

state identity is provided. For Egypt and Morocco, the starting point of this investigation is the aftermath of national independence, and for Israel, the establishment of the state.

This book does certainly not claim that the discrepancy between vision and reality of the Barcelona Process can be explained in terms of identity alone. Politics in general, and international relations in particular, do not follow mono-causal explanations. The (temporary?) collapse of the Middle East peace process, the events of 9/11, and factors appertaining to the EU itself certainly had a negative impact on the prospects of Euro-Mediterranean regional security. This research seeks to show, however, that unsettled state identities are a significant and independent factor that must be considered for explaining the difficulties of the EMP in particular, and of regional security initiatives in general. By approaching international relations from an alternative perspective, this book supports the argument that foreign-policy interests "are defined by actors who respond to cultural factors" (Katzenstein 1996a: 2). Yet going beyond this affirmation, the research also evidences the relevance of *domestic factors* for the study of world politics, while opening up the "black box" of state identities. As we have touched upon a wide range of theoretical issues, the next chapter elaborates on the theoretical underpinnings of our argument.

Theoretical Framework

This chapter focuses on the theoretical premises of the argument that contested state identities negatively affect a state's ability to engage with Euro-Mediterranean regional security. This discussion of the theoretical framework will start with a review of different schools of thought within the theory of IR. As this discussion touches upon questions of reality, truth, and knowledge, these issues will briefly be addressed in a second step. Subsequently, we theoretically elaborate on how identities, and in particular state identities, can be studied, while conceptualizing the impact of *contested* state identities on foreign-policy interests, and consequently, outcome.

Interests and Identities in IR

The focus on contested state identities as a possible explanation of the difficulties of the EMP has led us to the questioning of the very nature of foreign-policy interests. Certainly, the argument of this book does not lie within the range of approaches that have been dominating IR during most of its relatively young existence as an academic discipline. In fact, since IR's theoretical preoccupation with foreign and security policy developed around the cold war, the realist school traditionally stood at the center (Nye and Lynn-Jones 1988; Walt 1991). As it is well known, realism defines "interests" in terms of military capabilities, deterrence strategies, and power politics. In spite of repeated calls for broadening the definition of security and interests from the mid-1980s onwards (Ullman 1983; Buzan 1983), the rationalist and systemic view prevailed in IR theory. With it, the predominant assumption is that a state's foreign policy and security interests are exogenous and a priori given, an assumption that is discussed—and challenged—in the following sections.

Traditional Approaches: Realism, Neo-Realism, and Neo-Liberalism

The starting points of realism and neo-realism are the anarchical nature of the international system, nation-states as principal actors within it, and the rational behavior of states in their pursuit of power. Under these conditions, conflicts and wars are viewed as inevitable. Thus, the balance of power, or, better, *the balancing of power*, becomes the central mechanism of international relations (Morgenthau 1967; Carr 1964). The classical realists, however, can be criticized for not having defined the key concepts of "power" and "interest" in a consistent way, if at all. Thus, Hans Morgenthau (1967: 9, 122–144) asserted that the determining elements of power include material resources, the ability to influence the behavior of other states, domestic structures, state–society relations, as well as "the political and cultural environment" of foreign-policy making. While the assertion that both material resources and the possibility to exert influence define power is somewhat tautological (Keohane 1986a: 11), realist theory remains notably vague regarding the question of what state interests are and how they may change.

Giving absolute priority to the systemic level, neo-realism is much clearer on this point. In his influential reformulation of realist theory, Kenneth Waltz (1979) even insists that IR must focus solely on systemic factors in order to meet the conditions of theory.¹ According to Waltz, international anarchy and the position of the state within the system determine an actor's national interests, which merely reflect material capabilities and strategic circumstances (Waltz 1979: 18, 65; Gilpin 1981). Changing foreign-policy interests, then, must be a result of an altered distribution of capabilities or changed strategic conditions. Yet this point is certainly contestable. To give an example, the cold war did not end because of altered systemic conditions, but as a result of profound domestic changes *within* the former Soviet Union. As Robert Keohane (1986b: 182) correctly argues, neo-realism's "efforts to define the national interest on a priori basis . . . or to use the concept for prediction and explanation, have been unsuccessful." Applied to the Euro-Mediterranean case, neo-realism may offer an explanation for the launching of both the Arab–Israeli peace process and the EMP by pointing to the end of the cold war as an altered systemic condition. For the recurrent political stalemate and the EMP's lack of success, however, realism and neo-realism have no plausible explanation, since the strategic conditions did not notably change during the 1990s. Neither do they succeed in explaining altering patterns of

Euro–Mediterranean relations, including the reluctance of EMP partners to engage in the creation of a security region.

As is well known, institutional neo-liberalism was intended to challenge neo-realism's dominant position in IR theory, along with the strictly systemic view of world politics. However, neo-liberalism eventually adopted the same premises as the latter: The state is viewed as unitary actor in an anarchical system which, in turn, determines state behavior, and states act in a self-interested and rational way (Keohane 1986a). What distinguishes neo-liberal theory from neo-realism, however, is the former's emphasis on the role of international institutions. Thus, according to neo-liberalism, "cooperation can under some conditions develop on the basis of complementary interests," and "institutions, broadly defined, affect the patterns of cooperation that emerges" (Keohane 1984: 9). In other words, neo-liberalism still considers conflict as inherent in the international system, but, unlike neo-realists, not as inevitable. Moreover, unlike neo-realism, neo-liberal regime theory implicitly assumes the relevance of norms for foreign-policy behavior. However, neo-liberal scholars tend to treat these "explicit or implicit principles, norms, rules" on which international regimes are based, and "around which actors' expectation converge in given areas of international relations" (Krasner 1982: 186), as exogenous factors that reflect a state's preexisting foreign-policy interests (Krasner 1993).

Thus, neo-liberal scholars did not succeed in correcting the deficiencies of realism and neo-realism discussed above. As a result, neo-liberalism cannot reasonably explain the inconsistent evolution of Euro-Mediterranean relations in the event that material realities remain unchanged. In our case, neo-liberalism's focus on institutionalized cooperation among states is not relevant either, since the inconsistent evolution of Euro-Mediterranean relations seems to precisely prevent the emergence of such a cooperation.

The Challengers: Liberal Theory and Constructivism

A paradigmatic alternative to the systemic view of IR is Andrew Moravcsik's reformulation of liberal IR theory (Moravcsik 1997). This approach stipulates that societal groups, and their ability to promote their interests, determine a state's foreign-policy behavior. Liberal theory is based on three core assumptions: First, individuals and private groups are the most important actors in international politics. They act rationally in their pursuit of welfare under constraints

imposed by material scarcity, divergent values, and inequality in their societal influence. Second, states are not actors, but institutions representing the interests of the dominant domestic groups, termed *state preferences*. A priori, a state's preferences are independent of the interests of other states, but the latter may impose certain constraints on a state's realization of its preferences. The configuration of state preferences determines state behavior in the international arena (Moravcsik 1997: 516–520). Thus, liberal theory directly challenges Waltz's claim that it "is not possible to understand world politics simply by looking inside of states" (Waltz 1979: 65) by suggesting that, on the contrary, *looking inside of states* leads to the only valid explanation of world politics. Thus, liberal theory provides an explanation for variation in a state's foreign policy "while holding power and information constant" (Moravcsik 1997: 537). Unlike traditional IR approaches, the liberal school of thought explains foreign policy as a function of the domestic context, and it focuses on how domestic conflicts over preferences, not international anarchy, impose policy outcomes.

Applied to the Euro-Mediterranean case, liberal theory would explain foreign-policy variation in terms of domestic conflicts over preferences and changing coalitions in power. Moreover, the so-called ideational variant of liberal theory proposes that "disjunctures between borders and identity are important determinants of international conflict and cooperation" (Moravcsik 1997: 526). This point seems also interesting for explaining prospects and failures of the EMP.

However, there are several objections to liberal IR theory. First, by exclusively concentrating on domestic politics, liberal theory goes to the other extreme by ignoring the state-level in the analysis. This move is a problematic oversimplification, since domestic and international politics intersect at the state-level (Putnam 1988). Here, various feedback processes take place, and additional information, interests, and pressures, such as of political elites, intelligence services, or the international community, may intervene. Second, the rationality assumption, which liberal theory shares with realism and neo-liberalism, remains questionable. In fact, by referring to the relationship between national identity and territorial borders in explaining cooperation and conflict, liberal theory implicitly corrupts its own rationality assumption, as it unintentionally points to a possible incompatibility of identities and rationality. Finally, liberal theory does not answer the question of why some states are characterized by domestic struggle over preferences that may impact on foreign policy, while others are not.

Constructivist approaches represent a further challenge to traditional IR theory. Like liberal theory, constructivism defies the systemic perspective of world politics, along with the assumption that state interests are a priori given (Wendt 1992; Adler 1997b). But unlike liberal theory, constructivism also challenges the rationality assumption by viewing actors as responding to social norms and values. Although constructivist approaches do not ignore material determinants of foreign policy, they however regard them as acquiring meaning through the social dimension (Onuf 1989: 40; Adler 1997a: 255). Alexander Wendt (1995: 73) clarifies this point in a marked example: "500 British nuclear weapons are less threatening to the United States than 5 North Korean nuclear weapons, because the British are friends of the United States and the North Koreans are not."

An innovation of constructivist approaches is the focus on the relationship between interests and state identity (Wendt 1994; Neumann 1996; Berger 1996). Gaining important insights from the research on "security communities" (Deutsch et al. 1957; Adler 1997a; Adler and Barnett 1998), constructivist approaches suggest that social norms, values, and beliefs shape the self-understanding of the state, that is, its identity. In turn, a state's identity affects the perception of other states, and with it, of national interests. Thus, constructivist scholars equally defy the claim of traditional IR theory that states possess a priori given and stable identities, conversely arguing that state identities are socially constructed, and can therefore change. Studies of national identity (Anderson 1991; Haas 1993) confirm this perspective.

With regard to the EMP, a constructivist approach would lend itself to focus on unsettled state identities that frequently witness processes of reshaping and reconstruction. Given the wide-spread phenomenon of domestic fragmentation in the southern Mediterranean, this proposition is certainly worth considering. However, it touches upon a theoretical problem. Constructivist scholarship tends to treat state identity as a unitary concept as soon as it is applied to empirical case studies. While Wendt (1999) openly defends what has been termed "systemic" constructivism (Price and Reus-Smit 1998: 268–269; Ruggie 1998: 881), the implicit state-centric perspective of much constructivist scholarship excludes consideration of domestic conflicts over state identity, which may impact on foreign-policy making. Indeed, diametrically opposed domestic preferences regarding the identity of the state may considerably narrow-down a government's space of maneuver in foreign policy. Moreover, since external threats generally contribute to the reproduction and reconstruction of a state's

identity (Buzan et al. 1998: 120; Campbell 1992), governments might use an external threat to give a sense of unity to a deeply divided population—even if political realities change. Thus, in its unitary version, the concept of state identity in constructivist theory is of limited value.

Culture, Identity, and the "Third Debate"—Second Edition

The revolutionary changes that marked world politics in the late 1980s prompted a renewed preoccupation with cultural factors in IR from the 1990s onwards (Goldstein and Keohane 1993b; Katzenstein 1996b; Lapid and Kratochwil 1996). Since mainstream IR theory was unprepared for either the end of the cold war or the resurrection of ethnic conflicts—and even failed to explain them in the aftermath—IR scholars were inevitably forced to question their predominant analytical categories. The new "burst of critical scrutiny in the IR discipline" (Lapid 1996: 4) also affected the concept of security, which similarly witnessed the "intrusion" of culture and identity (Katzenstein 1996b; Bush and Keyman 1997; Goldgeier 1997; Adler and Barnett 1998). The rethinking of culture characterized realism and neo-liberalism (Goldstein and Keohane 1993a; Krasner 1993; Buzan et al. 1998) as well as the postmodernist, feminist, and constructivist challengers (Campbell 1992; Tickner 1996; Wendt 1994). Combined with the general rise of constructivist approaches, this trend also directed attention to meta-theoretical questions. Indeed, how compatible is the study of culture and identities with rationalist and positivist approaches that had dominated IR hitherto? How can these phenomena be studied, and what does it imply for our understanding of science? In a way, the preoccupation with this set of questions echoed the so-called Third Debate of the 1980s (Lapid 1989), which was sparked by critical theory and its questioning of the validity of positivism² in the social sciences (Walker 1988; Hoffman 1991; Linklater 1990, 1992).³ On these issues, constructivist approaches adopted similar positions as critical theory (Price and Reus-Smit 1998).

Indeed, in ontological terms, that is, regarding the question of what the world is made of, both constructivism and critical theory challenge the existence of purely utility-rationalist actors. Moreover, both approaches are at least critical of the assumption that the real world exists independently of the human mind (Hoffman 1991; Adler 1997b; Ruggie 1998). In epistemological terms, that is, regarding the question of "how reality can be known," both constructivist and critical

scholarship question the validity of law-like generalizations in the social sciences. To quote John Ruggie (1989: 880, footnote 138): "How many cases have there been of nuclear bipolarity? Or of any other kind, for that matter? How many hegemony have there been 'like' the United States in the twentieth century, or Britain in the nineteenth?"

Over the last decade, there has been an increase of systematic accounts of what may be called post-positivist social science (Searle 1995; Wendt 1999; Adler 1997b; Ruggie 1998; Kubáková et al. 1998b), along with a growing body of empirical research. Yet the diversity regarding meta-theoretical starting points within IR persists until the present. Thus, considering the subject of the present book, which position does it adopt? It is to these questions that we shall now turn our attention to.

Reality, Truth, and Knowledge: Contested Foundations

The questions of what the world is made of and how we can know about it have been preoccupying philosophers since centuries. Yet for IR, these questions are more than relevant. Indeed, we cannot study international politics "without making powerful assumptions about what kind of things are to be found in international life, how they are related, and how they can be known" (Wendt 1995: 5). All IR theories make these assumptions, at least implicitly. Yet alternative, and particularly post-positivist, approaches are often accused of not *scientifically* proving their arguments. This is even more the case if such "esoteric" phenomena as culture and identities are the subject of scientific inquiry. For this reason—and since important issues such as causality are at stake—we briefly clear the meta-theoretical foundations of this book.

The World Out There

What is the world like? What are its main components, and how do they relate to each other? Besides being interesting questions *per se*, assumptions about "what is" fulfill a specific task within science. In fact, ontology is preoccupied with the question of what the world must be like for science to be possible (Bhaskar 1975: 23; Quine 1963: 16–17).

The broadest agreement can probably be reached on the assumption that the world consists of material objects, which may be observable or not. In addition, most would probably agree on the existence of "ideational" facts, such as norms, ideas, practices, customs, and beliefs.

Laws and legislation, political ideologies, religions, the concept of sovereignty, property rights, and citizenship are examples of these "ideational" phenomena. In contrast to material objects, their existence is very much dependent on society. Thus, if we assume that these "ideational" facts are real, their "being real" somewhat differs from that of material objects. Indeed, while a mountain may exist independently of people believing that it does, social facts do not. As John Searle (1995: 31–32) has put it: "Part of being a cocktail party is being thought to be a cocktail party; part of being a war is being thought to be a war." The key mechanisms through which these "facts" become reality are *social institutionalization* and *intersubjective agreement* (Berger and Luckmann 1966). Indeed, a cocktail party would not be a cocktail party, and a war would not be a war, if only *one* individual—or only a few, for that matter—thought of the event in question as being a cocktail party, or a war. These examples, as well as of other social practices such as getting married, or stopping at a red traffic-light, also show that human behavior acquires a meaning only because of the preexistence of society. At the same time, people reproduce society and may transform it. Thus, society "is both the ever-present *condition* . . . and the continually reproduced *outcome* of human agency" (Bhaskar 1979: 43, original italics).

But how do material and "ideational" facts relate to each other? And which role does the human mind play in this context? The present book adopts the position that "brute" material facts may well exist independently of both social phenomena and of the mind of their observers. Thus, there is a commitment to scientific realism, which stipulates that the (material) world exists independently of our minds and of our knowledge of them (Blackburn 1994: 320; Manicas 1998). However, even this commitment, which in the current IR literature often serves as justification for a proper scientific stance, needs some fine-tuning. The reason is that processes of interpretation are also relevant when it comes to material factors. Indeed, material objects acquire a meaning through social convention and institutionalization; their *social significance* is dependent on the human mind. To give an example, our current economic thinking and way of life presupposes the scarcity of resources. But according to anthropological literature, traditional societies of gatherers and hunters—then and now—firmly believe that there is an abundance of natural resources and food. And yet they are referring to the *same physical world*.

Thus, scientific realism serves as an ontological reference point, which makes experimentation, and finally science, intelligible (Bhaskar 1975).

However, the moment we accept the assumption that "*the manner in which the material world shapes and is shaped by human action and interaction depends on dynamic normative and epistemic interpretations of the material world*" (Adler 1997b: 322, original italics), we depart from the commitment to scientific realism in its absolute version. Thus, we accept what has been termed "*internal realism*" (Putnam 1995: 172, original italics), which still differs from the anti-realist claim that things do *not* exist independently of our minds (Blackburn 1994: 319–320).

Affirming that social facts exist as "real-world" phenomena, the meaning of which, however, is dependent on social conventions has two important implications. First, it entails that social phenomena are not eternal and globally valid, but dependent on time and place. Second, collectively accepted interpretations of the material world—which include norms, beliefs, and identities—affect human behavior. They may be compared to lenses through which we see events and situations, and they direct human action, mostly unconsciously. For this reason, the assumption that "rational" human behavior is purely utility-oriented must be rejected.

How Can We Know?

The minimalist version of scientific realism has important epistemological consequences. If the social world is based on social conventions, meaning and interpretation become our main concerns. But in this case, how can we know anything to be true? And if our minds take part in the process of interpretation, how is knowledge in the social sciences possible?

For theorists who accept the maximalist version of scientific realism—Realism with a capital R, as Putnam (1995: 172) termed it—these questions are quite easy to answer. Indeed, the assumption that the real world exists independently of human thinking permits a clear distinction between subject and object. This leads to the propositions that some of our beliefs are correct descriptions of reality, even if they may be incomplete, and that we possess the appropriate scientific tools to verify that (at least) some of our observations of the world are objectively true (Blackburn 1994: 320). This position lends itself to espouse a positivist approach to science.⁴ In this vein, social phenomena can be studied like natural objects; observation leads to objective knowledge; and law-like generalizations are the basis of explanations and predictions (Hollis 1994: 49).⁵ In the study of IR, most neo-realist and neo-liberal scholars at least implicitly subscribe to this approach to science.

Clear-cut propositions about scientific knowledge and "truth" are far more complicated for social scientists who defend an intersubjective ontology, as most constructivist and critical scholars do.⁶ Refraining from a neat distinction between subject and object somewhat contradicts any approach "which applies scientific method to human affairs conceived as belonging to a natural order open to objective inquiry," as Martin Hollis (1994: 49) characterizes positivism in the social sciences. Indeed, an intersubjective ontology implies that the study of cultural and social phenomena cannot be purely "objective," as it necessarily rests on *meanings* of reality. These meanings are dependent on "value ideas" through which we observe the social world in specific times and places (Weber 1922). Thus, the human mind, or, better, *collective human minds*, plays a crucial role in deciding what counts as scientific knowledge (Quine 1963: 42). To put it differently, as much as communication is a social process of making sense of the world, so is knowledge. Certainly, this affirmation is particularly tricky for the social sciences, as they are part of their own field of inquiry. Indeed, the social sciences are "internal with respect to their subject matter in a way in which the natural sciences are not" (Bhaskar 1979: 59).

Thus, seeking to attain absolute "truth"—Truth with a capital T—must be rejected as a certainly desirable, but unrealistic, goal. This does not mean that the whole scientific enterprise is to be dismissed altogether. But the approach toward science necessitates a greater modesty and pragmatism. In this vein, it is possible to call observations or theories "true"—with a lowercase t—by taking previous experiences, commonly accepted theories, the cultural context, and language into account, as they provide the background conditions of intelligibility. Thus, things are true "*just in so far as they help us to get into satisfactory relation with other parts of our experience*" (James 1995: 58, original italics). Within this approach to science, reason plays an important role, as it substantially decides about the validity of a given explanation (Adler 1997b: 329). Thus, the assessment of truth follows rigorous definitions and theoretical constructs.

These propositions have a number of additional implications. First, refuting the possibility of objective observation implies that the social world, and human behavior within it, must be understood "from within" (Hollis 1994: 151). Thus, interpretative strategies are the adequate tool for seeking to explain the meaning of behavior. Max Weber's concept of *verstehen* (understanding) very much depicts this approach to the social sciences (Weber 1922: 503–512). Second, "understanding from within" implies a departure from generalizing,

or deductive, explanations that are widely associated with positivist science. Indeed, law-like generalizations will not help us to understand the meaning of actions within a specific cultural context. Moreover, the registration of causal laws presupposes a closed system, but in the social sciences, the objects of scientific inquiry can only manifest themselves in *open systems* without control conditions. Hence, while theories in the social sciences cannot be predictive, but exclusively explanatory, only *particularizing* strategies can explain the social world (Bhaskar 1979: 27 ff.; Hollis and Smith 1992: 50 ff.). The aim of these strategies is not to show that a specific situation "A" occurred due to circumstance "B," because all "B" cause "A," but rather to explain why a specific outcome is *so and not otherwise* (Weber 1972: 11–12). Finally, in the social sciences, *reasons for action*—which may result from utilitarian considerations, social norms, or identities—are accepted as *causes*. Indeed, the aim is to explain what people think they are doing and what their actions mean in a specific sociocultural context (Weber 1922: 503).

To sum up, the approach to truth and knowledge adopted here is based on the philosophical school of pragmatism (Goodman 1995) and critical realism (Bhaskar 1975, 1979; Archer et al. 1998).⁷ It asserts that scientific knowledge in the social sciences consists of temporarily valid and partial descriptions of "reality." Since social science is preoccupied with intersubjective meanings and social relations within open systems, theories can only be nonpredictive and explanatory, while they are "*necessarily incomplete*" (Bhaskar 1979: 62, original italics). True statements about the social world are based on logically and empirically plausible interpretations of why specific outcomes occurred the way they did and not otherwise—or alternatively, why specific outcomes did *not* occur although they were the most utility-rational, and thus logically expected. After this excursion into metaphysics and the review of IR literature in the previous section, we now outline the theoretical framework of this book.

A Liberal-Constructivist Approach

For studying the suggested link between contested state identities and regional security we propose a constructivist-oriented framework of analysis, which however incorporates one premise of liberal IR theory. This theoretical approach has a number of theoretical and methodological implications, as discussed in the following sections. The outline of our theoretical framework ends with a brief definition of the key concept of state identity.

A Constructivist Framework . . .

Considering its particular set of ontological and epistemological premises, a constructivist theoretical framework is almost imperative for the study of contested state identities and their impact on regional security. Indeed, since state identities are undoubtedly based on inter-subjective understandings, assuming a neat distinction between subject and object is pointless. The study of political identities also notably differs from assessing the international distribution of power. While the latter permits a positivist epistemology—weapons and resources can “objectively” be counted or measured—the study of identities necessitates a post-positivist approach.

Certainly, studying different case studies, as in this research, permits to single out specific factors that are crucial in all cases. Yet in view of our argument, the type of explanation cannot consist of generalizing strategies and deductive models that characterize classical positivism. This book adopts a particularizing strategy instead. Yet, seeking to understand “from within” also implies that we must refrain from any judgment on whether a specific identity concept is “rational” in the sense of expected benefits, or whether this or that interpretation of the EMP is “real.” Rather, the aim is to explore “what the actor thinks he or she is doing” in his or her social context. This also implies the attempt to understand the core values, which, according to the actor, are indispensable for the definition of his or her collective. It goes without saying that this exercise becomes meaningless by stipulating that actors are “rational” in purely utilitarian terms.

In addition, the extensive work on security communities (Adler 1997a; Adler and Barnett 1998) within constructivist scholarship provides the appropriate theoretical tools for understanding why the formation of security regions necessitates the emergence of shared regional identity themes. Thus, a constructivist framework also permits to consider the EMP’s region-building efforts as potential *manipulations* of the identity of the participating states.

To sum up, a constructivist approach permits to treat contested state identities as the independent variable, and a state’s ability to engage in Euro-Mediterranean regional security as the dependent variable, while it also accounts for *change*. Similarly, foreign-policy interests are not considered as given and unchangeable, and actors are not conceived as purely utility-rational, but rather as responding to social norms and identities. Finally, in accordance with a constructivist framework, this book does not present general true statements about the world, but rather an empirically informed interpretation of a specific

outcome, that is, the meager achievements in Euro-Mediterranean regional security, which is dependent on time and place.

. . . and the Liberal Premise

As briefly noted above, a constructivist approach to the study of contested state identities is nevertheless problematic. Although most constructivist scholars intend to problematize social identities, most empirical studies conducted in this spirit tend to treat state identity as a *unitary* concept. And while single case studies have focused on the *transformation* of state identity and its effect on foreign policy (Berger 1996), the impact of highly *contested* state identities on foreign policy has so far been overlooked.

Our exploration of contested state identities and their impact on regional security, however, must start by considering domestic preferences. Therefore, it presumes a bottom-up approach. But what are the methodological implications for such a move? To begin with, a broadening of the unitary concept of state identity as employed in most constructivist literature is required. If we assume that domestic divisions on the preferred political design of the state may affect foreign policy, the “commitment to states as units of analysis, and to the importance of systemic or ‘third image’ theorizing” (Wendt 1995: 72) must be modified. While treating the domestic level as *analytically prior*, the constructivist framework of analysis will thus borrow one of the basic assumptions of liberal theory, that is, the attention given to domestic politics and preferences.⁸ Thus, our theoretical approach may well be termed *liberal-constructivist*.

Second, adopting a liberal-constructivist approach to the study of state identities and regional security has implications for the level of analysis. In practical terms, it becomes necessary to repeatedly shift from the state level to the domestic level of analysis and back. For instance, exploring a state’s foreign-policy identity involves the state level. Yet the consideration of domestic preferences as far as state identity, relations to other states, and regional order are concerned must be carried out at the domestic level. And assessing the strategy of governments toward the EMP once more requires a shift to the state level. However, only a combination of the findings obtained at both levels of analysis permits to assess whether and how domestic conflicts over state identity impact on a government’s policy toward regional security on a Euro-Mediterranean basis. Thus, while repeatedly shifting from one level of analysis to the other, we propose a reintegration of both levels for explaining outcome, thus broadly following the

conceptualization of Kowert and Legro (1996: 487–488). In this context, it is worth reminding that the choice of one level of analysis is a purely theoretical exercise the aim of which is to “slice,” and thus simplify, a complex reality. We now provide a brief definition of the abstract concept of state identity, which has admittedly been treated as self-evident so far.

State Identity: A Definition

Identity is an abstract notion that is difficult to employ. This is reflected in the over-abundant number of viable definitions in the literature, which are partly conflicting. Similarly, in spite of some attempts to conceptualize *state identity* (Wendt 1999; Kowert and Legro 1996), there are no concise definitions of this concept in the IR literature.

In the present book, the term *identity* will exclusively refer to *social* (or *collective*) *identities*, defined as regulative accounts of actors themselves and of their relationships to others.⁹ Since identities are formed, maintained, or modified over time through relations with significant others, identities are a profoundly social phenomenon (Berger and Luckmann 1966: 173 ff.). As their most basic function, social identities set boundaries between “we” and “other.” For this reason, they are necessarily based on symbols, myths, and cultural and historical narratives, which give them a meaning, provide internal cohesion, and succeed in mobilizing the solidarity of the majority of the collective. Social identities are not a priori given, but rather a product of social construction, a “cultural artefact of a particular kind” (Anderson 1991: 4).

The term *state identity* refers to the state as a collective. It entails both the construction of statehood and nationhood and refers to the political self-image that a state adopts in the international arena—such as “democratic,” “regional leader,” or “superpower.” This image is shaped by the political, legal, and economic system, but also by national, religious, geographical, and historical narratives. Powerful domestic groups may thus shape, and manipulate, the identity of a state. Moreover, state identities are influenced by relations to other states as well as by historic events and (sometimes changing) norms of the international environment. Since states relate to other international actors through their self-image (Bush and Keyman 1997: 318–319), state identities influence the definition of foreign-policy interests.

There is, however, much more to say on the concept of state identity, its features and the role it plays in both domestic and international politics. The exploration of these questions necessitates a conceptualization

of the dynamics of social identities in general, and the subsequent application of these findings to the concept of state identity.

State Identity, Its Functions, and Its Domestic Contestation

What are the political functions of state identities? Under which conditions may state identities become the subject of domestic struggles? And how does it impact on foreign policy in general and regional security schemes in particular? We start this exploration by considering a number of important insights on collective identities of the disciplines of social psychology and inter-group sociology.

Collective Identities and Social Interaction

An individual’s quest for social identity corresponds to a basic psychological *need*. Since the mind exerts a pressure to classify perceptions, shared identifications reduce uncertainty, give a sense of “belonging,” and help to structure and simplify a complex social world. However, processes of identification are not necessarily irreversible. Although individuals are born into a specific cultural and social background, there still is a relatively wide margin to choose between identities, and consciously change parts of it (Tamir 1999).

The key ingredient of identities is the reference to an “other.” In fact, the tracing of boundaries between “self” and “other” is an *essential* and continuous element of identity formation (Durkheim 1964: 115–122). Within this process, several feedback mechanisms between “self” and “other” take place. Although some sort of personal identity is prior to interaction, people tend to internalize the attitude of the “other” toward the “self.” This process has been termed “reflective appraisal,” since “actors come to see themselves as a reflection of how they think Others see or ‘appraise’ them” (Wendt 1999: 327). Not every “other,” however, will have the same effect on identity formation. The literature refers here to a “significant other,” defined as those who are able to trigger processes of identity formation and reshaping. Wendt (1999: 331–332) suggests that power and dependency relations determine the significance of “the other.” But in fact, any other who potentially threatens the positive identification of the “self” may count as a “significant other.”

Identification processes do not follow black-and-white patterns. They are much more ambiguous than that. Anne Norton (1988: 45)

argues that in addition to the "self" and "other," there is a third category, which she calls "simultaneously other and like." Moreover, identification processes require language, which "articulates systems of sociopolitical order and serves as the instrument for placing individuals within those systems" (Norton 1988: 46). In this vein, language is the medium for defining, reassessing, and potentially changing, the key categories of social identities. Any social identity, ranging from identification with the own family, neighborhood, city, or high school, up to a specific sexual, religious, ethnic, or national identity is based on these psychological needs and patterns.

Although individual behavior somewhat differs from group behavior (Hogg and Abrams 1988), the key mechanisms of individual identification processes are similar to those of *collective* identity formation. Interestingly, it has been demonstrated that social interaction almost automatically forges patterns of collective identifications among complete strangers (Sherif 1966). Moreover, the arbitrary division of individuals into two distinct groups is sufficient to generate inter-group discrimination and competition (Hogg and Abrams 1988; Tajfel 1982). Emile Durkheim (1964) observed that social cohesion within a group first necessitates the establishment of a boundary vis-à-vis other groups. Thus, delineating the "out-group" is not the *result* of social integration within the "in-group," but rather its necessary *precondition*.

In-group and out-group perceptions tend to be biased. This bias entails the conviction that the others are different from the own collective, while there is a deeply grounded belief to be "better than them." Thus, members of social groups create and maintain a positively defined difference from other groups, and together they will "preserve, defend and enhance their common identity" (Bloom 1990: 26). In this context, inter-group conflicts play an important role, as they tend to increase the solidarity within a group. However, any given identity is constituted in relation to a specific situation or subject (Linklater 1990). Thus, groups that compete with each other in a specific situation may be part of a common collective in other circumstances. For instance, supporters of two local soccer teams may be adversaries while their respective teams play against each other. Yet the fans of both teams will share a "we-feeling" when their *national* team plays against the team of another state. Collective identities, thus, are not only multiple, but also relational.

Thus, social interaction is the source of collective identities, and it is crucial in all inter-group processes (Berger and Luckmann 1966). Indeed, the integrating motives of any collective identity are the result

of intersubjective meanings, which emerge and are maintained through communication and language (Norton 1988). In this context, Muzafer Sherif (1966) noted that collective identities are generally based on a common enemy, a common problem, common interests, or common values. But as much as these motives may "objectively" exist, they may also be distorted, or even freely invented (Anderson 1991). Thus, social communication also opens the way for the (intentional or unintentional) manipulation of the identity discourse by influential members of the collective (Bloom 1990; Norton 1988).

Moreover, communication is essential for the process of reflective appraisal between different collectives referred to above. But social interaction between hostile collectives does not necessarily lead to increased animosity. In fact, social learning (Adler 1991) may produce some sort of rapprochement, and even the emergence of shared values, provided that the patterns of inter-group relations change first. As Sherif (1966: 25) noted, it "is exceedingly difficult to change attitudes when inter-group relationships remain the same." Changed patterns of inter-group relations may thus give rise to altered perceptions, but this will only succeed if the other side takes up the new role and changes its attitude accordingly (Wendt 1999: 328). It should be stressed here that the image of a significant out-group is an intrinsic part of the conception of the in-group. For this reason, changed attitudes and behavior toward a former "enemy" necessarily demand a *redefinition of the identity of the own collective*. Applying these observations to states helps us to shed light on the political functions of state identity and its underlying mechanisms.

State Identities Between "Nations" and International Politics

State identities provide unifying motives to the citizens of specific states, while they also lend a state a distinct international role. Hence, state identity constitutes the link between national identity and international politics. State identities are undoubtedly a *political phenomenon*. In this context, Peter Katzenstein (1996a: 6) noted that the "process of constructing nation- and statehood typically is explicitly political and pits conflicting actors against each other."

Collective identities referring to states were born in Europe with the emergence of the modern nation-state, against the backdrop of the Enlightenment and the novel idea of national self-determination. The respective "nations," however, did not exist until then; they needed to be created.¹⁰ Thus, in many cases, such as France, states forged the

respective "nations" (Anderson 1991; Llobera 1993). Conflicts and wars with other political entities often reinforced the rise of national identities, which, in the European context, were typically based on an alleged cultural homogeneity and a stipulated congruity between nation and territory. In the developing world, national identities emerged much later, usually in the context of decolonization. Here, state identity was often propped upon existing patterns of social identifications, such as those based on ethnicity, religion, or kinship. But as in Europe, national identities often emerged in the context of conflicts with other states—most prominently the former colonial power.

Thus, national identities were useful for triggering mass mobilization and increasing social cohesion (Bloom 1990: 83). But there is more to this. In fact, national identities became the most important criterion for legitimate government. In Europe, for instance, a territorially defined national identity provided legitimacy to *secular* states after the dismissal of religiously defined state sovereignty (Ruggie 1993). And until the present, state authority and national sovereignty depend on the positive identification of citizens with the state (Norton 1988: 47; Haas 1993). Put differently, the state must be perceived "as being involved in a common endeavor in relation to an external threat; or [as acting] beneficently towards its citizens" (Bloom 1990: 75). This legitimizing function is double-fold, as it refers both to the population and the international environment. Indeed, the international recognition of a state very much depends on the assumption that the state represents "the nation." Thus, without identity, there can hardly be state authority, political legitimacy, or national sovereignty, and without them, no state would be able to survive.

The identification process of a population with the state follows the patterns of positive in-group identification and out-group discrimination described above (Goldgeier 1997: 143). Hence, state identities must employ powerful motives, which, however, are often the result of rather arbitrary choices. Identity themes will also be rather ambiguous, as they potentially need to provide social cohesion to an often heterogeneous population. Moreover, as much as social communication is crucial for maintaining the integrating force of state identity, it also permits manipulations by the political elites. However, at any given time, the options for identity manipulation are limited by the stipulated boundaries of acceptable behavior (Norton 1988: 48). In this context, Sherif (1966: 87) notes that "in order to be a 'leader' [of a group] . . . an individual must be responsible to pursue the goals of his group within the prevailing bounds for acceptable means. If he

transgresses these limits, someone—sooner or later—will expose him as a traitor."

How are these issues related to foreign policy? In fact, the adoption of a specific role in relation to other states is central to international relations. Thus, Wendt (1999: 21) suggests that the "daily life of international politics is an on-going process of states taking identities in relation to Others, casting them into corresponding counter-identities, and playing out the result." More pointedly, David Campbell (1992) explains U.S. foreign policy exclusively in terms of identity politics. Although this perspective may be too narrow, foreign policy corresponds to social interaction between states as collectives. Thus, foreign policy is the medium through which the boundaries to other states are delineated. In this vein, foreign policy will not only reflect a stipulated state identity, but potentially contribute to the strengthening of identity, as a number of authors have argued (Barnett 1996; Berger 1996; Kienle 1995; Dagi 1993). At the same time, state identity makes some foreign-policy actions more legitimate and intelligible than others (Barnett 1999: 10)—both vis-à-vis the population and the international community.

In this context, issues of national security are particularly important. Arnold Wolfers's definition of security stresses that "[s]ecurity, in any objective sense, measures the absence of threats to acquired values, in a subjective sense, the absence of fear that such values will be attacked" (Wolfers 1962: 150). Hence, any reference to a potential threat to national security is an extremely powerful theme. At the same time, presenting someone or something as an existential threat to national security probably provides the strongest legitimization of foreign-policy action—both internally and externally. Indeed, the "securitization" of an issue means to "transfer [it] to the agenda of panic politics" (Buzan et al. 1998: 34). This move also justifies the violation of political and administrative rules and procedures that otherwise have to be respected.

Thus, although identity perceptions are undoubtedly "real," the construction of state identity is *instrumental* and has precise political functions. As figure 2.1 illustrates, these functions can be summarized as follows: First, state identity increases internal cohesion through the delineation of cognitive boundaries to other states. Second, it legitimizes state authority internally, and sovereignty externally. Third, it provides legitimacy to foreign-policy action, both domestically and internationally. Thus, patterns of enmity or amity on the international stage will reflect, and be constructed in relation to, the political identity of the state and its citizens. The next section conceptualizes the factors

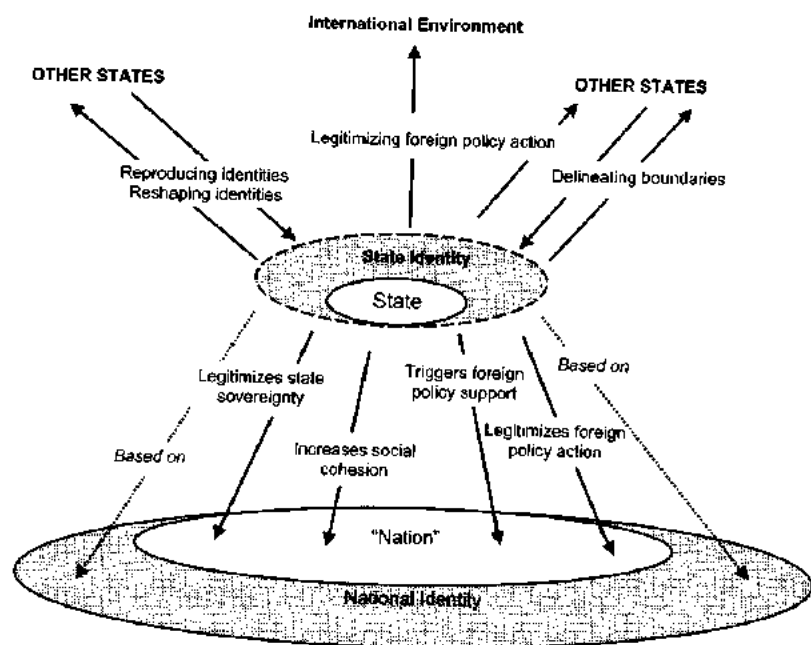


Figure 2.1 Functions of state identity.

that may trigger, or alternatively alleviate, domestic conflicts over state identity, and explores the conditions that determine the impact of contested state identities on foreign policy.

Contested State Identities: Intervening Variables

Domestic groups may have quite different preferences regarding the core values of their state. Since the international environment is not a stable parameter either, state identities may continuously be exposed to internal struggle, transformation, and change. Moreover, as state identities must be vague enough to comprise various sub-identities, different interpretations of state identity prevailing in any given society may be inherently contradicting. Nevertheless, conflicting interpretations of state identity may stand side by side as long as there is *no need to choose* between them. Thus, domestic conflicts over state identity are likely to arise whenever different interpretations of state identity are no longer compatible because they call for different action, that is, policy. Thus, we may understand domestic struggle over state identity as a

competition between domestic groups in trying to impose their respective interpretation in view of specific policy choices.

However, there are several factors and developments that may trigger, or exacerbate, domestic identity conflicts. At the domestic level, these include for instance demographic change, altered patterns of political representation, a change of territorial borders, and altered socio-economic patterns (Barnett 1999: 10). In addition, a change of leadership may prompt the deepening of domestic fault-lines, as a new leader may strengthen the political representation of one particular group (Gross-Stein 1999). Similarly, an extreme attempt to manipulate state identity by a political leader may be a triggering factor, since, as noted above, the manipulation of state identity may only be gradual and must respect certain limits. Other "triggering" factors may occur at the international level. Thus, any new situation that is no longer compatible with the self-image of a state, and that erodes the defining themes of the latter, may prompt domestic conflicts over state identity. These situations may include the dismissal of a former "enemy" (or emerging patterns of cooperation with the latter), or increasing ideological differences with a former "friend." Similarly, the transnational diffusion of certain norms could generate such a situation (Finnemore 1996). In this context, the virulence of domestic conflicts will somewhat depend on the degree of unexpectedness and extent of international change, along with the degree of disjuncture between state identity and the new environment.

The "triggering" factors and developments will often cut across domestic and international politics, or have repercussions at both levels. However, comparable developments may affect states in a different way. In one state, for instance, they may provoke fervent domestic conflicts, while they may prompt a rather *peaceful transformation* of identity in another state.¹¹ Certainly, identity conflicts may eventually lead to a transformation of state identity, as much as any crisis is a potentially powerful source of change. Thus, domestic conflicts over state identity may also be interpreted as the attempt to preserve a given state identity in the face of new challenges, as cultures and identities always tend to self-preservation.

But which factors determine whether, under comparable "negative" conditions, domestic identity conflicts will be more or less fervent? We may think of a number of such indicators. First, while the degree of religious or ethnic heterogeneity within a given state may not necessarily be significant, the compatibility of different identity preferences will be more relevant. However, this is also dependent on the distribution

of the mutually exclusive preferences. Indeed, if the identity preference of a small minority is incompatible with that of the majority, the outcome will be relatively insignificant. But if a society is divided into two or three almost equal groups that maintain incompatible preferences, the struggle will be more fervent. Second, domestic identity conflicts will be more salient in the absence of a "talented" political leadership that succeeds in aptly manipulating the identity discourse. To put it more sarcastically, the significance of domestic conflicts will depend on the ability of political leaders to "invent" new common problems, interests, values, or threats. Alternatively, emphasizing positively defined difference vis-à-vis other states may be helpful. Third, the promotion of overarching identity themes, for example at the regional level, may be a powerful tool for reducing domestic identity tensions, as Brigid Laffan (1996) has argued in the context of the EU. Fourth, any real situation of threat (such as that caused by military tensions, attacks, or ecological disasters) may exert a unifying pressure on society. Finally, while a common enemy may only be temporarily "effective" to overcome internal tensions, institutionalized cooperation toward what has been termed "super-ordinate" common goals is one of the most efficient ways of reducing inter-group conflict (Sherif 1966; Hogg and Abrams 1988). The variables that may trigger, or conversely alleviate, domestic identity conflicts will be relatively insignificant if considered separately. Only the assessment of the *interplay* of the various factors in a specific time and place will shed light on the question of why and when identity conflicts are more or less pronounced. In other words, the various factors discussed so far may be mutually reinforcing, although they may neutralize each other in other cases.

Contested Identities, Foreign Policy, and Regional Security

Our final step consists in conceptualizing the impact of contested state identities on regional security. When and under which conditions do domestic conflicts over state identity affect a state's foreign policy in general, and its policy toward regional security schemes in particular?

To begin with, not every domestic fault-line in terms of identity will be equally relevant for the realm of foreign policy, and not every domestic identity divide will bear the same importance for all foreign-policy areas. For this reason, it is first necessary to assess whether domestic identity divides touch upon the question of how to relate to specific other states or issue areas. Indeed, some foreign-policy actions

may bring the incompatibility of domestic identity preferences to the fore, while others may not. Thus, specific foreign-policy decisions may entail a need to *choose* between different preferences, which could previously stand side by side. Conversely, if the different domestic preferences show a fair degree of compatibility even under new international circumstances (and in light of specific foreign-policy decisions), a rather peaceful transformation of state identity is possible.

If a specific foreign-policy issue touches upon a domestic fault-line in terms of state identity, we may expect an inconsistent and contradictory foreign-policy discourse and behavior. However, this will also depend on the type of political system and state-society relations. Thus, in a democratic state, a given domestic polarization will be reflected at the legislative or the decision-making level. Thus, in democratic states, contested state identities will be not only be more *visible*, but also more *politically significant*. Indeed, a government may find it extremely difficult to implement a foreign-policy course that potentially contradicts the identity preference of important domestic groups. Conversely, domestically contested identities may have a weaker impact on foreign policy in authoritarian states. This also implies that domestic conflicts over state identity may be less visible in authoritarian regimes, although they may exist.

Confronted with domestic fragmentation, governments (or leaders) may adopt a stronger stance toward a former adversary, or promote integrating themes that underline the in-group/out-group bias. These efforts may also be supported by specific foreign-policy actions. In fact, "the opportunity is always present for a government to deliberately use foreign policy as a method of mobilizing the mass national public sentiment away from internal political dissension, and achieving political integration," as William Bloom (1990: 82) has put it. Alternatively, in the face of controversial foreign-policy decisions that touch upon domestic identity fault-lines, political leaders may adopt a strategy of inertia and postpone crucial decisions. This strategy may not be particularly wise, but, at least in the short term, it may alleviate domestic divisions. The different factors and developments that may trigger, or alternatively alleviate, the impact of contested identities on foreign policy are depicted in figure 2.2.

Finally, in view of domestic identity conflicts, attempts to engage in the creation of a security region may be a particularly difficult undertaking, particularly if it involves former (or present) adversaries. Indeed, in view of contested state identities, political leaders may be

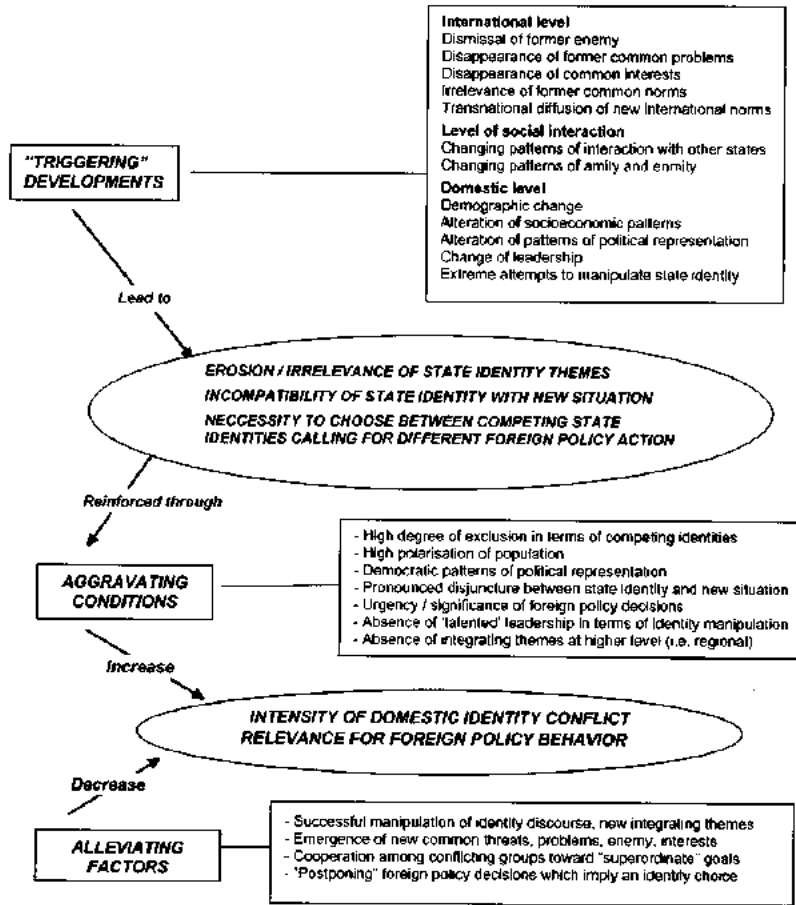


Figure 2.2 Interplay between triggering developments, aggravating conditions, and alleviating factors influencing the intensity of domestic conflicts over state identity and their relevance for foreign-policy behavior.

forced to promote "exclusive" identity themes and to emphasize the in-group/out-group bias. This potentially contradicts the promotion of values and identity themes that a state allegedly shares with the other regional neighbors—the necessary ingredient of regional security schemes. The in-group/out-group bias may thus undermine efforts to search for a common ground with the neighbors in the region. For this reason, regional initiatives are likely to fail until the internal conflicts over state identity have not been soothed.

Summary

The review of IR theory has shown that traditional approaches cannot provide the theoretical tools for studying the subject under discussion, as they consider foreign-policy interests as given. At the same time, traditional IR approaches tend not to pay attention to the identity of states, let alone the relations between identities and interests. Thus, region-building as an alternative approach to regional security and its identity implications can hardly be studied with a traditional IR approach. Constructivist approaches, on the other hand, allow the study of these phenomena and their interrelation, as they start from different meta-theoretical premises. While arguing in favor of the social character of international relations, these approaches depart from the strictly positivist foundations of classical IR theory, including the clear distinction between subject and object, the aim of reaching statements of absolute and timeless truth, and the generalizing model of explanation and prediction.

However, in order to explore the impact of domestic identity conflicts on a state's ability to engage in Euro-Mediterranean region-building, the constructivist-oriented framework is expanded to include one of the premises of liberal IR theory, namely the importance given to domestic factors. In methodological terms, this proposition is relevant for the level-of-analysis problem. This book proposes to consider both the domestic and the state level, and to subsequently integrate the findings obtained at both levels.

Based on the findings of sociology and social psychology, we have applied the key functions and dynamics of collective identities to states. State identity has been defined as the self-image that a state adopts on the international stage—which is based on a portrayed national identity. Thus, taking the state as the collective of its citizens as a reference point, state identities increase societal cohesion through the formation of boundaries to other states, while they legitimize foreign-policy action, state authority, and the existence of states (representing distinctive "nations") in the international arena. In a similar vein, it is possible to transfer the conditions under which collective identities are formed, strengthened, and modified to the realm of state identity. Social interaction and communication among groups thus correspond to foreign policy and relations among states.

Finally, the discussion of the conditions under which a state's identity may become contested at the domestic level and influence foreign-policy making has shown that different preconditions and factors may be

relevant. It is assumed that their interplay will determine outcome in practice. Indeed, the degree of societal polarization, the type of state–society relations and political representation may greatly vary from state to state, and the same can be said about international developments that may trigger, or alleviate, domestic identity conflicts. In accordance with the epistemological premises of this book, we thus argue in favor of adopting a particularizing strategy for explaining causes and outcome in international relations.

Historical Background and Regional Perspective

This chapter puts the Euro-Mediterranean Partnership in a historical context while providing a regional perspective on the suggested link between contested state identities and Euro-Mediterranean regional security. Thus, we first discuss previous policy initiatives addressing Mediterranean security and subsequently provide an overview of Euro-Mediterranean relations since the early 1990s. In this context, the response of major states in the southern Mediterranean to the EU's region-building logic since the launching of the EMP is explored. Finally, this chapter gives an overview of domestic developments in the Mediterranean/Middle East by keeping possible foreign-policy implications in mind.

Background of the EMP

The preoccupation of the “West” with Mediterranean security has quite a long history. At the same time, the EMP was the continuation of the EC/EU's Mediterranean policy of the previous decades, as discussed in the following sections. In this context, it should be noted that the EU, and before that the EC, is far from being a unitary actor in world politics—although it maintains a foreign policy (Regelsberger et al. 1997; Tonra and Christiansen 2004; Carlsnaes et al. 2004). In the framework of this book, however, the complex institutional mechanisms of EU foreign-policy making, and the difficulties related to it, will not be considered.