

Economic, Political and Social Identity in the European Union

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Lecture 8

**A European Union identity in
the future?**

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- the '*narrative*' of political, socio-cultural and economic development of the E.U.
- '*narrative*' will relate to, and inform E.U. citizens of, a multi-level process of E.U. economic, socio-cultural and political development
 - at 'heart' of '*narrative*' will be 'sense of belonging' based on shared values, beliefs, symbols

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- Not ‘one European people’, but a number of ‘European peoples’
 - comprising ‘multiple identities’
 - having ‘multi-layered identities’

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Three dimensions of the E.U. ‘top-down’ policies designed to encourage E.U. identity:

1. the development of rights and citizenship;
2. the politics of ‘belonging’ and ‘symbols’;
3. the development of, and support for, cross-national networks and co-operation.

(Laffan, B. ‘The politics of Identity and Political Order in Europe, in *Journal of Common Market Studies*, vol. 34, no.1, August 1996)

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EURO

- design of coins and notes symbolise a ‘common European face’ – representing a map of the E.U. against a background of transverse lines to which are attached the stars of the E.U. flag

The 1, 2 and 5 cent coins emphasise Europe’s place in the world.

The 10, 20 and 50 cent coins present the E.U. as a gathering of nations

The 1 and 2 Euro coins depict Europe without frontiers

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If E.U. 'citizen identity' is to be constructed the E.U. must be 'experienced' by the citizen in his or her everyday life:

1. E.U. must make itself felt in (be part of) education and culture, news and communications media
2. E.U. must protect the rights of the individual and strengthen democracy
3. E.U. must have a set of institutions that have legitimacy and transparency (legitimacy achieved through the 'will' of the people)
4. E.U. image must be one that demonstrates the values of European society, the solidarity of European people, but also the diversity of European people and society

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E.U. has to be aware/conscious that positive citizen identification as European is a 2 way process:

- a) individual (self) identification – (*AGENCY*)
- b) collective identification – (*STRUCTURE*)

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Future E.U. ‘citizen identity’:

- a) Hybrid (hybridisation – E.U. ‘grafting on’ to national identity)?;
- b) Layer cake? (many horizontal layers – E.U., national, regional, city/town, ethnic?)
- c) Marble cake? (streams of differing identities, fluid, inter-mixing, and ever-changing? – multiple types – geographical, ethnic, cultural?)