

# Wendt's Underspecified Ideationalism

: The Case of the "East Sea Bill"\*

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## Abstract

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International Relations (IR) scholar recognize Wendtian constructivism to be a major step forward because of its emphasis on ideational variables in analyzing international relations. However, the authors of this paper argue that Wendt's characterization of shared values, ideas, and identities is underspecified. We suggest that "the 2014 Virginia decision" is an obvious case in which it loses its explanatory power as Americans in Virginia chose to support the Korean cause despite the fact that Japan rather than Korea is closer to the United States in terms of shared values, ideas, and identities. We believe that the problem derives from Wendt's "one-size-fits-all" categorization of his conceptual variable. We suggest that, in order to rectify the lack of specificity inherent to constructivism, a distinction between different levels of the ideational variables is necessary. Utilizing this insight,

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we attempt to identify the contexts under which the “superordinate” values, ideas, or identities split from the “general” ones.

**Keywords:** constructivism, “one-size-fits-all” categorization, “superordinate” values

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## I . From Theory of International Politics to ‘Social’ Theory of International Politics?

Neorealism -- set forth by Kenneth Waltz in his 1979 book, *Theory of International Politics* -- has dominated the theoretical discussions of international politics over the past decades; but not without serious critics. A number of critics have pointed out that neorealism is unable to explain why the “stable bipolar” Cold War international structure crumbled ‘non-violently’ and why the Soviet satellite states drifted away one after another rather than closing ranks against the United States. They accused neorealists of being preoccupied unwarrantedly with material factors, casting aside ideational elements in analyzing international phenomena. Alexander Wendt laid the theoretical groundwork for challenging Waltz’s commitment to this “crude” form of materialism in his 1992 article entitled “Anarchy Is What States Make of It,” which emphasizes the socially constructed character of international politics. Wendt further developed and elaborated the ideas in his 1999 seminal work, *Social Theory of International Politics*.

The core of Wendt's constructivism is that "the structures of human association are determined primarily by shared ideas rather than material forces, and that the identities and interests of purposive actors are constructed by these shared ideas rather than given by nature"(Wendt 1999, 1) Wendt specifically takes issue with Waltz's characterization of anarchy in the international system by arguing that it is quite *underspecified* (emphasis added) as there are different types or natures of anarchy out there in the current international system. He claims that distribution of ideas are a key underlying causal factor for anarchy and thus international conflict, as opposed to Waltz's distribution of material capabilities.

However, the authors of this paper suggest that, while Wendtian constructivism is a major step forward, his characterization of shared ideas is quite *underspecified*. More specifically, we argue that there is a need to distinguish between different levels of shared ideas as they work differently depending upon the situation. This paper aims to illuminate international behaviors that are not adequately analyzed by the Wendtian constructivism by identifying different roles played by ideational variables as they are combined with situational variables. As a test case, we examine the passage of the bill in the state legislature of Virginia requiring that the state education board only approve textbooks that use both the "East Sea" and the "Sea of Japan" when referring to the body of water between Korea and Japan.

## II . The Passage of the “East Sea Bill” in the State Legislature of Virginia

On March 5, 2014, the Virginia House of Delegates passed a bill (SB2) -- by a wide margin of 81 to 15 -- that requires any newly purchased textbooks to note that the Sea of Japan is also known as the East Sea. On March 28, Governor Terry McAuliffe signed into law one of the “most arcane but headache-inducing bills” of the year, paving the way for a change in state textbooks that ethnic Koreans in Virginia pushed for over vigorous objections from Japan(Vozzella 2014). The law requires all textbooks approved by the Virginia Board of Education after July 1, 2014 to note that the Sea of Japan is also referred to as the East Sea.

According to research conducted in 2010, the parallel use of East Sea and Sea of Japan on world maps accounted for 23.8%, whereas single use of “Sea of Japan” was 65.7% and single use of “East Sea” was 1.2%(Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Trade, Korea 2010). The passage of the East Sea bill is thus significant considering the lopsidedness of this distribution. What ethnic Koreans call the “Virginia success” led to another attempts by Korean-Americans in other states in the United States. For one, New York Senator Tony Avella’s legislation (Bill S.6599-D) was passed by the State Senate with 59 out of 63 senators voting in favor of requiring any new textbook approved and issued pursuant to the Education Law to indicate a dual reference of the Sea of Japan as also the East Sea. The bill will become a law pending the

approval of the House and the Governor.

In order to understand the significance of the Virginia case, a closer look at the legislative process that produced the law is needed. Three Northern Virginia legislators submitted the bill in 2014 on behalf of their Korean-American constituents, who considered the Sea of Japan label "a painful relic of Japanese colonial occupation"(Virginia General Assembly 2014). Japan has argued that "Sea of Japan" is globally recognized, including by the United Nations. However, Korean-Americans have countered that the standardization occurred while Korea was occupied by Japan from 1910 to 1945 and thus is a vestige of the colonial period. Mark Keam, the only Korean- American lawmaker in Virginia, and Peter Kim, an attorney practicing law in Northern Virginia, played a key role in educating and persuading the lawmakers to submit the bill.

Gravely concerned with this move, Japan tried hard to prevent the passage of the bill. The Embassy of Japan hired four McGuireWoods lobbyists to press their case. The lobbyists have argued in committee meetings that the International Hydrographic Organization -- the world authority on charting bodies of water -- labels the sea between Japan and the Korean Peninsula as the Sea of Japan. So does the U.S. government. The lobbyists have suggested that the General Assembly should not, in essence, craft its own foreign policy on that front. The Japanese ambassador to the United States sent a letter to the Virginia governor expressing his worry that "Japanese affinity toward Virginia could be

hampered” if the measure is enacted(Weiner 2014). He noted the 1 billion dollars in direct investment that Japan has made in Virginia over five years, the 250 Japanese companies with investments in the state, and the multimillion-dollar export market in Japan for products from Virginia. He also visited the Capitol for what an embassy spokesman described as a “courtesy call” on the governor and legislative leaders.

After an intense debate and lobbying from both Korean and Japanese sides, the state’s House of Delegates approved the measure by an 81–15 vote to include “East Sea” along with “Sea of Japan” in the state’s textbooks. Japan subsequently made a strenuous attempt to bring pressure on the governor, who had pledged his support for the legislation during the gubernatorial race, as did his GOP rival. On March 28, 2014, the governor signed off on the legislation.

The passage of the bill is noteworthy as it poses many theoretical questions for IR theorists. Why did the Americans in Virginia decide to stand with the Koreans alienating Japan, a country that is not only a lot more important for the American interest from a materialist point of view, but also closer to the Americans from the perspective of social relations. What affected the lawmakers’ decision making? How can the passage of this bill be analyzed from an IR theoretical perspective?

### III. Wendtian Constructivism and Its Empirical Fit: An Anomaly

Wendt's constructivist approach is different from the "thick" constructivism advocated by Postmodernist/Post-structuralist theorists.<sup>1)</sup> His "thin" constructivism, or "via media," addresses an "idealist and holist ontology" while maintaining a commitment to science or a positivist epistemology. It is thus a scientific study of ideas in international politics rendering the empirical fit of the theory imperative for its validity and accuracy. We conduct an empirical test of the constructivism against the case of the East Sea bill.

Moreover, we address the fungibility of our findings; whether actions at a state level can carry significant meaning for actions at a nation-state level. Although constructivism is not just about international relations, as it deals with human ideas and associations, it would be more theoretically interesting and useful to discuss the impact of shared ideas, values, or identities on nation-states' behaviors. Virginia is not a nation-state, but rather a part of a nation-state. Therefore, it would be appropriate to provide a discussion of how much of what happens at the state level can translate into what may happen at the nation-state level.

On January 22, 2014, Marie Harf, the State Department's spokesperson, responded to a question raised by a journalist by

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1) The core of the post-structural argument can be summarized that "every understanding of international politics depends upon abstraction, representation and interpretation because 'the world' does not present itself to us in the form of ready-made categories, theories, observations or statements." See David Campbell(2013).

saying that “the U.S. board on geographic names’ standard name for that body of water is the ‘Sea of Japan’ and per U.S. policy, we use only one name to refer these kind of features for clarity purposes more than anything,” and that “this is long standing U.S. policy that we apply across the globe”(U.S. Department of State 2014). Harf’s statement raises an important question regarding the issue of our concern: Is the position of the U.S. government different from that of the Commonwealth of Virginia? If the answer is yes, then, how much are they different?

The current U.S. government’s position is to call the body of water the Sea of Japan. However, the reason seems pragmatic: for “clarity purposes.” Therefore, it appears plausible to suggest that the difference between the positions of the government and the state is -- if there is any -- not fundamental. Suppose a substantial difference exists. However, one cannot say that the government’s position is fixed and permanent because the reasons behind the clarity purposes can change. In other words, the U.S. board on geographic names is one of the government’s organizations that would reflect not only strategic interests of the nation but also its people’s preferences and desires and domestic political configurations.

Now, consider the significance of the passage of the bill in light of its potential national influence. First, the values and ideals the passage of the East Sea bill signifies are not contained within Virginia but are spreading to other states in the United States. Due to the agreement Virginia has with other southern states to purchase and use the same textbooks, the textbooks which use both

the East Sea and the Sea of Japan are likely to be used in such states (i.e., Texas, Georgia, and Alabama, Kentucky, Tennessee, Mississippi) as well. The more Americans in these states feel comfortable with the use of both East Sea and Sea of Japan in textbooks, the better chances for Americans in other states to be comfortable with a new law governing such a use. Values will be transmitted and socialized via textbooks.

Second, another relevant factor is that the Commonwealth of Virginia is a state with great political, military, and economic importance. Owing to the region's proximity to Washington D.C., many Virginians work for federal agencies in Northern Virginia, which include the Central Intelligence Agency and the Department of Defense (DoD) as well as the National Science Foundation and the U.S. Geological Survey. Many others work for government contractors, including defense and security firms, which hold more than 15,000 federal contracts (Fox 2007). Virginia has one of the highest concentrations of veterans of any state, and is second to California in total DoD employees. Virginia has the highest concentration of technology workers of any state, and the fourth-highest number of technology workers. Virginia has twenty Fortune 500 companies, ranking the state eighth nationwide. What happens in this important state carries powerful national implications because of the possible spillover to other states. Actually, inspired by the success in Virginia, the effort to legalize the parallel use of "East Sea" and "Sea of Japan" is gaining strong momentum in such states as California, New York, New Jersey,

Illinois, and Georgia. Hence, the actions taken by the lawmakers in Virginia can be considered to have a considerable political meaning at the national level as well.

Third, the Virginia decision caught the attention of major national newspapers in the United States. For example, the *New York Times* stressed that the U.S. emerged as central stage in Asian rivalry(Fackler 2014). The *Washington Post* carried an editorial that questioned whether “elected officials should be drawing textbook maps or writing lesson plans,” including the “body of water between Japan and Korea.” However, the editorial(2014) said, “We also think Americans can benefit from learning about the history of Japanese imperialism in Asia.” The *U.S. News and World Report* provided a detailed analysis of the issue and stated that “several states are considering changes to how textbooks reference the Sea of Japan”(Bidwell 2014). The fact that major U.S. newspapers went ahead and provided detailed analyses discussing “Japanese imperialism” that underlies “the East Sea/Sea of Japan dispute” means that the passage of the bill cannot be a peculiar and extraordinary case in one state. Rather, it is indicative of what really goes on in wider areas in the United States. We do not suggest that Virginia can speak for the United States. We do, however, suggest that the change in an important part of the United States is having an impact on American society via mass media.

Now, let us clarify our point. We do not support reductionism. We do not support structural determinism (or essentialism), either. Instead, we support constructivist ideas because it shows the

empirically legitimate importance of the 'social' content or '*domestic*' factors involved in the production of international relations, including state interests(Barnett 1996, 411; Katzenstein 1996, 22).<sup>2)</sup> We, thus, argue that the interests of the United States are continually shaped via socialization in significant part by the shared values held by the states that compose that nation and that the influence will be even more salient in the case of an influential state like Virginia. Therefore, we suggest that an anarchical constraint is not dominating international interactions and that such a close and causal fungibility nexus between Virginia and the United States allows us to meaningfully address the international theoretical implications of the Virginia case we study in the paper.

Having said that, the question we now need to address is "why has Virginia supported what Korea's history has represented?" Let us start with the neorealist materialism. Japan is vitally important for the United States' strategic, security, and economic interests. Of course, Korea, along with Japan, is a key military ally for the United States in East Asia. Korea is, again along with Japan, fairly important in allowing the United States to be able to deter "Chinese expansionism" and preserve its influence in the region. From a comparative perspective, however, Japan is far more useful for the United States than Korea, especially in terms of preventing the

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2) Peter Katzenstein(1996, 22) has suggested that, in pluralistic societies, the state's identities are shaped by domestic and international environments, especially by cultural and institutional ones. Michael N. Barnett(1996, 411) has also stressed the importance of domestic factors when he has said "Communities and societies can be understood as engaging in a continuous debate over their collective identity."

Chinese attempt to change the strategic status quo in East Asia in China's favor at the expense of the United States. Japan's defense capabilities based on its larger population and tremendous economic prowess are notably superior to Korea's. Nonetheless, the Virginian lawmakers stood with the Korean cause despite the anticipated material disadvantage Japan could inflict on the state. This shows that non-material factors did involve in the judgments that they made. At this point, constructivism emerges as an alternative to Neorealism as the former stresses the importance of shared ideas, values or identities that 'mediate' the materialist outcomes.

We agree that constructivist ideationalism has great potential to explain things that cannot be adequately explained by neorealist materialism -- as the example above shows. Yet, we argue that constructivism falls short when it comes to resolving the current puzzle. One can use the factors of shared ideas, values or identities (or preferences, if you will) in negating the materialist perspective; but these factors cannot satisfactorily explain the Virginia decision simply because Virginians chose to support the Korean cause despite the fact that Japan rather than Korea is closer to the United States in terms of shared ideas, values or identities. A strong sense of shared ideas, values, or identities exists between these two nations as their social systems are based on liberal democracy and market economy. Korea is democratic and capitalist. But there is a widespread American perception that Japan is more democratic and free in both political and economic realms. Recent history of the Korean dictatorship also appears to justify such a

perception. Moreover, American preference for Japan greatly exceeds that for Korea. According to the *U.S. Country Favorability Ratings* published by Gallup in 2011, 80% of American respondents had favorable opinion of Japan, whereas 15% had unfavorable opinion. On the other hand, 65% of respondents had favorable opinion of South Korea, whereas 28% had unfavorable opinion. Japan has been in the higher rank group in the 11-year history of Gallup's World Affairs poll, whereas South Korea's rank has generally been low over the past decade.<sup>3)</sup> The data on Americans cannot speak for Virginians. However, it seems plausible to suggest that the lopsidedness of the data does not allow us to contemplate about other possibilities. As frequently quoted, Alexander Wendt (1995, 73) has suggested that British nuclear weapons are less threatening to the United States than North Korean nuclear weapons because "the British are friends and the North Koreans are not." In terms of shared ideas, values or identities, the United States is significantly closer to Japan than Korea. Nevertheless, Americans in Virginia stood up with Koreans over the issue that both nations consider a "big deal" (Vozzella 2014). This important anomaly leads us to think about the need to recalibrate or refine the Wendtian constructivism.

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3) Accessed at://www.gallup.com/poll/146090/Iran-North-Korea-Americans-Least-Favorite-Countries.aspx(June 13, 2015); Accessed at://www.gallup.com/poll/1624/perceptions-foreign-countries.aspx(June 13, 2015).

#### IV. Wendt's "One-size-fits-all" Ideationalism

One can find a clue to this puzzle by taking a closer look at the process in which the East Sea bill was passed. On February 6, 2014, hundreds of Korean-Americans visited the General Assembly building to observe the voting process. Before the voting, Mark Keam made a speech, saying "When they open up the textbooks of their children and they saw that a map that reminds them of the repression, that reminds them of the invasion, that reminds them of that body of water that was crossed by the Japanese to come and annex that nation for 35 years."<sup>4)</sup> What he meant was that Japan unilaterally changed the name of the body of water between Korea and Japan from "East Sea" to "Sea of Japan" by registering with the International Hydrographic Organization in 1929 when Korea did not exist as a sovereign nation since it was colonized forcibly by Japan in 1910. Therefore, the matter is not simply about name changing, but, resisting Japan's past imperialism.

It appears that Keam's speech resonated well with Americans who have tended to believe that their nation has a strong tradition against imperialism. In fact, the ideals of self-government are succinctly expressed in the United States Declaration of Independence, George Washington's Farewell Address, and Abraham Lincoln's Gettysburg Address. Woodrow Wilson's idealist principle of national self-determination is another good example:

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4) Del. Mark Keam speaks on House Bill 11 on the East Sea. February, 6, 2014. Accessed at://markkeam.com/?q=media/video(June 13, 2015).

This war had its roots in the disregard of the rights of small nations and of nationalities which lacked the union and the force to make good their claim to determine their own allegiances and their own forms of political life. Covenants must now be entered into which will render such things impossible for the future; and those covenants must be backed by the united force of all the nations that love justice and are willing to maintain it at any cost.

The four-term, "historic" U.S. President Franklin D. Roosevelt was no less anti-colonialist. He advocated at the Cairo, Teheran, and Yalta Conferences independence for the former European colonies of Indochina and urged that the French possessions seized by the Japanese should be turned over to an international trusteeship for an eventual independence rather than returned to France, a position endorsed by Chiang Kai-shek and Josef Stalin.

In a different historical context, but in a similar vein, the Truman doctrine of 1947 declared that the United States was compelled to assist "free peoples" in their struggles against "totalitarian regimes," because the spread of undemocratic regimes would "undermine the foundations of international peace." Of course, Truman had a security interest in mind when he made the decision. Nevertheless, his strong sense of international justice is also undeniable.

More recently, long-underlying sense of justice emerged more systematically and comprehensively in American society in the form in which it condemns historical abuses of human rights. One example is that more Americans with political influence have become concerned with the issue of "comfort women," that is the

women who Koreans believe were drafted into prostitution by the Japanese during World War II. The treatment of many thousands of women “lured or abducted from their homes”(United States Congress 2007) and forced to serve at “comfort stations”(Kotler 2014) in other countries throughout the course of the war remains a sore point between Japan and countries like South Korea, China, the Philippines, and others whose women were drafted. The United States historically “has avoided getting involved in the painful history dividing Korea and Japan.” Yet Hillary Clinton has been said to have corrected a State Department official who referred to women by the widely used term “comfort women,” asking that the Department instead call it like it is and say “enforced sex slaves” (*The Japan Today* 2012). President Obama confirmed, more recently, that an important element shaping and driving American foreign policy is Americans’ will for international justice when he said, “American leadership also requires us to see the world as it should be -- a place where the aspirations of individual human beings really matters, where hopes and not just fears govern; where the truths written into our founding documents can steer the currents of history in the direction of justice”(Obama 2014).

Monuments reminding us of the pains of the “sex slaves” have been erected in seven places throughout the United States including the states of New York, New Jersey, and California. Of particular relevance and importance, a monument was erected in Bergen County, New Jersey by the initiative of the local government rather than the Korean-American community. It is the

first that a local U.S. government has raised funds for and erected (Korea Times, 2014). All six previous monuments were funded by associations of Korean residents in the United States.<sup>5)</sup> Inscribed in the monument are these words: "In memory of hundreds of thousands of women and girls from Korea, China, Taiwan, the Philippines, the Netherlands, and Indonesia, who were forced into sexual slavery by the Armed Forces of Imperial Japan before and during World War II." It is one of the many monuments built on Memorial Island in memory of those who suffered -- from the victims of the Holocaust to those of the Armenian massacre and American slavery. This shows that American society equates "the comfort women" with the sex slaves and considers sex slavery to be a major crime against humanity.<sup>6)</sup>

The message of historical justice resonates well with Americans because they *believe* (emphasis added) that they have resisted violations of the rights of smaller and weaker nations and individuals and that they have supported the cause of international peace and justice. The United States has often been criticized by some nations or individuals for having been "imperialist." What is relevant in this paper that discusses constructivism is not the fact

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5) More recently, on September 23, 2015, in a unanimous vote, the Board of Supervisors, the city of San Francisco, passed the resolution to build the memorial on public land to remember what it says were an estimated 200,000 women forced into sexual slavery by the Japanese Imperial Army during its colonial and wartime occupation of Asia and the Pacific islands.

6) "It's about human rights, it's about education," said Brian Stack, Union City Mayor, who delivered a speech during the unveiling ceremony, "Educating our youth about what took place in the past, so we don't make the same mistakes again."

itself, but rather the belief that Americans hold about themselves. In this regard, it is arguably true that American sense of justice has been playing an important role in shaping and driving the foreign policy of the United States, albeit at varying degrees of emphasis throughout American history. The 2014 Virginia decision has many reasons. But, one cannot deny that important one of them is related to the manifestation of long-underlying American sense of justice and moral objections to Japan's past imperialism and colonialism.

Critics may argue that the Virginia decision was closely related to the legislators' need to conciliate constituents rather than motivated by legislators' sense of historical justice. We do not deny the importance of electoral interest for the lawmakers in Virginia, and other states as well for that matter. However, the fact shows that, in this particular case, politics remained not as significant as the critics would believe. Although three Northern Virginia legislators submitted the bill on behalf of their Korean-American constituents, it should be noted that 32 out of 38 senators, and 82 out of 100 delegates casted their ballots in favor of the Korean cause. Although most senators who voted "nay" are from the districts located in southeastern Virginia, the delegates who voted "nay" are *unsystematically*(italics added) distributed. Even lawmakers from districts in northern Virginia where Korean-American voters have weighty electoral power voted against the bill.<sup>7)</sup> Moreover, a major newspaper in Richmond, the

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7) Delegates Randall Minchew (district 10 - Counties of Clarke (part), Frederick (part),

capital city of Virginia, carried an editorial admonishing the 'pro-change' Virginia politicians for challenging the status quo(*The Richmond Times Dispatch* 2014).

"Politicians should not micro-manage schools. This is an instance where politicians are justified in passing the buck. We should employ whatever the federal government employs -- and that is the Sea of Japan."

Politicians understand and are sensitive to the power of major newspapers. Nonetheless, an absolute majority of them voted for the change against the warnings of a major newspaper. This is a solid piece of evidence that there is no systematic and direct connection between the lawmakers' decisions on the bill and their political and electoral calculations.

The discussion above reveals that the sense of international and historical justice is a significant factor in explaining the Virginian reactions to the issue of (re)naming a body of water between Korea and Japan. This finding is at odds not only with the neorealist materialism but also the "one-size-fits-all" constructivist ideationalism that does not distinguish between one shared idea (friendship) and another (sense of justice).

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and Loudoun (part)) and Mark Berg (district 29 - Manassas City (All), Manassas Park City (All), Prince William County (Part)) voted "nay" while Senator Charles Colgan (district 29 - Counties of Frederick (part) and Warren (part); City of Winchester) did not vote. Accessed at://lis.virginia.gov/cgi-bin/legp604.exe?141+vot+SV0149SB0002+SB0002(June 13, 2015). Accessed at://apps.senate.virginia.gov/Senator/memberpage.php?id=S7(June 13, 2015).

We are not suggesting, however, that the sense of justice always works to affect states' behaviors. Security and material interests have had more influence -- as shown during the Cold War period. We are suggesting that Virginians and other Americans stood up and supported the Korean cause despite Japanese materialist importance and cultural affinity for them and that it clearly shows the significance of the sense of justice as a variable affecting states' behaviors, although other variables might have worked as catalysts or structural factors.

## V. Refining Wendtian Constructivism: A Hierarchy of Ideas

Interesting to us here are the theoretical implications that can be drawn from the fact that a sense of justice exerted more influence than preference in the legislative process which produced the "East Sea law." One crucial implication is the need to subdivide the general concept of the shared ideas, value or identities into at least two sets with different conceptual importance or priorities. Specifically, a distinction should be made between what we call an individualist concept and a universalist concept, with the former referring to relationships or values applicable to individual states and the latter referring to relationships or values applicable to humankind. We would call the latter a superordinate concept because the individualist concept is included in and based on the universalist concept.<sup>8)</sup>

As we argue for a distinction between different levels of shared ideas that work differently depending upon the situation, a question arises: in what context, then, do the superordinate values split from the general shared ideas, values or identities? In other words, when do the universalist values manifest themselves, exerting influence on decision makers as an ideational variable? First, they manifest themselves when they are in conflict with individualist values. One does not have to choose between the two when a friend is also righteous.

Second, they manifest themselves when there is no significant perception of threat to national survival. The threat perception depends on the kind of anarchy under which the nation-states find themselves. As Wendt distinguishes among the Hobbesian, the Lockean, and the Kantian anarchies, we may want to distinguish between the Cold War and the post-Cold War anarchies, or between the hegemonic stability and hegemonic competition structures. We suggest that the universalist values work more actively under the anarchy with less severe security competition. Under the anarchy with more severe security competition, the individualist values work more actively than the universalist ones.

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8) In line with Wendt's argument, we maintain that shared ideas are socially constructed (what states make of them) and that the universalist concepts such as justice or humanity are not exceptions. Both individualist and universalist values are social constructions which are subject to change over time through ideational and other interactions. We suggest, however, that ideas to which most humans agree (universalist) are more deep-rooted and, therefore, change more slowly compared to ideas shared by part of humankind(individualist); an "institution large and pérenne" takes more time to change.

For example, a sense of justice becomes more significant under the post-Cold War period whereas preference or friendship becomes more important under the Cold War anarchy. Many Americans now call Anastasio Somoza a despicable dictator of Nicaragua or a “bastard.” However, during the Cold War period many of them considered him a bastard but called him “our bastard”(Murawiec 2005, 202). The “Cold War consensus” among the right and the left in the United States is another example where “unfriendship” or hostility became a dominant ideational variable rather than universalist values. In short, the shared ideas, values or identities are a monolithic element when a security threat perception is acute; but, when it is mild, the universalist values split from it to emerge as a significant variable dominating the individualist values and influencing the decision making. To expand the time frame of the argument, it seems plausible to suggest that, if the current Sino-American rivalry becomes a severe hegemonic security competition, the split will be discouraged and sealed. In this conceptual framework, the neorealist and constructivist ideas can coexist in a supplementary fashion on a single, logical ‘space-time continuum.’

Third, the universalist values can manifest themselves when there is a cue that evokes memories of the past injustices relevant to the current problems decision makers are faced with. In particular, as Robert Jervis(1968, 470) has suggested, a state’s calamitous experience in the past with a type of danger can sensitize it to other examples of that danger. Moreover, a cue invoking the memories of the past unfortunate events supplies the

fear, disgust, guilt, anger, or humiliation often associated with them. The analogy may evoke not only specific emotions but also a general tone of confidence and righteousness (Ross 2014, 72).

For Americans, important historical "emotion-laden icons" include the Holocaust, Pearl Harbor, the Vietnam War, and 9.11(Ross 2014, 73). Relevant to this paper, Pearl Harbor has become an emotional symbol of not only fear and outrage but also moral confidence, determination, and vigilance. Thus, when the Japanese prime minister Abe suggested that Japan's wartime actions should not be defined as "aggression," because "the definition of aggression has yet to be established in academia or in the international community" and "things that happened between nations will look differently depending on which side you view them from"(*The Asahi Shimbun* 2013), American memories of Pearl Harbor and the War in the Pacific seemed to have been retrieved, charging them up with powerful normative associations. The American response to Abe's statement was immediate and direct. One week after Abe's utterance, a report released by U.S. Congressional Research Service said that "Abe embraces a revisionist view of Japanese history that rejects the narrative of imperial Japanese aggression and victimization of other Asian nations" and that "his perceptions of history could end up hurting U.S. interests(Chanlett-Avery, et. al. 2013, 2)." The *Washington Post* warned in its editorial that Prime Minister Abe appears to "entertain nostalgia for prewar empire," although he has good reason to reclaim the Japanese right to the collective self-defense

which will allow Japan support its allies in sufficient strength. It also retrieved a historical memory of war by asking a scathing question: “Why, decades after Germany solidified its place in Europe by facing history honestly, are facts so difficult for some in Japan to acknowledge?”(*The Washington Post* 2013).

When Abe attempted to overturn Prime Minister Tomiichi Murayama’s 1995 apology for Japanese aggression and the 1993 Kono Statement that recognized the Japanese military’s sexual enslavement of Asian “comfort women”(Beech 2014),<sup>9)</sup> Congress passed the resolution (H.Res.121) requesting Japan to “acknowledge, apologize, and accept historical responsibility in a clear and unequivocal manner for its Imperial Armed Forces’ coercion of young women into sexual slavery during its colonial and wartime occupation of Asia and the Pacific Islands from the 1930s through the duration of World War II.” President Obama was even more direct when he said in April 2014 that:

With respect to the historical tensions between South Korea and Japan, I think that any of us who look back on the history of what happened to the comfort women here in South Korea, for example, have to recognize that this was a terrible, egregious violation of human rights. Those women were violated in ways that, even in the midst of war, was shocking.

We do not suggest that the lawmakers in Virginia knew all of these in detail when they made their decisions on the “East Sea

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9) He said that “there was no information that shows people were forcibly recruited.”

bill.” But it seems clear that Abe’s revisionist moves worked as a cue evoking Pearl Harbor and other Japanese aggression and atrocities during the War in the Pacific, causing the emergence of the universalist values splitting from the individualist ones. Did the Virginian lawmakers, who stood up to support the bill, think and act like George Ball and Robert Kennedy who dared to speak, when a surprise attack was being contemplated during the Cuban missile crisis, that their President should not be “carrying the mark of Cain on his brow for the rest of his life”? In a similar vein, did Mark Keam’s appeal to historical justice in general and the speech at the Assembly in particular strike a chord with them because they had already been irritated and disgusted by Abe’s recalcitrance? The answer would most likely be yes. Virginian lawmakers, and other American leaders, disgusted with the defiant moves by Prime Minister Abe, appeared to have been cued to act in defense of international and historical justice. A number of Virginian lawmakers acknowledged that they decided to support “the East Sea bill” after they had learned that the name “Sea of Japan” itself signified the imperialist power of Japan(MBC 2014).<sup>10)</sup>

We do not suggest that the universalist values of historical justice have operated as a significant variable with all the decision makers in all U.S. administrations and assemblies in the post-Cold War period. Rather, we would argue that the dismantlement of “camp mentalities” provides fertile soil for those values underpinning

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10) MBC, “Who led the East Sea bill?” PD Notebook, No. 995, April, 29, 2014. Accessed at://www.imbc.com/broad/tv/culture/pd/vod/(June 13, 2015).

the American political culture for centuries. The lessening of security competition has provided the sense of justice with “breathing space.” By the same token, if the United States in the post-Cold War international structure perceives China as threatening its vital security interest in East Asia and elsewhere, the possibility of the conceptual split will become virtually non-existent.

## VI. Conclusion

Kenneth Waltz’s neorealism dominated IR theoretical discussions for decades. However, its materialist ontology came under heavy criticism after the end of the Cold War, especially by constructivists who underscored the importance of ideational variables in analyzing international phenomena. Alexander Wendt, one of the “thin” rather than “thick” constructivists, tried to remedy the Waltzian materialist inclinations with an approach based on an ideational ontology and an epistemological view, the “via media,” that he hoped would be acceptable to both Constructivists and mainstream positivists. His approach has had a significant impact on IR theorists despite the criticisms from both ends of the paradigmatic spectrum.<sup>11)</sup>

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11) Differences in emphasis exist within the constructivism itself. While “mainstream” constructivists, including Alexander Wendt, Emmanuel Adler, Nicholas Onuf, John Gerard Ruggie, Peter Katzenstein and Martha Finnemore, emphasize the role of “social norms” and “identities” in constructing international politics, post-positivist theorists, including Friedrich Kratochwil and Ted Hopf highlight the role of

However, the authors of this paper have found the passage of the "East Sea bill" in Virginia legislature to be an empirical case that contradicts Wendtian predictions. The Wendtian constructivism would predict that the bill would not pass because Americans in Virginia believe that Japanese are closer friends than Koreans in a similar way that Americans do not feel threatened by British nuclear weapons compared to North Korean ones. However, the Virginia case shows that the Wendtian approach in its current form fails the reality test. Why did Virginia, an important state in the United States, choose to stand up beside Korea rather than Japan? What, then, accounts for constructivism's lack of explanatory power? One possible answer to these questions lies in Wendtian constructivism's "one-size-fits-all" categorization of its key conceptual variable, namely, shared ideas, values, or identities. We argue that, in order to rectify such lack of specificity of his constructivism, a distinction between different levels of the ideational variable is necessary.<sup>12)</sup> Utilizing this insight, we have tried to identify the contexts under which the superordinate values split from the general shared values, ideas, or identities. It is our hope that the effort made in this paper would contribute, by ways

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"language," "linguistic constructions" and "social discourses" in constructing social reality. See Jeffrey T. Checkel(2008, 72).

12) The distinction renders the "one-size-fits-all" constructivism vulnerable to tautology. There can be a case where one kind of an idea makes an impact while another, which is in a contradictory and conflicting relationship with the former, does not. However, it will always be true to say that an idea makes an impact, although mutually contradictory and conflicting ideas cannot make an impact at the same time. For example, one cannot say that she takes an action influenced by her sense of justice and her disregard for justice.

of encouraging and provoking theoretical debates, to the refinement of constructivism and, therefore, the advancement of IR theories.

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요약

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## 웬트의 관념주의의 저구체성(低具體性)

하 보 람

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냉전의 평화적 종식으로 월츠의 물질론적 신현실주의가 도전받을 무렵 웬트는 관념주의적 존재론과 실증주의적 인식론을 결합한 새로운 접근법을 국제정치학계에 도입하였다. 물질적 결과를 매개한다는 “공유된 관념, 가치, 정체성”의 중요성을 강조하는 웬트의 구성주의는 현재까지 국제정치 연구의 중요한 하나의 패러다임으로 자리잡고 있다. 이 논문에서 필자들은 관념 변수의 중요성을 인정하면서도 웬트의 관념주의는 “프리사이즈(one-size-fits-all)”로서 저구체화(低具體化 underspecified)되어 있다고 지적한다. 웬트가 월츠의 무정부상태라는 개념이 저구체화 되어 있다고 비판한 맥락과 유사하다. 필자들은 이러한 문제를 해결하기 위해 관념 변수를 적어도 두 개로 나뉘야 한다고 제시한다. 관념 변수 중 인류와 관련된 보편적 변수와 개별국가와 관련된 개별적 변수가 그것이다. 필자들은 이렇게 구분할 때에야 비로소 2015년 미국 버지니아 주에서 동해 병기를 법제화한 사건을 설명할 수 있다고 주장한다.

주제어: 웬트의 구성주의, ‘프리사이즈 범주화’, 보편적 가치, 개별적 가치