

# Gov 50.08: Social Identity III

Prof. Kathleen E. Powers

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## Social Identity Theory

- Explain how transnational identities can shape international cooperation.
- Describe and evaluate evidence about the relationship between European identification and cooperation.
- Differentiate between "recategorization" and "dual identity" approaches to reducing intergroup conflict, and give examples of each. Evaluate the costs and benefits and apply to problems in international politics.
- Using social identity theory, explain and give examples of three ways that people respond to membership in a low status group.
- Apply each strategy to Russian and Chinese foreign policy in the post-Cold War era.

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## Social Identity Theory

- **Broad question:**
  - How does social identity contribute to the causes of and solutions to international conflict & competition?
- **Specific questions:**
  - What is ethnic identity? How and why do ethnic divisions create conflict?
  - How should identity inform counterinsurgency practices?
  - What is the relationship between nationalism and interstate conflict?
  - Can "supranational" identities foster interstate cooperation?

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## Summary...

- People categorize themselves and others into groups, and make social comparisons.
- People tend to like their ingroup more, because it makes them feel good (=> self-esteem).
- Under the right conditions, ingroup love becomes outgroup hate.
- Ethnic identification can lead to outgroup derogation and (sometimes extreme) violence, but historical contingencies shape whether ethnicity will be salient and promote/exacerbate conflict.
- While national identification can have positive effects – it facilitates trust between ethnic groups, can bind people together, and encourage loyalty – it also has a dark side.
- National identification is associated with public preferences for militarism/support for war, and international competition in trade (support for trade agreements that benefit the group, regardless of outgroup gains).

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## Social Identity & IR

- Quick Write:
  - Evaluate the following statement: Social identification causes -- and provides a solution to -- intergroup conflict in international politics.

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## Supranational Identification?

- Can a European identity overcome nationalism?
  - "If Europe were once **united** in the **sharing of its common inheritance**, there would be no limit to the happiness, to the prosperity and glory which its... people would enjoy.... [The] remedy...is to **re-create the European Family**." (Winston Churchill, 1946)



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## Supranational Identification?

- Collective Identification:
  - Recasts "self-interest" as "group interest" to promote security cooperation.
    - **Psychology:** People who identify with a group think about "not me or thee but we" (Dawes et al. 1988, p. 1). People make choices to advance the group.
  - Enhances intragroup trust (e.g., Rathbun's particularized trust).
    - **Psychology:** in-group members are more trustworthy.

7

## Supranational Identification?

- Among members of the public – and elites – European attachment increases a) trust in fellow Europeans b) support for a common foreign & security policy for the EU and c) support for a European army.
- Macron calls for a "true, European Army" at 2018 WWI Armistice remembrance.



Chris Mann  
European Identity: The  
Death of National Era?  
European Identity & Perceived of Identification with  
European Identity of the 1990s

8

## Supranational Identification?

- Why & when do states comply with international law?
  - Realist/rationalist argument
  - Psychological argument
- "Good Europeans" argues that policymakers care about the costs of complying with international law (consistent with rationalist models from the institutional IR tradition).
  - BUT identification can mitigate cost sensitivity.



9

## Supranational Identification?

- Hypotheses:
  - European identification will strengthen support for compliance with EU law.
  - High costs of compliance will weaken support for compliance with EU law.
  - European identification will weaken cost sensitivity.
- $B = f(P, E)$

10

## Supranational Identification?

- Research: Survey of German parliamentarians.
  - DV: support for compliance with EU law, even when it may be go against Germany's interests.
  - Experimental manipulation: A new EU taxation law will reduce government revenues by 20% (5%).
  - Strength of European Identity
- Primary findings?
  - European identifiers support compliance.
  - High costs reduce preferences for compliance overall.
  - But the effect of compliance costs is largest for people whose European identification is in the middle.
    - High identifiers are slightly less likely to support compliance when the costs are high, but their support is always above the median.
    - Low identifiers are slightly less likely to support compliance when the costs are high, but their support is always below the median.

11

## Supranational Identification?

- Is nationalist conflict inevitable? Why or why not (or, under what conditions)?
- Would a "world state" eliminate conflict? Enhance cooperation?



12

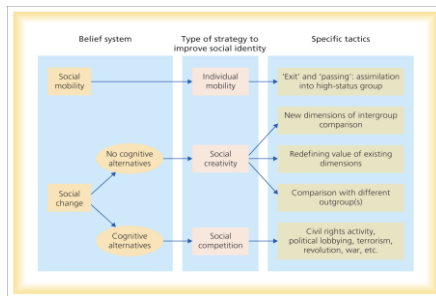
## Social Identity & Status

- What is the primary question for Larson & Shevchenko in "Status Seekers"?



13

## Strategies for Low-status Identities



14

## Social Identity & Status

- What is the primary question?
- How do post-Cold War strategies by China and Russia illustrate the three responses to low-status group membership?



15

## Social Identity & Status

- Social Mobility
  - "Since the 1978 economic reforms opening up China to trade and foreign investment... Chinese elites have aimed to achieve social mobility into the ranks of the great powers" (Larson & Shevchenko, p. 76).
- Social Competition
  - "... Russia adopted a social competition strategy of forming diplomatic coalitions to restrain U.S. power and enhance Russia's global status" (Larson & Shevchenko, p. 78).
- Social Creativity
  - China as a "responsible great power" and the "Beijing consensus" (p. 82).

16

## Discussion

- Thinking about politics today, what strategies are China & Russia currently pursuing?
  - Can you think of other, contemporary examples of mobility, competition, or creativity?
- Larson and Shevchenko use a theory about individuals to make inferences about state behavior. To what extent is this a problem for IR theorists? Are "self-esteem" and positive distinctiveness state-level motives?
- Larson and Shevchenko have a theory about how low status actors will behave. What might we expect from high status states?

17

## Fin.

Next time: Super-Micro – Biological & Genetic approaches

18