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## Trust in world politics: converting ‘identity’ into a source of security through trust-learning<sup>1</sup>

ALI BILGIC\*

*In the discipline of international relations, the concept of trust has been theorised in two ways: the ‘rationalist’ approach and the ‘normative’ approach. This article aims to show that these approaches do not adequately reflect how trust operates in world politics and that trust provides a new way of understanding the identity–security nexus in international relations. It is argued that as actors learn to trust each other, this trust-learning process has a transformative effect on their definition of self-interests and identities. The elaborated understanding of trust in the security dilemma is operationalised in terms of the immigration security dilemma.*

**Keywords:** identity; immigration; security; security dilemma; trust

In the discipline of international relations (IR), the concept of trust has been an undertheorised concept. A number of works on trust in IR have created an uneasy compromise between the idea of trust and the rational actor model. These approaches understand trust as an instrument to further self-interests. Contrary to this ‘rationalist’ approach, it has recently been argued that trust is necessary to transcend the security dilemma between individuals and social groups by building a common identity between them (Booth and Wheeler 2008). This conceptual article aims to show that these approaches do not adequately reflect how trust operates in world politics and that trust provides a new way of understanding the identity–security nexus in IR. It will be argued that as actors learn to trust each other, this trust-learning process has a transformative effect on actors’ definition of their self-interests and identities.

The discussion will be pursued in three sections. In the first section, the conventional approaches to the identity–security nexus in the areas of the security dilemma and migration will be discussed. Their primordialist and apolitical understanding of identity will be problematised. Following this problematisation, the security dilemma framework of Booth and Wheeler

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(2008) will be contrasted to the conventional approaches by highlighting how differently they conceptualise the identity–security nexus through the introduction of trust. However, the problems in Booth and Wheeler’s framework, especially in relation to the conceptualisation of trust in world politics, will also be examined. In the second section, the concept of trust will be explored. This section primarily focuses on the question of what trust means in world politics, how it works and its effects by introducing a new theoretical foundation to study and understand trust in world politics. This theoretical foundation will be built through the combination of Alexander Wendt’s (1999) social constructivism and Bill McSweeney’s (1999) sociological approach to the formation of collective identities. In the last section, the elaborated understanding of trust in the security dilemma will be operationalised in terms of the immigration security dilemma.

### **Conventional understanding of the identity–security nexus: identity as a source of insecurity**

#### *The identity–security nexus in the areas of the security dilemma and migration*

The concept of ‘identity’ was (re)introduced in the discipline of IR in general, and security studies in particular, by social constructivist approaches (Lapid and Kratochwil 1996; Wendt 1999) and is used by scholars belonging to different approaches (Adler and Barnett 1998; Campbell 1994; Hoogensen and Rottem 2004). The analytical focus will be on two areas in parallel with the objectives of the article: identity conceptualisations in the security dilemma literature and in the area of the security dimension of migration.

In the security dilemma literature, the concept of identity was first introduced by Barry Posen’s (1993) work about security dilemmas at the societal level. In Posen’s analysis, the political elites of societies manipulate the historical enmities between ethno-religious groups, which leads to increasing fear and insecurity for both. This motivates an ethnic group to pursue its self-security interests. However, this attempt results in more insecurity for the other group, which, as a response, tries to increase its own security by ethnocentric security policies. The pursuit of self-security on the part of each ethnic group eventually evolves into a vicious cycle of security competition. A similar perspective is also adopted by Stuart Kaufman (1996), with a more analytical and detailed focus on how the political elite manipulates the already existing fears and enmities. However, the most important work in the security dilemma literature to link security and identity is that of Paul Roe (2005). According to Roe, ethno-religious groups have different ‘societal identities’, which are ‘securitised’ by policy makers. Attempts to increase security lead to more insecurity and, eventually, ethnic conflict.

The securitisation approach used by Roe has appealed to wider scholarship in the area of migration. The securitisation approach is an attempt to understand

how an issue is presented by ‘securitising’ actors—mainly decision makers at the state level—as an ‘existential threat’ to the societal identities of receiving communities (Waever 1993). According to this approach, ‘securitising’ political actors argue that the social (read national) identities of the receiving communities are challenged by immigrants, who supposedly have a ‘different’ identity (Balzacq 2008; Balzacq and Carrera 2006; Boswell 2007; Huysmans 2000; Waever 1993). A securitisation analysis, as the approach’s prominent figures state, ‘stabilises’ the identities of the receiving community and the immigrant community in order to conduct a security analysis (Buzan and Waever 1997, 243). Without such stabilisation, there would be no unit which could be studied as the referent of security.

These two approaches (the societal security dilemma and the securitisation of migration) share a particular understanding of identity as a ‘thing’, as expressed by McSweeney (1999, 73). The security dilemma and securitisation approaches rely heavily on the idea that societal identity has essential characteristics and, when formed, it ‘freezes’. As a result, different and conflictive identities, with their essentialist features, are treated as the sources of insecurity. What is missing in these approaches is the role of political interests in the construction and reconstruction of social identities; or, to put it differently, the fluidity of collective identities because of the political contestation over them. This results in treating identity as ‘exogenous to political processes’, without discovering the role of politics in the (re)construction of particular social identities and the marginalisation of others (Bilgin 2010, 83–84). The implication of this ahistorical and apolitical understanding is that identities are generally understood in a primordialist and essentialist sense, which leads to the conceptualisation of identity as a source of insecurity for social groups which have ‘different’ identities (*ibid.*). However, identity can also be studied as a source of security, if it is understood from the political perspective. The security dilemma framework of Booth and Wheeler (2008) offers a new way of approaching identity (and enables a political analysis) as a source of security by attempting to explore the role of trust in identity-construction processes.

### *The new security dilemma framework*

The security dilemma is conventionally understood as a situation in which, when an actor tries to improve security for itself, it creates more insecurity all round.<sup>2</sup> Challenging this understanding, for Booth and Wheeler (2008), this approach confuses ‘the security dilemma’ with ‘the security paradox’, which refers to ‘a situation in which two or more actors, seeking only to improve their own security, provoke through their words or actions an increase in mutual tension, resulting in less security all around’ (9; original emphasis). According to their new thinking, the heart of the security *dilemma* is *lemma*—a Greek word for ‘proposition’—as a ‘dilemma’ is a situation in which an actor is forced to make a decision between ‘two equally balanced alternatives’ (6). The security

dilemma is a strategic predicament of an actor about how to interpret others' intentions and capabilities, and how to respond to them (3–4). Booth and Wheeler conceptualise three types of ideational settings from which the choices of actors can be derived: the logics of insecurity.

One choice of political actors can be underlined by fatalism. Fatalism foresees that when an actor faces insecurity in relation to another under the condition of uncertainty, it should prepare itself for the worst by adopting policies whose objective is to increase security ostensibly just for the actor itself. Fear plays a key role in the formation of fatalist logic (62). Another choice is derived from mitigator logic. Mitigator logic argues that insecurity can be ameliorated if actors choose to cooperate in order to break the vicious cycle of security competition and war. This depends on the ability of actors—mainly at the state level—to develop shared norms and values. They ameliorate insecurity because the common norms reduce the degree of uncertainty by providing some level of predictability about others' intentions (15–16). The third choice of political actors is shaped by transcender logic. According to this logic, security dilemmas can be transcended if a new type of relationship between social groups is constructed through trust-building. Trust can be a choice for actors which are ready to take risks to build security for themselves and others (16–17).

Booth and Wheeler's security dilemma conceptualisation provides important advantages for students of security studies. The societal security dilemma approaches reduce the security dilemma to action–reaction dynamics. In contrast, Booth and Wheeler's security dilemma approach enables analyses which examine political actors' ideas about security and how their ideas affect their policy choices. As it brings 'choice' to the centre of the security dilemma, it provides a new framework for analysing actors' responsibility in the escalation of crises into conflicts. Unlike the securitisation approach, it enables one to discover the plurality of the politics of security by focusing on alternative ideas and policies of security in a political structure.

This innovative thinking has implications for the study of the identity–security nexus. In the politics of security, different political actors have different ideas about how to make a social group more secure in relation to another. The choices of some aim to pursue security through ethnocentric (fatalist) security policies, regardless of others' security needs. However, there can be other choices available to political actors which seek security for a social group with others. If political actors choose to act in this way (the transcender logic), a common identity between two groups which feel insecurity towards each other can be constructed.

Booth and Wheeler's most crucial contribution for the purposes of this discussion is that the new security dilemma framework introduces trust into the identity–security nexus. They define trust as a situation where 'actors mutually attempt to promote each others' interests and values, including in circumstances that cannot be observed' (230). In order to transcend security dilemmas, trust should be embedded in societal relations. In an embedded model, trust is so

internalised in social relationships that it is not possible to talk about separate identities: two 'I's become one 'we' (233). Therefore, a conceptual link between the idea of trust and identity is made.

As important and innovative as their work may be, Booth and Wheeler's trust conceptualisation within the security dilemma framework also has problems. First, although they include 'interest' in their definition of trust, they do not adequately analyse the interest dimension of trust-building in world politics. Questions such as what 'interest' means in trust relationships and how it differs from that in relations characterised by mistrust remain unanswered. Among them, the vital question is: What kinds of effects does the trust relationship produce for the interests of an actor? The current analysis aims to build a stronger theoretical foundation for the role of interests in trust-building processes.

Second, and related to the first problem, Booth and Wheeler focus extensively on the 'normative' dimension of trust. They define the properties of trust as taking a leap in the dark, empathy, vulnerability and integrity (234–245). For them, when actors trust each other, they take a leap in the dark by relying on the integrity of others, and expect them not to harm their interests. This understanding is heavily influenced by Martin Hollis's (1998) conceptualisation of trust, which is not satisfactory for studying trust-building processes under the conditions of insecurity in world politics. Why should an actor just take a leap in the dark and make itself vulnerable, or try to empathise with others towards whom it feels anxiety, fear and even enmity? In this discussion, it will be argued that trust does not just appear out of normative considerations. Rather, actors learn to trust each other through interaction taken by small steps, and self-interest is a key motivation in trust-building.

The third problem is that Booth and Wheeler do not sufficiently elaborate how a trust relationship between two actors leads to the construction of a common identity between them. In fact, Booth and Wheeler's study challenges the dominant perspective about identity in IR, which attempts to 'freeze' it for analytical purposes. Their framework enables an analysis of the role of trust in identity politics, albeit that it remains undertheorised. In order to explore this important relationship, the interest dimension of trust should be analysed further. This study aims to accomplish this by using a combination of Wendtian (1999) social constructivism and the sociological approach to identity developed by McSweeney (1999). The parameters of the immigration security dilemma will be built on this combination.

### **Trust in world politics: from 'trust is in my interest' to 'trust is my interest'**

#### *The idea of trust*

The concept of trust has been studied by scholars from different disciplines of the social sciences. In spite of their differences in understanding the concept, all approaches point to the idea that trust is a risky venture (Luhmann 1988, 97).

In spite of its risky character, trust has generally been considered as a valuable asset in social relations mainly because, as Luhmann (1979, 1) put it, trust makes the common life possible. Without trust, individuals would act solely on the basis of rationalist cost–benefit analysis. This results in the limitation of choices for individuals to actions which serve only their self-interests, regardless of others' needs or at the expense of others' interests. In a social system constituted and inhabited by the self-centric units assumed by the rational actor model, a collective life can become almost impossible. As a result, 'a [social] system may lose its size; it may even shrink below a critical threshold necessary for its own reproduction at a certain level of development' (Luhmann 1988, 104). For Luhmann, trust is necessary not only for building a common life, but also for enriching it. Hollis (1998, 4) concurs: 'we cannot flourish without trust'.

As useful and necessary as it may be for the creation of the conditions of a collective life, individuals can be discouraged from embarking on such a venture because, by developing a relationship based on trust, the parties of trust become more vulnerable. The exploitation of trust can harm a trusting party's interests. Is trust not then 'irrational'? Why would an individual make him/herself more vulnerable by placing his/her interests in the custody of others? In order to answer these questions, the interest dimension of trust should be discussed.

According to the approach that prioritises the role of interest promotion as a motive for trust-building, which is commonly highlighted in the trust literature, trust characterises a social relationship which serves the interests of both the trusting and trustee parties (Kohn 2008; Misztal 1996). The interest-based definition of trust claims that two parties, whose interests might be different, can develop trust towards each other if each party adopts the other's interests as its own (Dees 2004; Hardin 2002). Similarly, for Kohn (2008, 9), 'trust is an expectation, or disposition to expect, that another party will act in one's interests'. The result of a successful trust relationship is rewarding. By building trust, as Misztal (1996, 22) nicely put it, 'human beings, as emotional, rational and instrumentally oriented agents, [seek] to ensure that their social relations and arrangements meet their emotional, cognitive and instrumental needs'.

The approach focusing on the interest dimension of trust is challenged by another approach, which prioritises the 'normative' side of trust-building processes (Hollis 1998). This approach argues that if a trust relationship is built to further participants' self-interests, the relationship becomes fragile because it can be broken when it does not serve the self-interests of the parties. In contrast, according to Hollis (1998, 10–13), trust has a normative dimension, whose source lies in 'social norms and moral qualities'. These norms and moral qualities construct a 'bond' between individuals. Trust therefore becomes an expectation that others will honour this bond and 'do what is right'.

Hollis's criticism of the approaches which highlight the interest dimension of trust is important for the purposes of this article. This is mainly because many IR scholars have so far treated trust in the way that Hollis criticises—that is,



merely as an instrument to serve self-interests (see below). However, Hollis and the IR scholars he plausibly criticises do not sufficiently conceive the transformative effect of trust relationships on the definition of the self-interests and identities of the trust parties.

The interest dimension of trust deserves attention, especially when the concept is studied in relation to the politics where diverse interests compete to affect 'who gets what, when and how' (Lasswell 1935). In the conditions where a lack of trust characterises political relations, individuals pursue their self-interests *as opposed to* others' interests. This potentially conflictive competition can pave the way for a political structure in which each 'self' should take care of him/herself. On the other hand, when political relations are based on trust, the individual adopts others' interests as the 'self's own interests, with the expectation that others will act similarly. This does not mean the disappearance of self-interest, rather the generation of the following idea: 'I pursue my self-interests better if I pursue the other's interests because I *trust* that the other will pursue my interests too'.

If neither party betrays the trust of the other, the trust relationship itself eventually becomes the shared interest of both sides—something that both value. In other words, they do not trust each other because the trust relationship serves to further their self-interests, but because the trust relationship itself *becomes* their self-interest. Their self-interests are redefined through trust-building, or through adopting each other's interests. If the trust relationship is successful, they do not think that 'trust is in my interest', but that 'trust is my interest'. This idea has implications for studying and understanding the identity–security nexus in world politics. In the following section, these implications will be discussed.

### *The identity–security nexus with trust*

It has previously been argued that in a social system without trust, individuals act in accordance with their self-interests regardless of others' interests. The individual thinks that when others' self-interests necessitate it, they will exploit the trust s/he has put in them by jeopardising his/her interests. This problem is effectively described by the prisoner's dilemma (PD). In the PD game, the self (-interest) is prioritised over the other (interest). In this well-known game, motivated by self-interest, both prisoners choose to confess and, therefore, can only achieve their third-degree preference (both are sentenced). One of the basic assumptions of the game is that, as there is no assuring mechanism between the prisoners to enforce an agreement on not to confess, each party's self-interest shapes their preferences. A lack of trust (accompanied by the lack of an enforcing mechanism) between the prisoners results in one of the least-preferred outcomes.

Some scholars in IR have attempted to solve the problem exemplified by the PD by bringing trust into the game. However, this type of conceptualisation

leads to Hollis's (1998) question: When the cooperation does not serve parties' self-interests, will trust just disappear? According to the rationalist approach to trust, the answer is yes. Similarly to Hollis, Booth and Wheeler (2008, 155) criticise the rationalist approach by arguing that this approach overlooks the 'human factor'—that is, the personal attachments and feelings between the parties.

The 'human factor' or normative side of trust is an important dimension of trust-building processes. Personal attachments and compassion between actors can alleviate the process by encouraging actors to understand the ideas and feelings of others. However, they are not sufficient to generate trust-building in world politics, where actors are to trust those who they do not know *personally*, at best, or those with whom they share a history of enmity, fear and insecurity, at worst. Can interpersonal emotions be adequate to enable trust at the societal level, say, between ethnic groups which palpably feel fear towards each other? For example, was it possible to build trust between Croats and Serbs in 1992 in the former Yugoslavia? If yes, why could trust not emerge between them? In order to generate trust in relation to the identity–security nexus in world politics, the interest dimension of trust needs to be revisited, albeit in a different way to how it is treated in the IR literature on trust.

A major separation was previously made between 'trust is in my interest' and 'trust is my interest'. The former dominates the trust conceptualisations in IR literature. Actors motivated by their self-interests choose to 'trust' another because they believe that their cooperation serves to further their self-interests. Their broad objective is to address the problem manifested in the PD game—that is, what types of changes trust can make in the PD game and in world politics (Brennan 1997; Deutch 1958; Wallace and Rothaus 1969). Kydd (2005, 6) defines trust as 'a belief that the other side prefers mutual cooperation to exploiting one's own cooperation, while mistrust is a belief that the other side prefers exploiting one's cooperation to returning it'. In Kydd's conceptualisation, trust is a 'rational' choice made by 'rational' actors. In this way, trust becomes a property of the rational actor model.

The common pitfall in this approach is that the transformative role of a trust relationship on actors' interests and identities is never explored. However, a trust relationship can change actors' identities and interests. Wendtian social constructivism can explain why. According to Wendt (1999, 139–146), 'identity' and 'interest' are the two main *properties* of actors. The properties of actors constitute the *behaviours* of them. Behaviours shape an actor's interaction with others. Their interaction constructs what Wendt calls 'structures', which in turn constitute an actor's properties. In other words, there is a mutually constitutive relationship between an actor's properties and behaviours. The Wendtian approach provides a fresh perspective to understanding the role of trust in world politics.

According to Wendt (1999, 18), the idea of 'self-interest' changes in different structures. The conception of self-interest in a structure underlined by the idea

of ‘trust is in my interest’ is different from that in a structure of ‘trust is my interest’. In the former, actors are motivated by the ‘self-interest’ defined by the rational actor model. Trust has an instrumental value to further their interests. An actor makes itself vulnerable by opening its self-interests to the exploitation of others and, at the same time, it prevents itself from exploiting others’ trust. For the dominant approach in IR literature, this is the end of the story. However, for the current discussion, it is the beginning. If the Wendtian approach is adopted, their trust relationship produces implications for their interests. Insofar as the trust relationship is successful (no party betrays the trust of another), they begin to construct a new structure that is different from the one of ‘trust is in my interest’ through interacting, whereby learning is the key.

In their interaction, actors *learn* to trust each other. By not harming others’ interests with the expectation that others will not harm its interests, the actor learns that the promotion of self-interests is not necessarily a conflictive process which is pursued in opposition to others’ interests. As the actor adopts and protects others’ interests as its own, it learns that others return its trust by protecting its interests. In fact, the actor learns that the other is *trustworthy*. If the trust relationship continues, actors learn more about each other’s interests, ideas, needs and fears, and realise that they can pursue their self-interests better when they do not seek to harm each other’s interests. Their interaction based on trust constructs a new structure—a structure underlined by the idea of ‘trust is my interest’. Following Wendt, in this structure, the definition of self-interest is different from that assumed by the rational actor model. Through trust, self-interest is reconstructed in a more conciliatory way.

A new trust structure and a new ‘self-interest’ have implications for the identity conceptualisations discussed above. As a reminder, the two approaches to identity discussed previously ‘stabilise’ social identity. In contrast, McSweeney’s approach to identity highlights the political contestation over collective identities. McSweeney (1999, 73) argues that identity is not ‘a thing’, but ‘a process of negotiation among people and interest groups’. Different units in a political structure claim and endeavour to construct alternative identities for the collectivity. These alternative identities reflect the interests of political groups. As a result, societal identity is subject to constant contestation, and is therefore unsolidified and non-reified. In addition, it is political. McSweeney’s understanding of identity explores the interest dimension in identity-construction processes. Hence, unlike the approaches discussed above, collective identity is not conceptualised by appealing to essentialist ideas (ethnicity, religion, institutional affiliation, such as common citizenship, and so on), but by analysing the interests of political actors which have alternative ideas about how the collective identity should be. If trust is about how to pursue interests, it will have implications for the character of the collective identity.

Social groups can perceive insecurity in relation to each other. Political actors are expected to choose policies, from among many, to address this insecurity, which puts them in a security dilemma. From McSweeney’s perspective, if some

groups of migrants or other societal groups are considered as ‘threats’ to the self-collective identity, this is mainly because of the dominant political actors. These political actors (at the state and non-state levels) define the interests of the collectivity as opposed to, and at the expense of, other social groups’ interests. They claim that the self-interests of the collectivity can be pursued better without developing trust with others. Their conception of interests constitutes a collective identity, which (re)constructs other social groups as ‘threats’ and as untrustworthy. The properties of the collectivity constitute the behaviours of the social group and shape its interactions with others. The interactions construct a structure characterised by fear, enmity and mistrust, which in turn constitute the properties.

In contrast, if political actors conceive that the interests of the collectivity can be pursued better if they are able to build a trust relationship with others, a different structure can be constructed. These political actors adopt other social groups’ interests as their own because they think that they can promote their self-interests in a more efficient way—that is, their choices are not restricted to those that dichotomise others. They think that ‘trust is in my interest’. This is similar to what Kydd (2005, 6) calls ‘cooperation’. However, what he does not consider is the mutually constituted relationship between behaviours and actors’ properties.

If the trust relationship is successful, social groups learn to trust each other. They learn that the other social group’s interests can coexist with the self’s interests and that others are trustworthy. This trust-learning process through interaction constructs a new political structure, which in turn transforms the properties of the social group. The self-interest of the social group is reconstructed in such a way that it includes others’ interests. In this new political structure, social groups think that ‘trust is my interest’. Through trust-learning, the security interests of the social groups become more and more conflated. Social groups learn that they are not ‘essentially’ different from others, but that their differences, which put their self-interests in opposition, are politically constructed. This learning process results in the realisation of the idea that a common ‘we’ feeling can be formed between social groups. As a result, the security dilemma is transcended.

How would a trust-learning relationship work in practice? The primary condition of trust-learning is that political actors (politicians, decision makers, publicly respected figures or civil society actors) should act as ‘identity entrepreneurs’ (Keck and Sikkink 1998). In the trust-learning process, they claim that the insecurity problem of the unit (the self-interest of the society or the state, depending on the level of analysis) can be dealt with through building a common identity with others. For example, in the case of Croat–Serb relations in the former Yugoslavia, political actors such as the Civic Alliance of Serbia argued for a Yugoslav Commonwealth, in which a certain level of Yugoslav common identity would hold different ethnic groups together (Thomas 1999, 109–117). Other identity entrepreneurs would be the civil society actors in

Serbia and Croatia which tried to promote trust between ethnic groups (Devic 1997, 190–197). Even during the civil war, women’s organisations in Serbia, in particular, were active in this area (Bieber 2003; Hughes, Mladjenovic, and Mrsevic 1995).

However, the trust-building activities of state and non-state actors at the microstructure level failed in the former Yugoslavia, where the political macrostructure was heavily dominated by ethno-nationalist groups. Their logic of fatalism marginalised the alternative approach of trust-building by feeding into the insecurity and fear of societies in a condition of uncertainty. The Yugoslav case leads to the point that, as expressed by Booth and Wheeler (2008, 245), trust is ‘elusive’ in world politics, but this does not rule out the possibility of trust-learning as a way to achieve security through common identity-building.

### **Towards the immigration security dilemma**

In this last section, an example of this new security dilemma framework will be illustrated with regard to one of the contemporary issues in the politics of security: immigration. Before this discussion, a caveat is in order. Migration is a multifaceted phenomenon. Different migrant groups can become different types of insecurity for the receiving societies. For example, in some societies, an immigrant community of a particular ethnic group can be a reason for insecurity; in others, asylum-seekers from a neighbouring country can be considered a destabilising factor. Irregular migration has various dimensions, which generates insecurity for societies and states whose border regulations are violated. In consideration of this complexity, the following discussion only presents a sketch of the immigration security dilemma by drawing its broad analytical boundaries. Students of security studies can adjust the framework in relation to specific receiving societies and immigrant groups.

The ‘immigration security dilemma’ was first conceptualised by Mikhail Alekseev. According to Alekseev (2006, 21), immigration security dilemmas emerge largely because of ‘a shadow of uncertainty about the intentions of immigrants’, which is amplified by four factors: anarchy, the indistinguishability between offence and defence, the groupness of immigrants and socio-economic relations. Receiving populations with socio-economic problems may be threatened by immigrant populations with high in-group solidarity, whose intentions are uncertain under the condition of anarchy. These factors, for him, construct immigration phobia, which creates an immigration security dilemma. Although Alekseev’s empirical analysis provides substantial input for the immigration security dilemma theory, his security dilemma is an example of the security paradox. The immigration security dilemma below analyses the choices that are available to actors, underlined by different logics of insecurity. This framework brings the concept of trust into the identity–security nexus in the area of migration.

Immigrant groups can become a source of insecurity for receiving societies for myriads of reasons. In order to understand these reasons, analysts can adopt the 'national identity approach' in migration studies. The national identity approach claims that 'the unique history of each country, its conception of citizenship and nationality, as well as debates over national identity and social conflicts within it, shapes immigration policies' (Meyers 2000, 1251). The national identity approach focuses on 'traditions' that have appeared historically within a country in the course of political, social and economic interactions (Herbert 1990, 3).

The national identity approach not only helps analysts to explore why particular immigrant groups are considered as 'threats' by unfolding the historical, sociological and political characteristics of the receiving society, but also confirms the McSweeneyian perspective adopted in this discussion. The political contestation about national identity interacts with ideas and policies about how to solve the insecurity in relation to particular immigrant groups. The political actors are in an immigration security dilemma in relation to these groups, and how they want to address the insecurity problem constitutes a particular national identity. They are faced with two types of choice.

The first type of choice is underlined by the logic of fatalism. These choices aim to increase the security of the receiving society without sufficient consideration of how these security policies negatively affect the immigrant groups' security interests. Political actors which adopt ethnocentric security policies have a certain conception of a threatened 'we' versus a threatening 'they'. The self-interests of the receiving society are pursued at the expense of immigrant groups' interests, as 'they' are not trustworthy. Political actors assume the worst about the immigrant groups and produce policies to minimise the risk through exclusion and alienation.

While some fatalism-driven policies aim to stop immigration completely—for example, the 'zero immigration policy' of France—others attempt to deter more immigrants from coming to a country. Deterrence policies can be the restriction of welfare benefits for immigrant groups, such as those policies in the UK (Schuster and Solomos 1999). They can also cover restrictive visa regulations, which, for example, in the case of some European states, make asylum-seeking and family unification only ways of immigration (Boswell 2003). Another dimension of these policies concerns irregular migration. As some immigrants attempt to use asylum-seeking to migrate and settle, fatalist policies target restrictions in the asylum system, which negatively affects asylum-seekers (Guild 2006).

Fatalism-driven policies can vary. Their common objective is to make the receiving society more secure by excluding and marginalising those immigrant groups in relation to which insecurity is perceived. The point here is not that the political actors with the fatalist logic want to cause harm to immigrants intentionally. However, their way of seeking self-security produces negative implications for the target groups. As the legal migration channels are restricted, some immigrants attempt to use the services of human-smuggling networks

(Bruggeman 2002). The restriction of welfare benefits and exclusion of some groups from economic interaction in a society (such as the voucher system in the UK for asylum-seekers) pushes immigrants more into the fringes of the wider community. Therefore, fatalism-driven policies feed into the very insecurity they purport to target: an attempt to generate self-security results in more insecurity for all—a security paradox. As a result, the ‘threatened self’–‘threatening other’ dichotomy is (re)constructed.

The second type of choice that political actors have is to build trust towards immigrant groups and seek the security of the receiving society through addressing the security needs of the relevant immigrant group. Political actors with this transducer logic adopt the immigrant group’s interests as their own, with the expectation that the group will not harm the receiving society’s interests. They adopt the idea that ‘trust is in my interest’. For example, transducer-driven policies create new legal channels of migration to cut down on irregular migration. Considering the irregular migration in the European Union, the European Commission suggested the formulation of regularisation mechanisms for irregular immigrants who came to European Union countries seeking protection for humanitarian reasons (Commission of the European Communities 2003). Instead of building detention centres where asylum-seekers are kept, ‘cities of sanctuary’ are created. In these cities, asylum-seekers and refugees are given a chance to contribute to the receiving society.<sup>3</sup> Political actors formulate mechanisms through which immigrants are informed about the receiving society. These mentors, who are ordinary members of the receiving society, interact with the immigrants. This interaction is voluntary and based on trust. The Time Together program in the UK is an example of such a mechanism.<sup>4</sup>

The consequences of the aforementioned actors’ efforts in trust-learning are yet to be seen. If the trust relationship is successful, their interaction will lead to the transformation of the receiving society’s properties, or its interests and identity. Political actors at the state and European Union levels will be enabled to conceive that the security interests of their society do not necessarily require the exclusion or marginalisation of immigrant groups. They will believe that the security of the receiving society does not have to result in the insecurity of immigrant groups. Political actors may be able to think that ‘trust is my interest’ and the immigration security dilemma may be eventually transcended.

## Conclusion

The concept of trust was first introduced in security dilemma theorising by Booth and Wheeler (2008). This article has taken Booth and Wheeler’s work as a starting point and aimed to elaborate their conceptual discussion about how trust contributes to the construction of common identities by presenting a stronger theoretical foundation. While accepting interest as the focal point of trust in world politics, it has been argued that trust can be a way to generate



security by constructing a common identity when actors feel insecurity towards others under the condition of uncertainty, or, to put it simply, when they are in a security dilemma. This argument has been built on the assumption that a trust relationship has a transformative effect on actors' interests and identities. This transformative role has been explained through a new theoretical foundation. Strengthened by this theoretical foundation, a new security dilemma has been illustrated in relation to migration as a contemporary matter of security.

Two main conclusions about trust can be derived from the discussion: trust as an analytical concept and trust as a political idea. Trust as an analytical concept has been undertheorised in IR. The current dominant accounts are rather limited in understanding the role of trust. The alternative approach of Booth and Wheeler represents a new understanding, although it needs theoretical elaboration with regard to the implications of trust-building for the identity–security nexus. This study has shown that this theoretical foundation can be constructed by a combination of Wendtian social constructivism and McSweeney's sociological approach to identity. Trust as a political idea highlights that trust becomes possible only if political actors realise the potential of the idea to generate self-security with other social groups, not in opposition to others. As trust-building is related to how collective identity can be constructed, there is political contestation about it as well. As briefly highlighted above with regard to the immigration security dilemma, fatalist and transcender choices coexist in political structures. Which one prevails is a matter of politics.

## Notes

1. The author wishes to thank Ken Booth, Alistair Shepherd, Nick Wheeler and the David Davies Memorial Institute's Trust in World Politics multidisciplinary discussion group for their comments and criticism.
2. This definition is not exclusive, although it is generally accepted by students of IR. One approach, which was proposed by Robert Jervis (1976), claims that the intentions of actors (whether they are offensive or defensive) are important in security dilemmas. Based on this distinction, he proposed the spiral model (actors with defensive intentions) and the deterrence model (where at least one actor has offensive intentions) (Jervis 1976, 58–113). Following Jervis, Roe (2005, 73), for example, has formulated three types of societal security dilemma. In two of them (tight and regular), actors have defensive intentions; in one of them (loose), actors have aggressive intentions. The conceptualisation of the security dilemma based on differing intentions, however, is not without a challenge. First, Mitzen (2006) argues that actors sometimes define themselves in terms of the security dilemma they are in, so whether they have offensive or defensive intentions does not essentially matter, because the security dilemma is about their 'ontological security'. Second, Tang (2010) problematises the intentions-based approach by arguing that a 'security dilemma' between actors with offensive intentions is not a security dilemma at all. Following Butterfield (1951, 19–21), he argues that, in security dilemmas, actors must have defensive intentions.
3. See the City of Sanctuary website at <http://www.cityofsanctuary.org/resources/criteria>.
4. See the Time Together website at [http://citiesofmigration.ca/good\\_idea/time-together-mentoring-for-daily-life/](http://citiesofmigration.ca/good_idea/time-together-mentoring-for-daily-life/).



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