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# Reality Changes Faster than Research: National and Supranational Identity in Social Representations of the European Community in the Context of Changes in International Relations

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### Introduction

The fall of the Berlin Wall, the collapse of the USSR, the whole restructuring of the relations between East and West and between Europe (as a geographical and political whole) and the European Community (Albert, 1984; Kaelble, 1987; Pollini, 1987; Cecchini, 1988; Dastoli, 1989; Dahrendorf, 1989; Dahrendorf *et al.*, 1992; Morin, 1988; Moscati *et al.*, 1989; Emerson, 1990; Braudel, 1992; Guarino, 1992; Losito and Porro, 1992): all these events are of great importance for a social psychology concerned with the study of social representations as dynamic socio-cognitive constructions linked to changes in intergroup relations and the expression of social identities (Etzioni, 1969; Inglehard, 1970, 1977; Lau and Sears, 1986; Flament, 1992). However, the rapidity of change in these situations is so searing that scientific research often cannot keep pace, with the risk that the instruments devised either become obsolete even before they can be used, or at the very least require modifications in the course of the research.

Having spent almost two years modelling the theoretical and methodological aspects of the project here presented, so many changes have taken place in the socio-political reality of Europe that the instruments have had to be updated frequently; particularly the maps which require each subject to identify national borders, capital cities and areas of political/social/ethnic conflict. Notably, the rapid changes in Eastern Europe have required redefinitions of capitals and borders which are themselves subject to local ethnic tensions, both schismatic and separatist. Further changes have occurred while I was revising this chapter, such as the change of the denomination of the EC into European Union and the transformation of the Twelve EC countries into Fifteen European Union Countries.

The research, which is on-going, will be presented analytically with regard to its methodological basis, both in terms of its theoretical background and the general objectives of the study.

### **Theoretical Background**

This investigation is based on two theoretical paradigms of great importance for psycho-social research:

(a) the paradigm of Social Representations (Moscovici, 1981, 1984, 1986, 1988, 1991; Moscovici and Vignaux, 1994; Jodelet, 1984, 1989, 1991, 1992; Farr, 1984, 1987; Farr and Moscovici, 1984; Doise, 1993; Doise, Clemence and Lorenzi-Cioldi, 1992; Palmonari, 1989; Flament, 1989; von Cranach, Doise and Mugny, 1992; de Rosa, 1990a, 1991, 1992a, 1992b, and 1993; Duveen and de Rosa, 1992; Abric, 1994; Guimelli, 1994; Wagner, 1994) currently subject to lively critical debate both in terms of meta-theory and methodology: (for a review, see: de Rosa, 1994a), also in relation to other emerging perspectives, such as the "rhetorical approach" (Billig, 1991, and 1993);

(b) Social Identity Theory (following the original formulation by Tajfel, 1981, 1982, and the English School and the more recent developments in the work of Turner (1987) and Hogg and Abrams (1988) also taking in consideration the wider literature on Self-Identity in a social perspective (Gergen and Davis, 1985; Zavalloni, 1983; Zavalloni and Louis-Guerin, 1984; Rosenbergh, 1987; Rosenbergh and Gara, 1985; Lapsley and Power, 1987; Yardley and Honess, 1987; Neisser, 1988; Doise and Lorenzo-Cioldi, 1991; Breakwell, 1992).

A synthesis of these two approaches has so far been neglected in literature, at least at the level of theoretical formalisation, if not in research practice (where an example can be found in the work of Di Giacomo, 1985). However, fairly recently interest has been expressed in this direction by Breakwell (1993) and Vala (1992).

Breakwell's proposal is developed from the observations made by Doise (1993) who emphasises how researchers have up until now directed their theoretical efforts towards just one aspect of the theory of social representations. In fact, researchers have limited themselves either to describing the content of the

representations with reference to the most varied objects of the social world, or to researching the way in which the processes of anchoring and objectification work. This focus has left unexplored Moscovici's hypotheses regarding the dynamics by which at the level of metasytem social groups generate representations as a function of the group's identity.

This suggests that intergroup dynamics and relationships could direct and channel the formation of every specific social representation.

In the light of this possibility, Breakwell suggests integrating Social Identity Theory and Social Representations theory: the first taken as a model which focuses attention on needs and motivations (the need for a positive social identity) considered as ways of explaining intergroup and interpersonal dynamics; the second which, by describing how people construct their model for interpreting the world, brings interpersonal communication processes to the fore as determining factors in the structuring and content of social representations.

Breakwell does not restrict herself to hoping for this integration, but identifies the ways in which group dynamics could influence:

- (a) the production, diffusion and functions of social representations;
- (b) the targets chosen for SRs;
- (c) the salience of SRs;
- (d) the relation between different SRs.

In this perspective, group interests would influence SRs, but the social representations in turn would contextualise, motivate and legitimate group actions.

Just as social identities are a product of group memberships, they similarly influence the involvement of the individual in the representational processes, determining to a large degree the exposure to, acceptance of and use of SRs (Breakwell, *ibid.*).

On the basis of empirical data from research currently in progress at the Social Psychology European Research Institute at the University of Surrey, Breakwell shows how individual psychological traits, taken as both subjective states and as self-consciousness or self-definition, also influence the exposure to, acceptance and use of SRs, as well as influencing the individual's disposition to participate in the production of SRs. Similar observations had also been made by Marková and Wilkie (1987), on the subject of the different emotional and cognitive anchoring of the SR of AIDS as a function of the proximity/distance in the experience that individuals have had of the illness.

Another attempt to find a way of integrating the theories of Social Identity and SR can be found in the empirical work of Vala (1992), who tries to show how (a) social groups, as cognitive products, represent the contexts in which SRs are constructed, and (b) representations of the social structure create categorisation systems which allow social groups to be formed.

The hypotheses formulated by Vala are born from consideration of the role of anchoring process in the formation of SRs and of the functional role played by the process itself at the level of the organisation of social relations.

The research outlined in this chapter differs from other work on the same theme (Hewstone, 1986; Magrin and Gheno, 1990) with respect to both the proposed theoretical framework and the multi-methodological approach (de Rosa, 1987, 1990b; Sotirakopoulou and Breakwell, 1992) which is designed to adapt methodological tools to the complexity of the social-representational construct with all its various sub-dimensional components (image, opinion, attitude, stereotype etc.) (Jaspars and Fraser, 1984; McGuire, 1986; Doise, 1989; de Rosa, 1993) and in its critical links with other social constructions, such as ideology (Aebischer *et al.*, 1991)

In previous articles (de Rosa, 1987, 1990b) I have proposed a multi-method approach to the study of Social Representations in order to adapt research instruments to the various levels and dimensions of analysis implicit in the complex construct of SRs. This proposal was made on the basis of the results of an articulated research programme on the SR of mental illness in both lay and expert populations. These results suggested a significant interaction between communicative codes (figurative and linguistic) activated as a function of different techniques (verbal or non-verbal) and of the level of the representations elicited (either more or less peripheral or central, variant or invariant). These representations emerged as more or less similar or differentiated not only as a function of the population variables under consideration but also as a function of the research instruments used.

Recently, the proposal for a multi-method approach has been taken up again in the literature (Sotirakopoulou and Breakwell, 1992) and discussed critically (Flick, 1992; de Rosa, 1993a, 1994). It is my intention that it should not be considered as a simple “*summing up*” of methods, but as a precise choice of methods as a function of the specific levels implicit in the representations under investigation, supported by definite hypotheses.

Furthermore, still on the theoretical-methodological question, the research presented here offers the opportunity to deepen fundamental aspects of the SR construct, which is still lacking adequate empirical proof from *field research*; for example, of the dynamic nature of SRs as processual and transformative. As has been said before, the literature shows that these aspects have mostly been approached with experimental or laboratory techniques (most notable in this respect is the work of the Aix-en-Provence school). In this research project, the choice of the object of enquiry (focused on dynamic processes that link *changing identities* and *social representations* within fast-changing socio-political contexts) and the decision to explore the extent of sharing and differentiation between two generations (young people and adults) together provide an interesting means of studying in the field the processes of transmission and changes in social representations—which are the vehicle for expressing identity.

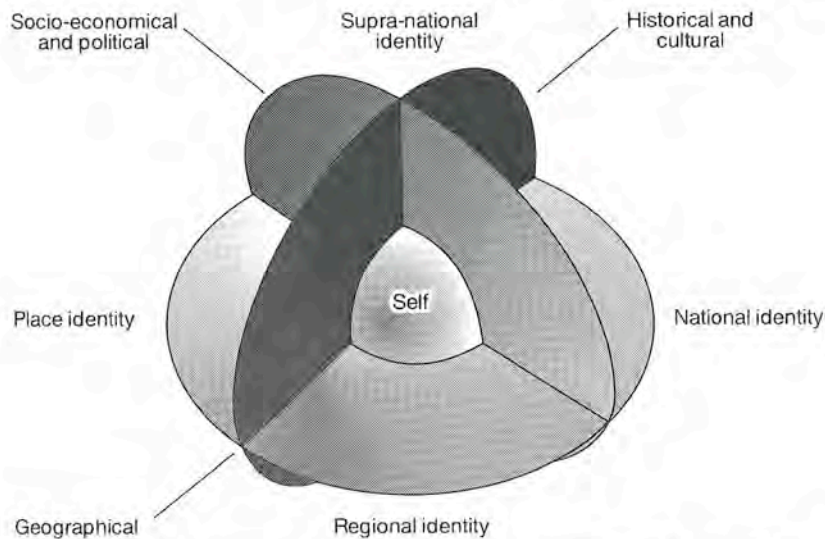


FIGURE 23.1 Multidimensional identity involved in social representation of the European Community

### Objectives

The research aims to investigate European identity in adults and students (the adults of tomorrow). This identity is a synthesis of values, feelings of belonging and social representations, which together with cognitive/informative factors contribute to the structuring of identification processes with an object (the EC) which is particularly salient at a time characterised by wide-ranging and profound changes in international East—West relations.

The intention of the research is to identify the points of intersection between the levels of identity (supranational, national, social and personal) of the chosen subjects, also as a function of the generation gap between young people and adults (see Figure 23.1)

The ultimate goal of the research is a comparative analysis of the data collected in different European countries (Austria, France, Finland, Germany, Greece, Italy, Portugal, Spain, Switzerland and the UK) using the same methodologies.

### Hypotheses

The research has been guided by a series of hypotheses concerning the likely influences of both the characteristics of the chosen sample and the methods used. The hypotheses were therefore articulated on the basis of a very detailed series

of sub-hypotheses, connected to all the population variables involved as well as to the various sections of the instruments. Here—by way of synthesis—only the guiding hypotheses will be presented.

So far as the population characteristics are concerned, we particularly expect to see differences in the SRs of the EC:

1. Between adults and young people, with a greater openness towards themes related to the EC on the part of young people.
2. As a function of other variables of the sample groups considered, such as: subjects' familiarity with other European cultures (identified through information on frequency of travel abroad and length of stay, and knowledge of foreign languages); strength of commitment to/active participation in European integration, e.g. membership of political, cultural or study groups, and political tendencies. In short, all those variables that are salient for the social identity of the subjects.
3. Between sample groups from different European nationalities (this is the guiding hypothesis of the European project as a whole, of which the present paper forms a part), as well as between different groups within the same nationality group. So far as the Italian samples are concerned, we expect to find differences as a function of place of residence: urban-metropolitan areas (represented by Rome) are presumed to bring about openness to the process of internationalisation because of daily contact—praxis—with tourists and people from other parts of the world while provincial areas (represented by Trento and Cosenza) presumed to be more focused on the specifics of local matters. In addition border areas which have traditions of intercultural exchange and middle-European characteristics (Trieste) or which are subject to inter-ethnic and political tensions between linguistic minorities (Bolzano) are likely to have an effect on the expressed SRs.

As regards the influence of perceived conflict, we expect that a perceived conflict at an intra-national level (between regions of the same country) could be correlated with a high degree of identification with a supranational entity (EC), in agreement with Valencia *et al.* (1991) who argued that the identification with a third object (Europe, EC) is perceived as a place in which it would be possible to resolve the existing conflicts.

We also expect that a perceived conflict at an international level (between one's own country and a foreign country) could anchor the representation of the EC to a specific dimension, such as Economic Relations (for example in the case of perception of tension between Italy and the potent imposing Germany).

Concerning the impact of the methods used and their relationship between some of the selected variables or the designed dimensions and the expected data, on the basis of the above mentioned consideration about the multi-method

approach to the study of SR (more analytically expressed in previous work: de Rosa, 1990b), we expect to find the following.

1. A significant interaction between the methods used and the results gained, in so far as the instruments of a more projective nature (such as the associative network, the projective use of space through the graphical map, and the semantic differentials) should allow the nuclei of the SRs expressed by the subjects to be singled out, as well as the components which are most closely anchored to their true identities (both personal and social). The more structured sections of the questionnaire will most probably elicit more peripheral dimensions of the representation, which are more sensitive to social preference effects.

Because of these influences, we expect that both the verbal and non-verbal projective above mentioned instruments will reveal latent tendencies in the subjects to discriminate the "outgroup" (other countries and nationalities) and the "ingroup" (own country) both in terms of idealising them as well as devaluing them.

2. That in the category differentiation between outgroup and ingroup a central role will be played:
  - 2.1 by self-representation, discriminating between subjects with a very positive self-representation and those with a very negative self-representation – singled out by both the "associative network" and the "semantic differential" for the stimulus-word "self";
  - 2.2 by the degree of identification with different entities (such as own town, region, country, Europe, EC), identified by the section of the questionnaire focused on the multi-dimensional (local, national and supranational) levels involved in the identification processes.

These dimensions are held to be so influential that at a later stage of data analysis they will no longer be treated as dependent variables, revealed through respective sections of the instruments, but as independent variables and as illustrative variables on the basis of which groups will ultimately be differentiated in order to show respectively the influences on the responses to other sections of the questionnaire, related to the evaluation of the process of European integration, and the relation with the structure and contents of the representations elicited by means of "associative networks".

3. That the evaluation of the process of European integration—as identified by the various sections of the questionnaire—are attitudinal dimensions somewhat external to the deepest nuclei of the sensitivity towards the EC, based on a more complex representational system characterised by an interweaving of various elements (the EC seen in relation to geographical Europe, to one's own country, to the other EC member countries, East/West, North/South, borders etc.)—as identified by both the semantic differential and the associative network of the different stimulus-words. We expect that on the one hand a higher level of information will be positively correlated



with a greater degree of sensitivity towards the process of European integration, and that in any case this will be strongly conditioned by the subject's perception of costs/benefits, with a strong downward trend in all those cases in which the process of European integration is seen as a disadvantage for one's own country and even more so if it is seen as a disadvantage for oneself.

## **Methodology**

### ***Population***

In anticipation of a more extensive sampling technique (almost 4,000 subjects) which has been extended to parallel groups gathered from other European countries both EC member and not EC member, an Italian pilot sample of almost 400 subjects—residing in Rome—was taken for the explorative phase of the investigation. These subjects were chosen from 262 final-year students from the various types of Italian secondary schools (humanities, scientific, business, industrial, teacher-training) and 121 adults (fathers and mothers of adolescents of the same age of the students frequenting secondary schools).

The subjects were equally distributed in terms of sex and social status, and other variables were also controlled for, including political inclination; 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.

So far as the adult sample was concerned, we would have preferred to have chosen it from the actual parents of the adolescents in our research project, rather than from the general population of parents of adolescents of the same age as those in our sample. In this way we could have controlled not just the "generation gap" variable but also the "family culture" variable, through membership of the same family nucleus.

The choice to explore the degree of sharing and differentiation between two generations (young people and adults), controlling for the variable of family culture (children and their parents), would have provided an interesting means of studying the processes of transmission and change in SRs and identity in natural primary groups which have a history (i.e. the family). However, it proved almost impossible to match the availability of both parents with the children who had been contacted via the schools, so we had to reorient the selection of the adult sample according to the criterion that they were parents of children of the same age as those who had agreed to participate in our research.

As regards the Italian sample, this pilot sample, consisting of residents of Rome, will be compared with analogous samples from Northern Italy (Trento), areas on the borders of Italy which are not marked by conflict (Trieste, Udine) and those that are (Bolzano), as well as Southern Italy (Cosenza), by other teams working on this project.

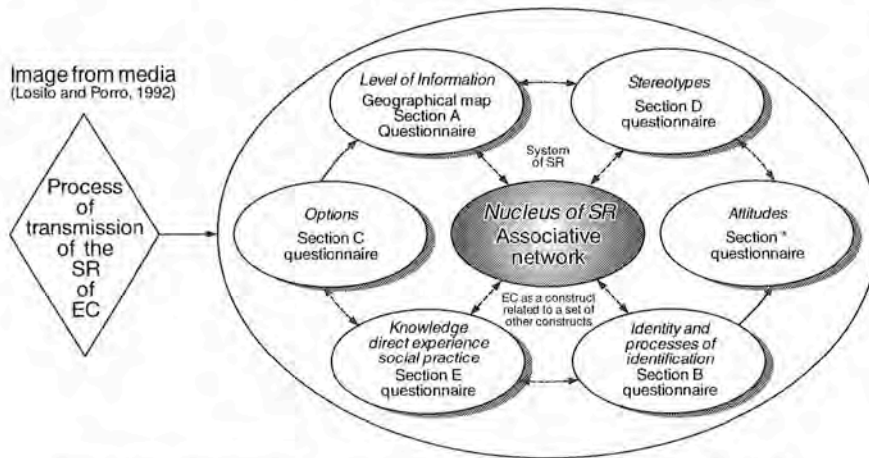


FIGURE 23.2 The different dimensions of S.R. of the E.C. as investigated by the multi-method approach

**Instruments**

In accordance with the multi-method approach to research required by social representations (de Rosa, 1990b; Sotirakopoulou and Breakwell, 1992), the following schedules were designed:

*Projective Verbal Instruments*

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, 1993b, 1995). The stimulus-words were as follows, aimed at studying the EC not as an isolated representation, but as a system of SR, i.e. as a representation related to a set of other social representations:

1. European Community
2. North/South
3. East/West
4. nation
5. boundaries
6. myself
7. the twelve Members of the EC requiring three adjectives to be given for each country. (In the version of the associative network administered in new member countries of the EU, this stimulus included also Austria and Finland.)

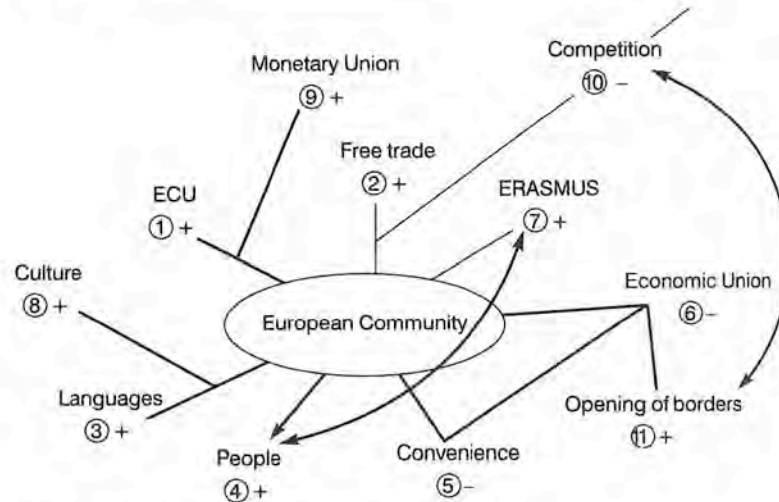


FIGURE 23.3 An example of an associative network

This instrument, which was specifically created for this and other research projects currently running, is aimed at investigating some of the latent and evaluative components of SRs. Similarly to the technique of free association, already widely used in research on SR (de Rosa, 1988), the “associative network”—despite making use of verbal code—allows some of the deep evaluative elements of representations to be captured due to its projective nature, thus avoiding the filter of social desirability that subjects often employ to orient their replies. I have called this instrument the “associative network” because—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. In traditional free association techniques, this stage is deduced post-hoc by the researcher on the basis of statistical techniques that identify clusters among the field elements.

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 (see example, Figure 23.3).

In fact what is interesting is that with this technique the phenomenon of emergence of the words (common to all traditional associative tasks) is contextualised in a chain of words directly indicated by the subjects, through

their ramifications and further connections. For example, in the associative networks that the subjects completed to the stimulus-word "European Community", the word "community" appears with different meanings according to the chain of ramification or connections in which it is included. It refers to at least three meanings:

1. to the "*EC as political institution*" when the word appears in the ramification such as "community-nations-government-politics" or in the connection "Strasbourg-parliament";
2. to the "*EC as economic union*", when the word appears in the connection such as: "community-ecu-free trade-monetary union-common market";
3. to the "*community as social dimension*" when the word appears in the ramification such as: "community-solidarity-people-communication-friendship-cooperation".

Further information given by the associative network is the *order* in which the words were thought of, as an index of their *accessibility*.

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 (see in the following paragraph the criteria for coding and for weighing the polarity (positive, negative or neutral) on the basis of the total number of the associated words).

#### ***Non-verbal Instruments***

A *map* which calls on wide-ranging graphical and spatial representations of the EC and of individual member countries (question 1 in the questionnaire) requiring:

1. identification of the geographical and political borders of the EC and of the individual EC member countries;
2. names of the EC member states and their capitals;
3. identification of the areas perceived by the subjects as foci of intense social or ethnic conflict.

#### ***Structured Verbal Instruments***

A *questionnaire* structured around the following thematic areas:

##### ***A. Level of Information***

These questions are intended to supplement the information/knowledge component regarding geographical-political details of EC countries demonstrated

by the Graphical Map, by ascertaining the degree of knowledge of political-institutional aspects of the EC, such as:

- the date of foundation of the EC and the reasons that led to its establishment;
- its constituent bodies;
- the most widely used currencies, languages and religions in the EC;
- information on possible future members of the EC;
- the Maastricht treaty and the changes made to the single market from 1 January 1993.

#### *B. Identity and Processes of Identification*

Various scales designed to measure:

- the *processes of identification/sense of belonging* felt by the subjects with their own town, region, home country, the EC and geographical Europe;
- their *value judgements of the different geographical-political entities* named above, with the objective of discerning the breadth and degree of inclusion of specific places in their personal identity;
- the *awareness of foci of tension or conflict* at a regional level, between neighbouring areas or between one's own country and other European countries (in the Italian version, only for subjects resident in border areas).

The questions in this section of the questionnaire were inspired by a study on "The images of Europe in the European" (Valencia *et al.*, 1991).

A *semantic differential* for the different geo-political entities (for example, city of residence, own country, the European Community etc) as well as for the stimulus "yourself", with the aim of revealing the links between the connotative aspects attributed to the identification objects and the Self.

The twenty-one adjectives used in the scales were selected after having analysed studies aimed at cross-cultural validation of the semantic differential in different countries (Capozza, 1977; Capozza *et al.*, 1981).

#### *C. Evaluation of the European Integration Process in Various Areas and Degree of Confidence in Referring to a Supranational Entity such as the EC rather than a National one*

The questions in this section are intended to reveal:

- the *evaluation of the EC* in reaching its goals and the evaluation of the success of the EC in various areas, as well as the length of time thought necessary to realise these goals completely;

- the *degree of confidence*—understood as willingness to turn to a supranational entity, i.e. the EC, rather than a national or regional entity, so far as decision-making processes of a political, economic or social nature are concerned; trust in the institutional and social set-up of the subject's own country is also investigated;
- the *perception of cost/benefit* derived from EC membership for some EC countries;
- the *perception of disparity* between members in terms of active participation in the unification process on an economic level, and confidence in a change of direction towards decreasing inequality.
- *Perception of equity/inequity* in cost-benefit terms derived from belonging to the EC both for one self and for one's own country

The questions in this section (not included in the Italian version used by the other research group working in North Italy) are intended to find out the subject's perception of whether EC membership brings advantages or disadvantages in various areas: Agriculture, Environment, Freedom of opinion, Economy, Education, Employment, Health, Science and Technology, National security, Tourism.

For each area the questions have been formulated (and equally distributed) in such a way that the criterion of advantage/disadvantage implicit in the statements takes on either an individual perspective (referring to oneself) or a collective perspective (referring to one's country).

#### *D. Stereotypes Attributed to the EC Member Countries and their Populations*

In this section, the questions are designed to reveal nuclei of stereotypes in the evaluation of different EC member countries and their populations, to be compared to the image of own country (evaluated on the same scales by the semantic differential included in the section B) and self-image (section B) which forms the central criterion for making self-other comparisons.

The aim is to identify the articulations between stereotypical attributions to the out-group (and possible categorical differentiations) and attributions to the in-group (own Country) and self-categorisation.

#### *E. Sociodemographic Data*

The questions which make up this section are intended to collect information related to population variables (such as age, sex, place of birth, place of residence, school, profession and level of education of the subject's family). It also asks about the subjects' direct experiences and familiarity with the EC (destinations and frequency of travel abroad, foreign languages spoken), their political identity and their major sources of knowledge about the EC and related matters.

### Criteria for Coding Procedure and Analysis of the Dependent Variables

In view of the complexity of the instruments and the number of both dependent and independent variables, the design for coding the data is of necessity very detailed. As such, it allows the pool of variables to be divided up into parts, each of which is subjected to factor analysis, followed by a multidimensional analysis of the factorial scores which have emerged.

Notably, the *codebook for the questionnaire* alone provides for the codification of 798 variables which are recorded on fourteen sheets for each subject.

For the spatial indices singled out by the *graphical map*, a correction grid was prepared on a transparency, which allowed the exactness or inexactness (in terms of expansion or underestimation) to be judged for the boundaries drawn for each member state and the EC as a whole. We could also see if any countries had been included which are not currently members of the EC, from the different areas of geographical Europe.

For the *associative networks*, a separate database for each stimulus-word was created (using "Filemaker" on Macintosh) in order to record all the information obtained by this instrument: (a) associated words; (b) ramifications between the words; (c) connections between groups of words; (d) order of priority in words were written; (e) polarity both of each word (positive, negative or neutral) and of the total associated words.

In order to weigh the polarity (positive, negative and neutral) on the basis of the total number of words associated by each subject, two specific statistical indexes were created. In particular, the first is:

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

This index ranges between -1 and +1.

If  $P$  was between -1 and -.05, this means that most of the words were connotated negatively.

If  $P$  was between -.04 and +.04, this means that the positive and the negative words tend to be equal.

If  $P$  was between +.04 and +1, this means that most of the words were connotated positively.

The second index is:

$$\begin{aligned} & \text{index of neutrality } (N) \\ & = \frac{N^{\circ} \text{ neutral words} - (N^{\circ} \text{ positive words} = N^{\circ} \text{ negative words})}{N^{\circ} \text{ total words}} \end{aligned}$$

This index too ranges between -1 and +1.

If  $N$  was between  $-1$  and  $-.05$ , this means that few words were connotated neutrally (i.e. = low neutrality).

If  $N$  was between  $-.04$  and  $+.04$ , this means that the neutral words tend to be equal to the sum of the positive and the negative words (i.e. = medium neutrality).

If  $N$  was between  $+.04$  and  $+1$ , this means that most of the words were connotated neutrally (i.e. = high neutrality).

### Multistep strategies of statistical analyses

#### *Step 1 (Analysis of Factorial Structures at Different Levels of Abstraction and of Communality of the Structures across Different Countries)*

The questionnaire was analysed separately for each section, in order to single out dimensions of an intermediate level of abstraction. A series of factor analyses (Principle Component Analyses: PCA) were carried out for each country and the emerging factorial structures for each country were compared. Depending on the quality of the factorial structure (tightness, simplicity), a different procedure, ranging along a continuum from the most exploratory to the most confirmatory, was used each time. These procedures can be depicted as follows:

Simple visual comparison	Coefficients of congruence (Everett, Phi, etc.)	Procustes rotations	Simultaneous Component Analysis	MTMM Multi-sample Analysis
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The first two procedures do not modify the factorial structure, they simply give insights into the comparability of the factorial structure between countries.

In some cases classical orthogonal (Varimax) or oblique (Oblimin) rotation, while in other cases Procustes orthogonal rotations (McCrae *et al.*, 1994) have been used. While the Varimax and Oblimin Rotations are well known and used in literature, it is useful to provide some more information about the less known Procustes Rotations.

This third procedure (Procustes Rotations) is aimed at lining up as much as possible, given the empirical results, one extracted factorial structure with another by using an algorithm of minimum squares under the bond of orthogonality. This rotation requires the identification of a *target* matrix, which acts as "anchor", towards which the extracted factorial solutions are rotated. In this case, the factorial structures emerging from the pilot study carried out in Italy were considered as the target matrices and the other countries' structures as pattern matrices to be rotated.

The fourth procedure is much more demanding from a computational point of view and is mostly useful with simple parsimonious factorial structures, given the length of computations. In other words, it could give an intermediate factorial structure between different countries and many indices of congruence.



Coefficients of congruence of factorial solutions or their stability (Everett, 1983) were also calculated. For both these coefficients, the values vary between 0 and 1, where 1 shows a perfect congruence or stability.

The fifth procedure is a strictly confirmatory procedure. The two sub-procedures are two submodels of the structural equation models and, depending on the quality of exploratory results, both of them could be used to gain different empirical information about the communality of the structures across different countries. Even in this case, the hypothesised structures should not be too complex, otherwise it would be quite difficult to find a numerical solution.

In some cases hierarchical cluster analyses were carried out.

### *Step 2 (Analysis of Differences and Positioning of Groups)*

Depending on the findings in the step 1 analyses, at step 2 emphasis was given to the difference (or equality) in scores in the factors stemming from the previous analyses. The aim was to compare scores of similar factors between countries while also considering other potentially influencing variables (socio-demographic, etc.).

In this respect, a series of ANOVA and ANCOVA was performed. When major differences in the factorial structures between countries had been found in step 1, the emphasis was placed upon similar countries.

In other words, the point was to try to focus on the communalities between countries, as well as on the specificity of each country (or groups of countries, i.e. Northern vs Southern, subjects with high or low distal or proximal identification, etc.).

### *Step 3 (Cross-analysis of the Results Collected by Different Methods: Questionnaire and Associative Network)*

A cross-analysis between both the set of representations related to the various stimulus-words used in the associative network (EC, National, Borders, South–North, East–West, EC Member States, Myself) and all the dimensions identified at different levels of abstraction (more detailed and descriptive vs more synthetic and supra-ordered) by analysing data of the questionnaire was carried out.

To this end, a series of SPAD-T was performed, by using as *active* variables all the associated words related to each stimulus and as *illustrative* variables not only the subjects' socio-demographic variables, but also all the dimensions extracted by the questionnaire relating to the following wide categories: informational and experiential knowledge of the EC, descriptors of self, evaluation of local, national and supranational objects of identification, degree of confidence in the EC, the evaluation of the EC Member countries (country by country), the evaluation of EC countries organised in clusters (Northern vs Southern, Powerful vs Weak, etc.), evaluation of the people of the various EC countries.

Furthermore, the indices of polarity and of neutrality as a composite measure of the evaluative dimensions linked to the representations associated with all the different stimulus-words were also included in the file of the illustrative variables in order to use them for a cross-analysis between the different files of the active variables (associated words) relating to other stimuli. The aim in this case was, for example, to analyse how subjects with a positive or negative index of polarity towards Nation were positioned on the representations referring to the EC, or again, how subjects with a positive or negative index of polarity towards North vs South were positioned when they produced representations of the EC countries perceived as belonging to Northern vs Mediterranean culture.

Factorial analyses aimed at identifying the latent structure between the indices of polarity expressed in relation to the different stimulus-words, and a correlational analysis between an index of polarity relating to a particular stimulus-word (such as Self) and the indices of polarity relating to all the other stimulus-words (previously regrouped by factor analyses) were also performed. The same was done to test the structure of the indices of neutrality.

#### *Step 4 (Building General Structural Models)*

As the final step, more than one general model will be built by trying to take into account the factorial dimensions emerging from the analyses of the questionnaire as well as the indices of polarity related to the representations emerging from the associative network.

A structuring equation modelling approach via LISREL has already been used to build and test one of the hypothesised general models.

Other general structural models—involving other flows of variables—will also be tested by this statistical strategy (Bollen, 1989), each time providing results on the total sample and the sub-samples country by country.

#### **Status of the International Research Programme**

In the first three years of this project, the following have been finalised:

1. *The theoretical model* (review of Italian and foreign literature; identification of the specific objectives and hypotheses within the general aims of the research project).
2. *Definition of the methodology* according to the multi-methodological design presented above, which required a lot of revision as work progressed, also a result of the continual changes in the political and institutional picture of Europe (particularly the East) in recent years.
3. *Collection and analysis of data related to the pilot study*

The data related to the pilot study carried out in Italy has been analysed as far as the sample collected in Rome (both on adult and young people) is concerned, while the data is currently being processed as far as the sample

collected in the other areas of Italy is concerned. Preliminary reports on the results related to the pilot study have been presented at various international conferences (de Rosa, 1993c, 1994b, 1994c).

#### 4. *Status of the cross-national programme*

The cross-national extension of the research project has involved the adoption of a common methodological research plan and the translation of the instruments into various languages and the identification of parallel sample groups in the ten European countries. English, Finnish, French, German, Portuguese, Spanish, Basque, Greek versions of the instruments have been realised. The data has already been collected and processed as far as the following European countries are concerned: Austria (Vienna), France (Aix-en-Provence and Paris), Portugal (Lisbon), UK (Cambridge), Spain (Barcelona and San Sebastian, on Spanish and Basque sample), Switzerland (French and Italian Regions), Greece (Patras). The data has already been collected also in Germany and in a new member country of the European Union (Finland), and is currently being processed.

Preliminary reports on the results related to the cross-national research programme have been presented during a symposium (de Rosa, 1995) and a summer school on Social Representations and Communication organised by de Rosa and Helkama in Finland (August–September 1995).

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