

ISA Catalytic Workshop Report

Making Identity Count: Quantifying National Identity Discourses

Tuesday, March 15, 2016
Hilton 205
Atlanta, Georgia

Organizers: Bentley Allan, Ted Hopf, and Srdjan Vucetic

Workshop Summary

Our workshop was a resounding success. It brought together interpretivist and quantitative scholars to help build a database of national identity for all the great powers from 1810 to the present. The discussion moved to a high level early in the day, but remained there as we collectively dove into the problems that face methods that seek to bridge the qualitative-quantitative gap. For the organizers, the central take away of the project was that a project to build quantitative database of national identity on a truly interpretivist analysis must confront three sets of challenges: potential constraints on the statistical form, establishing comparative validity from country to country, and demonstrating the reliability and robustness of the method. These points represent the work that the organizers must going forward as we seek to build a database that can bridge the interpretivist-quantitative divide in International Relations.

Workshop Schedule

9:00-10:00am: An Introduction to The Making Identity Count Framework

Ted Hopf and Bentley Allan

10:15am-12:15pm: National Identity Discourses

British National Identity, Srdjan Vucetic
French National Identity, Thierry Balzacq
American National Identity, Eric Blanchard
Brazilian National Identity, Marina Duque
Discussion

12:30-2:00pm, Lunch

2:00-4:00pm: Quantifying National Identity Discourse

Preliminary Quantification Proposals, Ted Hopf, Bentley Allan, and Srdjan Vucetic

Responses by Bridget Coggins, Yoshiko Herrera, Victoria Clement, Burcu Bayram, Michael Beckstrand, Dan Reiter, Josh Kertzer, Daisuke Minami, Jelena Subotic, Markus Kornprobst

4:00-5:00pm: Make Identity Count

Discussion on how to improve the data in the MIC project going forward.

The morning sessions featured presentations on the national identities of Britain, France, the U.S., and Brazil in the post-Second World War II era. These talks presented new data that is part of a planned volume on the distribution of identity and the emergence of the post-Second World War Order in 1950. The presentations helped the organizers to theorize how the identity profiles of Britain, France, and the U.S. undergirded the creation of the Western alliance in the early Cold War. This data will be complemented from Chinese, Indian, and Russian data in the planned volume. Looking at 1950, the year of the “after victory” settlement and the emerging Cold War, our ideational analysis of U.S. hegemony probes the extent to which U.S.-promoted norms and rules resonated with Great Power states and societies, including those associated with the so-called Western hegemonic bloc (Britain, France, West Germany), their socialist challengers (the Soviet Union and China), and those identified by themselves and others as following their own paths to modernity (Brazil, India). What we wish to accomplish here is provide an account of the ideological foundations of the post-World War II international order that is inductive and systemic as opposed to schematic, stylized, and single country case-based. The morning discussion pushed the organizers, who developed the method on display in the reports, to clarify aspects of the methodology. A central takeaway from this discussion was that our coding procedure needs to be streamlined to clarify text selection and the coding rules.

The afternoon opened the floor up to formal responses from the quantitative participants. Collectively, they made three main points:

- i) **the inductive nature of the interpretive coding means that there will be constraints on the statistical form the data should take.** Namely, one participant argued that a continuous ordinal variable would be misleading and that a dichotomous variable that simply stated whether an identity was present or not would be the most valid. Other participants suggested that an ordinal variable would be no worse than a continuous one and both would have some utility as a proxy that tracked changes in identity discourse. The organizers realize this is a complex and technical issue and will be requesting a formal write-up of the position that both kinds variables are good in a co-authored paper to appear in a volume on the distribution of identity from 1950-2000, which will contain the first time series data from the project.
- ii) **the inductive nature of the interpretive coding raises questions about comparative validity.** The problem arises because the “developing” country identity is not articulated in the same way in say Brazil and China. So if we have a variable that says “developing” present in both Brazil and China, does this mean the same thing? This is an important point, but participants and organizers responded to the critique by saying that it is not unique to this database. Moreover, all we need to maintain is that having that identity would tend to promote similar kinds of behavior. This theoretical claim can be verified by looking at the qualitative data. This raised another simple but often forgotten point that we believe is worthy of publication: quantitative findings built on interpretivist data only means something significant when checked against the qualitative findings. This may be generally true but broadly ignored. It is worth further exploration.
- iii) **the organizers should check the reliability of the inductive, interpretivist coding with some quantitative content analysis.** There were many options discussed (e.g., structural topic modelling and other learning based content analysis) that would be appropriate. Such methods would convince a wider network of quantitative scholars that the findings are reliable and robust.

The discussion was remarkable in that it spanned interpretivist principles and high end statistical techniques and back again multiple times throughout the day. Participants on both sides of the qualitative-quantitative divide made that divide seem small, so long as we are willing and able to ask questions and translate jargon. The workshop will not merely enhance this overall

project, but indeed is part of the conversations that make such a project possible in the first place.

Future Publications

Emboldened by the success of the workshop, the organizers pitched a book series on our larger project, the study of great power national identity from 1810 to present, to Oxford University Press, which enthusiastically invited our proposal. So the results of the workshop will inform not just one volume or journal issue, but an entire series. Nonetheless, the research presented at the workshop will form the basis of two edited volumes in the project. First, there will be a volume, provisionally entitled *International Order and Great Power Identity after World War II*, that will seek to theorize the role of identity in the emergence of international orders. Second, there will be a volume on the distribution of identity from 1950-2000 that will include the first time series data to emerge from the project. That volume will include responses from some of the quantitative participants at the workshop which will help the organizers to explain how their interpretively recovered data has been translated into a quantitative dataset.

Budget Details

Expense	No.	Cost per	Total	
Meeting Room Rental	1	\$200.00	\$200.00	
Lodging				
Bentley Allan	US	1	\$192.92	
Burcu Bayram	US	1	\$209.16	
Michael Beckstrand	US	1	\$194.31	
Eric Blanchard	US	1	\$192.92	
Bridget Coggins	US	1	\$183.79	
Joshua Kertzer	US	1	\$210.32	
Marina Duque	US	1	\$227.72	
Srdjan Vucetic	Non-US	2	\$445.22	
		\$1,856.36	1856.36	
Per Diem				
Bentley Allan	US	1	\$75.00	
Burcu Bayram	US	1	\$75.00	
Theirry Balzacq	Non-US	2	\$150.00	
Michael Beckstrand	US	1	\$75.00	
Eric Blanchard	US	1	\$75.00	
Bridget Coggins	US	1	\$75.00	
Joshua Kertzer	US	1	\$75.00	
Marina Duque	US	1	\$75.00	
Srdjan Vucetic	Non-US	2	\$150.00	
Ted Hopf	Non-US	2	\$150.00	
*some of our participants did not request reimbursement, even though they attended				
		\$975.00	\$975.00	
Coffee/Tea Break		2	\$90.00	\$180.00
Projector, Screen, Netbook		1	\$350.00	\$350.00
Internet		1	\$200.00	\$200.00
				\$3,761.36