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MAKING SENSE OF IDEATIONAL AND DISCURSIVE FACTORS IN WAR MEDIATION THROUGH POST-POSITIVIST TRADITION IN INTERNATIONAL RELATIONS

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ABSTRACT

This paper offers insightful study of the role of ideas and their intelligible employment in foreign policy discourse especially in war mediation by taking war as subjective and discursive phenomenon. In claiming so, it draws heavily on the post-positivist tradition in International Relations like critical constructivism, critical theory and post-structuralism without sharp rejection of positivist tradition in the study of International Relations. Along the same lines, it maintains, and substantiates that ideas have constitutive and performative role in foreign policy politics as well as in war mediation. Grounded in various theoretical currents in post-positivist turn in the discipline of IR, this paper warrants the post-positivist tradition significant promise to make sense of foreign policy politics and war mediation. In sum, substantiating war as ideationally and discursively mediated phenomenon, this paper argues for the centrality of ideational and discursive factors in our understanding of foreign policy politics and war mediation.

Keywords: Discourse, Identity, Imagined Communities, Intersubjectivity, Otherness, Performative, Positivism, Post-Structuralism, Securitization, War Mediation.

INTRODUCTION

Looking back to the debate about knowledge claims in IR, post-positivism, by contrast, offers radical departure from its competitor positivism. It takes social and natural world differently on the number of plausible reasons based on ontological, epistemological and methodological positions as well as its focus on the role of agent-structure problem and related debates. For post-positivists, social and political reality is relative as far as the ontological position is concerned because there is not one/objective reality but competing subjective positions, and reflections grounded in social and discursive constructions.

Interpretivism is considered as epistemological position or way of knowing with multiple research strategies or tools in post-positivist knowledge tradition. Likewise, on war discourse, as opposed to the positivist theorists, post-positivists construct their position on the basis of their meta-theoretical stands. For the post-positivist tradition, war is relative, interpretive, discursive hence;

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subjective and socially constructed phenomenon. Let us narrate the post-positivist approach to the problem of war before moving towards complex conjunctions of theory and practice.

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Under the post-positivist tradition, three main perspectives named as critical constructivism, Frankfurt school, and post-structuralism are most significant. This tradition also considers it important to engage meta-question on the potential role of discourse and ideas in political analysis that has largely shaped the post-Cold War theoretical surface of international security studies. Traditionally, ideational factors got very limited space in

political analysis when it comes to constitutive role of ideas in political sphere and part of the reason was positivists' dominance on the question of knowing.

For example, realists offered the heroic claim about the predictability of actors' behavior reduced to their structure and context dependency and economic rationalism. Such assertions helped realists to take individuals as identical, context-dependent, and self-centered hence, made the study of politics as 'predictable', and consequently, positioned ideas as irrelevant in political analysis. In contrast, the post-positivist tradition considers the constitutive and causal role of ideas while engaging with relativism and Interpretivism as their ontological and epistemological positions, with significant emphasis on the role of discourse in the construction of context and conduct (Derrida, 1976). As Hay puts it more precisely: [It emphasizes upon] the contingent or open-ended nature of social and political process and dynamics—especially those conventionally seen as fixed. Particular constructions may serve to present a 'reality' which is static, immutable, or inexorably unfolding in a given direction, but the recognition of the constructed nature of the reality we perceive implies that things could and can be seen differently (Hay, 2002).

Along the same line, post-positivist currents like critical constructivism and post-structuralism stress the need to consider the notion of contingency rather than causality in political analysis. They also emphasize the role of various discursive strategies in the making of 'ideational-material', 'conduct-context' dichotomies. Moreover, materialism argues the role of material factors to shape ideas, whereas post-positivism considers the central role of discourse to shape all social and political outcomes. Nevertheless, critical realism and social constructivism consider both ideas and material factors to shape the outcomes hence, offer a middle ground between positivism and post-positivism.

Moreover, post-structuralists and critical constructivist underline the "constitutive logic and processes—the construction, in discourse, of these objects on which material status is more conventionally conferred" hence making both ideational and material as discursive (Hay, 2002). In other words, they assert the potential of discourse in the constitution of political reality by employing multiple socially contingent ideational and material factors rather than causal explanations or fixed discursive conditions or 'structure'. However, these

currents emphasize more on the constitutive role of ideas rather material factors which shape social and political world.

Borrowing from post-positivist tradition, this paper limits itself to substantiate the crucial role of ideas or more precisely identity to understand the US foreign policy in general and the mediation of war through political discourses in particular. It engages three positions; first it asserts that actors in foreign policy environment, be they leaders or individuals hold certain understanding about the context, views and emotions about the social and political world they inhabit hence, their behavior cannot simply be derived from fixed context but their overall conduct is shaped by both context and ideas. Secondly, the behavior of political actors rests on their assumptions as they do not hold perfect control on the information related to any issue, hence, they assume according to their social and discursive construction which includes both ideational and structural factors.

Third and equally important is the role of context which cannot be divorced altogether because it exerts a strong selective effect upon the ideas we hold about it. And this assertion is not associated intrinsically to the reality of context, as context, itself is discursively constructed but its role to connect decision-makers' ideas to particular 'real event' or context. Hence, we see the role of discourse in the construction of any social or political event and action produced. In other words, we can observe the material-ideational dialectic or strategic relation in the social and political analysis (Hay, 2002). As Hay (2002) describes: [This tradition recognizes the] discursively mediated nature of our experience of, and engagement with, the structured context in which we find ourselves suggests the power of those able to provide the cognition filters, such as policy paradigms, through which actors interpret the strategic environment¹.

To suggest that perceptual, ideational, and contextual factors are discursive encounters which shape individuals' behavior towards the social and political 'reality' by constructing, articulating and interpellating contingent causes ranging from ideational to material which can make any event intelligible for us emphasize the need to reconsider the dominant meta-narrative in political analysis. It tends to divorce the dominant positivist approaches which insist the context dependency of political actors in which they must have

to act using rather very reduced or limited 'rational choice' (Erickson, 2001)ⁱⁱ.

Under the foregoing scenario, this paper grounded its main inquiry on the probability of ideational factors to help us understand foreign policy politics and war. In order to gauge the qualification of such assertion, the following section imports the role of ideational factors in political analysis from post-positivist tradition. It deals with main building blocks of this tradition which extensively deals with and talk about the potential role of ideas and discourse in security politics and foreign policy analysis. In this regard, three main currents are selected and their take on the role of identity discourse in foreign policy politics and war mediation is offered.

POST-POSITIVIST TRADITION ON WAR MEDIATION THROUGH IDENTITY DISCOURSE

This section offers extensive review of critical constructivism, critical theory, post-structuralism in the post-positivist tradition with special focus on the identity theory, securitization theory and discourse theory on war and war mediation. It begins with critical constructivism and introduces constructivists' take on the role of identity language and discourse which produce the patterns of social and political power in society. Likewise, critical theory focus more on the ways power elites produces discourse which constitutes exploitative relations in society.

Similarly, post-structuralists extensively engage the role of morality, ethics, values which, according to them, discursively shape the national identity and political culture of society that ultimately develops the power relations based on discursive othering. Moreover, this tradition emphasizes the deconstruction of meta-narratives on war to historicize the objectivity claims of positivists on war and to see how war is discursively mediated phenomenon. First, we will briefly touch critical constructivism, then critical theory, and finally, post-structuralism.

Critical Constructivism

Broadly acknowledged in the discipline of IR, social constructivism is one of the most prominent perspectives with status of theoretical 'middle ground' between positivists and post-positivists positions. The middle ground also means that constructivism is divided into two camps; one guided by positivist approach in its inquiry, and other by post-positivist anti-foundationalists which may also be termed as conventional versus critical.

Arguably, since late 1980s constructivism has been appreciated to bring back the role of agency and ideational factors along with material in political analysis. Put differently, 'constructivism places considerable emphasis on cultural, historical and social factors and how these lead to the emergence, and perpetuation, of ideas, of norms and identity' (Savigny & Marsden, 2011). Likewise, on war, constructivists will look the role of ideas, norms and identity as well as the role of security language for discursive war mediation for example, when political leaders interpret any event as supreme security issue and relate ideational and material values to it, and publically declare to take measures accordingly through their speech-acts (Savigny & Marsden, 2011)ⁱⁱⁱ.

Constructivists dismiss the positivists' claims of objectivity rather they insist the unavoidable place of potential bias in political analysis on the basis of ideas, norms, and identity in the matters pertaining to national security. Moreover, critical constructivist give more emphasis on normative and ideational structures through which moral and security politics, and policies including war get sense in public when processed identity discourse. On analytical side, constructivists draw our attention the way identity discourse and interest converges in politics on the one hand and the central role of text to shape and construct security issues on the other hand. Savigny and Marsden summarize the constructivists take in the following passage: The power of narrative, including language and texts, has capacity to shape the construction of security. Narratives frame security issues as threatening or benign and determine consequently, what actions need to be taken. Over time narratives become accepted and internalized and provide sets of values and norms of appropriate behavior (Savigny & Marsden, 2011).

The nature of values in a society leads the culture of that society which ultimately shapes its behavior in all matters including security. For example, the identity politics in the US is all about self-perceptions being moral, exceptional, and chosen people with moral obligations within their boundaries and all over the world as opposed to 'imagined other' and usually unequal others, that not only directs the political culture in a given society but also their behavior with imagined others. All this process is done through intelligent, persuasive, and discursive employment of language and text which ends up publically acceptable and sellable

narratives be it question of war or peace. In nutshell, critical constructivists stress the need to deconstruct and analyze the discourses and more precisely, speech-acts of political leaders; their 'assertions, directives and commitments' (Onuf, 1998). In security terms, 'the language used to define or describe security situations has the power to bring those into being'.

The Frankfurt School/Critical Theory

Critical theory shares the critical constructivists' take on the role of discourse in the securitization process. Borrowing from Wendt (1999) security is what states make of it. It is an epiphenomenon inter-subjectively created. Different worldviews and discourse about politics deliver different views and discourses about security^{iv}. Critical security theorists challenge the realists' stance on the role of state as the 'end' of security policy. They emphasize the role of state as a 'mean' to provide security to the individuals, hence, making the individual as end of security not the state.

As Ken Booth (1991) maintains, 'the real objective of the security should be to emancipate individuals rather than simply to preserve the state. What security means for critical theorists? He summarizes the critical security theorists' position on the question of war in the following words: Security means the absence of threats. Emancipation is the freeing of people (as individuals and groups) from those physical and human constraints which stop them carrying out what they would freely choose to do. War and threat of war is one of those constraints, together with poverty, poor education, and political oppression and so on. Security and emancipation are two sides of the same coin. Emancipation, not power or order produces security (Booth, 1991).

Critical security takes state as harbinger of security rather than enhancer of security when the whole phenomenon takes state as center and individuals as periphery. Moreover, critical security takes realists' core ideas very critically, for example, 'state-centrality, claims of rationality, and of national interest actually create identities that conceive a "discourse of danger" around notions of insider and foreigner'(Savigny and Marsden, 2012). Along the same lines, Sheehan maintain that: The idea of nation-states reinforces the idea of separation and otherness, both within and outside borders, with such notions cutting across shared humanity and focusing on what separates rather than what unites

enabling the ruling class within states to retain control (Sheehan, 2005).

Put differently, securitization is a process through which an issue is labeled as security issue by elite actor through 'speech act' (Searle, 1962)^v. Once labeled, it moves issues out of political sphere into security sphere and gets capacity to effect security policy and priorities. Through speech acts labeled security object get the currency of existential threat when required by the policy elites. Any issue, once non-politicized may get politicized, once politicized it can also be securitized.

A non-politicized issue has no state involvement, the politicized one gets space in public policy, and securitized once it gets currency of existential threat. According to critical security, once labeled security concern, you reserve the right to treat it by extraordinary means including war. Acceptance of securitization heavily depends upon the audience; hence audience has to accept any issue as subject of existential threat for them. At this stage, media plays crucial role for policy elites to reinstate and disseminate or mediate the official version of threat construction at the mass level through media discourses.

The research project of critical security studies takes individual as ultimate referent object of security while referring security practices as political in assumptions and implications with normative commitment towards emancipator transformations. It tends to expose the structures and relationships that prevents human emancipation, for example, oppressive relations and structures (economic, social and political) which leads to war, slavery, and cultural imperialism.

Critical Theory and Securitization: Another contribution of post-positivist tradition to understand the phenomenon of war discourse is "securitization theory" that is mainly advanced by the intellectuals working in critical security studies. This theory maintains that threats are constructed and deconstructed through speech acts by dominant actors (usually leaders). Through speech acts a problem becomes security problem when they declare it to be. Jorgensen summarizes the securitization theory in the following words: It shows how actors try to securitize various phenomenons, including missiles, ideology, migration and climate. According to the theory, actors securitize the ordinary issues by declaring that they consider issue x, y or z an issue of security – not merely

an ordinary issue of security but actually an existential security threat for which reason the employment of extraordinary means is mandatory and therefore legitimate (Jorgensen, 2010).

In addition, securitization of an issue requires relevant audience, and favorable overall environment. A threat has been constructed when an audience believes that “if we do not tackle this problem, everything else will be irrelevant” (Buzan *et al.*, 1998). Beach extends the Buzan’s line in these words: “note who securitizes, which issue, which [existential] threats and which extraordinary means do they suggest? This theory seeks our attention to the discursive power/ability of the leaders to construct threats to national security through speech acts that have real effects upon state’s foreign policy” (Beach, 2012).

Critical security studies offers deconstruction of security narratives that denotes the relationship between security and politics. It includes process and struggle through which security is reproduced and contested. In sum, critical security studies take security as social and political product and process which is politically negotiated, and discursively communicated, based upon self-perception of actors and the way they relate to each other which that made security is a political phenomenon. Deconstruction of hegemonic security discourse offers emancipation from state, the referent object of security, which has served the ulterior motives of power elites on the one hand, and emancipation or opening up space in people’s lives to exercise their control over life on the other hand.

Post-structuralism

Third and most important construction within post-positivist tradition is the post-structuralism. The post-structuralists offer alternative to realists’ explanations which they base as the objective conditions leading to insecurity and perpetual war. For all the mainstream post-positivist currents war is a socially constructed or discursively mediated phenomenon not the objective one as explained by the political realism. For example, Hansen (2012) takes into account central pillars of realism and compares them with post-structuralism like groupism, egoism and power-centrism which persuasively makes very plausible the case against realism standpoints.

- First of all, post-structuralists object the ‘taken for granted’ assumption of realism about the groupism that serves as the base of their theory. To begin with,

the realists’ assumption about groupism is based upon socially shared values which overtime glue individual with ‘we group’. In nation-state system this groupism adds more to we-feeling manifested through state-sovereignty that implies a separation between the ‘inside’ and ‘outside’ the state, where domestic is ordered and foreign is anarchic where ‘politics’ is replaced by the reign of power (Hansen, 2012).

Furthermore, the post-structuralists argue whether the realists led state’s commitment to sovereignty has produced more wars or more peace. In addition, they argue the discursive making of identity based radical construction of otherness which in turn makes domestic and international as radical opposite stabilizing their symbiotic existence. Post-structuralism insists to deconstruct the discursive practices which made groupism as objective reality and for that they suggest historicization (Hansen, 2012).

- Secondly, the post-structuralists replace the realists’ second main assumption about egoism from human nature explanation to performativity. Post-structuralists claim that interests are not human nature driven but intentions are established through discourses which are articulated in language by the actors involved in foreign policy process. They take human intentions based upon neither selfishness nor altruism but discursive performances (Hansen, 2012). Like the critical constructivists, post-structuralists focus mainly on the discursive construction of identity that serves as base of foreign policy politics and performances. They argue that the way juxtapositions of egoism-altruism, rationality-irrationality are deployed in the foreign policy politics, the same way inside-outside dichotomies construct our ability to think ‘us’ versus ‘them’ or ‘foreign’ in foreign policy which is contributed by multiple discursive structures in the same fashion i.e. boundaries, statecraft, and sovereignty. Post-structuralism offers deconstruction of the identity politics grounded in insecurity culture which is based upon moral value-system in which opposite moral pair lead to insecurity from each other while perceiving themselves as superior and other as inferior.

The culture of insecurity further helps power elite to enjoy unquestioned power and ulterior interests first by linking and inflating ‘our superior values’ to threat from ‘inferior and immoral other’ which metaphorically demands public support to meet

security challenges ranging from limiting civil rights domestically to wage war outside the borders. Hence, identity is never given independent of discourse and always considered as the prerequisite for foreign policy sphere being performative in the whole process (Hansen, 2012).

- Thirdly, power is considered as the fundamental feature of international politics but with clear difference amongst the realism and post-positivism about its nature and manifestations. As oppose to realists who focus on military force as the most reliable or compulsory source of power under the unavoidable international structure to ensure survival in an anarchic system, the post-structuralists assert language as the ultimate source of power. Likewise, Hansen maintains that language has political power because it is through intelligent employment of power in the discourses that constitute subjects, objects, actors, and identities of 'us versus them'. Put simply, discourse is a linguistic system through which meaning is generated (Hansen, 2012).

Post-Structuralism and Discourse Theory: Post-structuralists do not take language as neutral medium but political by asserting that all materiality have ascribed importance through discursive structures which construct enemies and friends that in turn requires necessary potential and measure to deal with them. Accordingly, through the discourses based on persuasive linguistic structures and symbols foreign policy and war is mediated or in other words, language is a medium which foreign policy actors strive to make their policies appear legitimate, necessary, and realistic. Therefore, foreign policy and so called power politics dependent upon particular discursive construction of identity through linguistic systems which generates fear and measures to manage it by material power.

As realists explain the foreign policy behavior of states and the causes of perpetual threat of war using structural factors, post-structuralism take language as central source which connect threats signified by signifier using language, hence fear from other or war is nothing but discursive representation of otherness. Discourse analysis is analytical route suggested by the critical constructivists and post-structuralist alike to deconstruct the discursive construction, representation and sustainability of threat from political 'other'.

Discourse analysis emphasizes to historicize, and to look into the genesis of key representations and their discursive connections and practices that erect, sustain and inflate the otherness glued with morality and security discourses. In the words of Hansen, "discourse analysis does not ask if a representation is true or false, but what are the political implications of choosing a particular representation" (Hansen, 2012). Finally, discourse analysis deals with the concept of change along with its focus on genealogy.

The focus on genealogy in discourse analysis is to ask how the 'us' versus 'them' categories are mobilized with intertextual encounters from historical discourses involved. Starting from present, genealogy asks how what we know now has become the understanding of history, and what has been excluded or marginalized by current representations (Hansen, 2012). Change in foreign policy discourse comes in two ways; first, through discourse, if the goal is too costly to unattainable discourse is modified as needed, secondly, change comes if the issue becomes irrelevant and requires its replacement with other issue, for example, the Soviet threat became irrelevant in the event of sudden volunteer withdrawal of Soviets from the Cold War competition that consequently, brought change in the Western discourse about the Soviet threat.

In sum, the most prominent contribution of post-structuralism is incorporation of discourse theory in political analysis. Discourse theory is a generic term or an umbrella term comprising several different, competing discourse theories (Jorgensen, 2010). Discourse analysis deals with the study of language and its impacts. The fundamental split within discourse analysis is primarily along ontological lines, dealing with the very nature of reality. Beach (2012) summarizes this difference as:

"Positivists investigate questions such as how language is used strategically by leaders or how we can map the content of the beliefs of leaders from their pronouncements. Poststructuralists believe that it is through language that 'reality' is constructed and reconstructed".

Shapiro asserts that as such there is no objective meaning beyond the linguistic representation that one refers to (Shapiro, 1981). Language is a social construct through which identities are built through a series of juxtapositions that value one object over its opposite (the other) (Hansen, 2006). Jorgensen defines discourses

as: “discourses stand for meaning of things and words; made up of ‘social representation’ that is system of values, ideas and practices” (Jorgensen, 2010).

Although the promise of discourse analysis is multifaceted and within discourse analysis, critical discourse analysis (CDA) is widely used scheme in political analysis. Poststructuralists utilize critical discourse analysis to uncover what they term the hidden meanings in text, showing the role of language in relation to ideologies and constructing and restructuring power relations (Beach, 2012).

According to Jorgensen, CDA is interdisciplinary approach based on the inspirational sources like Michel Foucault, Louis Althusser, Mikhail Bakhtin and other Frankfurt School philosophers. Within CDA there is discourse-historical-approach or Vienna School which was forced to close in 2003 (Jorgensen, 2010). In general, CDA assumes discourse is a form of political action, sometimes called social practice. CDA suggests that discourse should be analyzed as a dialectic movement between context (shaping the discourses) and intent (discourses shaping the context or environment).

In contrast to positivist oriented theory testing methods and explanation of given reality, discourse analysis utilizes post-positivist interpretivists methods which focus upon understanding instead of explaining. Unlike positivists’ hypothesis building and causal methods, discourse analysts aim to start with questioning the ‘settled narratives’ and creating a thick narratives and descriptions of structures and categorizations that can be detected through a systematic reading of texts to deconstruct a “given reality”.

Post-structuralism, Identity Discourse, and War Mediation: Post-structuralism involves adopting a relativistic view of the world in which there is no single objective truth or reality (Beach, 2012). As mentioned earlier, post-structuralism posits that human beings perceive the social world through language and it is not a neutral medium. Therefore, post-structuralism focuses mainly on the role of discursive structures in the making of identity, securitization and knowledge/power relationship in the study of foreign relations.

Moreover, Post-positivist tradition generally and post-structuralism specifically do not believe in causal analysis, as there is no single ‘objective’ reality against which causal claims that ‘discourse matter’ can be tested (Hansen, 2006). Further, there is no such thing as a

purely independent or dependent variable in post-structuralists led discourse analysis, given that they mutually reproduce each other. Foreign policies are therefore inseparable from identities (Hansen, 2006). There are five historical examples available in to substantiate the foregoing assertion; first the Balkans, second; the Cold War, third; Persian Gulf War, fourth; the EU, and finally, the post 9/11 War on Terror.

Political discourses produce national identity by “linking concepts together in a series of signs (the self and the other) that are differentiated from each other” (Beach, 2012). For instance, Hansen (2006) argues that two sets of signs regarding the ‘Balkans’ and ‘Europe’ existed. A set of interlinked terms including ‘barbarian’, ‘violent’, ‘underdeveloped’ and ‘irrational’ form the sign ‘Balkans’, whereas the discourse on ‘Europe’ is composed of the terms ‘civilized’, ‘controlled’, ‘developed’ and ‘rational’ that are juxtaposed from the ‘Balkans’ terms. Differentiation does not only to have a spatial dimension, but can also have a temporal one (Hansen, 2006).

How discourses of identity and discursive otherness leads to war justification and mediation to public thorough political speech acts and media discourses can easily be analyzed the way US government pictured Soviets before WWII and in the postwar period. The demonization of ‘the other’ in the Cold War led to mutual fear at mass level which kept on providing legitimacy to long war at domestic and international level both. It was self-evident in the political rhetoric of the presidential speech acts and media discourse during the Cold War. David Campbell very interestingly sum up the identity-based multiple discursive encounters employed against the “Soviet other” by the US during the Cold War in his phenomenal work on US foreign policy and politics of identity (Campbell, 1998).

Along the same line, Dalby maintain that ‘the discursive construct of the ‘Red threat’, from within and without, enabled the US government to increase military expenditure greatly and to construct a narrative of being un-American for opponents’ (Dalby, 1992). Post-structuralists held that the construction of external threats convinces populations to relinquish their rights and civil liberties to government in turn for better security in the country.

Accordingly, the post-structuralists assert that the ‘constructs of otherness are used to control those who are the same by constructing the fear of the other’

(Savigny & Marsden, 2011). Furthermore, for post-structuralists discourses are used for the construction of what is acceptable or not, to differentiate between us and them, and self and others at mass level. The best example of identity construction in the US foreign policy towards Iraq is given by Savigny and Marsden: Iraq was constructed as a friendly regime to the West in 1988 but not in 1990. Dominant discourses defined Saddam Hussein's actions in invading Kuwait, a friendly regime and major oil supplier to the West, as responsible for changing the regime's status from amity to one of enmity.

In order for Western populations to understand and endorse such a change in relations, then, a discourse had to be constructed positing Hussein as enemy and villain and, as such, we can see that power is located discursively (Savigny and Marsden, 2011).

Waever (1996), for instance, refers to the discourse on the 'EU', where the 'Other' is Europe's own bloody past that needs to be avoided. Likewise, after 9/11, George W. Bush's declared the global war on terror after successful construction of an existential Islamist threat enabling the projection of US military power and material interests in Afghanistan, Iraq, and other regions of the world on the one hand, while eroding civil rights in the US, under the umbrella of Homeland Security on the other hand (Dalby, 1992; Jackson, 2005). After the 9/11 incident, President G. W. Bush, for example, repeated the identity based threat to the US to constitute the public support to cope the threat from the ideological other which promoted the public opinion in favor of war against terrorism:

"Today, our fellow citizens, our way of life, our very freedom came under attack in...America was targeted for attack because we're the brightest beacon for freedom and opportunity in the world. And no one will keep that light from shining. Americans are asking, why do they hate us? They hate what we see right here in this Chamber, a democratically elected government. Their leaders are self-appointed. They hate our freedoms - our freedom of religion, our freedom of speech, our freedom to vote and assemble and disagree with each other" (Bush, September 12, 2001)^{vi}.

This approach assumes that states do not have an objective, independent existence but their existence is performative which simply means that discourses constitute the objects of which they speak (Beach, 2012). "Conceptualized in this way, foreign policy comes to be

seen as a political practice that makes 'foreign' certain events and actors on the basis of discursive "other". In other words, foreign policy is a specific sort of boundary producing political performance" (Campbell, 1992).

Beach refers to Anderson's 1990 book *Imagined Communities* to argue that "from space we can see no borders. Instead borders should be understood as social constructions (performances) that play a role in defining the 'Self' from the 'Other". This assertion follow that there is no such 'objective' thing like 'national identity' but 'imagined communities' or "fictional national myths" that were created in the 19th century (Beach, 2012).

Hence, "the national identity of the US, is a social construction created through the US foreign policy by defining the 'self' in terms of demarcation from what is 'foreign" (Beach 2012: 90). For example US national identity is seen as constructed to the relations to 'other' or the rest of the world, resulting in a national identity that emphasizes "American Exceptionalism" (Beach, 2012).

Post-positivist scholars have explored where interests come from, arguing that the politics of identity is where we should search for the origin of interests. Hence, when we aim at explaining a certain policy, the question is not whether an interest-based or an identity-based explanation is the better position. The question is how a certain identity causes a set of interests and subsequently, how these interests are translated into policy.

Furthermore, some scholars argue that identity-based explanations are complementary to power-based explanations, for which reason the two should be employed together (Campbell, 1992). For example, of particular importance for the creation and continuation of national identity is the national discourse of danger. During the Cold War, the Soviet threat played a crucial role in producing and reproducing US national identity. Campbell suggested that the US would search for a new external danger that could be used to reproduce the US national identity (Campbell, 1992).

CONCLUSION

Post-positivist tradition, in nutshell, qualifies to deal with two underlying questions raised in this paper; first, about the nature of war mediation; it holds that war is a discursively mediated phenomenon by considering the role of discursive structures i.e. ideological differences/otherness which promote war narratives and secondly; the way identity discourse plays central

role as 'power-base' for war mediation. For example, as constructivism draws the politics of war on various ideational factors i.e. social, political, economic, ideological, and other emotive factors like fear and security which strongly influence the input and output of foreign policy process and politics.

Along the same line, critical theorists emphasize the need to work for the emancipation of political and economic sphere from the clutches of corporate elites which use identity as a tool for their ulterior material goals. Finally, post-structuralism considers that social and political world is discursively constructed by hegemonic political power(s). It suggests that we need to unfold the identity based discursive patterns and the role of discourse as performative that produces power relations and war mediation. It also engages the role of language in producing identity, security, and war.

In addition, post-structuralists assert heroic claim that there prevails no objective reality; all hegemonic political reality is relative and discursively constructed by the hegemonic power. The biggest challenge to post-structuralists' claims come from the positivist tradition and structuralists that while negating the possibility of objective world out there as well as the role of political and material structures in the claims of knowing. Moreover, post-structuralism grounds its meta-claims on the evidence it takes from the 'real world' or from the existing social and political reality out-there.

The debate whether war is an objective phenomenon or subjective one is deeply rooted in the meta-debates on the question of knowing as well as question of nature of social and political world. In this paper, we have endeavored to streamline the post-positivist turn in the study of politics and most typically war mediation. In doing so, we found out the potential relevance of the claims promoted by the post-positivist tradition especially their take on the role of identity discourse in foreign policy politics and war campaign/mediation which not only produces the power relations in international relations but also serves the ulterior political motives of power elite.

In sum, this paper substantiates that foreign policy politics and war mediation is based on ideational and discursive factors albeit it does not deny the possibility of material factors and equally considers their coexistence in actual political realm and its analysis. Borrowing from various currents in post-positivist turn in the discipline of International Relations, this paper

warrants the post-positivist tradition considerable qualification to make sense of foreign policy politics and war mediation. Hence, we can rightly and quite sensibly argue for the centrality of ideational and discursive factors in our understanding of foreign policy politics and war mediation.

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ⁱ As Steven Lukes and, before him, Antonio Gramsci were well aware, those able to shape cognitions, perceptions, and preferences exert a very considerable and potentially malign influence over society and societal development. For more details see Hay (2002), p. 214.

ⁱⁱ Rational choice or more precisely rational choice theory serves as meta-theory in which rationalism in IR grounds itself for instance political realism and liberalism. A promising work in this regard is done by Lina Erickson (2001).

ⁱⁱⁱ An extensive study is offered on foundational and anti-foundational tradition in the discipline of International Relations by Savigny and Marsden see Saving, H. and Marsden, L. (2011) *Doing Political Science and International Relations: Theories in Action*, London: Palgrave MacMillan.

^{iv} Many writers in post-positivist traditions took this position for instance see Wendt (1999) and Booth (1995).

^v The linguistic-turn in IR can be traced in the writings of post-modern philosophers and critical thinkers including Derrida and Chomsky. The latest contribution comes from J. Austin, J. Searle. In foreign policy discourse we can entertain the positions of D. Campbell, L. Hansen and Jutta Weldes and others.

^{vi} For post-9/11 presidential speeches see presidential rhetoric that can be accessed from <http://www.americanrhetoric.com/speeches/gwbush911cabinetroomaddress.htm>