

Economic, Political and Social Identity in the European Union

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Lecture 4

**New Institutionalism,
Behaviouralism, and an E.U.
Identity**

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1. Theory of New Institutionalism and its utility in the construction of an E.U. identity.
2. Theory of Behaviouralism and its relationship to the construction of an E.U. identity

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1. NEW INSTITUTIONALISM

- grew out of greater concentration on attempting to understand the role of institutions in human behaviour
- institutions govern the behaviour of men and women, giving rise to determinate results, i.e. policy outputs or social outcomes

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- Institutions shape and inform politics, which in turn influences ideological beliefs, values, and social and economic developments
- Institutions provide symbols, rituals and rules so that people can interpret the choices they have and decide between them – choices ‘framed’ through values.

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Three main variants of New Institutional theory:

1. Historical institutionalism
2. Rational choice institutionalism
3. Sociological institutionalism

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Sociological institutionalism

- institutions are crucial mediators, both between the individual and the world at large (society itself) and between different individuals.
- institutions allow individual citizens to make sense of what they, and others, do – give us rules, norms, customs and values that shape and influence the pattern of everyday life.

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Importance of institutions for outcomes in society derive from *intrinsic* or *extrinsic* aspects:

- the *intrinsic* importance of institutions in their own right – their existence and consequent ‘institutional’ effect on society in promoting their self-interest, reflecting their self-image;
- or, their *extrinsic* effect – the resultant consequences upon society of the operations of institutions

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BEHAVIOURALISM

Talcott Parsons, *The Social System* (1951) – linked the behaviour of individuals and groups in societies to the social system and social structures in societies

- all societies constituted a social system, within which operated a number of sub-systems
- normal state of any social system was one of *equilibrium* – system always adjusted itself to restore state of *equilibrium*

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Talcott Parsons' *structural functionalism* theory:

1. *pattern-maintenance function* (managing tension within the system) performed by its cultural sub-system;
2. *adaptation or distributive function* performed by the economic sub-system;
3. *integration function* (co-ordinating inter-relationships between members of system) performed by legal and regulatory sub-system;
4. *goal-attainment function* (mobilising people and resources to achieve collective ends) performed by political sub-system

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Structural functionalism theory and an E.U. citizen identity?

1. E.U. institutions promoting the *pattern-maintenance function* to develop an E.U. ‘cultural identity’ alongside/complimentary to, national and regional cultures – manage tension between E.U. and national identity?
2. *Integration function* of an E.U. social system assist development of E.U. identity by co-ordinating inter-relationships between members of the system through E.U. legal and regulatory sub-system?