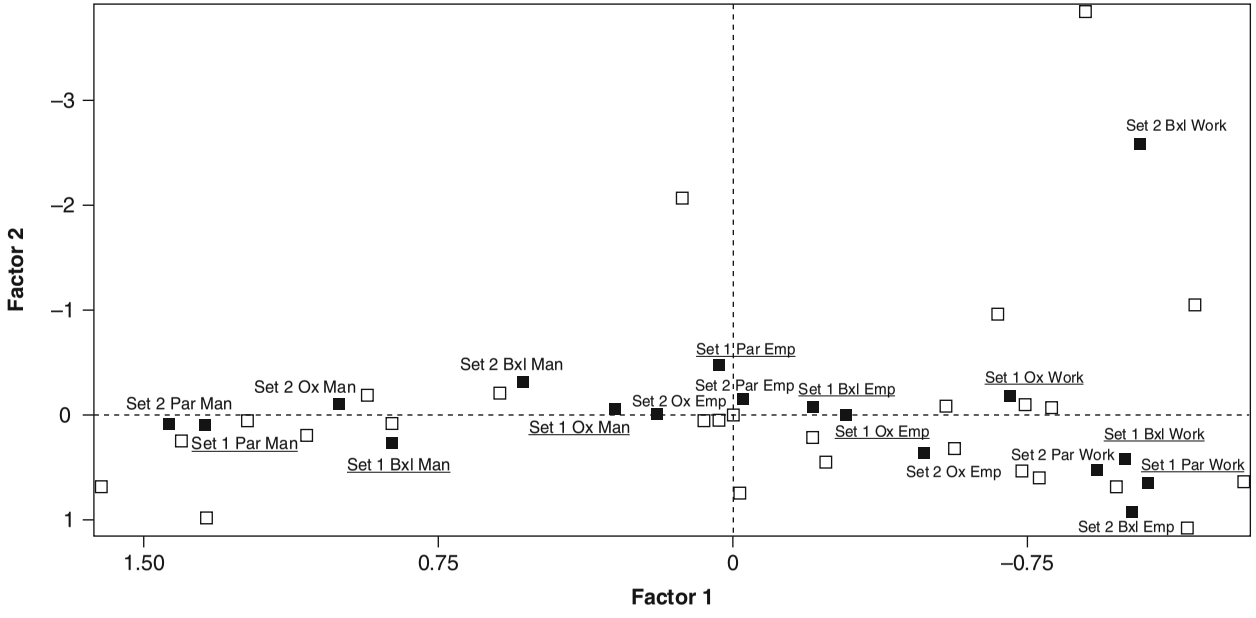


Figure 6.3 Formation of Sets 1 and 2

Note: □: Participant characteristics from Fig 6.2; ■: Set 1 groups Set 2 groups.

themselves at all. Because we were intent on dividing our groups on the European question, and in view of the acknowledged euroscepticism in the British case, this lack of any participants who were critical of the process of European integration was problematic. The Set 1 group proved to be more interesting, and the discussions conducted explain why we preferred to include them in our main analysis.

Finally, in both Sets 1 and 2, the French participants appear to be the most typical of their socio-economic categories, in that they are better distributed than the others across the factorial axes. Further, the French Sets 1 and 2 groups are closest to each other on the horizontal axis. As we have remarked, our procedure and schedule, by which we established the French groups first, established protocols for selection which closely fitted the Paris context and then attempted to replicate this in the other cities, have had an undeniable influence on the constitution of our sample of groups.

Conducting focus groups and generating data

Our recruitment procedures ensured comparability of data, socially and nationally, and conformed with our research aims of bringing together people who are not usually disposed to this kind of interaction. We tried to be rigorous in the organisation of the group sessions and the conduct of the discussions, as these determined the validity of the data collected. As we said above, we wanted to use the focus groups quasi-experimentally, in keeping with our initial conception and theory of politicisation, so we needed a mode of organisation and moderation that facilitated conflict and also allowed participants to move the discussion, and the expression of their disagreements, on to the topics that mattered most to them.

Different features of the sessions were meant to reinforce the experimental logic of our focus groups and to construct the discussion as a test of politicisation. The surroundings in which the groups met – in a meeting room of a Sciences-Po research centre for the French, in a university seminar room for the Belgians and the British – could not be for them everyday and banal surroundings. The staging of the discussion also contrasts with any usual course of daily conversation, not only because of the presence of a moderator and a research team, but also because of the arrangement of the room, the setting of chairs for participants in a semi-circle, not to mention the presence of a camera, which filmed the whole discussion (Appendix 5). This unfamiliar scene inevitably gave the discussion a kind of public character. Requiring participants to discuss a subject that is probably remote from their usual experience

and largely handled by members of the political system was obviously part of the experimental logic. Furthermore, the discussion was preceded by each individual completing a questionnaire (Appendix 2, part B) more detailed than the short one that they had completed by telephone as part of the application process, on their political opinions. This questionnaire enabled some (they told us) to deduce the political nature of the subject that would be presented to them. To sum up, everything contributed to breaking with the everyday in discussion practices and to giving their exchanges a particular kind of political character.

Creating conflict and allowing speech

Our moderation technique was also designed to facilitate conflict in the discussion. Duchesne and Haegel had used this technique, adapted from a method developed by a consultancy company, in their previous work on politicisation (Duchesne & Haegel, 2004a: 882). The impetus to conflict and the dynamic in the discussion is generated by the display of participants' comments on large boards which face them. The objective is not to reproduce the conditions of natural discussion, but on the contrary those of a debate that is partly public, but that is explicitly reflexively monitored by the participants.

On the board, the moderator sets out the main points that are made, writing these on cards and pinning them up as the discussion proceeds. The participants can thus see the discussion progress, as well as participate in its production. In front of them, they have a summary of the comments and can therefore react to these later (Appendix 6). This display technique is useful insofar as participants often need time to think, and seeing points written helps them react, and in particular to express their disagreement.

To further facilitate the expression of conflict, a particular rule – the 'flash' rule – is introduced. In her preliminary remarks, the moderator says that participants should not speak for too long (no more than 30 seconds per utterance), so that the flow of exchanges is preserved, and that participants could use the 'flash' either to express their lack of understanding, or their disagreement, or quite simply to comment on, qualify or amend the comments displayed on the board. When requested, the moderator draws a 'flash' on the relevant card; this indicates that the point would be revisited later, and discussed more fully. Moderators promoted the use of the flash, thanking those who used it, and hence introducing a clear incentive to challenge remarks or views, express disagreement or to question others.

Further, moderators left the participants free to shift the conversation towards subjects which interested them. The moderators' script, to which we will return, provided a framework for the discussion that clearly focuses it on Europe, but within each of the planned stages the objective was to make it as easy as possible for as many as possible to take part, to allow disagreements to emerge and not to refocus the conversation by redirecting participants to the European issue. In the event, the practice of the three moderators, Sophie Duchesne, Florence Haegel for the French-speaking groups and Elizabeth Frazer for the British groups, was not completely uniform. Their styles of moderation varied according to professional habits and personalities; and Duchesne and Haegel, but not Frazer, had undergone formal training in this moderation technique. Our conduct of the groups, actually, encompasses two psychology traditions which inspire interviewing techniques in the social sciences – the experimental psychology associated with the development of the focus group interview by Merton (1987), and the clinical psychology, popularised by Rogers (1945). The three can be arrayed on a continuum from the less (Haegel) to the more directive (Frazer). Such differences between research settings are usually quite invisible when national research teams work more or less independently of one another. Our integrated method (Duchesne, for instance, was present at every focus group session) has allowed us to take this variation into account, in our analyses.

Our principle of allowing participants to talk about what they wanted, and not to force them to redirect the flow of the discussion onto European questions, allowed the groups often to ignore the European level and to address matters that interested them, such as global economic and social dynamics, work, education, immigration, and so on. It allowed a whole range of possible reactions to the proposed instruction. It means that we can observe in these groups many strategies of avoiding and evading the task of talking about politics and talking about Europe. The first strategy is of course silence: some participants in fact only speak very occasionally. The share of the 'silent' or the 'not very talkative' is a function of at least two parameters. The first, as studies of political engagement in general and of political discussion in particular indicate, is linked to the influence of social inequalities (Mansbridge, 1983; Sanders, 1997; Mendelberg, 2002). Even if the attention that we gave to the composition of the groups allowed us to create relatively homogenous socio-occupational milieux, social inequalities still remain and those of sex are particularly powerful. As we indicated above, we quickly observed that it was imperative to put more than one woman in

a group to avoid seeing our only female participant retreat into silence. The second parameter relates to the size of the groups. The distribution of those who speak is all the more balanced as the group is smaller. A larger group probably allows some to free ride more easily. Our pilot groups convinced us that six participants is the maximum number if most are to contribute to the discussion – four or five is better in that regard; but the risk of defection was such that we kept inviting six participants per group.

In addition to silence, participants had other strategies of avoidance. One was to maintain a classroom-like, face-to-face relationship with the moderator, waiting to be told. Another was to resort to asides and discussions with neighbours, inaudible to the group and to the recording equipment. But above all, if questions of Europe did not inspire them, they were free to talk of other things. Notably, the task of refocusing the group was quite often spontaneously taken up by one of the participants, noticing and noting that the discussion was no longer about Europe, or questioning others about the connection between what they were saying and the European issue.

We began from the premise that from the moment the groups were asked to talk about Europe, all the talk that this instruction generated was meaningful in understanding their reactions to the European question. This includes those reactions that seem, on the face of it, to be distant from the initial question. This principle follows from the social scientific method inspired by clinical psychology, which is at the heart of the introduction of non-directive interviews into the social sciences (Rogers, 1945; Michelat, 1975). When the topic to be explored is proposed to respondents in such a way that they find they are free to respond as they wish, all associations of ideas, even when they appear to be digressions from the initial topic, inform us about the way in which the respondents define, understand and make sense of the topic, in the context of the research.

The schedule

The conduct of the discussion, then, was largely free and non-directive. But the conduct of the sessions was based on a schedule of scripted questions put to the groups in a rigorously standardised manner (Appendix 4). Sessions lasted about three hours (a long period by comparison to other focus group studies) and were structured around five major sequences, taking about 30–45 minutes each, except for the last, which was shorter. This left open large time slots for discussion.

Our data also include documented observations made by the research team throughout the sessions. We have field notes covering the arrival period, the break (about 30 minutes around a buffet table) and finally the period after the discussion closed and before the participants'departure. These notes include all comments made, and all conduct and action that the team members present were able to observe and recall. These documents were written jointly. We do not here reproduce any samples of these, as they all contain very personal notes. Each consists of about four pages; the initial version was drafted by Duchesne and completed in turn by all team members present. This was a minimum of three people (the moderator or moderators, the researcher in charge of recruitment and reception and a research assistant in charge of the camera).

Constructing a focus group schedule consisting of meaningful topics and questions, which could provoke similar levels of engagement and interest in the three countries, relied on a process of harmonisation, translation and evaluation. We tested different versions of the script by carrying out pilot discussions in the three countries. The final script which was used for the 24 groups analysed met a dual objective. First, we wanted to tap many facets of normal relations between citizens and Europe and, therefore, to address the questions of identity, legitimacy and interest (in the dual sense of being interested in and of having an interest). Second, we wanted to allow, encourage, conflict to build up over the discussion.

The first question 'What does it mean to be European?' was to act as a warm-up and allow us to collect data on perceptions of European borders and degrees of identification with Europe. The second question was aimed at confronting the participants with the complexity of the European system. They were asked 'How should we distribute power in Europe?' and to sequentially discuss the advantages and disadvantages of four sources of power: nations, elected representatives, experts and the market. After that there was a break, and then in the second half we posed questions designed to provoke conflict or at least debate. The topics chosen were a priori more controversial. We formulated the third question in a deliberately provocative way: 'Who profits from Europe?' It aimed to reveal a possible divide between the losers and winners of European integration. The fourth question concerned the issue of Turkey's entry into the EU. The techniques of eliciting responses to these two questions were also chosen with the aim of provoking conflictualisation. Whereas in the first session participants responded individually, for the third question they had to work in groups of two or

three and write their responses on cards which would be displayed, then discussed together. To form these sub-groups, and based on observations of the first half of the session, we tried to put together participants who we thought were similar in view of their positions on integration or in terms of ideological orientation. We were aiming to maximise the differences of opinion within the group. Response to the fourth question took the form of an a priori vote, for or against Turkey's entry in the EU. We asked the participants to vote before the discussion, publicly, in front of the others, telling them that they would then have the opportunity to express their doubts and that their vote could be revised. This technique of a preliminary vote also responded to a concern to create the conditions for conflictualisation, by fixing the discussion on clear-cut and clearly expressed positions.

In addition to the choice of topics and the response techniques, the hypothesis of a greater conflictualisation in the second session resulted from the idea that the participants, having had the opportunity to get to know each other in the first half, to take stock of each other's opinions, would be able to identify the participants with whom they agreed or disagreed on European questions. Insofar as we know that conflictualisation comes from the creation of an alliance (Duchesne & Haegel, 2007), we had to give the participants the time to identify other people's positions, so that the formation of alliances becomes possible when the questions asked became more controversial. Finally, the fifth question asked the participants to position the different national parties (and regional parties in the case of French-speaking Belgium) on a continuum going from the most in favour to the least in favour of Turkey's entry into the EU. It aimed both to give us data to assess the political competence of each of the participants and also to provide a period of calm and cooperation after a period of more heated discussion. The more relaxed atmosphere was helped by the fact that there was often no 'correct answer', as the parties' positions on Turkey's accession to the EU was far from always being clear or unanimous and by the fact that the participants' position in front of the political world of parties allowed a semblance of solidarity to be recreated, based on opposition between 'them', the politicians, and 'us', the citizens.

Data analysis

This way of organising and conducting focus groups is clearly in line with the standard social science uses of them, in opposition to market research. Following Morgan (1997), the method loosened the rules and

procedures elaborated in the marketing context and favoured methodological innovation. More importantly, the tradition is associated with interpretive analytic methods that explore the complexity of the data to the greatest possible extent. Theoretically, advocates of this kind of focus group work take a position close to 'social constructivism' with respect to 'opinions', 'attitudes' and political positions. It questions the idea that opinions are independent elements of individual consciousness, standing in a linear, predictive, relationship with subsequent behaviour or action. For constructivists, the meaning that people give to things and their actions is constructed in context, in interaction, and it is these interactions that we should analyse to reconstruct the meaning that is exchanged and to assess the impact of the opinions expressed. This general position is of course fully realised in the focus groups. Here, the analysis of interactions is therefore not additional and detached from the analysis of the content: it is work that is essential to understand the meaning exchanged in the conversations.

Interpretive analysis and the reconstruction of reaction

This constructivist understanding of respondents' positions is all the more legitimate here as the subject of discussion was clearly remote from the familiar reality of our participants. As White shows, when European citizens discuss the questions which are important to them, they do not spontaneously mention European integration (White, 2011). Participants in our groups often indicated that the subject was unfamiliar or that it was boring. Thus, they clearly signalled that the opinions that they might produce on the subject were not well formed in advance of the discussion. They were, rather, constructed during the sessions.

Further, the discussions we organised are, as are many other focus groups, marked by the fragmented and disorganised nature of the reasoning. The transcripts consist of many sequences that are difficult to understand for anyone who merely reads them – that is, for anyone who looks for meaning only in the content and the sequence of utterances. Our participants react, gradually, to what is said and to what they hear. One problem in the interpretation of focus group data is the impossibility of recreating with certainty and accuracy what each person heard or understood of what the others may have said. This is particularly true at times when the discussion becomes heated, and when the participants tend to talk at the same time. Our method of displaying the course of the discussion on the board was aimed at partly overcoming this problem. But, of course, there was a time lag, as the moderators displayed

cards in batches. (This is quite apart from the issue of legibility – which was pointedly brought up by participants in teasing and by asking the moderators to read the cards out.) In sum, it is necessary before trying systematically to analyse and compare the data, to go through a stage of interpretive construction of the meaning of the utterances exchanged. At this point, we make the data – the transcripts – into a corpus in the proper meaning of the term.

Our procedure for relating utterances to the development of relations between the protagonists in order to understand meaning has been inspired by the work of Billig. From conversations between close relatives about the British royal family (Billig, 1992), he shows how arguments are adapted to the reputation of the interlocutors: someone considered to have strong opinions will be led to retain his role, to construct his discourse and to adapt his replies in order to always have the last word. By contrast, our groups were made up of strangers without any prior reputations to maintain. But, their interventions certainly should be interpreted as reactions of participants to each other and impressions of group members were developed over the course of the session. These impressions and reputations tended to be strengthened after a while in systems of more or less explicit alliances. Our interpretive analysis therefore aimed to understand these interpersonal games and to provide an interpretive framework from which we could analyse how participants constructed their interventions and adapted their positions according to that held by those with whom they wanted to express agreement or disagreement.

Each of the 24 discussions analysed was therefore in the first place the subject of an interpretive narrative account by Duchesne, Frazer or Haegel. Using the video recording, the transcription, the questionnaires filled in by the participants and the observational notes written by the team after each group session, she constructed an account of the discussion, and everything that happened around it, by responding to the following questions: What happened between the participants? What conflicts were avoided and what conflicts were engaged in the discussion? What agreements or what consensus was found and how? How did alliances between group members develop? What divisions did they reveal? What were the subjects of discussion, explicit and implicit? What resources did the participants mobilise? The emphasis here on identifying implicit topics and disagreements assumed that analysts would fully take into account everything that had been expressed, even when the link with the topic and the discussion did not appear to be clear, by gambling that this link would (perhaps) take shape once the history of

the group had been clarified. The final document took the form of a narrative, about the participants and their conduct within the group. This helped us to interpret affinities and antagonisms.

These documents circulated within the research group and served as a framework for subsequent analyses. In view of the complexity of the data collected, we were keen to multiply the methods of processing them, in order to guarantee the reliability of the results, by the triangulation of methods. Each chapter in the book is based on at least two of the methods that we have implemented.

Sensitive moments and discussion dynamics

These narrative analyses of the group discussions support a systematic comparison of the dynamic of each group, by providing detailed analyses of 'sensitive moments' (Kitzinger & Farquhar, 1999). Kitzinger and Farquhar argue that such moments, defined by their emotional charge, allow the borders of acceptable discourse to be drawn. In other words, what is sayable is established. In our study, moments where conflict is revealed in the interactions, whether implicitly or explicitly, are moments when emotion suffuses the interactions between the participants. These moments, and the positions which are defended by participants, allow us to identify potential for the politicisation of integration. Our premise was that participants would only risk conflict and clearly express disagreement with another if the subject was really close to their heart and if they were assured of finding the support of one or several allies in the group (Duchesne & Haegel, 2007). The study of sensitive moments, based on the previous interpretive analysis, therefore led us to develop the idea by which the conflictuality of a subject, in a research setting like ours, could be considered salient. More practically, we therefore looked at how and to what extent European integration, the explicit topic for discussions as imposed by the research team, was present or implicated in the 'sensitive moments' which emerged between participants. Comparing the distribution of these sensitive moments, and their implicit and explicit topics – integration, globalisation, employment, migration, and so on – differentiated socially and nationally, helps us to observe the mechanisms of politicisation of European questions.

Quantitative and qualitative content analysis

This free interpretive analysis of the sessions was complemented by two other methods of analysis of the content, both computer aided: one

quantitative and the other interpretive. First, we deployed the automatic analysis implemented by Alceste software. Alceste generates distinct classes determined by co-occurrence and supplies a 'description' of these classes in the form of a list of strongly associated words and units of analysis. The procedure is entirely automatic, so there is no researcher bias. Researcher intervention is confined to a subsequent interpretation and labelling of the various classes. But a large part of the corpus is automatically discarded because of statistical insignificance and there is a danger of over-interpretation. The use of the method therefore assumes, as was the case for us, a close knowledge of the texts involved (see Chapter 2 for further detail and use of Alceste analysis).

Interpretive analysis of the content, by implementing a systematic coding of the discussions, does not involve the same risks. We used the software package Atlas.ti, one of a number of computer aided qualitative data analysis (CAQDAS) packages. Here, the categories produced by the analysis are completely created by the coder. Coding is certainly the most common method of systematic text analysis. It follows three basic principles. First it makes possible the falsification of the analysis by allowing, in theory, each code to be tested. It is less the technical principle of the possible challenging of the attribution of a code to an element which counts here, although inter-coder reliability tests have their place in this method and are implicit in the practice of different researchers reading the text on multiple occasions. More, the point is that the method of attaching codes to text reveals precisely how each unit of text was interpreted in the analysis. Coding in fact imposes a procedure of systematic processing of the corpus and, therefore, helps to fight against any tendency to over-use some sections, the content of which would be more in keeping with hypotheses, in analysis.

Finally, coding fulfills the essential function of linking the different parts of the corpus to each other. It allows us to make systematic comparisons between the text that is attached to a code throughout the entire corpus. Codes mediate, link, sections of text with each other. The use of computer packages like Atlas.ti enables the application of code to text to be reviewed, tested and revised, and because of their powerful search and retrieve facilities enables researchers to find patterns and divergences in very large datasets such as ours.

That said, coding can be used in two profoundly different ways and has been in our project. It can be based on an a priori scheme which is derived from previous work. For example, our conception of 'conflictualisation' emerges from previous work and was an a priori code that the

research term had in mind when getting to grips with the corpus. The research task then consists of applying (or not) codes to data, and then observing the distribution of codes within a corpus. By contrast, coding can be constructed inductively, and the categories emerge from readings of the data (Glaser & Strauss, 1967). Here it is less the distribution of the coded text units than the development of the codes themselves that is the heart of the analysis. In the end, the list of codes represents all the concepts constructed by the researcher to take account of the data. Both ways of coding were used in this project.

Finally, in addition to triangulation of methods of analysing the discussions themselves, we have processed, using statistical procedures, the other information collected – in particular the questionnaires filled in by each of the applicants and each of the participants. We have also analysed, quantitatively, the cards generated in response to the third question of the script: Who profits from Europe? Diversification of methods of analysis, according to the questions discussed, seems to us to be likely to consolidate our results. In other words, if the results presented in the different chapters tend to add up, this is for us the sign that the main results are validated. We hope that the reader will therefore not see in these convergences useless repetitions but rather see the result of our efforts to guarantee the solidity of our results.

Conclusion: the adventure continues . . .

This book is published at a particular moment in european studies, when the results obtained by researchers claiming different methodological traditions, qualitative versus quantitative, tend to differ. Our project aimed to examine in detail the results obtained by decades of analysis of Eurobarometer data. In fact it led us in part to question some of that work. Our project clearly shows that the reactions of citizens of Paris, Brussels and Oxford are far from being as structured and polarised as most of the analyses published in european studies would suggest. Their reactions include a good deal of ambivalence and indifference. In part, these are linked to the shadow that the processes of globalisation cast over European integration. Their reactions are, moreover, largely defined by national frameworks, insofar as Europe is not an independent horizon in citizens' representations but a more or less visible level in a system of power to which they are subject to a greater or lesser extent. Discussions between researchers who use statistical methods for analysing opinions, or qualitative interpretations of the links to politics, are often confused by contention over the 'scientificity' of

their work. The results of qualitative work sometimes appear to be less conclusive, more intuitive and less verifiable than the statistical work. But reflexivity and systematicity are the validation criteria for this kind of interpretive research. This is why we have taken care to explain in detail, in this long final chapter, the way in which we have carried out our project. In the course of this, we have explained the many methodological choices that a comparative focus group project involves. And we have managed the discrepancies between the objectives that we set for ourselves at the research design stage and the problems we faced when implementing it. The details of all of this may appear somewhat tedious; but in our view they are essential to be able to fully appreciate our results. Qualitative research is always a bit of an adventure, and, we might add, usually involves an admixture of misadventure. The data collected are rarely in keeping with what one imagines one would collect. But they are also always more full of information than one expects. Consequently researchers can develop and move ahead from the theoretical framework which predates the implementation of their projects. *Citizens' Reactions to European Integration Compared: Overlooking Europe* is no exception to this rule. The years that we spent keeping this project alive, as a team, were full of discussions and discoveries. We hope that the narrative, which we have here presented concerning the practical realisation of this research, will have given readers a glimpse into what it was like for us. The availability of all the documents and research data, which accompany the publication of this book at http://www.sciencespo.fr/dime-shs/content/dime-shs-quali, will allow colleagues who wish to do so to fully discuss our results and to continue the adventure.

Conclusion: Citizens Talking about Europe

Sophie Duchesne, Elizabeth Frazer, Florence Haegel and Virginie Van Ingelgom

Between December 2005, when our project really began in Paris, and June 2006, when the last of our focus groups was carried out in Oxford, 411 people applied, or volunteered, to take part in our groups, and in the end 172 actually participated (including those in the groups which have been discarded from this analysis) (See Table 6.1). Since January 2006, the European Commission has probably interviewed more than 800,000 Europeans. Eurobarometer surveys are conducted in all member countries every six months. This raises some obvious questions. What justifies our spending so long on our corpus of data – even though the 133 participants in the 24 groups whose data we have analysed translate into 3,000 pages? One reason why Europe is a good topic for in-depth interview or focus group research is that a lot of stuff happens there, so citizens and other participants are frequently cued for attentiveness and opinion formation. But the stuff that has happened since the financial crisis of 2008 might be thought to be game changing – hasn't our research effectively been made obsolete?

We have two responses to these sceptical charges. The first adverts to the continuing relevance and validity of our findings regarding our respondents' positions as European Union (EU) citizens. The second, actually, relates these findings to the current crises. We don't want to say that our respondents saw it all coming, exactly. However, strands in their discussions of Europe prove to be strikingly prescient. They were saying then what lots of people are saying now about the underlying causes of the financial and political crises in Europe.

First, we find that according to our respondents, the issues that affect them as ordinary citizens with jobs, children, housing and cultural issues in their lives are attributable to globalisation, and Europe is more or less irrelevant in their consideration of these things. For some of them, the European level and the EU itself are certainly part of the

political landscape. However, their perception of it is embedded in their perception of the national state and the global world landscapes. All our respondents have a more or less clear understanding of these two – state and globe. Some, particularly the working-class groups, barely have consciousness of Europe at all. However, the impact of nationality is particularly obvious. Our research confirms, a decade after Diez Medrano's work, how much the modes of understanding and appropriation of European construction differ depending on national historical narratives on the one hand and the analogies or disanalogies between the European and national systems on the other.

Second, it is impossible to translate these positions and articulations into the vocabulary and conceptual scheme of euroscepticism as that has been understood in political science. We don't find, to any widespread degree, a rejection of the European level of governance. There are some eurosceptical positions among our participants. There is one very settled British eurorejector whose position is based on the view that Europe distorts markets. In the same group, there was a left-wing participant whose eurorejection was based on the view that Europe is a capitalist enterprise. But these are political activists – party members and aspiring leaders, local councillors, for whom 'euroscepticism' and 'europhilia' are established, ideological, discourses, articulable and constitutive of their political identities. Among our non-activist participants, we simply do not find the kind of widespread euroscepticism on the part of our lower-class participants, those whom political scientists understand not to have directly and perceptibly gained from integration. Nor do we find the levels of europhilia that would be expected, were the survey research and model building in european studies correct, on the parts of those in our sample who can be expected to have perceptibly gained from aspects of integration. Identity, and more specifically political identity, which presupposes awareness and emotions related to the European level of political community, does not help much in understanding what is happening between European citizens and the EU and even tends to obscure it.

Instead, we find that throughout our social classes, and across the national contexts, respondents are ambivalent about Europe: they understand its upside, and in the same utterance, or in a subsequent turn in the conversation, they will advert to its downside. Observations that European integration should be rejected because it is neo-liberal, or indissolubly imbricated with the European colonial and imperial inheritance, are twinned with observations that its founders intended it to be a force for peace in Europe (good) or a bulwark against communism (good, or bad, depending on your party identification!). 'Well of course

it's good for people if they can travel to find work' invariably is followed by something like 'but this has drawbacks, for those who move as well as those who stay'.

As often, though, as we find articulations of this ambivalence, we also find a profound (if that's not too paradoxical) indifference. The global level is where all the action is. At the national level, a cast of characters including self-serving or otherwise useless politicians, hardworking individuals and migrants (who are either perceived as threatening or perceived as ordinary men and women, just like us, doing their best and deserving if anyone is of a chance in life) are quite powerless to do anything about the global flows of capital, income, technology, pollution and environmental degradation, and human labour. These flows account for what goes wrong and what goes sometimes right for people; and Europe has nothing to do with the case.

Our research design and our subsequent analyses are premissed on a combination of empirical concerns and commitments in political and social theory. We begin from the view that political life is, must be, conflictual. First this is because there are zero-sum conflicts in economic, social and cultural life – the domains with which political effort and governmental legislation and administration engage. Second, even where conflicts are positive sum, or decisions are based on agreement, on consensus even, individuals and parties in politics have to engage with others who are antagonistic or difficult. We are not saying that 'unlikeness' is always a bad thing for individuals. In any case one brilliant thing about social and political life is that one does not have actually to like one's co-actors or interlocutors. But it has to be admitted that the taking of a political position – that is a stance, a commitment, that either makes an overture to a potential ally or marks the distance between oneself and an antagonist – is a costly move for individuals. We began with an interest in the phenomenology of these moves and concomitantly the phenomenology of the social process by which politicisation of oneself, or one's interlocutor, or the subject of conversation, is avoided. This phenomenological interest meshes with positions in normative political theory that emphasise the importance of an understanding of this conflictual and evasive, as well as consensual and engaged, nature of political life and the norms that govern it.

We hope that our work makes a methodological contribution to political science and political theory. However, it was by no means methods driven. We chose the focus group method because of our interest in political conflict and our interest in analysing the conceptual structures that underlie what citizens say about their partisan commitments,

voting intentions or beliefs about politics. This conceptual structure cannot be analysed independently from analysis of social structure and attendance to emotions and interpersonal dynamics.

So where are we with this research project, at the time of writing in June 2012? We want to emphasise that whatever the levels of direct knowledge of political institutions and constitutional arrangements our participants demonstrate in these discussions, we must resist any temptation to interpret this in terms of deficit, whether of knowledge itself or of attitude or opinion, or any other citizenship capacity. Europe as a continent and the EU as a political entity are exceptionally complex, and even professional academics can exhibit low levels of knowledge of the detail. The boundaries – between levels, between states and sub- and super-state entities – are blurred, at best. Citizens are not political scientists, but this does not make them stupid. Our respondents have a very clear view, clear theories we might say, about many aspects of their predicaments and the state of the world. When they look at the political process – whether at the level of their city or region, their national state or the EU or above – they see hierarchy and monopoly. Who is to say that they are wrong in this, no matter how much democrats may wish for citizens with a highly developed sense of self-efficacy? They understand crises – in employment, in housing, in demand and supply – to result from the particular flows that follow the latest stages of globalisation. Notably, many of our groups articulate the ways in which this is only the latest chapter in a globalisation story that eliminated the peoples of the Americas, enslaved Africans, and opened Asia and the other continents up to depredation and exploitation by Europe. It bears repeating that at the same time as they believe that they, personally, cannot really change the structures that govern them, they believe that politicians and officers at the European level cannot either – and do not even want to try.

The way European people are coping with the present crises fits with what we already knew about their reactions. It is as if they saw it all in 2006. The crisis, in our reading, has led to a new stage of 'europeanisation' emphatically built on national differences. The stratification of nations has been enhanced, as we understand it. The sample reported on here, of course, comes from three rich countries, two original members and one relatively early entrant into the EU. In these countries, we have seen some protest against financial and political elites, but this is hardly directed at the European level. Between globalisation and national governments, Europe is hardly in focus.

Post Script: Searching for the Grail

A Comparison of Quantitative and Qualitative Methods: the Viewpoint of a Survey Analyst

André-Paul Frognier

If there is a grail to be reached in empirical research in political science, and particularly in comparative politics, it is to reconcile – and, even better, to integrate – qualitative and quantitative research in the same study, to bring their respective values to it. Having mainly practised a political science defined as quantitative, whether in the Eurobarometer analyses or in various kinds of other surveys, I was very interested in participating in this research project. I was extremely keen to see how the organising researchers met the challenge.

Integrating the two approaches does seem to be essential, at least in an ideal world where time and resources are available. What is here called quantitative research relates to the use of surveys which rely on a mathematical or statistical data analysis. This analysis concerns relations between variables, which are the numerical measurements of concepts developed as part of a theory. Numerical measurement here means an application in the world of numbers, with all or part of the scalar properties of these. In this kind of procedure, the interviewee is a 'captive' of the hypotheses that the researcher introduces into the questionnaire. The subject can only hide by not answering, or by answering 'don't know' or by 'neither-nor'. These answers often are not considered in the analysis. In this respect, a survey consists in answering, definitely responding to, the concerns of the author of the questionnaire. Further, the same hypotheses or theories, and therefore the same measurements, will be repeated from survey to survey to make comparisons possible over time, thus continuing the same approaches over sometimes long periods, until the next theoretical change that is generally accepted in the scientific community.

Qualitative research data are not susceptible to a statistical analysis, although whether we should think of the binary logic of qualitative comparative analysis as numerical or not remains a moot point (De Meur & Rihoux, 2002). The method of qualitative 'measurement' gambles on making the people who are the subject of the investigation talk. Such methods group different forms of discussion, including focus groups. It is no longer the researcher's explanatory framework which is imposed, but, on the basis of a topic chosen by the moderator, it is those who are 'surveyed' who impose their theoretical framework, or their lack of a theoretical framework, either consciously or unconsciously. This framework has to be inferred by the researcher from the evidence of how the discussion proceeds. The survey is no longer a captive of the researcher's way of understanding the themes. The relationship is reversed: the researcher should accept the reflexive constraints of the interviewees. A further dimension, lacking in numerical and statistical surveys, is added. The group offers not only 'opinions', 'attitudes', 'beliefs', and so on but also conflicting opinions which mutatis mutandis play the role of conflicting theories in classical research. Even more, measurement of these opinions is inseparable from the feelings which go with, and embody, them. Of course, traditional survey research has sought to measure the strength of opinions, but, as we know, these questions, which are most often 'cold' and distant from the context in which the feelings are experienced, are obviously particularly open to doubt. That the context matters in the expression of an opinion and that it can influence it is well known; it cannot be studied by survey, unless surveys are repeated at considerable cost.

The organisation and conduct of focus groups establishes a context (possibly a conflictual context) between the participants. This can contribute to change of opinion on the part of individuals. In the present research we can observe this by comparing the positions taken in the discussions with responses to the initial questionnaire presented at the time of recruitment (modelled on the Eurobarometer). Eurobarometer items, therefore, appear to be poor indicators of positions taken or not taken in the group discussions.

One of the criticisms most often directed at qualitative surveys lies in their lack of representativeness. A classic response to this criticism is to claim that 'public opinion' does not include so many variants in a society and that we quickly reach certain saturation in the range of opinions ('typological' rather than 'statistical' representation). Whether this response is entirely acceptable or not, nevertheless the authors of this book have made great efforts to ensure the representativeness of groups

by selecting them on socio-demographic bases and on opinions, both of which result from the social and political stratification of the countries studied. Eurobarometer tells us this, even as the current research challenges the Eurobarometer results with regard to the expression of opinions. Thanks to Eurobarometer, we know that opinions on Europe depend closely on national and socio-demographic frameworks. One of the merits of this research has been to recreate from the start this situation as scrupulously as possible in the composition of the groups.

A sensitive question which is asked of any discussion-based qualitative survey is that concerning the method of interpretation – at least, if we want to go beyond subjectivism. The raw material for the research is not a table of numbers, as in quantitative research, but narratives. Here the authors have developed an original approach which at several moments combines the quantitative with the qualitative. The first chapter includes an extensive review of the work carried out as a result of the Eurobarometer, and several chapters discuss the relationship between this and the focus group data. The interpretation of the narratives is most often combined with a partially quantitative analysis of the content, linked to the frequency and the environment of the words used, or with a dimensional analysis, the results of which are illuminated and allowed by the complex verbal reactions of the group participants.

The different combinations between a qualitative and a quantitative approach included in each chapter contribute their share of illumination. Thus, without wishing to be exhaustive, Chapter 2 refers to three different approaches on the relationship between the national and the European levels (integrated in Belgium, foreign in Britain and 'Gallicised' in France). The following chapter shows that the difference between the masses and the elites is more about a difference in salience than about a clear opposition between pro- and anti-opinions. The borders between the national and the European levels are blurred and the two levels are not experienced as being independent. Moreover, there is a kind of integration of the European level into that of the global, and globalisation prompts notice and awareness more than Europeanisation does. From this we can deduce, notably, that the 'Moreno' question posed in the Eurobarometer to measure national and European identities raises a problem of validity, as it assumes that the levels are independent. Chapter 4, which deals with the ambivalent responses to Europeanisation (of the type 'Europe is neither a good nor a bad thing') rejects interpretations in terms of ignorance and replaces them with positions expressed at different moments in time, or which convey an

opposition between the ideal and the real.[1] Chapter 5, on representation and legitimacy, is less concerned with the mix of quantitative and qualitative analysis. It focusses on the groups of activists – for whom there is no corresponding Eurobarometer data. The analysis has consequences for Eurobarometer analysis, in particular, by taking into account the fact that the political legitimacy of the EU cannot be understood outside the interaction between the European, the national and the international levels.

This quick reminder of the methodology of the chapters of *Overlooking Europe* confronts us with a complex interlocking of quantitative and qualitative approaches in a kind of methodological 'puff pastry' (*pâte feuilletée)*, a term used in semiotic analysis to represent the levels of analysis of meaning (Greimas & Courtes, 1979:103). In addition to the use of the Eurobarometer to create groups in a representative way, the interpretations take their starting point, when they can, from Eurobarometer analyses. The narratives are interpreted, in many cases, by relying on a quantitative approach to analysing the content or on a dimensional analysis, paving the way for interpretations that could not be obtained from the Eurobarometer. On this basis, new analyses of the existing Eurobarometer findings are inspired by the results gathered at previous stages of the research.

This interpenetration of methodology could be pursued further. The results of the focus groups should, indeed, help to propose new questions in the surveys, thus coming full circle. In this respect, the end of a study labelled as qualitative would signal the beginning of a new quantitative study – adding a layer to the puff pastry! The book provides many opportunities for this. For example, the unsuitability of the Moreno question should pave the way for new formulations for measuring identities. One can also quite easily imagine new closed questions which could operationalise concepts linking ambivalence to time and to the opposition between ideal and real. The advantage of such a procedure for the creation of new questions would be to refer to significant theoretical frameworks for the subjects themselves. Epistemologically, we are in a Weberian approach, which returns to the actors the meaning they give to their opinions, rather than imposing that of the researcher.

Finally, we note that research such as that of this book should also warn us not to abandon questions too quickly, in the pre-tests for example, when the responses are considered to be unsatisfactory, often because too many are without responses or because of a distribution of responses that is not normal enough. The attention given in this study to the phenomena of ambivalence and indifference forbids us from

ruling out too easily what appears not to have any meaning. Finally, the data collected from focus groups are the only ones that can validly measure the depth of emotions which go with the expression of opinions. They allow, also, study of the shaping of public opinion in interactive situations. Even if the analysis only simulates such concrete social situations, it provides information which could not be obtained by opinion surveys.

The research programme opened by *Citizens' Reactions to European Integration Compared: Overlooking Europe* places us at the confluence of two key problems: on the one hand, that of the complementarity between the explanatory models of opinion surveys and their methods of measurement And, on the other hand, those of the qualitative approaches of focus groups and that of the design of the comparative studies which rely on these. The book is a significant contribution to these questions and paves the way for much future progress.

Appendices

Appendix 1 Example of advertisement for participants: Oxford

DEPARTMENT OF POLITICS AND INTERNATIONAL RELATIONS
University of Oxford

Participants required
for a research project

Citizens Talking
Pay: £40

We are looking for volunteers to take part in a
group discussion of social issues.
Sessions will be held **between now and 8 April**
(exact dates and times to be confirmed).

You must be **over 18**, of **British** citizenship.
Sorry – **no students.**

Location: Manor Road Building, (near High Street,
Queen's Lane bus stop)

No previous knowledge required.
Anonymity of participants is guaranteed.

Duration of the session: approx. **3 hours**, incl. breaks and refreshments.
Payment in cash at the end of the session.

If you are interested, please contact **Firstname Lastname:**
By email: **firstname.lastname@abcdefg.hi.jk**
By phone: **0123456789** (if unavailable, please leave a message)
By text message: Text the word "Study" followed by your phone number or
email address to **0123456789**

Appendix 2 Questionnaires (Oxford)

A. Initial telephone questionnaire for all candidates

Candidate number : **INITIAL TELEPHONE QUESTIONNAIRE**
Pseudonym :

Good morning/afternoon

You've applied to participate in our group discussions. Are there any questions you would like to ask me about it? (*record all questions asked*)

Before we invite you to participate, we'd like to ask you a few questions about your work and your life, and to get your opinions about some matters.

Do you have ten minutes now? Is it OK with you for us to do this?

If yes, date and start time: .....

If not, when can I call you back? .....

In this research, we are guaranteeing participants' anonymity. People can be called by nicknames throughout the process. Would you like to choose a name to call yourself?

Chosen pseudonym:
.....

We are now going to ask some questions which will enable us to decide whether you should be invited to join one of the groups:

Are you:

Male	
Female	

What is your exact age? .....|___|___| years

Are you:

– married	
– widowed	
– divorced	
– separated	
– single	
– co-habiting	

At what age did you leave full-time education? |___|___| years

Are you now:

– in full-time employment (at least 35 hours a week)	
– in part-time employment (between 15 and 35 hours a week)	
– employed for less than 15 hours per week	
– working for a family member	
– unemployed	
– in full-time education or training	
– retired	
– home maker	
– disabled	
– other	

If you are employed (or have been employed) what is your profession or job (or, what was the last profession or job you worked at)?

Thank the respondent for giving the most detailed and accurate description of their work, and for answering further questions about it:

Are you or have you been:

– self-employed, or employer of others	
– in a salaried post in a private company	
– in a salaried post in the public sector	

When you were 15 years old, what job did your father do?

Record as much detail as possible; please don't use abbreviations

When you were 15 years old, what did your mother do?

Record as much detail as possible; please don't use abbreviations

In politics, people talk about left and right. Where would you put yourself, on a scale which goes from 1 to 10, where 1 is the most to the left, and 10 the most to the right?,

Left	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	Right

Don't know	
Won't answer	

Did you vote in the General Election of May 2005?

Yes	
No	

1. *If yes,* **how did you vote?**

Conservative	
Liberal Democrat	
Labour	
Green	
SNP/Plaid Cymru	
SDLP	
UKIP	
BNP	
Other: ----------	
Don't know	
Won't say	

If you were able to vote in a referendum regarding the Treaty establishing a Constitution for Europe, would you:

Vote	
Not vote	

If you would vote **would you vote:**

Yes	
No	
Don't know	
Won't answer	

Thank you very much. We are going to look at the responses, and we will contact you to let you know whether you have been selected. Please, can you let me have your contact details?

Last name .....
First name .....
Address .....
.....
Telephone : .....
Mobile .....
Email .....

Just before we finish, can I check your availability on some possible dates? Can you tell me whether you would be able to come, and if you can make a day, what time would suit you?

Date	NO	Yes, which time?
Thu March 23		
Fri March 24		
Sat March 25		
Tues March 28		
Wed March 29		
Thu March 30		
Fri March 31		
Mon April 3		
Tues April 4		
Thu April 6		
Fri April 7		

Thank you very much. You will be hearing from us shortly.

End time : .....

Post-interview notes:

2. total time taken for interview:

3. estimate of competence (ease of comprehension of the questions):
very easy /__1__/ __2__/__3__/__4__/__5__/ very difficult

4. cooperation:
very cooperative /__1__/ __2__/__3__/__4__/__5__/ not at all cooperative

5. sympathetic and friendly attitude:
very sympathetic/__1__/ __2__/__3__/__4__/__5__/ hostile

6. confidence:
very confident /__1__/ __2__/__3__/__4__/__5__/ lack of confidence

7. tendency to domination during the interview:
interviewee dominant /__1__/ __2__/__3__/__4__/__5__/ interviewer dominant

8. number of calls necessary to complete the questionnaire:

B. Questionnaire for selected participants (to be filled by telephone or face to face before the beginning of the session)

Good morning/afternoon/evening.
In advance of the discussion session you have agreed to participate in, we want to ask you, and the other participants, some questions that will be helpful when we analyse the way the discussion goes. This is going to take about 15 minutes. Thank you very much for the time.

Contact no :

Research name :

Are you:

Male	
Female	

What is your exact age? .....|___|___| years

Are you:

– married	
– widowed	
– divorced	
– separated	
– single	
– co-habiting	

At what age did you leave full-time education? |___|___| years

Are you now:

– in full-time employment (at least 35 hours a week)	
– in part-time employment (between 15 and 35 hours a week)	
– employed for less than 15 hours per week	
– working for a family member	
– unemployed	
– in full-time education or training	
– retired	
– home maker	
– disabled	
– other	

If you are employed (or have been employed) what is your profession or job (or, what was the last profession or job you worked at)?

Thank the respondent for giving the most detailed and accurate description of their work, and for answering further questions about it:

Are you or have you been:

– self-employed, or employer of others	
– in a salaried post in a private company	
– in a salaried post in the public sector	

When you were 15 years old, what job did your father do?

Record as much detail as possible; please don't use abbreviations

When you were 15 years old, what did your mother do?

Record as much detail as possible; please don't use abbreviations

Are you are a home owner? *if yes* **do you have just one or more than one properties? own home? second home? a property that is rented?**

How many children under the age of 18 do you have?

None	
One	
More than one	

(Include children of your partner, and/or adopted or fostered children)
|___|___| children

Could you tell me your religion, if you have one?

– Catholic	
– Jewish	
– Muslim	
– Orthodox	
– Protestant/Church of England	
– Other: which?	
– None	
– Don't know/not answered	

If has a religion **Would you say you are:**

Practicing	
Non-practicing	

In our society, there are some groups who are more or less at the top of the society, and others who are nearer the bottom. If ten is at the top and one at the bottom, where would you say you are ?

Top	1
	2
	3
	4
	5

	6
	7
	8
	9
Bottom	10

Can you tell me to which party or political organisation you feel the closest to, or anyway, the least distant from?

– Extreme left	
– Communist	
– Socialist	
– Green/Environmentalist	
– Conservative	
– Nationalist	
– Extreme right	
– Other: which? _____	
– None	
– No answer/don't know	

In politics, people talk about left and right. Where would you put yourself, on a scale which goes from 1 to 10, where 1 is the most to the left, and 10 the most to the right?,

Left	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	Right

Don't know	
Won't answer	

Did you vote in the General Election of May 2005?

Yes	
No	

If yes, **how did you vote?**

Conservative	
Liberal Democrat	
Labour	
Green	
UKIP	
Other: ----------	

When you are with friends, do you discuss political issues, frequently, sometimes, or never?

Frequently	
Sometimes	
Never	

When you have an opinion about something that you feel very strongly about, do you typically try to convince your friends, colleagues or family to adopt your opinion?

Frequently	
Sometimes	
Rarely	
Never	

How do you keep up with news and current affairs?

Newspapers and magazines:

Frequently	
Sometimes	
Rarely	
Never	

If yes, can you tell me the titles of newspapers and magazines that you read regularly?

_____

Television:

Frequently	
Sometimes	
Rarely	
Never	

If yes, can you tell me what TV channels you usually watch?

_____

Radio:

Frequently	
Sometimes	
Rarely	
Never	

If yes, can you tell me which radio stations you usually listen to?

_____

Internet:

Frequently	
Sometimes	
Rarely	
Never	

If yes, can you tell me which sites you usually visit?

_____

In general, do you think that Britain's membership of the European Union is a good thing, or a bad thing?

A good thing	
A bad thing	

Do you think of yourself mostly as:

English	
Welsh	
Scots	
Irish/Northern Irish	
British	

In the future, do you think you will feel yourself to be English/Scots/Welsh/British only, English/Scots/Welsh/British and European, European and English/Scots/Welsh/British, or European only.

British	
... and European	
European and	
European only	

Would you say that you are very proud, proud, not very proud, or not proud at all to be British?

Very proud	
Quite proud	
Not very proud	
Not at all proud	

Would you say that you are very proud, proud, not very proud, or not proud at all, to be European?

Very proud	
Quite proud	
Not very proud	
Not at all proud	

For each of the following issues, do you think decisions should be made by the British government, or do you think they should be made together by the members of the European Union?

	British government	European Union	Don't Know
Defence			
Environment			
Employment and unemployment			
Agriculture, fishing and food			
Education			
Culture			
Immigration			

Which of the following two opinions do you most agree: 'the welfare state makes our society more just' or 'the welfare state reduces the desire to work'?

The welfare state makes our society more just	
The welfare state reduces the desire to work	

Do you believe that homosexual couples should be allowed to adopt children?

Should be allowed	
Should not be allowed	

In general, what do you think about people who live in Britain but who are not citizens of the European Union: are there too many of them? Or are there too few?

Too many	
Not too many	
Too few	

Appendix 3 Participants (pseudonyms) by group, with principal characteristics

Pseudonym	Sex	Age	Education	Profession	Left right	Vote	Referendum	EU belonging	Identity	Origin
PARIS										
Paris workers 1										
Albert	M	42	Brevet/BEPC	Naturopath (unemployed)	5	NV	NV	G	World	White
Ghislaine	F	26	Brevet/BEPC	Care assistant	4	L. Jospin	NV	G	NE	Afro-Caribbean
Geoffrey	M	33	CAP ou BEP	Print worker	5	NV	N	NGNB	NE	White
Lionel	M	42	Brevet/BEPC	Security officer	DK	O. Besancenot	N	G	EN	White
Yasmina	F	35	Brevet/BEPC	Homemaker	DK	NV	NV	B	NE	Maghreb
Habiba	F	41	Bac général	Homemaker (and secretarial work for family business)	4	L. Jospin	No	NGNB	Other	Maghreb
Paris workers 2										
Jean-Marie	M	53	Brevet/BEPC	Auto mechanic (unemployed)	DK	C. Lepage	No	NGNB	NE	White
Cédric	M	38	Bac général	Charge nurse	DK	L. Jospin	Nul	NGNB	NE	White
Jeannette	F	25	Brevet/BEPC	Care worker in training (numerous jobs)	6	NV	NV	G	Other	Africa

Zahoua	F	45	Brevet/BEPC	Medical secretary (unemployed)	1	NV	NV	NGNB	N	Maghreb
Margot	F	40	CAP ou BEP	Lorry driver	DK	C. Lepage	NA	B	N	White
Gérald	M	37	CAP ou BEP	Heating engineer	DN	NV	NV	G	N	Other European
Paris employees 1										
Laetitia	F	23	Bac +2	Sales engineer	6	J. Chirac	NV	B	N	White
Magali	F	28	Bac +2	Receptionist/ telemarketing	DK	J. Chirac	NA	NGNB	NE	White
Victor	M	30	Bac +2	Higher technician, logistics	2	N. Mamère	N	G	E	White
Patrice	M	33	Bac tech/pro.	Butler	DK	NV	NV	NGNB	NE	White
Hadia	F	36	Bac +3 à +5	Project leader, advertisement (unemployed)	3	NV	NV	G	NE	Maghreb
Clelia	F	24	Bac+2	Receptionist/ illustrator	5,5	NA	NV	?	?	White

(Continued)

Pseudonym	Sex	Age	Education	Profession	Left right	Vote	Referendum	EU belonging	Identity	Origin
Paris employees 2										
Paul	H	35	Bac +2	Pharmaceutical sales representative	5	NA	No	B	NE	White
Pablo	M	43	Bac tech/pro.	Secretarial work (unemployed)	7	J. Chirac	No	G	N	Other European
Samira	F	26	Bac +2	Restaurant manager	5	L. Jospin	No	B	N	Maghreb
Aline	F	41	Bac +2	Sales engineer (unemployed)	6	J. Chirac	NV	B	E	White
Martin	M	46	Bac+2	Graphic designer (unemployed)	3	L. Jospin	Y	G	NE	White
Paris managers 1										
Francis	M	30	Bac +3 à +5	IT professional	7	J. Chirac	Y	G	EN	White
Inès	F	39	Bac +2	Fashion designer	7	J. Chirac	N	G	NE	White
Fabienne	F	26	Doctorat	Doctoral student	3	M.-G. Buffet	N	B	World	White
Gabriel	M	59	Bac +3 à +5	Printing advisor	3	L. Jospin	Y	G	NE	White
Toufik	M	24	Bac +3 à +5	Engineer	4	NV	NV	G	NE	Maghreb
Serge	M	42	Bac +3 à +5	Chartered accountant	5	L. Jospin	N	B	EN	White
Céline	F	31	Bac +3 à +5	Translator	4	NV	N	G	NE	White

Paris managers 2										
François	M	42	Bac +3 à +5	Computer/ logistics manager	9	J. Chirac	Y	G	NE	White
Michel	M	46	Bac +3 à +5	Management controller	6	J. Chirac	N	NGNB	EN	White
Patrick	M	38	Bac +3 à +5	Tax law specialist, civil servant	DK	J. Chirac	Y	G	EN	White
Jean-Paul	M	60	Doctorat	Math professor, university	6	NV	Y	NGNB	NE	White
Louis	M	49	Bac +3 à +5	Teacher/ photographer (ex marine officer)	3	L. Jospin	N	NGNB	E	White
Stanislas	M	50	Bac +3 à +5	Information officer (medical)	5	J. Chirac	Nul	G	NE	White
Paris activists 1										
César	M	35	Bac +3 à +5	Lawyer (unemployed)	6	J. Chirac	Y	NGNB	Other	Afro-Caribbean
Karl	M	21	Bac +3 à +5	Student (engineer)	8	NV	N	G	NE	White

(Continued)

Pseudonym	Sex	Age	Education	Profession	Left right	Vote	Referendum	EU belonging	Identity	Origin
Cheik	M	40	Bac tech/pro	Municipal agent	6	J. Chirac	NV	G	NE	Maghreb
Pierre-Antoine	M	23	Bac +3 à +5	Communications manager (party)	4	F. Bayrou	Y	G	NE	White
Déborah	F	30	Doctorat	Doctoral student	5	L. Jospin	Y	G	EN	White
Guy	M	59	Bac +3 à +5	Coach personal development / finance expert	2	N. Mamère	N	G	N	White
Dimitri	M	48	Bac +3 à +5	Principal private secretary (arrondissement mayor)	3	L. Jospin	Y	G	NE	White
Paris activists 2										
Norbert	M	65	Bac +2	Journalist (retired)	10	J.-M. Le Pen	N	B	NE	White
Jules	M	46	Brevet/BEPC	Photographer	3	R. Hue	N	NGNB	World	White
Adrien	M	32	Bac +3 à +5	Editor/temporary teacher	2	N. Mamère	N	G	NE	White
Bertrand	M	47	Bac +3 à +5	Communications adviser	5	J.-M. Le Pen	N	B	N	White
Pascal	M	41	Bac +3 à +5	Engineer (researcher)	2	R. Hue	N	NGNB	NE	White
Emmanuelle	F	29	Bac +3 à +5	NGO manager	8	J. Chirac	O	G	NE	White

BRUXELLES

Brussels workers 1										
Justine	F	38	Humanités sup gén	Accountant (unemployed)	10	NV	DK	G	NE	Africa
Rose	F	27	In training (adverstisement)	Receptionist	5	Cdh	DK	G	NE	White
Sidi	M	27	Humanités inf	Working man	4	Ecolo	DK	G	E	Maghreb
Marco	M	43	Humanités inf	Temp	6	NV	DK	NGNB	NE	White
Saïd	M	24	Humanités sup gén	Youth activity worker (unemployed)	NA	PS	Y	G	N	Maghreb
Ali	M	32	Graduat	Care worker	2	PS	N	G	NE	Maghreb
Brussels workers 2										
Christophe	M	24	Humanités sup pro/techn.	Working man (unemployed)	5	MR	N	G	NE	White
Farouk	M	28	Humanités sup pro/techn.	Security guard	4	PS	N	NGNB	NE	Maghreb

(Continued)

Pseudonym	Sex	Age	Education	Profession	Left right	Vote	Referendum	EU belonging	Identity	Origin
André	M	35	Humanités sup gén	Woodworker (black market)	5	NV	N	NGNB	World	Other European
Dona	F	56	Humanités sup pro/techn.	Caretaker	7	MR	DK	G	NE	Other European
Ming	F	24	Graduat	Waitress	3	PS	N	G	EN	Asia
Brussels employees 1										
Faissal	M	27	Licences/ Master	Temp/ unemployed graphic designer	5	Ecolo	Y	G	EN	Maghreb
David	M	24	Humanités sup pro/techn.	Sergeant	4	PS	Y	G	EN	White
Victor	M	28	Humanités sup gén	Office worker	NA	Other	DK	G	N	White
Fabien	M	26	Licences/ Master	IT adviser	7	MR	Y	NGNB	EN	White
Brussels employees 2										
Michèle	F	26	Humanités sup gén	Temp food industry	7	MR	NV	G	NE	White
Jonathan	M	29	Humanités sup gén	Computer technician	6	DK	Y	G	E	White
Tina	F	32	Humanités sup gén	Sales assistant (unemployed)	5	PS/MR	Y	G	World	Maghreb

Maria	F	40	Humanités sup gén	Office worker (television)	3	NV	Y	G	NE	Other European
Pierre	M	54	Humanités sup gén	Foreman	3	Cdh	N	B	N	NA
Brussels managers 1										
Alban	M	28	Licences/ Master	Engineer nuclear industry	8	MR	DK	G	N	White
Roger	M	59	NA	Executive electronics	4	PS	Y	G	EN	White
JF	M	29	Licences/ Master	NGO manager	3	Ecolo	Y	G	EN	White
Claire	F	51	Doctorat	General practitioner	7	Cdh	DK	G	EN	White
Franck	M	40	Humanités inf	Restaurant and shop manager	7	Ecolo	DK	G	NE	White
Valérie	F	45	Licences/ Master	Journalist and researcher	6	Cdh	Y	G	NE	White
Brussels managers 2										
Bruno	M	29	Licences/ Master	Human resources manager	5	PS	N	G	NE	White

(Continued)

Pseudonym	Sex	Age	Education	Profession	Left right	Vote	Referendum	EU belonging	Identity	Origin
Fabio	M	26	Licences/ Master	Translator (unemployed)	2	Ecolo	N	G	EN	White
Judith	F	44	Licences/ Master	Human resources manager	4	Ecolo	N	G	EN	Africa
Gaston	M	60	Humanités sup pro/techn.	Self-employed	7	MR	N	B	N	White
Brussels activists 1										
Aurélien	M	28	Licences/ Master	Parliamentary attaché	8	MR	Y	G	NE	White
Stéphane	M	30	Licences/ Master	Parliamentary attaché	7	MR	Y	G	NE	Asia
Clément	M	33	Candidatures	General practitioner	6	Cdh	Y	G	NE	White
Maxime	M	25	Licences/ Master	Teacher	2	Ecolo	N	G	World	Maghreb
Simon	M	30	Licences/ Master	Relations officer (party)	2	PS	N	G	NE	White
Romain	M	20	Humanités sup gén	Student	1	PS	Y	G	NE	White
Brussels activists 2										
Gérard	M	26	Licences/ Master	Shopkeeper	5	MR	Y	G	NE	White
Brandon	M	27	Licences/ Master	Musician	2	PS	N	G	EN	Other European

Ludovic	M	25	Graduat	Secretary	NA	PTB-UA	N	G	World	NA
Viviane	F	29	Doctorat	Elected representative	3	Ecolo	N	G	Other	Asia
Charles-Henri	M	26	Licences/ Master	Legal adviser	5	Cdh	Y	G	NE	White
OXFORD										
Oxford workers 1										
Mina	F	48	A-Level, AS-Level	Private care assistant	7	Labour	DK	NGNB	World	Black Asian
Robert	M	32	GCSE or O'Level	Tankdriver (disabled)	7	NV	Y	G	NE	White
Ron	M	31	VCE, AVCE, NVQ L3	Technician (car industry)	5,5	Labour	DK	NGNB	N	Black Asian
Mary	F	54	GCSE or O'Level	School cleaner	7	Ind.	Y	NGNB	N	White
Brenda	F	37	GCSE or O'Level	Post person and receptionist	DK	NV	N	NGNB	N	White
Oxford workers 2										
Vicas	M	29	VCE, AVCE, NVQ L3	Forklift driver	DK	NA	DK	NGNB	N	Black Asian

(Continued)

Pseudonym	Sex	Age	Education	Profession	Left right	Vote	Referendum	EU belonging	Identity	Origin
Esther	F	32	GCSE or O'Level	Kitchen assist, catering, cleaning (unemployed)	3,5	NV	DK	NGNB	N	White
Ruth	F	48	GCSE or O'Level	Care assistant, office worker (unemployed)	8	Cons.	DK	NGNB	N	White
Bridget	F	52	GCSE or O'Level	Receptionist (unemployed)	9,5	NV	DK	NGNB	N	White
Anthony	M	53	GCSE or O'Level	Working man (early retired)	5,5	LibDem	DK	G	NE	White
Oxford employees 1										
Nina	F	31	Foundation d°, NVQ L4	Care support worker	3	Labour	Y	G	EN	White
Pat	F	37	A-Level, AS-Level	Admin/secretarial work	4,5	Labour	DK	G	N	Black
Mel	F	51	A-Level, AS-Level	Receptionist (part time)	5,5	DK	DK	G	NE	White
Kenneth	M	51	A-Level, AS-Level	Office support worker	5,5	LibDem	Y	G	NE	White
Mike	M	45	A-Level, AS-Level	Office manager	6	NV	N	B	NE	White
Kamal	M	24	BA, BSc, degree	Team leader in catering business	5	Ind	N	G	N	Black Asian
Oxford employees 2										
Stephanie	F	33	VCE, AVCE, NVQ L3 . . .	IT trainer	5	Cons	N	G	N	White

Kylie	F	33	BA, BSc, degree	Office worker (unemployed)	2	Ind	DK	NGNB	N	White
Lily	F	37	BA, BSc, degree	Homemaker (former HR manager)	5	Labour	Y	G	NE	White
George	M	22	BA, BSc, degree	Temp, office worker	3	LibDem	Y	G	EN	White
Emily	F	82	VCE, AVCE, NVQ L3 . . .	Clerical work (retired)	1	Labour	DK	G	NE	White
Jeremy	M	67	Foundation d°, NVQ L4	Director in engineering sector (retired)	5,5	LibDem	DK	G	N	White
Oxford managers 1										
Sundai	M	36	BA, BSc degree	Store manager	7	Labour	Y	G	NE	Black
Alexander	M	39	A-Level, AS-Level	Bank manager	8	Cons	N	NGNB	N	White
Derek	M	37	PhD or Dphil	Lecturer and researcher	3	Cons	DK	NGNB	NE	White
Ian	M	38	BA, BSc degree	Salesman	7	Cons	N	NGNB	N	White
Bansuri	F	42	VCE, AVCE, NVQ L3	Personal development trainer	5,5	NV	N	NGNB	N	Black Asian

(Continued)

Pseudonym	Sex	Age	Education	Profession	Left right	Vote	Referendum	EU belonging	Identity	Origin
Oxford managers 2										
Sanjay	M	24	BA, BSc, degree	Accountant	6	LibDem	DK	NGNB	N	Black Asian
Joe	M	27	BA, BSc, degree	Fundraising	3	Labour	DK	G	N	White
Alya	F	23	BA, BSc, degree	Office manager	3,5	NV	Nul	G	N	NA
William	M	67	Master degrees	IT consultant (retired)	3	Labour	Y	G	NE	White
Rebecca	F	52	BA, BSc, degree	School teacher (unemployed)	6,5	LibDem	DK	NGNB	N	White
Rachel	F	28	BA, BSc, degree	Human resources manager	5	NV	Y	G	EN	White
Oxford activists 1										
Bethany	F	79	Foundation d°, NVQ L4	Councillor	5	Labour	Y	NGNB	NE	White
Allison	F	57	Primary school	Housewife and volunteer	4	LibDem	Y	G	NE	White
Charles	M	71	A-Level, AS-Level	District councillor (ex IT consultant and finance advisor)	6	Cons	Y	B	N	White
Annabel	F	26	BA, BSc, degree	Campaign manager	3,5	Labour	Y	NA	NA	White
James	M	61	Master degrees	Company director	8	Cons	N	B	Other	White

Lewis	M	70	PhD or Dphil	County councillor (ex health advocacy)	1	Green	N	DK	World	White
Oxford activists 2										
Kevin	M	20	A-Level, AS-Level	Student	3	Labour	Y	G	NE	White
Ben	M	19	A-Level, AS-Level	Student	5,5	Cons	N	B	N	White
Tim	M	23	BA, BSc, degree	Production editor	4	LibDem	Y	G	NE	White
Nick	M	21	A-Level, AS-Level	Student	6	Cons	N	G	NE	White

Pseudonym: name chosen by participant, or allocated by researcher in later anonymisation process.
Education: categories correspond to national qualifications.
Profession: as declared by participant.
Left/right: Politically, people speak of left and right. On a scale of 1–10, where 1 is extreme left and 10 is extreme right, where would you put yourself?
Vote: did you vote at the last general elections? (List of candidates or parties provided) NV: no, DK: don't know; NA: no answer.
Referendum: For the French: Did you vote in the referendum of ratification of the Treaty establishing a constitution for Europe on the 29 May 2005? Yes, no, did not vote, refuse to answer. For the others: If you had to vote in a referendum would you vote …
EU belonging: In general, do you think that Britain's membership of the European Union is a good thing, or a bad thing? G: good thing; B: bad thing. NGNB: neither good nor bad. DK: don't know. NA: no answer.
Identity: In the future, do you think you will feel yourself to be (nationality) only, (nationality) and European, European and (nationality), or European only? N: National only; NE: national and European: EN: European and national; E: European only; World: citizen of the world (spontaneous – that is, not offered by us as an option).
Origin: for the French and Belgian, researchers' evaluation. For the British, question asked.

Appendix 4 Focus group discussion schedule

Presentation of the session (moderator):

Discussion falls into two parts – first session of about an hour and a quarter, then a break for some food, drink and social talk, then a second session of just over an hour.

We are hoping that the discussion will just roll on, but there are some particular rules to help it go well:

First, the discussion will be recorded in writing, on these cards, and they will be put up on the board in front of you so that everyone can see everything that has been said;

Second, no contribution should be more than thirty seconds;

Third, if you object to or want to question or argue with anything anyone says, do feel free to speak; but rather than interrupting someone when they are talking, make a sign to me, and I will signal that you want to say something, with a flash. That is, when I put up a card with something on it that you want to talk about more, that is the time for you to speak up and I will mark it with a flash. Then, we will make sure we go back to all the flashes, and make sure that you have a chance to say what you want to say.

And now we are going to start. Today we are talking about Europe.

5 MINUTES

What does it mean to be European?

We are going to talk about Europe during this session – talking about different questions. Here's the first to get us going. So, over to you.

30 MINUTES

How should power be distributed in Europe?

Of course, Europe is complicated. We can say that there are different places or people with power in Europe: the nations, MPs, experts or the market.

We'd like you to think about each of these, and say what are the advantages and disadvantages of them having power in Europe. We'll take them one by one. Which one would you like to start with?

35 MINUTES

If no choice made . . .

OK, let's start with the nations. Why is it good, and why is it bad, for the nations to decide matters in Europe?

45 MINUTES

Next, MPs. Why is it good for MPs to have power, and why bad?

55 MINUTES

Let's pass to the experts. Why good, and why bad, for experts to have power?

65 MINUTES

And finally, the market. In what way is it good for the market to govern what happens in Europe, and in what way bad?

Thanks. And now before the break there's a final task for you to do. I'm going to give you each six stickers, and ask you to imagine that it's up to you to say what the European institutions should be like. Think about the advantages and disadvantages of the nations, MPs, the experts, and the market as the sites of power in Europe; and we want you to make a choice. You have six stickers, six votes, which you can distribute among these four cards: nations, MPs, experts, market. You could put them all on one card, or divide them out any other way. Think for a moment, and then we want you all to vote together.

Count.

Is that the result you expected? Is there anything else you want to say about this, before we break?

70 MINUTES

OK, we'll break now. Please help yourself with drink and food . . .

Break

95 MINUTES

Who profits from Europe?

We want you to get together in twos or threes and come up with some ideas about who benefits from Europe. Please write about six answers using the cards.

Hand out 6 cards, pens

105–110 MINUTES

Take and shuffle the cards. Read them out. Put the first one up in the centre of the board. For following ones ask where on the board it should go.

130 MINUTES

For or against Turkey's entry into the European Union?

We are going to begin this one with a vote. I am going to give each of you one sticker – please all together come up to the board and stick it either on the 'for' or the 'against' card.

Take vote

135 MINUTES

Now, let's discuss the reasons you have for voting as you did. We'll start with the arguments for the losing decision:

Why did you vote this way?

145 MINUTES

Now, what are the arguments for voting with the winners [*for/against*]?

160 MINUTES

In favour or not of Turkey's entry into the European Union? Political parties . . .

It's the same question but this time we're going to look at what you think different political parties think about this question and why they think what they think or why they think what you think they think. Which party do you want to begin with?

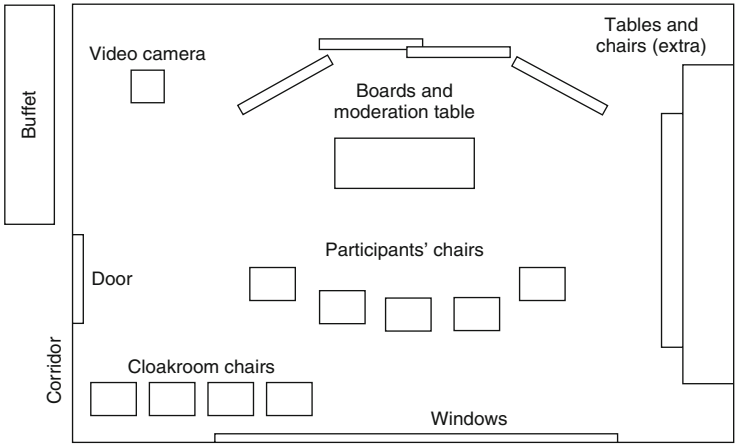
Presents cards representing each major party (logo and leader picture), asking where on the board they should go.

180 MINUTES

End

Thank you very much for your attention; that's the end of our discussion session today.

Appendix 5 Diagram of Room Layout (Brussels)



Appendix 6 Example of a board

Question 3, 'Who profit from Europe?'. Paris pilot group

Appendix 7 Responses (coded) to Q3: 'Who Profits from Europe?' by group

(See Table 3.2 for frequencies of codes)

CARDS by group	Code
MANAGERS BRUSSELS Set 1	$N = 15$
A nous–jeunes	CIT
Citoyens	CIT
Travailleurs	CIT
ca profite à l'économie	ECO
aux pays autour de l'Europe	EXT
les marges de l'Europe	EXT
aux gros industriels, aux multinationales	LIB
aux étudiants	MOB
voyageurs, mobilité des personnes	MOB
aide développement régions riches régions pauvres	NOUV
développement pays les plus pauvres en Europe	NOUV
les régions défavorisées subsides	NOUV
les nouveaux pays membres	NOUV
l'URSS	PAY
moins de nivellement des richesses	XXX
MANAGERS BRUSSELS Set 2	$N = 16$
Agriculteurs	AGRI
Aux citoyens	CIT
Européen	CIT
Aux Etats membres	CIT
Aux citoyens	CIT
Défense euro frontière unique	DEF
Aux hommes d'affaires	LIB
Aux marché et multinationales	LIB
Multinationales	LIB
Aux groupes religieux	NEG
Chômage	NEG
Nouveaux membres	NOUV
Aux politiques	POL
Aux experts	TECH
Aux USA	USA
Culture et valeurs	VAL
MANAGERS OXFORD Set 1	$N = 10$
People, lower taxes	CIT
Corporations	ECO
Companies	ECO
Cheap labour	LIB
European tourists	MOB
Poor countries, benefit not profit	PAUV

(Continued)

Political leaders	POL
Rich countries	RICH
USA	USA
Peace	VAL
MANAGERS OXFORD Set 2	$N = 18$
Farmers	AGRI
Financiers	BANK
Workers	CIT
States (economically)	ECO
Companies	ECO
EU business	ECO
Foreign policy benefiaries	EXT
Big multinationals	LIB
All do freedom of travel	MOB
Tourists	MOB
Footballers (Freddie Flintoff)	MOB
Under 26s, young people	MOB
Heads of state (political)	POL
Lawyers	TECH
Everyone, re civil liberties and human rights	VAL
Sharing info + experiences + ressources	VAL
the environment, wildlife	VAL
Nation States	XXX
MANAGERS PARIS Set 1	$N = 14$
aux banques	BANK
à tous	CIT
Aux européens	CIT
au reste du monde	EXT
A l'immigration intra-européenne	IMM
Aux entreprises qui délocalisent	LIB
Aux lobbies	LOB
aux interprètes	MOB
Aux ex-pays d'Europe les moins développés;	NOUV
aux pays pauvres	PAUV
Aux pays riches Allemagne France Angleterre	PAY
aux riches	RICH
à la compréhension des peuples	VAL
à la paix	VAL
MANAGERS PARIS Set 2	$N = 22$
les anciens (agriculteurs, pays fondateurs)	AGRI
aux banques de financement	BANK
aux Européens	CIT
au business, le marché, les experts	ECO
aux non-européens	EXT
l'Eurocratie – petits pays (Irlande, Espagne, Pays Baltes) – immigration	IMM

L'Oréal	LIB
aux multinationales	LIB
Pfizer	LIB
aux grands groupes (économiques et financiers), grands médias, opératuers téléphoniques	LIB
Nomenklatura politico-financière. Gérontocratie	NEG
les nouveaux entrants, secteurs de pointe, régions en voie de développement	NOUV
l'Eurocratie – petits pays (Irlande, Espagne, Pays Baltes) – immigration	PAY
chaque chef d'Etat dira à ses citoyens : on a gagné	POL
les élus	POL
Nomenklatura politico-financière. Gérontocratie	POL
aux élus (nantis)	POL
au business, le marché, les experts	TECH
l'Eurocratie – petits pays (Irlande, Espagne, Pays Baltes) – immigration	TECH
aux USA	USA
ca dépend pour qui	XXX
comment on va leur dire	XXX
EMPLOYEES BRUSSELS Set 1	$N = 10$
a qui ca ne profite pas?	CIT
à nos générations futures l'Europe profite	CIT
à l'égalité entre nous Européens	CIT
ca profite à nous	CIT
à des pays étrangers qui veulent se désolidariser des USA	EXT
ca profite au monde non européen à l'Afrique aux pays ex-colonisés	EXT
ca profite pas aux agriculteurs	NEG
ca profite au monde non européen à l'Afrique aux pays ex-colonisés	PAUV
aux politiciens	POL
aux chercheurs	RECH
EMPLOYEES BRUSSELS Set 2	$N = 11$
Aux investisseurs	BANK
Profite aux sociétés à but lucratif	LIB
Profite au système capital	LIB
Aux gérants de l'économie mondiale	LIB
Aux gros groupes financiers	LIB
Personnes qui voyagent	MOB
A nous ??? DEVRAIT profiter au citoyen	NEG
Pays économiquement plus faibles	PAUV
Aux politiciens	POL
Aux fonctionnaires européens	TECH
Aux bénéficiaires de l'aide européenne	XXX
EMPLOYEES OXFORD Set 1	$N = 23$
community groups eg Blackbird Leys	CIT
Citizens	CIT

(Continued)

People	CIT
Consumers	CIT
criminals, money laundering, drugs, prostitution	CRIM
extremist organisations	CRIM
local black markets	CRIM
breaking down of borders makes international crime easier, criminals	CRIM
companies that work under EC contracts	ECO
organisations [businesses]	ECO
companies within the EU who trade	ECO
Polish people	IMM
labour shortage and skills market	LIB
holiday makers	MOB
Eurostar	MOB
international workers	MOB
countries whose industries benefit from subsidies	NEG
profits???	NEG
poorer smaller countries	PAUV
Governments	POL
richer, wealthier countries	RICH
the bureaucrats	TECH
lawyers, translators, medical experts	TECH
EMPLOYEES OXFORD Set 2	$N = 11$
Asylum seekers	IMM
Disney (possibly)	LIB
Large manufacturers	LIB
Freight	MOB
Tourism	MOB
Smaller European nations	NOUV
MEPs	POL
Lawyers	TECH
European langage experts	TECH
French farmers	XXX
Smaller political parties	XXX
EMPLOYEES PARIS Set 1	$N = 14$
A tous les membres de l'UE (une force contre les USA)	CIT
aux entrepreneurs, aux commerciaux (plus de pouvoir, opportunité, main d'œuvre, expansion)	ECO
marché / économie plus vaste extériosée;	ECO
aux pays extérieurs à l'Europe;	EXT
aux pays pauvres ?, immigration	IMM
aux multinationales délocalisations, main d'oeuvre moins chère, moins de taxes	LIB
aux industriels investissements à l'étranger à mondres couts; avantages fiscaux	LIB
aux habitants des pays les moins riches car ouverture des frontières pour le travail	MOB

aux pays européens qui ont un faible pouvoir d'achat (salaire minimum inférieur au notre)	PAUV
aux habitants des pays les moins riches car ouverture des frontières pour le travail	PAUV
aux élus plus au pouvoir	POL
à la recherche; regroupement des impots [infos] des recherches et des rechercheurs;	RECH
aux associations et organisations; droit aux animaux protection consommatueur plus environnement;	VAL
aux pays extérieurs à l'Europe; populations pauvres ou riches; frontières	XXX
EMPLOYEES PARIS Set 2	$N = 17$
à l'agriculture des pays émergents	AGRI
profite aux grands groupes bancaires	BANK
en principe à tous	CIT
au développement économique de chacun	ECO
aux grands groupes économiques EDF/GDF/TF1	LIB
aux voyageurs – tourisme	MOB
intégration des citoyens dans les autres pays	MOB
aux nouveaux arrivants (pays de l'est) et aux pays émergents (Allemagne)	NOUV
plutôt aux pays pauvres aujourd'hui	PAUV
aux politiques, qui gouvernent autrement	POL
ouverture science technologie	RECH
aux chercheurs – à vous mesdames	RECH
à l'enrichissement culturel	VAL
aux échanges culturels, (linguistic)	VAL
échange politique, idées	VAL
profite à l'évolution des mœurs	VAL
à la mixité entre les populations	VAL
WORKERS BRUSSELS Set 1	$N = 15$
les capitaux, les lobbys	BANK
les entreprises	ECO
les pays d'Extreme-Orient, l'importation commerciale suivant le quota sur notre pouvoir d'achat	EXT
certains émigrants/immigrants	IMM
les pays d'Extreme-Orient, l'importation commerciale suivant le quota sur notre pouvoir d'achat	LIB
les capitaux, les lobbys	LOB
à nous aussi voyages plus faciles	MOB
un cycle vicieux qui devrait se compenser avec le temps	NEG
les pays pauvres, les nouveaux pays	NOUV
les pays rentrants européens	NOUV
Pays du Tiers monde, coopération au développement	PAUV
les pays pauvres, les nouveaux pays	PAUV
les chefs d'État	POL
les décideurs	TECH

(Continued)

Les proprios	XXX
WORKERS BRUSSELS Set 2	$N = 9$
Européens	CIT
Complexe militaire	DEF
Entreprise	ECO
Patronat	LIB
Les médias – désinformation	NEG
Nouveaux membres européens	NOUV
Institutions scientifiques	RECH
A la culture	VAL
Institutions culturelles	VAL
WORKERS OXFORD Set 1	$N = 6$
Businesses	ECO
Everyone but us	NEG
Tradesmen from poorer countries	PAUV
MPs	POL
Governments from bigger countries	RICH
Bigger countries	RICH
WORKERS OXFORD Set 2	$N = 9$
People	CIT
Businesses	ECO
Industries	ECO
All countries	EXT
MPs	POL
Lawyers	TECH
Commission	TECH
Environment	VAL
Countries	XXX
WORKERS PARIS Set 1	$N = 18$
aux banques	BANK
aux financiers, aux banques	BANK
Argent, économie	BANK
a la mafia	CRIM
les sociétés secrètes	CRIM
aux industriels	ECO
textile	ECO
Aux industries	ECO
Argent, économie	ECO
les étrangers	IMM
les grandes entreprises	LIB
je sais pas	NEG
aux pays pauvres de l'Europe	PAUV
aux hommes politiques	POL
le président, les hommes politiques	POL
Aux riches, pas aux pauvres	RICH

aux USA	USA
les Etats-Unis	USA
WORKERS PARIS Set 2	$N = 19$
elle favorise les richesses économiques et l'outil agricole	AGRI
l'agriculture	AGRI
marchés boursiers	BANK
aux populations	CIT
elle sert à la défense des pays	DEF
Import/Export. Profit pour l'économie européenne	ECO
elle favorise les richesses économiques et l'outil agricole	ECO
Elle sert au marché mondial	LIB
marchés mondiaux	LIB
aux voyages	MOB
pas à moi	NEG
aux derniers arrivants, les plus pauvres	NOUV
Aux nouveaux entrants dans l'Europe	NOUV
aux pays du Tiers monde	PAUV
aux pays du Tiers monde	PAUV
aux pays les plus pauvres. Par exemple l'Afrique pour le pétrole, le café, le cacao	PAUV
aux Anglais	PAY
aux hommes politiques	POL
aux riches	RICH
ACTIVISTS BRUSSELS Set 1	$N = 13$
aux agriculteurs	AGRI
au citoyen	CIT
aux corporates	ECO
à l'economie de marché	LIB
aux grands entreprises	LIB
les lobbyistes	LOB
aux touristes	MOB
aux étudiants	MOB
aux parlementaires	POL
aux chercheurs, par exemple UCL	RECH
les USA	USA
aux droits de l'Homme	VAL
les medias	XXX
ACTIVISTS BRUSSELS Set 2	$N = 12$
Déteneurs du capital international	BANK
Bruxelles	BXL
Européens / Citoyens	CIT
Entreprises (PME)	ECO
Extra européens = 1er coopérateur	EXT
Classe politique qui représente les intérêts des multinationales	LIB
Erasmus	MOB
Classe politique qui représente les intérêts des multinationales	POL

(Continued)

Chercheurs (connaissance)	RECH
Environnement	VAL
Diversité culture	VAL
Renforcement des mouvements sociaux	XXX
ACTIVISTS OXFORD Set 1	$N = 17$
Citizens of Brussels	BXL
Employees, perhaps not as much as we would like	CIT
Citizens	CIT
Manufacturers	ECO
Commerce	ECO
Owners of capital, businesses	LIB
Holiday makers	MOB
Travel industry	MOB
Travel industry [encore]	MOB
Employees, perhaps not as much as we would like	NEG
Major centres of existing power – who benefits?	NEG
Vulnerable people, people from poorer countries	PAUV
People from poorer countries and regions	PAUV
Major centres of existing power – who benefits?	RICH
Environment	VAL
Minorities via the Council of Europe and the Human Rights Act	VAL
Education	VAL
ACTIVISTS OXFORD Set 2	$N = 21$
Farmers	AGRI
Workers	CIT
Consumers	CIT
Retailers	ECO
Intra European trading	ECO
Accession candidates	EXT
Non EU immigrants or migrants	IMM
Pressure Groups	LOB
Lobbyists	LOB
Tourists	MOB
Brussels hoteliers	MOB
Budget airlines	MOB
French farmers and Spanish farmers	NEG
Poorer countries former soviet states	NOUV
Impoverished area	PAUV
Ireland	PAY
MEPs	POL
Bureaucrats	TECH
Lawyers	TECH
environment issues	VAL
Eurovision	XXX

ACTIVISTS PARIS Set 1	$N = 19$
aux agriculteurs	AGRI
aux financiers	BANK
aux Européens, paix, pouvoir d'achat, liberté	CIT
aux citoyens (santé, environnement)	CIT
aux entreprises – marché unique	ECO
pas au minima sociaux	LIB
au capitalisme	LIB
aux pays priviligiant le model libéral anglo-saxon	LIB
aux étudiants (Erasmus)	MOB
pas aux citoyens	NEG
pas aux pays pauvres	NEG
aux territoires – pour le développement	NOUV
aux régions – fonds structurels	NOUV
aux élus (privilèges, intérêts professionnels, décharge les gouvernements de leur inaction)	POL
experts, fonctionnaires, européen lobbies, ONG;	TECH
aux technocrates	TECH
Etats-Unis, Otan, division des européens	USA
aux citoyens (santé, environnement)	VAL
aux socialistes, aux centristes à Guy qui ont le pouvoir depuis des années et qui ne font rien	XXX
ACTIVISTS PARIS Set 2	$N = 14$
Agriculture	AGRI
le Hamas	CRIM
aux multinationales et à l'eurocratie	LIB
grands groupes agro-alimentaires	LIB
aux libéraux	LIB
World companie	LIB
Environnement. Des directives plus exigeantes que le droit français. Mais les lobbies industriels les édulcorent	NEG
aux pays européens pauvres (Espagne, Portugal, Irlande. Fonds structurels)	PAUV
Régions sous-développées. Certains Etats, provisoirement	PAUV
aux technocrates	TECH
aux multinationales et à l'eurocratie	TECH
aux anglo-saxons	USA
à la paix à l'intérieur de l'Europe	VAL
Environnement. Des directives plus exigeantes que le droit français. Mais les lobbies industriels les édulcorent	VAL

Notes

1 Concepts and Theory: Political Sociology and European Studies

1. Eurobarometer website at http://ec.europa.eu/public_opinion/index_en.htm, accessed 2 January 2011.
2. Unification: In general, are you for or against efforts being made to unify Western Europe? Are you for – very much, for – to some extent, against – to some extent, against – very much, Don't Know; Membership: Generally speaking, do you think that (your country's) membership of the European Community (Common Market) is a good thing, a bad thing, neither good nor bad, Don't Know?; Dissolution: If you were told tomorrow that the European Community (Common Market) – EU – had been scrapped, would you be very sorry about it, indifferent or very relieved?; Benefit: Taking everything into consideration, would you say that (your country) has on balance benefited or not from being a member of the European Community (Common Market)?
3. In your opinion, how is the European Community or European Unification advancing nowadays? Please look at these people (show card) Number 1 is standing still, Number 7 is running as fast as possible. Choose the one which best corresponds with your opinion of the European Community or European Unification. And which corresponds best with what you would like?
4. Do you sometimes think of yourself not only as a (nationality) citizen but also as a European citizen? Does it happen often, sometimes or never?
5. Also Belot (2000).
6. Two major European journals dedicated special issues to euroscepticism: *European Union politics* (Vol. 8, no. 1, March 2007) and *Acta Politica* (Vol. 42, no. 3, September 2007); an issue of *Revue internationale de politique comparée* deals with resistance to European integration (Vol. 15, no. 4, 2008).
7. The five former stages are: state building, capitalist development, nation building, democratisation and welfare-state development.
8. Medrano has recently revisited his interviews and published an analysis that is perhaps more critical of mainstream European public opinion analysis in so far as it questions the notion of European identity (Diez Medrano, 2010).
9. First published in French in 2010: *L'Europe des Européens. Enquête comparative sur les perceptions de l'Europe* (Paris: Economica).
10. An observation very similar to Diez Medrano (2010).
11. See, in particular, Dakowska and Hubé Ch. 5: 'For or against the EU? Ambivalent Attitudes and Varied Arguments towards Europe'. The literal translation of the French (*Le public européen ne se divise pas en deux catégories*) would be 'The European public does not divide itself into two'.

12. Oddly, however, the chapter dedicated to sophistication (or, in French, *compétence politique*) – Lehingue, Ch. 8 – is not based on the same series of interviews as the rest of the book.
13. White's interview design is based on cognitive frames research: he used 17 cards naming different issues, which the taxis drivers were asked to sort and label. Methodological issues are rigorously discussed.
14. We have chosen to focus on White and Gaxie, as they are so different in their research designs and are published as books. See also, Duchesne et al. (2010); EURONAT (2005); Favell (2010); Jamieson and Grundy (2007); Reungoat (2010); Weill (2010) – qualitative analyses that converge on the same results.
15. Not always the case; in his last book Risse, for example, takes into account only those results that corroborate the thesis of growing polarisation (Risse, 2010).
16. The 2011 Biennial Conference of the European Union Studies Association, Boston, USA, included several contributions on this question: it was the focus of de Vries's contribution to the roundtable 'Theorizing EU Politics', and of papers by Stoeckel (Stoeckel, 2011), Van Ingelgom (Van Ingelgom, 2010), Arnold and Hosli.
17. For an account of this theme in political theory see Frazer (2008).
18. Analysis based on Duchesne and Haegel (2004a); in political theory terms there is convergence with the 'agonistic' strain associated with, for example Mouffe (1993, 2005), Rancière (1999) and Honig (1993).

2 National Frames: Reactions to a Multi-Level World

1. This French computer package has been used in some research published in English: see Brugidou (2003), Bara, Weale & Bicquelet (2007). The Alceste analysis reported in this chapter has been carried out by Sophie Duchesne, whom Florence Haegel wishes to thank.
2. These basic analytic units are called Elementary Context Units in the jargon of the Alceste programme; we refer to them here and in the figures as 'units of analysis'.

3 Social Gap: The Double Meaning of 'Overlooking'

1. Fligstein uses a variety of data, but Chapter 5 is based on Eurobarometer; Hooghe &Marks (2009) quote extensively from work based on Eurobarometer; Hooghe & Marks (2004) is a Eurobarometer analysis.
2. Gamson's focus groups were organised in participants' houses, with acquaintances, so mimicked a natural setting.
3. Principal components analysis was conducted using the computer programme SPAD. As a robustness check, a second analysis, omitting codes that seem to play an important role but have only a small number of cases (e.g. USA, RICH, EXT, IMM) was run; the general configuration hardly changes.
4. On gender relationships in interviews and focus groups, Wilkinson (1998).

5. The full answer is 'new entering countries, leading sectors, developing countries' (*les nouveaux entrants, secteurs de pointe, régions en voie de développement*). Patrick and Michel ignored the rule: one card, one answer.
6. *Les élus* is a generic term for any kind of elected person.
7. He chose to use a pseudonym, as all participants might, although few did in Brussels, none in Paris.
8. In the correspondence analysis of the 'who profits ' cards, this group emerges as the one which contributes most to Factor 1 at the 'profit' rather than 'benefit' end.
9. Confirmed by Kuhn 15 years later. The lower one's satisfaction with national politics, the greater the likelihood to say one's country membership is a bad thing (Kuhn, 2011: 826)
10. See, in particular, Diez Medrano, Throssel & Weill (2010).

4 When Ambivalence Meets Indifference

1. Generally speaking, do you think that (OUR COUNTRY)'s membership of the EU is . . . A good thing – A bad thing – Neither good nor bad?
2. Exceptions include Franklin, Marsh & McLaren (1994); Sauger, Brouard & Grossman (2007); Verney (2011).
3. Standard Eurobarometer for spring 2011, three years on from the economic crisis, indicates 23% in Belgium, 33% in France, 37% in UK and 31% for the EU (European Commission, 2011).
4. Membership question was only asked in the second questionnaire, for participants. However, we also asked applicants, potential participants, a question about the constitutional referendum; although it had different meanings in the three countries (the question was hypothetical for the Belgian and British cases,) we did use it as a selection criterion – see Appendix 2, and Chapter 6.
5. Our analysis is distinct from that of ambivalence as response variation, initiated by Steenbergen and De Vries (Stoeckel, 2011); it is also different from that developed by Haegel & Garcia (2011).
6. On the difficulty of interpretive coding of affect and evaluation, Duchesne & Van Ingelgom (2008).
7. Compare with White (2010b: 1037).
8. For overviews of this White (2008, 2010a) and de Wilde (2011).

5 Representation and Legitimation

1. Examples include Beetham & Lord (1998); Bellamy & Castiglione (2003); Ehin (2008); Obradovic (1996); Scharpf (1999); Quermonne (2001); Van Ingelgom (2010).
2. Notably, though, for both Rawls and Habermas there is a subjective, agent-centred, element to the objective, philosophical, construction of justice; Rawls' theories of reflective equilibrium and the overlapping consensus can be read this way; Habermas explicitly emphasises the necessary endorsement of (ideal) interlocutors in any construction of justice.

3. Lipset (1959) emphasises the necessary economic and welfare conditions that could generate stable and widespread beliefs in the legitimacy of the governmental regime.
4. For Schmidt (2012) notably, the binary scheme is inadequate, and we must add the third category of 'throughput'. We do not dissent, but our simplified scheme here includes throughput processes in the input category.
5. This group is younger than the norm and dominated by students who we suspect had an academic understanding of subsidiarity. This is why this group is in Set 2 and not in our main comparatively well-matched Set 1.
6. There were two decidedly eurosceptic members of this group. For the left-wing eurosceptic, markets are illegitimate sources of power, and the EU is illegitimate because it is centred on markets (and their corresponding bureaucracy). For the right-wing eurosceptic markets (and individuals) are the only source of legitimate power; sovereign governments should be confined to safeguarding them.
7. Van Ingelgom (2010: Chapter 4) finds the same result using a systematic codification of the complete 24 focus group transcripts: 186 out of 918 quotes related to Europe were on the themes of governance and democratic deficit.
8. Mansbridge's account sets out to review and refine the various typologies of the relationships between representative and represented in Pitkin (1967), Mansbridge (1999), Young (2000).
9. cf. Arendt (1968: 241–2), on the necessarily representative quality of all political speech.
10. The Set 1 Oxford Activists were an exception: they discussed whether the exercise required them to disclose or to keep concealed their party affiliations.

6 Reflections on Design and Implementation

1. 'Do you ever think of yourself as not only (nationality) but also European? Does this happen often, sometimes or never?'
2. 'Taking everything into consideration, would you say that (your country) has on balance benefitted or not from being a member of the European Community (Common Market)?'
3. 'Generally speaking, do you think that (your country's) membership of the European Community (Common Market) is a good thing, a bad thing or neither good nor bad thing?'
4. In Paris, Guillaume Garcia; in Brussels, Virginie Van Ingelgom and in Oxford, Linda Pialek.
5. The unemployed are systematically over-represented among our applicants; notably at the time of the research unemployment rates were 20% of the working population in Brussels, about 10% Paris and about 3% Oxford.
6. Possible explanations include the sexual division in Internet use; we also wonder whether (young) men were attracted by the first name 'Virginie' shown on the advert with a mobile telephone number.
7. Also included in the 'workers' category were farmers; no participant had this profession but some had parents who were farmers.

8. The multiple correspondence analysis, carried out by V. Van Ingelgom using the computer package SPAD, is described in greater detail in Garcia & Van Ingelgom (2010). Readers familiar with this package will notice that in our figures we have altered SPAD's output, in the interests of legibility.

Post Script: Searching for the Grail

1. Van Ingelgom (2010) for statistical re-analysis of Eurobarometer data over the long term, revealing the extent of indifference in relation to Europe.

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Université Catholique de Louvain-La-Neuve and Sciences Po. To be published in 2013 at ECPR Press Monographs Series, ECPR Jean Blondel PhD Prize.
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