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## **EUROPEAN ATTITUDES IN EASTERN EUROPEAN COUNTRIES AFTER ECONOMIC CRISIS**

### **Introduction**

The “Brexit heritage” and the growing size and influence of Europhobic parties, together with a legacy of economic and financial crisis, cast a “dark light” on the future of the European Union.

So the European Union celebrated its 60th birthday, in March 2017, in a climate of profound uncertainty for its future.

Never as in those months have the questions about the prospects of a united Europe become complicated. Even the White Paper, handed down by European Commission President Jean-Claude Juncker, has tackled the root of the problem.

The political events that took place in the following months – especially the elections in France – have removed the most pressing concerns, but there is no doubt that the situation is not yet completely outlined. Even the elections in Germany at the end of September 2017 – the other political-electoral appointment on which the attention of observers and political actors focused on – allowed the knots to loosen.

The Italian national elections in March 2018 seem to throw new dark shadows on European integration path: thus the future definitely seems to be something to be written, although some signs of optimism are beginning to emerge.

However, to what extent has the economic crisis, after threatening the very existence of Europe, altered the structure of relations between citizens and the EU?

The goal of this paper is to inquire into the determinants of people's support for European institutions, also considered as institutional confidence, focusing in particular on the attitudinal consequences of holding an affective feeling towards Europe that can be labelled as "European identity".

In more detail, the goal is to assess to what extent European identity contributes to the explanation of European support (in this case, European Institutional Trust) compared to other determinants. Previous research on such support found that people's evaluations followed mainly an instrumental logic – support being dependent on a perception of personal or national benefits accruing from membership in the European Union (EU) – with an additional role played by European identification and other factor, such as trust in Europeans.

This contribution expands the previous analysis, done well after the beginning of the economic crisis and aims to offer a comprehension of the structure of the European attitudes.

The paper is organized as follows: in the first section, I discuss the concepts of European identity and European institutional trust. Subsequently, I review the main theories that have been elaborated to explain the development of political support for the EU. Thus, after a description of data and measurements, in the second section I offer a description of distributions of European Institutional Trust across Europe. Finally, I test a model that assesses the explanatory power of European identity on EU support as compared to other variables. The concluding section reviews the findings and the implications for future research.

## **European identification and Trust for European Institutions**

European identity is often seen in literature as a component of more general attitudes towards European integration; in early research it is even interpreted as being synonymous of support (see Inglehart 1970); European identity is also seen as diffuse support of the political community as a part of the political system (e.g., Duchesne and Frogner 1995); later research has explicitly interpreted European identity as a link to a political community distinct from general support for the EU itself (e.g., Scheuer 1999).

According to Social Identity Theory (SIT) (Tajfel and Turner 1986), identity is a feeling of attachment to a salient group: so European identity is an attachment to a salient supranational community.

Differently from a nation, the EU faces difficulties in becoming a proper polity because people's primary loyalty is still weak. Europeans do not share a single common history, culture and values. On the other hand, this traditional reasoning can be questioned, since Europeans do share a relevant past (the Greek

*polis* and the Roman Empire, the Crusades, the Renaissance, Romanticism and the French Revolution). However, together with a common heritage, Europeans share religious conflicts such as the cleavages between Catholics and Protestants, Latin and Orthodox, the Christian and Islamic world. Moreover, there are extreme political divisions within Europe: its history is a history of wars, culminating in the First and Second World Wars and the Cold War. In addition, Europeans do not share a common language. On balance, it might therefore be argued that, since basic elements of a common identity are lacking, the divisions are stronger than the commonalities. This perspective sheds a bleak light on the possibility of a European identity.

However, stressing the identity achieved component's (Huddy, 2001) defining European identity could be easier also because together with the vertical dimension (the sense of belonging to), a collective identity could also imply a horizontal dimension (the so-called sense of community, or sense of belonging together) (Kaina and Karolewski 2013; Green, 2007). Another point is stressed by Checkel and Katzenstein that contrasts a 'cosmopolitan' vision with a 'national-populist' declination of identity projects (2009: 11). There are few doubts that European identity is something closer to a cosmopolitan allegiance, because it stresses political rights and citizenship, while national-populist European identity focuses on cultural authenticity.

Political support could be instrumental and diffuse (see Easton 1965); this latter is crucial for a political system's life. In Europe, with the end of the initial permissive consensus on EU integration, people's support was conceived as a possible "remedy" to bridge the gap between supranational governance and citizens. Then, in this paper, the basic idea is that European identity might increase the legitimacy of EU governance, also via a "resilience" mechanism.

Public perception of the EU covers several dimensions and literature suggests a number of typologies to conceptualize them. Moving from Easton's (1965, 1975) notions of specific and diffuse support, Norris (1999) distinguishes five objects of political support (political community, regime principles, regime processes, regime institutions, and political authorities). Conceptually, popular support for the basic principles of the EU is conceived as the level of popular approval for integration project as whole.

But citizens' orientations towards the EU also include evaluations of the institutions of the EU. These assessments of the institutional design of the EU are most commonly assessed by asking respondents about their level of trust or confidence in various institutions. Institutional trust is explicitly linked to regime stability since it enhances the likelihood of support by citizens believing that the political system will produce ideal outcomes.

In Easton's words, institutional trust could be seen as support for regime institutions; European institutions make decisions so – in a way – they are directly considered responsible for policies and answers given.

During the crisis, European Institutions are directly “under observation”, because of lack of responses. For these reasons the focus in this paper is on the European Institutional Trust, as a dependent variable.

Before exploring the trends and the distribution of European Institutional Trust among countries the possible source of Europeanism should be considered. Therefore, the next paragraph will revise the literature on the predictors of European attitudes.

### **Theoretical perspectives and research hypotheses on the sources of European Institutional Trust**

The sources of Europeanism are of various nature. In a first step, the study of public opinion on European integration drawing on the tools and methods of the comparative study of regime support at the national level (Loveless and Rohrschneider 2011: 5).

At first, scholars followed the model of the permissive consensus (Lindberg and Scheingold 1971). Pro-European sentiments began to weaken with the Single European Act of 1987 and the adoption of the Maastricht Treaty in 1992, which broadened the sphere of action and the range of competences of the EU and brought about its transformation into an (un)stable system of governance. Rejections of the Constitutional Treaty in France and Holland in June 2005 – even though for different reasons – and the bumpy road taken by the Lisbon Treaty before it became effective in December 2009, again recall the question of the link between citizens and Europe. New theories were proposed and the subsequent empirical research on the determinants of European support is quite copious. They point to four theoretical perspectives that have been developed over time: cognitive mobilization, instrumental rational perspectives, political mobilization and affective/identitarian explanations (Bellucci et al. 2012; Toka et al. 2012).

Chronologically, the first theoretical perspective used to explain attitudes to Europe was the cognitive mobilization theory advanced by Inglehart (1970). This was followed by a series of studies in which motivations of a utilitarian nature had a predominant role (Gabel 1998). Subsequently, a number of authors studied Europeanism according to the idea that political explanations offered the key to its understanding (Anderson 1998; Sanchez-Cuenca 2000). More recently, the identity paradigm has been established, where national (and local) identities are seen as the variables explaining most of the variation of the orientations of public opinion towards Europe (Carey 2002; McLaren 2002; Hooghe and Marks 2005).

Summing up, ignoring the chronological criterion, the possible predictors of pro-Europeanism could be placed into two broad categories: economic and non-economic, as suggested by Hooghe and Marks (2005).

The economic-utilitarian theory (Gabel, 1998), interprets the pro-European sentiments of public opinion as the product of rational thinking and therefore of a calculation. Membership of Europe is in other words evaluated on the basis of criteria of expedience and utility of the choice involved. This literature presupposes that citizens are capable of rational evaluation, and therefore of calculating the economic consequences of European integration both for themselves and for the social groups to which they belong, including the nation. Attitudes towards the EU are thus the product of this calculation. The results of Gabel's investigations showed that citizens that benefitted directly from community assistance (such as farmers) had a higher level of support for Europe: this is a reflection of so-called 'egocentric utilitarianism'. The utilitarian approach also takes into account aggregate economic factors, according to economic voting literature (Lewis-Beck 1988). From this perspective, support for European integration is influenced by the performance of the national economic system. In particular, support for integration is strong when the state of the national economy (in terms of inflation, unemployment and growth) is good (Eichenberg and Dalton 1993): this is so-called 'sociotropic utilitarianism'. In sum, the central assumption of the economic or instrumental theory is that individuals' orientations towards the EU result from a calculation of costs and benefits.

In very recent years, economic crisis played a crucial role in Europeanism, as several studies show (see Serricchio et al. 2013).

This perspective in particular is useful because the economic crisis has threatened the very existence of the European Union.

Kuhn and Stoeckel (2014) look at the effects of the crisis on support for European economic governance. As far as the utilitarian approach is concerned, the authors hypothesize an opposite relationship with support for EU governance during the crisis.

Lastly, Di Mauro and Serricchio (2016) assess the role of national institutions as proxy for Europeanism, stressing also the role of some contextual variables.

Among non-economic factors, cognitive mobilization (based on growth in levels of education among citizens, exposure to a wider range of information sources and consequently greater awareness of Europe and of the way it works) was thought to favour pro-European sentiments. However, in recent years, especially following the expansion in the range of competences of the EU and its various enlargements, the identity explanation has become more relevant. In this perspective, national identity becomes a key predictor of the orientations of public opinion with respect to the EU. In Carey's view (2002), the danger of a loss of power on the part of the citizen's own member state deriving from the growing interference of the supranational institutions produces a negative reaction in those citizens who do not see the EU as a legitimate entity, and who in any case do not see or clearly recognize the outline of a European identity. So, for Carey, strong national identities, in some cases reinforced by sentiments of belonging to a sub-national territory, constitute an obstacle to European integration. McLaren (2002) focuses on the percep-

tion of a threat to one's own identity. The perceived threat posed by integration with other populations and cultures could be economic, deriving from possible conflicts over economic benefits enjoyed by minority groups, or it could derive from purely cultural considerations. The conclusion reached by McLaren is in line with that of Carey: strong national identities obstruct the process of European integration. However, the relationship between national identity and attitudes towards Europe seems to be more complex. For Duchesne and Frogner (1995), Bruter (2005) and Citrin and Sides (2004), in contrast to the interpretations of Carey and McLaren, the relationship between a sense of national belonging and pro-European sentiments is, rather, positive, and a strong national identity is fully compatible with positive attitudes towards Europe. Similar conclusions are reached by the authors of studies carried out by social psychologists (Cinnirella 1997; Huici et al. 1997; Catellani and Milesi 1998).

Hooge and Marks (2005) have suggested that the national context has a mediating role: national identity works in opposite directions, in favour of or against European integration, according to the context concerned, and especially as a consequence of specific political events with the power to trigger nationalistic sentiments in citizens (in the case in point, the holding of a referendum on Europe). Accordingly, people holding exclusive national identity – in contrast to people expressing dual allegiance to both nation and Europe – would be less supportive of European integration.

Other authors (Bellucci et al. 2012; Serricchio 2010 for the Italian case) stress the impact of different component of national identity (civic vs. ethnic or, as social psychologist claim, achieved vs. ascribed as in Huddy, 2001).

The role of European identity in determining pro-European attitudes is quite clear. In the Intune project (e.g., Serricchio 2011; Sanders et al. 2012) European identity has a relevant role as a predictor in European attitudes and, in fact, according to Toka et al. (2012), European identity can be grouped into an affective/identitarian factor.

According to Serricchio and Bellucci (2016), European identification is one of the most powerful predictor of pro-European attitudes also because could be seen as source of “resilience”.

Therefore, as the level of identity increases, the propensity to identify with European institutions grows and develop feelings of trust in them.

So, this is the main hypothesis to be tested.

The third perspective introduces political mobilization factors and judgemental heuristics. The main idea here is that mass perceptions of Europe are defined in national political arenas and that parties, political elites and the mass media may ‘cue’ voters in their views towards Europe and its institutions (Hooghe and Marks 2005). Political explanations (or political cues) encompass theoretical perspectives whose wide range is reflected in a corresponding heterogeneity of empirical findings. One perspective emphasizes the way in which individuals use certain

political cues – which come to them from their own ideological orientations and the messages put in circulation by the political élites – to form their ideas about Europe. Underlying this approach is the conviction that individuals are not able to obtain complete information; that their capacity for rational thinking is limited; that they have only partial awareness of the relevant issues and therefore must make use of institutional and other forms of delegation. These studies therefore give special emphasis to the role of political parties as the suppliers of cognitive shortcuts (Gabel 1998). A second perspective focuses on citizens' confidence in national institutions and in the national political system more generally. Anderson (1998) shows that the attitudes of citizens towards the EU – which is now a polity for all practical purposes, a polity *sui generis* though it may be – are to a degree filtered by the national political and institutional system. In other words, confidence in institutions has a positive impact on citizens' attitudes to Europe because the national institutions are used as cognitive shortcuts. Those who have confidence in their own political system are likely to develop attitudes of closeness to, if not confidence in, the institutions of Europe. However, the impact can also be negative, as Sanchez-Cuenca (2000) shows: those mistrustful of the national political system may develop strongly pro-European attitudes. So on the one hand, Anderson (1998) establishes a mechanism of institutional proxy in the context of which the national institutions are shortcuts to feelings of confidence in Europe. On the other hand, Sanchez-Cuenca (2000) provides confirmation of the hypothesis of a substitution mechanism whereby a lack of confidence in the national political system leads to the prediction of strong pro-European sentiments. Bellucci et al. (2012) show that the relationship between confidence in the national institutions and pro-European attitudes is in fact mediated by a third variable, namely, the quality of governance. In countries where this is high, the relationship is negative.

## **Data and measurement**

In order to do analysis and test hypothesis, I use a very recent Eurobarometer survey, the 88.3, which was released in November 2017 by the European Commission.

In the following analysis, the dependent variable is the European Institutional Confidence, an index that combines some classic measures of European institutional Trust, including both elected and not elected institutions: so, the scale includes general European trust, trust towards Parliament, European commission, European central bank; the variables were combined into an additive index and rescaled into a 0 – 10 point range, where 0 is the lowest level of confidence and 10 the highest.

Usually, European identity is measured with survey instruments pertinent to belonging, territorial-geographical attachment and future feelings (Citrin and Sides 2004; Sinnott 2006; Moreno 2006).

In previous research (Serricchio and Bellucci, 2016), European identity is conceptualized and measured according to Social Identity Theory that imply belonging and salience, captured by two questions which have been elaborated from Lilli and Diehl’s (1999) as reformulation of the Collective Self-Esteem Scale originally proposed by Luhtanen and Crocker (1992); unfortunately, the Eurobarometer survey employed for this paper doesn’t have the same items nor any similar. Nevertheless, it contains several parameters that measure emotional and affective feeling toward Europe thus allowing to well grasp the feeling of European identification.

The questions included are: Europe perceived image, the European and the European Union attachment, the European citizenship and the classic measure of European identity, the so called Moreno question; the variables were combined into an additive index and rescaled into a 0 – 10 point range, where 0 is the lowest level of identification and 10 the highest.

### European attitudes across time

The 2017 survey reveals some interesting findings. The (small) trends of some selected indicators – some of them are shown in figure 1 and fig 1a for eastern Europe – describe as, from 2013, trust toward European Parliament is stable, trust toward European commission slightly decreases while trust toward Eu as whole slightly grows.

In Eastern European countries, all indicators decrease.

These trends need to be confirmed in the following months. So, next surveys most probably will tell us something more on this subject. For the moment, the results are quite uncertain.

Fig. 1. Institutional Trust across time in Europe (selected indicators)

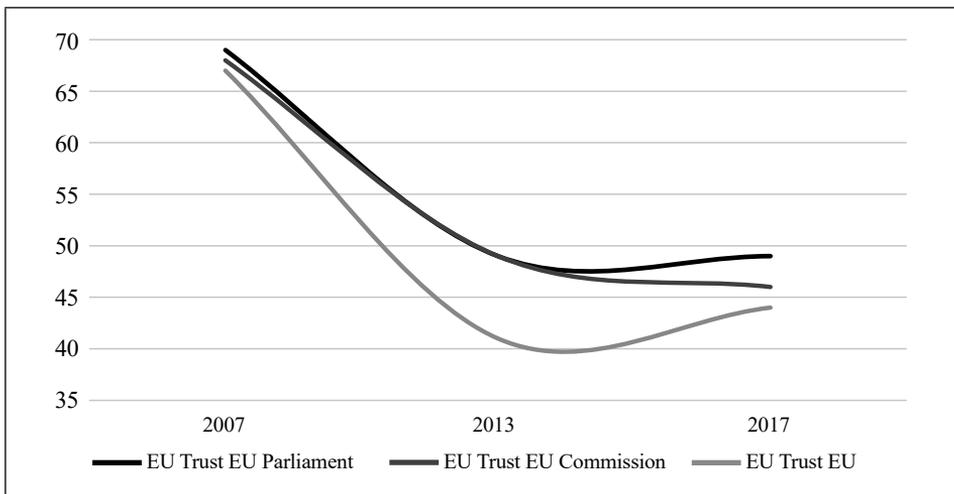
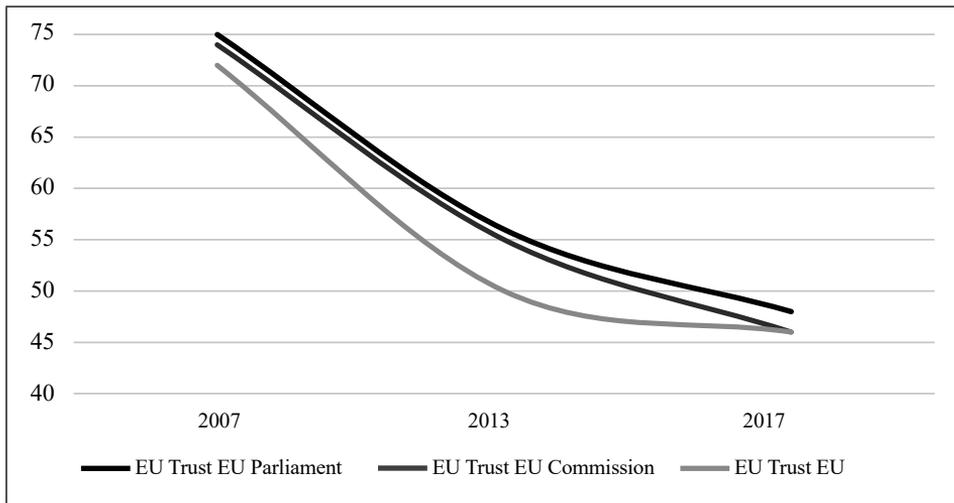


Fig. 1a. Institutional Trust across time in Eastern Europe (selected indicators)



Source: author's elaboration based on Eb 67.2 (2007), 80.1 (2013) and 88.3 (2017).

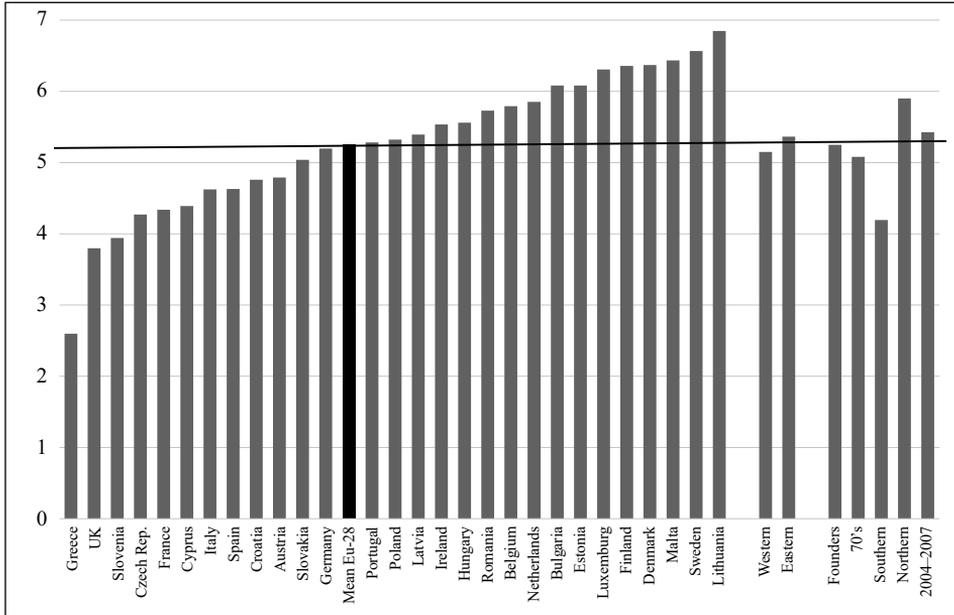
Focusing on the described dependent variable, it has a moderate average intensity (5.23 on a 0-10 scale,  $n=27.746$ ) with a 3.9 of standard deviation, that reveals a good variability among nations; so, as suspected, this level is not common to all European; indeed, the level of European institutional trust index varies considerably across European nations, depending on national context, with fifteen countries over the average.

Also considering groups of countries, selected according to different criteria including time to access Europe, the results show a greater level of confidence in the countries of the East, even compared to the founding members of Europe in the 50s

Therefore, a question could be raised: which factors explain this great variations among different national contexts?

A preliminary explanation recalls the different impact of economic and financial crisis, the different level of national attachment but also – and possibly most importantly – the potential different role of national institutional confidence. Before going into multivariate analysis, we try to examine the distribution of European institutional trust through citizens.

Fig. 2. The distribution of the European institutional trust among countries and group of countries (mean value on 0 – 10 scale): 2017



Source: author’s elaboration based on Eb 88.3 (2017, autumn).

### European attitudes across people

In this section I try to describe the distribution of the level of trust towards the European institutions according to some socio-demographic characteristics, dividing the sample among the citizens of the countries of Eastern Europe from those of the West.

In general, the level of Europeanism is higher among those who have a higher level of education, both in Eastern and Western Europe. A fact confirmed by the evidence that younger people are more enthusiastic towards united Europe than older people. Also in this case, there are no substantial differences between citizens of the Eastern and Western European countries

An entirely congruent interpretation can be advanced for the other variables used: those who work are more pro-European than those who are unemployed, as well as those who believe that they belong to a high social class show levels of confidence towards the European institutions that are higher, it is perceived as belonging to a low social class. Finally, the residence: those who live in rural areas have lower levels of Europeanism.

A particularly interesting observation can be formulated by observing the levels of European confidence depending on the self-positioning on the left-right

axis. While in the countries of Western Europe the classic curvilinear trend is observed, for which the centrists are considerably more pro-European, while the extreme wings, on the right and on the left, are more Eurosceptic, among the citizens of the Eastern countries a more linear trend emerges. And, with a little surprise, it appears that those are self-located on the right tend to be more pro-European than those on the left in the political spectrum. It is a result all in all interesting on which it will be necessary, in the future, to investigate with more attention.

Ultimately, no particular differences emerge between east and west Europe, except for the left-right self-collocation.

Results are summarized in table 1.

Tab 1. Eu institutional Trust according selected socio demographic variables

	Eastern		Western	
	Mean	N	Mean	N
<i>Left-right</i>				
Left	5,2	974	4,6	1376
Center-left	5,3	1264	5,7	3558
Center	5,4	3819	5,3	6058
Center-right	5,9	1643	5,4	2541
Right	5,9	1056	4,4	712
<i>Education</i>				
Still studying	6,3	709	6,0	1138
15	4,8	1084	4,2	3079
16-19	5,1	6204	4,7	6060
20+	5,9	3204	5,9	6156
<i>Age</i>				
15-24	6,1	1015	5,7	1328
25-39	5,6	2492	5,3	3165
40-54	5,3	2851	5,1	4032
55+	5,1	5016	5,0	8156
<i>Occupation</i>				
Other	5,5	6025	5,3	8075
Unemployed	5,2	5349	5,0	8606
<i>Residence</i>				
Urban	5,5	7854	5,2	11360
Rural	5,1	3520	5,0	5321
<i>Social class</i>				
Working	5,0	3390	4,1	4329
Low-mid	5,2	1731	4,6	2242
Mid	5,6	5065	5,6	8040
Mid-high	6,4	438	6,6	1444
Higher	6,9	74	6,3	80
<i>Mean</i>	5,4	10698	5,2	16135

Source: author's elaboration based on Eurobarometer 88.3 (2017).

A more complex explanation is thus needed. In order to do so, some multivariate regression models are set up. In these models the dependent variable is always the European institutional confidence, measured as explained; the predictors are selected and included according to the theories presented and discussed in section 3.

The next sections will present and discuss empirical findings.

### **Determinants of European institutional confidence**

So, what drives public support toward European institutions?

The literature review has shown that several factors affect the level of pro-EU attitudes and may lead to changes over the years and between countries.

As explained at the end of the previous section, the different theories on the sources of Europeanism could be operationalized following a rather widespread trend in the literature.

So, economic-utilitarian theory is operationalized with some classic indicators included in most Eurobarometer surveys: the perception of actual state of national and European economy and the economic expectation, both national and European (this means, the expectations on economy in European scenario).

The political cues theory is operationalized with the national institutional trust, an additive index, built combining several indicators of national institutional confidence and with the traditional Left-right scale (that tap the ideology)

The identitarian theory is measured with two indicators: one refers to European Identity, the other one to National Identity.

Media use serve as indicator for cognitive mobilization theory.

I start using a “basic” regression model (OLS estimation)<sup>1</sup> with only individual level predictors (table 2).

In general the model fit the data reasonably well, as r-square reveals (.37,.31 and .43). The last is the coefficient for western European countries, in which model explains a greater portion of variance.

The evidences suggest as follows: the economic variables are associated with great strength of support, also after the crisis. So, it is confirmed that the economy does directly impact the EU support.

However, there are some peculiarities. The perception of the performance of the national economy does not have a substantial impact on Eastern Europe, as do expectations on the improvement of the national economy; on the other hand, the impact of the perception of the positive performance of the European economy, similarly to expectations on the future of the European economy, is able to explain the European institutional confidence more in Eastern European countries.

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<sup>1</sup> The socio-demographic variables are included mainly as control variables, without any specific hypotheses.

Tab. 2. European identity as predictor of European institutional confidence

	<b>Eu-28</b>	<b>Eastern</b>	<b>Western</b>
National economy	,022**	,003	,041***
European economy	-,035***	-,037**	-,016
Economic expectation	,021***	,014	,02**
European economic expectation	,008	,022*	,005
Media use	-,006	,011	,007
National institutional trust	,346***	,267***	,399***
European Identity	,411***	,439***	,385***
National Identity	-,024***	-,012	-,036***
Left-right (ideology)	,015**	-,028**	,03***
Adj-R-sq	.37	.31	.43
N	22059	8337	13722

Source: author's elaboration based on Eurobarometer 88.3 (2017). Entries are Beta (standardized) coefficients and level of statistical significance. Socio demographic variables (sex, education, age, social class and occupation) are included in regression but not shown OLS regression.

Observing the confidence in national institutions, this predictor is very strongly correlated with the index of EU institutional trust, with a positive direction.

This is a very relevant finding, as the role of domestic governance is not always univocal and sometimes uncertain, as explained. With these data and this analysis its role appears to be quite clear.

National identity has a weak impact, negative and not significant in Eastern Europe, while in Eu-28 and Western countries the impact is negative and significant.

European identity has a relevant impact on general explanation: its impact on European institutional confidence is very important, both in European and Eastern Europe.

So, the sense of European identification greatly increases the confidence in European public institutions. Thus, the main hypothesis, according to these empirical evidences, is confirmed.

This is not a "prosaic" finding: rather, it confirms the idea that an affective link with supranational entity could promote also the institutional confidence and, broadly speaking, the political support for European integration project. The two concepts, certainly connected in citizens' mind, however have different role, as many previous researches show. The casual link between them (whom cueing who?) is not totally clear and some *endogeneity* problems also could be raised. But this is not the place for this discussion.

Rather, I would stress the importance of European Identity as reserve of goodwill.

The discussion on European identity and its nature and components are complicated questions:

Nevertheless is quite clear its role in promoting public support. It will be enough?

The European elections of 2019 will provide some answers.

## Conclusion

In the last period the European Union was highly contested: in March 2017, the united Europe celebrated its 60th birthday in a very heavy climate, nor the White Paper, handed down by European Commission President Jean-Claude Juncker, seem to indicate useful solutions.

The Presidential and Parliamentary elections in France seem to have removed the most pressing concerns, but the picture is not yet completely outlined and the future of a United Europe is still under observation, also because the subsequent events (election in several European countries, with growing influence of Eurosceptic parties, lastly in Italy) raised new questions toward European Union.

What will be the future is a very hard question: some signs of optimism seem began to emerge but polls are not encouraging<sup>2</sup> and next European election became crucial.

In this general climate, this paper aimed to assess if the economic crisis altered the structure of relations between citizens and the EU.

Previous research on support for European integration found that citizens' evaluation followed mainly an instrumental logic – support being contingent on a perception of personal/national benefit accruing for EU membership – with an additional role played by European identity.

This contribution expanded the analysis already done, mainly when the financial and economic crisis began to affect popular confidence towards political institutions and, mainly, the supranational polity.

The findings are quite surprising. First of all, pro-European attitudes show an increasing level among Europeans, although level of trust in European institutions (and other indicators too) considerably varies across countries. The situation in eastern countries is slightly different.

The first relevant finding concerns the trust in national political institutions that appears always positive.

But the most important result to be highlighted concerns the role of European identity that is able to contribute significantly to the explanation of the support.

Probably this affective attachment constitutes a reserve of resilience, able to drive public perception toward Europe across times of crisis, allowing to keep support at an acceptable level during peak of disaffection too.

It's good news, in a decidedly gloomy atmosphere. But to have more, we have to wait for the next European elections.

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<sup>2</sup> See, for instance, <https://pollofpolls.eu> [access on 2.11.2018].

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## **Postawy wobec Unii Europejskiej w państwach Europy Wschodniej po kryzysie gospodarczym**

Niniejszy artykuł koncentruje się na postawach wobec UE/postawach europejskich w krajach Europy Wschodniej, poddając analizie czynniki warunkujące poparcie obywateli dla europejskich instytucji, przy wyeksponowaniu wpływu tożsamości europejskiej. Przez długi czas, a w szczególności przed kryzysem, oceny ludzi podporządkowane były głównie logice instrumentalnej, identyfikacja europejska odgrywała tu dodatkową rolę. Później inne uzupełniające się perspektywy teoretyczne – związane z tożsamością i polityczne – ułatwiły interpretację europejskiego wsparcia. Niemniej po wybuchu kryzysu w 2008 r. ponownie kluczowa rola przypisana została motywacjom ekonomicznym. Prawdopodobnie, ta mieszanka przyczyn pomaga wyjaśnić europeizm i nawet obecnie wiele interakcji pozostaje niezbadanych. W oparciu o badania Eurobarometru z jesieni 2017 r. (88.3) artykuł ukazuje, że tożsamość europejska odgrywa kluczową rolę w wyjaśnianiu wsparcia europejskiego również po kryzysie, zarówno w krajach Europy Zachodniej, jak i Wschodniej.

**Słowa kluczowe:** tożsamość europejska, zaufanie, instytucje, Eurobarometr, Europa Wschodnia

## **European attitudes in eastern European countries after economic crisis**

This paper focus on European attitudes in eastern European countries, analysing the determinants of citizens's support for European institutions, stressing the impact European identity. For a long time, especially before crisis, people's evaluations followed mainly an instrumental logic, with an additional role played by European identification. Subsequently, other complementary theoretical perspectives – identity and political cues – helped to explain European support. But, after the explosion of the crisis in 2008, economic motivations have regained their crucial role. Plausibly, a mix of causes helps to explain Europeanism and even today many interactions remain unexplored. Using a recent Eurobarometer survey (88.3, autumn 2017) the paper shows that European identity plays a crucial role in explaining European support also after the crisis both in western and eastern European countries.

**Key words:** European identity, trust, institutions, Eurobarometer, East Europe