

Ideological Diversity and Cognitive Difficulties

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Abstract

In the last decades we can observe a large number of ideological changes and hybridizations. In the same time, it has also been developed a new academic field reserved for researching the political ideologies. Nevertheless, a large number of the papers, dedicated to this study, announce the theme of the end of the ideologies. Even if, in the monistic meaning of the term, the ideology lost its legitimacy and postmodernism has abandoned the hard thinking, political ideologies still remain an evident presence. Political ideologies are characterized by continuous diversification and fragmentation produced by the late modernity. In this context, we cannot observe the end of ideologies, but rather a process of multiplying. This fact signifies the complication of the ideological sphere and difficulties in political orientation. In consequence, several roles of political ideologies cannot be performed anymore. According to these theoretical statements, a large number of political ideologies could negatively affect the system of beliefs and the mental short-cuts about social and political reality. A large number of political ideologies create superficial beliefs about social and political life.

Keywords: cognitive bias, ideology, left-right cleavage, political cognition, ideological diversity, political sophistication, end of ideology

1. Diversification or the End of Ideology?

After the crystallization of the modern ideological perspectives from the XIXth century, the sphere of political ideologies was very well defined. However, in the last decades, we can observe a continuous ideological diversification and hybridization. Today, the scientific works about political ideologies are characterised by a large and varied number of political *-isms*. Without any explicative schema, all these

ideological changes could determine difficulties in political orientation and errors in political understanding. Together with ideologies as liberalism, conservatism, communism, social-democracy, anarchism, nationalism, fascism we can notice the crystallization of christian-democracy, libertarianism, green ideology, populism, republicanism, imperialism, feminist movements, ideologies of Latin America, Africa, China, South and South-East Asia (Freedon, Sargent and Stears 2013). Other theoretical approaches (Hoffman and Graham 2006) are based on the distinction between classical ideologies - liberalism, conservatism, socialism, anarchism, nationalism, fascism - and new ideologies, where are integrated feminism, multiculturalism, ecologist movements and fundamentalism. With several exceptions (for example, the theme of fundamentalism which is analysed from two major directions: i. starting from the relationship between politics and religion and ii. from a point of view exclusively Islamist), we meet the same ten ideological perspectives in other theoretical or philosophical works (Geoghegan and Wilford 2104; Wetherly 2017a, Heywood 2017).

Several books are characterized by significant and important ideological challenges. On the one side, we can notice the extension of the new political categories as ideologies of liberation (in this context are integrated a large number of militant movements along with feminist approach) and on the other side, these works exclude political ideologies as multiculturalism, anarchism and nationalism (Ball, Dagger and O'Neill 2014). Anarchism and nationalism are analyzed as political forces rather than political ideologies. The lack of autonomous and stable ideological corpus facilitates the interference between anarchism and nationalism with other political ideologies (Ball, Dagger and O'Neill 2014, 13).

In other works, dedicated to the presentation and analysis of the political ideologies, either the multiculturalism is absent (Vincent 2010), or is replaced by the new ideological perspectives related to globalism and postmodernism (Adams 2001). We can identify broader perspectives which place ideologies in relation to broad criteria such as the pluralist, ethical-democratic horizon. Thus, the taxonomy of political ideologies leads to the emergence of new categories such as

pluralistic ideologies, border ideologies and monistic ideologies. The pluralist ones are represented by liberalism, feminism, christian-democracy, conservatism, ecology, libertarianism, globalism, multiculturalism; in the category of border ideologies we can integrate anarchism and populism; the last category of monistic ideologies is represented by communism, extreme right and fundamentalism (Miroiu 2012). Thus, if we intend to account the current political ideologies, our enumeration being selective in several cases, we could obtain the following list: anarchism, communism, conservatism, christian-democracy, fascism, feminism, fundamentalism, globalism, African ideologies, Latin America' ideologies, Asia and South Asia's ideologies, China's ideological perspective, Islam, green ideology or ecology, imperialism, liberalism, libertarianism, multiculturalism, nationalism, populism, postmodernism, republicanism, socialism, social-democracy and extreme right. If we include all systems of ideas sustained by important political movements we can obtain a larger series of political ideologies (Riff 1987, XI). Therefore, some academic dictionaries, which have as major topic political ideologies, expose over forty labels with ideological meaning (Riff 1987).

In the last decades, new challenges, the process of ideological hybridization and the diversity of political ideologies have generated a new academic field of research for political ideologies. At the beginning of 1990s, the study of political ideologies was viewed as a rather narrow chapter of political theory - as academic approach, this field of study was reduced to a general presentation of the classical ideologies (liberalism, conservatism, socialism) with openings to the new ideological perspectives (Freeden 2016, 1-2). Today, this kind of scientific approach is seen as an important element of political sciences and political process (Freeden 2016, 2). Separating from the abstract, universal and normative study of philosophy, the current analysis of political ideology has to be seen as a manner of understanding the core of political reflection and practice (Freeden 2006). This kind of analysis generates the premises for creating an important tool for understanding the importance and influence of particular thinking or different political vocabularies on political behaviour, action and decision

(Freeden 2016, 2). The rise in importance of the research dedicated to political ideology is confirmed by the emergence of several consistent journals like *Journal of Political Ideologies* (JPI). Seeking what is published in these journals, you can have a clue about what kind of ideologies hold the attention in this moment. Starting from the titles of articles published in JPI, Freedden observed, for the last two decades, several tendencies: i. a large number of titles is related to classical ideologies - in descending order the topics are: liberalism, conservatism and socialism; ii. the academic studies associated to populism begin in the early of 2000s, and then we assist to an accelerated growth. These studies are closer to the number of articles dedicated to anarchism. The articles about populism are beyond the articles about globalism or anti-globalism, Islamism and green ideology; iii. the last topic as number of titles is represented by feminism (Freedden 2016, 5).

Paradoxically, although we observe this kind of ideological vivacity and diversity, many of the current works dedicated to the study of political ideologies propose us the theme of the end of ideology (Moya 2014; Heywood 2017, 324-331; Wetherly 2017b; Brick 2013; Ball, Dagger and O'Neill 2014, 329-331). This topic is quite old, being manifested since the beginning of the last century (Brick 2013, 93). This theme is met in the public space after the Second World War. For obtaining the most effective resistance to the potential Soviet threat, in Western societies had appeared political appeals for overcoming and abandoning ideological discords (Brick 2013, 95). In the early of 1960s appeared the most known thesis of the end of ideology. In this context, Daniel Bell's famous book is published - *The End of Ideology*. The book presents aspects of the exhaustion of the redemptive political ideology, particularly of the Marxist revolutionary socialism, and the transformation of the strong concepts, as the social class, into some unusable notions, at least for the Western post-industrial societies (Bell 2000, xi). This type of society couldn't be described with the political thinking schema inherited from the pre-war world (Brick 2013, 104). "Historical materialism had been torn to shreds. But so were tens of millions of persons, as the regnant ideology sought to transform history and peoples [...] The

crossover has ended. That was the thesis of the end of ideology.” (Bell 2000, xv-xvi) In the further decades, the thesis of the end of the ideology was resumed both by supporters and contestants (Brick 2013, 105-110). There are different episodes for announcing the end of ideology. We can remark two main episodes. The first is associated to the emergence of postmodernism based on cultural factors. The second episode, based on economic and political considerations, is represented by the collapse of communism.

The postmodern movement celebrates the weak thinking (Vattimo and Rovatti 2012), a thought which accepts its limits, which does not believe that it can discover certainties, ultimate and objective realities or metaphysical realms of absolute justice. The weak thinking abandons the support of the pre-eminence of the metaphysical thinking, theoretical thinking, on practice (Vattimo 2012, 50). It seeks exit from what Crespi (2012) entitled, the logic of absolutisation (256-257). This kind of thinking, part of the postmodern field, announces, naturally, a long series of the ends: the end of philosophy, of metaphysics, of epistemology, of the progress of the science or of the ideology. It's not a real extinction than a real diminution of their relevance or an abandonment of the illusions about what they can offer. Thus, this is not the death of ideologies, than is the end of their claim to be in the possession of the universal and eternal political axioms, or to be the only foundations which legitimate the political order.

Now takes place the death of hard ideology, in the meaning used by Hannah Arendt. Arendt (1962) shows that political ideologies are able to generate explanations about any event, starting from a single premise (468) and using dialectical logic beyond any experience (470). For Arendt (1962), all the political ideologies contain elements of totalitarianism (470). Thus, “in their claim to total explanation, ideologies have the tendency to explain not what is, but what becomes, what is born and pass away [...] Ideologies are always oriented towards history [...] The claim to total explanation promises to explain all historical happenings, the total explanation of the past, the total knowledge of the present, and the reliable prediction of the

future” (Arendt 1962, 470). Then, ideologies claim that they could eliminate the false reality and reveal us the veritable reality - “ideological thinking becomes emancipated from the reality that we perceive with our five senses, and insists on a ‘truer’ reality concealed behind all perceptible things, dominating them from this place of concealment and requiring a sixth sense that enables us to become aware of it” (Arendt 1958, 470-471). Political ideologies (Arendt 1962) are characterized by an unrealistic consistency with their axiomatic premises - “ideological thinking orders facts into an absolutely logical procedure which starts from an axiomatically accepted premise, deducing everything else from it; that is, it proceeds with a consistency that exists nowhere in the realm of reality” (471).

The critiques proposed by Hannah Arendt in the sphere of political ideologies open a significant series of debates in post-war political philosophy. The post-war political philosophy is characterised by a large number of theoretical rejections of the claims of political ideology for holding the objective truth. In this context are sought discursive channels for obtaining inter-subjective validity of political judgements (Schwartz 2018). However, this perspective doesn’t mean the end of ideologies or their overcoming, but the abandonment of monistic and objective theses of the total ideology. Paradoxically, in fact, the end of ideology is intensified in postmodernism (based on both the collapse of strong thinking and the celebration of differences, diversity and variety). At the same time, this kind of process has as main effects the multiplying of political ideologies, internal diversification and ideological hybridization. In this context, we cannot observe the end of ideologies, but rather a process of multiplying.

The second significant episode for the theme of the end of the ideologies is evident when we refer to the collapse of the Communist bloc. It seems that the economic and political collapse of the communist order means the triumph of capitalism and liberalism. Thus, in the early of the 1990’s is reiterated the Hegel’s thesis of the end of the history, which includes the perspective of the end of the ideology. For exemplifying this episode we have to emphasize the importance

of Fukuyama's book – *The end of the history and the last man*. Here, we can identify, on the one side, a description of the struggle for recognition. The recognition, from several points of view, is the main feature for liberal democracies. The liberal democracy seems to have a decisive victory against other rivals ideologies. On the other side, the work of Francis Fukuyama (2006) presents an incursion into the world of the last man, of the dangers which characterize the dimension of both abnegation and supra-individual ideals. This kind of victory seems to be a Pyrrhic victory, because, as the same author shows in his later works, it is accompanied by the new social reality, profoundly altered by the new technologies, where the moral norms are characterized by an accelerated dissolution process (Fukuyama 1999). Moreover, the threats regarding human life and liberty are so powerful, that they could transform the future into a post-human one (Fukuyama 2017). But, in such a context, it doesn't seem to have any sense to theorize the end of the ideologies. At least, it is not a glorious sense, in which the progress of humanity through history ends triumphal, with the reaching of the luminous point sought for the centuries. Now we can stress the need of the reiteration of the social, moral and political guidelines. Political ideologies have to sustain and spread in the world all these social, political and moral principles.

Moreover, ideologies have been criticized from realistic positions. The history of modern political thought presents a large and significant list of authors which have tried to reveal us the real aspect of social and political reality and to heal ourselves from perturbing political ideologies (Mihailescu 2013, 52). These attempts fail every time. No one is able either to practice total objectivity and completely historical self-extraction or to impose a single axiological perspective to the political space. Thus, the thesis of the end of the ideologies doesn't refer to a post-ideological time or to a socio-political reality without ideologies. This thesis has several hypostases: i. a kind of desideratum revealed by the history as being unrealisable; ii. a description of the particular cultural, social, economic or political situation. This situation is characterised by the fact that a large number of ideologues have lost their incisiveness, have abandoned their

redemptive mission or have recognized the domination of any of them. Although we discuss about the loss of the legitimacy, in the meaning proposed by Arendt (1962), political ideologies remain an obvious presence. This situation is also very clear in the case of postmodern movement, which celebrates the weak thinking (Vattimo and Rovatti 2012), and where meta-narrations are regarded with suspicion (Lyotard 1984), and pragmatic and dialogical criteria are considered better situated for responding to the current social and political needs (Rorty 1995).

Moreover, the recent studies in political psychology and neurosciences demonstrate the presence of ideological schemas in political cognition and behaviour (Grecu 2016; Jost 2006). Therefore, ideologies cannot disappear, because “ideology is a ‘natural’ part of our psychological functioning and will always be present in one form or another” (Jost 2006, 667). But, political ideologies are characterized by a continuous diversification corresponding to the fragmentation process developed in the late modernity.

2. Diversity, incoherence and disorientation

This kind of diversification is seen as a complication of the sphere of ideological differentiations from modern European political process. This sphere is structured on the dichotomy between left and right. The left side is characterized by the ideologies of freedom, ideologies which sustain emancipation, ideologies of the progress, egalitarian ideologies, ideologies which sustain human rights, ideologies of the militant protest and liberation. The intellectual origins of all these ideologies are met in the Enlightenment’s cultural and political project (Mihailescu 2015). The right side is characterized by the ideologies of preserving values, traditions, order, authority, nations, cultural particularities, community specific, history or hierarchy. All these ideologies derive from both the Counter-Enlightenment movement and post Enlightenment positions (Mihailescu 2015). These differentiations are corresponding to fundamental human attitudes and dispositions, oriented to preservation or equality, which coordinates the whole scaffold of thoughts, values and actions (Jost 2006, 667). Thus, “there is reason to

assume that human beings have required and will continue to require the characteristics that are associated with the political left as well as the political right” (Jost 2006, 667).

Therefore, the mixture, fragmentation and ideological diversification from the last decades generate new ideological forms which disturb the coherence of ideological sphere. There are ideologies like multiculturalism which sustain both the preservation of memory, historical peculiarities and tradition, and the egalitarian militancy, the recognition of the equal value of all the cultures (Murphy 2012, 84-95). The interest for the understanding of the role played by the communitarian and cultural framework, related to the formation and self-expression of the man, generates a new doctrine, such as communitarianism. This doctrine offers both right, traditional and conservative hypostases and left, universal and egalitarian perspectives (Brugger 2004; Miller 1999). Similarly, the libertarianism, the descendant of the classical liberalism theorized by Locke, opens its political approach to left, centre and right (Vallentyne and van der Vossen 2014). Starting from the need of liberation from the state, the anarchism promoted diametrically opposed post-state perspective (Graham 2013; McLaughlin 2007, 155-168). Fundamentalism could pass from the glorification of the religious perspective and its political instrumentalization to the fanatic celebration of the free market and equality (Vincent 2010, 261-291). Populism builds its recent and remarkable ascension on the ability to hybridize with almost all other ideologies - it keeps their initial message and adds the appendix of the purity of the simple people, which must be saved from the corrupt political system and elites by a group of honest political representatives (Müller 2016, 1-6; Mudde 2004). Based on either the movements for sustaining marginal and particular identities, or the liberation from the great narrations and illusions of the modern world, postmodern movement develops a counter/post/ Enlightenment perspective; at the same time, the postmodern movement recommends the modernization of modernity (Mihailescu 2017).

However, the classical ideologies didn't remain stationary in the old ideological sphere. For exemplifying we can stress the case of liberalism. Initially, liberalism was an

illuminist ideology, focused on the defence of the individual rights and freedoms through the constitutional order (Sartori, 1987, 379-383). Nevertheless, in this moment we can underline a significant variety of the perspectives about what political liberalism can or should represent. There are several derivatives from classical liberalism with several significant differences: i. liberals, descendants from John Locke philosophy, interested in the generalisation of the individual natural rights; ii. positivist liberals, inspired from the epistemological optimism of Mill; iii. liberals, with origins in the philosophy of Kant, interested in deontological and procedural approach; iv. there are, also, liberals interested in keeping distance from the Enlightenment project, as liberals which sustain the moderate pluralism, politically pure liberals, which seek the reasonability theorized by Rawls and the consensus through overlapping; v. liberals which sustain the Berlin's opinion about radical pluralism; vi. liberals which stress the need of post-illuminist liberalism, which assumes the inevitability of the conflicts between different values conveyed in the contemporary societies, and whose management means a kind of *modus vivendi* based on negotiations in search of the peace; vii. liberals which are advocates of the deliberative democracy and public communication sphere (Gauss 2003, 1-5; 12-21). This classification could be completed by other political types of liberalism such as pragmatic liberalism proposed by Rorty, based on special type of irony (Rorty 1995). This type of ideology is a postmodern bourgeois liberalism that attempts to defend liberal practices and institutions by appealing to solidarity and empathy and not by theoretical foundations (Rorty 1983, 584-585).

In this complicated ideological framework, political orientation may be difficult. One of the major roles played by political ideology, in conditions of irremediable incertitude, is to be an informational short-cut, but this route, used by rational citizens for reducing the costs (Downs 1957, 98-100), seems to be in danger. When you are wandering around the world of various proposals and political actions, you try to identify guidelines for a better orientation. This fact could be easier

realized through political ideologies (Downs 1957, 99). If you cannot preserve the simplification produced by ideological labels, political ideologies are seen as complicated and costly tools. This is also available in the case of ideological incertitude. Thus, although there is a large number of ideologies and ideological hybrids, you don't know how to label, if your tag is a correctly one, or if you have coherence during the labelling process. The increasing of the ideological diversity could create difficulties for political parties, which, given their need of coherence with their past actions, tend towards a relative ideological immobility (Downs 1957, 110). However, when faced with the ideologically variety much beyond the level they were accustomed in normal social uncertainties, political parties could be disoriented and, in order to gain as many votes as possible, could accelerate the natural process of ideological changes and hybridization (Downs 1957, 100-102) beyond the limits of political rationality.

Also, the accelerated diversification and the increasing of the ideological hybridization could negatively influence the ability of making one of the key gestures that political life involves. This is reduced to the distinction between those with whom you have common visions or interests, and those with who you are in the position of rivalry or incompatibility. Schmitt (2007) shows, in one of his most important paper, that: "the specific political distinction to which political actions and motives can be reduced is that between friend and enemy. [...] The antithesis of friend and enemy corresponds to the relatively independent criteria of other antitheses: good and evil in the moral sphere, beautiful and ugly in the aesthetic sphere, and so on. [...] The distinction of friend and enemy denotes the utmost degree of intensity of a union or separation, of an association or dissociation." (26) Under the conditions of reducing, complication or changing the ideological borders is possible to create dysfunctions in the classical model left-right and to create overlaps or convergences between different ideologies (Swedlow 2008). However, it is expected that in the case of ideological confusion the separation between friend and rivals cannot be done with sufficient clarity.

3. Cognitive bias and the diversity of political ideologies

This section intends to illustrate that ideological diversity could create both cognitive dissonances and alienated political behaviors. As mental representation of the social and political world, political ideology has to create the guidelines for political orientation. This is the main purpose of the political ideologies: to create premises and guidelines for political orientation (in classical manner: left/ right). Also, the ideological representation has to create an optimum field for political assessment and political action. Moreover, political ideology could be seen as a mental short-cut for understanding, explaining and acting in political world. In modern societies, political ideologies were the main vector of the political culture. In contrast, we can observe that the new ideological agenda is the “effect” of the social and political demands. This dual quality of the contemporary ideological process (cause for political culture; effect of the social demands) creates premises for defining political ideology in terms of ambiguity/ incertitude.

For arguing the impact of the political ideology at psychological level, we propose to define and analyze several perspectives regarding social and political cognition. Starting to these theoretical assumptions, the research will create the nexus between cognitive bias, lack of accuracy and the new sphere of ideological diversity. As psychological process, cognition is seen as a mental process regarding the manner of internally storing of information, recognizing objects, learning, using language, reasoning or navigating (Druckman and Lacey 1989, 7). We can underline that the main attribute of the cognitive process is related to memory (ability to store information). In this respect, human memory “is not a static container of corpuscles called items, neither is it a store in a technical sense. It is, on the contrary, a highly dynamic and active organ, the function of which serves the orientation and regulation of all behavior.” (Klix 1980, 11) The human behavior could be analyzed in a dualistic manner: cognition (as expression of rationality) and emotion (as expression of sensitivity). “We mean that whenever a behavior is occurring, the central nervous system (CNS) is processing cognitive-data

content, either consciously or unconsciously, and the feeling sensitivity associated with the cognitive content, also either consciously or unconsciously. Both the cognitive component and the feeling-sensitivity component form part of the experienced-memorized knowledge we call beliefs” (Perez-Alvarez and Timoneda-Gallart 2007, 5). From the neurobiological point of view, cognition is seen as both psychologically and physiologically, based on functional neural networks. Moreover, the neural network is the key-concept for explaining different social political or biological behaviors. In the field of neurosciences, researchers create the equivalence between cognition and mind – “as a set of functions for processing information” (Brook and Mandik 2005, 3). Also, the main attribute of cognitive process consists in learning and thinking (Fuster 2005, 88-89).

The nexus between political sphere and political cognition is realized by political ideology. Although the concept political ideology is used in different political and social context we have to stress that “but it is notoriously vague” (Van Dijk 2006a, 728). Moreover, political ideology has to be seen as a complex channel for transferring political knowledge through political discourse. In this context, political ideology is a specific form of social representation shared by a social group. If we define political ideology in terms of social representation we have to stress the fact that political cognition is a “special kind of social belief systems, stored in long-term memory. Socially as well as cognitively these ideological belief systems are socially shared by the members of specific social groups, or ideological communities.” (Van Dijk 2006a, 729) As social beliefs, “ideologies often appear in polarized thought, opinions, action or discourse. This suggests that somewhere in the representation of ideology, we probably find basic categories that represent this opposition between Us and Them.” (Van Dijk 2001, 14)

Although the contemporary researchers in the field of neurobiology consider political ideology a kind of „list” of social and political ideas, we emphasize the idea that this type of social representation has a proper structure. In this context political ideology could control the dynamics of social and political knowledge inside the group. Moreover, political

ideology should shape the social principles, political convictions, attitudes and beliefs. This fact is concretized in political discourse and social practice. In accord with social representations, political ideologies are located in social or semantic memory. Thus, is very important to describe the role played by mental models for understanding political reality through political discourse and ideology. In this sphere mental models couldn't address and define social or political facts than could represent facts as people define them. Starting from these assumptions, mental models express the subjective opinions or personal manners for understanding political reality. Beyond mental models, Van Dijk underlines the role played by context models in spreading political ideologies. "People not only form mental models of the events they talk *about*, but also of the events they *participate* in, including the communicative event of which their ongoing discourse is an inherent part. [...] These subjective, mental representations of the communicative event and the current social situation as it constrains current discourse, will be called context models, or simply contexts" (Van Dijk 2001, 17-18). Political discourse creates premises for political cognition. This relation between political discourse, political ideology and political cognition depends on the context models. In the cognitive approach, context models refer to personal or individual political knowledge and beliefs.

Another important feature of the context models, related to political ideology, is represented by the fact that this context is seen as an interface between social structure and political discourse (Van Dijk 2006b, 163). Contexts refer to personal and subjective representation and couldn't be observable. Thus, "defined as mental constructs of relevant aspects of social situations –influence what people say and especially *how* they do so " (Van Dijk 2006b, 165). In this meaning, context models could be seen as the "pragmatic understanding" of the political discourse. Beyond this feature, context facilitates understanding and interaction and, also, controls the discursive understanding and production (Van Dijk 2006b, 170-173). Synthesizing, "there is a close relationship between discourse, ideology and politics, in the sense that politics is usually

discursive as well as ideological, and ideologies are largely reproduced by text and talk” production (Van Dijk 2006a, 739).

Another perspective related to political cognition consists in describing and explaining the role played by the biological architecture. This kind of structure facilitates human interaction, social relationships and orientation in the world. Practically, researchers have observed a high level of similarity among human cognition and primate cognition. In this meaning, Michael Tomasello argued that: “human cognition is a specific, in the literal meaning of the word, form of primate cognition. Human beings share the majority of their cognitive skills and knowledge with other primates - including both the sensory-motor world of objects in their spatial, temporal, categorical, and quantitative relations and the social world of behaving conspecifics in their vertical (dominance) and horizontal (affiliative) relationships” (Tomasello 1999, 201). Thus, an important aspect of the human cognition is represented by the orientation in the world, evaluation of the world, social behaviors and emotional responses. Related to the emotional dimension, scholars demonstrated that there is a strong association between cognitive skills and emotional mood. Although there are two different biological systems for emotion (amygdala) and for cognition (hippocampus and neocortex), in practice there is a strong correlation between emotional and cognitive sphere. “The (conscious) experience of emotion is the product of simultaneous projections of the affective and cognitive products into working memory.” (Mandler 1999, 375)

Starting from this general view of the cognitive process, this section will underline the social dimension of cognition. In association with the social perspective, we intend to discuss a particular case of the cognitive process: *political cognition*. From this point of view, both affect and cognition are influenced by “people’s social motives and intentions” (Forgas 2001, 19). Social cognition could be seen as a mechanism for selecting and processing social strategies and interpersonal behavior. Social cognition is reduced to people’s knowledge about the social world. Also, we can insert in this sphere judgments about social situations and individual decision in different social contexts (Moskowitz 2005). Beyond this general approach, social

cognition depends on the cultural variables (Vallée-Tourangeau and Villejoubert 2013) or the linguistic/communication factors (Chemero 2009).

One of the most important normative approaches in the field of the social cognition is represented by the “sharing reality” theory. For Gordon Moskowitz, a common social experience generates a particular form of social cognition, based on “shared reality”. Moreover, “shared experience links specific interpersonal relationships to specific cognitions, thereby simultaneously binding social relationships and maintaining the individual's grasp of a dynamic world.” (Moskowitz 2001, 8) This form of social cognition derives from the mutual understanding of reality. For example, people who are parents share the same social and cultural experience with other parents. This is a volunteer and motivated psychological activity to understand their personal and inter-subjective experience. The same case could be met for the political party membership. In this situation, the quality of membership derives from the common ideological perspective shared by individuals involved in political activity. In contrast to these situations, we can stress the same social and political experience for the citizens from authoritarian political regimes. In this case, citizens are exposed to the cult of leader's personality, non-democratic political symbols, political mythology and similar forms of professional activities. In this case, we can discuss about a model imposed by political authorities/leadership to create the same level of cognitive bias or cognitive retard/delay regarding political system. This theoretical model shows that relational connections between individuals are necessary for creating social relationships and for generating social cognitions (positive or negative) (Moskowitz 2001, 10).

From the constructivist point of view, all social objects are mentally and socially constructed. Objects from reality exist if only an external observer accords sense and significance to these objects. In this meaning, “so far social cognitive neuroscience has been mainly, if not exclusively, focused on interaction between minds and brains [...] Being material and social at once, social objects may serve as a platform to

understand how interacting minds/brains” (Becchio and Bertone 2014, 131). Social conventions and social intentions generate significance to social objects. People intentions make things what they are. Deriving from these premises we sustain the thesis that social cognition operates with “socially constructed/constituted” objects (Millikan 2014, 27-41).

If social cognition operates with “socially constructed/constituted” objects, political cognition operates with “politically constituted” objects. In this field could be inserted objects like: political parties, political institutions, political rules, human rights, state intervention in society/economy etc. Thus, all the objects which form the whole sphere of the political cognition are placed in several theoretical schema/representation embodied in political ideologies. Beyond classical division into left/right, friend/enemy, power/opposition (and other dualistic perspectives of the public life) political ideology tries to order political objects and to guide citizens in political life. This social and mental schema is useful for a simple and accurate understanding of the social and political rules. Despite the type of political regime, political ideology could be very well integrated in the sphere of social representation and political cognition.

Political cognition could be explained through the theory of “sharing reality”. Citizens with common political experiences tend to develop the same cognitive shema. Lupia et.al demonstrated that the common experiences of understanding the role played by the political objects in the public space create a common mental disposition (Lupia, Mccubbins and Popkin 2000). Citizens will engage in different forms of cognition when political circumstances will generate specific emotional moods (Lilleker 2014, 215). In this case, we can observe several forms of political cognition both in elections and in the case of public plebiscites. This kind of cognition generates, in political practice, political beliefs, attitudes and behaviors. The size of cognitions, the structure of beliefs and the type of political behavior are integrated in the sphere of *political sophistication* (Luskin 1987, 857-860).

The contemporary ideological framework has a negative impact in political cognition. For several scholars, at the psychological level, we can observe elements of cognitive

inaccuracy. The end of classical ideological perspective creates a lack of logical consistency and internal coherence for ordinary citizens (Jost 2006). Another psychological impact of the ideological diversity consists in the lack of the cognitive mobilization. “A second and related claim is that most people are unmoved by ideological appeals and that abstract credos associated with liberalism and conservatism lack motivational potency and behavioral significance” (Jost 2006, 651). This fact is in opposition with natural psychological predisposition for liberalism and conservatism. Recent trends from neurosciences demonstrate that there are two different neurophysiologic processes associated with liberal and conservative attitude. Ideological appeals have to activate both neurophysiologic areas and social behaviors. Liberal attitudes are associated with anterior cingulate cortex ($p < 0.001$) and conservative attitudes are related to right amygdala ($p < 0.05$) (Kanai, Feilden, Firth and Rees 2011, 678). “Moreover, the amplitude of event-related potentials reflecting neural activity associated with conflict monitoring in the anterior cingulate cortex (ACC) is greater for liberals compared to conservatives” (Amodio et al. 2007, 1246-1247). But, the end of classical ideological perspectives could generate psychological ambiguity and behavioral disorder. In the traditional manner, ideology reflects “an organization of opinions, attitudes, and values — a way of thinking about man and society” (Adorno et al. 1950). The new ideological hybrid, with elements of liberalism, socialism, conservatism, populism etc., generates inaccuracy and cognitive bias when we think about the role of man and society. We have to underline the fact that only traditional ideologies create different ways of expressing political attitudes and specific, but coherent, manner of understanding the role played by the citizens in social reality. Evidences from political reality reflect a strong statistical correlation between political preferences for American president and ideological perspective (Jost 2006, 658-660).

As comprehensive manner of understanding the social and political world, the new framework of political ideologies could create premises for cognitive bias and errors in attribution. Generally speaking, both personal disposition and environment influence the crystallization of the cognitive

errors. “Our exploration of the intuitive psychologist’s shortcomings must start with his general tendency to overestimate the importance of personal or dispositional factors relative to environmental influences [...] He too readily infers broad personal dispositions and expects consistency in behavior or outcomes across widely disparate situations and contexts. He jumps to hasty conclusions upon witnessing the behavior of his peers, overlooking the impact of relevant environmental forces and constraints.” (Ross 1977, 184) A large number of political ideologies could represent an environment variable for citizens. It generates radical views on political process or overconfidence in different doctrinarian perspectives. If we see political ideologies as situational factors, we can stress the idea that any situational factor could determine, with a high level of likelihood, errors in attribution or correspondence bias (Gawronski 2004).

Beyond the cognitive psychological approach, we have to underline the fact that political cognition implies, naturally, a high level of emotion. In this respect, individuals have political emotions related to the classical ideological sphere: left/right. Conservative citizens are more predisposed to develop emotional attachment to traditional values, than while socialists are more predisposed for sustaining with enthusiasm social progress. Academic studies reflect the fact that this cognitive strategy is genetically transmitted. Starting to these assumptions we can observe that the large number of political ideologies could create confusion or ambiguity in elections, in political preferences or in political decisions. The normal cognitive process related to political sphere is characterized by “political sophistication”. In this meaning, political sophistication refers to the existence of the clear cognitive schema. The role played by this cognitive schema is to intermediate political orientation and evaluation. Without the main guidelines of the classical ideologies citizens could have difficulties in political orientation. In the field of political schema we can integrate the political ideologies. In this meaning, “given the assumption that social representations such as knowledge and attitudes of groups are organized by a non-trivial structure, it is plausible also that ideologies are not merely a list of basic beliefs. The acquisition, the changes and

the uses of ideologies in social practices suggest that we should try to find schemata or other structural patterns that are typical for ideological systems.” (Van Dijk 1998, 65) For social and political psychologists, ideologies have an important cognitive impact. However, the cognitive component of the political ideologies is based on several criteria as: i. ideologies are system of beliefs; ii. ideologies reduce the social complex phenomena; iii. ideologies are a special type of social shared mental representations; iv. ideologies have social foundations (Van Dijk 1998, 126).

According to these theoretical statements, a large number of political ideologies could negatively affect the system of beliefs and the mental short-cuts about social and political reality. First of all, a large number of political ideologies create superficial beliefs about social and political life. It's very difficult to have a strong, stable and accurate system of beliefs when you have a large list of doctrines, characterized by hybridization processes. Human brain (mind) functions normally when it has the ability of distinguishing between few options. When we have a large number of political options we assist to the mental process of overconfidence and inaccuracy. Thus, the postmodern world, based on the weak thinking, is the propitious framework for generating intellectual confusion or ambiguity. The large numbers of ideological approaches create premises for expanding social or political reality. We can remark the bias between the main features of the ideology (to reduce the complexity of social reality for a better understanding) and the postmodern perspective, based on the increasing number of the social and political approaches. However, it is very difficult to create a realistic representation about the political life when you have different, divergent and dissipated ideological perspectives.

Synthesizing, the cognitive component of the political ideologies is influenced due to the ideological mixture, fragmentation and hybridization. Recent trends from cognitive and neurocognitive social sciences reflect that behavioral patterns are strongly related to classical ideologies. There are two main cortical responses when an individual is exposed to political stimuli. In this case, we can stress the idea of the

correlation between brain architecture and ideological perspective. Although, in contemporary political thinking, where we meet a large number of ideological perspectives, is very difficult to modulate political process and political decision in accord to all these perspectives. Moreover, several new ideologies are unable to offer economic “therapy” or to manage deep social problems. Thus, we sustain the fact that ideological laxity, ideological fragmentation or the ideological cross-cutting process could create cognitive difficulties for the simple citizens.

4. Conclusion

This article sustains that the ideological diversification could interfere with individuals’ psychological processes influencing their political attitudes and behaviors. However, in the last few decades, we are the witnesses of the crystallization of the large number of political ideologies. But, no one is able either to practice total objectivity or to impose a single axiological guideline for political life. Therefore, the current doctrinarian mixture disturbs the coherence of the political ideology sphere. We observe several new ideologies which sustain in various degrees elements of the classical liberalism, conservatism and socialism. This kind of ideological approach could have a negative impact on political cognition, creating disorientation and overconfidence. This could be a way for sustaining radical political perspectives. The large number of political ideologies creates superficial beliefs about social and political life. It’s very difficult to have a strong, stable and accurate system of beliefs when you have a large list of fragmented political doctrines. The revival of the classical ideological approach could be a good “therapy” for reducing the political cognitive bias.

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