

**Nationalism in
International Context**

**5. International Relations Theory II -
National Identity and Foreign Policy**

30 October 2012

National Identity

- Both a **collective representation** and a **social identity** of individuals in a nation (e.g., H. Taifel)
- Set of particular attributes make up national ID
 - ‘**Ethnic**’ elements: ancestry, heroes, myths, memories, landscape, religion, ethno-culture, ethno-language, ethnic homeland, ethno-history
 - ‘**Civic**’ elements: legal, philosophical, political, economic, state-symbolic, state-cultural and state-historical (i.e., war record)
- A person’s sense of **self-worth** is influenced by the perceived status of his/her nation:
 - Pride, confidence, self-doubt, shame, all can be produced by national standing.

Rise of State Nationalism

- Foreign policy is predicated on the existence of **‘us versus them’**: a distinction between our state and foreign states.
- Without a **national interest** to serve, government would have less **legitimacy**.
- The myth of ‘us versus them’ helps **mobilize the citizenry** to patriotism.
- 19th century: industrialized states **increase citizens’ duties**: taxes, serving national economy, military service.
- As democracy grew, this increased burden had to be **voluntary**.
- Patriotic mobilization achieved by **state-nationalism**: reinforced the symbols and myths motivating national solidarity and the claim to national sovereignty.

[ctnd.] Rise of State Nationalism

- Does not have to displace ethnic elements
- Growth of economy, democracy, bureaucracy, state, military
- Greater density of state and private sector
 - **New state symbols:** i.e. autobahn, Air Lanka, NHS, CN Tower, Union Buildings, Olympic Team, Air Force
 - **New private symbols:** Rolls-Royce, Ford T-Bird, Ferrari....

National Pride

- Qualitative vs. Quantitative nationalism
 - **Qualitative nationalism**
distinct traditions; culture; origins
 - **Quantitative nationalism**
establishing the nation as ‘bigger;’ ‘better’
- Inter-state (‘international’) competition
 - Size and military might, but also: GNP, liberty, equality, ‘modernity’, moral virtue, technological superiority, sporting prowess, cultural products, arms race, etc.
 - Could lead to the acquisition of nuclear warheads, missiles and other weapons for **prestige reasons** rather than practical security.

CANADA'S WONDER OF THE WORLD

NOTRE MERVEILLE DU MONDE

WELCOME

BIENVENUE

CANADA'S NATIONAL TOWER

The World's Tallest Building 553M (1,815FT)

LA TOUR NATIONALE DU CANADA

L'édifice le plus élevé au monde 553M (1,815 PL)



ENGLISH

FRANÇAIS

National Identity + Foreign Policy: Qualitative Aspects

- A qualitative connection between nations with **similar cultures** (Russia-Serbia-Greece)
- Might be **civilization or smaller aggregation** (pan-African, pan-Arab, North American, etc.)
- Could be **historical comity or enmity** (UK-Canada; France-Senegal vs. Greece-Albania, Japan-China)
- Past **memories of grandeur** and a desire to return to a geopolitical 'golden age': pre-Trianon Hungary, Ottoman Turkey, USSR, British Empire, Islamic world domination.

National Identity + Foreign Policy: Quantitative (Self-Esteem) Aspects

- **INSECURE NATIONAL IDENTITY** → Aggression
(Iraq 1990, Georgia post-1991)
- **SELF-CONFIDENT NATIONAL IDENTITY** → Assertiveness
(China)
- **SENSE OF VICTIMHOOD/ENTITLEMENT** → Aggression
(Germany, c. 1933-45)
- **SENSE OF MISSIONARY ZEAL** → Aggression
(USA, France c. 1806-15)
- **SENSE OF MORAL SUPERIORITY** → As peacekeeping ‘middle power’ (Canada, Norway)
- **SMALLER NATIONS SEEKING PROMINENCE** → On world stage, joining larger/more prestigious alliances/bodies; or pooling sovereignty
(Benelux in EU, UK in Coalition, Canada in Empire).

‘National’ Interest and National Identity

- **Realism** thinks in terms of states maximizing ‘national interests,’ i.e. **state interest**
- This quantitative success or failure has **identity implications** because social psychology emphasises link between (state) performance, (and citizens’) identity and positive self-esteem
- Qualitative national identity is
 - part of the national interest, but so, too,
 - national interest reflects back on national identity.

France: Gaullist pro-Europeanism

- Seeks to reclaim French cultural predominance of 18th-19th c.
- Seeks to challenge Anglo-Saxon hegemony of 19th-20th c.
- Sees Anglo-Saxon west as ‘other’
- De Gaulle positions France at the heart of a Europe that includes Russia and is flanked by Anglo-Saxon West and Chinese East
- **Foreign Policy Results**
 - 1963 crisis over UK entry into EEC: De Gaulle seeks to block
 - Gaullist tradition: Assertive foreign policy, seeks sphere of influence in ex-colonies, seeks independence (‘thumbing of nose’) from US/UK.

German pro-European Idealism

- Nazi period discredits nationalism
- Cosmopolitan as opposed to Gaullist spirit
- Desire for influence and self-respect without nationalism
- Less anti-Anglo-Saxon due to post-WWII (witness different attitudes toward English as language)
- More truly cosmopolitan than French pro-Europeanism
- **Foreign Policy Results**
 - Euro-Federalist, Euro-Expansionist to the East.

Smaller Nations: Benelux

- History of neutrality and fear of larger nations
- History of pooling sovereignty in alliances
- Only chance of agency is through a larger unit
- Identity is less significant in absence of larger blocks
- Belgium and Luxembourg lack clear linguistic or religious markers of nationhood unlike say Germany or France
- **Foreign Policy Results**
 - Support for Qualified Majority Voting in EU.

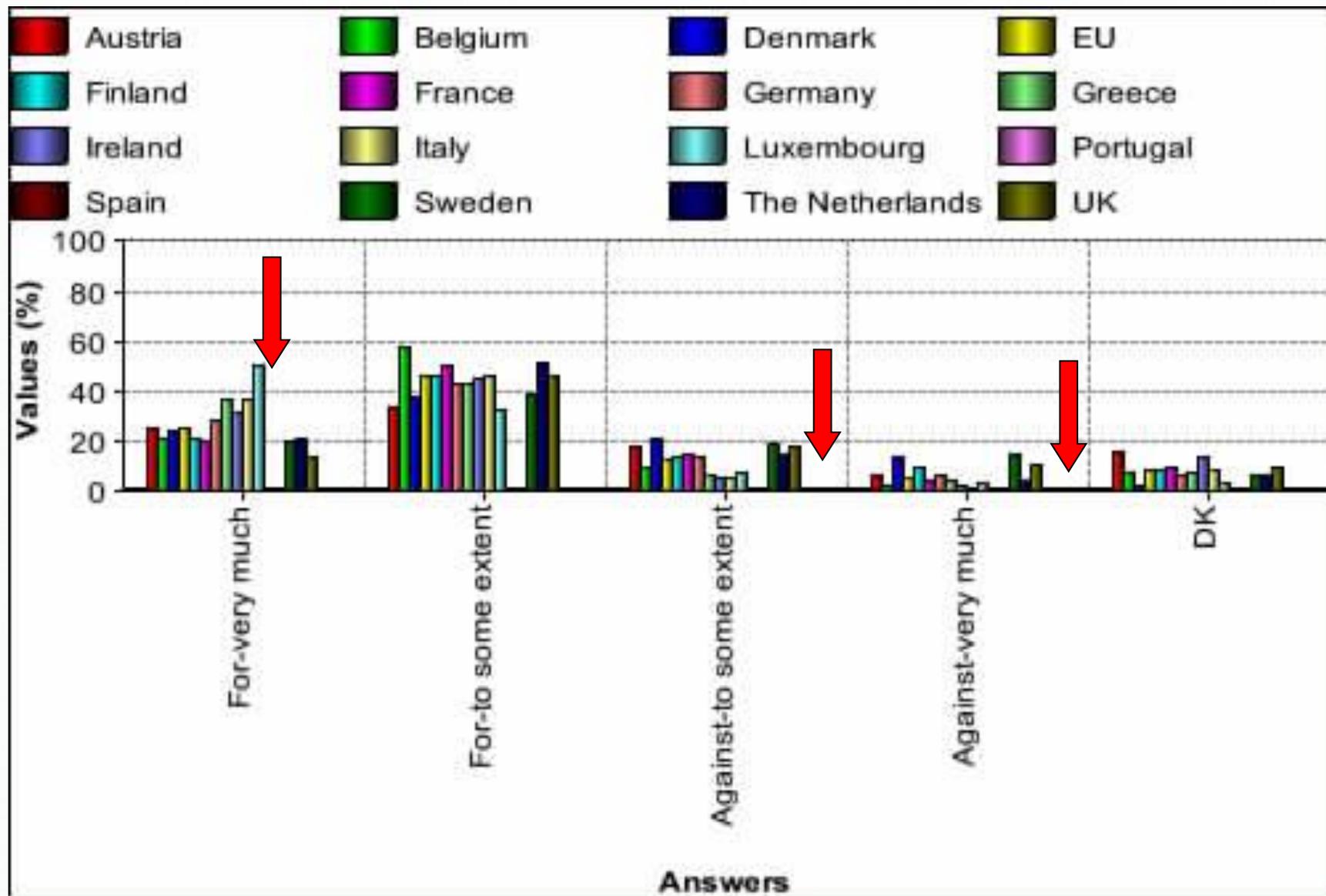
United Kingdom

- Centuries of war and competition with France to 1904
- Wars against Germany since 1914
- Long History of ‘Splendid Isolation’ and Offshore Balancing of Power in Europe
- Pride in war record, liberty, democracy, industrial capitalism, US connection, empire
- Historical-Cultural Link to US & Commonwealth
- **Foreign Policy Results:**
 - Euro-Skepticism
 - US presidents are greeted in London with more pomp and circumstance than French or German leaders.

Wallace (1991) on UK

- Old pride-raising facts are largely gone. Britain is no longer in the first rank in:
 - Industry (largely de-industrialized)
 - Military and civil high technology (no more)
 - World's reserve currency (no more)
 - Highest GNP (no more)
 - Large merchant navies (drastically reduced);
 - Strongest democracy (all of Europe is democratic);
 - The best developed welfare state (poor by standards of France, Germany, Sweden, Norway)
 - Should be enthusiastic Europeans!
- BUT, the memory of old glories persists! To change foreign policy, must change national identity.

Views of Unification (1995)



Psychology, Nationalism, IR

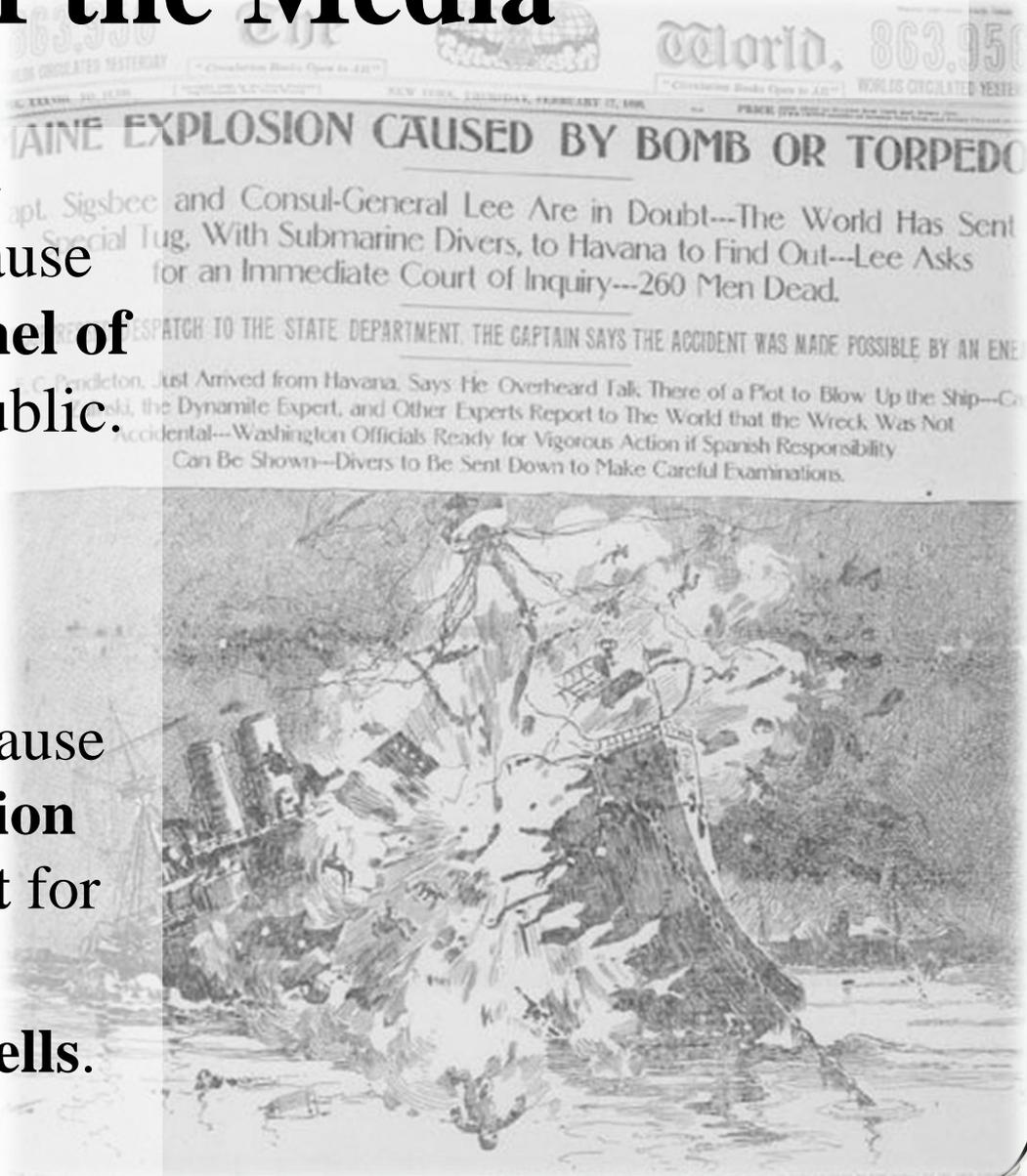
- W. Bloom, 1990, *Personal Identity, National Identity and International Relations* (CUP)
 - Psychological analysis of identity processes yet to be used in study of International Relations;
 - **‘National identity dynamic’**
 - Mass mobilization to “secure, protect and enhance” national identity;
 - Produced by credible information of either
 - (1) a threat to national identity;
 - (2) an opportunity to enhance national identity.

Domestic Nationalism and Foreign Policy

- Foreign policy acts can “trigger, **manipulate**, appropriate - or **be manipulated** by” the national ID dynamic (p.80).
- The national identity dynamic is the **widest possible type** of mobilization within a state.
- Constant **domestic competition** between politicians to appropriate the national identity dynamic (p.81).
- Nation-building is a **continuous necessity**, to heal divisions.
- Political **integration and stability** are served by national mobilization.
- foreign policy can be dictated by **domestic political demands** more than by the international issues at stake.

Role of the Media

- Mass media influence the national ID dynamic because they are the **major channel of communication** to the public.
 - Either state controlled or ‘independent’;
 - But both manipulate international news, because the **national mobilization creates a large market** for ideas and for products;
 - National **chauvinism sells**.



National Identity Can Prompt State to Act Against Own 'Interest'

- **Democratisation** can release **pressure** to stir up the people
- Can lead to **nationalistic politicians** and release popular **jingoism**
- **National identity** comes into play in **foreign policy** decisions
- E.g., French Revol. press screams for war; **popular fervour** pushes reluctant UK cabinet to Crimea war (1853)
- German **showdown** with France **over Morocco**, 1905, 1911, and later with election of Nazis in Weimar
- Argentina, **adventurous rhetoric**, democratised popular press, led to disastrous invasion of Falklands, 1982.

Prizel's Typology

National ID and Foreign Policy

- I. Prizel, 2003, *National Identity and Foreign Policy* (CUP)
- Foreign policies that affirm national identity can be supported even when they are known to cause hardship
- **Control of the collective memory** can shift between national elites
- Can result in a **redefinition** of the nation and hence a new perception of its national interests
- National ID + perceived national interests as IR dynamics are **amenable to** analysis by **constructivist theory**
- **5 types** of national identity, each with different foreign policy implications.

International Context Shapes National Identity

- National IDs form through interactions with ‘the Other’, stimulating psychological identity processes.
- Most national **identities originate in conflict** with neighbours.
- These interactions generate myths of common (national) cultural or historical traits.
- **Wars provide foundation myths** for peoples (Hungarians, Poles, US, Brazil, even Australia/NZ)
- Can lead to reproduction of previous patterns of engagement with ‘Other’ (i.e. Greece-Turkey, UK-France ?).

Foreign Policy + Domestic Pressures

- National ID: primary link connecting **individual - society**, and **society - international environment**.
- Foreign policy
 - Both **constitutes and protects** national identity.
 - **Elites' tool** for mobilizing masses, producing solidarity and legitimizing own rule.
- Case: US militarism?
 - Very diverse population
 - Military adventures unite across ethnic lines
 - McCarthyism, Goldwater: Protestant-Catholic
 - War on Terror: White-Black-Hispanic.

1) ID Insecurity + Foreign Policy: E.g., Eastern Europe, Mexico

- Influenced by foreign culture or empire (i.e. Germany, Eastern Europe, then Asia, Africa...)
- Cultural **defensiveness**, *ressentiment*
- Search for noble origins
- Motivates foreign policies disproportionately devoted to reaffirming national identity and independence
- National identity embraces **resentment** against world powers; touchiness vis-à-vis neighbours
- **Cultural policies** towards minorities, or interpretations of history can rankle neighbours (Japan v. China, Romania v. Hungary, Czechoslovakia v. Germany).

2) *Ressentiment* part II: The (ex-)Colonies

- **Ex-Colonies** (i.e. post-1948 India, Muslim Middle East) and their Western-trained elites can also nurse *ressentiment* v. West
- **Insecurity** v. West **can shape attitudes** toward EU, global institutions, peace initiatives, liberal democracy
- **Rejection** of West **can influence drift** to Soviet bloc, or nonaligned movements, or pan-Arab, pan-African and other regional blocs.

3) Secure Identity and Foreign Policy

- Political nationalisms, not ethnic
- Self-confident, sense of **superiority**
- Universalist; imperial rather than particularist
- **Outward-looking**, hence imperialistic
- Sometimes providentialist
- UK ‘white man's burden’ in the colonies, v.v Belgium (1832)
- US ‘**manifest destiny**’ (1846-8, 1898, etc.)
- Choice: ‘little England’ v. Empire, American isolationism v. expansion. Ethnic v. Messianic nationalism.

4) Declining Powers, National Prestige and Foreign Policy

- France: invades Algeria, 1830, to bolster domestic popularity of monarch. Expands settlement there in 1871 after losing in war.
- **France: Reluctant to withdraw** from Vietnam and Algeria, 1950s, Gaullism 1960s, delays NATO membership
- Portugal: low prestige leads to reluctance to withdraw from Mozambique and Angola until 1975
- Spain: loss of Cuba and colonies in 1898 spawns **soul-searching and fascism.**

5) Theocratic Nationalism

- Czarist Russia, Iran → beware of Prizel's often erroneous analysis of Iranian national identity.
- National identity based in distinctiveness of religion
 - Another main source remains 'Iranian civilization.'
- Defined as **defender of the faith**; against degenerate versions of the faith and secularism.
- Claiming a **universal messianic role** based on theocratic ideology; defends regime's legitimacy.
- Pursues sphere of influence: regional messianic expansionism in foreign policy, based on religious national mission?

National ID-Foreign Policy Shifts

- **National memory** is a **resource** from which leaders can select certain paths. Almost any lesson can be drawn.
- **France:** After humiliating Indochina and Algeria defeats, identity **change** → civilizing empire to part of Europe.
- **Iran: post-revolution**, ditches Indo-Aryan ‘Western’ uniqueness, **foreign policy shift** ‘East’ to Muslim world.
- Have new British leaders adjusted British ID from Churchillian myth of pan-Anglo-Saxon **Atlanticism** towards a **European ID?**
- “When the **custodian** of a national identity **changes**, so do **perceptions** of the past and, consequently, the parameters of the national interest” (p.35).
- **Feedback** process:
National identity → **Foreign policy** → **National identity**.