9 *Foreign Policy and Identity*

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Foreign policy, it may be argued, is some distance away from the daily lives of citizens. Certainly, being perceived as somewhat distant and remote, it can be assumed that people are often less concerned with foreign policy than with policies that relate to domestic matters. However, geopolitical events often bring to the fore issues that can stir a collective conversation on the nature of foreign policy. In certain circumstances, citizens *can* become deeply engaged with foreign policy, despite its remoteness, and can become involved in collective action to try to influence matters. To give a recent example, thousands of British citizens protested their government's decision to engage in military intervention in Syria in November 2015. These thousands of people were not solely driven by self-interested motives such as the fear of a terrorist attack in Britain, but were taking this action because they rejected what such military engagement would say about Britain, their country, and them - its citizens. In sum, they were rejecting the negative implications of this action for British national identity.

Foreign policy is defined here as the *strategy* that a nation state adopts in its interactions with other states. In this sense, it is distinct from state *behaviour*, which encompasses the range of unplanned or reactive acts that a state may carry out. It denotes the rules and norms governing the way in which the state deals with its allies and its enemies, its neighbours and far flung countries, in addition to supranational organisations such as the United Nations (UN) and the North Atlantic Treaty Organisations (NATO). In line with its "constructivist turn" (Checkel, 1998, p. 324), international relations and foreign policy theorists now focus to a greater extent on identity-related concerns in addition to realist (or instrumental) factors in the construction and practice of foreign policy. However, it is argued here that there is relatively little attention given to the participation of citizens in these processes. We should not think that states operate independently of their citizens - foreign policy concerns the thoughts, actions and representations of citizens. The outcome of international relations' focus on the behaviour of nation states is that this powerful agentic potential – citizen participation - has been underexplored.

In this chapter, we will describe a social psychological approach to these issues, which is well-placed to recognise the central role played by citizens in the construction, practice and maintenance or resistance of foreign policy. The crux of social psychology's potential contribution stems from its recognition of the nation state as a constellation of identities, representations and narratives associated with a particular group – the national in-group.

Illustrating such a perspective, this chapter will draw upon empirical work which has explored the case of Irish **neutrality** (O'Dwyer, Lyons & Cohrs, 2016) using the theoretical framework of **social representations theory** (Elcheroth, Doise & Reicher, 2011; Moscovici, 1961/76). This research reveals the dynamic relationship between national identity and the Irish state's foreign policy, and considers possibilities for social change in light of this relationship. The chapter closes by outlining possibilities for further social psychological research in this vein.

Foreign policy and identity: Conceptual and theoretical anchors

It has been recognised previously (e.g. Kaarbo, 2003) that an understanding of psychological processes would extend and benefit the field of foreign policy analysis. This assertion has been made, in particular, by international relations (IR) researchers working within the **constructivist** paradigm (e.g. Kubálková, 2001; Wendt, 1992, 1999), who use the concept of identity to understand and explain state behaviour and foreign policy. Such a paradigm asserts that state behaviour and foreign policy cannot be predicted solely on the basis of material interests or the balance of power, as researchers adopting a realist or neorealist position would propose. Identity, which is informed by the values, beliefs, myth and histories of nation states and their citizens, can inform our understanding of state behaviour to a larger extent than material interests or power asymmetries.

Identity in IR is still a somewhat nebulous concept; it is attributed to the nation state but this necessarily leads to the question of whether nation states can actually *have* identities. The attribution of identities to nation states feeds into the broader process of their **personification**. But if nation states possess personalities, which we would assume would be somewhat stable, how can citizens have any influence? On this, Seed (1966) noted:

> The state is a complex of institutions and yet in international affairs is conceived in personal terms. The state, in reality, may be unco-ordinated (sic) and muddled, and yet built up around it, there is a fantasy of singlemindedness (sic). The state appears at one and the same to be human, non-human and super-human. (p. 11)

We can see that considering the nation state in these terms, granting it superhuman properties, diminishes the capacity and agency of citizens. Two questions remain: to what

extent do the identities of nations exist? And do they exist independently of their citizens? I suggest here that, rather than (or in addition to) nation states occupying identity positions and enacting these identities, we should instead consider the collectivities that lend nation states their power and status. This is not to suggest that scholars attempting to understand foreign policy must focus purely on the individual or group level of analysis (clearly broader institutional processes and the balance of power are important). However, any attempt to understand the identities of nation states without considering the identities of their citizens, and the way in which the two interact, would only be partial.

The influence of citizens on foreign policy

The question may be asked – can citizens influence foreign policy? Much empirical work suggests that they can. According to **the democratic-responsiveness model** (Page & Shapiro, 1983), elite actors are "delegates who respond to the requests of the mass public" (Cunningham & Moore, 1997, p. 643). Proposing this model, Page and Shapiro's (1983) analysis of public opinion and policy data in the USA from 1935 to 1979, found that there was a good deal of congruence between changes in public opinion and government policy, and this was especially the case when these changes were large, stable and related to salient issues. Further, in some cases, changes in public opinion actually *preceded* policy changes.

Foyle (2004) also found support for such claims by showing that public opinion had a major impact on the United States (US) government's decision to invade Iraq in 2003. An analysis of US public opinion and policy decisions (from 9/11 to the invasion of Iraq in 2003) showed that the Bush administration was initially constrained by negative public opinion and as a consequence had to delay the invasion of Iraq until the Al 'Qaeda issue had been perceived to have been satisfactorily dealt with, after the invasion of Afghanistan. When this concern had been alleviated, the administration was free to mobilize support for the invasion of Iraq. While the US administration "led" the public to support the invasion of Iraq through the use of persuasion and priming strategies (e.g. linking Iraq to weapons of mass destruction), the government's success in 'leading' the American public to war was nevertheless "in large part because, after September 11, the public was inclined to support a war" (p. 288).

Further, Davis (2012) examined the effect of pacifist public opinion on foreign policy

in eight Western countries (all US allies) across a 24-year period (1973-98). Results showed the impact of security threat on the relationship between public opinion and foreign policy. In times of high-threat (during the Cold War), the impact of public opinion on foreign policy lessened, while in the years following the Cold War, when the security threat was lower, governments were more responsive to public opinion.

Taken together, this research suggests that citizens play a part in determining the nature of their nation's foreign policy. Then it follows that the practice of foreign policy should not be seen to be concentrated in the actions and behaviour of the nation state. Globalization and new technologies have also changed the parameters and the meaning of foreign policy. As Foyle (2003) noted "to a certain extent, the technology of the Internet is beginning to allow individuals to conduct their own foreign policies and exact costs upon nation-states whose policies displease them" (p. 167). Boycotts and 'hactivism' are two examples of what a citizen's foreign policy might look like.

If we accept that (1) an analysis of the identities of nations is incomplete without giving attention to the identities of its citizens; (2) citizens can influence foreign policy under particular conditions; and (3) globalisation and new technologies are creating new possibilities for the practice of citizen foreign policy, then it seems clear that a consideration of *national identity* – the identity of citizens at the individual and group level - is necessary to gain an understanding of foreign policy. This is where social psychological theory becomes particularly useful. Social psychology has developed a well-elaborated conceptualisation of identity and different theories, for example, **social identity theory** (Tajfel & Turner, 1979) and **identity process theory** (Breakwell, 1986), have been advanced to specify and define the concept, describe the processes by which it is formed, enacted and changed, and identify the interpersonal and intergroup consequences of identity dynamics. Identity remains a key concern of social psychologists, but there has been no serious attempt to link identity to international relations and foreign policy.

If the identities that nation states enact in their dealings with other states are indeed *national identities* - the identity of citizens at the individual and group level - then we have a substantial body of empirical and theoretical work at our disposal to understand foreign policy. If we consider national identity as a specific type of social identity (group membership), then we are drawn into a series of categorizations in which other individuals, groups, or nations are seen as either in-group or out-group members. When

a group or nation is seen as an out-group, then this would explain hostile foreign policy. Moreover, perceptions of similar or shared identity become important because this likely bolsters the probability of cooperative foreign policy. Some empirical work has tested this assertion, primarily using experimental methods.

Out-group perceptions and foreign policy attitudes

Rousseau and Garcia-Retamero (2007) conducted a cross-national study on the relative effects of power asymmetries and shared identity on threat perceptions and willingness to cooperate in international affairs. Three experiments were conducted in Spain and the USA in which participants were asked to answer questions about their perceptions of hypothetical countries as well as concrete examples (Russia, in Study 2 conducted in Spain only). When a country was described as relatively more powerful than the home country, participants perceived it as more threatening, while when it was described as similar to the home country, participants perceived it as less threatening. In two of the studies, an interaction was found such that those countries high in power and low in shared identity were seen as the most threatening. In Study 3, framing Russia as an in-group member had a positive effect on support for a trade agreement, and increasing trade more generally with Spain, while high military power of Russia decreased support for Spanish defence cuts, and shared identity.

Across three studies with US participants using survey and experimental methods, Wetherell, Benson and Reyna (2015) found that the belief that the citizens of other nations were supportive of US values (value similarity), was linked to more positive views about these countries, in terms of decreased prejudice, increased desire for closeness and support for foreign aid. Interestingly, value similarity was a more consistent predictor of opinion about people in foreign countries than value threat. Value similarity was more important for understanding attitudes towards these people and support for foreign aid while value threat was related to support for aggressive policies (in this case, support for the military overthrow of a country's government).

Similarly, in a series of experimental studies with Swiss students, Falomir-Pichastor, Pereira, Staerklé and Butera (2011) found support for the **"democracy-as-value" hypothesis**. They measured support for military intervention (which would likely result in civilian deaths) in response to experimental vignettes in which the nature of the

political system (democratic or non-democratic) and the level of public support for the government's policy varied. They found that support for military intervention was low when the political system of the target country was democratic. On the other hand, they found that participants perceived military intervention in non-democratic states as less illegitimate when public opinion in the target country was supportive of its government's policies. Citizens of democratic countries then appear to have differing views on military intervention depending on whether the country involved shares their commitment to democratic values.

Each of the studies outlined above has used experimental methods to investigate the relationship between outgroup perceptions and foreign policy attitudes and all point towards *the importance of categorisation* for the way in which people perceive and respond to international affairs and foreign policy. However, identity is conceptualised solely in relative terms, referring to the similarity or difference of other countries and their citizens to us. Therefore, these studies do not address the issue of the *content* of national identity, what it means to be a particular member of a national group, and how that affects people's views on foreign policy. The next section comprises a discussion of empirical work conducted on the curious phenomenon of Irish neutrality (O'Dwyer, Lyons & Cohrs, 2015; O'Dwyer, 2013), which brings these issues to the fore.

A case study: Irish neutrality

Irish neutrality is an intriguing phenomenon, both from a psychological and lay perspective. Neutrality as a foreign policy orientation denotes "a deliberate, conscious policy of impartial abstention from a war or armed conflict with concomitant rights and duties, together with an intention to resist violations of those rights and duties by armed resistance if necessary" (Salmon, 1989, p. 27). It is a stance that nation states take, *during wartime*, which places particular obligations on that state while simultaneously conferring specific rights. Neutral states must adhere to particular principles; they should not engage in warfare (non-belligerence) nor show favour for the warring parties (impartiality). Further, neutrality should not be mistaken for defencelessness; states are entitled and indeed expected to protect their neutral position if it is threatened. Also worth noting is the fact that neutrality, as a specific legal concept codified during the Hague Conventions of 1907, cannot be qualified. It is an all-or-nothing stance; states either sign up to all of the principles that accompany neutrality, or they are not, according

to this definition, neutral.

Neutrality is a typically Western European phenomenon, with Austria, Switzerland, Finland, Switzerland, as well as the Republic of Ireland being either officially neutral or having some tradition of the policy. What is essential to note here is that each of these states came to the policy of neutrality for very different reasons. For example, in the aftermath of World War II, Austrian neutrality was stipulated as a condition for independence. Other parties also dictated Finnish neutrality: its non-alignment was set down in the Treaty of Friendship, Co-operation and Mutual Assistance with the USSR in 1948. Switzerland, the archetypal case, adopted and codified its permanent neutrality in 1815. In the present day, Sweden has moved away from its declaration of neutrality in 1834 and, after its accession to the European Union, now uses the term "military non-alignment" to characterise its foreign policy.

Irish neutrality in context

The Republic of Ireland's neutrality is different again; it is not shaped by East-West conflict post-World War II, nor is it deeply rooted legally, politically or historically (Binter, 1989). While some theorists (e.g. Fanning, 1982) go back further, Keatinge (1978) points to the introduction of conscription to the British army in Ireland in 1918 and the subsequent withdrawal of the Irish party from Westminster and creation of the Irish parliament, as the time during which "the popular basis of Irish neutrality was enshrined" (p. 47). The Anglo-Irish Treaty signed in 1921 effected the creation of the Irish Free State. However, because key Irish ports were still under British control, it was not possible for the Free State to be neutral. Prior to independence, the Free State asserted itself strongly on the world stage, playing an active role in the League of Nations, for example. Éamon de Valera, the Taoiseach (Prime Minister) at this time and almost certainly the political figure most commonly associated with Irish neutrality, was initially enthusiastic about the League, but after its failures to curb Hitler and Mussolini's forays into the Rhineland and Ethiopia, respectively, came to the view that neutrality was the only credible option available to the Free State. Yet the key Irish ports were still under British control. Negotiations following the Anglo-Irish Trade War (1932-38) returned these ports to Irish control.

On the outbreak of World War II, de Valera declared Ireland's neutrality – this was

met with British opposition, due in part to concerns over their ability to protect the British mainland. De Valera's motives have been a matter of some analysis and speculation – was it a principled objection to war? A strategy to end Irish partition? Or cowardice plain and simple? Fanning (1982) points to his desire to bring about a united Ireland, thus neutrality was a means of buttressing Irish sovereignty. Keatinge (1978) asserts that de Valera wished to underscore Irish independence, the freedom to decide in which wars to participate being one of the key privileges of an independent nation. Salmon (1989) characterises Irish neutrality instead as non-belligerence – "piggy-backing" off British defence. Whether Ireland actually observed the particularities of neutrality, or instead, "showed a certain consideration"[1] for Britain has been debated, but it is sufficient to say that Ireland *approximated* a neutral position during World War II, the perceived success of which laid the foundation for enduring public support for the policy.

Ireland also chose to stay outside NATO in 1949. This was due to the issue of partition, (the division of Ireland), but also because of the consensual quality that neutrality had now assumed in Irish public opinion. Ireland joined the United Nations in 1955, and continues to this day to play an active and valued role in this organisation, especially in terms of peace-keeping activities. In 1974, the Republic joined the European Economic Community (EEC, now European Union). While there was debate at the time about neutrality, government officials downplayed this concern and worked with a very minimal definition of neutrality, centred on non-membership of NATO. While beginning life as a trade organisation, the European Union (EU) now encompasses other types of integration between member states, including foreign and security policies (e.g. the development of the Common Security and Defence Policy developed in the 1990s). In Irish referendums seeking to ratify changes to the European Treaty, for example, the Treaty of Lisbon referendum in 2008, the maintenance of neutrality emerged as significant concerns for voters. In particular, the fear that Irish citizens would be conscripted into a European army was a genuine fear and was one of the factors that led to the defeat of the Treaty on its first outing in 2008. The Treaty was only subsequently passed in 2009 when "legally-binding guarantees" from the European Union on issues including neutrality were received. Devine (2011) has noted that, irrespective of these guarantees, one of the implications of the changes brought about by the Lisbon Treaty is that neutrality "in legal

[1] A phrase widely attributed to de Valera (see Fisk, 1983).

and political terms, is dead" (p. 360).

In spite of the political reality that neutrality is now obsolete in "post-Lisbon" Ireland, a number of surveys indicates that public support for neutrality is high (e.g. Gilland, 2001; Lyons, 2003). It was a factor in voter decision-making in European Treaty referendums (Sinnott & Elkink; 2010; Sinnott, 2003) and is positively linked to support for Irish independence and national identity (Devine, 2008). A central aim of this research was to provide a qualitative investigation of neutrality and its relationship to Irish national identity – an account of this work will be provided in the next section.

The social representation of Irish neutrality

Previous empirical or theoretical work on Irish neutrality either tended to dismiss the concept as a relic of the pre-globalised and integrated world system, or else it was partial, failing to acknowledge the meanings that people tied to it. This was a position that often served the authors' self-interests or the groups to which they belonged. It became clear that a theoretical framework was needed that would acknowledge the importance of the everyday sense-making of individuals and communities as well as a consideration of contextual and historical processes. Social representations theory (Moscovici, 1961/76) offers this framework. To provide a brief overview, the theory characterises and describes common sense or lay thinking on particular issues. It describes particular processes – **anchoring** and **objectification** – which produce lay knowledge. Social representation (it is thought of as both process and object) is tied to group processes as the creation of social knowledge always functions in the context of that particular group. Social representations may serve individual, intragroup or intergroup functions, satisfying motives such as continuity or distinctiveness, creating cohesiveness within the group or providing guidance to group members in terms of behaviour towards other groups, respectively (Breakwell, 1993). The way in which individuals and groups construct social objects is in line with context-specific demands related to identity.

While social representations theory has been criticised for its alleged **determinism** and tendency towards cognitive **reductionism** (Jahoda, 1988; Potter & Billig, 1992; Potter & Litton, 1985), much current work emphasises the conflictual and ambivalent nature of these representations (Figueiredo, Valentim, Licata, & Doosje, 2013; Moloney, Williams, & Blair, 2012; Wagner, Duveen, Verma & Themel, 2000), and the capacity of

individuals and groups to *resist* those that may have stigmatising consequences or which affect status or group identity (e.g. Howarth, 2002; 2006). Furthermore, social representations cannot be separated from the political context in which they are embedded; indeed this political dimension "becomes a *condition of intelligibility* for social phenomena" (Elcheroth, Doise & Reicher, 2011, p. 733, authors' emphasis).

Social representations theory thus offered a way to approach the puzzle of Irish neutrality. This would be by (1) recognising and respecting lay thinking on a difficult and possibly obscure concept for Irish citizens: what is more, the representations might be contrary or ambivalent; (2) emphasising the dynamic relationship between identity and the content and construction of social knowledge; and (3) bringing to the fore the issues of power, resistance and the political context. The research project adopting this theoretical framework utilised a number of different methodologies in its investigation of Irish neutrality – focus group interviews, secondary survey analysis and the automated content analysis program, ALCESTE (Reinert, 1990). Although an exhaustive treatment of the methodological and analytic features of the project are beyond the scope of this chapter, the key findings demonstrate the utility of applying social psychological theory and method to the investigation of identity and foreign policy.

Céad mile fáilte neutrality

In the Irish/Gaelic language, the term 'céad mile fáilte' is the expression for welcome (literal translation: one hundred thousand welcomes). Thus, when combined with the word "neutrality", this expression highlights the accommodating and flexible nature of the concept. A **thematic analysis** (Braun & Clarke, 2006) of focus group data with members of pro-neutrality political parties (the Green Party of Ireland and the nationalist Sinn Féin party) revealed the variable and malleable quality of Irish neutrality. Green Party and Sinn Féin members both supported the stance, but the values and beliefs that they attached to neutrality were very different. For Green Party members, support for neutrality was tied to the recognition of human rights and antipathy towards oppression, while Sinn Féin members consistently linked it to the rejection of imperialism and recognition of national sovereignty and independence in international affairs. More generally, the groups differed in terms of their outlook on war, with Green Party members linking their pacifism to concerns about the protection of the environment and their view

of armies as "destructive forces", while Sinn Féin members grounded their anti-militarism in the view that all wars were imperialist conquests in one guise or another.

A further study - a secondary analysis using data from the Irish Social and Political Attitudes Survey conducted in 2001/2002 (Garry, Hardiman & Payne, 2006) explored this point further. The analysis revealed that the meanings that participants attached to neutrality moderated the relationship between basic human values (Schwartz, 1992) and support for neutrality. For those who defined neutrality as independence, support for neutrality was strongly related to high priority of conservation values (tradition, security and conformity). In contrast, for those who used the definition of peace-keeping, support for neutrality was strongly associated with high priority of openness to change (self-direction, stimulation) values. Taken together, the two studies demonstrate the open and flexible representation of neutrality by the Irish public. People of very different ideological backgrounds can support the same stance. They may possess diverse definitions of neutrality, and anchor it in different values, but its broad appeal and potential for practical use in a number of settings may explain its continued popularity in Ireland.

The macro-political dimension of identity construction

In a subsequent qualitative focus group study (O'Dwyer, Lyons & Cohrs, 2016), Irish participants of different ages and educational backgrounds were asked to respond to and discuss hypothetical international conflict events (e.g. China had invaded the Philippines), in which the Irish state was being asked to play a part (e.g. allowing US troops to refuel in Shannon). A thematic analysis of the data revealed that participants constructed Irish national identity as being constantly in conversation with the international political system; for example, the idea that national identity and the practice of neutrality were constrained by Ireland's membership of the European Union. Participants' talk about the scenarios also revealed the way in which the historical precedents legitimised further similar foreign policy actions. As one participant stated, *"And all we're doing is allowing them (the US army) to refuel in Shannon which they're doing all the time anyway, which doesn't affect our military neutrality irrespective of what people say or don't say".* We might say then that historical precedents reify current policy and close off possibilities for alternative courses of action and so they become "world-making assumptions" (Elcheroth, Doise & Reicher, 2011). Gaskarth (2006) expresses a similar view:

> Constructing an idea of foreign policy as shaped by historical preconditions, and as a continuous realm of social activity, offers limited scope for new conceptions of its possible practice. It also separates policy from its immediate context – as it is portrayed as functioning within a transcendent reality. (p. 332)

On the other hand, the macro-political system was also an arena in which Irish national identity could be confidently asserted. This was especially evident in participants' talk about Irish involvement in the United Nations, which was construed as a means of projecting national identity, underscoring its "moral authority" and status as a "peace-keeping nation". The Irish army specifically was viewed positively due to the specialised military assistance it contributed to UN missions. Participants' talk about the UN more generally belied its positive consequences for the distinctiveness, efficacy and esteem of Irish national identity.

Constructing the national in-group in international affairs

The final theme is related to the issue of **categorisation** in foreign policy. How do people decide who is like them, and thus should be defended in the event of conflict? How do people determine which nations should be opposed, militarily or otherwise? Past research suggests that if the country under attack is democratic, and the hostile country is powerful and possesses nuclear weapons, that this motivates support for military action to defend the country being attacked (e.g. Falomir-Pichastor, Pereira, Staerklé, & Butera, 2011; Herrmann, Tetlock & Visser, 1999). Value similarity or a sense of shared identity will also motivate cooperative foreign policy (Rousseau & Garcia-Retamero, 2007; Wetherell, Benson, Reyna & Brandt, 2015). This work was mostly experimental or survey based, whereas the study outlined earlier (O'Dwyer, Lyons & Cohrs, 2016) offered rich qualitative insight into the process through which people decided whether the assistance of the Irish state was warranted. To understand these issues, we chose actors involved in the hypothetical scenarios to reflect differing levels of cultural similarity and power - Germany, the Philippines, China, Guinea, the USA, Great Britain and Pakistan-based Islamist terrorists.

The analysis plainly showed that categorisation in international relations is not necessarily a straightforward or predictable process; participants' discussions of the hypothetical conflicts showed the process to be a pragmatic and collaborative endeavour. Participants' discussions of the actors involved were central to the decision over Irish

involvement in the conflicts. The assessments of the actors involved were often shaped by perceptions of pre-existing, taken-for-granted alliances or links to the Irish diaspora (e.g. in the case of the USA), which tended to underpin support for Irish involvement in the conflict situations.

Two other characteristics of the actors involved were crucial – closeness and threat. Threat was mostly linked to perceptions of terrorism and China, and tended to motivate opposition to Irish involvement. Perceptions of closeness to Ireland worked in the opposite direction. Intriguingly, this closeness was not always geographically-determined. One group argued for Irish involvement in a conflict in which the Philippines had been attacked by China on the grounds that the mother of the Rose of Tralee (a famous Irish beauty pageant) and a sizeable amount of nurses employed in the Irish health service were from the Philippines. As one participant stated, "They can use Shannon. We have to look after our own!" This creative stretching of the representation and boundaries of the national in-group supports the assertion that identity is a specific social representation (Andreouli & Chryssochoou, 2014, Elcheroth, Doise & Reicher, 2011), which is always strategic or action-oriented (Reicher & Hopkins, 1996, 2001), in this case to justify support for involvement in conflict. Further, this analysis demonstrates that *agency* is an essential part of identity (co-) construction. Our participants, working within the parameters set by the international system (e.g. legacies of past cooperation with other countries, supranational memberships), nevertheless collectively recast Irish national identity as a more inclusive, outward-looking identity to advance particular rhetorical ends.

Unanswered questions: Opportunities for future research

The social psychological approach to the investigation of foreign policy brings identity to the fore; both the process of categorisation and the content dimension of national identity are important. The research, however, leaves open a number of questions. For example, future research could tackle the issue of resistance and foreign policy. It is clear that public opposition to foreign policy is often insufficient to change it. One need only think of the mass protests that took place globally to oppose the US invasion of Iraq in 2003, to realise that citizens are not always able to influence the direction of foreign policy. Nevertheless, peace activist organisations continue to resist militarist foreign policy. Indeed, it would be interesting to carry out a qualitative analysis of interviews with peace

activists to understand the way in which they conceptualise their role and that of other citizens in influencing foreign policy and driving social change. Such an analysis could also provide insight into a process by which people become more efficacious in their engagement with foreign policy as well as their capacity to resist policies with which they disagree.

Moreover, while it is clear that identity plays an important role in the nature of foreign policy, clearly institutional factors and elite behaviour also play a significant part. Research should explore these factors and attempt to provide an account of their relative influence and the way in which they may interact. Such a line of enquiry would necessarily be inter-disciplinary and encompass individual, group/organisational and national levels of analysis.

Research should also consider historical processes to a much greater extent. In particular, such research may be usefully complemented by a consideration of post-colonial perspectives (e.g. Hook, 2012) and historical work, for example, on collective memory. It is clear that foreign policy decision making does not take place in a historical vacuum. On the outbreak of war, social representational processes often work to tie the current conflict to past wars (e.g. "the new Iraq") – which functions to make the new war intelligible while simultaneously guiding our reactions and behaviour towards it (Cohrs & O'Dwyer, in press). Other work (Gaskarth, 2006; O'Dwyer et al., 2016) has highlighted the importance of the rhetorical use of historical precedents in foreign policy to legitimize and reify current action. A line of research that prioritises the analysis of historical events, looking at their discursive use in popular media and political discourse, for example, may provide insight into possibilities for their strategic use to counter hostile foreign policy and foster cooperation between nation states.

Finally, it was noted above that globalisation and new technologies may be creating a context for the practice of new types of citizen engagement with foreign policy (Foyle, 2003). Future research needs to be conducted to determine whether this is indeed the case. Are citizens engaged in collective action which might be construed as foreign policy? And do they see this as effective? How do elites conceptualise this type of "citizen foreign policy", especially in cases where it conflicts with national policy? From a social psychological perspective, a key question would be to what extent involvement in such collective action creates superordinate identities and what might their consequences be? Addressing these questions would enhance our understanding of the future direction and

shape of foreign policy in a globalised international system.

Summary

- Much of the previous literature on the relationship between foreign policy and identity has been a consequence of the development of constructivism in international relations theory.
- In such a perspective, identities are the properties of nation states, are enacted on the world stage, and can explain state behaviour.
- Yet given particular conditions, citizens and public opinion have been shown to influence the nature of foreign policy in a number of different contexts.
- Globalisation and new technologies are creating new possibilities for the practice of citizen foreign policy e.g. boycotts or hacktivism.
- Social psychological theory has developed a significant body of theoretical and empirical work which has examined the structure and consequences of identity dynamics.
- Previous experimental work based on social identity theory suggests that perceiving the attacked country as democratic or sharing values with oneself, and the aggressor as powerful and in possession of nuclear weapons, influences the ways in which people respond to international conflicts.
- The case of Irish neutrality shows that we also need to consider the *content* dimension of national identity – what it means to be a member of a particular national group – and the way in which this affects people's assessments of foreign policy.

GLOSSARY

anchoring refers to one of the two interdependent processes that describe the ways in which social representations form and change. It refers to the way in which unfamiliar knowledge is tied to, and understood through existing world-views or knowledge.

categorisation refers to the psychological process in which people are assigned to social groups or categories.

constructivism (international relations) is a school of thought that emphasises the role played by non-material factors (ideas, identities, beliefs, culture and norms) in international affairs and politics.

'democracy-as-value' hypothesis is the claim that democracy bestows value on democratic institutions, groups and citizens, and confers legitimacy to their actions.

democratic-responsiveness model is a theory of the relationship between elite and mass opinion, which asserts that elites are responsive to mass opinion.

determinism is the philosophical position that every event or state of affairs is caused by the inevitable consequences of pre-existing forces or prior events - no other outcome or action was possible.

foreign policy refers to nation state's broad strategy for diplomatic relations with other nation states.

identity (international relations) is a broad term that denotes representations of the state as well as its representations to other states.

identity process theory is a theory that describes the formation and articulation of *personal* identities, and the ways in which people respond to identity threat.

neutrality is a legal position taken by nation states in times of war, which establishes their non-participation in the conflict.

objectification refers to one of the two interdependent processes that describe the ways in which social representations form and change. It refers to the way in which unfamiliar knowledge is concretized and takes visual or metaphorical form.

personification refers to the attribution of human-like attributes to non-human phenomena.

reductionism is the philosophical position that higher-order phenomena can be explained using lower-level theories (e.g. physics).

social identity theory is a theory of intergroup relations, which specifies three key processes in the formation and maintenance of group membership: categorisation, comparison and the drive for positive distinctiveness.

social representations theory is a social psychological theory that outlines the processes involved in generating common sense understanding and social change.

thematic analysis is a method of qualitative analysis based on the identification and analysis of themes.

FURTHER READING

Davis, W. (2012). Swords into ploughshares: The effect of pacifist public opinion on foreign policy in western democracies. *Cooperation and Conflict*, *47*, 309–330.

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QUESTIONS FOR GROUP DISCUSSION

- How are new technologies enabling citizens to have more influence over foreign policy?

- "Ever closer union" is one of the cornerstone principles of the European Union. Many policy makers are keen to develop a common foreign policy for member states, with citizens frequently less keen on the idea. How can social representations theory help us to understand the disparity between political elites and the wider public on this issue?

- History is frequently used in political discourse to legitimise foreign policy and to argue for or against militarism. Can you think of some examples?

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