

## PARADIGM WARFARE: THE WAY OF THE FUTURE FOR IR\*

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*Why is paradigm warfare necessary? Do groups of warring theories help scholars in promoting clarification and reconstruction, or do they balk at change because it implies amending, or even rejecting core tenets of IR theory? This article argues that classical realism currently runs the risk of degenerating into a regressive research program unless it can find new sources of explanatory power regarding state behaviour. One such source is found in the three-part combination of constructivism, strategic culture and identity studies, all of which have the potential to shed light on the complex world of preference formation, policy choice and actor behaviour, a world until now, that has rejected ideational-based theory. As this article demonstrates, such revision is perfectly feasible and more than a little surprising: culture is found to have much to say regarding strategy, while key tenets of Morgenthau reveal national identity as a driving force behind policy choice. Following such revelations, this article then explores how the burgeoning new area of constructivist-culturalist theory sheds new light on questions of national interest, state preference and policy formulation, illustrating that the tools of context, culture and constitutiveness operate with equal if not greater explanatory power to the traditional tools of materiality, structure and causality. Ultimately, culture needs to be added to the battle colours of constructivism in order to advance the cause of a realist-led theory of state behaviour that operates on both endogenous and exogenous levels of explanation. Cultural imperatives contain the power to inform both the identity of the collective self as well as determining its social and strategic preferences; identity represents the ability of the national community to form self reflective knowledge regarding unit preferences, knowledge that works both constitutively and causally in affecting the social nature of policy construction. National identity is then revisited for its potential contribution to classical realism as a means of augmenting formerly state-based focii with concepts of the nation. It is time for identity studies and the whole panoply of constructivist-culturalist arguments to be set in revisionist opposition to the unchallenged supremacy of classical realism in order to continue the questing spirit of paradigm wars so vital to the renewing spirit of IR.*

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## INTER-PARADIGM BATTLES

Is a little war is good thing? Physical destruction and social strife arising from wars of nations and beliefs is an abhorrent occurrence. However, a war of ideas that pits paradigms against each other in stalwart validation of a series of competing ontologies is an absolute necessity. Without inter-paradigm rivalry, without the discordance of incommensurate concepts and the clear areas of commonality laid bare, the conceptual and analytical work required in establishing viable progress within individual research programmes cannot take place without such warfare. The discipline of International Relations itself will find its ontological perspective swiftly foreshortened, its epistemological methods blunted and its future one of diminishing returns, rather than increased options.

A war of ideas has been waged in IR for the past hundred years, echoing the strife of underlying philosophies that stretch back two millennia or more. The allegorical 'battlefield' is the ontological sphere of differing perspectives of the natural and social world. The foes advance: rationalist forces vie against reflexivist operatives, both sides brandishing differing methodologies plucked from various decades of research and implicit authority. Most recently, IR 'warfare' has seen the forces of positivistic determinants and quantifiable factors spar against a host of social and constructed factors whose battle colours remain omnipresent in the fray. While regarded by many as confusing, unnecessary and even detrimental, the inter-paradigm war – more politely referred to as a 'debate' – between realist, pluralist, structuralist theories and their foundational positivist and post-positivist epistemologies is a crucial and requisite element in ensuring the survival of the discipline. As this article makes clear, inter-paradigm warfare promotes the clarification, revision, reconstruction or even rejection of the core tenets of IR theory and is a necessary exercise in ensuring the viability of the discipline.

The realists have long held the field of battle in this war, assisted by a distinct paucity of realist casualties, and whose survivors in the form of applicable concepts are remarkable for their longevity.<sup>1</sup> Emblazoned with ancient names resplendent in polished authority, the realists count Thucydides, Sun Tzu, Machiavelli, Thomas Hobbes, E.H. Carr and Hans Morgenthau among their captains. However, the realist prescription of anarchic society reveals a silent horde of casualties amassed in the actual lived events of state-centric induced strife that have marked the international system of states since the late Middle Ages. Liberal theories are something of a reactive force; liberal warrior poets from Kant and J.S. Mill to Woodrow Wilson and a host of present-day institutionalists and pluralists have tackled the materialist concepts of state-centrism from a social and

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<sup>1</sup>The *loci classicus* range from ancients like Sun Tzu and Thucydides to more recent themes on older variations, including Kenneth Waltz. A very brief role call could include N. Machiavelli, *The Prince*, Q. Skinner, (ed.), Cambridge, Cambridge University Press, 1988, E. H. Carr, *The Twenty Years' Crises 1919-1939: An Introduction to the Study of International Relations*, London: Macmillan, 1946, H. Morgenthau, *Politics Among Nations: The Struggle for Power and Peace*, New York, [1948] 1955, K. Waltz, *Theory of International Politics*, Reading: Mass., Addison-Wesley, 1979, along with an articulate defence of realism in R. Keohane, *Neorealism and its Critics*, New York, Columbia University Press, 1986.

cooperative perspective and have fought hard to dispel the semblance of reactive rather than active agency that characterises the explanatory power of the liberal battle plan.

Along with the contributions of theories of international political economy, the forces of constructivism are the most recent addition to the inter-paradigm battlefield. At first sight, the constructivists appear rather ill-equipped to engage in the exhaustive process of an inter-paradigm battle. Within their own ranks, the standards of constructivists are not uniform: they advance upon realist and liberal forces bearing a multitude of inter-disciplinary ensigns of sociology, anthropology, cultural, colonial and linguistic studies. More importantly, while constructivist theories are arguably mounting a visible, even viable attack upon a central portion of the war-strewn field, but because of their mingled, uneven composition, this attack is not a direct or even flanking manoeuvre upon any one of the main contenders. Constructivists have appeared upon the IR battlefield in camouflage, operating in connection with the social concepts propounded by varying liberal forces but also functioning as an attaché to the systemic and largely exogenous concepts launched by realists. Within the heterogeneous camp of constructivist theories, the sociological language and concepts of culture and identity remain loose and unarticulated, a short-lived attempt to 'fit new data into existing categories'.<sup>2</sup> With little formal articulation of a battle plan, the constructivists catapult these and other concepts bravely into the paradigmatic battlefield. Being only partially constructed, constructivist missiles frequently miss the target, or worse, break up on impact against realist or pluralist theories and are thus deemed largely ineffective.

While paradigm warfare can never, indeed *should* never end, the battle plan for IR requires a comprehensive revision. While each camp advances upon the other in earnest pursuit of the same objective, they remain discrete forces. Constructivism has successfully engaged the forces of realism either cooperatively or conflictually by 'concentrat[ing] on explaining the behavioural outcomes' associated with power and interest.<sup>3</sup> As such, constructivism can now be accepted as a distinct and viable paradigm in its own right rather than a loose amalgam of theories, capable of pitching its own paradigmatic battles based upon tenets that combine pluralist and realist concepts. Complementing the composition of the constructivist paradigm are the forces of culturalist theories, which examines how evolving cultural characteristics (generally at the level of the nation-state) affect its endogenous composition, motivation and behaviour. Within the broad gamut of culturalist studies, the approaches of both strategic culture and identity studies appear to have redeemed both culture and its specific attribute of identity from a formerly residual role as a subjective factor of no consequence in the operationalisation of state behaviour.<sup>4</sup> Culture as a newly- identified analytic tool now appears an exceptionally fecund avenue of explanatory power regarding the constitutive and causal nature of actor outcomes; in essence, culture 'provides the context in which

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<sup>2</sup>I. Miller, 'A Changed World?', *International Studies Review*, Volume 4, Issue 1, Spring 2002, pp. xvii-xviii.

<sup>3</sup>T. Farrell, 'Constructivist Security Studies: Portrait of a Research Program', *International Studies Review*, Volume 4, Issue 1, Spring 2002, pp. 52..

<sup>4</sup> D. J. Elkins and R. E. B. Simeon, 'A Cause in Search of its Effect, or What does Political Culture Explain', *Comparative Politics*, Volume 11, Issue 2, 1979, p. 142.

actors operate, thereby constituting and giving meaning to material factors'.<sup>5</sup> Strategic culture was first articulated in the late 1970s by Jack Snyder in a document dealing with the nuclear element of Soviet strategic culture; perhaps a surprisingly realist, hard-power pedigree for a definition that saw culture as 'the sum total of ideas, conditional emotional responses and patterns of habitual behaviour that members of a national strategic community have achieved through instruction and imitation'.<sup>6</sup> Culture clearly had had the power to inform not only the identity of the collective self, but also determine its preferences, by operating as '[a]n integrated system of symbols (e.g. argumentation structures, languages, analogies, metaphors) which acts to establish pervasive and long lasting preferences'.<sup>7</sup>

Culturalist theories also count among their youthful ranks the component of identity. As this article commits itself to a reappraisal of the role of national identity as an analytical feature that can viably augment classical realist theories, a definition of this notorious eliding concept is in order. National identity broadly entails the series of recognisable images and narratives springing from the corps of history, ideology, national myth, culture, norms, social ideas, practices and constitutive rules which, via collective intentionality translates into broad cultural, institutional and political forms of legitimacy and authority yielding a sharply defined sense of the civic-cultural self.<sup>8</sup> Cultural studies and identity in particular turn their gaze to the internal contents of the national state, focusing upon the endogenous roots of nation-state foundation and authority, and in particular, those domestic cultural and institutional structures which visibly 'constitute or shape the basic identities of states', and thereby operate as distinct attributes or 'features of state 'actorhood'.<sup>9</sup>

The concepts of culture and identity are clearly attached to the broader forces of constructivism, but also exist as a distinct set of theories capable of analysing the content, context and causality of preference choice, policy construction and even state behaviour. While still in its formative stages, both culture and identity are, as Yosef Lapid argues, 'staging a dramatic comeback in social theory and practice' to the extent that the 'interdisciplinary content for these concepts is in full swing' by participants at either end of the battlefield who 'seem genuinely convinced that the stakes are far from negligible'.<sup>10</sup>

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<sup>5</sup>S. Poore, 'Strategic Culture' in J. Glenn, D. Howlett and S. Poore (eds.), *Neorealism Versus Strategic Culture*, Aldershot, UK, Ashgate Publishing Ltd., 2004, p. 48.

<sup>6</sup>J. Snyder, 'The Soviet Strategic Culture: Implications for Limited Nuclear Operations, Santa Monica, RAND, 1977, p. 8.

<sup>7</sup>A. I. Johnston, 'Thinking about Strategic Culture', *International Security*, Volume 19, Issue 4, 1995, p. 46.

<sup>8</sup>'Collective intentionality' is defined by G. J. Ruggie in his article 'What Makes the World Hang Together? Neo-utilitarianism and the Social Constructivist Challenge', *International Organization*, Volume 52, No., 4, Autumn 1998, p. 873, as the ongoing role or 'institutional foundation of all social life' in linking broad cultural patterns to forms of discrete agency.

<sup>9</sup>Jepperson, Wendt and Katzenstein, 'Norms, Identity, and Culture in National Security', in Katzenstein, *op. cit.*, p. 58.

<sup>10</sup>Y. Lapid, 'Culture's Ship: Returns and Departures in International Relations Theory' in Y. Lapid and F. Kratochwil, (eds.), *The Return of Culture and Identity in IR Theory*, Boulder, Colorado, Lynne Rienner Publishers, 1996, p. 3. See also S. H. Bremer, 'Interdisciplinary Competition for the Concept of Culture: What's at Stake?', *The Centennial Review*, 1990, Volume 34, pp. 109- 115.

Two points will now be advanced in order to augment the requisite clarity of the IR battle plan. First, that the concepts of culture and identity are necessary additions to the inter-paradigm debate, and are crucial additions in promoting the successful future of IR as a discipline of conceptual latitude within the wider traditions of socio-political research. As a brief revision of the works of Morgenthau reveals, culture and identity already possess a quiet history in works of classical realism, but can exercise still greater power as a sophisticated extension of traditional realist concepts. Second, the category of identity is weighed in the balance and found capable of operating as a revised form of realism. The central role of this 'revisionist realism' is the ability to problematise both objective and subjective aspects of the nation-state within a form of analysis recognisable and workable to most social scientists. Identity represents a new addition to the ability of IR paradigms to wage war, for it sharpens previously reified and under-analysed understandings of the central actor of the discipline: that of the nation-state unit. The possibilities of identity as an innovative form of state analysis is considerable: focusing on both social and material aspects of cohesion, interest, power and policy that form and maintain the nation-state unit. Identity is also capable of bringing increased explanatory power and broad epistemological base to the strictures of preference and policy choice. Such a definition is required in the daily struggle to *refine* rather than reify the tools of individual paradigms which operate within IR both as metanarratives of theory and as structures denoting political practice utilised by practitioners dealing with the quotidian events of current political reality. In the following three sections, national identity will be explored for its revisionist contributions to classical realism; evidence to this effect will then be examined in a brief re-reading of the writings of Morgenthau, and a constructivist-culturalist approach suggested to augment the battle camps of the present inter-paradigm debate.

### **MAPPING REALISM ANEW: CULTURE AND IDENTITY**

Culture and identity are not mounting a covert attack designed to undermine or uproot chestnuts of realist theory. Rather, when viewed as a form of 'revisionist realism', the two concepts contribute visibly to a range of core realist understandings. As Finnemore and Sikkink argue, because '[t]he utilities of actors could be specified as social or ideational as easily as they can be material', identity and culture as ideational concepts contribute viably to the realist-derived state-based precepts of political modernity by suggesting a range of internal motivations at work in articulating the unity, interests and policy behaviour of the state unit.<sup>11</sup> National identity recognises the objective existence of the political unit, its identity and policy-based behaviour (all recognisable precepts of realism) but it also emphasises the lack of any ontological status assigned to the content of any such categories 'apart from the various acts which constitute [their] reality'.<sup>12</sup>

The language of identity theory emanates from the symbolic interactionist and functionalist modes of description found within sociology, providing broad foundation to

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<sup>11</sup>M. Finnemore and K. Sikkink, 'International Norm Dynamics and Political Change', *International Organization*, Volume 52, No. 4, Autumn 1998, p. 910.

<sup>12</sup>D. Campbell, *Writing Security: United States Foreign Policy and the Politics of Identity*, Minneapolis, University of Minnesota Press, 1992, p. 9.

describe attributes ranging from military capability to cultural cohesion.<sup>13</sup> Further, national identity possesses an ability to analyse both instrumental (genetic) and primordial (generic) facets of the forces of nation-state construction found within the ideologies of nationalism by which nations in general are constructed and which contribute to the wider socio-political philosophies used to determine the rise of the state.<sup>14</sup> The marriage of such forces remains present in the majority of modern nation-state units, visible not only in facets of their identity but also in aspects of preference and interest articulation. Ultimately, identity theory promotes a category of idea-based analysis by which to grasp both the objective and subjective elements of the nation-state unit including its internal, cultural nuances and the broader characteristics of geography and population.

There are several viable reasons why identity theory proves vital in realising a fuller theory of the state than classical realist concepts have traditionally allowed. First, identity theory defines 'social groups on the basis of mostly territorial criteria', thus retaining the *form* of the nation state.<sup>15</sup> Second, identity is based upon the discourses of self-representation arising from the concepts of sovereignty and statehood, thus preserving the content of the nation state. Third, the social and historical content of those discourses engenders 'visions of just political and social orders', thus ensuring the *goal* of the nation state.<sup>16</sup> Fourth, the cultural nuances of identity arising from the forces of literature, drama, media, education and history foster civilisational and emotive representations that are exclusively endogenous in nature, which provide both discrete meanings to the previous three categories, and a formidable method by which to deconstruct them with regard to their policy-based behaviour. In other words, the category of *identity* operationalises the motivations behind all such influences because it alone reflects and connects the 'deep roots in our shared current condition.'<sup>17</sup>

Operating as a focal point between the civic imperatives of the state unit and the cultural imperatives of the national unit, the category of collective identity sheds light upon the incongruent conflation found in general references to the 'nation' and the

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<sup>13</sup>The classic text in this area is H. Blumer, *Symbolic Interactionism: Perspective and Method*, Englewood Cliffs, NJ, Prentice-Hall, 1969. A more recent text is that of John P. Hewitt, *Self and Society: A Symbolic Interactionist Social Psychology*, University of Massachusetts at Amherst, Allyn & Bacon, 2003.

<sup>14</sup>Instrumental and primordial perspectives are crucial to identity construction and thus nation-state instantiation. Anthony Smith describes primordialism as 'the idea that nations exist from time immemorial, and that nationalists must reawaken them... to take their place in a world of nations.' A. Smith, *Theories of Nationalism*, First Edition, London, Duckworth, 1971, p. 20. See also works by E. Gellner and E. Renan. Instrumentalism differs considerably, representing identity as 'a matter of attitudes, perceptions and sentiments that are necessarily fleeting and mutable, varying with the particular situation of the subject', allowing nationalist initiatives to be used 'instrumentally' to further individual or collective interests', K. Deutsch, *Nationalism and Social Communication*, Cambridge, Mass, MIT Press, 1966, p. 22. See also works by E. Hobsbawm and H. Seton-Watson. The suggestion of genetic/generic forms of identity comes from P. Allott, *The Health of Nations: Society and Law beyond the State*, Cambridge, Cambridge University Press, 2002, pp. 109-113.

<sup>15</sup>T. Risse, et. al., 'To Euro or Not to Euro? The EMU and Identity Politics in the European Union', *European Journal of International Relations*, London, Sage Publications, 1999, p. 155.

<sup>16</sup>Ibid.

<sup>17</sup>Jepperson, Wendt and Katzenstein, 'Norms, Identity, and Culture in National Security', in P. Katzenstein, (ed.), *The Culture of National Security: Norms and Identity in World Politics*, New York, Columbia University Press, 1996, p. 57,

'state'. Identity provides terminological accuracy and conceptual clarity by promoting a methodological convergence between the two 'seemingly divergent trends in the study of power and culture' entailed in references to state units, rather than national units. Identity capably refers to the forms of collective self-reference and subsequent agency that takes place at broad levels of the general populace and popular culture and takes action at specific levels of the political elite; it does so by appointing both cultural and 'politico-jural' categories that promote a broader, convergent definition of the construction, definition and preference-based choices of the national state.<sup>18</sup> In other words, because 'collective *identities* appear to define the range of (economic and political) *choices* which actors regard as in their interest', identity is crucial in determining both the forms of statehood and methods of statecraft at work in the host of modern nation-state units, and the constitutive and causal forces of their identity-based preferences within a given policy environment.<sup>19</sup>

The methodology by which identity theory is linked to traditional realism to produce a new 'revisionist' approach is based on three understandings. First, correspondent with traditional realist definitions, the 'national state remains the pre-eminent unit, visibly sustaining 'its historically dominant role as an arbiter of control, violence, order and organization for those whose identities are being transformed by world forces.'<sup>20</sup> Second, while a central political actor, the national state also represents a distinctly social entity endowed with the ability to constitute forms of sociality within its political boundaries and thereby producing a set of meanings peculiarly 'national' in ilk.<sup>21</sup> Third, as Morgenthau alludes, the state possesses an endogenous framework of cultural forces which extend in their agency of influence from specific cultural understandings to unit preference and system-wide behavioural outcomes. National identity allows one to pursue the culturalist core of constructivism to its logical conclusion and deduce a more specific range of identity 'enacted' in the choice of interest and operable in the environment of policy-making from a broad understanding of socio-cultural forces that actively characterise the nation-state. National identity pertains not only to key modes of unit-based self-reference but supplies the cohesiveness and motivation that instantiate a considerable portion of national preference, which by extension, allow legislative and decision-making structures to construct and 'enacted' social mores, traditions, laws and policy, all as an extension of national identity. As Philip Allott argues, national identity functions as a force of 'self ordering' at the level of

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<sup>18</sup>T. Wilson and H. Donnan, 'Nation, state and identity at international borders', in T. Wilson and H. Donnan (eds.), *Border identities: Nation and state at international frontiers*, Cambridge, Cambridge University Press, 1998, p. 2.

<sup>19</sup>T. Risse, et. al., *op. cit.*, p. 177, emphasis added.

<sup>20</sup>T. Wilson and H. Donnan, *op. cit.*, p. 2.

<sup>21</sup>Likening the state to a solid vessel with fluid contents aids in regarding it as an entity both stable and changeable. As Katzenstein argues, '[t]he state is a social actor. It is embedded in social rules and conventions that constitute its identity and the reasons for the interests that motivate actors.' Katzenstein, *op. cit.*, p. 23. This first statement by Katzenstein concretises both the state and its attributes of identity as unchanging social categories. The second statement reveals what is changeable about the nature of state sociality: namely the emergence of rules and norms that consolidate an identity from which interests and the 'motivation' of unit-based behaviour can spring. The state thus possesses the attributes of identity as a firm category of self-definition; the nature of that attribute however is inherently changeable, contextual, contingent and subjective.

the national collective, and which ‘call[s] forth particular social structures and functions and values.’<sup>22</sup> Identity may be defended ‘as a primary interest of the nation (national security)’ and may also be communicated as education.<sup>23</sup> Centrally however, identity may be used ‘as an axiomatic basis for the derivation of legislation and executive action’ by all manner of government forces.<sup>24</sup> From this perspective, national policy is therefore not *adjacent* to domestic forms of cultural and political self reference but emanates directly from the state unit as an additional locus of collective meaning and preference identification by which to gauge interest, policy and the unit itself.

National identity thus assists social scientists in a transition from ontological stasis to broader epistemological possibilities, not by ‘eliminat[ing] the classical factors used for explaining and understanding international relations’<sup>25</sup> and the central unit of the state, but by retaining these categories while simultaneously aiming for a ‘richer’ appreciation of their ‘motives’ by ‘envision[ing] them as aspects of the social construction of human agency in a culturally full international society’.<sup>26</sup> Again, grounded in a traditional realist approach, the concepts of culture and identity possess a high degree of utility in deconstructing the ‘hardened truths’ extant in the currently **reified** categories of the state.<sup>27</sup> Augmented by identity theory, the familiar rubrics of classical realism that have characterised the battleground of politics for the past few centuries now demonstrate greater explanatory power in three distinct ways. First, the tenets of traditional realism continue in their dedicated focus upon the state as ‘an independent and agency-based variable’.<sup>28</sup> This is nicely congruent with the primary objective of revisionist realism outlined above, and merely broadens the state actor to the ‘national’ peripheries and attributes inherent in its category of statehood. Second, as revisionist realism focuses upon the social and socialising quality of the national state, one finds commensurate ground between traditional realism and recent constructivist contributions, which mutually avoid parsimonious explanations of state behaviour advocated within the theoretic variant of neorealism. The quality of sociality is not strained in a revised approach to realism that favours identity theory, chiefly because culturalist-constructivist theories provide a foundation for the role of ‘preference-based’ behaviour and policy choice, operating by an endogenous rather than exogenous focus upon their sources. Lastly, and in tandem with the third category of revisionist realism – that of accepting the power of cultural forces and national imperatives to direct political choice and focus state policy – the realist standard-bearers of Thucydides, Thomas Hobbes, E. H. Carr and Hans Morgenthau (once re-read with accuracy rather than

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<sup>22</sup>P. Allott, *op. cit.*, p. 110.

<sup>23</sup>*Ibid.*

<sup>24</sup>*Ibid.* Allott argues that at the level of public identification, the citizens themselves ‘bear the primary responsibilities’ for accepting and instantiating that identity as a quotidian code, simply because ‘all the public life of the nation seem[s] to be bound up with self-identifying of the nation’. *Ibid.*

<sup>25</sup>X. Guillaume, ‘Foreign Policy and Politics of Alterity: A Dialogical Understanding of International Relations’, *Millennium: Journal of International Studies*, Volume 31, No. 1, 2002, pp. 1-26, p. 10.

<sup>26</sup>N. Inayatullah and D. Blaney, ‘Knowing Encounters: Beyond Parochialism in International Relations Theory’, in Kratochwil and Lapid, *op. cit.*, pp. 65-66.

<sup>27</sup>For a further explanation of the genealogical concept of information hardening over time into a series of tacit socio-political ‘truths’ see M. Foucault, *Nietzsche, Genealogy, History*, Pantheon Books, New York, 1990.

<sup>28</sup>J. H. Hobson, *The State and International Relations*, Cambridge, Cambridge University Press, 2000, p. 45.



assumption), reveal a level of sophistication towards aspects of sociality, and the strategic deployment of culture in preference and policy. These authors provide enormous scope for augmenting classical realism with a revisionist, ideational hue by operating as the bedrock for newly-revised theories capable of recognising the survivalist mechanics of state units as coterminous with the nexus of norms, culture and identity. Both materialist and ideational streams provide the national state unit with its sense of cohesion, motivation and preference, which channel visibly into the practice of policy formation. Traditional realism, in other words, provides a surprising but conducive hermeneutical locus for national identity and strategic culture to obtain as theories of state preference, policy choice and behaviour.<sup>29</sup>

### MAKING THE MOST OF MORGENTHAU

Space forbids a thorough revision of realist patricians through the ages; this section focuses upon the writings of Morgenthau as a singular representative of twentieth-century realism. While much in the writings of Morgenthau may at first glance depict the world of politics as sterile realm of rules, institutions and individual and state agency, a closer examination of his work reveals an interesting acknowledgement of the nature of state sociality and the contextualising power of endogenous forces.<sup>30</sup> The monograph *Politics Among Nations* contains numerous clues to a deep understanding of the internal forces of identity formation. Chief among these are the chapters that analyse the national character, morale and identity, and which appear to reflect Morgenthau's central belief that '[t]he kinds of interests determining political action in a particular period of history depend upon the *political and cultural context* within which foreign policy is formulated'.<sup>31</sup> This rather holistic approach to the constitution and deployment of power does not appear to represent the mandate of a theorist generally recognised for his sole concern with the tangible resources of 'hard power'. Morgenthau is well placed to discuss the use of military power, economic strength and territorial resources within the formulation of national policy precisely because of his incipient recognition of the role played by the intangible resources of 'soft power'. Within Morgenthau is found clear reference to the true power of soft forces of culture, ideology, institutions national characteristics and normative social behaviour, and their ability to determine the seemingly 'objective' categories of the nation-state and its policy choice.

The justification for this observation is found in the central chapters of *Politics Among Nations*, and in two further articles, 'The Mainsprings of American Foreign Policy: The National Interest vs. Moral Abstractions' and 'Another 'Great Debate': The National Interest of the United States'.<sup>32</sup> In these writings, the broad structure of the

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<sup>29</sup>See for example D. Campbell, *Writing Security, op. cit.*, for a revisionist reading of Hobbes, and D. Welch, 'Why IR theorists should stop reading Thucydides', *Review of International Studies*, Volume 29, No. 3, July 2003.

<sup>30</sup>Hobson contends that Morgenthau can be read to contain a 'static' or systemic approach (similar to the 'technical' approach of neorealism) and a 'dynamic or non-systemic approach that departs from neorealism', Hobson, *The State and International Relations*, op. cit., p. 45.

<sup>31</sup>H. J. Morgenthau, *Politics Among Nations: The Struggle for Power and Peace*, Third Edition, New York, Alfred A. Knopf, 1961, p. 9, italics added.

<sup>32</sup>H. Morgenthau, 'The Mainsprings of American Foreign Policy: The National Interest vs. Moral Abstractions', *The American Political Science Review*, Volume 44, Issue 4, December 1950, pp. 833-854.

international realm is regarded in the process of policy production as coterminous with the practice of ‘power politics’, with the ‘balance of power as the guiding principle’.<sup>33</sup> However, the central emphasis is not upon the principle of balance, but upon the state and its domestic characteristics. Foreign policy, far from being a constrained outcome of predetermining systemic forces is determined by the endogenous construction of the national interest and produces a natural and highly endogenous dialect in which ‘the concept of the national interest [acts] as the rational guide for foreign policy’.<sup>34</sup>

For Morgenthau, national interest is not an immutable category of survival, nor is the state an inviolable, reified ‘bordered power-container’.<sup>35</sup> While ‘interest is indeed the essence of politics and as such unaffected by the circumstances of time and place’, unit-based interest, once wed to the national state as a processual socio-political unit, reveals itself as a distinctly contingent and largely domestic category operating within the larger political and even cultural fabric of the unit itself.<sup>36</sup> Morgenthau’s broad definition of the national interest may therefore surprise some ‘hard-core’ realists:

the concept of the national interest... is determined by the *political traditions* and the *total cultural context* within which a *nation* formulates its foreign policy. The concept of national interest, then, contains two elements, one that is logically required and in that sense necessary, and one that is variable and *determined by circumstances*.<sup>37</sup>

Morgenthau’s perspective regarding the roots of foreign policy is yet more surprising:

Any foreign policy which operates under the standard of the national interest must obviously have some reference to the physical, political and *cultural entity* which we call a *nation*. ... the foreign policies of all nations must necessarily refer to their survival... all nations do what they cannot help but do: protect their physical, political, and cultural identity against encroachments by other nations.<sup>38</sup>

In these writings, the concept of the national interest clearly emerges from the political and cultural traditions of the domestic unit. Also evident is the contingent nature of the national interest, coterminous with the fluctuations of its historical underpinnings.<sup>39</sup> Most interesting is the observation that nations do indeed prioritise their survival: not – as

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‘Another ‘Great Debate’: The National Interest of the United States’, *The American Political Science Review*, Volume 46, Issue 4, December 1952, pp. 961-988.

<sup>33</sup>Morgenthau, ‘Another ‘Great Debate’, *op. cit.*, p. 965. Morgenthau divides foreign policy into three categories: imperial, status quo and prestige, in which states seek to change, maintain or integrate the distribution of power accordingly.

<sup>34</sup>Morgenthau, ‘Another ‘Great Debate’, *op. cit.*, p. 974.

<sup>35</sup>A. Giddens, *A Contemporary Critique of Historical Materialism, ii.: The Nation-State and Violence*, Cambridge, Polity Press, 1985, p. 119

<sup>36</sup>Morgenthau, ‘Another ‘Great Debate’, *op. cit.*, p. 974.

<sup>37</sup>Morgenthau, ‘Another ‘Great Debate’, *op. cit.*, p. 974. p. 972

<sup>38</sup>*Ibid.*

<sup>39</sup>*Ibid.*

realists would have it – merely their physical and material survival, but also the cultural survival of their distinct political ethos.

As constructivists contend and realists are beginning to accept, the ideational content of history, culture and identity comprise the central aspects of unit power. Morgenthau reveals that unobservables represent important if not always quantifiable factors that assist in gauging the relative facets of unit power, which in turn yield explanations for preference, interest and policy formation. However, in general both realist theorists and practitioners have yet to hearken readily to the battle cry given by Morgenthau that ‘the observer of the international scene who attempts to assess the relative strength of different nations must take *national character* into account, however difficult it may be to assess correctly so elusive and intangible a factor. Failure to do so will lead to errors in judgment and policies’.<sup>40</sup> For IR and its ongoing paradigmatic battles, this observation largely annihilates all attempts to cast realism as a wholly materialist philosophy concerned merely with objective, quantifiable data. It also institutes the concepts of identity and culture as necessary additions within the realist camp, requisite in the study of the state unit and its power practices and policy construction within IR overall. For a practitioner of realist policies to make such statements during a period when Cold War policies were escalating into reified proportions, Morgenthau displays a precocious understanding of the need to address the ‘elusive intangibility’ of ideational categories by augmenting them within a reflexivist rather than overtly rationalist perspective of the study and praxis of statecraft. On this particular point regarding the unreflective use of, and reliance upon reason, Morgenthau provides a critical interpretation of post-Enlightenment concepts of reason and rationality:

[r]eason... is carried by the irrational forces of *interest and emotion*...[t]he triumph of reason is, in truth, the triumph of *irrational* forces which succeed in using the processes of reason to satisfy themselves. Clamouring for reason to extend its domination over all human affairs and expecting it to reach this goal by its own inner [*a priori*] force is the most futile, yet most conspicuous, social practice of the age.<sup>41</sup>

From the same theorist who advocated precision in the approach to state practice now comes the foresight that the seeming monopoly on rationalist epistemologies cherished by realism would prove particularly ineffectual in view of the swathes of ideational, discursive content at work in determining political practice and state behaviour.<sup>42</sup> Neatly undermining the ongoing ‘clamour’ for rational quantification entailed in the last half century of realist thinking, this statement ultimately dislodges Morgenthau from the pedestal of overtly rational scientific methodology and establishes a new form of realism one that is coterminous in its acceptance of both exogenous and endogenous forces prevailing upon the state regarding the survivalist and self-based choices made.

This insightful warning by Morgenthau was aimed precisely at the same body of

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<sup>40</sup>Morgenthau, ‘Another ‘Great Debate’’, *op. cit.*, p. 131, emphasis added.

<sup>41</sup>H. Morgenthau, *Scientific Man vs. Power Politics*, Chicago, University of Chicago Press, 1946, pp. 154-5.

<sup>42</sup>See for example S. Brooks, ‘Dueling Realisms’, *International Organization*, Volume 51, 1997 and B. Frankel (ed.), *Realism: Restatements and Renewals*, London, Frank Cass, 1996.

theorists who have failed comprehensively to make adequate use of them in broadening the remit of realist theory. Accordingly, it is clear that the works of traditional realism must be reread to grasp their original emphasis upon the ideational roots operating to inform the range of preferences articulated by nation-state units as survival strategies within an anarchic but visibly social system. Failing to recognise the profoundly socio-ideational content of its heritage, realism has consequently crippled itself as a viable theory and stymied half a century of trans-Atlantic theorising. In many respects, the result has produced not a deepening of its working epistemologies, but a calculated removal of socio-ideational and constructed elements from a series of understandings regarding power and interest, leaving many core principles destitute in their under-analysed state.

Despite the fact that 'loaded terms and semantic sleight of hand are anathema to scholarly debate' there is still a marked proclivity within the 'terminological dimension' of IR to pigeonhole theories by their forms of 'connotation' and 'denotation', examining them not according to their explanatory content but according to their lowest common conceptual denominator.<sup>43</sup> This has produced a forced and artificial coherence that falsely portrays realism 'as a tradition of inquiry' with self-evident cohesion, symbolising 'a single stream of thought, handed down in a neatly wrapped package from one generation of realists to another'.<sup>44</sup> The call for intensified paradigmatic warfare must therefore be carefully understood. Clearly, a battlefield of 'great debates' in which intricate theories are subsumed under generalist ensigns implies a risk of over-simplifying their various epistemologies, blurring their differing ontologies, and ultimately belying the subtlety of their contents. What is required is instead a fair fight between equally pitched theories and manageable metanarratives in which greater explanatory power is achieved through research that merges both quantitative and qualitative methodologies, both exogenous and endogenous foci, both materialist hard power strategies and the strategic deployment of culture as a form of soft power. This widened battle ground is a paradigmatic necessity, forcing theories to stand or fall on their merits as progressive or degenerative research programmes.<sup>45</sup> Degenerative research programmes that rely only upon presuppositions hardened into truth over extended periods of time are to be problematised in sophisticated fashion and vanquished if demonstrably unworthy.<sup>46</sup> Failure to do so

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<sup>43</sup>D. Baldwin, 'Neoliberalism, Neorealism, and World Politics', in D. Baldwin (ed.), *Neorealism and Neoliberalism: The Contemporary Debate*, New York, Columbia University Press, 1993, p. 9.

<sup>44</sup>See T. Dunne and B. Schmidt in J. Baylis and S. Smith, *The Globalization of World Politics*, second edition, Oxford, Oxford University Press, 2001, p. 148. Dunne and Schmidt illustrate a more logical approach by viewing realism via different branches that produce research because they conflict with one another rather than stymie it out of deference to consensus. The authors conclude that it is infinitely 'preferable to think of living traditions like Realism as the embodiment of both continuities and conflicts' as well as encouraging the school to take note of its 'historical and political contexts'. *Ibid.*, p. 148.

<sup>45</sup>See J. Sterling-Folker, 'Realism and the Constructivist Challenge: Rejecting, Reconstructing or Rereading', *International Studies Review*, Volume 4, Issue 1, Spring 2002, pp. 73-97.

<sup>46</sup>This is a central contention in IR theory, made by both theorists and philosophers of theory. See for example J. Vasquez, *The War Puzzle*, Cambridge, Cambridge University Press, 1993, for information regarding degenerating research programs. See also I. Lakatos and A. Musgrave, (eds.), *Criticism and the Growth of Knowledge*, Cambridge, Cambridge University Press, 1970. For the role of theory and research programs in social science in general, see Hollis and Smith, *Explaining and Understanding International Relations*, *op. cit.*, and K. Popper, *The Logic of Scientific Discovery*, London, Hutchinson, 1934, *Realism and the Aim of Science*, *Postscript*, London, Hutchinson, 1983, *Conjectures and Refutations, The Growth of Scientific Knowledge*, London, Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1963.

returns social scientists to a form of research-based practice marked by the degrees of futility prophesied by Morgenthau.

### ADVANCING THE FLAG: CONSTRUCTIVISM AND CULTURALISM

Change has recently taken place in aspects of 'revisionist realism' advanced under the banners of constructivism and culturalism, and the lesser legions of strategic culture. Constructivism operates as a 'metatheoretical framework' describing systemic imperatives by which states are constructed and constrained.<sup>47</sup> Constructivism has contributed creatively to the conceptual approach to state-based perspectives and forever changed the ontological nature of IR paradigm warfare through its insistent focus upon the 'social structure of state action at the level of the international system' and the role of agents, norms and identities within that same structure.<sup>48</sup> As advocated by the high priests of constructivism, norms actively shape identities that promote a set of interests that may mitigate systemic conflict and promote endogenous cohesion and growth.<sup>49</sup> The social structure constitutes both actors and their actions, lending meaning and agency to both their formation and interaction.

Within, but also distinct from the constructivist school, culturalist theories view the role of ideas in similarly constituted fashion, but regard the domestic realm as equally if not more important than the role of the system in promoting a nexus of normative ideas coterminous with the establishment of identity, the articulation of interests and the formation of policy.<sup>50</sup> While norms function at both state and system level, their inherently subjective formation (rather than their solely systemic usage, as advocated by Wendt) forms a stronger portion of the culturalist argument. Social roles and domestic norms are important facets of culturalist theory, and are understood to constitute individual, group and unit practice in a manner that reflects the 'total cultural context' by which a nation fashions itself and 'formulates its foreign policy', as first advocated by Morgenthau.<sup>51</sup> Within culturalist schools, one also finds a strong sense of the dialectical relationship between the constitution of *identity* and the definition of a series of *interests*. As Ted Hopf clarifies, '[i]n telling you who you are, identities strongly imply a particular set of interests or preferences with respect to choices of action in particular domains, and

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<sup>47</sup>J. Duffield, 'Political Culture and State Behavior: Why Germany Confounds Neorealism', *International Organization*, Volume 53, No. 4, 1999, pp. 765-804.

<sup>48</sup>T. Farrell, 'Portrait of a Research Program', *op. cit.*, p. 52.

<sup>49</sup>See for example A. Wendt, 'Anarchy is What States Make of It: The Social Construction of Power Politics', *International Organization*, Volume 46, Issue 2, 1992 and *Social Theory of International Politics*, Cambridge, Cambridge University Press, 1999, F. Kratochwil, *Rules, Norms and Decisions*, Cambridge, Cambridge University Press, 1989, J. Goldstein and R. Keohane, *Ideas and Foreign Policy: Beliefs, Institutions, and Political Change*, Ithaca, N.Y., Cornell University Press, 1993 and M. Finnemore, *National Interests in International Society*, Ithaca, N.Y., Cornell University Press, 1996.

<sup>50</sup>Culturalists are broad in their inter-disciplinary heritage; a brief selection includes P. Katzenstein, (ed.), *The Culture of National Security: Norms and Identity in World Politics*, New York, Columbia University Press, 1996, Jepperson et.al, in Katzenstein, *op. cit.*, T. Hopf, 'The Promise of Constructivism in International Relations Theory' and M. Desch, 'Culture Clash: Assessing the Importance of Ideas in Security Studies', both articles found in *International Security*, Volume 23, No. 1, 1998, pp. 141-200.

<sup>51</sup>Morgenthau, 'Another 'Great Debate'', *op. cit.*, p. 974.

with respect to particular actors.<sup>52</sup> Actors are in this way constituted by the range of self-reference and self-interest, generally formed endogenously (if reaffirmed exogenously) and which then promote a cohesive sense of unity, an intra-unit commonality as well as inter-unit differences throughout the wider international structure. The endogenous construction of interests via a substratum of identity also strongly affects the agential nature inherent in the formation of policy that determines both internal sources of unit coherence (self-based reference), its external sources of differentiation (other-based reference) and a series of policies that negotiate between the two.

Culturalist theories that focus upon identity as the *primum mobile* of state choice and action, move forward from the socialised and ideational base established under the ensign of constructivism, and assist in providing answers to much of the reified presuppositions found within the majority of the realist canon. The nexus of constructivist-culturalist theories suggest that ideas, in the form of norms, culture and identity also actively inform interest, assist the formation of policy, and thereby articulate various facets of the state unit itself. As Jeffrey Checkel argues, ‘actor identities and interests do not simply regulate behaviour... Norms are no longer a superstructure on a material base; rather, they help to create and define that base’.<sup>53</sup> In this way, constructivism, assisted by broader culturalist epistemologies more capable than before in waging war on the realist silence regarding ‘who... actors are or how their interests were constituted’.<sup>54</sup>

Just as ideas promoting the role of national context and sociality have found an early home in the writings of Morgenthau, so also the culturalist use of norms and ideas now augment the categories of national identity, interest and policy formation and find a natural, if somewhat surprising home within the realist tradition of policy and security studies. As Keohane and Goldstein argued more than a decade ago, ‘[i]deas influence policy when the principled or causal beliefs they embody provide road maps that increase actors’ clarity about goals or ends-means relationships, when they affect outcomes of strategic situations... and when they become embedded in political institutions’.<sup>55</sup> Culturalists can make ready use of the endogenous composition of a given nation-state to problematise its security norms and analyse the true motivations at work in its definition of self-interest. As Theo Farrell argues, culturalist philosophy echoes earlier attempts by pluralists to examine the role of interest-based concepts of power ‘operating at the domestic level to shape state preferences and behaviour’, but differs by focusing on the role of norms specific to a given state unit in articulating policy and security preference.<sup>56</sup> Most important in the culturalist contribution to realist theories of policy and security is the understanding that ‘*state action* regarding military force [and the definition of self interest] is *shaped by beliefs collectively held* by policymakers and political elites (strategic culture) and by military officers (organisational culture).<sup>57</sup> From this

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<sup>52</sup> Hopf, ‘The Promise of Constructivism’, *op. cit.*, p. 175.

<sup>53</sup> J. Checkel, ‘The Constructivist Turn in International Relations Theory’, *World Politics*, Volume 50, No. 2, 1998, p. 328.

<sup>54</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 330.

<sup>55</sup> R. Keohane and J. Goldstein (eds.) *Ideas and Foreign Policy: Beliefs, Institutions and Political Change*, Ithaca NY, Cornell University Press, 1993, p. 3.

<sup>56</sup> Farrell, ‘Portrait of a Research Program’, *op. cit.*, p. 53.

<sup>57</sup> *Ibid.*, emphasis added.

perspective, the nation-state reveals itself conducive to forms of analysis emanating from an innately social and ideational frame of reference. These same ideational theories and the category of national identity also prove equally conducive in providing a strong explanation regarding the perceptions and motivations engendered in the social structure of state action and system composition. National identity only triumphs fully however with a sound appreciation of its ability to produce a workable definition of the nation-state unit that stands astride both the realist and constructivist-culturalist camps on the battlefield of IR paradigm warfare in operationalising the troubling array of objective and subjective nation-state characteristics.

### THE FINAL BATTLE: UNTANGLING THE NATION-STATE

Attempting to reconceptualise the state by emphasising the endogenous attributes of identity means reversing much in current IR methodology that ‘has typically focused on the variability in the autonomy and the capacity of states, not on their identity.’<sup>58</sup> From the constructivist-culturalist perspective, one must first establish the endogenous and normative sources of identity, ideational preferences, material interests and policy of a state to determine how its resulting behaviour functions ‘structurally’ vis-à-vis other unit actors.<sup>59</sup> From the constructivist perspective, the intersubjectivity of such norms are understood to be present in varying degrees in each unit and more importantly, to function as an ideational meta-narrative in generating forms of system-based interaction. The position of traditional realism as suggested in the above re-reading of Morgenthau is in no way incommensurate with the aims of either culturalist or constructivist camps. Indeed, the suggestion is that an ideational, contingent, social and cultural frame of constructivist-culturalist reference does not wage war upon realist tenets but rather augments realist principles of the nation-state unit and prepares the realist research programme thoroughly for future battles on this most contested conceptual terrain.

Realist theory adequately addresses the requirements of nation-state units and choices of individual policy élites from a standpoint exogenous to the unit itself. However, continuing to view the nation-state from this now largely reified perspective not only renders the unit and its attributes as a series of systemic epiphenomena but forcibly marginalises its endogenous attributes which are clearly vital contributory elements in the form and function of both state and system. Within all theories of IR, culture and identity can no longer be treated as ‘explanation[s] of last resort’: they are key factors to analysing nation-state construction, system maintenance and the environment of interstate policy formation by which both states and system are conjoined.<sup>60</sup> The body of social theory at work in the cavalry of constructivism itself requires a renewed battle plan if it is to survive the increasing incursions made against it

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<sup>58</sup>Katzenstein, *op. cit.*, p. 23, ft. 74. Campbell makes a similar point in arguing that for example ‘the assumption common to the orthodox theory and practice of international relations [is] that the behaviour of the Soviet Union provided the organising principle for post-war United States foreign policy’ rather than the ‘important relationship between foreign policy and the domestic social order in the United States.’ Campbell, *op. cit.*, p. 23.

<sup>59</sup>See for example H. Eckstein, ‘A Culturalist Theory of Political Change’, *American Political Science Review*, Volume 82, 1988, who advocate a similar view.

<sup>60</sup>V. M. Hudson, ‘Culture and Foreign Policy: Developing a Research Agenda’, paper presented at 36th annual ISA conference, Chicago, 1995, p.2, cited in Lapid and Kratochwil, *op. cit.*, p. 3.

by the forces of cultural theory. IR theorists must not hesitate to summon social and cultural theories to solidify the crumbling ramparts of state theory; a reluctance to do so will only 'induce[] the imagination of static actors and the stubborn maintenance of tenuous boundaries (state/society, domestic/international) set by the field of international relations.'<sup>61</sup>

Narratives of culture and identity rest easily within accurate re-readings of traditional realist writings. As a result, they shift 'considerations of... myopic calculations of interest to 'deeper' questions of values' in a manner that implies forms of 'relational thinking [that] fall squarely in the sociological rather than economic mode of analysis.'<sup>62</sup> This is the new battle plan for IR upon which inter-paradigmatic warfare between positivist and post-positivist epistemologies and realist, pluralist, structuralist and constructivist ontologies may pitch themselves with vigour in fervent attempts at creating greater disciplinary latitude. Each camp must now reorient itself accordingly, taking up aspects of 'revised' and reoriented realism found in the arsenals of identity and culture to verify or falsify their current positions, thereby revealing the relative strengths or weaknesses of their various research programmes. The overall aim is therefore to nourish a warmongering mood, stirring paradigms to clash not as unwieldy, reified generalisations but deeply-analysed ontologies, sophisticated in nature and complex in possibilities. Such battles can never be finished, for ideas will always be discharged as armies, falling one upon another. Theories however, can and indeed must pass away if they fail to address the aspects of daily change that are incorporated within the practice and theory of current international relations. National identity bestows on IR theory the capacity to enliven and make real abstract and generic categories; it represents an ancient method of nation-state formation and unit awareness, long practiced as a singular and collective art 'by those who build nations in the mind and not merely on the battlefield.'<sup>63</sup>

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<sup>61</sup>S. C. Pasic, 'Culturing International Relations Theory: A Call for Extension', in Lapid in Kratochwil, *op. cit.*, p. 89.

<sup>62</sup>Katzenstein, *op. cit.*, p. 15 .

<sup>63</sup>Allott, *op. cit.*, p. 112.