

# LECTURE 1

## *IDENTITY*

### - THE 'NARRATIVE OF THE NATION'

- *national history*
- *literature*
- *through the media*
- *through popular culture*

these provide:

- *a set of stories, images, historical events, national symbols and rituals*

... .. which represent:

- *the shared experiences, triumphs and disasters, which give meaning to the nation*

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## **SOCIAL DEVELOPMENT:**

- establishing over time a greater degree of mutual acceptance or tolerance amongst the different peoples (different populations of each state) of the European Union.
- through processes such as:
  - *education*
  - *cultural exchanges*
  - *communication processes*
  - *economic and political processes*
  - *social celebrations/anniversaries/festivals*

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EUROPEAN COMMISSION SURVEY JUNE 2001

### PERCEPTIONS OF THE EUROPEAN UNION

1. There was a widespread feeling of a loss of values, and a loss of a previously cohesive social fabric.
  - a dilution of the values of solidarity and community
  - increasing drug use
  - increasing crime and insecurity
  - a fear of the destabilisation of society by uncontrollable immigration
  - isolation of young people
  
2. There was a feeling that economic liberalism had gone too far, or had gone wrong
  - people were concerned about the deterioration of essential public services (health, education, public transport)
  - people were concerned about the growing gap between rich and poor
  - BUT the general overall improvement in the economic situation in most of the Member States was rarely mentioned.

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In order to construct a European Union 'identity' the European Union must be 'experienced' by the citizen in his or her everyday life:

- The European Union must make itself felt in (be part of) education and culture, news, and communications
- The European Union must also protect the rights of the individual and strengthen democracy
- The European Union must have a set of institutions which have legitimacy (a legitimacy achieved through the 'will' of the people)
- The image of the European Union must be one that demonstrates the solidarity of European people and the values (diverse values) of European society

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## *OBSTACLES*

1. A growing diversity, differences, in the level of socio-economic development across the European Union
  - this threatens to obscure the basic commonality of interests
  
2. Processes of profound structural economic change, which brings a rise in unemployment in some regions, and in turn this threatens the already overstretched social systems and social stability in the European Union
  
3. These two things (above) fuel a rise in nationalism in some states
  - through fear and anxiety about economic and social issues (unemployment, immigration)
  - fear and anxiety tempt people to seek refuge in a return to the nation-state and national symbols, rather than transnational symbols