Ideology and Identity in Constructivist Foreign Policy Analysis

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Chapter 1

Introduction: Ideology and Identity in Constructivist Foreign Policy Analysis

[Partial Draft]

Ten days after the terrorist attacks of September 11, 2001, President George W. Bush spoke before a joint session of Congress. After the events of that day, he said, "night fell on a different world." It was a fact so obvious and so often repeated that it became a truism, even a cliché in the months that followed: 9/11 was the day that everything changed.

But it wasn't true. That al-Qaeda had the means and intention to use violence against American interests around the world, and that international terrorist organizations might attempt to attack the United States on its own soil, were realities well understood long before 9/11. The strategic balance of military forces in the world was not altered. The U.S. economy was damaged but not permanently or fundamentally, the U.S. stock market recovering its losses in a matter of weeks. Compared to the Japanese bombing of Pearl Harbor in the last days of 1941, which did significantly change the strategic balance of military forces in the world, the material impact of September 11 on world politics was minimal.

At the same time, it is clearly not the case that the 9/11 attacks were unimportant to world history simply because they did not mark a major power shift within the international system. Their impact was enormous, but the fact that it occurred without a commensurate change in the global balance of power suggests a critical point for the analysis of international relations in the contemporary world: perceptions matter, often as much or even more than objective, material power.

What changed after 9/11 was not the world, but the way in which Americans saw the world and understood the threats and opportunities it presented. After coming to grips with the horrific reality of what had occurred, millions of Americans struggled to understand what it meant, what it should be interpreted to say about their nation's place in global politics, in the past and in the future. Like Pearl Harbor, September 11 will be a seminal moment for American society for a generation, the event and the image that is taken as the starting point for understanding the appropriate purposes and means of American foreign policy in the years ahead. The same could be said about Pearl Harbor as well; while the military damage done there had major strategic implications, the greatest historical importance of that attack resulted from the change in perception it engendered among U.S. citizens. For a generation, the images of destroyers burning became a shorthand for understanding what to do in the world, and how to avoid the mistakes of the past. September 11 will likely come to play the same role in the psyche of a new generation of Americans.

In both cases, however, the experience of the events and the nature of their causes will likely be far more complex than the lessons distilled from them. Pearl Harbor is remembered to mean that the United States must be strong, engaged in the world, and intolerant of aggressors–but the emergence of this consensus was well underway before the end of 1941. President Franklin

Roosevelt had been actively advocating for greater U.S. engagement in the European war, Congressional isolationism was already in full retreat, and the United States had been mobilizing its resources and supplying the British and Russian war effort for a year before the attacks. Pearl Harbor became a cultural icon at almost the same moment it became an historic event, and because it did, contemporary culture has lost the context of evolving American attitudes toward the world in which it occurred, even as the event itself has come to symbolize that very change in attitudes. In much the same way, September 11, 2001 may well be remembered as the day on which 21st century American foreign policy began. But if it is, its meaning will represent a complex set of beliefs about the U.S. and the world, crafted by U.S. leaders interpreting the events of 9/11 into a coherent, holistic understanding of the world in the months and years that followed.

This study will seek to explain U.S. foreign policy in the post-9/11 ere by employing constructivist theory to illustrate the process by which U.S. leaders and American society have come to comprehend the nature of the international system in which they exist and their relationship to that system, in so doing creating the socio-cognitive basis for action within that system. It will argue that in order to understand the role of America in the world in this period it is necessary to consider not just the relative power relationship that exists between the United States and other actors in the international system, but also the ideational framework through which U.S. leaders have understood the world around them. The first question that it seeks to answer is simple: why has the United States undertaken the policies it has in the years since 9/11? But it will argue that the answer to this question is far more complex than previous generations of international relations scholarship, based in the rational-materialist power premises of neorealism, would have conceded. In this era as in every era, the nature of the international environment in which the United States or any state acts can be apprehended by national leaders only through a socio-cognitive structure in which, it will be suggested, national identity and ideology are critical variables in determinations of friend and foe, threat and opportunity. Who the United States is, who its friends and enemies are, and what is possible and desirable in the environment in which they interact, are determined not strictly by material, objective power realities but by the process through which reality is understood and represented by state leaders. In this process, U.S. leaders in every era reach understandings of U.S. interests by appealing to a set of traditional ideals which are to a large extent consistent over time but which are interpreted in different ways in each historical era in order to make sense and frame a coherent narrative about recent historical events. It will be argued here that the administration of George W. Bush in the years since 9/11 has behaved in some ways much as every presidential administration has behaved, at least in times of international crisis: it drew conclusions about the nature of the international environment and the identity of other actors in the system, and of the United States itself, but referencing and interpreting a set of broad, traditional American ideological principles. It then framed a narrative about the causes, consequences, and meaning of recent events and the appropriate course of future policy based on a set of assertions about the identity of the United States and the international Others with whom it was interacting.

Part I of this text will examine the intellectual history of American foreign relations in the twentieth century, focusing on the emergence of constructivism in its various forms in the post-cold war era. It will develop the concepts of national identity and ideology as operationalizable tools in foreign policy analysis, establishing the theoretical context for an examination of

contemporary U.S. foreign policy and prescriptive argument that follow in Parts II and III respectively.

In its emphasis on ideational determinants of foreign policy, this study adds to a body of literature in IR theory which has grown significantly in the last two decades. "Culture and identity are staging a dramatic comeback in social theory and practice at the end of the twentieth century," Yosef Lapid has written. "A swing of the pendulum toward culture and identity is strikingly evident in post-Cold War IR theorizing."[1] John Kurt Jacobsen has suggested that "after a long period of indifference, even hostility, toward ideational explanations in political science, the time for ideas has come around once again." The reasons for this revival are "a discontent with the inability of rational interest-based models to explain, let alone predict, policy outcomes (except by resorting to a host of auxiliary assumptions) and the evident onset of another era of profound socioeconomic change." Jacobsen argues that new ideational literature presents a formidable challenge to the "actual softness that hides behind the seeming toughness of rational choice theories which see individuals as calculating interests," and concludes that "beliefs about the connections between interests and policies are at least as important as the nature of the interests themselves."[2]

Since the end of the cold war, constructivism has challenged the realist assertion that states have only one essential identity--sovereign, self-interested, competitors for power--by contending that the perspectives of international actors are socially as well as materially determined, and that identities and interests are intersubjective and malleable. While for realists the structure of the international system is static and state power determines the course of history, for constructivists, comprehending the perspective of the Other is critical to dispute resolution. As Jack Snyder has suggested,

> Constructivists believe that debates about ideas are the fundamental building blocks of international life… People's understanding of their interests depends on the ideas they hold… Recent events seem to vindicate the theory's resurgence; a theory that emphasizes the role of ideologies, identities, persuasion, and transnational networks is highly relevant to understanding the post-9/11 world.[3]

This text will employ a variant of constructivism focusing on the intersubjective identities of actors in the international system. Alexander Wendt has argued that such identities constitute "cognitive schemas that enable an actor to determine 'who I am/we are' in a situation, and positions in a social role structure of shared understandings and expectations."[4] Similarly, Ted Hopf has agued that "a state's own domestic identities constitute a social cognitive structure that makes threats and opportunities, enemies and allies, intelligible, thinkable, and possible."[5] Definitions of identity are thus crucial to understanding the ebb and flow of international politics for constructivists, since actors comprehend their own self-interest in large part through their assessment of their own identities in relation to those of others in the system.

Foreign policy analysis from an identity-constructivist perspective thus begins by asking how international actors see and define themselves, other actors, and the environment in which they interact, with the assumption that these perceptions tend to determine policy. The implications of constructivist theory for the practice of global politics can and should be more fully explored,

and this text will argue that as a body of theory constructivism suggests a clear agenda for the political scientist's role as contributor to public discourse: to convey the importance of understanding the culturally subjective contexts within which the perceptions and preferences of actors in the international system are created and employed. Since the 9/11 attacks the Bush administration has pursued a series of policies which have consistently failed to recognize the cultural and historical contexts from which other actors view the international system. This text will argue that this approach has been the primary cause of the most notable failures in recent U.S. foreign policy and the marked decline in American influence in the world, and that that there is thus a critical need for wider understanding of the intersubjective, intercultural, and socially constructed nature of international politics in the making of U.S. foreign policy at this moment in history.

Realism and Constructivism across Two Centuries

In his seminal 1953 work Ideals and Self Interest in America's Foreign Relations, Robert Osgood suggested a pattern by which change had occurred in the first half of the twentieth century in U.S. foreign policy. Osgood reached the conclusion that there are a variety of factors influencing the way in which the United States defines its foreign policies, national self-interest being only one among them. He suggested, in short, that in the creation of American foreign policy, ideas, values, and perceptions matter.

Osgood's argument centered on the notion that paradigmatic understandings of the nation's proper role in the world come to hold sway for long periods, based on their ability to describe a coherent and believable view of the world more adequately than competing views. The creation of foreign policy was the result of a contest between different systems of beliefs, in which periodic debates eventually yielded consensus understandings of the nation's proper role in the world; a dominant rationale emerged to provide the intellectual paradigm for the foreign policy of an era, until circumstances change in such a way as to call its propriety into question. American foreign policy was thus marked by long periods of consensus, punctuated by periods of redefinition occurring when consensus beliefs no longer seem effective in explaining and dealing with the international environment. While American interests remained relatively consistent throughout this process in Osgood's view, they might be properly perceived or ignored to a greater or lesser degree by the dominant paradigm of a given era.[6]

Left unresolved by this notion of national interest, however, is the fact that while few in policy circles seem to disagree that there is a "national interest" and that it ought to be pursued, few agree about what it is. In this problem is the stage for every major debate about foreign policy in the United States in the twentieth century. Osgood suggested that the preeminent goal defining national interest was "national survival,"[7] but the possibility of disagreement makes even this seemingly self-evident statement ultimately hollow--because in the American foreign policy community of 1938, for example, none of the parties to the debate believed that they were arguing against national survival, but different individuals were nevertheless able to reach very different conclusions about proper policy. They operated from different assumptions, core values, and views of the world which led them to divergent understandings of threat and opportunity, and thus to different policy prescriptions. Osgood's equation of the national interest

is unsatisfactory because it does not take account of this fact: that the national interest, to some degree and in every era, can be found only in the eye of the beholder.

Since it is possible and even common for national leaders to misperceive the demands of national interest, it is also likely that differing definitions will often be in competition within the foreign policy community, and policy is therefore heavily dependent on the assumptions, beliefs, and values of leaders. Conclusions about America's place in the world emerge largely from the observer's understanding of America itself, its founding, its philosophy, and its history. This has been the case on all sides of each of the pivotal debates over foreign policy throughout American history, with proponents of very different policy orientations arriving at their conclusions from different conceptions and interpretations of these factors. Definitions of national interest and threat depend on perceptions and judgments that are not determined through rational calculation alone. Emotions and values find their way in, simply because analysts and policymakers are human.

The observation that there is often conflict over the definitions of national interest helps to explain, as systemic theories cannot, why there is a lag between changing international circumstances and national policies, since even interests which are assumed to be absolute will not necessarily be perceived correctly. In order to understand this process it is necessary to contend with the complexity of ideology and identity, the intellectual lens through which events abroad are perceived, the set of assumptions from which definitions of power and national interest in given situations are extrapolated, the beliefs and values that underlie concrete policy choices.

Thus, in explaining the history of American foreign relations, the traditional realist view of states as unitary, rational actors pursuing national interests defined as power is inadequate. Realism emerged as the dominant paradigm in modern international relations scholarship during the cold war. But profound disagreements over the most elemental structure of national interests in the post-cold war era suggest that the cold war consensus may have prejudiced the view of those who observed it, leaving the impression that a broadly held understanding of the demands of national interest is the norm, and that a clear definition of interest will be readily approachable more often than is usually the case in more typical times. In the absence of the cold war consensus, a different, more confusing reality reemerged, in which threat, opportunity, security, and power are more often matters of debate, their meaning dependent on the subjective value judgments of individuals–-in which, in other words, ideals and interests are theoretically separable but never entirely separate in practice. The “national interest,” to some degree and in every era, is only in the eye of the beholder.

The importance of individual beliefs and ideals in the foreign policy process suggests that the realist admonition to pursue the national interest, defined as power, through moderate means may be the way states ought to act, but it is not necessarily the way they do act. Though Osgood assumed there was such a thing as "the national interest" in any given case, he was forced to conclude that decision-makers may not perceive it correctly. It is possible to define the national interest too narrowly or broadly, ignoring ideals or emphasizing them excessively.

The possibility of misperception undermines the explanatory power of the realist model, by implying that definitions of the national interest may be a function of the subjective belief systems of individual decision-makers. The distinction between ideals and interests is false, because the ambiguity of the unforeseeable consequences of policy and the nature of the minds of policymakers--which don't separate these concerns carefully or neatly--mean that both factors will almost always be at play simultaneously. States may indeed operate consistently in the pursuit of some conception of national interest, conceived as the augmentation or maintenance of national power, as realists suggest--but different individuals in the same situation may define the terms "national interest" and "power" in very different ways. The realist conception of foreign policymaking is not so much inaccurate as incomplete, because nations and national leaders perceive power and national interest through the lens of systems of belief which exert a profound influence on their practical understanding of these concepts.

The realist school from which Robert Osgood emerged was defined in its modern form by the work of Hans Morgenthau in the late 1940s. In the decades that followed, realism became the dominant philosophy in the study of international relations, the standard against which alternative views were measured, a position which it retains today (and which it has held, in the view of some realists, since Thucydides wrote about the Peloponnesian war some 2400 years ago). This is not to suggest that post-war realism has not evolved–in fact, there have been a vast array of variations, refinements, and amendments asserted by scholars in the last five decades. Most significantly, in the late 1970s Kenneth Waltz's Theory of International Politics marked the vanguard of a new school of realism which asserted that it was not the insatiable desire for power inherent in human nature that drove world politics, but the insecurity inherent in an anarchic international system. "Neorealism" still saw competition for power within the system as the primary dynamic of state behavior, but assumed that states' underlying motives were basically defensive, that they typically sought power in response to threats rather than opportunities.[8]

Despite this evolution, however, in many ways realism remains fundamentally unchanged. In 2001, John Mearsheimer could still write about the dynamics in international system in terms that would have sounded very familiar to Hans Morgenthau in 1948, or indeed to Hobbes, Thucydides, or Machiavelli. "There are no status quo powers in the international system," Mearsheimer stated, and

> save for the occasional hegemon that wants to maintain its dominating position... the desire for more power does not go away... the world is condemned to perpetual great-power competition. This unrelenting pursuit of power means that... not only does a great power seek to gain power at the expense of other states, it also tries to thwart rivals bent on gaining power at its expense.[9]

Throughout its evolution, the explanatory power of realism has remained consistently and fundamentally dependent on the concept of the national interest. The first generation of realists defined it in terms of power, but conceded that more power would not always serve the nations interest--if, for instance, it made one's neighbors insecure and thus more hostile. But these thinkers never fully acknowledged the imprecision of the notion of power, highlighted by the fact that while the concept could be defined in the abstract, it became less certain when translated into practice; when deciding whether to use force abroad in a given situation, for example,

uncertainty and subjectivity overtook the abstract clarity of the idea. Later realists sought to overcome this ambiguity by substituting the notion of "security" for power; but these efforts could not make the argument more concrete; if anything, they highlighted its vagueness.

The underlying subjectivity of the national interest means that in order to explain or predict it is necessary to understand both the ways in which decision makers define national interest and the process by which these definitions manifest policy. The broad cold war consensus in policy circles may have had the effect of obscuring the subjectivity of national interest during the formative years of the academic study of international relations in the wake of World War II. But the end of the cold war--which IR theory did not anticipate because of its failure to consider closely the political and ideological processes of change within states--certainly suggests that these factors are more important than many scholars had previously believed.

In the 1990s, a school of thought called "constructivism" presented a challenge to the realist paradigm which attempted to address this issue. Though constructivism was derived from postmodernism and critical theory, the extent to which it applied the postmodernist challenge to the underlying material basis of reality to IR theory depended greatly on the author.

Constructivism does not constitute a tightly consistent school of thought with many agreed assumptions, as realism does, and while constructivism has often been depicted as postmodernist and antipositivist, there are major variations within the constructivist school which cast doubt on these generalizations. Constructivism is not synonymous with critical theory, which includes feminist theory, queer theory, neo-Marxism, and others. Ted Hopf has described an important distinction between "conventional" and "critical" constructivists, the former sharing considerable common ground in research methods and goals with neorealists and other traditional schools of thought, the latter regarding the basic enterprise of these schools as fundamentally misguided. Conventional constructivism understands itself as social science, and amounts to a criticism of neorealism for the purpose of refining and building upon the body of IR theory, while much of critical theory understands scholarship as a political act, and opposes what it views as a dominant intellectual paradigm because it is understood to support a dominant political paradigm. [10]

Previous cognitive approaches to IR have been primarily concerned with the effects of ideas on policy, treating ideas as an intervening variable between systemic cause and policy effect, rather than understanding ideas as elemental to structure and focusing attention on the ways in which they are created and evolve. In such approaches, ideas become significant in policy when they become entrenched in organizational rules and procedures or when they are used as political "weapons" to legitimize policy choices.[11] Such approaches do not run counter to the positivism of mainstream rational-actor IR, but instead offer to refine them by claiming that "an ideas approach is always a valuable supplement to interest-based, rational actor models."[12] Mark Laffey and Jutta Weldes among other have critiqued such approaches based largely on their willingness to accept the neorealist notion of ideas and interests as separable. Weldes and Laffey argue that cognitive approaches treat ideas as tools "which are used by policy-makers into manipulate various audiences, such as international elites, domestic publics or bureaucracies," a practice which "reinforces the notion that 'ideas' are distinct from interests and that their role, in practice, is limited to manipulation; and it obscures the constitutive function of "ideas."[13]

Emmanuel Adler has argued that "constructivism is the view that the manner in which the material world shapes and is shaped by human action and interaction depends on dynamic normative and epistemic interpretations of the material world."[14] Ted Hopf has suggested that constructivism has two defining assumptions which distinguish it as a body of theory: it is interpretivist in that it holds that interests are constructed by human beings as opposed to being a function of some objective reality or assigned by an omniscient observer; and it is structuralist in that it emphasizes the role of intersubjective communities in shaping the interests of their members.[15]

Alexander Wendt has distinguished the constructivist school from others by noting two basic claims which it makes: that "the fundamental structures of international politics are social rather than strictly material... and that these structures shape actors' identities and interests..." However, he notes that these assertions do not imply any contradiction to most of the traditional assumptions of realism–that international politics is defined primarily by the actions of states, that states can be seen as rational actors, that they are motivated by the desire to survive, that they cannot be certain of each others' intentions, and that the system is anarchic.[16]

Thus, constructivists are not necessarily strict postmodernists in the sense that they assume that there is little or no objective basis to reality; rather, they tend to hold (in Wendt's words), that "the structure of the states system contains both material and cultural elements... but constructivists give priority to cultural over material structures on the grounds that actors act on the basis of the meanings that objects have for them, and meanings are socially constructed. A gun in the hands of a friend is a different thing from one in the hands of an enemy, and enmity is a social, not material, relationship." Intersubjective definitions of identity are thus crucial to understanding the ebb and flow of international politics, since the way in which actors identify themselves and others comprise "cognitive schemas that enable an actor to determine 'who I am/we are' in a situation, and positions in a social role structure of shared understandings and expectations." In any given situation, actors derive understandings of their own self-interest from their assessment of their own identities in relationship to those of the actors with whom they have contact.[17]

Whereas all variants of realism assume that states have only one fundamental identity–sovereign, self-interested, competitors for power–constructivists assume that identities are intersubjective–that is, they define the self of the observer but also define the nature of others being observed, and since all actors in the system play both roles, they may be understood very differently by different observers. In all cases, however, constructivists assume that broad identities–capitalist, communist, dictatorship, democracy, Western, Eastern, enemy, friend–will be taken by observers to imply a much more diverse array of likely attitudes and intentions.[18]

Thus, constructivists differ profoundly with realists on the process by which key variable such as "power," "self-interest," and the "system" itself are defined and operationalized by policymakers. As with critical theory generally, constructivist IR theory tends to assert that discourse plays a major role in shaping practice; that the way in which policymakers talk about the world around them tends to define the ways in which they act in that world, prejudicing them toward some options and away from others. Social structures of shared knowledge thus provide a critical background for understanding threats and opportunities in the constructivist view,

whereas these are self-evident and objectively meaningful in the realist view. The balance of power in the world should be clear to the leader of any state, realists tend to suggest, but for constructivists, "500 British nuclear weapons are less threatening to the United States than 5 North Korean nuclear weapons, because the British are friends of the United States and the North Koreans are not..."[19]

Threat and opportunity, friend and foe, are largely subjective categories, constructivists argue, unless threats are understood to be strictly correlated with the capabilities of other actors, which they rarely are. Faced with Osgood's distinction between ideals and self-interest, constructivists would deny the dichotomy and define both as products of social structure. "Power and interest do not have effects," Wendt argues, "apart from the shared knowledge that constitutes them as such." While anarchy remains the overarching reality of the international system, it is important to distinguish "an anarchy of friends... from one of enemies, one of self-help from one of collective security, and these are all constituted by structures of shared knowledge."[20]

Wendt's argument is essentially that international society is built on a body of shared knowledge and to some extent, shared norms. He is a "third image" analyst, attempting to refined structural theories which have emphasized the anarchy of the environment in which states interact but suggesting that the meaning of "anarchy" to each of them will depend in part on the way in which they see and define each other. This study suggests that the same logic must be applied to the "second image" analysis in order to understand the bases of state behavior.

One major criticism of constructivist IR theory is that it cannot adequately account for change in the system, and particularly the ascent of one mode of thought over others to occupy the position of dominant discourse. Constructivists "maintain that state behavior changes when discourse changes," John Mearsheimer has written, but "what determines why some discourses become dominant and others lose out in the marketplace of ideas? What is the mechanism that governs the rise and fall of discourses?" Mearsheimer correctly suggests that if Wendt's basic premise of state identity as the key variable shaping the national interest is accepted, this still leaves unanswered the question of how intellectual or systemic paradigms change over time. This study suggests a partial answer to that question by noting that at times of major change in the international system, similar social processes are at work at the state level, in which divergent views of the nation's appropriate role in the world compete with one another within the political framework of the foreign policy process. Leadership skill and particularly the perceived lessons of recent history tend to determine which of these policy orientations will come to define the new consensus which emerges.

Past interactions are important to understanding the dynamics of the international system for constructivists, since policymakers memories of past successes and failures, and the self-interested or cooperative behavior on the part of other actors, on the are likely to shape understandings of what is possible and desirable in the future. In short, Wendt argues, "*History matters*" [emphasis in original], though it would be more accurate to say that *perceptions* of history matter.[21]

"Anarchy" invokes different responses depending on the social-identity relationships of those acting within it. The implications of this fact for international relations are manifold; consider,

for example, the importance of intersubjective identity for Rousseau's stag hunt, in which hunters must decide whether to cooperate to kill a stag, which will feed all of them amply, or to defect when the opportunity arises to kill a hare, which will satisfy only the defector for a short while. The likelihood for Rousseau—and for Kenneth Waltz, who focused on this allegory to illustrate the dynamics of neorealism—is that anarchy will lead to defection. Constructivism would suggest that the answer is more complex, particularly if we assume that the hunt occurs, as contemporary international relations do, in a state of anarchy but not in a pre-social state of nature. The hunters have some knowledge of each other, and this knowledge must be a critical variable in understanding their responses. How one hunter understands the next will be critical in determining his decision to pursue the hare when he has the chance. Are the other hunters brothers, friends, members of the same tribe? Are they enemies not to be trusted? Critically, the answers to these questions, and thus to the primary question of whether a hunter will defect, do not depend strictly on material factors, but on the hunter's perceptions and subjective judgments of the others. And these judgments will in turn tend to be derived primarily from his assessment of how like or unlike himself the others are; he will trust and tend to cooperate with those who he understands as similar to himself, and mistrust and tend to betray those who are seen as more dissimilar. These cognitive schemas do not preclude the possibility of betrayal of a friend or cooperation with a competitor, but they do suggest that very different responses are likely depending on intersubjective identity relations even under identical conditions of anarchy.

Thus, many constructivists view neorealism as not so much inaccurate as incomplete in its encapsulation of the dynamics of the international system. As Henry Nau puts it, constructivism "adds critical missing elements" to neorealism. "It does not replace but completes" neorealist theory. "National identity organizes and motivates national economic and military power and tells us for what political purposes nations legitimate and use their wealth and power."[22] "Neorealists do not pretend to explain how individual states might behave," Nau continues, "but they issue a stern warning to individual states: if you do not take into account the distribution of relative power and balance against greater power, you will certainly suffer and may fail to survive in an anarchic world."[23] Neorealism as thus depicted is a far stronger normative theory than it is a descriptive one; it tells states how they should act, but cannot capture or predict in detail how they do act, and while it may be convincing on the first count, its failure on the second should engender some skepticism about its overall usefulness as a theory. If neorealism's emphasis on the objective national interest leaves it unable to explain how states understand the national interest in particular circumstances, it is doomed to failure as both a descriptive and a normative theory of use to policymakers. If, on the other hand, it can be augmented with an understanding of the processes by which national interests are interpreted by states, then it holds the promise of being able both to describe how states do act and give them specific, politically realistic advice as to how they should act.

Thus it is possible to view neorealism and constructivism as, to some extent, complementary rather than conflicting theories. This conclusion has given rise in recent years to various hybrid forms of "Realist-Constructivsm" which accept many of the core premises of neorealism but seek to augment and expand upon them with elements of constructivist thought.[24] Many leading realists have conceded some merit to constructivism as well, notably Samuel Huntington, who has argued that "national interest derives from national identity… the nature of the country whose interests are being defined."[25] Kenneth Waltz has suggested that states are socialized into

certain roles based on their weight in the international system, though this socialization is very limited in its effects in his view.[26] Zbigniev Brzezinski has claimed that "Russia's longer term role in Europe will depend largely on its self-definition." And Henry Kissinger, who experienced firsthand the limits of material power in the closing chapters of the Vietnam war, suggests that "once a nation's image of itself is destroyed, so is its willingness to play a major international role." Kissinger further argues that "a state is by definition the expression of some concept of justice that legitimates its internal arrangements and of a projection of power that determines its ability to fulfill its minimum functions."[27]

The areas of agreement between constructivists and neorealists should not be overstated, but neither should their differences. As Alexander Wendt has noted, there are fundamental differences in the two perspectives in that "neorealists think [structure] is made only of a distribution of material capabilities, whereas constructivists think it is also made of social relationships." Wendt suggests that for constructivists, "social structures include material resources like gold and tanks. In contrast to neorealists' desocialized view of such capabilities, constructivists argue that material resources on acquire meaning for human action through the structure of shared knowledge in which they are embedded… Material capabilities as such explain nothing; their effects presuppose structures of shared knowledge, which vary and which are not reducible to capabilities."[28] But David Dessler has also described constructivism as positivist social science in that it shares some fundamental underlying assumptions of neorealism: "(1) that we inhabit a world whose nature and existence is neither logically nor causally dependent on any mind; (2) that some of our beliefs about this world are accurate, even if incomplete, descriptions, and thereby qualify as true; and (3) that our methods of inquiry enable us to discover that (at least) some of our belief about the world are true. [29]

Ideology and Identity in Constructivist Foreign Policy Analysis

Left unanswered by previous generations of realist scholarship were, in the view of Ngaire Woods, "questions of which… beliefs are most likely to shape the definition of interests in international relations and why and how it is that particular sets of ideas prevail in the international arena."[30] Constructivism offers a means to fill this void by asking how interests are defined rather than how they are defended, but constructivists have in turn been subject to calls to "cease and desist their discussion of theory, epistemology, and ontology and get on with demonstrating their comparative advantage in explaining real-world events."[31] This study will seek to advance this agenda by suggesting that two related factors hold critical keys to understanding the process by which leaders and whole societies comprehend and thus act within the world: ideology and identity. This section of this chapter will explore the relationship between these factors as variables in constructivist foreign policy analysis.

While few constructivists would deny that both ideology and identity can have important impacts on state policy, the relationship between them has yet to be fully problematized and its implications for theory and policy fully described. This chapter will argue that there exists a mutually interconstitutive relationship between national ideology and identity. It will contend that ideology is the politically normative element in the cognitive framework of national identity, the set of ideas which explicitly presumes to dictate political behavior, translating philosophical

beliefs into instructions to act. It is therefore necessary to understand both the dominant political ideology in a given society, and the broader national identity foundations underpinning it, in order to fully understand the socio-cognitive bases of that society's foreign policy.

Identity

The process of acquiring and employing identity is a natural and automatic feature of the human condition, a product of the "human desire to understand the social world and the consequent cognitive need for order, predictability, and certainty."[32] Identity is a cognitive shortcut, a heuristic device which allows the individual to simplify and thus operate effectively within a complex world. "We construct worlds we know in a world we do not," Nicholas Onuf has written; identity is the primary element comprising these worlds and enabling their construction.[33] "Identities categorize people according to common features, making the other's actions intelligible and an individual's own actions vis-à-vis them intelligible to himself." Identities are thus created to be used, and they are used within intersubjective social systems, what Clifford Geertz terms a "web of meaning" and Michel Foucault refers to as "discursive formation," a sociohistorical space in which a given set of meanings hold sway. Individuals assign identities to others which may ascribe broad sets of traits, motives, and intentions based on limited observation of some small number of these characteristics.[34] Mark Neufeld has defined intersubjective meanings as "the product of the collective self-interpretations and self-definitions of human communities." Together, these comprise a social "web of meaning" which is as much a part of the environment confronting states in the international system as material capabilities are. Neufeld argues that "the practices in which human beings are engaged cannot be studied in isolation from the 'web of meaning,' which is, in a fundamental sense, constitutive of those practices."[35]

Such social cognitive structures serve to establish the boundaries of discourse within a society, defining the parameters within which individuals tend to think about themselves and others. They constitute intersubjective reality, a social framework through which material reality is perceived, understood, and acted upon. The social cognitive structure is not reality, but it's the only framework within which material reality can be apprehended. It is the environment in which human interactions of all kinds occur, in which the business of being an individual in society is done, and thus the only mechanism through which the real world can be known. [36]

Identity is created within this milieu, and is thus intrinsically social. Individual identity is by definition an expression of distinction and difference, which therefore requires social interaction with an Other in order to exist. As Ted Hopf has put it, "identities can only be understood relationally."[37] Like power in an earlier realist formulation, individual or state identities are always and necessarily relative. Just as their can be no meaningful "I" without a "You," there cannot be a "We" without a "They." Identities are thus built around defining characteristics which are first and foremost instruments of distinction—what makes me myself or defines us as a group is not important in and of itself but rather because of the cognitive space that it allows the individual or group to perceive between themselves and others.

By its very nature "national identity" is and is likely to remain a contested concept. Peter Katzenstein claims that identities come in "two basic forms": that which is intrinsic to the actor and that which is social, able to be constructed only in the intersubjective international environment. But a number or critics have noted that this distinction is deeply problematic, as suggested by one example that the author provides: "being democratic is an intrinsic feature of the US state relative to the structure of the international system," raises more questions than it answers.[38] Alexander Wendt has distinguished between the "corporate" and "social" identities of states, and suggests that four national interests exist outside of the social milieu: physical security, autonomy, economic well-being and collective self-esteem, though this assertion raises immediate questions about whether and why these concepts also should not be subject to social construction and subjective interpretation.[39] Wendt has argued as well that all past and potential international systems fall into one of three fundamental ideational structures—Hobbesian, Lockean, and Kantian, though various critics have taken issue with this assertion because it severely limits the range of relationships between states, allowing only three: "enemy, friend, and rival—where dozens would be too few."[40] States which may be closely connected socially, economically, ideologically, or otherwise may nevertheless have serious differences over particular issues at particular times, even to the point as viewing each other as rivals or enemies in a limited sphere within a broader relationship of friendship.[41] It might be added that there are and presumably will remain differences of perspective among elites as to where on this ideational continuum the world system currently is—some see an increasingly Kantian world, others a still fundamentally Hobbesian one—and so long as there is an uneven distribution of power between states in the system, domestic political change within powerful states will be able to affect the dynamics of the system as a whole. It can be argued that much of the negative response to the Bush administration's war in Iraq around the globe resulted from the pursuit of an essentially Hobbesian foreign policy in an environment of Lockean and increasingly Kantian norms. But it is too soon to dismiss these events as aberrations on the road toward a Kantian future; because these ideational structures depend on belief and perception, it must be acknowledged that the Bush administration's perceptions are as much part of the international social fabric as anyone else's, and that the Bush administration, by seeing a Hobbesian world and acting consistent with this perception, has to some extent made it real.

Among the major distinctions within constructivist thought is the divide between normative, systemic, and social constructivists. Normative and systemic constructivists such as Martha Finnemore and Alexander Wendt examine the emergence of norms and social structures between states. While starkly distinct from neorealism in their conclusions regarding the motives of state behavior, these perspective thus share with neorealism a third-image bias; that is they focus on the relationships between states at the expense of what is occurring within them. The fact that, for example, Alexander Wendt's revisionist, status-quo, and collectivist state orientations are simply given rather than fully interrogated places state identity at the domestic level "outside analysis" in the view of some critics.[42] Jennifer Sterling-Folker has argued that this neglect of domestic identity formations has compelled constructivists to fall back on assumed collective interests without fully exploring their bases. There is no *a priori* reason to assume that state or social identity is created solely at the international level, and many instances in which foreign policy can reasonably be argued to have been influenced by domestic culture. Chaim Kaufmann and Robert Pape argue that it was domestic political culture that led to Britain's opposition to the international slave trade in the 19th century, for example. Identity would seem likely to emerge

first from domestic culture, though it is critical to note that it becomes meaningful only in relationship to the international Other, that an identity informed by a society's conception of itself domestically still exists within the intersubjective web of identities at the international level. Ted Hopf has argued that it would be a mistake to reduce IR theory to a function of strictly domestic state identities, but "social constructivism assumes that a state's identity in international politics cannot be constructed at home alone—it is only in interaction with a particular Other that the meaning of the state is established.[43]

One consequence of this third-image emphasis has been the much constructivist writing "investigates Self and Other as if the only Other for a state were another state," when in fact there is no reason to assume that this is the case. It seems more likely that the full reality of Self and Other must apprehend, in each category, units including but not limited to individuals, families, clans, nations, states, and even the global community as a whole. Communities and distinctions between them exist within, between, and across state borders, and while acknowledging these cleavages vastly complicates the task of explaining international politics, it also enables a theoretical grasp on those historical phenomena which impact international relations but seem to defy the model of a sovereign state system as it has often been imagined—political and cultural schisms within states or across borders; the "special relationship" between like-minded states, or the labeling of an "enemy within," for example. One strength of the constructivist perspective is its capacity to account for and consider these realities, based on the fact that social constructivism, as Ted Hopf has put it, "assumes no boundary between meanings within and outside the state's official borders. The assumption that meaningful Others exist both at home and abroad differentiates a social constructivist account of the domestic from those that assume either the primacy of the internal or the external or that there are different domains for the two." [44]

This question of whether national identity is created and/or becomes meaningful for international relations at the domestic or international-social level is one that has been the focus of significant scholarly debate, much of it in response to the Wendtian conception of identity as an international social phenomenon, a perspective which has been criticized by some as artificial dividing internal from external state politics and leaving the domestic origins of identity obscured. Henry Nau attempts to compensate for this perceived weakness of Wendtian constructivism by asserting parallel concepts of identity: "national identity at the domestic level, and the structure of relative national identity at the international level.[45] Nau defines identity "in terms of both a liberal (autonomous or internal) and a social (interrelated or external) dimension. The liberal or internal dimension captures the relative priority citizens assign to ideological, cultural, ethnic, religious, and other factors in establishing the rules for the legitimate use of force at home. The external dimension captures the history and experience of associations among countries that influence their inclination to use force against one another." [46]

National identity is commonly thought of as being rooted in one of two distinct bases of allegiance: one the one hand, nations may be formed around bonds of "ethnic or traditional community that shares common linguistic, cultural, racial, or religious characteristics;" or on the other, "ideological community composed of a variety of ethnic groups that unite around a set of common beliefs."[47] Japan and Germany might be suggested as examples of the former category and the United States, Switzerland, and Belgium as cases of the latter. This distinction is

problematic because ethnicity and ideology are rarely wholly separable in practice; ethnic communities are *imagined* communities just as ideological communities are; they are based on the idea of belonging in the consciousness of their members more fundamentally than they are based on biology. To be Japanese is to be part of an ethnic community, but it is also to be part of a community of shared history and values (it is hard to conceive of the meaning of being Japanese without considering Japanese Buddhism, for example), and in practice it would be both impossible and misleading to prioritize or sever these elements of identity from one another. While the case has often been made that the United States is an unusual society in that its identity is built around a set of ideas, and its acceptance of these ideas rather than ethnic, religious, or other bonds which tend to characterize other nations, this is an oversimplification. Every nation is built around a set of ideas—both perceptions of ethnic kinship (which in practice is generally rooted at least as much in belief as it is in biology) or religious doctrine, but also, critically, of the shared history and values that form national cultures. American identity is comprised in part by an acceptance of common liberal political and economic values, but also around a sense of shared and unique history and culture. Religion is often a critical component of this identity, but typically not because it unites people behind an evangelical mission or even universal belief. To be Russian Orthodox is an important part of what it is to be Russian, but many people who consider themselves Russian and Russian Orthodox do not go to church very often, or at all. Thus, religious identity comprises one piece of a larger shared culture, rather than a code for operationalizing national identity. While it is true that Shia Islam is a critical element in contemporary Iranian national identity, that element of identity is inseparable from many other factors, including a sense of Persian national history (with very definite recognition of pre-Islamic history), and distinction from the Other—notably from both the West and the Sunni and Arab worlds, and indeed to some extent from Shia Muslims in other states.

It has been suggested hat IR theorists "can measure the similarity or dissimilarity of these ideas, and so track relative national identities just as we track relative power," and critically, predict the likelihood and perhaps the course of international conflict and cooperation on this basis. Henry Nau contends that "the identities of separate national may conflict or converge," and that "The United States and the Soviet Union fought the Cold War as much because they pursued different national ideas to legitimate the use of force as because they pursued relative national power." While Nau makes a critical point here about the importance of national identity in motivating conflict, he draws a misleading distinction between power and ideology. The cold war superpowers would not have regarded each as as threatening as they did, and would likely have pursued much more moderate policies toward one another, had they shared similar national identities. Consider by comparison the example of Britain and the United States from 1890-1930. Britain, the world's economic hegemon for decades, was rapidly being surpassed in this role by the rise of the United States. Britain was also the world's preeminent naval power and in strictly material terms a much more serious rival to U.S. naval power in the Pacific than Japan. U.S. policymakers throughout this period saw Britain as a strategic and economic competitor, but never an "enemy" in the way that Germany, Japan, and even the far weaker Soviet Union were understood. In this case as in the cold war, identity is not incidental to definitions of power and interest—it is intrinsic to them. [48]

Nau argues that national identities may also converge, creating the basis for international cooperation and community. Because identity is first and foremost related to the conditions

under which force can legitimately be used, converging state identities will tend to create consensus around this question or at least leave states better able to anticipate the use of force by their neighbors. Uses of force by one state in such a community will not be surprising to others in the same community, and will tend to be regarded as just by all. Nau notes that relations between Russia, Prussia, and Austria during the Concert of Europe tended toward a relatively peaceful balance of power due to shared identities as aristocratic monarchies, and argues that the same dynamic is at work today as "the world's great industrial powers share similar democratic national identities and appear to eliminate the balancing of military power from their relationships altogether." [49]

Certainly converging or diverging national identities cannot offer complete explanations of every outcome in international politics. Based strictly on political culture, one would expect the United States and Saudi Arabia to have a history of hostile relations, when in fact the opposite is true, due almost entirely to common strategic interests. It is clearly not the case that national identity or ideology will define national interests to the exclusion of other factors, only that all factors influencing the definition of national interests are understood through a socio-cognitive process in which national identity and ideology are always intervening variables. As Henry Nau suggests, "relative national identities can harden or soften the consequences of national power. And identity changes can reduce or increase threats even if there are no power changes. Military capabilities by themselves are not the threat. Who (i.e., the identity of the nation) possesses the capabilities defines the threat. France with hundreds of nuclear weapons is not a military threat to the United States; North Korea with a few nuclear weapons is." [50] Judgments regarding the threat posed by another state must necessarily be based on evaluations of both capability and intention. The first of these can be very difficult to know; the second is nearly always impossible to be certain of. Thus there is virtually always great uncertainty and thus vast room for subjective interpretation surrounding potential threats, and policymakers tend to rely on understandings of identity to fill these gaps in knowledge, just as all human beings tend to rely on heuristic device to make an uncertain and complex world comprehensible. Conceptions of identity will be deployed to answer questions of capability as well as intent (Q. "does North Korea posses nuclear weapons? A. Yes, because North Korea is the kind of state that would build and conceal such weapons, as well as the kind of state that might use them"). It is certainly not the case that material capabilities do not matter at all—North Korea cannot actually use nuclear weapons unless it has them, for example, and it can make its threat to do so far more effective by filling the interpretive space in U.S. leaders perceptions by testing one. But it is true that policy makers' understanding of threats are always filtered through the lens of relative state identity, that this process invariably results in an image of reality which is different from the world as it actually is, and that the result can be understanding of threats which is sometimes profoundly different than that which neorealists might expect based on objective knowledge of material capabilities alone. Saddam Hussein was judged a threat to build and use weapons of mass destruction because he had already build and used them in the past, so it is not as if the conclusion that he was likely to do so in the future was without any material basis at all—but the jump from a set of historical facts to apparent certainly about the present and future in Iraq—with virtually no other hard evidence to support such conclusions--shows the profound effect that understandings of relative identity can have in the policy decision process.[51]

Constructivist theory is able to account for these facts by starting from the premise that state interests are not waiting to waiting to be discovered by or ontologically prior to the state actors themselves. "Interests" in the constructivist formulation have no intrinsic meaning or value unto themselves; rather they are functions of identity. As Ted Hopf has put it, "a state's own domestic identities constitute a social cognitive structure that makes threats and opportunities, enemies and allies, intelligible, thinkable, and possible." "There is no such thing as an unalloyed economic interest," Hopf continues; to determine whether the United States has an interest in investing in Iranian natural gas, for example, one must necessarily consider the intersubjective identity relationship of the two states.[52] Or as Henry Nau has put it, "national identity and national power both define the national interest."[53] "The national interest begins with what kind of society the nation is, not just what its geopolitical circumstances are." [54]

Clearly a significant role is played by perceptions of history in shaping identity; social identity between states is shaped in part by social history, that is, their understandings of how they have interacted in the past. It is important to note that it is perceptions of history that shape identity and thus structure future expectations; history is not so much events as commonly accepted stories about those events, and national history is shaped before and interpreted after through the interpretive lenses of national identity and ideology. There may be a warlike history between states due to the fact that they have seen one another as threatening due to ideological antipathy, for example, in which case their history of conflict will not create but rather reinforce their image of one another as enemies. Similarly, historical facts will be interpreted by different parties in ways consistent with their understanding of their own identity and others'—as the U.S. Civil War is regarded as a war against Southern slavery by some and a war of Northern aggression by others. National ideology both shapes and is shaped by history, constantly creating new stories to comprise the every-changing national mythology, but also giving credence to one or another interpretation of national ideals.

Theorists have long argued that the international state of anarchy is moderated by the fact that state interactions occur in an endless series of iterations; states know how their neighbors have behaved toward them yesterday and 100 years ago, and they know they will necessarily have to contend with one another tomorrow. There is thus more pressure for honesty and fidelity to agreements than there would be in a pure, pre-social anarchic state, even if the restraints of law and ethics are more limited in the international domain than they are within domestic societies. The constructivist perspective suggests that the social relationships created in these ongoing interactions are more complex and more significant for the course of international affairs than previous paradigms would have acknowledged. It is not simply the case that states will tend to view each other as "honest" or "dishonest" based on past behavior, but that the will conceive a tendency toward honesty or dishonesty on the part of their neighbors as one part of a much larger and more detailed identity, based not only on past behavior but on a variety of other factors deployed to help place the observed state in a comprehensible relationship with the observer. Past behavior will be one factor which helps the observer to conclude where to place the observed on a continuum of similar or dissimilar, to decide whether They are more or less like Us—and it is from this estimation that the observer will derive conclusions about intentions and likely future behaviors—the more like Us they are, the more likely they are to behave as we do (peacefully and reasonably in the self-estimation of most observers), and the more likely They are to behave in a friendly way toward us. Certainly past behavior is part of this process, but like

interests and capabilities, to be meaningful past behavior depends requires interpretation—and actions that appear dishonest or aggressive from the perspective of one who already sees the actor as an enemy may appear justifiable or defensive from one's own perspective or that of a "friend."

Thomas Risse-Kappen has suggested that actors infer external behavior from the values and norms governing the domestic political practices that shape the identities of their partners in the international system.[55] Similarly, Henry Nau has argued that identity is intrinsically related to "the consensus by which the citizens of a nation agree that only the state can use force legitimately," both internally and externally. The conditions under which most citizens would accept that their government should be able to use force—to compel compliance with its domestic laws or to advance its interests and ideals abroad—thus comprise not only a set of legal or political constraints, but also the fundamental premises around which that people defines itself communally. These values are likely to closely parallel each other in their domestic and external applications, Nau argues. "No state is completely schizophrenic," he suggests, with "its behavior abroad consistently deviating from its behavior at home." Presumably because these behaviors are rooted in a common national value system, and bounded by the constraints of political legitimacy within the same framework of national public opinion. These domestic standards have important implications for intersubjective international identity as well, though, because if a government represses its own people in ways which run counter to the values of other states, this will tend to construct or reinforce the identity of that state as *both* internally repressive *and externally aggressiv*e in the eyes of these observers—even if the repressive state has exhibited no aggressive behavior beyond its borders. "When China cracks down on dissidents," Nau contends, the United States tends to assume that "if China treats its own citizens in this manner, it may also use force for similar purposes against outside states" [56]

Clearly elements of national identity overlap, conflict, and evolve over time. What it means to be African-American, Catholic, a member of a trade union, and U.S. citizen all at the same time is a question being negotiated in countless permutations on a daily basis, sometimes with great conflict—as when the question of whether one could be both "Virginian" and "American" was decided finally only through violence on a scale that few could have imagined at the time. Whether one can be "Walloon," "Belgian," and "European" all at once (or which takes priority) is a question which is still being answered today, without much violence but not without conflict. It does not mean exactly the same thing to be American, French, or Ibo in 2008 that it did in 1868 or 1968, but in all three instances there are important continuities, common threads of belief and value woven through the fabric of identity over that time as well as differences. A Turkish guestworker in Germany may have a very different conception of what it is to be "German" than does a Wehrmacht veteran of the Second World War; a recent immigrant from Honduras living in South Central L.A. may define "American" somewhat differently than does a 5th generation farmer in Minnesota. But there will be important linkages between their definitions as well, commonalities than can reasonably be thought of as comprise a core national ideology, which in turn provides the basis for national identity among its adherents. Clearly national identity can change over time, typically through gradual evolution and generational adaptation, but sometime precipitously (post-war Germany is an obvious example, but consider the Soviet Union or Yugoslavia in the 1990s or post-revolutionary Iran). When change occurs it never eradicates the ideological framework of the past, however; it consists instead of changes in

emphases within a very diverse set of beliefs and values, and novel adaptations of old ideas to new circumstances.

If self-perceived national identity can change over time, intersubjective identity relationships at the international level can change as well. Here again, change tends to happen slowly but can be precipitous—witness the sudden, dramatic end of the cold war, due not so much to the sudden disappearance of Soviet nuclear weapons as the sudden assertion by Soviet leaders that they no longer regarded the west as an enemy (which in turn made possible dramatic reductions in the weapons stockpiles that had been symptoms of their prior relationship). And here again, the distinction between international and domestic identity seems false and misleading. The West was convinced to abandon its long-held view of the Soviet Union as an enemy both by Soviet actions abroad (notably removing missiles and tank divisions from Europe), and by changes within the Soviet Union itself, political and economic liberalization which, critically, made the Soviet Union with all its cultural differences and past misdeeds appear to be a society that shared western political values. After generations of hostility and active war, Germany and Japan became part of a democratic security community in the second half of the twentieth century, a concert of states built around a stunningly new norm of the impossibility of war between the world's leading economic powers. This was able to occur because of changes in the material power structure of the international system—the permanent limitation of German and Japanese military power and the emergence of the cold war. But it also happened because the former adversaries could now imagine international cooperation because they now understood each other as sharing common values domestically as well. These examples suggest that it is not merely unnecessary to segregate notions of identity at the international and domestic levels. It is actually misleading, because the changes that occurred at each level in these instances were intrinsically related, cause and effect of one another.

Authors such as John Gerard Ruggie and John Ikenberry have suggested that international institutions may have an important role to play in this process of state identity formation, going beyond the traditional neoliberal view that institutions can alter the cost-benefit calculus in the foreign policies of their members to conclude that institutions can change the ways in which state interests are understood in more fundamental ways, altering the nature of state identity itself and thus the meaning of anarchy and community in the international system.[57] While it is true that the international institutions which comprise the most tightly bonded communities of states are those that include the most politically similar groups of states, to ask whether domestic similarity is the cause and international integration the effect or vice versa is once again to impose an erroneous assumption on the process. There seems instead to be a frequent tendency for changes in self-perceived state identity and intersubjective international relationships to cascade, reinforcing one another, motivating change at the international institutional level which in turn tend to foster further change in identity. Historians 100 years hence will likely look at the emergence of post-war liberal democracy in Western Europe and the founding of the E.U. and NATO as simultaneous events, all causes and all effects of one another.

Clearly these forces cannot always be expected to reinforce one another indefinitely, much less always be expected to create stronger communities rather than weakening them. The saga of the League of Nations, for example, stands as a cautionary tale regarding the limited capacity of international organizations to foster communal identity where it does not previously exist.

Woodrow Wilson expected the League to do just this, to engender a sense of community between its members based on a very broad acceptance of common interests at its inception. We cannot know whether this expectation might have come to pass had history not conspired against it, but the historical record is clear that in the absence of U.S. membership, under the pressure of a world economy collapsing into depression, and comprised in part of states with no interest in peace or the territorial status quo, the League could not create a community of states where one did not exist before. And what was true of the League can still be argued to be true of many international organizations to this day—that they are seen by some states as the creations of larger powers to serve their own interests. This is perhaps the single best explanation for the relative success for organizations based on more similar communities of states compared to larger institutions, but this fact should not be taken to suggest that international organizations can not be a force shaping state identity and fostering community, only that membership in international organizations is not in and of itself and indication that strong communal bonds already exist.

National identity clearly does not exist in a material sense, nor is it readily quantifiable, in much the same sense that the "international system" is not a tangible entity but an intellectual construct, a shorthand describing a set of relationships without a material reality of its own. Similarly national identity is a construction, a set of commonly shared conclusions about what defines a people as a people. Individual identity is clearly determined in part subjectively, but subjective judgments about identity are always framed in a social context and limited by objective facts. To a large extent, I am who I define myself to be (I am a Christian if I believe I am, for example), but my beliefs are constrained by an objective material reality and the subjective perceptions of those around me. If the community of Christians in my town don't believe I'm one of them, this certainly hurts my social claim to be a Christian, though it may do nothing to diminish my own belief that I am—and in this instance my own belief is separable from but at least as important as the community's perception. But can I be a professor if I believe in my heart that I am, despite the objective fact that I've never attended graduate school? In this instance the objective reality would seem to suggest that I'm simply delusional, trumping my identity claim. But what if I secure a college teaching job, and spend my lifetime educating students?

This is the bad news about identity as a category—that it is ill-defined in the abstract, perhaps impossible to encapsulate in practice, and what is true in this regard for individuals is even more true for whole polities, which are of course infinitely more complex. The notion of state identity is complicated by the fact that states are not uniform wholes, that they are made of cultures and subcultures as well as idiosyncratic individuals, each of whom has a unique understanding of what belonging within the community means. And if national identity exists it is clearly not always reflective of the objective reality of practice within a society; both the French and the rest of the world think of crepes as French and kebabs and hamburgers as un-French, regardless of the fact that more kebabs and hamburgers than crepes may be eaten every day in France. Americans think of their society as being defined by equality of opportunity, despite the clear fact that equality of opportunity (between rich and poor in education, for example) is not the reality of the contemporary United States. Identity is not about who we are. It is first and foremost about whom we think we are, as operationalized in the context of the world outside ourselves, with its own understandings of who we are.

If that's the bad news about identity, there is good news too, which is that foreign policy analysis does not need to apprehend national identity in some quantifiable, reproducible way in order to understand its importance in policy. This is because the intervening role of policymakers means that national identity does not typically affect policy directly—but the perceptions of national identity understood by leaders do, and so it is only necessary to comprehend the ways in which national leaders define their nation and the international Others with whom it interacts. This leaves unanswered the question of whether leaders appeal to national identity because they are honestly defining the nations interests in this way or simply framing for public consumption policies which are actually motivated by material power or security concerns, but it does suggest that a coherent, unimpeachable portrait of national identity is not necessary in order to illuminate the effects of identity on policy.

Ideology

If, in the simplest sense, identity answers the question "who am I," then ideology answer the question "what do I believe." The answer to these questions are clearly related but not identical; what I believe will likely constitute an important element in my understanding of who I am, as core values about the relationship of the individual to society and the universe are among the most deeply held and emotionally laden elements of individual psychology. Ideology can thus be seen as one element comprising identity. Like identity, ideologies serve as heuristic devices, cognitive frameworks enabling individuals to manage the complexity of reality by drawing general conclusions from a relatively small set of particular facts. Unlike the broader category of identity, in politics ideology is invariably, explicitly, and consciously normative. Ideologies are systems of belief which translate philosophical principles or values into instructions to act, sets of ideas that are presumed to form a basis for individual behavior rather than simply to be believed. Ideology and identity are mutually interconstitutive; that is, they are constantly informing and informed by one another, just as an individual's sense of who she is in the world both shapes and is shaped by the set of principled beliefs for action she holds. If ideology is one reflection of identity, it is a particularly important one for political analysts in that it is the element that explicitly presumes to dictate political behavior.

"Ideology" has been chosen here as the term which most accurately describes the set of ideas being described in this study, but it should be noted that the definition of the term itself is a subject of debate. Ideology has tended in the past to refer to highly coherent and well-defined systems of belief, such as Christianity or Marxism, but this conception has been become a matter of scholarly debate as it has been challenged by a more general, inclusive construct. Applied to states, this broader notion of ideology comes to mean something akin to "political culture"; it is a set of general, widely and firmly held beliefs, which delineate the ways in which people conceive of the multi-sided relationship between themselves, the polity of which they are members, their government, and the external world. Martin Seliger describes what he refers to as "restrictive" and "inclusive" definitions. The first "...comprises the definitions which, like the original Marxian conception of ideology, but on different grounds, confine the term to specific political belief systems. The other category comprises those conceptions which stipulate the applicability of the term 'ideology' to all political belief systems."[58] Walter Carlsnaes (among others) has

contested this definition, arguing that this broader conception robs the word of much of its meaning.[59] The distinction between the two notions lies in the level of coherence and narrowness which one demands a belief system must posses in order to be referred to as an ideology. The restrictive view requires that the given set of ideas provide an explicitly stated, easily definable, and internally coherent system of thought, while the inclusive view sees all political discourse as fundamentally rooted in ideology.

In order to have political utility and causal significance as a variable in the study of foreign policy, an ideology must be abstract or at least abstractable from particular questions of policy; it must in some sense be principle. It must also be prescriptive; it cannot be pure theory, but must both answer basic questions about human nature and the proper relationship of individuals to state and society, and also assert the possibility and desirability of social reform to match these claims. But it does not need to be explicit, clear, or internally consistent. The ideas that comprise it need to be generally related to one another if the ideology is to be considered a single, whole entity unto itself, but the history of American foreign policy suggests that this kind of system of beliefs does not need to be elaborately structured or fully coherent within itself in order to have profound effects on the shape of policy.

"Ideological states" have often thought of as those which explicitly refer to a well-codified set of beliefs that would meet Seliger's restrictive definition as their guiding principles in policymaking, such as Nazi Germany, the Soviet Union, or Revolutionary Iran. Distinguishing these states as "ideological," however, risks minimizing the importance of political belief systems which meet the "inclusive" definition in other states. The term "ideology" is used here with the understanding that it refers to the broader definition, and for the purposes of this study will be defined as any system of principled beliefs which dictate political action. By this standard, the United States, Turkey, and Japan are also ideological states, because there exists within the political culture of each a set of ideas, rooted in the communal identity of those societies, which forms an ideational framework that both enables and constrains state policy.

Michael Hunt has suggested that "ideologies are integrated and coherent systems of symbols, values, and beliefs," arising from "'socially established structures of meaning,'" a set of ideas which are "relatively coherent, emotionally charged, and conceptually interlocking." In Hunt's view, in the case of the United States, this set of ideas is comprised of three subsets: a vision of national greatness and expansion connected with the propagation of liberty beyond the nation's borders, a sense of Anglo-Saxon racial superiority, and a fear of revolution in any form. Hunt asserts that in every era, a small and homogeneous cohort of policy elites, holding strong opinions on these subjects, have intentionally or unconsciously succeeded in making their personal ideology define the role of the United States in the world.[60] An approach similar to Hunt's is taken by Richard Kerry, who considers American ideals historically to have included Democratic Universalism (the notion that the American system of government and society are applicable everywhere), American Exceptionalism (the belief on the part of Americans that the development of their nation is distinct from the manner in which such evolution has taken place in other parts of the world), and the 19th century Liberal philosophy of Locke, Jefferson, and others. Each of these systems of belief Kerry sees as having had an influence on American perceptions of the U.S. and the world.[61]

Stanley Hoffmann asserts the importance of similar influences on policy, arguing that America's principles are rooted in the liberalism of the 18th and 19th century, the philosophy of Locke and Jefferson. In practice, these ideas constitute "abstract dogmas and moral imperatives, deeply felt and widely shared, setting goals and defining rules of conduct," along with assumptions about how individuals and nations can be expected to act. The nation's historical experience has had a similar and related effect on American attitudes toward foreign policy, creating erroneous assumptions about what is possible in the realm of world politics. "Our past, our principles, and our pragmatism," Hoffmann concludes, "breed not only millennial hopes, but an embattled sense that we are the chosen champions of those hopes--and this buoys and harries us in turn."[62]

Judith Goldstein and Robert Keohane distinguish between "principled beliefs," which convey "criteria for distinguishing right from wrong, and just from unjust," "causal beliefs," which structure expectations about cause and effect, and "worldviews" which determine "the universe of possibilities for action." According to these authors, ideas exert influence on policy when 1. "the principled or causal beliefs they embody provide road maps that increase actors' clarity about goals or ends-means relationships"; 2. when they serve as "focal points that define cooperative solutions or act as coalitional glue"; and 3. when they come to be reflected in political institutions. [63]

Citing as an example the historical reluctance of the United States to employ military means to settle civil wars beyond U. S. borders, even in defense of democracy, George Kennan refers to "America's principles" as "general rule[s] of conduct by which a given country chooses to abide in the conduct of its relations with other countries." They are unlike policies inasmuch as they are not subject to negotiation. "A country, too, can have a predominant collective sense of itself," Kennan writes, of "what sort of country it conceives itself to be--and what sort of behavior would fit that concept...Principle represents, in other words, the ideal...of the rules and restraints a country adopts." Principles to Kennan are the necessary cornerstone of successful national leadership on issues of foreign policy.[64]

Though an identifiable set of ideas which can be reasonably thought of as a single national ideology has colored American foreign policy throughout its history, emphases on different aspects of this ideology, along with differing interpretations of common aspects and different understandings of the nation's capabilities and limitations abroad, have led individuals starting from similar core beliefs to reach very different policy conclusions. Stanley Hoffmann has suggested that what he refers to as "America's principles" and "national style," like the "international system," should be regarded as not so much an object as an intellectual device, which exists though it is difficult to quantify. In the United States, Hoffmann argues, the "power elite" and the mass of the population are "bound together by a truly remarkable tissue of common beliefs and feelings."[65] In the end, however, this national style is much easier to detect and describe than it is to define.

For the United States in this century, ideology has been dominated by Judeo-Christian ethics and the philosophy of 18th 19th century Liberals, including Locke, Mill, Rousseau, and Jefferson. This thinking has emphasized the preeminent value of the liberty of individuals and states, and the efficacy of reason in solving problems--and in doing so, has tended to cloud Americans'

understanding of nationalism, which has led to either the oversimplification of international issues or fearful aversion to them.

Henry Nau has argued that the major poles of American thought historically—isolationism, liberal internationalism, and realism—are all rooted in a common sense of American separatism or exceptionalism. This sense of difference has produced the historical cycle of engagement and disengagement from world affairs, and this aspect of U.S. identity currently mitigates against recognition of global interdependence.[66] In the early United States, a belief in individualism economic and political freedom, opposition to regulation and mistrust of government, along with "self-government, distance, and a liberal political ideology" were the "ingredients [that] molded a new identity, even as the political ideology sharpened conflicts and put the new nation on a course to civil war."[67] Seymour Martin Lipset has emphasized a similar set of characteristics in describing American identity: "the United States… compared to other Europe-Canadian polities.. is still more classically liberal (libertarian), distrustful of government, and populist. It gives its citizens more power to influence their governors than other democracies, which rely more heavily on unified governments fulfilling economic and welfare functions. Viewed cross-nationally, Americans are the most antistatist liberal (Whig) population among the democratic nations."[68]

This same liberal philosophy and sense of exceptionalism has also formed the ideological basis for American support for international institutional building in periods of historical foreign policy activism, as a sense of the moral superiority of America's founding principles has led U.S. leaders with a strong belief in the utility of American power to advocate for the creation of international institutions based on this model. They have reflected a desire to create a constitutional community--*E Pluribus Unum*--on a global scale, and have tended to lead Americans to underestimate and misunderstand the power and potential for violence of traditional nationalism. Woodrow Wilson's argument for a new international order rooted in law and organization after World War I, or Franklin Roosevelt's arguments for the creation of the United Nations and Bretton Woods system after World War II, were attempts to apply to global politics those liberal principles that were understood to have created a just and stable order in the diverse American polity in the previous century. Thus, as John Gerard Ruggie has argued, " a multilateral vision of world order is singularly compatible with America's collective self-conception as a nation. Indeed the vision taps into the *very idea* of America."[69]

American ideology has also included an understanding of history which has engendered the sometimes contradictory notions of American exceptionalism and the universalizability of the American model of society and politics. U. S. leaders over the course of the 20th century have consistently held that the United States is a country fundamentally unlike other states in its more just form of government and social organization. They have also consistently argued, however, that this model of just society is universally applicable, that rooted in basic truths about the value of individual sovereignty, its essential structure has been assumed to be appropriate everywhere.

Americans have tended to believe, in short, that the social and political order established in their country is unique because it recognizes the basic rights of all human beings. But there have been crucial differences about the means--example or activism--that the nation should apply to the promotion of this its model abroad, and as a result, this single, basic belief has given rise to very

different visions of the nation's proper place in the world. Starting from this core value, it is possible to conclude reasonably that the United States should actively export its superior vision of politics and society, or just as reasonably that it should protect the uniqueness of this order at home by avoiding engagement with the outside world. This example illustrates the more general complexity of the translation of ideology into policy, because the conclusions leaders have drawn from this belief have depended on a host of ancillary assumptions and values, and the distance separating the policy options which emerge has tended to obscure the common core principle at the root of both.

Beyond these generalities on which there is broad agreement, profound differences over policy have emerged over more concrete questions of interpretation and emphasis. The relative importance of American sovereignty and the danger presented to it by participation in foreign politics; the relative importance of promoting justice (meaning a Liberal definition of individual human rights, capitalism, and democracy); the relative importance of foreign trade to U. S. economic prosperity; and the relative value of and danger to the lives of U. S. troops posed by foreign activism--differences over these issues have animated each of the pivotal debates which have defined the moments of transition in 20th century American foreign policy.

Secondary assumptions about the ends of policy--about whether the United States has a concrete interest in economic stability in more or less of the rest of the world, or the right or duty to champion its own version of political and economic order against other alternatives, or a moral obligation to establish peace abroad--have tended to go hand in hand with assumptions about the means of policy--whether the United States has the economic capacity to fund an activist foreign policy, or whether its diplomats and military can be effective. Disagreement over these assumptions led individuals in turn to very different definitions of national interest and threats to security, running the gamut from "war anywhere" to "physical attack on the territorial United States."

The history of U.S. foreign relations in the last century suggests that it would be overly simplistic to argue that these definitions of military security are derived from definitions of economic security--or vice versa. Certainly, Liberal economic theory supports the conclusion that global security is interconnected because it holds that global economics are interconnected--and economic nationalists consistently argue that these conclusions about both economic and security interests are incorrect. But it does not follow that national leaders define security based on their conclusions regarding economics; rather, it seems that for most leaders, all good things--and all bad things--go together with surprising consistency. The reasons for this seem likely to be rooted in both political expediency and individual psychology, but in any event, national leaders often assert conclusions about the domestic and international environment which allow them to support their policy choices unambiguously. Congressional isolationists before World War II, for example, concluded not only that the nation's well being was not closely tied to European trade and investment and that war would not threaten American security, but also that war on the Continent was not likely, and that the United States did not have the means to prevent it or change the outcome if it occurred.

Conclusion: Ideology and Identity in the History of U.S. Foreign Policy

The concluding section of this chapter will briefly suggest the ways in which national identity and ideology have shaped the creation of U.S. foreign policy over the course of the past two centuries. It will argue that differences in emphasis and interpretation within this common ideational framework explain the divergent understandings of the appropriate U.S. world which have animated the critical foreign policy debates in U.S. history. While national identity and ideology comprise the overall socio-cognitive structure within which foreign policy debate occurs, within this broad system particular schools of thought have emerged time and again, such as liberal and conservative isolationism and internationalism. At moments of change in the international system, one of these approaches has gained ascendance over its competitors to define a new foreign policy consensus for the decades that follow. Though the process by which this has occurred is complex, the most important factor determining which approach to the world will triumph has tended to be its ability to convincingly explaining the critical events of recent historical memory.

As he ended his second term as president in 1797, George Washington gave the following advice to the nation regarding its future foreign policy:

> Permanent, inveterate antipathies against particular nations and passionate attachments for others should be excluded... Against the insidious wiles of foreign influence… the jealousy of a free people ought to be constantly awake, since history and experience prove that foreign influence is one of the most baneful foes of republican government… The great rule of conduct for us in regard to foreign nations is, in extending our commercial relations to have with them as little political connection as possible. Europe has a set of primary interests which to us have none or a very remote relation. Hence she must be engaged in frequent controversies, the causes of which are essentially foreign to our concerns… Our detached and distant situation invites and enables us to pursue a different course… we may take such an attitude as will cause the neutrality we may at any time resolve upon to be scrupulously respected... Why forego the advantages of so peculiar a situation? Why quit our own to stand upon foreign ground? Why, by interweaving our destiny with that of any part of Europe, entangle our peace and prosperity in the toils of European ambition, rivalship, interest, humor, or caprice?[70]

Washington asked American leaders to redeem the promise of the Revolutionary War: to conduct foreign policy in a way that would allow the new nation to pursue its own destiny, free from the fetters of ancient rivalries and European power-politics. America enjoyed a natural isolation and resources so limitless that dependence on Europe was unnecessary. It had also liberated itself from an ancient political system in favor of government based on the liberal philosophy of Rousseau, Locke, and Montesquieu. It was for these reasons that Washington's words in the farewell address were able to become the axis around which American foreign policy revolved for the next hundred years. The country was endowed with physical security and a progressive system of government that engendered a sense of optimism and superiority and made the allure of the old world seem distant and faint.

Washington's Secretary of State Thomas Jefferson elaborated the logic of these ideas further. Jefferson's philosophy concerning world affairs held that conditions in the Old World caused "the general fate of humanity...[to be]...most deplorable...suffering under physical and moral oppression."[71] America, on the other hand, profited from a wealth of arable land and other resources, and its people were independent farmers, whose lifestyle to Jefferson's mind was healthier and more noble than that of more urban Europeans. The moral superiority of these people over those of the Old World, and the superiority of their liberal, egalitarian government, created in the United States the potential for a rational utopia. Americans had established the foundations of a society which was in every way more rational, noble, and just than any that had come before.

Jefferson accepted that a small navy and limited diplomacy would be needed to secure export outlets for American agriculture, but to attempt to play a more substantial role in the system of European politics would compromise unnecessarily the natural independence with which the country had been blessed. The notion of the frontier became an important element in this national philosophy, representing both the wealth of resources that allowed American detachment from the rest of the world, and also the proper vent for American productive energies. Jefferson's notion of America's moral superiority, and the need to maintain a kind of quarantine from European affairs in order to protect it, was to become an enduring aspect of the American psyche.

By the turn of the 20th century, however, the United States had become an economic giant--by 1914, the world's largest financial and industrial power--and U.S. business was rapidly expanding its designs on overseas markets and resources. As the nation's economic status changed the Jeffersonian notion of America's world role was amended by a generation of imperialist national leaders who sensed the new potential and demands of greater economic power. In the debate that developed over extra-continental American expansionism in the wake of the Spanish-American War, these proponents of empire tended to argue that America's racial and cultural superiority imposed a civilizing duty (and that if the U. S. did not step in, the inhabitants it might have protected would be left to the mercy of a European power or Japan), that empire would expedite trade, and that national honor would not permit territory acquired at the sacrifice of American blood to be discarded. Their arguments prevailed, and in so doing altered the traditional Jeffersonian interpretation of America's founding ideology to support a new policy consensus. Still accepting Jefferson's premise that American government and society were morally superior to those of the old world, they amended to his philosophy the assertion that the United States now had the means and thus a moral obligation to offer the benefits of civilization to the backward peoples of Latin America and the Pacific. But this idea of America as an active moral educator did not yet extend to Europe; the U.S. had nothing to fear from the child-like, powerless, even inherently inferior people of the uncivilized world, but could still be damaged by too-deep involvement in the fully-developed but amoral European political system. Europeans were the intellectual if not the moral equals of Americans, and this meant not only that political entanglement would be dangerous, but also that it was the duty of the United States to keep undeveloped regions out of the corrupting hands of European powers. After prolonged debate within the U. S. policy community, American dominion in Latin America, the Philippines, and other parts of the Pacific were widely accepted as coherent with this founding philosophy, but the prescriptions of the Farewell Address had not been fundamentally altered by

these changes since Washington had been referring to European entanglements. Generation after generation had come to understand that this was the quintessential statement of American foreign policy, and the intellectual force of this tradition remained deeply entrenched at the turn of the century.

With the outbreak of World War I the United States adopted a policy of neutrality ostensibly premised on Washington's principle of non-entanglement, but which in practice heavily favored the Allies because of British control of the sea and thus made German clashes with American shipping almost inevitable. Once the March, 1917 revolution in Russia had replaced the Czar with republican government, the war could be depicted to Americans as a struggle by democracy to defeat imperialism, militarism and autocracy.[72] And perceptions of Germany taking innocent American lives at sea and conspiring against the United States in Mexico comprised a threat to the "national honor" and physical security of the country that aroused public anger and eroded the restraints of traditional non-entanglement.

In this environment Woodrow Wilson reinterpreted traditional American beliefs to support a policy of intervention which was completely at odds with the historical practice of American foreign relations. Tradition had held that American exceptionalism compelled the United States to stay clear of European politics, that America's uniqueness required protective isolation. Wilson argued that American exceptionalsim should instead be a basis for intervention; that a more powerful United States had less to fear from the corrupting influence of European diplomacy, but might now use its unique national institutions as a model to reshape that system in its own image. Based in the same principles which had formed the intellectual foundation of traditional policy, Wilson radically altered its practical form, and called for a "war to end war," and to "make the world safe for democracy." His stated goals for the post-war world included the protection of all states by all others through a system of collective security; universal national self-determination and democracy; equality under international law; and the elimination of national barriers to trade.

These ideas represented a distinctly American statement of what was possible and desirable in international affairs, a globalization of the principles of the American founding. The same philosophy that provided the intellectual framework for America's Constitution led Wilson to the conclusion that the international community could also be united under the banner of shared aspirations and a common acceptance of universal goals. Democracy, individual liberty, and the right to self-determination in political and economic affairs were assumed to be an adequate foundation for a global constitutional community as they had been in American history.

But if the American ideological principles were reflected in Wilson's desire to create a global constitutional community, opponents of intervention in the war made their arguments based on their own interpretations of beliefs that were no less part of the nation's tradition. Ultimately, Wilson succeeded because his interpretation of these ideas seemed better able to explain recent history. It told Americans that the United States stood for peace, was a rational nation, slow to anger, but that America also stood for human rights and democracy, and no longer had to stand aside as these ideals were destroyed. It succeeded because it expressed and seemed to reconcile the contradictory impulses present in America's basic belief system, the compulsion to pursue both peace and justice. Torn by these conflicting desires between 1914 and 1917, Wilson shaped

a consensus for intervention based on a reinterpretation of American ideals which explained more effectively than his opponents' the events that had led up to war, and the nation's possible future. He recast traditional American beliefs about foreign policy to allow the kind of civilizing mission which had previously been extended only to the underdeveloped world to be directed at Europe as well, a feat made possible by the growing perception among national leaders and the public alike that the United States was now economically and militarily powerful enough that it did not have as much to fear from European involvement as it once had.

Wilson and his supporters in government, in order to convince Americans of the necessity of a war in which it was not self-evident that their interests were involved, depicted the conflict as an ideological battle and unrealistically raised expectations for the post-war world. When the "war to end war" did not in fact do so, it was inevitable that many of those who had supported it on this basis would be disappointed, and in 1920s political leaders opposing Wilson's globalist agenda in favor of a return to a more limited world role for the United States were able to tap into public disillusionment over the war and Versailles settlement. They argued that America had been drawn into World War I against its interests, only to discover that its European allies were more interested in profit and empire than an end to war. The lesson taken was that the superiority of the American social and political order dictated that the United States should remain a "city on the hill," steering clear of the corruption of European power-political struggles as it traditionally had, and this remained the guiding principle of American foreign relations even as Europe was once again descended into war again in the next decade. Franklin Roosevelt increasingly worked to challenge this isolationist consensus in the late 1930s and early 1940s, arguing in Wilsonian terms for an activist U.S. world role to defend American ideals and the community of peace loving, democratic states. After the close of World War II those advocating a leading U.S. world role in peacetime argued in traditional ideological terms once again that the United States represented a morally superior social and political system, but now claimed that it was the nation's responsibility actively to export these ideals. In light of the widespread perception that the United States had been too passive in the face of international aggression in the 1930s, arguments for the need to actively engage in world affairs and confront Soviet aggression resonated with many Americans both because they drew on the traditional American principles and because they seemed to capture more effectively than other policy arguments the lessons of recent history.

This history suggests that if the different strains of thought competing at these moments are rooted in a common American belief system, growing from the nation's founding ideas and history, they are also the lens through which the nation understands its recent past. These periods have often been marked by cataclysmic generational experiences which the claims of some policymakers appear better able to rationalize, justify, and interpret than others, and this capacity to convincingly explain recent events appears crucial to the effective assertion of a vision for future policy. Beliefs have tended to shape perceptions of the facts of recent history, with individuals often seeing in events what they expect to see even in the face of overwhelming evidence to the contrary. But historical facts have also tended to shape beliefs, and what Americans have believed about the world and the likely future has depended heavily on how they have come to understand the recent past.

When paradigmatic changes have occurred it has been because external events have forced a reconsideration of consensus assumptions about policy. This change remains constrained by a more general, widely and deeply held set of ideological core values, though at these moments this set of beliefs may be interpreted very differently than they have been in the past, to support new or even revolutionary policy choices. This is an intellectually and politically arduous process, however, and it does not typically occur without profound evidence that the established consensus is failing to serve the nation's interests. Change comes slowly because policy-makers (and the attentive public) are wedded to existing ideas and structures, and this fact tends to make change dramatic and sudden, rather than evolutionary. In the past, crisis has often necessary for change, and policies need to be more than anachronistic to be replaced--often they must fail utterly, unmistakably, and tragically.

The result has been a pattern not of smooth adaptation, but rather of "punctuated equilibrium" in the history of American foreign policy.[73] American foreign relations have been marked by long periods of consensus, divided by periods of change when policy became dysfunctional, was overturned and replaced by a new consensus. Given this history, if one assumes that the United States over the course of the 20th century has acted in the service of its national interests as realists conceive the term, one must also concede that it has been capable of making mistakes in comprehending the demands of that interest, and capable as well of learning from those mistakes over time.

Each of the pivotal moments in the history of U.S. foreign relations has been marked by strong disagreements over the nature and definition of the "national interest." There were fundamental, meaningful decisions about America's world role being made in 1917, 1919, 1939, 1948, and in the current era, decisions which might well have been made differently by different actors under different circumstances, even if the basic structures of world power had remained the same. . These facts suggests that the cold war consensus may have prejudiced the view of the neorealist IR theorists who observed it, leaving the impression that a broadly held understanding of the demands of national interest is the norm, and that a clear definition of interest will be readily approachable more often than is usually the case in more typical times. In the absence of the cold war consensus, a different, more confusing reality reemerged, in which threat, opportunity, security, and power are more often matters of debate, their meaning dependent on the subjective value judgments of individuals--in which, in other words, ideals and interests are "not separate entities, only analytically separable ones."[74] In the intervening decades it has become clearer that power, security, and the national interest are not Platonic ideals, and that even if they could be defined in the abstract they are contested concepts in the day to day reality of politics. Thus it is necessary to understand how these concepts are defined in order to comprehend the patterns of history which emerge from the accumulation of these day to day events.

The realist argument that states will pursue their national interest defined in terms of power and security provides an accurate description of the course of American foreign relations in the twentieth century, but is inadequate in that it does not take account of the complexity and diversity of American opinions regarding the nature of the national interest, the as well as the meaning of "power" and "security" for the United States. Constructivism offers the means to fill this void, by suggesting that it is American ideology and identity that provide the intellectual framework within which debates over these issues occurred. The intellectual history of U.S.

foreign policy has been defined by the continuous recasting of American identity--not the recreation of identity from scratch, but the reinterpretation of old ideas in new ways to match new circumstances. In some cases, however, the reinterpretation of these ideas has stretched them to support policies which were nothing short of revolutionary when judged against past practice, and in every case, the experiences of the nation's recent past exerted a profound influence over the dynamics of that reinterpretation. Though in a general sense the demands and opportunities accompanying the nation's position in the international system may dictate foreign policy as realists suggest, this process happens slowly and is biased by the subjective judgment and cognition of those in power. The constraints and opportunities of the international environment may take individuals--and even more so, nations--time to perceive, and their differing interpretations of changed conditions may still lead them to very different policy choices. As R.B.J. Walker has argued, in understanding the process by which the national interest is defined, "it is important to recognize that ideas, consciousness, culture, and ideology are bound up with more immediately visible kinds of political, military, and economic power."[75]

At moments of change in the history of U.S. foreign policy, debates over policy have been driven by competing definitions of national interest derived from a common framework of national identity and ideology, a set of general but historically resilient and widely held beliefs combining an understanding of the nation's history with traditional Liberal assumptions about the just relationship of individuals, government, and society. This broad, interconnected set of core values plays a dual role in the policy process, animating the choices of individual leaders but also creating a set of expectations and an understanding of acceptable policy among national elites and the public alike, and policy which seems to contravene these basic values will be met with disapproval from both groups. National identity and ideology comprise the socio-cognitive framework within which debates over foreign policy occur, limiting debate by implicitly determining which ideas, arguments, and policies are open to discussion and which are not. This ideational system thus creates both constraints and opportunities for national leaders, since while it limits the number of politically feasible policy options, it also offers the potential for leadership by appeal to its tenets.

At various points over the course of history, dramatic changes in the international system have led Americans to question and ultimately overturn entrenched consensus understandings of the appropriate role of the United States in the world. When this has occurred, the debates that have resulted have involved the reinterpretation of American identity and ideology to match new threats and opportunities, and in some cases to support policies that departed radically from past practice. In every case, the experiences of the nation's recent past exerted a profound influence over the socio-cognitive dynamics of foreign policy change. During the First and Second World Wars, presidents Wilson and Roosevelt reinterpreted traditional American beliefs to support policies profoundly at odds with the established practice of the nation's history. In the wake of 9/11, a similar reinterpretation has occurred, as the Bush administration has appealed to American's insecurity, but also traditional values, to support its policy choices.

Notes

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[14] Emmanuel Adler, "Seizing the Middle Ground: Constructivism in World Politics," European Journal of International Relations, Vol. 3, no. 3 (1997), 319-363, 322.

[15] Hopf, Social Construction, xi.

[16] Alexander Wendt, "Constructing International Politics," International Security, Vol. 21, no. 1 (Summer 1995), 71-81.

[17] Wendt, "Identity and Structural Change," 47-64.

[18] Ted Hopf, "The Promise of Constructivism in International Relations Theory," International Security, Vol. 23, no. 1 (Summer 1998), 171-200.

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[20] Wendt, "Constructing International Politics," 72.

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[36] Hopf, Social Construction, 6.

[37] Hopf, Social Construction, 7.

[38] Peter J. Katzenstein, ed., The Culture of National Security: Norms and Identity in World Politics, (Columbia University Press, 1996), 59. See also Latha Varadarajan, "Constructivism, Identity, and Neoliberal (In)security," Review of International Studies, 30 (2004), 323-24.

[39] Wendt, Social Theory, 235-7. A critique of this conception of identity can be found in Maja Zehfuss, "Constructivism and Identity: A Dangerous Liaison, European Journal of International Relations, 7 (2001), 315-48.

[40] Wendt, Social Theory of International Politics, 229, 300-305.

[41] Hopf, Social Construction, 287.

[42] Hopf, Social Construction, 289; Steve Smith, "Wendt's World," Review of International Studies, Vol. 26, no. 1 (January 2000), 161.

[43] Wendt, Social Theory, 147; Chaim D. Kaufman and Robert A. Pape, "Explaining Costly International Moral Action: Britain's Sixty Year Campaign against the Atlantic Slave Trade," International Organization 53, no. 4 (Autumn, 1999); Hopf, Social Construction, 278-280.

[44] Hopf, Social Construction, 289.

[45] Nau, 19-20.

[46] Nau, 10.

[47] Nau, 20.

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[49] Nau, 6.

[50] Nau, 6.

[51] On the importance of perceptions of intentions, see Thomas J. Christensen, "Perceptions and Alliances in Europe, 1865-1940," International Organization 51, no. 1 (1997), 65-69; William C. Wohlforth, The Elusive Balance: Power and Perceptions During the Cold War (Cornell University Press, 1993); and James Goldgeier and Philip Tetlock, "Psychology and International Relations Theory," Annual Review of Political Science Vol. 22, no. 4 (2001), 67-92.

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[55] Thomas Risse-Kappen, "Collective Identity in a Democratic Community: The Case of NATO," in Katzenstein, ed., Culture of National Security, 367.

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[57] G. John Ikenberry, After Victory: Institutions, Strategic Restraint, and the building of Order after Major Wars, (Princeton University Press, 2001).

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[60] Michael Hunt, Ideology and U. S. Foreign Policy (New Haven; Yale University Press, 1987), 12, 14.

[61] Richard Kerry, The Star Spangled Mirror (Rowman and Littlefield, 1990).

[62] Stanley Hoffmann, Gulliver's Troubles (McGraw Hill, 1967), 212

[63] Judith Goldstein and Robert Keohane, "Ideas and Foreign Policy: An Analytical Framework," in Judith Goldstein and Robert O. Keohane, eds., Ideas and Foreign Policy: Beliefs, Institutions, and Political Change (Cornell University Press, 1993), 8.

[64] George Kennan, "On America's Principles," Foreign Affairs; Vol. 74, no. 2 (March-April 1995), 116-126. Other works on the role of culture in international politics have included: Peter J. Katzenstein, ed. The Culture of National Security: Norms and Identity in World Politics (Columbia University Press, 1996); Michael C. Desch, "Culture Clash: Assessing the Importance of Ideas in Security Studies," International Security, Vol. 17, no. 4 (Summer 1998), 141-70; Alastair Iain Johnston, "Thinking about Strategic Culture," International Security, Vol. 19, no. 4 (Spring 1994), 32-64; and Jeffrey W. Legro, "Culture and Preference in the International Cooperation Two-Step," American Political Science Review, Vol. 90, no. 1(March 1996), 118-137.

[65] Hoffmann, Gulliver's Troubles, 87-89.

[66] Nau, 43-59.

[67] Nau, 63.

[68] Seymour Martin Lipset, American Exceptionalism: A Double-Edged Sword (W.W. Norton, 1996), 46. See also Roger M. Smith, "The 'American Creed' and American Identity: The Limits of Liberal Citizenship in the United States," Western Political Quarterly, 41, no.2 (1988), 229-30; Civic Ideals: Conflicting Visions of Citizenship in U.S. History (Yale University Press, 1997).

[69] John Gerard Ruggie, Winning the Peace (Columbia University Press, 1998); Nau, 25.

[70] George Washington, Farewell Address.

[71] Michael Hunt, Ideology and U. S. Foreign Policy (Yale University Press, 1987), 22.

[72] Jean-Baptiste Duroselle, From Wilson to Roosevelt: Foreign Policy of the United States, 1913-1945 (Harvard University Press, 1963), 68.

[73] The term "punctuated equilibrium" is borrowed from Jerel A. Rosati, who borrows it in turn from the field of evolutionary biology. Jerel A. Rosati, "Cycles of Foreign Policy Restructuring: The Politics of Continuity and Change in U.S. Foreign Policy, in Jerel A. Rosati, Joe D. Hagan, and Martin W. Sampson, eds., Foreign Policy Restructuring: How Governments Respond to Global Change (University of South Carolina Press, 1994), 224. See also Albert Somit and Steven A. Peterson, The Dynamics of Evolution: The Punctuated Equilibrium Debate in the Natural and Social Sciences, (Cornell University Press, 1992).

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[75] R.B.J Walker, "East Wind, West Wind: Civilizations, Hegemonies, and World Orders," in R.B.J. Walker, ed. Culture, Ideology, and World Order (Westview Press, 1994), 3.