

From vicious to virtuous circle: Moralistic trust, diffuse reciprocity, and the American security commitment to Europe

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Abstract

Constructivists maintain that a shared identity was crucial for explaining the creation of the North Atlantic Treaty Organization and the multilateral form that it took. I challenge this view, arguing instead that the alliance was based on moralistic trust, the belief that others will live up to their moral obligations. Moralistic trust facilitates the initiation of cooperation, so that states can begin a virtuous circle of trust, collaboration, and enhanced trust. It is also the foundation of the diffuse reciprocity inherent to multilateralism. In two case studies of the domestic politics in the United States of making a multilateral security commitment to Europe, the first being the League of Nations, I demonstrate that identity was not a prominent consideration and did not lead individuals to embrace multilateralism. This social-psychological account improves upon constructivism and rationalism by offering a way to embed ideational variables in studies of strategic interaction.

Keywords

constructivism, international organizations, NATO, psychology, reciprocity, trust

Introduction

The North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO) is a special alliance. Formed 60 years ago, it laid the foundation for security in post-war Western Europe, facilitating a rapprochement between France and Germany that counts among the most unexpected and transformational developments in the history of great power relations. It has endured the test of time, taking in 12 new members since the end of the Cold War. The treaty contains

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one of the most robust security guarantees of any alliance in history. NATO's integrated command comes close to constituting a supranational army.

For many, NATO is more than an alliance held together by shared security interests — it is a community of democracies. The idea that NATO's unique characteristics, indeed its very existence, is owed to a shared identity based on Western values is one of the most common theoretical claims made by constructivist scholars about the alliance (Deutsch, 1957; Hemmer and Katzenstein, 2002; Jackson, 2006; Patrick, 2009; Risse-Kappen, 1995). It is often associated with a particular account of post-World War II American foreign policy, that after 1945 the United States broke free of its parochial isolationism and magnanimously made the security commitment to Europe it had refused after World War I. The United States was led to this point by the realization of a common identity with the liberal democracies of Europe. Identity in these accounts implies a certain altruism, a merging of selves. The United States made an asymmetric commitment to European security that gave the Europeans a larger role than pure power would have led us to expect, most evident in the multilateral security guarantee of Article V in which an attack on one was an attack on all.

If democratic identity was the tie that brought the West together, it begs the question of why it did not occur earlier. American President Woodrow Wilson's idea of collective security was largely considered through the lens of relations with the great powers of Europe. Following World War I, there was a significant group of American politicians who felt an affinity with America's wartime allies, fellow civilized powers defined in opposition to German barbarism. This was a contrast of autocracy and democracy. Yet these same Americans, predominantly conservatives in the Republican Party, were not willing to make a binding security commitment to Europe. They would only consider a concert-like arrangement based on consultation that preserved America's unilateral freedom of action. Identity mattered in a negative way. Traditional isolationists, who defined the United States in opposition to Europe, would not even contemplate going that far. Only Wilson and his Democratic Party allies were willing to consider multilateralism, and they felt no bond with the Old World. In other words, those liberals most willing to extend a multilateral security guarantee to Europe felt *less* of a sense of common identity than conservatives who favored unilateralism. In the debate over the North Atlantic Treaty, the same political factions, with the same preferences, largely re-emerged. Liberal Democrats largely supported multilateralism, conservatives preferred unilateralism, and isolationists objected to any association. Only a political compromise between the parties allowed the United States to negotiate and sign the treaty.

If identity was not necessary for the creation of NATO, shared interest was necessary but insufficient. Lake (1999) has correctly pointed out that the shared threat of the Soviet Union was indeterminate. There were multiple ways of coping with this problem. NATO required something else, and the League debate provides clues. American participation in this multilateral arrangement was scuttled by fears of various types of opportunism that are possible under multilateralism, such as entrapment in European conflicts. These concerns were the expression of distrust, but of a particular sort. Opponents of multilateralism objected to it because they argued that others were inherently untrustworthy; they were immoral. Proponents of collective security believed that others would largely comply with the obligations of the League because they were generally trustworthy.

What Uslander (2002) calls ‘moralistic trust’ allows for the diffuse reciprocity necessary for the functioning of multilateral security organizations in a way that other types of trust cannot. Only moralistic trust can explain how those cooperating can be comfortable with an imbalance of contributions to a collective good for a length of time. And moralistic trust allows states to initiate cooperation on the basis of a future expectation of reciprocity. It helps begin the ‘virtuous circle’ of cooperation, enhanced trust, and deeper cooperation (Putnam, 1993).

Moralistic trust was a critical and necessary ingredient for the American commitment to NATO. American motives were narrower and more self-interested than constructivists acknowledge. A common faith in democracy and heritage in Western civilization were not central considerations in American decision-making, serving instead as arguments to convince skeptics of the merits of the alliance. The key American policy-makers expected a reciprocal relationship; the Europeans would not get a free ride. However, they also understood that reciprocity would only be forthcoming in the medium to long term, so they would have to move first. And the multilateral nature of the security guarantee in NATO can only be accounted for through reference to moralistic trust. This trust was not the product of a common identity, as constructivists might counter but rather was generalized in nature. Opponents who lacked this type of trust also identified with Europe but were not willing to make the same commitments. Moralistic trust is an attribute of particular decision-makers; some have it and some do not. It is social-psychological in nature.

Sociological accounts of NATO: A community of democracies

For constructivists, the essential ingredient for explaining the creation and design of NATO, as well as its subsequent operation, is identity. Hemmer and Katzenstein make the strongest and most convincing case, arguing that NATO would never have come about, at least in the form that it did, without a feeling of ‘mutual identification’ among the allies (2002: 576). The North Atlantic states were a ‘shared community’; democracy ‘established a basis for identification that transcended military-strategic considerations’ (Hemmer and Katzenstein, 2002: 575, 589). Patrick also writes of a ‘natural community that shared, broadly speaking, similar political and cultural values as European’ (2009: 270).

In constructivist estimation identity drove not only the creation of NATO, but also the institutional form. The multilateral structure of the alliance ‘requires a strong sense of collective identity’, Hemmer and Katzenstein write (2002: 576). ‘Once the North Atlantic was constructed as a region that put the United States in a grouping of roughly equal states with whom it identified, multilateral organizing principles followed closely’ (2002: 588). Where such a ‘we-feeling’ was lacking, as was the case in Southeast Asia, the design of the alliance was very different. Similarly, Jackson claims that the ‘indivisible notion of security was a logical consequence of thinking of the alliance members as belonging to a common “Western Civilization”’ (2006: 219).

Implicit in the constructivist account is almost a kind of selflessness on the part of the United States consistent with a focus on identity. The very notion of identity implies at least a partial merging of the self and other based on shared membership in a group. Quoting Finnemore, Hemmer and Katzenstein note that identification ‘emphasizes the affective relationships between actors’ (Hemmer and Katzenstein, 2002: 587). By helping the

Europeans, the Americans were helping themselves as they were part of the same group. For Hemmer and Katzenstein, this is evident in the fact that even though the European countries had been destroyed by the war and were no longer deserving of great power status, the United States treated them as equals. The Americans did not press their power advantage over the Europeans as the raw distribution of capabilities might have allowed; they pulled back based on a shared sense of self (2002: 588). Hemmer and Katzenstein argue that this shared identity helped define the Americans' very interest in Europe, apart from its material importance. Similarly, Jackson also argues that recourse to the concept of Western civilization engendered 'American *responsibility* for preserving Europe', which implies magnanimity and paternalism on the part of the Americans (2006: 222). Risse-Kappen makes an almost identical argument based on identity and American benevolence in an effort to explain the operation of NATO *after* it was created (1995: 31–32).

Constructivists stress the egalitarian nature of a multilateral security commitment, that an attack on Iceland was equivalent to an attack on Britain. As Ruggie defines it, multilateralism is 'an institutional form which coordinates relations among three or more states on the basis of "generalized" principles of conduct — that is, principles which specify appropriate conduct for a class of actions, without regard to the particularistic interests of the parties or the strategic exigencies that may exist in any specific occurrence' (1992: 51). States cannot distinguish between the victims.

A psychological account of trust, reciprocity, and international cooperation

I argue that constructivist accounts overstate the degree of self-abnegation by the United States and emphasize the wrong ideational variable. Stressing the egalitarian nature of multilateralism predicated on a shared sense of self distracts from the fact that multilateralism involves reciprocity, a self-interested exchange of benefits. And when both halves of the transaction do not take place simultaneously, cooperation requires trust.

Trust might be sustained through an ongoing and consistent exchange of benefits, what Uslaner (2002) calls 'strategic trust'. This is trust based on the belief that others will not defect due to their interest in sustaining a mutually beneficial relationship, that their interests 'encapsulate' one's own (Hardin, 2001, 2006). This rationalist conception of trust is present, albeit implicitly, in Axelrod's (1984) understanding of the evolution of cooperation. By lengthening the shadow of the future, states can transcend short-term incentives for defection. Axelrod and those who borrowed from his insights, such as Robert Keohane (1984), focus on 'uncertainty' or reducing 'transaction costs' and rarely invoke trust. However, in the context of cooperation, uncertainty about intentions and fears that others will defect from a cooperative agreement are the very definition of a lack of trust, as Kydd (2005) has articulated.

To develop and sustain a relationship of mutually beneficial exchange on the basis of strategic trust requires 'specific' reciprocity, in which the exchange occurs 'in a strictly delimited sequence', as Keohane describes it (1986: 4). Where the gains from cooperation are not relatively consistent, strategic trust disappears as it is the very repetition of cooperation that convinces states of the trustworthiness of others. It provides the information about the interests of others' cooperative intentions. And if there is no frequent

exchange of benefits, there is no long-term relationship that provides the incentive to cooperate and the reason to trust.

Strategic trust, therefore, cannot explain diffuse reciprocity over time. This is particularly problematic for explaining multilateral security arrangements in which exchange occurs over a longer period and contributions to the common enterprise are often asymmetric at any point in time, if not for ever (Keohane, 1986: 12). As Ruggie (1992) and others note, the indivisible nature of the NATO security guarantee was based on an expectation of diffuse rather than specific reciprocity (Hemmer and Katzenstein, 2002). Norway did not exchange aid from France in their efforts to fight a potential invasion from the Soviet Union in return for their aid when France was possibly invaded by Germany. They could not. These types of contingencies could not be foreseen, and they would be extremely rare if they occurred at all. As a consequence, Norway could not expect help from France simply based on its assessment of French self-interest in investing in the relationship in the case that France was later the victim of attack, as neither were guaranteed, or even likely, to happen. In other words, in the absence of the possibility of specific reciprocity, encapsulated interest does not emerge and strategic trust cannot sustain cooperation.

Therefore, to explain the origins and durability of cooperation in multilateral security institutions requires us to call into service a different type of trust that is not based on information and does not require specific reciprocity, what Uslaner (2002) calls 'moralistic trust'. This variety of trust is based on the belief that others will feel morally bound to reciprocate cooperation and comply with their agreements. Rotter defines this variety of trust as the 'expectancy held by an individual that the word, promise, oral or written statement of another individual or group can be relied on' (Rotter, 1980: 1; see also Cook and Cooper, 2003: 213; Messick and Kramer, 2001: 91). Hoffman calls it 'fiduciary trust' (2002: 20–22).

In moralistic trust, trusters believe that intentions and behavior reflect traits of the trustee, rather than the situation (Tyler and Degoe, 2004: 332). It rests on a belief in the benevolent character of others (Cook and Cooper, 2003: 215; Uslaner, 2002: 4). Moralistic trust is based on 'an implicit theory of personality', a belief that others have consistent attributes that do not vary by situation (Mercer, 2005: 95; Sztompka, 1999: 75). When we trust moralistically, we are making judgments about the character of partners and their inherent trustworthiness rather than their interests (Larson, 1997: 22; Yamagishi and Yamagishi, 1994: 132). It is consistent with the conventional, common-sense notion of trust as having a moral element. Trust is generally associated with an expectation of integrity and upright behavior on the part of the trustee. Uslaner writes that when someone trusts, he or she presumes that others are 'honorable' (2002: 15). One might even argue that if we need to gather information and constantly verify cooperative behavior in order to trust, we are not really trusting.

A belief that others are inherently trustworthy provides the confidence needed to cooperate even when the gains from cooperation are not consistent. Moralistic trust serves as a foundation for the diffuse reciprocity often needed to sustain cooperation. Members of the North Atlantic Treaty had to feel assured, even in absence of specific reciprocity, that others would come to their aid. Only moralistic trust gives that assurance. Norway (and every other member) exchanged their *pledge* to help France (and any

other member) *in case of attack* for a similar pledge to aid it in case of attack. This was a swap of promises that might never be called into play. But it was based on a belief that others would feel morally obligated to comply. Without moralistic trust, there would have been no Article V. As Keohane notes, diffuse reciprocity rests on a 'sense of obligation', of 'duties' and a 'confidence in the good faith of others' (1986: 20–21, 25). Although he is not explicit, he is talking about moralistic trust. Where moralistic trust is lacking, actors must engage in simultaneous exchange or specific reciprocity. This is the 'appropriate principle of behavior when norms of obligation are weak' (Keohane, 1986: 24).

Moralistic trust is also necessary for explaining the initiation of cooperation, something that rationalists themselves recognize they have difficulty accounting for (Axelrod and Hamilton (1981)). Once begun, ongoing relationships of mutual benefit and exchange might be self-reinforcing if there is constant enough reciprocity. However, before a relationship begins, states do not have the information necessary to gauge the trustworthiness of others, or the peace of mind that the other will not defect for risk of undermining ongoing exchange. They cannot by definition. The process must begin with one side beginning that process, risking opportunism for the potential gains of cooperation. Someone must take the 'initial gamble' (Uslaner, 2002: 14–15). As will be seen, American and European negotiators of what became the North Atlantic Treaty saw this very same dilemma. British Foreign Secretary Ernest Bevin called it the 'vicious circle'.

Moral attributions allow individuals to draw conclusions about the trustworthiness of others absent firm information, unlike in moralistic trust (Cook and Cooper, 2003: 209; Putnam, 1993; Sztompka, 1999: 62; Tyler, 2001: 285). As a consequence, it enables them to begin a 'virtuous circle' of cooperation. In a prominent study demonstrating the role of moralistic trust, Hayashi et al. (1999) conducted a one-shot experiment with prisoner's dilemma pay-offs, only they staged the moves so that players did not move simultaneously. The study found that when the first mover's choice is conveyed to the other player, first movers are more likely to believe that they can induce others to reciprocate and are much more likely to choose to cooperate as a result. The kind of trust operating in this instance must be based on a belief that others will feel morally obligated to reciprocate cooperation since there is no sanction for defection or incentive to invest in the relationship given the limited nature of the game (Kramer et al., 2004: 374; Larson, 1997; Pilisuk and Skolnick, 1968). This helps explain the willingness and ability of the United States to break the vicious circle in the early Cold War.

If I can demonstrate that the United States committed to the alliance only on the condition of reciprocity, even if diffuse, it undermines the constructivist claim that identity drove the creation of the alliance. It also undercuts the notion, implied in a number of accounts, that the United States acted as a hegemon willing to provide public goods to Europe after World War II regardless of opportunism. In this argument, the Europeans and the United States had an identity of interests making the latter willing to extend a guarantee regardless of reciprocity, rendering trust of any type unnecessary (Ikenberry, 2001; Lake, 1999). I should stress that trust in and of itself does not explain cooperation. Rather it facilitates collaboration if there is the possibility of mutual gain based on some complementary interests. States do not cooperate for cooperation's sake even if they trust one another.

Moralistic trust is best seen and measured in relief. Whereas strategic trust is a product of situational factors like the structure of incentives and information, research in social psychology indicates that moralistic trust is at least partially dispositional. Some people have it and others do not. There is overwhelming evidence from social-psychological experiments that moralistic trust leads to greater cooperation in the same structural circumstances. Those who trust more, cooperate more. Based on attributions about others character, some, individuals reframe the objective games given them by researchers. They convert prisoner's dilemma games into assurance games, expecting that cooperation will elicit cooperation rather than defection. This trust can only be moralistic; it cannot be strategic, as participants have the same information, play the same game, and receive the same feedback (Kelley and Stahelski, 1970; Kuhlman and Marshello, 1975; Kuhlman and Wimberley, 1976; McClintock and Liebrand, 1988).

Those subjects identified as more dispositionally trusting before experiments tend to attribute behavior by others during experiments to moral characteristics, holding cooperators to be more moral than defectors. They believe that honesty will have a greater effect on the level of cooperation of others than non-trusters do, and their own level of cooperation increases much more sharply against players identified as moral than does that of those who lack moralistic trust (Liebrand et al., 1986; Van Lange and Kuhlman, 1994). These individuals are not altruistic, however. Moralistic trusters eventually defect in the face of defection, when others continually refuse to reciprocate (Kelley and Stahelski, 1970; Kuhlman and Marshello, 1975; Kuhlman and Wimberley, 1976; McClintock and Liebrand, 1988; Rotter, 1980).

We can measure moralistic trust in a number of ways. If individuals in the same structural circumstances systematically differ in their expectations of opportunism, this must be moralistic trust. Opportunism is a violation of trust, and alliances come with several risks. In the NATO case, the Europeans might free-ride on the American defense commitment or entrap the United States into conflicts not necessarily in its interests. The insurance offered by the mighty American military could cause the Europeans to act provocatively, leading to 'moral hazard'. Allies might even abandon the United States in a time of attack (Lake, 1999: ch. 3; Snyder, 1984). Second, moralistic trust is evident when individuals in the same position define the game they are playing differently. If some see an assurance game where others see a prisoner's dilemma, the former are trusting moralistically. Third, moralistic trust can be captured directly in attributions about the character of others.

If my argument is correct, that the American security commitment to Europe rested on moralistic trust, only those who give evidence of trusting moralistically should embrace multilateralism, as diffuse reciprocity requires moralistic trust. Those who believe others are inherently untrustworthy should support more unilateral alternatives that reduce the chance of opportunism. For instance, those who trust less and fear entrapment might want to make security guarantees weaker. Those who expect free-riding will prefer to make their own cooperation contingent on prior cooperation by others. Rationalism cannot account for those differences, as strategic trust is a function of the situation, and all those with the same information will make the same choices. If trust is operating, it cannot be strategic trust.

Constructivists might reply that their account of NATO's origins is perfectly consistent with the theoretical account identified above. American self-restraint and its magnanimous over-provision of certain public goods was simply the first part of a long-term reciprocal exchange. However, the constructivist accounts of NATO still differ in that they argue implicitly that common identity is the foundation of moralistic trust.¹ Hemmer and Katzenstein briefly note the presence and role of trust but imply that belonging in a common group comes first: 'Perceived affinities of various types reinforced the political trust rooted in common democratic political institutions, "we-feeling", and "mutual responsiveness" that Karl Deutsch and his associated have described as central ingredients of the emergence of the North Atlantic community' (2002: 588; emphasis added). Risse-Kappen also mentions trust, but he offers it no special role and it appears to derive from the central factor of shared democratic identity (1995: 31).

To judge if trust is promoting cooperation independently of identity or is the by-product of shared group ties requires measuring the degree to which the type of moralistic trust operating in a given instance is *generalized* or *particularized* (Uslaner, 2002). Moralistic trust varies in scope. Generalized trust is an optimism about others in general, even those we do not know or do not identify with. It is the basis of all the studies cited above, which involved subjects with no prior knowledge of one another with the others with whom they were interacting, and in most cases involved them playing against a computer that they believed was controlled by someone else. However, generalized trust is *not* inconsistent with distrust of specific others who have proved themselves to be unreliable and dishonest partners and therefore has relevance for the study of creating alliances against untrustworthy adversaries. It is a general inclination, not a blanket rule (Uslaner, 2002: 24).

Not all moralistic trust is generalized. It might also be more limited in scope. Particularized trust is the belief that a particular other is inherently trustworthy, and Uslaner (2002) finds that it is likely identity-based. We trust others who are like us. This is the kind of moralistic trust implicit in constructivist accounts. Both are undoubtedly important in social relations. However, if we see evidence of generalized trust, we can conclude that moralistic trust is operating independently of identity as the primary causal factor since generalized trust is too broad to be based on identity.

The two forms of trust might be expressed differently rhetorically. Generalized trust can be measured through references to human nature, particularized trust through statements about the inherent attributes of specific others. However, the latter might still be indicative of generalized trust as those who are generally trusting are, *ceteris paribus*, more likely to trust any particular other. If individuals express both generalized and particularized trust in reference to a particular cooperative situation, then we can conclude that generalized trust is doing most of the work. If expressions of generalized trust are not to be found, I rely on the comparative method. If individuals express the same feeling of identification with a particular group but differ in their expressions of its inherent trustworthiness, the difference in trust is more likely one of generalized trust, as shared identity should always lead to particularized trust according to constructivism.

In the pages that follow, I review two cases of the domestic political differences in the United States over an American security commitment to Europe. While our primary interest is in NATO, an examination of the political terrain during the League debate

shows the role that moralistic trust played in defining differences between opponents and proponents at another time in which the US considered a multilateral commitment to Europe. The main point is that identification with Europe was not associated with support for multilateralism and was actually sometimes associated with unilateralism. Identity was neither necessary nor sufficient for support of a multilateral security guarantee.

This comparison between the League of Nations and the North Atlantic Treaty offers more theoretical leverage than Hemmer and Katzenstein's cases. They seek to demonstrate the centrality of identity by comparing the creation of the alliance with the South East Asian Treaty Organization, which contains no collective security guarantee. The authors claim that this reflects a lack of a shared sense of self with its members. While the authors argue that the latter two cases offer 'something like a natural experiment', in fact the varying outcomes were overdetermined (Hemmer and Katzenstein, 2002: 578). In Asia, the US had remarkably fewer strategic and commercial interests and no viable partners for burden-sharing, making multilateralism ill-fitted for the job. In both the cases of transatlantic cooperation, the Americans had much at stake in European security and potential partners to carry the load. This leaves us better able to examine the supplementary role played by other non-material factors.

In the NATO section, I make the case for the psychological argument by demonstrating that moralistic trust allowed American officials to take the first steps to begin cooperation with the expectation of reciprocity, if only of the diffuse variety. Identity barely figured in their private deliberations. Conservatives again had major reservations because they feared opportunism, even though they did not vary in the degree to which they identified with Europe. If identity was necessary, it was certainly not sufficient.

The League of Nations

Thirty years before the conclusion of the North Atlantic Treaty, the United States considered a different multilateral security guarantee. President Woodrow Wilson championed the cause of collective security, in which members would pledge to come to the aid of others whose territorial integrity or political independence was violated. While this was to be a global institution, its most obvious aim was to maintain peace in Europe, and this is how American leaders, diplomats, and congressmen understood it. World War I, despite its name, was fought of course almost solely in Europe. And before decolonization, most independent nation states *were* European or at least Western.

Wilson's vision was premised on moralistic trust, a belief that a moral obligation (or a Covenant, the term he preferred) would suffice to maintain peace. In his private meeting with Republican Senators hostile to his proposals, Wilson stressed that Article X, the League's collective security guarantee, was 'a moral, not a legal, obligation.... It is binding in conscience only, not in law' (Papers of Woodrow Wilson, Vol. 45: 343). While this might seem to imply that Wilson was downplaying the nature of the guarantee to soften opposition, he stressed to skeptics that 'a moral obligation is of course superior to a legal obligation, and, if I may say so, has a greater binding force' (PWW, Vol. 45: 361). Wilson said that he did not expect defection (PWW, Vol. 45: 361, 393).

Wilson and his supporters based their optimism on their sense of *generalized* trust, partly in a belief in the benevolence of human nature. This was evident in a broader political program emphasizing the moral nature of the masses (Gerring, 2001). War was the result of the selfish interests of the few, whereas the masses were peaceful and could be expected to embrace international cooperation (PWW, Vol. 40: 538, 539). Without mobilizing the force of public opinion, war would be ‘determined upon as wars used to be determined upon in the old, unhappy days when peoples were nowhere consulted by their rulers and wars were provoked and waged in the interest of dynasties or of little groups of ambitious men’, he said (PWW, Vol. 41: 523).

As optimistic as Wilson was, however, he did not trust European leaders. It could be said that he had an anti-European identity. Wilson wrote to a colleague, ‘Yes, I know that Europe is still governed by the same reactionary forces which controlled this country until a few years ago. But I am satisfied that if necessary I can reach the peoples of Europe over the heads of their Rulers’ (Knock, 1992: 162). The masses, Wilson believed, were behind him, symptomatic of his generalized trust. The President believed that he could ‘convert’ the European leaders with their help (Ambrosius, 1987: 82–84). It was for this reason that Wilson put such a great stress on democracy as a precondition to the functioning of collective security, not as a form of identity that marked an in-group, but as a form of government that would enable the moral masses to force their leaders to meet their moral obligations in foreign affairs under the League. ‘Only free peoples can hold their purpose and their honour steady to a common end and prefer the interests of mankind to any narrow interest of their own’, he asserted (PWW, Vol. 45: 525; Vol. 41: 523).

Those American politicians who did feel a shared identity with the Europeans were some of the least willing to make a binding commitment to the continent. The dominant faction of the Republican Party, whom Knock (1992) has dubbed the ‘conservative internationalists’, supported a continuation of cooperation among the ‘righteous’ and ‘civilized’ wartime allies of the United States (Cooper, 2001: 11–22; Knock, 1992: 109; Patrick, 2009: 11). By ‘civilized’, these conservatives meant democratic, which they contrasted with their primary wartime adversary. Republican majority leader and *de facto* leader of the conservatives, Henry Cabot Lodge, explained, ‘We took up arms against Germany because we were determined not only to protect our own safety and independence against her attacks but because the people of the United States believed that if the world was to be a possible place for free, law-abiding people to live in, the autocratic system and the organized barbarism of Germany must once and for all be eliminated from among the nations. We went to war to save civilization’ (Congressional Record, 65:3: 725).

Conservatives advocated a different conception of a League based on continued cooperation among the allies. As Philander Knox, another prominent conservative, explained, ‘We have now passed from a dangerous balance of power to a beneficent preponderance of power in the hands of the proved trustees of civilization. The English-speaking people and our principal allies formed a real league and they have enforced peace and saved civilization. This league we have stands ready to enforce the conditions of peace’ (CR, 65:3: 604). However, Republicans would not commit to any formal and binding multilateral guarantee to the security of the continent except perhaps a bilateral alliance with France. They preferred an informal concert arrangement, *ad hoc* in nature without any

general obligations or even voting procedures. Knox advocated 'a permanent committee for consultation on these subjects' (CR, 65:3: 605). It 'entangles us in no way', he reassured (Cooper, 2001: 41). The conservatives in general preferred a League that simply allowed great power discussion (Cooper, 2001: 8).

Any identification conservatives felt with the Europeans was more than trumped by their generalized distrust, evident in ubiquitous references to human nature (Ambrosius, 1987: 48; Patrick, 2009: 17; Stone, 1970: 10–11). Lodge cautioned, 'We must deal with human nature as it is and not as it ought to be' (Ambrosius, 1987: 28). Knox said, 'One must be visionary indeed to suppose that the heterogeneous peoples of the earth could so completely overcome human nature as to combine now in the real internationalism of a world State or even in a league involving a great catalogue of unnatural self-restraints' (CR, 65:2: 11487; also Cooper, 2001: 40). This lack of generalized trust led conservatives to expect opportunism of every kind — abandonment, free-riding, and entrapment (Cooper, 2001: 41, 135; CR, 65:3: 606; 66:1: 3778–3784).

Based on this lack of generalized moralistic trust, conservatives were convinced that states, including the United States, would abandon their pledges when a crisis ensued. Diffuse reciprocity would not work. Publicly, Lodge complained of 'too many and too Utopian proposals ... and too difficult obligations' (Stone, 1970: 26; see also CR 65:2: 11485–11488). In a closed-door meeting with Wilson, for which a transcript is now available, Senator Warren Harding asked skeptically, 'if there is nothing more than a moral obligation on the part of any member of the league, what avail [the security guarantee]?' He predicted to Wilson that others will 'take advantage of the [moral] construction that you place upon these articles' (PWW, Vol. 45: 361). The League could not work on the basis of 'verbal adherence to general principle', declared Lodge. 'You can not make effective a league of peace, "supported by the organized force of mankind", by language or high-sounding phrases' (Knock, 1992: 124).

On these grounds, they opposed collective security. Even among former allies, trust might not be possible. Conservative Senator Brandegee said to Wilson in their closed-door meeting, 'I want to call your attention to the fact that this era of good feeling which exists between the allied and associated powers after their common experience and suffering in this great war may not always exist, in view of future commercial contests and separate interests of different nationalities which may occur in the future' (PWW, Vol. 45: 401). Conservative internationalists supported a reservation attached to American ratification of the League of Nations Covenant that would reassert American unilateralism, a default position of non-involvement in case of aggression against League members unless the United States decided otherwise.

Where identity mattered, it was in a negative way, to make already skeptical politicians even more pessimistic. Traditional isolationists made the same cautionary references to human nature (CR, 64:1: 11377–11378; 65:3: 191–196; Stone, 1970: 42–43). However, traditional isolationists also had an anti-European identity that made them reluctant to cooperate informally or even consult with Continental great powers. Isolationists were the guardians of the Monroe Doctrine and Washington's farewell warning, both premised on the notion that the foreign policies of the United States and Europe should be kept separate, even if they could and should engage in economic exchange (Dueck, 2006; Jackson, 2006; Montan, 2005). Like Washington, isolationists

believed that Europeans were inherently untrustworthy. It was not only that European interests were antagonistic to American interests; Europeans were immoral. The isolationists' unofficial spokesperson was William Borah, Republican Senator from Idaho. Paraphrasing Washington, he asked rhetorically, 'Are there people in this day who believe that Europe now and in the future shall be free of selfishness, of rivalry, of humor, of ambition, of caprice? ... Why should we interweave our destiny with the European destiny?' (CR, 65:3: 3912). Hiram Johnson referred to the 'sordid, cunning, secret and crafty designs of European governments' (Cooper, 2001: 100). 'European statesmen', according to Joseph France, were 'dominated by bigotry, hatred, and intolerance' (Cooper, 2001: 217).

By joining a League of Nations, isolationists argued, the United States would expose itself to all types of European opportunism, such as entrapment (Cooper, 2001: 19, 61; Czernin, 1964: 410; Lake, 1999: 117; Stone, 1970: 16, 55). Borah asked scornfully, 'Do you say that you propose that American citizens shall be called into military action at the bidding of a tribunal composed almost entirely of members from Europe. ... Are we to have our security determined by the 57 varieties of nations in Europe?' (CR, 65:3: 189, 192).

Particularized distrust of Europeans was driven by a contrast in identity. For isolationists, Europe was the antithesis of the United States — aristocratic, anti-democratic, and imperialistic. The Monroe Doctrine was more than a warning to Europeans to remain out of the American sphere of influence, but rather a statement of difference between the Old World and the New World. It was the 'Republic's bold challenge to this unconscionable conspiracy bent upon the destruction of free governments', explained Borah (CR, 65:3: 195).

Like conservative internationalists, isolationists embraced unilateralism (Stone, 1970: 27, 57). However, because of their particularized distrust of Europe, isolationists also opposed any American participation in an organization of any form. By mere participation, the United States would become a European-like power, losing its democratic character and identity. 'These distinguishing virtues of a real republic you can not commingle with discordant and destructive forces of the Old World and still preserve them', Borah argued. 'We will in time become inured to its inhuman precepts and its soulless methods, strange as this doctrine now seems to a free people' (Czernin, 1964: 411). The League would draw the United States into the 'rapacious power of the imperial system of Europe', he warned. 'I know that instead of Americanizing Europe, Europe will Europeanize America' (Cooper, 2001: 227). They would watch the 'Republic die' (Patrick, 2009: 23). Isolationists attributed to Europeans an almost mythical ability to lead the United States astray. Europeans would dominate it and use it for their nefarious purposes regardless of the voting procedures (CR, 65:3: 3913; Stone, 1970: 51, 58). 'Close the doors upon the diplomats of Europe, let them sit in secret, give them the material to trade on, and there always will be unanimous consent', cautioned Borah (Czernin, 1964: 408).

The North Atlantic Treaty

The original idea for what would become NATO originated in Britain, not the United States. Fearing a disintegration in morale and a 'piecemeal collapse' in the face of an

increasingly provocative Soviet Union, British Foreign Secretary Ernest Bevin was the first to float the idea of 'Western Union' to hold Europe together so that individual members would 'feel sufficiently reassured to refuse to embark on a fatal policy of appeasement' (FRUS, 1948: 4, 15; Kaplan, 2007: 30). In early 1948, he advocated publicly and privately for some sort of association of Western countries threatened by the Soviets.

That the original idea for NATO has European origins is not at all surprising, considering the weakness of the post-war European countries and their closer proximity to the Soviet Union (Kydd, 2005). The key puzzle in the formation of NATO is not, as Ikenberry (2001) implies, how the United States was able to convince Europeans of the merits of American leadership, but rather how the Europeans were able to lure a weary United States into making a commitment to European security.

Initiating the process that led to the North Atlantic Treaty required the United States to move first because of the imbalance in power among its members. Bevin and the Europeans as a whole stressed continually that the United States must first extend Europe a security guarantee before they could be counted upon to mobilize their material resources to balance against the Soviet Union, economically and militarily. Because they were so weakened by the war, they needed the assurance of an American commitment in order to stand up to the communists both internally and externally. Otherwise they risked attracting the ire of the Soviet Union alone, the equivalent of political and military suicide (FRUS, 1948: 15; Henderson, 1983: 4; Kaplan, 2007: 30; Miscamble, 1992: 115). An American security commitment was necessary to boost European morale and give them the confidence necessary to stand up to the Soviet Union. As a British official noted in conversations with the Americans, 'The plain truth is that Western Europe cannot yet stand on its own feet without assurance of support' (FRUS, 1948: 14).

The very idea of an association was constructed to solicit American involvement in Western European security. Bevin's language was carefully constructed with the Americans in mind, avoiding any insistence on a treaty or use of the politically sensitive term 'alliance' so as not to provoke isolationist sentiment. The Union was to be 'of a formal or informal character backed by the Americas and the Dominions' (FRUS, 1948: 5). Bevin described this 'spiritual union' as an alliance of countries sharing a common identity based on democratic values and a common heritage in 'Western civilization', a 'Western democratic system'. He stressed the 'common ideals for which the Western Powers have twice in one generation shed their blood'. Bevin wrote in correspondence with the Americans, 'Almost all the countries I have listed have been nurtured on civil liberties and on the fundamental human rights.' The 'federation of the West' needed to 'contain all the elements of freedom for which we all stand' (FRUS, 1948: 1-5). In Bevin's eyes, this was not to be an alliance based merely on interests, but the 'common way of life of the Western democracies' (FRUS, 1948: 14).

Despite evidence that Bevin's rhetoric was not entirely genuine (Baylis, 1993: 66; FRUS, 1948: 12), Hemmer and Katzenstein claim this identity argument had a great effect in convincing decision-makers in the United States of the merits of a transatlantic alliance. The latter write, 'One of the most striking aspects of the discussion surrounding the formation of NATO is the pervasive identification of the United States with Europe' with 'constant references to a "common civilization", a "community", "a shared spirit",

“like-minded peoples” and “common ideals” (2002: 593). They cite American assertions ‘that the North Atlantic already existed as a political community and that the treaty merely formalized this pre-existing community of shared ideals and interests’ and find these to be credible evidence of the importance of identity (Hemmer and Katzenstein, 2002: 593).

This overstates the case. Shared identity was certainly used by the advocates of the alliance to convince those more skeptical but *after* the former had settled on its merits. The ‘constant’ references referred to by Hemmer and Katzenstein actually amount to a relatively *small* number of quotations from officials after they began mobilizing domestic support for the treaty. In particular, constructivist accounts recycle the same speech by Secretary of State Acheson on how the Soviets threatened ‘the civilization in which we live’, ‘the ideas on which the United States was founded’, which went back ‘more than 2000 years, to the very beginning of Western civilization’ (Hemmer and Katzenstein, 2002: 585; Jackson, 2006: 219; Patrick, 2009: 289). However, in private correspondence and deliberations, a common civilization and shared democratic values came up very infrequently, and generally in a perfunctory way, such as remarks to open up negotiating sessions. The Europeans were much more likely to make reference to a common identity than the Americans, likely due to the fact that they were more threatened and somewhat desperate for an alliance commitment (FRUS, 1948: 152). When the administration referred in private documents to the ‘free nations of Europe’, it was as a moniker to distinguish the Western democracies from the Eastern bloc already under the boot of Stalin (FRUS, 1948: 10, 40–41, 55, 62–63, 73). Even those few opponents of a multilateral treaty in the administration, most notably George Kennan, used the term in the same way (FRUS, 1948: 116–117). Keeping Europe free was the object of the alliance, but not solely for freedom’s sake. Freedom was to be the effect of the treaty; it was not the primary cause.

Even if identity was not sufficient or central, I am not suggesting a simple materialist explanation. It is true that the United States only began to seriously consider a formal commitment to European security following the Czechoslovakian crisis of February 1948, which convinced American officials that the nature of the Soviet threat might be military as well as economic and more directly confrontational than internally subversive (Kaplan, 1984: 61). However, the Truman administration was only willing to undertake such a commitment because of their trust of the Europeans. State Department officials believed that if they made the first move, the Europeans would reciprocate. They framed the situation in assurance terms. Democratic diplomats noted that European ‘willingness to fight for liberty is closely related to the strength of the help available’ and argued that ‘concrete evidence of American determination ... would go far to reduce both dangers’ (FRUS, 1948: 40–42). The Americans would begin the virtuous circle of cooperation. ‘A general stiffening of morale in free Europe is needed and it can come only from action by this country’ (FRUS, 1948: 40). Europeans would cooperate ‘provided they are assured of military support by the United States’ (FRUS, 1948: 85–86). Early planning documents accepted this as an ‘assumption’ (FRUS, 1948: 62; Henderson, 1983: 17; Kaplan, 2007: 68; Miscamble, 1992: 123).

This trust was moralistic in nature, and based on diffuse reciprocity. The American administration understood that it would have to bear the burden up front, and went as far as to guarantee the security of those interested until a treaty was successfully completed

(FRUS, 1948: 71–72; Henderson, 1983: 17; Kaplan, 2007: 68; Miscamble, 1992: 123). American willingness to engage in diffuse reciprocity is also evident in early and consistent support for a multilateral defense commitment. The United States was actively considering a collective security commitment to an alliance, in which an attack on one was an attack on all, even before the Berlin blockade crisis of June 1948 (FRUS, 1948: 62; Henderson, 1983: 17; Kaplan, 2007: 68; Miscamble, 1992: 123). There were differences with the Europeans, who wanted stronger and more automatic language regarding the security guarantee. This reflected the fact that they were more vulnerable and more in need of assistance given their relative weakness. The reservations of American decision-makers stemmed from concerns about the constitutionality of an automatic commitment and the ratification prospects of the treaty given the less trusting premises of conservatives (FRUS, 1948: 69, 173, 211–212). The central fact was that the United States was willing to contemplate a security guarantee that could only be premised on diffuse reciprocity. Officials consciously understood the American obligation in moral terms. John Hickerson, the point person in the State Department on European issues, stated that '[O]nly a moral commitment by the US to do whatever was necessary, including fight ... would do the trick' (Achilles, 1992: 12–13).

This was not international altruism or an American hegemon willing to put up with free-riding. The Truman administration expected the Europeans to eventually reciprocate in the common struggle against the Soviet Union. Even Hickerson, the biggest cheerleader for the alliance, stressed that the Europeans must themselves pool resources and resist 'by every means at their disposal ... any threat to the independence of any member whether from within or without' (FRUS, 1948: 40). While planning documents stress that an American commitment would increase European confidence, it 'should be predicated upon resolute action by them'. The United States expected 'reciprocal support' (FRUS, 1948: 62). The Americans promised assistance in case of attack 'provided they defend themselves with every resource at their command' (FRUS, 1948: 63).

How can we be sure that this was moralistic trust? Perhaps cooperation was the obvious choice given objective American interests. Maybe this was an obvious assurance game in which cooperation was the clear dominant strategy, as Kydd concludes (2005: 165–168). Or perhaps it was moralistic trust of a particularized variety, driven by a common identity. The first is belied by the fact that there was considerable opposition to the North Atlantic Treaty on the part of those in the same structural position. A sizeable group of Senators, predominantly conservatives, initially opposed the alliance based on a belief that the Europeans were not trustworthy, most prominently Robert Taft of Ohio. Taft and his supporters were no less anti-communist than the Democrats. They also believed that the United States needed a strategy for deterring a Soviet invasion of Western Europe. However, they argued that the Europeans would take advantage of American trust, entrapping the United States in conflicts not in its interest, free-riding on American defense commitments, and even abandoning it in its time of need. Taft feared that a binding treaty would induce moral hazard and lead to entrapment. Such an instrument required action 'without any examination of the reasons for the aggression which may have occurred' (Taft, 1951: 88–89). The United States could not judge whether a country 'had given cause for the attack' (Taft, 1997: 82–83).³ Jenner accused the Europeans of 'gorging themselves at the expense of the American taxpayer while

continuing the exploitation of their own people' (CR, 81:1: 9561).⁴ Watkins predicted that the 'allies will stick together when the necessity is present, when the emergency is on, but they will rapidly forget their pledges the moment pressure is removed' (CR, 81:1: 9092).⁵ Their alternative framing of the same situation and the decidedly moralistic case strongly suggests that the difference was moralistic trust.

For some, the issue was particularized distrust of Europe, evident in the familiar argumentation about how the pact would amount to a new Holy Alliance with the imperialist Old World. Participation in such an alliance would make the United States itself into a tyranny as it embraced European habits of power politics and secret diplomacy and militarized American society.⁶ They even objected to any obligation to consult in the case of attack, an echo of Borah's objections to even be part of a concert arrangement after World War I (CR, 81:1: 9641).

However, it does not seem possible to extricate these feelings of Europe from a deeper generalized distrust, based on a pessimistic view of human nature. The two covaried. Treaty opponents drew connections between their general views of the trustworthiness of others and particular types of opportunism. Donnell warned of moral hazard and entrapment:

It is not at all impossible, it is a matter of human nature, that such an official would, in his attitude toward other nations, be influenced by his realization that back of him, in the event of an attack by any one of such other nations, would be the united force of 11 other signatories. It is easily possible, while we are speculating on this matter, that his attitude might become overbearing and characterized by reckless disregard and misconduct toward other nations. Such an attitude on his part might provoke an attack by some other nation, and thereby bring immediately into operation, article 5 of the North Atlantic Treaty. (CR, 81:1: 9033)

Watkins made the connection with free-riding on American defense spending: 'I think it would be a strong temptation to them if they had someone who was willing to take care of defense and furnish them with arms, to use their own money for some other purpose and let the good friend carry the load as long as he was willing to do it. That would be the human-nature side of it' (CR, 81:1: 9103; see also CR, 81:1: 9094, 9107.).

Most Taft Republicans were not isolationists. They did not have a different conception of American identity and the American relationship to Europe. They were the ideological heirs of the conservative internationalists discussed above. Indeed, Taft's own father, the former President, was one of that group's primary strategists during the League fight, endorsing Lodge's formula for a League. As Democrats did, Taft argued that the 'special problems of Europe and its importance to the cause of freedom throughout the world force us to act there more vigorously and make some exceptions to the general rules of policy. Our cultural background springs from Europe, and many of our basic principles of liberty and justice were derived from European nations' (Taft, 1951: 80). The civilizational justification of the alliance as a community of democracies did not feature prominently in the debates, amounting to only a few scattered references that did not distinguish proponents and opponents of the treaty (CR, 81:1: 8900, 9769). Alliance opponents were simply more skeptical about the prospects of European reciprocity, despite this shared identity.

Another indication that distrust was generalized and not particularized in nature, and therefore not identity-driven, was the fact that even the most supportive 'internationalists'

in the Republican Party had the same concerns about entrapment and free-riding. Sometimes called the 'Europe-firsters' because of their support for the administration's concern with the security of the continent, they never expressed any antipathy to the Europeans in terms of identity. When consulted privately, Senator Arthur Vandenberg, the leader of this faction, confessed that he expected the 'majority of the countries to take one or two lines of action, either to fold their hands and let Uncle Sam carry them, or secondly, and in his opinion of equal and perhaps greater danger, to let them get a sense of false security which might result in their taking so firm an attitude as to become provocative and give the impression of having a chip on their soldier' (FRUS, 1948: 82). When John Foster Dulles, the prominent Republican and presumptive next Secretary of State, was brought into the conversations, the two expressed 'unanimous agreement that the United States should not be in the position of taking any engagement for assistance of any sort which would be automatically brought into being by the act of someone else' (FRUS, 1948: 107).

Without a willingness to engage in diffuse reciprocity, Taft and his allies backed a unilateral alternative protecting against opportunism, a 'Monroe Doctrine for Europe'. The United States would declare its interest in the security of Western Europe, much as it had done for the western hemisphere, thereby warning Russia not to contemplate any armed action in the Western sphere of influence (Doenecke, 1979; Lake, 1999; Snyder, 1991; Taft, 1951: 19–20; 1997: 59–63, 87–91). Internationalist Republicans did not imagine a multilateral alliance either, but rather at most the standardization of equipment and pooling of military supplies (FRUS, 1948: 104–108).

Vandenberg and his allies adopted a go-slow approach to the alliance on much less trusting terms. The powerful head of the Foreign Relations Committee suggested a resolution in which the Senate would proclaim to 'take particular notice of countries' that showed their determination to resist aggression and would be 'prepared to consider', but not promise, 'association' based on 'mutual aid and self-help' (FRUS, 1948: 82ff., 92ff., 104ff.). Lacking moralistic trust, Vandenberg insisted that Europeans start the virtuous circle of cooperation. In private Foreign Relations Committee hearings, another Republican, Henry Cabot Lodge, Jr., insisted on 'evidence' of self-help and mutual aid, otherwise the United States 'shouldn't have anything to do with them' (US Senate, 1973: 20). Vandenberg emphasized that the US would only consider association if the Europeans 'can succeed in proving to us that [they] mean business in connection with it' (US Senate, 1973: 29). He was keen to build 'on a basis which does not involve us until we see the actual creation in Western Europe of a new evolution which is of definite and specific advantage to the national security of the United States' (US Senate, 1973: 54). The 'Vandenberg resolution', based on this formula, passed the Senate overwhelmingly in June 1948.

In the face of this type of reluctance, the administration proceeded cautiously, urging the Europeans to first demonstrate their commitment to their own defense by coordinating their own defense efforts (Baylis, 1993: 68; FRUS, 1948: 8, 17). They stressed that this was necessary for ensuring the bipartisan support necessary for Senate approval of any treaty. Nevertheless, the British were frustrated, as it created a dilemma of who would move first, one they had thought had been broken by the administration's trusting instincts, only to be revived again by conservative concerns about European trustworthiness. This prompted the famous letter from the British ambassador to Secretary of State

Marshall. In a reference to domestic political constraints, it stated that Bevin ‘appreciates your difficulties’, but was also ‘conscious of a risk of getting into a *vicious circle*. Without assurance of security, which can only be given with some degree of American participation, the British government are [sic!] unlikely to be successful in making the Western Union a going concern. But it appears from your letter that, until this is done, the United States Government for their part does not feel able to discuss participation’ (FRUS, 1948: 19; emphasis added).

With the unexpected Democratic victory in the presidential election of 1948 and the return of the Senate to Democratic control, however, there was suddenly wind behind the sails of the North Atlantic Treaty. A draft was concluded in late December 1948. The administration stayed true to their consistent desire for a multilateral defense guarantee, encapsulated in Article V. The administration approached the North Atlantic Treaty much as Wilson had done with the League. Mindful of the latter’s failures, Acheson was careful never to explicitly claim any moral obligations. Nevertheless, he approached the line. When asked about whether, despite its legal limitations, Article V created a moral obligation to act in the case of aggression, Acheson inferred that honesty and integrity required action and declined to refuse an obligation. ‘Decent people ... kept their contract obligations.... We were decent people, we could keep our promises, and our promises were written out and clear enough’, he said (Acheson, 1969: 283).

While in 1919 this caused great turmoil, the Truman administration had been careful to build in protections to satisfy the concerns of less trusting unilateralists. Objections on the part of conservatives that the commitment was too automatic in nature led to its dilution, from an obligation ‘to assist the party or parties so attacked by taking forthwith such military or other action ... as may be necessary to restore and assure the security of the North Atlantic area’ to a commitment for each member to take ‘such action as it deems necessary’ to do so (FRUS, 1948: 108–110; FRUS, 1949: 74; Kaplan, 2007: 197; Reid, 1977: 153). As was the case in 1919, less trusting conservatives advocated a weaker security guarantee that would protect against opportunism on the part of potentially untrustworthy partners. This diluting of multilateralism paid great dividends by tempering conservative fears about entrapment and was central to ensuring bipartisan support for the treaty, which passed easily in the Senate (Achilles, 1992: 31).

Conclusion: Matching morality with self-interest

To claim that identity did not drive the creation of NATO is not to claim that a common identity among NATO members has not arisen from the shared experiences of the last 60 years. It likely sustains the alliance now that its original *raison d’être* has largely disappeared. Nevertheless, I have attempted to demonstrate that it is a mistake to argue that the shared identity was there from the beginning. NATO became special; it was not born special. Without moralistic trust, the alliance might have never come into being, hegemony or no hegemony, or it might have looked quite different, as the contrasts between the preferences of the two parties brings into relief. It was necessary to get the ball rolling or, to mix metaphors, the circle spinning.

This empirical contribution is matched with a theoretical one. Sociological perspectives on International Relations theory have had something of a monopoly on ideational

explanations of major outcomes in world politics in recent years. They are, in my view, overly focused on norms and identity, to the neglect of other important non-material variables such as moralistic trust. There is also a notable tendency in the constructivist literature to falsely equate moral factors in international politics with limitations on self-interest. Studies of international norms of appropriateness, implicitly or explicitly backed by moral sanction, typically involve state restraint on the basis of humanitarian concern. Moral considerations often involve transcending egoism, but not always. Not recognizing this creates a false dichotomy between self-interest and morality that prohibits an accurate account of NATO's origins. Social psychology is uniquely suited to blending strategic interaction among self-interested actors with ideational elements.

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Notes

- 1 It should be noted that this does not appear to be endemic to constructivism as an approach, only something common to constructivist work on the alliance. Adler and Barnett (1998), for instance, claim that trust comes before identity.
- 2 Hereafter, CR.
- 3 See similar comments in CR (81:1) by Donnell (p. 9639) and Malone (pp. 9648, 9889).
- 4 See similar comments in CR (81:1) by Watkins (pp. 9097, 9458), Malone (p. 9103), Donnell (p. 9892), and Kem (p. 9627).
- 5 For other references to abandonment, see comments in CR (81:1) by Donnell (p. 9565), Watkins (p. 9105), and Jenner (p. 9565).
- 6 In CR (81:1), see Langer (pp. 9374ff., 9428ff.), Mundt (pp. 9455ff.), Jenner (pp. 9553ff.), Malone (pp. 9888ff., 9098ff.), Donnell (pp. 9890ff.), Watkins (pp. 9898ff.), and Kem (p. 9769).

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