

Economic Rationality and Support for European Identity Providers

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Abstract. *Discussions on the emergence of a European identity meant to provide legitimacy to the European Union (EU) often include references to factors influencing EU support. These determinants of support are essential in anticipating EU's future, in solving its legitimacy deficit and for the development of a common European identity. European citizens' support for the EU could be considered a predictor of sense of belonging to the European community that actually provides generating elements of European identity. In this context, the present article elaborates from a theoretical perspective on the relationship between EU support and European identity. First, the goal is to illustrate the theories on factors that strengthen European citizens' support for the EU, whether economic or non-economic. Second, the focus is on establishing the differences between support for European integration and the attachment that Europeans feel for the EU or between economic rationality and affective evaluation in regard to the EU. The article argues that, while the identification of a European identity seems increasingly difficult to attain, this support for European integration could be viewed as a temporary solution for solving the legitimacy deficit the EU suffers from.*

Keywords: *support for European integration, European identity, national identity, costs and benefits, attachment.*

Introduction

Discussions on the emergence of a European identity meant to provide legitimacy to the European Union (EU) often include references to the factors that determine public opinion to support the European integration process. They are essential in anticipating EU's future, in solving the legitimacy deficit and

for the development of a European identity. European citizens' support for the EU could be considered a predictor of sense of belonging to the European project that actually provides generating elements of European identity, but also a result of the emergence of a sense of belonging or, more specifically, of European identity.

In this paper, European identity and public support for the European Union are presented as two attitudes that should not be confused or treated alike as the differences between the two are being enhanced by the intensity of attachment to the European project. While EU support is determined and emphasized by the fact that individuals become aware of their status of European citizens with common rights and responsibilities, European identity requires the existence of a sense of attachment to the European community with whom they share both rights and responsibilities, and a common destiny. On one hand, support may determine Europeans to be aware of their EU belonging while European identity implies establishing a sense of belonging to the EU.

In this sense, the relationship between the two attitudes can be bidirectional and cyclical. While support for the integration can generate awareness of belonging to the European community, European identity can lead to extensive support for EU integration at all levels. However, the relationship between the two is not necessarily one of proportionality, as low levels of EU identification can be correlated with high levels of support for the European community and high levels of European identification can be related to low levels of European integration support, depending on context and individuals' willingness to show more instrumental or affective interest.

The goal of this paper is to illustrate the relevant theories on factors that strengthen Europeans' support for the EU, whether economic or non-economic, and to discuss on the differences between EU support and European identity or between rational and affective evaluation of European integration. Since the identification of a European identity seems increasingly difficult to attain, we consider that support for European integration can be viewed as a temporary solution for solving the legitimacy deficit the European Union suffers from.

As "in any democracy, legitimacy is derived by the perception of the political process as originating 'from the people' and serving 'the people'" (Harteveld, Van der Meer & De Vries, 2013, p.543), thus we consider that support originates from the people as a result of their positive rational costs and benefits

evaluation and trust in a better future as citizens of the European Union. We say that economic advantages have greater power in instating support for the EU, while non-economic factors determine a more affective relationship between European citizens and European institutions. While the economic costs and benefits model is more relevant for EU support, most non-economic models are more directly linked to the European sense of identification. For example, positive economic and democratic performance and competence is related to support, while cultural distinctiveness and the relationship between national identity and individuals' attachment to their countries are better correlated with European identification.

Elements that determine Europeans' support for the EU

In literature there are used both economic and instrumental explanations and non-utilitarian arguments for the assessment of EU public support. Some academics believe that support for the EU is based on rational arguments focused on the costs and benefits of the integration process and support is stronger when the advantages of integration are directly experienced by its beneficiaries (Gabel & Palmer, 1995; Anderson & Reichert, 1995; Gabel, 1998; Marks & Hooghe, 2003; Brinegar, Jolly & Kitschelt, 2004; Christin, 2005). Given that the European Union was created in order to reduce financial and physical barriers among states so as to develop a prosperous economic community and to facilitate trade among member states, the economic benefits argument seems to be the most pertinent.

However, the European Union aims not only to develop itself into an economic community but also into a political one and academics consider that besides the economic arguments there are also some other important aspects that should be taken into account when talking about the support offered by Europeans to the integration process. For example, Inglehart (1970) believes that higher levels of cognitive mobilization contribute to higher levels of public support for European integration as Europeans who have the opportunity to familiarize more with this subject become less reluctant towards a phenomenon perceived as an abstract one by many average citizens. On the other hand, Anderson (1998) assumes that the lack of knowledge about the EU determines the citizens of the member states to use proxies in evaluating EU policies, their attitude being, in fact, a reflection at the European level of their view on the national politics. Thus, their view on the EU depends on how individuals assess the internal political reality of their country, satisfac-

tion with the domestic reality leading to support for the EU. Sánchez-Cuenca (2000) launches a hypothesis contrary to Anderson's. He considers the EU as a solution for the problems in the functioning of national political systems and in his view citizens' negative evaluation of the functioning of their state leads to greater support for the UE which is viewed as a solution for corruption, unemployment and poor governance.

In addition to these assumptions that take into account the link between citizens and the internal political reality in shaping support for the EU, there are hypotheses based on the relationship between national and European identity. While some researchers believe that these identities can coexist as two levels of identification that become salient depending on contexts and needs, others argue that the two are incompatible and mutually exclusive. Considering these relationships, Carey (2002) sees national identity as one of the main factors explaining attitudes towards the EU. According to him, a strong national identity results in weak support for the EU because of fears of national sovereignty loss through the implementation of European policies at national levels. Also, McLaren (2002) argues that hostility towards other cultures is an important element in justifying attitudes towards the EU because some individuals are concerned with the degradation of national values in the context of the integration process aimed at reducing the physical and financial barriers of the nation-states.

Theories of support for EU integration are diverse, sometimes divergent, but they prove to be not so strong when tested individually. Therefore, we consider that analyzing all these arguments identified in literature could offer a more complex perspective on possible calculations influencing European citizens' opinions on specific EU policies and practices, each argument having a relevant role in shaping attitudes of the Europeans that have or have not undergone the European experience.

Economic costs and benefits model

Since the early 90s, studies on Europeans' attitudes towards the EU have been dominated by economic and rational calculations, especially by utilitarian costs and benefits. After analyzing the level of public support for the European integration, many studies have concluded that individuals from countries that experience directly the economic benefits of the European integration show higher levels of support (Inglehart & Rabier, 1978; Gabel & Palmer,

1995; Anderson, 1998; Gabel, 1998; Christin, 2005). This is because one of the main objectives of European integration was to remove barriers to economic exchange, facilitate the free movement of goods, capital, services and people and create a single monetary authority (Marks & Hooghe, 2003). Therefore, economic calculations and utilitarian cost-benefit evaluations of the effects of the EU integration process on the Europeans' lives are among the first explanations underlying the attitudes of European citizens towards integration.

Among the most important studies on EU support that is primarily based on instrumental motivations are those of Gabel and Palmer (1995) and Gabel (1998). They show that public attitudes towards the EU focus on the rational calculations of EU membership's costs and benefits and that individuals' level of support is related, on one hand, to the security and trade interests of their states, and, on the other hand, to their personal potential to benefit from the liberalization of markets for goods, capital and labor (Gabel & Palmer, 1995). The stronger the material gains of market liberalization in the EU, the stronger the support for integration. However, individuals' level support varies because European policies affect them differently. Europeans experience differently the costs and benefits of integration due to some important factors such as human capital, income levels and proximity to foreign markets.

An issue to consider is the integration of various EU countries in the Eurozone. This is a desired shared by most of the Eastern European countries, including Romania, being associated with positive general outcomes for the population. Still various economic and financial evolutions, as well as the political ones in the EU lead to modifications in the accession plans (Anghel & Dinu, 2013). Therefore, these aspects as well as the integration or postponing of the currency integration also impacts the way EU is viewed in various countries.

Several researchers support the hypothesis that markets liberalization favors those with higher levels of education, income and occupational skills (Inglehart, 1970; Inglehart & Rabier, 1978; Anderson & Reichert, 1995; McLaren, 2002; Carey, 2002; Marks & Hooghe, 2003; Elgün & Tillman, 2007). In regard to the human capital hypothesis, Gabel and Palmer (1995, p.7) agree that "certain individual skills are more valuable and transferable in an advanced industrial economy". Therefore, Europeans with higher levels of education and occupational skills are more willing to use their skills in an international context and to adapt diverse economic changes. On the other hand, less educated and poorly skilled Europeans become reluctant to the integration process as they

feel disadvantaged because of their less transferable skills on an expanded labor market. In this case, human capital is a strong indicator of individuals' ability to adapt to the labor market competition (Gabel, 1998) developed with the liberalization of the European labor market. McLaren (2006) considers human capital to have an essential role in explaining public support for the EU given that those with higher levels of education and professional skills can use their knowledge and skills to find better paid jobs, to increase their salaries by threatening to migrate to another EU state where people in their position are better paid, or to go to another EU member states to open their own business. Therefore, the most advantaged will be more optimistic about integration and much more willing to express their support for the opportunities it offers.

As regards the income hypothesis, the same researchers observe a positive relationship between high income levels and support for European integration. Those with higher incomes will benefit more from the capital market liberalization as they benefit from greater investment opportunities provided by the more open financial markets (Gabel, 1998). The proximity to other EU markets hypothesis predicts that citizens in states located close to foreign markets benefit from more opportunities in exploiting the liberalized markets for goods, labor and capital. According to Gabel and Palmer (1995), European citizens who live near the borders with other EU countries benefit more from increased economic exchanges among neighbouring states than those who do not live in such regions. Therefore, residents of border regions show more EU support as they have the opportunity to experience directly these commercial benefits of the integration.

Gabel and Palmer's hypotheses (1995) support the ideas of Anderson and Reichert (1995) and Christin (2005) that the so-called winners of integration are more likely to support their country's membership than losers. Anderson and Reichert (1995) analyzed if the EU integration economic benefits influenced Europeans' support and concluded that individuals living in countries that enjoyed more advantages as EU member states and those who experienced directly those benefits were more likely to support the integration process. The two researchers focused on assessing the direct and indirect economic benefits or personal and national benefits associated with EU membership in order to justify the variation in EU support. Direct economic benefits were seen as the funds provided by the EU to member states or individuals, while indirect benefits were those associated with EU membership, such as trade with other member states, opportunities for professional mobility. In

respect of the direct benefits, Brinegar et al. (2004) argue that residents of states that are net beneficiaries of EU funds are likely to support European integration, while states that donate funds tend to adopt a negative attitude. Anderson and Reichert (1995) concluded that citizens and states that benefited personally, directly and systematically from the economic advantages of the EU membership were more engaged in supporting a more integrated European community.

So, those who are aware of the positive effects of the integration on their country's economy will be more likely to support the European project. Researchers have identified two types of attitudes: *egocentric* and *sociotropic* (Marks & Hooghe, 2003; Brinegar et al., 2004; Bruter, 2005; McLaren, 2006). Individuals support policies that are beneficial both for their economy (*sociotropic* evaluation) and for themselves (*egocentric* evaluation), which indicates that "continued support for integration will depend on the EC's ability to respond to the economic demands of its citizens. In other words, those least able to benefit from EC membership should not be expected to support the EC solely because the EC is advantageous for their nation as a whole" (Gabel & Palmer, 1995, p.13). Individuals who are more optimistic about both their own financial situation in the future and their country's will show more support for integration (Gabel & Palmer, 1995; Gabel, 1998; Marks & Hooghe, 2003). But the absence of one of these conditions will implicitly lead to a decrease of support.

On the other hand, Christin (2005) analyzed the evolution of Europeans' attitudes towards the EU both at individual level and macro level and noted that the effects on individuals' attitudes were stronger when their country's economic situation was precarious. In such situations, the European Union is seen as a solution for the domestic economic problems that individuals observe in their countries. In states that benefit from a good economic development, people are more skeptical in supporting European integration.

Instrumental arguments justifying different levels of support for European integration among EU citizens may be different, but what is certain is that they depend on the economic contexts that Europeans are exposed to, but also on the direct experience with the benefits of EU membership, as it is expected that "those who regard the Common Market as having a beneficial effect on their own lives to become progressively pro-European" (Inglehart, 1970, p.67). This idea is found in a study of Elgün and Tillman (2007, p.392), which focuses on an essential dimension of the costs and benefits model, claiming that "the

effect of utilitarian benefits varies by the respondent's experience with the economic consequences of EU membership". In other words, individuals cannot assess positively or negatively the economic consequences of the EU membership until they experience them directly: "Put simply, individuals cannot develop a positive or negative assessment of the economic consequences of EU membership until they learn just what these consequences are. Individuals with little exposure to EU policies are unlikely to have independent and structured opinions about the economic effects of integration, meaning that these in turn are unlikely to predict attitudes toward integration. As the individual becomes more familiar with EU policies, then she or he can begin to judge their costs and benefits. Only then these judgments begin to predict support for integration" (Elgün & Tillman, 2007, p.393). Direct experience is important in evaluating the intensity of Europeans' attitudes towards integration as compared to opinions formed through proxies in cases in which individuals do not have the opportunity to undergo directly through the European experience, which we will discuss later.

The economic costs and benefits model seems to be relevant for discussions on the emergence of a civic European identity and European economic policies seem to become identity-building elements (Thiel, 2011). However, in literature there are a number of other variables that seem to influence the attitudes of European citizens towards integration. Elgün and Tillman (2007) claim that before having more experience with EU policies and before feeling the effects of integration, Europeans focus on non-economic evaluations of national politics and on their social identity.

Non-economic models

Contrary or in addition to the utilitarian arguments behind different levels of support that European citizens show for integration, researchers have proposed different models to explain support for or opposition to European integration. They focus on individuals' access to information on EU policies (Anderson & Reichert, 1995), the social location of Europeans (Inglehart, 1970; Inglehart & Rabier, 1978; Janssen, 1991), national identity (Carey, 2002; Marks & Hooghe, 2003; Citrin & Sides, 2004; McLaren, 2002, 2006), support for the national government and political parties (Gabel, 1998). Arguments for these models are also diverse and divergent but equally relevant as the economic ones. Thus, as there is no consensus on the nature of the elements that lead to support for European integration and their capacity to produce effects

on the attitudes of European citizens towards integration, we consider these non-economic models to be as important as the economic ones.

Social location model

This model states that social development factors, such as higher levels of income, education and access to information, lead to increased public support for supranational European institutions and identification with a transnational European community, as individuals manage to process information about events and processes related to the European community and understand abstract issues related to the integration process. In this respect, Inglehart (1970, 1971) suggests in several studies that we can discuss about two important factors that influence public support for European integration: cognitive mobilization and postmaterialism.

According to the cognitive mobilization theory, higher levels of education and increased access to information develop the ability of citizens to receive and process messages on EU policies, which might prove to be too difficult, too abstract or insufficiently important for common citizens: „The ability to handle abstractions, to process information about remote and complex entities (such as the European Community) lies at the heart of the Cognitive Mobilization process, and formal education tends to increase these skills” (Inglehart & Rabier, 1978, p. 86). The term “abstraction” which Inglehart uses while referring to the European Union is related to the ease with which people can understand European political messages so that they can assimilate and use them in their everyday lives. As Janssen (1991, p.467) mentions, „the better skilled do not fear politics and institutions on a European scale simply because they have the capacity to understand them better, with the result that European integration is less threatening”.

Inglehart (1970, 1971) believes that the cognitive mobilization process, which involves a higher capacity to understand abstract political messages about the European community and some kind of familiarity with the European policies, focuses on a number of independent variables that tend to lead to pro-European attitudes or on “predictors of pro-European attitudes” (Inglehart, 1970, p.51) as social class, income, education, sex, age, exposure to different forms of mass media, the opportunity to travel abroad. „In the long term, therefore, it would seem that rising levels of income, education, and communications development favor the growth of public support for supra-

national European institutions” (Inglehart, 1970, p.70). Inglehart and Rabier (1978, p.83) consider education as the most powerful indicator of EU support: „European integration benefits the upper and middle classes more than the working class, thus the fact that the more educated are relatively favorable to integration is simply an expression of social class interest”. Therefore, the cognitive mobilization theory assumes that the level of education may lead to the development of pro-European feelings through exposure to European political messages. Inglehart (1970) found a positive relationship between income level and pro-European attitudes as higher incomes favor travel opportunities in other member states and thus interaction with other Europeans. Janssen (1991) challenges the macro level effects of cognitive mobilization on public attitudes towards the EU, noting that personal skills have no impact on EU support but in turn they raise awareness of integration and help individuals experiment cosmopolitanism. He does, however, agree on the micro level effects of individuals’ personal skills of individuals, stating that people with more knowledge about the integration process tend to exhibit a more cosmopolitan and more positive outlook towards integration.

Regarding postmaterialism, Inglehart (1970, 1971) argues that postmaterialists tend to manifest cosmopolitan attitudes and are more committed to European integration, since they give priority to their intellectual needs, their need for belonging, independence and self-actualization. On the other hand, materialists are interested in economic and physical security, being less cosmopolitan in their outlook. Since the theory was strongly disputed (Janssen, 1991; Anderson, 1998) as there were not identified links between increased postmaterialism and the evolution of public support for integration we would not insist on it.

National proxies model

Another non-economic model is that developed by Anderson (1998) which combines both economic and political reasons. He considers the argument that individuals support European integration from a cost-benefit perspective as insufficient because it ignores the political dimension that is essential for a complete understanding of EU public support.

If Inglehart (1970, 1971) focuses on a higher level information of individuals to explain the increase in EU public support, Anderson takes into account the lack of information on European affairs and identifies an alternative argument

in explaining changes in their attitudes towards the EU: "[...] because citizens of the member states are largely uninformed about Europe, they employ proxies rooted in domestic political considerations (government, party, and system support) when responding to questions about the integration process" (Anderson, 1998, p.571). Thus, individuals transfer their opinions about the domestic political reality at the European level and citizens that assess favorably the efficiency of the internal political institutions will support integration efforts as they associate the internal economic and political performance with the integration process. Therefore, citizens' attitudes towards government and ruling parties represent a key element affecting EU public opinions on Europe (Anderson, 1998; Elgün & Tillman, 2007).

Anderson (1998, p. 583) proposes this model which combines economic and political arguments because „when citizens are unwilling to support the pro-Europe policies of unpopular governments or parties, for example, economic conditions may have a smaller and indirect influence on the ups and downs of the integration process". This model excludes the condition of direct experience with the effects of EU membership and could be an explanation for the attitudes of those who fail to perceive the benefits of integration through travel, education or markets liberalization.

Democratic performance model

In terms of the relationship between national and European policies, there is another theory which states that lack of trust in national governments, political instability and corruption are decisive determinants in respect to the public support for the European Union which is perceived as a solution for consolidating democracy in countries affected by a poor performance of the state (Sánchez-Cuenca, 2000; Rohrschneider, 2002; Christin, 2005; Tanasoiu & Colonescu, 2008; Durach & Bârgăoanu, 2013).

Sánchez-Cuenca (2000, p.147) believes that public support for the EU is higher when assessments of the national political institutions are unfavorable and European integration is seen as a means of strengthening and stabilizing national democratic institutions: „[...] the higher citizens' opinion of the functioning of supranational institutions and the lower that of national institutions, the greater their support for integration. This is because the worse the opinion of the national political system, the lower the opportunity cost of transferring sovereignty to Europe".

Thus, when the efficiency of national democratic institutions is low, citizens will be more confident in the ability of the EU to solve their problems by putting in place monitoring mechanisms of their national political system. A number of studies in Central and Eastern Europe (Christin, 2005; Tănăsoiu & Colonescu, 2008; Durach & Bârgăoanu, 2013) support this hypothesis. Tănăsoiu and Colonescu (2008) tested it on the Bulgarian public and concluded that individuals who believed strongly in democratic values had a favorable attitude towards European integration, considering that after their country's accession to the EU the national regime had to strengthen its democratic values thanks to the constant monitoring from Bruxelles. Durach and Bârgăoanu (2013, p.70) carried out a research focused on the young generation in Romania and concluded the European Union was considered "a watchdog of democracy", "rescuer" and "problem solver" for Romania that could not solve its internal problems without support from the European institutions, regarded as "legitimate actors" in Romanian political affairs. On the other hand, the idea of European intervention and monitoring mechanisms put in place in order to ensure the compliance of the member states with the democratic values launched another image of the European Union, that of "Europe that punishes us" and "EU that scolds us like a parent or teacher" (Durach & Bârgăoanu, 2013, pp.70-71).

On one hand there is this image of the EU as rescuer in respect to the internal problems, but, on the other hand, there are academics who claim that the democratic efficiency of the European institutions is also essential for an increase in EU public support (Rohrschneider, 2002; Loveless & Rohrschneider, 2011). Thus, „if Europeans believe that EU institutions fail to adequately represent their interests and are no longer transparent, this undermines the core of the EU's *raison d'être*, certainly in the long run" (Loveless & Rohrschneider, 2011, p.5). This is even more relevant to those situations when national institutions are considered to be effective and citizens feel that the potential costs of transferring national sovereignty to some supranational bodies are too high for a wider European integration of their countries.

National identity and cultural threat models

These two models view national identity as a key element in explaining individuals' attitudes towards the EU. In order to understand how the public assesses European integration, we must examine the level of attachment that individuals have towards their nation or, as Hooghe and Marks (2004, p.418)

state, if individuals believe that national identity “can go hand in hand with the process of European integration or that European integration limits or threatens their national identity”.

Regarding the relationship between national identity and EU public support, Carey (2002, p.388) has developed a model which suggests that „feelings of national identity are highly important in an individual’s choice to support the European Union. It is expected that higher feelings of national identity decrease support for the European project because of the conflicts over sovereignty that have developed in this era, such as the creation of a single European currency, the European Central Bank and the increased primacy of European law”.

Although Carey (2002, p.402) argues that a strong national identity is a clear indicator of a decrease in support for the EU, he does not exclude situations in which “a strong national identity is not necessarily a negative predictor of support for the EU if the individual also has a strong attachment to Europe”. Therefore, this model takes into account the individuals’ feelings of belonging to the EU and possibly other determinants such as the economic, social and utilitarian ones that we have mentioned above. Europeans support the EU as long as they feel that it helps their nations ensure their needs (Van Kersbergen, 2000), as long as it does not threaten national sovereignty (Carey, 2002) and attachment to a state is not necessarily associated with the rejection of the European project (Marks, 1999).

In order to assess the way in which individuals perceive their national identity, Carey (2002) uses three conceptualizations of national identity: the intensity of feelings towards one’s country, the level of attachment to the nation as compared to other territorial entities and the fear of other identities and cultures. McLaren (2002, 2006) has developed on this third conceptualization which refers to the cultural threat that the European integration exerts on the existing national culture. He believes that previous “research has missed an obvious but important factor that determines levels of support for, or hostility toward, the process of European integration. That factor is degree of antipathy toward other cultures stemming from nationalistic attachments” (McLaren, 2002, p.551). According to the cultural threat theory, some individuals are concerned about the degradation of national resources and about the social and cultural threats posed by other ethnic or national groups to the nation-states with the EU enlargement.

These concerns over national culture have emerged because, as mentioned earlier, the European Union has become more than an organization designed to reduce economic barriers and facilitate trade among member states, as it „is making policies that were formerly within the prerogative of the nation-state, and it is likely to be seen as having a homogenizing effect on the member states. The uniqueness of national cultures and the exclusive control over the resources of the nation-state are, in turn, seen as being under threat by the EU” (McLaren, 2002, p.554). According to this model, the EU is a political system in development that threatens not only the decisional independence of national institutions, but also core values such as national sovereignty and identity.

Whether we discuss about economic calculations or other types of determinants, EU public support varies according to the political and economic realities of each country, the history of each state, the year of accession but also to one’s own willingness to experience, accept and evaluate the effects of European integration. One of the key elements for an efficient assessment of the relationship between European citizens and the European Union is to evaluate the way in which the UE is perceived in people’s lives and citizens’ expectations in regard to integration: the EU as a solution or a threat.

EU support and/or European identity

In literature, EU support and European identity are two terms that are sometimes used interchangeably, the former often being used as a substitute for the later (Inglehart, 1970; Inglehart & Rabier, 1978; Gabel & Palmer, 1995; Anderson, 1998; Gabel, 1998; Sánchez-Cuenca, 2000; McLaren, 2002, 2006; Rohrschneider, 2002; Marks & Hooghe, 2003; Hooghe & Marks, 2004). In this paper we have chosen to discuss about the EU public support as being different from the notion of European identity because we consider that it is a term less complex and possibly more relevant in the absence of a strong sense of belonging to the European community among Europeans.

On one hand, support for integration can be considered a precursor to the development of a sense of belonging to the European Union, as it actually provides generating elements of European identity. On the other hand, public support can be also considered an effect of European identity that aims at further all-level integration but which does not imply a relationship of proportionality.

Bruter (2005) argues that the two attitudes represent two different variables that must be tested separately from an empirical and conceptual point of view. In this view, Brigeovich (2011) believes that attachment to the European Union is similar to European identity while EU support is determined by individuals' awareness of their status of European citizens with common rights. According to the author, the two attitudes are two existential states that should not be confused and should be tested distinctly because higher levels of attachment to the EU should not automatically generate support for integration and vice versa. But which are the elements that differentiate them?

When analyzing European identity determinants we consider similar factors to those addressed in assessing elements that determine support for EU integration: economic costs and benefits, the importance of cognitive mobilization, the relationship with national identity and with other social groups. And, indeed, there is a positive relationship between support and European identity, on one hand, and the economic benefits of integration, on the other. Young people with higher levels of education, income and occupational skill are advantaged by markets liberalization and they can understand more easily abstract topics related to EU. That is why in their case the possibility for EU support to increase and a European sense of belonging to emerge and develop is higher. Differences between the two attitudes result from the fact that the level of support changes especially after experiencing the economic costs and benefits of integration, while European identity intensifies through Europeans' awareness of their belonging to the community that enjoys these benefits. As Hartevelde et al. (2013, p.548) state "identity is the product of deeper emotional investment or of prolonged experiences. A European identity may consequently function as a buffer against more short-term notions, such as (perceived) costs and benefits".

On one hand, support for the EU can be justified through a variety of factors, but the most important argument is in fact the evaluation of economic costs and benefits of the European integration. Europeans are particularly interested in the benefits of EU integration and markets liberalization, the opportunity to study, travel and do business in other member states much more easily than before EU accession. This support is based on the directly experienced economic advantages of integration and is primarily linked to rational evaluation of the European integration process. In this case, we can discuss about no affective attachment but economic rationality only.

As one of the advantages of European integration is the common market, individuals are likely to become more supportive of the EU as they experience the

instrumental benefits of their status of European citizens. Easier access to European markets associated with increased living standards, incomes and profit opportunities might lead in return to increased EU support. Furthermore, positive evaluation of the EU benefits and support result in identification with EU membership's economic advantages and thus EU economic policies can be seen as European identity-building factors. But this positive relationship between economic benefits and support for EU integration occurs as long as costs do not interfere with national and individual values. Therefore, the support that European citizens show towards the European Union is rather instrumental, utilitarian and less affective. That is why when discussing the relationship between economic rationality and affective evaluation in regard to the EU we have to take into account not only the rational, instrumental elements but also the emotional, affective ones. On the other hand, when assessing European identity we focus on the development of a sense of belonging to the EU and of its emotional side, a point which is not so pertinent when discussing about EU integration support. If identity involves by definition both a civic, instrumental or utilitarian side and a cultural, emotional one, support for an economic and political project like the EU does not necessarily require the emergence of this feeling that individuals are part of a large community, but awareness among them that they are involved in this project that is advantageous both for themselves and their nation.

European identity could lead to the development of a European political community based on the awareness of belonging to the European project and to the emergence of a European *demos* that would confer legitimacy to the EU and solve the democratic deficit the EU suffers from. In this case, individuals become aware of this status of European citizens and recognize themselves as members of this group and develop a collective identity beyond the idea of utilitarian and economic interests.

Thus, another important element for the assessment of the two notions is that EU support and the opportunity of developing a European identity depend on how people perceive their national identity. A strong national identity and perception of integration as a threat to national cultural values lead to lower support for the EU, but it can also lead to the strengthening of European identity if there are feelings of attachment to the European project and if integration does not threaten national values, but rather consolidates and valorizes them. Carey (2002, p.402) says that „a strong national identity is not necessarily a negative predictor of support for the EU if the individual also has a strong attachment to Europe”.

However, there are differences in intensity between the two attitudes – EU support and European identity – based on the variables used when observing them. Citrin and Sides (2004b, p.177) note that integration support decreases for citizens who feel in some way Europeans when it comes to European intervention in areas such as culture and education, which they “want to keep solely under national purview”. So the development of a European identity does not necessarily lead to absolute support for integration, but to support for those practices and policies that do not challenge specific elements of national identity. Support does not play an imperative role in developing a sense of belonging to the EU, but only for the development of awareness of belonging to the European community, as it increases or decreases in relation to the democratic efficiency of European and national institutions in the context of European integration. Therefore, public support could lead to the emergence of a civic European identity and not an affective or cultural one. It can help the EU attain the entitativity that Risse (2003, 2005) discusses about or concreteness and realness” in the daily lives of European citizens.

We believe that the relationship between the two attitudes – support and identification – can be bidirectional and cyclical. Public support for the EU can lead to identity through awareness of belonging to the European community and the European identity can lead to support for European integration at all levels – economic, political, social, and cultural.

As we have mentioned, support for integration develops when the EU is considered to be a solution for the low level of democratization in nation-states, the support being strengthened by a direct experimentation of the integration effects that could lead to the development of a strong sense of belonging to this economic and political project that embodies the democratic rescuer. At the same time, this sense of belonging generates further support for a European integration extended at all levels. Although we do not consider that support for European integration should implicitly generate a European identity, it has a double role in fostering a sense of belonging and legitimizing the European project: the EU is “able to integrate the economies of its member states while protecting them from the wider global context. This is primarily a functional, if not a technocratic, legitimization. As long as it delivers the goods and achieves a legitimacy through efficiency, it has the support of citizens”, developing a sense of loyalty and providing a minimum degree of identification (Delanty, 2008, p. 678).

In this respect, Citrin and Sides (2004b) conclude that low levels of identification with Europe can be correlated with high levels of support for European

integration and for the benefits of the EU membership. Also, the two have not identified significant differences between European citizens who show lower or higher levels of attachment to the EU and higher levels of support for EU integration. Their most important point is that the level of support does not depend on the importance or priority that individuals grant to European identity in relation to the national one, but on its existence regardless of its intensity: „[...] creating support for a stronger European state does not require a European identity that dominates national identity. It is sufficient if a European identity is established alongside one's national identity” (Citrin, Sides, 2004b, p. 175). Therefore, regardless of its intensity, the European identity is necessary for the development of public support for European integration.

Also, in assessing the relationship between the two notions – EU support and European identity - Bruter (2005) believes that European identity is necessary to generate support and legitimize further political development of the European integration process. After testing the two variables, Bruter (2005) has concluded that the statistical links among European identity, integration support and a range of traditional independent variables vary according to the European experience that individuals are being exposed to. In this context, we consider that individuals who experience positively the economic costs and benefits of European integration are more likely to support the EU and further identify themselves as members of the European community with common rights and opportunities. We also think that support can be tested rather by using the economic costs and benefits model, while European identity involves a more complex process that includes both economic and affective evaluations. In this context, the question is: Can public support be sufficient for the legitimization of the European project in the absence of a solid European identity?

Conclusions

One of the purposes of this paper has been to present the factors that lead to public support for the European Union and for an extended European integration process in order to identify the most relevant elements that strengthen or decrease individuals' positive attitudes towards the European project.

Another objective has been to assess the differences between EU support and European identity, based on similar evaluation criteria, because as the emergence of a European identity seems increasingly difficult to attain, public sup-

port for EU institutions, policies and values could be sufficient to legitimize the European project.

The conclusion is that while support is based mainly on instrumental motivations and rational economic evaluations, European identity implies attachment to the European community that provides its members with both civic and instrumental values and cultural and affective ones. Therefore, EU support leads to awareness of European belonging especially through the economic benefits associated with European citizenship and European identity to the development of an affective sense of belonging to this community. Thus, economic policies as the liberalization of markets for goods, capital, people and services can become identity-building elements, as Thiel (2011) states.

Although we have not intended to establish an implicit relation of complementarity between the two notions, we consider that they can be viewed as being in a bidirectional or cyclic relationship as long as support for integration can generate European identity and the latter can result in support for further European integration.

Also, given that the intensity and value of two variables may differ among individuals depending on both national and personal contexts and situations, there is no relationship of proportionality between the attitudes mentioned.

Although they seem to overlap in certain situations, we believe that a separate empirical assessment of these two types of attitudes could determine whether support for European integration could replace European civic identity which is considered by some academics (Kaelberer, 2004; Kantner, 2006) to be sufficient to legitimize the European project.

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