

# Economic, Political and Social Identity in the European Union

*Professor John Wilton*

## Lecture 3

### **Social Constructivism and an E.U. identity**

# Lecture 3

Two perspectives about the way in which identity is produced are:

- ESSENTIALIST
- CONSTRUCTIVIST

# Lecture 3

## *1. ESSENTIALISM*

- an approach that looks for the  
‘essence’ or ‘true core’ of  
objects, values,  
identities and cultures

# Lecture 3

## *2. CONSTRUCTIVISM*

- identities not ‘fixed’ or static, but instead should be understood as a process of ‘becoming’ within which they are continually mediated and influenced by other factors, built up – for example, socially – or constructed

## Lecture 3

- citizen identity is 'constructed' every day by the social determinants of our actions
- Constructivism is based upon the concept of

***IDEATIONAL SOCIALISATION***

# Lecture 3

Constructivists hold the view that the ‘building blocks’ of international reality are *IDEATIONAL*, as well as material

- in other words, ideas, as much as experience and actuality, shape international reality

(- the ideas, beliefs, norms and values of elites, as much as the actuality and experiences of individual citizens, shape and form the reality of everyday life)

# Lecture 3

E.U social and cultural policies

PLUS

economic growth and stability

(material interests)

*produce*

‘citizen interest’

+

E.U. cultural and social images and institutions

= socially constructed E.U. identity