

Economic, Political and Social Identity in the European Union

Professor John Wilton

Lecture 7

European Union identity today

Lecture 7

- The web site of the E.U. can be found at:

<http://europa.eu.int>

Web sites for information referred to in this lecture are:

http://europa.eu.int/comm/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/eb66/eb66_highlights_en.pdf

Lecture 7

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

- initial results from Eurobarometer 66
(fieldwork Oct/Nov. 2006, published
Dec. 2006)

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 66 (Autumn 2006)*

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

- Autumn 2004 56%
- Autumn 2006 53%

Lecture 7

- - 67% of people who studied beyond the age of 20 thought E.U. membership was a good thing
- - But, only 41% of those people who left school at earliest possible age thought E.U. membership a good thing.
- - 66% of students thought E.U. membership a good thing

Lecture 7

- - 60% of people age 15 to 24 thought E.U. membership a good thing
- - But, only 48% of people aged 55 and over thought E.U. membership a good thing
- - 67% of people surveyed considered they know a great deal about the E.U., its policies and institutions

Lecture 7

Eurobarometer 66 (Autumn 2006):

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

- 69% of students thought their country benefited from membership compared to 41% of those who left school at the earliest possible time

Benefit of membership stronger support among young people

- (65% aged 15 to 24) (46% aged 55+)

Lecture 7

On average the percentage of E.U. citizens who viewed the EU positively in Autumn 2006 was less than in Autumn 2004

Autumn 2006 46%

Autumn 2004 50%

In nearly all the EU states in Autumn 2006 citizens who saw the EU image as positive outnumbered those who saw it as negative (except in U.K. 36% negative, 28% positive)

Lecture 7

Most important *Personal Values* for EU citizens (Eurobarometer 66, Autumn 2006):

- Peace 52%
- Respect for human life 43%
- Human rights 41%

Values that best represented the E.U.:

- Human rights 38%
- Democracy 38%
- Peace 36%

Lecture 7

In Autumn 2006 fewer people than previously felt things “going in the right direction in the EU”

- - 33% in right direction (compared to 39% Autumn 2005)
- - 33% in wrong direction
- But, percentage of those citizens who felt EU going in the right direction (33%) was still on average higher than percentage who thought things were going in the right direction in their own country (28%)

Lecture 7

Most optimism amongst young people:

15 to 24 Age group 43% thought things going in right direction

55+ Age group 27% thought things going in the right direction

Subjective EU knowledge an important determinant for this dimension

- 45% of citizens who felt they knew a great deal about EU felt things 'going in the right direction'
- BUT, only 25% of those who felt they knew very little about EU felt 'things going in the right direction'