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Multidimensionality of EU attitudes in France: An issue for the understanding of the politicization of attitudes towards the EU

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Abstract: This paper analyzes if and how citizens' attitudes towards European Union (EU) integration are correlated with their ideological and partisan positioning, using France as a case study. We challenge traditional measures of citizens' support for European integration, which are one-dimensional. We analyze the French samples of the European Election Study (EES 2009) and the European Values Study (EVS 2008) surveys and use multiple correspondence analysis to highlight the multidimensionality of French attitudes towards European integration. To avoid methodological problems typically encountered in correspondence analysis when the variables analyzed are ordinal, we have applied an original adaptation of multiple correspondence analysis proposed by French statisticians. The use of multiple correspondence analysis demonstrates the multidimensionality of attitudes of the French towards the EU. Our results show that the correlation of attitudes towards the EU with the left-right scale or partisan identification is not the same across different dimensions. The most general attitude towards the EU (first dimension) has complex relationships with ideological and partisan positioning. However, concerns expressed with respect to the consequences of European integration in terms of loss of social benefits or those expressed in terms of loss of identity and national culture (second and third dimensions) are clearly related to the left-right scale positioning. In the second and third dimensions identified in the EVS 2008 data, attitudes towards the EU rank the left-right positioning in the expected order. These results show that perception of EU integration by the French citizens is not simple.

Keywords: Public opinion; European identity; Europeanization; France; European public space.

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Introduction

Since the beginnings of the 1990s, European integration has deeply reshaped the EU member's politics and their partisan lives. Despite these overwhelming transformations parties still tend to oppose each other on the same cleavages; citizens still tend to vote according to the same cognitive tools they previously did, in particular the left-right cleavage and orientations. This paper¹ proposes to raise questions on how much national political spaces are 'disturbed' by European integration focusing on European citizens' opinions and attitudes rather than on parties and votes. It raises these questions based on the French case using two major sources: the French sample of the European Election Study (EES 2009) and the French sample of the European Values Study (EVS 2008)².

Understanding how political parties adapt to the major changes introduced by European integration in national politics has generated a huge body of literature over the two last decades (for instance Marks and Wilson, 2000; Marks, Wilson and Ray, 2002; Gabel and Hix, 2002, 2004; Steenbergen, Edwards and de Vries, 2007; Crum, 2007; Gabel and Scheve, 2007; Hooghe, 2007; Marks, Hooghe, Steenbergen and Bakker, 2007; Ray, 2007). Belot, Cautrès and Strudel (2009) give an extensive review of the recent literature, but we may summarize some of the key issues here. Despite many different fieldworks, countries studied, and a certain heterogeneity in their perspectives, these publications have a dominant view about national political parties in their relationship to EU issues: they try to adapt to the new rules, agendas and issues imposed by the Europeanization of politics at both the party system level and the government level.

Two dominant approaches can be found in the literature. First, several authors have claimed that European integration is the source of a new 'cleavage', a concept which is not without ambiguities (see below) but which is referred to by Lipset and Rokkan (Kopecky and Mudde, 2002; Rovny, 2004; Kriesi, 2007). The substantive and methodological discussion about this point appears as one of the main questions in the literature (Roger, 2008). In contrast, other authors argue against the existence of such a new cleavage and claim that the issue of European integration is "absorbed" in the pre-existing partisan systems and structures (Sitter, 2003; Harmsen, 2005a; De Vries, 2007; Poguntke et al., 2007). When adopting this latter perspective, authors claim that existing political forces, party organizations and partisan systems have the tendency as well as a certain capacity to absorb and frame new issues such as the EU in their old rhetoric. The EU would not be an exception despite the historic challenge that European integration raises and poses to national politics and EU issues would follow the same trend as other "new politics" issues to be progressively incorporated into the

¹ A first draft of this paper was presented at the final PIREDEU conference, 18 November 2010 in Brussels.

² Pages 3 to 5 of this present paper are partly based on an on-going project and paper written with Céline Belot and Sylvie Strudel (Belot, Cautrès and Strudel, 2009). It has been presented at the EUSA conference in 2009 (Los Angeles) and in the ESA Political sociology conference in Lille, November 2010. I thank Céline Belot and Sylvie Strudel for permitting me to borrow some paragraphs and ideas from our common on-going papers in the very first pages of this paper. The 2009 paper presents in more detail the state of the art on political parties and the EU issues.

existing frames. This “hard” line takes a very narrow view, “purist” we may say, about the pre-conditions and the conditions for a conflict or political contestation to become a “cleavage”.

Indeed, the answer to these different questions varies by which definition of the term “cleavage” authors relate to. Strict or lenient definitions of the cleavage concept make the answers fairly different. In the typical Stein Rokkan tradition (Lipset and Rokkan, 1967), the term “cleavage” denotes a specific type of conflict that is anchored in the structural elements and transformations of societies, linked to historical processes such as nation-state building and industrialization (today also linked to the consequences of post-industrialization and globalization). If the intuitive definition of the “cleavage” concept is one of a long-term and lasting division between social groups based on some kind of conflict, academic debates over its exact pre-conditions have been very intense. Those close to the Rokkanian legacy, like Bartolini and Mair (Bartolini and Mair, 1990; Bartolini, 2005), have marked this intellectual field with a very strict definition of these pre-conditions, while the discipline certainly uses the word “cleavage” in a wider sense. According to the post-Rokkanian perspective, to be called a “cleavage,” a political division must be comprised of three elements: a) social-structural element, such as class or religious denomination; b) an element of collective identity of this social group, and c) an organizational or institutional manifestation in the form of collective action or a durable organization of the social groups concerned. If these three conditions are met, a cleavage is a “compounded divide”, according to Bartolini (2005b) and Deegan-Krause (2006, 2007). In light of this definition, European integration does not produce “cleavages” in every European country even if producing internal divisions within the parties and disturbing the ideological alignments of voters. The last condition in particular is not easy to observe since not every EU country has seen the emergence and stabilization of euroskeptical organizations (parties for instance). Also, the second condition to be met is controversial: a national identity and a European one often go together, at least at the empirical level and except for the “exclusive national identity” (those declaring that they see themselves only as national and not national and European at the same time).

When authors put their research perspectives in the strict Lipset and Rokkan definition, European integration is considered a political process which generates misfits in the existing partisan order and dealignments in the relationship between political preferences and socio-political cleavages without fundamentally disturbing the pre-existing cleavages (Mair, 2000) in the system. When they take the more extensive and lenient definition, European integration appears to be able to restructure old cleavages and to play the role of a crosscutting cleavage (Marks and Wilson, 2000; Hooghe, Marks and Wilson, 2002). In spite of the variety of their conclusions and their different uses of the Lipset and Rokkan framework, all studies share a common point: European integration disrupts the political spaces of the member states and constitutes a source of potential political conflict and contestation (Marks and Steenbergen, 2004).

However strict or lenient the definition and approach to the cleavage formation issue, studies tend to show that, as far as European integration is concerned, there are weak correspondences between the parties' and citizens' positions on EU (Mattila and Raunio, 2006). Having to cope with new public policy challenges, and particularly the rhetoric of governmental elites on the necessary adaptations to a European / world economy, citizens seem disorientated in terms of responsibility attribution. The changes due to EU integration (as well as changes due to globalization) contribute to this disorientation and play an important role in the emergence of political dissatisfaction, political distrust, lack of confidence in political parties and "critical citizen" figure (Norris, 2011). It is remarkable to note that, temporally speaking, these changes coincide with the end of the "permissive consensus" (Lindberg and Scheingold, 1970).

How much European integration has played a role in these changes is of critical importance. How it is related to existing political and ideological dimensions (orthogonally or not; in other words independently or not, see Van der Eijk and Franklin, 2004; Gabel and Anderson, 2004) is even more crucial in investigating the EU's politicization. Politicization of the EU itself is a complex topic. If one considers politicization in the perspective of issue voting, it is certainly the case that the EU issue cannot be qualified as a "politicized issue." The saliency of the EU issue is not very strong in many countries, at least not when compared to domestic socioeconomic issues. Citizens have not always strong and definitive positions on the EU; it is hard for them to clearly identify policy positions of the parties on different issues, especially since in many countries mainstream parties share a large set of (positive) orientations towards the EU. In other words, in the perspective of issue voting, it is not certain that the level of conceptualization of the EU is very strong in the public. In this paper we do limit ourselves to this perspective, but rather to the perspective of the possible links between social representations of the EU and existing ideological representations, namely the left-right dimension. We will come to the partisan proximities later on, and thus will go in the direction of the citizen's partisan understanding of EU issue. We are in fact taking a general and broad perspective on the concept of "politicization." For us, "politicization" is the process by which citizens connect their positions on a new/emerging issue to an existing political/ideological representation. Obviously, the possible misfits between these links and the party systems or the structure of electoral competition and electorates are key problems that would require other empirical objectives.

To analyze and investigate these questions, France is a rather good case study. As described by Belot, Cautrès and Strudel (2009, 5), France "occupies a singular position within the European Union by playing, over the course of its construction and in comparison with the other original European Community (EC) members, the role of both the motor and the brake". At a high level for a long time, French citizens were described as good supporters of European integration; at least when taking into consideration the traditional indicators of diffuse support to the EU. But the small majority by which France ratified the Maastricht Treaty in 1992 (51% "Yes") and the victory of the "No" on the 29 May 2005 referendum on the EU Constitution both indicate that the attitudes of the French citizens towards European integration are certainly more complex than French elites used to think.

To understand this complex set of attitudes, it is more than important to think about its relationship to one of the dominant traits of French politics: its ideological element. The left-right scale is a habitual measure of this ideological element and a very powerful shortcut of political attitudes of the French. If the left-right dimension continues to be the dominant ideological structure of French politics, recent analyses identify a “new cleavage, transversal with the left-right traditional cleavage,” (Grunberg and Schweisguth, 1997, 195; see also Grunberg and Schweisguth, 2003) opposing “universalist” and “anti-universalist” attitudes. This universalist/anti-universalist divide is clearly related to major recent political phenomena in France: the emergence and stabilization of the extreme-right voting, the regular presence of the immigration issue in the public debates and electoral campaigns, and the recent attempt by the French government to activate national issues. The emergence of this new dimension is a major element in recent French politics, making it possible to explain the so-called “tripartition” of the political space (left/right/extreme right). The sociology of political attitudes and behaviors in France cannot ignore this new dimension, which summarizes what can be described as “open” versus “closed” political representations: openness to social changes and new issues or refrainment from it.

This new ideological cleavage has shown its political potential in the 2002 presidential election, when the leader of the extreme-right party (Jean-Marie Le Pen, then the Front national leader) qualified for the second round. Three years before the 2005 referendum it was a clear sign that anti-Europe discourse, when combined with anti-immigrant and anti-elite discourses, could be quite an efficient combination in the French political space. Since then we have been engaged (with Céline Belot in particular and more recently with Sylvie Strudel) in a research program which aims at understanding the multi-facets and multi-dimensionality of attitudes towards the EU in the French public (Belot and Cautrès, 2004; Cautrès and Strudel, 2007)³.

Our main objective is a methodological one, restricting our empirical findings to the question of multidimensionality of citizen attitudes towards EU integration, an objective that we also pursue on other European matters such as the attitudes of citizens towards Turkish membership (Cautrès and Monceau, 2011). We will do so using recent data, the latest available studies permitting to study the dimensionality of citizen attitudes towards the EU in France, with the exception of most recent Eurobarometer studies. The dimensionality issue will be addressed with the substantive research question of the left-right placement relationship to the EU integration attitudes of the citizen.

³ With Céline Belot we published in 2004 (Cautrès and Belot, 2004) the first paper in showing the bi-dimensionality of the attitudes of French voters regarding EU integration and the complex relationship it created with the left-right placements. Throughout this paper, we propose to develop the analysis of these two dimensions and their relations with the left-right axis. This paper is, in other words, a step forward in a common enterprise with Céline Belot and Sylvie Strudel.

In the following sections we first formulate our methodological and substantive hypothesis on the multidimensionality of the EU attitudes and explain in detail the methodology we followed and the data we used to test it in France. We proceed by presenting our empirical findings; first in an empirical section which analyzes the relationship between the attitudes of the French towards the EU and their ideological orientations, followed by a second empirical section exploring and analyzing in more detail the multidimensionality of the attitudes of the French toward the EU. The concluding section discusses how these findings matter and how this research can be extended.

1. Hypotheses, method and data

We will investigate the French case through two studies, the EES 2009 (the post-EP election study conducted in the framework of the PIREDEU research program) and the EVS 2008. The EES 2009 study offers a set of indicators of EU support and attitudes towards the EU, broader than the classical diffuse and specific support measurement (as shown in table 1) but who do not cover fully all the facets of diffuse and specific support. The EES study is more orientated to the study of media exposure and attention during the EP campaign, attribution of responsibility for socioeconomic issues and policy evaluations of voters. The EVS 2008 is a much broader study than the EES, largely inspired by a value orientations approach; it offers a new set of items in its last wave (the 2008 one), adapted from a Eurobarometer set of indicators and measuring fears towards developments of EU integration on a set of 0-10 points scales. Tables A1 and A2 in the appendix give the question wordings for the EES 2009 and the EVS 2008 items used in this paper. The analysis of the fears towards different dimensions of EU integration developments is certainly a very interesting way of capturing attitudes towards the EU. The EVS 2008 data set is certainly the most complete; it has taken the “fears” approach on attitudes towards the EU coming from certain waves of Eurobarometer but has measured the different forms of fears towards EU integration developments on a series of 10 point scales (coded from 1 to 10). This block of items is at the same time coherent with diffuse attitudes towards the EU (negative feelings such as low scores on the scales are statistically associated with the item on trust in the EU but in a complex way also), but is not a direct measure of diffuse support to the EU. It captures positive and negative orientations towards the EU and, more importantly, captures them in a multi-facets perspective.

One of the major objectives of this paper is not only to analyze the relationship between attitudes towards the EU and the left-right orientations of French voters, but also to investigate the multidimensionality of these attitudes and relationship. These objectives have methodological consequences. Rather than using a classical methodological framework, where attitudes towards the EU is the dependent variable, studied in its relationship with explanatory variables through a regression analysis, we will privilege a factor analysis framework. The multiple correspondence analysis (MCA) is a multivariate technique which permits factor analysis when the measurement level of the variables is discrete, either categorical or ordinal. The basic principles of MCA can be found in Greenacre and Blasius (2006) and more recently in Le Roux and Rouanet (2010).

To summarize the major advantages of using MCA to study the multidimensionality of attitude towards the EU, it is useful to think of such an attitude as a “latent” trait which explains how respondents answer the different “manifest” questions. MCA shares the major objectives of the factorial techniques: to quantify the relationship between the “manifest” and the “latent” variables (factor loadings) and to investigate the dimensionality of the data. A key objective in using such a methodological framework is to refute the one-dimensional view of the attitude towards the EU, when many authors just analyze a positive-negative measure of attitude or support towards the EU. The reason to critically investigate the supposed unidimensionality of the attitude is to test for the following research hypothesis: the relationship between attitude to the EU and the left-right scale depends on the components and dimensions of such an attitude. More precisely, we want to test if the left-right orientations and positions correlate with the different dimensions of attitude towards the EU revealed by the MCA analysis. It might be that a general positive-negative attitude towards the EU does not correlate with the left-right orientations and positions (validation of the hypothesis that the EU issue “disturb” the left-right scaling), when some more specific dimensions (for instance fears about the social consequences of EU developments) correlate with it.

To investigate the dimensionality of attitude towards the EU is thus a key issue of this paper. MCA shares with classical factor analysis the objective to investigate the multidimensionality of the latent trait: is it a unidimensional trait or is there more than one trait? But MCA avoids the classical difficulties of factor analysis or principal component analysis (PCA) when variables are discrete, either categorical or ordinal ones. In such cases, basic assumptions of factor analysis or PCA are hardly met (normality of distributions in particular since the categorical level of measurement is by definition non-linear). Application of MCA to ordinal scales, such as many of the ones we will analyze, does not go without problems, however. Using MCA with such scales, in particular 10 point scales such as the EVS 2008 battery of items on fears towards the EU, drives classical MCA into some important methodological problems: the factorial solution can suffer from a so-called “Guttman effect”, or “horseshoe effect”. This could be fairly embarrassing since the presence of such an effect indicates that the second dimension of the factor analysis performed by MCA is in fact a function of the first one. In other words, if nothing is done to correct for such a “Guttman effect” (when the data points cloud in the factorial plan has the typical shape of a horseshoe), it may be impossible to identify a second dimension, a key problem for this paper. To correct for this, we will later use a new form of MCA, called by French statisticians “*analyses des correspondances dédoublées*” (see below for explanations). The application of such a method to the EVS 2008 10 points scale analysis is one of the innovations of this paper.

2. Empirical results I: The attitudes of French citizens towards the EU and their left-right ideological orientations

We may start our empirical analysis with looking at Table 1, based on the EES 2009 study.

Table 1: Some basic measures of attitudes towards EU integration in France

	French EES sample (2009)	Complete ESS sample (2009)
EU membership good or bad ("Bad thing") (a)	11	11
Very important which candidates win seats in EP elections ("Disagree" + "Strongly disagree")	13	22
Very important which party wins most seats in EP elections ("Disagree" + "Strongly disagree")	25	24
Interest in EP election campaign ("not at all")	28	26
Not only French citizen, but also European citizen? ("national only") (b)	27.5	47.5
EU enlargement good or bad ("Bad thing") (c)	36	33
EU Parliament considers concerns of EU citizens ("Disagree" + "Strongly disagree")	39	27
Satisfaction with democracy in the EU ("Not very much" + "Not at all")	42	46
EU decisions in the interest of France ("Not very much" + "Not at all")	52	55
EU treaty changes should be decided by referendum ("Agree" + "Strongly Agree")	67	70
Respondent's attitude to European unification (mean score on the 0-10 points scale, 0= 'Unification has already gone too far' ; 10= 'Unification should be pushed further')	4.69 (sdv=3.33)	5.15 (sdv=3.12)

(a) The "neither good nor bad thing" answer: 26% in France, 28% in the complete EES.

(b) The "national and European citizen" answer: 60% in France, 44% in the complete EES.

(c) The "neither good nor bad thing" answer: 30% in France, 33% in the complete EES.

Nota bene: Weighted samples.

Source: EES 2009

Traditionally, the study of political support towards the EU starts with the distinction between "diffuse" and "specific" forms of support. Operationalization of public support for the EU either follows a utilitarian (specific) one-dimensional conceptualization or includes an additional dimension of affective (diffuse) support measured with feelings towards the community or other measures of the "we-feeling", the sentiment of belonging to the community and/or identifying with it. According to Easton (1965, 1968), the specific support is related to the actions of political actors and to the output of the political system. The specific support is dynamic, varying with the actions of political actors. If the requests of the political system's members are satisfied and people are content with the output system, then one can expect an increase in specific support. There is, in other words, a compensation mechanism between diffuse and specific support: the diffuse support represents, according to

Easton, a “reservoir of favorable attitudes” which helps the members to tolerate outputs opposed to their wishes. This “reservoir” may compensate for the lack or weakening of specific support and sustain the legitimacy when the political system is perceived as inefficient by its members.

If all the aspects of diffuse and specific support are not covered by the EES study, some of them are measured and available in the EES 2009 round. We may start with the more general level of support, the diffuse one. The opinion that French membership to the EU is a “good thing” is shared by 61% of the French voters in the context of the 2009 EP elections, a figure that is much higher than the Eurobarometer conducted during the same period, which only reports 50%. The “neither good nor bad” opinion, which indicates some “euro-indifference” measure (Duchesne and Van Ingelgom, 2008; Duchesne and al. 2010) is reported by 28% of the French voters in the EES 2009 (30% in Eurobarometer 71), when the most negative views are quite low in the EES 2009 (11% as against in France, 17% in Eurobarometer 71). Another measure concerns the more diffuse type of support: the general opinion on the European unification process. The mean score of the French sample on this 0-10 point scale is significantly lower in France than across the rest of the EES samples (p-value of a test of means difference is < 0.001).

If the EES 2009 study does not permit covering all the aspects of diffuse and specific support to the EU, it does present interesting figures about the mobilization of the French voters to the EP election and their support for the actors and institutions of the EP elections (specific support). The negative views, indexed by the “disagree” answers on the three items measuring the interest in EP election outcomes (lack of any interest in EP campaign, no importance attached to which candidates and parties win seats), are shared by 13% to 28% of the French sample. Those figures are quite close to the average proportions for the whole EES 2009 pooled data set, with the exception of the interest for which candidates win seats (a surprising finding since EP elections are more party- than candidate-centered elections in France). The specificity of the French sample appears more significantly with two other dimensions, the attitudes toward enlargement and the trust in the EU institutions. French respondents are more negative toward enlargement (difference is significant at the 0.05 level) and much more negative towards the EU institutions, in particular the EP. This set of negative views on the EU institutions (although national political institutions do not have very positive views either), as well as the negative views toward enlargement are likely to explain the very high level of demand for referendum in case of EU treaty change (which is even bigger across the rest of the EES countries, the difference being significant at the 0.05 level).

MCA analysis was performed on a set of seven variables, tapping either general attitudes towards the EU or more specific ones: opinions on EU membership, on EU enlargement, trust in the EU institutions, satisfaction with democracy in the EU, opinion on whether EU decisions are in the interest of France, opinions on whether EU treaty changes should be adopted by referendum, and scale of attitudes towards European unification. Not surprisingly, the factor analysis generates a two-dimension solution. The first dimension explains 11.2% of the total inertia and summarizes opinions towards the EU with the most negative views at one end of the axis, and the most positive views at the other end. The second dimension explains 6.6% of the total inertia and summarizes opinions according to their strength: the most extreme views versus the midpoints. Such a configuration is a very classic result when applying factor analysis to ordinal scale (this point will be considered in more detail later when we will analyze the EVS 2008 data). Because of this, we will first analyze the first dimension of this multiple correspondence analysis and then we will raise the issue of its relationship to the left-right orientations.

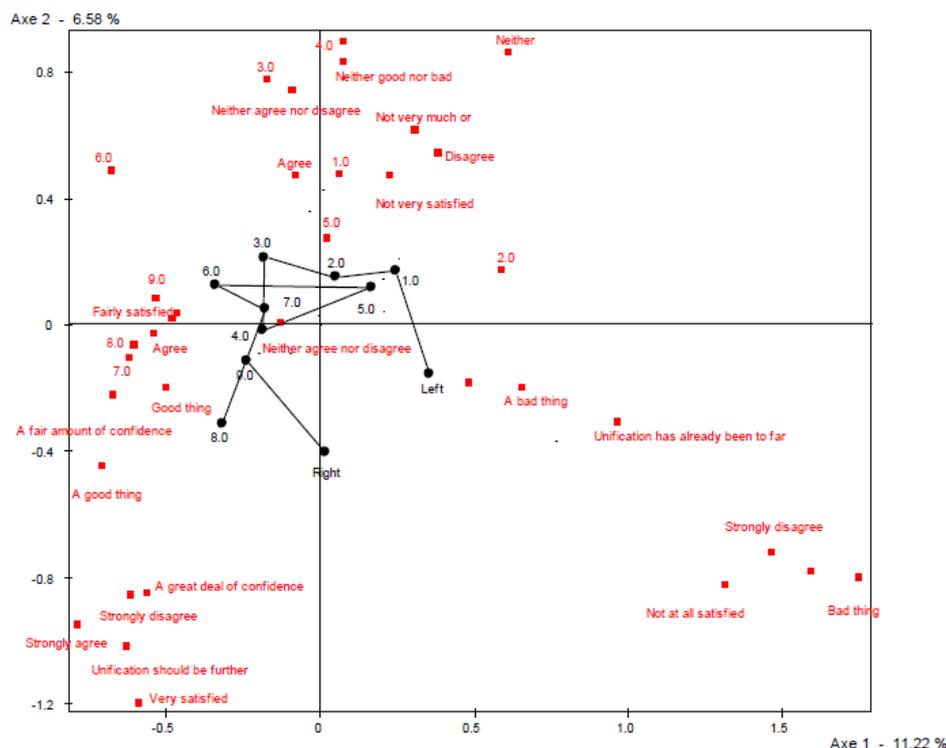
The variables which contribute most to the first dimension of the MCA solution are the opinions on EU membership as a good/bad thing, about trust in the EU institutions and about the confidence that EU decisions are made in the interest of France. In other words, the first dimension of our MCA captures altogether three facets of a general attitude towards EU: diffuse support, evaluative opinions about the EU and trust in its institutions. The other variables (like the opinions about enlargement) also contribute to this MCA solution and significantly to the first dimension, but much less so. Finally, one variable does not really contribute to the MCA solution: the opinions about the EU treaty changes by referendum.

We will now concentrate on the analysis of the relationship between the first dimension and the left-right scale and then the partisan proximity. The research question is the following: how do the attitudes of French voters towards the EU fit with their left-right placements and partisan orientations? This question is particularly relevant in regards to recent trends in French politics: two years before the 2009 EP elections, the 2007 French presidential election had shown tendencies that raise this question. A key element of the Sarkozy election in 2007 was its capacity to attract one-third of the extreme-right voters (those who voted for Jean-Marie Le Pen in 2002); at the same time and in between 2007 and 2009, there were important evolutions on the left and at the center: extreme-left parties tried to unify, the green party reinforced and a new center party (MoDem) emerged. It is thus fairly interesting to analyze if such tendencies fit or not with the structure of attitudes of French voters towards the EU, in particular in the case of the relationship between right-wing (UMP) and extreme right-wing voters (Front national) as well as in the case of the relationship between the socialist party (PS) and its left allies or with the extreme-left voters and parties.

Empirically speaking, this can be done through the projection of the left-right scale positions and the partisan proximities on the factorial plan. This technique permits visualization of the proximities between the positions of the so-called “active” and the so-called “illustrative” or “supplementary” items or variables. In the MCA vocabulary and technique, “active” items (or variables) are items which contribute to the creation of the distance in the factorial space, while “supplementary” items (variables) are projected onto the resulting space. In our case, this technique permits to “illustrate” the factorial plan of the attitudes towards the EU with the left-right positions and the partisan orientations. The factor analysis performed by MCA is thus only based on items related to the EU, the political variables (left-right scale and partisan proximity) are just projected (geometrical projection) onto the factorial space and do not contribute to it. If the “illustrative” variables do not contribute to the MCA solution, it is nevertheless possible to get the coordinates of their categories in the factorial plan. In doing so, our objective is to compare the “natural” coding of the two political variables to their estimations through the MCA analysis of attitudes towards the EU.

We begin with the left-right scale projection, shown in Figure 1.

Figure 1: The structure of EU attitudes in the French public, with the left-right scale projected on the factorial plan



The red points indicate the positions of the “active” items and the black ones indicate the positions of the left-right scale points. The trace between the categories of the left-right scale permits to see if these points are spread over the factorial space in their “natural” order (from the more leftist to the more rightist in an ordinal scaling order).

Source: EES 2009, French sample

The factorial plan shows clearly that the first dimension does not fit with the left-right scale: the scaling of the factorial coordinates (the coding of the left-right scale categories given by correspondence analysis) is not perfectly ordered along the 0 to 10 point scale of the observed scale. If opinions towards the EU were perfectly ordered on the first dimension by the left-right scale, the factorial coordinates would increase or decrease in the same order as the 0 to 10 point scale as it was measured in the questionnaire. This is not the case as shown in Table 2.

Table 2: Factorial scores for the left-right self-placement scale and the partisan proximity on the first dimension of the multiple correspondence analyses of attitudes towards EU (seven measures)

Left-Right self-placement (ranging from left to right)	Factorial scoring
0	0.35
1	0.24
2	0.05
3	-0.18
4	-0.18
5	0.17
6	-0.34
7	-0.18
8	-0.32
9	-0.24
10	0.05
Partisan proximity (ranging from left to right)	Factorial scoring
(Extreme-left) Parti de Gauche	0.88
PCF (Communist party)	0.88
PS (Socialist party)	-0.19
Verts (Green)	-0.16
Europe Ecologie	-0.20
MoDem (Center)	-0.12
UMP (Center right, right)	-0.31
FN (Extreme-right)	1.45

Source: EES 2009, French sample

3. Empirical results II: Measuring the multidimensionality of attitudes towards the EU in France

The EVS 2008 study presents a set of five 1-10 point scales measuring “fears” towards EU integration. This set of attitudinal measures captures a different facet of orientations towards EU integration than the more traditional measures of support. Emphasizing the notion of “fears” certainly taps a more emotional component of the general attitude towards the EU and may produce less “don’t know” answers. Table 3 reports basic statistics for the five distributions.

As can be seen, the mean values for social security and loss of jobs items are the lowest ones, indicating that French population has a dominant concern for the social and economic consequences of EU integration on France (remember that the scale goes from 1 to 10 and also goes in the direction of lower levels of fear when going from 1 to 10). The statistical difference with the other three means are all significant (p-value is < 0.05), even if one may interpret this cautiously knowing that the sample size is quite large.

Table 3: Descriptive statistics for the five items on fears towards the consequences of EU integration

	Fears of losing social security	Fears of losing national identity and culture	Fears that France will pay more and more for EU	Fears of losing power in the world	Fears of losing jobs in France
Mean (a)	3.72	4.47	3.91	4.49	3.70
Standard-deviation	2.83	2.94	2.71	2.87	2.80
Skewness (b)	0.58 (0.044)	0.47 (0.044)	0.70 (0.045)	0.42 (0.045)	0.82 (0.045)
Kurtosis	-0.44 (0.089)	-0.98 (0.089)	-0.53 (0.089)	-0.97 (0.089)	-0.52 (0.089)

(a) We report descriptive statistics for the five ordinal 1 to 10 points scales, even if it should be underlined that these scales are not interval ones. The estimation of their means and other descriptive statistics is thus more informative than consistent since changing the coding may impact these point estimates.

(b) For skewness and kurtosis statistics we report their standard errors.

Source: EVS 2008, French sample, weighted

As indicated previously, the application of MCA to ordinal scales, in particular ten-point scales, often falls into a methodological trap, the “Guttman effect”, also called the “horseshoe effect”. This problem was already mentioned above when we discussed the five-point scales of the EES 2009 study. It is now more important to cope with such a methodological problem since the EVS 2008 items are ten-point scales. What is the methodological issue and how to cope with it?

When analyzed by MCA, a set of ordinal scales often reveals an underlying approximate total ordering of the modalities and individuals expressing that a hierarchical scale, or Guttman scale, shape their interrelations. Statistically speaking it means that there is a quadratic relation between the dimensions; in other words, a non-linear relationship between them despite the assumption of non-dependency and orthogonally (this assumption excludes linear

relationship but not non-linear ones). When simultaneously projected on a factorial plan, the ordinal categories of the scales show a parabolic shape, which is the typical indication of the Guttman effect. The first dimension summarizes the most extreme categories, while the second one summarizes opinions according to their strength, displaying all the extreme categories of the scales versus the midpoints. Avoiding such problems is important since it indicates that the second dimension is nothing else than a non-linear function of the first one and cannot be independently interpreted. It is the reason why we have decided not to consider the second dimension of the MCA based on the EES 2009 study. In this latter case, it was not such an issue since all items were targeting the same latent variable, a continuum opposing positive to negative opinions and evaluations towards the EU. The EVS 2008 study raised the methodological issue of the Guttman effect not only because ten-point scales are more sensitive to it than five-point scales, but also because the ten-point scales capture different facets of the fears generated by EU development: fear about the loss of social security, the loss of national identity and culture, that France is going to pay more and more to the EU, the loss of power in the world for France, and fear of the loss of jobs in France. In other words, these items are likely to reveal different latent dimensions.

To cope with this methodological difficulty, we have used a variant of correspondence analysis, proposed in 1980 by the French mathematician Jean-Paul Benzécri and called “*analyse des correspondances dédoublées*”⁴. Without going into the statistical details of this method, it permits to avoid the Guttman effect by a fictively constructed “double” cloud of modalities: every observed scale is transformed into its reverse ordered equivalent and the full set of observed and transformed scales is then analyzed through MCA. In doing so, correspondence analysis is a like-PCA (principal component analysis) technique that treats the scales as vectors of notes. The representation of the factorial plan (like our Figure 3) can represent either observed and transformed scales or just one of the two since the other one is simply a reversed picture.

The factorial results show that the first three dimensions can be considered and analyzed (all together they explain 86.40% of the total variance). The first dimension (63.02% of the variance) summarizes the extremities of the five scales. It corresponds to a general dimension that sets apart the absence of fears, at one end of the axis, from the expression of fears at the other end. It shows a pattern of coherence between the scales: this general pattern would have totally dominated the analysis if the special Benzécri technique had not been employed. The second dimension (13.42% of the variance) differentiates one of the five fear scales, the fear that EU integration may translate into the loss of social security, from the other ones (even if the fear of losing national identity and culture is on the same side of the second dimension actually it does not contribute to it). Lastly, the third dimension (9.96% of the variance) distinguishes two specific fears: the fear of losing national identity and culture on the one hand, and the fear of losing more jobs because of European integration on the other one.

⁴ See also the very useful exposé of such method in Flora Chanvriil (2009). We thank Flora Chanvriil as well as Jean Chiche, our colleagues at the CEVIPOF, for help in explaining the empirical as well as the theoretical aspects of this method.

How do these three dimensions relate to the left-right orientations? Table 4 shows the factorial coordinates of the 10 points left-right scale when projected on the factorial dimensions as the supplementary variable which does not contribute to the factorial solution. As can be seen, the first dimension of the correspondence analysis does not fit very well, with the ten-point left-right scale. On this first dimension, negative coordinates (which indicate a propensity to have fears about EU development) can be found at the two extremes of the left-right scale (scores 1 to 4 and score 10, a non-symmetrical situation with more negative coordinates on the left side) but also in the center-right placements (placements 6 and 7). This result fits (with some slight differences) with our previous findings.

Table 4: Factorial scores of the left-right scale when projected on the three main dimensions of the multiple correspondence analyses of five scales about fears about EU integration

		Factorial scoring (1 st dimension)	Factorial scoring (2 nd dimension)	Factorial scoring (3 rd dimension)
Left	1	-0.02	0.29	0.20
	2	-0.12	0.28	0.05
	3	-0.17	0.31	0.18
	4	-0.15	0.19	0.00
	5	0.11	-0.10	0.01
	6	-0.05	-0.11	-0.11
	7	-0.08	-0.15	-0.14
	8	0.04	-0.25	-0.21
	9	0.16	-0.43	-0.14
Right	10	-0.04	-0.37	-0.26

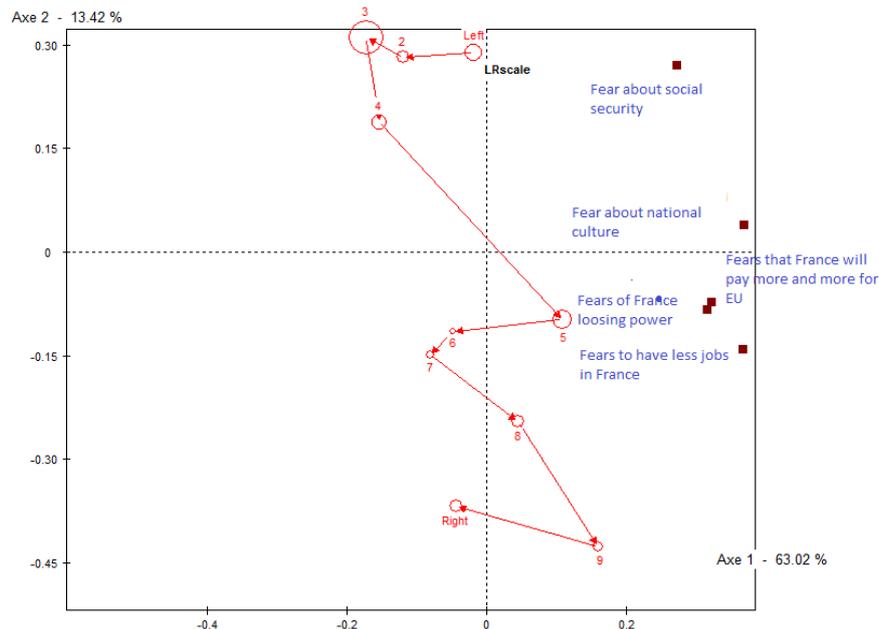
Again, we can conclude that the opposition between a general sentiment of fears towards EU integration and a general sentiment of non-fear does not fit with the left-right continuum. The continuum of the fears towards EU development (from fears to no-fear) does not correspond to the ideological continuum (from left to right or right to left) and the relationship between the two continuums is non-linear. A very different picture comes with the second and third factorial dimensions. Before reading the second and third dimension coordinates, we may remark that MCA gives different signs than for the first: for the second and third dimensions, positive coordinates indicate fears. In the case of the second dimension the coordinates give a continuum from fear of losing social security (positive coordinates) to the non-fear of such a loss (negative coordinates); the third dimension indexes a continuum from the fear of losing jobs because of EU development (positive coordinates) to the fear of losing national identity and culture (negative coordinates). Statistically speaking, the signs of the coordinates could be inverted without modifying anything to the MCA solution; the positive and negative signs are conventional and due to computation. Running the same MCA analysis with different software may turn negative coordinates into positive ones, and positive ones into negative ones. What matters is the interpretation of the signs.

The major conclusion from the second dimension is that the coordinates are quasi-ranked in an ordinal left-right continuum (with left placements being more concerned than right ones by the possible loss of social security), while the ranking on the third dimension mostly set apart the two blocks of placements without going necessarily into a quasi-perfect ordinal coding (with right placements being more preoccupied with losing national identity and culture). In other words, social protection and job loss are a matter of concern for the left-wing people, while losing national identity and culture is the dominant concern of right-wing citizens. The MCA analysis shows that in France, attitudes towards the EU are a three-dimensional or three-facet phenomena (at least in the context of the EVS 2008 study and using the available items): a general feeling of fear or non-fear, whatever the domain (first dimension), a specific feeling of fear about losing social “advantages” (social security) and another specific feeling that opposes the fear of job loss to the fear of losing national identity and culture.

Our results show that the specific fears orientated to the questions of social security and national identity and culture (versus job loss in this last case) fit with the left-right placements of French respondents and in particular the fears towards the European integration impact on French social security. The meanings and perceptual filters that French respondents attach to this possible impact are driven by left-right orientations. The fears about losing national identity and culture versus losing jobs because of EU integration are also driven by ideology, but less strictly since national identity and unemployment concerns are more widely spread among French respondents.

Figure 3 displays dimensions 1 and 2 of the first factorial plan (the figure is called *biplot*, a two-dimensional plot), where the left-right scale was added as an illustrative variable. Arrows indicate the order between self-positions. Positions on the left-right scale are not linearly ordered from 0 to 10 on the horizontal dimension, but are rather grouped around the axis' center (even if the distribution is skewed, with left self-positions having more negative coordinates than right self-positions). On the contrary, the second dimension (displayed on figure 3 as the vertical axis) very clearly fits with the ideological left-right self-positioning: left-right self-positions are linearly displayed along the vertical axis. The breaking-point, between the upper and the lower part of the axis, is between self-positions 4 and 5, meaning that the further individuals position themselves on the left of the ideological scale, the stronger fears of losing social security are, as compared to the center-left fifth self-positions. The second factorial plan (dimensions 1 and 3) is not represented here but basically shows the same (with self-position 5 being as breaking-point).

Figure 3: Factorial plan (two first dimensions) for the five scales of fears about European integration



This graphical display is not like the usual ones in correspondence analysis. We cannot see the categories (1 to ten-point scales), but rather the variable positions like in a principal component analysis (PCA). One may choose to represent the original variables or their inversed codings. This does not modify the results, only the graphical display (variables points would be on the left side rather than on the right one). The red arrows show the left-right orientations (from code 1, the more leftist, to code 10 the more rightist) that run perfectly along the second (vertical) dimension.
Source: EVS 2008, French sample

The statistical analysis of the links between these “fear” variables clearly replicate some of the major results that we had already observed with Céline Belot in 2004 and that we replicated with Sylvie Strudel later on with the 2007 French post-election study (Belot and Cautrès, 2004; Cautrès and Strudel, 2007).

On the first dimension side, our new findings (based on the EVS 2008 data) look fairly similar to the first dimension observed then with Céline Belot as well as with the EES 2009 data above (empirical results: part I). It is a general dimension of feeling of fears or no fears about the different consequences of EU integration for the citizens. It does not match with the left-right scale and it clearly “disturbs” it. On the second dimension side, it is also the case that our new findings fit with the previous ones. Again, the second dimension displays those who fear a loss of social benefit due to European integration, on the axis’ right end, to those who have no fear on that matter, on the axis’ left end. This second dimension fits with the left-right self-placement. Certainly due to the differences in the measurement scales and items phrasing, this new analysis shows a third dimension that, in previous study (based on the French 2007 post-election study), was part of the second dimension. In this previous analysis, we saw a

clear distinction between the absence of fear about social protection and fears about immigration, which is partly captured by the fear of losing national identity and culture in the EVS question trend).

Apart from a few differences, our new findings verify the previous ones: French attitudes towards the EU are multidimensional and the decomposition of the different dimensions of support is crucial in understanding the relationship between EU attitude(s) and left-right placements. The multidimensionality of attitudes towards the EU in France and its complex relationship with the partisan and ideological structures and orientations was very well illustrated in 29 May 2005 referendum, when France rejected the European Constitutional Treaty. This was not an “accident” or a consequence of domestic issues, but certainly a consequence of this multidimensionality. That day, a significant segment of the left voters in particular expressed a double and complex view: in favor of the general principles and ideas of European integration (positive diffuse support) but in favor of “another Europe” (negative specific support towards the supposed “liberal” economic and social orientations of the EU). When thinking about the present situation and how the French may consider the role of the EU in the context of the Euro-crisis, these results should be considered with increased attention.

Conclusion

If one now turns back to our central interrogation (how much has European integration disturbed French political space, and particularly its most frequently used shortcut, the left-right axis), the projection of citizens’ left-right positions on the MCA factorial plans built with European variables gives striking results: the more the voters declare themselves leftists, the more they fear the consequences regarding social protection and social security in particular (second factor). To the contrary, the more the voters place themselves on the right, the less they fear that more European integration will damage social protection in France but the more they fear a loss of national identity and culture. On the first dimension, the left-right ideological positioning is blurred by attitudes towards the EU, even if the pattern is not one of a complete lack of correspondence.

Clearly, these results show that the left-right axis is still not a heuristic or shortcut that French people use to draw their opinions on European integration as a whole. Saying that Europe is an issue that is progressively dissolved in pre-existing cleavages is still far from being proven, as far as the French political space is concerned. The EVS 2008 data, however, show a clearer picture of the second dimension that was the case with our previous findings and research: on this dimension (even if the position 5 on the left-right scale is on the other side) the scores of the placements have a left-right ordering that conforms to the a priori coding of the scale.

It is certainly because of this multi-dimensionality that parties and voters do not match easily on EU issues. Parties tend to mask attitudinal dimensions towards Europe that work in the political space as far as citizens are concerned. Therefore, European integration still potentially appears as a “sleeping giant” that may be reactivated in the framework of a European referendum (2005 in France) or during a national election campaign when party leaders put the issue on top of the agenda (extreme-right candidates in the French presidential elections in 2002 or 2012).

We may raise the question of the French specificity: comparative analysis should be performed to identify if such multidimensionality tends to exist in other countries, either “by nature” (it would be in the nature of EU attitudes to get more complex and multi-faceted as European integration moves further), or if national configurations, structures of opportunities and the political actors' roles and positions are determinant. It is likely that such a comparative analysis would show that both processes matter.

On the methodological side, the measurement of attitudes towards the EU has concentrated a lot on the measures and items used to capture the diffuse and specific facets of support. If this agenda represents a major contribution to the understanding of citizen attitudes, it should certainly be complemented in the future by a research question targeting the ideological meanings given to European integration by citizens.

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Appendix

Table 5: Wording of variables, European Election Study 2009

Variable	Original Name	Wording
Opinion on membership	QA6A	Generally speaking, do you think that France's membership of the European Union is...? A good thing (1), a bad thing (2), neither good nor bad (3)
Trust in the EU	Q41	Do you 'strongly agree' (1), 'agree' (2), 'neither agree nor disagree' (3), 'disagree' (4) or 'strongly disagree' (5)?: You trust the institutions of the European Union.
Opinion on future enlargement	Q83	In general, do you think that enlargement of the European Union would be a good thing (1), a bad thing (2), or neither good nor bad (3)?
Feeling European	Q80	Do you see yourself as French only (1), French and European (2), European and French (3), European only (4)
General evaluation of membership	QA7A	Taking everything into account, would you say that France has on balance benefited or not from being a member of the European Union? Benefited (1), not benefited (0)
Opinion on unification	Q80	Some say European unification should be pushed further. Others say it already has gone too far. What is your opinion? Please indicate your views using a scale from 0 to 10, where 0 means unification 'has already gone too far' and 10 means it 'should be pushed further'. What number on this scale best describes your position?
Interest in European Elections: campaign	Q23	Thinking back to just before the elections for the European Parliament were held, how interested were you in the campaign for those elections: very (1), somewhat (2), a little (3), or not at all (4)?
Interest in European Elections: candidate	Q42	Do you 'strongly agree' (1), 'agree' (2), 'neither agree nor disagree' (3), 'disagree' (4) or 'strongly disagree' (5)?: It is very important for you which particular candidates win seats and become MEPs in the European Parliament elections.
Interest in European Elections: party	Q43	Do you 'strongly agree' (1), 'agree' (2), 'neither agree nor disagree' (3), 'disagree' (4) or 'strongly disagree' (5)?: It is very important for you which particular political party gained the most seats in the European Parliament elections
EU's decisions in the interest of France	Q91	How much confidence do you have that decisions made by the European Union will be in the interest of France? A great deal of confidence (1), a fair amount (2), not very much (3), no confidence at all (4)
Referendum for EU treaty	Q65	Do you 'strongly agree' (1), 'agree' (2), 'neither agree nor disagree' (3), 'disagree' (4) or 'strongly disagree' (5)?: EU treaty changes should be decided by referendum
Left right position	Q46	In political matters people talk of "the left" and "the right". What is your position? Please indicate your views using any number on a scale from 0 to 10, where 0 means "left" and 10 means "right". Which number best describes your position?
Partisan proximity	Q87	Do you consider yourself to be close to any particular party? If so, which party do you feel close to? Extreme-left ; Parti de Gauche, PCF (Communist party), PS (Socialist party), Verts (Green), Europe Ecologie, Modem (Center), UMP (Center right, right), FN (Extreme-right).

Source: EES 2009

Table 6: Wording of variables, European Values Study 2008

Variable	Original Name	Wording
Left right position	Q57	In political matters, people talk of 'the left' and the 'the right'. How would you place your views on this scale, generally speaking? 1 (left) ... 10 (right)
Fears about European integration: social security	Q73.A	Some people may have fears about the building of the European Union. I am going to read a number of things which people say they are afraid of. For each tell me if you - personally - are currently Very much afraid (1), ..., not afraid at all (10) of: The loss of social security
Fears about European integration: national identity	Q73.B	The loss of national identity and culture
Fears about European integration: cost	Q73.C	Our country paying more and more to the European Union
Fears about European integration: power	Q73.D	A loss of power in the world for France
Fears about European integration: jobs	Q73.E	The loss of jobs in France

Source: EVS 2008