

Economic, Political and Social Identity in the European Union

Professor John Wilton

Lecture 7

European Union identity today

Lecture 7

Web sites for information referred to in this lecture are:

http://ec.europa.eu/public_opinion/index_en.htm

http://europa.eu.int/comm/public_opinion/archives/eb/eb62/eb62first_en.pdf

http://ec.europa.eu/public_opinion/archives/eb/eb69/eb69_values_en.pdf

http://ec.europa.eu/public_opinion/archives/eb/eb70/eb70_en.htm

http://ec.europa.eu/public_opinion/archives/eb/eb72/eb72_first_en.pdf

www.europa.eu/public_opinion/archives/eb/eb74_public_en.pdf

http://ec.europa.eu/public_opinion/archives/eb/eb78/eb78_citizen_en.pdf

Eurobarometer 62 from Autumn 2004 (fieldwork carried out in October/November 2004, published December 2004 – first results)

Eurobarometer 69 from Autumn 2008 (fieldwork carried out in Mar/May 2008, published November 2008)

Eurobarometer 70 (fieldwork Oct/Nov. 2008, published Dec.2008, first results)

Eurobarometer 72 (fieldwork Oct/Nov. 2009, published Dec.2009, first results)

Eurobarometer 74 (fieldwork Oct/Nov. 2010, published Feb. 2011)

Eurobarometer 78 (fieldwork Nov 2012)

Lecture 7

Eurobarometer 62 (Autumn 2004)

EU membership good thing (56%). Plus 8 percentage points from Eurobarometer 61 (Spring 2004). Highest level of support since 1995.

- But, view that EU membership is a good thing for their country mainly found amongst the citizens of old Member States (85% Luxembourg, 77% Ireland, 75% Netherlands, 73% Belgium, 72% Spain)

Lecture 7

- Oct/Nov 2004 Eurobarometer poll 53% of EU citizens considered their country had benefited from belonging to the EU
- 34% thought their country hadn't benefited.
 - Positive view Plus 6 percentage points from survey Feb/Mar 2004 - reached a level not seen over previous 10 years

Lecture 7

IMAGE OF THE EUROPEAN UNION

- 50% had a positive image of the EU in Oct/Nov 2004 survey – an increase of 6 percentage points on Spring 2004 survey
- 33% were neutral about the EU image
- 15% had a negative perception of the image of the EU

Lecture 7

From this the Eurobarometer 62 report suggested that:

- *“This constant trend reflects once again the gap which exists between the wishes of citizens for more Europe and their perception of the current situation.”*
(p.29)

Lecture 7

- *Eurobarometer 72 (Autumn 2009)*

Support for E.U. membership slightly lower than in EB62 (Autumn 2004)

- Autumn 2004 56%
- Autumn 2009 53%
- 57% thought their country benefited from being member of EU (Autumn 2009)
- 31% not benefited, 12% Don't know

Lecture 7

- 66% of people who studied beyond the age of 20 thought E.U. membership was a good thing (Autumn 2008)
- But, only 39% of those people who left school at earliest possible age thought E.U. membership a good thing.
- 70% of students thought E.U. membership a good thing

Lecture 7

Autumn 2008:

- 62% of people age 15 to 24 thought E.U. membership a good thing
- But, only 47% of people aged 55 and over thought E.U. membership a good thing
- 62% of people surveyed considered they know a great deal about the E.U., its policies and institutions

Lecture 7

In Autumn 2008 fewer people than previously felt things “going in the right direction in the EU”

- - 35% in right direction (compared to 39% Autumn 2004)
- 34% in wrong direction
- But, percentage of those citizens who felt EU going in the right direction (35%) was still on average higher than percentage who thought things were going in the right direction in their own country (28%)

Lecture 7

Eurobarometer 70 (Autumn 2008):

Higher level of education, the more citizens believe their country has benefited from EU membership

- 70% of students thought their country benefited from membership compared to 39% of those who left school at the earliest possible time

Benefit of membership stronger support among young people

- (62% aged 15 to 24) (47% aged 55+)

Lecture 7

On average the percentage of E.U. citizens who viewed the EU positively in Autumn 2008 was less than in Autumn 2004

Autumn 2008 45%

Autumn 2004 50%

But, in all the EU states in Autumn 2008 citizens who saw the EU image as positive outnumbered those who saw it as negative

Lecture 7

Most important *Personal Values* for EU citizens (Eurobarometer 69, Autumn 2008):

- Peace 45%
- Respect for human life 41%
- Human rights 42%

Values that best represented the E.U.:

- Human rights 37%
- Democracy 34%
- Peace 35%

Lecture 7

So, in socio-demographic terms, according to Eurobarometer 70 (Autumn 2008), ***EU citizen who has most positive image of EU*** (and will 'identify with EU more?') is more likely to be:

- ***male*** (50% positive) than female (42% positive)
- ***young*** (aged 15-24: 54% positive) compared to oldest age group (aged 55+: 42% positive)
- ***have spent longer time in education*** (aged 20+ when finished education: 55% positive) compared to left school earlier (aged 15-: 36%)
- ***have a good knowledge of EU*** (53% positive) compared to poor knowledge of it (29%)

Lecture 7

Eurobarometer 74 (Autumn 2010): Most important *personal values* for EU citizens -

- human rights 47%
- peace 44%
- respect for human life 41%
- democracy 29%
- individual freedom 23%
- rule of law 22%
- equality 19%

Lecture 7

Eurobarometer 74 (Autumn 2010):

- When asked to select the values that best represent the E.U., Europeans give priority to the values which are the most important for them personally:
 - human rights 38%
 - democracy 38%
 - peace 35%

Lecture 7

Eurobarometer 74 (Autumn 2010):

Perceptions of what the E.U. represents for E.U. citizens:

- freedom to travel, study and work
anywhere in E.U. 45%
- Euro 40%
- peace 24%
- democracy 23%
- cultural diversity 23%
- stronger voice in world 23%
- BUT,** - waste of money 25%

Lecture 7

Eurobarometer 74 (Autumn 2010):

- 38% of Europeans surveyed had a positive image of the European Union (= minus/decline of 4 percentage points from Eurobarometer 73 survey in Spring 2010)
(= minus/decline of 10 percentage points in comparison with Eurobarometer 72 in Autumn 2009)
- Eurobarometer 62 (Autumn 2004) 50% had positive image of E.U.
- Eurobarometer 76 (Autumn 2011) 31% had positive image (down 9 percentage points from Spring 2011)

Eurobarometer 78 (Autumn 2012):

2013 designated as the European Year of Citizens by the European Parliament and the Council of Ministers

Article 2 of that decision states:

“the general objective of the European Year of Citizens shall be to enhance awareness and knowledge of the rights and responsibilities attached to Union citizenship, in order to enable citizens to make full use of their right to move and reside freely within the territory of the Member States. In this context, the European Year of Citizens shall also promote the enjoyment by Union citizens of the other rights to Union citizenship”.

Eurobarometer 78 (Autumn 2012):

- Achievements and Benefits of EU:
- Most positive = 'free movement of goods, people and services within EU' (52% = + 1 from Spring 2012)
- 2nd most positive = Peace among Member States (50% = minus 3 from Spring 2012)
- 4th most positive = Exchange programmes such as ERASMUS (22% = minus 1 since Spring 2012)
- The proportion of European citizens who answered 'none' when asked for EU positives = 13% (+ 1 since April 2012)

Eurobarometer 78 (Autumn 2012):

- An increasing sense of European citizenship
- More than 6 out of 10 (63%) Europeans say that they feel definitely and/or to some extent European citizens (increase of 2 percentage points from Spring 2012)
- 22% say they are “definitely” European (increase of 3 percentage points from Spring 2012), 41% say European “to some extent”.
- 36% do not feel that they are EU citizens (down 2 since Spring 2012), including 13% who say they are “definitely not” Europeans

‘Crisis for Europe as trust hits record low’
(The Guardian newspaper 25.4.13)

<http://www.guardian.co.uk/world/2013/apr/24/trust-eu-falls-record-low>