Chapter 2

The Concept of the Political: Radical Identity

Love your enemies.[1]

It will be remembered from chapter one that the influence of liberal thought on traditional IR theory is mirrored in the analyses of collective identity that realism and liberal constructivism have developed. I argued in the previous chapter that these approaches only show a partial picture of the process of collective identity formation because the conceptions of politics that realism and liberal constructivism employ are guided by a narrow account of state-centric forms of politics. In this chapter I develop a view of identity and difference through an engagement with Carl Schmitt's seminal study on *The Concept of the Political*. This work, I will argue, offers a relevant theoretical support to understand the activity of politics as the realm to establish and protect collective identities. This is particularly so when examining some of Schmitt's ideas from a postmodern perspective which, among other things, employs an alternative methodology grounded on 'discourse analysis' to understand the formation of collective identities. In line with the suggestion made in chapter one I consider postmodernism give us a more prominent picture of political phenomena such as the construction of collective identity and that classical international relations theory falls short in this task for two reasons. First, many of its proponents rely on a limited political imagination which sees little farther than state-centric forms of politics. Second, traditional international relations theory very often tends to compromise its theoretical assumptions with a western liberal culture.

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[1] Matt. 5:44; Luke 6:27.

My main objective in this chapter is to make a case for showing that Schmitt's concept of 'the political' appears to throw fruitful theoretical insights upon the construction of collective identity as a result of antagonistic relations. My contention is that Schmitt's work shows a more prominent image of the construction of identity as a political phenomenon when engaged in a poststructuralist analysis of 'antagonism' than it does in the way it has been used under the auspices of traditional international relations theory and Neo-conservative propaganda as an apologist of war.

This chapter lays the groundwork for a later analysis of the construction of collective identity viewed as the result of the *antithesis* of the friend-enemy which I term 'radical identity'. I distinguish self/other relationships according to the degree in which such relations of othering may turn into friend-enemy relations. The term 'conflict' therefore refers to the ontological relationship between identity and difference, acknowledging that the intensity of conflict can vary.

Schmitt's central argument is grounded on the belief that human relations become organized via the distinction of friends and enemies. Schmitt conceptualizes the political "within the totality of human thought and action"[2] to highlight that the element lying at the core of politics, in his antithesis of the friend and enemy, is precisely action. Schmitt's most important contribution to political theory has probably been his ground-breaking and often stinging critique of liberal politics. In brief, he argues that liberalism promotes a political system which eliminates the possibility of antagonisms in society, replacing it with a moral discourse on the possibility of attaining a common good.

This chapter discusses Carl Schmitt's peculiar understanding of 'the political' as the moment in which human groupings construct collective forms of identification in relation to 'otherness-as-enmity.' First, I introduce briefly Schmitt's main ideas on 'the

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[2] Carl Schmitt, *The Concept of the Political* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1996).

political' and the friend/enemy distinction. Second, I explore these notions and point out some of the advantages over traditional IR theory that a non-state-centric version of 'the political' can offer. This section also considers the limitations of Schmitt's thought in this conceptual field. Third, I introduce the concept of 'antagonism' and show how, through a distinction I develop between difference, otherness and enmity, this can provide an important basis not offered by traditional IR theories for understanding collective identity formation. I continue the discussion on antagonism and contrast it with more traditional understandings of conflict. I proceed to examine Schmitt's perceptive understanding of sovereignty as 'the moment of antagonism' and show that the links between this and drawing the limits of community make it possible to argue that the relationship between sovereignty and identity is reciprocally interdependent. Finally I present an example of some recent misreadings of Schmitt which can be seen as showing the other side of the coin in the heated dispute over the usefulness of this somewhat maligned German thinker. However, I show that such misreadings have very frequently been biased and have been used for theoretical justifications which lack the conceptual depth that the work of Schmitt necessarily deserves.

1. Rescuing Schmitt's Concepts

Here I introduce three main concepts developed in the work of Carl Schmitt, 'politics and the political', 'the state' and 'sovereignty'. These will be used to hightlight several theoretical implications on the construction of identity and to elucidate how dominant understandings of such terms affect the way IR scholars theorize political phenomena. I employ a strategic reading of Schmitt through a poststructuralist lens for two reasons. First, it intends to rescue the conceptual thought of Schmitt from the

misuses to which it has been frequently subject when read from more traditional IR perspectives. Second, approaching Schmitt's concepts from a postmodern approach offers a powerful response to the contested notion of identity and its repercussions for liberal democratic theory. The distinction Schmitt makes between 'politics' as opposed to 'the political' produces important consequences for the conceptualisation of self/other relationships. My broadest suggestion is that the political thought of Schmitt discloses conceptual links between identity and difference, which provide a wider understanding of the centrality of confronting views in the making of collective identities. These identities, in my view, can be seen as being constituted to a large extent by the discourses that constantly reinforce a sense of collective belonging through the practices of political action they opt to employ.

Schmitt emphasises antagonism through the friend-enemy distinction as an ineradicable core characteristic of human relations. This argument is often mistaken by many liberals[3] to be a reiteration of Hobbes' assumption that man is evil by nature. This error has led several commentators[4] to understand both Schmitt's work and the concepts of antagonism and conflict found within it far too simplistically. In consequence, the benefits of his work for scholars of international relations almost always go unnoticed. Indeed, Schmitt's work has never been used in the field of international relations as a powerful source to theorise collective identity construction. This, in my view, is perhaps not taking advantage of the scope of his ideas. A thorough and sensitive reading of Schmitt shows that the condition for achieving collective identity, if it can at all be achieved, is based on the premise that relations of antagonism need to be articulated

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[3] See particularly the interesting critique of Carl Schmitt by Heinrich Meier, *Carl Schmit and Leo Strauss: The Hidden Dialogue* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1995), and Pauline Johnson, "Carl Schmitt, Jürgen Habermas and the Crisis of Politics," *The European Legacy* 3, no.6 (1998): 15-32.

[4] See Jan-Werner Müller, *A Dangerous Mind: Carl Schmitt in Post-War European Thought* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2003), 7. Also see Arash Abizadeh, "Does Collective Identity Presuppose an Other? On the Alleged Incoherence of Global Solidarity," *The American Political Science Review* 99, no. 1 (2005): 45-60.

through specific forms of political action that do establish difference and instead of eradicate it. The production of identity and difference in turn conveys the existence of conflict as something contingent, which Schmitt brings out as an omnipresent possibility (*reale Möglichkeit*). For the purposes of this thesis, however, one of my objectives is to show that the relevance of Schmitt's conception of the political can put forward an alternative theoretical approach to bring antagonistic concepts in confrontation through adequate forms of political action.

I have chosen to develop a reading of Schmitt through a postmodern lens to respond adequately to the conceptual challenges posed by the concept of identity in IR theory. My main argument in this chapter indicates that a deeper analysis of the conceptual linkages between two binary pairs: postmodernism's identity/difference and Schmitt's friend/enemy distinction uncovers a common ground between the two approaches to understand 'the political'. This common ground is a theoretical touchstone that if taken in serious consideration it could begin to pave the way for the development of more genuine democratic forms of identity than those notions of identity commonly associated with associational theory. Conflict, in its ontological manifestation is this similar ground, which if understood from both approaches can explicate the tension existing between these binary pairs. Then a more compelling explanation to use an alternative view to grasp the nature of the political is foreseeable. This tension is obscured by the liberal preference for neutralising politics and thus the antagonistic dimension of politics, and as a result the ontological dimension of conflict is often greatly overlooked by IR theorists and liberal thinkers.

Schmitt grants political meaning to every realm of human life that can be divided according to the category of the friend-enemy. While some of the elements in Schmitt's concept of the political appear far too radical at a first glimpse, the strength of

the his conceptual ideas lies in the scope that his category of the friend-enemy can embrace. Schmitt's theory of sovereignty and concept of the political do not need to be accepted in their most radical tones to embody the alternative conception of identity I present in this work. Nor is it my purpose to sustain that everything is politicisable only for virtue of the criterion of the friend-enemy. I also do not offer a postmodernist reading of Schmitt's work as a justification to separate the Schmitt political philosopher from the Schmitt legal theorist of the Nazi *Machtergreifun*. As I mentioned above, Schmitt's notion of the political exposes its usefulness in such a way that his understanding of identity/difference reveals that its *political* character can transcend all other types of collective sentiments of attachment. None of this should be taken to suggest that culture and other collective feelings of belonging should be underestimated or confined to the private sphere of life as in the case with liberalism. In contrast to liberal thought, the conception of otherness developed by Schmitt is not reduced to the private differences that cultural attachments entail. Schmitt presupposes a pre-cultural state that gives more weight to the capacity to decide what 'otherness' is. If any analysis of Schmitt's begins by misunderstanding the friend-enemy distinction, as a reiteration of the realist vision in which man is deemed as evil by nature, the actual meaning of the work of Schmitt is likely to be deferred. Expanding on this argument, Tracy Strong has added that,

> [t]here is here, however, a deeper claim, a claim that the political defines what it is to be a human being in the modern world and that those who would diminish the political diminish humanity. Schmitt lays this out as the "friend-enemy" distinction. What is important about this distinction is not so much the "who is on my side" quality, but the claim that only by means of this distinction does the question of our willingness to take responsibility for *our own* lives arise. "Each participant is in a position to judge whether the adversary intends to negate his opponent's way of life and therefore must be repulsed or fought *in order to preserve one's own form of existence.*" [5]

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[5] Carl Schmitt quoted by Tracy Strong, foreword to *The Concept of the Political,* xvi, Schmitt, *The Concept of the Political*, 27.

Schmitt conceptualised the 'political' with the fundamental antithesis of the friend and the enemy because he considered this binary opposition to be the core distinction to be found in any situation in which politics takes place. Ultimate distinctions can be traced, according to Schmitt, in all other fields of life.[6] For instance, aesthetics derives its force form the distinction between the beautiful and the ugly and likewise economics hinges on a distinction between profitable and unprofitable.[7] In particular, he separated politics from ethics as two different spheres of life, yet he acknowledged that both realms of human endeavour are interconnected, as he explicitly indicates,

> [i]n contrast to the *relatively independent* endeavours of human thought and action, particularly the moral, aesthetic, and economic, the political has its own criteria which express themselves in a characteristic way. The political must therefore rest on its own ultimate distinctions, to which all *action with a specifically political meaning* can be traced.[8]

Contrary to Machiavelli's separation of ethics and politics, Schmitt's claim finds its uniqueness in specifying that politics and ethics are not atomistically distinct and, therefore, to read it as such would be mistaken. By means of the friend-enemy distinction, Schmitt promotes and understanding of politics as action which becomes visible in the struggle to establish an us/them relationship. However, he insists on the political meaning that action, in the form of struggle, should retain in order to transcend the conflicting non-political antagonism. This means that the friend-enemy distinction needs to remain valid in order to establish difference. When they consider him at all, realist scholars have seen this theoretical move of Schmitt as a means to limit the scope

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[6] Friedrich G. W Hegel developed an analysis of the dialectic of human thought, that says that every category in the universe has an opposite, every thesis is counterposed by an antithesis, for he considered all things in the universe are constitutive parts seeking to find themselves in the whole. The thesis and the antithesis get blended in a synthesis which is a higher phase of reality in which the lower contradiction is overcome and transcended. See *Phenomenology of Spirit*. Trans. A. V. Miller. (Oxford: Oxford UP, 1977).

[7] Schmitt, *The Concept of the Political*, 26.

[8] Schmitt, *The Concept of the Political*, 26, [emphasis added].

of conflict in order to avoid a war of all against all.[9] In my view, this is however, rendering Schmitt's notion of politics as action as a procedure to justify war as a likelihood and not as a possibility. By contrast, Schmitt warned that should the friend-enemy distinction develop into war, this would bring the friend-enemy distinction to an end. This last observation has important repercussions for collective identity formation and the inextricable link to the notion of "otherness" in postmodern thought. I will come back to this point shortly.

Theoretically speaking, the concept of the political poses a challenge to both essentialist and liberal constructivist theories of identity in the discipline of IR. The 'political' is a concept that surpasses the often simplistic essentialist understanding of identities grounded on the categorical distinctions inherent in every group, such as religious affiliation, race, gender and so forth.[10] The instability of identity categories prohibits serious analyses on the subject matter from examining the evolution of a collective experience. This renders essentialist theorists incapable of dealing with difference, and thus overlooks the political aspect of identities. As I argued in chapter one, constructivists of the liberal camp such as Wendt and Ruggie, do not leave enough room in their theories for that possibility that difference and identity require each other in an ever-present possibility of conflict. Wendt's statement that "collective identity brings the relationship of self and other to its logical conclusion"[11] reveals his belief that identity may either incorporate difference into sameness or that friend-enemy groupings

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[9] See Eckard Bolsinger, *Carl Schmitt's and Lennin's Political Realism.* (Westport, CT: Greenwood Press, 2001).

[10] An example of this type of theorizing is found in R. Sooknanan, "The politics of Essentialism: Rethinking 'Black Community'," in *Rude*: *Contemporary Black Canadian Cultural Criticism*, ed. R. Walcott (Toronto: Insomniac Press, 2000), and H. Bhabha, "Introduction: Narrating the Nation," in *Nation and Narration*, ed. H. Bhabha (New York: Routledge, 1990).

[11] Alexander Wendt, So*cial Theory of International Politics* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1999), 227.

can be transcended. Both of which appear to be objectives of arch-liberal Rawls'

"overlapping consensus", for example.[12]

The concept of the Political decides the degree of separation which compels the

members of a human grouping to associate in a critical situation. Understanding

Schmitt's thinking in this way helps us build a strong theoretical base to understand

political identity as less of an associational character than Rawls would have it. By

aligning collectivities under the friend-enemy distinction, *categories are entirely*

transcended without transcending the different kinds of identities inherent in each

category. The concept of the political

> does not describe its own substance… The real friend-enemy grouping is existentially
> so strong and decisive that the non-political antithesis, at precisely the moment in
> which it becomes political pushes aside and subordinates its hitherto purely religious,
> purely economic, purely cultural criteria and motives to the conditions and conclusion
> of the political situation at hand.[13]

A superficial reading of Schmitt's words here might suggest that there are no

grounds for locating the specificity of the political outside the conditions which appear

to shape an antagonism. However, his elaboration of antagonism as a theoretical tool to

examine political conflict succeeds in that it overcomes the essentialism entailed by

reliance on categorical oppositions. Schmitt subsumes all other spheres of life into the

friend-enemy distinction in order to raise consciousness about the contexts in which all

other spheres of life become political.

The postmodern approaches to antagonism developed by Ernesto Laclau and

Chantal Mouffe are useful in disclosing the conceptual properties inherent –albeit if

latent– in the Schmittian concept of the political. Antagonism, in this view, is

approached in the discourse-theoretical conditions in which it develops. Laclau and

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[12] John Rawls, *Political Liberalism*, (New York: Columbia University Press, 1993), 12
[13] Schmitt, *The Concept of the Political*, 38.

Mouffe examine antagonism beyond the logical incompatibility of ideas and interests. Antagonism is seen as constitutive of the processes in which identification emerges. In this respect Laclau and Mouffe think of antagonism beyond the logical structures which situate two opposing views in conflict. For instance, Laclau and Mouffe see the opposition between empiricism and rationalism as a historically specific discursive construct.[14] What lies at the core of antagonism is the fact that social subjects[15] are understood to be relationally constituted by creating 'subject positions' which come to be conceived in terms of the discursive practices associated with the relationship between two or more subjects. Subject positions are seen, in this view, as incomplete in themselves without the articulation of the discourse formulated by other subject positions.

So what is exactly antagonism? Laclau and Mouffe, as well as Slavoj Zizek[16] agree on the notion of 'impossible full identification' as a step towards understanding the incomplete character of the subject and its dependence upon the consequential experience of not ever finding identity in the other.

While Laclau and Mouffe do not put it in quite his Hegelian way, the basic stages in the argument for antagonism are as follows. Premise 1: The subject seeks its own "objective" realization. So, for example, during the Cold War, the U.S. strove to the single 'objectively realized' superpower. Premise 2: the 'other' stands in the way of this objective realization (represented in this brief example by the Soviet Union). Premise 3: the subject desires to annihilate the other who stands in its way. Premise 4: But the subject requires the existence of the other for the existence of its own identity

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[14] Ernesto Laclau and Chantal Mouffe, *Hegemony and Social Strategy: Towards a Radical Democratic Politics* (London: Verso, 1985): 125.

[15] The term subject position seeks to capture the idea of what enables the identity of a given subject is not self-generated but its given through its subject position (i.e. its relations with other subject positions).

[16] Slavoj Zizek, appendix "Beyond Discourse Analysis," in *New Reflections on the Revolution of Our Time*, by Ernesto Laclau (London: Verso, 1990): 249-260.

hence 'antagonism' is the constant oscillating desire to crush the other, but repeatedly drawing back from doing so lest its own identity be eclipsed at the very moment of its "realization".

For Laclau and Mouffe this model related most strongly to the struggle between the proletariat and the bourgeoisie. However, the end of the Cold War also seems to bear out the use of 'antagonism' as a very explanatory concept. Once the 'Other' had disappeared, the identity of the U.S. has been placed in serious question, both internally and externally, and 'another other' subsequently had to be found to balance the inescapable tension identity entails. This point can be used to illuminate the scope that Schmitt's friend-enemy distinction can bring to understanding collective identity formation and rearticulation in a way not captured by traditional IR theory.

In this sense, Schmitt's friend-enemy distinction oscillates before and after the decision to nominate the enemy has been reached. So far, I have shown the compatibility of the Schmittian notion of antagonism with that offered by postmodernist thinkers like Chantal Mouffe and Ernesto Laclau. The strength of this approach should serve us as an indicator of how liberal thought has underestimated the ontological presence of conflict in its own debates. From this point it should be clear that the liberal avoidance of conflict brings as an initial consequence the privatization of differences. In this way, my argument that the strategy of liberal thought to universalize metanarratives shows that liberalism constantly locks itself in the conceptual impossibility of developing a non-universalistic concept of difference that recognizes that difference, be it in conceptual otherness or in collective forms of identification is particularistic.

2. Historical Context and Discourse-orientated interpretations of Schmitt

While it is important to recognize that Schmitt condemned those liberal practices of the Weimar state he happened to live in, it is even more important to acknowledge the usefulness we can find in this thought to correct present mistakes, or depoliticisations, as he would put it. His critique of depoliticisations and neutralisations in *The Concept of the Political*[17] against the narrowing down of the field of the political was the result of the practices of liberal democracy in the nineteenth century which gave rise to the total state of the interwar years. In the words of Paul Hirst, "[t]he [liberal] state provided a legally codified order within which social customs, economic competition, religious beliefs, and so on, could be pursued without becoming 'political.' 'Politics' as such ceases to be exclusively the matter of the state when 'state and society penetrate each other."[18] It is difficult not to agree with Hirst's interpretation when examining Schmitt's text**.** For Schmitt, "[t]he concept of the State presupposes the concept of the Political."[19] While the most salient features of the concept of the political have been spelled out in this chapter, it is important to investigate what is 'the concept of the state' that Schmitt has in mind. For him "the state is nothing else than the legal order itself,"[20] Schmitt recognizes the political dimension that involves the creation of the state, that is, the potentially antagonistic relationship between those who govern and those who are governed. Gopal Balakrishnan begins to query this statement by asking

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[17] See Carl Schmitt, "The Age of Neutralisations and Depoliticisations," *Telos* 96 (1998): 130-42.
[18] Paul Hirst, "Carl Schmitt's Decisionism," in *The Challenge of Carl Schmitt*, ed. Chantal Mouffe (London: Verso, 1999), 23.
[19] Carl Schmitt, *The Concept of the Political*, 1.
[20] Carl Schmitt, *Political Theology*, *Four Chapters on the Concept of Sovereignty*, trans. George Schwab (Cambridge, MA: MIT Press, 1985), 19.

what was meant by Schmitt with the word 'presuppose.'[21] To say presuppose however also indicates that 'the political' is a fundamental feature of human behaviour that includes the organization of a particular form of order yet is not limited to state-related endeavours. In consequence this presupposition logically implies that 'the political' can occur also within and beyond the spectre of the state.

The challenge Schmitt poses does not intend to eradicate the function of the state as an analytical unit for the study of the constructions of identities. However, this idea begins to suggest how state-based theories of identity might fail to account for, or to explain the emergence of, collective identities within the state and outside of it as consequences of the contested notion of politics. Since, as Yosef Lapid points out, "the spectre of the state is still very much with us,"[22] it is important to recognize that concepts such as sovereignty (in its liberal form) and the state still play a fundamental role in the construction of identities.

It is worthy of mention that Schmitt's critique of the liberal state corresponds exclusively to the liberal state of the Weimar Republic. He envisioned a substantial fissure in the body politic of societies embracing individualism, fearing that political unity would not be achieved once the demos was left "without the possibility of a determinate decision in the case of conflict between the series of these many bonds."[23] Although it can be objected that his critique is determined by the historical conditions that prevailed in the Weimar Republic, what it is intended here is to show that the substantial evolution of the liberal state between the interwar years and our current liberal democracies render Schmitt's critique of the liberal state useful only insofar as

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[21] Gopal Balakrishnan, *The Enemy: An intellectual Portrait of Carl Schmitt* (London: Verso, 2000): 21
[22] Yosef Lapid, "Culture's Ship: Returns and Departures in International Relations Theory," in *The Return of Culture and Identity in IR Theory*, eds. Y. Lapid and F. Kratochwill (Boulder: Lynne Rienner, 1996), 10.
[23] Carl Schmitt, "Ethic of State and Pluralistic State," in *The Challenge of Carl Schmitt*, ed. Chantal Mouffe (London: Verso, 1999), 196.

the concepts of the state and sovereignty are analyses as the result of discursive practices and open to change.

Schmitt's version of antagonistic politics should not be regarded as a deliberate effort to create hostility, however. Rather, he suggests that some degree of antagonistic conflict is an ineradicable feature of human behaviour that purports to preserve particular characteristics with which every human grouping acknowledges to be fully identified. Mouffe provides a promising argument on how antagonism can be situated at the core of the creation of identities. She argues that "in the domain of collective identifications, where what is in question is the creation of a 'we' by the delimitation of a 'them', the possibility always exists that this we/them relations will turn into a relation of friend/enemy type."[24] Accordingly, the discussion here concerns the extent to which relations of identity/difference can be translated into the friend/enemy arguing that such a transposition of terms is required in order to construct a radical identity. Radical identity needs to be seen more as a methodological tool and less as a necessary condition to understand collective identity formation. I hope the following argument demonstrates that this process does *not* conflate difference, otherness and enmity, as has been claimed by Arash Abizadeh.[25]

The notion of 'otherness' in the development of identities has long been present in the history of political thought. A prominent account of particularist identities is found in Hegel's argument.[26] The so-called 'recognition' argument states that "[s]elf-consciousness requires *recognition* by an *other* who is also a *self-consciousness* – another human being. And this recognition must be a mutual recognition."[27] Contrary to the particularist understanding inherent in Hegel's argument, Abizadeh claims that the

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[24] Mouffe, *The Return of the Political* (London: Verso, 1993), 2.
[25] Abizadeh, "Does Collective Identity Presuppose an Other?," *American Political Science Review*, 99.1 (2005): 45.
[26] It is the Master-Slave Dialectic in F.W.G. Hegel, *Phenomenology of Spirit*, 166.
[27] I have borrowed this phrase from Abidazeh, "Does Collective Identity Presuppose an Other?," 6.

delimitation of an us/them relationship understood at the conceptual level can be established in relation to a "we" referring to all human beings.[28] Such an interpretation of the term 'humanity' involves both a masked conceptual fallacy and an intrinsic liberal understanding of universal values. Schmitt famously charged that "whoever invokes humanity wants to cheat"[29] in allusion to the universalising concepts launched by the liberal machinery. While this form of universalism under the term humanity attempts to enhance the common aspects that could create a common membership to a world community in terms of humanity, it fails to account conceptually for particular cultures, ways of life and for the distinctiveness of political communities with different needs and self-perception of how they came into being. Moreover, Abizadeh contends that "[t]here is nothing incoherent about an identification that goes beyond humanity, to include, for example, sentient beings."[30] Thus, Abizadeh's claim that otherness need not be human fails to grasp the fundamental axiom of the Hegelian argument whereby one other self-consciousness is indeed required to mirror the self's desire for self-consciousness only through another human being. My suggestion here is therefore that this mutual identification applies for both individual and collective identity formation and that it does require an external other which must be human as well.

Alternatively, Schmitt offers a powerful critique of the liberal notion of humanism, his assertion that "[t]he concept of humanity excludes the concept of the enemy, because the enemy does not cease to be a human being,"[31] obliterates the possibility of relying on non-human objects to attain collective identity on a world scale. Schmitt tries to convey the relevance of an *external* other against which one human grouping can reflect its own particular identity. That is, the reflecting other

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[28] Abidazeh, "Does Collective Identity Presuppose an Other?," 46.
[29] Schmitt, *The Concept of the Political*, 54.
[30] Abizadeh, "Does Collective Identity Presuppose an Other?,"47.
[31] Schmitt, *The Concept of the Political*, 54.

ought to be one other which is not a constituent part of the collectivity because such constituent elements do not relate in an antagonistic fashion to one another so as to delineate the limits of collective identity. Only in reflection with an external other can 'radical' difference be established. In the words of Walker, "[c]laims about some common identity convey a great deal about our capacity to imagine particular identities, for a common identity is precisely what we do not have, at least in any politically meaningful sense."[32] It is not difficult to notice that Abizadeh falls into a conceptual pitfall by unnecessarily relating global solidarity, which for him requires a common global identity based on humanity, to the concept of 'the friend.'

In this context, the concept of the "enemy" appears to unfold gradually from both "difference" and "otherness", yet it is possible to come across literature which posits these concepts to be interwoven or even conflated, as is the case of Abizadeh.[33] They are nevertheless, distinct in their conceptual meaning. Yet it *is* possible to arrive at enmity, in the Schmittian understanding of it, when departing from difference and otherness. David Campbell, as a postmodern constructivist, concedes that "in so far as identity requires difference, the potential for the transformation of difference into otherness always exists."[34] Consequently, the possibility of otherness turning into enmity is also omnipresent in the 'political' and this possibility is contingent upon the struggle which makes human action so fundamental to the activity of politics.

Relationships of othering are a contingent outcome of difference, yet othering in itself cannot fully account for the construction of identities. Othering must be perceived as a threat to one's identity, in other words, that not only the very visibility of its *being* other will establish the group's identity, but also the possibility of the other to become

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[32] R. B. J. Walker, *Inside/Outside International Relations as Political Theory* (Cambridge & New York: Cambridge University Press, 1993), 161.
[33] Abizadeh, "Does Collective Identity Presuppose an Other?," 45.
[34] David Campbell, *Writing Security: United Status Foreign Policy and the Politics of Identity* (Manchester: Manchester University Press: 1992), 23.

an enemy. This fine distinction is both profound and crucial to Schmitt's thought. I interpret Connolly's statement that "[t]he threat is not posed merely by the *actions* the other might take to injure or defeat the true identity but by the very visibility of its mode of being other"[35] to be fairly consistent with Schmitt's portrayal of the enemy in his claim that "it is sufficient for his nature that he is, in a specially intense way, *existentially something different and alien*, so that in the extreme case, conflicts with him are always possible."[36] The conceptual differences between otherness and enmity will necessarily be reflected in the intensity of the conflict. The presence of antagonism is a necessary condition, therefore, to carry out the process of identification, which in postmodernist approaches is a process that never achieves a full identification so long as the enemy stops us from reaching our identity. However, should the enemy disappear it would be impossible to reflect our own form of identification. We would turn from subject to object, which makes otherness the condition of possibility and impossibility of identity, in Derridean terms.

The significance of integrating Schmitt's concept of the political for theorising the construction of identities resides in its ability to comprise a wide range of identity categories *so long as political meaning can be granted*. Schmitt explains that "every concrete antagonism becomes that much more political the closer it approaches the most extreme point, that of the friend-enemy grouping."[37]And by moving towards the friend-enemy distinction and thereby becoming political, human groups actively constitute their identities "even if the awareness of the extreme case has been entirely lost."[38] These theoretical insights are equally useful for locating the political in discussion of concepts and methodologies for example. The confrontation of concepts as well as the

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[35] William E. Connolly, *Identity/Difference. Democratic Negotiations of Political Paradox* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 1991), 66.
[36] Schmitt, *The Concept of the Political*, 27, [my emphasis].
[37] Schmitt, *The Concept of the Political*, 29.
[38] Schmitt, *The Concept of the Political*, 30.

confrontation of collective systems of belief is a necessary condition for reinforcing and establishing a sense of identity. Thus identity operates first and foremost from the other, by distinguishing and identifying the features that are not the concept or collectivity.

2. Ethical Considerations of the Political

One point to be made at this stage refers to the ethical burden that such concepts as 'enmity' and 'conflict' bear in contemporary liberal debates. Schmitt's friend-enemy distinction has received numerous criticisms[39] because, in my opinion, the content of his political thought has not been sensitively read as a *conceptually* valid option to shed light on how potential collective identities come to be constituted. It is important to reiterate that the friend-enemy distinction need not be taken in its most radical way, as variously 'a life-and-death struggle', 'full-blown physical and/or psychological violence' or 'out-and-out war', to be able to grasp the distinction between identity and difference. Rather, I proceed to examine Schmitt's brand of antagonism in way similar to the concept of antagonism developed by the poststructuralists Chantal Mouffe and Jacques Derrida.

By enemy and conflict, Schmitt is not intending to introduce a language of hostility in 'politics' but to address the issue that "it cannot be denied that nations continue to group themselves according to friend and enemy antithesis, that the distinction remains actual today, and that this is an ever present possibility for every people existing in the political sphere."[40] It remains then to address the question of whether a different analysis of the manifestation of political identities is possible by means of exploring the discursive practices of translating difference as enmity.

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[39] A recent critique of Schmitt though can be found in Lon Troyer, "Couterterrorism, Sovereignty, Law, Subjectivity," *Critical Asian Studies* 35, no.2 (2003): 262.

[40] Schmitt, *The Concept of the Political*, 28.

Insofar as analyses of the processes of collective identity formation are situated within the analyses of the multiple forms in which difference emerges, questions about how to approach the concept of conflict start to arise. It is not difficult to trace back in the history of IR how conflict, has been overemphasized as is the case with realists or weakened to a point of denial as with the case of institutional liberals.[41] However, it is the ontological value of conflict that has been underexamined and taken for granted. This brings us to the point where the conceptualisation of conflict has to be addressed. Poststructuralist thinkers have been concerned with explaining how the establishment of difference results in the outcome of conflicting structures, stressing particularly the preservation of the ontological value of conflict by not attempting to overcome its possibility. Thus conflict comes to constitute the very essence of difference. William Rasch elaborates as follows,

> [c]onflict is possible as a structure of difference, and such a structure is only possible as a differentiation of unities, a differentiation, that is, of bundled differences. Thus, the specific nature of politics is determined by the specific constitution of opposed unities, making the origins of politics already political, already a battle about what constitutes a politically legitimate unity.[42]

I stated earlier in this chapter that the relationship of constitutive difference between self and other necessarily posits a friction of disagreement, namely, an aspect of non-identification. What is relevant about this relationship is that it demands social exclusion and simultaneously reassures the members' inclusion into their respective group. Mouffe supports her own claim about the underpinning role of antagonism with the Derridean notion of constitutive outside which explains "[t]he antagonism inherent in all objectivity and the centrality of the us/them distinction in the constitution of

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[41] For an account of the treatment of conflict in IR see Jeffrey W. Taliaferro, "Security-Seeking Under Anarchy: Defensive Realism Reconsidered," *International Security* 25, no. 3 (2000/2001): 152-86; and John J. Mearsheimer, *Tragedy of Great Power Politics* (New York: W.W. Norton, 2002).

[42] William Rasch, "Conflict as a Vocation. Carl Schmitt and the Possibility of Politics," *Theory, Culture & Society* 17, no.6 (2000): 2.

political identities. This arises when this us/them relation, which until then was only perceived as simple difference, began to be seen as one between friend and enemy."[43]

To make sense of these theoretical assumptions, I reiterate that Schmitt's central argument lies precisely in the intrinsic value of conflict as a delineator of collective identities. Because liberal constructivists like Wendt downplay the role of conflict in the construction of identities and therefore in the making of politics, Schmitt has often been misrepresented as an defender of the intensification of conflict whose conception of enmity could ostensibly generate violence and war.[44] Schmitt's conceptualisation of the enemy does presuppose a possibility whereby conflict itself has the potential to turn into war. Nevertheless, he insists that "[w]ar is neither the aim nor the purpose nor even the very content of politics. But as an ever present possibility it is the leading presupposition which determines in a characteristic way human action and thinking and thereby creates a specifically political behaviour."[45] The key word for Schmitt is possibility and its theoretical implications need to be approached from perspectives that can embrace the undecidability it entails. This is an aspect that liberal thought and IR theory attempt to set aside by negotiating procedures to overcome the possibility of conflict when in fact, procedures are needed to allow for conflict in ways that permit a ongoing disclosure of the political character of identity without permitting that conflict turns into war. This is possible I argue through a deep reformulation of how we understand forms of political action that I examine in detail in chapter three.

This analysis precedes and justifies the assertion that the very possibility of conflict embedded in the concept of the political serves as parameter to set limits on the scope of conflict, assuming that there is a boundary beyond which uncontrolled conflict

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[43] Chantal Mouffe, *The Democratic Paradox* (London: Verso, 2000), 13.
[44] One of major critics includes Jurgen Habermas. I will approach the repercussions of these misinterpretations in chapter 3.
[45] Schmitt, *The Concept of the Political*, 35.

would necessarily terminate the very purpose of the political. "War follows enmity. War is the existential negation of the enemy… But it must nevertheless remain a real possibility (*reale Möglichkeit*) for as long as the concept of the enemy remains valid."[46] In order to defend the argument that only the *possibility* of war can bring about politically meaningful associations, it is important to stress that the point Schmitt tries to get across materializes in the stakes involved for identity when the enemy is lost. The emphasis is thus placed on the possibility of establishing a friend-enemy grouping, the moment in which the people's sense of belonging is tested by being prompted to take sides. Derrida's reading of Schmitt suggests that the notion of possibility acquires a reified conceptual value insofar as the struggle for reaching a final decision about who the enemy is also derives the construction of identities.

> [a]s soon as war is possible, it is presently in process ….as soon as it is characterised as *eventual* (that is, announced as a non-excluded event in a sort of contingent future). And it is *eventual* as soon as it is *possible*. Schmitt does not wish to dissociate the quasi-transcendental modality of the possible and the historico-factual modality of the eventual. He names now the eventuality (*weningstens eventuell*), now the possibility (Möglichkeit)… as soon as war is possible/eventual, the enemy is present… the concept of the enemy is thereby deduced or constructed a priori, both analytically and synthetically.[47]

The disappearance of the enemy results in the absence of a constitutive outside against which any collective subject can reaffirm what their identity is not. Thus conflict on the one hand cannot be brought to a halt, and simultaneously it ought not to develop into a war of mutual annihilation. In other words, without the enemy identity ceases its course of construction and culmination. The poststructuralist reading of Schmitt offered by Derrida and Mouffe have so far served us as an indicator of the similar grounds that the Schmittian approach and the poststructuralist conception of conflict share. In both

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[46] Schmitt, *The Concept of the Political*, 33.
[47] Jacques Derrida, *Politics of Friendship* (London: Verso, 1997), 86.

instances we are told that the concept of the enemy is a construction that almost always informs a crucial component of the discourses that make identity possible.

3 The Schmittian Conception of Sovereignty

Now my suggestion extends to indicate that Schmitt's concept of the political decision, which reads "sovereign is he who decides on the exception [*Ausnahmezustand*],"[48] is not difficult to integrate into the constellation of postmodern thinking which challenges the traditional notion of sovereignty by giving it an interpretation of a fiction of discourse. The state of emergency is tied to sovereignty by way of a decision which parallels Schmitt's notion of the political with that of poststructuralist thinkers such as Slavoj Zizek, Derrida and Laclau: "the moment of the political is a period where a new social order is founded… it institutes that which will henceforth count as *political community*."[49] Sovereignty is thus seen as the diving line between chaos and order and its force lies precisely in the decision to designate friends an enemies for Schmitt. Sovereignty as a concept brings about the necessary distinction between antagonistic views and concepts. For the purposes of this thesis I sustain that sovereignty can bring that distinction in cases where, similar to collective systems of belief, at least two concepts are held in tension, without either being broken apart or completely elided.

Sovereignty is thus seen as the "moment of antagonism."[50] Bearing in mind that the friend/enemy opposition deconstructs itself as a figure of discourse, neither the

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[48] Schmitt, *Political Theology*, 5.
[49] Jenny Edkins, *Poststructuralism and International Relations: Bringing the Political Back in*. (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1999), 7.
[50] Laclau cited in Edkins*, Poststructuralism*, 5. This is not to say that Laclau and Mouffe's notion of antagonism corresponds exactly to Schmittian enmity. See for instance Mouffe, *The Democratic Paradox,* 102.

friend nor the enemy is ontologically prior to each other. Hence, it implicates a decision which is necessarily political because it decides the undecidible.[51] In other words, the state of emergency demands succinctly the construction of a new social order which brings about the circumstances in which collective identity can be ideally formed. The sovereign decision is performed in the way that it places itself above the ordinary course of action, the general norm or the ordinary legal prescription, because as Schmitt puts it, such an ordinary situation "can never encompass a total exception."[52] This links smoothly with my earlier statement in the introduction of this thesis and chapter one that points at the constant flux of concepts. If concepts are analysed as discursive constructions that in most cases mutate or evolve, then it is likely that when they enter the battle of confrontation there will necessarily be a state of exception to establish a sense of order from which to establish a sense of temporal fixity.

One theoretical limitation in the work of Schmitt is presented by Charles E. Frye. He critically observes that such a proposition may lead Schmitt to fall into a state of nihilism.[53] If there are absolutely no norms or laws that define or limit the possibilities open to him, then "the sovereign is in a state of mind in which he cannot possibly decide."[54] But such an accusation relies tacitly on Schmitt's detachment of any ethical codes which could exert an influence on the sovereign decision. This is precisely part of Schmitt's possible and highly significant contribution to international relations theory: he raises questions pertinent to the anarchic nature of our international system and its institutional forms of politics dominated by liberalism. The displacement of the political in modern politics places ethics and morality above struggle which, for Schmitt, meant inhibiting the agency of deciding on a particular situation. But the

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[51] Jacques Derrida, "Force of Law: 'The Mystical Foundation' of Authority," in *Deconstruction and the Possibility of Justice*, eds. D. Cornell et al. (New York: Routledge, 1992), 15.
[52] Schmitt, *Political Theology*, 5.
[53] Charles E. Frye, "Carl Schmitt's Concept of the Political," *The Journal of Politics* 28, no.4 (1966): 828.
[54] Frye, "Carl Schmitt's Concept," 828.

accusations his notion of sovereignty faces ignore the fact that Schmitt's theory of identity is indeed a theory of limits.

If acknowledging the limits of the community entails the recognition of homogeneity, it follows that the sovereign act simultaneously leads to the exclusion of heterogeneity *qua* difference. Thus, the arrangement of limits appears conceptualisable in Schmitt's theory of identity. Using the lexicon of Laclau, members of a community generate 'chains of equivalence'[55] and not of identity, when this chain closes via the sovereign act; it does so by excluding that which escapes the scope of the decision.[56]

Sovereignty, in the Schmittian understanding of it, accounts for an existing human agency capable to set the limits on the scope and intensity of conflict. Douglas Bulloch pertinently inquires "when decisions are taken on behalf of a collective, what makes the members of the collective abide by those decisions? ….the decision must be understood as a decision by the members of the collective."[57] The constitution of identity is dependent upon a decision to nominate otherness as enmity and thereby setting up the conditions to distinguish friends from enemies. Ellen Kennedy expands this argument by affirming that "Schmitt… transformed the Hobbesian notion of sovereignty as a person or instance into a moment of existential intervention in a process over which the sovereign does not reside as a creator and controller."[58] The particularity of the Schmittian understanding of sovereignty is that it empowers the collective will with a capacity to decide on an unprecedented situation which exceeds

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[55] Laclau means by chains of equivalence the presence of signs or concepts that can be associated in a single discourse. This association is not a form of cooperation but it entails that a mutual enemy is a point for mutual identification.

[56] See Ernesto Laclau, *Identity and Hegemony* (London: Verso, 2000).

[57] Douglas Bulloch, "Carl Schmitt and the Theory of the Partisan: Articulating the Partisan in International Relations" (paper presented at the SGIR Conference, The Hague, September 2004), http://www.sgir.org/conference2004/papers/Bulloch%20-%20Articulating%20the%20Partisan.pdf (accessed on June, 2005).

[58] Ellen Kennedy, "Carl Schmitt and the Frankfurt School: A Rejoinder," *Telos* 73 (1987): 101-116.

the moral, economic or aesthetic realms, "a decision in the true sense of the word."[59] Further, if politics is viewed as a result of struggles in the quest for achieving identity, it follows that politics derives its force from its capacity to deal with contingency. Rather, sovereignty, understood in this way seeks to reclaim the agency of human collectives to decide its own *telos*. As it has become clear, the relationship between sovereignty and identity is reciprocally interdependent.

The limitations of Schmitt work are therefore methodological in the sense that his concepts are equally contestable and subject to change. My position here is to vindicate that the concepts of 'the political' and 'sovereignty' are located in the place that semiotics would call 'signified' – although inevitably connected with the sign (or signifier) they represent, their meaning remains discursively constructed as an image of thought. Although this can bee seen as a weakness, the concept of sovereignty presented here portrays a more coherent tool to grasp the nature of identity and its strength needs to be seen in the ways it explains the logic of self/other relationships.

Schmitt's limitations for international relations theory remain to be seen mostly from realist perspectives and international law studies. I agree with his critics that in practice, much of his work was inspired by the need to salvage Germany from liberal imperialism.[60] This strategy in the end aimed at contributing to the creation of a total state however, I must insist on the value that his concepts have as analytical instruments to disclose the close, so far concealed, connection between politics and collective identity. From this perspective Schmitt's thought has not been widely explored and the real limitation would be for IR theory if his ideas are not seriously taken into account. On the theoretical level Schmitt can also be charged for not giving sufficient attention to the issue that causes the opposition between two collectivities. While this issue is a

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[59] Schmitt, *Political Theology*, 5.
[60] Johnson, "Carl Schmitt, Jürgen Habermas," 15-32.

necessary component of antagonistic relations, the political reflects the possibility of antagonism regardless of the conditions in which this develops. In fact, it has been suggested by Arditi that the issue in dispute makes the political a triad instead of a binary.[61] These three poles connect identity with sovereignty as a result of the decision and sovereignty with the political as the end of the struggle (temporarily) to achieve identity.

As a conclusion, while the terms of the debate revolving around collective identity formation have shifted considerably with the influence of postmodernism, less attention has been given to Schmitt's concept of the political as a useful conceptual support to theorise identity. I have suggested that Schmitt's thought throws promising insights in the development of a coherent reformulation of identity if it is viewed through the lens of a postmodern approach. The limitations of discourse analysis as a methodology also need to be acknowledged in that there is always the risk of denying the role of socio-economic factors in explaining political motivation. Likewise, the appeal to linguistics and the context-dependent nature of discourse analysis make discourse analysis appear a little less than flexible, and as John Torfing has warned, it could develop into a 'totalizing master methodology.'[62]

It must be made clear at this stage that the decision to employ the work of Carl Schmitt over other thinkers can be justified on several grounds. In contrast to Hobbes, who sees the creation of the Leviathan to offer protection to the life, and therefore the identity of individuals, Schmitt's poltical agent is a collective body and as such the conceptualization of the enemy remains part of the constitutive outside of the body politic. In a distinct fashion to Max Weber, who sees politics as a vocation, and for whom the development of disputes into violence continues to be political, Schmitt limits

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[61] Arditi, Tracing the Political, *Angelaki*, 1, No.3, (1995): 16
[62] Jacob Torfing, *New Theories of Discourse, Laclau, Mouffe and Zizek* (Oxford: Blackwell, 1999): 49

the content of politics to the possibility of conflict and war. While the approaches of Arendt and Schmitt have been studied together as being compatible or complementary in many ways,[63] I focus only on Schmitt because he offers a model of antagonism that can be transformed into agonism in the sense that Arendt depicted it. Arendt's work goes underexplored in this thesis because her approach to politics requires physical presence to make genuine politics flourish, although this shortcoming could be transcended if taken conceptually, her approach lacks the presence of antagonism that this thesis proposes as an ontological necessity of the principle of identity. Some of her ideas are tacked in chapter three and four where the focus is more on action than on concepts. The list could go on, but it must be remembered by now that for the length of the project one of my objectives is to introduce Schmitt's concept into current debates in IR about the nature of concepts such as politics and collective identity.

Schmitt has been subject to conceptual criticism by Leo Strauss[64] and Heinrich Meier[65] in a way that goes deeper than other superficial readings of Schmitt that are circulating around. I consider Strauss's and Heinrich's critiques of Schmitt as the most congruent in the literature whose objections to Schmitt's ideas must definitely be approached with the conceptual scrutiny the work of Schmitt also deserves. Meier accuses Schmitt for drawing his concepts significantly from theology, the content of which principally appeals to a transcendental concrete order as opposed to the belief in an absolute immanent world as proposed by Hegel. Schmitt's concept of the political is in this sense transcendental and counterposes immanence in the sense that the friend-enemy distinction is conceptually dependent on a constitutive outside to exist. Mika Ojakangas suggests that Meier's accusation of Schmitt too quickly misinterprets the

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[63] See Emma Norman, "The Political Self", 130-142.
[64] See Leo Strauss, "Comments on Carl Schmitt's *Der Begriff des Politischen*" in Schmitt, Carl, *The Concept of the Political*. New Brunswick: Rutgers University Press, 1976
[65] Heinrich Meier The Lesson of Carl Schmitt: *Four Chapters on the Distinction between Political Theology and Political Philosophy*, (Chicago: Chicago University Press, 2004), 204

political character of Schmitt's theology only for the resemblances it could bear to Christian theology. Ojakangas discusses that this move in Schmitt's thought against the Hegelian immanent world has its roots in Schmitt's desire to illuminate human's freedom to act politically outside its own self-immanent world.[66]

Schmitt has also been the target of Strauss who famously denounced Schmitt for proposing a concept of the political too separate from a particular conception of the good, the major consequence of which is to give this concept ontological neutrality. In contradiction to himself, this is a principle Schmitt attacked liberals of using with procedures. However, in my view the decision to designate and distinguish the enemy from the friend has an already ethical content to it. This moral decision is not ultimately abided by any liberal conception of the good but can be attributed to Schmitt's own personal interpretation of a decision between good and evil, which as Sergei Prosorov appropriately proposes, "this a-moralism of Schmitt's concept of the political is a vital component of its ethical dimension."[67] My criticism of Schmitt is his reductionism of human relations into the friend-enemy distinction as containing a radical view of what can only be political. This is in part one of the capital reasons why I chose to offer a poststructuralist reading of Schmitt in conjunction with some exegetical work. I interpret this move of Schmitt to encompass all of what lies within the variety of radical antagonisms in human thought. The consequences of his concept of sovereignty as the act that "emanates from nothingness" and "cannot be subsumed"[68] may suggest certain degree of nihilism but also could convey a sort of a mystical element in his thought. His conception of human sovereignty appears as a direct reproduction of Christian's god

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[66] Mika Ojakangas, "A Terrifying World Without An Exterior: Carl Schmitt and the Metaphysicis of Word (dis)order," Conference on: The International Political Thought of Carl Schmitt. September 2004. available at: http://www.sgir.org/conference2004/papers/Ojakangas. (Accesed on 23 Jan 2006).
[67] Sergei Prozorov, "The Ethos of Insecure Life: Schmitt, Kundera and Foulcault and the Point of the Political." Conference on The Political Thought of Carl Schmitt, Septermber 2001. available at: http://www.sgir.org/conference2004/papers/Prozorov. (Accessed on 3 May, 2006).
[68] Schmitt, *The Concept of the Political*, 32.

sovereignty. In this sense, collective identity and politics are ultimately related by a human sovereign act that I have shown is dependent on human action.

In applying Schmitt's concept of the political to support a theoretical framework of identity, I focus on the relevant aspects of his thought which deserve a deeper assessment and are often overlooked along with other aspects of his theory which convey a rather more radical tone. Nonetheless, what is intended in this chapter is to provide a "reconstructive theoretical framework"[69] which may incite to raise questions about why it is important to understand collective identity in relation to difference acknowledging the conflicting reality such a process entails. The significance of identity depends to a certain extent on our ability to identify the structures of power inherent in the politics of identity which will significantly affect our life chances. Such structures of inequality abound at the international level as well as within the state. The lack of substantial non-ethical approaches in the area accounts for why identity has been a fundamental element of social liberation as well as in social oppression.

The benefit of using a postmodern approach can be honestly assessed to the degree in which the methodology employed interrogates the nature of cultural and social identities as fictions of discourse. However, my intention is not to discard the existence of collective forms of identifications as merely fictitious creations translated into facts. Rather, Schmitt's challenge for identity theory is just as liberating in that it allows a collective will to take their own stand, their own *Gestalt* beyond the structures already produced. In the next chapter, I examine two contemporary approaches to develop alternative forms of political action. These are the deliberative democratic approach and agonistic pluralism. These forms of political action reveal useful in providing elements to contest and discuss collective systems of belief. However, I show that the agonistic

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[69] Lapid and Kratochwil, *The Return of Culture,* 23.

pluralist approach succeeds in providing adequate mechanisms for antagonistic confrontation of concepts, which in turn allows for an deeper analysis of the connection between politics and identity.