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SOCIAL REPRESENTATIONS AND COMMUNICATIVE PROCESSES

Mohamed Chaib & Birgitta Orfali (Editors)

The theory of Social Representations assumes that our ideas of the
world that surrounds us are created, mediated, negotiated, confirmed
and maintained in the social interaction that occurs between
individuals within a certain group or culture. Our representations help
us to get orientation in our social life, how to act and interact in it and
determine our forms of everyday communication.

How are representations created and maintained? It is by no means
obvious how this occurs. How do we construct understanding of new,
unfamiliar phenomena in new environments? How do we communicate
our representations to others? What do mediation processes look like
in interpersonal interaction? What do they look like on a macro-level,
where institutions can be said to interact with individuals' every day
life and common sense-knowledge through science, politics,
ideologies and mass media? With what methods can we study these
processes?

The ambition of this book is to illuminate some of these questions
and bring them up to further discussions. The articles can be seen as
examples of how the theory of social representations can be applied
in empirical studies that cover a wide range of different disciplines
and contexts.

Chaib,M. & Orfali,B. (Editors)

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Annamaria Silvana de Rosa

North-South-East-West:
The four points of the compass in the European Skies.
A comparison of views from different latitudes in the Social Representations of young people in ten European Countries.

On the Relativity and Conventionality of Geographic Parameters

That North, South, East and West were relative parameters, at least from the observer's position, I understood with great emotion one day when, visiting the Greenwich Observatory with my son. I found myself (like many tourists before me), with one foot in the East and one foot in the West. My feet were on either side of a line that visibly and tangibly demarcated what had been for me, from the school books and atlases of my childhood till then, nothing but a vertical line drawn from the North Pole to the South, passing through London – the Greenwich meridian. That day I was profoundly struck by the power of the conventional definition of time. Standing on the point 0° that all the clocks in the world refer to in calculating the 24 hours of a day; and of space, which begins here, if it is true that one only has to put one foot left and one right to be in the East and the West of the world at the same time. So that even Italy, a place I had always thought of as the centre of the Western world, perhaps because of the ancient web of Rome – caput mundi –, now turned out to be in the East, which was therefore not just the territory of the Balkans and the ex-Soviet Empire.

But that North, South, East and West are just conventional parameters and not intrinsic attributes of the physical structure of the world is a piece of information that goes against the grain of a primary anti-relativistic need that humans have, from their day of birth, to orientate themselves in the world through fixed spatial-temporal coordinates. An aspiration to have a kind of internal compass that cannot be thrown off course, whose baricentre is always where we are right now.

A whole series of didactic instruments (globes, atlases, geographical maps etc.), help the "civilized" to represent planet Earth from their first experience of school onward. A very small planet compared to the immensity of the Universe, and at the same time incredibly vast in relation to the perceptual-representational capacities of single individuals and to the psychological modalities through which we learn to structure a "place identity" (Proshansky, H.M., Fabian, A.K., Kaminoff, R. 1983; de Rosa, 1997a; et al. 1995, 1988.)

Recently, however, the correctness of the geo-political representations that we habitually form, thanks to the role played by these didactic instruments (maps, etc.) in organizing our perceptions, has been questioned.

"The planet drawn on maps is not the Earth, it is only one of the portraits we have invented of it, all different, and all to some extent wrong. Every map of the world is an opinion – relative – but also irreplaceable, without them we are lost" (ArnoPeters)

The German cartographer Arno Peters[1] does not limit his criticism to the over 500 cartographic projections that have so far been invented, in a kind of *cartographic colonialism* by which the rich North reaffirms its economic supremacy through altered spatial proportions that visibly emphasize Europe and North America by reducing the immense continents of the South - Africa, South America, Australia, to ridiculous dimensions, through the distorted representation of meridians and parallels. Motivated by a desire for geo-political equity and in opposition to *distorted eurocentric projections*, he has instigated a new type of cartographic projection based on three criteria : "equivalence of area", "equivalence of axis" and "equivalence of position".

Once the equator has been returned to its place, (that is at the middle of the planisphere), and the real proportions of the territories have been restored to cartographic projection, Peters' map provides the planet with a new look, giving due space to the vastity of Africa and South America, and reducing considerably the dimensions of Europe. It is not within my capacity to determine whether Peters' map gives a more truthful picture than traditional maps; but what is certain is that, from the perspective of the social construction of knowledge, it provides us with an instrument that not only reproduces, but also induces a different representation of the North, South, East and West of the world. A representation that is not influenced by socio-economic and geo-political power relationships between the areas concerned.

Vujakovic (1993), of the Anglia Polytechnic University of Cambridge, has pointed out that cartographic maps have historically served as an ideological instrument, often at the service of political or religious propaganda in manipulating the political image of Europe through visual metaphor. The geographical consistency of the continent of Europe and the neutrality of its cartographical representation is hereby placed in question. Moreover, Europe and Asia form a single continental block and in specialist geographical texts, Europe is often defined as a "sub-continent of Asia":

"The notion of 'European continent' is without geographical-physical foundation. The space between the Urals and the Atlantic is in reality the western section of the great Asiatic continent (...). The notion of Europe is therefore a 'geographism' that determines the historical-cultural peculiarities of a space which, for physical geography, is a sub-continent : a territory designated by a succession of ethnical and political-military affairs, whose delimitations have been subject to mutation in diverse historical eras" (E.G.G.,1995,p.14)

If geographical maps are uncertain instruments, destined to express (and at the same time to influence with all the power of visual language) representations of contingent historical situations with their ideological determinants; how diversified and mutable, or alternatively homogeneous and shared, will the mental maps be of those people who create and recreate Europe (or the European Community), taking the cardinal points North, South, East and West as orientative elements in the twelve-starred sky of the flag of the European Union?

In the first place it must be noted that we are in the presence of 'objects of complex representation', that is to say of a multiplicity of objects that form part of a system of interrelated representations. It is not possible to study the social representation of the European Community/ Union, interwoven with the social representation of Europe in a historical-geographical-cultural sense, without examining the representations of its member states, the concept of Nation, of Boundaries, and of the four parameters that represent the social-cultural coordinates, not just spatial, of North, South, East and West.

The points of the compass in the European sky: introductory notes on a vast programme of cross-national research on the social representations of young people from a total of ten member, new member amd non-member states of the E.U.

The results I will present in this paper have been chosen from a complex research project carried out in ten European countries (Austria, France, Finland, Germany, Great Britain, Greece, Italy, Portugal, Switzerland, Spain) aimed at investigating the relationship between the Social Representations of European Union and Social

Multi-dimensional Identity of 3454 young subjects, aged 18-24 years, and of their parents (only for the Italian sample [2]).

The multi-dimensional identity is assumed not simply and statically in terms of socio-demographic characteristics of the subjects, or as a product of a cognitive social categorisation, but also in terms of the *degree of identification/ sense of belonging* felt by the subjects with their *own town, region, home country, the E.U. and geographical Europe* and their inclusive or exclusive identitive pattern of integration/differentiation of local, national and supranational entities.

The aim is to analyse how this multi-dimensional identity influences both their *value judgements of the different geographical-political entities* mentioned above and their set of representational systems related to E.U., Nation, North-South-East-West, Boundaries, the Countries and People of the member states of E.U. and Myself.

The theoretical framework and the methodological plan of research has already been presented in a book edited by Breakwell and Lyons (1996), coming from the Farnham Conference (May 1993) and) some results have been already discussed in other conferences (Lisbon, Sept. 1993; Madrid, July 1994; Cambridge, Sept. 1994; Mustlio, Aug. 1995; Aix-en-Provence, Sept. 1996; Bari, May. 1997; Helsinki, Aug. 1997; Rome, Oct. 1997: see de Rosa in list of References).

Here I intend to present – for the first time on the basis of the empirical data collected in all the ten above mentioned European countries – data concerning the social representations of North-South-East-West (the four points of the compass on the European sky), by comparing views of young people from different latitudes.

The results I will be referring to are largely drawn from the analysis of "associative networks" [3] (de Rosa, 1995), both from the point of view of the evaluative and attitudinal dimension revealed by the polarity index of the semantic field, and from that of the structure and contents of the representations emerging, in particular, in relation to the stimulus words North-South-East-West. Not neglecting however, the structural links that these representations have with a set of more articulated representations relating to the European Community, Nation, Boundaries, the Member countries of the European Union and the Self of the subjects, themselves proponents of the representations.

In the first place I will present repeated models of factorial analysis designed to identify the latent structure webbing the indexes of polarity expressed in relation to the different stimulus-words, as synthetic measures of the evaluative dimension linked to the associated representations. A correlative analysis between the index of polarity in relation to one verbal stimulus (such as the Self) and the indexes of polarity relating to all the other verbal stimuli (previously regrouped by factorial analysis) will also be discussed, with the intention of analysing the latent structure of the system of representations.

Subsequently, a cross-analysis of data derived from the different (structured and projective) instruments designed for this research programme, based on a multi-methodological approach, will be presented.

Therefore, structure and contents of the semantic field of representations derived from the 'associative networks' related to the stimulus-words North-South-East-West will be presented, at a more analitycal level, by illustrating how the positioning of the social groups identified – country by country – on the basis of the answers to the structured questionnaire and non-verbal instruments (geographical map) affects the various representations.

To this end, the results derived from a series of Multidimensional Analysis of Correspondence for textual data (SPAD-T) will be discussed, by presenting not only the structural configurations of the contents which organise the representations derived from all the associated words (*active variables*) related to the stimulus-words (North-South-East-West), but by also explaining the significant contribution of some of the dimensions extracted by the questionnaire (*illustrative variables*) relating to: informational and experiential knowledge of the E.U., descriptors of self, evaluation of local, national and supranational objects of identification, degree of confidence in the E.U., the evaluation of the E.U. member countries (country by country), the evaluation of E.U. countries organised in clusters (Northern vs Southern, Eastern vs Western, Powerful vs Weak, etc.), evaluation of the people of the various EU countries and the indexes of polarity of the semantic field derived from the associative network related to the stimulus-words North-South-East-West.

Structural and differential results for an overall historical-dynamic vision of the four cardinal points (North-South-East-West) and of the other objects of representation (European Union, Nation, Boundaries).

These results are interesting both from a structural and a historical-dynamic point of view because they are drawn from repeated factorial analyses of the data collected across a period of time that was particularly important to the decision-making process on joining the E.U. of new member States like Austria and Finland, and of the progressive transformation underway in relationships with Eastern Europe. In fact, the cross-national research stems from an extensive pilot study conducted in Italy in 1993, which was extended in 1994 to another six member States (France, Greece, England, Portugal, Spain) and one non-member (Switzerland). It was further extended in 1995 to another three countries; to Germany (data being collected in both East and West Berlin, a city that is rightly considered an open-air social laboratory in view of the profound political changes taking place there, and their international implications), and to Austria and Finland (which was at the time in the process of deciding to become a new member of the European Community, in the meantime redesignated European Union).

The different factorial analyses presented here aim to establish the latent structure webbing indexes of polarity expressed in relation to different stimulus-words included in the methodological model.

The first results, shown in Table 1, are drawn from analyses of the associative networks produced by all the 3,154 subjects interviewed in eight of the ten countries (excluding Finland and Germany), relative to the stimulus-words referring to the four cardinal points, and to the twelve member States of the European Community, before the entry of Austria in 1995.

We tested various solutions. In one solution of the matrix of factors in rotation that we tested, five factors were extrapolated with an eigenvalue above 1 (explained variance 44.5%). The stimulus-word "East" represented alone the fifth factor and left no doubt as to its interpretation. The same is true of the fourth factor, which concerns the high saturation of North and West, the indivisible binomial which is the symbol of the European Community. Regarding the third factor the links between France, the U.K. (with which Ireland is associated by virtue of geographic proximity) and Germany dominate the representations of the countries of the Centre-North of the E.C. This three-way geo-political configuration is often called the *golden triangle of the big bosses*, both in the media and in the specialist literature.

Going back, the second factor emerges from the aggregation of the lands of 'mystery', the countries of BE.NE.LUX, together with Denmark; while the first factor is distinctly identified with the South, gathering around this point of the compass the pearls of the Mediterranean (Greece, Spain, Portugal, Italy). (cf. Table 1)

Table 1: Results derived from factorial analysis (PCA) rotated factor Varimax solution) on the indexes of polarity related to the four cardinal points and the 12 E.C. member countries used as stimulus-words, calculated on the total population (except Finland and Germany).

Factor	Eigenvalue	%	% Cum
1	2,47497	15,5	15,5
2	1,39006	8,7	24,2
3	1,16612	7,3	31,4
4	1,08220	6,8	38,2
5	1,00037	6,3	44,5

Rotated Factor Matrix:

	Factor 1	Factor 2	Factor 3	Factor 4	Factor 5
GREECE	,66252	,05781	-,07819	-,07451	-,09281
SPAIN	,59464	-,06483	,20391	-,05956	-,05194
PORTUGAL	,57143	,10365	-,01549	,09995	,06100
ITALY	,55554	,06319	,18345	,16253	,15221
SOUTH	,47367	-,04871	-,16472	,36276	,24325
FRANCE	,34870	,09423	,34489	,22606	,01126
BELGIUM	,11244	,69459	,00546	-,02874	-,02019
DENMARK	-,07994	,69065	,13445	-,06870	-,00299
LUXEMBOURG	-,01248	,53618	-,10197	,20961	,03941
HOLLAND	,28197	,39870	,14535	,04134	-,00840
UNITED KINGDOM	,11936	,03162	,65445	,15341	-,25157
GERMANY	-,02350	-,01422	,61885	,04706	,17238
IRELAND	,08091	,17768	,44915	-,13640	,35064
WEST	,14355	,04286	,04984	,71577	-,17911
NORTH	-,01123	,05852	,13814	,68998	,16401
EAST	,05710	-,03239	,05855	,05213	,84430

Factor Transformation Matrix:

	Factor 1	Factor 2	Factor 3	Factor 4	Factor 5
Factor 1	,74412	,33872	,38431	,39878	,15758
Factor 2	-,40063	,87001	,21790	-,17550	-,06557
Factor 3	-,42239	-,28838	,67462	,18591	,49875
Factor 4	-,32535	,05318	-,19857	,87239	-,30139
Factor 5	-,03891	,20582	-,55704	,12065	,79453

Undertaking a factorial analysis of the entire matrix of collected data at a year's distance, including the samples from Finland and Germany, over a total population of 3,454 subjects the structural factor, remained basically stable. The only exception is that regarding the word East, which is still confined to the fifth factor, but in one case is articulated with another element – that of Ireland (though with a much lower saturation than that of East, but still significant, and slightly higher than that which sees Ireland as collocated with the U.K. in the fourth factor). The presence of Ireland represents the other extreme boundary of the European community and is perhaps in some way evocative of the marginality of the countries collocated on the farthest frontiers; or rather, her co-presence with the key element of the factor East could lead to the supposition that the profound transformations that have taken place in international relations act on the representations of our subjects in the direction of an attempt at integration, if only to recall the opposite frontiers East-West. (cf.Tab.2)

Table 2: Results derived from factorial analysis (PCA) rotated factor Varimax solution) on the indexes of polarity related to the four cardinal points and the 12 E.C. member countries used as stimulus-words, calculated on the total population.

Factor	Eigenvalue	%	%Cum
1	2,41586	15,1	15,1
2	1,39057	8,7	23,8
3	1,16970	7,3	31,1
4	1,09259	6,8	37,9
5	1,00003	6,3	44,2

Rotated Factor Matrix:

	Factor 1	Factor 2	Factor 3	Factor 4	Factor 5
GREECE	,66696	,06851	-,10566	-,04699	-,10138
SPAIN	,59766	-,05094	-,05977	,17287	-,02988
ITALY	,56199	,05650	,15178	,20955	,13690
PORTUGAL	,54403	,10776	,15031	-,06367	,10482
SOUTH	,44247	-,05338	,40450	-,18430	,24326
BELGIUM	,11571	,67531	-,05369	,02122	-,02508
DENMARK	-,05881	,67323	-,08088	,13214	,00311
LUXEMBOURG	-,05959	,56604	,25133	-,10588	,04957
HOLLAND	,27176	,43476	,05477	,09939	-,01161
NORTH	-,03658	,04762	,69350	,13827	,16127
WEST	,15434	,03111	,67576	,09986	-,26956
UNITED KINGDOM	,12721	,00828	,09165	,69719	-,15951
GERMANY	-,04079	,02352	,05369	,58453	,20457
FRANCE	,34287	,12929	,20163	,35359	,00127
EAST	,06697	-,06490	,04527	,01587	,81686
IRELAND	,07121	,17754	-,09057	,38995	,41441

Factor Transformation Matrix:

	Factor 1	Factor 2	Factor 3	Factor 4	Factor 5
Factor 1	,73546	,37001	,38670	,38116	,16548
Factor 2	-,41505	,87161	-,17419	,17121	-,09155
Factor 3	-,43216	-,23481	,17809	,63371	,56991
Factor 4	-,31482	,01600	,87206	-,14253	-,34616
Factor 5	-,03105	,21909	,16709	-,63522	,72084

Furthermore, if we examine the averages relative to the indexes of polarity referring to all the stimulus-words, East has the lowest result of the whole sample, followed by Germany, Ireland and England, while the highest value is attributed to Greece, preceded by Holland and West. (cf.Tab.2a)

Table 2a: Mean values obtained on the indexes of polarity related to all the stimulus-words, calculated on the total population (except Finland and Germany).

Words	Mean
EAST	1.62
GERMANY	1.83
UNITED KINGDOM	1.95
IRELAND	1.96
BOUNDARIES	1.98
NORTH	2.05
SOUTH	2.05
PORTUGAL	2.06
LUXEMBOURG	2.12
FRANCE	2.18
ITALY	2.21
BELGIUM	2.22
SPAIN	2.24
DENMARK	2.25
WEST	2.26
HOLLAND	2.38
GREECE	2.40

This hierarchy of preferences among the countries and the four points of the compass in the skies of Europe holds firm, even for the population sample of 3,454 subjects, including the data subsequently gathered in Germany and Finland. The East is always collocated at the lowest level of preference, which leads to the supposition that however profound the changes in the geo-political set-up, a deep sense of extraneity continues to pervade the representations of ordinary people in relation to this enormous flank of Europe.

It is interesting to note the consistency of these results obtained utilizing the projective technique of associative networks, with the clusters emerging from an analysis of section D of the questionnaire. This had been structured according to the evaluations expressed regarding the member countries of the E.C.(item 29) concerning *security and tranquillity, the standard of living, citizens' rights, social organization, environmental protection, military power, technological progress and cultural liveliness.*

Through a nation by nation analysis of the main first level components revealed by the questionnaire regarding the evaluation of the characteristics of "liveability" and quality of life, cultural liveliness, technological progess and military power of the various E.C.Member Countries, a bifactorial structure organized around two dimensions interpretable as "organizational societal" and "military and technological

power" was identified, before proceding to an analysis of the clusters. This bifactorial structure has proved to be highly generalizable on the basis of the calculation of the correlations between the factorial structures separately checked for all the countries using phi of Tucker with values around .95.

An inspection of the average values (see Tab.4) – attributed to the factor *"Organizational.societal aspects"* further subdivided in two factorial dimensions derived from the factorial analysis of second level and subsequent hierachical clusters analysis on the two factors related exclusiveley to these aspects and interpreted as *Northern Countries* (Luxembourg, Denmark, Belgium, Holland, Great Britain) vs *Southern Countries* (Spain, Portugal, Italy and Greece) (see Tab. 3) – reveals that the nations of the South (in particular Greece and Portugal) are given evaluations that express a lower degree of social organization compared to the countries of the North, which are in turn judged positively in this dimension, first place going to the Benelux countries.

Table 3: Results derived from factorial analysis (PCA: rotated factor Varimax solution) of second level by using as dependent variable the factorial scores extracted by factorial analysis of first level and interpreted as "Social and Organizational Aspects" related to the 12 E.C. member countries

Factor	Eigenvalue	Pct of Var	Cum Pct
1	4.31908	36.0	36.0
2	1.94245	16.2	52.2

Rotated matrix

	Factor 1	Factor 2
LUXEMBOURG	.81407	.07770
DENMARK	.80172	.02622
BELIUM	.79238	.10506
HOLLAND	.77615	.17385
UNITED KINGDOM	.49620	.42474
GERMANY	.48628	.17196
SPAIN	.11832	.76415
PORTUGAL	.08006	.76331
ITALY	.06769	.76295
GREECE	.05337	.69868
FRANCE	.35796	.50987
IRELAND	.33835	.46682

Table 4: Mean values related to the factor "Social and Organizational Aspects" related to the 12 E.C. member countries

Variable	Mean	Num
GREECE	9.76	2366
PORTUGAL	9.80	2321
ITALY	10.28	2378
SPAIN	10.38	2349
IRELAND	10.45	2335
GERMANY	11.07	2423
FRANCE	11.77	2436
UNITED KINGDOM	11.82	2383
HOLLAND	12.53	2318
LUXEMBOURG	12.70	2380
BELGIUM	12.82	2409

Examining the average values regarding the factor *"Military and technological power"* (cf. Tab.6) the differential of potency adjudicated between the first and second grouping of countries appears evident. From the factorial analysis of second level two factors clearly emerge: *Weak countries* (Denmark, Benelux, Ireland, Portugal, Greece, Spain and Italy) vs. *Powerful countries* (France, Great Britain and Germany) (cf. Tab.5). It is noteworthy that Benelux and Italy, though classified among the weak countries, are in reality positioned half-way between the two groupings.

Table 5: Results derived from factorial analysis (PCA: rotated factor Varimax solution) of second level by using as dependent variable the factorial scores extracted by factorial analysis of first level and interpreted as "Military and technological power" related to the 12 E.C. member countries.

Factor	Eigenvalue	Pct of Var	Cum Pct
1	3.86896	32.2	32.2
2	1.79333	14.9	47.2

Rotated matrix

	Factor 1	Factor 2
DENMARK	.72519	.05042
LUXEMBOURG	.69239	.09246
HOLLAND	.69171	.17400
IRELAND	.68472	.01407
PORTUGAL	.66982	-.09859
BELGIUM	.65953	.13917
GREECE	.64479	-.24634
SPAIN	.55100	.18823
ITALY	.45301	.38328
FRANCE	.05654	.75109
UNITED KINGDOM	.04867	.72845
GERMANY	-.00420	.69816

Table 6: Mean values related to the factor "Military and Technological Power" related to the 12 E.C. member countries

Variable	Mean	Num
PORTUGAL	2.99	2321
GREECE	3.22	2366
SPAIN	3.38	2349
IRELAND	3.38	2335
BELGIUM	3.39	2409
LUXEMBOURG	3.40	2301
DENMARK	3.46	2380
HOLLAND	3.62	2318
ITALY	3.86	2378
UNITED KINGDOM	4.90	2383
FRANCE	4.92	2436
GERMANY	4.93	2423

An examination of the average values illustrated in Tab.8 shows that the countries judged as most lively culturally are in order of priority France and Italy, whereas those judged as least lively are Luxembourg and Portugal. Three factors emerged from the factorial analysis of second level by using as dependent variable the factorial scores extracted by factorial analysis of first level and interpreted as *"Cultural Liveliness"*: the first factor refers to the *'Northern cultures'* re-grouping Benelux plus Denmark and Ireland, the second factor includes the *'Mediterranean cultures'* (Spain, Greece and Portugal), the third factor identifies *'Historical Cultures'*, re-grouping France, Great Britain, Italy and Germany. Some transversality of these factorial dimensions emerges. For example, by placing Italy both on the third and second factor and Germany and Great Britain on the third and first factor, coherently with their interpretations. (cf. Tab. 7).

Table 7: Results derived from factorial analysis (PCA: rotated factor Varimax solution) of second level by using as dependent variable the factorial scores extracted by factorial analysis of first level and interpreted as "Cultural Liveliness" related to the 12 E.C. member countries

Factor	Eigenvalue	Pct of Var	Cum Pct
1	3.44216	28.7	28.7
2	1.39615	11.6	40.3
3	1.12252	9.4	49.7

Rotated matrix

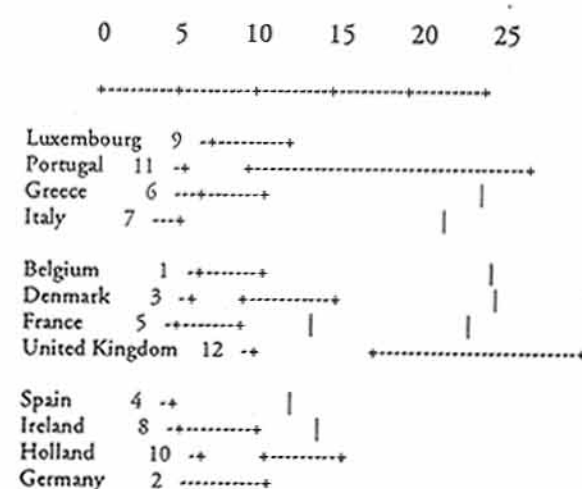|	Factor 1	Factor 2	Factor 3
LUXEMBOURG	.74135	.01548	.14169
DENMARK	.69770	.14451	.00611
BELGIUM	.68991	.10661	.10255
HOLLAND	.59576	.15803	.22615
IRELAND	.58885	.25271	.05093
SPAIN	.03627	.67460	.30344
GREECE	.19888	.66346	.04820
PORTUGAL	.37452	.61855	-.14222
FRANCE	-.02447	.18808	.72181
UNITED KINGDOM	.30113	.02729	.58555
ITALY	-.02986	.47620	.53224
GERMANY	.40032	-.15952	.52875

Table 8: Mean values related to the factor "Cultural Liveliness" related to the 12 E.C. member countries

Variable	Mean	Num
LUXEMBOURG	2.07	2301
PORTUGAL	2.09	2321
IRELAND	2.13	2335
BELGIUM	2.13	2409
DENMARK	2.16	2380
HOLLAND	2.25	2318
GERMANY	2.25	2423
GREECE	2.32	2366
SPAIN	2.42	2349
UNITED KINGDOM	2.42	2383
ITALY	2.55	2378
FRANCE	2.65	2436

The consistency in time of this sectional representation of the European Community in three blocks suggests a widespread and shared stereotyping of the image of one's own and other countries. The image acts as a stabilizer of beliefs and of self and other-attributed social images, serving as a vehicle for forms of pre-consciousness that are not always rendered critical or articulated by deeper forms of experiential consciousness.

Three classes emerge from the cluster analysis on the indexes of stereotyping on the countries 'as objects' [3] (cf. Tab. 9), confirming a European puzzle comprised of three blocks: the first class, which reveals the highest mean of the index of stereotyping (X = 33,705), is composed of the Mediterranean Countries (Greece, Italy and Portugal, with the only exception being Luxembourg); the second class includes Great Britain, Belgium, Denmark and France, which are the objects of the lowest stereotyping (X= 41,280), probably because they are places of the highest experiential knowledge (Great Britain and France are the most visited countries by our subjects); the third class refers to Spain, Ireland, Germany and Holland which express an intermediate index of stereotyping between the two mentioned poles (X - 37, 585).

Table 9: Clusters of the "Objects of stereotyping"

```
              0      5     10     15     20     25

              +----------+----------+----------+----------+

Luxembourg    9 -+----------+
Portugal     11 -+          +---------------------------------+
Greece        6 ----+-------+                                 |
Italy         7 ----+                                         |

Belgium       1 -+--------+                                   |
Denmark       3 -+        +-----------+                       |
France        5 -+--------+           |                       |
United Kingdom 12 -+                  +-----------------------+

Spain         4 -+            |
Ireland       8 -+----------+ |
Holland      10 -+          +---------+
Germany       2 -----------+
```

Three clusters emerge:

1) Luxemburg, Portugal, Italy, Greece

2) Belgium, France, Denmark, United Kingdom

3) Spain, Ireland, Holland, Germany

Mean values of the indexes of stereotyping on the countries, stimulus-words, X cluster (1, 2, 3):

COUNTRY	MEAN	CLUSTER	MEAN
UK	42.32	2	41.280
B	42.28	2	
DK	41.25	2	
F	39.30	2	
E	38.38	3	37.585
IRL	37.68	3	
D	37.40	3	
NL	36.88	3	
P	35.42	1	33.705
I	34.09	1	
L	33.51	1	
GR	31.80	1	

Being unable, for reasons of space, to discuss analytically all the differential results reported above, we conclude this section by going back to one result of a structural nature which emerged from the associative networks, utilizing the indexes of polarity as synthetic measures of the representations relating to the four cardinal points (North-South-East-West) and other stimulus-objects (European Community, Nation, Boundaries). The Table 10 shows clearly how the two factorial dimensions (% of explained variance = 38.8) split the cardinal points into two configurations centred on the opposition of the West to the East. Regarding the first factor (24% of explained variance, eigenvalue = 1.67683), denominated North-West, it is the West which presents the highest saturation, together with Boundaries, European Community, North and Nation; as for the second factor (14.9% of explained variance, eigenvalue 1.04065), it is certainly the East that gives meaning to the factor, dragging with it the South, although with a much lower saturation.

It is interesting to note that while the East presents negative saturation on the first factor, confirming the antagonistic nature of the representation of the East in relation to Western Europe; the South is however aggregated with the East on the second factor, probably due to a common perception of economic and geo-political marginality. With regard to the first factor, it shows positive saturation instead.

Reading these results, gathered from the entire research sample (3,454 subjects) in the ten countries, in a more dynamic way than that of the results presented previ-

ously, perhaps we could point out that the needle of the compass is reorientating toward a new inclination among the four cardinal points that define the geo-political orientation of the European territory, aggregating the area of the South-East as a marginal factor compared to the Europe of the European Community, which is entirely centred on the North-West axis, and incorporates both Nation, and Boundaries (clear expressions of the limits of identity).

Table 10: Results derived from factorial analysis (PCA - rotated factor Varimax solution) on the indexes of polarity - calculated on the total population (3,454 ss.) - related to the stimulus-words: North, South, West, East, Nation, E.C., Boundaries.

Words	Factor 1	Factor 2
WEST	.69622	-.04878
BOUNDARIES	.58644	.11289
E.C.	.56696	.06933
NORTH	.45008	.26314
NATION	.31448	.00015
EAST	-.16247	.87298
SOUTH	.32908	.52913

Besides a differential perspective among the countries in relation to the other independent variables inserted in the ANOVA models, a simple inspectionary comparison of the averages expressed by the entire sample on the indexes of polarity relative to the various stimulus-words reveals a precise hierarchic order among the various objects of representation. The sliding scale of preferences illustrated by the Table 11, with the East collocated at the lowest pole in opposition to the European Community. Together with the West and even before Nation and North receives decidedly higher average values – says much about how the Eastern flank of Europe, convulsed by a profound ideological and cultural crisis, as well as economic and social problems, is perceived nonetheless by the subjects of our research (all living in Western European countries) at the opposite pole to the West.

Table 11: Mean values obtained on the indexes of polarity - calculated on the total population (3454 ss.) - related to the stimulus-words: North, South, West, East, Nation, E.C., Boundaries.

Words	Mean
EAST	1.63
BOUNDARIES	1.96
SOUTH	2.08
NORTH	2.08
NATION	2.11
WEST	2.25
EUROPEAN COMMUNITY	2.34

The results are still more interesting if we go beyond simple confrontation of the averages resulting from the polarization of the semantic fields expressed in relation to each stimulus-word, independently from each other, to investigate the connection between the subjects expressing such representations, not simply on the basis of their social-demographic variables, but on that of the self-representation that they provide through associative networks in their responses to the stimulus-word Myself. The correlations between the indexes of polarity relative to the self-representations and the two factorial dimensions (defined by us as North-West versus South-East) extracted using P.C.A.(Principal Components Analysis) from the indexes of polarity expressed by the associative networks in response to the stimulus-words North-South-East-West, Boundaries, Nation, European Community, clearly demonstrate that the values of the correlations are much higher for the North-West than for the East-South, even though in both cases significant levels of probability were registered.

Table 12: Results derived from correlational analysis (results of Pearson) between the indexes of polarity related to the stimulus-word Self and the two factorial dimensions (the North-West vs the South-East) extracted by P.C.A. on the indexes of polarity related to: North, South, West, East, Nation, E.C., Boundaries.

Self	1.0000		
FACTOR 1 (North-West)	.3038	1.0000	
P	.000		
FACTOR 2 (South-East)	.1476	.1818	1.0000
P	.000	.000	.

However, for reasons intrinsic to the conceptual definition of social representation in itself, indissolubly linked to the interlaced structure-contents, it is necessary to pass from this type of structural and differential presentation of the results to an illustration of the contents that organize the representations of the subjects of our research.

Some results on the interlaced structure-contents in the S.R. of the European young people as regards the North-South-East-West

Being unable here, for obvious lack of space, to present all the SPAD-T tables showing the contents of the representations of the young people of the ten European countries who were interviewed in the course of our research, we must limit ourselves to a synthetic picture of the key elements which unite or diversify the representations by structure and contents.

Reviewing the diverse factors that have emerged, we note certain elements that constitute a kind of lowest common denominator of the representations associated with the cardinal points North and West. In fact, in confirmation of the axis constituted by the poles North-West, that has already clearly emerged from the analysis presented in the preceding paragraphs, certain structural dimensions inherent in: democracy and capitalism, power and politics, economic wealth, well-being, were delineated.

If it is the *geo-political dimension* centred on economic power that turns the compass from the North towards the West (the rich and powerful West in which our youth feel at home), it is rather the *geographical and climactic dimension* that characterizes the juxtaposition between North (in this case anchored to the North Pole) and South (the warm South of holidays). But the economic dimension reappears in other facets of the representations of the South, with negative connotations linked to its condition of perceived poverty and underdevelopment.

Juxtaposed against the North-West axis represented as winning, the representation of the East appears under the sign of economic underdevelopment and a weak geopolitical axis. It is perceived at times from an economic point of view as the defeated antagonist of the capitalist and democratic West, and at times culturally as recalling "The East" as a far away, magic and esoteric dimension (reconfirming also in this case its fundamental extraneity).

It is therefore the structural dimensions of political economy and geography-culture that polarize on opposing fronts the representations of West and of East, of North and of South; orienting the compass towards the North-West axis of Europe, experienced as not only the territory, but the land of identity of our young people.

Thus, if we then shift our attention from the structural dimensions to a consideration of some analytical elements that could be described as marking out the perimeters of territorial extension within which these representations are collocated, we note that the boundaries are at times defined by a specific place (a city, a region, a continent), at times by a specific cultural denotation (Far West, for example, or else The Orient). These can move from a horizon that is fairly close to the subjects (this is above all true for the English youth whose representations seemed circumscribed by their island perimeters, whereby North means Scotland, South does not cross the English Channel, West stops at Cornwall or Wales, or at most expands to the lands formerly dominated by the British Empire such as the West Indies, and East is even reducable to an area localized to the east of London), to a horizon that extends across the entire globe, along which West evokes the "New World", North

America and particularly the U.S.A. in the configuration of the western continent and transoceanic extension of Western Europe. Also the South dilates to extra-European boundaries, evoking South Africa or the more distant South America in a chain of semantic assonances linked to poverty and underdevelopment. East can mean the conflictual neighbouring territories located in the Balkans, or can expand to reach the Far East of esoteric religions and traditions.

Since reasons of space limit our exposition to a restricted exemplification, only the tables illustrating the first factor inherent in the representations of North-South-East-West of French youth will be reported here. The illustrative variables reported below each table show the positioning of the subject's groups on the semantic space of the elicited representations.

Table 13: Stimulus-word "North". Absolute and relative contributions of the words which determine the positive semi-axis of the first factor: data collected in France (Paris, Aix-en-Provence).

Words	Semi-axis	Absolute Contributions	Relative Contributions
NEIGE	+	3.30	.13
ESQUIMAUX	+	1.80	.08
GLACE	+	1.50	.05
SKI	+	1.50	.05
PARIS	+	1.20	.03
FROID	+	1.10	.05
OURS	+	1.00	.04
POLE	+	1.00	.04
IGLOO	+	.80	.03
POLE/NORD	+	.80	.02
BANQUISE	+	.70	.02
ANGLETERRE	+	.70	.02
SUEDE	+	.70	.03

illustrative variables

social demographic variable factor	
sex	male
age	<18
school	business
Informational and experiential knowledge of the EC	
level of knowledge	low
number of western european countries visited	up to or %
number EC countries visited	none
number of EC countries perceived as northern culture visited	-> none
number of EC countries perceived as Mediterranean culture visited	-> up to or %
evaluation of EC countries (overall)	
evaluation of cultural liveliness of EC countries perceived as "northern cultures"	-> low
index of polarity related to the north	indifferent
index of neutrality related to the north	high
index of polarity related to the south	positive
index of neutrality related to the south	high
index of polarity related to the west	indifferent
index of neutrality related to the west	high
index of polarity related to the east	indifferent
index of neutrality related to the east	high

Table 14: Stimulus - word "North", Absolute and relative contributions of the words which determine the negative semi-axis of the 1st factor : data collected in France (Paris, Aix-en-Provence).

Words	Semi-axis	Absolute Contributions	Relative Contributions
RICHESSE (WEALTH)	-	7.20	.21
RICHE (RICH)	-	4.70	.11
MODERNTITE (MODERNITY)	-	4.00	.11
CAPITALISME (CAPITALISM)	-	3.80	.12
DEVELOPPE (DEVELOPED)	-	3.10	.07
DOMINATION	-	3.10	.07
INDIVIDUALISME (INDIVIDUALISM)	-	3.10	.09
EXPLOITATION (EXPLOITATION)	-	3.00	.08
PROFIT	-	2.10	.07
DEVELOPPEMENT (DEVELOPMENT)	-	1.90	.04
TECHNIQUE	-	1.90	.06
URBANISATION	-	1.90	.07
INDUSTRIE (INDUSTRY)	-	1.80	.06
INDUSTRIEL (INDUSTRIAL)	-	1.80	.04
INDUSTRIALISATION	-	1.50	.04
ABONDANCE (ABUNDANCE)	-	1.50	.04
EGOISME (EGOISM)	-	1.40	.05
CHOMAGE (UNEMPLOYMENT)	-	1.30	.03
ARGENT (MONEY)	-	1.30	.05
PUISSANCE (POWER)	-	1.30	.04
VIE (LIFE)	-	1.20	.05
OCCIDENT (WEST)	-	1.10	.03
USA	-	1.00	.03
AMERIQUE (AMERICA)	-	1.00	.02
POLLUTION	-	1.00	.03
CRISE (CRISIS)	-	1.00	.03
LIBERTE (FREEDOM)	-	1.00	.03
ECONOMIE (ECONOMY)	-	.90	.02
CULTURE	-	.90	.04
POUVOIR (POWER)	-	.90	.03
PAYS/RICHE (RICH/COUNTRY)	-	.80	.02
CLIMAT (CLIMATE)	-	.70	.01
VILLE (CITY)	-	.70	.03
PAIX (PEACE)	-	.70	.02
OTAN (NATO)	-	.70	.03

illustrative variables

social demographic variable factor	
sex	female
age	>18
school	humanities
father's educational level	medium
mother's educational level	high
least favoured political orientation	right
most favoured political orientation	other
Informational and experiential knowledge of the EC	
level of knowledge	medium
number of eastern european countries visited	one or more
number of western european countries visited	more than there
southern EC countries visited	more than one
northern EC countries visited	more than one
number of EC countries perceived as northern culture visited	-> one or more
number of EC countries perceived as mediterranean culture visited	-> more than one
evaluation of EC countries (overall)	
evaluation of EC countries perceived as "northern"	high
evaluation of cultural liveliness of EC countries perceived as "northern cultures"	-> high
index of polarity related to the north	negative
index of neutrality related to the north	low
evaluation of EC countries perceived as "southern"	low
evaluation of cultural liveliness of EC countries perceived as "mediterranean cultures"	-> medium
index of polarity related to the south	negative
index of	

Words	Semi-axis	Absolute Contributions	Relative Contributions
PAUVRETE (POVERTY)	-	6.200	.1900
TIERS/MONDE (THIRD WORLD)	-	4.9000	.1500
EXPLOITATION (EXPLOITATION)	-	4.8000	.1300
PAUVRE (POOR)	-	4.5000	.1000
MISERE (MISERY)	-	4.0000	.1300
BESOIN/D'AIDE (NEED FOR /HELP)	-	3.2000	.0600
SOUS/DEVELOPPE(SUB/ DEVELOPMENT)	-	3.1000	.0700
COLONISATION	-	3.0000	.0900
MAIN D'OEUVRE (LABOUR)	-	2.9000	.0700
GUERRE (WAR)	-	2.3000	.0700
FAMINE	-	2.2000	.0800
EXPLOITE (EXPLOITED)	-	2.0000	.0500
DOMINATION	-	-1.8000	.0600
SURPOPULATION	-	1.7000	.0600
ENDETTE (INDEBTED)	-	1.7000	.0600
DEPENDANCE (DEPENDENCE)	-	1.5000	.0400
SOLIDARITE (SOLIDARITY)	-	1.3000	.0500
MALADIE (ILLNESS)	-	1.2000	.0500
AIDE (AID)	-	1.2000	.0400
PEU/DEVELOPE (LESS DEVELOPED)	-	1.2000	.0200
TRADITION	-	1.1000	.0400
PAYS/VERS DEVELOPEMENT (DEVELOPING COUNTRIES)	-	1.0000	.0200
AFRIQUE (AFRICA)	-	.9000	.0300
DIFFERENCE	-	.9000	.0300
SOUMISSION (SUBMISSION)	-	.9000	.0300
CHAUD (HOT)	-	.8000	.0200
PROBLEME (PROBLEM)	-	.8000	.0200
DICTATURE (DICTATORSHIP)	-	.8000	.0200

illustrative variables

social demographic variable factor	
sex	female
age	>18
school	humanities
least favoured political orientation	right
most favoured political orientation	left
Informational and experiential knowledge of the EC	
level of knowledge	medium
number of western european countries visited	more than three
northern EC countries visited	more than one
number of EC countries perceived as northern culture visited	-> one or more
number of EC countries perceived as mediterranean culture visited	-> more than one
evaluation of EC countries (overall)	
evaluation of EC countries perceived as "northern"	high
evaluation of cultural liveliness of EC countries perceived as "northern cultures"	-> high
index of polarity related to the north	negative
index of neutrality related to the north	low
evaluation of EC countries perceived as "southern"	low
evaluation of cultural liveliness of EC countries perceived as "mediterranean cultures"	-> medium
index of polarity related to the south	negative
index of polarity related to the west	negative
index of neutrality related to the west	low
index of polarity related to the est	negative

Table 16: Stimulus-word "South". Absolute and relative contributions of the words which determine the positive semi-axis of the 1st factor: data collected in France (Paris, Aix-en-Provence).

Words	Semi-axis	Absolute Contributions	Relative Contributions
PLAGE (BEACH)	-	3.0000	.1000
MER (SEA)	-	2.7000	.1100
MARSEILLE	-	2.0000	.0500
SOLEIL (SUN)	-	1.9000	.1000
VACANCE (VACATION)	-	1.6000	.0700
MEDITERRANEE (MEDITERRANEAN)	-	1.6000	.0500
CLIMAT/CHAUD (HOT/CLIMATE)	-	1.4000	.0300
ESPAGNE (SPAIN)	-	1.2000	.0400
ETE (SUMMER)	-	1.0000	.0300
ITALIE (ITALY)	-	1.0000	.0300
AIX/EN/PROVENCE	-	.7000	.0200
GRECE (GREECE)	-	.7000	.0200
CHALEUR (HEAT)	-	.7000	.0200

illustrative variables

social demographic variable factor	
sex	male
age	<18
school	business
Informational and experiential knowledge of the EC	
level of knowledge	low
number of western european countries visited	up to one
northern EC countries visited	none
number of EC countries perceived as northern	->
culture visited	none
number of EC countries perceived as mediterranean	->
culture visited	up to one
evaluation of EC countries (overall)	
evaluation of EC countries perceived as "northern"	low
index of polarity related to the north	indifferent
index of neutrality related to the north	medium
index of polarity related to the south	indifferent
index of neutrality related to the south	high
index of polarity related to the west	indifferent
index of neutrality related to the west	high
index of polarity related to the east	indifferent
index of neutrality related to the east	high

Table 17: Stimulus-word "Est". Absolute and relative contributions of the words which determine the positive semi-axis of the first factor: data colleted in France (Paris, Aix-en-Provence).

Words	Semi-axis	Absolute Contributions	Relative Contributions
MARSEILLE	+	74.900	.8600
AIX/EN/PROVENCE	+	74.900	.3500
VERBE (VERB)	+	4.7000	.1100
COTE (COST)	+	2.1000	.0500

illustrative variables

social demographic variable factor	
sex	
age	<18
school	business
Informational and experiential knowledge of the EC	
level of knowledge	low
number of western european countries visited	up to one
northern EC countries visited	none
number of EC countries perceived as northern	->
culture visited	none
evaluation of EC countries (overall)	
evaluation of cultural liveliness of EC countries	->
perceived as "northern cultures"	low
index of neutrality related to the north	high
index of polarity related to the south	positive
index of polarity related to the west	indifferent
index of neutrality related to the west	high
index of polarity related to the east	positive

Table 18: Stimulus-word "Est". Absolute and relative contributions of the words which determine the positive semi-axis of the 2nd factor: data collected in France (Paris, Aix-en-Provence).

Words	Semi-axis	Absolute Contributions	Relative Contributions
GUERRE (WAR)	+	2.1000	.0700
MARSEILLE	+	2.1000	.0200
COMMUNISME (COMMUNISM)	+	1.4000	.0500
PAUVRETE (POVERTY)	+	1.0000	.0300

illustrative variables

social demographic variable factor	
sex	female
age	>18
school	scientific
least favoured political orientation	right
most favoured poltical orientation	left
Informational and experiential knowledge of the EC	
level of knowledge	high
number of eastern european countries visited	
number of western european countries visited	more than three
southern EC countries visited	more than one
northern EC countries visited	more than one
number of EC countries perceived as northern culture visited	-> one or more
number of EC countries perceived as mediterranean culture visited	-> more than one
evaluation of EC countries (overall)	
evaluation of EC countries perceived as "northern "	high
evaluation of cultural liveliness of EC countries perceived as "northern cultures"	-> high
index of polarity related to the north	negative
index of neutrality related to the north	low
evaluation of EC countries perceived as "southern"	low
evaluation of cultural liveliness of EC countries perceived as "mediterranean countries"	-> high
index of polarity related to the south	negative
index of neutrality related to the south	low
index of polarity related to the west	negative
index of neutrality related to the west	low
index of polarity related to the east	negative

Table 19: Stimulus-word "Est". Absolute and relative contributions of the words which determine the negative semi-axis of the 2nd factors: data collected in France (Paris, Aix-en-Provence).

Words	Semi-axis	Absolute Contributions	Relative Contributions
ALPES (ALPS)	-	12.700	.2200
OCEAN	-	11.9000	.1700
SKI	-	8.9000	.2100
AUSTRALIE	-	6.9000	.1400
ITALIE (ITALY)	-	5.6000	.1000
SOLEIL (SUN)	-	5.0000	.1100
MER (SEA)	-	4.5000	.0600
ORIENT (EAST)	-	3.1000	.0600
MONTAGNE (MOUNTAIN)	-	2.3000	.0400
ALLEMAGNE EST(EST/GERMANY)	-	1.9000	.0400
LEVÉ DU SOLEIL (SUNRISE)	-	1.8000	.0300
JAPON(JAPAN)	-	1.7000	.0400
ASIE(ASIA)	-	1.5000	.0300
EST	-	1.4000	.0200
LEVE(RISE)	-	1.3000	.0200
FRONTIERE(BOUNDARY)	-	1.3000	.0400
COTE (COST)	-	1.3000	.0300
SUISSE(SWISS)	-	1.2000	.0300
CHINE(CHINA)	-	1.0000	.0200
ALLEMAGNE(GERMANY)	-	.9000	.0200
ALSACE(ALSATIA)	-	.9000	.0200
VENT(WIND)	-	.9000	.0200

illustrative variables

social demographic variable factor	
sex	male
age	>18
school	business
Informational and experiential knowledge of the EC	
level of knowledge	high
number of western european countries visited	up to one
northern EC countries visited	none
number of EC countries perceived as northern culture visited	-> none
evaluation of EC countries (overall)	
evaluation of EC countries perceived as "northern "	low
evaluation of cultural liveliness of EC countries perceived as "northern cultures"	-> low
index of polarity related to the north	indifferent
index of neutrality related to the north	medium
index of polarity related to the south	indifferent
index of neutrality related to the south	high
index of polarity related to the west	indifferent
index of neutrality related to the west	high

Table 20: Stimulus-word "West"-Absolute and relative contributions of the words which determine the negative semi-axis of the 1st factor: data collected in France (Paris, Aix-en-Provence).

Words	Semi-axis	Absolute Contributions	Relative Contributions
OUVERTURE (OPENING)	-	3.7000	.0400
CAPITALISME(CAPITALISM)	-	3.6000	.1000
LIBERTE(FREEDOM)	-	3.5000	.1000
RICHESSE(WEALTH)	-	3.1000	.0900
CHOMAGE(UNEMPLOYMENT)	-	2.3000	.0700
DEMOCRATIE(DEMOCRACY)	-	1.5000	.0500
ARGENT(MONEY)	-	1.5000	.0500
LIBERTÉ D'EXPRESSION (EXPRESSION/FREEDOM)	-	1.4000	.0400
PAUVRETE(POVERTY)	-	1.3000	.0300
CONSOMMATION(CONSUMPTION)	-	1.3000	.0200
EGOISME(EGOISM)	-	1.2000	.0300
INDUSTRIE(INDUSTRY)	-	1.1000	.0300
ECHANGE(EXCHANGE)	-	1.1000	.0300

illustrative variables

social demographic variable factor	
sex	female
age	>18
school	humanities
Informational and experiential knowledge of the EC	
level of knowledge	high
number of eastern european countries visited	one or more
number of western european countries visited	more than three
southern EC countries visited	more than one
northern EC countries visited	more than one
number of EC countries perceived as mediterranean culture visited	-> more than one
evaluation of EC countries (overall)	
evaluation of EC countries perceived as "northern "	high
evaluation of cultural liveliness of EC countries perceived as "northern cultures"	-> high
index of polarity related to the north	negative
index of neutrality related to the north	low
evaluation of cultural liveliness of EC countries perceived as"mediterranean cultures"	-> medium
index of polarity related to the south	negative
index of neutrality related to the south	low
index of polarity related to the west	negative
index of neutrality related to the west	low
index of polarity related to the east	negative
index of neutrality related to the east	low

Table 21: Stimulus-word "West"-Absolute and relative contributions of the words which determine the positive semi-axis of the 1st factor: data collected in France (Paris, Aix-en-Provence).

Words	Semi-axis	Absolute Contributions	Relative Contributions
BORDEAUX	+	6.3000	.1100
BRITTANY	+	5.8000	.1200
ATLANTIQUE (ATLANTIC)	+	4.8000	.0900
AMERIQUE(AMERICA)	+	4.4000	.0800
CLIMAT (CLIMATE)	+	3.9000	.0700
COUCHER/DU/SOLEIL(SUNSET)	+	3.4000	.0600
SUD (SOUTH)	+	3.2000	.0400
OCEAN ATLANTIQUE (ATLANTIC/OCEAN)	+	3.0000	.0600
PECHE (FISHING)	+	2.4000	.0500
OCEAN	+	2.2000	.0400
PLUIE (RAIN)	+	2.1000	.0400
SURF	+	1.7000	.0400
LOS ANGELES	+	1.5000	.0200
VACANCE (VACATION)	+	1.3000	.0400
VENT (WIND)	+	1.3000	.0300
BIARRITZ	+	1.0000	.0300
NORMANDIE (NORMANDY)	+	1.0000	.0200

illustrative variables

social demographic variable factor	
sex	male
age	<18
school	business
least favoured political orientation	left
Informational and experiential knowledge of the EC	
number of western european countries visited	up to one
northern EC countries visited	none
number of EC countries perceived as northern culture visited	-> none
number of EC countries perceived as mediterranean culture visited	-> up to one
evaluation of EC countries (overall)	
index of polarity related to the north	indifferent
index of neutrality related to the north	medium
index of polarity related to the south	indifferent
index of neutrality related to the south	high
index of polarity related to the west	indifferent
index of neutrality related to the west	high
index of polarity related to the east	negative
index of neutrality related to the east	low

Conclusion

The multiple results deriving both from the questionnaire and from the associative networks, organized at times according to criteria of grouping by category (clusters), on the basis of attitudinal indicators (indexes of polarity), and referring more strictly to the articulation between structure and content, emerged from analysis of the multiple correspondences of the textual data revealed by the associative networks, allow us to fix the four cardinal points East-West-North-South in the European skies on the basis of the representations of the youth of the ten member, new-member and non-member countries of the European Union investigated. Even though their observation point varies considerably (it is enough to think of the different latitudes of the Finnish and the Greek subjects of our sample), the results that have emerged provide a picture, solidly based on empirical certainty (obviously limited to the populations from which our data was collected and to the period of time in which the survey took place), of noteworthy consistency.

A Europe divided into blocks (strong countries and weak countries, Northern and Mediterranean countries, and a buffer zone of the mystery countries of the Benelux group that are still largely unknown); the North-West axis that orientates the geopolitical compass of a strong Europe and the socially marginal flank represented by the East (mostly isolated but sometimes aggregated to the South), the opposition between North and South that is not only geographical-climactic but also geopolitical - these are the fairly consistent results emerging from the different data sources used in our research.

Therefore the strength of these representations is to be seen at the level of systems of opinion, sometimes widespread and shared, other times articulated and diversified according to the specificity of the social-demographic characteristics of the subjects, to their nationality, to their knowledge of the world deriving from personal and scholastic experience, to the wider systems of attitudes and values in relation not only to the E.U. and its countries, but also to their own Nation, their perception of Boundaries, of the four points of the compass, and of the representation that they give of themselves, sometimes anchored to nearby objects of identification (their town, region, nation), sometimes to more distant objects (European Union, Europe).

These results are therefore no longer merely the fruit of the intellectual reflection of experts, discussed in many books and given ample publicity and editorial space in journals and reviews by authors of the calibre of Dahrendorf (1989, 1996), or historians such as Braudel (1993), Furet and Geremek (cf. Dahrendorf,R., Furet,F. and Geremek,1992), Kaeble (1987), Carpentier and Lebrun (1992), though these reflections are lent support and scientific legitimation by the interpretation of our research data. Moreover, the results presented are not the outcome of a superficial sociological survey, such as those conducted using such instruments as opinion polls on a wide scale, including those published in Euro-Barometer, that very often do not take into account the methodological safeguards of psycho-social research designed to avoid the gathering of data which is conditioned by factors of social desirability.

The results of our investigation, presented only partially and in summary, are the outcome of a complex methodological framework and sophisticated strategies of data analysis that have allowed for a theoretical-empirical modelling of a vast quantity of data, on the basis of precise hypotheses. This data emerges freely from the live voices of the subjects themselves who constitute that reality which is today so studied and discussed - the Europe of the citizens - which is not to be identified tout court with the Europe of economic systems, of legislative apparatuses, of institutions, or worse, of bureaucracy, but which is that component of Europe which expresses most directly the culture(s), the history(histories), the tradition(s), the national language(s), the customs etc., vital elements of challenge to a Europe that is searching for unity in the diversity of a multiculturalism as old as its existence.

Evidently, even for objects that apparently represent certainties of geo-physical reality such as North-South-East-West, "a geographical atlas is not enough, a historical one is also needed" (Dahrendorf, 1995). Regarding psycho-social research, on one hand it can contribute to enriching the historical approach with information that is vital because it is directly rooted in the systems of representation of the people; on the other, if it lacks a historical perspective, it moves with the fragility and ingenuity of foreigners forced to reorientate in a country whose origin is unknown to them.

Regarding the link between social psychology and historical research, it remains to be said that other results of this research to which we have made reference in this article, demonstrate with startling clarity the manifest articulation between social representations, social memory and social, national and supranational identity. (de Rosa and Mormino, forthcoming).

Notes

[1] The Peters Projection: An Area Accurate Map. http://www.webcom.com/bright/petermap.html

[2] *E.U. member* – France (Aix-en-Provence 300 Ss; Paris, 298 Ss), Germany (Berlin 121 Ss), Greece (Patrass, 189 subjects), Italy (Rome, 262 teenagers + 121 adults), Portugal (Lisbon, 292 Ss), Spain (Barcelona, 157 Ss; San Sebastian Spanish language 257 Ss; San Sebastian Basque language, 96 Ss), United Kingdom (Cambridge, 406 Ss);

E.U. new-members: Austria (Vienna, 381 subjects), Finland (Helsinki, 180 subjects); *non- E.U. member* country – Switzerland (Geneva, 273 Ss; Bellinzona, 120 Ss).

The population was of final-year students from the various types of secondary schools (humanities, scientific, business, industrial, teacher-training) and, in one case (Paris), from the first year of university. Only for the pilot study carried out in Italy was the sample also extended to 121 adults: fathers and mothers of teenagers attending secondary school.

The subjects were mostly distributed in terms of sex, social status and other variables, and were also assessed, for example, for their political and religious inclinations; frequency of travel in Europe and choice of respective countries; knowledge of foreign languages; sources of information on and/or possible active involvement with the issue of the European Community.

[3] The 'associative network', which is based on the technique of free associations with a series of stimulus-words, chosen as a function of the research objectives (de Rosa, 1995, 1996a). The stimulus-words were as follows, aimed at studying the E.C.-E.U. not as an isolated representation, but as a system of S.R., i.e. as a representation related to a set of other social representations:1) European Community (for the data collected before the changing of name) + European Union (for the data collected in Austria and in Finland); 2) North/South; 3) East/West; 4) Nation; 5) Boundaries; 6) Myself; 7) The 12 Members of the E.C. (for the data collected before the new entrances; for the data collected in the new member states, Austria and Finland, also these countries were included for requiring associations related to EU Members: 3 adjectives for each country)

Unlike traditional techniques of free association (Di Giacomo 1985) which simply plot the constitutive elements of the semantic field activated by the stimulus-word (that is the whole vocabulary which constitutes the elicited representation) - the associative network enables subjects to specify the structure of the semantic field by establishing connections between the words they have written down.

The associative network gives this task to the subjects who are expressing the representation, by asking them to identify the ramifications between the words and any further connections between the words or groups of words written around the stimulus-word which appears at the centre of the page.

Further information given by the associative network is the order in which the words were thought of, as an index of both their saliency and the level of stereotypical sharing of the elicited representations (the first words elicited are usually both the most salient for the subject and the highest socially shared).

Finally, it requires each word to be given a polarity by the subject, who is asked to place a sign by each word (+, - or 0) to show whether that term in the context of the test has a positive, negative or neutral valency for him/her.

[2] In order to calculate the polarity (positive, negative and neutral) on the basis of the total number of words associated by each subject, two specific statistical indexes have been created. The first is as follows:

$$\text{index of polarity (P)} = \frac{N^{\circ} \text{ positive words } - N^{\circ} \text{ negative words}}{N^{\circ} \text{ total words associated}}$$

This index ranges between -1 and +1. If P is between -1 and -.05 (this value can be later recoded as 1), most words are connotated negatively. If P is between -.04 and +.04 (this value can be later recoded as 2), positive and negative words tend to be equal. If P is between +.04 and +1 (this value can later be recoded as 3), most words are connotated positively.

The second index is as follows:

$$\text{index of neutrality (N)} = \frac{N^{\circ} \text{ neutral words } - (N^{\circ} \text{ positive words } + N^{\circ} \text{ negative words})}{N^{\circ} \text{ total words associated}}$$

This index also ranges between -1 and +1. If N is between -1 and -.05 (this value can be later recoded as 1), few words are connotated neutrally (= low neutrality). If N is between -.04 and +.04 (this value can be later recoded as 2), neutral words tend to be equal to the sum of positive and negative words. If N is between +.04 and +1 (this value can be later recoded as 3), most words are connotated neutrally (= high neutrality).

The importance of these measurements is that they are the result of the evaluations of the subjects themselves and not of a post hoc categorial analysis on the basis of evaluations of the researcher. By synthesising the component of evaluation and attitude implicit in the social representations, these indexes can be used as illustrative variables for groups of subjects that can be projected onto the factorial axes produced by the representations that have emerged as responses to the stimulus words.

[3] The index of stereotyping is calculated dividing the number of different words and the total number of the words and multiplying it per 100. It is comprised between 1 (highest degree of stereotyping) and 100 (lowest degree of stereotyping) and allow comparison of the various dictionaries of the associated words on the basis of their semantic width and internal differentiation independently.

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