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Chapter 1 : Ontological Security and India-China Relations | Lu Yang - www.nxgvision.com

This article proposes that in addition to physical security, states also seek ontological security, or security of the self. Ontological security is achieved by routinizing relationships with significant others, and actors therefore become attached to those relationships. Like its physical.

This relocates the referent of ontological security from the self to the social arrangements where action takes place. It implies that actors seek not to secure the coherence and stability of self in particular, but rather of their broader social context. By taking this relational approach, international relations scholars may avoid methodological difficulties in accessing or defining the cognitive or affective processes shaping certain actors, while honing in on the social embeddedness of action. I outline three causal mechanisms for theorizing ontological security in particular cases: I do so with reference to prominent methodological frameworks in relational sociology—namely, those based on fields and on figurations, respectively. Finally, I connect this new approach to theorizing ontological security to existing trends in relational international relations research. I argue that it provides a theoretical architecture more sensitive to action and agency than is offered by many existing relational approaches, and is especially well suited to the study of precarious forms of transnational life. Introduction the research program, but reorient them around factors and processes less dependent on the specific beliefs or feelings of actors. In this note, I propose such a reformulation. Scholars working on ontological security argue and its most prevalent explanatory modes. This examination shows why international actors such as states or policymakers do things that, from a traditional security perspective, appear costly or even directly compromise their physical security. They contend that actors must draw an alternative from relational sociology would be secure their social existence before they are able to do preferable for some research problems. To further develop this alternative, I outline three relational ontological to say, with an emphasis on particular thoughts and security mechanisms: By building theories with these mechanisms. Second, they must begin with non-psychological factors. Early ontological security scholarship in the field criticized In some circumstances these assumptions prove unproblematic, but in others they are unwarranted or limiting. It also questioned, from within, the liberal These assumptions are not essential to the study of bias of existing constructivist theorizing. It argued that ontological security, however. International Studies Quarterly, doi: V All rights reserved. For permissions, please e-mail: For scholars of international around which most ontological security scholars arrange relations, then, the concept of ontological security provides a way of understanding the relationship between values, identities, and routinized actions. As implied by the findings thereof. The framework explains why some states remain see two practical, methodological reasons to develop a relational view of ontological security—one that does not adventures. It also directs attention to the principles and emphasize psychological and affective factors. Of course, actors need attention in the way that scholars cash out—and apply empirically—ontological security. This remains true even of action theory. Even in loyal Giddensian form, it delivered ontological security scholarship that is otherwise very attractive on this critical promise: Political elites are generally ontological security provided a new avenue of inquiry into highly conscious of the need for image management, as world politics otherwise closed by the rationalist paradigm well as practiced and experienced in dissembling, obfuscatory debates of the self and others. In consequence, their statements may be unreliable indicators. In such circumstances, we should treat assertions as forms of

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rhetorical or discursive from their role in alleviating existential anxiety. Beyond this, we face broader questions about the validity of narrative accounts. As it stands now, the ontological security literature may be ferent from what researchers assume, we often lack clear the former rests upon explorations of subjectivity and psychology, in order to underwrite the causal explanations in which ontological security features. Within this literature, psychological and affective factors receive particular emphasis. The concept of ontological security mostly encompasses processes of self-perception and self-experience. These provide mechanisms for averting existential dread or anxiety. For example, Solomon is interested in the manipulation of affect through social interaction, and Rumelili treats the referent of ontological security as a narrative relation rather than a psychological construct. Some ontological security theorizing de-Elster or hermeneutic approaches Weber ; Habermas , treat parts from this by incorporating a broader range of reasons as causes von Wright In doing so, they are open to contention from a number of approaches, both realist and anti-realist, that call into question the validity of any explanation based upon them Calhoun ; Boudon Consider, for example, the range of possible moral or affective interpretations one might reach in examining how Israeli defense officials justify the use of nuclear weapons in particular detail on religious nationalism in India. First, what subjective processes or social structures Habermas ; would be the explanatory value-added of an alternative approach? Second, even if it were valuable, can such an alternative even be coherent? Can there be an analysis of causal weight to mental and affective content. Not all ontological security and security-seeking without taking cases may feature strong incentives for actors to dissemble, on board meta-theoretical premises assigning an operative while documentary evidence may help preempt retrospective role to these factors? Skeptics might sweep those makers behave in ways that appear costly and dangerous, foundations away with a single dismissive expression of at least when security is more narrowly understood as territorial integrity and invulnerability to attack. This constitutes a force, making it potentially inappropriate for some kinds distinctive analytical theme: Scholars historically situated narrative. This narrative in turn un-working on ontological security have already questioned dermines the assumptions of those approaches without whether their approach is appropriate for the study of cor-sacrificing their epistemic goods, such as causal inference porate agents Krolikowski , and this skepticism is or observer-independent referents. One defense of analyzing corporate lations is only contingently linked to psychological and affective entities is to emphasize the relational character of self-factors. Since emphasizing these factors may lead to the po-hood, but this still entails explicit, operative premises tential methodological problems just discussed, the onto-about the psychology of actors Mitzen a. Another is logical security project would be improved by the availabil-to confine ontological security analyses to persons only ity of an alternative approachâ€”one that sustains its see for example Steele , Yet even focusing on critical intervention through a different theoretical vocab-specific persons of influence can be problematic; as rela-ulary. Moreover, such an alternative may open up a tionally minded scholars have observed, people may act as broader theoretical horizon. This is a larger problem of psycho-feelings receive little emphasis, can be answered by exam-logical theorizing in the field: For some theoretical tasks this is a strength ; Archer For Giddens, and for scholars who rather than a weakness Craib , , but it neverthe-have taken the concept further than Giddens himself did, less rests on a host of psychological assumptions. For the mechanism by which it does so is through the human studying ephemeral, dynamical, polysemic, or simply need for stable and trustworthy routines of self-expression poorly understood kinds of actorsâ€”such as might be and self-perception. If other, non-psychological mecha-found in settings undergoing rapid change, transnational nisms could also account for the durability of social set-communities such as diasporas, or highly formalized or rit-tings, and for the way actors secure their own continuity ualized exchangesâ€”these assumptions may not be justi-of being, scholars would not need to craft explanations fied. Indeed, it is an interesting empirical

question based on detailed examinations of thoughts and feeling. Hence, and as stand them, scholars must shift to a different meta- theoretical vocabulary. The concepts and theoretical 7 See, for example, the central research problem in Zarakol , 4: Perhaps these policymakers are pandering to more specific 8 constituencies, or have some broader strategic vision? If so, the problem In other words, ontological security scholars can be critical without being dissolves. Implications of a Relational View of Ontological Second, selfhood is processualâ€”that is, the cognitive and affective emerge out of an unfolding action process. While relational- any sense as an idea. Investigating the more psychological ity is a broad and common theoretical concept, and is al- dimensions of ontological security thus gains greater ready present in the ontological security literature,9 this depth if accompanied by an examination of social setting. In par- other words, a relational view of ontological security is al- ticular, relational sociology provides a way of drawing ready commensurable with more psychologically oriented out and building upon nascent dimensions of relational- research. That is, agency arises out ical security, but not currently emphasized in existing of an unfolding process of mutually constitutive engage- work. Hence that the referent shifts from the self to the social ar- seeking or maintaining ontological security works through rangement. I propose three relational mechanisms by actions that are not merely discrete choices or routinized which ontological security may be attained. Rather, actors and the social ar- the field. Together, these principles imply that ontological secu- In the relational view I propose, the referent of ontologi- rity is inseparable from social stability. There can be, cal security is not the self but the social arrangement. By therefore, an approach to theorizing ontological security this term, I mean a structured configuration of transac- that is not limited by empirical or conceptual problems in tions between actors, which both serves as the social envi- defining particular selves, and not reliant on references to ronment in which action occurs and provides the social psychological or affective factors. The implication promising as frameworks for crafting ontological security of this shift in referent is that actors are not trying to se- explanations around relational mechanisms. While the cure the coherence of self, but rather the coherence and mechanisms themselves are the same, they lead to signifi- stability of their broader social context. To understand cantly different ways of theorizing ontological security. Though principles of relational sociology. Fligstein and First, social arrangements are wholes. In this sense, they are forms of life: They thus deliver one of the key which they are not an immediate party or obvious stake- critical benefits of ontological security theorizing as a holder, to pressure those involved to adhere to existing whole: A refereeing actor might im- conventional realist or liberal lens. Fields and figurations differ in some on- ontological security. Refereeing is Gorski , focus on shorter-term, tactical jockeying rational if evidence suggests an actor is cynical or for position and power by competing actors, in cases begrudging in their intervention, because it props up a where the broader social arrangement remains relatively broadly valuable order of things. What matters is not the stable. As relational mechanisms respect for extant normative arrangements, bolstering are important instruments of ontological securing, exam- those arrangements and signaling credible commitments ining their evolution over timeâ€”their development and to remain within them. This of ontological security theorizing into research areas that action is sensible even if evidence suggests that acquies- have previously been methodologically or ontologically cence is only to create the superficial appearance of moral out of bounds. While there may be other mecha- status-quo-altering actions. This may involve reactionary nisms that could cause this, I have focused on three that violence, such as through oppression directed at insur- seem obviously relevant to current international relations gent movements. If sibly unforeseen dimension of refereeing, or imperial and colonial gover- nance as responses to obstructive resistance from peripheral communities. In 19 the next section, I explain what I mean by this. One example that may qualify is the involvement of certain smaller 18 Akin, that is, to officials of a sport who force players to follow the rules states, such as Norway or Canada, in peacekeeping and conflict resolution ini- and to foresters who protect the woods from poachers, respectively. However, relational theorists also stand to benefit from Hence actors may engage in reactionary maneuvers even the confrontation with ontological security, at least as it is if they are not passionately attached and may even seem presented here. Ontological security, as a theme or proj- ambivalent to the

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particular features of the world they ect, calls attention to dimensions of action they might oth- are preserving. Notably, all of these mechanisms offer ontological secu- Those in the field who have drawn upon relational soci- rity explanations without emphasizing convictions, ology have often focused on the macro-historical level passions, and anxieties, but nevertheless establish a ratio- see, for example, Nexon ; Linklater , rather nal and causal basis to otherwise costly or seemingly irra- than on theorizing action. Meanwhile, the prominence of tional actions. They refer to social in- limitations.

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Chapter 2 : Ontological Security – what’s behind this new theory trending in IR? | www.nxgvision.com

Ontological Security in International Relations inspires a number of ideas, and as such, there are a number of potential future applications for Steele's ontological security approach. What Sjoberg has illustrated with regards to feminism may be equally applicable to other IR theories.

Haunted by the past: At the same time, however, it is often argued that emotions have no place in discussions of state action. In this workmanlike book, Brent Steele takes it upon himself to investigate what it means for a state to feel secure. He does not start from fear, however, but from a variation of glory, namely honor. This is not because he does not acknowledge fear, but because he has other fish to fry, namely cases where fear cannot by itself account for the course of action taken. For Giddens, agents are constrained and enabled by structure, by which he simply means sets of norms and resources. Steele posits that a polity needs ontological security, and treats that security as a norm and a resource. When this is not the case, the agent experiences shame. This has been done before in International Relations IR, perhaps most eloquently by Frank Schimmelfennig, but, contrary to Schimmelfennig, Steele insists that shame should be understood as a feeling whose source is internal to the agent. Steele contrasts shame with guilt, which he sees as a transgression of a recognized norm of a community. Steele stakes his argument on this difference, for if shame is not an internal quality which arises and asserts itself independently of what other agents do, then it cannot be the inner-driven phenomenon that he needs it to be for states to appear as rational egoists. The book fights on two fronts. In addition to exposing the mainstream view that emotions have no place in state action as fallacious, Steele also attacks extant post-structuralist work on ontological security for treating security exclusively as a question of reacting to others and hence neglecting internal debates about identity and indeed the element of agency overall. This attack follows logically from his Giddensian commitments, and makes the book part of a wider attempt by constructivists in contemporary IR theory to seize the middle ground between rationalists on the one hand and post-structuralists on the other. In this sense, it is a nice coda to the book by Emanuel Adler that was recently published in this series. As a result of that debate, I have come to feel that these are complementary and that this complementarity follows logically from the collective self being necessarily a composite phenomenon which is a result of struggle. In the degree that Steele is able to change the discourse that he writes up against, this text is able to carry off its own Giddensian program performatively. That is quite a feat. This book began in an earlier form as my Ph. Without the guidance of one individual – Rodney Bruce Hall – I might have neither finished earlier versions of this manuscript nor completed my Ph. I must also thank Rod for the many hours he spent looking over several drafts of this book, and for the time he spent in his office helping me sharpen my understanding of various bodies of major social theory. Rod not only is a fantastic scholar, but in my case has been a great mentor and friend. I only hope that someday I will have the opportunity to pay him back for all his mentoring, which continues to this day. I would also like to thank Friedrich Kratochwil of the European University Institute for serving as an external member on my dissertation committee, and providing critical, probing, and even entertaining feedback during my dissertation defense. Professor Alfonso Damico also provided many insightful comments and served as a de facto mentor at Iowa when Rod was not available. Special thanks to Denise Powers and John Conybeare, both of whom provided helpful feedback on various chapters of this work. Frederick Boehmke and Tom Rice also provided detailed comments on portions of this work. I am especially thankful for the assistance I received and the friendships I made with several of my graduate colleagues. Andrew Civettini provided much encouragement and feedback on various papers that I presented on ontological security. Tracy Hoffmann Slagter, besides being a positive source of Acknowledgments xiii encouragement in our graduate program, provided helpful guidance on Chapter 4, and in providing detailed suggestions about writing structure she also endeavored to improve my sophomoreic prose. Jeremy Youde and Jack Amoureux were above all wonderful friends and colleagues, providing detailed professional and theoretical advice, often over too many consumed

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cups of coffee. By creating an environment for theoretical innovation, Jeremy and Jack were and continue to be welcome sources of collegial support. Past the dissertation, this work benefited from many individuals. Two anonymous reviewers channeled my attention towards engaging some important critical scholarship that I had up until recently overlooked. Several individuals I met, even momentarily, at past conferences provided useful suggestions on various portions of this work, including Howard Adelman, Hayward Alker, Neta Crawford, Patrick Jackson, and Hans Peter Scmitz. Oded Lowenheim, as I acknowledge in Chapter 5, provided detailed comments on the Belgian case, and through several discussions at conferences and over email he has helped me continue to sharpen my understanding of the state-as-person issue. Tony has also proven to be a helpful guide on the process of writing a book. I am thus especially grateful to individuals as busy and productive as Oded and Tony for lending their assistance. Most notably, I am indebted to the research assistance that Tashia Dare has provided in getting this ready for delivery. Moreover, the book was written in part because of a General Research Fund grant provided by the University of Kansas. I am grateful to Cambridge University Press for granting permission to republish. Finally, and most importantly, I have benefited from the most loving and supportive network of family a scholar could ever hope for. The entire Strohman family, including, especially, Dan and Sherry Strohman, have been fantastic in-laws whose assistance served to make it possible to write this book. I wish to thank the entire Akers family, and especially my xiv Acknowledgments grandparents, Eldon and the late Dory Akers, who taught me valuable lessons about selflessness and unconditional love which I will carry with me always. My parents, Ted and Barb Steele, have been inestimable sources of encouragement and support throughout my life and academic career. The many rounds of golf that I have played with my father over the years have most of the time, depending upon the consistency of my driving served to alleviate my notoriously high levels of anxiety. My brother, Kyle Steele, has been my best friend, whose affable and jocular nature keeps me upbeat about life. My nephews expect very little from me other than requiring me to be a rowdy uncle, a role I am all too willing to play, and one I wish I could enact more often. Last, but not least, my wife patiently listened to the many absurd rants which come coupled with writing any academic work, and without her companionship and encouragement I might have lost any purpose for writing this book, or pursuing an academic career altogether. And conversely, but just as importantly, she kept me grounded during those moments when I was a bit too inspired or optimistic. I thank my little girl, Annabelle Kathleen, who provides a daily source of joy and amazement. My only regret in writing this book is that, during the many hours it took to revise, I missed seeing several wonderful and iconic moments in her early life that I will never be able to recuperate. But at the same time the work away from home has made me more greatly appreciate the time I spend with her and her mother, and it is to them that I dedicate this book.

Steele 1 Introduction There are two positions that I confront in this book. The first derives from an assumption in International Relations IR theory that has been a target for critical security studies for some time “that nation-states are primarily concerned with their survival. This book seeks to expand upon those critical studies” problematizing that assumption by asking whether states desire something more than survival in international politics. By way of introduction, I should state that my decision to confront the survival assumption in IR theory was not made in a vacuum. Whether it be torture and all forms of prisoner abuse or the invasion of a sovereign state that posed no actual threat to the US, such policies have been enacted because they were perceived as necessary to protect the United States from some existential threat. The obvious costs to such policies were evident but not fully articulated and resulted in a counter-narrative that was less than effective and did not speak to my overwhelming concerns as an IR scholar and an American in that order. And so Americans are left with a choice “either pursue policies that are selfish yet they are informed best ensure their physical survival, or continue to uphold international standards that are popular with the international community but 2 Introduction they are also informed compromise American security. With such a choice, Americans are usually forced to hold their noses and prefer the former over the latter.

Introduction to ontological security The central argument of the book is that states pursue social actions to serve self-identity needs, even when these actions compromise their physical existence. Yet why do states

themselves feel compelled to pursue such actions? How do such actions serve the national interest? How are moral actions rational? The short answer to such questions is that these actions satisfy the self-identity needs of states. Or, conversely, that if states avoided these actions their sense of self-identity would be radically disrupted, and such a disruption is just as important to states as threats to their physical integrity. States pursue their needs through social action, yet not to impress an external society so much as to satisfy their internal self-identity needs, and this book explicates such actions as rational pursuits to fulfill the drive for ontological security, as developed from the structuration theory of sociologist Anthony Giddens. Thus they should calculate their foreign policy decisions with solely that goal in mind. The cases explored in this book directly contradict, to varying degrees, the survival assumption which pervades mainstream IR, and the ontological security approach elucidates the actions pursued in those cases. Those routines can be disrupted when a state realizes that its narrated actions no longer reflect or are reflected by how it sees itself. When this sense of self-identity is dislocated an actor will seek to re-establish routines that can, once again, consistently maintain self-identity. Ontological security reveals how crises that garner the attention of states challenge their identity. As the disparate behaviors of states illustrate, identity needs compel them to pursue actions that are seemingly irrational – yet such behavior must have made sense to the state agents who decided upon that course of action at the time. Shame is used as a metaphor to understand how identity disconnects can compel states to pursue social actions which sacrifice physical security interests but strengthen ontological security. As developed in Chapter 3, shame is a problem in ontological security – nation-states seek to avoid it at all costs; however, its presence is needed if a state is going to confront its disrupted self-visions and therefore regain ontological security although the former does not always guarantee the latter, as will also be demonstrated. Its presence means that a state recognizes how its actions were or could be incongruent with its sense of self-identity. Ontological security-driven action, because it attempts to change behavior in relation to experienced shame, is thus self-help behavior. Compared to the manner in which IR theorists have treated social action, using the need for ontological security in states leads to novel empirical findings. Evidence that state behavior is motivated by this kind of empathetic identity would contradict neorealism, since such behavior would not be predicted by any neorealist theory. And English School solidarists like Nicholas Wheeler would argue that the defense of individuals is a principle which states uphold through interventions because it establishes the order that members of international society value. The whole concept of empathy implies a connection with others. The source for the repetition of this affective pull, according to this view, can be found at the international level in institutions of international law, organizations, norms, or regimes. There is thus an environmental focus in many mainstream approaches – and it is one whose import goes well beyond the issue area of humanitarian action. Actors respond primarily to external stimuli. Such an understanding of social action would address why states in similar structural contexts pursue different policy choices. Why would the United States fail to stop the genocide in Rwanda but feel compelled to do so in Kosovo albeit in limited fashion in both cases. In , NATO leaders were influenced by the recall of past disasters in weighing whether to intervene in Kosovo. Beginning with the Holocaust prior to and during World War II and leading up through Rwanda and Bosnia, these crises were discursive resources used by state agents that resulted in national remorse and ontological insecurity. Indeed, is there anything more political in social life than the struggle over identity? Rather, understanding the objects of inquiry means also understanding, in a holistic manner, what processes motivate those actions. In short, one must properly evaluate the context in which the self-regarding behavior of states takes place: Three are noteworthy here: Rather, the question to be addressed concerns the roles that ethical standards or Introduction 7 codes of conduct actually play in a social setting considered by many to be antithetical to the operation of normative principles. By resurrecting these accounts, we might recognize not only the theoretical importance of ontological security but also the rationality of those state agents. Interpretive approaches are not without their problems – because interpretation captures the context and contingencies of social action, it falls prey to relativity; all actions are a product of their context and environment. Thus it becomes difficult to generalize about social action precisely

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because the continuities in action between time and place cannot be recognized. Therefore part of my inquiry into the empirical puzzles reviewed in this book includes a proper understanding of not only the context of those actions but also the underlying continuity the decisions for those actions serve. Finally, interpretivist approaches sometimes disregard the importance of how power and power relations structure human behavior.

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Chapter 3 : Ontological Security in International Relations: Self-Identity and the IR State by Brent J. Steele

Ontological Security in International Relations will be of particular interest to students and researchers of international politics, international ethics, international relations and security studies.

The theory seeks to explain state behavior, and offers a new perspective on the security dilemma and the persistence of conflicts. It has proven itself helpful in explaining seemingly irrational state behavior such as an aggressive foreign policy by weak states or the provision of humanitarian aid by powerful nations. OST further allows scholars to analyze norm-violating behavior of states, for instance the use of torture at the hands of Americans in the War on Terror. If you have not engaged with the theory before, you might want to learn about its core arguments as well as its potential and limitations in the following. For those who know the theory well, let me show you how the theory was key to gaining new insights in my research. Core arguments of the theory OST has been developed in the last decade by scholars of international relations, peace and conflict studies, sociology, psychology, and other areas. It has quickly gained popularity. In March , the journal *Cooperation and Conflict* released an issue dedicated entirely to ontological security. According to OST scholars, states do not merely seek physical security but also ontological security, i. States are thus not only interested in survival as realists assert but also in the continuation of the self, i. OST scholars aim at explaining the seemingly irrational behavior of states. For instance, Brent Steele a discusses the paradox of states following moral actions such as providing humanitarian aid although this costs them in material terms 2f; also see Steele Traditionally, constructivists have explained moral state behavior by focusing on the power of disciplining discourses and the role of international institutions and transnational advocacy networks cf. OST adds a rational component to the constructivist account of moral state behavior: While states engage in moral behavior because they are interested in fulfilling ontological security needs, states also engage in destructive behavior for ontological security reasons. Mitzen shows that states might compromise physical security for ontological security by the example of the security dilemma f. States become attached to established roles and routines because they sustain self-identity and thus provide ontological security. In the example of the security dilemma, uncertainty is not so much responsible for conflict as certainty, i. In OST, routines and narratives play important roles as they sustain the self-identity of the state. Routines are automatic reactions that are rarely reflected upon. They provide a sense of continuity and certainty in an international environment of constant change and uncertainty. Therefore, routines are rarely changed and can be the reason why conflicts persist. In this context, work has been done on the case of Israel Bar-Tal Through narratives, states link behavior e. Moreover, biographical narratives are used to sustain the state self-identity Berenskoetter Government representatives of a state employ biographical narratives in political discourse e. Especially in times of crises, narratives are used to reduce fear and anxiety. Another important element in OST is crisis, or the occurrence of a moment that profoundly challenges state identities. Such self-identity threats occur when an unpredictable event affects a large number of individuals, and there is a perceived threat to the identity of a group or state Steele a: States then activate familiar routines and biographical narratives in order to reduce anxiety among the state members Mitzen , ; Subotic Subconsciously rather than consciously, states draw on established routines to restore ontological security since routines are internalized and provide a feeling of continuity Mitzen An international crisis thus needs to be imagined in a way that allows continuity of the state autobiography. This can induce state leaders to misinterpret a critical situation Chernobrov This was paradoxical to many scholars since 1 the USA had formally accepted and internalized the international prohibition of torture and 2 has long proclaimed the importance of protecting and promoting democracy and political rights Ignatieff ; Sikkink Constructivists argued that the USA violated the norm against torture because the norm had not been fully internalized Sikkink or because the norm has been de-internalized McKeown Although the basic ideas made sense, I found these explanations unsatisfying as they lacked depth. The constructivist explanations failed 1 to take into account the significance of the terrorist attacks in for the

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violation of the norm against torture and 2 to grasp the specific processes at work that encourage non-compliance with the norm. OST can help fill those gaps because the theory focuses on the importance of crises, as well as the significance of routines and narratives in the reaction of a state to a crisis. Those are the notions of power, dominance, and strength that are inscribed in ideas such as American exceptionalism, manifest destiny, and the myth of American manhood. Hence, the United States felt ontologically insecure. In an attempt to restore ontological security, the US government activated familiar narratives and routines, constructing the threat of terrorism as a familiar one and returning to a conservative Cold War-like mode of foreign policy. Foreign policy included proactive foreign aggression and policies from the toolbox of a realist. The use of torture was one of these policies. Hence, torture was used as a tool to restore ontological security among the American people. After all, the display of torture as in photographs showing torture at Abu Ghraib prison in Iraq was widely used by terrorists for recruitment purposes Hajjar Potential and limitations of the theory In my research, OST helped me gain new insights and explain a phenomenon that previously lacked in-depth explanations. When constructivist explanations of the use of torture in the War on Terror lacked depth, OST helped fill the gaps. Torture was one tool in the context of a conservative foreign policy, and helped from the US perspective to restore notions about American strength, masculinity, and dominance. With its realist and constructivist elements, OST complements other theories of international relations. It allows researchers to consider the significance of severe disruptions in world politics and the deep psychological processes that lead states to favor certain policies. OST also explains state behavior that seems irrational at first. In my case, the theory was able to shed light on the motivation of norm-violating state behavior. In general, OST has much potential for the study of international relations and scholars should further engage with it. However, as with most theories in IR, there are limits to the theory and its application in research. I will outline two issues that were most challenging in my research with regard to OST. First, the concepts used in the theory are vague or even unclear. Since the theory is a rather new one in IR, there are still open questions about details of some concepts. For instance, scholars refer to the subject of ontological in security sometimes as individuals but other times as a people or a state. This is certainly problematic as it lacks specificity. Unfortunately, OST does not provide a clear definition of the subject of ontological in security. Scholars use all three categories. As far as I understand it, individuals, society, and government interact in the sense that they produce and reinforce narratives and routines that sustain the state self-identity. Therefore, in my MA thesis, I used the terms individuals, people, and government as subjects of ontological in security interchangeably most of the time. Similarly, the concept of a state routine remains unclear. According to OST, states and individuals alike follow routines for ontological security reasons. While individuals can easily think of several routines that they follow in their daily lives, it is more difficult to identify the routines of a state. Steele a argues that states follow established policies because they appear to create predictability, and provide a sense of trust in the world system Scholars of OST have not elaborated on what qualifies as a state routine. Unfortunately, my thesis lacked the scope to elaborate on the definition of a state routine. In my paper, I simply considered American routines the core notions, strategies, and paradigms that have dominated US foreign policy since World War II. Further work must be done on the core concepts of OST, and definitions should be clarified. Second, the theory leads the researcher to work with general assumptions about a state or a group of people. This is a simplification that reduced the validity of my argument. Certainly, not every American believes in American exceptionalism or the idea of American masculinity. Unfortunately, working with OST, it seems necessary to exclude diverse interpretations of the state self-identity. Due to the scope of my thesis, I had to concentrate on hegemonic narratives and beliefs that dominate American politics, excluding minority views and counter-narratives. Conclusion While much work remains to be done on concepts and definitions, ontological security theory is a promising tool for scholars to understand world politics. The theory provides a new perspective on relevant issues such as seemingly irrational or norm-violating state behavior. Uncertainty, Political Imagining, and the self. America, Abu Ghraib, and the War on Terror. The New York Review of Books. Finnemore, Martha, and Kathryn Sikkink. A Sociology of

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Violence and Human Rights. New York and Oxon: American Exceptionalism and Human Rights. Keck, Margret, and Kathryn Sikkink. Mitzen, Jennifer, and Randall L. The Power of Human Rights: International Norms and Domestic Change. Does the Spiral Model Work? From Commitment to Compliance. Ontological Security in International Relations: International Relations 22 2: Mitzen provides the following definition of ontological security:

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Chapter 4 : A Relational View of Ontological Security in International Relations | Simon F Pratt - www.nxgvision.com

Ontological security is a stable mental state derived from a sense of continuity in regard to the events in one's life. It refers to ontological security as a sense of order and continuity in regard to an individual's experiences.

Ontological security is the security of identity, achieved by routinized relationships with significant others and actors can become attached to those relationships. The main research question will be twofold: However, breaking out of this relationship will render their identities insecure. To end persistent conflict, it is important to take more seriously the legacy of the past traumatic interactions. Moreover, a multi-layered historical reconciliation process could serve as a tactic to conflict resolution and to foster mutual trust between India and China. Lu Yang¹ Introduction After two decades of diplomatic silence following the border war, India and China started border negotiations in the 1990s, and in the 2000s established confidence-building measures in the border area. Since then, peace in the border area has largely been maintained. With the improvement of bilateral relations, the India-China border dispute has moved to a post-conflict stage, which means that if current trends in bilateral relations continue, force is unlikely to be used to settle the ongoing dispute. Ontological security, as opposed to security as survival, is security of the self. There is a growing body of literature in international relations IR theory on ontological security, which argues that in addition to physical security, states also seek ontological security. The author, not the Institute of South Asian Studies ISAS, an autonomous research institute at the National University of Singapore, is liable for the facts cited and opinions expressed in this paper. This article proceeds in four parts. The second section provides an overview of the development of border dispute and briefly major agreements on border issue. The final section discusses the implications of ontological security for ending persistent border conflicts and suggests the importance of historical reconciliation between India and China and the strategies leading to this. Ontological Security in International Relations Ontological security approaches challenge the assumption in mainstream approaches that states only engage in physical security-seeking, that is survival, and instead, argue that states also engage in ontological security-seeking, that is, security of the self. The term ontological security has its roots in psychology and sociology. The term was introduced to IR by Jef Huysmans and further developed by other scholars. Huysmans draws attention to the meaning of security. Due to the fear of the unknown, human beings tend to institutionalize social relations and establish orders, thereby providing cognitive security for themselves. She argues that state identity is very much constituted and sustained by social relationships and threats, and routinized relationships could cause ontological insecurity. Other scholars such as Kinnvall and Steele focus on the construction of a biographical narrative that state agents seek to fulfill their self-identity requirements, which helps states mitigate anxiety over uncertainty in the international system Kinnvall, Steele, Krolikowski, Chako Individuals need to feel secure in who they are, as identities or selves, because they require a stable cognitive environment for agency. Ontological security is thus security of the self, which is important for actors to relate ends to means systematically. Uncertainty in Giddens, see also Wendt Since individual identity is formed and sustained through relationships, actors achieve ontological security especially by routinizing their relations with significant others. These routines provide cognitive certainty which sustains continued agency, actors therefore get attached to these social relationships. Applying ontological security to states, states might actually come to prefer their ongoing, certain conflict because even a harmful or self-defeating relationship can provide ontological security Mitzen Through the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, British power in India expanded and met China at the Himalaya. The British tried to settle boundaries with China, yet only achieved partially. When they left India in 1947, some areas still remained undefined and this later became a problem between India and China. The Sino-Indian border is generally divided into the eastern, middle and western sector See Map 1. On the western sector is the Aksai Chin plateau held by China, which, on its three sides, faces Ladakh in Indian-administered Kashmir, Tibet, and Xinjiang.

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Northwest of the western sector is an area of Pakistan-controlled Kashmir ceded by Pakistan to China in 1951, which India refuses to recognise. The border dispute focuses mainly on the western sector and eastern sector. The Economist, Feb 8th, [Note: However, their differences over their common border soon emerged after they signed the Agreement on Trade and Intercourse between Tibet Region of China and India in 1953 and seriously damaged this friendly relationship. On 1957 and China from 1959 to 1962, is a source of great controversy in the India-China border dispute. After a remarkable advance, Chinese troops declared a unilateral cease-fire on November 21, 1962. The war also has far more consequences in India than in China. The war was perceived as a Chinese invasion of Indian territory. For India, the defeat of 1962 was traumatic. In the belief that the inadequate defence preparation of India had led to the losses of 1962, Indian began to mobilize its economic resources in order to strengthen its military capacities. In the perception of Chinese leaders, they secured a border which was strategically significant for China and preserved territory integrity. Yet, the border conflict with India also aggravated worsening Sino-Soviet relations and pushed China into a state of further isolation. After the war, the dispute entered into a stalemate. All the channels of communication between India and China were broken or suspended. In 1963, India and China finally reached a consensus to restore ambassadorial-level relations. It was not until 1965, however, that India and China began to negotiate their border. The first period of border negotiation was taken the form of eight rounds of border talks at the vice-ministerial level from 1965 to 1966. From 1967 to 1968, a face-off between Indian and Chinese troops occurred at Sumdorong Chu valley, which brought India and China again to the brink of war. IX December 1967, p. Following his visit, Joint Working Groups JWG on border were established, replaced the border talks to continue the negotiation. Although border talks during the 1970s failed to achieve any breakthrough, the dialogue itself eased tensions and provided a platform for exchanging views as to border and discussing cooperation in other areas. Under the new mechanism of JWG, the border negotiation during the 1980s was fruitful. These two Agreements marked a big step forward in exploring border solution and dealing with possible military crises. Throughout the 1990s, India-China relations continued to develop, although there was a temporary setback in 1998 on the ground that India pleaded threat from China to justify its nuclear tests. The relations recovered soon in the early 2000s and bilateral trade had by then emerged as a driving force. Package settlement was first raised by Chinese Premier Zhou Enlai in 1954, later by Deng Xiaoping, suggesting a swap between eastern and western sector. However, given that there is no physically demarcated LAC on the ground or on military map, sporadic incidents of border transgressions occurred at times, in some cases, even caused face-offs between the troops from both sides. These border transgressions were reported by media and have become a major source of agitations in the bilateral relations. As to the development of the India-China border dispute, the following circle Figure 1 can provide some insights into the conflict dynamics. The circle describes different stages of a conflict. India-China border dispute has gone through all these stages, and currently is at the stage of negotiation. Nevertheless, the source of the conflict, the conflicting border claims, has not been resolved, which means, conflict could be triggered again and escalate under certain circumstances, though they may not take a physical form. She noticed that in China the market-oriented urban media and online media have increasing impact and the Indian image on these sections of Chinese media varies from moderate to negative. There are two aspects to explain this: On the one hand, it should be recognized that due to marketing considerations some of these media specifically seek to promote national pride by showing that China is superior to India, by focusing on issues 13 Tang Lu is a senior journalist of the Xinhua News Agency who reports India. In Indian media, from 1950 to 1962, the keynote of media reports was still positive, though not without fears and doubts. However, since the end of 1962 there had been increasingly negative reports on China Tang The historically determined antipathy to China, together with the anxiety about the challenges that a rising China could bring about, and the market-oriented news business, contributed to the media narratives that China is a threat. In spite of this, there is no doubt that negative media reports on both sides have had an immense impact on public opinion and in turn sustain their respective identities in their relationship. Although China did not really gain from the war since it not only failed to get most of the territory it claims but also created an enemy in its direct neighborhood, China has the psychology of a winner.

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Generally speaking, the concept identity implies a relationship between self and others. Both relationships had their origins in the border war and were routinized in the years thereafter. According to the understanding of ontological security, routinized relationships provide cognitive certainty therefore actors get attached to these relationships. Reflected in the linguistic circle, India tends to portray China as a threat, while China tends to look down India. The stability of social relationships suggests that conflict can be caused not by uncertainty, which, as the realist school suggests, but by the certainty such relationships offer to their participants. Break the Vicious Circle? The ontological security-seeking behavior of states can help address the problem of persistent conflicts by shedding light on the stability of social relationships. Efforts for increasing understandings between Indian and Chinese media began from the track-two level and have moved to track-one level. In an effort to help bridge the media divide, the Institute of South Asian Studies at the National University of Singapore 14 convened a China-India Media Mediation Workshop in May , brought together practitioners and experts from China and India to address the issue. Traumatic encounters between states such as wars or other disruptive events, especially those related to the founding stage of these states, results in a strong attachment of states to harmful routines. There is no doubt that interactions between India and China have intensified to a large extent over the past decade and this trend will continue, but it will not automatically lead to a better trust between them. Taking the example of China-Japan relations, the ties of trade, tourism, and cultural exchanges between China and Japan have been deepening, however, these material interactions have not yet contributed to historical reconciliation and the resolution of their territorial dispute. Therefore, for India and China relations, efforts towards historical reconciliation should be taken in parallel with intensified interactions between two nations. Fresh insights can be gained from the European context: The European stories suggest that historical reconciliation is a multi-layered process which requires initiatives from the civil societies building transnational networks to connect practitioners and academics, as well as initiatives from the political level. To end with, we know that overcoming conflict is not easy, however, the recognition of ontological security-seeking of states does open a new perspective for understanding conflict, and thus potentials to bring new ideas and tactics in for ending persistent conflicts. From Enmity to Amity. The Constitution of Society: Outline of the Theory of Structuration. What Do You Mean? From Concept to Thick Signifier. *European Journal of International Relations* 4 2: Globalization and Religious Nationalism: *Chinese Journal of International Politics* 2: Security, Identity and Interests. *Ontological Security in World Politics: State Identity and the Security Dilemma*.

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Early work on ontological security argued that concerns over the maintenance of the self, rather than simple 'material interests', drive foreign policy and international relations. Scholars working on ontological security argue that it explains why international actors (such as states or.

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*Jennifer Mitzen, 'Ontological Security in World Politics: State Identity and the Security Dilemma', *European Journal of International Relations*, Vol, No. 3 (), pp. 5 While it is not feasible to relate here the different perspectives and points of contention in the debates about state personhood, it should be emphasized that.*