

Introduction

Life without the drive to identity is an impossibility, but the claim to a natural or true identity is always an exaggeration.¹

Our contemporary world is marked throughout by the increasing importance of questions of identity, with special significance of those emerging in the field of International Relations.² National and international politics are now concerned with the attempts of various collectivities to claim or reclaim their lost, suppressed or threatened identity, be that ethnic, religious, class, sexual or any other type.³ Unsurprisingly, theories of International Relations are following practice in what Yoseph Lapid and Fredrich Kratochwil termed in 1996 a “return of culture and identity in IR theory.”⁴ Indeed, many developing countries seem to be somehow engaged in national development activities with the central aims of strengthening national unity and improving the welfare of the population. Identity has become not only one of the most important questions, but also the most vital answer to some of the chief problems that our states and world face on the road toward development and peace.

One particularly pressing problem within the general field of questions regarding national identity and unity concerns the fragmentation, isolation, exclusion and ultimately conflict within multi ethnic nations. Multi ethnic groups living within the same nation state do not always agree on where their strongest allegiance lies – to the state, or to their

¹ W. Connolly, *Identity\Difference: Democratic Negotiations of Political Paradox* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 1991).

² Yannis Stavrakakis, “Identity, Political,” in *Encyclopedia of Democratic Thought*, eds. Paul Barry Clarke and Joe Foweraker (London: Routledge, 2001), 333.

³ Stavrakakis, “Identity, Political,” 333.

⁴ Joseph Lapid and Friedrich Kratochwill, *The Return of Culture and Identity in IR Theory* (Boulder: Lynne Reiner, 1996).

particular nation. In the cases of Bosnia, Serbia, Rwanda, Ethiopia etc, one very basic explanation could be that of territorial disputes between ethnic communities, or lack of official representation of some communities. Another could be that allegiance to one's cultural or tribal community in these cases is clearly stronger than allegiance to the political community (the state). And when more than one cultural or ethnic group where this scenario is the case inhabits a single state, tensions and conflicts can and have occurred. Moreover, it is often empirically the case that those who control state power and resources favor some groups within the state over others.

For example, Ethiopia today harbors a situation of grave uncertainty because of ethnic problems. The two most important ethnic groups in the country, the Oromo and the Amhara, live in constant conflict. The reason for these problems is that by 1962 the United Nations decided to bring Eritrea under the government of Ethiopia.⁵ In this newly formed state, a situation of ethnic favoritism gave to the Amara the political and economic control over Ethiopia for the last century.⁶ The aid of international organizations such as the International Monetary Fund (IMF) exacerbated ethnic inequality throughout the period.⁷ At the same time, Ethiopian governments used violent and repressive measures against the minority groups.⁸ The few integrated ethnic groups that lived together and were organized as societies, were separated during the Socialist government which took over in 1974. A land reform program broke up entire ethnic groups and placed them into labor camps.⁹

⁵ Kourosch Farrokhzad, "The IMF: the International Manipulation Fund?," *Peace Magazine* (Jan/Feb 1994 [cited 26 July 2004]): available from <http://www.peacemagazine.org/archive/v10n1p06.htm>

⁶ "Ethiopia," *The Columbia Encyclopedia, Sixth Edition, 2001* (2003 [cited 29 July 2004]) Columbia University Press: available from <http://www.bartleby.com/65/et/Ethiopia.html>

⁷ Farrokhzad, "The IMF: the International Manipulation Fund?"

⁸ Farrokhzad, "The IMF: the International Manipulation Fund?"

⁹ Marc Sommers, "Power and the Powerless," *New Routes – A Journal of Peace Research and Action* (Vol 2. No. 4 (1997 [cited 29 July 2004]): available from <http://www.life-peace.org/newroutes/newroutes1997/nr199704/power.htm/>

Today, Ethiopian ethnic groups continue to compete against each other for political and economic power and the attention and support of international organizations, in an environment of grave instability, poverty and fear.¹⁰

In the ex-Soviet Union, in the Balkans, and in so many other places such as in Africa, a federal political system did not create an environment that allowed diversity to blossom. On the contrary, it creates hatred, aggravates ethnic and nationalist feelings, and splits the system from the inside. It is very dangerous to institutionalize ethnicity, and national differences. It is not democracy, it is not really federalism, and it does not even provide a benefit for those who believe that they can dominate the nation by favoring an ethnic group to the detriment of all the others. Creating different entities within the same nation under an allegedly federal system cannot bring either stability or economic progress.¹¹

In our more recent world history, inequity has become the detonator that often ignites the fire of war. The general point I wish to make in this thesis is that such scenarios do not need to result in out-and-out war, or even sporadic conflict. This is possible, I will argue, if inequity can be replaced by an understanding of difference. In that case, inequity can possibly be overcome and later integrated into the commonality. Projects that attempt to create national identity integration within the same state contain the possibility for creating the very stability and economic progress Farrokhzad argues is lacking in the Ethiopian case. I wish to show this by looking at the way in which difference can be understood theoretically and through the way in which it has, historically, been dealt with in the practice of one particular nation state.

In the historical case of Japan, conflict has been minimal. Tensions and inequities have nevertheless remained between different ethnic groups living within the state territory. The inequity was not purely state-inspired. Rather, it was inbuilt in a 200 year culture of exclusion and inclusion. Japan is an interesting case in point, however, because very recently steps have been taken to ameliorate the culture of ethnic inclusion and exclusion

¹⁰ Farrokhzad, "The IMF: the International Manipulation Fund?"

¹¹ "An interview with Jérôme Tubiana," *African Geopolitics/Géopolitique Africaine* (no date [cited 29 July 2004]): available from : http://www.african-geopolitics.org/show.aspx?ArticleId=3165#_ftn3

and to promote national unity and stability. As I will show throughout this thesis, steps have been engaged consciously by the institutions of the state itself in what appears at the moment to be a fairly successful attempt to mobilize and organize the different ethnic communities together as part of the same political (state) and cultural (nation) community. This strategy has created an artificial, but nevertheless apparently functional, new identity that is inclusive rather than exclusive that can only be termed ‘Japaneseness’.

While several Japanese authors,¹² and a few western ones,¹³ have hinted indirectly that this process is happening, very little if any academic study has been devoted to exploring how this process has occurred and what its implications might be for certain theories of identity and for the theory and practice of national and international relations. The broad task of this thesis is to make some contribution in this area. Part of this thesis was inspired by my attempts to understand a particular theory of identity first published in 1990 by the poststructuralist Judith Butler. Her theory of the ‘performative construction of identity’ contests the notion of gender-fixed identity and explains how identity is located not in the body but beyond it, within the acts that individuals perform and repeat in their social context. Butler explained that “[i]dentity is performatively constituted by the very ‘expressions’ that are said to be its results.”¹⁴ The idea of performative creation of identity refers to the concept as something *executed* as opposed to something merely ‘possessed’. However, this “performativity is... not a singular ‘act’, for it is always the reiteration of a

¹² Takashi Fujitani, “Inventing, Forgetting, Remembering: Toward a Historical Ethnography of the Nation-State,” in *Cultural Nationalism in the East Asia: Representation and Identity*, ed. Harumi Befu (Berkeley: Institute of East Asian Studies University of California, 1993). See also Tessa Morris-Suzuki, *Re-inventing Japan* (Armonk, New York: M.E. Sharpe, 1998) and Yoko Takakuwa, *Performing Marginality: The place of the player and of woman in early modern Japanese culture* (Tokyo: New Literary History, 1998).

¹³ Benedict Anderson, “Western Nationalism and Eastern Nationalism: Is there a difference that matters?” *New Left Review* 9 (May–June 2001 [cited 29 July 2004]): available from : <http://www.newleftreview.net/NLR24302.shtml>

¹⁴ Judith Butler, *Gender Trouble: Feminism and the Subversion of Identity* (New York and London: Routledge, 1990), 12.

norm or set of norms, and to the extent that it acquires an act-like status... it conceals or dissimulates the conventions of which it is a repetition.”¹⁵ In other words, performances of identity become more meaningful and asserting to the extent that they are repeated.¹⁶

In 1990, Butler herself absolutely rejected the possibility of applying her theory to ethnic forms of identity.¹⁷ However, after a few studies effectively applied a version of her theory to political institutions, in 1999 Butler conceded that her theory had, perhaps, a wider application than she originally thought.¹⁸ Indeed, several factors suggest that her theory may not only be eminently applicable to ethnic forms of identity. It may also be the case that applying it to ethnic forms of identity (which, like gender, also rest partially on the way we perceive the body) validates further the theory itself by increasing the scope of its application.

In view of this, this thesis demonstrates that some central aspects of Butler’s theory of the performative construction of identity can be useful in explaining the Japanese case in particular. From this I wish to draw and defend the tentative conclusion that her theory may well permit a better understanding of the way in which national identity is formed and can be artificially created in a wider context than that of Japan. Butler’s work has become a theory of significant importance for those who aim to explain by the use of critical theory the performative construction of hegemonic powers.¹⁹ I wish to make the general point that it provides for International Relations an important resource to help explain the actions,

¹⁵ Butler, *Gender Trouble*, 12.

¹⁶ Judith Butler, *Bodies that Matter. On the Discursive Limits of ‘Sex’* (New York and London: Routledge, 1993), 12.

¹⁷ Butler, *Gender Trouble*, ‘Preface, 1991’, 7.

¹⁸ Butler, *Gender Trouble*, 9.

¹⁹ See, for example, the work of David Campbell, especially *Writing Security: United States Foreign Policy and the Politics of Identity*, (Minneapolis and London: University of Minnesota Press, 1998) and Cynthia Weber, especially “Performative States,” *Millennium: Journal of International Studies* 27, no 1 (1998). Their translation of the gender theories to the International Relations can be seen as not only an outstanding interpretation of performativity for International Relations, but also the first step to other uses of it.

representation and construction of dominance, to challenge previous analyses of hegemony and to develop new possibilities for understanding the consequences of this execution of power.

The contribution I hope to make in this thesis operates on two levels, one particular and one more general. In the first instance, I wish to demonstrate the wider appeal of Judith Butler's theory of the performative construction of identity through applying it to the particular case of Japan. In the second instance, I attempt to establish and defend the more general thesis that identity can be used as an artificial instrument significant for the construction of the nation states, exemplified by the practical case of Japanese institutional identity construction. However, the stages of the argument I use to defend this thesis rest on several important conceptual distinctions. It is therefore necessary to explain the most important of these first. The core concepts I use are *identity*, *nation*, *state*, and *nation state*.

Questions of identity are difficult to answer with confidence in the field of International Relations and outside of it. The very concept of identity is notoriously difficult to define because it itself defies concrete designation. Problems increase when attempting to define the difference between individual and collective forms of identity. In pre-modern societies, identity was considered as something given and immutable, guaranteed by mythical or religious forces.²⁰ Even with the Enlightenment, the subject was considered as a unified individual with an essential inner core that would appear and develop with the individual.²¹ "This core of the self was the source of identity."²² As a result of the social transformations taking place in modernity, both individual and collective

²⁰ Yannis Stavrakakis, "Identity, Political," 334.

²¹ Jenny Edkins "Politics, Subjectivity, and Depoliticisation," in Jenny Edkins *Poststructuralism and International Relations: Bringing the Political Back In* (Boulder: Lynne Rienner, 1999), 22.

²² Jenny Edkins, *Poststructuralism and International Relations*, 22.

identity is now recognized as a result of social construction. This is to say it is not *nature*, but *nurture* that gives content to our identity as individuals or as members of a group. Identity is, on this account, not fixed over time and space. Neither is it 'centred' in an essential inner core or 'self'. Against the Enlightenment essentialism of Descartes and Kant, and following early ideas found in the work of Rousseau, Hegel, Marx and Freud, it is now widely accepted that our identity is constructed from the social environment in which we live. This acceptance is widespread in the Anglo-American tradition in communitarian and postliberal political philosophy. It also forms a central line of enquiry in the continental tradition in poststructuralism and the philosophy of deconstruction associated with Jacques Derrida. Derrida mentions that, "[i]n the complexity of the modern world the awareness of this inner core of the subject was not autonomous and self sufficient, but was formed in relation to 'significant others', who mediated to the subject the values, meanings and symbols – the culture - of the worlds he/she inhabited."²³ This understanding of identity or, to use the poststructuralist word, subjectivity, is 'decentred' in that it is not found in an illusory essential inner core, but only becomes visible and meaningful in its relation to others or to social structures and institutions.

The first point to be made here is that if identity, whether collective or individual, is a social construct, it cannot be examined in the abstract. It can only be understood and examined in its relation to the social conditions from which it is constructed. The postmodern way of saying this is that identity can be examined around its construction, articulation or transformation. The second point to be made is that if identity is a non-fixed concept and if social conditions fundamentally affect our identity, then any manipulation of

²³ Jacques Derrida, "'Eating Well', or the Calculation of the Subject: An Interview with Jacques Derrida," in *Who Comes After the Subject?* ed. Eduardo Cadava, Peter Connor, and Jean-Luc Nancy (New York: Routledge, 1991), 108.

those conditions can be used to construct identity - artificially. The postmodern language used to express this basic idea is that identity, or subjectivity, has become an object for possible re-articulation.²⁴ This is where discussions of identity clearly have an impact upon international relations issues. A better understanding of identity may well help us to find better solutions for many current problems that challenge the wellbeing of our societies.

For people that have the same task as me, scrutinizing, building upon or rearticulating ideas in international relations, one of the most important tasks to face during the process of writing is dealing with concepts that become vague through the interchangeable use that other studies before us gave to them. A clear conceptualization of terms is therefore necessary, but often lacking, since many scholars use these terms interchangeably and sometimes imprecisely. In the case of this thesis, one of the biggest problems experienced in understanding the idea of national identity formation was exacerbated by unclear distinctions between the key terms nation, state and nation state. This thesis attempts to address the sometimes vague way in which these concepts are used by problematizing the concepts themselves. It is my belief that the clues in understanding the importance of national identity and its formation are to be found within the careful definition of these terms and a clear understanding of the differences between them. In the course of this thesis I wish to build on and deepen a particular understanding of these inter-connected, but nevertheless distinct, concepts using the theoretical framework I have chosen to apply to the Japanese case. However, every conceptualization has to start somewhere. The ones offered here begin with some generally accepted definitions of the terms 'state' and 'nation'.

²⁴ Stavrakakis, "Identity, Political," 334.

The classic definition of the state is given by Max Weber. “A state is a human community that (successfully) claims the monopoly of the legitimate use of physical force within a given territory... The right to use physical force is ascribed to other institutions or to individuals only to the extent to which the state permits it. The state is considered the sole source of the ‘right’ to use violence.”²⁵ This definition exalts the ideas of the state as a common territory with a government which holds the monopoly of coercive power and legitimacy.²⁶ Also, it is important to remember that the construction of states in the past was originally based on the idea of controlling territories under peace. But, as I mentioned before, our contemporary circumstances show that the problematic of national identity is not yet solved by the state. Palestinians, Kurds, the former Yugoslavia and tribal warfare in Africa give recent examples of genocide and ethnic cleansing, and continuing conflict which is not yet controlled by the political community. Authors like Mathew Horsman and Andrew Marshall are known for their literature that exposes the idea that the state may well be coming to its end.²⁷ The problems to maintain peace or achieve a certain degree of wellbeing experienced in cases like the former Yugoslavia can direct us to a similar conclusion. In other words, concepts, including the concept of the state, change over time and with the circumstances. An entity which was considered before as the single most important institution is now questioned in its functionality and its means. Maybe this questioning does not go as far as considering the state as dead in modern times, but it seriously questions the old way of conceiving it as sovereign and autonomous. There are many things (multi-nationals, global economy, world citizenship etc.) that now mean that

²⁵ Max Weber, “Politics as a Vocation,” in *From Max Weber: Essays in Sociology*, eds. H. H. Gerth and C. Wright Mills (London: Routledge, 1991), 78.

²⁶ Weber, “Politics as a Vocation,” 78.

²⁷ See Mathew Horsman and Andrew Marshall, *After The Nation-State: Citizens, Tribalism and the New World Disorder* (London: Harper-Collins, 1994).

the state is no longer the autonomous controller of the actions and destinies of its inhabitants. However, the Weberian definition still holds and this kind of argument makes it all the more important to recognize that the state can and has had some artificial influence in terms of galvanizing the national unity of its people through identity construction practices.

‘Nation’ is a rather complicated concept to define. The famous historian Eric Hobsbawm mentions that “[a]s an initial working assumption any sufficiently large body of people whose members regard themselves as members of a 'nation', will be treated as such.”²⁸ He describes nations as modern constructions rather than naturally created and unchanging social entities. This idea is basically explained through the view that the development of the mass politics made nations possible.²⁹ Mass politics is a recent development in which masses have interaction with the system of power and have the ability to contest their location within a particular representation of the social or to be part of the political decisions of the governments. In the last twenty years for example, women, homosexuals, ethnic minorities and indigenous groups of people have entered in the political arena *en masse* and have interacted with the other forces in the realm of the political.³⁰ These mass movements together with the power of humans to associate themselves to some imaginary bond are considered by Hobsbawm as imperative elements for the existence of nations.

The point is extended by Ernest Gellner: “[t]wo men are of the same nation if and only if they share the same culture, where culture in turn means a system of ideas and signs

²⁸ Eric J Hobsbawm, *Nations and Nationalism since 1780: Programme, Myth, Reality*. (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1990), 9.

²⁹ E. Zuelow, "Hobsbawm Nations and Nationalism" (no date [cited September 11, 2004]): available from : www.nationalismproject.org/what/hobsbawm.htm

³⁰ Yannis Stavrakakis, "Identity, Political," 334.

and associations and ways of behaving and communicating...Two men are of the same nation if and only if they recognize each other as belonging to the same nation.”³¹ For Anthony Smith the ‘nation’ is “a named community of shared history and mass culture, with a ‘homeland’ of its own, and possessing a single economy and uniform rights and duties for all members.”³² This type of entity involves the sense of shared memories and history, as well as a territory which serves for identification. But above all, it should be emphasized that nations are built by an “endowing belief-structure.”³³ Its existence relies on the myths of origin, liberation and a past heroic or ‘golden age’ which provides to the nation its political, cultural and social content³⁴ and, I may add, continuity of identity.

It is clear, then, that these definitions of ‘nation’ run in a different direction than the Weberian view of ‘state’. Nation has more to do with an imaginary construction of bonds that come into existence in the form of an entity by the recognition of the members of being part of it. The nation goes beyond the sole official administrative function of the state or its monopoly of legitimate use of power. The power of the nation has more to do with the bottom up construction and organization. In other words, it depends on the strength of the human bonds to their common culture and territory and the organization that departs from it.

So it follows that if the terms nation and state mean quite different things, caution must be exercised when combining the individual terms of ‘state’ and ‘nation’ into the term ‘nation state’. The most basic understanding of this term is that a particular ‘nation’ situated within a given territory enjoys official representation in the international arena. There has,

³¹ Ernest Gellner, *Nations and Nationalism* (Oxford: Blackwell, 1983), 6-7.

³² Anthony D. Smith, *The Ethnic Origins of Nations* (Oxford: Blackwell, 1986), 73.

³³ Emile Durkheim, *The Elementary Forms of the Religious Life*, trans. J. Swain (London: Allen & Unwin, 1915), 214 cited by Smith, “Nationalism,” *A Dictionary of Ethics, Theology and Society*, eds. Paul Barry Clarke and Andrew Linzey (London and New York: Routledge, 1996), 591.

³⁴ Anthony D. Smith, “Nationalism,” 591.

however, been a growing tendency for scholars to use the term nation state to mean more than the legal or formal organization of the population connoted by ‘state’. Several authors, such as Ernest Gellner,³⁵ Eric Hobsbawm and Terence Ranger,³⁶ Paul Barry Clarke³⁷ and, perhaps most famously, Benedict Anderson, understand ‘nation state’ as not only an official representation of a ‘nation’, but also as a social and political community to which its members have a sense of belonging.³⁸ Benedict Anderson, for example, describes this sense of belonging in terms of a community which imagines itself to be part of a particular entity, limited and sovereign.³⁹

It is this deeper understanding of ‘nation state’ that I wish to adopt and explore in this thesis. In particular, I wish to suggest that this sense of belonging can be understood as an important source of power. In this respect, a remark from Michel Foucault forms an appropriate starting point for the discussion I wish to engage.

Power must, I think, be analyzed as something that circulates, or rather as something that functions only when it is parts of a chain...Power is exercised through networks, and individuals do not simply circulate in those networks; they are in a position to both submit to and exercise this power. They are never inert or consenting targets of power, they are always its relays.⁴⁰

This can be interpreted as the basic premise to understand that the power or wellbeing of a state is not only based in itself as an institutional unit. We should take into consideration that the power of a state to survive and organize itself relies on the networks of its constituent populations, their links and the interaction that occurs between them. Power is,

³⁵ Gellner, *Nations and Nationalism*.

³⁶ *The Invention of Tradition*, eds. Eric J. Hobsbawm and Terence Ranger (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1983).

³⁷ Paul Barry Clarke, “State,” in *A Dictionary of Ethics, Theology and Society*, eds. Paul Barry Clarke and Andrew Linzey (London: Routledge, 2001), 792.

³⁸ Benedict Anderson, *Imagined Communities* (New York: Verso, 1991), 6.

³⁹ Anderson, *Imagined Communities*, 6.

⁴⁰ Michel Foucault, “Society Must be Defended,” in *Michel Foucault: Ethics: Subjectivity and Truth*, ed. Paul Rabinow (New York: New Press, 1997).

in a nation state, the result of the identification and the circulation of it radiating from its institutional core out toward the population. Power is exercised, then, thanks to the sense of belonging that make individuals easier to organize when they are being formally represented by the state. The population in this case functions as the veins that allow this power to flow and be exercised throughout the whole entity – a physical metaphor which is not at odds with the drawing of the state as the body of one man filled by the individuals that make it up on the original front cover of the first edition of Hobbes' *Leviathan* in 1651.

Central objectives, structure of arguments.

The central objective of this dissertation is to stress the significance of identity as an artificial instrument that can be used to create and consolidate a nation state and to assert national unity and power. I wish to highlight the artificialness of national identity and at the same time stress its importance for the wellbeing of the nation state. I aim to explain by way of Butler's theory that identity can be articulated, transformed and created by the existence of social norms and institutions. But this point has a very strong connection with explaining how the malleability of national identity construction can be used to promote the elements needed to build a sense of belonging and therefore produce strength, stability and national unity or power in certain cases.

The broad hypothesis I attempt to verify throughout this thesis is that *national identity can be articulated, transformed and created artificially by the state through the existence of social norms and institutions*. In such a case, the implicit malleability of identity can be used to the common good of the members of the nation state. Based on theories of postmodernist creation of identity, I wish to explain the mentioned processes. I therefore advance two sub-hypotheses (one mainly theoretical and one mainly empirical)

that, taken together, help to verify the main one. Sub-hypothesis one is that Butler's theory, with some important modifications, can be used to explain how the artificial construction of national identity happens very well and that it should therefore be imported into the discipline of International Relations. Sub-hypothesis two is that Japanese national identity and even the Japanese nation state itself has, in fact, been artificially created by the state.

Since the nation state is very complex in its parts, I will attempt to do so only within the context of identity. For this aim I need to explore and make an initial attempt to transfer the theories of Judith Butler and other postmodern authors to the national sphere and to the discipline of International Relations.

Both David Campbell and Cynthia Weber use the theoretical framework of feminist theory and in particular draw from the ideas of Judith Butler to explain the state as any other subject, and the elements that have impact in its construction. Campbell affirms that understanding the performative construction of identity encourages a better understanding of the performative construction of the institutions of the state. He develops examples of how foreign policy is implicated in the reproduction of state identity⁴¹ in particular drawing from the case of the United States. Extending recent debates in the fields of International Relations concerning identity and culture, Campbell shows how perceptions of danger and difference work to establish the identity of a country. Cynthia Weber does something very similar in her books *Performative States* and *Simulating Sovereignty*. She links the notion of performativity with many political topics of International Relations and aims to decipher the constant construction of the state by the means of some type of action. Most importantly, she explains how, by the performativity of foreign relations and especially by

⁴¹ David Campbell, *Writing Security: United States Foreign Policy and the Politics of Identity*, (Minneapolis and London: University of Minnesota Press, 1998), 9.

the occupation of other nations, the United States reaffirms its sovereignty and power, by giving central importance to the concerns and needs of the state.

Campbell and Weber analyze different aspects of how state identities are acted and constructed by their foreign policy. Campbell based on how state identity is constructed by the identification of enemies and Weber by examining how sovereignty and intervention boundaries discursively construct the state.⁴² Their understanding of Butler's theory and application place its center of attention upon the *political* identity of states. This is extremely valuable for its innovation in transferring Butler's theory into the field of International Relations. Focusing purely on the performative effects of discourse in the political sphere of a state allows an illuminating insight into the possibilities of analyzing the state. However, I wish to suggest in this dissertation that such an approach is not perhaps doing Butler's theory the justice it deserves. For in concentrating on the political elements, these authors fail to translate this idea into the *social* sphere and fail to consider the nation state as an entity constituted not only by its institutions (state) but also by the populations inside it (nation). It seems to me that the theory of performative construction of identity can play a significant role in explaining how national identity is formed and re-formed in a more integrated manner from what I will term a 'social' point of view. In this way, I hope to show that the theory of performative construction of national identity can be even more useful than Campbell suggests.

I wish to demonstrate this wider appeal of Butler's theory through applying it to the particular case of Japan. The reason for using this case is primarily the difficulty to understand any complex theory in the abstract. This is especially important in the initial stages of attempting to import a theory designed for one discipline to another. For that

⁴²Alina Hosu, *Identity Politics and Narrativity*, 8.

reason, what I hope to show is not necessarily that the whole of Butler's theory is useful to International Relations, since there are many areas of that theory that I do not have time to discuss and there are many areas of the theory that cannot be tested by the single illustration that I use. A true verification of the theory would require several or many case studies, which is beyond the scope of what I can hope to achieve here. What I do wish to show is that some areas of Butler's theory contain promising dimensions for the study of identity topics in the discipline of International Relations. I attempt to establish and defend my second sub-hypothesis that identity has, in practice, been used as an artificial instrument significant for the construction of the Japanese nation state.

It is also very important to make more evident the need to study together the social and political realms for the discipline of International Relations. I would like to clarify the impossibility of splitting the social dimension and the political dimension when studying the nation state for, as we have seen, the idea of the 'nation state' necessarily involves both dimensions. As I will demonstrate, the social and the political dimensions are inseparable from each other, and merely focusing on the political side cannot fully capture the complex issues at stake.

To defend my case I apply an inductive approach, since the particularities of the Japanese case can show a new explanation of the theories of performative construction of identity. This case shows the development of ideas of belonging and the creation of national subjects despite ethnic differences through the use of institutions and norms created explicitly by the state. I derive my arguments from a number of authors whose expertise in identity or the deconstruction of the nationness of Japan or whose professional and personal experience in Japan have called my attention to the topic of identity. However, Butler's theory will form the main theoretical framework for the present analysis of the

performative construction of national identity in Japan. I will use this theory to reveal the conscious recognition and reproduction of national ideas through the execution of standards established by the institutions of the state.

In chapter one I present and explore the theory of performative construction of identity and I justify why it is theoretically possible to apply this theory to the construction of nation states. I then show how these ideas can be enhanced with the help of some of Benedict Anderson's key ideas on imagined communities. I argue that a certain approach to Anderson's position can give to us a more comprehensive view of Butler's ideas through the addition of Anderson's illuminating concepts of 'nation' and 'belonging'. This will form the theoretical base of the whole study by demonstrating how national identity can be constructed artificially.

In chapter two I will argue that the case of Japan provides significant practical evidence supporting the validity of the theory of performative national identity construction developed in chapter one. I introduce the Japanese case history and then demonstrate that several crucial themes of the theory can be used to explain the artificial nature of Japanese national identity construction in a particularly integrated and illuminating way.

In chapter three I evaluate how successful the Japanese project of artificial national identity construction has been. I explore the perceived benefits of creating and maintaining national unity and consequently internal stability and external power. I also contend that the manipulation of national identity by political means and political elites has an unavoidable dark side. Caution therefore needs to be exercised when approaching artificial identity construction - which the Japanese case shows is an empirical reality not a social science fiction. There is nevertheless a positive side to projects of artificial identity construction that should not go unnoticed either practically or for their theoretical implications.

In the conclusion I draw together and reinforce the central argument of this thesis that the Japanese case of the construction of the nation state was a process in which identity was used as an artificial instrument.

In the coming chapters I will make use of historical approaches to show how the Japanese case gives empirical support to the theory. Above all I wish to demonstrate that nation states are not pre-given subjects, and that they are more complicated than merely the sum of separate interpretations of their institutions and populations. This brings us to the point where the conceptualization and theorization of performativity has to be addressed. For this reason, chapter one will explore some of the central ideas of the performative theory of identity construction and show that it can be a useful resource not only for gender studies but for studies on national identity that fall well within the realms of international relations.