

# AFFECTS, PERCEPTION AND EUROPEAN CITIZENSHIP. REGARDS IN POLITICAL PSYCHOLOGY

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## Abstract

*This study underlines the relation between political emotions and the citizens' perception of the European citizenship. This complex and ambivalent model of the EU identity generates a "soft" perspective of EU citizenship. The lack of the legal framework both in EU and in States Members creates premises for a volatile model of the citizenship without duties. This research aims to develop a quantitative design for analyzing the functional relation between political cognition (beliefs and political emotions), dimensions of the political socialisation, political identity and possibilities of explaining the dynamics of the EU citizenship. As research method the article uses the comparative case studies for shaping the differences between political identity and perspectives for EU citizenship in Eastern post-communist countries and Western democracies. Quantitative data are collected from the official statistical reports of the Eurostat. At the empirical level the first quantitative result reflects that economic factors are related to the attachment for EU in post-communist countries. In the same context, political and social values are predictors for the attachment of EU in Western political systems. Another empirical finding presents the human rights as vector for shaping both political attachment and political identity in EU sphere. The third empirical finding stresses the fact that for Eastern citizens a high level of EU attachment is related to a weak level of the rule of law. Several historical patterns specific for this geographical area could explain this negative relation between variables.*

**Keywords:** political psychology, political cognition, European citizenship, political culture, attachment for EU values

## Introduction

This paper underlines the relation between individual values and the attachment for EU. We analyze several social, cultural, political and economic factors which determine both the attachment for EU values and European citizenship. At the methodological level we use the comparative case studies between Eastern and Western democracy. The main research question is "which is the impact of the political values, emotions and preferences in creating perspectives for EU political identity?" In this respect, we test the relation between political

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cognition (beliefs and political emotions), dimensions of the political socialisation, political identity and possibilities of explaining the dynamics of the EU citizenship. The inquiry strategy is quantitative, being based on regression equations for identifying predictors for EU political identity. Empirical findings emphasize the role played by personal values, economic factors and the respect for human rights in creating premises for EU citizenship. At the cognitive level we have observed several differences and cognitive errors which could be integrated in the sphere of the cognitive dissonance and logical errors. Although, most part from the statistical sample demonstrates the preferences for democracy, in Eastern countries we could identify differences between personal political beliefs about EU values and political attitudes and behaviours.

The main vector for configuring political attitudes and behaviours is represented by individual psychological process for computing and signifying information from social and political environment. Thus, political cognition and sophistication could be seen as a key-concept in the field of the political psychology. Both the biological and sociological factors are relevant for analyzing individual cognitive mechanisms. A synthetic definition of the cognitive processes stresses the fact that “cognition refers to all the processes by which the sensory input is transformed, reduced, elaborated, stored, recovered, and used. It is concerned with these processes even when they operate in the absence of relevant stimulation” (Neisser, 1967, p. 4). But, this process should be analysed through social environment. One of the most important pieces in the cognitive process is represented by the interaction between individuals and society. In this context, psychological processes are based on socialization. Regarding political cognition we can stress the fact that political socialization plays the role of the catalyst in shaping political beliefs, attitudes and behaviours. “But social cognition should properly be seen as the emergent property of the system when these more fundamental cognitive processes are applied explicitly to social contexts. There is an implicit sense that individuals of those species that have this capacity are especially sensitive to social contexts, and that this context brings into play a specialized suite of cognitive mechanisms not normally used in more mundane physical world contexts” (Dunbar, 2011, p. 25).

This approach emphasizes the role played by the cognitive or emotional factors in creating premises for EU citizenship. If political socialization is the most important variable in shaping political cognition, emotions or models of sophistication, we are interested, in a comparative manner, to analyse this relation in Western and Eastern Europe. Beyond political socialization, we agree the cultural thesis of the cognitive process. In this respect, social and political culture could generate different ways to act and understand social world. Parochial culture is specific for authoritarian political order, subject culture for post-authoritarian political regimes and participative culture for democratic political systems (Almond and Verba, 1996; Almond *et al.*, 2004; Inglehart and Welzel, 2005; Beck, 2007; Dahl *et al.*, 2003; Pattie *et al.*, 2004; Martin, 2002). Thus, this paper will

focus on the importance of the cultural factors in generating patterns for political cognition and different ways for expressing political attachment for the EU values. Political history and the common political past (with differences between Western democracies and Eastern post-communist countries) are relevant for understanding cultural variables and rational or emotional political participation both in national and transnational systems.

### **1. Political cognition and affects. Social environment and behavioural responses**

The key concept for understanding political behaviour both in national and transnational political systems could be reduced to political cognition. Why is important to study political attitudes through cognitive perspectives could be an important research question for social or political scientists. The answer to this question is structured on two different academic fields of research: on the one side we can stress the role played by the psychology and the recent works from social neurosciences and, on the other side we analyze the impact of the cultural geography, which shapes common political beliefs and attitudes for individuals which share the same cultural and geographical area. The academic literature emphasizes the role played by the brain architecture in configuring personal beliefs about physical or social world. But, beyond this biological architecture as social beings individual are interested in generating meanings or significances related to reality. In this context, we can underline several limits of the human knowledge. One of these limits could be related to the social infrastructure which could interfere with personal beliefs about reality. Moreover, in the academic field of the social cognitive psychology we observe the fact that personal beliefs are strongly associated with emotional or subjective influences (Houghton, 2009; Deutsch and Kinnvall, 2002; Cottam *et al.*, 2004) Generally speaking, personal cognitions are seen as models for “mental short-cuts”. “In politics as in other spheres of life, beliefs help determine what we see; they help us define the nature of the situation we are facing (diagnosis), as well as the kind of options or solutions we find appropriate (prognosis). From a cognitive psychological perspective, beliefs can be considered a kind of mental *short cut*; individuals develop beliefs in order to help them make sense of the world. Beliefs are one way of sorting through signals and information that would otherwise be overwhelming to our senses” (Houghton, 2009, p. 106).

In correlation with all these perspectives from cognitive psychology we intend to stress the fact that political beliefs results from the interaction between social world and individual action. In this respect, political attitudes and beliefs are learned by the social actors when they are involved in different social situations or interactions. Thus, personal beliefs and attitudes are learned both in a conscious or unconscious manner. “Except for elementary reflexes, people are not equipped



with inborn repertoires of behaviour. They must learn them. New response patterns can be acquired either by direct experience or by observation. Biological factors, of course, play a role in the acquisition process. Genetics and hormones affect physical development which in turn can influence behavioral potentialities. The dichotomy of behavior as either learned or innate has a declining number of proponents as knowledge of behavioral processes increases” (Bandura, 1977, p. 16). All axiological, practical or idealistic beliefs are transferred through social interaction and social learning. Individuals are predisposed to learn normal or abnormal beliefs, attitudes or behaviours if they are socially exposed (Grusec, 1992; Perry *et al.*, 1990; Pratt *et al.*, 2010; Shannon, 2015).

The strong influence played by the social environment in shaping political beliefs is related to the work of Lazarsfeld in the middle of the XX-th century. Thus, through quantitative tools and questionnaires, Lazarsfeld and his research team had demonstrated the influence played both by social environment and mass-media in generating political cognition (Lazarsfeld *et al.*, 1944). If individuals are exposed to political stimuli we can identify several transformations in their political perception and axiological system. In this case, political stimuli are transferred from social environment to individual perception through mass-media. Thus, mass-media could be seen as a catalyst for transferring both political information and beliefs. Social environment and emotional factors are responsible for electoral decision. Both society and media are seen as perceptual filters in political cognition (Campbell *et al.*, 1960; Russel, 2000; Antunes, 2010). Moreover, social environment could be reduced to the image of the social system, being based on a complex set of mutual correlations between components. In this respect, we can observe a high rate of interactions between the idealistic system (social or political opinions and beliefs, religious faith, artistic expression etc.) and the material structure of the social system. In this connectionist perspective, the idealistic and symbolical dimensions are strongly influenced by the social proximity and reality. Social proximity generates models and methods for understanding the world. Geographical proximity shapes the same manner for expressing the vote or the same manners for behave in different political situations. Small geographical areas are more predisposed to social and political interactions. In several empirical studies, scholars have observed that demographic density and geographical magnitude are related to social thinking, social communication and social interaction. In all the cases we can underline strong positive correlations with  $r > 0.7$  and  $p < 0.05$  (Pascaru, 2012, pp. 114-160).

A particular case of the social environment is represented by the familial context. Primary political socialisation influence directly electoral decision. In the quantitative terms, researchers have estimated the impact of proximity in shaping vote decision. Through Markow statistical models researchers have estimated the impact of the physical proximity in generating electoral decision. They observed with  $p < 0.01$  that political attitudes are constructed symbolically in social and geographical proximity. When people vote, they have already set their political or



electoral options (Rowden *et al.*, 2014). Moreover, social stratification and social division have an important impact in political attitudes and cognition. People who are included in the same professional or social category are more predisposed to vote in the same manner. For example, workers are more predisposed to vote with socialist or social-democratic ideologies than other professional categories. Political message is structured to their own possibilities of understanding and explaining social and political world. Social, economic, professional and religious values are positive related to political attitudes and electoral decision (Lipset, 1999, pp. 3-9; Manza, 1995; Elff, 2009, pp. 304-305; Laver, 2001; Laver and Garry, 2000; Elff and Roßteutscher, 2017, pp. 12-34). Also, the cognitive aspect is related to the educational level and rate of social interaction between individuals (Moscowitz, 2001).

If social proximity and environment plays an important role in social and political cognition, we have to underline the importance of emotional or affective disposition in generating political beliefs and attitudes. One of the most important thesis in social cognitive psychology, strongly related to neurosciences, refers to the emotional impact in political decision. In terms of the „Theory of Minnd”, the recent findings from neurosciences try “to explain behavior in terms of the activities of the brain. How does the brain marshal its millions of individual nerve cells to produce behavior, and how are these cells influenced by the environment, which includes the actions of other people?” (Kandel, 2000, p. 5) However, the biological infrastructure could interfere with social or political behaviors. The ideological perspectives are related to different mental processes and different biological structures.

Academic studies and researches demonstrate that a political response for liberals is different from the political responses of the conservative people. In this meaning, studies based on functional magnetic resonance imaging demonstrated in different ways that there are two different brain areas involved in political decision. “Behavioral research suggests that psychological differences between conservatives and liberals map onto the widely-studied self-regulatory process of conflict monitoring. Conflict monitoring is a general mechanism for detecting when one’s habitual response tendency is mismatched with responses required by the current situation, and this function has been associated with neurocognitive activity in the anterior cingulate cortex (ACC). For example, in the Go/No-Go task used in our study, participants must quickly respond to a frequently presented Go stimulus, such that the ‘Go’ response becomes habitual. However, on a small proportion of trials, a No-Go stimulus appears, signaling that one’s habitual response should be withheld. Hence, a No-Go stimulus conflicts with the prepotent Go response tendency. Such response conflict is typically associated with enhanced ACC activity, measured using functional magnetic resonance imaging or event-related potentials (ERPs). We proposed that differences in conservatives’ and liberals’ responsiveness to complex and potentially conflicting information relates to the sensitivity of this general mechanism for monitoring response conflict”



(Amodio *et al.*, 2007, p. 1246). Other empirical studies demonstrate that this different biological areas are responsible for two different cognitive processes: an emotional process based on reactions at the level of the cerebral amygdala and an rational process based on reaction at the prefrontal cortex. In many cases, political cognition combines this two types of psychological activities (both emotion and rationality), generating, in practice, a model of “playground cognition” (Fowler and Schreiber 2008). Empirical findings suggest that there are significant differences between party members and novices in political activity. Thus, for democrat or republican club members researchers have observed a high neural activity in limbic system (emotional system). Then, for novices in politics, researchers have observed an intense neural activity in prefrontal cortex (rational system) (Fowler and Schreiber, 2008, p. 914).

Synthesising, both in theory and practice we can underline two main perspectives for understanding and predicting political cognition and behaviour: sociological perspectives and neuropsychological differences in political activity. Social environment has an important influence in shaping connections and beliefs about social or political world. Neuropsychological differences are evident when individuals are faced to political ideologies or political stimuli. In this situation we can underline the model based on “hot cognition” (Arcuri *et al.* 2008). This model of political cognition is seen as a hybrid model being based both on emotion and rational political beliefs.

## 2. Political socialisation, identity and perspectives for EU citizenship

An important issue, in the field of the political psychology, related to identity and political citizenship is represented by socialisation. Political socialisation, both primary and secondary levels, facilitates the internalisation of the political roles and knowledge. Social reality is the symbolically product of the individuals interaction. This interaction is realised at the symbolical level through a mechanism based on “sharing reality”. This type of interaction involves opinions, beliefs, and attitudes, cultural or political values. All these symbolical elements are transferred through personal social interaction in a “social network”. Social networks represent the sum of all particular “nexus” between individuals (Rouquette, 2002, p.60). At this level, the nexus could be defined as common emotional nodes for the individuals from a social or political group. Moreover all these nodes are characterised by the lack of the rational or logic thinking. The cognitive nodes are shared by all the members of the community. These nodes are used both for creating differences (in and out group) and generating abstract or ideological perspectives of the political environment and reality. Political reality is analysed and understood through emotional patterns. All these significances, both rational and emotional, are determined by the social interaction and political socialisation. In this respect, we can underline the role played by the learning theory for understanding the role played by political socialisation. In general terms,





“political socialisation is the process through which we learn about politics. It concerns the acquisition of emotions, identities and skills as well as information. The main dimensions of socialisation are what people learn (content), when they learn it (timing and sequence) and from whom (agents). Most studies of political socialisation derive from the primacy model- the assumption that what we learn when young provides a lens through which we interpret later experience” (Hague *et al.*, 1998, p. 64). Political socialisation could be seen as the process for transferring political culture. In this context, in political socialisation are transferred attitudes, values and beliefs about politics, whether they are conscious or unconscious, explicit or implicit (Newton and van Deth, 2010, p. 171). Political socialisation is strongly related to political activity in different social or political groups and to civil society. In this case, “voluntary organisations and associations, clubs and social movements play an enormously important role in social and political life, and are said to be one of the main foundations of modern democracy. Politically active groups voice the demands of their members and defend their interests in the political arena, as any peaceful group in a democracy is entitled to do. Many groups play a direct role in the consultative machinery of government” (Newton and van Deth, 2010, p. 198).

Political socialisation is the main catalyst for political identity. “The concept of a political identity can best be understood as an inner narrative of one’s political self. Identity is the story that we tell ourselves and others about who we are, who we were, and who we foresee ourselves to be” (Gentry, 2018, p. 19). Although it is very difficult to create quantitative and objective measures for political identity we agree the fact that: “political identity is focused on the individual and his or her internalization of a sense of self; political identity does take into account social interactions of the individual: the focus is on how individuals create their understanding of themselves and redefine themselves according to expectations from the outside world” (Gentry, 2018, p. 19). One of the most important theories in the field of the social psychology which could be applied in the sphere of the political identity refers to the approach developed by Tajfel in terms of *social identity theory*. The relation between in-group and out-group could create a good guideline for understanding personal political identity. Although, scholars argued the importance of this theory for understanding political identity, in practice we can identify several limits and critics (Huddy, 2001, p. 128).

Beyond the traditional aspects of the political identity we can stress the fact that political identity is produced by the continuous interaction between media and personal beliefs. The personalization of the politics is the new way for creating political identities. “Among the most interesting aspects of this era of personalization has been the rise of large-scale, rapidly forming political participation aimed at a variety of targets, from more traditional parties or candidates, to direct engagement with corporations, brands, and transnational policy forums. These mobilizations often include a multitude of issues brought into the same protests through a widely shared late modern ethos of diversity and



inclusiveness” (Bennett, 2012, p. 21). Political identity refers to the public identity of the individuals. In this respect, we have to stress the strong relationship between public identity and citizenship. In relation with the political community, “political identity is, first, the set of social and political values and principles that we recognize as ours, or in the sharing of which we feel like ‘us’, like a political group or entity” (Cerutti, 2013, p. 27).

Beyond the sociological dimension we have to complete all the conceptual assumptions with historical perspectives. “Political identity is both a social and a historical construct. As a social construct, it reflects the institutional nature of the political community. As a historical construct, its emergence and consolidation is bound up with historical contingencies and with the way in which competing narratives and ideologies shape the self perception of the members of the community” (Castiglione, 2009, p. 29). The common historical past is a good political indicator for understanding political identity. Historical experiences and past play the role of the catalyst in transferring different patterns of political culture. In this respect we can understand two model of political identity in EU space: Western democracies and Eastern post-communist political systems. In Western Europe we can identify the same historical manner for constructing the democratic order. The XVII-th and XVIII-th century are characterized by several social movements and revolutions for creating the premises of the democratic order. The central figure in this type of approach is represented by the French Revolution (1789) for independence, liberty and equality. Other social movements from Western Europe are relevant for shaping the same political values and practices. In contrast, Central and Eastern Europe is characterized by the incidence of the communist and authoritarian practices. Moreover, after the World War II, the common political past in Eastern countries could be reduced to a single concept: soviet influence. This practices and social values had developed a particular type of political culture, based on the hybrid between parochial and subject culture. Thus, through these examples we can illustrate the significance of the historical past in shaping different patterns of political culture and political identity.

Starting from these theoretical perspectives we aim to create the nexus between European political identity and perspectives for EU citizenship. It is very difficult to define in a single concept EU political identity and we agree, metaphorically speaking, that “the image of Europe as a shining city perched on the hill of perpetual peace, social welfare and inalienable human rights is replaced with the cry of *Europe for Europeans*” (Checkel and Katzenstein, 2009, pp. 1-2). As a complex economic and political structure, EU is based on the continuous interactions between social structure, economic free market, rule of law, bureaucratic mechanisms and institutional design for preserving social order and political interactions between national political groups, parties and ideologies. “A full understanding of Europe’s ambivalence, refracted through its multiple, nested identities, lies at the interaction of competing European political projects and social





processes” (Checkel and Katzenstein, 2009, p. 2). EU political identity should be seen in a “soft” manner, being based on the dynamics of multi-level governance, historical construction, political institutionalism, political functionalism, and principles of federalism. The solid structure of EU identity should be realized through the process of politicization (Checkel and Katzenstein, 2009, p. 9). In practice EU identity is quite volatile and related to the ambiguity of the EU political project. The main political differences between Western democracies and Eastern post-communist countries could be a historical impediment in constructing a strong model of social and political identity. In social psychology, the problem of identity should be analyzed through two elements: *identification* with the members of the group and the *differentiation* between individual and other members of the group or community. In this context, EU political identity has to be created through the isomorphism between personal values and practices and trans-national political, social or economic values and perspectives. In practice, scholars observed a high level of the volatility in the axiological framework which define European cultural heritage. In this case it is possible to create conflicts between individual, national and European social and political values. “Under such conditions, European political identity cannot be constructed on the basis of putative European values but must be supported by the more conflictual mechanisms of democratic politics and inter-institutional balance” (Castiglione, 2009, p. 30).

This complex and ambivalent model of EU identity generates a “soft” perspective of EU citizenship. The difference between classical perspective of national citizenship and attachment creates a specific model of “EU citizenship without duties” (Kochenov, 2014). The classical perspective refers to the strong relationship between duties and rights. From the judicial perspective “citizenship plays an important role at both EU and national levels. This is mostly due to the concept of rights and is not disturbed by whatever is going on with the duties of citizenship. Consequently, approaching the matter empirically, there is no correlation between duties and citizenship” (Kochenov, 2014, p. 491). The lack of the legal framework both in EU and in States Members creates premises for a volatile model of citizenship without duties.

Another perspective related to EU citizenship create the nexus between EU values, political culture, historical identity and citizenship. This manner of understanding and predicting EU citizenship is based on affective or emotional factors. Both personal attachment and political emotions and rhetoric are involved in describing identity and citizenship. “This account links Union citizenship to the promotion of a European identity based around common cultural values and political symbols that parallel and could possibly supersede the national identities of citizens. It seeks to develop an affective relationship among Union citizens towards the EU and their fellow EU citizens similar to that felt by co-nationals towards each other and their state, thereby legitimizing the development of greater competences at the EU level” (Bellamy, 2008, p. 597). During this paper we intent to extent this perspective and to stress the psychological relation between political



cognition and affects, the perception of the EU values and EU citizenship. In this sphere we agree the fact that psychological factors could be related to a model of cosmopolitan citizenship. “Instead, they contend EU citizenship should form a component of some kind of post-national cosmopolitan citizenship grounded in the moral entitlements we have as human beings and the obligations we owe each other to secure them in an increasingly interconnected world” (Bellamy, 2008, p. 597). Bellamy demonstrates the normative dimension of the EU citizenship. He uses citizenship as a belonging model to European Community, as a model for preserving human rights and a strategy for civic engagement (political participation). The critics of Bellamy regarding EU citizenship consists in this fact: “moreover, the EU would appear to show that a politics where rights and participation are detached from any sense of belonging is likely to be hard to sustain and potentially have perverse effects. Consequently, the formal status of EU citizenship as dependent on and complementary to national citizenship seems more normatively attractive than is often supposed” (Bellamy, 2008, p. 609).

One of the main limits theorized regarding EU citizenship refers to the normative approach. In political practice is very difficult to identify a strong model of EU citizenship. This inner limitation derives from the “space state” (Shaw, 2012). In this context we can observe the legitimacy and supremacy of the national identity. Both judicial factors and national attachment are relevant for stressing the empirical limitations of the EU citizenship. The outer limits of the EU citizenship include Treaties, secondary legislation and territorial limitations (Shuibhne, 2009).

Beyond all these judicial and normative limitations, scholars reinforced the concept “flexible citizenship” for filling the sphere of EU citizenship. “Within the European Union in particular, there is a return to citizenship in the city as well as the transnational institutions of the EU” (Benshabib, 2005, p. 675). The main differences between classical citizenship and EU citizenship could be reduced through public autonomy (Benshabib, 2005, p. 675). This type of public autonomy is more closer to cosmopolitan democracy and citizenship. Through the sphere of human rights EU could emphasize public autonomy and axiological attachment for common European values. “The nation-state is the home of the modern citizen. The reconfiguration of citizenship beyond nation-state boundaries is necessitated by developments which themselves undermine the nation-state, even if they are blindly promoted by it as well” (Benshabib, 2005, p. 676). This flexible model for understanding citizenship is, also, related to freedom of movement across country borders in EU space (Bauböck, 2010).

Synthesizing, we can stress that the functional relationship between political identity and citizenship should be mediated by judicial norms and factors. One of the main limitations of the EU citizenship consist both in inner and outer limits, generated by the Treaties and secondary legislation. Moreover, an optimistic scenario should emphasize and practice the idea of “flexible citizenship” quite closer to a model based on public autonomy.

### 3. Research Methodology

In accord with the theoretical framework this research aims to develop a quantitative design for analyzing the functional relation between political cognition (beliefs and political emotions), dimensions of the political socialisation, political identity and possibilities of explaining the dynamics of the EU citizenship. Thus, this research has several **research objectives**: 1. *to observe the correlation between the subjective feeling of the citizen of the EU and the main cultural, axiological and economic factor for create the feeling of community*; 2. *to explore the feeling as a citizen of the EU in accord with individual values*; 3. *to measure the impact of the perception of the EU as a model for democracy for shaping political attachment and citizenship*. The main research questions in our approach are based on: “what is the impact of the individual values in creating the feeling of EU citizenship?” and “could be based EU citizenship on individual political emotions and preferences?” For answering to all these questions we want to test the research hypothesis: *h<sub>1</sub>: The symmetry between individual and EU political values generates attachment and the feeling of EU citizenship*.

At the methodological level we use, as research method, the comparative case studies for identifying several differences at the cognitive and emotional level between Western democracies and Eastern post-communist countries in shaping both political identity and the feeling of the citizen of the EU. The tool of research is represented by a standardized Eurobarometer. All statistical data were collected from official statistical reports of the Eurostat<sup>1</sup>.

The research design is focused on the recent public opinion regarding European Citizenship from Standard Eurobarometer 89, Spring 2018. We use both descriptive and inferential statistics for describing and explaining the dynamics of the feeling of the EU citizenship both in a time series and in cross-national analyses. Research variables are presented by:

Y<sub>1</sub>= Feeling as a citizen of the EU

Y<sub>2</sub>= Attached to the EU

X<sub>1</sub>= Attached to national state

X<sub>2</sub>= Feeling as a citizen of the national state

X<sub>3</sub>= Factors for create the feeling of community (Culture; Values; Economy)

X<sub>4</sub>= EU as a mechanism for preserving peace

X<sub>5</sub>= EU as a model of democracy

X<sub>6</sub>= EU as a model for preserving peace

X<sub>7</sub>= EU as a model for equality

X<sub>8</sub>= EU as a model for individual freedom

X<sub>9</sub>= EU as a model for the rule of law

<sup>1</sup> See <http://ec.europa.eu/commfrontoffice/publicopinion/index.cfm/Survey/index#p=1&yearFrom=2007&yearTo=2018>, accessed on March-April 2018



$X_{10}$  = Individual/ Personal social and political values (Peace; Human Rights; Democracy; Individual Freedom; Equality; Rule of Law)

The entire research variables are quantitative, measured on a scale between 0-100 percent. The quantitative values reflect the percent of the respondents from EU28 to each item of the Eurobarometer regarding European Citizenship. The empirical findings reflect a cross-national statistical analysis only for the year 2018. If we compare data from 2007 with samples from 2018, we can observe the fact that in EU27 there is an optimistic approach regarding political trust and attachment in EU. Thus, 48% of the citizens' tent to trust in EU and 35% tent to trust in national political institutions<sup>2</sup>. The recent political events (BREXIT) associated to economic imbalances have determined an increased level of attachment for national political institutions (average= 46,5%) and a decreasing rate of trust and attachment for EU transnational institutions (average = 28%). Through this type of approach we are interested to observe the realistic situation regarding European citizenship through a transversal analytical design.

#### **4. Empirical findings. Attachment, Democracy and perspectives for European Citizenship.**

Starting from these methodological premises, the empirical research is focused on the comparison between Eastern political systems and Western democracies. In this respect, regarding the attachment for EU we can estimate several differences between Eastern and Western countries. Thus, at the descriptive level we can estimate the mean of 57,4% the level of attachment for the EU in Central and Eastern Europe. In this context, we estimate  $\sigma = 9,81$ , Skewness= -0.309 and Kurtosis = -1.185. Thus, the distribution of attachment for EU has left asymmetry, with confidence level among [50,38; 64,41]. The most probable repartition of the values with  $\alpha = 0.05$  has values among [50,38; 57,4]. If we compare means we can observe that there are no significant differences between Central and Eastern Europe and Western democracies. In Western industrial democracies we can estimate the mean of 53,88 with  $\sigma = 10,89$ . In this context we can observe normal and symmetrical distribution with Skewness= 0,504 and Kurtosis =0,184. The most probable repartition of the values with  $\alpha = 0.05$  has values around the arithmetical average. Comparing the level of the variance and standard deviations we cannot register significant differences in the variance of the phenomenon. Regarding the possibilities for EU citizenship we have to observe that in Eastern Europe the average is 60,5%, with mode =55,00%. For Western countries the average of the feeling of the EU citizenship is 64,38% with mode= 61.00. In this context we have to underline that in Western democracy we have several distances and differences

<sup>2</sup> Read more at [https://ec.europa.eu/commfrontoffice/publicopinion/archives/eb/eb68/eb68\\_first\\_en.pdf](https://ec.europa.eu/commfrontoffice/publicopinion/archives/eb/eb68/eb68_first_en.pdf), accessed on March-April 2018

**Attached to EU/ Western Europe**

COUNTRY	ATTACHED TO EU (%)
PORTUGAL	55.00
IRELAND	52.00
NETHERLANDS	69.00
GERMANY	64.00
GREECE	37.00
SPAIN	65.00
FRANCE	58.00
ITALY	50.00
REPUBLIC OF CYPRUS	40.00
LUXEMBOURG	80.00
AUSTRIA	65.00
FINLAND	43.00
SWEDEN	58.00
UNITED KINGDOM	57.00
GERMANY	46.00
IRELAND	51.00
UK	45.00

**Attached to EU/ Eastern Europe**

COUNTRY	ATTACHED TO EU (%)
BULGARIA	53.00
CZECH	38.00
HUNGARY	56.00
CROATIA	49.00
LATVIA	71.00
LITHUANIA	56.00
HUNGARY	61.00
POLAND	71.00
ROMANIA	58.00
SLOVAKIA	61.00

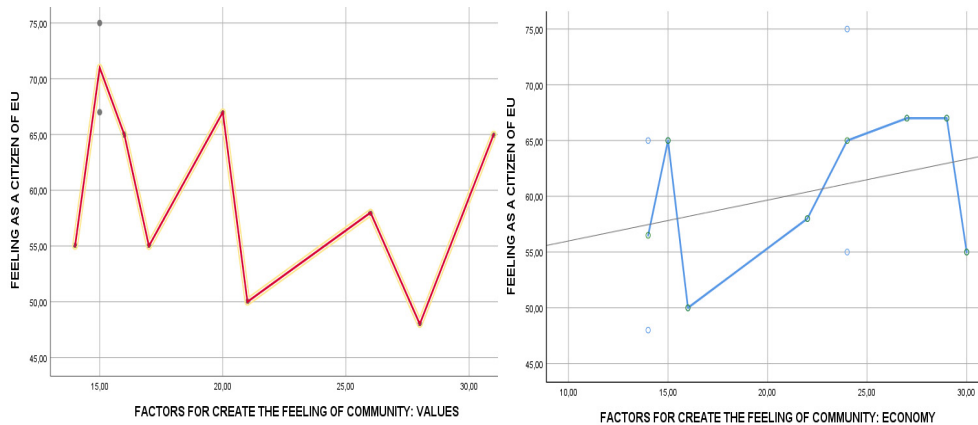
For the first research objective of the empirical study we test the statistical relationship between attachment to EU, feeling of EU citizenship and factors as: culture, axiology (values) and economy. In this context we have identified differences between Eastern and Western European countries. Thus, in ex-communist political systems we have estimated negative correlations between European values and attachment for EU with  $r = -0.604$ ,  $p < 0.1$ . In the same context, the attachment for EU has a weak but positive association with the economical factors, with  $r = 0.387$ ,  $p > 0.05$ . In the category of Western democracies there are no statistical positive or negative significant coefficients of correlation.





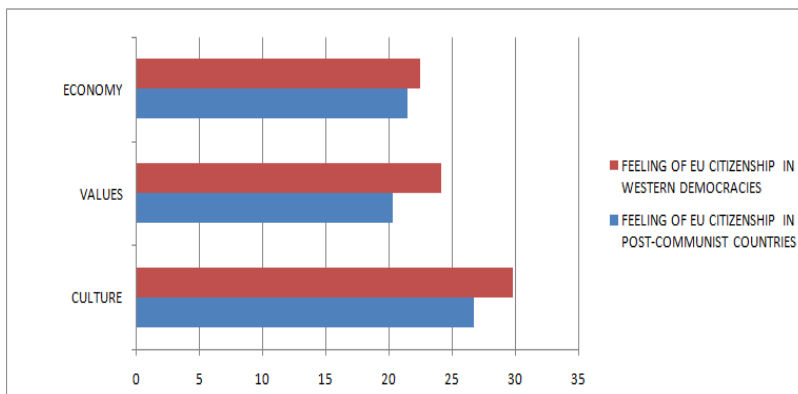


**Figure 3. Correlations between feeling as a citizen of EU, social values and economy**



Source: author's representation

**Figure 4. Differences between factors which are important in shaping EU citizenship**



Source: author's representation

Thus, starting from all this factors which could create premises for the feeling of the EU citizen we can distinguish two main models: 1. a model based on political culture and values specific for Western societies and 2. a model based on economy, which is specific for ex-communist countries. Moreover, for Eastern Europe, political identity could be seen in terms of economic equality, economic development and economic stability. This type of approach is specific for protected democratic transitions based only on economic welfare.



*Individual political values and perspectives for EU citizenship*

The second research objective of this paper aims to create the nexus between the feeling as a citizen of the EU and individual and personal values. In Eastern Europe the attachment of EU is strongly positive associated with human rights with  $r = 0,716$  and  $p = 0.02$ . In the same context, the feeling as a citizen of EU is strongly positive related with democracy with  $r = 0,697$  and  $p = 0.025$ . These statistical significant associations reflects the fact that for ex-communist citizens the main values around which is crystallized EU political identity are represented by the respect of the human rights and democratic order. In the case of the Western countries, a single variable predict the feeling of EU citizenship: attachment for EU values with  $r = 0,778$ ,  $p < 0.001$ .

**Table 1. Pearson linear correlations between individual values and the feeling as a citizen of EU**

Individual/ Personal Values	Feeling as a citizen of EU (Western Europe)	Feeling as a citizen of EU (Ex- communist countries)
Peace	-0.109	-0.230
Sig.	0.668	0.523
Human Rights	-0.125	0.716
Sig.	0.621	0.020
Democracy	-0.02	-0.277
Sig.	0.931	0.438
Individual freedom	-0.09	-0.358
Sig.	0.723	0.308
Equality	-0.233	0.09
Sig.	0.353	0.804
Rule of Law	-0.212	-0.138
Sig.	0.398	0.703
Attachment for EU	0.778	0.000
Sig.	0.000	1.000

Source: author's representation

If we test the whole data, both from Eastern and Western countries we can observe that the feeling as a citizen of EU is related with democracy ( $\beta = 0,392$ ,  $t = 2,286$ ,  $p = 0.033$ ) and the affective sphere reflected in attachment for EU values ( $\beta = 0.682$ ,  $t = 3,653$ ,  $p = 0.002$ ). Thus, generally speaking, the perspectives for EU

citizenship depend on the emotional disposition of the citizens (attachment for EU values) and the importance of the democratic order.

**Table 2. Linear Regression Model for predicting the feeling as a citizen of the EU**

		Coefficients		Standardized		
		Unstandardized Coefficients		Coefficients		
Model		B	Std. Error	Beta	t	Sig.
1	(Constant)	14,103	22,280		,633	,534
	PERSONAL VALUES:	,444	,275	,350	1,613	,122
	PEACE					
	PERSONAL VALUES:	-,437	,215	-,365	-2,027	,056
	HUMAN RIGHTS					
	PERSONAL VALUES:	,417	,182	,392	2,286	,033
	DEMOCRACY					
	PERSONAL VALUES:	-,050	,193	-,051	-,260	,798
	INDIVIDUAL FREEDOM					
	PERSONAL VALUES:	,393	,270	,341	1,454	,162
	EQUALITY					
	PERSONAL VALUES: RULE	-,162	,266	-,113	-,608	,550
	OF LAW					
	ATTACHED TO EU	,587	,161	,682	3,653	,002

a. Dependent Variable: FEELING AS A CITIZEN OF EU

Source: author's representation

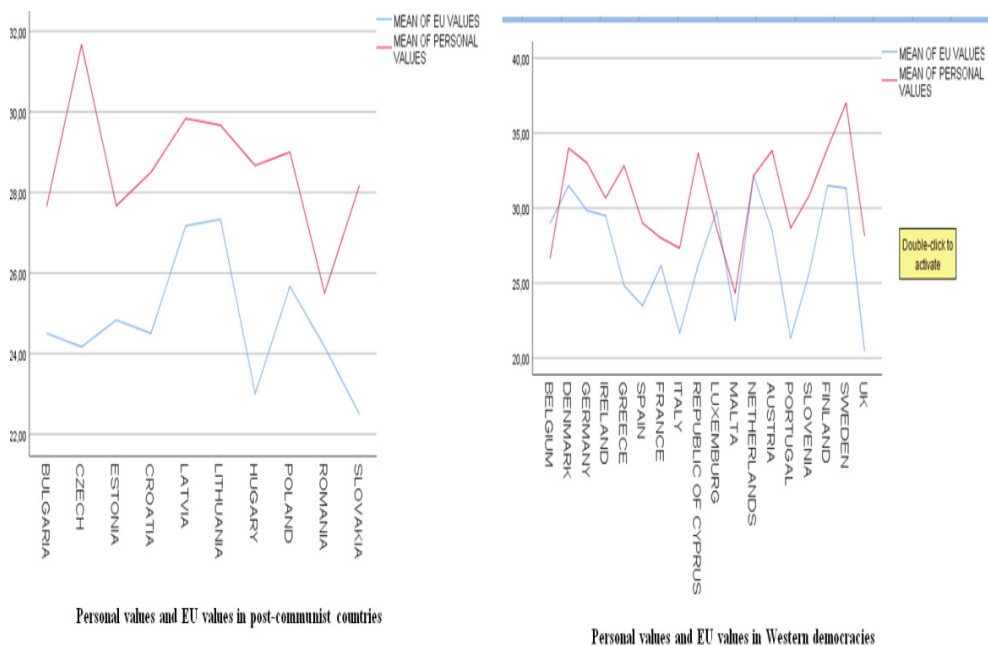
### *EU - a model for preserving peace and human rights*

The last research objective is focused on creating associations between the perception of EU as a strong democracy and the feeling of EU citizenship and attachment. At the cognitive level we can observe that there are no significant statistical correlations between the perception of EU as a model for peace, democracy or equality and the attachment for EU values or the feeling of EU citizenship. But, empirical evidence suggested for Eastern ex-communist countries a negative association with the rule of law ( $r = -0,483$ ,  $p > 0.05$ ). For Eastern citizens a high level of EU attachment is related to a weak level of the rule of law. Several historical patterns specific for this geographical area could explain this negative relation between variables. For Western countries we should underline the recurrence of the EU attachment in shaping premises for EU citizenship.



Regarding the relation between personal beliefs about political values and the perception of EU as a political model for preserving democratic values we can stress the fact that there are several significant differences. For post-communist countries the correlation coefficient between the average of the personal values and EU values reflects the lack of symmetry between citizens' beliefs and political perception and cognition ( $r = 0.311$ ,  $p > 0.1$ ). In Western democracies we can note a positive association and relative symmetry between personal values and EU values ( $r = 0.629$ ,  $p = 0.005$ ).

**Figure 5. The dynamics of the mean of the Personal/ Individual values and EU values**

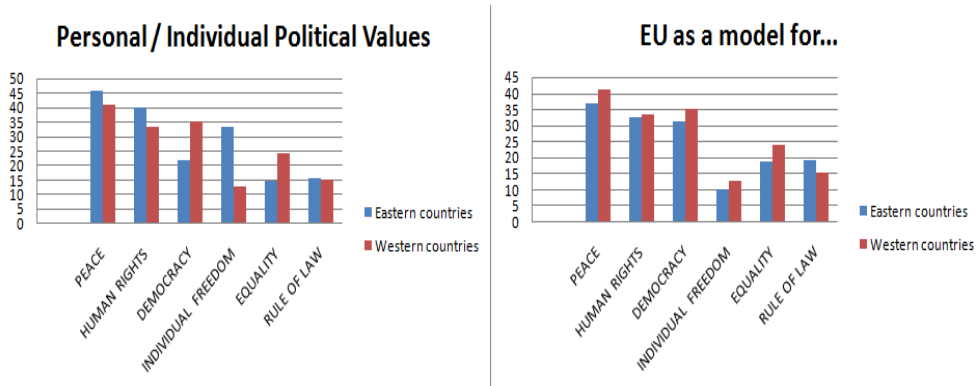


Source: author's representation

The most important individual values for citizens from Eastern Europe are represented by: peace (45,9%), human rights (39,9%), individual freedom (33,1%) and democracy (22,1%). In the first quartile we can integrate equality (14,9%) and rule of law (15,9%). For Western societies the most important values are represented by peace (45,5%), human rights (43,94%) and democracy (28,16). A constant value for individual perception is represented by the rule of law (17,72%). In this regard we can stress the fact that the most important individual values are represented by peace and the protection of the human rights and political liberties. The same political values are perceived as part from EU construction: preservation

of peace (40% in Western Europe and 36,7% in Eastern systems), human rights and civil liberties ( in both geographical areas 33%), and democracy (35,2 in stable democracies and 31% in fragile post-communist countries).

**Figure 6. Individual political values and EU as model for....**



*Source:* author's representation

Synthesizing, empirical results demonstrates the existence of a “dual-level” citizenship. This flexible model for understanding EU citizenship is affected by axiological and cultural sphere for Western democracies and by the economic factors in ex-communist countries. This type of political identity is based on emotional factors as political attachment for the EU values only in the consolidated democracies. Moreover, here we can stress the fact that EU political citizenship should be crystallized around democratic order and legal practices for preserving human rights and civil liberties. Statistical differences between East and West explain the gap between personal values and EU values in ex-communist states. In this context, we have to stress the role played by the historical factors in generating models for political identity and political behavior. A European space based on peace and protection for human rights should be a good way for creating, during the time, beyond judicial implications of the Treatises, premises for EU citizenship.

Regarding the further research direction of this topic we intend to explore the sociological perspectives of the citizenship. Thus, we intend to collect empirical data from several post-communist countries from relevant statistical samples for observing the link between social environment, social behaviors, social networks and the judicial perspectives of the EU citizenship. Moreover, this kind of approach will stress, beyond the psychological aspects, the role played by social environment and secondary socialization in creating premises for European political identity.



## Conclusions

This paper emphasized the role played by emotional factors (political attachment) and individual cognitive and axiological sphere in generating premises for EU citizenship. Although the academic literature presents EU citizenship from the judicial perspectives, in correlation with the European Treatises and secondary legislation, this approach is focused on several psychological implications for shaping an adequate model of EU citizenship. However, we observed, from empirical findings, two different ways of understanding the EU political identity and citizenship.

These ways are specific for the classical geographical cleavage between Eastern and Western political systems. In this respect, democratic consolidated countries emphasize the role of cultural and axiological variables in generating a common approach of the political identity. Moreover, these political systems are interested in preserving both democratic order and protection for human rights and civil liberties. The second model involved in creating premises for EU identity is based on economic factors. This model is specific for ex-soviet countries. Beyond these strategies for generating models of political identity, this paper reflects the main differences between personal/ individual and EU values. The main feature of the EU citizenship consists in flexibility. This “dual-level” model supposes the balance between national identity and citizenship and EU political identity. The cognitive level, personal values and emotional factors are relevant from the psychological perspective in the field of EU political identity and citizenship. In conclusion, the issue of political identity and citizenship should be analysed in a deep manner from the psychological and socio-anthropological perspective. Beyond civil duties and rights, citizenship is a complex political construction based on historical factors, cultural dimensions, anthropological perspectives, sociological interactions and psychological manner for computing and signifying information from national or trans-national political environment.

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