

Blaming excessive energy consumption: between stigmatization and denunciation, showing a deviant group

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Making use of the information and incentive tools available in both the public space and in the marketplace, public energy-saving policies devote considerable space to the “consumer citizen”. The dissemination of statements articulating values, social norms and actions which favour energy-saving practices and blame excessive energy consumption is indeed part of a new statement regime (Foucault, 1969): it legitimates these public policies whilst at the same time driving discursive practices aimed at encouraging energy sufficiency.

This communication will attempt to explain some of the sociolinguistic modalities of these discursive practices in relation to the reception, transformation and repeated use of statements concerning the public energy-saving “solution”.

It begins by presenting a survey device and a situational analysis which allow us, from a sociolinguistic standpoint, to characterize public statements relating to energy saving. The survey is mainly based on an experimental protocol which leaves a great deal of room for open-ended questions. In particular, albeit without going into details (Brugidou, 2013), it points out a distinction between public statements of *stigmatization*, aimed at criticizing any individual deviation from the norm (in this case, energy saving), and statements of *denunciation* (Boltanski, 1984), justifying or challenging the values and/or modalities of public energy-saving policies.

However, it seems important to make clear that this analytical comparison covers a continuum in which hybrid forms stand out – statements that can be described as “protopolitical” to the extent that they present the characteristics of expressions of both stigma and political denunciation. The study of these is an avenue of research not to be neglected, because they clarify certain ways in which problems are politicized.

This communication will specifically seek to describe the modalities of circulation between these different enunciative positions. The analysis of responses shows that many answers have certain traits of stigma but also features of political denunciation. The most characteristic responses of this view are those which stigmatize not an individual, but a group. It is not therefore the behavior that is mentioned but an attribute that is, in the same movement, essentialized and associated with a collective: it is thus ‘the mighty’ or more rarely ‘the poor’ or ‘EDF agents’, ‘industrialists’, ‘the elderly’ or ‘youngsters’ etc. who are designated as responsible.

The communication starts by presenting a survey device and a situational analysis which allow us, from a sociolinguistic standpoint, to characterise public statements relating to energy saving.

It then moves on to analyse statements that can be described as “protopolitical” to the extent that they present the characteristics of expressions of both stigma and political denunciation.

1. The empirical survey: open-ended questions

The idea behind the longitudinal survey device is a relatively simple one: it consists in assessing the strength of a norm and the extent of its dissemination, using analysis of the reprobation that deviations from the rule arouse in the public. P. Pharo points out that Durkheim had already offered to find an “agent which in some way forces moral rules to outwardly translate their specific nature, and the agent envisaged consists in looking for what happens when these various rules are broken” (Pharo, 2004; p. 165).

The survey is mainly based on an experimental protocol which leaves a great deal of room for open-ended questions. One of its particularities is that it introduces a diachronic dimension to the gathering and analysis of open-ended questions. This temporal dimension is a response to both a conception of the publics formed by controversy (Brugidou, 2008) and to the more specific issue of normative dissemination relating to a public policy – in this case energy saving (Pautard, 2009; Brugidou & Garabuau-Moussaoui, 2013).

The survey was carried out in two waves (2009 and 2013) and examines perceptions of energy issues and energy-saving practices in the Provence-Alpes-Côte d’Azur region¹ (PACA). It asked an open question designed to learn the interviewees’ reasons (good or bad) for not saving energy:

In your opinion, why do some people think that it is not important to save energy? (Open-ended question).

The formulations and number of follow-ups for this question were coded. The replies were recorded and transcribed in full. Previous studies have shown the importance of follow-up instructions and the dialogic nature of open questions².

By analysing responses using a method which hybridised the analysis of textual data³ and the analysis of discourse (Brugidou and Moine, 2010), we were able to distinguish four types of statement:

- *stigmatization* statements which criticise people who do not save energy,
- *denunciation* statements which question the principles behind the energy-saving norm or the introduction of public action measures,
- *discernment* statements examining the circumstances of the action and suspending any judgement which will criticise a behaviour or condemn a policy,
- “residual” statements or “zero” statements which do not fall into any of the above categories.

In this paper we are going to focus on the first two types of statement.

¹ First wave in April 2009 by Institut LH2. Sample comprising 2,100 persons aged 18 and over, living in the PACA region (Provence-Alpes-Côte d’Azur). The three sub-samples were built using the random method. Telephone study, end of April 2009.

Second wave in 2013 by Institut Somme Toute. Sample comprising 1,500 persons aged 18 and over, living in the PACA region. Quota method. Telephone study.

² A more detailed presentation of the device may be found in Brugidou and Moine, 2010.

³ Alceste software. Reinert (1993).

2. The normative pincer: stigmatising behaviour or denouncing an unjust (dis)order

This study leads us to check on the relevance of the analytical distinction put forward by Kaufmann (2010) between the semantic use of *They* and *We*:

– on the one hand, this analysis brings out the different values of the speaker, figuring in one area as an individual political subject, and in another as a social agent, a moral entrepreneur, almost automatically bringing into play the justification of the standard – just like any other member of the group;

– on the other hand, we differentiate between two kinds of action, one that, in a single statement, tends through criticism to institute and keep at bay a citizen and a political community, and the other, also dual, that tends to strengthen community cohesion by sanctioning the transgression of a standard.

However, it seems important to make clear that this analytical comparison covers a continuum, in which hybrid forms stand out – statements that can be described as protopolitical to the extent that they present the characteristics of expressions of both stigma and condemnation. The study of these is an avenue of research that should not be neglected, because they clarify certain ways in which problems are politicized.

From this point of view the most characteristic responses are those which stigmatise a group, rather than an individual. Consequently it is not the behaviour which is targeted, but a characteristic which is at the same time linked to a group: it is “the mighty”, “the well-off” (or more rarely “the poor”), “EDF employees”, “manufacturers”, “old people”, “young people” etc. who are deemed to be responsible.

So they're either, let's say, I don't know, but either they're lazy, or else they're ... how can I put it, they've come face-to-face with the truth, in the sense that it's not a private individual driving his car on a Sunday who's going to cause pollution, it's the manufacturers who pump out tons of gas and who break the law. That's the main problem in my opinion.

Woman, 45-54 years old, university degree.

The lack of, the lack of education, I think maybe the lack of information, of facts. A lack of knowledge, yes, a lack of knowledge about the environment, in terms of figures, in terms of figures too. [Okay. So in your opinion it's really a lack of information, a lack of education, is that correct?] Yes, I think the further down the social classes or social strata you go, the less people pay attention to things like ecology. So it's obvious, to have ...

Homme, 18-24 years old, university degree.

Well, because they're not aware and no-one has properly explained it to them, or because they don't have time to examine the problem, or they can easily afford it, there are a whole load of reasons why people don't, um ... either they're not aware of the problem, or they don't care or they have money to burn, you know, you want me to give you an example of people who don't pay attention? [Yes] Well, do you know how much retired EDF employees pay for electricity? [Um, no] Well, they pay 10% of their bill, so they can use their heating all day long with the windows wide open!

Man, retired, 65 years old or over, Baccalauréat (equivalent of A-Levels/High school diploma)

Well, um, as far as I know, there are people who don't want to use energy, they say “yes, when you see that everywhere else, I mean even our leaders, they have so much of everything, it's always us, the little people, who have to go without, for the benefit of everyone else”, I think that's what we've heard people say.

Woman, 54-64 years old, Baccaauréat (equivalent of A-Levels/High school diploma).

Box 1: Stigmatising a deviant group

These statements clearly present characteristics in common with the grammar of stigmatization. It is a question of punishing a deviancy and, through the action of a “police force”, to use H. Becker’s terminology, of going so far as to remove the deviant member from the group⁴, to “dismember” him⁵. Analysis of the stigmatization responses showed that body vocabulary was a powerful metaphor through which to denounce perspectives which were withdrawn within the satisfaction of their own bodies. It created particularly strong images to stigmatise laziness, narrowness of mind, selfishness or greed.

<i>“(…) who don’t want to deal with that.” “I think, and then they have reasons for not worrying too much about looking for new things,”</i>	
<i>“(…) or maybe they’ve got nothing going on inside their heads”</i>	Laziness (the head)
<i>“I haven’t got a thought inside my head”</i>	
<i>“Well those people have a pea brain. You need to give them a new brain, you have no idea, you don’t understand what they think”</i>	
<i>“No, everyone reacts that way, according to what goes on inside their head.”</i>	Stupidity (the head, the internal)
<i>“I don’t live inside their heads!”</i>	
<i>“Maybe they don’t see the world through the same eyes!”</i>	
<i>“I think people don’t have their eyes in the right place, and they keep them shut”</i>	A limited point of view (the eyes)
<i>“they can’t see past their noses,”</i>	
<i>“(…) past their noses and look after their own interests”</i>	
<i>“(…) who can’t see past their own noses,”</i>	Egotism (the nose)
<i>“because they can’t see further than their stomachs,”</i>	
<i>“because they gaze at their own navels”</i>	
<i>“(…) why don’t they just look down at their own navels,” “Well, they were born with a silver spoon in their mouths!”</i>	Greed (the mouth, the stomach)
<i>“(…) and they only care about their fat faces!”</i>	
<i>“(…) they only care about their own fat faces.”</i>	

Box 2– Physical and Moral Characteristics in Expressions of Stigma (Brugidou, 2013, p. 93).

However, one major difference is immediately apparent, in as much as here it is not one member who is symbolically “removed”, but a whole class of members, a group identified as being distinct from (if not exogenous from) the speaker. Social order is not threatened by one individual but by a group. From this standpoint, these statements might be qualified as *protopolitical*⁶ (Mauger, 2005) in

⁴ It goes without saying that these sanctions are generally diffuse, weak and graduated, rarely going as far as physical stigmatization, even if this does remain a possible outcome of the sanction. Ogien (1990).

⁵ An expression used by Laurence Kaufmann in a discussion of Brugidou, (2013).

⁶Not in the sense that it refers to an ancient political repertoire, such as the peasant revolts of the 17th and 18th centuries which in some ways foreshadowed the 2005 suburban riots, but in the sense that the statement “lacks perspective on political or social transformation but nevertheless conveys a critique of the order of

as much as they sketch out the construction of a *We*, of a collective identity, a shadow carved up by the projection of the deviant group. In this respect they differ from statements of individual stigmatization which we might requalify as *infrapolitical* because in the indifferentiation of the *we-speaker* (Berrendonner, 1981), they are content to maintain the existing social order without re-examining its political foundations, under the waterline, so to speak, of the group – and sometimes of the reflexive – through a diffuse sanction and in relative silence⁷.

We find a well-known rhetorical process which, through the designation of a delinquent group, performs a backward construction of a collective identity. This group, designated in a more or less marked fashion by popular opinion, can be constructed according to very different principles of categorisation: we find the “well-off”, i.e. those who have privileges, however big or small they may be, and among whom EDF employees constitute an emblematic figure⁸, the “mighty” - be they the rich, manufacturers or politicians – but also groups built in accordance with age criteria of biological resonance, “old people” who are always cold, or “young people” who are happy-go-lucky and who do not care about anything. Foreign countries are sometimes designated as being responsible for disorder that must be fought and for dysfunctions which must be remedied. But here it is a case of statements that we might qualify as political, and not protopolitical, in as much as they denounce an unjust world order, and, above and beyond pure critique, support a project for political change.

Oh, well I mean, um, if you look at it from a global standpoint, for the time being what we are managing to do in countries like France, it represents such a tiny percentage that it might discourage some people! [How do you mean?] Well, um, it's as if America is only just realising that perhaps they need to start saving a bit of energy, and well, China and other developing countries have methods of production, of heating, which they cannot change for the time being, and so us⁹, we just follow suit!

Man, retired, 65 years old or over, Baccalauréat (equivalent of A-Levels/High school diploma).

We know that the step which consists in essentializing the group's basic characteristic – thus reducing individuals to one of their qualities – or, on the contrary, in keeping individuals at a certain distance from their qualities (in this case recognised as being multiple, with uneven definitional characteristics), defines the democratic (or not) nature of the political conflict: in particular, it maintains the possibility of resolving the problem without eliminating the group to which it is now merely linked, i.e. in a manner which is relative and not absolutely identified. Here we see the paradigm of agonistic pluralism, discussed by Chantal Mouffe in relation to the intuitions of Carl Schmitt¹⁰, who attempts to do justice to the passions and conflicts that make up collective identities, but within a “modern” democratic framework (Mouffe,1992). This pluralism opposes liberal and deliberative models, both of which remain silent on the issue of collective identities (Mouffe, 2004). It thus has the merit of reminding us – in a democratic framework too – that “where there is power, force and power cannot be completely eliminated, even though these may only take the form of “force of argument” or “symbolic violence” (Mouffe, 1992, p. 93)¹¹.

things” *L'émeute de novembre 2005. Une révolte protopolitique*, by Gérard Mauger, critical account by Jean-Jacques Yvarel. n°4, Autumn 2007 : Circulations juvéniles et usages adolescents de l'espace.

⁷ Here it is in fact the designation of the *xenos*, of the foreign group, which makes it possible to sketch the construction of a figure of the people as an *ethnos* (Flipo et Tarragoni, 2015).

⁸ Emblematic but rarely mentioned: 1% of responses mention any such difference. Difference of age is mentioned in 2% of all responses, the rich and the poor in 2.5% and companies in 3%.

⁹ Our emphasis.

¹⁰ We see here the friends-enemies dialectic, “Them” and “Us”, discussed elsewhere by C. Schmitt, where “l'homogénéité du groupe se laisse décrire comme une égalité *sous la menace*” (Karsenti, 2010, p. 288).

¹¹ This conception of politics therefore always lies to some extent on the edge of the abyss, reminding us of the presence of an ever-available literal definition of the body marked or group eliminated under the symbolic stigmatization of the individual or the deviant group.

Here our perspective joins that proposed by Duchesne, Haegel et al., (2003)¹², underlining the fact that the maintaining of order is just as much a founding part of policy as the desire to change it¹³.

Some particularly well-developed responses can therefore be analysed using the criteria system proposed in Duchesne and Haegel (2001, p.99). This grid can identify an anecdotal narrative, a rise in generality and a cleavage (which according to Duchesne and Haegel may be considered to be levels) along with other non-prioritized criteria such as stances within a cleavage, naturalisation, designation of the person responsible, identification with the groups involved etc. The grid intersects in part with the different phases of definitional work on public problems according to specialists in public policy analysis. For example, P. Zittoun (2013, p. 52 and following) who identifies five such phases: labelling the situation and qualifying it as problematic, dividing society by identifying a public of victims, designating the causes, those responsible and the victims, making the future apocalyptic and making immediate action necessary. This work on identifying politics nevertheless differs from a « perspective constructiviste de mise au jour du travail de politisation des enjeux » in as much as the approach proposed by Duchesne and Haegel «part des individus et s'interroge sur leur propension à politiser ou à dépolitiser leurs propos, et ce, dans différentes situations de parole » (Duchesne, Haegel et al., 2003, p. 4).

Because everything's free for them. [How do you mean?] They're part of the well-off. Lots of people are privileged in France: civil servants, teachers, um, the gendarmerie, the police, the county councils, and so on, um, from the lowest to the highest. So they don't care, everything's paid for, it's free for them. Even at EDF they don't pay anything, so ... they pay nothing. The meter turns but no bills are sent. 1%. But what's 1%? It's scandalous. That's where energy savings can be made. The same goes for gas. But no government's ever going to want to, to upset the apple cart. So, what I mean is, everyone gets to keep their privileges, and no-one shows any solidarity with anyone else. We can say what we like, it won't make any difference. This is an old man talking. So there you go (laughs). [Thank you very much] Ah well, ... I'm telling the truth you know. [Ah yes, well, go ahead!] I'm speaking my mind, speaking my mind.

Man, high-school diploma, retired.

Other shorter responses also suggest a cleavage, the construction of a deviant group and identification with a group that is involved: *Why? Because I simply believe, as far as I'm concerned, it's my opinion. As long as the big people don't make any effort, I don't see why we should make any more effort than them.* (Man, intermediate profession, 2-year degree)

3. (Un)just (dis)order

We identified two types of order. We noted the difference between *police*¹⁴ operations – which relate to the everyday maintenance of existing order – and the actions of *Crusaders* denouncing an unjust order (i.e. one or more unjust¹⁵ “solutions) or justifying a just order – more often than not by

¹² In particular, their works shed light on the stigmatised person's point of view and show the role of the individual and collective feeling of stigmatization in politicisation: « Dans ce cas, la stigmatization au niveau individuel et collectif construit et fixe un fort clivage d'unification du groupe, et elle génère un processus de justification qui est inévitablement lié à une montée en généralité et à la conflictualisation » Duchesne, Haegel et al.,(2003), p. 17.

¹³ Our perspective also joins that of Duchesne and Haegel in the sense that the suggested approach begins with individuals and takes situations of utterance into account.

¹⁴ And here, even though Rancière's terminology intersects with that of Becker, they don't overlap.

¹⁵ In the same way as the distinction between ends and means (Simon, 1948) is a problem, so is it sometimes tricky to disentangle problem and solution, in as much as for some people it is other people's solutions which constitute the problem: this is especially evident in relation to energy, where the various sectors of production (nuclear, wind, etc.) take it in turns to be designated as the solution or the problem.

denouncing an unjust disorder (i.e. a “problem”) Zittoun, 2013). In other words, we must not confuse the diffuse “defence of society” as it is embodied in the ordinary sanctions which mark our everyday interactions (the micro-powers to which Foucault refers) with an ideological programme which aims to defend the (existing) order by justifying its just nature. They relate to types of statement which, as we have seen, are very different:

- one takes place below politics (it is therefore *infrapolitical*) under the cover of an existing community of tradition, a *we-speaker*.
- the other projects a collective determination, a *We* to be constructed using the agreement between political subjects, an *a posteriori* group – including in the name of tradition and of an inherited order as found in conservative ideologies – and constituting *the* politics according to C. Mouffe (2004, p.184)¹⁶.

It is these cleavages, these differences in relation to issues, which rise to the surface in the stigmatization of deviant groups. In the most notable cases, these statements present formal similarities with statements that denounce a conspiracy: the guilty/responsible group is described as a collective entity acting intentionally, in a more or less secretive manner, even though the action is always likely to be decoded and linked to the pursuit of private interests.

Because they have ... because it's advantageous for them to ... to ... to ... to use energy. For example, EDF and GDF will never force you to reduce consumption for the simple reason that they want people to consume. So there you go. It's a problem of ... of ... how can I put it? They're in charge ... they have the energy, they're the ones selling it, so they're not going to reduce sales. If you want proof, it's that they've never been interested in ... in photovoltaic energy, not like in Germany. And now that they've got no choice, now they're interested, that's the way it is. I know about all systems for ... for producing energy, whether it's in Austria, Germany ... [Ah, that's good!] In Holland or elsewhere, so, um ... I'm a polyglot, so I can read foreign articles you see. [Ah, wonderful!] And I have no respect for people ... whether it's EDF or GDF. [I see].

Woman, 2-year degree, retired.

Because they're the ones filling their pockets! They're the biggest thieves, bosses who are thieves, we see examples of that every day, right under our noses, it's been going on for decades, one day the pressure cooker's going to explode, we're not far from that happening, with certain categories of bosses, especially the big ones.

Man, high-school diploma, retired, 65 years old and over.

Box 3 : Stigmatising a deviant group *and* denouncing an injustice

So it is also in this very specific sense that these statements may be qualified as “protopolitical”: borrowing from the rhetoric of conspiracy (Danblon and Nicolas, 2010) and from the chiaroscuro of rumour-based modes of opinion propagation¹⁷, they are threatened at their confines by an imaginary of extermination. Yet before these confines are reached, it is the chiaroscuro which reigns. On the subject of Richard Hofstadter's works, Luc Boltanski has clearly demonstrated the difficulty, or impossibility, of defining a category such as “conspiracy theory”, which in some way aims to downgrade a statement of opinion and requalify it as “pathological” or abnormal, thus stigmatising

¹⁶ The question of justice, i.e. of just order, not to be confused here with that of emancipation because different types of cleavage or differences can be highlighted, must therefore be closely intersected with that of collective identities which are rearranged and reformulated within the conflict.

¹⁷ Particularly because they propagate an opinion under the cover of a *they*—speaker (Anscombe, 2009) who, in a grammar of public opinion (Kaufmann, 2001), be endorsed by a political subject, an “I”.

it: « Il faut en effet asseoir solidement la position depuis laquelle un tel jugement peut être porté, c'est-à-dire à la fois, en tant que position épistémologique « objective » et en tant que position politique susceptible d'incarner la rationalité et la normalité » (Boltanski, 2012, p. 271). Here Boltanski extends an argument introduced thirty years earlier in “the denunciation”. The judgements of normality demanded of a panel who examined letters of denunciation sent to the *Le Monde* newspaper were based on practical knowledge, a “member’s competency” to use ethnomethodological vocabulary, not on any objective knowledge and even less so on any “objective” epistemology: « On a demandé à six personnes de lire rapidement les lettres et de noter de 1 (tout à fait normal) à 10 (complètement fou) le degré de normalité de l’auteur de ses lettres » (Boltanski, 1984, p.6.).

Here the two grammars (denunciation and stigmatization) are closely linked, side by side, because they are *reversible*: the former is essentially revealed in contrast to the latter, the stigmatization being sub-thematized in the 1984 text. The very meaning of the word *denunciation*, qualified as “public”, is deprived of its “private” meaning, and here, in our opinion, we must also hear “policeman”. The “unfortunate” denunciation is revealed, deformed through the medium of another act of language, an act of ordinary policing, a stigmatization that itself downgrades it into a *stigmatization*, illicit in the context of a letter to *Le Monde*, an “error of category” that must be rejected. But as Boltanski points out in *Enigmes et complots*, it is always possible to denounce a political act behind a stigmatization and a “Crusader” behind the neutral mask of a “security force”. One is not unmasking a “Tartuffe”, an unbeliever who maintains order, disguised as a sincere proselyte; one is denouncing the opposite – a “fanatic”, a believer who passes his order off as a social order, an order for all.

To summarise, in order for the norm to be respected, the speaker can therefore take on the role of an agent, that of the “They-speaker”¹⁸, by *stigmatising* a behaviour. He/she articulates actants in accordance with a grammar of stigmatization:

Police ↔ Deviant ↔ Community of tradition.

He/she can also adopt the stance of a political subject and *denounce* an unjust (dis)order, aligning these actantial roles in a different way:

Crusaders ↔ Dis(order) ↔ Political group.

Finally, he/she can place him/herself in a more or less undermined no-man’s land, taking on the role of a *we-speaker* by no longer stigmatising a behaviour but a group and/or by cleaving a problem. In this way he/she suggests a different principle of political organisation which often indistinctly affects collective identity and/or a cleaved definition of a public problem and its solutions.

4. Conclusion

Analysis of these responses pertaining to energy-saving allowed us to reveal a series of three declaratory positions relating to acts of language.

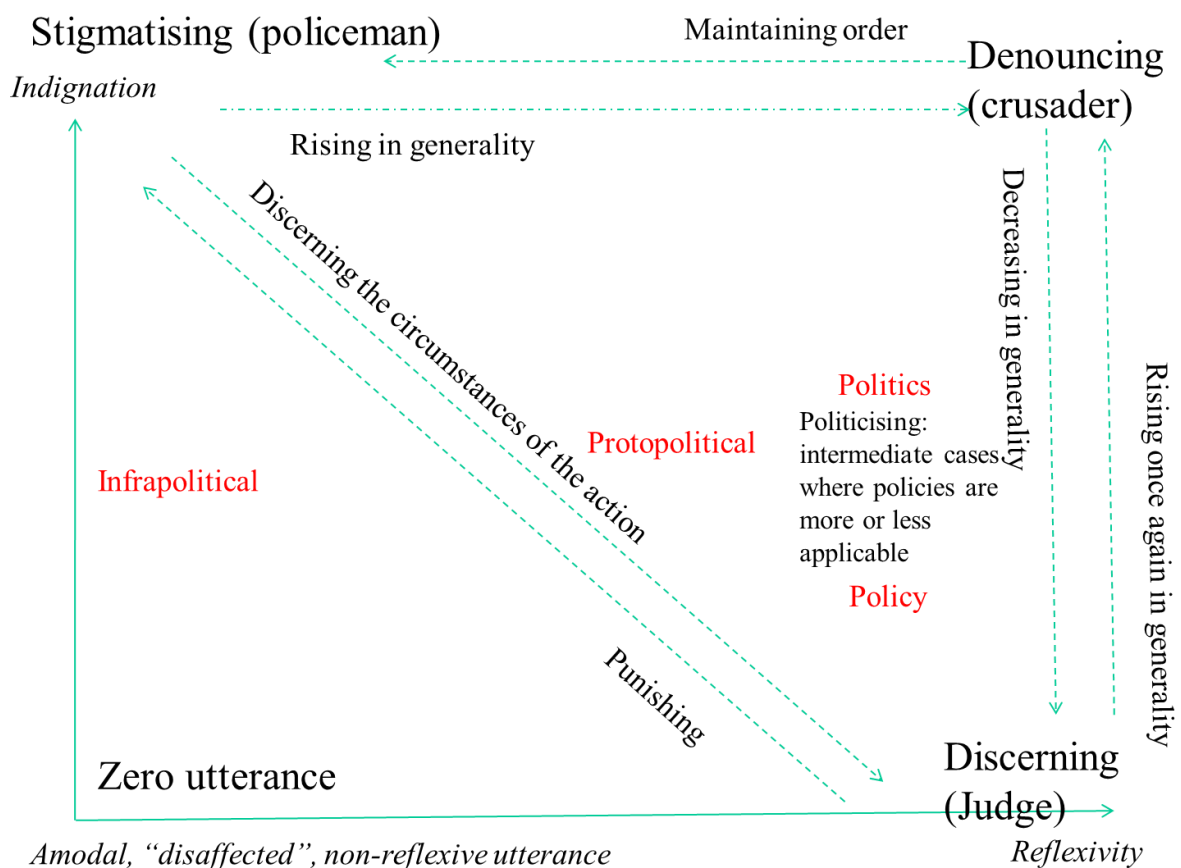
Each of these declaratory statuses is analytically defined in comparison to the others: their narrative grammars (Brugidou, 2013) present the same structure, even though the agents are different.

¹⁸ Jean-Claude Anscombe, based on the work of Berrendonner, puts forward the idea of the “They-Speaker” (“*On-Locuteur*”) to describe sententious forms in complex discourse (2009, 20).

Type of act of language	Agent	Event	Value object
Stigmatization	Police force	Punish a deviation	Maintain a tradition-based community
Denunciation	Crusading reformer	Condemn an injustice	Build a community
Discernment	Judge	Examine the circumstances / modalities of the public action	Apply a solution to a public problem

Table 2: Grammars of stigmatization, denunciation and discernment

Empirical analysis demonstrated the existence of intermediate hybrid statements with traits that related to heterogeneous positions. This analysis therefore showed that over and above the analytical description of these grammars, it is the circulation between these declaratory positions which constitutes a research issue. The politicisation or depoliticisation of statements relating to energy-saving can be grasped through various different modalities due to the reversible nature of the declaratory positions revealed.



Graph 1: analytical presentation of statements of opinion

We believe that the study of these reversals is in interesting avenue of research. In particular it allows us to describe the exceptionally blurred and fluctuating boundaries that surround politics. It reminds us that a grammatical posture does not permit us to identify any firm and stable boundary

which would make it possible to differentiate between “well-formed” and “poorly formed” political utterances.

"Conspiracy-theory" statements, for example, have an annoying habit of mashing up heterogeneous discursive stances, but they are one of the forms of politicization – as Sophie Duchesne and Florence Haegel very perceptively analysed in their work on political discussion – that superimpose the identification of a deviant group onto a fundamental difference of opinion about a particular issue, projecting retrospectively, as it were, a collective identity. Furthermore, these observations have the advantage of reminding us that stigmatization or denunciation do not come without an engagement of passion, of *indignation* – of different types it is true, if we consider an uncivil act or an injustice. Public policies, apparently little suited to encouraging passions such as energy-saving, can encourage commitments which do not come without violence, even if the latter is expressed in a euphemistic manner or through the use of metaphor. But this study also reminds us that by their very nature, stigmatization and denunciation are linked to forms of discernment which graduate and avert violence¹⁹: the reflexive examination of situations and cases leads to a denunciation of all of the public policy deemed to be unjust.

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¹⁹ To use a Foucauldian vocabulary: « Dans toute société, la production du discours est à la fois contrôlée, sélectionnée, organisée et redistribuée par un certain nombre de procédures qui ont pour rôle d’en conjurer les pouvoirs et les dangers, d’en maîtriser l’événement aléatoire, d’en esquiver la lourde, la redoutable matérialité”. M. Foucault, 1971, *L’ordre du discours*, Paris, Gallimard.

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