Tastes Great? Less Filling? On the Coherence of Constructivisms in IR Theory

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ABSTRACT

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Realist/neo-realist and neo-liberal institutional approaches of international relations (IR) theory, which take a rationalist/systemic approach using the state as a primary unit of analysis, have recently come under fire. As a result of what has been characterized as the 'third debate' or critical turn, the discipline of IR seems to have congealed around seemingly intractable dichotomous conceptualizations of theorizing and research: structural vs. post-structural, and positivist vs. post-positivist.

The first part of this thesis is concerned with assessing the various constructivist critiques targeting the dominant theories. Since not all constructivists are classified or classify themselves as post-structuralist and/or post-positivist, the second part of the thesis attempts to unpack the category of IR constructivism.

By comparing and contrasting two diametrically opposed constructivist strands – modernist and post-structural – on the central constructivist themes of intersubjectivity, identity, and representation, the thesis attempts to verify whether a common core of principles exists between the opposing strands. The modernist work of Alexander Wendt (supplemented by Emanuel Adler and John Gerard Ruggie) is compared to the post-structural position of David Campbell (supplemented by Richard K. Ashley and R.B.J Walker). The result of the analysis demonstrates that, even within the diametrically opposed strands, a common core of constructivist principles does exist.

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Preface: The Promise of Constructivism In International Relations Theory

> Neorealists see the structure of the international system as a distribution of material capabilities because they approach their subject with a materialist lens; Neoliberals see it as capabilities plus institutions because they have added to the material base an institutional superstructure; and constructivists see it as a distribution of ideas because they have an idealist ontology. In the long run empirical work may help us decide which conceptualization is best.[1]
>
> The states systemic project does not commit us to any particular theory of how that system works. In principle there are many systemic theories. One of the basic issues that divides them is how they conceptualize the structure of the system. Neorealism offers one such conceptualization, one so dominant today that systemic international relations is often equated with it.[2]
>
> Alexander Wendt
>
> The moral cartography of the Cold War was sustained by, and in turn nourished, the hegemony of realist perspectives in the discipline. The unraveling of that orientation to the world – which above all else depends on the notion of the state as a pregiven subject – existing independently of and prior to the dangerous relationships it encounters – creates the possibility of rethinking the problematic of subjectivity in international relations.[3]
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> The argument begins with the proposition that the normal foundations for ethical considerations in international relations – sovereign states in an anarchic realm – can no longer be theoretically considered sufficient for the purpose, even if their illusory permanence remains efficacious within political discourse.[4]
>
> David Campbell

Realist/neo-realist and neo-liberal institutional approaches of international relations (IR) theory, which take a rationalist/systemic approach using the state as a primary unit of analysis, have recently come under fire. Despite the fact that both

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[1] Alexander Wendt, *Social Theory of International Politics*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1999, p. 5.
[2] Ibid., p. 15.
[3] David Campbell, "Violent Performances: Identity, Sovereignty, Responsibility", in *The Return of Culture and Identity in International Relations Theory*, Yosef Lapid and Friedrich Kratochwil (eds.), Boulder: Lynne Rienner Publishers, 1996, p. 164.
[4] Ibid.

Alexander Wendt and David Campbell are (or could be) classified as constructivist theorists under the larger umbrella of critical theory, albeit with different methodological shades, criticisms of the dominant schools do not uniquely originate from critical theorists.[5]

However, due to the insights provided by what has been characterized as the 'third debate' or critical turn, the discipline of IR seems to have congealed around seemingly intractable dichotomous conceptualizations of theorizing and research: structural vs. post-structural, and positivist vs. post-positivist.[6] This thesis is mainly concerned with the various constructivist critiques targeting the dominant theories. The justification for the selection of constructivism as the thesis' main focus is twofold. First, constructivist theory in IR operates on the basis of many of the commonly agreed claims underlying all critical theory:

(i) recognition of the political character of epistemology and rejection of the subject/object duality
(ii) recognition of the historically and spatially constituted character of the international system
(iii) rejection of the objectivist conception of history
(iv) rejection of the conception of theory as a disembodied thought, a neutral device which is assumed to correspond to reality[7]

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[5] Neo-liberal institutionalism challenges realism's central predictions and conclusions about the mitigation of anarchy in the international system; for a good example see Robert O. Keohane and Lisa L. Martin, "The Promise of Institutional Theory", *International Security*, 20:1, Summer 1995, pp. 5-49. Others have challenged the dominant theories on the basis of levels and units of analysis: see Daniel L. Byman and Kenneth M. Pollack, "Let Us Now Praise Great Men: Bringing the Statesman Back In", *International Security*, 25:4, Spring 2001, pp. 107-146 or Robert D. Putnam, "Diplomacy and Domestic Politics: The Logic of Two-Level Games", in *Double-Edged Diplomacy: International Bargaining and Domestic Politics*, Peter B. Evans, Harold K. Jacobson, and Robert D. Putnam (eds.), Berkley: University of California Press, 1993, pp. 431-468.

[6] See K.M Fierke and Knud Erik Jorgensen, "Introduction", in *Constructing International Relations: The Next Generation*, K.M Fierke and Knud Erik Jorgensen (eds.), Armonk: M.E Sharpe Inc., 2001, pp. 3-9, E. Fuat Keyman, *Globalization, State, Identity/Difference: Towards a Critical Social Theory of International Relations*, New Jersey: Humanities Press International, 1997, pp. 91-95, or Wendt, *Social Theory of International Politics*, pp. 38-39.

Basically, constructivism examines how knowledge is constructed and consequently how the international system is a social construct. Second, the field as whole seems, at a minimum, to be willing to entertain – mainly through rebuttals – the argument that constructivism has become an important discourse contesting the dominant schools of thought.[8] Maximally, there is a concession that

> ...the debate between constructivists and rationalists has supplanted the age-old debate between realists and liberals. Instead of its marginal position in the early 1990s constructivism now occupies a central place in the discipline.[9]

However, it is important to heed a cautionary note. Not all constructivists are classified or classify themselves as post-structuralist and/or post-positivist.[10] It seems that one of the focal challenges for constructivism as a school of thought, as shall be explored later, has been and still is the quest to unpack the category of constructivism in order to dispel the adage that "constructivism is what international relations scholars make of it – which suggests that anything might qualify as constructivist."[11] As Maja Zehfuss affirms, "Talking about constructivism in international relations as a

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[7] Keyman, *Globalization, State, Identity/Difference: Towards a Critical Social Theory of International Relations*, p. 12.

[8] For a good example, see John J. Mearsheimer, "The False Promise of International Institutions", *International Security*, 19:3, Winter 1994/1995, pp. 37-47. Although Mearsheimer titles the section Critical Theory, he is specifically rebutting the argument that the international system is socially constructed; a substantial portion of his footnotes in the section refer to scholars generally recognized as constructivists or having constructivist leanings (Kratochwil, Ruggie, Wendt, Adler, Risse-Kappen).

[9] Fierke and Jorgensen, "Introduction", p. 3.

[10] See Walter Carlsnaes, "Foreign Policy", in *Handbook of International Relations*, Walter Carlsnaes, Thomas Risse and Beth A. Simmons (eds.), London: Sage publications, 2002, pp. 339-341.

[11] See Nicholas G. Onuf, "The Politics Of Constructivism", pp. 236-254, and Fierke and Jorgensen, "Introduction", pp. 3-9, in *Constructing International Relations: The Next Generation*, K.M Fierke and Knud Erik Jorgensen (eds.), Armonk: M.E Sharpe Inc., 2001.

homogenous concept, therefore, obscures the variety of approaches that come under this label."[12]

Since policymaking processes are grounded in and guided by theoretical frameworks, constructivist critiques may be highly relevant; if international policies derived from the meta-theoretical logic of the dominant theories are erroneous or misplaced, the impact(s) could be detrimental to a substantial number of human lives. Put more succinctly, from a theoretical perspective, what are the policy implications of the dominant theories? Can or how do the insights of constructivists propose to rectify the problems that they highlight?

In attempting to answer these questions and assessing the theoretical soundness of constructivist frameworks, the ultimate hope of this author is to explore whether a move to synthesize the dichotomous structural/post-structural and positivist/post positivist debates is possible. I am, of course aware that this goal is a highly ambitious one and may not be possible, especially not in a single project within the spatial constraints and scope of this thesis. However, the desire may be tempered by the fact that this thesis may be a small step towards a partial unpacking of the category of constructivism and the building of bridges between the diverse strands within it.

[12] Maja Zehfuss, "Constructivisms in International Relations: Wendt, Onuf, and Kratochwil", in *Constructing International Relations: The Next Generation*, K.M Fierke and Knud Erik Jorgensen (eds.),

Framework

Chapter 1 will begin with a brief chronological historiography of the development of IR theory. Once a succinct theoretical overview of the first school of thought is complete, criticisms which culminated in the emergence of a variant or a new school of thought will be surveyed. Although I have no pretensions of possessing an in depth knowledge of all theories that may be included in an exhaustive historiography of the field, and such a historiography is beyond the scope of this thesis, the timeline will follow what seems to be (specifically in the American context) the accepted lines of evolution in the discipline of IR: realism to neo-realism; neo-realism to neo-liberal institutionalism; and finally, constructivist critiques of the mainstream theories. The employment of this 'American' timeline is not meant to suggest that this pattern of evolution holds across time and space in the entire sub-discipline; to cite a couple of examples among the many, studies of imperialism by V.I Lenin and Rosa Luxemburg which preceded political realism, and Hedley Bull and the English school, illustrate differing patterns of evolution in diverse world quarters. However, given the advancing interconnectedness of the world and the fact that the United States remains the sole superpower, policies derived on the basis of these mainstream American schools of thought will most likely impact many people across geographic space, and are therefore of particular import.

Most constructivists would agree that Wendt's *Social Theory of International Politics* was a watershed in bringing constructivism in IR theory to the fore, and they may also agree with many of his critical insights. His "Anarchy is What States Make of

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Armonk: M.E Sharpe Inc., 2001, p. 55.

It" has "arguably replaced Kenneth Waltz's *Theory of International Politics* as the most frequently quoted source in the field of international relations theory."[13] However, many "thicker" or more radical constructivists have criticized Wendt for accepting many of the assumptions of the mainstream that he sets out to criticize. Two examples are the persistent prominence he gives to states as unitary actors, and his failure to deal with language in the establishment of intersubjective structures.[14]

Given these criticisms, once the validity of generic constructivist critiques are assessed in chapter 2, the rest of the thesis will consist of a fairly close reading of some of the published texts of two authors, followed by a comparison of each author's interpretation of three concepts which are key to constructivist critiques: intersubjective meaning, identity, and representation. In a matrix comprising structural/post-structural and positivist/post-positivist elements, the structural/positivist and post-structural/post-positivist dyad would be considered polar opposites. It would be common sense to assume that if it is possible to synthesize elements from the extremes, the prospects for further work on unpacking and building bridges would be promising. Given this assumption, the work of Alexander Wendt (occasionally supplemented by Emanuel Adler and John Gerard Ruggie) will be used to represent the structuralist/modernist-positivist school. At the other pole, David Campbell's work (occasionally supplemented by R.B.J Walker and Richard K. Ashley) will be used to represent the post-structuralist/post-positivist school. Although Ashley and Walker are usually referred to

[13] Fierke and Jorgensen, "Introduction", p. 6.
[14] Ibid.

as post-structuralists, not constructivists, using their work is justifiable because their thoughts have heavily influenced what eventually evolved into constructivism.[15]

Chapter 3 will examine intersubjective meaning, chapter 4, identity, and chapter 5, representation. The fact that meanings are constituted *intersubjectively* (by one's conscious attribution of intentional acts to others) in relational fashion through interaction and language – as opposed to an objective truth that is out there to be discovered – is a central constructivist critique of the mainstream theories. *Identity* is in turn assigned and constituted through experiences based on intersubjective meaning attribution; therefore it is a central element in defining the self and others, others who may represent a threat to the self (this process is not based solely on, say, material capabilities). Once intersubjective interaction experiences constitute reliable identities, those identities are either reinforced or modified through the politics of *representation*; it is through discourse that human beings convey meanings to what is being represented. For these reasons, these three central concepts will occupy the core of the thesis. The thematic comparison chapters (3, 4, and 5) will be wrapped up by a brief balance sheet highlighting similarities and differences.

The final chapter, by recapitulating and expanding on the similarities and differences between the thematic comparisons, will revisit the implications of the constructivist critiques regarding the mainstream theories; the chapter will end with conclusions about the possibilities of synthesizing the work of the two authors examined, and the practical implications of such a possibility.

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[15] Fierke and Jorgensen, "Introduction", pp. 5-6.

Chapter 1: Dominant Perspectives

This chapter will provide an outline of the evolution of the dominant perspectives in IR theory. By briefly explaining the tenets of each school of thought and the criticisms of ensuing variants or schools, the chapter will highlight the similarities and differences of realism/neo-realism and neo-liberal institutionalism and will conclude with a sample of constructivist critiques of the mainstream theories.

Realism

Political realism, as a school of thought in IR, developed as a rejection of the interwar expansion of the precepts of idealism (whose best known proponent was Woodrow Wilson). Reacting to idealism's professed aspirations and prescriptions for the creation of mechanisms to avoid potential scourges like the war to end all wars, Hans Morgenthau, the father of IR realist theory, affirmed that

> ...the fundamental problems which have confronted man from the beginning of history are a result of not ephemeral historic configurations but rather stem from the very essence of human nature. They, then, cannot be made to disappear, but they can only be mitigated; they can at best be temporarily submerged or shoved underground; they can be transformed; but they cannot be eliminated altogether.[16]

Or in Reinhold Niebuhr's words,

> The ego which falsely makes itself the center of existence in its pride and will to power inevitably subordinates other life to its will and does injustice to other life. Man is insecure and involved in natural contingency; he seeks to overcome his insecurity by a will to power which overreaches the limits of human creatureliness. Man is ignorant

[16] Hans Morgenthau, "Realism in International Politics", *Naval War College Review*, 51:1, Winter 1998, p. 16.

> and involved in the limitations of a finite mind; but he pretends that he is not limited.[17]

As illustrated by the quotes above, both Morgethau and Neibuhr thought that human nature was the root of all human struggles for power. For Morgenthau,

> ...it is futile to search for a mechanical device with which to eliminate those aspirations; that the wise approach in political problems lies in taking the perennial character of those aspirations for granted – in trying to live with them, to redirect them into socially valuable and beneficial channels, to transform them, to civilize them.[18]

And, as E.H Carr affirmed,

> In the field of action, realism tends to emphasize the irresistible strength of existing forces and the inevitable character of existing tendencies, and to insist that the highest wisdom lies in accepting, and adapting oneself to, these forces and these tendencies.
> ...there is a stage where realism is the necessary corrective to the exuberance of utopianism...[19]

Given these assumptions, international politics, as a consequence of "a multiplicity of nations living with each other"[20], necessarily and inherently becomes a struggle for power. For Morgenthau, the balance of power was to foreign policy what the law of gravity is to nature.[21] It was the main tool to be used in 'channeling, transforming, and civilizing' our human essence. In Morgenthau's words "...to criticize the balance of

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[17] Reinhold Niebuhr, *Reinhold Niebuhr on Politics: His Political Philosophy and its Application to our Age as Expressed in His Writing*, Harry R. Davis and Robert C. Good (eds.), New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1960, p. 76.
[18] Morgenthau, "Realism in International Politics", p. 19.
[19] E.H Carr, *The Twenty Years' Crisis 1919-1939: An Introduction to the Study of International Relations*, London: Macmillan and Company Ltd, 1946, p. 10
[20] Morgenthau, "Realism in International Politics", p. 21.
[21] Ibid., p. 19.

power for its shortcomings leads nowhere as long as you have no viable alternative with which to replace it."[22]

Since Morgenthau's first five principles of political realism succinctly summarize the basis of his theory, it is worthwhile to revisit them here:

1. Political realism believes that politics, like society in general, is governed by objective laws that have their roots in human nature.
2. The main signpost that helps political realism to find its way through the landscape of international politics is the concept of interest defined in terms of power.
3. Realism assumes that its key concept of interest defined as power is an objective category which is universally valid, but it does not endow that concept with a meaning that is fixed once and for all.
4. Political realism is aware of the moral significance of political action. It is also aware of the ineluctable tension between the moral command and the requirements of successful political action. And it is unwilling to gloss over and obliterate that tension and thus to obfuscate both the moral and the political issue by making it appear as though the stark facts of politics were morally more satisfying than they actually are, and the moral law less exacting than it actually is.
5. Political realism refuses to identify the moral aspirations of a particular nation with the moral laws that govern the universe.[23]

In regards to this 'ineluctable tension' between morality and politics, Carr asserts that "whatever moral issues may be involved, there is an issue of power which cannot be expressed in terms of morality" and "power goes far to create the morality convenient to itself, and coercion is a fruitful source of consent."[24]

It is on the basis of these principles, with a particular emphasis on the firm conviction that laws of politics exist and can be deciphered by virtue of the ability to determine reality objectively and rationally, that Morgethau concluded that until states decide to cede their sovereignty to a world authority, the "mundane business" of

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[22] Morgenthau, "Realism in International Politics", p. 20.
[23] Hans J. Morgenthau, *Politics Among* Nations, New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1973, pp. 4-11.
[24] Carr, *The Twenty Years' Crisis 1919-1939: An Introduction to the Study of International Relations*, pp. 235-236.

diplomacy, based on the realistic concepts of foreign policy, was the best hope for making peace more secure than it was.[25]

Neo-Realism

Neo-realism, a variant of realism, is the result of Kenneth Waltz's revisions of Morgenthau's work. Waltz makes two substantial moves. First, the ultimate end of states shifts from the quest for power to the quest for security. And second,

> Neorealism contends that international politics can be understood only if the effects of structure are added to the unit-level explanations of traditional realism.[26]

The revised conception is that power is a useful means to achieve security and that states run risks if they have too much or too little. Too little may reveal weakness and invite attack, whereas too much may prompt other states to arm themselves and band together in their efforts to thwart the dominant or dominant states.[27] This explains the shift to security as the primary concern. The emphasis of the new structural variable on the actions and outcomes of states renders Morgenthau's conceptions of man's innate lust for power an insufficient cause for war in the absence of other causal variables.[28]

States are regarded as rational unitary actors and the main components of the international system. At a minimum, all states want to survive in a system that is

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[25] Morgenthau, *Politics Among* Nations, pp. 4 and 459 and Morgenthau, "Realism in International Politics", p. 25.
[26] Kenneth N. Waltz, "The Origins of War in Neorealist Theory", in *The Origin and Prevention of Major Wars*, Robert I. Rotberg and Theodore K. Rabb (eds.), Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1989, p. 41.
[27] Ibid., p. 40.

characterized by anarchy[29] – i.e., "the absence of a central monopoly of legitimate force."[30] Ultimately, the structure of the system is determined by the variation and number of great powers; expected outcomes are deduced within the parameters of assumed state motivations and structure.[31] Flowing from this logic, the system constrains the freedom of action of its units and their behavior becomes predictable. As per Waltz, this is why "systems theories explain why different units behave similarly and, despite their variations, produce outcomes that fall within expected ranges."[32]

Since the system is anarchic, states must provide for their own security and constantly assess the abounding threats from other states. Identifying dangers becomes routine and relations remain tense even though actors may not be naturally predisposed to suspicion and hostility[33] (the ever-familiar security dilemma defines and exacerbates the situation). Ultimately, "The recurrence of war is explained by the structure of the international system."[34]

Neo-Liberal Institutionalism

Neo-liberal institutionalism could be considered a variant of neo-realism in so far as it is a utilitarian and rationalistic theory.[35] Neo-liberal institutionalists begin from the realist premise that states are central, rational, unitary egoists operating in an anarchic

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[28] Kenneth N. Waltz, *Man, The State, and War: A Theoretical Analysis*, New York: Columbia University Press, 1959, p. 238, and Waltz, "The Origins of War in Neorealist Theory", p. 41.
[29] Waltz, *Man, The State, and War: A Theoretical Analysis*, 1959, pp. 5 and 238.
[30] Waltz, "The Origins of War in Neorealist Theory", p. 42.
[31] Ibid.
[32] Ibid., p. 43.
[33] Waltz, *Man, The State, and War: A Theoretical Analysis*, p. 7 and Waltz, "The Origins of War in Neorealist Theory", p. 43.
[34] Waltz, "The Origins of War in Neorealist Theory", p. 45.

international system[36]; a realm in which agreements cannot be enforced in a hierarchical fashion.[37] The first caveat that institutionalists add to the basic assumptions of neo-realism is that heightened international interdependence makes for fertile ground favoring the creation of international regimes (i.e. governmental creation and acceptance of procedures, rules or institutions to regulate transnational and interstate relations).[38] As an outgrowth of the first, a second caveat is that in this setting domestic, transgovernmental, transnational and non-state actors – such as inter-governmental bureaucratic ties, multinational corporations and non-governmental organizations – become relevant and necessary components of analysis to properly explain and predict phenomena. Therefore, international regimes act as intermediate forces between the system's power structure and the political and economic bargaining that takes place within it.[39]

Keohane and Nye elaborate the conditions of complex interdependence[40], which they claim closely approximates many contemporary situations. In these instances the use of force as the primary policy tool emphasized by realism, may be too costly and inefficient to accomplish desired objectives.[41] Complex interdependence has three main characteristics. First, multiple channels connect societies – informal and formal, interstate, transgovernmental and transnational – which comprise state as well as non-state actors; second, interstate relationships consist of multiple issues that are not always ordered in a consistent hierarchical fashion; and third, when the conditions of complex

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[35] Keohane and Martin, "The Promise of Institutional Theory", p. 39.
[36] Robert O. Keohane and Joseph S. Nye, *Power and Interdependence*, Harper Collins Publishers, 1989, p. 20.
[37] Keohane and Martin, "The Promise of Institutional Theory", p. 39.
[38] Keohane and Nye, *Power and Interdependence*, p. 5.
[39] Ibid., p. 21.
[40] Ibid., pp. 23-28.

interdependence prevail, governments will not use military force on other governments.[42] The existence of complex interdependence does not mean the disappearance of conflict; conflicts may increase but they "will take new forms"[43]. However, in occurrences where situations more closely approximate realist assumptions, the standard realist explanations may be more accurate.[44]

Ultimately, interstate cooperation can only occur if states have strong common interests and perceive that joint benefits are possible from cooperation. Neo-liberal institutionalists argue, in a world of interdependence, the divide between realist and liberal institutionalist conceptions of security is unsound. Without omitting power realities as a component of analysis, institutions make a difference by providing information, reducing transaction costs, making commitments more credible, establishing focal points for coordination, and facilitating the general operation of reciprocity.[45] However, institutionalists caution that they do not claim "that institutions can prevent war regardless of the structure in which they operate."[46]

The crux of the argument centers on the institutions' ability to reduce uncertainty through information-providing functions. According to neo-realism, since states are uncertain about other states' intentions, they always have to plan policy contingencies based on worst-case scenarios. If institutions could make intentions more transparent by providing useful information, states could enact policies that better maximize utility.[47]

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[41] Keohane and Nye, *Power and Interdependence*, p. 21.
[42] Ibid., pp. 24-25.
[43] Ibid., p. 8.
[44] Ibid., p. 24.
[45] Keohane and Martin, "The Promise of Institutional Theory", p. 42.
[46] Ibid.
[47] Ibid., p. 44.

Realists argue that the only condition under which cooperation is likely in an anarchic system is when a state can clearly establish that their gains from cooperation will be relatively larger than another state's.[48] Under these conditions, in game theoretic language, the disadvantaged state will likely cheat or defect from cooperation. The neo-liberal institutional rebuttal is that the argument is self-evident in a context where only two states exist, but in any other case, if the potential absolute gains from cooperation are substantial, the importance of relative gain dissipates.[49] In these situations, multiple cooperative outcomes may exist. International institutions can provide "constructed focal points that make particular cooperative outcomes prominent" and facilitate distributional conflicts by assuring evenly divided gains over time.[50] Keohane and Nye argue that their international organization model

> [It] does not predict how international regimes will change from a single variable such as international structure. Indeed, its focus on the political processes associated with international organization implies that actors' strategies, and their cleverness in implementing them, can substantially affect the evolution of international regimes. Furthermore, it is much less deterministic than the basic structural models, leaving wide latitude for choice, decision, and multiple-level bargaining.[51]

Institutions do not only prevent cheating; by creating issue linkages, they allow for more effective retaliation and create capacity for mutually beneficial exchanges.[52] Keohane and Martin conclude that,

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[48] See Joseph M. Grieco, "Anarchy and the Limits of Cooperation: A Realist Critique of the Newest Liberal Institutionalism", *International Organization*, 42:3, Summer 1998, pp. 485-507 and Waltz's famous appropriation and extension of Rousseau's stag hunt analogy to the international level, Waltz, *Man, The State, and War: A Theoretical Analysis*, pp. 167 and 183.
[49] Keohane and Martin, "The Promise of Institutional Theory", p. 44.
[50] Ibid., p. 45.
[51] Keohane and Nye, *Power and Interdependence*, p. 57.
[52] Ibid., p. 49.

> Claiming too much for international institutions would indeed be a false promise. But in a world politics constrained by state power and divergent interests, and unlikely to experience effective hierarchical government, international institutions operating on the basis of reciprocity will be components of any lasting peace.[53]

Realism/Neo-Realism and Neo-Liberal Institutionalism: Similarities and Differences.

Before moving on to constructivist critiques, it would be useful to outline some of the commonalities and differences between realism, neo-realism, and neo-liberal institutionalism. First, in the case of realism and neo-realism, there is an element of immutability; the potential for systemic change is negligible. Realism's basis for this assumption lies on human nature while neo-realism's lies on the structure of the international system. On the basis of this ontology, the best we can hope for is to derive tools to mitigate the static characteristics of human nature or the international system (i.e., prudent foreign policy, balance of power, alliances, etc.). As Adler points out, for realism and neo-realism,

> International systems and their components have been perceived as Newtonian elements, suspended in space; time has little to do with them, and movement and change are linear...This kind of theory studies international relations and international phenomena according to the metaphors of equilibrium and balance of power: It looks for the recurrent, for stability, and tries to predict the future from past events. International relations theory thereby fails to grasp the nature of the phenomena it tries to describe and explain, which are in flux and evolution.[54]

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[53] Keohane and Nye, *Power and Interdependence*, p. 50.

[54] Emanuel Adler, "Cognitive Evolution: A Dynamic Approach for the Study of International Relations and their Progress", in *Progress in Postwar International Relations*, Emanuel Adler and Beverly Crawford (eds.), New York: Columbia University Press, 1991, p. 44.

For R.B.J Walker, Adler does not go far enough. In speaking about profound global transformations currently in progress, he asserts that,

> ...our understanding of these transformations, and of the contours of alternative political practices, remain caught within discursive horizons that express the spatiotemporal configuration of another era.[55]

The neo-liberal institutionalist perspective makes a slight move away from this notion of immutability; under proper conditions – but still based on neo-realist principles such as anarchy, interests and power calculations – institutions may be able to mitigate anarchy and encourage cooperation. Therefore, anarchy as the main characteristic of the system and security as the ultimate end are accepted as the basis and motivation for state action, although the actions and impacts of other levels and agents, such as the domestic level and international organizations and multinational corporations are included in the realm of analysis.

Second, the dominant theories stake a claim to universality. In realism's case, given the essence of human nature, people within different countries and state apparatuses will act the same way based on incentives to acquire power. In the neo-realist conception, based on the quest for security, the structure of the system dictates the range of actions that states can undertake; in both cases, notions such as differing cultures and rationales, and domestic institutions are rendered secondary. In the case of neo-liberal institutionalism, based once again on an acceptance of neo-realist conceptions of the nature of the international system (an anarchic system comprised of self-interested rational unitary state actors), since the system's structure ultimately constrains all states

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[55] R.B.J Walker, *Inside/Outside: International Relations as Political Theory*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1993, p. x.

to act in a predictable fashion, given the appropriate conditions and incentives, the conclusion is that the presence of institutions could encourage cooperation. All three theories are built upon the foundations of a universal conception of rationality.

Third, each of the dominant theoretical frameworks privileges one unit of analysis over others. Realism privileges the state (the unit) whereas neo-realism and neo-liberal institutionalism privilege the international structure whose main actors are states. By virtue of this privileging, little or no explanatory power is attributed to other elements such as domestic politics, individuals' influence or ideologies – although this statement is less applicable to neo-liberal institutionalism (regime theorists in particular) than realism/neo-realism.

Finally, all three dominant theories assume that an objective analysis of politics is feasible. This means that there is an essential truth out there that can be discovered independently of the observer's purview. The main basis of this belief in positivist epistemology is the universal rationality of man. Ultimately, theory corresponds to a reality which it represents. This assumption of causality denotes how one element gives expression to the operation of another as its agent.[56] Given these assumptions, positivism endeavors to predict phenomena based on the study of past cause and effect relationships. Consequently, the tools deemed most conducive to this end are hypothesis testing and empiricism, which are based on the scientific method. As Stephen Van Evera affirms "I am unpersuaded by the view that the prime rules of scientific method should differ between hard science and the social sciences. Science is science."[57] In the

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[56] Keyman, *Globalization, State, Identity/Difference: Towards a Critical Social Theory of International Relations*, p. 5.

[57] Stephen Van Evera, *Guide to Methods for Students of Political Science*, Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1997, p. 3.

discipline of IR, in Kuhn's conceptualization, until the recent challenges from the critical turn, the positivist epistemology had taken on paradigmatic proportions. As Kuhn affirms,

> Normal science, the activity in which most scientists inevitably spend almost all their time, is predicated on the assumption that the scientific community knows what the world is like. Much of the success of the enterprise derives from the community's willingness to defend that assumption, if necessary at considerable cost. Normal science, for example, often suppresses fundamental novelties because they are necessarily subversive of its basic commitments.[58]
>
> Scientists work from models acquired through education and through subsequent exposure to the literature often without quite knowing or needing to know what characteristics have given these models the status of community paradigms.[59]

As we shall see in the next section, the assumptions of the three dominant schools outlined in this section form the basis of constructivist critiques. For the moment, an important caveat needs to be made: constructivism did not develop overnight or come about in a vacuum. Although the focus of this thesis is on constructivism in IR theory, before proceeding further, it is worth very briefly highlighting a small sample of the contributions and influences that other critical approaches have made towards the eventual development of constructivism.

Jurgen Habermas has posited that all knowledge is historically rooted and interest bound.[60] For Habermas, the project of modernity remains incomplete because, through instrumental rationality, epistemology has dissolved into positivism and we have lost our

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[58] Thomas H.Kuhn, "The Structure of Scientific Revolutions", *International Encyclopedia of Unified Science*, 2:2, Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 1962, p. 5.
[59] Ibid., p. 46.
[60] Keyman, *Globalization, State, Identity/Difference: Towards a Critical Social Theory of International Relations*, p. 99.

reflexive capacity. Consequently, by treating humanity's problems as technical ones, the possibility of emancipation from domination has been practically eliminated.[61]

Like Hambermas, Robert Cox's IR work on the basis of Antonio Gramsci's conceptualization of the hegemony of thought affirms that "theory is always for someone and some purpose."[62] For Cox, domination, on its own, cannot account for the reproduction of world order; there is a process by which the legitimacy accorded to the dominators by the dominated is created and manufactured. Structures and superstructures are constituted and reproduced into a system of order based on "coercion and consent, material capabilities, political and discursive practices, and the creation of a consensual politics."[63] In this conception, a range of activities including values, norms and practices come into play in the politics of domination.

Although Michel Foucault was not an IR scholar per say, IR theorists like Campbell or James DerDerian have extended his work to IR theory.[64] While excessively oversimplified, the main claim here is that IR theory is discursively and historically constructed. Based on Foucault's notion of disciplines, disciplining knowledge practices establish boundaries and constitute an order of truth in IR theory.[65] This brand of critical theory pays particular heed to discursive effects and the processes through which boundaries and binary dichotomies are constructed in theory. It will be apparent in the following section how influential the works of this short sample of critical theorists are to constructivist scholars of IR.

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[61] Keyman, *Globalization, State, Identity/Difference: Towards a Critical Social Theory of International Relations*, pp. 101-105.
[62] Ibid., p. 114.
[63] Ibid., p. 117.
[64] Ibid., pp. 127-131.
[65] Ibid., pp. 123-126.

Chapter 2: Constructivist Critiques

The basic notion that is affirmed by all constructivist approaches is that the international system is a social construction.[66] As Wendt specifies, two tenets of social constructivism that most students of international politics have come to accept are:

> (1) that the structures of human association are determined primarily by shared ideas rather than material forces, and
> (2) that the identities and interests of purposive actors are constructed by these shared ideas rather than given by nature.[67]

Constructivists argue that neo-realists and neo-liberals do not pay enough attention to how actors in the realm of world politics are socially constituted, i.e. how their interests, identities and perceptions of each other are shaped. Since international politics is not something that can be directly accessible to the senses, theories of international politics are contestable on the basis of debates about the basic features of reality (ontology) and the origins, nature, and limits of human knowledge (epistemology).[68] The reason for constructivism's different understanding of the 'real' world stems from different ontological (or second order) commitments; this stems from the observation of unobservables in the real world (Wendt refers to this as underdetermination of theory by data[69]). The difference in second order commitments – seeing a different 'reality' in terms of what is out there and how we should study it – results in constructivists' idealist (as opposed to materialist) ontology.

Wendt criticizes Waltz's analogical comparison of the international system to a market – based on neo-classical micro economics – where "competition eliminates states who perform badly, and the international system socializes states to behave in certain

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[66] Wendt, *Social Theory of International Politics*, p. xiii.
[67] Ibid., p. 1.
[68] Ibid., p. 5.
[69] Ibid.

ways."[70] This highly materialistic microeconomic approach does not explain what constitutes structure, and, therefore shaping ideational features are excluded: the international system is viewed solely on the basis of variations in structure based on material differences.[71] The counter argument is that

> ...the character of international life is determined by the beliefs and expectations that states have about each other, and these are constituted largely by social rather than material structures.[72]

A shift to a constructivist re-conceptualization may enable us to see how identities, not just behavior, are affected by the international system and ways that those identities are constituted rather than simply caused by the system. At a minimum, how we act depends on how representations of self and other are fashioned.[73] Envious of natural scientists (who can conduct experiments on the basis of their suspicions), many IR scholars eschew ontological debates. IR has no thorough empirical method by which the structure of reality can be ascertained. Therefore, the ontology of the dominant theories may itself be a social construction and room has to be made for differing attributes of reality.[74]

Put simply, what is at stake is not very different from the classic Hegelian vs. Marxian debate; does shared consciousness shape material forces or vice versa? Basically, which of the two should be relegated to secondary status? Wendt characterizes the divide as materialist vs. idealist and answers the question as follows:

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[70] Wendt, *Social Theory of International Politics*, p. 16.
[71] Ibid.
[72] Ibid., p. 20.
[73] Ibid., p. 22.
[74] Ibid.

> Either way, social structure can matter in various ways: by constituting identities and interests, by helping actors find common solutions to problems, by defining expectations for behavior, by constituting threats, and so on. These possibilities need not deny a role for material forces, but the idealist claim is that material forces are secondary, significant in so far as they are constituted with particular meanings for actors.[75]

Many variations on this theme may exist within what is loosely labeled as the constructivist camp.

In Wendt's formulation, constructivism rests on a second pivotal debate, the famous agency vs. structure debate, which he characterizes as individualist vs. holist.[76] Both individualists and holists acknowledge that structures make a difference in social life but they do not agree on the depth of these effects. Individualists see arrangements producing behavioral effects through constraints; holists see arrangements having distinct effects on the qualities or traits peculiar to individuals (property effects) – especially identities and interests – through their construction.[77] Therefore, property effects are more substantive because they also have behavioral consequences, whereas behavioral effects, as conceptualized by individualists, do not have property effects.[78] Most dominant IR theories are individualist and rationalist; they study choice under constraints. Consequently, they treat identities and interests as being set by factors outside the structure (exogenous).[79]

Along with domestic structures, Wendt believes that international structures affect both the behavior and constitution of states.[80] Neo-realists and neo-liberals agree on an individualist rationalist approach to system structure but their debate, which has

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[75] Wendt, *Social Theory of International Politics*, p. 24.
[76] Ibid., p. 26.
[77] Ibid., pp. 26-27.
[78] Ibid., p. 27.

largely preoccupied the sub-discipline of IR theory, has emphasized the relative importance of power and interest vs. ideas and institutions.[81] The main challenge presented to this debate by constructivism is the belief that the international structure is composed mainly of shared knowledge that affects not only behavior, but state identities and interests as well.[82]

Ultimately, the heart of the debate is conceptualized as an opposition between those who take identities and interests as a given (rationalists) and those who do not (constructivists). Taking the material structure of the anarchic system as a point of departure, neo-realism automatically reduces ideas to an intervening variable between material forces and outcomes; "...neo-liberalism concedes too much to neorealism a priori, reducing itself to the secondary status of cleaning up residual variance left unexplained by a primary theory."[83] The danger is that the theoretical conception of the rationalist view, in which substantial elements are assumed as being produced outside the system, is transformed into an implicit view that the same conditions hold in reality.[84] Given these assumptions, when a particular method comes to dominate a field – the case of rationalist mainstream IR theory – otherwise valid methodological differences leading to dissimilar conclusions are suppressed. "In such a context certain questions never get asked, certain possibilities never considered."[85] As Nicholas G. Onuf states, "Having adopted a notion of rationality as instrumental, interesting questions about the ends

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[79] Wendt, *Social Theory of International Politics*, p. 27.
[80] Ibid., p. 28.
[81] Ibid., p. 31.
[82] Ibid., p. 31.
[83] Ibid., pp. 34-35.
[84] Ibid., p. 35.
[85] Ibid., p. 35.

sought are excluded from the analysis."[86] Walker refers to this as "...the manner in which the possibility of a critical theory of international relations has been erased by a privileging of epistemological and methodological prescriptions that simply take historically specific – modern – ontological options as a given."[87]

The net effect of taking identities and interests as givens begs the questions of whether they need to be socially sustained or whether they are fixed objects outside spatial and temporal considerations. In the constructivist view, conceptions of self and other, interest and identity are perpetually being produced and reproduced.[88] Jutta Weldes' work on the construction of national interests validates the former point. In a case study of the Cuban missile crisis, Weldes examines how the crisis was produced, represented, and reproduced in radically different fashions in the three states involved (the United States, the U.S.S.R, and Cuba). She argues that "the mere fact of missile installation, does not, and cannot, determine"[89] the meaning of crisis or severe threat to U.S national interests that was assigned to the event by the Kennedy administration.[90] Before any assessments needed to be made about what to do about the missiles, the missiles needed to be "made to mean something"; this practice emerges through a process of representation via which state officials interpret, assign, and construct a shared meaning through which the world and international system are understood.[91] This mirrors Campbell's affirmation that "Danger is not an objective condition. It is not a

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[86] Zehfuss, "Constructivisms in International Relations: Wendt, Onuf, and Kratochwil", p. 63.
[87] Walker, *Inside/Outside: International Relations as Political Theory*, p. 8.
[88] Wendt, *Social Theory of International Politics*, p. 36.
[89] Jutta Weldes, *Constructing National Interests: The United States and the Cuban Missile Crisis*, Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1999, p. 1.
[90] Ibid.
[91] Ibid., p. 2.

thing that exists independently of those to whom it may become a threat."[92] Weldes' framework could be applied to the current foreign policy approaches adopted by the George W. Bush administration towards Iraqi weapons of mass destruction.

Wendt claims that the differences of opinion highlighted so far between the mainstream and constructivism cannot be resolved by simple appeals to facts because the various tools used to analyze phenomena are laden with ontological assumptions. According to Wendt, these ontological differences, rather than serving to avoid comparisons, should be taken seriously and efforts should be made to derive propositions to be able to assess them empirically.[93] In order to elaborate some of these propositions, Wendt suggests two initial avenues of exploration. First, if interests and identities are constructed within the international system (endogenously), rationalists, with their assumptions that they are exogenous, are ill equipped to study these matters. Second, given this first observation, how valid are rationalist notions about the immutability of state identities and interests?[94] As Campbell has argued,

> ...the identity of any particular state should be understood as "tenuously constituted in time...through a stylized repetition of acts," and achieved, "not [through] a founding act, but rather a regulated process of repetition."[95]

Campbell argues that foreign policy and the constant articulation of danger are central components of this stylized repetition of acts, which constitutes, produces, and maintains stable identities.[96] Foreign policy is not, as conventionally understood, simply

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[92] David Campbell, *Writing Security: United States Foreign Policy and the Politics of Identity*, Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1998, p. 1.
[93] Wendt, *Social Theory of International Politics*, p. 37.
[94] Ibid., pp. 37-38.
[95] Campbell, *Writing Security: United States Foreign Policy and the Politics of Identity*, p. 10.
[96] Ibid., p. 11.

an internal response to an external stimulus. It is, on the basis of the identities that it creates, what produces, maintains, and differentiates the inside/outside dichotomy. Therefore, for Campbell,

> Ironically, then, the inability of the state project of security to succeed is the guarantor of the state's continued success as an impelling identity. The constant articulation of danger through foreign policy is thus not a threat to a state's identity or existence: it is its condition of possibility.[97]

Somewhat similar to Campbell's argument, Anthony Giddens, commenting on why some social theories – like theories of the state – retain their novelty long after the conditions that have produced them have faded, affirms that the reason lay in the fact that "they have contributed to constituting the social world we now live in. It is the fact that they are reflections upon a social reality which they also help to constitute and which both has a distance from, yet remains part of, our social world that engages our attention."[98]

Another central element of the constructivist critique of rationalist theories stems from epistemological debates arising out of the 'critical turn' or 'third debate'. Positivists "think science is an epistemically privileged discourse through which we can gain a progressively truer understanding of the world."[99] On the other hand, post-positivists "do not recognize a privileged epistemic status for science in explaining the world out there."[100] Positivism assumes that subject and object are distinct; this assumption is easily sustainable if the article of enquiry is material. This is why most material IR

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[97] Campbell, *Writing Security: United States Foreign Policy and the Politics of Identity*, pp. 12-13.
[98] Anthony Giddens, *The Constitution of Society: Outline of the Theory of Structuration*, Berkley: University of California Press, 1984, p. xxxv.
[99] Wendt, *Social Theory of International Politics*, p. 38.
[100] Ibid., pp. 38-39.

theorists are positivists.[101] However, as constructivism affirms, if shared knowledge is the main constituent of the international system, humans create the objects that their theories purport to explain; in this case, the subject-object divide is harder to maintain. Consequently, idealist onotologies seem more suited to post-positivism.[102] As Weldes states,

> ...the realist notion of national interest rests upon the assumption that an independent reality is accessible both to state officials and to analysts. It is assumed that the distribution of power in the system can be "realistically" or objectively, assessed, and, consequently, that threats to a state's national interest can be accurately recognized....The difficulty, of course, is that objects and events do not present themselves unproblematically to the observer, however realistic he or she may be....Rather than being self-evident, threats, and the corresponding national interest, are fundamentally matters of interpretation.[103]

However, Wendt does not believe that "an idealist ontology implies a post-positivist epistemology" and considers himself a positivist.[104] He attempts to reconcile his position by adopting a pluralistic science with a significant role for understanding as well as explaining.[105] He argues

> (1) that what really matters is what there is rather than how we know it, and
> (2) that science could be question rather than method driven, and the importance of constitutive questions creates an essential role in social science for interpretive methods.
>
> Put more bluntly, I think that post-positivists put too much emphasis on epistemology, and that positivists should be more open-minded about questions and methodology.[106]

As previously stated, most constructivists would agree with many of the important critical insights that Wendt has brought to the fore. However, many "thicker"

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[101] Wendt, *Social Theory of International Politics*, p. 39.
[102] Ibid.
[103] Weldes, *Constructing National Interests: The United States and the Cuban Missile Crisis*, pp. 6-7.
[104] Wendt, *Social Theory of International Politics*, pp. 39-40.
[105] Ibid., p. 39.

or more radical constructivists have criticized Wendt for accepting many of the assumptions of the mainstream that he sets out to criticize. The two most prominent examples are the persistent standing he confers to states as unitary actors and his failure to deal with language in the establishment of intersubjective structures.[107]

On the former point, it is worthwhile to quote Weldes at length:

> Wendt's "anthropomorphized" understanding of the state continues to treat states, in typical realist fashion, as unitary actors with a single identity and a single set of interests. The state itself is treated as a black box whose internal workings are irrelevant to the construction of state identities and interests. In Wendt's argument, the meanings that objects and actions have for these unitary states, the identities and interests for states themselves, are therefore understood to be formed through processes of interstate interaction. But as Wendt himself recognized, the political and historical context in which national interests are fashioned, the collective meanings that define state identities and interests, cannot arbitrarily be restricted to those meanings produced only in interstate relations. After all, states are unitary actors only analytically, not in fact. The meanings that objects, events, and actions have for states are necessarily the meanings they have for those officials who act in the name of the state. And these state officials do not approach international politics with a blank slate onto which meanings are only written as a result of interactions among states. Instead, they approach international politics with a quite comprehensive and elaborate appreciation of the world, of international politics, and of the place of their state within the international system. This appreciation, in turn, is necessarily rooted in collective meanings already produced, at least in part, in domestic political and cultural contexts.[108]

Weldes' critique of state centeredness seems to closely mirror that of Richard K. Ashley. For Ashley,

> ...that human beings are fundamental implies that aggregate social patterns – population size, national income, volumes of trade, and so on – are to be viewed as the cumulative traces of countless constrained human decisions. It implies, too, that institutions are to be seen as social structurations given form and identity through (often complex) reproductive patterns of choice among individuals. And it implies that both aggregate social patterns and institutions might assume other

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[106] Wendt, *Social Theory of International Politics*, p. 40.
[107] Ibid.
[108] Weldes, *Constructing National Interests: The United States and the Cuban Missile Crisis*, p. 9.

> forms and different identities were people somehow to choose and act differently.[109]

Given the earlier arguments presented by Wendt, Onuf, and Walker about other methods and/or objects of analysis being suppressed, Wendt could ironically fall prey to his own criticism; as Jens Bartelson has argued about the state as an ontological given,

> ...the more central a concept becomes within a given discourse, the more likely it is to become implicit in and taken for granted within that very discourse. And the more implicit it is, the more likely it is to become foundational to and constitutive of that discourse.[110]

Bartelson's observations could provide more fodder for the cannons of those that criticize Wendt for his state-centric views.

The second criticism of Wendt – his failure to deal with language – is highlighted by Zehfuss through a comparison of the constructivisms of Wendt, Onuf, and Friedrich Kratochwil.[111] As Zehfuss points out, Wendt's theory is a structural/state-centric one that revolves around the idea of structure as process; in other words, structure only exists through actors' practices, therefore self-help and power politics are not givens acquired independently from the anarchic nature of the system. Rather, they are developed and sustained by actors' interactions.[112] It is through this interaction that actors acquire their identities, which in turn leads to the elaboration of their interests. The process of interaction, which is comprised of "...signaling, interpreting and responding, completes a

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[109] Richard K. Ashley, *The Political Economy of War and Peace: The Sino-Soviet-American Triangle and the Modern Security Problematique*, London: Frances Pinter Publishers Ltd, 1980, pp. 11-12.
[110] Jens Bartelson, *The Critique of the State*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2001, pp. 10-11.
[111] Zehfuss, "Constructivisms in International Relations: Wendt, Onuf, and Kratochwil", p. 56.
[112] Ibid.

social act"; through repetition of social acts, stable identities and future expectations are created and sustained. [113]

In Onuf's case, as Zehfuss affirms,

> ...human beings construct reality through their deeds, which may be speech acts. Speech acts in turn may be institutionalized into rules and thereby provide the context and basis of meaning for further human action. This process is deeply political as rules distribute benefits unevenly. In other words, rules privilege some people over others. The effect is rule.[114]

As highlighted in the quote, not only actions but the speaking of words (speech acts) constitute deeds. Rules, acting as guidelines, are what make shared meaning possible, which in turn makes agency possible; every time one decides to follow a rule or not, they strengthen or weaken it.[115] Rules are the pivotal element for Onuf:

> Rules establish stability in social institutions by privileging certain people. We usually call this order. Stability ensues precisely because those who made the order benefit from it.[116]

Onuf disagrees with the positivist and empiricist foundations on which dominant IR theories operate. He believes that it is not possible to detach oneself from the matter observed; therefore, neutral observation of phenomena is impossible. By assigning meaning to concepts, we create a privileged point of view by which other aspects of reality become meaningful; "Knowledge thus exists in relation to a specific context. Therefore, it is crucial to know the makeup of this context."[117] Here Onuf seems to be

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[113] Zehfuss, "Constructivisms in International Relations: Wendt, Onuf, and Kratochwil", p. 57.
[114] Ibid., p. 59.
[115] Ibid.
[116] Ibid., p. 61.
[117] Ibid., p. 62.

reiterating Ashley's earlier work. When speaking about traditional IR theories, Ashley asserts that

> All such traditions do contain relative truths as seen from particular vantage points on reality. The point, rather, is that these competing traditions are ahistorical. Although often mistaken for timeless universals, the patterns identified by such traditions are historically dependent relations. They are patterns whose existences depend upon contextualizing historical processes that individual traditions have relegated to their unspoken and unexamined *ceteris paribus* clauses.[118]

Akin to Onuf's conception, Kratochwil sees practices based on rules and norms as central to constructivism.[119] In the international realm, agents' practices – based on transformed beliefs and identities of domestic actors – change and remake norms. As Adler comments on Waltz's neo-realism,

> Emphasizing equilibrium, he has looked for the recurrent, and stressing material power alone, he has overlooked the capacity of humans to change the meaning and understanding of power with a change in expectations and values, which occurs at the unit level – the ultimate source of systemic change.[120]

Audie Klotz provides a case study corroborating the effects of changing norms at the international level. In a case study of international sanctions applied against apartheid South Africa, Klotz concludes that the reason why mainstream materialist IR theories could not explain the timing of sanctions was because the explanation rested in a shift of global norms concerning racial equality.[121] There was no evidence of either structural

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[118] Ashley, *The Political Economy of War and Peace: The Sino-Soviet-American Triangle and the Modern Security Problematique*, p. 16.
[119] Zehfuss, "Constructivisms in International Relations: Wendt, Onuf, and Kratochwil", p. 63.
[120] Adler, "Cognitive Evolution: A Dynamic Approach for the Study of International Relations and their Progress", p. 45.
[121] Klotz found that the answer that accounted for the shift in norms of global racial equality rested in the examination of the loose coalition of governments, NGOs, and individuals that made up the transnational globalized anti-apartheid movement. Audie Klotz, *Norms in International Relations: The Struggle Against Apartheid*, Ithica: Cornell University Press, 1995, pp. 5-7.

military or economic change.[122] Although this argument seems to mirror what many regime theorists and liberal institutionalists[123] have proposed, Klotz's study can be differentiated from these arguments because, as Klotz affirms,

> since actors' definitions of their interests remain constant in the standard formulation, these regime theorists accept the realist conception of norms as separate from, rather than constitutive of, interests. Consequently, conventional regimes theory offers little insight into self-affirmation and group-interest motivations, the identity dimensions of norms.[124]

As a result, regime theory can only treat interest formation as exogenous domestic factors.[125]

Kratochwil sees the positivist method as faulty for the study of human behavior. Rather than proceeding from "antecedent conditions", explanation should make reference to intentionality and goal-directedness.[126]

> By misrepresenting human action in the positivist way, we are likely to misunderstand ourselves and our role in the world. In other words, apart from making social life unintelligible, we define away the normative dimension and thus the problem of responsibility.[127]

In order for an actor to operate on the basis of instrumental rationality, the actor already has a mind-set about the situation he/she faces. This attitude is influenced by values; therefore, rationality as common sense is bound in normativity, because rational action is an endorsement of some appropriate norm or moral feeling.[128] Norms basically

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[122] Audie Klotz, *Norms in International Relations: The Struggle Against Apartheid*, p. 7.
[123] See Ethan A. Nadelman, "Global Prohibition Regimes: The Evolution of Norms in International Society", *International Organization*, 44:4, Autumn 1990, pp. 479-526; or Keohane and Nye, *Power and Interdependence*, pp. 38-62.
[124] Klotz, *Norms in International Relations: The Struggle Against Apartheid*, p. 14.
[125] Ibid., p. 26.
[126] Zehfuss, "Constructivisms in International Relations: Wendt, Onuf, and Kratochwil", p. 64.
[127] Ibid.
[128] Ibid., p. 65.

provide a way to reason and decide why a particular choice is justified over others. Since reasoning does not always lead to the best single solution, it is necessary to advance good reasons for decisions. This is why Kratochwil believes in the "unprejudiced assessment of the empirical evidence."[129] However, his empiricism strives to provide an understanding of human behavior within its intersubjective/normative elements. Giddens seems to agree in that "social theory has the task of providing conceptions of the nature of human social activity and of the human agent which can be placed in the service of empirical work."[130]

Given these conditions, for Kratochwil, characterizations of actions are not descriptive; they are evaluations of facts based on normative considerations.[131] Therefore, what is being described is not objective. It reflects the intersubjective validity of a depiction which reasonable persons can agree on.[132] Ultimately,

> Human behavior can therefore only be understood in the context of meaning, interpretation and judgment, that is, embedded in an intersubjective context. The intersubjective context is based on the existence of rules and norms, which fulfill all three functions above: They establish the rationality of the situation, give actions meaning, and provide the framework for processes of deliberation, interpretation, and argumentation.[133]

All three authors – Wendt, Onuf, and Kratochwil – agree that the meaning of human behavior and social reality are vital in the study of IR; however, the differences become apparent in their individual conceptualizations of how meaning is constituted. For Wendt, meaning arises from speechless interaction, i.e. signaling, interpreting and

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[129] Zehfuss, "Constructivisms in International Relations: Wendt, Onuf, and Kratochwil", p. 65
[130] Giddens, *The Constitution of Society: Outline of the Theory of Structuration*, p. xvii.
[131] Zehfuss, "Constructivisms in International Relations: Wendt, Onuf, and Kratochwil", p. 68.
[132] Ibid., p. 68.
[133] Ibid., p. 68.

responding.[134] For Onuf and Kratochwil, in order to create norms and rules that begin with speech acts, one must be able to reflect and interpret, which in turn requires the ability to use and understand language.[135] Wendt leaves the issue of the functions of language unproblematized; this makes his interactions similar to a rationalist game theory move/countermove scenario.[136]

This is where Campbell also differs considerably from Wendt. Campbell argues "that as understanding involves rendering the unfamiliar in the terms of the familiar, there is always an ineluctable debt to interpretation such that there is nothing outside of discourse."[137] Given this statement, Campbell is concerned mainly with how terms and concepts function within discourse. Cautiously, however, he does not claim that "objects do not exist externally to thought", rather that they could not constitute themselves outside "discursive conditions of emergence."[138] He refers to a discursive economy "whereby discourse (the representation and constitution of the 'real') is a managed space in which some statements and depictions come to have a greater value than others."[139]

The consequence of Wendt's lack of dealing with language culminates in the fact that Wendt's "actors cannot communicate about their behavior; they communicate through their behavior."[140] This limits the scope of his constructivism. Wendt's close paralleling of neorealist and rational theories, coupled with the void he leaves in discussing language as a tool of constructing reality, omits the problems of normativity that Onuf, Kratochwil, and Campbell try to bring to bear by coupling language with the

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[134] Zehfuss, "Constructivisms in International Relations: Wendt, Onuf, and Kratochwil", p. 69.
[135] Ibid., p. 69.
[136] Ibid., p. 70.
[137] Campbell, *Writing Security: United States Foreign Policy and the Politics of Identity*, p. 4.
[138] Ibid., p. 6.
[139] Ibid., pp. 6-7.
[140] Zehfuss, "Constructivisms in International Relations: Wendt, Onuf, and Kratochwil", p. 70.

existence of a material world.[141] Given Campbell's tendency of focusing mainly on language/discourse (an alleged deficiency in Wendt's work), coupled with the fact that Campbell does not consider himself a positivist, it becomes conducive to the ends of this thesis to examine if Wendt's and Campbell's work could be synthesized.

Constructivism? Constructivisms?

As this short review of some of the constructivist literature demonstrates, although some baseline commonalities may exist, there are many constructivist strands and discourses that are being scrutinized and challenged from without and within the constructivist camp. The general consensus seems to be that mainstream IR theory lacks a sociological approach and that the global 'reality' around us is socially constructed, but the similarities seem to end there.

While some constructivists place themselves or are placed in the structural and/or modernist-positivist camps, others are classified or classify themselves in the post-structural and/or post-positivist camps. The majority of the dissimilarities seem to stem from three pivotal thematic conceptualizations: those of intersubjective meaning, identity, and representation. In the hopes of partially unpacking the category of constructivism in IR theory, the ensuing chapters will compare and contrast two authors' – at opposite poles, i.e. structural/modernist-positivist vs. post-structural/post positivist – conceptualizations of these themes.

The next chapter will examine what intersubjective meanings denote to Wendt and Campbell. Since identity and representation are constituted and solidified via the

[141] Zehfuss, "Constructivisms in International Relations: Wendt, Onuf, and Kratochwil", p. 71.

attribution and transmission of intersubjective meanings to interactions and events, it becomes important to begin the thematic exploration with the intersubjective attribution of meanings.

Chapter 3: Intersubjectivity

Through a reading and comparison of a number of their publications, this chapter will compare Wendt's notion of intersubjectivity to that of Campbell's (Wendt's work will occasionally be supplemented by two other modernist constructivists, Adler and Ruggie, and Campbell's by two other post-structuralist constructivists, Ashley and Walker). At the end of the chapter, a brief balance sheet will highlight similarities and differences.

Since the themes of identity and representation, which will be covered in later chapters, hinge on the intersubjective attribution of meaning, the latter concept seems to be the most adequate entry point into the constructivist 'intraparadigm' debate. However, before proceeding, a caveat needs to be made; in separating the three themes and attributing individual chapters to each, it should not be misconstrued that I am implying that each can stand autonomously in relation to the others. Quite to the contrary, the selected themes are highly interdependent, and in attempting to deal with each independently, there will be overlap and repetition. However, given the importance and magnitude that each of these themes commands in constructivist IR literature, a separation, in order to demonstrate and bring into sharper analytical relief how each mutually dependent theme ties in to the others, seems warranted.

Intersubjective Meaning Attribution

Wendt's notions of intersubjectivity, identity, and representation are well expounded in his seminal "Anarchy is What States Make of It"[142] article. On the focus of

[142] Alexander Wendt, "Anarchy Is What States Make of It: the Social Construction of Power Politics", *International Organization*, 46:2, 1992, p. 397.

the current chapter – intersubjectivity – it is worth quoting the author at length. In the following passage, Wendt is criticizing Waltz's neo-realist framework for not being able, without the injunction of meaning attribution, to define state behavior on the sole bases of ordering principles and capability distribution.

> A fundamental principle of constructivist social theory is that people act towards objects, including other actors, on the basis of the meanings that objects have for them. States act differently towards enemies than they do towards friends because enemies are threatening and friends are not. Anarchy and the distribution of power are insufficient to tell us which is which. U.S military power has a different significance for Canada than for Cuba, despite their similar "structural" positions, just as British missiles have a different significance for the United States than do Soviet missiles. The distribution of power may always affect states' calculations, *but how it does so depends on the intersubjective understandings and expectations, on the "distribution of knowledge,"* (emphasis added) that constitute their conceptions of self and other.... It is collective meanings that constitute the structures which organize our actions. [143]

In Waltz's theory, the conception of self-help derived from the anarchic nature of the international realm is, in Wendt's words, "one such intersubjective structure and, as such, [it] does the decisive explanatory work in the theory."[144] In the same vein, Ruggie affirms that "physical objects cannot will things to happen"[145] and, based on the following passage, Ashley would probably concur.

> Such understandings of power are rooted in a utilitarian understanding of international society: an understanding in which (a) there exists no form of sociality, no intersubjective consensual basis, prior to or constitutive of individual actors or their private ends...[146]

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[143] Wendt, "Anarchy Is What States Make of It: the Social Construction of Power Politics", p. 397.
[144] Ibid., p. 396.
[145] John Gerard Ruggie, "Epistemology, Ontology, and the Study of International Regimes" in *Constructing the World Polity: Essays on International Institutionalization*, John Gerard Ruggie, London: Routeledge, 1998, p. 90.
[146] Richard K. Ashley, "The Poverty of Neorealism", *International Organization*, 38:2, 1984, p. 245.

Likewise, in Campbell's problematization of the notion of danger in U.S foreign policy conduct during the cold war, the author suggests that "Danger is not an objective condition. It is not a thing that exists independently of those to whom it may become a threat."[147] It is an interpretation, a constructed relation to the events it is purported to derive from. For Campbell, the problem with realist and Marxist theories is that they eradicate the indispensability of this interpretation.[148]

The idea here is that there is nothing inherently natural about what Wendt calls this 'one such intersubjective' structure[149]; rather, it is dependent on actors' "socialization to and participation in collective knowledge."[150] Given this affirmation, this 'one such intersubjective structure' is one among many and is therefore subject to change if actors' 'socialization to and participation in collective knowledge' changes.[151] It is on this basis that constructivism derives its basic edict that reality is a social construction. So far, all authors under examination seem to be in agreement. As Ashley states,

> approaches meriting the label "critical" stress the community-shared background understandings, skills, and practical predispositions without which it would be impossible to interpret action, assign meaning, legitimate practices, empower agents, and constitute a differentiated, highly structured social reality...But whatever the label, critical social scientists understand such shared background knowledge

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[147] Campbell, *Writing Security: United States Foreign Policy and the Politics of Identity*, p. 1.
[148] David Campbell, *Writing Security: United States Foreign Policy and the Politics of Identity*, 1998, pp. 2 and 6. This is also one of the main arguments in Campbell's study of the Bosnian war, i.e., that most conventional analyses of the Bosnian conflict overlook and ignore "the projectional character of interpretation" because of their ontological presumptions. See David Campbell, *National Deconstruction: Violence, Identity, and Justice in Bosnia*, University of Minnesota Press, 1998. p. 23.
[149] Campbell makes similar claims. See David Campbell, "Salgado and the Sahel: Documentary Photography and the Imaging of Famine" in *Rituals of Mediation: International Politics and Social Meaning*, Francois Debrix and Cynthia Weber (eds.), University of Minnesota Press, 2003, p. 72.
[150] Wendt, "Anarchy Is What States Make of It: the Social Construction of Power Politics", p. 399.
[151] Alexander Wendt, "Constructing International Politics", *International Security*, 20:1, 1995, p. 73.

> and skills to be "the very ontological condition of human life in society as such" (Giddens, 1976:19).[152]

However, as comparison will later show, viewpoints start to diverge during discussions of how this process of socialization evolves, and whether the interpreted nature of constructed realities can be discovered.

To deepen the reader's comprehension of socialization and formation of intersubjective understandings and expectations, Wendt uses a hypothetical example of a first encounter between two actors, ego and alter.[153] In order to better ascertain this analogy, a crucial point needs to be made. For Wendt, the central notion of interests in neo-realist – and most IR – theory stems from actors' identities[154] (a theme that shall be explored in chapter 3). For the purposes of the current chapter, it is sufficient to underscore Wendt's affirmation that interests are not independent of social contexts, and that they are defined in the course of delineating situations.[155] Although most situations in our experiences are routine and we assign meaning to them on the basis of existing cognitive frames, we sometimes encounter situations that are unprecedented. In these cases, we have to construct meanings on the basis of analogies or invent them from scratch.[156] Consequently, actions are organized on the basis of meanings, which in turn, are products of interaction.[157] The ego/alter example illustrates the process.

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[152] Richard K. Ashley, "The Geopolitics of Geopolitical Space: Toward a Critical Social Theory of International Politics", *Alternatives*, 12, 1987, p. 403.
[153] Wendt, "Anarchy Is What States Make of It: the Social Construction of Power Politics", pp. 404-405.
[154] Ibid., p. 398.
[155] Ibid.
[156] Ibid.
[157] Ibid., p. 403.

Wendt's hypothetical example begins with a first time encounter between two actors that possess material capabilities.[158] Both actors want to survive and have no a priori imperatives for power, glory, conquest, and no previous security/insecurity history between them. Mirroring the conditions of the international anarchic realm where no overarching authority enforces rules, ego is the first to act; he can advance, retreat, brandish his arms, lay down his arms, or attack.[159] Alter must now infer ego's intentions and decide whether ego represents a threat. As Wendt specifies, there is no a priori reason, before ego's initial gesture, for alter to feel threatened; it is on the basis of ego's initial gesture whether and how alter will decide to react. While making inferences, alter may make an attribution error misinterpreting ego's true intentions, but the point remains that the attribution error is based on and would be impossible without the initial "process of signaling, interpreting, and responding [which] completes a "social act" and begins the process of creating intersubjective meanings".[160]

It is through cycles of these 'social act' interactions that collective and shared knowledge about the world around us (meanings, understandings, expectations, etc.) is acquired and 'rules of the game' (boundaries) are established. The key to constructivist renderings lies in the fact that these processes are in constant flux. Even well established collective meanings are always in (re)development and subject to (re)negotiation and change (although the methods and speed by which change is affected and evolves varies on diverging perspectives, various constraints, and contextual factors). It is on the basis of this shared knowledge that 'things' are represented (a theme that shall be explored in chapter 4) and acted upon. If actions and representations are modified, the intersubjective

[158] Wendt, "Anarchy Is What States Make of It: the Social Construction of Power Politics", p. 404.
[159] Ibid.

knowledge that constitutes actors changes, and logically, the system – eventually – follows suite to reflect these alterations.[161]

While Wendt adopts a Waltzian state-centric purview and squarely focuses his work on how this socialization process occurs between states, others (modernist or not) extend the field of analysis to the participation of non-state actors. Adler and Barnett affirm that

> [But] what state interests are or become, and the meaning and purpose of power, take shape within – and are constituted by – a normative structure that emerges and evolves due to the actions and interactions of state and non-state actors.[162]

At the other end of the spectrum, Campbell puts the emphasis of the socialization process on the imposition of meaning through narrativizing (a highly important concept in post-structural theorizing).

> Telling a story establishes order and meaning. Scripting a narrative, providing a sequentially ordered plot, a cast of characters, identifiable forces, attributable motivations, and lessons for the future, is one of the most common ways we ascribe intelligibility when confronted with the novel or the unfamiliar.[163]

Although this narrativization seems similar to Wendt's ego/alter example, there are important differences. In Campbell's view, narrativization leads to the textual interpretive position of "the impossibility that understanding can occur outside of discourse".[164] The contention culminates in a singular quest to deciphering meanings that

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[160] Wendt, "Anarchy Is What States Make of It: the Social Construction of Power Politics", p. 405.
[161] Ibid., p. 407.
[162] Emanuel Adler and Michael Barnett, "Security Communities in Theoretical Perspective" in *Security Communities*, Emanuel Adler and Michael Barnett (eds.), Cambridge University Press, 1998, p. 15.
[163] David Campbell, *Politics without Principle: Sovereignty, Ethics, and the Narratives of the Gulf War*, Lynne Reinner Publishers, 1993, p. 7.
[164] Ibid., p. 9.

are imposed through the via media of text[165] (this may occur say, when alter tells others the story – on the basis of his inferences – of his first encounter with ego). This is why Campbell affirms that what is usually referred to as "external" realities motivating foreign policy, are in fact experiences that are mediated by (or read off) internal discourse.[166]

Wendt does caution that his socialization explanation should not be misunderstood (or misconstrued) as implying that the potential for change is a simple matter of willing desired changes into existence – as is often the case with criticisms of constructivism.[167] Once intersubjective structures are well entrenched because of repetitive cycles of interactions, they become "social facts".[168] As opposed to Wendt, in Adler's examination of what constitute these social facts, the role of language is more explicitly problematized: social facts "which are facts only by human agreement and which account for the majority of the facts studied in IR, differ from rocks and flowers, because unlike the latter, their existence depends on human consciousness and language."[169] Campbell pushes the language envelope even further by affirming that

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[165] Campbell, "MetaBosnia: Narratives of the Bosnian War", pp. 261-262. In at least three other articles, Campbell argues that even pictures do not mean anything unless 'a relevant political consciousness' serves as a pre-existing framework on which to attribute meaning. This implies that the textual even takes precedence over the visual. See David Campbell, "Atrocity, Memory, Photography: Imaging the Concentration Camps of Bosnia – The Case of ITN versus Living Marxism, Part II", *Journal of Human Rights*, 1:2, 2002, p. 159; David Campbell, "Representing Contemporary War", *Ethics and International Affairs*, 17:2, 2003, p. 100, and David Campbell, "Cultural Governance and Pictorial Resistance: Reflections on the Imaging of War", *Review of International Studies*, 29:SI, 2003, pp. 71- 72.

[166] Campbell, *Politics without Principle: Sovereignty, Ethics, and the Narratives of the Gulf War*, p. 9.

[167] For a good treatment see Wendt's response ("Constructing International Politics") to Mearsheimer's "The False Promise of International Institutions".

[168] Wendt, "Anarchy Is What States Make of It: the Social Construction of Power Politics", p. 411.

[169] Emanuel Adler, "Constructivism and International Relations" in *Handbook of International Relations*, Walter Carlsnaes, Thomas Risse and Beth A. Simmons (eds.), Sage publications, 2002, p. 100.
In Wendt's book and his seventeen book chapters/articles surveyed for this thesis, the author explores language issues in intersubjectives structures five times; the few times that the issue of language is broached, it is dealt with very briefly.

language is the overwhelmingly predominant item fashioning interpretation – and consequently, meaning attribution.

> The world exists independently of language, but we can never know that (beyond the fact of its assertion), because the existence of the world is literally inconceivable outside of language and our traditions of interpretation.[170]

It is at this juncture that the divergence between modernists and post-structuralists becomes wider and markedly noticeable. Before continuing the discussion of social facts, a brief parenthesis about this divergence needs to be opened.

The central notion that separates the two schools of thought is based primarily on differing epistemological stands. Modernists and post-structuralists agree that the world exists independently of language and interpretation.[171] However, as opposed to post-structuralists, modernists believe that these independent realities can be deciphered, apprehended, and explained. Modernists

> ...argue that the fact that human action is linguistically constituted is not a barrier to the possibility of social science... [that] self-understandings and social conventions are themselves effects of causal processes like socialization and structural power. [And] it is the task of social science to investigate these processes.[172]

Therefore, Wendt and Adler both affirm that not only is it possible to infer the best explanation from observed effects to unobservable causes, but that much (non-social

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[170] Campbell, *Writing Security: United States Foreign Policy and the Politics of Identity*, p. 6 and Campbell, *National Deconstruction: Violence, Identity, and Justice in Bosnia*, p. 25.
[171] Alexander Wendt, "The Difference that Realism Makes: Social Science and the Politics of Consent", *Politics and Society*, 20:2, 1992, p. 210 and Campbell, *National Deconstruction: Violence, Identity, and Justice in Bosnia*, p. 25.
[172] Wendt, "The Difference that Realism Makes: Social Science and the Politics of Consent", p. 211.

science) scientific practice already follows this logic.[173] These claims, made on the basis of the philosophy of scientific realism, stand in opposition not only to post-structuralist theorizing, but also to logical empiricism, which is agnostic about unobservables. Ultimately, the argument is that research agendas that aspire to decipher intersubjective structures while accounting for incontrovertible linguistic and interpretive factors – which constitute these structures – are not only possible but highly desirable. Scientific realists would argue that by casting aside unobservables or subsuming them under language and/or interpretation, both logical empiricists and interpretivists are likely to produce incomplete and/or erroneous analyses. In this sense, proponents of scientific realism (or pragmatism), feel that post-structural and logical empirical analyses are unduly constraining. The post-structuralist response is that given the fact that the tools used to study these independent realities are human creations that owe their existence to language and interpretation, the quest to apprehend these realities becomes futile.[174] The parenthesis will be closed here in order to resume the discussion of social facts.

For Wendt, the implications of the existence of established social facts are that,

> For both systemic and "psychological" reasons, then, intersubjective understandings and expectations may have a self-perpetuating quality, constituting path-dependencies that new ideas about self and other must transcend.[175]

Walker (in 1989) – albeit in different terms – makes a similar argument when referring to the difficulty of transcendence in debates surrounding international relations theorizing.

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[173] Wendt, "The Difference that Realism Makes: Social Science and the Politics of Consent", and Emanuel Adler, "Seizing the Middle Ground: Constructivism in World Politics", *European Journal of International Relations*, 3:3, 1997, p. 329.

[174] Campbell, *Writing Security: United States Foreign Policy and the Politics of Identity*, p. 6 and Campbell, *National Deconstruction: Violence, Identity, and Justice in Bosnia*, p. 25 and Adler, "Seizing the Middle Ground: Constructivism in World Politics", p. 326.

> ...the categories of realist and idealist, as they were deployed in these debates – and as they have since come to provide convenient labels and systems of classification – should be understood as the primary forms in which the basic assumptions governing the study of world politics have been left to congeal, requiring little further exploration.[176]

To illustrate the possibility of transcendence based on the human capacity of self-reflexion[177], Wendt uses the example of the Soviet 'new thinking' of the 1980s. He explains how the breakdown of intersubjective understandings plays a crucial role in "identifying the practices that reproduce seemingly inevitable ideas about self and other"[178] and leads to new aspirations and reflections of self.[179] His example highlights the ongoing process of the (re)negotiation of established collective meanings; over time, once the parties involved internalized the process, new intersubjective understandings governing East-West relations were created. Ashley summarizes this process in a brief paragraph.

> Nowhere in neorealist categories do we find room for the idea that men and women who are the objects of theory can themselves theorize about their lives; are in fact engaged in a continuing struggle to shape and redefine their understandings of themselves, their agencies of collective action, and the very categories of social existence; do indeed orient their practices in light of their understandings; and, thanks to all of this, do give form and motion to the open-ended processes by which the material conditions of their practices are made, reproduced and transformed.[180]

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[175] Wendt, "Anarchy Is What States Make of It: the Social Construction of Power Politics", p. 411.
[176] R.B.J Walker, "History and Structure in the Theory of International Studies", *Millennium*, 18:2, p. 167.
[177] For more about actors' abilities to transcend social structures see Alexander Wendt and Ian Shapiro, "The Misunderstood Promise of Realist Social Theory" in *Contemporary Empirical Political Theory*, Kristen Renwick Monroe (ed.), University of California Press, 1997, p. 177.
[178] Wendt, "Anarchy Is What States Make of It: the Social Construction of Power Politics", pp. 418-422. For a good treatment of this topic and an example of an incidence where appropriate conditions were in place and ideas were able to transcend, see Jeffrey T. Checkel, *Ideas and International Political Change: Soviet/Russian Behavior and the End of the Cold War*, New Haven: Yale University Press, 1997.
[179] Elements of the same approach are used to describe the shifts in the historic relationship between East Germany and the Soviet Union in Alexander Wendt and Daniel Friedheim, "Hierarchy under Anarchy: Informal Empire and the East German State, *International Organization*, 49:4, 1995, p. 704.
[180] Ashley, "The Poverty of Neorealism", p. 259.

Similar to Wendt's notion of social facts, Campbell suggests that the end of the cold war brought about a crisis in U.S policy orientation (domestic and foreign) which was reflected by heated debates about post Cold War national interests.[181] The crisis was mainly due to the disappearance of the long-standing narrativized danger represented by the Soviet Union. Faced with new conjectures, in the face of inhumane events such as Bosnia-Herzegovina, Campbell affirms that the silence of inaction suggests evidence that "traditional compasses offer[ed] little bearing on this new terrain."[182] Although similar to Wendt's breakdown of intersubjective understandings playing a role in redefining self and other, for Campbell, this process would entail the replacement of the old script with the narrativization of a new one – the key difference being that it would likely be imposed through a discursive articulation of a new danger(s).[183]

To bring intersubjectivity and the notion of social facts further into focus, Wendt, like many constructivists, delves into the concept of sovereignty in the international order.[184] As Walker states "State sovereignty works because it has come to seem to be simply out there, out in the world, demarcating the natural orders of here and there."[185] Along the same logic, Wendt affirms that unless there are others who both share the intersubjective understandings underlying sovereignty and base their practices and representations on those foundations, the intersubjective understandings and expectations

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[181] David Campbell, "Violent Performances: Identity, Sovereignty, Responsibility", p. 163.
[182] Ibid., p. 164.
[183] Within the confines of the argument presented in Writing Security, this would mean the identification of a new candidate(s) to differentiate against the self as dangerous, in order to maintain the continuity of 'the evangelism of fear' that is the condition of possibility of state sovereignty. See Campbell, *Writing Security: United States Foreign Policy and the Politics of Identity*, pp. 12-13. See also, David Campbell, "Introduction: The End of Philosophy and the End of International Relations", in *The Political Subject of Violence*, David Campbell and Michael Dillon (eds.), Manchester University Press, 1990, p. 32.
[184] Alexander Wendt and Michael Barnett "The Systemic Sources of Dependent Militarization" in *The Insecurity Dilemma*, Brian L. Job (ed.), Lynne Reinner Publishers, 1992, pp. 103-104.

that brought sovereignty into fruition – and continue to perpetuate it – simply cease to exist.[186] The latter fact remains true irrelevant of how well established an intersubjective structure or social fact is. Ruggie highlights that

> Some constitutive rules, like exclusive territoriality, are so deeply sedimented or reified that actors no longer think of them as rules at all. But their durability remains based in collective intentionality, even if they started with a brute physical act such as seizing a piece of land.[187]

In his study of the Bosnian war, Campbell suggests that established international norms (similar to social facts), particularly the norm that demarcated territories must correspond with national communities, were not only unable to generate a satisfactory response to the violence, they were in fact complicit in the conduct of the war.[188]

> This is because inscribing the boundaries that make the installation of the nationalist imaginary possible requires the expulsion from the resultant "domestic" space of all that comes to be regarded as alien, foreign, dangerous.[189]

The intraparadigm differences on the emphasis of what constitutes intersubjectivity in global politics does not limit itself to the modernist/post-structuralist divide. Adler elaborates on the 'stuff' that constitutes intersubjective knowledge by affirming that "...intersubjective meanings are not simply the aggregation of the beliefs

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[185] R.B.J Walker, "International Relations and the Concept of the Political" in *International Relations Theory Today*, Ken Booth and Steve Smith (eds.), Pennsylvania State University Press, 1995, p. 322.
[186] Alexander Wendt, "The Agent-Structure Problem in International Relations Theory", *International Organization*, 41:3, 1987, p. 259 and Alexander Wendt and Robert Duvall, "Institutions and International Order" in *Global Changes and Theoretical Challenges: Approaches to World Politics for the 1990s*, Ernst-Otto Czempiel and James N. Rosenau (eds.), Lexington Books, 1989. p. 59.
[187] John Gerard Ruggie, "Introduction: What Makes the World Hang Together? Neo-Utilitarianism and the Social Constructivist Challenge", in *Constructing the World Polity: Essays on International Institutionalization*, John Gerard Ruggie, London: Routeledge, 1998, p. 25. See also Adler, "Seizing the Middle Ground: Constructivism in World Politics", p. 322.
[188] Campbell, *National Deconstruction: Violence, Identity, and Justice in Bosnia*, p. 13; David Campbell, "The Deterritorialization of Responsibility: Levinas, Derrida, and Ethics After the End of Philosophy,

of individuals who jointly experience and interpret the world."[190] They are the public knowledge on the basis of which individuals recognize and perform appropriate ranges of social practices (i.e. they set the boundaries of collective consciousness). In the context of national interests, he states that these are not merely the collective interests of a society, nor are they simply the interests of dominant and powerful individuals. "Rather, national interests are intersubjective understandings about what it takes to advance power, influence and wealth, that survive the political process, given the distribution of power and knowledge in a society."[191] In an article that probes the U.S' future role in the immediate post Cold War era, Ruggie also accords importance to the domestic realm in the formation of intersubjective knowledge; he affirms that, in the past, "the multilateral world order principles that American leaders have invoked when the remaking of the international order has been at stake reflect the idea of America's own foundational act of political communion."[192]

Even though Wendt concedes that domestic interactions are important in intersubjective knowledge formation[193], the scant attention he pays in probing these dynamics – coupled with his preference of emphasizing how the international system constitutes the intersubjectivity of state actors – imposes limits on what he self-avowedly

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Alternatives, 19:4, 1994, p. 456 and David Campbell, "Apartheid Cartography: The Political Anthropology and Spatial Effects of International Diplomacy in Bosnia", *Political Geography*, 18:4, 1999, pp. 400-401.

[189] Campbell, *National Deconstruction: Violence, Identity, and Justice in Bosnia*, p. 13.

[190] Adler, "Seizing the Middle Ground: Constructivism in World Politics", p. 327.

[191] Adler, "Seizing the Middle Ground: Constructivism in World Politics", p. 337. This also mirrors Campbell's notion of a 'discursive economy' based on Michel Foucault's 'micro-physics' of power. See Campbell, *Writing Security: United States Foreign Policy and the Politics of Identity*, pp. 6-7 and Michel Foucault, *Discipline and Punish: the Birth of the Prison*, New York: First Vintage Book Editions, 1979, pp. 221-222..

[192] John Gerard Ruggie, "The Past as Prologue?: Interests, Identity, and American Foreign Policy", *International Security*, 21:4, 1997, p. 111.

[193] Wendt, *Social Theory of International Politics*, p. 21.

calls his 'thin constructivism'[194] based on the structural state-centric Waltzian model.[195] Wendt seems to escape problematizing the domestic realm and non-state actors by black boxing these elements into the "process of signaling, interpreting, and responding..." between states.[196] However, without unpacking the various 'goings on' inside the box, it remains problematic and difficult to see how elements like the domestic realm and non-state actors, even if they have a lesser role to play (a plausible but not irrefutable argument), influence and shape the process of intersubjective meaning attribution.[197] As Campbell points out,

> A totalizing perspective is necessarily reductionist; reducing evident hybridity to a 'structural principle' has to result in the loss or under-appreciation of many of the aspects of world politics we seek to understand.[198]

In a recent article, Wendt justifies why the state can and should be considered a person (or actor) in international theorizing.[199] To properly explore his thoughtful and detailed arguments with due diligence is beyond the primary scope and objective of this thesis. For now, the conclusion of this chapter will highlight the differences and similarities between Wendt's scientific realist/structural position and Campbell's post-positivist/post-structural stance.

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[194] Wendt, *Social Theory of International Politics*, p. xiv.
[195] Ibid., pp. 15-23.
[196] Wendt, "Anarchy Is What States Make of It: the Social Construction of Power Politics", p. 405.
[197] Adler, "Constructivism and International Relations", p. 108.
[198] David Campbell, "Political Excess and the Limits of Imagination, *Millennium*, 23:2, 1994, p. 44.

Intersubjectivity Balance Sheet

Similarities:

- Collective meanings are the basis of action and there is nothing inherently natural about the meaning of things; meanings depend on processes of socialization and participation in collective knowledge.
- There is a reality out there that exists independently of language and interpretation.
- Although intersubjective meanings can and do become entrenched (social facts), the human capacity for self-reflexion allows the possibility to transcend and change intersubjective knowledge.

Differences:

- For Wendt, the socialization process which gives rise to collective meanings is produced via interaction (language is an under-explored component of this interaction). Campbell, on the other hand, puts the emphasis of the socialization process on the imposition of meaning through narrativization (discourse wholly dependent on language for interpretation). It is the how (method) – not whether – the socialization process central to collective meanings occurs.
- For Campbell, the indelible debt of interpretation to language makes it impossible to uncover the reality that exists independently of language. For Wendt, although linguistic and interpretive factors cannot be ignored and need to be accounted for, they do not represent an insurmountable obstacle standing in the way of uncovering socially constructed realities (observed effects can be traced back to unobservables

[199] See Alexander Wendt, "The State as Person in International Theory", *Review of International Studies*, 30:2, 2004, pp. 289-316.

and produce the best possible explanation). Here the questioning of the very possibility of discovery leads to differing methods of inquiry that seem irreconcilable. On this matter, both the whether and the how are divergent.

Chapter 4: Identity

Through a reading and comparison of a number of their publications, this chapter will compare Wendt's notion of identity to that of Campbell's (Wendt's work will occasionally be supplemented by two other modernist constructivists, Adler and Ruggie, and Campbell's by two other post-structuralist constructivists, Ashley and Walker). At the end of the chapter, a brief balance sheet will highlight similarities and differences.

Notions of identity in IR constructivism stem from the development of intersubjective knowledge (collective meanings – see chapter 3) and relational difference[200]. As Wendt mentions,

> Actors acquire identities – relatively stable, role-specific understandings and expectations about self – by participating in such collective meanings. Identities are inherently relational: "Identity with its appropriate attachments of psychological reality, is always identity within a specific, socially constructed world" Peter Berger argues.[201]

Campbell accentuates the relational notion of identity based on difference:

> Inescapable as it is, identity – whether personal or collective – is not fixed by nature, given by god, or planned by international behavior. Rather, identity is constituted in relation to difference. But neither is difference fixed by nature, given by god, or planned by international behavior. Difference is constituted in relation to identity.[202]

In *Writing Security*, Campbell attempts to explain, how, through the inscription of foreignness, US foreign policy during the Cold War helped to produce and reproduce

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[200] Alexander Wendt, "On Constitution and Causation in IR", *Review of International Studies*, 24:SI, 1998, pp. 113-114.
[201] Wendt, "Anarchy Is What States Make of It: the Social Construction of Power Politics", pp. 397-398.
[202] Campbell, *Writing Security: United States Foreign Policy and the Politics of Identity*, p. 9. See also Campbell, *National Deconstruction: Violence, Identity, and Justice in Bosnia*, Campbell, "The Deterritorialization of Responsibility: Levinas, Derrida, and Ethics After the End of Philosophy", pp. 460-461, and David Campbell, "The Politics of Radical Interdependence: A Rejoinder to Daniel Warner, *Millennium*, 25:1, 1996, p. 131.

American political identity.[203] He argues that the boundaries of a state's identity are secured by the representation of danger integral to foreign policy.

> ...I want to suggest that we can understand the state as having "no ontological status apart from the various acts which constitute its reality"; that its status as the sovereign presence in world politics is produced by "a discourse of primary and stable identity"; and that the identity of any particular state should be understood as "tenuously constituted in time...through a stylized repetition of acts," and achieved, "not [through] a founding act, but rather a regulated process of repetition."[204]

This mirrors Ashley's position that, "From a genealogical standpoint, there are no subjects, no fully formed identical egos, having an existence prior to practice and then implicated in power political struggles".[205]

This notion of iterated performance is key to constructivist renderings of identity formation. Wendt uses the concept of the looking glass self to explain how conceptions of self and interest tend, over time, to reflect the performance of important others.[206] While examining the phenomenon of third world militarization for example, Wendt and Barnett assert that,

> States which feel their identities lacking – because their autonomy is not respected by great powers, because they are unable to assert their control in all areas of the country, because their governments are corrupt or inefficient, or simply because of their relative youth – may try to compensate for such 'incompleteness' by acquiring the trappings of the modern state by a process analogous to conspicuous consumption. The things acquired by such 'symbolic self-completion' are valued not so much for their instrumental virtues as for what they symbolize – in this case status and membership in modernity.[207]

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[203] Campbell, *Writing Security: United States Foreign Policy and the Politics of Identity*, p. x.
[204] Ibid., p. 10.
[205] Ashley, "The Geopolitics of Geopolitical Space: Toward a Critical Social Theory of International Politics", p. 410.
[206] Wendt, "Anarchy Is What States Make of It: the Social Construction of Power Politics", p. 404.
[207] Alexander Wendt and Michael Barnett, "Dependent State Formation and Third World Militarization", *Review of International Studies*, 19:4, 1993, pp. 336-337 and Ronald L. Jepperson, Alexander Wendt, and Peter J. Katzenstein, "Norms, Identity, and Culture in National Security", in *The Culture of National*

As Wendt affirms, the intersubjective structure of self-help in the international system is a construction by virtue of the fact that these "reciprocal typifications"[208] have been repeated long enough over time to become social reality or social fact (see discussion of social facts in chapter 3).

> It is through reciprocal interaction, in other words, that we create and instantiate the relatively enduring social structures in terms of which we define our identities and interests.[209]

For Campbell, foreign policy and the constant articulation of danger are central components of this stylized repetition of acts, which constitutes, produces, and maintains stable identities.[210] Foreign policy is not, as conventionally understood, simply an internal response to an external stimulus. It is – on the basis of the identities that it creates – what produces, maintains, and differentiates the inside/outside dichotomy. Therefore,

> Ironically, then, the inability of the state project of security to succeed is the guarantor of the state's continued success as an impelling identity. The constant articulation of danger through foreign policy is thus not a threat to a state's identity or existence: it is its condition of possibility.[211]

Based on the work of Benedict Anderson, Campbell goes as far as arguing that the state most often preceded the nation, and nationality was a construction to secure state legitimacy.[212] For Campbell, this is nowhere more obvious than in the United States:

Security: Norms, and Identity in World Politics, Peter J. Katzenstein (ed.), Columbia University Press, 1993, p. 58.

[208] Wendt, "Anarchy Is What States Make of It: the Social Construction of Power Politics", p. 405.

[209] Ibid., p. 406.

[210] Ibid., p. 11.

[211] Ibid., pp. 12-13.

[212] Campbell, *Writing Security: United States Foreign Policy and the Politics of Identity*, p. 11.

> If all states are "imagined communities," devoid of ontological being apart from the many and varied practices that constitute their reality, America is the imagined community *par excellence*...[213]

In Campbell's conceptualization, at the heart of the continued elaboration of the self/other dichotomy rests the goal of eradicating the ambiguity and contingency of social life.[214] Campbell argues that this process always results in an other being marginalized. Meaning and identity are therefore always the consequence of a relationship between the self and the other that emerges through the imposition of an interpretation.[215]

Through a textual analysis of US foreign policy documents of the Cold War era, Campbell argues that the sources of danger and the identities that they threatened were always subject to rewriting (kept malleable). Foreign policy documents were "replete with statements about the fulfillment of the purpose of the republic, the fundamental purpose of the nation, god given rights, moral codes, the principles of European civilization, the fear of cultural and spiritual loss, and the responsibilities and duties thrust upon the gleaming example of America."[216] Upon closer examination, Campbell's claim is that these texts were not only meant for strategy; they actively scripted a particular American identity. Elsewhere, while examining the notion of political violence, Campbell goes as far as affirming that

> As it reads, listens and above all watches, the audience is directly and insistently invoked both morally and politically to be the legitimating and perpetrating subject.[217]

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[213] Campbell, "Violent Performances: Identity, Sovereignty, Responsibility", p. 166.
[214] Campbell, *Writing Security: United States Foreign Policy and the Politics of Identity*, p. 23.
[215] Ibid.
[216] Ibid., pp. 31-32.
[217] Campbell, "Introduction: The End of Philosophy and the end of International Relations", p. 15. For a treatment of how elements of the news media, film and documentary photography contribute to the

Campbell maintains that this type of scripting is not a new phenomenon. Christendom as a mediating entity replaced the Roman Empire, and the entity that came to be known as the state, in turn, took over mediation of identity claims from Christendom (the church).[218] With the coming of the state, the figure of identity moved from god and his agents to the monarch, and the puzzle now shifted to handling contingency and difference in a world without god.[219]

The state required a new theology of truth about whom or what "we" were. This new theology was elaborated by highlighting who or what "we" were not, and what "we" had to fear. The state took over the church's role in finishing the unfinished and endangered nature of the world.[220] Just as the church had previously relied on discourses of danger to establish its authority, discipline its followers, and ward of its enemies,[221] in order to "secure an ordered self in an ordered world", the state, through identity and otherness, continued defining the obstacles that stood in the way of terminating the unfinished and endangered nature of the world.[222]

Thus, for Campbell, the state and the identity of man located within it are effects of the discourses of danger that employ strategies of identification through othering. The cold war then, was a manifestation of the continuing production and reproduction of an American identity consistent "with the logic of a "society of security"".[223]

Similar to Campbell's elaboration, Wendt asserts that identities correspond to actors' social definitions of self and other based on understandings derived from

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expression of collective identity, see Campbell, "Cultural Governance and Pictorial Resistance: Reflections on the Imaging of War", pp. 57-73.

[218] Campbell, *Writing Security: United States Foreign Policy and the Politics of Identity*, pp.43-45.

[219] Ibid., p.46.

[220] Ibid., p. 48.

[221] Campbell, "Introduction: The End of Philosophy and the end of International Relations", p. 31.

[222] David Campbell, *Writing Security: United States Foreign Policy and the Politics of Identity*, p. 50.

intersubjective knowledge.[224] For Wendt, the pivotal notion of interests in any IR theory is based on identities, which in turn depend on social contexts; logically, as contexts vary, so will identities and interests.[225] Without roles, defining interests becomes next to impossible and identity crises inevitably ensue. Wendt, Campbell, and Ruggie all cite the heated debates about the definition of post Cold War US national interests as a prime example of this type of crisis.[226]

Wendt defines institutionalization as "...a process of internalizing new identities and interests..."; it flows logically then, that institutions are entrenched sets of identities and interests.[227] As highlighted in chapter 3, self-help is an institution in which the process of identity formation in anarchy is heavily skewed towards the preservation of the self. However, just as Campbell describes the process of othering on the basis of representations of danger, Wendt asserts that,

> These claims presuppose a history of interaction in which actors have acquired "selfish" identities and interests. Before interaction...they would have no experience upon which to base such definitions of self and other.[228]

The claim is not that the principle of self-help guiding state action in the international realm is not real. The self help structure – Campbell's "society of security" – of the international system is a result of repeated cycles of interaction in which parties

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[223] David Campbell, *Writing Security: United States Foreign Policy and the Politics of Identity*, p. 202.
[224] Wendt, "Anarchy Is What States Make of It: the Social Construction of Power Politics", pp. 397-398.
[225] Ibid., pp. 398-399.
[226] Wendt, "Anarchy Is What States Make of It: the Social Construction of Power Politics", p. 399. See also Campbell, "Violent Performances: Identity, Sovereignty, Responsibility", p. 163 and Ruggie, "The Past as Prologue?: Interests, Identity, and American Foreign Policy", p. 111.
[227] Wendt, "Anarchy Is What States Make of It: the Social Construction of Power Politics", p. 399.
[228] Ibid., p. 402.

feel others have been behaving in a way that is threatening to the self; the ultimate result is competitive or egoistic identities.[229]

> There is no logic of anarchy apart from the practices that create and instantiate one structure of identities and interests rather than another one; structure has no existence or causal powers apart from process.[230]

Even if insecurity is rooted in the memory of learned identities based on past interactions, those identities are mutable given dissimilar repetitive cycles of interactions over time.[231]

Ultimately, self help is not inherent to the structure of the system or the nature of its components, but is attributable to the identities (practices and performances) which bring it into fruition and perpetuate it. Here, once again, the notion of performance and repetition in the formation of identity – emphasized by both Wendt[232] and Campbell – is crucial. As Walker states when discussing the concept of balance of power, what is at stake here is,

> ...whether a balance of power should be understood as an automatic mechanism to which statesmen simply respond, or whether it should be regarded as a practice or policy that statesmen have developed on the basis of long historical experience.[233]

As pointed out in chapter 3 however, transcending identities is not a question of simply willing new intersubjective structures into being. Wendt asserts that entrenched identities serve to reinforce the boundaries (rules of the game) established by the

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[229] Wendt, "Anarchy Is What States Make of It: the Social Construction of Power Politics", pp. 406-407.
[230] Ibid., pp. 394-395.
[231] Ibid., p. 411.
[232] Alexander Wendt, "Identity and Structural Change in International Politics", in *The Return of Culture and Identity in International Relations Theory*, Yosef Lapid and Friedrich Kratochwil (eds.), Boulder: Lynne Rienner Publishers, 1996, p. 47.
[233] R.B.J Walker, "History and Structure in the Theory of International Studies", *Millennium*, 18:2, p. 177.

intersubjective meanings which constitute them; the result is the rewarding of certain types of behavior while other deeds are discouraged.[234] Here, Wendt mirrors some of Ashley's earlier assertions:

> ...the state's claim to autonomy may also derive from its historic adaptations to the requisites of participation in an international rule system...In adapting to the dominant rule system of a threatening world, a state effectively interiorizes within itself – within its agencies, instruments, and *raison d'etre* – the demanding logic of a systemic regime...And once adapted, each state...will tend to behave in ways contributing to the perpetuation of this regime by which all rationalize their partial autonomy through time.[235]

To further complicate things, not only do stable role identities "minimize uncertainty and anxiety", they avoid foreseeable costs of breaking commitments made to others on the basis of past practice.[236]

According to Wendt, the transformation of identity is not necessarily dependent on a revolutionary change of intersubjective knowledge. As he illustrates with the example of the European Union, what may have begun in pursuit of self-serving reasons, may have, four decades of cooperation later, redefined these same reasons "by reconstituting identities and interests in terms of new intersubjective understandings and commitments."[237] Just as repetitive cycles of interaction over time – based on insecurity – led to identities rooted on the institution of self help in the international realm, repetitive cycles of interactions – based on say, notions of collectivity – may lead to entrenched collective identities[238] that may be just as impermeable.[239]

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[234] Wendt, "Anarchy Is What States Make of It: the Social Construction of Power Politics", p. 411.
[235] Ashley, *The Political Economy of War and Peace: The Sino-Soviet-American Triangle and the Modern Security Problematique*, p. 21.
[236] Wendt, "Anarchy Is What States Make of It: the Social Construction of Power Politics", p. 411.
[237] Ibid., p. 417.
[238] For a good explanation of what Wendt means by collective identity, see Alexander Wendt, "Why a World State is inevitable", *European Journal of International Relations*, 9:4, 2003, pp. 512-516.
[239] Wendt, "Anarchy Is What States Make of It: the Social Construction of Power Politics", p. 418.

> ...if state actors develop a collective identity this becomes the basis for "common purposes" or interests, and this in turn is a necessary (but not sufficient) social psychological condition for an internationalization of political authority.[240]

This pivotal argument of identity formation (based on a Deutschian framework) is central to the case made by Adler and Barnett in *Security Communities*:

> ...that states can become embedded in a set of social relations that are understood as a community, and that the fabric of this community can generate stable expectations of peaceful change.[241]

However, as opposed to Wendt, Adler and Barnett drilldown to other levels (domestic and transnational).[242]

> Moreover, shared identities may lead to the creation of domestic constituencies, which, on the first sign of threat to security communities, will mobilize on their behalf.[243]

Ruggie also stresses that identity formation does not solely or predominantly emanate from the international realm: "identities are generated *in part* (emphasis added) by international interaction".[244] When examining the U.S' potential future role in the immediate post Cold War era, Ruggie affirms that, in the past, "the multilateral world order principles that American leaders have invoked when the remaking of the international order has been at stake reflect the idea of America's own foundational act of political communion"[245] (a domestic variable). In his discussion of the concept of culture in international relations theory, the sentiment for the need to go further than mainstream

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[240] Wendt, "Identity and Structural Change in International Politics", p. 52.
[241] Adler and Barnett, "Security Communities in Theoretical Perspective", p. 6.
[242] Adler, "Constructivism and International Relations" p. 104.
[243] Emanuel Adler and Michael Barnett, "Taking Identity and Our Critics Seriously", *Cooperation and Conflict*, 35:3, 2000, p. 323.
[244] Ruggie, "Introduction: What Makes the World Hang Together? Neo-Utilitarianism and the Social Constructivist Challenge", p. 33.

state-centric analyses based on this predominant framing of the political only being possible within the confines of territorial space[246], Walker affirms:

> In short, questions about culture are translated into questions about "values," and questions about values come to an abrupt halt with the assertion of state sovereignty as the ultimate source of value, and thus the ultimate agent in the conflict between different value communities.[247]

And, when discussing the concept of international regimes, Ruggie – like Adler and Barnett – also emphasizes convergent expectations which lead to identity formation.

> The emphasis on convergent expectations as the constitutive basis of regimes gives regimes an inescapable intersubjective quality. It follows that we know regimes by their shared understandings of desirable and acceptable forms of social behavior.[248]

The sometimes slow and incremental process of identity (re)formation is instantiated by the human capacity for self-reflection (see Wendt's illustration of the Soviet new thinking in chapter 3[249]). Once an actor rethinks his ideas of self and other, he/she can begin the process of building new intersubjective structures on the basis of which his own as well as others' identities start shifting.[250] Naturally, if a change in practice occurs in the self but not in the practices of others, the relational requirement for

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[245] Ruggie, "The Past as Prologue?: Interests, Identity, and American Foreign Policy", p. 111.
[246] Walker, "International Relations and the Concept of the Political", p. 314.
[247] R.B.J Walker, "The Concept of Culture in the Theory of International Relations", in *Culture and International Relations*, Jongsuk Chay (ed.), Praeger, 1990, p. 11.
[248] Ruggie, "Epistemology, Ontology, and the Study of International Regimes", p. 89.
[249] Wendt, "Anarchy Is What States Make of It: the Social Construction of Power Politics", pp. 418-422. For a good treatment of this topic and an example of an incidence where appropriate conditions were in place and ideas were able to transcend, see Checkel, *Ideas and International Political Change: Soviet/Russian Behavior and the End of the Cold War*.
[250] Wendt, "Identity and Structural Change in International Politics", p. 57.

an intersubjective knowledge shift is not met. For Wendt, the tool most frequently used to achieve the end of shifting others' identities is 'altercasting';[251]

> – a technique of interactor control in which ego [the self] uses tactics of self-presentation and stage management in an attempt to frame alter's [the other] definitions of social situations in ways that create the role which ego desires alter to play.[252]

Just like the thematic of intersubjectivity covered in chapter 3, many similarities are obvious when comparing Campbell's and Wendt's conceptualization of identity. However, two main differences are apparent. First, given that the elaboration of intersubjective knowledge serves as the foundation of identity formation (see chapter 3), it is logical that the differences underscored between the two authors on the theme of intersubjectivity will once again be a differentiating element here. The disparity does not stem from the significance of identity in international relations. Rather, once again, as was the case for intersubjectivity, it stems from how identity is constituted.

Wendt focuses on an interaction/process model in which the role of language is under-explored, whereas Campbell's focuses heavily on interpretation through the use of language. For Campbell, Wendt's interaction/process model is only meaningful and subsidiary to – or the result of – underlying language politics. The process described by Campbell is individualistic, whereas Wendt's interaction/process model, while not completely discarding language, privileges interaction at the international (structural) level as having a larger role to play in identity formation (a top down phenomenon).

The second major difference stems from the first and has to do with the sources of identity formation. Whereas Campbell is more interested in how individual and domestic

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[251] Wendt, "Anarchy Is What States Make of It: the Social Construction of Power Politics", p. 421.
[252] Ibid., p. 421.

influences shape the formation of identity through the establishment of meaning through othering, Wendt focuses on how systemic influences at the international level shape and condition state identity and action. The end result is differing frameworks upon which the study of phenomena is based (state-centric vs. non state-centric or structural vs. post-structural).

Identity Balance Sheet

Similarities:

- Identity is inherently relational and the key to understanding identity formation rests on iterated performances (practices) based on the formation of intersubjective knowledge (collective meanings).
- In turn, the practices and performances arising from role definitions based on notions of identity perpetuate or modify intersubjective knowledge (collective meanings).
- The processes of identity reformation are attributable to and instantiated by the human capacity for self-reflection.

Differences:

- For Wendt, the social structure of the international system is the predominant constituent of identity formation. For Campbell, identity is not set by international behavior; it is simply constituted in relation to difference. The disparity stems from the sources of identity formation.
- For Wendt, identity is comprised by a history of reciprocal interactions in the international realm. For Campbell, the foundations of these reciprocal interactions are

subsidiary to and driven by the interpretive politics of language which occur at the individual and domestic levels. The disparity stems from the import given to discourse vs. interaction (the method of identity formation).

- Given the differences elucidated above, the frameworks used to study political phenomena diverge. Wendt's focus is on the international system's predominant role in identity formation (a top down, state-centric, and structural approach). On the other hand, Campbell's interest lies in how individual and domestic elements interpretively shape identity formation through othering based on language (a non state-centric, and post-structural approach).

Chapter 5: Representation

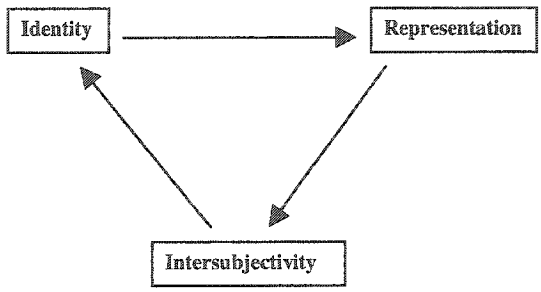
Through a reading and comparison of a number of their publications, this chapter will compare Wendt's notion of representation (the terms representation, practice, and performance are used interchangeably) to that of Campbell's (Wendt's work will occasionally be supplemented by two other modernist constructivists, Adler and Ruggie, and Campbell's by two other post-structural constructivists, Ashley and Walker). At the end of the chapter, a brief balance sheet will highlight similarities and differences.

Before beginning the exploration of the representation theme, it would be important to quickly revisit the logic behind the sequential ordering of the themes (chapters) in this thesis. As I have previously mentioned, this ordering is not a random one. The fact that meanings are constituted intersubjectively in relational fashion through interaction and language – as opposed to an objective truth that is out there to be discovered – is a central constructivist staple. Identity is in turn assigned and constituted through experiences based on intersubjective meaning attribution; therefore it is a central element in defining the self and others. Once intersubjective interaction experiences constitute reliable identities, those identities are either reinforced or modified through the politics of representation; it is through discourse that human beings convey meanings to what is being represented.

This 'building blocks' approach to the themes under investigation is not meant to imply that social reality is constituted in this strict sequential ordering. As I have pointed out earlier, these themes cannot stand autonomously in relation to one another. The goal of sequencing them as I have is based on the logic mentioned in the previous paragraph and the move to separate them is an attempt to bring the constructivist intraparadigm debate into sharper analytical relief. In the real world, I suspect that intersubjectivity,

identity, and representation are linked in a triangular (or circular) fashion, and actions and/or events can interject anywhere along the contours of the triangle (see Figure 1).

Figure 1. Constitution of Reality



However, a discussion of that matter is not within the purview of this thesis. Nonetheless, given my decision to order the themes as I have, representation would be the final extremity of the hypothetical triangle of Figure 1. Consequently, representation would be impossible to explain without reverting to the concepts of intersubjectivity and identity. As a result, this chapter will be somewhat repetitive.

Another caveat about representation is that since it is mainly through discourse that human beings convey meaning to what is being represented, and since discourse is in turn dependent on language, representation is a theme that is widely covered in discursive theories which tend to gravitate to the post-structural pole. The modernist treatment of this theme remains relatively under-explored; it is an interesting theoretical gap that remains open to future work.

As expounded in previous chapters, Campbell argues that the boundaries of a state's identity are secured by the representation of danger integral to foreign policy.[253]

> ...I want to suggest that we can understand the state as having "no ontological status apart from the various acts which constitute its reality"; that its status as the sovereign presence in world politics is produced by "a discourse of primary and stable identity"; and that the identity of any particular state should be understood as "tenuously constituted in time...through a stylized repetition of acts," and achieved, "not [through] a founding act, but rather a regulated process of repetition."[254]
>
> Ironically, then, the inability of the state project of security to succeed is the guarantor of the state's continued success as an impelling identity. The constant articulation of danger through foreign policy is thus not a threat to a state's identity or existence: it is its condition of possibility.[255]

Given the fact that a state's identity is 'constituted in time through a stylized repetition of acts', Campbell argues that, paradoxically, "states are (and have to be) always in a process of becoming."[256] As Ashley states, "From a genealogical standpoint, international community can only be seen as a never completed product of multiple historical practices..."[257] Wendt makes an almost identical affirmation to Campbell's:

> The sovereign state is an ongoing accomplishment of practice, not a once-and-for-all creation of norms that somehow exist apart from practice.[258]

And, when speaking about notions of social reality, Adler also puts emphasis on practice.

> It can be a set of norms, or consensual scientific understanding, or the practice of diplomacy, or arms control. All these knowledge

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[253] Campbell, *Writing Security: United States Foreign Policy and the Politics of Identity*, p. 3.
[254] Ibid., p. 10.
[255] Ibid., pp. 12-13.
[256] Ibid., p. 12.
[257] Ashley, "The Geopolitics of Geopolitical Space: Toward a Critical Social Theory of International Politics", p. 411.
[258] Wendt, "Anarchy Is What States Make of It: the Social Construction of Power Politics", p. 413.

> structures are continually constituted and reproduced by members of a community and their behavior.[259]

For Campbell, the tool that feeds this perpetual need for reproduction is representation, and the narrative functions of representation are usually filled by society's privileged storytellers.[260] "For a state to end its practices of representation would be to expose its lack of prediscursive foundations; stasis would be death."[261] Although both Campbell and Wendt emphasize the indispensability of the notion of performance, Campbell focuses on discourse while Wendt continuously refers to practice.[262]

An example of Wendt's subordination of discourse within practice is illustrated by his discussion of 'altercasting'[263] (see chapter 4) as a representational technique meant to shift identities.

> The vehicle for inducing such change is one's own practice and, in particular, the practice of "altercasting" – a technique of interactor control in which ego [the self] uses tactics of self-presentation and stage management in an attempt to frame alter's [the other] definitions of social situations in ways that create the role which ego desires alter to play.[264]

Scant attention is paid to how 'self-presentation and stage management' occur. Consequently, Wendt's concept of practice becomes a generic notion that refers to action and interaction. Discourse seems to be subsumed into action/interaction and is therefore

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[259] Adler, "Seizing the Middle Ground: Constructivism in World Politics", 1997, p. 326.
[260] Campbell, *Politics without Principle: Sovereignty, Ethics, and the Narratives of the Gulf War*, p. 7.
[261] Campbell, *Writing Security: United States Foreign Policy and the Politics of Identity*, p. 12.
[262] Wendt, "Anarchy Is What States Make of It: the Social Construction of Power Politics", pp. 395, 411, 421.
[263] Ibid., p. 421.
[264] Ibid.

never fully explored. This subordination of discourse is also evident in Wendt's earlier work when Wendt affirms that,

> A solution to the agent-structure problem, then, engages in reification when it objectifies social structures without recognizing that only human action instantiates, reproduces and transforms those structures.[265]

By utilizing the word action, Wendt eludes further development of what the constituents of this notion of action are.

Although Campbell and Wendt differ considerably on these points, the language divide is not confined to modernist vs. post-structural constructivists – as it is often simplistically characterized. Although Adler agrees with Wendt on issues of epistemology – pragmatism or scientific realism (see chapter 3) – he is much more sensitive to language as it relates to practice.

> Social communication and practical rationality depend on language, which is the vehicle for the diffusion and institutionalization of ideas, a necessary condition for the persistence in time of institutionalized practices, and a mechanism for the construction of social reality.[266]

In his analysis of US cold war foreign policy, Campbell points to the frequently cited qualitative historical change in the post cold war era – "new global issues" such as the environment, drug use and trafficking, Japan and Germany as economic threats, disease, migration, terrorism, Islamic fundamentalism, etc.[267] He suggests that the fact that "for the most part...these developments have been represented in ways that do not depart dramatically from those dominant during the cold war"[268] (external hazards that

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[265] Wendt, "The Agent-Structure Problem in International Relations Theory", p. 345.
[266] Adler, "Constructivism and International Relations", p. 103.
[267] Campbell, *Writing Security: United States Foreign Policy and the Politics of Identity*, p. 7.
[268] Ibid.

threaten an internal domestic society), is indicative of the fact that if states do not continue their practices of representation, they would lose their *raison d'etre*. In Wendt's discussion of the same qualitative historical change, the attribution void left by the sudden halt of cold war representations leads to an identity crisis: "without the cold war's mutual attributions of threat and hostility to define their identities, these states seem unsure of what their interests should be".[269] Ultimately, by backpedaling through certain historical eras, Campbell concludes that "while the objects of concern change over time, the techniques and exclusions by which those objects are constituted as dangers persist."[270]

Further, in *Writing Security*, Campbell asserts that "the ability to represent things as alien, subversive, dirty, or sick has been pivotal to the articulation of danger in the American experience"[271], and that

> ...neither the passage of time nor the decline of the perceived Soviet threat has assuaged the desire to (re)produce in the texts of foreign policy declarations of the nation's meaning and purpose.[272]

In the contemporary context, the current Bush administration of the United States could be cited as a good example of this affirmation.

Campbell provides concrete examples of the representational performances of some of society's privileged storytellers. When referring to the first gulf war, he writes:

> ...the pentagon sought to objectify representations of engagements in ways that obfuscated their constructed and contested character. Notorious in this regard was the presentation of the air campaign

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[269] Wendt, "Anarchy Is What States Make of It: the Social Construction of Power Politics", p. 399.
[270] Campbell, *Writing Security: United States Foreign Policy and the Politics of Identity*, p. 13. For more on the scripting of identity through representation, see Campbell's arguments regarding Christendom and the state in chapter 4.
[271] Ibid., p. 3.
[272] Ibid., p. 30.

> against Iraq's fixed and mobile SCUD launchers. As Mark Crispin Miller has revealed, although the military claimed to have destroyed all the fixed launch sites and over three-quarters of the mobile sites (indeed, when added up, Pentagon briefers had claimed to have destroyed eighty-one SCUD launch sites even though they said Iraq possessed only fifty at the start of the war), the actual numbers turned out to be far smaller. To be precise, no mobile launchers were destroyed, very few of the missiles themselves were rendered inoperative, and the meaning of "destroyed" in relation to the fixed sites was debated.[273]

And, from the second gulf war, Campbell describes how Coalition Media Centre (CMC) journalists were awakened from their sleep to be shown a five-minute night lens military video detailing the US Special Forces rescue of Private Jessica Lynch.[274] Reported as having been captured after suffering a gun shot and stab wounds whilst firing away as many of her comrades were being killed, "A BBC documentary which interviewed staff involved in Lynch's care after the war had been declared over, revealed that she had no war wounds but was diagnosed as a serious road traffic accident victim, had received the best available treatment from Iraqi medical staff, and their attempt to return her to US forces in an ambulance had been repelled at a US military checkpoint."[275]

> While the basic coordinates of the Lynch story were not invented (she was injured, captured, then recovered), the account was staged, insofar as the particular narrative that was attached to and derived from the military footage of her release was constructed by the Pentagon's media operation to convey a heroic and redemptive meaning.[276]

As detailed in the chapter on intersubjectivity (chapter 3), representations are superimposed on the framework of established intersubjective knowledge (meanings). On the other hand, representations are also the pivotal elements that enable progress.

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[273] Campbell, *Politics without Principle: Sovereignty, Ethics, and the Narratives of the Gulf War*, p. 13.
[274] Campbell, "Cultural Governance and Pictorial Resistance: Reflections on the Imaging of War", pp. 63-64 and Campbell, "Representing Contemporary War", pp. 104-105.
[275] Ibid.

Representational practices feed back into and reinforce or modify thus reproducing or redefining intersubjective knowledge (see Figure 2). In Figure 2, unless representational practices are modified (arrow b), as the path of arrow a illustrates, the triangle perpetually reproduces itself. This cyclical phase is broken when, on the basis of the human capacity for self-reflection, arrow b comes into play in order to create an adjustment based on modified intersubjective meanings.

As Wendt comments, "social scientists participated in the naturalization of the cold war and by extension were not helping to empower policymakers to end it, just to manage it."[277] And,

> Because social evolution depends so much on the choices that people make, there is always room in principle for creating expectations that are not simply extrapolations from the past but that also reflect where we want to be in the future.[278]

As Walker affirms in his discussion of the trouble that mainstream international relations theories encounter when discussing change and temporality,

> Claims about novel political practices, about new world orders, interdependencies, integrations, globalizations, and so on, quickly run up against the counterclaim that international relations is simply a realm of structural continuity and repetition.[279]

To be able to come to grips with culture in international relations, Walker argues that we must engage in questions of political practice.[280] And, as Ruggie reaffirms, "Actors not

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[276] Campbell, "Representing Contemporary War", pp. 104-105.
[277] Wendt, "On Constitution and Causation in IR", p. 109.
[278] Alexander Wendt, "What Is International Relations for? Notes Towards a Postcritical View" in *Critical Theory and World Politics*, Richard Wyn Jones (ed.), Lynne Reinner Publishers, 2001, p. 222. On the hazards and constraints that rational instrumentality may present for institutional designers, see Alexander Wendt, "Driving with the Rearview Mirror: On the Rational Science of Institutional Design", *International Organization*, 55:4, 2001, p. 1047.
[279] Walker, "International Relations and the Concept of the Political", p. 309.
[280] Walker, "The Concept of Culture in the Theory of International Relations", p. 12.

only reproduce normative structures, they also change them by their very practice, as underlying conditions change, as new constraints and possibilities emerge, or as new claimants make their presence felt."[281] "Under certain circumstances, it seems, collective intentionality can "will" the rules of the game to change."[282]

The statements put forth above by the various authors seem reminiscent of Ashley's strong argument that rationalist theories reduce people to idealized homo oeconomicuses that cannot reflect critically on the "logic that the system demands of them."[283] As Ashley has so forcefully argued in *The Poverty of Neorealism*, people

> do indeed orient their practices in light of their understandings; and...do give form and motion to the open-ended processes by which the material conditions of their practices are made, reproduced and transformed.[284]

In his earlier work, Wendt recognizes that in the course of the processes described in the previous paragraphs,

> Just as social structures are ontologically dependent upon and therefore constituted by the practices and self-understandings of agents, the causal powers and interests of those agents, in their own turn, are constituted and therefore explained by structures.[285]

However, on the basis of the affirmations that "systems are sets of regularly interacting agents and their practices"[286] and "the states system, for example, is a system in this sense; it is a collection of regularly interacting state actors and their practices in relations

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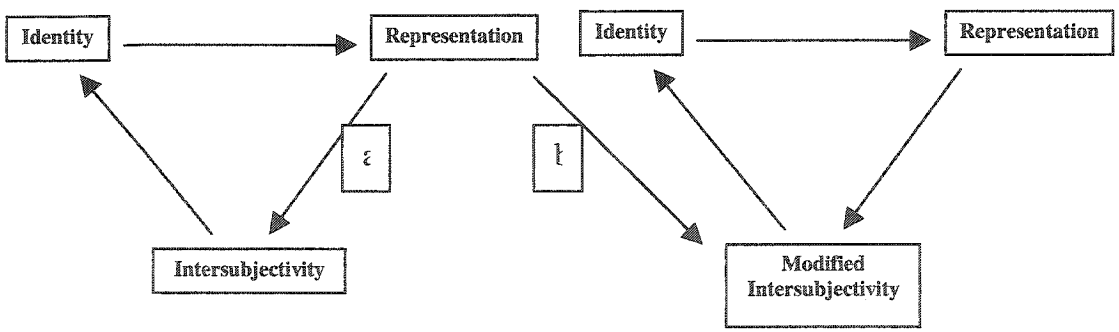
[281] Ruggie, "Epistemology, Ontology, and the Study of International Regimes", p. 99.
[282] Ibid., p. 25.
[283] Ashley, "The Poverty of Neorealism", p. 258.
[284] Ibid., pp. 259-260.
[285] Wendt, "The Agent-Structure Problem in International Relations Theory", p. 359.
[286] Wendt and Duvall, "Institutions and International Order" p. 59.

to on another"[287], Wendt's later work focuses on how agents are constituted by structures. Conversely, Campbell's work accentuates how individuals, through narrativization, constitute intersubjective meanings.

> Inescapable as it is, identity – whether personal or collective – is not fixed by nature, given by god, or planned by international behavior. Rather, identity is constituted in relation to difference. But neither is difference fixed by nature, given by god, or planned by international behavior. Difference is constituted in relation to identity.[288]

The main difference is that while Wendt seems to put the emphasis on how practices in the international realm affect the constitution of the realm's units (states), Campbell places the emphasis on individuals' representations which serve as the pivots that construct and reinforce the very notions of the outside and the inside.

Figure 2. Evolution of Reality



[287] Wendt and Duvall, "Institutions and International Order"p. 59.
[288] Campbell, *Writing Security: United States Foreign Policy and the Politics of Identity*, p. 9. See also Campbell, *National Deconstruction: Violence, Identity, and Justice in Bosnia*, p. 24, Campbell, "The Deterritorialization of Responsibility: Levinas, Derrida, and Ethics After the End of Philosophy", pp. 460-461, and Campbell, "The Politics of Radical Interdependence: A Rejoinder to Daniel Warner", p. 131.

Representation Balance Sheet

Similarities:

- The concept of representation (or repetition, or performance, or practice) is central and highly emphasized by both Wendt and Campbell. Representation is the tool through which the role identities acquired through intersubjective meaning attributions are manifest in discourse and action.
- Abrupt ruptures in representational practices based on entrenched intersubjective attributions can lead to identity crises. This is apparent in both Wendt's and Campbell's discussions of the post cold war era.
- It is on the basis of the human capacity for self reflection that fresh representational practices may lead to intersubjective knowledge change.

Differences:

- Campbell pays explicit attention to linguistic and discursive (narrativization) factors that generally seem to reinforce entrenched intersubjective meanings. While Campbell concedes to the possibility of change based on the capacity for self reflection, his conclusions that although objects of danger change over time, the techniques and exclusions used to constitute dangers persist, paints a bleak picture for a real possibility of change. Ironically, this is similar to the neorealist logic of *plus que ca change*... Although Wendt omits linguistic and discursive notions by subordinating and black boxing them into a generic conception of action and interaction between states, his incrementalism makes the real possibility of change more feasible. Problematizing the role of language in his action/interaction model while loosening its state-centrism might contribute to strengthening his positions.

- For Wendt, representational practices are largely shaped by the social structural constraints of the international system (the same point of origin of neorealism – anarchy), whereas Campbell argues that it is the very representational practices of individuals that give rise to, maintain, and reproduce established understandings of that very system.

Conclusion

Where does the analysis leave us? What are the policy implications of constructivist critiques of mainstream IR theories? Is there an acceptable threshold of common denominators within the constructivist camp to justify the constructivist category? Are there possibilities of synthesis and/or bridge building within constructivist strands?

I will begin by briefly revisiting the policy implications of the constructivist critiques regarding mainstream IR theories. I will then, on the basis of the thematic comparisons, draw up a cumulative similarities and differences balance sheet. This will allow me to determine, through the analysis conducted thus far, if there is a common core of elements that constructivists are committed to. Finally, the thesis will end with conclusions about the possibilities of synthesizing the work of the two authors under examination, and the practical implications of such a possibility.

At the most generic level, constructivist critiques are levied at rationalist notions of immutability. In the case of classical realism, immutability is based on a particular conception of human nature. In both the neorealist and institutionalist cases, immutability is driven by the structure of the international system. Even analysts who may not be fully committed to the stability of what is out there, make, for the sake of analytical convenience, assumptions based on theory. The danger lies in tacitly accepting, through the force of practice, these assumptions as being real (rendering them social facts). The consequence of this acceptance can result in the curtailing of viable policy alternatives. Further, if what is out there is subject to change, policies founded on theoretical renderings of immutability may not achieve the desired end, or worse, they may have perverse effects.

For those actively engaged in the stakes of social change (be they policymakers or researchers), a further level of complication is introduced by policies based on rationalist frameworks. Analyses and recommendations on the basis of tacit reifications of stability or immutability will, through repetitive cycles of practice, perpetuate structures whose analysis of composition is arguably inaccurate to begin with. If we revisit Figure 2, this would mean constantly choosing the path of arrow a, which feeds back into and reinforces the intersubjective makeup instantiated by potentially inaccurate reifications. In this case, it is natural that the realist adage of *plus que ca change*...may stand firm against the empirical record, not so much because it is necessarily true, but because human beings, the makers of those structures, endow them with a self-fulfilling prophetic quality. This curtails the ability of researchers and policymakers form introducing fresh and innovative ideas to catalyze social change.

One thing is for certain. Since the coining of the term by Onuf, constructivism has made inroads in the field of international relations. The field can no longer avoid engaging with constructivist theorists by simply dismissing constructivism as reflexive or by accusing it of having no coherent research agenda. I will now move on to drawing up the cumulative similarities and differences balance sheet that will help determine if there is a common core of constructivist principles based on my thematic analyses.

Cumulative Balance Sheet

Similarities:

- Collective meanings are the basis of action and there is nothing inherently natural about the meaning of things; meanings depend on processes of socialization and participation in collective knowledge.
- There is a reality out there that exists independently of language and interpretation.
- Although intersubjective meanings can and do become entrenched (social facts), the human capacity for self-reflection allows the possibility to transcend and change intersubjective knowledge.
- Identity is inherently relational, and the key to understanding identity formation rests on iterated performances (practices) based on the formation of intersubjective knowledge (collective meanings).
- In turn, the practices and performances arising from role definitions based on notions of identity perpetuate or modify intersubjective knowledge (collective meanings).
- Representation (or repetition, or performance, or practice) is the tool through which the role identities acquired in the course of intersubjective meaning attributions are manifest in discourse and action.
- Abrupt ruptures in representational practices based on entrenched intersubjective attributions can lead to identity crises.

Differences:

- For Wendt, the socialization process which gives rise to collective meanings is produced via interaction (language is an under-explored component of this interaction). Campbell, on the other hand, puts the emphasis of the socialization

process on the imposition of meaning through narrativization (discourse wholly dependent on language for interpretation). It is how (method) – not whether – the socialization process central to collective meanings occurs.

- For Campbell, the indelible debt of interpretation to language makes it impossible to uncover the reality that exists independently of language. For Wendt, although linguistic and interpretive factors cannot be ignored and need to be accounted for, they do not represent an insurmountable obstacle standing in the way of uncovering socially constructed realities (observed effects can be traced back to unobservables and produce the best possible explanation). Here, the questioning of the very possibility of discovery leads to differing methods of inquiry that seem irreconcilable – both the whether and the how are divergent.
- For Wendt, the role of the international structure is emphasized as a constituent of identity formation. For Campbell, identity is not set by international behavior; it is simply constituted in relation to difference. There is a disparity about the sources of identity formation.
- For Wendt, identity is comprised by a history of reciprocal interactions in the international realm. For Campbell, the foundations of these reciprocal interactions are subsidiary to and driven by the interpretive politics of language which occur at the individual and domestic levels. The divergence is due to the import accorded to discourse vs. interaction (the method of identity formation).
- Given the differences elucidated above, the frameworks used to study political phenomena diverge. Wendt's focus is on the international system's predominant role in identity formation (a top down, state-centric, and structural approach). On the other

hand, Campbell's interest lies in how individual and domestic elements interpretively shape identity formation through othering based on language (a non state-centric, post-structural approach).

- Campbell pays explicit attention to interpretive linguistic and discursive (narrativization) factors that he affirms usually reinforce entrenched intersubjective meanings. This is awkward because his conclusions that although objects of danger change over time, the techniques and exclusions used to constitute them persist, paints a bleak picture for a real possibility of change. Ironically, this is similar to the neorealist structural logic of *plus que ca change*...the difference being the way the continuity is explained. Although Wendt focuses on states and he omits linguistic and discursive notions by subordinating and black boxing them into a generic conception of action and interaction, his incrementalism makes the real possibility of change more feasible. Problematizing the role of language in his action/interaction model – while loosening his state-centric approach – may well contribute to strengthening his positions.
- For Wendt, representational practices are largely shaped by the social structural boundaries set by the international system, whereas Campbell would argue that it is the very representational practices of individuals that give rise to, maintain, and reproduce established understandings of that very system's logic.

For the determination of whether or not a common core of principles can be elaborated on the basis of the cumulative balance sheet, it is more important to examine the similarities rather than the differences. The reason for this is simple. Given the

accusations of disarray within the constructivist camp and the conflations surrounding constructivism, the objectives were to assess some of these accusations and attempt to clarify some of the confusion. The logic was that if substantive similarities could be found by focusing on the work of diametrically opposed (modernist/positivist vs. post-structuralist/post-positivist) constructivist authors, minimally, common principles could be elaborated, and maximally, it could be a modest step towards synthesis.

Before proceeding further, I would like to reiterate that, because of the logic outlined in the previous paragraph, the thesis focused primarily on two authors. I am not implying that their views represent other authors within their variants or that their variants are the only ones or even the most salient ones. Given that the focus was primarily on Wendt and Campbell, the conclusions reached here are not mechanically generalizable. The goal, as mentioned, was a modest one ranging from assessing the potential for a set of common principles to synthesizing within two specific strands.

It is clear that there are enough similarities within the diametrically opposed strands to elaborate elements that are common to both and extendible to all constructivist categories. Constructivists believe that collective meanings are the basis of action and there is nothing inherently natural about the meaning of things; meanings depend on processes of socialization and participation in collective knowledge. Even proponents of post-structural strands believe that there is a reality out there that exists independently of language and interpretation (divergence here relates to whether or not this reality can be uncovered). And although intersubjective meanings can and do become entrenched (social facts), the human capacity for self-reflection allows the possibility to transcend and change intersubjective knowledge.

Constructivism affirms that identity is inherently relational, and the key to understanding identity formation rests on iterated performances (practices) based on the formation of intersubjective knowledge (collective meanings). In turn, the practices and performances arising from role definitions based on notions of identity perpetuate or modify intersubjective knowledge (collective meanings). And, finally, representation (or repetition, or performance, or practice) is the tool through which the role identities acquired in the course of intersubjective meaning attributions are manifest in discourse and action.

Using this core of common principles as a point of departure, views diverge as to the ways that all the elements interact and are interwoven with one another, and the limitation and constraints of their study. The result is diverse stands with differing focuses, commitments, and levels of analysis (modernist, structural, post-structural, feminist, linguistic, discursive, state-centric, individualistic, etc.). As we will see in the next paragraph, with the exception of the modernist vs. post-structural divide, the variety is not unlike the differing commitments, focuses, and levels of analysis that exist within various rationalist camps (realist, neorealist, institutionalist, rational choice, individualistic, domestic, international, two-level games, feminist, etc.).

However, if we take synthesis to be the combining of varying conceptions into a coherent whole, in the specific case of my analysis, synthesis stops at the core principles elaborated above. The main reason for not being able to synthesize further is the intractable epistemological divide between modernists and post-structuralists (see chapter 3).

Due mainly to this divide, depending on the classification scheme one uses, post-structuralists are not always categorized under the constructivist umbrella. The irreconcilable issue surrounds the conceptions of the limits of science in human inquiry (see chapter 3). I suspect the reason why they may not be welcomed has to do with the fact that including post-structuralists makes constructivists of other variants susceptible to the criticisms levied at the post-structuralist strand.

Given this reality and based on the analysis undertaken here, two very rudimentary classification schemes are possible. First, the constructivist umbrella could exclude post-structural variants. In so doing, constructivism as a category becomes very much like the rationalist camp; various approaches, focuses, and commitments with a relatively harder core of common principles. However, since the core of common principles elaborated in this thesis does applies to the post-structuralist side, a second rudimentary scheme is also possible. One in which you would have two sub categorizations; the first would be post-structural with a sub categorization of its variants, and the second would be modernist with a sub categorization of its variants.

The bottom line is that due to the epistemological divide between modernist and post-structural positions, further synthesis between these variants seems unlikely. However, the fact that common core principles can be flushed out even between these diametrically opposed variants of constructivism is a positive step in rejecting the accusation of incoherence within the paradigm. It is also an encouraging indication that although further synthesis may not be possible between these variants, even more coherent positions are likely to emerge within the modernist and post-structuralist variants respectively.

One must not forget that constructivism is a relatively novel paradigm that has managed, in a fairly short time, to make substantial inroads in the field of international relations. One must also not forget that constructivism did not develop in a vacuum and owes its roots to other variants of critical theory that preceded it – including post-structuralism. And, before being so quick to dismiss post-structuralism, there is a plausible argument to be made, that in the grander scheme of the push and pull between the mainstream theories and post-structuralism, a middle ground known as constructivism emerged.

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