

4 THE NATIONAL IDENTITY DYNAMIC AND FOREIGN POLICY

INTRODUCTION - THE MASS PUBLIC AS FOREIGN POLICY VARIABLE

It is important to understand clearly the relationship between the mass national public and government decisions, not simply for the sake of political analysis. It is also important that we should be able to think clearly about 'what is the proper relationship between a society and those professionally responsible for its external affairs'.¹ Because of the methodological difficulty, however, in generalising from the individual out to the group,² there has existed a specific difficulty in foreign policy and international relations theory in understanding the role of the mass public, or in using the mass public as a theoretically integrated variable. There have, nevertheless, been two lines of approach to the subject, the first of which has been unconcerned about the methodological difficulties, and the second of which has self-consciously floundered in them.

The first approach has been that of the strategists and realists who have straightforwardly recognised the mass population as being one of several resources available for foreign policy and, in the final analysis, war.³ If war is diplomacy conducted by other means, then those means include the men and women prepared to take up arms. Put at its most basic, this is a recognition of the mass public as cannon fodder, as another power resource. This approach to the populace can be made slightly more subtle by the further recognition that it is not only the quantity, but the quality that matters.⁴ As Francis Bacon wrote, 'Walled towns, stored arsenals and armories, goodly races of horse, chariots of war, elephants, ordnance, artillery and the like; all this is but a sheep in a lion's skin, except the breed and disposition of the people be stout and warlike. Nay, number itself in armies importeth not much, when the people is of weak courage; for as Virgil saith: "It never troubles a wolf how many the sheep be"'.⁵

In an age of 'total war', this requires, in strategic terms, that the

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people as a whole must be capable of being mobilised and of remaining mobilised. This, of course, is only possible if there has been successful nation-building. (It is, of course, irrelevant in the case of nuclear holocaust triggered by a few individuals.)

Hans Morgenthau was fully aware of the necessity of nation-building, but his understanding of the mass national public was distinctly coloured by his Hobbesian vision of human nature. Thus, he saw the mass public which has identified itself with the nation as an amorphous force, prey to the primitive dynamics of nationalism and actively seeking foreign aggression. In fact, Morgenthau understood the highest feat of statesmanship as 'trimming his [the statesman's] sails to the winds of popular passion while using them to carry the ship of state to the port of good foreign policy'.⁶

At the very least, Morgenthau had a clear theory about the mass public as an actor in international relations. The mass public has passionate public opinions which work directly upon those in government, and public opinion is 'a dynamic, ever-changing entity to be continuously created and recreated by informed and responsible leadership . . . it is the historic mission of the government to assert that leadership lest it be the demagogue who asserts it'.⁷ According to Morgenthau, then, the mass public is instinctively aggressive, but plastic and capable of being manipulated. The statesman thus stands as 'superman' reigning in the primitive beast. It is important to note that Morgenthau has had an immense influence on the post-1945 study of international relations, and his understanding of mass national publics is, therefore, part of the subliminal intellectual baggage carried by students and practitioners who have been persuaded by Morgenthau's realist paradigm. Morgenthau, however, never provided any clear analysis of his basis for making such an assumption about human nature and mass national publics.

Governments, however, do have to be sensitive to the general *will* of the mass national public - acknowledging the norms of democracy (and all states claim democracy) and acknowledging the practical consequences of pursuing unpopular policy. The relationship between the mass national public and the government exists, but it is difficult to analyse. Kenneth Younger, for example, wrote of British foreign policy that although he could think of no occasion when he or his superiors had been greatly affected by public opinion in reaching important decisions, nevertheless, 'the government tends to identify itself almost unconsciously with a vaguely sensed general will, and no clear formulation of the pressure of public opinion upon government policy ever occurs'.⁸ And, as Kurt London wryly remarked, 'There is no constitu-

tional provision in any country, democratic or totalitarian, which would include public opinion as a co-determinant in [foreign] policy-making.⁹

There is not only a problem in analysing the relationship between public opinion and policy-making – ‘Probably no aspect of foreign policy’, wrote Holsti, ‘is more difficult to generalize about than the relationship of public opinion to a government’s external objectives and diplomatic behavior.’¹⁰ There is also the severe difficulty of building consistent theory about public attitudes. Although, for example, there has been an immense amount of research into public opinion, especially in the United States,¹¹ the problem has been to find any consistent causal relationship between environment and attitude. Rosenau produced a suggestive framework for analysis, but no consistent variables that were capable of being operationalised.¹² And one researcher in this field was finally led to describe the connection between public opinion of foreign policy and the electoral behaviour of the same public as ‘chaotic’.¹³

Even those writers, however, who sought to take a behaviouralist or scientific approach to the problem, had a distinctly cynical view of the mass public and public opinion. Although lacking the Hobbesian ‘realism’ of Morgenthau, they perceived the major features of public opinion in relation to foreign affairs to be emotionalism and unpredictability. James Rosenau wrote that the mass public’s response to foreign policy matters was ‘less one of intellect and more one of emotion; less one of opinion and more one of mood, of generalized, superficial, and undisciplined feelings which easily fluctuate from one extreme to another . . . The most predominant mood of the mass public is, of course, indifference and passivity – except for acute peace-and-war crises.’¹⁴ Even more brutally, Rosenau went on to quote Gabriel Almond, stating that the cumulative effect of public opinion could be ‘understood in terms of the analogy of loaded pistols which are triggered off by special issues which bring generally inattentive and uninformed groups into a sudden impact on the policy-making process’.¹⁵

There has been a general tendency, then, to divide the public into two sections: (1) a small, thoughtful and attentive group ‘which is informed and interested in foreign policy problems, and which constitutes the audience for foreign policy discussion among the elites’; and (2) a much larger general public which ‘reacts to general stimuli’.¹⁶ There has been no analytical success, though, in defining the nature of the attitudes of the general public, nor of the relationship between the general public and government decisions. There is certainly the

recognition of such a relationship, but the only clarity to be found is in the Morgenthau view of the ‘super-statesman’ taming and harnessing the beast.

Identification theory, however, provides a precise tool for defining and investigating a general level of analysis for the relationship between the mass national public and foreign policy decisions. Identification theory can demonstrate several consistent features in (1) the mass national public’s attitude to international relations and (2) the relationship between the mass national public and actual foreign policy decisions. The next section of this chapter is concerned with making these general features explicit. It is then followed by illustrative case histories.

THE NATIONAL IDENTITY DYNAMIC

If nation-building has been successful, then identification links the individual citizen with his or her mass of fellow citizens through the shared national identity. Thus:

If there has been a general identification made with the nation, then there is a behavioural tendency among the individuals who made this identification and who make up the mass national public to defend and to enhance the shared national identity.

This tendency as it works through the mass national public may be called the *national identity dynamic*.

If, then, images and experiences concerning international events are presented to the mass public in such a way that either (1) national identity is perceived to be threatened, or (2) the opportunity is present to enhance national identity – then the identification imperative will tend to work through the mass public as a national whole. The mass national public as one group will seek to secure, protect and enhance their general national identity. The *national identity dynamic*, therefore, describes the social-psychological dynamic by which a mass national public may be mobilised in relation to its international environment.

This is to state explicitly that the mass national public has a clear and psychologically coherent relationship with international affairs.

The mass national public will mobilise when it perceives either that national identity is threatened, or that there is the opportunity of enhancing national identity.

Moreover, identification theory makes explicit the structural features of the relationship between the national identity dynamic, the state decision-makers and the international environment. It is possible to delineate a triangular relationship between:

- 1 The mass national public.
- 2 Government foreign policy decisions.
- 3 Images of the relationship between the nation and the international environment which threaten or provide the opportunity of enhancing national identity.

The logic of the relationship is as follows:

- 1 Images of the international environment can mobilise the national identity dynamic.
- 2 Government may create/manipulate these images in order to mobilise the national identity dynamic.
- 3 Factors beyond government control may create/manipulate these images. The mobilised national identity dynamic may then affect government foreign policy-making.

This can be summed up:

The state, in terms of its foreign policy decisions, may trigger, manipulate, appropriate – or be manipulated by – the national identity dynamic.

and

The national identity dynamic can be triggered by international images manipulated by the government *or* by other actors.

The mass national public is thus shown to be a discrete actor in the foreign policy decision-making process:

The mass national public will always react against policies that can be perceived to be a threat to national identity.

The mass national public will always react favourably to policies which protect or enhance national identity.

DOMESTIC POLITICAL COMPETITION AND THE NATIONAL IDENTITY DYNAMIC

The national identity dynamic is triggered by political circumstances, and it is necessary to look at the general nature of these circumstances. It is, of course, in the very nature of domestic politics

that there should be competition to trigger, manipulate and appropriate the national identity dynamic. The political attractiveness of the national identity dynamic, of the mobilisation of mass national sentiment, is that *it is the widest possible mobilisation that is available within a state*. It theoretically includes the total national population, transcending political, religious, cultural and ethnic factions. If a politician, therefore, can symbolically associate her/himself with national identity and mobilise it, s/he will then possess a virtual monopoly of popular support.

As the national identity dynamic, based in the identification imperative, is constantly seeking enhancement and is therefore volatile, *it is a permanent feature of all domestic politics that there be competition to appropriate the national identity dynamic*. This is to say that political factions compete with each other to be perceived as the party whose policies and utterances most enhance national identity and protect it from foreign threat. No politician seeking popular support can run counter to this dynamic.

Furthermore, there is that other political reality – that, in the face of continuously changing political and socio-economic realities (which is in the nature of contemporary life), nation-building is an ongoing necessity. It is a necessity in order to maintain political integration and stability. Thus, there is ever-present the temptation for government to nation-build by mobilising the national identity dynamic in relation to the international environment.

These two dynamic political factors – (1) domestic competition and (2) the ongoing necessity of nation-building – mean that no government can afford to ignore the national identity dynamic lest it be triggered or appropriated by political opponents.

In relation to international affairs, then, this means that every government must be concerned about how its actions are perceived by the mass national public in relation to the national identity dynamic. A government's foreign policy may thus be dictated by internal domestic political realities as much as by the actual nature of its international relations.

FOREIGN POLICY MANIPULATION

The key to foreign policy as a tool for nation-building is that foreign policy can create a situation in which the mass of people can perceive a threat to their communal identity, or an opportunity to protect and enhance it. The government *qua* state then acts as the parental or significant symbolic figure which is fully involved in the

protection and enhancement. The government-as-state thus is perceived, and psychologically experienced, by the mass national public as being one with the national community. Government, state and national community are entwined as one bundle of symbols representing national identity.

Foreign policy can create a situation in which the whole national community can be perceived as sharing the same experience in relation to a foreign actor.

Whether the social-psychological theory is self-consciously understood by the decision-makers or not, the opportunity is always present for a government deliberately to use foreign policy as a method of mobilising the mass national public sentiment away from internal political dissension, and achieving political integration. In these situations, the government appropriates the mobilised national support on behalf of the nation and, at a very practical level, any anti-government behaviour can be interpreted as anti-nationalist, unpatriotic and treacherous. It is, therefore, of course, a well-remarked syndrome for governments to distract attention away from domestic crises by creating involvement in international crises.¹⁷ The social-psychological dynamics of this syndrome, however, have not previously been analysed. The reality is not simply that 'attention is being distracted' – but that a deep psychological motivation has been tapped and triggered.

It should also, of course, be noted that even if the national identity dynamic is purposefully triggered and manipulated by government, it can still, like the forces unleashed by the sorcerer's apprentice, run out of control. A government's international posturing may trigger a mobilisation of the national identity dynamic that forces the posturing into real action – for if there is no action, the government will lose credibility and fall prey to internal political opposition.

The national identity dynamic can, of course, be triggered and mobilised by sources other than the government or state. Once triggered it has a powerful momentum which has to be acknowledged by government in terms of its foreign policy. This is simply based in the practical fact that no government can afford to ignore the pressure of such a substantial political force. This, of course, is the art of politics, the art of adept response to the general will. It is not capable of the kind of scientific measurement which would be sought by a behavioural approach to politics, because it concerns the images that politicians and statespeople have of their domestic political environment, and the calculations they make of how they can affect that environment.¹⁸

There are clear historical examples of the mobilised national identity dynamic, of public opinion, forcing governments into aggressive international behaviour. Public opinion, for instance, clearly took the United States into the Spanish-American War. The Anglo-Spanish War of 1739 was more popularly known as the War of Jenkins' Ear, for it was the severing of the English sea-captain's ear which mobilised the English people (the said English ear being the symbol of the English national identity) so that Walpole, against his better judgement, was forced to war with Spain.¹⁹ The Crimean War was also precipitated by public opinion in Britain and France, as the two countries competed with each other to force Russia to back down over the guardianship of certain holy places in Jerusalem.²⁰ And in Japan, at least since the Meiji Restoration, public opinion and spontaneous mass mobilisation have been central factors in the making of an aggressive Japanese foreign policy; it was, for instance, specifically public opinion which took Japan into Korea in 1894 and into the war with China in the same year.²¹

NATIONAL INTEREST, NATIONAL PRESTIGE, HIGH AND LOW POLITICS

National interest. This clarification of the nature of the national identity dynamic and its general effect on foreign policy, also allows for a certain clarity with regard to the notion of *national interest*.

It is possible at a social-psychological level of analysis defined by identification to state:

National interest is that which:

- (a) can be perceived as being a part of national identity and thus
- (b) is capable of triggering national mass mobilisation to defend or enhance it.

Such a definition, if accepted, clears up the difficulty over whether or not national interest is a useful analytical term or a term that is so diffuse in its meaning as to be useless. Classical definitions of national interest, for example, state that national interest is the preservation and enhancement of security of a state's territory and of the core values and culture of its citizens.²² As an academic tool for analysing foreign policy, however, the concept has had apparently little use as it is bound by value ideas of what is 'best' for the nation and, as Furniss and Snyder stated, national interest is frequently 'whatever the decision-maker says that it is'.²³

But this is exactly the point, for national interest defines that political arena of discourse in which those factors that affect the national identity dynamic are communicated about. The political rhetoric, therefore, in which the domestic power competition for control of the national identity dynamic is communicated, is framed, rationalised and legitimated by the concept of *national interest*. Certainly, national interest may be whatever the decision-maker says it is, but we can be clear that the decision-maker's purpose in so saying is to mobilise the national identity dynamic. Certainly, the actual content matter of national interest may be redefined, but the redefinition concerns what may or may not mobilise the mass national public. Politicians and decision-makers may attempt any number of ruses to harness the national identity dynamic. National interest is the basket which contains issues that mobilise, or which politicians assume or think should mobilise, the national identity dynamic.

In terms of political analysis then, national interest has no conceptual use as a tool for ranking foreign policy priorities. It does, however, describe a discrete social-psychological structure – the arena of communication and discourse for mobilising the national identity dynamic.

National prestige. Equally, 'national prestige' as a factor in contemporary international relations²⁴ receives some methodological clarity from identification theory. Following the *Oxford Dictionary's* definition of prestige as 'influence exercised or impression produced by a nation's or institution's or person's reputation', and following identification theory, it can be stated:

National prestige describes the influence that can be exercised or the impression produced by virtue of events and images that devalue or enhance national identity.

Thus, an increase in prestige is synonymous with any circumstance that enhances national identity; a decrease in prestige is any circumstance that devalues national identity. National prestige is, therefore, of course, a matter of perception and communication, and political leaders will seek to associate themselves with it as a way of appropriating the national identity dynamic.

It can be said, therefore, that states compete with each other for prestige, not because it is inherent in the nature of the international system so to do, but because it is an outcome of the domestic internal political competition to control and appropriate the national identity dynamic. Equally, it is not necessarily, though of course it may be, the result of statespersons' seeking ego gratification. From a practical point

of view, the statesperson who succeeds in acquiring an increase in national prestige for her/his country will also tend to mobilise mass national public sentiment behind her/him.

High and low issues. This clarification, at a social-psychological level of analysis, of national interest and prestige points out that there exist two distinct levels of interstate activity. The first level is that which involves the national identity dynamic. The second is that which does not involve the national identity dynamic. The dividing line between the two levels is porous, as foreign policy issue areas move between a high and a low profile.

This differentiation has been clearly delineated, for example, in the workings and structure of the European Economic Community in which functionaries, civil servants and junior government ministers deal with the low issue areas, while prime and foreign ministers deal with the high issue areas. This occurs because all high issues can be appropriated by the domestic political competition to mobilise the national identity dynamic, whereas low issues are simply functional. A politician, of course, can change the status of a low issue providing that s/he manages to communicate about it in such a way that it becomes relevant in terms of national interest or prestige.²⁵

All of this is to say that no government, or any political group seriously vying for power, can afford to put forward a policy that is outside the accepted rhetoric of national interest; i.e. no policies can be put forward which can be perceived as threatening or destabilising national identity. Politicians, therefore, have always to exercise great caution in order not to be associated with policies that can be interpreted, perceived or communicated about as being contrary to national interest. To do so is to risk being perceived as a threat to national identity and, therefore, to alienate mass national opinion.

MODERN MASS MEDIA AND NATIONAL AND INTERNATIONAL IMAGES

The practicalities of mass mobilisation have been profoundly facilitated, of course, by the nature of modern mass media. The importance of mass media rests on the fact that they are the major actors in the transmission of the communications which may effect and trigger the national identity dynamic. Images concerning symbols of national identity can be communicated to the whole nation at the same time.

In the past, communications concerning national identity were passed by proclamation, by pamphlet or from person to person. This,

in turn, meant that (a) communications to the mass public took time, and (b) that it was less easy for any one source to possess a monopoly of communication as the modes of communication were *per se* decentralised. Contemporary mass media, however, provide the opportunity for virtually instantaneous mass communication and also for a monopoly of that communication. The possibility exists, therefore, for a modern government to sustain a continuous manipulation of the national identity dynamic for political purposes. Thus, an immediate division can apparently be made between those mass media which are state controlled and those which are free and 'independent'.²⁶

Such a division, however, is more apparent than real because a free press, like a controlled press, needs to satisfy the demands of its patrons – whether these demands are political or for financial profit. Ironically, this leads the press, in both open and closed societies, to manipulate international news in order to manipulate the national identity dynamic. Of course it is accepted, in times of international crisis and in situations concerned with national security, that a free press should function under much the same constraints as the most controlled totalitarian press, and that its truthfulness and freedom become 'the first casualty'.²⁷ But in times of peace, and free of government control, there is a clearly observable tendency within the media to dramatise and to play up international conflict. This is not simply due to the fact that very few journalists of international affairs have been academically trained in the discipline.²⁸ It is also due partly to the fact that there is no mass market for foreign policy analysis as such,²⁹ but most importantly it is due to the fact that national chauvinism is commercially successful.

In explaining this success, Nimmo and Combs have argued in *Mediated Political Realities* that a successful news story must be structured on the classical elements of melodrama:

Moral justice is at the heart of most melodrama – trials of the virtuous, calumny of the villainous, good rewarded, evil punished. Suspense is the key – from certain death to miraculous safety, disgrace to vindication, paradise lost to paradise regained, vanquished to victor. *Anxiety is provoked.*

These characteristics are more than qualities of melodrama, they are requirements. Related as they are to the elements and structure of dramatic logic, they define what an account must have to be melodramatic. They add up to a 'melodramatic imperative'.³⁰

The main thrust of their thesis is to demonstrate how this imperative

works in political news, with a section specifically devoted to foreign crises.³¹ That this mode of presenting news should be attractive and influential makes intuitive sense; that the dramatic presentation of crisis should be entertaining is not extraordinary. What is extraordinary is that its emotive force is such that it can mobilise opinion in favour of war, and motivate those opinion-holders actually to go to war. Identification theory provides clear insight into the dynamics of this motivation.

In the media coverage of international politics, Nimmo and Combs's 'melodramatic imperative' manifests itself within a stylistic framework of 'them' and 'us'. Within this framework, the media can appropriate any international issue and use it to defend or enhance national identity. The murder of a fellow citizen overseas, for example, can either be reported noncommittally, or can become an issue that is projected as threatening national identity. The same is true of any foreign event which involves an entity which can be identified with national identity, e.g. 'Indonesian' tourist, 'Japanese' company, 'Tanzanian' minister, and so on. Symbolically, then, what happens to the tourist, the company or the minister, can be perceived, and experienced through shared identification, as happening to the total national group. In terms of the 'melodramatic imperative' of newsmaking, there is a consistent tendency to project international news as a function of an ongoing competition between the in-group/nation and the out-group/international environment. Inasmuch as all of a state's foreign relations can be perceived as an interaction between symbols of national identity and outside actors, all international interactions are, of course, capable of being appropriated and projected as affecting national identity.

From the perspective of the free capitalist press, the nation-building which results from this mode of international news presentation is coincidental to sales success. It may be that the editorial policy of a newspaper is patriotic and that it is considered editorially appropriate always to support competitive national chauvinism, but it is also financially successful as the mobilisation of the mass public ensures high sales. National chauvinism can be as appealing as sexist pin-ups.

The sales dynamic that comes from chauvinistic international reporting became apparent, for example, in Britain in the late nineteenth century when increased educational possibilities and new technologies were making a mass media possible. During this time, narrow party political stances were dropped by papers contending for the mass audience and were replaced by patriotism and imperialism, and 'blustering chauvinism marked the treatment of foreign affairs'.³² This

chauvinism was remarkably successful in increasing sales; during the Boer War, for example, the *Daily Mail's* sales increased some three hundred thousand to over a million.³³ This concern with commercial success rather than responsible reportage and analysis predominates in the mass circulation popular press.

The unacceptable face of this struggle for commercial gain *par excellence* was seen in the well-known circulation war that took place in the late 1890s between the *New York Journal* and the *New York World*. The proprietor of the *New York Journal*, William Randolph Hearst, recognising the need for a good story to boost sales, sent an illustrator to Cuba to provide illustrations of the insurrection against the Spanish. The illustrator found no such war and cabled Hearst: 'Everything is quiet. There is no trouble here. There will be no war. I wish to return.' Hearst cabled back: 'Please remain. You furnish pictures. I will furnish war.' The subsequent blowing up of a United States battleship in Havana harbour provided Hearst with the opportunity to wind up public opinion and boost sales; and war duly ensued.³⁴

The power of the mass media and public opinion brought a substantial new factor to foreign policy decision-making in the nineteenth century. As Hale comments, however rarefied the environment of diplomacy and state practice, the elite could now 'not free itself entirely from the prejudices, the attitudes, and the opinions of the mass electorate, and these elements had to be reckoned with in the determination and execution of policy'.³⁵ The reality of this new relationship between decision-maker and mass national public was crudely expressed by Lord Milner's categorical statement that 'what is needed is a serious and resolute propaganda. The ordinary man has to be convinced of the burden before his answer is required.'³⁶ This sentiment echoed Bismarck who had once said that 'if diplomatic dispatches were published his work would be doubled, because he would be forced to write one dispatch to accomplish his purpose and another for publication'.³⁷

A two-tier system of communication about international affairs is, of course, precisely what does exist in all countries whether their societies are open or closed. There is one tier of information possessed by the security services and decision-making elites; there is another tier in the public domain. The restriction on complete disclosure is precisely to avoid the possible triggering of the national identity dynamic which would take decision-making out of the hands of the 'responsible' and informed few.³⁸

All of this is to point out that the modern mass media have

powerfully augmented the role of the mass national public as a factor in foreign relations. Arguments about policies which promote the interest of the state in relation to its international environment no longer solely take place in the rarefied atmosphere of an interested elite; any issue may at any time trigger the national identity dynamic if it is taken up by the mass national press.

CLASSIFICATION

It is possible now to suggest a taxonomy or classification which may help clarify the types of relationship between the national identity dynamic and foreign policy decisions. Three basic patterns are discernible:

- 1 *National identity as a foreign policy resource.* Government evokes the national identity dynamic for the pursuit of strategic foreign policy goals.
- 2 *Foreign policy as a tool for nation-building.* Government uses foreign policy to evoke the national identity dynamic for the purposes of nation-building with the result that either
 - (a) the national identity dynamic remains under government control
 - or
 - (b) the national identity dynamic, once mobilised, influences government.
- 3 *National identity dynamic triggered by non-government actors influences foreign policy.* Other actors evoke the national identity dynamic and the mobilised national identity dynamic then influences the government's foreign policy decisions.

The use of a 'resolute propaganda' to mobilise the mass national public behind a foreign policy that has already been decided or implemented (1) is not the concern of this thesis.³⁹ My purpose here is to illuminate the dynamic interaction between the national identity dynamic and foreign policy decisions – 2 and 3. The following brief foreign policy studies provide illustrations of how identification theory can be usefully applied as a tool of analysis. The canvasses are large and the brush strokes are necessarily broad; in the final chapter I discuss the methodological criticisms that can be levelled at such an approach. I do wish to stress again, however, that this mode of analysis is not intended to subsume the strategic realities of the situations described. It is merely intended to hold a mass psychological focus as defined by the national identity dynamic.

UNITED STATES FOREIGN POLICY AND THE COLD WAR

It is possible to state in a somewhat crude fashion that since 1947, for an American President or Presidential contender to be perceived as being soft on the Soviets or on Communism is to commit political suicide. The Soviet Union has become inextricably involved in the domestic politics of the United States in so much as its image has become a semi-automatic trigger for mobilising the national identity dynamic.

Most analysis of the Cold War and of its origins has focused upon the *strategic* competition between the two superpowers.⁴⁰ This analysis is based on the view that the two superpowers are in a real situation of jockeying for power. Decision-makers, then, both in the United States and in the Soviet Union, have based their foreign policy decisions on a strategic assessment of the configurations of the conflict. Decision-makers' perceptions, for one reason or another, might have been dissonant with 'reality' but the general paradigm that there was United States/Soviet conflict was accurate. The major thrust of the analysis, then, was to understand how the two sides were viewing each other and to assess the value of their respective strategic policies. There is, however, a domestic factor based in the national identity dynamic which provides another perspective.

This dynamic can be seen as having been set fully in motion by McCarthyism.⁴¹ A full analysis of McCarthyism and the anti-communist hysteria of the late forties and early fifties is beyond the scope of this thesis, but it is worth drawing out certain distinctive connections between domestic political realities and United States foreign policy.

McCarthyism emerged in the United States in the years immediately following her victory in the Second World War, and as United States foreign policy became internationally engaged. The victorious images of 1945 which enhanced national identity were, however, being tainted by several other events distinctly threatening to United States prestige and national identity: Mao Tse Tung defeated the United States-backed Chinese nationalists under Chiang Kai Shek; there was the continuing aggressive ignoring of wartime agreements by the Soviet Union in Eastern Europe and elsewhere; there was also the failure to achieve a unified non-communist Korea. Despite, therefore, the allied victory of 1945, the United States' engagement in world politics could be clearly perceived and interpreted as unsuccessful and threatening to United States national identity. Joseph McCarthy, using

the mobilisation of the national identity dynamic as his trump card, played a crude political game.

Against this backdrop of United States failure on the international stage at the hands of communist opponents, and with the help of a non-discriminating media and opportunistic, frightened or genuinely rightist politicians, McCarthy mobilised a substantial portion of mass public opinion behind a witch-hunt for communists within the United States establishment. He stated that a communist conspiracy directed from Moscow was responsible for American failure; and the national identity dynamic was mobilised against this enemy, i.e. against Moscow and against communism, all of which was Moscow-controlled. Indeed, McCarthy's initial accusation in February 1950 was that there were covert communists in the State Department itself and it was they who were responsible for United States failure abroad. For two years McCarthy received widespread support as 'a dedicated patriot and guardian of genuine Americanism'⁴² while he triggered and sustained the hysterical witch-hunt of domestic communists. Finally, after a farcical 36-day televised hearing of his charges of subversion against army officers and civilian officials, McCarthy began to be seen more generally as the irresponsible manipulator that he was and he was ejected from the United States political scene.

The dynamic, however, that he had set in motion was immensely powerful and was not so easily removed. In terms of emotive rhetoric bound to trigger the United States national identity dynamic, the Soviet Union became (at least until the time of writing) a permanent feature of United States political culture. This is to say that the rhetoric of national interest which frames United States foreign policy was inextricably based in implacable opposition to Soviet/Communist threats. It can be said that this was the result of the domestic manipulation of the national identity dynamic, and not the result of a reasoned strategic reaction to external realities. Whatever the genuine strategic threat posed by the Soviet Union, and whatever the genuine Marxist-Leninist ambition for international proletarian revolution and global communism, psychologically the Soviet Union and communism had been appropriated by the domestic political competition to mobilise and harness the American national identity dynamic.

Certainly, since 1950 no President has been able to conduct a foreign policy with Moscow free of this highly charged domestic atmosphere. And, of course, real Soviet actions have been easily open to interpretation in such a way that they fit these perceptions, thereby reinforcing the dynamic.⁴³

It is possible, then, to interpret the major thrust of United States

foreign policy towards the Soviet Union as just as much a function of internal political competition to appropriate the national identity dynamic as it is the result of rational strategic decision-making. It is possible to understand the national identity dynamic as a substantial variable influencing United States foreign policy towards the Soviets.

In a very real sense, then, United States foreign policy is caught in domestic mass social-psychological constraints which continually play on the themes of national interest, national prestige and the struggle with the Soviet/Communist adversary. This spills over into other issue areas of United States foreign policy as the structural dynamics of this situation tend (1) to define *all* enemies of the United States as Soviet inspired communists and (2) to define *all* the enemies of the Soviet Union and of communism as friends and allies of the United States in the struggle to preserve freedom and democracy.⁴⁴ One clearly observable spillover has been in its own continental foreign policy.

Since the enunciation of the Monroe Doctrine in 1823, the whole of the American continent has been straightforwardly designated as a sphere of United States interest in which Washington would brook no outside interference. Since the inception of the Cold War, however, United States foreign policy in Central and Southern America has been legitimated in the rhetoric of the Soviet/Communist threat. Beneath the rhetoric, the actuality may well still be that United States policy in Central and Southern America has been motivated by simple power political or economic interests; it has not, however, been justified in those terms. It has been justified in the language of a response to Communist threat. There is an obvious tendency, then, for United States foreign policy to be legitimated by recourse to the anti-Communist rhetoric that mobilises national identity. Inasmuch as this rhetoric has become a fixed part of popular political culture, United States foreign policy is a prisoner to it.

This anti-Communist, anti-Soviet, Cold War rhetoric, released into the political environment in the early fifties, has thus taken on a clear domestic dynamic of its own in terms of its mobilising appeal to the United States mass public and the need for American politicians to kowtow to it. Its exact role in decision-making obviously varies from situation to situation, as it works in relationship with domestic political contingencies, international realities and how these events are communicated and perceived. It is, however, a clear structural dynamic in the foreign policy process.

Purely in terms of identification theory, this history can be interpreted thus:

A non-governmental actor mobilised the national identity dynamic. It was then appropriated by Government, but took on a momentum of its own which continues to influence Government.

It is interesting at this point just to mention the possible interpretation of the Cold War as a function of the ongoing need for political integration and nation-building in both the United States and the Soviet Union. According to this interpretation, both societies suffer severe internal contradictions, and successive governments have, therefore, played up the Cold War in order to mobilise national sentiment and ensure internal coherence. The accusation has been levelled by one side against the other⁴⁵ and the Soviet leaders, of course, have not been slow to recognise the need for symbols more potent than dialectical materialism in order to stimulate and mobilise the Russian people. The language of 'Russia the motherland' has intertwined with that of Marxism-Leninism. A full discussion of this tantalising issue is beyond my scope and perhaps, following *glasnost*, no longer immediately relevant.

THE FALKLANDS/MALVINAS CONFLICT

The national identity dynamic, once deliberately mobilised, can run out of control. Equally, when mobilised by non-governmental actors, it can be appropriated by government for its own narrow political purposes. The Falklands/Malvinas conflict of 1982 can be interpreted as illustrating both cases.⁴⁶

In the years immediately preceding the Argentine invasion, the Buenos Aires military junta was facing severe domestic difficulties due to economic failure and social injustice. To mobilise the national identity dynamic and thus ensure popular support for its regime, the junta began to play up the issue of sovereignty of the islands. Britain, which in fact was an historical and economic ally, was now projected as an imperialist enemy who was holding on to islands that were part of Argentina's sovereign territory. The islands were projected as a part of Argentina's national heritage and thereby had a psychological share in the dynamics of national identity; the British were the threat to this identity. In this situation of perceived and carefully projected threat, the junta could be seen to share the same experience as the Argentine people, and all mobilisation of the national identity dynamic could be appropriated as political support by the junta.

The rhetoric of retrieving the islands from the colonialists, however, obviously demanded action, action that had previously seemed out of

the question due to the British naval presence. At this time, however, the British government, and particularly the Foreign Office, were careless in how they communicated about British resolve to hold on to the islands. This created a situation in which the junta had no excuse for winding down the rhetoric for action, and any back-down by the junta would have been domestically extremely dangerous. The momentum created by the junta's early actions, helped especially by the apparent lack of British firmness over the issue, left no choice but invasion. The first foray into the Georgias induced no British reaction and so a full-scale invasion was unavoidable. Ultimately, of course, the Argentine defeat led to the complete collapse of the junta and the imprisonment of its leaders as popular support reversed to almost complete alienation from the government. The Argentine nation remained built, but the state had to undergo substantial political adaptation in order to remain in tune with its people.

The British government's behaviour during this episode can also be interpreted using identification theory to define the level of analysis and to put forward the national identity dynamic as a coherent foreign policy variable. Although there were certain strategic and economic reasons for Britain to stay in the Falklands, the Foreign Office had in fact been seeking an accommodation with the Argentines for some time. Had it not been for the British nationals on the islands and the pressure from absentee British landlords, it seems probable that the islands would have been abandoned long before. And in the event, the Argentine interference in South Georgia was responded to with little resolution.

As a result, however, of the main invasion, the House of Commons was called to an emergency session on the morning of Saturday 3 April 1982. The Prime Minister opened the debate with a statement which demonstrated concern, but which certainly did not resonate with any patriotic or nationalist fervour; this was hardly surprising considering the lack of firm response to the Argentines in the preceding months. The speakers that followed her in the House of Commons debate, however, set up a chorus of jingoism in which only one voice of moderation was heard.⁴⁷ 'As speaker after speaker rose, Thatcher, astonishingly, seemed in danger of being outflanked on the right. Labour's leader, Michael Foot, veteran of peace marches through the decades, employed unprecedented warrior rhetoric . . . hardly a word of caution crossed his lips.'⁴⁸

Whatever the Prime Minister and her cabinet might have been considering as potential policy before the debate, the mood of the House, and the jingoism on both the government and the opposition

benches, determined the path that she had to take. All the symbolic phrases that would mobilise the national identity dynamic were being used. In this situation, any voice raised against a belligerent stance was a voice not truly British, was a voice unpatriotic and perhaps even treacherous.⁴⁹ Even if, following the debate, the government had been inclined towards moderation, the popular press had taken up the note of national chauvinism, further mobilising opinion.

Whether she appropriated this momentum as an act of self-conscious political artistry or whether she was simply an enthusiastic victim, Mrs Thatcher directed the tidal wave of mobilisation through a successful military operation.⁵⁰ Moreover, the momentum of the mobilised national identity dynamic, with which Mrs Thatcher as leader of the British people was fully identified, continued for several years. The momentum of this dynamic was so clearly observable to political commentators that it was actually named 'The Falklands Factor', and was deemed by many to have won the Tories the next election. Certainly any Conservative domestic failures, particularly in the field of economics and unemployment, were forgotten.

This whole episode, then, following identification theory, could be summed up:

The Argentine government mobilised the national identity dynamic in order to nation-build, but the mobilised national identity dynamic then forced the government into adventurism. Finally perceived, after defeat, as *the* threat to Argentine national identity, the government fell.

In Britain, non-government actors started the process of mobilising the national identity dynamic which was then successfully appropriated by Government.

UNILATERAL DISARMAMENT AND AMERICAN BASES IN THE UNITED KINGDOM

The debate in the 1960s and 1980s in the United Kingdom over nuclear disarmament and American bases on British territory also provides an interesting area in which identification theory can be applied.

The campaign for British unilateral disarmament achieved little popular or media support. On the other hand, the campaign of militant, pacifist, feminist women at the Greenham Common American military base against the use of British territory for launching American missiles, received much more coverage and popular

sympathy. This support was evoked despite the fact that the women themselves had a group image quite alien to mainstream British culture.

According to identification theory, the mobilisation of popular support for unilateral disarmament can only come about if the arguments for such a policy are framed in such a way as to be seen to enhance national identity. Most of the campaign, however, was framed within the rhetoric of idealism and 'world peace'; there was not even any sustained attempt to build up a powerful propaganda, based in the enhancement of national identity, by blazing a path of moral rectitude.⁵¹ The opponents of unilateralism, however, were able to argue the need for strength and deterrence in the face of external threat. Whatever the actual strategic rights and wrongs of such a policy, it is obvious that the 'cold warriors' possessed far more emotively effective symbols for harnessing the national identity dynamic. It seems safe to predict, therefore, at the time of writing (1987), that if the Labour Party leader is to have any success with a policy of unilateral disarmament it will be because (a) the issue is kept in low profile compared to other policy arguments, or (b) he propagandises it as an enhancement of British national identity through moral leadership of the world, or (c) he projects conventional defence in a way that enhances identity rather than as a soft option. (I once saw a unilateralist persuade a large drunken bully of the merits of unilateral nuclear disarmament by saying: 'If they invade, at least you can fight them properly.' I do not put this forward as meaningful academic evidence.)

The Greenham women demonstrators, on the other hand, despite their general protest on behalf of 'life on Earth', presented a case that was clearly framed in a 'them/us' mode that could evoke the national identity dynamic. In this case, the 'them' was the United States whose bases demeaned national prestige since they could be perceived as pieces of British territory colonised by the Americans and beyond sovereign British control. Demonstrations around these United States bases, rather than those against the British nuclear capability, received approbatory press coverage and much public support.⁵² Identification theory suggests that this phenomenon was not to do with the logic or rationality of any of the arguments, but was based in the mobilisation of the national identity against an external actor. It would seem, for example, that it was precisely the same syndrome which took France out of the formal structure of the North Atlantic Treaty Organisation, while she still remained securely within the western alliance.⁵³

It is interesting to contemplate the possibility that the Greenham

movement, which finally lost political steam, would have had a more sustained and more morally effective result had it been focused against British nuclear establishments. The protest might not then have received the immediate popular support that it did, but its essential arguments would not have been transcended and appropriated by a superficial anti-Americanism.

According to the level of analysis defined by identification theory then, it is possible to summarise thus:

Two non-governmental actors sought to affect British foreign policy concerning the crucial subject of defence. The Campaign for Nuclear Disarmament did nothing to evoke the national identity dynamic and received little popular support. The Greenham movement, however, did evoke the national identity dynamic and received a measure of public support.

GREECE, TURKEY AND THE CYPRUS CONFLICT

The conflict between Greece and Turkey over Cyprus, in terms of the national identity dynamic, displays clear elements of manipulation, appropriation and then loss of control of the national identity dynamic.⁵⁴

The coup of April 1967 in Greece brought into power a military regime which possessed minimal popular support. Constraint and terror replaced democratic legitimation. In 1973 and 1974 the situation became increasingly unstable, manifesting itself in massive street demonstrations, increasingly bold protests by students, and the mutiny of the navy. In the face of this severe domestic instability, albeit funded perhaps by the United States, the right wing junta decided to accelerate the process of *enosis*, the union of Cyprus and Greece, thereby mobilising the people behind a common national goal and securing a huge popular victory for itself. The Greek soldiers, who were stationed in Cyprus and who formed the National Guard, were ordered to lead a coup against Archbishop Makarios and to install a right wing stooge, Nikos Samson. They obeyed their orders.

It was impossible for the regime in Turkey, which was also dealing with domestic instability, not to react. There was a long history of intense rivalry with Greece over Cyprus, which was exacerbated by a complex of other long-standing disputes in the Aegean. In fact, the Turkish government had several times previously threatened to invade Cyprus, but had been placated and held back by United Nations intervention. The actual military interference by Greece in

Cyprus was an act that directly threatened Turkish Cypriots and one to which the Turkish government had no choice but to respond. In terms of the national identity dynamic, the attack on Turkish Cypriots was a clear threat to Turkish national identity, and a lack of military response by the Turkish government would have led to its downfall. The lack of policy options available to the Turkish regime was, then, based in the domestic dynamics whereby any action that was seen to be soft on the Greeks would have discredited the regime at the widest possible level.

The efficient and successful operation of the Turks was in stark contrast to the bombastic ineptitude of the Greek military. Within two days, Turkish troops had taken over 40 per cent of the island. What popular domestic support there had been for the Greek regime collapsed completely as the temporary identification with the junta, as representative of national identity in a situation of national mobilisation, turned to alienation. The common enemy, which had been the Turks for threatening national identity, now became the junta. The national identity dynamic, which the junta itself had triggered in order to appropriate its support, became the very cause of mobilisation which created the opportunity and dynamics to topple it. The Turkish regime was strengthened.

Following identification theory, it can be summed up:

In order to nation-build, the Greek junta embarked on an adventurist foreign policy to mobilise the national identity dynamic; the adventure failed, alienating the mobilised dynamic from the junta. With Turkish national identity threatened, the Turkish government replied successfully and appropriated mobilised mass public opinion.

THIRD WORLD FOREIGN POLICY

Identification theory also suggests a possible general interpretation of the way in which the national identity dynamic may affect the foreign policy process of developing countries. It is, of course, dangerous to analyse at this level of generality, but the constraints of economic development and of nation-building suggest certain general structural features.⁵⁵

The socio-economic and psychological pressures to achieve economic growth are considerable. Unlike those nation-states which were formed and integrated prior to 1945, the post-1945 states exist in a global communications village. Images of industrialised bourgeois life are communicated to the very centres of poverty and distress. This

means that group and individual identities are threatened by images of metropolitan peoples who, by virtue of the possession of wealth and technology, have *in reality* a greater control over the primordial forces of life themselves – food, clothing and transport. As Sukarno remarked wryly, but with a sense of its profound reality, 'A refrigerator is a revolutionary symbol in a hot country like mine.'⁵⁶

Added to these pressures to modernise, there are, in many African and Asian states, the other extreme pressures of ethnic, tribal or religious cleavage created by the metropolitan imposition of borders resonant with imperial and not native interests. The straight lines of the cartographers of the Congress of Berlin had no concern for 'natural' tribal territories. In fact, within most of the new African states of the 1950s and 1960s the only unifying domestic element which cut across tribal divisions was the shared experience of this European imperialism. If there was a geographical identity beyond that of the tribe, it was that of being a black African who had been subject to, and was now liberated from, white dominion. And, in fact, this particular sense of identity was sufficiently strong for there to be, before the realities of domestic political tensions and international competition took hold, a substantial pan-African movement based in this common identity which looked forward to a United States of Africa.⁵⁷

The pressure to nation-build and achieve political integration, however, went hand-in-hand with the pressure to achieve economic growth and industrialisation/modernisation. According to identification theory, nation-building can be achieved either through materialistic state beneficence or through the use of an external threat. If neither of these policies is adopted, or if adopted are unsuccessful, perhaps due to lack of resources, then internal force must be used to constrain political integration. This general situation gives rise to an interesting syndrome which can be observed in terms of nation-building, foreign policy and the two broad sweeps of policy available – *laissez-faire* or socialism – to achieve economic growth. The two different strategies towards growth, *laissez-faire* and socialism, have distinct implications for nation-building.

If a policy of *laissez-faire* is adopted, then capitalist success at the centre of the state 'trickles' out to the periphery. If a socialist policy of state intervention is adopted, then the 'trickle' is replaced by centrally directed redistribution. Both these approaches are, of course, aiming at the same goal which is to achieve the socio-economic conditions already 'enjoyed' by the first and second worlds.

A distinctive feature of these two policy options, however, is that nation-building based in state beneficence under capitalist policies will

take longer than nation-building under socialist policies. This is so because under capitalist policies, there is bound to be a substantial time-lag before the beneficent results of the creation of wealth at the centre by an entrepreneurial class is felt by the whole population. In some cases, one wonders if it will ever reach the total population. Social justice and economic redistribution are not the major priorities of a government dedicated to economic growth through *laissez-faire* capitalism. There is, therefore, a huge perceivable disparity between the economic conditions of the centre and the periphery. Also, in very practical terms, while the wealth is being created, there are neither the resources nor the political will to finance social welfare and general state intervention in order to bring about the kind of nation-building discussed in chapter 2. Moreover, general global economic conditions may not even allow any wealth creation at the centre of new states.

A developing state, however, which deliberately adopts socialist policies can touch peripheral groups very quickly. This is not simply based in the peripheral peoples being directly and materialistically touched by state beneficence, but can be profoundly affected by a political style in which the metropolitan decision-making elite projects a clearly perceivable image of equality with their people. The socialist state prioritises social justice and economic redistribution alongside economic growth and wealth creation. Policies of social welfare are introduced as high priorities, and even if the resources are slender there will be a tendency away from ostentatious displays of wealth by the metropolitan elite.

None of this is to argue the economic and more general political case between *laissez-faire* and socialism. It is, however, to posit that:

In developing states, socialist economic policies will tend to evoke nation-building more quickly than policies of *laissez-faire*.

We can now take up two earlier propositions:

- 1 Successful nation-building is a prime power resource of effective foreign policy.
- 2 A state may resort to an aggressive foreign policy in order to evoke nation-building, *but* will not do so if there is a possibility of risking internal cleavage.

A general model of developing states' foreign policy now suggests itself:

- a Developing states that adopt socialist economic growth policies will achieve early national integration and, relying on the

national identity dynamic as a resource, may, therefore, adopt aggressive foreign policies.

- b Developing states which adopt capitalist economic growth policies, and which have internal cleavages based in ethnos, tribe or religion, will not be able to rely on the national identity dynamic and will tend not to adopt aggressive foreign policies. If they do adopt them, the likelihood of internal collapse is high.
- c States which use internal force to constrain political integration may adopt the rhetoric of aggressive foreign policy in order to justify internal repression; this rhetoric, however, may mobilise the national identity dynamic so effectively that the rhetoric may spill over into actual international conflict.

Risking again the criticism of using too wide brush strokes on too broad a canvas, the following brief examples are illustrative.

Nigeria. Nigeria presents an interesting example of a state with a low profile foreign policy. Despite the fact that she is the richest and most powerful black African state, her foreign policy is both regionally and globally passive.⁵⁸ She has kept a low profile in the major local issue of French influence and a low profile in the major continental issues of neo-colonialism and the white South African regime. This is resonant with the fact that Nigeria is pursuing an economic policy of *laissez-faire* capitalist growth from the centre, and has a history of severe internal cleavages of which the breakaway of Biafra was an extreme example.

Libya and Tanzania. In contrast to Nigeria, Libya and Tanzania, two African states with extremely high foreign policy profiles, are both states with domestic policies that are highly focused on government intervention, social welfare and national integration. Though varying greatly in terms of economic resources, both Libya and Tanzania have pursued policies in which the government has acted as a materialistic benefactor to the population as a whole, regardless of class or ethnic status. According to one set of figures, Libya has the highest level of general welfare expenditure of any country on the African continent, including South Africa.⁵⁹ Tanzania, on the other hand, although beset by ongoing economic difficulties, has pursued a consistent policy of communal and self-reliant socialism as laid out in the Arusha declaration of 1967. Despite its poverty, then, Tanzania has displayed remarkable internal stability and social cohesion.⁶⁰

Libya's foreign policy has been dramatic in terms of its revolutionary nature, its attempts at integration within the Arab nation and its support of international terrorism. Tanzania's foreign policy has also been extremely independent in terms of its aggressive non-alignment,

its moral stance and its material support for other African states. In 1978, in particular, after an incursion of its borders by Ugandan troops, Tanzania's retaliation led to the occupation of the Ugandan capital and the downfall of President Amin.

Once again, this is not to deny or to attempt to belittle the crucial role played in all this by strategic and other political realities, particularly the personalities of Mohamir Ghaddafi and Julius Nyerere. It is, however, to point out that both leaders could act with confidence because they possessed widespread popular support based in successful nation-building.⁶¹

Argentina and Chile. Those South American states with policies of internal constraint for political stability, and of giving low priority to social and economic justice, tend to demonstrate an aggressive foreign policy rhetoric but a low profile in reality, unless the rhetoric overflows into action as was the case with Argentina and the Malvinas. There is also a general tendency here to have a military that is used for internal order rather than external security, and to attempt to use minor border and territorial disputes to mobilise the national identity dynamic.⁶²

Indonesia. Indonesia provides a clear example of how a change in economic growth strategies was reflected in a change in foreign policy orientation.

From the time of national liberation until his overthrow, President Sukarno conducted a domestic policy of socialist nation-building which, despite divisive class, religious and ethnic divisions, was successful in terms of building a single political community.⁶³ At the same time, Sukarno was adroit in focusing national attention upon foreign policy issues for which his government's position had overwhelming national support, particularly with regard to anti-imperialism and the recovery of West Irian.⁶⁴ Sukarno's foreign policy was aggressively non-aligned and independent.

His overthrow and replacement by Suharto ushered in a completely new form of domestic policy, one based purely in *laissez-faire*. National cohesion began to disintegrate and the government resorted to terror and constraint in order to maintain internal order.⁶⁵ Concomitantly, there was a substantial change in Indonesian foreign policy away from aggressive non-alignment to a clear and passive alignment with the United States.⁶⁶ Once again, this is not to suggest that strategic and economic motivations are to be ignored – especially the new *laissez-faire* society's economic dependence on United States capital. It is only to point out the suggestive relationship between internal factors, based in mobilisation of the national identity dynamic, and foreign policy. A

policy of socialist nation-building under Sukarno was accompanied by an aggressive foreign policy; under Suharto, the new capitalism was accompanied by a passive foreign policy.

Burma. An interesting counterpoint to the preceding examples is provided by Burma which, after the coup of 1962, turned from a policy of active international involvement, particularly in the non-aligned movement, to one of almost complete isolation. The new government of General Ne Win was dedicated to a policy of national integration based in traditional Burmese values. According to the perception of Ne Win and his colleagues, all international contact, especially with cosmopolitan bourgeois culture, was destructive to the cultural integration of Burmese society. On assuming power, the Revolutionary Council, for example, banned beauty contests, required civil servants to wear the traditional *longyi* and insisted that members of the military forces neither displayed wealth nor indulged in conspicuous consumption; communalistic policies for growth and government were introduced.⁶⁷ In the two years following the seizing of power, all forms of external contact were perceived to be forms of interference, inasmuch as they provided images and stimuli that were domestically destabilising.

To avoid the effect of destabilising images of relative deprivation inherent in global village communications and to sustain national integration, the regime adopted an aggressive foreign policy of active disassociation. In this instance, an aggressive foreign policy, that of autarchy, was a sustained and overt instrument of political integration. Whether such a policy can endure depends a great deal on whether the external threat continues to be perceived to be real.

CONCLUSION

Identification theory provides a distinct level of analysis which draws into clear perspective a consistent structural variable of the foreign policy of decision-making process. Recognition of the *National Identity Dynamic* – the giving to the mass national public of a methodologically coherent status – does not, however, give us a mechanical model for precise prophesy. It merely makes explicit the dynamics which, to a lesser or a greater degree, are inherent in the situation and which, for holistic analysis, require acknowledgement.

At the micro level, identification theory can say little about how the individual decision-makers will behave. Certainly, a powerful public opinion and a mobilised national identity dynamic must affect the

decision-maker, but the actual decisions will depend upon the decision-makers' own degree of identification, peer pressure, group mores, individual psycho-history and so on – a kaleidoscope of elements worthy of substantial research.

5 IDENTIFICATION AND INTERNATIONAL RELATIONS THEORY

INTRODUCTION

In chapter 3, identification theory provided a methodological tool for investigating nation-building. Then in chapter 4, via the national identity dynamic, it was of some use in giving the mass national public a certain theoretical coherence in relation to foreign policy analysis. This chapter is now concerned with examining whether identification theory provides any useful insights into International Relations theory generally.¹ The possibility that such an approach will be useful exists because identification theory:

- 1 Puts forward a distinct theory of mass human behaviour and
- 2 Defines a discrete social-psychological level of analysis.

The method of approach in this chapter will be to apply identification theory to what I take to be the three major areas of argument within International Relations. These are:

- 1 Historians/classicists versus behaviouralists/scientists.
- 2 Realists versus idealists.
- 3 State-centrists versus structuralists/Marxists.

Although such a classification risks undue parsimony, it is actually imperative to attempt to classify International Relations; otherwise there exists the very real problem of never knowing where to start. This problem is due to the fact that, in one way or another, connections can be made between almost any form of human behaviour and issues in International Relations. All insights, pre-theories, theories and world-views – psychological, social, economic and political – can be applied to International Relations. This is obviously so because the subject of International Relations is global society itself, what Charles Manning called 'social cosmology',² whether it is the society of four billion souls or the society of one hundred and sixty states.³ The scope of the subject is such that any analysis of social behaviour may be subsumed by International Relations and, conversely, any presumptions about

social behaviour may be generalised and projected into International Relations theory. In fact, the three divisions which I identified above can be restated in the form of three major debates which run through social theory generally:

- 1 Whether human beings are subject or object to social systems.
- 2 Whether human beings are essentially savage or cooperative.
- 3 Whether human society's essential structure is socio-economic or more variegated.

This chapter, then, approaches each of these divisions in International Relations, first describing the basic features of the debate and then applying identification theory.

HISTORIANS/CLASSICISTS VERSUS BEHAVIOURALISTS/SCIENTISTS⁴

The essence of the debate between the historians and the scientists concerns whether or not an explicit and internally coherent methodology, i.e. a scientific method, can be used for analysing international relations and for predicting international phenomena.

The historians/classicists criticise as wasteful scholasticism any attempt to achieve such a methodology. The essential attitude of the classical or historical approach in International Relations is to be wary of any analysis which seeks predictability beyond what is blatantly obvious. For the classicist, it is in the very nature of international relations that scientific predictability should be unattainable because of the almost infinite number of variables that are involved. To arrange these variables methodically so as to have access to any form of precise forecast is impossible.⁵ This is not, however, to say that there are no general patterns which are discernible, but these patterns are to do with 'types' of situation. It is through a thorough knowledge of history that one may gain an awareness of the various patterns of action which do indeed recur in certain types of situation – and this knowledge may then be applied analogously to contemporary situations. Predictability, then, is only possible because contemporary situations are analogous to past ones, and the chances are that a certain pattern or cluster of patterns may repeat. The 'balance of power' paradigm is just such a pattern, but even acknowledging that there is such a repeatable pattern does not allow for prediction – for there are always buccaneers, cowboys and wimps on the international stage to upset the theoretical apple cart. To work with the balance of power paradigm, for example, is useful because it provides a theoretical frame within which the various possible courses of action can be analysed.

The historian may thus point out what is possible and even probable in a situation, but there are certainly no guarantees of prediction or even an attempt at 'scientific analysis'. At the very least, the historian may promise few surprises.

The behaviouralists, on the other hand, state that without an explicit methodology there can be no worthwhile analysis, as the analysis will be based purely in the ideological predisposition, explicit or implicit, of the historian. The whole classical approach is, therefore, woolly, and does not even begin to make use of the tools made available by twentieth-century social theory. Analysis based in history may be rigorous in terms of uncovering the apparent facts of a situation, and rigorous in its attempt to present all the relevant facts. But the crucial issue concerns by what criteria these facts are chosen in the first place and, again, by what criteria these facts are then related to each other. The accusation made by the behaviouralist is that the historian has no explicit methodology, has no clearly differentiated levels of analysis and works with a method that is purely intuitive or idiosyncratic. The behaviouralist seeks to bring International Relations under the same kind of methodical rigour applied to other academies in the social sciences.⁶

This debate concerning a rigorous methodological approach holds within it, though, a hidden debate concerning the more substantial issue of the nature of the relationship between the individual and society. Implicit in the classicist's position is the notion that the individual human being is capable of dynamic, initiatory and creative acts – whatever the value of the acts themselves. Thus, the individual human is obviously a major creative actor in social systems, and social systems are, in the final analysis, subservient to the acts of individuals. This is not to deny that in one form or another many, perhaps most, people are subject to social systems. It is, however, to state that all systems are, in fact, human-made, are ephemeral and may be dismantled by human action. Even when social systems are constructed with an extremely high degree of internal constraint, one individual's will-power, eccentricity or sheer stupidity may yet transcend or disrupt it. This individual may be a 'Great Man' of history, or it may equally be the unknown individual who casts the first stone or fires the first bullet. The stance of the historian/classicist is essentially humanistic.

Implicit in the behaviouralist's approach, on the other hand, are the two ideas that (1) human behaviour is predictable and that (2) human beings are subject to society. This approach is based partly in a general Hobbesian notion of society as civilising the instinctively savage human, and partly in the insights of twentieth-century social theory,

from Durkheim and Weber through behavioural psychology to systems theory. These assumptions of the behaviouralist marry with a methodological approach that finds its paradigm in the natural sciences and Newtonian order. In terms of this world-view, social systems are functionally integrated entities with their own coherent, scientifically analysable structures, and the human being is, thus, essentially only a social being created and constrained by the social system. The scientific approach to International Relations, then, assumes that: (a) human behaviour is predictable; (b) human action is subservient to, and determined by, the system; (c) if the system is repeated so too will be the human actions; (d) international phenomena can be quantified and ordered in such a way that distinct patterns emerge which lead to predictability.⁷

The major features of the debate between the historians and the behaviourists appear to remain unresolved.⁸ The two world-views are apparently incompatible and mutually exclusive: a system of human free will versus a system of measurable social constraint. This divide is often further exacerbated by the different personal backgrounds of the scholars – many historians totally lack any background in the methods of contemporary social theory, and many behaviourists lack background in the humanism yet rigour of historical research.

There do exist, however, areas of International Relations study where the usefulness of discrete levels of analysis have been fully accepted by the historians, and in which coherent social-psychological theory has been successfully integrated. This area is to do with decision-making and perception. The history of this development within International Relations is well rehearsed: Richard Snyder and colleagues first identified the significance of the actual foreign policy decision-makers, particularly with regard to their motivations.⁹ Graham Allison subsequently pointed out that these individuals frequently argued on behalf of their bureaucratic power-bases, rather than rationally in the interests of the state as a whole.¹⁰ Robert Jervis, drawing on Festinger's theories of cognitive dissonance, next placed on the agenda the insight that all decision-makers were subject to cognitive predispositions and misperceptions regarding incoming information about the international environment.¹¹ And, during this same period, attention was also focused on the way in which decision-makers tend to behave in groups and in times of crisis.¹²

Despite quite severe criticism of these analyses, particularly of Allison's bureaucratic politics model,¹³ the approaches have, in fact, been thoroughly absorbed into general International Relations

analysis. This is to say that it is universally recognised within the discipline that no analysis of inter-state politics is thorough unless it has encompassed a focus on the decision-makers involved, their processes and their perceptions. Methodologically, these insights have provided a distinct level of analysis (scientific even!) which has been generally adopted. Its success has been such that the approach is now generally applied by *all* students of International Relations – including historians and classicists – as a level of analysis for investigating certain structurally inherent psychological variables in world politics. In any analysis of the relations between states, there must at some point be a focus on the decision-makers and upon the psychological factors which affect their behaviour.

That such a behaviouralist approach could be absorbed by the historians/classicists is due to the fact that theories of decision-making and misperception define *tendencies* in human behaviour and do *not* delineate situation-defined *constraints*. The level of analysis and the theory do not posit the decision-maker as a mechanistically predictable social dupe. The decision-maker still exercises unique creativity based in his/her unique situation, character and history. There are indeed certain tendencies, but there is no inherent determining factor. The human actor at the decision-making level of analysis – albeit bureaucratically inspired or cognitively misperceiving or group hysterical – is yet free to make eccentric, idiosyncratic and unique decisions that are not determined either by the system or by the psychological framework. The decision-making level of analysis and the theories of misperception and groupthink point out consistent behavioural tendencies which are not determined by the specifics of environmental input, yet are structurally inherent and unavoidable in all inter-state relations. The theoretical structures remain consistent, thus satisfying a behaviouralist approach; yet the individuals are still theoretically free to take unique and creative actions, thus satisfying the humanist historian.

Furthermore, as well as defining discrete *units* of analysis – e.g. the individual, the decision-maker, the group of decision-makers – discrete levels of analysis are also delineated. These clearly defined levels of analysis introduce a degree of methodological rigour into the criteria by which historians select and string together their evidence and material. Evidence is not drawn together intuitively, or for a coherent narrative, or in an attempt to get the 'whole' picture. Evidence is selected and arranged which is specifically and logically relevant to the particular mode or level of analysis currently being utilised – in this

context, the levels of analysis delineated by theories concerning perception and decision-making.

The successful integration of these approaches into general International Relations theory suggests that identification theory can be equally well integrated. Identification theory also provides a clear level of analysis, while not introducing any deterministic constraints on human action. The unit of analysis, however, is not the relatively small decision-making elites – although they themselves, of course, are equally subject to identification – but the mass national citizenry.

Identification theory outlines the structural dynamics of the psychological relationship between a people and their nation-state. It analyses how this relationship may be developed and the elements which may create and sustain it. It explicates how the national identity dynamic is mobilised and how it can overcome, be triggered by, appropriated by and manipulated by, the state.

If identification theory and its political corollaries are accepted as useful tools for analysis, then any investigation of foreign policy decision-making and the relations between states must include, at some point, a focus upon the national identity dynamic – if only, at the very least, to acknowledge that it is not relevant to the situation being studied. Identification theory makes possible a coherent analysis of the influence of the mass national public.

Insomuch as these levels of analysis – that of decision-making and that of the national identity dynamic – and their specific theoretical tools are acknowledged and integrated by historians/classicists, so historians/classicists can claim intellectual rigour and even a scientific approach.¹⁴ The historian can, with theoretical justification, hold on to the notion that human beings, not systems, make history. And, as discussed in the previous chapter, even those terms used freely by the classicists such as 'national prestige', 'honour', 'interest' and 'identity' now possess methodological coherence.

Moreover, these particular levels of analysis, and their psychological theories, severely criticise the most extreme behaviouralist approaches to International Relations, particularly systems theory.¹⁵ To vindicate the operationalisation of any systems approach – i.e. the notion that a particular kind of system determines behaviour according to a set pattern – clear methodical links have to be explicated that demonstrate the *causal* connection between the structure of the system and the actual human behaviour. These causal connections must be based on clear insights of coherent social and psychological theory; if this criterion is not met, then there is no bridging logic and a systems

analyst is merely working at perceiving patterns. Coincidence of behaviour is insufficient evidence. No purpose other than the construction of taxonomy is fulfilled unless the systems analyst can first demonstrate, by the explication of coherent social or psychological theory, that any social system *determines* human behaviour. This connection has thus far eluded the major thinkers in social theory. This is not to deny the attractiveness of systems or the possibility of general patterns that repeat themselves; it is merely to question its internal logic.

If the covert debate between historians and scientists in International Relations regarding the freedom of creative human action is not acknowledged, or if both sides decide to remain firmly in their respective camps – free will versus measurable social determinism – then the divide cannot be bridged. If, however, theories of human behaviour are acknowledged which, while psychologically precise and methodologically coherent – such as identification theory or theories of misperception – actually work out as social tendencies, then a merging of the two camps is possible. Scientific rigour squares with the circle of humanism.

In general, however, it is possible to say that identification theory goes some way towards vindicating the classical approach in International Relations by providing it with a further psychological level of analysis that respects the dynamic nature of human beings.

As if in parentheses, it seems to me worthwhile to mention here a certain elegance in the way in which the human element in state actions has, in the theory, historically expanded. Psychoanalysis provided a scientific mode for analysing the behaviour of 'Great Men'. The decision-making level of analysis – with the analytical tools of bureaucratic politics, misperception theory, groupthink and crisis behaviour – then provided a clear and coherent frame within which to analyse the behaviour of decision-makers. Before the development of the decision-making level of analysis, there was simply no method for organising all the historical information about decision-making groups. Identification theory now frees the mass national public for analysis. The 'Great Man' approach expanded to include decision-makers which now itself expands to include the mass national citizenry. This is to be expected given the long-term historical trend away from divine kingship and absolute individual rule to the more democratic conditions constrained by a world of evolving mass media and information technology.

REALISTS VERSUS IDEALISTS

A second major divide in International Relations is that which exists between the realists and the idealists.

The realist proposition is that human nature is essentially savage and competitive, and that this nature inevitably manifests itself in the behaviour of states.¹⁶ This notion has a respectable intellectual heritage beginning, at least, in Machiavelli and Hobbes.¹⁷ And from this basic proposition it follows that the only morality in international relations is the practical one of self-help, of preserving state security and of pursuing power enhancement. Any lapse from such an approach threatens both national security and international stability because the appearance of weak resolve will tempt and lead other states to pursue their own territorial and power enhancement. The pursuit of state power is, therefore, not only a domestic imperative, but also an international good – as, through systems of self-help, of balance of power and of mutual deterrence, international order is maintained.

Moreover, given that human nature is essentially savage and aggressive, international cooperation in the form of an overarching international authority or world government would risk despotism rather than beneficence in the absence of competing and balancing power centres.

The idealist has a more benign view of human nature which is seen as essentially benevolent and cooperative. From this perspective, humanity's essential goodness is led astray by political and social dynamics. What is required, therefore, is the dismantling and then the reconstruction of political structures in terms of both inherent ideologies and hierarchies of power.¹⁸ A good and peaceful world is possible provided we cooperate and plan together.

The realists and the idealists can both draw upon substantial evidence for their respective cases. For the realist, history abounds with examples of expansionist and aggressive states seeking territory and power enhancement at the cost of weaker, less prepared and less resolute states. Moreover, at a micro level of analysis, human beings demonstrate a propensity to behave in cruel, sadistic and destructive ways, reality frequently outstripping fiction in its horror. The idealist, however, can point to the fact that every social and political system consists of people cooperating. Cooperation is indeed the *sine qua non* of any human grouping. Further, the idealist can point out that the overwhelming majority of these groupings do not indulge in savage behaviour, either internally or externally. Moreover, in close and

family groups, men and women display a distinct tendency towards selfless, self-sacrificing, generous and loving behaviour.¹⁹

What is clear from both sets of propositions is the precarious evidential basis for any confident assertions concerning absolute or exclusive tendencies to either savage or benign behaviour. The fact is that human beings seem capable of almost any kind of action. There exists, however, a second line of defence for both realists and idealists when presented with evidence contradictory to their stance. Realists, presented with evidence of cooperation, may argue that this is not evidence of a cooperative human nature, but is evidence of a realistic human nature: it is within order, rather than within anarchy, that human beings can best gratify their primal instincts. The idealist, on the other hand, presented with images of human bestiality, blames not the innocent human, but warped social constructs which chain free men. The realists upon one side and the idealists upon the other take heavily normative stances which are mutually exclusive. And, within International Relations, this division is demonstrated in extremity by, on one side, those students concerned with strategic affairs and, on the other, those concerned with international interdependence and integration. The two differing frames lead to vastly different interpretations and policy prescriptions.

Given that there is no safe evidential basis for exclusively justifying either position, the choice of being either a realist or an idealist is not a choice based in a clear, intellectually rigorous rationale. It must be a choice based in political, ideological or temperamental predispositions.

Identification theory, however, provides an analysis of both aggressive and cooperative mass behaviour – an analysis which bridges their apparent mutual exclusivity.

Identification theory presents this possibility because the identification dynamic works, in a janus-faced manner, towards internal group integration and cooperativeness, as well as towards external group aggressiveness. It thus provides an insight into the psycho-social *motivation* which makes for both political integration and international conflict.

The drive to internalise the mores and behaviour patterns of significant others in order to achieve psychological security, works out societally as the most basic form of cooperation: people share similar attitudes and behaviour patterns; people share a political culture. Yet once the shared culture has been achieved, the identification dynamic also works to defend and enhance that shared identity. If a mass of people who share the same national identity perceive that identity to

be threatened, or perceive the possibility of enhancing it, then they will mobilise so as to defend and enhance it. The ironical truth, according to a dynamic identification theory, is that the drive to protect and enhance identity is, in certain situations, more powerful even than the drive to live. It has to be recognised that men and women sing happily as they go into battle, and some even remember wartime as the best years of their life, so great is the psychological security and euphoria which is experienced when identity is enhanced.

This crucial nature of the national identity dynamic takes on an even clearer profile when applied to defensive wars. The fight against invasion and external interference is precisely based in the fact that one people with a shared national identity is profoundly psychologically threatened by the prospect of rule by an alien culture. The crucial issue is not the *physical* threat – peaceful surrender may be gracefully accepted. What is crucial is that one people with a shared national identity – a common culture – will be ruled by, and subject to, an alien culture. And the alien culture is the very antithesis of an identity-securing interpretive system. The point that emerges clearly here is that identity is as tangible a factor as territory or property in situations of conflict; in fact, it can well be argued that territory is only a blatant symbol of national identity.

It is necessary, however, to state clearly and carefully that a perception of external threat and the ensuing mobilisation are not spontaneous. There are many hundreds of thousands of people involved, and for mobilisation to occur, these people must be presented:

- 1 With *images* that demonstrate external threat or the possibility of enhancement.
- 2 With a clear strategy of action that defends or enhances identity.

This, in turn, requires of course that some entity or entities present these images and, equally, that some individual or individuals suggest the prescribed course of political action. It is to state the obvious, but nevertheless one must be absolutely explicit, that without the projection of the appropriate images, and without the communication of a strategy for action, there would be no mass national mobilisation. This is to say that the national identity dynamic requires the appropriate trigger in order to mobilise. It cannot mobilise without such a trigger. This is not to deny that, once triggered, the national identity dynamic may roll forward with uncontrollable fury. This fury is based in the need of each individual to preserve and enhance her/his own personal identity – but mass national mobilisation will not, and cannot, occur unless externally triggered. This is axiomatic.

Thus we can state that the national identity dynamic provides the fuel and psychological motivation for aggressive mobilisation, but it requires external stimuli. These stimuli are projected images and communicated strategies. It is worth examining the sources of these stimuli.

In the previous chapter, the dynamic relationship between internal political competition and the national identity dynamic was discussed. Transcending religious, ideological and parochial divisions, the mobilisation of national identity is the largest mobilisation possible within a state in which there has been successful nation-building; there is, therefore, domestic political competition to appropriate it. Whoever can successfully mobilise and appropriate the national identity dynamic has the greatest possible popular power base. Because of this, the protection and enhancement of national identity – national interest, national prestige and so on – are crucial *domestic* political issues. They are crucial issues regardless of external international realities. Put crudely, no political incumbent or competitor for political power can allow herself to be seen as 'soft' in her international posturing for fear of it being interpreted as denigrating or threatening national identity. Moreover, as also discussed in the previous chapter, international posturing can mobilise mass public support in otherwise unstable domestic situations.

There is, therefore, the continual, if not tendency, then at least temptation, to trigger the national identity dynamic for domestic political purposes. It seems safe to say, then, that it is in the nature of the internal political structure of any state for there to be competition to trigger and appropriate the national identity dynamic. This, of course, is further complicated in western-style democratic states where a free capitalist press may also seek to manipulate the national identity dynamic as a way of increasing sales.

To state the obvious, then, it is domestic political actors who present the images and strategies which mobilise the national identity dynamic. The ease, however, with which the national identity dynamic can be mobilised is not based simply in the aggregate of individual psychological drives to defend and enhance identity. It is based also in the credibility of images concerning a competitive and dangerous international environment. There is indeed a reality of international conflict, both historical and contemporary. Thus any claim made by a domestic political competitor that there is an international threat is made within a general cognitive framework which supports such a statement. The history and contemporary reality of conflict give licence to 'make up' such threats.

This, of course, is further complicated by the fact that there may indeed be a real strategic threat. Even then, however, the way this threat is perceived by the mass national public is mediated by domestic media and communicators. Any external action touching any sphere that can be interpreted as being 'national', can be communicated about as threatening national interest.

Following Waltz's discussion of whether the origins of war lie in Man, the State or the International System,²⁰ it is possible, using identification theory, to attempt some clarity:

- 1 *Human*: People do not have a proven instinctive drive for aggression. They do, however, have a drive to protect and enhance identity. The national identity dynamic, however, requires appropriate images and strategies in order to be mobilised.
- 2 *State*: The nature of domestic political structures is such that there is competition to trigger and appropriate the national identity dynamic. This is done by mediating and manipulating images of the international environment, and putting forward defensive and enhancing strategies. The mobilisation may: (a) remain contained; (b) overspill and force international aggression; (c) be deliberately channelled into international aggression.
- 3 *International system*: (1) The historical and contemporary reality of international conflict lends credibility to domestically projected images of external threat. (2) Actors in the international system may, of course, genuinely provide a threat.

There is, thus, an unfortunate dialectic between the imperative dynamics of identification and the nature of political competition, a dialectic which takes place against an historical and contemporary reality of international aggression. And the synthesis of this dialectic is itself international aggression.

This analysis puts severe pressure on both certain realist and certain idealist positions. Hans Morgenthau's statement, and the assumption underlying most of his influential writing, that international conflict is the result of the savage urges of the mass of people and that peace is the result of the wisdom and wiles of statesmen, is shown to be untrue.²¹ The savage urge of the mass of people is, in fact, the drive of psychologically insecure human beings to defend and enhance their identity; and the drive is, in fact, mobilised into mass movements by the wisdom and wiles of competing politicians, some of whom may be those very same statesmen. And, of course, international conflict has historically been essentially a conflict between elites – between

statesmen, be they monarchs or clerics – and the mass of people have hardly been involved. The military competition for control of a territory was frequently irrelevant to the mass of people as there was no shared culture between the mass of people and their rulers.²²

Equally, the idealist position concerning the innocence of the mass of people is also severely strained. According to this approach, the mass of people are merely the manipulated dupes of self-seeking political forces.²³ Identification theory points out that although they may be duped by propaganda and by the manipulated images of political intrigue, the mass of people do in fact have a clear and rational motive for mobilising for aggression: they are mobilising to defend their identity. They are not innocent bystanders, and to argue that they are wrong to defend their identity, for example when faced with real invasion by an alien culture, is in fact to argue pacifism. I shall return to these issues in the final chapter.

At a level that is purely theoretical, identification theory should thus have gone some way towards bridging the gap between the realist and the idealist stance. If one accepts the integrating analysis of identification theory, then there is no longer a mutually exclusive choice between a realist stance which believes in a savage human nature and an idealist stance which believes in a cooperative human nature. For a student of International Relations, identification theory provides a norm-free level of analysis which takes full account of, indeed is based in, human nature. The purely theoretically inclined student is, therefore, provided with an analytical tool which allows her to avoid the realist-idealist clash.

At a level, however, that is more normative and prescriptive, the clash between idealist and realist may still continue. An analysis which integrates identification theory may indeed be accepted, but it can nevertheless still be used to prescribe for particular goals. The idealist, remaining an idealist, may wish to use the analysis to prescribe strategies for disarmament, international integration or other idealist goals. And the realist, equally remaining a realist, may exploit it to prescribe strategies for enhancing state power. Moreover, the realist may argue that although the analysis using identification theory is correct, it is not a level of analysis that she chooses to employ. She may choose to continue to work at a level of analysis which accepts international conflict as the norm.

The application of identification theory, however, presents the challenge to, and the chance for, both realists and idealists to be more carefully explicit about the intellectual basis of their relative positions.

Certainly, identification theory presents a level of analysis which is detached from normative arguments concerning human nature, and this allows students of International Relations to adopt realism or idealism as prescriptive strategies without attempting to invest them with the status of theoretical truth.

STATE-CENTRISTS VERSUS STRUCTURALISTS

The argument in International Relations between state-centrists and structuralists is perhaps the most difficult to resolve because their division is based in more subtle ideological predispositions than those which divide the historians from the scientists, and the realists from the idealists. Identification theory, however, suggests a level of analysis which might go some way towards resolving their mutual exclusivity.

State-centrism. The state-centric perspective is that the major actor and unit of analysis in international politics is the nation-state.²⁴ This focus, however, is not based purely in a perception of power realities, but possesses a powerful normative aspect whose source is eighteenth-century European political theory. In one form or another, this theory posits that people have voluntarily contracted into arranging their communities as states; that, either for the imposition of minimal order or for cooperative communal benefit, people have granted a central organ a monopoly of political authority and power.²⁵ The state-centric analysis, then, is implicitly and normatively legitimated by the idea of the active and voluntary opting into the state by the mass citizenry. This is not the place to analyse the sociology of Enlightenment political theories. One can, however, point out that there was indeed a growing eighteenth-century middle and intellectual class which was increasingly ambitious for authoritative involvement in state power and whose ambitions these theories reflect. Any idea of a mass opting into a social contract to create the state is mythical and not based in any historical realities. This is not to deny that the mass of people may come to identify with their state and form a national community harmonious with the state – that indeed has been the major theme of this thesis. It is only to make clear that it was *not* the people who willed the state, but that the state emerged from political contingencies in which one of several power resources may have been a national identity.

This western European political theory has been bolstered by the general success of nation-building in Europe. Whatever the historical background, contemporary European states are also nations.²⁶ Thus,

for Europe at least, its political arrangement into nation-states seems appropriate and normatively validated. This perspective is further substantiated by the other states which also appear to be integrated national communities. In fact, the state-centrist accepts this European reality as the norm for territorial political arrangements, and projects it on to the total international environment both as the major level of analysis and as the universally applicable goal for all territorial arrangements. The world is thus divided into nation-states, normatively validated – or moving towards being normatively validated – by the voluntary social contracts of their citizens. And the major global interactions are those between these states.

Structuralism. The structuralist perspective in International Relations, however, posits that the most useful and the most real unit of analysis is that of class.²⁷ Moreover, it posits that the nation-state arose in western Europe as a power political superstructure to protect and bolster feudal, and then bourgeois, class interests. A major thrust of the structuralist critique, then, is that the nation-state emerged as the result of changing socio-economic forces and that the ongoing changes of these forces may equally well take the state out of existence. The state is a temporary political arrangement manifested by the power needs of the ruling bourgeois class. From the structuralist perspective, therefore, any approach which accepts the state as the major unit of analysis is merely a superficial description of shallow realities beneath which determining class forces are actually at work.

It is implicit in state-centrism that the major and transcending allegiance and identification is with, and ought to be with, the nation-state. In a tautological fashion, this in itself legitimates the state system. To the structuralist, however, this identification with the nation-state is only a temporary form of political false consciousness until true class interests are recognised – and class interests are international and not territorially bound. Dangerously, this academic debate between state-centrism and structuralism is reflected in the opposing ideologies in the East–West conflict and increasingly in the North–South divide.

Identification theory provides the possibility for a detached psychological standpoint which can bring a new perspective to bear on the competing paradigms. In providing this perspective it may act as a form of theoretical diplomat, a third party mediator, which, although not perhaps defusing the conflict between statism and structuralism, may work towards some form of holistic theoretical accommodation.

The major question which identification theory can ask is somewhat crude:

With which entity do the mass of people identify – nation-state or class?

In political terms, this is a crucial question because where the identification has been made, there lies the power resource of mass mobilisation. Chapter 3 discussed the elements which work towards nation-building. Identification theory can also be used to analyse the dynamics that work towards identification with class.

Following the basic tenets of identification theory, individuals make an identification when it is psychologically beneficial so to do. For a group identification there must, of course, be common symbols with which the identification can be made. The nation-state has a large array of high profile informal, and formal, symbols and social rituals which work towards nation-building. The nation-state also has an immensely well-resourced structure of governance which provides day-to-day communicated experience of the reality of the nation-state, e.g. postmen, police, state broadcasting, education system, flag and so on. Class, however, by its very nature, is diffuse. In a certain way, a class exists only as the socio-economic concept of social and political theorists rather than as a social group with a clearly defined identity – an identity which is self-consciously acknowledged and known by its constituents in the same way that nationality is.

It is possible here to ask another unobtrusive question:

What are the symbols of class which can be internalised?

We are not here referring to the symbols, rituals and mores that exist in every parochial culture. We are inquiring about symbols, rituals and mores which exist *internationally* – which can give reality, in terms of identification, to the notion of an international proletariat or an international bourgeoisie.

International working class. First, it is important to recall that, according to identification theory, identification occurs with either a beneficent actor/symbol or an actor/symbol which provides the appropriate behaviour in the face of threat.

Second, it is important to note that the working class is externally identifiable as a class which exists in a state of subservience or relative deprivation in contradistinction to that of the bourgeoisie. The middle class life style is *per se* materialistically superior. For proletarian identification to take place, some form of symbol, some form of identity-securing interpretive system, must mediate between the individual and her/his life reality. The individual must somehow or other interpret the reality of relative deprivation in such a manner that it is

psychologically enhancing to internalise it. Moreover, for there to be such an entity as an *international* proletariat, in the terms of identification theory, the internalised identity-securing interpretive system must be a shared international one.

There are, of course, *parochial* identity-securing interpretive systems which work with just such a purpose. The Hindu caste system is such a system, creating a secure cosmological place for the deprived. A similar religious perspective is displayed in the notion of 'It is God's will and divinely intended'. Equally, that poverty is a form of spiritual purity is another system that meets the requirement. None of these systems, however, is internationally applicable. The one interpretive system which comes closest to international acceptance is the Marxist one. According to this system, deprivation is not the will of a deity, but a temporary historical situation which will be transcended as the proletariat free themselves to take control of their own labour, production and the fruits thereof.

Certainly, Marxism provides a clear international, or universal, interpretation and revolutionary prescription. It competes, however, with the local, frequently spiritual or religious, interpretive systems. Even in continuing situations of gross relative deprivation, where the ideologies of spiritual acceptance or historical passivity have been broken down and there exists no identity-securing interpretive system to mediate between the deprived and their existential situation, an ideology of revolutionary action may still not be adopted. This is because revolution is a dangerous affair at the best of times. Revolutionary Marxism is not a safe interpretive system to adopt, for it prescribes a course of action that involves struggle against ruling bourgeois class forces and physical danger. Therefore if the individual has not *already* internalised the identity of being Marxist, there is no psychological benefit in taking a Marxist stance.

Furthermore, the proletarian individual may have made a prior identification with the nation-state, and the Marxist system may well conflict with this national identity. In fact, working class patriotism and nationalism – proletarian identification with the nation-state – has been a major theoretical thorn in the side of Marxism.²⁸ A classical Marxist analysis would state that class interests are bought off by materialistic promises, but this does not explain wars in which the poor are mobilised for conflict with *no* expectation of materialistic gain. In this context, patriotism – or the mobilised national identity dynamic – not religion, is the opium of the people. The fact is that mobilised nationalism and patriotism provide a benefit in terms of enhanced identity that completely ignores class and simple materialistic inter-

ests. This is not, however, to deny that vested bourgeois interests may deliberately manipulate the national identity dynamic. This can appear highly ironical as the reality of class, through gross relative deprivation, may impinge far more directly on the actual daily life of the mass citizenry than their nationality does.

Moreover, revolution that is purely Marxist has none of the reinforcing rituals of mass national mobilisation which occur when a state goes to war. Revolutionary warfare requires a far greater psychological commitment than the organised patriotic euphoria which can be mobilised for international conflict.

Marxism also, of course, competes with local political ideologies which promise, via one form of economic growth or another, an end to this deprivation.

Certainly this theoretical appearance of the lack of a coherent international proletarian class identity is borne out by historical realities. The strength, for example, of national identity has been such that class revolution has not occurred in waves of international solidarity, but has, in fact, always been defined by nation-state boundaries.²⁹ The Socialist International broke down into national loyalties in 1914, and a few years later the Russian Revolution, despite the expectations of the Bolsheviks, was not the beginning of an international revolution. In fact, successful proletarian revolutions have been mainly based in, or have successfully harnessed, the triggering symbols of the national identity dynamic – proletarian revolution has moved in tight concert with domestic *national* liberation. Perhaps the most dramatic example of this harnessing of the national identity dynamic to class revolution was Mao Tse Tung's use of the Japanese incursions to mobilise popular Chinese support behind the Chinese Communist Party.³⁰ Furthermore, in power after revolution, proletarian socialist states have demonstrated no more solidarity with each other than bourgeois ruled states. This is obviously so, for example, in the relations between the Soviet Union and the People's Republic of China.

Although the socio-economic situation of relative deprivation is a structurally consistent feature across the world system, it consists in fact of geographically isolated groups of people. They may indeed, at the time of writing, make up the majority of the planet's population, but they do not make up a group that shares, according to identification theory, a common identity. This is not to deny that they share a common reality of deprivation – or that they might not in the future come to share a common identity. The careful manipulation of international mass media and political symbols could evoke a coherent international working class. It is possible that the 'South' in the North-

South conflict represents the seed of just such an awareness. If and when the international proletariat comes to share a common ideology and, therefore, is mobilisable as one unit – for example, in international strike action or concerted revolution – then the international working class will be identifiable as a major actor.

International middle class. By definition, a middle class life style is one of relative materialistic advantage over that of the working class. The middle class possesses objects which in a very real sense enhance the quality of life. In a very real way these objects bring physical security in terms of control of the environment – heating, food, dwellings, clothes, social influence and so on. These objects not only supply human creature comforts, but they also provide real life survival enhancement in a world environment of deadly human competition and of potential, and frequently realised, dearth and disaster. To act to achieve enhanced physical security is 'natural'.³¹ In the struggle to achieve this enhanced physical security, however, social divisions appear, as certain individuals and groups do indeed succeed in enhancing their physical security whilst others do not.³²

As with the international proletariat, we need now to examine whether there is any symbolic system which interprets this materialistic advantage with which the international middle class universally identifies.

The rationale for such relative materialistic advantage might simply be one of 'might equalling right', in which case the identity-securing interpretive system which explains class advantage is one which simply states that some men are stronger than others – and that is the existential reality. The problem with such a brutal ideology is that it *per se* justifies, if not actually invites, revolution and threat from any individual or group who wishes to overthrow the current holders of the materialistic advantage. Various other more subtle and more generally acceptable interpretive systems have, however, evolved. Historically, the major ideology justifying class advantage is some form of spiritual or metaphysical cosmology in which the 'better off' are in some way 'divinely chosen'. The monarch or chief, for example, is a direct representative of deity, or a microcosmic reflection of macrocosmic divine principles. In turn, the monarch's or the chief's clan, relatives or associates have shared in this divine beneficence. There is also the alter ego of that set of spiritual interpretive systems which explain relative deprivation as being a matter of incarnational karma or divine will. To be materialistically advantaged is equally a matter of God's will or of one's spiritual position in the caste hierarchy.

The rise of capitalism and the beginnings of industrialisation,

however, brought the need for an interpretive system which accounted for the relatively huge numbers of people now entering the advantaged class. The Protestant Work Ethic surely provided just such an identity-securing interpretive system for western Europe: God wants you to work hard and if you work hard you will be rewarded with material benefits. Material benefits are a form of divine approval.³³ The rise of capitalism, however, also went hand-in-hand with an Enlightenment liberation from religious dogma and the beginning of a more secular and explicitly political interpretation of social realities. A Darwinian sense of progress and competitive evolution, and the phenomenal success of western capitalism, entwined to produce a more materialistically pragmatic ideology. Essentially, this middle class ideology states that everything is in the process of economic growth and general progress, the end result of which is that *everyone* will enjoy material advantages. Also inherent in this ideology is the notion that competition is healthy, normal and, moreover, the most efficient way of achieving rapid and sustained economic growth. Seen from the outside, this ideology is the whole western notion of modernisation. The Worldview is that economic growth is the macro reality and a personal *career* structure is the micro reality.

It is also possible to state that the higher up the class scale the individual rises, so, through higher education and international travel, she or he becomes increasingly socialised into a single high technology and *haute bourgeois* culture which transcends parochial national culture. To belong to the international middle class with its coherent ideology of material benefit, progress and economic growth is certainly identity enhancing.³⁴ This may not be obvious in the already industrialised areas of the globe, but it is clearly observable in developing areas where life style differences are extreme.

All this can be brought into clearer focus by asking the following question about members of a third world elite and bourgeoisie: Do they share a common identity with (a) their fellow nationals of all classes or (b) with an international middle class? There is a powerful tendency for members of a third world metropolitan elite with electricity, consumer goods, changes of clothing and vehicles, who are literate and, most of all, who have careers, to be culturally and socially at one with their class siblings across the globe; and to be culturally and socially alienated from their proletarian and peasant fellow countrypeople. The rhetoric of a third world elite may be nationalistic, but their norms, mores and general culture tend not to be parochial and indigenous, but international and bourgeois.

This identification with the international middle class is continuously reinforced, by ongoing contact with the visitors, long and short term, from first and second world countries, the vast majority of whom are middle class. These middle class visitors – diplomats and business people – moreover, display a life style that is particularly distinguished by high levels of disposable income. Visiting holidaymakers display the same disposable income and security enhancing control of their environment. This, in turn, is further reinforced by third world visitors to first world societies, where they experience a general life style which, compared to their own countries, appears to be thoroughly middle class for everyone. Deprivation and advantage are always relative.

It is possible, then, to state that, according to identification theory, an international middle class sharing a single culture does indeed exist. It possesses the same symbols, mores, behaviour patterns and ideology. It is interesting, then, to enquire how this shared class actually manifests itself in terms of action on the international stage. First, one should recall that those people who have made a general identification with the global middle class will seek to protect and enhance that identification. There will be, therefore, an unconscious psychological dynamic in middle class elites to adopt ideologies, strategies and cultural stances that enhance and defend middle class identity. This works, then, to create a dynamic in which bourgeois elite discourse and decision-making are determined by their international middle class identity rather than by their parochial national identity. This pattern is clearly discernible in the trading and commerce of international financiers, multinational executives and third world elites.

International trading, particularly as practised by third world elites, hardly begins to consider the interests of their mass of fellow citizens, or their local ecology; to do so would be to alienate themselves from the very culture which gives them security.³⁵ Their fellow citizens are fellows, then, purely in theory and not in the psychological fact of shared identity. In a very real sense then, the state may be used by third world elites simply as a tool for achieving their own materialistic interests, and as they have no sense of solidarity with their mass of countrypeople, their states are in no sense nation-states. Third world pockets of 'modernised' culture experience definite conflicting loyalties and interests in terms of nationality and class. This is not to say, however, that some, if not many, middle class third world citizens will not have a sense of national identity which overrides and transcends their international middle class identity.

To summarise:

International working class

- 1 There is only one identity-securing interpretive system for the international proletariat which approaches universality. This is Marxism.
- 2 Marxism competes, however, with:
 - a Parochial spiritual/religious interpretations of deprivation.
 - b The dangers of revolution.
 - c National identity.
 - d Political ideologies which promise a peaceful end to deprivation.
- 3 The working class acts as a single coherent culture only domestically and within national borders.

International middle class

- 1 There is one identity-securing interpretive system for the international middle class. This is an ideology of progress, competition and modernisation.
- 2 This ideology competes only with national identity.
- 3 The middle class acts as a single coherent culture both domestically and internationally.

This whole model is an attempt to produce an ideal construct and is flawed by the fact that the dividing line between the classes is not clear, particularly in the industrialised first and second worlds. Moreover, the classes within themselves are variegated.³⁶ Also, especially in the developed states where nation-building has been relatively successful, middle class individuals may change their loyalty from national to transnational middle class mores according to their instrumental needs. The model is, however, merely an attempt to produce an ideal type to aid analysis at the most general level.

Continuing at this general level, there are several other structural features which can be noted:

- 1 The majority of middle class (relatively advantaged) people live in the first and second industrialised worlds.
- 2 The majority of the proletariat (relatively deprived) live in the third industrialising world or the South.
- 3 Due to historical circumstances, nation-building tends to have been successful in the already industrialised, predominantly middle class states.

- 4 The middle class of the industrialised states, therefore, tends to have internalised symbols of national identity more than the middle class of developing states.
- 5 This means that middle class individuals of industrialised states may act according to an ideology that is either (a) of national identity or (b) of the international middle class.
- 6 This also means that middle class individuals of developing states will tend to act according to the culture of the international middle class rather than that of their nation.
- 7 There will, therefore, be a distinct tendency for middle class international decision-making to favour international middle class interests rather than national interests.³⁷

Identification theory thus provides a distinct analytical perspective for studying international class. The state-centrist can use this form of analysis as a non-ideological mode for getting to grips with the notion of class and the impingement of class interests on international relations. Via this mode of analysis, it can be perceived that international class interests, rather than the interest of the nation or the mass national population, do indeed, in certain situations, govern state decisions. The purely state-centric mode of analysing international politics has to expand to include class factors, but in so doing does not need to resort to a Marxian form of analysis with its implicit socialist determinism.

Equally, the structuralist can use this form of analysis as a tool for coming to terms with the fact that, regardless of the existential reality of class interests, working and middle-class individuals invest their states with a legitimacy and a loyalty that transcends class identity. The structuralist can acknowledge this psychological legitimacy of the state without the acceptance of western democratic and capitalist norms.