# The Social Construction of Identity:
# Israeli Foreign Policy and the 2006 War in
# Lebanon.

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## Abstract:

How can the social construction of identity explain the Israeli action in Lebanon in 2006? To answer this question this dissertation undertakes a conventional constructivist analysis, focussing on salient Israeli identity strands constituted at both the domestic and international level. The analysis considers how these identity strands worked to make a military response to the Hezbollah problem possible. Barnett's methodological framework of *narratives, frames* and *institutions* provides the analytical basis of the work, but it is argued that this approach lacks an adequate explanation of the role of internationally-constituted identity, and of systemic shifts. For this reason, the approach implemented draws on Wendt's distinction between *role* and *type* identity and a constructivist engagement with Walt's balance of threat theory. This approach enables both a fuller exploration of the role of internationally-constituted identity, and a conceptualisation and incorporation an analysis of the role of the War on Terror – a systemic shift. At the domestic level, analysis of the institutional context of the 2006 Knesset elections revealed a national identity in which the multi-faceted vulnerability identity and Fighting Jew identity were salient, interacting strands. At the international level, the analysis focuses on the democratic, western *type* identity. The prominence of this identity strand is illustrated within the institutional context of the United Nations, where Israel gained membership of the geopolitical WEOG group in 2000. It is argued that at the domestic level the interaction of the facets of the vulnerability identity, - the narratives of ordeal, existential threat, and self-reliance - acted to increase the power of the Fighting Jew identity, predicated on a faith in military solutions to threats. At the international level the Israeli democratic, western *type* identity is powerful in its framing of the non-democratic, terrorist antithetical 'other' within the systemic shift of the War on Terror. Analysis of this framing provides an account of threat perception which is incorporated into a constructivist account of the balance of threat. Israel's decision to adopt a military policy regarding Hezbollah is seen as balancing in identity terms, by asserting the identity of the self. The interaction of the domestic and international identity strands, it is argued, further strengthened the possibility of a military policy option.

**Acknowledgement**

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## Introduction

The purpose of this research is to implement an identity-based constructivist account to provide an explanation of the 2006 Israel-Hezbollah war. Firstly, the policy context of the 2006 war is set out, and secondly, a brief synopsis of existing research in this area is provided, followed by an outline of the approach adopted during the research, the argument presented, and overall conclusions.

The Israeli-Hezbollah War 2006 – Policy Context

On the 12th of July 2006 Hezbollah, a Lebanon-based Shiite Organisation, launched a cross-border raid into Israel, capturing two and killing three Israeli soldiers[1]. The Kadima-coalition Israeli government described the attack as an 'act of war' and authorised 'severe and harsh' retaliation on Lebanon, whom it held responsible[2]. Israel then began a Thirty-Four day military campaign which caused extensive damage to Lebanese infrastructure and resulted in approximately 1,000 Lebanese and 159 Israeli deaths – mostly civilian[3].

Although the timing of the conflict and some statements made by the Israeli government suggested that the campaign was mainly responsive to the Hezbollah raid[4], this

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[1] Captured Israelis Were Injured BBC News Online, (2006),
http://news.bbc.co.uk/2/hi/middle_east/6215270.stm 6 December
[2] Israel Authorises Severe Responses to abductions CNN.Com (2006),
http://edition.cnn.com/2006/WORLD/meast/07/12/mideast/index.html, 13 July
[3] PM 'Says Israel Pre-Planned War' BBC News Online, (2007)
http://news.bbc.co.uk/2/hi/middle_east/6431637.stm, 8 March
[4] Israel Authorises Severe Responses to abductions, CNN.Com, (2006)
http://edition.cnn.com/2006/WORLD/meast/07/12/mideast/index.html, 13 July, also Joint Press Conference by
FM Tzipi Livni and EU Envoy Javier Solana, Israel Ministry of Foreign Affairs, (2006),
http://www.mfa.gov.il/MFA/Government/Speeches+by+Israeli+leaders/2006/Joint+press+conference+by+FM+
Tzipi+Livni+and+EU+Envoy+Javier+Solana+19-Jul-2006.htm?DisplayMode=print, 19 July. On the confusion

interpretation is not sustainable. It is more credible to view the conflict as a response to the wider threat of the 'Hezbollah problem', of which the raid was merely the latest symptom. Evidence to the Winograd Commission - appointed by the Israeli government to inquire into the 2006 conflict – suggests that Israel's campaign in Lebanon was planned in advance, with the 12[5]th of July raid acting as a trigger. In addition the raid was not an unexpected anomaly in the pattern of recent Hezbollah activity. The leader of Hezbollah in Lebanon, Hassan Nasrallah, had hinted on the 24th of April 2006 that a Hezbollah 'resistance action' was imminent as part of its campaign for the release of Israeli-held prisoner Samir Kuntar. At the same time, Nasrallah suggested that the Israelis were expecting an abduction attempt on their soldiers.[6] In addition, Hezbollah had a record of taking Israeli military prisoners, including Colonel Elhanan Tennenbaum in 2000.[7] In January 2004 a Likud-coalition Israeli government and Hezbollah (with the help of German negotiators) had successfully undertaken a prisoner exchange, which resulted in the release of Tennenbaum.[8] For many, this context made the Israeli military reaction the unexpected element in the events of 2006. On the day of the raid, Nasrallah demanded 'direct negotiations' with a view to a second prisoner exchange[9] and - following the war - stated that he would not have undertaken the

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concerning war aims see: A.H. Cordesman, Preliminary "Lessons" of the Israeli-Hezbollah War Centre for Strategic and International Studies, (2006), http://www.csis.org/index.php?option=com_csis_pubs&task=view&id=3449, p.3 and J. Cook, 'Cracks in the Consensus' Al-Ahram Weekly, (2006) 3-9 August, Issue No. 806 [No page numbers)

[5] PM 'Says Israel Pre-Planned War', Op. Cit., also S. Hersh 'Watching Lebanon', The New Yorker, (2006) 21 August

[6] G. Achcar and M. Warschawski, The 33-Day War: Israel's War on Hezbollah in Lebanon and its Aftermath, (London: Saqi, 2007), p.46

[7] Hezbollah Offers Israeli Hostage Deal, BBC News Online (2002) http://news.bbc.co.uk/2/hi/middle_east/1923398.stm, 11 April, Israel Frees Hezbollah Prisoner, (2002) BBC News Online, http://news.bbc.co.uk/2/hi/middle_east/2036566.stm 10 June

[8] Israel, Hezbollah Swap Prisoners, CNN Online, (2004), http://edition.cnn.com/2004/WORLD/meast/01/29/prisoner.exchange/index.html, 29 January, also Achcarand and Warschawski, The 33-Day War op. cit. p.42

[9] Israel Authorises Severe Responses to abductions CNN.Com, op. cit.

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12th of July raid if he had known how Israel would retaliate.[10]  The expectation of negotiations was not confined to Hezbollah; within the Israeli Defence Force (IDF), Major General Udi Adam, chief of the Northern Command, suggested that a diplomatic solution was needed to minimise the Hezbollah threat.[11]

The implications of the above analysis are twofold. Firstly, the Israeli action was a policy response not to the 12th of July raid but to a wider Hezbollah threat of which the raid was a symptom. This was a policy which had been part of Israel's agenda for at least the previous four months.[12] Secondly, and crucially, the Likud and Kadima responses to what was essentially the same threat were completely divergent. The purpose of the research undertaken here is to provide an account of the way in which the specific Kadima vision of Israeli national identity made the military policy response adopted in 2006 'possible and desirable'[13].

Existing Literature

There exists a wide canon of constructivist literature on which this research draws. Chapter Two examines the constructivist theoretical approach in detail, progressing from basic tenets (understood to be the view that the 'realities' of the political world are actually socially constructed through shared ideas[14], a process of meaning construction in which

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[10] Achcarand and Warschawski, *The 33-Day War* op. cit. p.47

[11] E. Inbar, 'How Israel Bungled the Second Lebanon War', *Middle East Quarterly*, vol. XIV, 3 (2007) p.1

[12] PM 'says Israel Pre-Planned War', BBC News Online op. cit

[13] M. Barnett, 'The Israeli Identity and the Peace Process: Re/creating the Un/thinkable' in S. Telhami and M. Barnett (eds.), *Identity and Foreign Policy in the Middle East*, (Ithaca and London: Cornell University Press, 2002), p.60

[14] D.C. Copeland, 'The Constructivist Challenge to Structural Realism', *International Security*, vol. 25 2 (2000) pp.187-212, p. 189

identity is seen as central[15] and a position which entails the rejection of the assumption that such 'realities' are given facts, exogenous to human experience[16]) to fundamental divisions within constructivism. The aim is to distil a coherent epistemological basis for the empirical work which follows. To this end, debates concerning the constructivist epistemology are discussed, debates which divide constructivist work into that undertaken within a broadly positivist epistemology, termed conventional constructivism, and that which follows a post-positivist epistemological agenda; termed critical constructivism[17]. Following consideration and evaluation of these two approaches, the decision to employ a broadly conventional constructivist epistemology in the course of the following empirical work is discussed and justified.

The theory of identity is also discussed in Chapter Two, concentrating on the distinctions between identity constituted at the international and domestic levels, Wendt's notion of *type* and *role* identity, and the manner in which identity effects foreign policy[18]. Identity is understood for the purposes of this project, as the strands which constitute the sense of national (as opposed to 'state')[19] self arising out of intersubjective and interacting processes occurring in both the domestic and international environments[20]. Such identities interact, for example in the domestic electoral processes of democracies, providing an

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[15] 'identity matters' - D.P. Houghton, 'Reinvigorating the Study of Foreign Policy Analysis: Toward a Constructivist Approach, *Foreign Policy Analysis* 3(1), (2007), pp.24-45, p.30

[16] E.g. M. Barnett, ' Social Constructivism' in J. Baylis and S. Smith (eds.), *The Globalization of World Politics: an Introduction to International Relations*, (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2006) p.258

[17] T. Hopf, 'The Promise of Constructivism in International Relations', *International Security*, vol. 23, (1998), pp. 171-200, p.181

[18] M. Finnemore and K. Sikkink, 'Taking Stock: The Constructivist Research Program in International Relations and Comparative Politics', *Annual Review of Political Science*, vol. 4 (2001) pp. 391 - 416, p.399

[19] S. Telhami and M. Barnett, 'Introduction: Identity and Foreign Policy in the Middle East' in S. Telhami and M. Barnett (eds.) *Identity and Foreign Policy in the Middle East* (Ithaca and London: Cornell University Press, 2002), p. 8-9

[20] Finnemore and Sikkink, 'Taking Stock', op. cit p. 399

important indicator of identity flux, competition and crisis.[21] Identities influence foreign policy by constructing the reality of the political world and making certain policy behaviours possible or probable.[22]

The existing empirical literature is less extensive. The short passage of time which has elapsed since the conflict means that as yet very little work has been undertaken concerning the 2006 war.[23] Consequently, this project draws heavily on analysis of primary sources, mainly speeches by policy makers, news sources and documents. Away from the specific empirical focus of this project there is a useful body of work concerning the Israeli identity, and some research which actively addresses Israeli identity and its role in foreign policy, notably that of Michael Barnett[24] whose analytical framework provides the basis for the research undertaken here. In *The Israeli Identity and the Peace Process: Re/creating the Unthinkable* Barnett uses the analytical devices of *Frames, Narratives and Institutions* to analyse the way in which Israeli national identity worked as an identity of the 'possible and desirable'[25] regarding the Middle East peace process. Whilst Barnett's use of *Narratives, Frames and Institutions* offers an excellent conceptual device it is argued that his approach could be improved by expanding on the roles of identity constituted at both the domestic and international levels and by clarifying the role of systemic shifts in the international political environment – the Cold War and the War on Terror being examples - acknowledged by Barnett as relevant[26] but which do not receive adequate attention in his approach.

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[21] See Barnett, 'The Israeli Identity and the Peace Process', op. cit. p. 70-87
[22] Finnemore and Sikkink, 'Taking Stock: The Constructivist Research Program in International Relations', op. cit. p. 394
[23] One exception at the time of writing: Achcarand and Warschawski, *The 33-Day War* op. cit
[24] Barnett, 'The Israeli Identity and the Peace Process', op. cit.
[25] ibid p.60
[26] ibid p.62

Approach and Findings

Having clarified the epistemology and research terms, an analysis of Israeli identity is undertaken in Chapter Three. The aim is not to produce an account of *the* Israeli identity but to clarify key identity strands which were salient to the construction of the 2006 military policy as possible and legitimate, and which were central to the Kadima vision of Israeli national identity. The focus is on identity constituted at both the domestic and international level.

At the domestic level, the analysis examines the ongoing debate at the heart of Israeli national identity; the extent to which modern Israeli identity is defined by a historical narrative of persecution. This debate has found modern expression in the Jewish-Israeli narrative of vulnerability and the post-1967 Fighting Jew identity[27]. Using the conceptual devices of *narratives, frames and institutions* the analysis traced the transformation of these identity strands. Through examination of the institutional context of the Israeli elections of 2006, it is argued that Kadima represented in identity terms a 'legacy party' for their founder Ariel Sharon, whose conception of Israeli identity is typified by the policy triggered his founding of Kadima; the Disengagement Plan. The Israeli identity as conceived by Kadima in 2006, and salient to their policy regarding Hezbollah, was the combination of an ongoing attachment to the vulnerability identity, and a strengthening of the Fighting Jew strand. At the international level, the analysis focuses on one identity strand - the democratic *type* identity. It is argued that this strand is important on two levels. It is both an identity of similarity with other nations who share the *type* identity, but in the context of the systemic shift of the War on Terror it is also a potent identity of difference from the antithetical

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[27] J. Elizur, 'The Fracturing of the Jewish Self-Image: The End of "We Are One"?' in E. Karsh (ed) *Israel: The First Hundred Years, Volume III; Israeli Politics and Society Since 1948 – Problems of Collective Identity*, (London and Portland: Frank Cass, 2002) p. 22

'other'. Examination of the institutional context of the United Nations reveals the strengthening and affirmation of this identity strand; in 2002 Israel was admitted into the Western European and Other (WEOG) voting group, the only geopolitical rather than purely geographical, grouping within the United Nations[28].

Chapter Four examines in detail how the two salient domestically-constituted identity strands operated and interacted to make a military response to Hezbollah both possible and legitimate. It is argued that the constituent facets of the vulnerability strand interacted to strengthen the salience of the Fighting Jew strand, an identity predicated on military responses to threats to Israel. The facets of the vulnerability strand interacted on a number of levels. Firstly, the Hezbollah threat was framed within the narrative of the Jewish-Israeli ordeal and the associated Israeli 'underdog'[29] identity; secondly, the Hezbollah threat was framed as an existential threat. This, too, operated on a number of levels. An association with Iran (framed as a modern day Arab Hitler)[30] positioned the threat within the narrative of previous existential threats. By threatening the way of life of the 'Israeli family' and challenging the ability of Israelis to live a life free from political violence, Hezbollah were seen to be challenging Israel existentially on another level. Thirdly, the narrative of passivity on the part of the international community was evoked bringing the self-reliance facet of the vulnerability strand into play. This strand also warned of the dangers of passivity, equating any form of compromise as submission. These interactions within the vulnerability strand worked to provide a series of lessons from past narratives. It is argued that this strengthened

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[28] Israeli Welcomes UN Breakthrough, BBC News Online, (2000), http://news.bbc.co.uk/2/hi/middle_east/770584.stm, 30 May

[29] Elizur, 'The Fracturing of the Jewish Self-Image: The End of "We Are One"' op. cit p. 23
[30] H. Kreiger, Olmert: Ahmadinejad is a Psychopath, The Jerusalem Post, (2006), http://www.jpost.com/servlet/Satellite?pagename=JPost/JPArticle/ShowFull&cid=1145961248151, 29 April

the Fighting Jew identity strand, which, as such, can be viewed as the fruit of the Masada Complex (the framing of past events of historical warnings concerning persecution and death[31]). The Fighting Jew identity entails a rejection of passivity, a strengthening of Israeli unity and a sense that due to the inner strength, courage and fearlessness of Israelis, existential threats can be overcome through military means[32]. This framed a military solution to the Hezbollah threat as not only possible but desirable. This was reinforced by the framing of the non-military alternative as submission to the enemy.

Chapter Five examines how the internationally constituted Israeli democratic *type* identity made the military policy response to Hezbollah possible and legitimate. This Chapter has a dual purpose; to provide and account of the role of internationally-constituted identity in the formulation of Israel's policy and its interaction with domestic identity strands, and, in doing so, demonstrate that Barnett's original approach can be fruitfully augmented by clarifying the role of identity constituted at the international level. Additionally it is argued that the significance of systemic shifts at the international level – in this case the War on Terror - may usefully be incorporated into the analysis. These processes are conceptualised through the use of Walt's notion of the Balance of Threat[33], understood in constructivist terms by the inclusion of an identity-based account of threat perception and its outcome, 'bandwagoning or 'balancing'[34].

The Israeli democratic *type* identity is also a western, democratic identity. Its power as such lies in its framing of the antithetical identity 'other' – the non-democratic terrorist

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[31] Y. Zerubavel, 'The Multivocality of a National Myth: Memory and Counter-Memories of Masada' *Israel Affairs*, 1:3, (1995) pp.110-128 p.112
[32] Elizur, 'The Fracturing of the Jewish Self-Image: The End of "We Are One"' op. cit p. 23

[33] S. Walt *The Origins of Alliances* (Ithaca, N.Y: Cornell University Press, 1987), p. 5
[34] P. Kratochvil, The Balance of Threat Considered: Construction of Threat in Contemporary Russia, Unpublished Manuscript - Paper Presented at the Fifth Pan-European Conference, (2004), p12

identity - which positions Hezbollah in Lebanon not merely as a militarily limited threat[35] but as part of the Middle Eastern identity 'other'. As predicted by Walt, Lebanon is thus perceived as threatening, not because of its power but because of the nature of the threat it poses.

Recasting Walt's notions of balancing and bandwagoning in identity terms Israel could either assert its self-preferred identity and ally with other states against the Hezbollah threat, or recast its identity and ally with the threat. The latter is made unlikely on a number of levels. The framing of the Hezbollah threat within the 'War' on Terror creates the narrative of an ongoing military campaign in which the solution to the Hezbollah problem becomes the latest battle. The interaction of the domestic and international identity strands also make the 'bandwagoning' option less likely. The narrative of the War on Terror reinforced the domestic narrative of global hostility; the world became hostile not merely because it was populated by apathetic appeasers, but because it was populated by the antithetical other. Connectedly, the domestic perception that appeasement of the enemy was tantamount to defeat made bandwagoning less possible; anything other than absolute adherence to the identity of the self is demonstrative of a realignment of the identity toward that of the antithetical 'evil other'[36]. This in turn provided a supplementary tier of existential threat; any passivity in the face of the antithetical other would be acceptance of the identity of the antithetical other and would thus compromise Israeli existentially.

The Conclusions considers the wider context and implications of the research, and discusses consequent avenues for further work.

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[35] G. Myre and S. Erlanger, <u>Clashes Spread to Lebanon as Hezbollah Raids Israel</u>, International Herald Tribune, (2006), http://www.iht.com/articles/2006/07/13/africa/web.0712mideast.php, 12 September

[36] N. Epstein, 'Explaining the War on Terrorism from an Ontological-Security Perspective' *MIT International Review*, Spring, (2007) pp.12-19 p.13

**Theoretical Foundations**

This section will set out the theoretical underpinnings of constructivist analysis, with the aim of isolating an understanding of the approach which sets out clear epistemological foundations for subsequent empirical analysis. The centrality of the constructivist conception of identity will be brought into focus, and the implications of this conception for a constructivist research programme discussed.

A great deal of uncertainty remains concerning what constructivism actually *is*[37]. This has been less troubling for those who choose to label their work 'constructivist' than for those who attempt to critique the constructivist project. Zehfuss notes a tendency amongst constructivist scholars to eschew a detailed explanation of the constructivist approach in favour of 'get[ing] on with the empirical work.'[38] If this is the case it is not indefensible having lead in some part to the success of the constructivist approach. By focussing on the common ground within constructivism, and thus including a vast array of permutations, the approach has developed a considerable width of scope. In addition, its inclusivity makes it difficult to delineate a target for effective critique[39]. Whilst this tactic may reduce the opportunity for effective criticism of the approach it has failed to encourage analytical precision. In the next part of this Chapter an attempt will be made to distil some clarity and to arrive at an epistemologically coherent account of constructivist theory which can be foundational for the subsequent discussion of the constructivist conception of identity and later empirical analysis.

Constructivism: Core features, Core Disagreements

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[37] M. Zehfuss, *Constructivism in International Relations: The Politics of Reality*, (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2002) p.1
[38] ibid. p9
[39] ibid. p. 6

Attempts to set out the 'core features[40]' of constructivism are a regular feature of the constructivist literature.[41] A starting point for many scholars is to describe constructivism relative to the dominant 'mainstream' theories realism and neoliberal institutionalism[42] to which constructivism is often presented as being opposed (although, as we shall see, the situation is not so clear cut). Thus, at the heart of the constructivist approach is a rejection of the assumption that notions key to the traditional understanding of the political world are given facts, existing exogenous to human experience[43]. Whereas realists see anarchy as one of a set of 'timeless truths about human reality'[44] constructivists suggest that such 'realities' are actually socially constructed through intersubjectively[45] held practices, identities and norms,[46] (essentially, shared ideas[47]). Identity is seen as central to this process[48]. In a socially constructed political world, identities operate to tell actors about themselves and others and to entail interests and preferences for actions in given situations involving other actors[49]. Thus identity provides actors with a method of predicting the behaviour of others, and, since interests are constituted by identities[50], for guiding actor actions[51]. For constructivism, identity is an 'empirical question to be theorised within a historical context',

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[40] Finnemore and Sikkink, 'Taking Stock', op. cit, p.292
[41] For example see: Finnemore and Sikkink, ibid 'p. 392 – 393; Houghton, 'Reinvigorating the Study of Foreign Policy Analysis' Op. Cit. p. 27- 30; Hopf, 'The Promise of Constructivism' op. cit, p. 172- 185; Copeland, 'The Constructivist Challenge to Structural Realism', op. cit, B. McSweeney, *Security, Identity and Interests*, (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press 1999) Ch. 6 and A. Wendt, 'Collective Identity Formation and the International State', *American Political Science Review* vol. 88, No.2 (1994) pp. 384-396 p. 385
[42] Hopf, 'The Promise of Constructivism' op. cit., p. 171, see also V. Kubalkova, 'The Twenty Years' Catharsis' in V, Kubalkova, N. Onuf and P. Kowert (eds.) *International Relations in a Constructed World* (New York and London: M.E. Sharpe, 1998) p. 34
[43] E.g. Barnett, ' Social Constructivism' in J. Baylis and S. Smith (eds.), op. cit., p.258
[44] Hopf, 'The Promise of Constructivism' op. cit., p. 171
[45] Copeland, 'The Constructivist Challenge to Structural Realism', op. cit p. 189
[46] Hopf, 'The Promise of Constructivism' op. cit. p. 173
[47] Copeland, 'The Constructivist Challenge to Structural Realism', op. cit p. 189
[48] 'identity matters' - Houghton, 'Reinvigorating the Study of Foreign Policy Analysis', op. cit., p.30
[49] Hopf, 'The Promise of Constructivism' op. cit p. 175
[50] J. Weldes, 'Constructing National Interest', *European Journal of International Relations,* 2 (3), (1996) pp.275-318
[51] Hopf, 'The Promise of Constructivism,' op. cit. p.175

in contrast to a neorealist position which treats actor identity as universally and unchangingly that of the self-interested state.[52] Constructivism makes the assumption that identities are created out of cultural, political, historical and social contexts[53] and are subject to flux[54].

Beyond this, however, it would seem that more disagreement than common ground exists. Different understandings of what constructivism *is* lead inevitably to differences in agendas within the constructivist research programme. Whilst there are undeniably other disagreements within constructivism,[55] the question of whether constructivism is opposed to, or to some extent compatible with, mainstream theory is critical here because of its epistemological implications and consequent ramifications for constructivist research.

For some, including Onuf and Kratochwil[56], a constructivist position is one in opposition to the 'mainstream' rationalist approaches; neorealism and neoliberalism[57]. For others, it is the 'middle ground'[58] between rationalist approaches and the more radical 'reflectivist' position.[59] For those that view constructivism as oppositional to mainstream approaches, the constructivist approach seems to challenge the positivist epistemology which underpins mainstream approaches because in order to understand a phenomenon such as changing identity it is necessary to interpret intersubjective meaning, something quite separate from the mainstream focus on the validation of 'explanations of independent mechanisms'[60]. This is a position which Hopf[61] terms 'critical constructivism.'[62]

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[52] ibid
[53] ibid p.176
[54] Telhami and Barnett, 'Introduction: Identity and Foreign Policy in the Middle East', op. cit. p.8
[55] Houghton, 'Reinvigorating the Study of Foreign Policy Analysis' op. cit. p. 30
[56] ibid p. 30
[57] Copeland, 'The Constructivist Challenge to Structural Realism', op. cit, p.189
[58] For example, E. Adler, 'Seizing the Middle Ground: Constructivism in World Politics', *European Journal of International Relations*, 3(3), pp.319-363 (1997)p. 323
[59] Zehfuss, *Constructivism in International Relations* op. cit., p. 2-9.
[60] ibid, p. 4
[61] Hopf, 'The Promise of Constructivism' op. cit., p.181

Alternatively, constructivism may be seen as the 'middle ground' between a more extreme reflectivist position (for example post modernism) and the mainstream rational theories.[63] On this understanding, a positivist epistemology is compatible with constructivism, a position taken by, amongst others, Wendt[64] and Katzenstein.[65] This has resulted in what Hopf terms 'conventional constructivism'; an approach which 'while expecting to uncover differences, identities, and multiple understandings, still assumes that it can specify a set of conditions under which one can expect to see one identity or another.'[66] Whilst theorists who take this position are attempting to place themselves in the middle ground, this is misleading - as Zehfuss convincingly argues[67]. In reality there is a tendency for engagement with approaches at the reflectivist end of the spectrum to be fairly superficial, compared with a careful conversation with mainstream approaches.

In order to illustrate where these two constructivist approaches might part company, even on core issues, it is useful to reconsider one of the points of apparent constructivist agreement noted at the start of this section; the social construction of reality. For conventional constructivists, a distinction is made between 'brute' and 'social' facts, and actors (or agents) and structures are seen as co-constitutive. Firstly, From a conventional constructivist perspective 'realities' such as anarchy are socially constructed through shared

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[62] See also Finnemore and Sikkink, 'Taking Stock', op. cit., p. 395 and their analysis of Price and Reus-Smit's distinction between modern and post-modern constructivists; and Houghton, 'Reinvigorating the Study of Foreign Policy Analysis' op. cit., p. 30 on positivist and post-positivist/radical constructivists
[63] Hopf, 'The Promise of Constructivism' op. cit., pg. 181
[64] Wendt, 'Collective Identity Formation and the International State', op. cit., see also A. Wiener, 'Constructivist Approaches in International Relations Theory: Puzzles and Promises, *Constitutionalism Webpapers conWEB No. 5/2006* (2006) http://www.qub.ac.uk/schools/SchoolofPoliticsInternationalStudiesandPhilosophy/FileStore/ConWEBFiles/File toupload,52215,en.pdf
[65] P. Katzenstein, 'Introduction: Alternative Perspectives on National Security' in P. Katzenstein (ed), *The Culture of National Security: Norms and Identity in World Politics*, (New York: Columbia University Press, 1996)
[66] Hopf, 'The Promise of Constructivism' op. cit., pg. 181, 183
[67] Zehfuss, *Constructivism in International Relations* op. cit., p5

ideas[68] and are thus 'institutional' or 'social' facts distinct from 'brute facts' such as continents and oceans.[69] This brute/social fact distinction is not made by critical constructivists who instead see that every facet of the world is attributed with meaning by virtue of it passing through the filter of human social experience.[70] Thus, the meaning society attaches to continents is the result of the interpretive power of language to make sense of the world around us[71]. Secondly, conventional constructivists observe that the relationship between actors and structures[72] is actually one of co-constitution. If social/institutional facts are actually ideational structures, notions such as anarchy are created (constituted) by the interactions of actors and, as Wendt famously put it, 'anarchy is what states make of it'[73]. Such structures take on the appearance of objective reality because of the intersubjective nature of the ideas that constitute them.[74] Actors constitute structures, but structures also constitute actors because they provide the context within which actors operate and define their identities and, consequently, interests[75]. For critical constructivists – Onuf, for example - the agent structure consideration is a conventional constructivist preoccupation. Since structures are created out of socialisation and discursive practices they originate absolutely in the actor, and are irrelevant independently. This position is exemplified by Onuf, who views

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[68] Copeland, 'The Constructivist Challenge to Structural Realism', op. cit, p. 189
[69] Barnett, ' Social Constructivism' op. cit. p. 259
[70] See, e.g. N. Onuf, 'Constructivism: A User's Manual', in Kubalkova, Onuf and Kowert (eds.) *International Relations in a Constructed World* op. cit, esp. p. 59-63
[71] V. Kubalkova, N. Onuf and P. Kowert, 'Constructing Constructivism' in *International Relations in a Constructed World,* op. cit. p. 19
[72] See, A. Wendt, 'The Agent-Structure Problem in International Relations Theory' *International Organization* 41, 3, (1987) pp. 335-370
[73] A. Wendt, 'Anarchy is What States Make of it: the Social Construction of Power Politics' *International Organisation*, 46 (2) (1992), pp391-425, p. 395
[74] Barnett, ' Social Constructivism' op. cit M. Barnett, p. 259
[75] ibid

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the structure concept as so secondary[76] that the term should be rejected in favour of 'social arrangement'[77]

Conventional constructivism has enabled constructivist work to gain legitimacy[78] within International Relations and to debate and interact with mainstream theories such as realism[79] in a productive manner, and it has generated a healthy literature in areas previously dominated by mainstream theory.[80] What is more, it acknowledges the explanatory value of a positivist epistemology, whilst retaining the potential for 'understanding'[81] offered by its ontological position[82]. This approach is not without its inconsistencies,[83] yet it offers an excellent theoretical foundation for empirical work, and results in a research programme which is able to both question and build upon mainstream literature. For these reasons, it shall form the theoretical basis of the following empirical analysis.

Identity in Constructivism

As outlined above, identity is central to constructivism[84]. State actors constitute the structures of the social reality of international politics through intersubjectively held ideational processes which include the identity of the actors themselves. These structures in

[76]    J. Joseph 'Philosophy in IR: A Scientific Realist Approach' *Millennium* 35(2) 2007, 345-360 p.356

[77]  Onuf, 'Constructivism: A User's Manual' op. cit p. 63; See also H.G Gould 'The Agent-Structure Debate' in V. Kubalkova, N. Onuf, and P. Kowert, *international Relations in a Constructed World* op. cit. – especially, on Wendt p. 84-86, 88-89, 90-91, and on Onuf, p.97

[78]K. Fierke 'Constructivism' in T. Dunne, M. Kurki, and S. Smith (eds.) *International Relations Theories: Discipline and Diversity*, (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2006)

[79]See e.g. R.L. Jepperson, A. Wendt and P. Katzenstein, 'Norms, Identity, and Culture in National Security' in Katzenstein (ed), *The Culture of National Security: Norms and Identity in World Politics* op. cit p. 63

[80]  E.g. P. Katzenstein, 'Introduction: Alternative Perspectives on National Security' in P. Katzenstein (ed), *The Culture of National Security: Norms and Identity in World Politics* op. cit

[81]  M. Hollis and S. Smith, *Explaining and Understanding*, (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1990)

[82]  A. Wendt, *Social Theory of International Politics* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1999), p. 39-40 For a summary of this ontological position see Telhami and Barnett, 'Introduction: Identity and Foreign Policy in the Middle East' op. cit p. 4

[83]  See e.g. Hopf, 'The Promise of Constructivism' op. cit., pg. 196

[84]  Houghton, 'Reinvigorating the Study of Foreign Policy Analysis, op. cit p.

turn constitute actors by defining their goals and roles in the international system and thus

their identities. Identities tell actors who they and others are and what their interests are and

provide actors with a method of predicting the behaviour of others, and, since interests are

constituted by identities[85] for guiding actor actions[86]. Identities are formed in relation to

others, and arise out of interaction with other actors; in the case of the state they arise out of

interaction and participation of actors in institutional contexts[87] in international as well as

domestic politics.[88] It is possible to make an analytical distinction between state and national

identity - the two are not always coterminous; the state identity is closely tied to the state

apparatus, whereas the national identity arises out of a 'common historical homeland… a

common myth and historical memories.'[89] In addition and as noted earlier, such identities are

not static but are instead subject to flux and alternative interpretations. It is also the case that

there are likely to be more than one, often competing, identity,[90] for example the

dichotomous notions of the 'victim in history' and 'Super Jew'[91] in Israeli identity.

Despite the centrality of identity within constructivism, there exists, as Finnemore

and Sikkink note[92], a distinct lack of agreement concerning precise definitions. The relative

weighting of international and domestic political environments in shaping identities is also

subject to some disagreement.[93] This does not encourage coherence across identity research.

As we shall see, whilst the role of identity within a constructivist position has been subject to

theoretical scrutiny, the engagement with what exactly 'identity' is has been less adequately

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[85] Weldes, 'Constructing National Interest' op. cit
[86] Hopf, The Promise of Constructivism' op. cit Hopf p. 196, and 193
[87] Telhami and Barnett, 'Introduction: Identity and Foreign Policy in the Middle East' op. cit p. 8
[88] Finnemore and Sikkink, 'Taking Stock', op. cit p. 399
[89] Telhami and Barnett, 'Introduction: Identity and Foreign Policy in the Middle East' op. cit p. 8-9
[90] ibid
[91] Elizur, 'The Fracturing of the Jewish Self-Image', p. 22
[92] Finnemore and Sikkink, 'Taking Stock', op. cit p. 399
[93] ibid

translated into empirical research. However, some theorists have attempted to refine the concept of identity, thereby producing a more promising operational reconstruction of the notion. Wendt, for example, has created a distinction between two kinds of identities crucial in international affairs: *type identities* which place states in categories with others of similar type - for example 'democratic' or 'Islamic'; and *role identities* which are unique and relational, arising out of the dyadic relationships between countries, for example the status of 'enemy' or 'ally'.[94] Much identity research (including that of Barnett[95] from which this research draws analytical elements) lacks a nuanced exposition of, especially, identity constituted in the international environment. *In The Israeli Identity and the Peace Process: Re/creating the Un/thinkable*[96] Barnett's definition of identity itself does little beyond noting that 'identity is the understanding of oneself in relation to others'[97] It will be suggested that the analytical approach of this sort could benefit from some form of incorporation with the insights Wendt offers.

The crucial point of interest for this project is to distil how identities effect the foreign policy actions of states. Couched in the terms of this research project, how did the Israeli national identity effect foreign policy actions with regard to the threat from Hezbollah in Lebanon in the summer of 2006? As Telhami and Barnett[98] note, alternative accounts of this relationship exist[99] within wider International Relations theory. These accounts range from the realist position that identity is an ideological device to justify political decisions which

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[94] Wendt, cited in ibid, p. 399
[95] Barnett, 'The Israeli Identity and the Peace Process: Re/creating the Un/thinkable' op. cit
[96] ibid
[97] ibid p. 62
[98] Telhami and Barnett, 'Introduction: Identity and Foreign Policy in the Middle East' op. cit. p. 7
[99] See also S. Saideman, 'Conclusion – Thinking Theoretically About Identity and Foreign Policy' in S. Telhami and M. Barnett (eds.) *Identity and Foreign Policy in the Middle East* (Ithaca and London: Cornell University Press, 2002), p. 169

are in truth self-interested; in effect 'window dressing'[100] to the constructivist position which

understands identity as conditioning what foreign policy actions are and are not considered

possible or legitimate by forming part of the 'cultural terrain' within which actors operate.[101]

The conventional constructivist understanding of identity involves the specification of

identities and their 'associated reproductive practices' and an account of how these identities

suggest particular state actions.[102] Thus, conventional constructivists posit the latter account,

which leads them to make probabilistic 'small-t'[103] claims. By examining how the ideational

world of political reality is 'put together' a conventional constructivist analysis is able to

show that certain political behaviours are possible or probable.[104]

Working on the assumption that identities define which foreign policy actions are

considered legitimate and possible, how do they do this? Again, there is no single

constructivist answer to this question. For Hopf – as outlined above – identities are 'cognitive

shortcuts' which give order and meaning to the world and are the basis of interests. This is a

similar position to that of Wendt, however, whereas Wendt emphasises the international

nature of the environment from which identities, and consequently interests, are derived Hopf

emphasises domestic level environments which constitute identities.[105] To explore the same

relationship, Weldes[106] endows the traditionally realist notion of the 'national interest' with a

constructivist re-conceptualisation. Rather than asserting – as Wendt does - that systemic or

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[100] V. Mastny, 'Ideology and Foreign Policy in Historical Perspective' in G. Schwab (ed), *Ideology and Foreign Policy, a Global Perspective,* (New York: Irvington, 1981), p. 9
[101] Barnett, 'The Israeli Identity and the Peace Process: Re/creating the Un/thinkable' op. cit. p.63
[102] Hopf, The Promise of Constructivism' op cit p.183
[103] Claims which are partial and contingent, as opposed to Big-T claims which are 'claims to all-encompassing truth' of the type that mainstream theories advance. Price and Reus-Smit cited in Finnemore and Sikkink, 'Taking Stock', op. cit p. 394
[104] ibid p. 394
[105] Hopf cited in Houghton 'Reinvigorating the Study of Foreign Policy Analysis' op. cit p. 36; Barnett, 'The Israeli Identity and the Peace Process: Re/creating the Un/thinkable' op. cit; Barnett and Lynch, cited in Saideman, 'Conclusion – Thinking Theoretically About Identity and Foreign Policy' op. cit p. 177
[106] Weldes, 'Constructing National Interest' op. cit p.280

interstate relations construct identities,[107] Weldes suggests the political world is populated with objects which include the state actor (thus constituting an identity) through a process of representation which employs cultural and linguistic mechanisms.[108] In identifying objects including the self, relations are posited and interests defined[109]. This allows Weldes to ask 'how possible questions.'[110] For the purposes of the empirical analysis to come, this might result in a question being couched thus: how did the abduction of two Israeli soldiers come to be seen as a such a threat to the Israeli national interest that the 2006 war became an appropriate policy response? Whilst Weldes' postmodernist lexicon might not sit happily with conventional constructivists her position is congruent with that of more conventional scholars.[111]

Thus far it has been seen that there is a distinct lack of consensus concerning exactly what identity is, despite the considerable attention paid to the central role it plays in constructivism. Just as it was necessary to isolate some epistemological specificity from the constructivist rubric, it is also necessary to distil a meaningful and internally coherent notion of identity. In order to give a complete account, identity must be understood as being constituted by intersubjective and interacting processes occurring in both the domestic and international environments. The relative weight these two environments have is not fixed and may only be understood by analysing a particular situation empirically. When considering identity arising out of interactions at the international level, Wendt's notion of *type* identities and *role* identities is useful, and may fruitfully be incorporated into a wider constructivist

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[107] Houghton, 'Reinvigorating the Study of Foreign Policy Analysis, op. cit p. 36
[108] Weldes, 'Constructing National Interest' op. cit p. 281
[109] Houghton, 'Reinvigorating the Study of Foreign Policy Analysis, op. cit p.37
[110] Weldes, 'Constructing National Interest' op. cit
[111] Houghton, 'Reinvigorating the Study of Foreign Policy Analysis, op. cit p. 37 – Houghton posits
a convincing association between Weldes, Lebow & Stein, and Snyder.

engagement with the concept of 'threat perception'- a point which will be developed below. It is also necessary to incorporate into our understanding of identity the interaction between the collective national identities. Their interactions, for example in the domestic electoral processes of democratic states, provide an important indicator of identity flux, competition and crisis.[112]

Although, as has been argued, Barnett's explanation of identity is, inadequate, his analysis of the way in which identity affects foreign policy is highly coherent. Using the three-pronged analytical device of *narratives, frames* and *institutions* Barnett explores how identity works to create 'conditions that make certain action possible.'[113] Historical *narratives* work by defining the common historical memories[114] which are a facet of a collective identity and by providing 'lessons for the future.'[115] *Institutions* are the context of the domestic political environment of party politics and elections,[116] which also shapes the 'possible and the legitimate'[117] within a continual process of debate concerning this collective identity, a debate which finds expression in the electoral politics of democratic states. *Frames* are 'metaphors, symbolic representations [and] cognitive cues'[118] which serve to interpret the world and create shared understandings which thus suggest solutions[119] which are translated into policy options. These analytical tools allow Barnett to develop a

convincing analysis of the role of the Israeli collective identity in the Israeli-Palestinian

Peace process.

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[112] This is central to Barnett's approach; see Barnett, 'The Israeli Identity and the Peace Process: Re/creating the Un/thinkable' op. cit. p. 70-87
[113] ibid pg.60
[114] Telhami and Barnett, 'Introduction: Identity and Foreign Policy in the Middle East' op. cit p.8-9, also see Barnett, 'The Israeli Identity and the Peace Process: Re/creating the Un/thinkable' op. cit. p.65-66
[115] Barnett ibid. p61
[116] ibid
[117] ibid
[118] ibid p.68
[119] ibid p.69

As it sets out to make small-t claims, Barnett's approach acknowledges that systemic or material forces at an international level - 'mighty shifts in the international and regional environment' - are also important,[120] but he does not seek to provide a satisfactory explanation of the role of the Israeli national identity within these 'forces'. In order to provide a fuller account of Israeli national identity and the 2006 action in Lebanon it is necessary to explain the central role of the wider War on Terror, which may be characterised as a 'mighty shift[] in the international and regional environment'[121] analytically comparable with other 'systemic forces' such as the end of the Cold War. The constructivist approach to identity can provide an analytical framework for understanding the link between the Israeli national identity and the systemic force of the War on Terror through a constructivist account of Walt's concept of the balance of threat.[122] A constructivist analysis can result in an account of 'threat perception.'[123] Where Neorealism suggests that states ally (or balance) against power, Walt suggests that they in fact balance against threats. A constructivist understanding of identity can inform us how actors decide which states pose a threat through an identity-based theory of threat perception[124]. Using the concept of threat perception, it will be argued that within the systemic context of the War on Terror the actions of Hezbollah came to be seen as threatening to such an extent that a war became the appropriate response. Such an analytical framework provides a way of conceptualising the War on Terror and in the process extends the scope of Barnett's original approach. This point is compatible with, and may be profitably augmented by, Wendt's distinction between *type identities* and *role*

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[120] ibid p.60
[121] ibid
[122] Walt *The Origins of Alliances*, op. cit.  p. 5
[123] Hopf, The Promise of Constructivism' op. cit p. 186 also Katzenstein, 'Introduction: Alternative Perspectives on National Security' op. cit  p. 29
[124] Hopf, The Promise of Constructivism' op. cit p. 186

*identities* and provides a way of extending Barnett's analytical approach to include a more advanced understanding of identity constitution in the international political environment. For example, *type* identities such as 'democratic' state and 'Islamic state' can be seen to play a role in threat perception. Thus, Israel's role identity as a western, democratic[125] and 'liberal'[126] state caused it to perceive the Hezbollah/Lebanese threat in a way that placed it as part of the 'axis of evil.'[127] Israel thus balanced against this particular type of threat by allying itself within the systemic context of the War on Terror.

      This chapter has set out to survey the theoretical underpinnings of a constructivist research programme with the aim of distilling specificities which can provide an effective epistemological foundation for the empirical work which is to follow. Throughout the chapter is has been necessary to make choices concerning which of the multiple notions of constructivism and identity are to be employed and developed. Using a conventional constructivist epistemology it will be argued that the social construction of identity can explain how the Israeli action in Lebanon in 2006 came to be seen as possible and legitimate through the deployment of the analytical devices of *narratives, frames* and *institutions,* an approach developed by Barnett. Yet this approach is not a complete one and Barnett's approach should be augmented with a constructivist account of the role of identity in systemic forces, namely the War on Terror. This can be accomplished through a constructivist conceptualisation of the notion of the 'balance of threat', into which Wendt's distinction between *type* identities and *role* identities may be usefully integrated.

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[125]The United States: Israel Model For Iraq, Says Bush BBC News Online (2007) http://news.bbc.co.uk/2/hi/americas/6251982.stm 28 June

[126] Barnett, 'The Israeli Identity and the Peace Process: Re/creating the Un/thinkable' op. cit p. 63

[127]Prime Minister Ehud Olmert's Speech at the Knesset Regarding the War in the North (2006) Prime Minister's Office, http://www.pmo.gov.il/NR/rdonlyres/4334F340-02BA-431B-AE0F-30CDFEDF4F8C/0/speechnew140806.doc, 14 August

## Israeli National[128] Identity

There is no attempt in this Chapter to present 'the' Israeli identity – even if it were possible such an endeavour is beyond the scope of this project. Instead, the aim is to identify certain specified aspects of the Israeli identity salient to the government's security policy and decision to adopt a military solution to the Hezbollah problem. The broad themes which dominate Israeli identity debates will be briefly set out in the first part of the section, followed by an analysis of how these themes were interpreted in the vision of national identity represented by Ariel Sharon's Kadima in the 2006 Israeli election.

Israeli national identity can be conceptualised as arising out of a number of interconnected strands which Barnett[129] identifies as the Holocaust, religion (Jewishness), nationalism (Zionism) and liberalism. In order to focus on those strands which are most relevant to the construction of Israeli security policy, this analysis focuses on, at the domestic level, the Holocaust as part of a continuity of a Jewish Historical narrative of vulnerability - the 'common myth and historical memories'[130] out of which national identity arises. The way in which this historical narrative has been subject to an ongoing domestic reinterpretation, which has produced the modern Israeli national identity, will be discussed by drawing on the role of Israeli nationalism (Zionism) - which sought to leave behind the established historical narrative of vulnerability - and the post-1967 legacy of the Super Jew identity construct which introduced the vital identity facet of the Fighting Jew into modern Israeli identity[131]. Although Israel's identity as a democratic state is constituted at both the domestic and international level, the focus here will be on constitution at the international level.

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[128] Note: this project is concerned with national rather than state identity – see discussion in Ch. 1

[129] Barnett, 'The Israeli Identity and the Peace Process: Re/creating the Un/thinkable' op. cit. 63

[130] Telhami and Barnett, 'Introduction: Identity and Foreign Policy in the Middle East' op. cit p.8-9

[131] Elizur, 'The Fracturing of the Jewish Self-Image: The End of "We Are One"?' op. cit p. 22

Domestic Identity: The Jewish Historical Narrative and the Holocaust

The centrality of the Holocaust in Israeli identity is unparalleled. As Segev states, the Holocaust both 'formed the collective identity' of Israel and is the 'shadow' in which 'the most fateful decisions in Israeli history' were conceived.[132] The Holocaust forms a twentieth century link with an established narrative of two millennia[133] of Jewish history; a past which is remembered as being marked by expulsions, pogroms, persecution[134] and other constant existential struggles.

The combination of the Holocaust experience and the Jewish historical narrative of persecution[135] have resulted in an identity phenomenon within which the Gevalt syndrome/Doomsday Mentality (a 'historically conditioned sense of foreboding'),[136] Galut Mentality[137] (the mentality of the exile[138]), Masada Complex[139] (where past events are framed as historical warnings concerning persecution and death[140]), and 'victim in history' self-image[141] are all interconnected and often synonymous elements. This phenomenon may be distilled into a fundamental sense of vulnerability[142] and insecurity[143] in a hostile

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[132] T. Segev, *The Seventh Million: The Israelis and the Holocaust* (New York: Henry Holt, 1991) p.11, see also S. Herman, *Israelis and Jews: the Continuity of an Identity'* (New York: Random House, 1970) p. 8

[133] A. Dowty, 'Israeli Foreign Policy and the Jewish Question' *Middle East review of International Affairs,* vol. 3 no.1 (1999) [no page numbers]

[134] Elizur, 'The Fracturing of the Jewish Self-Image: The End of "We Are One"?' op. cit. p. 14

[135] ibid

[136] Dowty, 'Israeli Foreign Policy and the Jewish Question' op. cit

[137] Elizur 'The Fracturing of the Jewish Self-Image: The End of "We Are One"?' op. cit p. 14

[138] I. Lustick, 'Changing Rationales for Political Violence in the Arab-Israeli Conflict' *Journal of Palestine Studies,* 20:1 (1990), pp. 54-79 p. 56

[139] Barnett, 'The Israeli Identity and the Peace Process: Re/creating the Un/thinkable' op. cit p. 64; Y. Zerubavel, 'The Multivocality of a National Myth: Memory and Counter-Memories of Masada' *Israel Affairs,* (1995) 1:3, 110-128 and N. Ben-Yehuda, *The Masada Myth: Collective Memory and Mythmaking in Israel* (London and Madison: University of Wisconsin Press, 1996)

[140] Zerubavel, 'The Multivocality of a National Myth' Op. Cit. p.112

[141] ibid p.14

[142] M. Nisan, 'Israel 1948-98: Purpose and Predicament in History' in Efraim Karsh (ed.) *Israel: The First Hundred Years – Israeli Politics and Society Since 1948* op. cit. p.4, also Dowty, 'Israeli Foreign Policy and the Jewish Question' op. cit

[143] S. Roberts, *Survival or Hegemony? The Foundations of Israeli Foreign Policy*, (Baltimore and London: John Hopkins University Press, 1973) p.108

world,[144] in which threats are to the very existence[145] of the Israeli nation. This creates an identity in which the need for protection culminates in what Arian terms a 'religion of security', based on 'deep-seated core beliefs about the nature and destiny of Israel.'[146] The Holocaust was also central to the construction of the Israeli identity of isolation and self-reliance[147] - the notion that the Israeli people are alone in a hostile world; the international community being seen as having 'offered up the Jews "as prey to the enemy's jaws"'[148] during the Second World War. This self-reliance is closely linked to the Jewish narrative of being a 'people that dwells alone' and the 'two camp' thesis; the world is seen as bifurcated into Jewish and non-Jewish 'camps' with the non-Jewish camp being basically aggressive towards the Jews.[149]

The ongoing debate concerning Israeli identity has at its core a fundamental indecision regarding the influence of the Jewish historical narrative on modern Israeli identity. Despite attempts by the Zionist movement to distance the modern Israeli identity from the narrative of the Jewish past, which was seen to be based on weakness and a mentality of exile (Galut), it was inevitable that the narrative of the Jewish experience would continue to shape and define the Israeli national identity.[150] Much of the debate concerning the modern Israeli identity has focussed on the framing of the narrative of the past. An example of this is the historical event of the siege of Masada in AD 73, where – following a failed Jewish revolt - 960 Jews are said to have opted to commit suicide rather than face

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[144] Dowty, 'Israeli Foreign Policy and the Jewish Question' op. cit
[145] Elizur 'The Fracturing of the Jewish Self-Image: The End of "We Are One"?' op. cit p. 21
[146] A. Arian, *Security Threatened: Surveying Israeli Opinion on Peace and War*, (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press) p.164
[147] Roberts, *Survival or Hegemony?* op. cit. p. 115
[148] Shenhabi, quoted in Segev, *The Seventh Million o*p. cit p. 428
[149] Dowty, Israeli Foreign Policy and the Jewish Question' op. cit
[150] A. Dowty, 'Zionism's Greatest Conceit', *Israel Studies*, Vol. 3:1 (1998) [no page numbers]

death at the hands of the Romans.[151] In the early days of Zionism and up until the Yom Kippur War this event was framed, as Zerubavel terms it, as a 'patriotic death in the battle for freedom.' Following the Yom Kippur War however, this same event was reframed as a 'historical model of a hopeless situation in which Jews face persecution and death'[152].

The period between the 1967 Six-Day War and the 1973 Yom Kippur War is vital to the understanding of modern Israeli identity, particularly with regard to security. The Six-Day War saw the emergence of what Elizur terms the Super Jew identity - a construct which has had a lasting effect on national identity in modern Israel, with particular power to influence security policy The Yom Kippur War resulted in the decline of this construct, [153]. as well as (as set out above) a return to a framing of the Masada Myth more congruent with the Jewish historical narrative of vulnerability, demonstrating a trend in the identity debate back towards the established narrative of the struggle for existence in a hostile world.

As the analysis above reveals, the Holocaust and the narrative of Jewish vulnerability in a hostile environment has been dominant in Israeli identity. However, the identity of modern Israel also arises out of a narrative of Israeli military success, most importantly the Six-Day war. The 1967 victory over a combined Arab adversary created a break from the passivity in the face of existential threat which continued to haunt the Jewish psyche.[154] It was thus an opportunity to redefine an identity which was formed in the shadow of the Holocaust, from 'victim-in-history' to united nation of the Fighting Jew - 'stalwart, fearless, invincible' victor[155]. The victim/vulnerability identity was too powerful to be displaced by the Super Jew identity but it came to interact with the more established strands of the Israeli

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151 Zerubavel, 'The Multivocality of a National Myth' op. cit p.111
152 ibid p.112
153 Elizur 'The Fracturing of the Jewish Self-Image: The End of "We Are One"?' op. cit  p. 22, 28
154 ibid p.21
155 ibid p.22

narrative to influence the modern Israeli identity. The power of the notion diminished after the Yom Kippur war in 1973, when Israel came perilously close to military defeat, undermining the power of the notion of Israeli invincibility.[156] Whilst the Super Jew identity was not sustained in the wider Israeli identity, it remains powerful to this day with regard to military policy[157], where it interacts with the victim identity. Whilst modern Israeli identity draws heavily on the established Jewish narrative of existential struggle and 'victim-in-history' it also draws on the strength of the Israeli military, integrating the Fighting Jew identity. If Israel is faced with an existential threat it will 'go down fighting.'[158] The importance of this identity strand is demonstrated by the significance of military service in Israeli life; seen as 'a pillar of the personal and collective identities of the Israeli people'[159]. Thus, modern Israel's identity is not that of invincibility, but neither is it an identity of passivity.

Domestic Institutions: Sharon, Kadima and the 2006 Elections

In the institutional context of electoral, coalition and party politics, debates take place out of which the Israeli identity, interests and policies arise[160]. Examination of how debates concerning Israeli identity played out in the 17th Knesset elections, and which vision of Israeli identity prevailed, is crucial to understanding the conception of Israeli identity which dominated within the government in the summer of 2006.

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[156] ibid p. 24
[157] ibid  p.28
[158] Hertzberg cited in ibid p21
[159] Segev, *The Seventh Million* op. cit p. 408-9
[160] Barnett, 'The Israeli Identity and the Peace Process: Re/creating the Un/thinkable' op. cit p.70

The 2006 Israeli election has been described as the 'big bang' in Israeli politics – a major realignment of 'parties and power.'[161] Prior to the March 2006 elections, Israeli politics was dominated by Likud, the main centre-right party[162] and Labour, the main centre-left party.[163] Due to the electoral system, Israeli governments have consistently been formed of coalitions between Israel's main parties and partners drawn from the large number of smaller parties[164]. The Left-Right split and the dominance of Likud and Labour ended[165] in November 2005 when Ariel Sharon left Likud along with 13 Members of the Knesset and founded Kadima ('Forward'), a move which followed fundamental splits within Likud concerning Sharon's Disengagement Plan.[166] Kadima presented itself as a Centrist party; drawing politicians from both Likud and Labour, including former Labour Leader Shimon Peres[167] a move which appeared to capture the mood of the Israeli electorate.[168] On the 4th of January 2005[169], Sharon suffered a severe stroke which ended his political career. This transformed Kadima into a party which would, from that moment on, base its policy on the continuation of the Sharon legacy[170]. Sharon's legacy and the vision of Israeli identity it represented came to define Kadima. 'Sharon's hand-picked successor'[171] as leader of

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[161] W. Safire, 'Israel Seems Headed for a Political Big Bang' *International Herald Tribune* 16 September 2004
[162] R. Hazan, 'Israel's "Big Bang": The Parliamentary Elections of 2006' *Representation,* 42:3 pp.243-252 p. 243
[163] ibid p.244
[164] Barnett, 'The Israeli Identity and the Peace Process: Re/creating the Un/thinkable' op. cit p. 70
[165] P. Heumann, Choosing Divorce Over Peace (2006) Spiegel Online International, http://www.spiegel.de/international/0,1518,408600,00.html, 29 March
[166] Hazan, 'Israel's "Big Bang"' op. cit; Israel's Sharon Quits Likud Party, BBC News Online (2005) http://news.bbc.co.uk/2/hi/middle_east/4456242.stm, 21 November; J. Ward Anderson, 'Sharon Heads Into Showdown With Own Party Over Gaza Pullout' *The Washington Post*, 14 October 2004 A24
[167] Peres Quits Labour to Back Sharon, BBC News online (2005) http://news.bbc.co.uk/2/hi/middle_east/4485568.stm 1 December
[168] Kadima launches election campaign BBC News online (2006) http://news.bbc.co.uk/2/hi/middle_east/4667722.stm 31 January
[169] Doctors Prolong Sharon Sedation BBC News Online (2006) http://news.bbc.co.uk/2/hi/middle_east/4585562.stm, 5 January 2006
[170] Hazan, 'Israel's "Big Bang"' op. cit p. 247
[171] ibid p. 247

Kadima, Ehud Olmert, was perceived as the politician most likely to continue Sharon's

legacy. Olmert himself was conscious of his role, stating after the 2006 war that he believed

he had acted as Sharon would have done.[172] Security issues dominated the election

campaign[173] and ultimately the election became a referendum[174] on Sharon's Disengagement

Plan for the West Bank, a policy rooted in the vision of Israeli identity held by Sharon.

Analysis of a series of addresses made by Sharon during 2003-2005 concerning the

Disengagement Plan, reveal Sharon's very distinct version of Israeli identity.

A number of strands are identifiable in Sharon's identity vision for Israel. The first is

the framing of the policy within the broader existential struggle of the Jewish people, a vision

of Israeli identity congruent with the vulnerability narrative. For Sharon the Disengagement

policy was framed as the latest part of the intergenerational 'ongoing war' for Israeli

existence[175] in a 'hostile world'[176] with Israel's future only guaranteed by self-reliance[177],

strengthening security[178] and the creation of 'secure and defensible borders'[179]. In this way,

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[172] PM 'Says Israel Pre-Planned War' BBC News Online op. cit

[173] Hazan, 'Israel's "Big Bang"' op. cit p.247

[174] C. Mcgreal, Kadima Wins Israel's General Election as Likud Humiliated The Guardian Unlimited (2006) http://www.guardian.co.uk/israel/Story/0,,1741953,00.html 29 March

[175] Prime Minister Ariel Sharon's Address to the Knesset – The Vote on the Disengagement Plan Israeli Ministry of Foreign Affairs, (2004) http://www.mfa.gov.il/MFA/Government/Speeches+by+Israeli+leaders/2004/PM+Sharon+Knesset+speech+-+Vote+on+Disengagement+Plan+25-Oct-2004.htm 25 October; also Speech by PM Ariel Sharon After Government Approval of the Disengagement Plan Ministry of Foreign Affairs, (2004) http://www.mfa.gov.il/MFA/Government/Speeches+by+Israeli+leaders/2004/Statement+by+PM+Sharon+6-June-2004.htm 6 June

[176] Address by Israeli Prime Minister Ariel Sharon to United Jewish Communities and American Jewish Leadership, United Jewish Communities (2005) http://ujc.org/page.html?ArticleID=78239&page=1&print=1, May 22

[177] Speech by PM Ariel Sharon After Government Approval of the Disengagement Plan Op. Cit.

[178] The emphasis on security is apparent in all of the speeches analysed, explicit statement in e.g. Letter from PM Ariel Sharon to US President George W Bush, Israeli Ministry of Foreign Affairs (2004) http://www.mfa.gov.il/MFA/Peace+Process/Reference+Documents/Exchange+of+letters+Sharon-Bush+14-Apr-2004.htm, 14 April

[179] Address by Israeli Prime Minister Ariel Sharon to United Jewish Communities and American Jewish Leadership, Op. Cit; see also Ariel Sharon's Address to the Fourth Herzilya Conference, Israel Ministry of Foreign Affairs, (2003)

Sharon's notion of Israeli identity adheres to the established narrative of the Gevalt syndrome identity, which sees separation as synonymous with survival.[180] Sharon's framing contrasted with that of the depleted Likud, who also framed Disengagement as part of the existential struggle, but framed it as a defeat for Israel rather than a tactical victory[181].

Secondly, Sharon demonstrated an adherence to some elements (the Fighting Jew and Israeli national unity) of the Super Jew vision of Israeli identity, contrasting the past – where Israel stood 'defenceless' in the face of the hostility of the world – with the present, where Jews 'have Israel' - a country which, through the nation's 'security and strength', ensures that 'the Jewish people cannot be broken.'[182] The contrast between the passive past and the proactive present was explicitly drawn; 'we have the strength to defend this country and to strike at the enemy which seeks to destroy us'[183] and 'we will not be caught unprepared as in ... the past'.[184] Sharon further evoked the Six-Day War – the source of the Super Jew identity construct - emphasising that no withdrawals would relinquish territory gained in the 6-Day War.[185] An additional facet of this strand of identity is the centrality of Israeli unity, with Sharon stating that unity was necessary for the defeat of existential threats and that the aim of the Disengagement Plan was to increase Israeli cohesion.[186]

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http://www.mfa.gov.il/MFA/Government/Speeches+by+Israeli+leaders/2003/Address+by+PM+Ariel+Sharon+at+the+Fourth+Herzliya.htm, Dec 18

[180] Dowty, Israeli Foreign Policy and the Jewish Question' op. cit

[181]J. Kessel and P. Klochendler, Middle East: a Plan That Just Might Come Together, International Herald Tribune – Opinion, (2004) http://www.iht.com/articles/2004/03/12/edkessel_ed3_.php 12 March; I. Black, Daunting Task For a Cold But Pragmatic Politician, Guardian Unlimited (2006), http://www.guardian.co.uk/israel/Story/0,,1742685,00.html, 30 March

[182] Speech by PM Ariel Sharon After Government Approval of the Disengagement Plan, op. cit

[183] Prime Minister Ariel Sharon's Address to the Knesset – The Vote on the Disengagement Plan op.cCit

[184] Knesset Speech by PM Sharon on the Disengagement Plan, Israeli Ministry of Foreign Affairs, (2004) http://www.mfa.gov.il/MFA/Peace+Process/Guide+to+the+Peace+Process/Israeli+Disengagement+Plan+20-Jan-2005.htm#doc3, 15 2004

[185] ibid

[186] Prime Minister Ariel Sharon's Address to the Knesset – The Vote on the Disengagement Plan op. cit and Prime Minister Ariel Sharon's Address to the Fifth Herzilya Conference, Israel Ministry of Foreign Affairs, (2004)

Thirdly, Sharon explicitly stated that the Disengagement Plan was directly

sympathetic with Israel's identity as a Jewish and liberal democratic[187] state, and would

benefit the economy[188], acknowledging Israel's identity as a free-market[189] democracy and a

modern 'western' nation. By implementing the Plan, Sharon could 'guarantee a Jewish

majority in the State of Israel'[190], vital both in terms of Israel's identity as a democracy and

the Jewish identity of being a 'people that dwells alone'. This position is important on two

levels, besides the overt reinforcement at the domestic level of the democracy *type* identity.

Firstly, by emphasising an identity of modernity Sharon, was demonstrating a wish to break,

in identity terms, with the past - a position congruent with his continued adherence to the

Super Jew identity. Secondly, the reinforcement of the identity of separation (being a 'people

that dwells alone') frames the policy within the notion of Israeli self-reliance.

Thus, the vision of Israeli identity put forward by Sharon leading up to the 2006

election, and which came to define his legacy, was built upon 3 interconnected strands; the

enduring narrative of the vulnerable Israeli nation  engaged in the perpetual crisis[191] of the

existential struggle in a hostile environment, coupled with the vision of Israeli identity

symbolised by the 'Super Jew', (a notion which – as set out above – describes a united,

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http://www.mfa.gov.il/MFA/Peace+Process/Guide+to+the+Peace+Process/Israeli+Disengagement+Plan+20-Jan-2005.htm, 16 December

[187] A connection also explicitly made by Ehud Olmert, see C. McGreal, Kadima Wins Israel's General Election as Likud Humiliated Guardian Unlimited http://www.guardian.co.uk/israel/Story/0,,1741953,00.html, 29 March

[188] Address to PM Ariel Sharon to Conference of Presidents, Israel Ministry of Foreign Affairs (2005) http://www.mfa.gov.il/MFA/Government/Speeches+by+Israeli+leaders/2005/Address+by+PM+Sharon+to+the+Conference+of+Presidents+20-Feb-2005.htm, 20 February, and Speech by PM Ariel Sharon after Government Approval of the Disengagement Plan, op. cit

[189] Hazan, 'Israel's "Big Bang"' op. cit p.251

[190] Address by Israeli Prime Minister Ariel Sharon to United Jewish Communities and American Jewish Leadership, op. cit

[191] C. Shindler, 'Likud and the Search for Eretz Israel: From the Bible to the Twenty-First Century' in Efraim Karsh (ed.) *Israel: The First Hundred Years o*p. cit. p.112

'stalwart, fearless, invincible'[192] Israel) and with Israel's international identity as a modern, democratic, western state. As is apparent from the above analysis these constituent strands are, to some extent, dichotomous; for example, the continued adherence to the narrative of vulnerability might appear contradictory to an adherence to a Super Jew or Fighting Jew identity. Whilst it is true that in its purest form the Super Jew identity was a rejection of the vulnerability identity, as the analysis above shows it did not survive in this form for long. Any modern Israeli identity is formed out of a dialogue between the identity strands, fed by their internal inconsistencies, and their interpretation and reformulation is the process out of which identities are continually reconstituted.

The elections of the 28th of March 2006 can be interpreted as either a rejection of the Kadima vision, or an endorsement of it. Kadima won 22% of the vote and took 29[193] seats to make it the largest single party in the Knesset. Crucially however, turnout was the lowest in Israeli history at 63%[194] and Kadima failed to win as convincingly as some analysts had predicted.[195] Binyamin Netanyahu of Likud suggested in the days after his party's defeat that the outcome was a symptom not of a fundamental shift in Israeli politics, but a result of public dissatisfaction with Likud state spending[196]. This position is given credence by the growth in support for Israel Our Home (from 5.5% of the vote in 2003, to 9% in 2006)[197], positioned comparably with Likud on the right of the political spectrum. Arguably this suggests that disenchanted Likud voters shifted allegiance to a party in broad political

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[192]Elizur, 'The Fracturing of the Jewish Self-Image: The End of "We Are One"' op. cit. p. 22
[193]Elections in Israel March 2006, Israel Ministry of Foreign Affairs, (2006), http://www.mfa.gov.il/MFA/History/Modern+History/Historic+Events/Elections+in+Israel+March+2006.htm#results
[194] Kadima Wins Israel's General Election as Likud Humiliated op. cit
[195] S. Erlanger and G. Myre, Voters in Israel Support Parties Vowing Pullout, International Herald Tribune, (2006), http://www.iht.com/articles/2006/03/28/news/israel.php, 29 March; Heumann Choosing Divorce Over Peace op. cit
[196] Kadima Wins Israel's General Election as Likud Humiliated op. cit
[197] Figures quoted from in Hazan, 'Israel's "Big Bang"' op. cit. p.249

agreement with Likud, rather than endorsing Kadima. This argument remains unconvincing however. Whilst the drop in turn-out was remarkable it is attributable to disenchantment with Israeli party politics in general, resulting from a succession of scandals[198], rather than a rejection of Kadima. Likud's share of the vote dropped from 29.4% in 2003, to 9% in 2006. This collapse cannot be attributed to a shift towards other right of centre parties because, although Israel Our Home did gain, these parties in total received a marked reduction in their vote share[199]. Overall, the shift was toward Kadima,[200] who received 7.1% more of the vote than their nearest rivals labour on 15.1%.

Whilst the significance of the 2006 election result is unquestionably opaque, the most convincing analysis at present is that the result *was* an endorsement of Kadima as a party committed to Sharon's legacy, and as such, an endorsement of Sharon's vision of identity. Sharon's vision of Israeli identity was a seductive one; offering a hope for Israel's peaceful coexistence alongside but separate from her Arab neighbours, coupled with the inherently 'ego-inflating'[201] identity concept of the Super Jew. The additional acknowledgment of Israel's free-market[202] democracy identity provided an important indicator of Israel's identity as a modern 'western' nation. This vision of Israeli national identity allowed Kadima to transcend the traditional 'dove' – 'hawk' splits of the left and the right in Israeli electoral politics, to create a centrist party with a composite vision of Israeli identity. With a consistently high level importance given to security issues by the Israeli electorate,[203]

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[198] <u>Olmert Wins in Israeli Election</u>, China Daily Online, (2006), http://www.chinadaily.com.cn/world/2006-03/29/content_554967.htm, 29 March
[199] Hazan, 'Israel's "Big Bang"' op. cit. p.249
[200] ibid
[201] ibid
[202] ibid, p.251
[203] see, Arian, *Security* Threatened Op. Cit.; also B. Whitaker, <u>Sharon too Peaceful, Says Israeli Poll</u> Guardian Unlimited, (2001) http://www.guardian.co.uk/israel/Story/0,2763,538705,00.html, August 18, 2001

Sharon's status as 'Mr Security'[204] resonated with the electorate who, whilst they had lost patience with the Likud hawks[205], had little faith in the abilities of the Labour doves to guarantee Israeli security. With a track record as a politician who embodied the 'last hurrah' of the Super Jew identity within post-1967 Likud[206], Sharon offered a more positive, affirming and proactive vision of Israeli identity with regards to security. This was contrasted with the position of the majority of Likud politicians, typified by Binyamin Netanyahu whose election slogan in 1996, 'peace with security' was seen as appealing to the electorate's fears and emphasising a victim-self image, reactively to the *intifada[207]*.

International Identity: Israeli Liberal Democracy as a *type* Identity

It is common in the existing literature (for example, Wendt[208]) for the democratic identity to be viewed and analysed as a as a domestically-constituted identity. A democratic identity is, indeed, an important part of the Israeli national identity constituted at the domestic level.[209] As Olmog[210] suggests, it is possible to observe an emergent 'democratic religion' in modern post-Zionist Israel, in which democracy worship and the election day 'Holiday of Democracy' is beginning to supplant old legends and holidays at the domestic level. However, the constitution of the Israeli democratic identity at the international level is

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[204] J. Reynolds, Israel Holds its Breath for PM's Breath, BBC News Online (2006) http://news.bbc.co.uk/2/hi/middle_east/4584108.stm, 5 January

[205] Hazan, 'Israel's "Big Bang"' op. cit, p 251

[206] Elizur, 'The Fracturing of the Jewish Self-Image: The End of "We Are One"' op. cit. p. 25-26

[207] ibid p. 26

[208] Wendt, 'Collective Identity Formation and the International State' op. cit

[209] A. Benn, Israel's Identity Crisis, Salon.Com, (2005), http://dir.salon.com/story/news/feature/2005/05/16/identity/index.html, 16 May; Official Draft of a Constitution for Israel, The Committee for the Preparation of a Constitution by Broad Consensus, http://experts.cfisrael.org:81/~admin/proposals.pdf; Guidelines for the 31st Government of Israel, Israel Ministry of Foreign Affairs, (2006), http://www.mfa.gov.il/MFA/Government/Current+Government+of+Israel/Basic+Guidelines+of+the+31st+Government+of+Israel.htm, 4 May

[210] O. Olmog, 'Shifting the Centre from Nation to Individual and Universe: the New "Democratic Faith" of Israel' in in Efraim Karsh (ed.) Israel: The First Hundred Years op. cit p. 31-33

also of significance, especially to the understanding of the 2006 war, an observation which

makes the intersubjective recognition that it is such by other key states highly interesting.

As outlined in Chapter Two, a distinction may be made between *type* identities and *role*

identities constituted at the international level.[211] *Type* identities refer to characteristics held

by the state and shared with others, for example Israel's identity as a democracy which

endows it with the same *type* identity as other so called 'western'[212] democratic nations. *Role*

identities refer to the relationships between countries,[213] for example Israel's *role* identity as

'friend' to the USA or 'enemy' to Iran. The importance of the international constitution of

the democratic identity is distinct from the domestic democratic identity on a number of

interconnected levels. Whilst the democratic identity at the domestic level is an identity of

procedure (as the work of Olmog, outlined above, suggests), the international constitution

transcends this focus. The countries which regularly assert Israel's democratic identity,[214]

and support similar assertions emanating from Israel[215] are, significantly, the 'western'

liberal democratic nations. As such, the identity arising from the intersubjective process of

constitution is not an identity of democratic procedure - Israel's status as a liberal democracy

is by no means undisputed[216] on this measure. Rather it is an identity of perceived shared

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[211] See E.g. J. Fearon, 'What is Identity (As We Now Use the Word)?' *Unpublished Manuscript, Stanford University* (1999) http://www.stanford.edu/~jfearon/papers/iden1v2.pdf, and also R. Abdelal et al. 'Treating identity as a Variable: Measuring the Content, Intensity and Contestation of Identity' *Unpublished Manuscript, Central European University* (2001), http://www.ceu.hu/cps/bluebird/eve/statebuilding/abdelal-herrera-johnston-martin.pdf, p. 10

[212] S. Shavit, 'This is a Clash of Civilisations' *New Perspectives Quarterly,* vol. 23: 4 (2006) p.33

[213] Finnemore and Sikkink, 'Taking Stock', op. cit p. 399

[214] The United States: Israel Model for Iraq Says Bush, BBC News Online (2007) http://news.bbc.co.uk/2/hi/americas/6251982.stm 28 June

[215] E.g. Independence Day Message from Interim PM Ehud Olmert, Israel Ministry of Foreign Affairs (2006) http://www.mfa.gov.il/MFA/MFAArchive/2000_2009/2006/Independence%20Day%20message%20from%20PM%20Ehud%20Olmert%20-%20May%202006, 2 May

[216] Telhami and Barnett, 'Introduction: Identity and Foreign Policy in the Middle East' op. cit. p. 64; some dispute the nation's identity as a democracy, others that it is a liberal democracy; A. Dowty, 'Is Israel

democratic values. The internationally-constituted liberal democratic identity is itself multi-stranded, but it is importantly an identity of difference from the rest of the world. Since the War on Terror this facet has been strengthened as the liberal democratic *type* identity has been framed in terms of the identity's contradictions to a perceived antithetical identity 'other'. For states which display the liberal democratic *type* identity, the identity of the self has been framed as an identity of 'freedom' antithetical to the other, framed as an identity of 'terror'. Most prominently, and relevant regionally to Israel, the 'other' is framed as 'terrorist', 'fundamentalist Islam.'[217] Israel's identity as a member of the 'western' liberal democratic *type* identity group is an identity of a 'Western democracy placed in a completely incongruous regional environment.'[218] In this regard it is important not as identity of similarity with other 'western' nations, but an identity of difference in the Middle East.

International Institutions: The United Nations

Examination of an institutional context at the international level, the United Nations, illustrates one way in which the Israeli democratic *type* identity was strengthened and affirmed since the end of the 20th century, and was thus positioned to play the central role it did in the 2006 conflict. The history of Israeli interaction in the United Nations has been a chequered one; despite being one of the earliest members,[219] until 2000 it had not succeeded in joining a regional voting group thereby preventing it from serving on the Security Council

Democratic? Substance and Semantics in the "Ethnic Democracy" Debate' *Israel Studies,* vol. 4, 2 (1999) [no page numbers], but 'Israeli and western scholars consider Israel to be a democracy' – B. Kimmerling 'Religion, Nationalism, and Democracy in Israel' *Constellations* 6 (3), (1999), pp.339–363, p. 339
[217] Shavit, 'This is a Clash of Civilisations' op. cit
[218] E. Gad, Poor Israel, Al-Ahram Weekly (online version), Issue No. 736, (2005) 31 March - 6 April
[219] D. Harris, High Time for Western Europe to Put Israel in Its UN Group, International Herald Tribune (1999) http://www.iht.com/articles/1999/10/12/edharris.t.php, 12 October

and other UN bodies.[220] The reason for this exclusion was the disjuncture of Israeli geographical location and identity. Whilst in geographical terms Israel should have joined the Asian Group[221] its isolation in identity terms meant that it was barred by its Arab neighbours.[222]

In 2000 Israel was invited to join the Western European and Other Group (WEOG)[223] as a temporary member. Israel became an indefinite member in 2004,[224] albeit conditionally.[225] Crucially, WEOG is the only geopolitical rather than geographical group in the UN, representing 'a group of states that share a western-democratic common denominator': the Western European states, Australia, Canada, New Zealand and the United States.[226] The group is, therefore, the only UN grouping defined by its identity. In terms of the international constitution of Israel's identity, the admission into WEOG, a group defined unlike any other by its identity, was of considerable significance. The move was an acknowledgement of Israel's western democratic *type* identity by the other states who shared this identity. It was also a reinforcement of Israel's difference with its regional neighbours, making it an identity of Israeli separateness in the Middle East and – as a member of the only geopolitical grouping – of difference from the majority of actors in the international arena. Officially, Israel will continue to pursue admittance to the Asian Group, however, this

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[220] ibid

[221] R. Weiner, Israel Wins Membership on WEOG, Jewish Virtual Library (2004), http://www.jewishvirtuallibrary.org/jsource/UN/weog1.html; also Israeli Welcomes UN Breakthrough, op. cit

[222] Harris, High Time for Western Europe to Put Israel in Its UN Group, op. cit

[223] Israel Accepted to WEOG An Achievement for Israeli Diplomacy, Israel Ministry of Foreign Affairs Press Release, (2000), http://www.mfa.gov.il/MFA/About%20the%20Ministry/MFA%20Spokesman/2000/Israel%20Accepted%20to %20WEOG, 28 May

[224] Weiner, Israel Wins Membership on WEOG, op. cit

[225] Israel's Membership in the Western European and Other States Group (WEOG), Permanent Mission of Israel to the United Nations, http://www.israel-un.org/israel_un/weog.htm.

[226] Weiner, Israel Wins Membership on WEOG, op. cit

remains unlikely.[227] Therefore, Israel is likely to continue to be defined at the international level as a western, democratic state, like the rest of its Group geographically disparate but united by a common identity.


**Domestically-Constituted Identity**

As discussed in the previous section, two domestically-constituted salient strands were identifiable in the Kadima vision of identity in 2006; the enduring narrative of Jewish-Israeli vulnerability and the Super Jew identity legacy of the Fighting Jew. This Chapter examines in detail how these two strands operated and interacted as an 'identity of the possible'[228] to make a military policy response to the Hezbollah threat possible and legitimate. Furthermore, it will be seen that the policy option of a non-military alternative was made less possible by these identity strands.

The prominence of the Fighting Jew identity during the summer of 2006 is central to the understanding of how the policy of a military solution to the Hezbollah problem was viewed as possible and legitimate. The Fighting Jew identity, predisposed to a military solution, emerged and became important as a result of the interaction of the constituent strands of the 'vulnerability' identity, as the following analysis will demonstrate. In the early stages of the conflict, the fighting Jew identity strand permeated every level of Jewish society, in an unprecedented climate of consensus[229]. A poll conducted in the first days of the conflict found that 86% of respondents backed the military operation with 58% saying that

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[227] Israel's Membership in the Western European and Other States Group (WEOG), op. cit
[228] Barnett, 'The Israeli Identity and the Peace Process: Re/creating the Un/thinkable' op. cit
[229] A. Pfeffer, The Countdown for Olmert has Begun, Jerusalem Post (Online Edition), (2006), http://www.jpost.com/servlet/Satellite?cid=1154525866594&pagename=JPost%2FJPArticle%2FShowFull14 August

Israel should fight until 'Hizbullah is wiped out.'[230] Sentiments invoking the Fighting Jew identity were widely expressed in Israeli popular culture. The pop song *Yalla Ya Nasrallah,* written in a spirit of parody, was taken at face value and became a major hit, recalling as it did Israeli songs from the past which celebrated 'Israel's effortless defeat of the Arabs in previous wars'[231] The national mood was captured by the bumper stickers and billboard advertisements issued by Israeli banks and newspapers proclaiming 'We Will Win.'[232]

The Vulnerability Strand: Interaction

How did the interaction of the constituent strands of the Vulnerability identity lead to this dominance by the Fighting Jew identity? Firstly, the Hezbollah threat was situated within the established narrative of the Jewish-Israeli ordeal. Israeli Prime Minister Ehud Olmert[233] framed the conflict within the narrative of what he termed '3,000 years of … [Jewish] existence.' To Israelis, Olmert framed Hezbollah as the latest of 'many enemies who rose against us to destroy us'[234] The conflict was also framed as being part of a continuing narrative of the fight for the right to live a 'normal life' – a fight that Olmert envisaged would continue for 'many years to come.'[235] In a speech at the start of the conflict, the Israeli Prime Minister made a link between the threat from Hezbollah and the historical narrative of the Holocaust, drawing on the experiences of a family of European Jews whose founders in Israel had survived the Holocaust and whose son had been killed in the fight against

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[230]Rory McCarthy, Widespread Support for War Among Israeli Public, Guardian Unlimited, (2006), http://www.guardian.co.uk/israel/Story/0,,1823798,00.html, 19 July, also; Little Dissent as Israelis Support War, BBC News Online, (2006), http://news.bbc.co.uk/2/hi/middle_east/5208718.stm, 23 July
[231] I. Goren, Settling for a draw with Hezbollah, Spiegel Online International, (2006), 25 August
[232] ibid and D. Kellen, Why Israel Won't Win, Ynet news.com, (2006) http://www.ynetnews.com/articles/0,7340,L-3285298,00.html, 2 August
[233] Prime Minister Ehud Olmert's Speech at the Knesset Regarding the War in the North, op. cit
[234] ibid
[235] ibid

Hezbollah. This association both framed the conflict with Hezbollah on a timeline of struggle, and also evoked the defining historical memory of modern Israel – a memory which served (like the Masada myth) as a warning from the past concerning the dangers of passivity. Thus by demonstrating the dangers of passivity in the face of threat, this framing advocated a proactive policy; advancing the Fighting Jew view of Israeli defence.

Associated with the narrative of Jewish-Israeli struggle is the notion that the Jews whilst 'proud' are also 'vulnerable';[236] they are the underdogs[237] in the ongoing struggle. This notion was emphasised by Shimon Peres[238], the Vice Prime Minister, who framed Israel as 'David' - with Hezbollah presumably representing the Arab Goliath. By invoking a religious myth[239], Peres places the Hezbollah threat on a historical footing with the foundational myths of Israel, as well as implying the lessons to be learnt from the David and Goliath tale; David, the Israelite underdog, was not passive in the face of a much stronger enemy. The association also evokes memories of the Six Day War, a defining event in Israeli history, framed at the time as a modern day David and Goliath battle[240] and the event which came to create the Super Jew identity of which the Fighting Jew strand is a legacy[241]. The lesson to be learned from this historical narrative does not concern the dangers of passivity (a negative focus), instead it emphasises positively the rewards of a proactive military response to threats. This

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[236]Nisan, 'Israel 1948-98: Purpose and Predicament in History' op. cit. p. 4
[237]Elizur, 'The Fracturing of the Jewish Self-Image: The End of "We Are One"' op. cit p. 23
[238] S. Peres 'Lessons of the War with Hezbollah' *New Perspectives Quarterly*, vol. 23, 4, (2006),pp.23-26  p. 25
[239]  1 Samuel 1 Chapter 17, The Holy Bible (King James Version), Electronic Text Center, University of Virginia Library, http://etext.lib.virginia.edu/etcbin/toccer-new2?id=Kjv1Sam.sgm&images=images/modeng&data=/texts/english/modeng/parsed&tag=public&part=17&division=div1
[240]Elizur, 'The Fracturing of the Jewish Self-Image: The End of "We Are One"' op. cit p. 22; S. Tolan, Rethinking Israel's David and Goliath Past, Salon.com, (2007), http://www.salon.com/opinion/feature/2007/06/04/six_day_war/,  4 June
[241]Elizur, 'The Fracturing of the Jewish Self-Image: The End of "We Are One"' op. cit p. 22

framing of the Hezbollah threat within a narrative of a struggle of epic proportions made myths and memories of previous threats directly relevant to the present, positioning them as all part of the same continuum of danger. The threat from Hezbollah thus became comparable with defining moments in Jewish-Israeli identity and in line with the concept of the 'Masada Complex' these associations carried with them lessons for the present crisis. Underdogs must fight hard to gain victory.

Secondly, as outlined in Chapter Three, the established narrative of Jewish-Israeli struggle is a narrative of the struggle for survival; a struggle for the right to exist. In broad terms, by placing the Hezbollah threat within the narrative of this struggle, Olmert framed the threat as one to Israel's existence. More explicitly, Hezbollah was framed as an existential threat on two levels; first by associating Hezbollah with the Iranian regime, and secondly by emphasising the threat to the Israeli way of life and the physical safety of Israeli citizens. A report by the Intelligence & Terrorism Information Center, an Israeli-based research group, stated that Iranian Revolutionary Guard units were operating within Lebanon in support of Hezbollah.[242] Although the factual accuracy of this assertion is disputed[243] the claim was enormously significant, meaning that Israel was faced and was addressing both the Hezbollah *and* Iranian threat in Lebanon when it chose a military policy response in the summer of 2006. Earlier in 2006, Iran's President Mahmoud Ahmadinejad had delivered a speech in which - as translated at the time[244] - he said that Israel should be 'wiped off the map'. The

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[242]I. Stoll, Hundreds of Iranian Troops Fighting in Lebanon, The New York Sun, (2006), http://www.nysun.com/article/36326, 19 July; and J. Stahl, Israel Fighting Free World's War on Terror, Defence Ministers Says, CNS News.Com, (2006), http://www.cnsnews.com/ViewForeignBureaus.asp?Page=/ForeignBureaus/archive/200608/INT20060809c.html, 9 August
[243] See e.g. Iran Denies Having Any Troops in Lebanon, Fox News Online, Sunday, (2006), http://www.foxnews.com/story/0,2933,203829,00.html, 16 July
[244] J. Cooke, Israel's Jewish problem in Tehran, Al Jazeera.Com, (2007), http://www.aljazeera.com/news/newsfull.php?newid=25781, 20 August

accuracy of this translation has since been fundamentally questioned[245], but at the time, Olmert made a direct comparison in response, between the Iranian President and Adolph Hitler.[246] On the most overt level, the link to Ahmadinejad made the conflict with Hezbollah a conflict with Iran as well, a country which (at least on the plainest reading of Ahmadinejad's apparent pronouncements) wished an end to the existence of Israel. The conflict was thus an existential one. In a climate of consensus[247] across the political divide – as well as in Israeli society - Binyamin Netanyahu[248] spoke of Israel facing 'a threat to our very existence' and that as such it must 'identify the threats to its existence and develop the capacities to thwart those threats.' As a politician who typified Likud and a renowned adherent of the vulnerability identity,[249] Netanyahu's statement emphasised a reactive rather than Fighting Jew response; but the threat he conceptualised was the same one identified by the Kadima government. On another level the framing of the conflict as one which encompassed Ahmadinejad placed Israel in direct conflict with a new 'Hitler' in the Middle East thus making the Jewish-Israeli narrative of the Holocaust of overwhelming significance. There is a consistent record of Israeli leaders making associations between their regional Arab enemies and Adolph Hitler; in the Six Day War the press as well as politicians compared President Nasser of Egypt to Hitler[250], and in 1982 Menachim Begin sent 'the

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[245] ibid; and E. Bronner, 'Iran's leader and Israel: What did he say, and what did he mean?' *The International Herald Tribune*, NEWS; Pg. 3 June 12, 2006

[246]Kreiger, <u>Olmert: Ahmadinejad is a Psychopath</u>, The Jerusalem Post, op. cit.; the theme was also strong in the Israeli and Jewish media, e.g.: S. Stalisnksy, <u>Hizbullah's Nazi-Like Propaganda</u>, Jewish Press - Online Edition, (2006), http://www.jewishpress.com/print.do/19029/Hizbullah's_Nazi-Like_Propaganda.html, 2 August

[247] E.g. J. Beinin, 'The 2006 Lebanon War and the Israeli Peace Forces' *New Insights*, Vol. 1, Issue 2 (2006) p. 5

[248] <u>Benjamin Netanyahu Address to the Knesset 14 August, 2006: Ceasefire in Lebanon</u>, Benjamin Netanyahu Personal Website, (2006), http://www.netanyahu.org/threatandstr.html, 14 August

[249] Elizur, 'The Fracturing of the Jewish Self-Image: The End of "We Are One"' op. cit, p. 26

[250] Segev, *The Seventh Million o*p. cit p. 297 and 391

Israeli army to Beirut to destroy Adolph Hitler'[251]. Segev identifies this pattern as an Israeli

urge 'to revive and obliterate Hitler over and over again'[252]. As the Masada Complex would

predict, by framing the conflict with Hezbollah as a conflict with a 21st century Hitler, Israel

drew on the lessons learnt in the Jewish 'first' encounter with Hitler, thus bringing the

identity strands of self-reliance and rejection of passivity into play, boosting the Fighting Jew

identity.

The second facet of the existential threat was the framing of Hezbollah as a threat to

the Israeli way of life and the physical safety of individual Israelis. In his speeches during the

summer of 2006 Olmert couched threats to the existence of Israel in terms of threats to 'the

right to a peaceful and normal life[253] for Israelis. Olmert quoted David Ben Gurion, stating

that Israel's existence was dependent on its freedom[254]; a freedom which is seen as going to

the heart of Israel's identity as a nation where the Jewish people should be able to live, free

of fear of politically motivated violence and with their own personal safety guaranteed.[255]

Thus, for Olmert, Israel's existence was dependent on the rights of Israelis 'to live safely in

[their] own homes, [and] on the streets of [their] cities and towns'[256]. This viewpoint has lead

Israel to develop a very broad interpretation of threat to security, and this, coupled with

Israel's deep sense of 'familism' means that 'the death of a single Israeli [for political

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[251] ibid p. 402
[252] ibid p. 400
[253] Prime Minister Ehud Olmert's Address to the Knesset During the Conflict in the North, Knesset
Website, (2006), http://knesset.gov.il/docs/eng/olmertspeech2006_eng.htm, 17 July; Prime Minister Ehud
Olmert
Addresses Meeting of Heads of Local Authorities, Israel Ministry of Foreign Affairs, (2006),
http://www.mfa.gov.il/MFA/Government/Speeches+by+Israeli+leaders/2006/Address+by+PM+Olmert+to+the
+Mayors+Conference+31-Jul-2006.htm, (2006)
[254] Olmert Addresses Meeting of Heads of Local Authorities, op. cit
[255] Dowty, Israeli Foreign Policy and the Jewish Question' op. cit

[256] Olmert Addresses Meeting of Heads of Local Authorities, op. cit

reasons] is seen as an attack on a family member and as a personal threat' to all Israel[257].

This 'familism' is illustrated by Olmert's language regarding the imprisoned Israeli soldiers.

He described Israel as a nation which counts and grieves for every one of its dead[258] and

speaking of the two soldiers imprisoned by Hezbollah, and the one held by Hamas, said:[259]

> Pictures of three boys now stand in my room. Many times during the day I look in
> their faces, into their eyes, and embrace them in my heart. I do not forget them for
> one minute. They were there on our behalf and for our sake. We will do everything
> and make every effort to bring them home

The prisoners are framed by Olmert not as men, or as soldiers, but as 'boys'; children of

Israel, and as such part of the Israeli family[260], a family which would be incomplete until

they were returned 'home'. The 'boys' were serving 'on behalf' of the Israelis, and an attack

on them was thus an attack on the family of Israel. Regardless of whether Olmert's purported

attitudes are taken at face value, the speech was clearly expressing the wider Israeli national

attitude to its individual citizens. By taking military personnel prisoner and launching rocket

attacks into Israeli territory – threatening the personal safety of Israelis – Hezbollah was

challenging the tenets of Israel's being, and thus, challenging it existentially. This last tier

further reinforced the sense of existential threat, and in doing so the appropriateness of a

policy response congruent with the Fighting Jew identity.

Thirdly, constituted by the memory of past episodes of persecution, the Israeli

identity is one of self-reliance – a strong sense of Israel being alone in a hostile world. The

combination of the Jewish identity as the 'people who dwell alone'[261] and a narrative of

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[257] Dowty, Israeli Foreign Policy and the Jewish Question' op. cit
[258] Prime Minister Ehud Olmert's Speech at the Knesset Regarding the War in the North, op. cit
[259] Prime Minister Ehud Olmert's Address to the Knesset During the Conflict in the North, op. cit
[260] Elizur, 'The Fracturing of the Jewish Self-Image: The End of "We Are One"' op. cit p. 20
[261] Dowty, Israeli Foreign Policy and the Jewish Question' op. cit

passivity by the international community[262] – and as some Israelis perceive it, by the Jews themselves[263] - during previous crises in Jewish history have created a belief that ultimately the Israelis can only rely on themselves when facing threats from the hostile non-Jewish world[264]. As outlined above, the recent history of the Holocaust (invoked by the associations between Hitler and President Ahmadinejad, and the notion of a broader existential threat) brought the lessons of the Holocaust into focus during 2006. There was a strong sense that the international community was in a state of what Shimon Peres referred to as 'paralysis' concerning the Hezbollah problem[265]. In 2006, Pereswrote of Hezbollah:[266]

> Israel really is alone. No one else can stop them. And, on the other hand, no one else can defend us. We have to defend ourselves in … a dangerous world

Olmert[267] expressed similar sentiments. Quoting David Ben Gurion he stated that in the struggle for continued existence, Israelis must 'depend first and foremost on ourselves'. The lessons of the narrative of 3000 years of the non-Jewish world offering up the Jews "as prey to the enemy's jaws"'[268] has created a tendency to interpret non-action on the part of the international community very broadly, thus framing threats as requiring self-reliant action on the part of the Israelis. The view that the non-Jewish world is hostile arises out of the lessons from the narrative of the past; that passivity in the face of threat is a form of defeat and subjugation. Compromise by the non-Jewish world is thus tantamount for support for those enemies who wish to destroy Israel – an attitude summed up by Albert Einstein who stated:
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[262] Nisan, 'Israel 1948-98: Purpose and Predicament in History', op. cit. p.9
[263] Elizur, 'The Fracturing of the Jewish Self-Image: The End of "We Are One"' op. cit p. 21
[264] Dowty, Israeli Foreign Policy and the Jewish Question' op. cit
[265] Peres 'Lessons of the War with Hezbollah', op. cit. p.23
[266] ibid
[267] Olmert Addresses Meeting of Heads of Local Authorities, op. cit
[268] Shenhabi, quoted in Segev, *The Seventh Million, o*p. cit p. 428
[269] Quoted in Nisan, 'Israel 1948-98: Purpose and Predicament in History', op. cit. p.11

The world is too dangerous to live in, not because of the people who do evil but because of the people who sit and let it happen

As Olmert stated at the start of the conflict, in a hostile world, 'restraint' is interpreted as 'weakness'[270]. In the same speech, Olmert framed Israel's options regarding Hezbollah as two opposing alternatives; 'consent to living under the axis of evil' or the mobilisation of 'inner strength' and 'determination' in a military operation. The alternative to war with Hezbollah was thus framed as submission to the enemy.

The interaction of these three constituent strands of the Israeli identity of vulnerability made specific policy responses to the Hezbollah threat possible by offering up lessons from the past, as analysed above; lessons which helped to raise the Fighting Jew identity strand to a level of importance unprecedented in recent Israeli history. Support for the military policy response was such that Israeli consensus reached a level in the first month of the campaign not seen since the start of the Yom Kippur War[271] when the Super Jew identity was untarnished and at its peak. Thus far we have seen how the Jewish-Israeli narrative of struggle, the fear of existential threat, and the notion of Israeli self-reliance came together to offer lessons which boosted the prominence of the Fighting Jew identity strand. This Chapter concludes by clarifying how the manifestations of the Fighting Jew identity strand in the summer of 2006 made the military policy response to the Hezbollah threat possible.

The Fighting Jew Identity

Section three explored how the Super Jew identity had left the legacy of the identity strand of the Fighting Jew, an identity of faith in and appreciation of the rewards of Israeli

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[270] Prime Minister Ehud Olmert's Address to the Knesset During the Conflict in the North, op. cit

[271] Beinin, 'The 2006 Lebanon War and the Israeli Peace Forces' op. cit. p. 5

military strength. The Fighting Jew identity is the culmination of the narrative of warning;

the fruit of the Masada Complex. It is the means by which Israelis can avoid the horrors of

the past. As Ben-Gurion[272] put it, it enabled the Israelis to 'be reshaped into a nation of

warriors.' This identity has manifested domestically in the centrality of the Israeli Defence

Force in Israeli society which has acted to hold Israeli society together and 'has reshaped the

way Jews the world over think of themselves.'[273]  In 2006, with party politics tarnished by

corruption and scandal, the IDF was the one remaining institution trusted by the Israeli

population - 'public trust' ratings for the IDF were running at 79% compared with 22% for

political parties[274].  In direct terms the fighting Jew identity entails a rejection of passivity, a

strengthening of Israeli unity and a sense that due to the inner strength, courage and

fearlessness of Israelis, existential threats can be overcome through military means. This

identity is thus predicated on a military solution to threats to Israel and as such its

overwhelming prominence in the summer of 2006 – at all levels of Israeli society - framed a

military solution to the Hezbollah threat as not only possible but desirable. This was

reinforced by the framing of the alternative – a non-military solution – as submission to the

enemy and acceptance of their agenda of existential challenge to the state of Israel, as set out

above.

Evidence of the adoption of the fighting Jew identity in Israeli popular culture is set

out at the start of this chapter, but it was also given overwhelming and explicit emphasis by

the Israeli government. In his speech at the start of the campaign, Olmert made a direct link

between the strength of the state of Israel and the strength of the IDF. His language was

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[272]W. Walters, Army Holds Israeli Society Together, CNN.Com, (1998),
http://edition.cnn.com/WORLD/meast/9804/29/israel.glue/index.html, 29 April
[273] ibid
[274] Israeli Popular Attitudes toward Politics and Politicians in Transition, Canada-Israel Committee,
(2006), http://www.cicweb.ca/publications/backgrounder/backgrounder_060511.cfm

heavy with Fighting Jew sentiments, invoking the 'strength, determination, valor, sacrifice and dedication' of the Israeli nation, and emphasising the identity of Israel as a nation of united fighters: [275]

> …our enemy comes up against a united nation, which fights together, shoulder to shoulder. We do not surrender and we do not panic

A fortnight later, Olmert[276] detailed the last moments of Roi Klein[277], a deputy commander in the IDF who had been killed in action:

> Roi, who was leading his fighters, jumped on the grenade thrown at them, absorbed the force of the explosion on his body and saved the lives of his fighters. He still had the chance to murmur "Hear O Israel, the Lord God, the Lord is One" and asked the signal operator to report his death. This is how he died.

This account positions Roi Klein as the epitome of the Fighting Jew; as the brave warrior making the ultimate sacrifice for the Israeli nation. This frames him as a modern day war hero and positions him within the narrative of military successes remembered through the bravery and sacrifices of past Israeli war heroes.[278]  A link is therefore created between the present conflict and the past, particularly the Six Day War when the notion of the Israeli war hero became most resonant in Israeli society as a representation of the Super Jew identity. The framing of Roi Klein, a representative of Israel and part of the Israeli family, as the embodiment of the Fighting Jew identity indicates, therefore, the importance of this identity strand. Crucially, the comparable fates of the two soldiers detained by Hezbollah on the 12th of July tapped into a very different identity strand – as the above analysis shows.

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[275]Prime Minister Ehud Olmert's Address to the Knesset During the Conflict in the North, op. cit.
[276]Olmert Addresses Meeting of Heads of Local Authorities, op. cit
[277]See J. Merkin, Eli mourns two brave sons, Jerusalem Post, (2006), http://www.jpost.com/servlet/Satellite?pagename=JPost%2FJPArticle%2FShowFull&cid=1153292016100, 27 July
[278] On Israeli war heroes see P. Hellman, *Heroes: Tales from the Israeli Wars*, (New York: Henry Holt, 1990)

**Internationally-Constituted *Type* Identity.**

The purpose of this Chapter is to illustrate the role played by identity constituted at the international level (focussing on Israel's democratic *type* identity) in Israel's 2006 policy regarding Hezbollah, and in doing so provide an account of the part played by identity in systemic forces, namely the War on Terror. This will be accomplished through a constructivist conceptualisation of Walt's 'balance of threat'. The aim here is to present the linkages between these various notions to provide an account of the interacting roles of the democratic type identity strand and the War on Terror in the 2006 War. An account of the internationally-constituted Israeli democratic *type* identity provides a constructivist explanation of threat perception which clarifies how Israel came to represent what George W. Bush termed 'the forces of freedom'[279] and ally against the Hezbollah threat by opting for a military solution to the Hezbollah threat. This account of threat perception will then move on to consider how the internationally-constituted Israeli democratic identity strand interacted with the domestically constituted identity strands analysed in Chapter Four.

The Balance of Threat

As outlined in Chapter Two, Walt's[280] balance of threat proposes that perceived threat rather than power alone (as neo-realists suggest) is responsible for the formation of alliances. States ally against power that is threatening;[281] as Walt puts it, 'states tend to ally

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[279]D. Stout, Bush Ties Battle with Hezbollah to War on Terror, New York Times, (2006), http://www.nytimes.com/2006/07/31/world/middleeast/31cnd-prexy.html?ex=1311998400&en=5aa75b43d62eef26&ei=5088, 31 July

[280]Walt, *The Origins of Alliances*, op. cit., Ch. 2

[281] T. Farrell 'Constructivist Security Studies: Portrait of a Research Program' *International Studies Review* 4 (1), (2002), pp. 49–72. see also, D. Rousseau, D. Miodownik and D. Lux, Identity and Threat Perception: an Experimental Analysis, Unpublished Manuscript - University of Pennsylvania, (2001), http://www.ssc.upenn.edu/~rousseau/identity.htm

with or against the foreign power which poses the greatest threat'[282]. For Walt, aggregate power, geographic proximity, offensive capabilities and aggressive intentions define which states are threatening.[283] It is in the category of 'aggressive intentions' that constructivism can usefully augment Walt's analysis. Building on Walt's explanation constructivism offers an analysis of the way in which identity constructs hostile intentions and explain how states perceive which state poses 'the greatest threat.'[284] Ultimately, threats arise out of notions of identity because 'they are produced in and out of the context within which actors "give meaning to their actions and experiences and make sense of their lives"'[285] The analytical approach undertaken here will be to extend the application of Barnett's concepts of *narratives* and *frames* to an identity strand which is internationally constituted and to the systemic force that is the War on Terror. The choice of whether to ally against (balance) or with (bandwagon) a threat can also be expressed in constructivist terms, with – as Kratochvil[286] terms it – allying against seen as a 'refusal to accept the role relationship offered by the other'; the attack on the identity of the self which this represents is met with an assertion of the self-preferred identity. Alternatively, allying with the threat requires the identity to be reformulated in line with the casting of the 'other'.

Type Identity and the War on Terror

Israel's internationally-constituted democracy *type* identity arises, as outlined in Chapter Three, out of the intersubjective understanding that it is such by states with the same

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[282] Walt *The Origins of Alliances*, op. cit p. 21
[283] ibid 22-28
[284] P. Kratochvil, The Balance of Threat Considered: Construction of Threat in Contemporary Russia, op. cit. p12
[285] J. Weldes et al. 'Introduction: Constructing Insecurity' in Weldes et al. *Cultures of Insecurity* (Minneapolis and London: University of Minnesota Press, 1999) p.1
[286] Kratochvil, The Balance of Threat Considered: Construction of Threat in Contemporary Russia, op. cit

*type* identity. The important point to make about the international constitution of the Israeli democratic identity is that this democratic identity is also a culturally 'western' identity. As far as many are concerned, Israel 'is part of the West.'[287] Like the other constituting strands of Israel's identity, the 'western democracy' strand has been considerably controversial at both the international and Israeli domestic level, involving as it does fundamental questions concerning Israel's place in the Middle East.[288] The western democracy identity strand is strengthened by the domestic Israeli Jewish identity of being 'a people that dwells alone' because the western identity emphasises Israeli cultural separateness in the Arab Middle East. For example, and as explored in Chapter Three, the Disengagement plan of Ariel Sharon and later Kadima was framed as a policy to reinforce Israeli democratic principles [289] and it was also a policy of physical and cultural separation from the Arab world.

The power of the internationally constituted western democratic identity in 2006 lies in its framing of the identity 'other'. On September 11th 2001, George W. Bush identified the attacks on the United States as emanating from 'the enemies of freedom', an identity which was to become the 'evil other'[290] of the post Cold-War world. The states which belong to the same democratic *type* identity-group framed Israel as the only democracy in the Middle East[291] and this identity was positioned in terms of the other– the non-democratic countries

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[287]C. Krauthammer, 'Judging Israel', *Time,* (1990), 26 February, see also, J. Maria Aznar, Europe's Response to the Threat of Global Terror , Jerusalem Centre for Public Affairs - Jerusalem Issue Brief, Vol. 5, No. 23, (2006), http://www.jcpa.org/brief/brief005-23.htm, 27 April
[288]see e.g. Telhami and Barnett, 'Introduction: Identity and Foreign Policy in the Middle East' op. cit. p. 64; some dispute the nation's identity as a democracy, others that it is a liberal democracy; A. Dowty, 'Is Israel Democratic? Substance and Semantics in the "Ethnic Democracy" Debate', op. cit. [no page numbers]
[289]Address to PM Ariel Sharon to Conference of Presidents, op. cit.
[290]Epstein, 'Explaining the War on Terrorism from an Ontological-Security Perspective' op. cit p.13, also P. Graham et al. 'A Call to Arms at the End of History: A Discourse–Historical Analysis of George W. Bush's Declaration of War on Terror'
*Discourse & Society*, Vol. 15, No. 2-3, 199-221 (2004) p.212-214
[291] A. Abootalebi, 'Civil Society, Democracy, and the Middle East', *Middle East Review of International Affairs*, Volume 2, No. 3, pp. 46-59 (1998)

by which Israel is seen to be surrounded[292]. In the systemic context of the global War on Terror this Middle East 'non-democratic' other is framed as the identity antithesis of the western democracy identity. The western democratic identity of the self is framed as an identity of 'freedom' while the identity of the other is framed as an identity of 'terror'[293]; an identity intrinsically antithetical to the western democratic self. As part of the Middle Eastern identity other, Hezbollah in Lebanon was perceived not merely as a low-level localised threat with, in relative terms, a limited military capacity[294] but as a part of what George W. Bush termed 'the forces of terror'; an international movement of 'hatred and tyranny' opposed to the 'forces of freedom' represented by the western democratic identity self. [295] The Hezbollah threat thus became part of the narrative of the 'much wider struggle' of the War on Terror'.

Analysis of speeches and press conference transcripts made during the summer of 2006 revealsthat this construction of events was a key factor in the Israeli decision to undertake a military campaign in Lebanon. Firstly, the importance of Israel's western democracy *type* identity was expressed by Olmert who stated that Israel's conflict with Hezbollah was 'crucial to all nations of the free world, who struggle against global terror'[296]. Israel was said to be fighting 'the free world's struggle with terror' a conflict which was positioned within the Israeli narrative of Jewish struggle by analogy with the 'struggle of the

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[292] See e.g. D. Stout, Bush Links Fighting to War on Terror, International Herald Tribune, (2006), http://www.iht.com/articles/2006/07/31/news/diplo.php, 31 July
[293] e.g. ibid, see also Bush: "Hezbollah Suffered a Defeat", CNN.Com, (2006), http://edition.cnn.com/2006/POLITICS/08/14/bush/index.html, 15 August
[294]Myre and Erlanger, Clashes Spread to Lebanon as Hezbollah Raids Israel
[295]Bush Links Fighting to War on Terror, Op. Cit., see also Bush Calls Lebanon a Front in Terror War, (Transcript of Speech to the Media), CNN.Com, (2006), http://edition.cnn.com/2006/POLITICS/08/14/transcript.bush/index.html, 14 August
[296] Prime Minister Ehud Olmert's Speech at the Knesset Regarding the War in the North, op. cit

Zionist movement against terror.'[297] Emphasising that the Hezbollah threat was not a problem of limited scope, Olmert stated that the threat was one which threatened stability not just within Israel, or the Middle East but globally.[298] Positioning the Hezbollah threat as part of the narrative of the War on Terror, Olmert made a comparison between Israel facing the Hezbollah threat and the people of New York enduring the September 11th attacks. Hezbollah were framed by Israeli Foreign Minister Tzipi Livni[299] as part of the 'axis of terror and hate' composed of Hezbollah, Hamas, Syria and Iran, a point also made by Defence Minister Amir Peretz[300]. On this framing the Hezbollah threat encompassed not only Hezbollah in Lebanon, but the strong Palestinian-based threat of Hamas, and Iran which – as explored in Chapter Four - was seen as posing an explicit existential threat to Israel. These statements reveal that the Hezbollah threat was constructed as being of international significance; it was far reaching enough to effect all of the nations of the free world, of which – due to its *type* identity – Israel is one. This framing positions the Israeli stance as one congruent with the United States which views the War on Terror as a conflict between the forces of 'freedom' and the forces of 'terror'. The identity of Hezbollah is thus constructed in antithetical terms; making the assault on the identity self it represents a fundamental one. The Hezbollah threat, framed in the terms of the War on Terror, became a threat of enormous proportions and threatened the very tenets of Israel's existence.

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[297] ibid
[298] Prime Minister Ehud Olmert's Address to the Knesset During the Conflict in the North, op. cit
[299] Joint Press Conference by FM Tzipi Livni and EU Envoy Javier Solana, op. cit
[300] Excerpts from Statement by Defence Minister Amir Peretz to the Knesset, Israeli Ministry of Foreign Affairs, (2006), http://www.mfa.gov.il/MFA/Government/Speeches+by+Israeli+leaders/2006/Excerpts+from+statement+by+Defense+Minister+Peretz+to+the+Knesset+31-Jul-2006.htm, 31 July

As Walt's analysis predicts,[301] Lebanon which was a weak state in power terms thus came to be seen as disproportionately dangerous due to the nature of the threat it posed, as perceived by Israel; this perception arising out of the Israeli western democratic *type* identity. Faced with this threat, Israel could either assert its self-preferred identity and ally with other states *against* the Hezbollah threat, or recast its identity and ally *with* the threat. The choice was explicitly stated by Olmert:[302]

> We are at a national moment of truth. Will we consent to living under the threat of this Axis of Evil or will we mobilise our inner strength and show determination and equanimity?

In policy terms, 'the possible' was thus constructed very narrowly. Israel could, using the language of the balance of threat theory, bandwagon by consenting 'to live under the threat of the Axis of Evil' or it could ally against the threat by mobilising its 'inner strength' and taking military action against Hezbollah. As explored in Chapter Four, the domestically constituted Israeli identity made the former option virtually impossible by constructing compromise with the enemy as tantamount to submission and passive acceptance of what the historical narrative of Jewish vulnerability taught were attacks on the existence of the Jewish-Israeli nation. The internationally constituted democratic *type* identity also constructed the latter option as the most possible by positioning Israel within a 'War', the narrative of which was defined by a series of military confrontations with what were framed as international terrorist threats. Since al Qaeda bomb attacks in Africa in 1998, states framing themselves as part of the international community of the 'free world' had undertaken military responses to what were framed as international terrorist threats in Sudan, Afghanistan, Iraq, and Chechnya

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[301] Walt, *The Origins of Alliances*, op. cit. p. 20
[302] Prime Minister Ehud Olmert's Address to the Knesset During the Conflict in the North, op. cit

amongst others.[303]   The framing of the threat of international terrorism and the response to it as a 'War' on Terror creates – at the most explicit level – a narrative of an ongoing military campaign. Framed in these terms, the Israeli campaign against Hezbollah was merely a battle in an ongoing war. This view was expressed in such terms by George W. Bush, for whom the conflict in Lebanon was one of three 'fronts' in 'the global war on terror'[304]. This construction - which frames Israel as one General in a world army, fighting one battle – makes anything other than a military solution nonsensical. Thus, Israel's western, democratic *type* identity framed it as a nation engaged in the systemic force of the War on Terror, positioning its policies within an ongoing narrative of military conflict with an identity 'other' and making a military response to this other – in the form of Hezbollah in Lebanon – congruent with this internationally-constituted identity.

Interaction: Domestic and Internationally Constituted Identities

As the analysis in Chapter Four revealed, the prominence of the Fighting Jew identity strand in the summer of 2006, interacting with the constituent strands of the vulnerability identity, acted as an identity of the possible in which a military policy response to Hezbollah was possible, appropriate, and legitimate. By engaging Israel in the War on Terror, the democratic identity served to reinforce and strengthen the salience of the domestic identities, thus reinforcing the possibility of a military solution to the Hezbollah problem. Some mention has already been made of the interaction between domestic level and international

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[303]U.S. Missiles Pound Targets in Afghanistan, Sudan, CNN.Com, (1998), http://edition.cnn.com/US/9808/20/us.strikes.01/, 20 August; M. Wines, 'War on Terror Casts Chechen Conflict in a New Light', *New York Times*, (2001), pg. 6, 9 December; J. Garamone, Iraq Part of Global War on Terrorism, Rumsfeld Says, U.S. Department of Defence, (2002), http://www.defenselink.mil/news/newsarticle.aspx?id=43444, 19 September.
[304]Bush Calls Lebanon a Front in Terror War, (Transcript of Speech to the Media), op. cit

level identities in the creation of an identity of the possible regarding Hezbollah in 2006. This section will concentrate on analysis of the relevance of the notions of non-Jewish global hostility and existential threat.

Firstly, as the above analysis reveals, Israel's democratic *type* identity placed Israel within a global 'war' – the War on Terror. On an initial level, this interacted by reinforcing the Jewish-Israeli narrative of global hostility. Importantly, this perceived hostility was qualitatively distinct from the underlying pre-9/11 perception. As the analysis in Chapter Four set out, hostility has been defined very broadly within the Israeli identity of vulnerability to encompass apathy by the non-Jewish international community, seen as tantamount to support for enemies of Israel. Within the War on Terror this shifted. Threat was framed as emanating from the 'Axis of Evil'[305] or the international movement of 'hatred and tyranny'[306] – perceived as an organised alliance stretching far beyond the established regional Arab threat and fundamentally opposed to Israel's democratic *type* identity. Therefore, in the era of the War on Terror the world became hostile not merely because it was populated by apathetic appeasers of Israel's regional Arab enemy, but because it was populated by the antithetical 'evil other'[307], fundamentally opposed, by virtue of Israel's *type* identity, to the Israeli self. On another level, the belief that appeasement is tantamount to support acted to make anything other than the most extreme measure against the 'Axis of Evil' fundamentally incompatible with the Israeli identity. By framing the identity other as

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[305] The number of states framed as constituting the Axis of Evil has increased since the term was coined: Bush's 'Evil Axis' Comment Stirs Critics, BBC News Online, (2002), http://news.bbc.co.uk/2/hi/americas/1796034.stm 2 February; US Expands 'Axis of Evil', BBC News Online (2002), http://news.bbc.co.uk/2/hi/americas/1971852.stm 6 May; and George W. Bush's State of the Union Address, The White House Website, (2002) http://www.whitehouse.gov/news/releases/2002/01/20020129-11.html, 29 January 29.
[306]Bush Links Fighting to War on Terror, op. cit, see also Bush Calls Lebanon a Front in Terror War, (Transcript of Speech to the Media), op. cit.
[307] Graham et al. 'A Call to Arms at the End of History, op. cit

'Evil', any policy response which could be construed as apathetic would be dichotomous to the Israeli identity; implicating it in the 'Evil' it opposed.[308] The impossibility of anything other than an absolute rejection of the antithetical other is illustrated by George W. Bush's well known Address to a Joint Session of Congress and the American People on the 20th of September 2001[309], in which he framed the new War on Terror as entailing a choice for every nation of the world: 'Either you are with us, or you are with the terrorists'. Anything other than absolute adherence to the identity of the self is demonstrative of a realignment of the identity toward that of the antithetical 'evil other'.

Secondly, the framing of the Hezbollah threat as antithetical in identity terms to the Israeli democratic *type* identity interacted with the sense of existential threat which is, as explored in Chapter Four, a strand of the Israeli vulnerability identity. Chapter Four analysed how the Hezbollah threat was framed as existential on two levels arising out of the domestically constituted Israeli identity: as part of the policy of the new 'Arab Hitler', President Ahmadinejad of Iran; and as a threat to the rights of Israeli citizens to live a life free from politically motivated violence. The framing of the War on Terror served to provide a third tier of existential threat. The War on Terror has been, according to McLaren[310], characterised by a 'fear of imminent annihilation' and 'panic over the insecurity of existence' amongst those nations who frame themselves as oppositional to the 'forces of terror.'[311] This arises out of the antithetical nature of the identity other – framed as the opposite of the

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[308] P. McLaren, 'George Bush, Apocalypse Sometime and the American Imperium' *Cultural Studies- Critical Methodologies* Vol. 2 No. 3 (2002) pp.327-333, p. 330
[309] George W. Bush: Address to a Joint Session of Congress and the American People, The White House Website, (2001), http://www.whitehouse.gov/news/releases/2001/09/20010920-8.htmlon, 20 September
[310] McLaren, 'George Bush, Apocalypse Sometime and the American Imperium' op. cit., p. 329
[311] E.g. Binyamin Netanyahu's reference to 'forces of terror' - Press Conference by FM Netanyahu- Terror attacks in Mombassa- Kenya, Israel Ministry of Foreign Affairs, (2002), http://mfa.gov.il/MFA/Government/Speeches+by+Israeli+leaders/2002/Press+Conference+by+FM+Netanyahu-+Terror+attacks+i.htm, 28 November

democratic *type* identity. In a conflict thus framed, victory for the opposing identity would necessarily mean annihilation for the self, in identity terms the ultimate existential threat. The identity strand which defined Israel at the international level, its *type* identity, was thus threatened fundamentally. Constructed in these terms, the appropriateness of bandwagoning was further diminished. In order to ally with the threat, Israel would have – as discussed above – to reformulate its identity congruent with the casting of the other. To reformulate the identity of the Israeli self congruent with the antithetical other would result in an annihilation of Israeli identity and defeat in the existential struggle.

The internationally constituted *type* identity which positioned Israel within the systemic War on Terror thus boosted those domestically constituted identity strands which made the Fighting Jew identity salient. The War on Terror framed the threat in identity-antithetical term and it also positioned Israel within the context of an ongoing war and a conflict narrative which was defined by military solutions to threats framed as emanating from the 'Axis of Evil'. Conceptualised in the language of a constructivist reworking of Walt's Balance of Threat theory, this made any policy of alliance (bandwagoning) with the threat tantamount to identity-annihilation.

**Conclusions**

The purpose of this research has been to answer the question, how can the social construction of identity explain the Israeli action in Lebanon in 2006? In order to provide an answer, the research undertook a conventional constructivist analysis of the role of Israeli identity in the 2006 33-Day war between Israel and Hezbollah in Lebanon, focussing on identity constituted at both the domestic and international level, and extending an analytical

framework utilised previously by Barnett to account for the role of systemic forces. This Chapter provides an opportunity for a final consideration of the wider implications of the research, and consequent avenues for subsequent research.

As noted in Chapter One there is a healthy body of literature concerning Israeli identity, and Israeli identity and foreign policy. However, as yet, there is an absence of work on the 2006 conflict with Hezbollah, due inevitably to the short amount of time which has elapsed since the conflict. Future research will need to address both the causes (including the regional and international context) of the conflict and its aftermath. The aim of the work undertaken here has been to address the former, suggesting how Israeli identity made a military solution to the Hezbollah threat possible and legitimate. Future research might profitably engage with both issues in much greater detail.

The project revealed the continually evolving nature of the Israeli identity. For example, as was explored in Chapter Three, the Israeli Fighting Jew identity has been shaped since the inception of the Israeli state by interaction with a narrative of perceived military success and failure. Subsequent research might fruitfully engage with the consequences in identity terms of the outcome of the conflict, which is already being viewed as a military failure for Israel[312]. How has the 2006 war been framed within the narrative of the Israeli experience? What has the effect of this been on the Fighting Jew identity strand?

Connected to the above point, the research was able to illustrate the enduring significance of identity in Israeli foreign policy. Considering the constantly changing nature of national identity in general, and the Israeli national identity in particular, research might usefully address the ongoing Israeli response to the continuing Hezbollah threat. How is the

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[312]Israel's Military Stunned by the Failure of its Air War, World Tribune.Com, (2006), http://www.worldtribune.com/worldtribune/06/front2453938.0986111113.html, 21 July

Israeli government addressing the ongoing Hezbollah threat post-2006? To what extent can this policy be attributed to any shifts in the post-2006 Israeli identity?

Additionally, the research highlighted the relevance of a constructivist account of identity to an analysis of one of the many facets of the War on Terror. The work undertaken here provided an account of how Israel allied or balanced (in identity terms) against the Hezbollah threat by allying with other states who shared its western, democratic *type* identity in the War on Terror. This aspect of the research also highlighted the rewards of combining a conventional constructivist analysis with insights offered by realist theorists.

An interesting avenue for related research might be to examine why states which do not, in the explicit sense, share a *type* identity with the western, democratic states might ally with them in the War on Terror. Is Pakistan's alliance with the United States, for example, a result of balancing or bandwagoning in constructivist terms?

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The leadership acts within a world of myths and monsters of its own creation

This observation regarding Israel's policymakers was made by Israeli columnist Boaz Evron[313] in 1980. Written ten years before constructivism became influential within International Relations, and made in a spirit of journalistic rhetoric, it nevertheless captures in popular terms a fundamental insight of constructivism, applicable not just to Israel but to all states The research undertaken here has demonstrated how the 'myths' and 'monsters' which populate the political world, define and are defined by a state's identity and in doing

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[313]Segev, *The Seventh Million o*p. cit p. 402

so, work to entail policy choices. The 'myths' and 'monsters' examined here were Israel's

and the policy they helped to form was the 2006 war; however – as this Chapter has

suggested – the scope of this analytical approach is far wider.

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