Identity and Foreign Policy (to appear in *Oxford Research Encyclopedia of Politics*)

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Identity has come to figure prominently in the study of foreign policy since the 1990s when it was first introduced by constructivist theorists in International Relations. Consensus on what identity is and what it does in relation to foreign policy does not exist and is unlikely to be ever forged. Some scholars investigate state identity—how it informs and shapes foreign policy processes while simultaneously being informed and shaped by international structures. Others use the concept of identification to examine what foreign policy means for the constitution of modern political subjectivities. Still others seek to bring together constructivist identity scholarship together with more established approaches in Foreign Policy Analysis. This article considers the contextual emergence and evolution of the “identity and foreign policy” scholarship in its many different and differing streams. The large volume of literature produced on this subject over the past two and a half decade defies an easy summary of its theoretical and empirical contributions, but an overview of the main controversies and debates should provide the reader with a solid foundation for further research.

Keywords: identity, Foreign Policy Analysis, International Relations, constructivism, poststructuralism, feminism, social psychology, self, Otherness.

A Trading Zone

Research on identity and foreign policy is irreducibly associated with constructivism—an extended family of theoretical approaches that established themselves as a leading “paradigm” in International Relations (IR) in the 1990s [1]. The story of constructivist IR has many twists and turns, but its core plot is the mainstreaming of the claim that reality and knowledge are socially and politically constructed, contingent, and to various degrees contestable. Stylistically if not substantively, the story centers on the collapse of the Soviet Union and the end of the Cold War. Red-faced about their inability to foresee these dramatic events, “mainstream” scholars diverted attention to the “alternatives” on offer by “dissidents” since at least the 1980s (Adler, 2013, p. 114; also see Onuf, 2016).

One of those alternatives was constructivism, a theoretical system with an “almost frightening potential,” as one budding sociologist of the field described it at the time (Wæver, 1997, p. 25). In Foreign Policy Analysis (FPA), the main channel of constructivist influence has been identity and, in particular, state identity. By the early 2000s, a thriving trading zone was established: identity, one of the main “theoretical workhorses of constructivist accounts of global politics” (Hopf, 2000, p. 369), was being “foreign policy-ized” (Kaarbo, 2003, p. 160; also see Kubáľková, 2001, pp. 31–34; Houghton, 2007; Flockhart, 2012), and vice versa. The trade has boomed ever since (Onuf, 2016, p. 121; Kaarbo, 2015, pp. 193–194, 199–203; Carlsnaes, 2013, pp. 313–314, also see Berenskoetter, 2010, 2016; Kowert, 2010).

This article maps out the scholarly literature on the identity–foreign policy nexus by providing an overview of its origins, evolution, and main debates. It begins with some definitional matters, followed by an overview of the main assumptions and arguments associated with different strands of scholarship on identity and foreign policy. These are grouped under three broad and loose rubrics: conventional constructivism, constructing bridges, and critical constructivism. Attention to methodological issues is managed throughout. The concluding section addresses a selection of future research avenues.

Caveats: First, this article defines FPA broadly to include studies elsewhere categorized as Foreign Policy, or FP (Carlsnaes, 2013) and as Analysis of Foreign Policy, or AFP (Hadfield & Hudson, 2015). The same applies for “constructivist IR”: the convenience of this shorthand depends on the reader’s ability to separate, when appropriate, constructivist (a.k.a. constructionist) philosophy from the constructivist research agenda in this field, “conventional” (“moderate,” “American”) constructivisms from their “critical” (“radical,” “European”) constructivist counterparts, as well as between and among different “generations” of constructivist scholarship (Adler, 2013, pp. 116–117, 118–121). Finally, although, the notion that state policy, like stateness in general, is by default implicated in identity processes that occur beyond and through state boundaries, space prevents us from engaging with nonstate polities, the elasticity between state and nation and many other research areas that today logically fall under the rubric of identity and foreign policy (Neumann, 2015, pp. 45–46).

Meanings of Identity

The term “identity” began to gain social scientific currency in the middle years of the 20th century, primarily among psychologists. In the earliest conceptualizations, identity referred to the construction of an individual self [2]. Today, it typically refers to collectives. The concept was never without critics. Perhaps the most common criticism is that identity offers social scientists an exceedingly

unhappy choice: either you define identity narrowly, whereby you risk relabeling an already existing analytical category (role, rule, norm, group, social location, subject position, etc.), or you do so generally, risking a totalizing claim on everything that history and culture has made (Brubaker & Cooper, 2000).

Similar points can be found in the literature on identity in contemporary IR and FPA. In theory, notions of Self and Other are certainly capable of shedding light on actors' goals, interests and preferences, and so on how they relate to each other (e.g., Barnett, 1996) and/or on processes of identification that draw boundaries among, between, and within polities (e.g., Guillaume, 2010). In research practice, however, such theorization of identity is devilishly difficult, if not impossible, for reasons well rehearsed in all previous reviews of this literature: identity and action are indistinguishable; not all action is about identity; identities are too fragmentary, contingent, and malleable to be analytically meaningful; identity collapses into the cultural, discursive, and other ideational resources from which it is forged; identity is a quintessentially modernist illusion, and so on (Kowert & Legro, 1996; Ó Tuathail, 1996; Zehfuss, 2001; Hynek & Teti, 2010; Berenskoetter, 2010; Epstein, 2011; Kaarbo, 2015; Onuf, 2016).

Critical scrutiny has been productive for the identity scholarship in IR and FPA. The once ubiquitous assumption that identity presupposes an oppositional Other, for example, is no longer so ubiquitous in the field because several scholars have now examined why and how the Other can take many different forms in world politics [3]. The concept's scope, domain, and types have been clarified as well. Arguing that identity is not "susceptible to general definition," Alexander Wendt proposes the existence of four "kinds" of identities: the categories of corporate identity and role identity both emphasize self–other relations and us versus them differences, while collective identity and type identity stand for commonalities and we-ness (Wendt, 1999, pp. 221–230).

Others have schematized identity's "constitutive dimensions." A volume edited by Goff and Dunn (2004) unpacks alterity, fluidity, constructedness, and multiplicity, while a volume edited by Abdelal, Herrera, Johnston, and McDermott (2009) breaks identity into content and contestation, and then it breaks content into constitutive norms, social purposes, relational comparisons, and cognitive models. Building on the latter framework, Kowert (2010) categorizes identity on the basis of two binaries: constitution versus regulation (who or what agents are versus how agents should act) and internal versus external (integration versus differentiation). All of these interventions make the same point: fields characterized by so much philosophical, theoretical, and empirical heterogeneity simply do not tolerate general definitions [4].

Another important definitional qualification stems from the fact that IR's appetite for new theories means that much of the so-called identity scholarship is not centered on identity. Research on the construction of threats, which is of direct relevance to FPA, is a good example. There, identity routinely plays second fiddle to other concepts. These include performativity (Campbell, 1992; Laffey, 2000), societal security and securitization (e.g., Wæver et al., 1993; Hayes, 2013), intersectionality (Milliken & Sylvan, 1996; Sjöberg & Weber, 2015), norms (Klotz, 1995; Checkel, 1999), recognition (Ringmar, 1996; Daase et al., 2015), security communities (Acharya, 2000; Pouliot, 2008); self-esteem (Lebow, 2008; Browning, 2015), articulation and interpellation (Doty, 1996; Weldes, 1999), socialization and internalization (Gheciu, 2005; Flockhart, 2006), institutionalization (Barnett, 1993; Subotić, 2011), stigmatization (Zarakol, 2011; Adler-Nissen, 2014), legitimation (Jackson, 2006; Goddard & Krebs, 2015), strategic and organizational cultures (Johnston, 1995;

Kier, 1997), ontological security (Mitzen, 2006; Steele, 2007), habit and habitus (Hopf, 2002; Bjola & Kornprobst, 2007), affect and emotions (Crawford, 2000; Hall & Ross, 2015), among others.

Perhaps most importantly, the concept of identity has also helped the field reflect on itself, facilitating a proliferation of thought-provoking probes into the relationship between the core social and intellectual disciplinary structures on the one hand and the assorted liberal, imperial, racialized, and gendered identities and identifications on the other (see, e.g., Tickner, 1996; Chowdhry & Neir, 2004). The result has been greater awareness of the situatedness of knowledge among all scholars, not just constructivists. While constructivism has gone mainstream, heterogeneity of the identity agenda informed by constructivist ideas has arguably increased rather than consolidated. Recognition of the many deployments of this agenda goes a long way in contextualizing its critiques. Indeed, different meta-theoretical commitments imply different theoretical and methodological choices and therefore different strengths and weaknesses. Trade-offs exist, and their sharp edges cannot always be blunted; even the best work cannot always avoid all conceptual pitfalls. In this way, the scholarship on identity and foreign policy is no different from the scholarship on “X and foreign policy” or “identity and Y.” Yet, if we agree that identity in the twenty first century is what ideology was in the twentieth (Moisi, 2009, p. 12), then this research agenda and its many debates are probably here to stay.

State Identity as a Variable

Broadly defined, the domain of identity and foreign policy involves an assortment of constructivist literatures in IR—from state sovereignty and nationhood to regions and regionalization to the character of the modern international system and of the modern episteme. Viewed from the perspective of FPA, however, this domain tends to be reduced to the claim that “[i]dentities shape actor interests or state policy” (Jepperson et al., 1996, p. 53), which in turn tends to be associated with the conventional constructivist critique of materialist, rationalist, and individualist traditions of theorizing.

Consider one of Wendt’s go-to vignettes: why is it that “500 British nuclear weapons are less threatening to the United States than 5 North Korean nuclear weapons” (Wendt, 1995, p. 73, cited in Hurd, 2008, p. 298)? The answer—because “the British are friends and the North Koreans are not”—should not be obvious if one insists, as structural realists do, that patterns of cooperation and conflict in the international system follow anarchy plus the distribution of capabilities. Puzzles like these have led to many a “refinement” of realist theories. A case in point is Stephen Walt’s (1987) argument that states react not so much to the distribution of material power as to threats, and specifically “aggressive intentions.” With this, Wendt’s question appears answered: North Korean warheads threaten the United States because North Korea has hostile intentions vis-à-vis the United States, in contrast to the British ally.

This, constructivists pointed out, was only the beginning of a good constructivist argument. Had Walt actually theorized the constitution of security threats, he would have come to an appreciation of the importance of identity relations and the ways in which they condition phenomena like enmity, friendship, aggression, and alliances (Barnett, 1996, p. 403; Hopf, 1998, p. 187). The same for Nau (2002) who later proposed that threats depend on the “distribution of identity”—a variable theretofore omitted in realism. Operationalizing

identity in terms of democracy scores, Nau seemed to offer another answer to Wendt's question: the quality and quantity of their weaponry notwithstanding, democracies do not threaten the United States. Once again, constructivists were interested but critical. Identity may well be a variable, just not a "fixed variable that can be read off a state's domestic politics," wrote Jeffrey Checkel (2004, p. 232). [6]

Conventional constructivism indeed came to distinguish itself by treating "identity as a variable" (Abdelal et al., 2009). Usually combining realist ontologies with methodological elements derived from both interpretivist and positivist traditions enabled critical constructivism to make fairly mainstream causal claims. In the seminal volume edited by Katzenstein (1996), for example, "actor interest or state policy" was famously recast as "effects of identity"—that is, items to be explained with an analysis of expressions and embodiments of state identity (Jepperson et al., 1996, pp. 53–54; cf. Ruggie, 1998, p. 52). This framework was then deployed to highlight how variations in, and configurations of, state identity shaped the foreign and defense policies of the late Soviet Union, interwar France, all "civilized" states, all "modern" states, postwar Germany and Japan, Maoist China, NATO member states, as well as the states of the Middle East.

Importantly, the Katzenstein volume paid close attention to "recursivity." What this means is that each empirical chapter traced much more than how specific state identities authorized some collectively binding policy undertakings but not others. In fact, most chapters also examined not only how selected purposive state policy actions and state policy events influencing the evolution of state identities, but also how enactments of those identities massively influenced the "structure of the international system to which they belong" (Jepperson et al., 1996, p. 62). Seen in this light, state identity is not a "thing" and not simply "there"; rather, it is constantly evolving, always in formation and interaction. Or, as Emmanuel Adler puts it, "*becoming* rather than being" (2013, p. 113, italics in the original).

The first generation of conventional constructivist scholarship has had lasting effects on FPA. On the plus side, it sensitized the subfield to the fact that power, authority, interests, threats, alliances, regions, and weapon use norms are all social and relational phenomena, and that they should be studied as such. Further, by appropriating the mantra on the "mutual constitution" or "co-constitution of agent and structures"—the idea that structural developments "impact," continuously and simultaneously, who states are and what they want, while state action and non-action "impact" structures in the same manner—conventional constructivism helped reconfigure theorization of foreign policy continuity and change as well.

On the minus side, with realism as its main theoretical foil, early constructivist research spent too much time on the shortcomings of the materialist, objective-interest explanations instead of actually analyzing how foreign policy is implicated in the political construction of "us" and "them" or, for that matter, theorizing the link between the processes of identification on the one hand and the material objects, institutions, and practices of foreign policy on the other. In some corners of IR theory, early constructivist work was interpreted as "idealism" and, more damningly, as a move away from the study of power in international political life. Whether or not this interpretation was fair can be debated, but constructivists have long been at pains to demonstrate otherwise (Guzzini, 2000; Onuf, 2016).

Constructing Bridges

Constructivist FPA is sometimes pegged as the latest iteration of the “cultural” approach to foreign policy (Hudson, 2014, chap. 4). This characterization is misleading. Certainly, it is true that the putative founding fathers and mothers of FPA—Leites (1951), Wolfers (1952), Snyder, Bruck, and Sapin (1954), Sprout and Sprout (1956), and Boulding (1959)—were all calling on students to pay more theoretical and empirical attention to agentheld ideas and assorted ideational environments and that their scholarship helped pave the way first for FPA frameworks on bureaucratic politics, cognitive processes, groupthink, images and misperceptions in the 1970s (e.g., Jervis, 1970) and then, at the century’s end, certain forms of constructivism (Kubáľková, 2001, pp. 17–18, 27–28; Houghton, 2007, p. 26). That said, none of these early ideational approaches relied on the conceptual building blocks one associates with today’s constructivist FPA: meaningmaking practices, intersubjectivity, agent-structure co-constitution, and so on (Kubáľková, 2001, p. 30, also see Kaarbo, 2003; Berenskoetter, 2010). Examples: it is one thing to posit that shared cultural identity helps build alliances (e.g., Snyder, 1997, p. 8), and quite another to trace this connection historically and relationally—that is, without essentializing and reifying either the state’s culture or its alliance portfolio. Similarly, whereby the taken-for-grantedness of culture was once regarded as an almost intractable conceptual and methodological challenge (e.g., Katzenstein, 1997), in constructivist FPA it is far more likely to be treated as a theoretical starting point.

It is in this context that we can understand various attempts to “build bridges” between conventional constructivist scholarship on the one hand and assorted “traditional” FPA theories and theoretical frameworks on the other. Following Kaarbo (2003), the most likely participants in the latter camp are role theory, psychological approaches, and domestic process theories. Let us consider each in turn.

The influence of role theory, especially its symbolic interactionist and cognitive strands, on conventional constructivism is considerable (Thies, 2010). In contrast, the bridges between these two approaches in FPA are still under construction. While both approaches set out to reconcile the agent–structure divide, they do so in manifestly different ways (Kaarbo, 2003, p. 160; Carlsnaes, 2013, p. 315; cf. Bukovansky, 1997, p. 210).

In role-theoretic FPA, the title of the main conceptual workhorse goes to national role conceptions or NRCs—the social-cognitive constructs nations bring to their interaction with other nations within an international structure defined primarily by the distribution of material capabilities. NRCs are also said to be defined and redefined by decision makers first and foremost, even if one accepts that these definitions must by default resonate with the national culture, broadly defined (Breuning, 2011, p. 26). Thus, while role theorists chide (some) constructivists for their hyper-socialized view of actors and the impoverished understanding of interstate interactions (Kaarbo, 2015, p. 201; also see Albert & Lapid, 2010; McCourt, 2014), constructivists criticize (some) role-theoretic perspectives for their materialist conception of structures and also for being “excessively consequentialist, as if an actor has some pregiven interest that it can advance through the appropriate choice of an identity or a norm” (Hopf, 2002, p. 282; also see Bevir, Daddow, & Hall, 2013).

Another point of contention is the conception of intentionality. If it is true that state identity

unselfconsciously supplies all actors, including the foreign policy elites, with a sense of being in and through time, then it could be argued, as some constructivists did, that state identity in fact subsumes NRCs—that is, it defines them and resolves conflicts among them (Hopf, 2002, pp. 10–12; Kratochwil, 2007, p. 41; also see Nabers, 2011, pp. 82–83).

None of this suggests that bridges are impossible. Role theory has a lot to offer to IR as a whole (Thies & Breuning, 2012). Indeed, recent research shows that constructivist teachings on the discursive construction of identity can and do inform role-theoretic hypotheses on role change (Harnisch, Frank, & Maull, 2011, pp. 260–261), just as greater attention to roles can help better explain the effects of identity on state policies (Krotz, 2015). These studies are still exceptions, however. As with any bridge-building effort, the challenge when working with seemingly irreconcilable conceptualizations of, for example, the role of language or the interplay of agency and structure is to avoid cheap subsumption moves—that is, as Checkel (2004) puts it in another context, the building of one-lane bridges in which the flow of traffic goes from one theory to the other rather than in both directions.

Psychological insights about identity formation—in particular, those from Social Identity Theory (SIT)—gained currency in FPA long ago, and they continue to motivate research on, for example, attitudes toward war and peace or trust and mistrust (e.g., Herrmann, Isernia, & Segatti, 2009; Chung, 2015). In addition, SIT was one of the main driving forces behind the conventional constructivist boom in the 1990s (Mercer, 1995). However, shared empirical interest and theoretical borrowing do not build bridges on their own. One challenge is what ontology to prioritize: “subjective” beliefs of individuals and groups of individuals, which are the focus of psychological research, do not easily mix or nest with the constructivist interest in ideas that are shared and “intersubjective.” Expanding on this point, constructivism veers toward the structural side of the agent–structure dynamic, while psychological approaches focus on agents’ motivations, judgments, and decisions. That said, just like constructivists borrow from SIT, social psychologists can arguably make use of constructivist macrolevel interpretations of identity formation to design research that centers on microlevel data and relies on methodologies such as closed surveys or field experiments (Sylvan & Metskas, 2009). Thus, while full-blown “theoretical integration” and “synthesis” are probably chimeras, “complementarities” and “alliances” certainly exist (Kowert, 2012, pp. 223, 229; also see Kaarbo, 2003, p. 161; Shannon & Keller, 2007, p. 80).

To illustrate some complementarities between the two camps, consider the recent analyses of the role of status claims in foreign policymaking by Clunan (2009) and Larson and Shevchenko (2003, 2014). [7] Each study begins with a basic SIT insight: the international behavior of contemporary Russia, China, Turkey, India, and Brazil is far less puzzling if one considers the relationship between the need for positive collective self-esteem and the desire for great-power status. From this perspective, foreign policies are basically identity management strategies. At different points since the 1990s, Russian state officials have thus tried to manage Russia’s self-esteem by pursuing both assimilating and social competition strategies in most issues areas. As these strategies failed, Moscow switched gears toward social creativity and social competition—seeking to regain great-power status by championing “alternative norms” or by “unexpected” turns in cooperation practices with Western partners (Larson & Shevchenko, 2003, pp. 90–93; Clunan, 2009, chap. 6).

Where these two analyses diverge concerns the degree to which identity can be managed by ruling elites. For Larson and Shevchenko (2003), the dominant mechanism is social comparison: the greater the state's risk for negative distinctiveness, the more likely the state's elite will reframe that distinctiveness as positive or underscore state-level achievements in other issue areas. The more constructivist Clunan leaves less room for elite agency. In 1991–2004, she argues, Russian elites deployed multiple and occasionally competing “national self-images” (her ideal-typical categories are Western, statist, restorationist, neocommunist, and Slavophile), which set the framings of Russia's great-powerhood and thus the realm of possible Russian foreign policy action. Clunan's main argument is that the epistemic appropriateness and institutional efficacy of each frame depended on its “legitimacy test”—that is, on the “fit” between elite strategies on the one hand and the prevailing understandings of history, of social norms, of international political conditions, and of elite competence on the other hand (2009, pp. 36–38). In this account, post-Soviet Russian foreign policy is an outcome of the iterative interaction between elite claims and ideas circulating at the level of national society or, differently put, of ideational structural constraints on elite agency and of elite agency reshaping ideational structural constraints through simultaneous feedback loop. Social comparison plays a role here, too, but only as a component of the broader mechanism of fit. [8]

The third potential bridge-building area identified by Kaarbo involves domestic process approaches, a large tent that in her formulation includes research on bureaucracies, organizations, small decision-making groups, public opinion and the media, and state–society relations (2003, p. 162). A decade later, Kaarbo found that bridges were missing, partly because constructivists were still putting aside domestic political structures and elite agency, while underspecifying mechanisms for linking societal identities and foreign policy choices (2015, p. 202; also see Checkel, 2004). A particular problem, in Kaarbo's view, is constructivism's mistaken notion that state identities are vertically shared between masses and elites and that these shared meanings determine the elites' judgment and decision making. FPA insights suggest precisely the opposite (Kaarbo, pp. 202–203; for e.g., see Page & Barabas, 2000). Views on the country's identity tend to differ not only across the mass–elite divide, but also within elites themselves. As Murray Edelman argued over 50 years ago, the deployment of symbols and symbolic assurances by the elites on behalf of a country's citizens “may well be maximal in the foreign policy area” (1964, p. 41, also see Wolfers, 1952).

FPA theorizations of domestic processes—and one could add to Kaarbo's list class relations and the rise of ethnocultural diversity and diaspora politics in the advanced capitalist democracies (Hill, 2013)—serve as a vast repository of knowledge that many constructivist accounts ignore. A notable exception is Ted Hopf, who has sought to bring the domestic into constructivist FPA for almost two decades now (Hopf, 1998, p. 194, 2002, 2013). According to this theory, which Hopf dubs societal constructivism, state identity is constituted primarily through state–society dynamics, discursively constructed and, most importantly, habitualized—that is, implicit, solidified, and taken-for-granted (as opposed to negotiated on the basis of either cost-benefit calculations or role compatibility). What is more, this approach posits that identity is most useful when conceptualized in terms of nationwide discourse and recovered from texts generated at both elite and mass levels.

Hopf's version of constructivist FPA revolves around empirically demanding

reconstructions of the “topography” of state or national identity—in his case Soviet and Russian identities—which are then used to help explain the state’s foreign relations in a specific historical period. Here, the causal mechanism is socialization in the deep sense: all foreign policy decision makers belong to the same national identity terrain that delineates what is or is not possible, intelligible, thinkable, and imaginable (Hopf, 2002, p. 20). Importantly, there need not be a single state identity but multiple identities; indeed, even in a thoroughly Stalinized Soviet Union, Hopf discovered contestations (Hopf, 2002, pp. 79–80). Societal constructivism is also a theory of middle range: it does not seek to explain how identity discourse might have caused specific policies, judgments, or decisions, but rather broader foreign policy understandings and their influence on the country’s foreign relations.

In a subsequent refinement of this theory, Hopf (2012, pp. 17–23) adds an institutional component in order to examine the role of foreign policy bureaucracy, academia, media, and other institutional containers of state identity. If formal and informal institutions are able to support, resist, or modify the hegemonic understanding of what it means to the state and nation, then this theoretical move can help explain why some self-understandings tend to be stickier, more pervasive, and, indeed, more powerful than others in a given historical context.[9]

Bridges? What Bridges?

Not everyone in IR is, or should be, interested in building bridges or, for that matter, “seizing” and “sharing middle ground” (Adler, 2013, p. 212; cf. Barder & Levine, 2012; Hynek & Teti, 2010; Locher & Prügl, 2001). In such a diverse and interdisciplinary field, scholarly communication often calls not only for recognition of philosophical, theoretical or methodological distinctions and differences, but also for acceptance of incommensurabilities between the existing approaches. It is important to keep this point in mind when reviewing the so-called critical constructivism—that wide body of scholarship based on ideas distilled from postmodernist postulates, poststructuralism, postcolonial theory, semiotics, critical theory, pragmatist philosophy and a host of other philosophical and sociotheoretic approaches (Adler, 2013, pp. 116–117).

A commonplace label in IR, “critical constructivism” is at best a pleonasm.[10] It is also crucial for understanding the origins of the trading zone between identity and foreign policy. [11] A good starting point is Campbell’s (1992) deconstruction of the U.S. obsession with security. U.S. national identity, he argued, is not something that shapes U.S. foreign policy, but rather that which is constituted by it. So rather than viewing identity as a cause, as in the state identity as a variable literature, the purpose of the deconstructive approach is to show how state identity is reified—and for what purposes—through state action. Campbell’s argument was that “US foreign policy” served to justify the oppression and exploitation of populations who either resisted European colonization (Native Americans), who were enslaved for capitalist profit (Africans above all, but also some Native Americans again), or who rejected the principles of the Great Republic (communists, for example).

Campbell’s argument not only turned the “traditional” FPA on its head, but it also inspired a number of debates that have come to influence IR as a whole (e.g., see Krishna, 1993; Locher & Prügl, 2001). For example, the recent “practice turn” (Adler, 2013, pp. 120–121) was in many ways made possible by the scholarship of “dissidents” like Campbell and Onuf (2001) who showed that foreign policy is practice—at once a tool of identity production

and a plan of action spoken into existence by power-holders.

It is thanks to these early critical constructivist interventions that today's IR recognizes that an important purpose of foreign policy is to manage difference "at home," that foreign policymaking is implicated in the relations of super- and subordination in multiple societies, not just the international one, and that disciplinary knowledge in the area conditions how the discipline positions itself as a social scientific field (e.g., Doty, 1996; Inayatullah & Blaney, 2004; Barder & Levine, 2012; Sjoberg & Weber, 2015). This literature has also increased awareness of the problems of treating identity as a variable as opposed to inherently processual and relational configurations of events dependent on, among others things, the available "discursive articulations" (Hansen, 2006; including, as per the preceding point, one's own theoretical discourse [Onuf, 2016, p. 122]). The same goes for awareness of the value of less Eurocentric vantage points (see, *inter alia*, Johnston, 1995; Berger, 1996; Acharya, 2000; Ayooob 2002; Telhami & Barnett, 2002; Chacko, 2012; Morozov, 2015).

Not to be forgotten are contributions to methodology. Hansen's discourse analysis of Western policies vis-a-vis the Bosnian War has demonstrated that "poststructuralist methods" is not an oxymoron. In what texts are Western discourses on Bosnia in 1992–1995 most likely to reside? How does one establish a discursive boundary analytically? Which discourses dominated, and where, when, and what implications did they have for policy? Not only does Hansen outline procedures for tackling these questions in a reliable fashion (Hansen, 2006, chap. 2), but she does so in a dialogue with those who insist on collapsing relations between theory and method (Hansen, 2006, pp. 218–220). The fact that the latest edition of a leading FPA textbook now includes a chapter on poststructuralist discourse analysis penned by Hansen (2012) is a testament to the quality of her work as well as to the growing relevance of the critical constructivist approaches that are being taught in the subfield (cf. Hudson, 2014; also see Carlsnaes, 2013, p. 315).

What Next?

Whatever their overarching philosophical and theoretical lenses, the vast majority of identity and foreign policy studies tend to be based on the case study and grounded in the manual interpretation of texts—usually some form of discourse analysis. In terms of causal accounts, this scholarship has long been characterized by a division of labor of sorts: conventional constructivist and their various ideational allies within traditional FPA make causal claims, and critical constructivists focus on constitutive claims. This division is now more blurred than ever before. The critical constructivist ritual of abjuring causal claims relates specifically to Human conceptualization of causation (e.g., Hansen, 2006, pp. 25–28). Follow a different model—critical realists and pragmatists have several of them on offer—and causal inferences become possible across different schools of identity and foreign policy research (Vucetic, 2011A, pp. 1307–1311; also see Grynaviski, 2013). Such "alternative" theoretical moves are especially important for those interested in bridging constructivism with traditional FPA frameworks or, for that matter, centering FPA closet to the study of temporality, crises, memory, and intuitions, to name but a few recently reinvigorated concepts adjacent to identity (for discussions, see Hagström & Gustafsson, 2015, pp. 9–12; Holland & Solomon, 2014, pp. 263–265; Holmes, 2015, pp. 708–712).

In connection with the previous point, promoters of “pluralism” and “analytical eclecticism” have drawn on recent developments in the philosophy of social sciences to argue that many disparate IR and FPA theories can be structured around causal explanations and causal mechanisms in particular—all entities, relations, and configurations that come together to generate specific outcomes (Sil & Katzenstein, 2010, p. 421; also see Bennett & Checkel, 2015). A volume edited by Guzzini (2012) shows the empirical import of this stance. In this collaborative study, the object of analysis is the end of the Cold War and the variable influence it had on foreign policy identities in six European countries—specifically, how and why German and Czech foreign policies failed to experience the revival of neoclassical geopolitical discourse that came to characterize the foreign policies of Estonia and Russia (both of which were also “new”) as well as those of Italy and Turkey. The answer is that these divergent policy trajectories can all be explained by reference to specific concatenations of social mechanisms involving leadership choices, collectively (and sometimes unselfconsciously) shared ideas, institutional features and their path dependencies, and various feedback dynamics. Identifying mechanisms behind such complex but recurrent processes, Guzzini argues, is conducive to the much-needed development of constructivist theorization of the microdynamics of foreign policy (2012, p. 277).

Such approaches are bound to further destabilize the state as the unit of analysis. A practice theory-inspired study by Adler and Patricia Greve (2009) finds that security communities are created and maintained not so much on the basis of collective and/or overlapping identities between and among states but on the basis of specific practices among state representatives—self-restraint or internal and external confidence building, for example. Following his ethnographic analysis of a European foreign ministry, Neumann (2012) shows that foreign policy change and continuity arise not from the processes of national identity and identification but from everyday diplomatic practices, such as speechwriting. Both studies point to a radical expansion of the identity and foreign policy research agenda. Rather than analyzing identity formation at the level of the nation-state or among various national agents (e.g., Checkel, 2001), the goal is to trace the same process within and across the networks of agents—including those populated with nondomestic, nonstate, and even nonhuman elements.

Expanding on this point, consider also the sizable literature linking various identity formation processes to narratives (a sample: Banerjee, 1998; Berenskoetter, 2014; Miskimmon, O’Loughlin, & Roselle, 2013; Krebs, 2015; Subotić, 2015). Recasting narratives as “games” played out among different narrators and their audiences as opposed to “stories” complicates constructivism’s methodological default setting as well as its understanding with an agent-structure co-constitution (Büger & Gadinger, 2014, pp. 37–40; e.g., see Faizullaev & Cornut, 2016). To the extent that such games can and do negotiate international social order, it then becomes an imperative to revisit, theoretically and empirically, not only the conditions of identity formation, but also the reigning understanding of power in world politics (cf. Doty, 1996; Fierke, 1998).

The current international order is being transformed by global ecological change, shifting political landscapes across the West, and the rise of the “Rest.” Much like the end of the Cold War, these transformations are influencing the scholarly production in new and interesting ways. For one, the rise of anti-globalist nationalism has prompted many a reflection on the constitutive role emotionality plays in the human capacity for maintaining

stable and coherent selves (e.g. Moïsi, 2009).

The phrase “identity politics” is another major fulcrum of current identity debates. In 2016, the year of the “Brexit” vote in the UK and the rise to United States presidency of Donald Trump, many commentators in the English-speaking world came to argue against what they saw as a liberal obsession with diversity. Per this argument, this not only “Balkanized” society and politics, but it also paved for the right-wing “identitarian” reactions *à la* Trump and Trumpism. This only goes to show how little Western politics has changed since the time the phrase was first deployed by a group of radical black feminists in the 1970s—the Combahee River Collective Project. In this formulation, identity politics is neither a function of an innate human need for recognition nor a plot against class-based forms of political organizing but a means for identifying and resisting racism, patriarchy, and heteronormativity. The history of the term is worth keeping in mind considering that mainstream conceptualizations of identity politics are already implicit in FPA engagements with “multiculturalism” or “populism.”

Finally, much like its parent field of IR, FPA is now striving for a more global interaction of theory and empirics (e.g., Brummer & Hudson, 2015). In the literature reviewed in this article, scholars have already demonstrated the utility and necessity of building theories of the identity–foreign policy nexus in relation to non-European and non-Western settings. The benefits of this trend are considerable. For example, students of Turkish foreign policy were always much more likely to furnish new conceptual insights into the nature of feedback loops between international structure on the one hand and a state’s “liminality” on the other than students of, say, U.S. foreign policy. [12] The challenge for FPA is to develop greater ability and willingness to bring such work out of the margins and into the center of theoretical debates.

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NOTES

(1.) For written comments and criticism, I am grateful to Juliet Kaarbo, Felix Berenskoetter and two anonymous reviewers. All errors remain mine.

(2.) In this sense, “identity” is said to go back to the 1890s and the work of William James (Oyserman, Elmore, & Oyserman, 2012, pp. 69–70), though some have extended it to ancient philosophers as well (Lapid & Kratochwil, 1996; Lebow 2012).

(3.) Wæver (1998), Neumann (1999), Onuf (2003), Odysseos (2007), Guillaume (2010) and Epstein (2011). On the evolving ontological, epistemological, and normative status of the Other in identity theory, also see *inter alia*, Keith and Pile (1993), Abizadeh (2005), and Lebow (2012).

(4.) This is most clearly evident in the Goff-Dunn (2004) collection. It brings together poststructuralist, postcolonial, pragmatist, feminist, and other perspectives that deal with civilizational, national, gender, imperial, regional, religious, ethnic, historical, and state identities in contexts ranging from fin-de-siècle Bengal to the structure of international order emerging after the terrorist attacks of 9/11.

(5.) For a sample, see Biersteker and Weber (1996), Ferguson and Mansbach (1996), Hall (1999), Risse (2010), and Agathangelou and Ling (2009).

(6.) This is but one episode in a number of realist-constructivist dialogues (e.g., Lapid & Kratochwil, 1996; Williams, 1998; Ayoob, 2002; Jackson & Nexon, 2004; Rousseau, 2006; Sterling-Folker, 2009; Hadfield, 2010; Barkin, 2010).

(7.) The FPA literature on status-seeking and status inconsistencies is an encyclopedia entry on its own.

(8.) Social-psychological FPA approaches have also examined how ideas shared among foreign policy decision makers—those within political institutions such as parties, as well as among political elites more generally—resonate, or fail to resonate, with shared sociopolitical and cultural ideas at the level of the society (Kaarbo, 2003, p. 161). A similar mechanism is central to many theories of strategic persuasion and framing as well: leaders use those frames that have the greatest chance to persuade their audiences. What constructivists like Clunan do differently, however, is to provide methods for empirically specifying the constraints that emanate from the so-called background knowledge—that which is intelligible, thinkable, and imaginable (also see Hopf, 2002). Scholars have also shown that the mechanism of fit can not only be tied to ideas and discourses, but also to nondiscursive practices, institutions, and events. For partial reviews of this scholarship, see Vucetic (2011b, pp. 12–13, 2016, pp. 210–201), Ilgit and Özkeçeci-Taner (2012, pp. 96–97), and Holland and Solomon (2014, p. 265).

(9.) Hopf’s societal constructivism is currently driving an ambitious project with a potential to build several more bridges across FPA and IR: a “national identity database” covering all modern great powers (Hopf & Allan, 2016). Here, too, the research objective is to recover identities via discourse analysis of popular texts, but now this is done by counting the number of times a particular identity category appears within and across texts chosen for analysis. In addition to providing easily retrievable and interpretatively

coded national identity topographies in select cases (e.g., China in 1950), this project opens up a possibility of both qualitative and quantitative longitudinal and cross-national comparisons (e.g., the evolution of Chinese national identity from 1950 to 2010, the distribution of great powers identities in 2000, and so on).

(10.) For a variety of constructivist (aka constructionist) views in philosophy and in social theory, and how the two connect, see Haslanger (2003). For IR discussions, see Zehfuss (2013) and Sjoberg and Tickner (2013).

(11.) The heterogeneity of critical constructivist approaches to identity and foreign policy can be gleaned from the following sample: Dalby (1988), Ferguson (1996), Larsen (1997), Fierke (1998), Weldes (1999), Wæver (2002, 2005) Nabers (2009), Neumann (1999), Duffy and Federking (2009), Agius, (2013), Carta and Morin (2014), Solomon (2015), and Cha (2015).

(12.) Bozdağlıoğlu (2003), Yılmaz and Bilgin (2005), Rumelili (2011), Yanık (2011), and Zarakol (2011, chap. 3).