Chapter Two
THE GLOBAL CONSUMERIST SOCIETY: THEORISING EXISTENCE

Times are changing and, indeed, changing fast. Increasingly, traditional concepts and theories are proving inadequate in explaining and understanding the contemporary world. Perhaps this underlying thought guided Emerson to note that, "each age must write its own books."¹ This plight is particularly acute for International Relations, which has witnessed extraordinary developments since 1989. International Relations has assiduously nurtured the state-centric and war-focus umbilical cord, from its year of inception in 1919 with the Chair at the University of Wales, Aberystwyth. International Relations have made progress in breaking out of this state centrum and war and peace straitjacket. The idea of its success can be gleaned from the very dispute and varied designation of field/subfield/discipline of International Relations.² Primarily, three designations are employed to refer to the inquiry viz., International Relations, International Politics and International Studies - and now, World Politics.

According to Hayward Alker, International Studies refers "to the most inclusive, regionally or globally oriented, interdisciplinary version of IR, emphasizing within its scope – as some scholars do not – normative, legal or humanistic concerns as well as more strictly naturalistic and social scientific ones."³ Realist thinkers have predominantly resorted to the use of term International Politics, though constructivist Alexander Wendt's Social Theory of International Politics is a conspicuous exception. Alker, sees it as "the subfield of Political Science dealing with international affairs."⁴ International Politics emphasises the conflictual aspect of International Relations. International Relations is an all encompassing term, implying according to Alker, "an inter-disciplinary field of research training and rationally guided practice concerning relations among or across the major groups, nations, states and cross-border agencies (including individuals)."⁵ These competing designations

² This confusion is amusing at personal level, since in Jawaharlal Nehru University, we have Masters in International Studies and M.Phil/Ph.D. in International Politics, perhaps reminiscent of liberal outlook of young and conservatism of older.
⁴ Ibid., p.1.
⁵ Ibid., p.1. Though there are two other designations, viz., world politics and global politics used. I will use international relations, partly because of its wide popularity and all encompassing scope.

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not only point to the young age of the discipline but also promise of opportunity to shape its subject matter and future development. Another phrase World Politics is also very often used, which implies that it is not mere inter-nation or inter-state relations, instead it has progressed to a level where the states are not principal actors or even primary actors. Here, an attempt will be made to undertake study of significance of consumption practices for International Relations. Scholars at best have been indifferent to it and at worst castigated it as frivolous, undeserving of scholarly study. This is due to its positivist epistemology and state centric ontology of International Relations. It is to epistemology and ontology that we now turn.

INTERNATIONAL RELATIONS, EPISTEMOLOGY and ONTOLOGY

The questions of epistemology and ontology are being discussed almost frequently in International Relations. It has been realised that elucidation of epistemological issues is key to the theory building enterprise. Here, discussion of epistemology and ontology is especially desired, since it is argued here that the discipline has a benign neglect of consumption practices. This characteristic is precisely due to its epistemological assumptions.

Epistemology literally means theory of knowledge, implying the method through which knowledge could be acquired, the criterion and standards through which reliability of knowledge thus acquired can be established and the extent to which knowledge could be explored. Ideally, this is the philosophical definition of epistemology. In the social sciences, “an epistemology is a theory of knowledge constructed in social and historical circumstances which is characterized by a series of propositions concerning the real nature and relationships between the subjects and objects of the world.” Barry Hindess conceives epistemology as “knowledge rules” through which “real or valid knowledge can be acquired”. In short, epistemological assumptions have a significant effect on study of international relations.

The related issue is of ontology, i.e. theory of the nature of being. Ontological assumptions guide much of International Relations theorizing. In fact, ontology guides our efforts to study any social and political practice. As, Wendt maintains, “...
ontologies inevitably influence the content of our substantive theories.\textsuperscript{8} Problematising ontological assumptions is not only desired but necessary. Particularly so, the debate on epistemology and ontology has at times become a dispute over which has primacy, epistemology or ontology. Wendt is in the favour of latter, arguing that, "social scientists should not be as worried about epistemology as many today seem to be. The point is to explain the world, not to argue about how we can know it."\textsuperscript{9} In the sections that follows issues about epistemology and ontology in International Relations will be explored, and it will be argued that theories which emphasise ontology's primacy over epistemology nevertheless give epistemic categories predominance in their conception of ontology.

**Positivist/Empiricist Epistemology**

Positivist/empiricist epistemology had till recently maintained a dominant hold over the study of International Relations. Positivist epistemology searched for a foundational law or Archimedean point, through which social practices could be studied and judged. Positivist epistemology was influenced by Rene Descartes, father of Modern Philosophy, and his idea of methodic doubt. That is, doubting every belief until we can know for certain its indubitability. This foundation of knowledge was achieved in his famous dictum of *Cogito Ergo Sum* (I think, therefore I am).\textsuperscript{10} The Cartesian aim of "clear and distinct ideas" was to be derived from intuition and deduction.\textsuperscript{11} Cartesian philosophy is rationalist, implying that knowledge can be gathered from reason alone. Both Platonic theory of ideas and Descartes philosophy argued that true knowledge is within us and can be discovered through intuition and deduction. Euclidean geometry was pointed to as an ideal example of rationalist theory of knowledge. On the source of theory, Kenneth Waltz remarked that it can't be constructed, "... unless at some point a brilliant intuition flashes, a creative idea

\textsuperscript{8} Alexander Wendt, *Social Theory of International Politics* (Cambridge, 1999), p.370.
\textsuperscript{9} Ibid., p.373.
\textsuperscript{10} Cartesian conclusion of *Cogito Ergo Sum* is very popular, in fact it's a kind of mantra encapsulating his philosophy. He argued that in our experiences we found many of our previously held ideas to be false. Therefore, it is needed that, "... I must once for all seriously undertake to rid myself of all the opinions which I had formerly accepted, and commence to build a new from the foundation, if I wanted to establish any firm and permanent structure in the sciences." *Meditations*, vol.1 of *Philosophical Works of Descartes*, trans. Elizabeth S. Haldane and G.R.T. Ross (Cambridge, 1969), p.144. Some people point out that it is not clear, what is foundation or Archimedean point in his philosophy i.e. God, who will not deceive.
\textsuperscript{11} For Descartes, intuition meant an intellectual flash of vision, while deduction implies arriving at truth by a process of mind.
emerges."12 Descartes and Waltz in a similar way search for a foundational idea to make sense of disorder and instability. Descartes zeroed in on the foundational idea of "I think", while Waltz deduced three principles of an anarchical world. This quest for axiomatic truth continues, prompting some scholars to describe international relations as "The Elusive Quest".13

According to Jim George, the significance of Descartes' contribution to "the foundationalist paradox of modernity" could be gauged from "Descartes's efforts to ground cognitive certainty beyond mere subjectivity and connect rational knowledge to an independent universe of things that, in the classical/Christian tradition, could be understood only via "right reason" - a "right reason" for the modern thinker Descartes that lay in physics and mathematics."14 Rationalist Philosophy was established further on the Continent by Spinoza and Leibniz. Spinoza also believed in the power of reason, but while Descartes philosophy is of simple axioms, Spinoza envisaged a geometry of philosophy, setting forward almost 250 axioms or theorems. Rationalism's ambitious belief in the power of reason and neglect of reality as an epiphenomena was criticized severely by Bacon and Hobbes. Hobbes criticized Spinoza's geometry of philosophy as arbitrary. Since, if knowledge is gathered from intuition then each person intuition will be different. Critics argued that Descartes "innate ideas" or Plato's "theory of ideas" are nothing but fantasy, which can be neither seen nor felt. Particular, new developments in the field of geometry in the early nineteenth century cast doubts on rationalist assumptions. Non-Euclidean geometries developed axioms contrary to Euclidean. For example, Riemann and Lobachevsky proposed contesting axioms to Euclidean geometry which contested Euclid's fifth axiom positing that parallel lines do not meet.

Steve Smith gives primarily two reasons against rationalism. Smith argues that, "there is more than one "reason", if in Cartesian spirit, we take it to mean a deductive system

14 Jim George, *Discourses of Global Politics: A Critical (Re)Introduction to International relations* (Boulder, 1994), p.47. Jim George, terms this Cartesian attempt to discover indubitable knowledge as paradoxical modern. Modern, since it repudiated traditional notions of metaphysics and wanted to base his metaphysics on reason alone. But paradoxical, because, belief in one foundational knowledge, is termed by Jim George as pre-modern. George believes that for Descartes, foundational idea was "I think". While Bernstein notes that, "It is less clear what is the Archimedean point in Descartes' philosophy - whether it is the cogito or God himself." In Richard J. Bernstein, *Beyond Objectivism and Relativism: Science, Hermeneutics, and Praxis* (Oxford, 1983), p.16.
based on intuitive axioms." Secondly, it "is particularly problematic for the social sciences, and it concerns the notion that there is a (in the sense of one) real world to explain." Richard Bernstein, disapproves of Cartesian search for foundation and argues that, "we need to exorcize the Cartesian Anxiety and liberate ourselves from its seductive appeal." In the post-Cartesian period various philosophies have attempted to disapprove of the rationalist quest for foundation of knowledge, but the Cartesian Anxiety still pervades western philosophy. As Bernstein notes,

Despite the almost ritualistic attempts of succeeding philosophers to overthrow and murder Descartes as the father figure of modern philosophy, and despite the many attempts to discredit the foundation metaphor that so deeply affects modern philosophy, this underlying Cartesian Anxiety still haunts us and hovers in the background of the controversies waged by objectivists and relativists.

Increasingly, rationalism has lost dominance, but its effects on the whole practice of philosophizing is quite evident. Descartes simplistic and common sense assumption of reality and appearance continues to dominate search for theories. Even empiricists attempt to get behind appearance to account for the reality is partly guided by Cartesian beliefs. As Martin Hollis, concludes, "rationalism is no longer much in favour, but it remains important for its attempt to give theoretical reasoning the task of identifying hidden structures and laws..." In fact, this idea of "hidden structure and laws" guided Kenneth Waltz to posit structural realism, whereby states, in an anarchic structure of world politics, follow self-help. This is precisely the reason for discussing Cartesian rationalism under the heading of positivist/empiricist epistemology: both rationalist and empiricist accounts of reality converge on discovering hidden structures.

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16 Ibid., p.578.
17 Bernstein, n. 14, p. 19. By the phrase "Cartesian Anxiety", Bernstein means that Descartes search for an indubitable foundation was "more than a device to solve metaphysical and epistemological problems", p. 18. He further notes, that, "it would be a mistake to think that the Cartesian Anxiety is primarily a religious, metaphysical, epistemological, or moral anxiety. These are only several of the many forms it may assume. In Heideggerian language it is "ontological" rather than "ontic", for it seems to lie at the very center of our being in the world." p. 19.
18 Ibid., p. 18.
19 Martin Hollis, *The Philosophy of Social Science: An Introduction* (Cambridge, 1994), p. 25. Hollis maintains that the predominant thrust of rationalism has been search for innate forces. Hollis argues, "the relevant point is that rationalism gave the human sciences a strong invitation to search for hidden structures and forces. Whether psychological or social, they would turn out to be the determinants of human behaviour," p. 37.
If rationalists were Continental philosophers, then empiricism was the forte of British. Locke, Berkeley and Hume were the British empiricist philosophers who contested rationalist claims of knowledge and put forward the idea that knowledge was derived from our sense experience. Locke was the founder of empiricism, and aimed to “clearing the ground a little, and removing some of the rubbish that lies on the way to knowledge.” Locke denies the Cartesian belief in “innate ideas”, instead arguing that the sense experience is the source of ideas, which is in two forms, 
*sensation* and *reflection*. *Sensation* is prior to *reflection*. Locke distinguishes between simple and complex ideas, where mind receives simple ideas and combines it in endless variety of knowledge, viz., intuitive, demonstrative and sensitive knowledge. Of these three, Locke terms intuitive knowledge as “the clearest and most certain knowledge of which human frailty is capable; it need not be proved and cannot be proved; it is irresistible, self-evident.”

In short, the Cartesian thrust of intuitive certainty is evident even in empiricist philosopher, whose avowed objective was to contest rationalist claims of knowledge.

The other two very important empiricist philosophers were Berkeley and Hume, in fact Hume was termed by Kolakowski as “... the real father of positivism.” Berkeley put forward the radical ideas of *esse est percipi* i.e. “to be is to

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21 A word of caution is imperative here. I do not want to dismiss the differences between rationalism and empiricism, in fact they are major rather than minor. Rationalists believe that knowledge is innate, like, geometry and mathematics. While empiricists dismiss this belief of innate ideas in us is given by god, but see mind as a blank slate (for Locke *tabula rasa*) and our knowledge is derived from experience. Which guided Hume to claim, “... any hypothesis that pretends to discover the ultimate original qualities of human nature, ought immediately to be rejected as presumptuous and chimerical” quoted in, Calvin Pinchin, *Issues in Philosophy* (London, 1990). But Hume was inconsistent, when he believed that mind and material things were composed of corpuseles or atoms. Hence, we are in agreement with the conclusion of Bernstein that, “Few philosophers since Descartes have accepted his substantive claims, but there can be little doubt that problems, metaphors, and questions that he bequeathed to us, have been at the very center of philosophy. Since Descartes – problems concerning the foundations of knowledge and the sciences, mind – body dualism, our knowledge of the “external” world, how the mind “represents” this world, the nature of consciousness, thinking, and will, whether physical reality is to be understood as a grand mechanism, and how this is compatible with human freedom.” See Bernstein, n. 14, p. 17.

be perceived.”23 Here we will focus on Hume’s theory of knowledge and its influence in positivism since, according to Steve Smith, “for the last forty years the academic discipline of International Relations has been dominated by positivism.”24 Hume sought to repudiate the classical metaphysical artifices, and was inspired by Newton to accept as knowledge only those beliefs which can be arrived at through experiments. Hume was sceptic of the power and capability of human mind to arrive at knowledge of abstruse subjects. According to Stumpf, Hume’s belief in extreme empiricism led him to arrive at scepticism.25 This scepticism, according to Kolakowski, paved the way to seek knowledge through observation and collection of data.26 Appraising Hume’s contribution to the possibility of knowledge, Jim George notes that “Hume, the original, the most consistent and logically rigorous of positivist thinkers, thus concluded that the whole attempt to construct a modern realist philosophy upon an empiricist theory of knowledge was incapable of providing the means to its avowed scientific ends.”27 George sees this as giving "a glimmer of critical “thinking space”."28

In short, Humean philosophy had twin contradictory influences. First, it dismissed any talk of any thing metaphysical, e.g. substance or cause and effect, but also normative values like goodness and justice. Secondly, his very idea that only those beliefs which can be empirically derived can be given the epithet of knowledge, even though Hume accepted that there are none such beliefs. But this skepticism ultimately resulted in positivism where only those things that can be directly observed from reality “out there” would be regarded as knowledge. For George, the conclusion from Humean philosophy is very evident, that “there is no logical basis, even in positivism’s own terms, for the proposition that knowledge of reality is directly

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23 Since Locke declared that substance is “something we know not what”, it was logical for Berkeley to deny the very existence of substance, which resulted in his radical conclusion; “to be is to be perceived.” For Berkeley it was ridiculous, to speak of something existing which can't be perceived. His philosophy of subjective idealism, to account for external reality, had to admit God as the perceiving mind. Since it is beyond the scope of our study, we won’t focus on Berkeley.
24 Smith, n. 15, p. 568.
26 Kolakowski, n. 21, pp. 11-17.
27 George, n. 6, p. 79. George terms it as the paradox of “positivist empiricist theory” which disregards the conclusion of Hume that if we followed strictly empirical methods, one could end up at extreme skepticism. According to George, “indeed much of the history of western theory since the Enlightenment has been characterized by the continuing pursuit of a since of human society based on the very theory of knowledge condemned as inadequate by Hume.” p. 80.
28 George, n. 14, p. 54.
derived from an independent world "out there". But nobody could be expected to hold on to this sceptical position. Now there was either of two options, i.e., return back to speculative metaphysics, which was next to impossible, since increasingly metaphysics had not only been discredited but proved itself to be anachronistic in the age of scientific progress. Hence, the other remaining option inspired by natural sciences had become the logical choice (even though critical theorists won't see it as logical). George interprets Hume's action as,

In this acquiescence before the foundational power of the "Cartesian anxiety" Hume was after all, perhaps the quit essential modernist, searching even at the critical margins for assurance and conviction in the face of the "necessities of nature." Whatever the case, if there is one theme that can be said to characterize the narrative of modernity in the period since Hume, it has been the search for assurance and conviction, centered on a series of ingenious attempts to construct a scientific philosophy that avoided the paradoxical consequences exposed by Hume.

Smith criticises empiricism for the very definition of knowledge which restricts it to only direct observation. This precludes us from talking sensibly about social and international structure. Also, Hume denies causality and reduces it to "constant conjunction". Further, empiricists belief in the pure passive observation is untenable. W.V.O. Quine in his "Two Dogmas of Empiricism" severely criticizes empiricist belief. Quine questions the two pillars of empiricism viz., analytic and synthetic distinction, and the belief that there is some state called pure observation. According to Quine, when scientists claimed that Euclidean Geometry didn't adhere to the practice, it had to be revised. Hence, according to Quine, "the totality of our so called knowledge or beliefs, from the most casual matters of geography and history to the profoundest laws of atomic physics or even of pure mathematics and logic is a man-made fabric which impinges on experience only along the edges." Thomas Kuhn, in his concept of paradigm, argued that the Enlightenment belief that science progressed in a uniform progression is mistaken. We progress from one paradigm to the better paradigm. For example, the divergent theories of Copernicus and Ptolemy coexisted until the advent of telescope. Hollis questions the assumption of the

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29 Ibid., p. 53.
30 For example, the most profound development has developed in the sciences by Newton, Kepler and Galileo. It upturned traditional theological position of earth being at the center of the cosmos i.e. geocentric. Modern developments instead showed it to be heliocentric.
31 George, n. 14, p. 54.
32 Smith, n. 15, pp. 575-6.
33 Cited in Hollis, n. 19, p. 79.
empiricists that, “perception alone gives us unvarnished news in the form of brute, uninterpreted facts, and by the previous argument, without this foundation, we could know nothing of the world.” Immanuel Kant brought a Copernican revolution in philosophy, which sought to counter the sceptic conclusion of Hume. According to George, now, “a new sense of rational-scientific philosophy became possible, on this basis, because it was now acknowledged that factual scientific knowledge, derived from “experience”, must ultimately conform to the philosophical categories of mind without which it is impossible to “experience”.

Positivism

We now turn to positivism, which has been blamed by critical theorists for its hegemonic aspiration. With the Kantian Copernican revolution, the path to positivism’s dominance was now open. According to Steve Smith, there are three variants of positivism while Mark Neufeld analyses two variants viz., Comtean and logical positivist. However, Neufeld maintains that, “it will not be argued that positivism can be defined in terms of the specific methodological characteristics of one or another of the more well-known variants of positivism.” Hollis maintains that “at the broad end, it [positivism] embraces any approach which applies scientific method to human affairs conceived as belonging to a natural order open to objective inquiry.”

Auguste Comte coined the word “positivism” in early nineteenth century. The objective was to construct a science of society (termed by Comte as sociology) based on the methods of natural sciences. Comte envisaged three stages of development of human society viz., primitive, intermediary and scientific. And corresponding to these

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35 Hollis, n. 19, p. 70.
36 Kant accepted that Hume awakened him from his, hat he called “dogmatic slumber”. Kant sought to combine elements of his predecessor philosophers i.e. rationalism and empiricism. Kant posited critical philosophy which argued that “though, our knowledge begins with experience, it does not follow that it all arises out of experience.” Kant divided knowledge into analytic (true by their definition) and synthetic (acquired through experience). Then he subdivided them into apriori and a posteriori judgment on which were based concepts of science. Kant argued that mind brings categories (like space, time, cause) to the objects.
37 George, n. 14, p. 55.
38 Though George traces three influences of Kantian philosophy. One was positivist, other interpretivist which looked at modernity critically. While the third had emancipatory goal in the philosophies of Hegel and Marx. But George sees positivist tradition was dominant.
39 Mark A. Neufeld, The restructuring of International Relations Theory (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1995), p. 23. Neufeld believes that common perception of positivism as “as moral, theoretical ‘number crunchers’,” is simplistic and unhelpful. Further, he emphasises that “quantification is neither sufficient nor necessary for study of the social world to qualify as positivist.” p. 22.
40 Hollis, n. 19, p. 41.
three stages were three variants of knowledge i.e. theological (primitive),
metaphysical (intermediary) and positive (scientific). Comte was influenced by the
developments in sciences, which he wanted to replicate in the study of society. Comte
believed that, “the positivist approach would yield a methodologically unified
conception of science which would provide true, objective knowledge in the form of
causal laws of phenomena, derived from observation.” The pivotal idea of Comtean
positivism was that all sciences can be unified methodologically. This idea was
influences by his belief in mathematics at the base and sociology at top. Perhaps in
this he was guided by the Cartesian conception of metaphysics as the trunk and rest
sciences as branches. Neufeld argues that there are three notable aspects of Comtean
positivism,

First, positive knowledge would be ‘true’ in that it would correspond to
empirical experience (facts). In this Comte was clearly influenced by
seventeenth century empiricists such as David Hume.

Secondly, positive knowledge would be ‘objective’ in that its grasp of
the fact would be achieved without reference to (and without being
subject to the distorting influence of) normatively oriented theological
and metaphysical ideologies.

And finally, positivism as an approach would be methodologically
unified in that it is held to be as well-suited to the study of the social
world as it is to the natural world.

These positivists idea were so dominant that even writers who were critics of
the Comtean idea, for example, Marx, Engles and Durkheim, were seduced to use
positivism in their theories. The second variant of positivism, known as Logical
Positivism, under the rubric of analytic philosophy in 1920s, came to have dominant
influence. The Logical Positivist school was also knows as the Vienna Circle. The
philosophers of the Vienna Circle were Rudolf Carnap, Herbert Feigl, Moritz Schlick
and Carl Hempel. Their avowed objective was to reject traditional metaphysics.
Carnap argued that “the only proper task of philosophy is logical analysis.” They were
dissatisfied with Comtean positivism, and sought to include Russell’s symbolic logic
and Wittgenstein’s relation of logic and language in their construction of positivism,
hence named logical positivism. The fundamental belief was that only scientific
knowledge was knowledge and others like metaphysical were meaningless

42 Ibid., pp. 24-25.
(Wittgenstein) or expressive (Carnap).\textsuperscript{43} Hence, according to Smith, “logical positivists rejected Comte’s notion of causal laws explaining observable phenomena as metaphysical and therefore unscientific.”\textsuperscript{44} Russell espoused the philosophy of logical atomism, the product of which was symbolic logic. According to the early Wittgenstein, “whatever can be said at all can be said clearly” and “whereof one cannot speak, thereof one must be silent.” The early Wittgenstein believed that language has only one function of “picturing” objects. This position he later changed, and came to believe that “to imagine a language means to imagine a form of life.” According to Neufeld,

The emphasis on symbolic logic gave rise to three distinctive aspects of logical positivism: (i) the referential theory of meaning; (ii) the deductive-nomological method of explanation and the related hypothetical deductive model of justification; and (iii) the axiomatic view of theories.\textsuperscript{45}

Smith emphasises on third variant of positivism, which “has been most influential in the social sciences in the last fifty years. It emerged out of logical positivism but moved away from its extremely stark criteria for what counts as knowledge and its reductionist view (contra Comte) that all cognitive knowledge would be based on the principles of physics.”\textsuperscript{46}

Christopher Lloyd sees four main features of positivism: (i) logicism (ii) empirical verification (iii) distinction between theory and observation and (iv) Hume’s theory of causation.\textsuperscript{47} Particularly influential and noteworthy was the “deductive nomological” model of explanation. Hempel was the ardent advocate of this explanatory model.\textsuperscript{48} It involved three steps, first formulating a general law, secondly, clarifying its background conditions i.e. conditions under which it operates

\textsuperscript{43} The logical positivist emphasized on the principle of verification, if a statement was held to be verifiable, then it was meaningful otherwise meaningless. Carnap on criticism from Reichenbach, Popper, Lewis and Nagel, shifted form verification to confirmation.
\textsuperscript{44} Smith, n. 15, p. 571.
\textsuperscript{45} Neufeld, n. 39, p. 25.
\textsuperscript{46} Smith n. 15, p. 571.
\textsuperscript{47} Christopher Lloyd, \textit{The Structure of History} (Oxford, 1993), pp. 72-73. At the risk of being repetitive, logicism implied that through deductive logic one should seek objective confirmation of theory. Empirical verification implied that only those theories or statements are scientific, which can be verified (through objective experiments, viz., synthetic) or statements which are analytic, true by their very definition. Observation is taken to be value neutral. Causation implied establishing an invariant relationship between events
and finally, by these features, explanation of a particular event is deduced. Hempel also put forward the "inductivist-statistical" model, where through induction and statistical collection of facts, a probabilistic law can be arrived at.49

Karl Popper was another influential thinker, who through his falsification methods established the supremacy of positivism, even though Popper, himself repudiated positivism, claiming that, "throughout my life I have combated positivist epistemology... I have fought against the aping of the natural science by the social sciences, and I have fought for the doctrine that positivist epistemology is inadequate even in its analysis of the natural sciences."50 Popper's role in the context of positivism is controversial George sees Popper as a positivist, and his repudiation of positivism as "an intellectual sleight of hand."51 Also, George maintains that "... while Popper ostensibly detached himself from nominalist and phenomenalist premises and acknowledged the theory -- impregnated nature of observation, he (paradoxically) continued to represent social (science) knowledge in terms of a single foundation of understanding based on the (pure) method of the natural sciences."52

The broad positivist tradition was carried in a new direction by Imre Lakatos. Lakatos "demolishes the simplistic notions about testing that have been and remain part of the intellectual stock of most students of political science,"53 as evident in the Popperian dictum of falsification. Lakatos put forward the idea that "we cannot prove theories and we cannot disprove them either."54 Lakatos postulated a new way out of the clash between Popper and Kuhn. Where Kuhn's concept of "paradigm" argued that we are not progressing towards better theories, as argued by Popper, but through competition over the explanatory potential of paradigms, where which paradigm is to prevail is guided by the relevant scientific community. Lakatos, instead, conceptualizes a "methodology of scientific research programs". A scientific research program has four elements: "a hard core; a negative heuristic; a positive heuristic; and

49 Ibid., (1966), p. 11.
50 Cited in George, n. 14, p. 62.
51 Ibid., p. 61.
52 Ibid., p. 63.
a protective belt of auxiliary hypotheses." Waltz believes that "Lakatos's assaults crush the crassly positivist ideas about how to evaluate theories that are accepted by most political scientists." However, Neufeld, maintains that, "the three commonalties [empiricism, naturalism and objective knowledge] just noted have remained fundamental elements of the positivist tradition in both its Popperian neo-positivist and most recently, Lakatosian variants." On the question of the implication of positivism in International Relations, Steve Smith argues that, "positivism is a methodological view that combines naturalism in either its strong (ontological and methodological) or its weak (methodological) sense, and a belief in regularities. It is licensed by a strict empiricist epistemology itself committed to an objectivism about the relationship between theory and evidence." Now, we turn to the post-positivist debate.

The Post-Positivist Debate

The fundamental idea influencing post-positivist debate involves questioning the value neutrality of theories, belief in naturalism (i.e. natural and social worlds could be analysed alike), and that there are two different categories of objective and subjective world. Lapid termed this post-positivist debate as the "third debate." Vasquez differentiates post-positivism into post-modernist and post-empiricist. But here for better heuristic practices, it will be analysed under three major headings, viz., post-modernist, critical theory and the hermeneutic tradition. Neufeld against positivism, emphasises

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55 Colin Elmans and Miriam Fendius Elman, "Lessons from Lakatos," in Colin Elman and Miriam Fendius Elman, eds., Progress in International Relations Theory: Appraising the Field (Cambridge, 2003) p. 25. In a research program hard core assumption cannot be unchanged. They are helped in this by "negative heuristic" which put forwards negative injunctions proscribing contesting the hard core. It also has auxiliary hypotheses, which "bear the brunt of tests and gets adjusted and readjusted, or even completely replaced to defend... the core." Lakatos, n. 54, p. 133. The positive heuristic gives hints to develop specific theories within the program.
56 Waltz, n. 53, p. xii.
57 Neufeld, n. 39, p. 32.
58 Smith, n. 15, p. 574.
59 It is at the risk of simplification, that the phrase "post-positivist debate" is used. This idea is influenced by Vasquez, who terms era succeeding dominance of positivism as post-positivist. As in positivist tradition, strands in post-positivism are many. But they converge on their opposition to, "... a value free, neutral and objective science; the lack of an Archimedian point to build knowledge; the absence of an independent data base, etc." John Vasquez "The Post-Positivist Debate: Reconstructing Scientific Enquiry and International Relations Theory After Enlightenment's Fall", in Ken Booth and Steve Smith, eds., International Relations Theory Today (Cambridge, 1995), p. 217.
60 Yosef Lapid, "The third debate: on the prospects of international theory in a post-positivist era", International Studies Quarterly, 33, 1989. The other two "great debates" in international relations were firstly, between idealism and realism in the late 1930s and early 1940s and second was over realism and behaviouralism in the late 1950s and 1960s.
theoretical reflexivity"... Theoretical reflection on the process of theorizing itself... [which involves] (i) the self consciousness about underlying premises; (ii) recognition of the inherently politico normative dimension of paradigms and the normal science tradition they sustain; and (iii) the affirmative that reasoned judgment about the merits of contending paradigms are possible in the absence of a neutral observation language.\textsuperscript{61}

The aim behind explication of these three streams of post-modernism, critical theory and the hermeneutic tradition, is to explore their stand on knowledge and reality.\textsuperscript{62} How is their conception of knowledge different from the positivist tradition? Also, what are the nuances between these three streams on their conceptualization of epistemology and ontology? Frequently post-modernists maintain that "ontology is prior to epistemology". In fact, constructivist thinkers like Wendt also give precedence to ontology over epistemology.

\textit{Postmodernism}

It is well nigh impossible to pin down the meaning of postmodernism. There are certain key elements in their thought, which primarily arose as a reaction against modernist ideas of progress, rationality and enlightenment. They dismiss the modernist/rationalist belief that there is something called objective knowledge. In the mid-1980s various International Relations theorists, viz., Ashley, Shapiro, Der Derian, Bradley Klein, Jim George and David Campbell, began to espouse a postmodernist perspective in the study of international relations. The epistemology and ontology debate is key to the postmodernist debate. As Smith notes, "... (it) is fashionably the case among post-modernist philosophers and (philosophical) realists, that ontology is prior to epistemology."\textsuperscript{63} Resonating similar ideas was the postmodernist writer, Der Derian, who noted that "international relations is undergoing an epistemological critique which calls into question the very language, concepts, methods, and history which constitutes and governs a "tradition" of thought."\textsuperscript{64} The postmodernists focus on the relationship between power and knowledge. Power is a recurrent theme in international relations, where international politics is taken as

\textsuperscript{61} Neufeld, n. 39, p. 40.
\textsuperscript{62} Another very pertinent epistemology (feminist) will not be discussed here but taken up in the next section concerning debate over priority of epistemology or ontology. We will explore how feminist epistemology guides our research.
\textsuperscript{63} Smith, n. 15, p. 574.
\textsuperscript{64} J. Der Derian, "Philosophical Traditions in International Relations", \textit{Millennium: Journal of International Studies}. 12, 2, 1988, p. 189.
Postmodernists argue that due to the assumption of an "objective knowledge", the relationship between power and knowledge has not been problematised. According to Richard Devetak, "despite this centrality of [power], it has remained largely an underdeveloped concept. More worrying than the underdevelopment of the concept of power has been the virtual silence regarding questions of knowledge in the study of international relations until recently." Foucault is the pioneer writer who has explored the inter-relationship between power and knowledge. He seeks to repudiate the whole belief that knowledge is independent of power and interests. He says that the traditional modernist belief that knowledge is independent of power is mistaken. Since "... power and knowledge directly imply one another; there is no power relations without the correlative constitution of a field of knowledge, nor any knowledge that does not presuppose and constitute at the same time power relations." Foucault believes that power relations and knowledge claims are mutually constitutive. Knowledge constitutes a social world as an object of inquiry and control. Thus knowledge claims not only systematize and constrain any field of inquiry, but also make it susceptible to be governed and controlled. Even though Foucault emphasises the power/knowledge mutual constitution, but, according to Jon Simons, "Foucault does not attempt to systematically break down the elements of that mutual constitution. Rather, his accounts are a deliberate entanglement of power and truth. Power/knowledge is a knot that is not meant to be unraveled." Foucault focuses on discourses as key to unraveling underlying power constitution. A discourse can be seen as exemplifying/incorporating knowledge. For Foucault, the traditional subjects for analysis, e.g. text, theories and paradigms, are not worthy. The emphasis on genealogy, that is as a method for study of history, repudiating traditional methods which studies history in a linear emerging and progressive structure. Foucault terms his history as "effective history."

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65 John Vasquez's influential book The Power of Power Politics: A Critique (London, 1983), showed how the realist-rationalist assumption for the study of international politics is not only inadequate but dangerous and self-fulfilling. He argued that, "power politics is an image of the world that encourages behaviour that helps bring about war...the attempt to balance power is itself part of the very behaviour that leads to war..." p.220.


68 Jon Simons, Foucault and the Political (London, New York, 1995), p.27. (emphasis added)

69 Philosopher Nietzsche is associated with the genealogy. Nietzsche's ideas of truth and morals in Beyond Good and Evil and On the Genealogy of Morals, rejects teleological conception of history,
epistemology focuses on "... a rediscovery of fragmented, subjugated, local and specific knowledge." He was against what he called "totalizing discourses" which attempted to discover an underlying progressive structure. Instead he emphasized that history passes from one domination to another, and knowledge is nothing but a tool in the domination.

Ashley applies the postmodernist perspective to the study of international relations. Ashley applies Derrida's strategy of "double reading" to the anarchy problematic. As Derrida argued, one should focus on the deconstruction of texts, which involves sabotaging the text from within. Ashley takes recourse of this step to analyse anarchy, which leads to anarchy outside and power politics within. According to Devetak, this constitution of anarchy as opposed to sovereignty has two implications, "(i) to represent a domestic domain of sovereignty as a stable, legitimate foundation of modern political community, and (ii) to represent the domain beyond sovereignty as dangerous and anarchical." Ashley argues that the very use of sovereignty voices the epistemological assumptions underlying it, which emphasise man as the supremely powerful being who through the use of reason can not only provide meaning to the world but also achieve "total knowledge, total autonomy, and total power." The postmodernists seek to emphasise contingency and the constitutive nature of the world around us. Ashley and Walker see themselves as dissidents and their epistemology as dissidence, indulging in "subversion." In their "dissident" epistemology they "share a suspicion of all assertion of sovereign truth and morals. It dismisses the belief that through careful analysis one can unearth a uniform universal structure. He emphasized that history progresses through jumps and there is no progression of history towards any particular objective. Genealogical approach is anti-essentialist and heterogeneous and emphasises differences.

32 Devetak, n. 66, p.191
34 Ashley's academic work has traversed two "phases", heroic and subversive. In his "heroic" phase Ashley followed the epistemological assumptions of modernity and Enlightenment. In his later subversive phase, he has sought to reject and repudiate or epistemological "sovereign" assumptions. This differentiation into phases has been done by, Darry S.L. Jarvis. International Relations and the Challenge of Postmodernism: Defending the Discipline (Columbia, 1999).
privilege and they assert none of their own. Ashley and Walker focus on the interpretive and reflexive approach. Ashley and Walker maintain that

Their dissidence consists in their readiness to regard every historical configuration of sovereign presence be it God, nature, dynasty, citizen, nation, history, modernity, the West, the market’s impartial spectator, reason, science, paradigm, tradition, man of faith in the possibility of universal human community, common sense, or any other – as precisely a question, a problem, a contingent political effect whose production variations, and possible undoing merits the most rigorous analysis.

According to John Vasquez, “postmodernism not only insists that modernity is an ongoing project, but denies its benevolence. It stands in opposition to the homogenising role modernisation has played both within and between states. What it fears most is the bureaucratic/all-seeing/scientific investigating/liberal social engineering/technology world that will make every one the same and frown all cultures in one global culture.” Bartelson and Cynthia Weber explore the construction of sovereignty in the postmodernist framework of power and knowledge.

Another prominent postmodernist international relations thinker is R.B.J. Walker. Walker rejects the widely popular Popperian distinction of theory and practice. He asserts is belief leads to an exclusive emphasis on epistemology in the hope that the subject can have knowledge of an objective external world. He dismissed the idea that there is an external world that can be known through hitherto popular modernist scientific assumptions. As he maintains, “my suspicions are always raised when it is suggested that the alternatives before us can be reduced to only two, even if they are said to be complementary... I would not frame it as a duality of

76 Ibid., p.127.
77 Vasquez, n. 59, p.220
78 Bartelson argues that the concept of sovereignty has changed over the years. This change has run parallel to the discursive practices of sovereignty. He maps the notion of sovereignty with respect to its conception and practice which is changing along the three periods of the renaissance, the classical age and the modernity. Bartelson noted that there are “battles over sovereignty within knowledge, and battles of different knowledge’s within the discourse on sovereignty”. J. Bartelson, A Genealogy of Sovereignty (Cambridge, 1995), pp.83-84. Similarly, Weber argues that the concept of sovereignty changes with the time. She argues that “there is no “natural” sovereign state because there is no “natural” foundation of sovereignty”. In short, there is no foundational concept of sovereignty. Cynthia Weber, Simulating Sovereignty: Intervention, the State, And Symbolic Exchange (Cambridge, 1995), p.27.
practice." Walker alongwith Ashley endeavoured to incorporate elements of deconstructionism and post-structuralism in the study of International Relations. Walker questions the traditional dichotomy of "inside/outside", that is order within states versus anarchy of external world. He criticises the "... privileging of epistemological and methodological prescriptions that simply take historically specific-modern-ontological options as given." He questions the reification of the "... autonomous subject set apart from the objective world..." Walker is not comfortable with the ahistorical epistemology, and instead affirms the priority of historical contextual approach. He was also against the hitherto practiced dominance of epistemology, arguing that, "... differences between approaches to contemporary world politics must be addressed at the level of basic ontological assumptions: the possibility of empirical research strategies is a significant but decidedly secondary matter." This is particularly noteworthy, for a postmodernist and poststructuralist thinker to accept the importance of empirical research, even if at a secondary level. This idea is guided by the belief in desirability of constructing a theory, which postmodernist thinkers like Ashley vehemently deny. Walker rejects the traditional realist belief of realism which sees the world in "acute ontological antagonisms" of "inside/outside", where "inside" incorporates elements of justice, freedom and rights, while "outside" is neo-Machiavellian, full of barbarism and strife. Walker questions the reification of sovereignty, which as a dense political practice justifies the conflictual international relations. According to Walker, "in this world of sovereignty/lack of sovereignty, of supposedly autonomous states in an unregulated contest of wills, sovereignty is both constitutive of the system and problem to be overcome."

**Critical Theory**

The critical theory stands for the philosophy of the Frankfurt School which began to be noticed in the 1960s and 1970s, blossoming to full in the 1980s. However, at the

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81 Ibid., p.8.
82 Ibid., p.82.
83 Ibid., p.172.
84 For a very cogent and concise discussion of formative influences of critical theory, see David Held's Introduction to Critical Theory: From Horkheimer to Habermas (Cambridge, Oxford, 1980). According to
outset it should be noted that critical theories do not form a unity. Here our focus will be on Habermas, who is the most influential contemporary critical theorist. The prominent critical theorists are Max Horkheimer, Theodor Adorno, Walter Benjamin, Herbert Marcuse, Erich Fromm and Leo Lowenthal. The underlying thought of critical theory is rejecting the subject/object dichotomy and emphasizing the interpenetrative and constitutive character of knowledge and its surroundings. According to McCarthy, the objective of critical theorists is to “radicalize epistemology by unearthing the roots of knowledge in life.” The predominant objective of critical theory is to unearth prevailing dominances and to emancipate people from them. They are guided by the normative commitment to the emancipation of people, and seek to unravel the hidden forces of domination in the present epistemological structure of scientific technological rationality. Hence, they emphasise self-reflective knowledge. Devetak summarises their contribution in three broad areas, “(i) the historical-sociological analysis of the structures of modern world politics; (ii) the philosophical critique of particularism and exclusion, and (iii) the philosophical inquiry into the conditions under which emancipation in world politics is possible.” Critical theory displays the predominant influence of early Marx, but its scope has widened to include Freudian psychoanalysis of mass culture. Horkheimer extolled the virtue of unity of philosophy and science. Hegel’s thought had a major influence on him. Hegel’s concept of dialectics accepts reason in a particular period history, i.e. reason is not eternal and ahistoric but resonates its social and political reality. However, Horkheimer rejected the Hegelian conception of history as signifying realization of universal reason. As David Held argues, “Horkheimer

Held, varieties of influences can be said to contribute to the development of critical theory, “... they looked (as Lukacs had done before them) to German idealism, and to Kant and Hegel in particular, to retrieve the philosophical dimensions of the Marxist tradition. Criticisms of German idealism – those of Marxists as well as of non-Marxists like Schopenhauer and Nietzsche – were explored in order to come to grips with idealist views. Marx’s early works, especially the 1844 Manuscripts (which were unavailable to Lukacs), were examined both to assess Hegel’s impact on his thought and to help uncover the critical basis of Marx’s ideas. The contributions of, among others, Heidegger and Husserl were assessed as part of a general engagement with contemporary philosophy for the reinvestigation of human subjectivity. Such works were regarded as of paramount importance. Weber’s writings, especially in the processes of rationalization and bureaucratization, were thought to be key contributions to contemporary sociology especially in the light of the absence of serious discussion of these and related issues in the Marxist tradition. p.23.

86 Horkheimer, and influential theorist of this school distinguished two types of theory, viz., traditional and critical. Traditional theories maintain distinction between subjective and objective. While critical theory is seen as a part of social and political reality.
contended that a critique of knowledge, presented as a dialectical critique of ideological context, uncover its rootedness in human interests and yet (itself) avoid relativism and be distinguished from skepticism." Horkheimer was impressed by Hegelian dialectic, which espouses incompleteness, even when completeness is emphasised. Horkheimer maintained that history in its totality can’t be grasped. He notes that, “... there is an irreducible tension between concepts and being, then no proposition can claim the dignity of perfect knowledge. Knowledge of the infinite must itself be infinite, and a knowledge which is admittedly imperfect is not knowledge of the absolute." Horkheimer argues that there is an impregnable gap between theory and reality. The method to be followed is immanent criticism. This immanent criticism is practiced through negation. According to Horkheimer, “the negation is double-edged – a negation of the absolute claims of prevailing ideology and of the brash claims of reality.”

Theodor Adorno was another prominent theorist of the Frankfurt School. While Horkheimier believed that instead of repudiating traditional philosophies, they should be recasted, Adorno emphasized the immanent critique. Arguing that subject and object are mutually constitutive Adorno rejects what he terms as “identity thinking”. Identity thinking believes in construction of a universal theory incorporating particular concepts and objects. Adorno was influenced by Benjamin’s Origin of German Tragic Drama, which rejected universal theory. According to Held, “Benjamin’s emphasis on the uniqueness, important and complexity of the particular, his highly unconventional concept of induction (reversing the standard relations of particular to general) and many other of his concepts (for instance, ‘constellation’) had a profound impact on Adorno’s earliest works.” Adorno maintained that reality can’t grasped from one point. He was influenced by the ideas of Nietzsche, Kierkegaard, Husserl and Heidegger. Adorno in his opposition to identity thinking, favoured negative dialectics of non-identity thinking. Adorno differentiates between identity and reality. He termed those concepts hubristic which emphasised the correspondence between the two. Adorno argues that rational identity sets a standard (even though utopian) through which difference between actuality and potentiality is

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88 Held, n. 84, p.176.
89 Cited in ibid., p.179.
90 Cited in ibid., p.185.
91 Ibid., p.207.
shown. This negative dialectic tries to show "unfulfilled potentialities for emancipation". Hence, there is no relativism, but through the promise of the concept of rational identity dominating practices can be pointed out. As Adorno maintains.

... 'dialectics allow us to think the absolute'; but 'the absolute as transmitted by dialectics remains in bondage to conditioned thinking'... 'No absolute can be expressed other than in topics and categories of immanence, although neither in its conditionality nor in its totality is immanence to be deified". 92

Herbert Marcuse is another prominent thinker of critical theory. Marcuse's work represent more Marxist elements especially young Marx, than those of the Horkheimer and Adorno. Also Marcuse, was more influenced by Hegel. Marcuse's main objective is to unearth the structures of domination so as to emancipate people. Marcuse, "... holds that historical rather than purely epistemological conditions determine the meaningfulness and truth of propositions". 93 Marcuse does not believe in discovering the essence of the reality through reason. Knowledge is constituted of social practices and its prime goal is emancipation of the people. Although, Marcuse was impressed by the phenomenological method of the Heidegger, he didn't accepted Heidegger's conclusion that human life can be studied in "existence itself" only. Marcuse maintained that science is a form of domination. He argued that science is, "the a priori of a specific technology-namely technology as a form of social control and domination." 94

Now, we turn to the most prominent thinker of critical theory Habermas. The guiding idea in his conception of epistemology is dismissing scientific rationality. According to Smith, "the main implication for epistemology has derived from his work on a broader conception of reason than the instrumental view which dominates western science and his development of a non-positivist methodology for the social sciences." 95 Habermas's use of reason is to subserve in the dominant purpose of emancipation of the people. The goal is, according to Habermas, "struggle for the critical soul of science" and "scientific soul of criticism". 96 Habermas was particularly against technological domination of society. This technocratic domination he traced to instrumental rationality, which is the after effect of the dominance of the positivism.

92 Ibid., p.222.
93 Ibid., p.225.
94 Cited in ibid., p.243.
95 Smith, n. 15, p.582.
96 Cited in Held, n. 84, p.250.
Habermas sought to link knowledge and interest. In this book Knowledge and Human Interests and Theory and Theory and Practice, he develops the concept of cognitive interests. Knowledge-constitutive interests guided towards showing linkage between social and political conditions and knowledge. That is, he firmly rejects "... the Kantian approach of locating such activity in an ahistorical, transcendental subject."  

According to Habermas, man conceptualizes his experience in a priori interests. He differentiates three a priori interests which guide the generation of knowledge. The three interests are the technical, the practical and the emancipatory. The technical interest is reflected in the production of material things to make life possible. The second is the practical, emphasising inter-subjective understandings generated through language. Third is the emancipatory, which seeks to unravel and free people from domination and dependency. These three interests are exhibited in the areas of work, interaction and power. In the area of labour/work, the knowledge-constitutive-interest is of prediction and control, leading to the empirical – analytic sciences. The second aspect of interaction involves the knowledge-constitutive-interest of interpretation, hence forming the historical-hermeneutic disciplines. Thirdly, domination of power involves the knowledge-constitutive-interest of critical theory. According to Anthony Giddens, "one of Habermas’s most interesting contributions to philosophy is his attempt to reconcile hermeneutics and positivism and thereby overcome this division between them." Later, Habermas developed a new concept of communicative action. In the ideal speech situation, one can defend his claims only if it can be shown that the speech involved is meaningful, true, justified and sincere. These criteria are termed by Habermas as validity-claims. Habermas emphasises that truth is the product of rational consensus. According to Giddens, "for Habermas the concept of ‘rationality’ has less to do with the foundations of knowledge then with the manner in which knowledge is used."

Kant’s critical philosophy is central to the Habermas’s philosophy. Kant’s argument for recognition of limits to reason is, according to Habermas, a key insight of modern political philosophy. However, "this insight was radicalized in the work of Hegel and Marx, but also significantly undermined first by Hegel’s retreat into

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97 Ibid., p.254.
99 Ibid., p.132.
absolute knowledge and then by Marx’s inadequate conceptions of reflection and action."\textsuperscript{100} While simultaneously rejecting the absolute claims to knowledge, Habermas avoids relativism because his “idea of communicative rationality, which is intersubjectively based and oriented towards understanding is both presupposed in all discourse and provides a standard against which both individual rational capacities and the organization of societies can be judged.”\textsuperscript{101} But this view is not without problem as, according to Bernstein, “it even begins to look as though when Habermas argues for what is presupposed and anticipated in communicative action of when he deals with the highest states of moral or social development, his own arguments have more of the flavour of those transcendental arguments that are supposed to be overcome by reconstructive analysis.”\textsuperscript{102} Similar sentiments were expressed by Steve Smith, who noted that,

Habermas’s emphasis on the existence of foundations for making judgements between knowledge claims places his work as a direct descendent of the Kantian enlightenment project, a position that has been both a major source of criticism from post-modernists and yet a great source of strength to those who want to link foundational knowledge to emancipation.\textsuperscript{103}

Hermeneutics

Hermeneutics took shape in the writings of Dilthey, Husserl, Weber, Heidegger, Wittgenstein and Gadamer. The fundamental idea behind the hermeneutic tradition is of understanding and interpretation. This it is believed, will fill the breach between subject and empiricist objective reality. That is, our interaction with objective reality is not in an autarchic encounter, but is an active process where according to Jim George, “meaning argued von Humboldt (and Gadamer and Habermas later), is a matter of active linguistic competence (Sprachkraft) that arises from the human social process, the dialectical interaction of mind, and the social use of grammar”.\textsuperscript{104} In fact, Weber’s emphasis on \textit{Verstehen} (understanding) has influence Morgenthalau’s methods, when he sought to interpret statesmen’s speeches. But Weber’s understanding of hermeneutics was influenced by the ideas of neo-Kantian thinkers

\textsuperscript{101} Ibid., p.62.
\textsuperscript{102} Bernstein, n. 14, pp.198-204.
\textsuperscript{103} Smith, n. 15, p.583.
\textsuperscript{104} George, n. 14, p.146.
like Rickert and Simmel, who emphasised the shift from psychological approach (as of Dilthey) to culture. But the problem with Weberian Verstehen was its modernist assumptions. Because of this, Roy Bhaskar noted that not only hermeneutics but also neo-Kantian philosophies have an underlying positivist assumption.\textsuperscript{105} Also, Mervyn Frost emphasised that even though traditional realism is portrayed as historical-philosophical sensitive, but it still has positivist bias.\textsuperscript{106} Jim George accuses even the “... most sophisticated of hermeneutic based works...” of Kratochwil of positivism.

To move away from positivistic assumptions, termed by Gadamer as “romantic hermeneutics”, critical hermeneutics was espoused. Gadamer’s magnum opus, \textit{Truth and Method}, emphasises critical hermeneutics as an approach to understanding the world in historically and culturally located reason. Emphasising this inter-relatedness, Gadamer, according to George Warnke, argues, “... we understand the meaning of a text, work of art or historical event only in relation to our own situation and therefore in light of our own concerns. In other words we understand it only in light of its significance.”\textsuperscript{107} Gadamer’s hermeneutics is termed as “philosophical hermeneutics” or “critical hermeneutics”, in contrast to “objective hermeneutics” or “romantic hermeneutics”, which seek to arrive at an objective methodology for principles of interpretation. Hence, according to Hekman, “Gadamer defines hermeneutics as the philosophical exploration of the character and fundamental condition of all understanding and rejects the contention that the task of hermeneutics is methodological investigation into the social sciences or any other discipline.”\textsuperscript{108} Gadamer rejects the traditional epistemological belief in a withdrawn subject getting knowledge of reality apart from it self. He argues that this a priori

\textsuperscript{105} Roy Bhaskar, \textit{Scientific Realism and Human Emancipation} (London, 1986) p.306. Bhaskar argues that firstly, they accept reality as unearthed by natural sciences, and then try to interpret to gain knowledge of the reality.

\textsuperscript{106} Mervyn Frost, \textit{Towards a Normative Theory of International Relations} (Cambridge, 1986). Frost accepts that interpretative approach did question the foundationalist positivism, but this did not culminated in “full reinstatement of normative social theory”. According to Frost, “…the Verstehen theorists make a valid point when they show that data of social science are not observable in the way that the data of the natural sciences are; when they show that understanding is required. But this does not undermine the positivist distinction between scientific inquiry and moral judgement.” p.24.

\textsuperscript{107} George Warnke, Gadamer: \textit{Hermeneutics, Tradition and Reason} (Stanford, 1987), p.68. (emphasis in the original)

\textsuperscript{108} Susan J. Hekman, \textit{Hermeneutics and the Sociology of Knowledge} (Oxford, 1986), p.92. Hekman notes with surprise, that, even though Gadamer categorically rejects any intent to provide methodological principles, he is often attributed with one. Hekman argues, “given the firmness with which Gadamer denies any methodological intent, these misinterpretations are somewhat hard to explain, but the frequency with which they occur necessitates a clear understanding of Gadamer’s position on this fundamental issue.” pp.92-93.
existence of knower from known is wrong. In fact, knower and known are merged in what Gadamer terms as "horizons". Hence, according to Smith, what "Gadamer proposes (is) an ontology of knowledge, reason and truth which shows how they are embedded in history rather than being above it."\textsuperscript{109} In short, epistemology is secondary to ontology. According to William Outhwaite, for Gadamer, "...understanding is not a matter of trained, methodical, unprejudiced technique but an encounter in the existentialist sense, a confrontation with something radically different from ourselves."\textsuperscript{110}

**Epistemology Versus Ontology: The Unending Debate**

The frequent discussion of epistemological and ontological issues by international relations theorists, points towards the attempt (or desperation) to give their concepts and theories a philosophical grounding.\textsuperscript{111} But taking sides in this debate will not be easy. As Kratochwil notes, "epistemological and ontological levels might not be that independent of each other, but are probably 'tightly linked through the mediating lens of the linguistic/conceptual structure' of discourse in a field."\textsuperscript{112} The epistemology/ontology debate is particularly complicated when our focus is the study of human action (be it in the name of state, nation and sovereignty). Our focus will be on organisation of human activities, but what are human activities, will depend upon how to define or organise them. As Kratochwil further argued, "social objects are not simply describable in terms of purely observational categories or measurement procedures. Rather, their descriptions must make reference to the shared representations underlying the actions of actors that allow us to identify, for instance, the marks on a piece of paper as a 'signature'."\textsuperscript{113} Similarly, Smith maintains that epistemology and ontology are interrelated; we can't exclude one from another. Smith argues as to the separation of epistemology, methodology and ontology the three are fundamentally interrelated. Methodology (why use that

\textsuperscript{109} Smith, n. 15, p.582.
\textsuperscript{111} Ole Waever argues, "a frenzy for words like 'epistemology' and 'ontology' often signals (this) paradigms", in Iver B. Neumann and Ole Waever, ed., *The Future of International Relations: Masters in the Making?* (London, New York: Routledge, 1997).
\textsuperscript{112} Friedrich Kratochwil, "Constructing a New Orthodoxy? Wendt 'Social Theory of International Politics' and the Constructivist Challenge", *Millennium: Journal of International Studies*, 29.1, 2000, p.73.
\textsuperscript{113} Ibid., p.74.
method?) needs the warrant of an epistemology (answer: because this method discriminates between "true" and "false" within the range of what we could know to be "true" or "false"); whereas ontological claims (what is the would like and what is its furniture?) whereas ontological claims (what is the world like and what is its furniture?) without an epistemological warrant is dogma and will not itself license a methodology.”

Hence, the issue of epistemology and ontology can’t be solved by giving priority of one over the other. They are inextricably linked; we cannot emphasis one or the other helpfully. Without an adequate and well thought out epistemology, we can’t zero in on what ontology to study and analyse, leading us to wander in what Martin Hollis calls “hermeneutic circles”, exemplifying unhelpful relativism. Smith argues, “... just as epistemology is important in determining what can be accepted ontologically, so ontology affects what we accept epistemology.” Reason may not of much help as Kimberly Hutchings argues that thought of Habermas, Arendt, Foucault, and Lyotard are influenced by Kantian critique. According to Hutchings, Kantian critique is paradoxical, since it is “... premised on both the limitation of reason to transcend that limitation in the process of critique... therefore, critique is an impossible task.”

Habermas’s critical theory involves incorporation of Kantian conception of limitations of reason. But he, akin to Kant, faces difficulty in justifying critical endeavour. Hutchings argues that Habermas encounters twin problem in accounting for “the politics of his theory and his theorization of politics.” According to Hutchings, Habermas’s argument fails to account for the justification of critique, but “... is a testimony to critique’s impossibility and its persistent tendency to lapse back into the speculative and skeptical alternatives it is designed to overcome.” Further, Hutchings concludes, “in an effort to ground critique Habermas employs the idea of knowledge-constitutive interests, then moves on to universal pragmatics, a theory of rationalization and the art of reflective judgement. However, none of these ways of overcoming the divisions of reason is sustainable except as hypothesis or as hope.”

Similar sentiments on epistemology were opined by Martin Hollis, who argued that at times hermeneutic approaches become self-defeating. Further, Hollis

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114 Smith, n. 15, p.574.
115 Ibid., p.574.
116 Hutchings, n. 100, p.1.
117 Ibid., p.80.
118 Ibid., p.80.
accepts that "the proper conclusion is that epistemology has to go the long ways round, visiting arguments about the historical particularity of all ways of searching into and discovering truth but then returning with renewed determination to transcendental questions of how knowledge is possible."

Analysing various positions on epistemology and ontology in the social sciences in general and international relations in particular exemplifies the attempt to come to terms with "Cartesian Anxiety". As Bernstein, discussed earlier, argued, the whole of Western philosophy, despite repeated assertions of overturning Descartes, continues to look for foundations of knowledge, but the thing to be noted is that "Cartesian Anxiety" is sought to be solved predominantly through reason. Our argument is that the social sciences revolves around "cogito man", i.e. man as a thinking being. Even though the search for an Archimedean point of knowledge also has its roots also in existential–anxiety, but efforts are guided towards its solution in reason. Although Habermas has tried to link knowledge with interests, a careful analysis of his thought reveals an inherent bias of social and political theory towards cogito man. This bias towards "reason man" has its roots in the Platonic conception of human nature, which has been later established by Descartes as fundamental tenet of epistemology and ontology, that is, mind-body dualism. Descartes saw mind as diametrically opposed to body. Mind is without extension, and body is without thinking. Mind is solely defined by its thinking capability and it is an unextended thing. On the other hand, body is an unthinking extended substance. Now, with this bifurcated sense of self, it was inevitable for Descartes to locate human existence in the thinking self. For him, this thinking self or cogito was so important that he was willing to impart credibility to even the "deceived" mind. But body was not to be given even slight credibility to whatsoever, leading Descartes to remark that "I must confess that I could more readily allow that the soul has matter and extension than that an immaterial being has the capacity of moving a body and affected by it." This Cartesian view is similar to Max Stirner's view of the self as ultimately subjective individual in "the owner". Stirner's egoism is without any compromise. As Mitchell notes, "Descartes method allows for a radical separation between subjective experience and objective reality and then trades on the possibility of non-correlation between the two to pose problems about the veracity of sensory experience and the,

19 Hollis, n. 19, p.259.
now problematic, relation between mind and body."  

Plato divides the human soul into three, but the divisions between "guardians" (rulers or philosopher kings and soldiers) and "producers" is sharper. Though these three "souls" are to be combined to form the Platonic ideal state, the dominance is of the "rational Soul". It was this dominance of the "rational soul" which was reinforced by the Cartesian "cogito man". While Habermas tried to link human knowledge with interests, his overall thinking is underlined by assumption of a very reasonable articulate human nature, capable of partaking in "ideal speech situation."

Western epistemology, both foundationalist and anti-foundationalist, is contesting over various conceptions of reason. Foundationalist epistemology is looking for a universal stable hidden structure as a "reality", underlying unstable changing "appearances". Anti-foundationist epistemologies look for a local (not universal) reason. To put it very simplistically, the whole debate between foundationalist and anti-foundationalist epistemologies is over the location and definition of reason. Hence, the reigning desire is to grasp "turtles". The agenda set by the Cartesian quest for a foundationalist epistemology is maintaining its stranglehold, and the various anti-foundationalist epistemologies are only reacting to that agenda. According to Chris Brown, the avowed anti-foundationalist epistemology of critical theory has espoused the objective of "emancipation". But, "for Habermas, emancipation means the achievement of rational autonomy and this means that some independent criterion of validity -- some theory of truth is required... His answer is that truth is established by rational consensus." The agenda set by the Cartesian quest for a foundationalist epistemology is maintaining its stranglehold, and the various anti-foundationalist epistemologies are only reacting to that agenda. According to Chris Brown, the avowed anti-foundationalist epistemology of critical theory has espoused the objective of "emancipation". But, "for Habermas, emancipation means the achievement of rational autonomy and this means that some independent criterion of validity -- some theory of truth is required... His answer is that truth is established by rational consensus." In fact, both foundationalist and anti-foundationalist epistemologies are guilty of which have been called since Kant "transcendental

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122 Ibid., pp.1660-1.( emphasis in the original)
arguments”, but differ in that one’s epistemology proceeds from “top-to-bottom” and another’s “bottom-to-top”.

Charles Taylor had similar ideas in mind when he described epistemology as “hydra”. This is because the assumptions of epistemology are those which have been articulated by Descartes. The assumptions underlying various epistemologies is that, “... we can somehow come to grips with the problem of knowledge, and then later proceed to determine what can be legitimately say about other things: about God, or the world, or human life. From Descartes’ standpoint, this seems not only a possible way to proceed, but the only defensible way.”\(^{123}\) Taylor contests the familiar epistemologies advocating foundations because in its original form it saw knowledge as the inner depiction of reality.\(^{124}\) Taylor takes a cue from the ideas of phenomenologists and existentialists like Husserl, Heidegger and Merleau-Ponty in arguing that human knowledge is not only about picturing reality, but also about “being-in-the-world.” That is, according to Taylor, “we can draw a neat line between my picture of an object and that object, but not between my dealing with the object and that object”.\(^{125}\)

\[\text{Fig.1}\]

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Epistemology</th>
<th>Ontology</th>
</tr>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Positivist</td>
<td>Mind (Rational/Cogito)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(Rationalist/Empiricist)</td>
<td>Descartes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Post-Positivist</td>
<td>Body (Existence/Being)</td>
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<tr>
<td>(Reflective/Interpretative)</td>
<td>Heidegger</td>
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Western social and political theory can be seen as interacting around the matrix shown in fig.1. Cartesian mind-body dualism has been central to the social and political theory. Most of the Western social and political theory occupies its place as the product of positivist understanding of mind. For example the goals of liberalism, capitalism, socialism and Marxism were the analysis of reality in underlying rational categories and themes. Liberalism is said to be part of the Enlightenment project. As Heywood notes, “the central theme of the Enlightenment was the desire to release human kind from its bondage to superstition and ignorance, and unleash an “age of

\(^{123}\) Charles Taylor, Philosophical Arguments (Cambridge, 1995), p.vii. (emphasis in the original)

\(^{124}\) Ibid., p.3.

\(^{125}\) Ibid., p.12.(emphasis in the original)
reason’... Enlightenment rationalism influence liberalism in a number of ways... to the extent that human beings are rational, thinking creatures, they are capable of defining and pursuing their own best interests."\textsuperscript{126} It was further confirmed in the beliefs of utilitarianism and social Darwinism. This tendency was confirmed in economics which had paradigm of \textit{homo economicus}, i.e., the Robinson Crusoe conception of man. "\textit{Homo economicus} is an instrumentally rational and calculating seeker of preference satisfaction."\textsuperscript{127} While Marxism focuses on "needs", "Needs" are seen as basic to human existence, but "wants" are frivolous and shaped by personal and cultural features. Marx also believed in positivist conceptions of reality. This was evident in his analysis of the materialist conception of history, by turning "Hegel on his head." He believed in a teleological conception of history where due to antithesis, capitalism is doomed to failure, ultimately culminating in communist utopia, where states will wither away.

Post-positivists in their various variants continue with the obsession of \textit{cogito} man but instead of propounding universal ahistorical reason as was done by positivism, favour local contextual knowledge. Also, they emphasise mutually linked objective and subjective categories, as already discussed earlier. They frequently assert of priority of ontology over epistemology, but their concern is nevertheless with epistemic categories, for example by exploring the link between knowledge and power as was done by Foucault. Further, their emphasis on localizing and contextualising knowledge is in the terms of ethnic categories of "us" versus "them". It is because of this exclusive concern with reason that they are criticised for their relativism and nihilism and, at times, solipsism. In short, they restrict themselves to "deconstruction" and fail to point the way forward.

A positivist study of the "body" has been reflected in conceptions of Darwin’s view of natural selection. Biological determinism incorporates a positivist understanding of the body. Darwinian idea later influenced Herbert Spencer’s view of the "survival of the fittest". Nazi belief in racial anti-Semitism is an example of the positivist view study of the human body. Racialism suggests that social or political differences can be deduced from the division of the human being into different biological and different genetic "races". Racialists believe that significant practical

political conclusions can be derived from different biological make-up of the races. This entails supremacy of some and inferiority of others, as was reflected in the Nazi Aryanism and its practice in anti-Semitism, which culminated in holocaust.

A post-positivist or interpretative study of the human body has been taken up by feminists, who emphasise the different nature of women's understanding of society, which is more cooperative than conflictual. Feminists may not like our categorization, since they would emphasise that gender difference is social and political rather than sexual. Although we don't have any difference with their later claim, it must not be ignored that gender differences arise from biological differences. This is reflected in many feminist authors' claims that women's understanding of the world is different from men. We do not mean to dismiss the various streams of feminism which are very strong and divergent, but our attempt is to emphasise that whatever the different variants, feminists have at times emphasized difference located in biological difference and resultant epistemological difference. As Tickner argues, “… masculinity and femininity refer to a set of socially constructed categories that vary in time and place rather than to biological determinants. In the west conceptual dichotomies such as objectivity vs. subjectivity, reason vs. emotion, mind vs. body, culture vs. nature, self vs. other or autonomy vs. relatedness, knowing vs. being and public vs. private have typically been used to describe male/female differences by feminists and non-feminists alike.”

Feminists maintain that Western social and political theory has been written from the dominant view of white males. As Nancy Harstock, reminds us, feminists try to “explore some of the epistemological consequences of claiming that women's lives differ structurally from those of men.” Our concern with conceptualising man as “being”, as pointed by Heidegger, will be beneficial to the study of international relations. We also affirm that the same dichotomy of “reason vs. emotion” is reflected in the dichotomy of production and consumption. This is particularly so when consumption is studied in the context of Homo economicus, whose only goal is increasing production. Kimberly Hutchings maintains that “a feminist approach to international relations acknowledges the

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identity in difference of the subject/object of knowledge, rather than asserting the victory of identity over difference of difference over identity. Similar is our aim to assert identity-in-difference and difference-in-identity through analysis of consumption patterns, particularly since our contestation is that domestic homogeneity has selectively been reified, resulting in, as Walker pointed out, “inside/outside” dichotomy.

Our argument is that this dealing with objects in not only rational but material also. Due to the tendency to analyse human interrelationship with objects, primarily through rational categories, viz., trade and political economy, the significance of consumption practices in constituting people’s identities and society has been woefully neglected. We trace this neglect of consumption as social practice to the exclusive focus in Western social and political theory with “cogito” man i.e. rational man. Hence, the debate between priority of epistemology and ontology is biased towards epistemic categories, which neglect human existential features.

Even philosophers who assert the primacy of ontology over epistemology define their ontology in epistemic categories. For example, in Western philosophy, the phenomenological tradition of Husserl repudiated speculative metaphysics and ostensibly focused on human experience, but his phenomenology began to look for the “essence” in human experience. Ultimately, it was rephrased as transcendental phenomenology. Husserl’s earlier philosophy was of naturalism but later it look a transcendental turn. As David Bell emphasises, “one way to describe this change is to say that Husserl moves from a naturalistic point of view to a transcendental one; another is to say that he relinquishes mere methodological solipsism for a full-blooded transcendental idealism.” Similar thoughts were opined by Timothy J. Stapleton, who noted, “... for all intents and purposes, Husserl stands alone as the exponent of a transcendental phenomenology”. Still, phenomenology had a tremendous impact on the social sciences, since, according to Thomas Luckmann, “the new perspective illuminated the human world and the method was applied successfully to the detailed

description of concrete human experiences."^{133} It was this philosophical perspective which gave birth to the idea of "the social construction of reality."^{134} It is from this insight that the constructivism approach international relations has taken root.

Martin Heidegger was the prominent philosopher who turned away from Husserlian transcendental phenomenology to existentialist phenomenology. He criticized Kant for focusing on man's "metaphysical nature." He argued that the purpose of philosophy is concerned with "being-qua-being". But this being is a whole being, not an abstracted metaphysical nature. Hence, the question is not epistemological, but ontological, i.e. concerned with Dasein. Wendt, in his *magnum opus Social Theory of International Politics*, is guided by the same belief in giving primacy to ontology. Arguing that, "... the ontology of international life that I have advocated is "social" in the sense that it is through ideas that states ultimately relate to one another, and "constructionist" in the sense that these ideas help define who and what states are."^{135} But our contention is that even though Wendt's position is an advance from the deterministic neo-realist position of Waltz, his focusing on states as the agents involved in symbolic interaction, is too much of anthropomorphism. Meadean symbolic interaction theory was developed to account for interaction among individuals and groups. In short, Wendt's epistemic beliefs have influenced his ontology. Precisely, because of this state-centrism, his conception falls between two stools, i.e. neither bring neo-realist nor being constructivist enough. As Kratochwil argues, "... Wendt's attribution of intentions, desires, and beliefs to 'states' might seem like strange anthropomorphism..."^{136} It is our contention here, that a better "social theory of international politics" can be constructed around global consumerism, and can be argued that we are living in a global consumerist society.

**GLOBAL CONSUMERIST SOCIETY: GENESIS AND EXISTENCE**

Constructivism as envisaged by Wendt emphasised,

(1) that the structures of human association are determined primary by shared ides rather than material forces, and (2) that the identities and interests of purposive

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^{134} Peter L. Berger and Thomas Luckmann, *The Social Construction of Reality: A Treatise in the Sociology of Knowledge* (Harmondsworth, 1967). Berger and Luckmann, believe that, "...the sociology of knowledge is concerned with the analysis of the social construction of reality". p.15. (emphasis in the original)

^{135} Wendt, n. 8, p.372.

^{136} Kratochwil, n. 112, p.82.
actors are constructed by these shared ideas rather than given by nature. The first represents an “idealist” approach to social life, and in its emphasis on the sharing of ideas it is also “social” in a way which the opposing “materialist” view’s emphasis on biology, technology, or the environment, is not. The second is a “holist” or “structuralist” approach because of its emphasis on the emergent powers of social structures, which opposes the “individualist” view that social structures are reducible to individuals. Constructivism could therefore be seen as a kind of “structural idealism”.

Our contention is that Wendt’s version of “moderate constructivism”, which “… draws especially on structurationist and symbolic interactionist sociology”, is singularly worthwhile to study the effects of global consumerism. This work accedes to moderate constructivism but in contrast to constructivists who simultaneously stress constructedness of identity and difference, we seek to accede to first part of constructedness of identity, but stress identification across borders and cultures located in the process of global consumerism. Ted Hopf distinguished between conventional and critical constructivism. Conventional and critical constructivisms converge in the belief that the world is socially constructed. Both emphasise the importance of human agency. They aim to contextualise all practices, i.e. desist from discovering an underlying hidden unchanging structure. Conventional and critical constructivism “… stress the reflexivity of the self and society, that is the mutual constitution of actor and structure.” The fundamental conventionality is the continuing faith in empirical methodology and epistemology. That is, they do not reduce all social reality only to interpretation. Hence, we can arrive at some form of consensus over the reality. As Mark Hoffmann has argued, “minimal foundationalism, accepting that a contingent: universalism is possible and may be necessary.” We focus on this universal foundationalism of consumerism, which is definitely contextually located, but also increasingly globalised. As further, Hopf points out, “conventional constructivists wish to discover identities and their associated reproductive social practices, and then offer an account of how these identities imply

137 Wendt, n. 8, p.1. The term constructivism in international relations has been first used by Nicholas Onuf, World of Our Making (Columbia, SC, 1989). But according to John Gerard Ruggie, “unlike neorealism and neoliberal institutionalism, the constructivist approach has no direct antecedent in international relations theory. To that extent, it is sui generis”. John Gerard Ruggie, Constructing the World Polity: Essays on International Institutionalisation (London, New York, 1998), p.11.
138 Ibid., p.1.
140 Ibid., p.1763.
certain actions.” We focus on this universal foundationalism of consumerism, which is definitely contextually located, but also increasingly globalised. As further, Hopf points out, “conventional constructivists wish to discover identities and their associated reproductive social practices, and then offer an account of how these identities imply certain actions.” We focus on this universal foundationalism of consumerism, which is definitely contextually located, but also increasingly globalised. As further, Hopf points out, “conventional constructivists wish to discover identities and their associated reproductive social practices, and then offer an account of how these identities imply certain actions.” We focus on this universal foundationalism of consumerism, which is definitely contextually located, but also increasingly globalised. As further, Hopf points out, “conventional constructivists wish to discover identities and their associated reproductive social practices, and then offer an account of how these identities imply certain actions.” We focus on this universal foundationalism of consumerism, which is definitely contextually located, but also increasingly globalised. As further, Hopf points out, “conventional constructivists wish to discover identities and their associated reproductive social practices, and then offer an account of how these identities imply certain actions.” We focus on this universal foundationalism of consumerism, which is definitely contextually located, but also increasingly globalised. As further, Hopf points out, “conventional constructivists wish to discover identities and their associated reproductive social practices, and then offer an account of how these identities imply certain actions.” We focus on this universal foundationalism of consumerism, which is definitely contextually located, but also increasingly globalised. As further, Hopf points out, “conventional constructivists wish to discover identities and their associated reproductive social practices, and then offer an account of how these identities imply certain actions.”

We repudiate critical constructivism for its exclusive emphasis on hermeneutics. This obsession with interpretation tends to dismiss the significance of some form of consensual objective reality, thus becoming susceptible to the criticism of relativism, solipsism and nihilism. As Hopf notes, “critical theorists see power being exercised in every social exchange, and there is always a dominant actor in that exchange.”

But Price and Reus-Smit. maintain that constructivism has its genesis in “Third Debate Critical Theory.” Price and Reus-Smit, believe that “constructivism can make a vital contribution to the development of critical international theory.

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142 Hopf, n. 139, p.1764.
143 Ibid., p.1765.
offering crucial insights into the sociology of moral community in world politics."\textsuperscript{145} We argue here that people's partaking of global consumerism is not insignificant or frivolous but of fundamental importance, and a process in the formation of global consumerist society.

As Nicholas Onuf has pointed out, "constructivism holds that people make society, and society makes people".\textsuperscript{146} But we contest the dominant notion that the boundaries of society are concurrent with the boundaries of state or nation. This boundary has been reified to the extent that people are unwilling to accept its constructed nature. That is, boundaries are seen as sacrosanct and taken as given, as is the idea of the nation itself. As Anthony Giddens maintains, "the sociologist 'society' applied to the period of modernity at any rate, is a nation-state, but this is usually a covert equation rather than an explicitly theorized one".\textsuperscript{147} Particularly, this boundary or nation is identifiable with ethnic ties. The dominance of "cogito man" can be also seen in the various theories over identity. "cogito man" i.e. "thinking man", consciously cerebrates over issues of identity/identification and then forming a society. For example, various theorists of state as a social contract, talk of a group of people deliberating the over formation of the state or government. Our belief is that the first group of people must have been formed as a consuming community, where a group must have shared their hunt. As is the case of defection in Stag Hunt, it not only symbolises the deficiency of cooperation and the essentially wicked nature of humans, but more importantly, defection over consumption. Our view is that the development of society is parallel to the sharing of consumption practices and consumption commodities. The sharing of resources is not unconscious and insignificant, but conscious and significant in building community and society. Tribal society is limited, simply because its sharing and consuming of goods is limited to the tribe. We do not deny the significance of other identities, viz., ethnic, national and tribal. Nevertheless, our objective is to emphasise their background in the sharing of consumption practices. It is around this consuming community that \textit{ethnie} (Smith) are formed, nation is \textit{imagined} (Anderson) and \textit{invented} (Gellner).

\textsuperscript{145} Ibid., p.1785.
Consumerist Identity

Identity is a vital and foundational need for stable social existence. A person living alone on an island has neither the pressing need for an identity nor the mechanisms to acquire it. Identity provides the prism through which we make our surroundings meaningful. As Manuel Castells, maintains, “identity is people’s source of meaning and experience.”

We have progressed from the earlier formulations of identity seeing it as fixed and originary or epistemic. Now, almost all social theorists accept the constructedness of identity. That is identity is not given but formed and formulated in the historical context. Earlier, the view held was that there was an “essence” of self, which can be unearthed. The essentialist view of identity has been repudiated by most scholars. This essentialist notion of identity was based on the enlightenment beliefs. As Stuart Hall, argued that enlightenment person was, “… a conception of the human person as a fully centred, unified individual, endowed with the capacities of reason, consciousness and action, whose ‘centre’ consisted of an inner core… The essential center of the self was a person’s identity.” This conception of man is “Cartesian subject”, since it emphasises “cogito man” i.e. rational and conscious individual subject. We contest this Cartesian conception of identity.

Now, this essentialist view of identity has been discarded, in favour of anti-essentialist sociological concept of identity. This identity has been termed by Stuart Hall as “sociological subject”, where, “the inner core of the subject was not autonomous and self-sufficient, but was formed in relation to ‘significant others’, who mediated to the subject the values, meanings and symbols – the culture – of the worlds he/she inhabited.” Similar ideas have been asserted by Calhoun, arguing that no people are without cultures, and this culture is constructed in interaction with others. As Yosef Lapid notes that the “embracing the idea that cultures and identities are emergent and constructed (rather than fixed and natural), contested and polymorphic (rather than unitary and singular), and interactive and process-like (rather than fixed and essence - like), can lead to path-breaking theoretical

150 Ibid., p.275.
151 Calhoun argues, “We know of no people without names, no languages or cultures in which some manner of distinctions between self and other, we and they are not made... Self-knowledge-always a construction no matter how much it feels like a discovery – is never altogether separable from claims to be known in specific ways by others”. Craig Calhoun, ed., *Social Theory and the Politics of Identity* (Oxford, 1994), pp.9-10.
advances. Anthony Giddens emphasises the reflexivity of the self, and that it is necessary to maintain continuity in the narrative of the self. This reflexivity has been particularly accentuated by the, what Giddens terms as “late modernity” or “high modernity”. Giddens maintains that,

Self-identity for us forms a trajectory across the different institutional settings of modernity over the duree of what used to be called the ‘life cycle’, a term which applied much more accurately to non-modern contexts than to modern ones. Each of us not only ‘has’, but lives a biography reflexively organized in terms of flows of social and psychological information about possible ways of life. Modernity is a post-traditional order, in which the question, ‘How Shall I Live?’ has to be answered in day-to-day decisions about how to behave, what to wear and what to eat – and many other things – as well as interpreted within the temporal unfolding of self-identity.

Giddens argues that lifestyles are means to maintain particular biographical narratives of self identity. He argues that traditionally lifestyle has been seen as trivial, but it plays an important role in construction and maintenance of self-identity. He argues, “a lifestyle can be defined as amore or less integrated set of practices which an individual embraces, not only because such practices fulfill utilitarian needs, but because they give material form to a particular narrative of self-identity.”

Though here we are in agreement with Gidden’s argument that “lifestyle” forms a narrative in self-identity, but instead giving material form to self-identity, go in constituting it we extend this conception of identity to form identification among a group of persons practising more or less common consumption practices.

Castells sees the construction of identity under three categories, viz., legitimising identity, resistance identity and project identity. Legitimising identity is concerned with rationalisation of authority over the subjects. Resistance identity is constructed when groups which are unhappy with present states, seek to resist them. The project identity seeks redefinition of one’s place in society, as happens with the case of women’s struggle. Castells believes that the different types of identity-building process lead to “different outcomes in constituting society.”

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133 Giddens, n. 147, p.14. (emphasis in the original)
134 Ibid., p.81.
135 Castells, n. 148, p.8.
Castells further argues that “legitimizing identity generates a civil society”.\textsuperscript{156} This identity process seeks to legitimise the structural domination. Castells though discusses the other view which sees civic society as suggesting “a positive connotation of democratic social change”. However, Castells argues that his is the original conception of civil society as formulated by Italian thinker Gramsci, but due to the “...double character of civil society that makes it a privileged terrain of political change by making it possible to seize the state without launching a direct, violent assault.”\textsuperscript{157} Hence, while Gramsci and Tocqueville see civil society as positive, Horkheimer, Marcuse and Foucault see it as site of “internalized domination”. The problem with this definition of identity is that it ignores human agency and sees identity from above. Also, as the sub-category of identity, it stresses the passive role of individuals, giving consent to domination or in rare cases withdrawing from it. It ignores the role of identity in formation and expansion of community.

Castells posits a second type of identity, “... identity for resistance, (which) leads to the formation of communes or communities...”\textsuperscript{158} According to Castells, this is the most important way of identity-building. In contrast to the legitimising identity, though this sub-category asserts about the role of identity in formation of community. But this identity-building is especially conflictual where the fight is over exclusion and inclusion as in ethnic nationalism. Though the issue of identity formation is especially potent in the wake of conscious or unconscious exclusion from the fruits of power, which leads to the hardening of identities this is only partly true. The problem with this formation of identity is that it is negatively inspired, based on exclusion. Even in this sub-category, human agency’s role is diminished, which is subsumed under group. Hence, they lack a positive basis of forming a moral community.

Finally, Castells’s third sub-category of identity is “project identity: when social actors, on the basis of whichever cultural materials are available to them, build a new identity that redefines their position in society and, by so doing, seek the transformation of overall social structure.”\textsuperscript{159} The emphasis on term “subjects” by

\textsuperscript{156} Ibid., p.8 (emphasis in the original)
\textsuperscript{157} Ibid., p.8-9.
\textsuperscript{158} Ibid., p.9.
\textsuperscript{159} Ibid., p.8 Castells approvingly cites Alain Touraine’s conception of subjects. Touraine notes, “I name subject the desire of being an individual, of creating a personal history, of giving meaning to the whole realm of experiences of individual life... The transformation of individuals into subjects results from the necessary combination of two affirmations: that of individuals against communities, and that of individuals against the market”, p.10.
Castells is not insignificant. Castells clearly states that "subjects are not individuals." They are social actors in their goal to fulfill a project, e.g. as in forming of a post-patriarchal society. Hence, again Castells's approach is liable to be castigated for lack of recognition of individual role in formation and constructing of community. Further, Castells's maintains that we have come close to the end of "late-modernity" of "high-modernity" and are in "network society", where "reflexive life planning" has become well nigh impossible. Because, "... the network society is based on the systemic disjunction between the local and the global for most individuals and social groups... Subjects if and when constructed, are not built any longer on the basis of civil societies, that are in the process of disintegration, but as prolongation of communal resistance."

In fact, it was Erik Erikson who made the concepts of identity important issues for contemporary social theory. Earlier, George Herbert Mead argued that identity is made in response to "generalized others". Mead argued that "the individual experiences himself as such, not directly, but only indirectly, from the particular standpoints of other individual members of the same social group, or from the generalized standpoint of the social group as a whole to which he belongs." Mead emphasised that identity is made in response to "generalized others". Erikson formulated his conception of ego identity and problems of identity as feature of the modern world. He took recourse to the Freudian conception of ethos and ego, and converted it into "group identity" and "ego identity." The issues of identity had become especially salient in the period between the two world wars. Erikson defined ego identity as "... the awareness of the fact that there is a selfsameness and continuity to the ego's synthesizing methods and that these methods are effective in safeguarding the sameness and continuity of one's meaning for others." Later, thinkers of the pragmatic school of philosophy discarded ego and reduced it to identity. Erikson's contribution to the study of identity is tremendous, particularly since he developed his "theory of identity" with respect to changing social and cultural realities. As Weigert, Teitge and Teitge maintain

160 Ibid., p.11. (emphasis in the original)
Erikson’s conceptualisation of identity combined his early developmental interest in the inner psychological unfolding of individual identity with his awareness of the impact of the historical and socio-cultural factors on the identities as they are realised. The paradigm of human nature social reality is reformulated in the context of historical change and biographical circumstances into the powerful twins of identity-society and identity-history.

The most noteworthy effect of Erikson has been his espousal of the link between human psychology and socio-historical reality, which was especially useful for the thinkers working in the field of symbolic interactionism adhering to pragmatic epistemology. Erikson argued that identity construction was a non-stop continuous process from birth to death, where identity, ideology and culture form a clear continuum. Erikson asserted close linkage between culture and identity, where any threat to culture is a threat to identity and enhancement of culture is a boost to identity.

Culture and identity are fused together forming a polymorphic relationship, i.e. not having one-to-one mapping. Culture provides a setting where identities choose and pick symbolic materials. Thomas Fitzgerald sees culture as the “frame” in which people “locate” themselves. He conceptualises identity as having an “executive role” as “fundamentally the problem-solving tool for coping in particular environments, i.e. identities are “the action unit of culture”. Habermas also insists on stable identity for a cohesive social system. The Habermasian conception of identity is philosophical rather than social psychological. As William Bloom notes, “for Habermas, the whole problematic of identity and identification is the major concern of philosophy – as human and community seek, through the self-relective symbolism of identity, meaningfully to locate themselves in their profane and cosmic environment.” Individuals and groups seek to “locate” themselves in their surroundings. Habermas maintains that identity is “the symbolic structure which allows a personality system a secure continuity and consistency”. Habermas differentiates three basic phases of individual identity corresponding to cognition, interaction and moral consciousness, viz., “natural identity”, “role identity” and “ego

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164 Ibid., p.8.
identity." Natural identity is concerned with the child, who is unable to distinguish between physical and social objects. Natural identity transcends to "role identity," when the child began to inculcate the norms of groups. Finally, according to Habermas we have "ego identity" when, "role bearers (are) transformed into persons who can assert their identities independent of concrete roles and particular systems of norms." This independent character of identity is tested when ego recognises that conventionally held identities were not credible, leading to identity crises, and overcomes it. Furthermore as Habermas, maintains, "to the extent that the ego generalizes this ability to overcome an old identity and to construct a new one and learns to resolve identity crises by reestablishing at a higher level the disturbed balance between itself and a changed social reality, role identity is replaced by ego identity." Habermas's conception of communicative ethics makes the ego the internal judge of the prevalent norms with internal principles. Thus, according to Stephen K. White, "...the core ideas of intersubjective recognition and equal accountability make the universalism of communicative ethics one which is not "imperialistic" in the sense of always threatening to smother the "other." Habermas terms Erikson's "ideology", Mead's "generalized others" as "identity securing interpretive systems".

The Habermasian conception of identity, according to Bloom, "overstressed the consensual nature of social cohesion." The Habermasian conception of ideal speech situation and communicative ethics, emphasises again the Cartesian conception of identity, where identity is formed through the role of mechanism of careful conscious mental deliberation. It is in this exclusive concern with the reflexive conception of self that the role of consumption practices in identity sensing mechanisms in neglected. Even though the conceptions of identity have moved from a "centred" notion of identity to "decentered" subject, still the notion of consumption leading to the formation of identity is neglected because it continues with the Cartesian tradition of seeing an isolated individual coming to term with reality. In contrast, Heideggerians sees the self as dasein located in the everyday world. The issue is also evident when the Cartesian subject ignores the everyday world to look for

168 Cited in ibid., p.79.
169 Cited in ibid., p.79.
170 Ibid., pp.81-2.
171 Bloom, n.166, p.50. Bloom also criticises Habermas for ignoring "behavioural imperative" in formation of identity. Also, his is a "static model" which places "overemphasis on shared values". p.47.
the essence, while the Heideggerian analysis focuses on being-in-the world. Critical theorists criticise positivists for their exclusive emphasis on instrumental rationality in dealing with the world around us. But critical theorists themselves are guilty of holding consumption practices as either being false consciousness or else having instrumental value in making life possible. The much valued reflexive rationality of critical theorists fails to analyse reflexively enough or alternatively overanalysis makes them regard all social exchange as domination in the Foucauldian sense. (Foucault sees history as progression from one domination to another).

The various preceding conceptions of identity, have broadly two underlying themes. One, that identity is discussed from the psychoanalytic perspective, where identity emphasizes a sense of psychological well-being and order, the prominent theorists being Freud and Lacan.172 The other, theme, with which we as students of international relations are primarily concerned, is of belonging to exclusionary groups predominantly delineated in terms of ethnic and exclusionary categories. This is the identity around which international politics is concerned. With "the return of culture and identity in IR theory", the issues of identity and culture are now being increasingly discussed.173 Though the constructivists' attempts to look for identity are a theoretical advancement, it is not without its pitfalls, since for constructivists it is axiomatic that theories are constitutive of society. Our submission is that this obsession with emphasising identity and difference especially located in the local contexts is akin to preparing the theoretical foreground for "clash of civilisations". Using the infinitely malleable phrase of culture, the intellectual sleight of hand emphasises cultural differences especially reified with ethnicity and nationalism.

As Yosef Lapid, argues, "it seems as if IR's fascination with sovereign statehood has greatly decreased its ability to confront complex issues of ethnic nationhood and political otherhood. As a result, the IR theoretical enterprise must now reorient itself to a dynamic pluralism as conceived at a new level of complexity.

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and fluidity”. Predominantly, the very pious notions of “culture”, “identity”, “historicity” and “meaning” is used, but the underlying assumption is typical occidental existential desperation for identifying not only others as “others”, concurrently themselves as “us”. The most ambitious attempt in this direction has been taken up in Huntington’s thesis of “clash of civilisations”. Obviously it is not difficult to appreciate that identity and culture are the key to ethnic exclusion and at times extermination.

Though we see ourself as following the constructivist models which emphasises the social construction of reality, I desist from coming to the conclusion that all social construction necessarily emphasises difference. Till recently, social construction and identity was coupled as to lead to the emphasis of difference. Our endeavour in this work will be to show the coming together of people not because some abstract moral philosophy enjoins them to do so, but only because in their daily interaction they are not only recognising difference but also similarity and that makes them recognise themselves as members of one single moral society.

Alexander Wendt’s constructivism, seeks to replace the structural features for the Cold War with cultural features entailing cold war. As Wendt asserts that, “the cold war was at base a cultural rather than material structure”. Wendt’s conception of corporate identity and social identity is state centric and with the overwhelming goal of survival. In short, his conclusions are more or less same, though the premises have changed. Wendt defines national interest “as the objective interests of state-society complexes, consisting of four needs: physical survival, autonomy, economic well-being, and collective self-esteem.” In short, according to Pasic, “he (Wendt) hesitates to explicitly engage culture”. Also, even William Bloom’s identification theory fails to go beyond the nation-state.

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176 Wendt, n.8, p.198.
As R.B.J. Walker notes that, the “culture dissolves into cultures: cultures translates into values; values bring on the problem of relativism; and relativism reduces everything to an irreducible clash of power politics.” Subsequently, Walker impresses the need for linking culture with political practice. Further, Walker argues that thus the significance of the concept of culture in the analysis of contemporary international relations is not that it offers a convenient category of socio-scientific explanation, or a convincing account of human nature, or a helpful classification of the different kinds of human practices there have been. Rather it hints at all the uncertainties of modernity, and at a multitude of struggles-on the grounds of tradition or postmodernity, of gender, race, religion and ethnicity, or socialism or capitalism, of the other, of the future, of the local community, of the state and of the planet-to reconstitute the conditions of human existence in the force of tremendous structural transformation. The categories of international relations theory systematically define these uncertainties and struggles as marginal. As categories, they betray their own historical and cultural specificity.

Similar views are maintained by Jacquin-Berdal, Oros and Verweij, who argue that “cultures partly constitute the international system: they make up people’s ethnic, national and political identities”. Hence, this emphasis on difference is not without its implications, since theories are constitutive of reality. These ideas ostensibly rejoice in cultural differences, but practically emphasise cultural clashes and politics. However, Daniel Deudney, raises the hope that world society may come together because of “green culture”. He argues that, “one reason for believing that the emergence of “green culture” will replace or moderate state and ethnic nationalism rather than make it more truculent in that environmental awareness brings with it an awareness of the interconnected and interdependent character of the earth’s diverse inhabitants.” We will explore this coming together of world in consumerist identity.

The study of consumption has been very popular in Anthropology and Sociology. To whatever little extent Political Science and International Relations has dealt with it, it has been in the unhelpful dichotomy of homogeneity and heterogeneity. Unhelpful because this dualism of homogeneity and heterogeneity proceeds on the traditional assumptions that have been termed as "inside/outside" by Walker. Debaters over homogeneity and heterogeneity, reify a particular practice according to their predilections, and insist on their side of argument. Further, homogeneity is characteristic of episteme or mental creation rather than of human life more culture. It is akin to the Jain mythology of blind men touching elephant and insisting on their own interpretation. International relations scholarship, in its study of identity and culture on the one hand and regimes and norms on the other, ignores the significance of consumption practices for international politics. This is perhaps due to the prevalence of Cartesian man. Whatever little focus that does exist on global culture, begins with Coca-Cola, McDonalds as key elements of homogenisation, with little dash of anthropologists like Arjun Appadurai and Mike Featherstone. In short, international relations scholarship on the whole has refrained from seriously engaging with consumerism.

International relations does study norms, but the various conceptions neglect consumerism as a norm, instead focusing on the constraining study of use of force, e.g. proscribing assassinations, landmines, and chemical weapons. In norms they are state centric. Jeffrey Legro defines norms as a "collective understanding of the proper behaviour of actors."\(^{182}\) According to Thomas, a norm "contains elements of both prescription, characterizing certain behaviour as "proper," and description, since arriving at "collective understandings" depends upon a certain amount of regularity of behaviour among relevant actors."\(^{183}\) Thomas questions the prevailing conception of norms in neorealism and neoliberal institutionalism for their underlying assumptions of rational choice mode, favouring "positivist methodology and viewing actors as egoists, exclusively concerned with utility. Thomas questions this dichotomy between


\(^{183}\) Ibid., p.7 Thomas argues that ethical implications of norms are not made explicit, due to egocentric assumption of state behaviours. He argues that both neo-liberalism and neo-realism give least credence to norms, whatever is present is seen as "epiphenomenal reflections of that power structure". Thomas argues that even though neoliberal institutionalist theories are expected to give more importance to norms leading to formation of regimes, but it's characteristic feature is that norms are, "both products of and constraints upon state act on, serving as essentially instrumental purpose". p.9.
self-interest and ethics. In the omnibus, exploring interrelations of culture and security, *The Culture of National Security*, undertakes the study of norms, but it focuses on issue of “high politics” i.e. national security. Finnemore and Sikkink see norm“life cycle” in three stages, viz.: “norm emergence”, “norm cascade” and “internationalization”. They argue that concern with norms in international relations discipline is not a new turn but a return. They emphasise, with Ward Thomas, the link between norms and rationality. They assert that, “the current tendency to oppose norms against rationality or rational choice is not helpful in explaining many of the most politically salient processes we see in empirical research, processes we call “strategic social construction, in which actors strategize rationally to reconfigure preferences, identities, or social context”. A related issue has been the conception of regimes. Stephen Krasner defined regimes as

Implicit or explicit principles, norms, rules, and decision-making procedures around which actor’s expectations converge in a given area of international relations. Principles are beliefs of facts, causation, and rectitude. Norms are standards of behaviour defined in terms of rights and obligations. Rules are specific prescriptions for action. Decision-making procedures are prevailing practices for making and implementing collective choice.

Some authors distinguish between three schools of thought on international regimes, viz., power-based, interest based and knowledge-based theories. Power-

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184 Peter J. Katzenstein, *The Culture of National Identity: Norms and Identity in World Politics* (New York, 1996). It takes a “sociological turn” to the study of international politics, but turn is slight, because it restricts itself to the study of national security. Katzenstein, use “the concept of norm to describe collective expectations for the proper behaviour of actors with a given identity...Norms thus either define (or constitute) identities or prescribes (regulate) behaviour, or they do both”. (p.5) Amitav Acharya shows norm diffusion occur in world politics. He insists that unlike the constructivists belief that “good” global norms drive out the “bad” local norms. Instead they are reinterpreted in the light of local beliefs and practices, giving it a legitimate “localization”. Amitav Acharya, “How Ideas Spread: Whose Norms Matter? Norm Localisation and Institutional Change in Asian Regionalism”, *International Organisation*, 58, Spring 2004.

185 Martha Finnemore and Kathryn Sikkink, “International Norm Dynamics and Political Change”, *International Organisation*, 52,4, 1998. They argue that concern with norms and normative issues has been traditionally the concern of the international relations. Thinkers like Plato, Aristotle, Carr and Morgenthau had always been concerned with normative and ideational issues. Finnemore and Sikkink are particularly against mutually exclusive conception of rationality and norms. As they argue, “rationality cannot be separated from any politically significant episode of normative influence or normative change, just as the normative context conditions any episode of rational choice” p.888.

186 Ibid., p.888.


188 Andreas Hassenleber, Peter Mayer and Volker Ritterberger, Theories of International Regimes (Cambridge, 1997). This is a fairly comprehensive study of international regimes. Authors argue that the difference between power-based and interest-based regimes have been “overstated and that there is a considerable potential for a fruitful combination of ideas so far associated with alternative
based theories of regimes adhere to typical neo-realist assumptions. They insist on both absolute as well as relative gains theories. States cooperation has no less central element of state power. Interest based regimes are of neoliberal origin, though they do not disregard state capabilities, but emphasise convergence of interests, which makes states to cooperate. They are inspired by economic theories. The third more radical regime theory in knowledge based, which insists on doing away with rationalist notion of state as utility-maximisers, instead emphasise on their constitutive role in forming of identities. Knowledge-based regimes are further subdivided into “strong cognitivism” and “weak cognitivism”. Though knowledge-based regimes differ from power and interest based regimes, their exclusive emphasis on interpretation makes them neglect the conception of consumerism as one of the international regimes. Further, norms and regimes have been studied at the level of states only or its institutions, instead the need is to focus on individuals of different states becoming aware of each other through consumerism.

The anthropologists Mary Douglas and Baron Isherwood were the pioneer thinkers who emphasized the significance of consumption practices in their book, *The World of Goods*, published in 1978. Douglas and Isherwood note that, “a growing swell of protest against the consumer society sets the background to this book. Consumerism is castigated as greed, stupidity, and insensitivity to want.” They note that the practice consumption has been seen as unwanted and vulgar. The literature on consumption assumes that “people buy goods for two or three restricted purposes: material welfare, psychic welfare, and display.”

Thorstein Veblen in his book *The Theory of the Leisure Class* reviled conspicuous consumption. According to Veblen, this was driven by the desire to emulate and envy of the upper classes and elites. Veblen emphasised, for the first time, the social significance of consumption practices. He argued that a small number of elite extends its influence over the society through twin means. Firstly, designation

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190 Ibid., p.3.
of "refined" taste, concomitant with this was seeing fulfilment of daily life needs as "cheap". Secondly, the elites emulative position, also extends influence of upper class throughout the whole society. The long term influence of Veblen was his progressing, forward from the "rational man" of classical economics which had a bundle of desires to be whetted. Veblen emphasized a more diverse human nature, unfolding itself in its pursuit of status.\textsuperscript{191} That is, unlike neo-classical economics, which saw a rationalist instrumental view of consumption striving to reach an optimum equilibrium, Veblen emphasised the continuous evolving nature of human wants. Hence repudiating conventionally held views of neo-classical economics that demand reduces with an increase in the price of goods, Veblen emphasised that increase in price also lead to increase in demand, primarily for reasons of status.

There have been other theorists who have denounced consumer culture. Karl Marx castigated "commodity fetishism" in capitalist society, where a particular commodity is seen as having an independent existence oblivious of social, economic and political surroundings.\textsuperscript{192} A particular commodity is fetishised when one is obsessed with its quality and ignores the various circumstances which have prevailed in its reproduction. For example, one may focus only on texture, colour and durability of imported goods from a developing country and ignore the inhuman surroundings and procedures which have been imposed on the labour force to produce it. Arjun Appadurai argues that the Marxian "fetishism of commodity" has now been replaced by production fetishism and consumer fetishism. Production fetishism implies the way in which transnational production are given image of local control and territorial sovereignty. He says,

By production fetishism I mean an illusion created by contemporary transnational production loci, which masks translocal capital, transnational earning-flows, global management and often faraway workers (engaged in various kinds of high-tech putting out operations)

\textsuperscript{191} Thorstein Veblen, \textit{The Theory of the Leisure Class} (New York, 1899) Veblen's place in consumption studies is prominent, but his contribution to economics which differs from mainstream economics is tremendous. Veblen also discussed anthropology from feminist viewpoint. He criticized militarism, bureaucracy and absentee ownership. Due to his divergence from mainstream economics view of man, Veblen was ignored in his own field, and often attributed to be a sociologist. Being embittered over exclusion from mainstream economics, veblen rejected the offer of presidency of the American Economic Association in 1925. Frank Ackerman, ascribes Veblen as victim of Bermuda Triangle of economics, since beyond mainstream economics "lies an intellectual Bermuda Triangle where voyages of thought disappear without a trace" Frank Ackerman, "Foundations of Economic Theoreis of Consumption"; in Neva R. Goodwin, Frank Ackerman, and David Kiron, ed., \textit{The Consumer Society} (Washington, D.C. 1997), p.149.

in the idiom and spectacle of local (sometimes even worker) control, national productivity and territorial sovereignty... This generates alienation (in Marx’s sense) twice intensified, for its social sense is not compounded by a complicated spatial dynamic which is increasingly global.193

As similarly, negative view of consumer culture was most prominently espoused by thinkers of critical theory. Theodore Adorno equated consumer culture with “mass culture”. Though he carried forward the Marxian tradition in the analysis of history, Adorno desisted from giving prime importance to the Marxian theory of history or economic value. Critical theory’s primary focus has been analysis of false consciousness and alienation. Adorno castigated capitalist society for its mass culture. Mass culture is produced through the capitalist channels of mass media which possess pliant subjects, ignoring real issues of distribution. Adorno blames the culture industry for commodification and production of culture on a mass scale, hence banishing the individuality of the people. According to Adorno, the culture industry through capitalist means of production produces cultural artifacts as a commodity, thereby debasing culture and promoting “pseudo-individualism”. They give only a false sense of choice and freedom. Adorno argued that,

by pseudo-individualisation we mean endowing cultural mass production with the halo of free-choice or open market on the basis of standardization itself. Standardisation of song hits keeps the customers in line by doing their listening for them in line by making them forget that what they listen to is already listened to for them or “pre-disgusted” 194

Herbert Marcuse, was another critical theorist, who deliberated about baneful influence of consumer culture in his political theory classic One Dimensional Man published in 1964. Marcuse castigated bourgeois civilisation, for it is a modern technological society where both bourgeoisie and proletariat believe in status quo. He argues that both capitalism and communism have their central ideology in maximising technological production and enhancing material productivity. Marcuse believed that capitalism has through its control of the mass media, promoted consumerism, which promotes false needs and trivial material wants, making the proletariat involve themselves in satisfying these and ignoring real issues. Consumerism has made the

masses insensitive. In fact, consumerism has become the "opium of the masses" replacing Marxian religion as the opium of the masses. This has the repercussion of making the individual one-dimensional. Ignoring the multi-dimensional character of the individual life, individuals thus become voluntary slaves of the system. Marcuse refers to the process as "moronisation", where individuals are coopted by the system, i.e. "they are corrupted, blinded and enslaved by consumerism".  

In short, Marx, Adorno and Marcuse see consumerism as devoid of authenticity a misnomer for unrealized delusion. At the risk of being repetitive, we contend that the fundamental problem with these views is adherence to the Cartesian assumption of looking for authenticity in cogito man. This obsession with rational man, both in positivistic and post-positivist tradition, is the cause of ignorance of consumption practices. As Douglas and Isherwood assert, that, "the idea of rational individual is an impossible abstraction from social life. It is clearly absurd to aggregate millions of individuals buying and using goods without reckoning with the transformations they affect by sharing consumption together". Douglas and Isherwood argue that consumption practices have been unhelpfully abstracted from the process. Hence, "consumption has to be recognized as an integral part of the same social system that accounts for the drive to work, itself part of the social need to relate to other people, and to have mediating materials for relating to them." They trace this practice to a narrow view of reasoning, which focuses exclusively on induction and deduction. Douglas and Isherwood emphasise "metaphorical understanding". They assert that goods around us make our environmental meaningful and stable, making it a background where in our rationality can be practiced. In short, goods around us make our surroundings coherent. Douglas and Isherwood espouse "a communication approach to consumption", where "goods are part of a live information system". Hence, "goods are neutral, their uses are social; they can be used as fences or bridges".

Douglas and Isherwood define consumption as the "use of material possessions that is beyond commerce and free within the law, we have a concept that travels extremely well, since it fits parallel usages in all those tribes that have no

196 Douglas and Isherwood, n.189, p.5.
197 Ibid., p.4.
198 Ibid., p.12.
commerce".\textsuperscript{199} Here one point is very important, which in a way is response to critics of consumerism which see it as a delusional and irrational. Douglas and Isherwood argue that the consumer’s choice is a free choice i.e. sovereign choice. A consumer may be mistaken but he exerts a free choice. Similarly, voters in an election cast their free vote (even though in a developing like India, various influences can affect individuals choice, be it caste, region and religion) and it is a definition of democracy. We don’t dismiss a democracy simply because its voters may have been influenced by extraneous facto.: Similarly, we can’t dismiss consumer culture as delusional or frivolous, not having repercussions in the formation of society and identity. Hence, according to Douglas and Isherwood, “consumption is the very arena in which culture is fought over and licked into shape”.\textsuperscript{200}

As we have already seen, social identity is a product of the culture surrounding it. It can therefore be safely asserted that consumption practices are not only the material side of culture, or material culture as some sociologists are wont to call it. On the contrary, consumption practices are intrinsic to the definition of the self. Also, as already discussed, Douglas and Isherwood, argue that consumption practices or goods can be used as fences or bridge. It is our contention that the global flow of goods cannot be gainfully studied merely under the technically neutral rubric of trade, balance of payments, balance of trade and foreign investment, but also as the means of constructing bridges across cultures and nations, and particularly widening the moral community. The belief that consumption practices are properly studied in Sociology alone and commodity must be studied under the rubric of Anthropology is unfortunate. Even in Sociology the predominant underlying theme in discussing consumerism has been to see it as unwanted, and as a sign of inauthentic living. Also the focus on commodities in the field of anthropology has tried to abstract goods as symbols, thereby ignoring issues of identity, boundary maintenance and definition and redefinition of society.

Marshal Sahlins criticised modern civilization as “bourgeois ethnocentrism”, which designates the “original affluent society” of hunters and gathers as suffering from scarcity.\textsuperscript{201} Sahlins’s later acclaimed book \textit{Culture and Practical Reason} (1976) emphasised structural anthropology in the study of objects. He dismissed “... endemic

\textsuperscript{199} Ibid., p.57.
\textsuperscript{200} Ibid., p.57.
Western antimony of a worldless subject confronting a thoughtless object: ineradicable opposition of mind and matter...202 Sahlins asserted that goods are an “object code” which carry cultural codes. Goods can help in conveying cultural meaning. They are the means of non-verbal language. Sahlins differentiates consumption from Marxian analysis of production, and sees it in domain of “practical reason”. Sahlins insists that “cultures are meaningful orders of persons and things. Since these orders are systematic, they cannot be free inventions of the mind. But anthropology must consist in the discovery of the system.”203 The noteworthy contribution of Sahlins has been the analysis of goods in modes of structural anthropology.

Related to consumption practices has been the contribution of French sociologist Pierre Bourdieu’s conception of habitus. In his two most acclaimed books, Outline of a Theory of Practice and The Logic of Practice, Bourdieu insists that any fruitful exploration of human practice should explore both the objective and subjective conditions.204 Structuralism assumes human orientation and attentions, while subjectivism ignores the objective reality. According to Bourdieu, “social life must be understood in terms that do justice both to objective material, social, and cultural structures and to the constituting practices and experiences of individuals and groups”.205 In fact, Bourdieu introduced the term “structuration” a noteworthy contribution to overcome theoretical dichotomies, viz., subjective/objective, structure/action and culture/society.

The concept “habitus” occupies a central place in theory of practice. Habitus is “a system of general generative schemes that are both durable (inscribed in the social construction of the self) and transposable (from one field into another), function on an unconscious plane, take place within a structured space of possibilities (defined by the intersection of material conditions and fields of operation).”206 The point in Bourdieu’s notion of habitus, is that it purports to capture the dynamic nature of

203 It’d., p.x.
206 Ibid., p.4.
human practice, instead of fighting over objective or subjective elements. Hence, the habitus is a dynamic field of interaction between the individual and society.

Bourdieu also introduced the concept of “capital” and “field”. “Field” provides the framework for “relational analysis”. Every field is conceptualised as autonomous, having a restricted number of variables, playing out their role according to the capital invested in them. Bourdieu’s concept of capital is not Marxian, but incorporates positive influence over events. Bourdieu sees society divided according to the differential location of capital. He distinguishes between, social, cultural and economic capital. Bourdieu is concerned with the interplay between these capitals. He accepts economic capital as the most efficient capital. Bourdieu explored cultural capital in France of 1960s, and showed how people differentiate themselves from the others through their tastes.207 He asserted that taste as consumption practice locates people in their habitus. While Veblen emphasised emulation of cultural practices of the elites, Bourdieu emphasises taste as a referent which locates people in their networks of power inter-relations. Hence, “the consequence is that taste is not ultimately a matter of individual choice nor is it a pure and abstract aesthetic standard. By describing the interaction of economic and cultural capital (the learnt capacity to make distinctions) he describes a system of inclusion and exclusion that maintains social distinctions.”208 Though Bourdieu emphasises taste as categorising social distinction, his analysis easily could be bypassed as a sociological study of the formation and practice of classes. His views are focused, as the very name of the book Distinction implies, maintenance of distinction through different tastes. Bourdieu’s conception implies an individual impressing his identity through hierarchy of tastes, not in turn affected by it.

Arjun Appadurai’s book The Social Life of Things (1986), was a book which put commodities back into the focus of the material culture, where “…commodities, like persons have social lives.”209 Appadurai asserts that commodities are “thoroughly

socialised thing.” Appadurai argues that value is created by economic exchange. This exchange embodies value in commodities. He argues that “focusing on the things that are exchanged, rather than simply on the forms or functions of exchange, make it possible to argue that what creates the link between exchange and value is politics, construed broadly.” Appadurai refers to the Simmelian conception of value. Simmel argues that it is a not valuable object that is difficult to acquire, but rather that objects which are difficult to acquire are termed as valuable. Appadurai accepts that his emphasis on commodities is guilty of “methodological fetishism”, but it is unavoidable, since we are prone to sociologise things as was done by Mauss in his discussion of gift. In Appadurai’s classic the focus is on “luxury” goods rather than primary commodities, also there are no discussions of services, but which Appadurai accepts as an important part of commoditisation. Further, he argues that commodities are not restricted to modern industrial economies. Appadurai, taking cue from Baudrillard asserts that political economy of societies should focus on consumption. The particularly noteworthy conclusion of Appadurai is linking between commodities and politics. He argues

It is the interests of those in power to completely freeze the flow of commodities, by creating a closed universe of commodities and a rigid set of regulations about how they are to move. Yet the very nature of

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210 Ibid., p.6. It might be perplexing why once “goods” are used and at other times, “commodities”. Appadurai favours use of phrase “commodity”. Marx and Simmel used commodity, which later was replaced by “goods” and “commodity” was restricted to primary goods. Appadurai take a detailed discussion of commodity, commodity situation, commodity context, and commodity candidacy. Commodity is a thing which “in a particular” context, meet the requirements of commodity candidacy” (p.16, emphasis in the original). A appadurai asserts, “The commodity situation in the social life of any “thing” be defined as the situation in which its exchangeability (past, present, or future) for some other thing in its socially relevant feature.” p.15, (emphasis in the original). While “the commodity context refers to the variety of social arenas, within or between cultural units that help link the commodity candidacy of a thing to the commodity phases of its career” p.15, (emphasis in the original). While “commodity candidacy of things is less temporal than a conceptual feature, and it refers to the standards and criteria (symbolic, historical context)” pp.13-14, (emphasis in the original)

211 Ibid., p.3.

212 Georg Simmel, has been termed by Berman as thing almost developing a “dialectical theory of modernity”. Simmel is also called as first sociologist of modernity. Simmel developed, “sociological impressionism”, focusing on critical appraisal of aestheticisation of contemporary reality. Simmel’s key contribution has been recognizing and focusing on contemporary reality. Simmel emphasised that the “essence of modernity” is psychologism, where one experiences, fragmentary, fleeting and ceaseless flux. David Frisby terms Simmelian conception of “modernity as an eternal present”. See Dav’d Frisby, Fragments of Modernity: Theories of Modernity in the Work of Simmel, Kracauer and Benjamin (Oxford, Cambridge, 1983).

213 Mauss’s classic book The Gift, shows objects or gifts are endowed with personality. He was one of the earliest anthropologists who tried to show social relations as embodied in gifts. He argued, “things possess a personality, and the personalities are in some way the permanent things of the class”. M. Mauss, The Gift: The Form and Reason for Exchange in Archaic Societies (London, 1990 (1950)), p.46.
contests between those in power (or those who aspire to greater power) tends to invite a loosening of these rules an expansion of the pool of commodities. This aspect of elite politics is generally the Trojan horse of value shifts. So far as commodities are concerned, the source of politics is the tension between the two tendencies.\textsuperscript{214}

Jean Baudrillard is another thinker who has written extensively on consumer society. He argues that in consumer society peoples are less surrounded by humans and more by objects. Acquisition of objects is not for instrumental purposes but for its sign value. Baudrillard sees consumption as akin to incorporating “an order of significations, like language, or like the kinship system in primitive society”.\textsuperscript{215} Baudrillard does see collection of commodities not as a mere collection but “an amalgamation of signs”. Baudrillard argues that forces unleashed in the nineteenth century which had been embodied in production have now reached their culmination in the twentieth century in consumption. He asserted that reality had been juxtaposed by inspired “hyper-reality,” whose resultant is in “decomposition of cultural meanings.”\textsuperscript{216} He says acts of consumption play an active role in defining people, identities and self-consciousness. He said that styles of consumption have superseded the old class consciousness. Baudrillard does sees a commodity culture in which reality is made out of “simulacra” (or simulation) having no foundation in reality.

In contrast to the critical tone adopted by Baudrillard in his discussion of consumption practices Daniel Miller has been one of the most vocal writers who has insisted on regarding consumption as a legitimate area of inquiry.\textsuperscript{217} In a polemic introduction, Miller writes that “consumption has become the vanguard of history”.\textsuperscript{218} He sees lack of attention to consumption due to the end of grand narratives tradition. Also, this neglect has been accentuated by the dominance of left and right, which had hegemonic political ideologies and converged in dismissing “consumption as a political activity.” Miller asserts that literature on consumption is “filled with,

\textsuperscript{214} Appadurai, n.209,p.57.
\textsuperscript{216} Jean Baudrillard, Simulations-Sem.otsenx (New York, 1983).
\textsuperscript{217} Daniel Miller, Material Culture and Mass Consumption (Oxford, 1987). This is signal contribution of Miller which tries to establish consumption as worthy of inquiry devoid of shibboleths, which have overpowered conventional conceptions of consumerism and consumption.
\textsuperscript{218} Daniel Miller, “Consumption as the Vanguard of History: A Polemic by Way of an Introduction” in Daniel Miller, ed., Acknowledging Consumption: A Review of New Studies (London, New York, 1995) p.1. Here Miller notes, discusses and dismisses various myths surrounding consumption. They are, Myth 1: Mass Consumption Causes Global Homogenisation or Global Heterogenisation; Myth 2: Consumption is opposed to Sociality; Myth 3: Consumption is opposed to Authenticity; Myth 4: Consumption creates particular kinds of social Being. pp.21-27.
colloquial beliefs... crystallised around a large number of core clichés and myths as to
the "true" nature of consumer societies." Daniel Miller terms as myth the idea that
"mass consumption causes global homogenisation or global heterogenisation". Since
this issue is key to our discussion it needs to be cited in full, Miller makes following
assertion:

1. That the world of commodities has destroyed significant
difference between peoples.
2. The opposite idea that the world of consumption is a postmodern
condition that has destroyed the basin for significant cultural
homogeneities.
3. That commodities are the prime force behind Americanisation.
4. That consumption is intrinsically linked to capitalism and the
dominance of capitalism.
5. That consumer culture is an aspect of an overall erosion of culture
per se. Miller as an anthropologist accepts the importance of consumption but sees its
importance in "dialectical contradiction, were "specificity" of local traditions and
groups is paramount, hence no to global homogenization". Miller asserts that
consumption "... must be followed as dialectic between the specificity of regions,
groups and particular commodity forms on the one hand, and the generality of global
shifts in the political economy and contradictions of culture on the other." Miller
argues that any talk of "reduc(ing) consumption to identity is not only to pass the
buck, but to replace one reification with what is possibly a till more problematic
one". But Lunt and Livingstone in their book Mass Consumption and Personal
Identity, link consumption with personal identity. They take a social psychological
view towards consumption and argue that the consumption practices are related to the
realisation of personal identity. Lunt questions the traditional "bounded rationality"
approach to consumption, and seeks to carry forward George Katona's argument in
the Psychological Analysis of Economic Behaviour (1951), that economics and
psychology need to be linked. Recently, this idea of consumerist identity has been

212 Ibid., p.20.
221 Ibid., p.21.
221 Ibid., p.34.
222 Ibid., p.33.
223 P. Lunt and S. Livingstone, Mass Consumption and Personal Identity (Milton Keynes, 1992)
Authors take recourse to economic psychology towards analysis of consumption both in its decision
stage and final consumption. Sue, Peter Lunt, "Psychological Approaches to Consumption" in Daniel
reemphasised by Naomi Klein in her much acclaimed book No Logo. This book talks of the ubiquitous spread of brands in the contemporary world. She bemoans that no space has been left without brand or some sponsorship. In fact, Klein is an anti-globalisation activist who opposes corporatisation, which is according to her leading to a situation of “no jobs”. She argues that with the anti-corporate feelings of people a world of no brands or no logo is desirable. Klein asserts that brands have become integral to our social existence. According to Klein, “corporate obsession with brand identity is waging a war on public and individual space: on public institutions such as schools, on youthful identities, on the concept of nationality and on the possibilities of unmarketed space.”

Klein’s view is that even in our identity we have no choice but to seek identity from brands. To use Habermas’s phrase, brands have become “identity-interpretative systems”.

In fact, this linking of psychology to consumption practices has also been widely discussed in marketing literature, where consumer behavior is studied through exploring the interrelation with ethnicity, nationalism and cultural identity. Alladi Venkatesh espouses the concept of “ethnoconsumerism” to explore the link between culture and cross-cultural consumer behaviour. Venkatesh argues that “ethnoconsumerism is the study of consumption from the point of view of the social group or cultural group that is the subject of study.” As similar idea was impressed by Grant McCracken, one of the pioneer anthropologists justifying consumption as a legitimate area of inquiry. McCracken argues that in consumer society goods are used, “… to express cultural categories and principles, cultivate ideals, create and sustain lifestyle, construct notions of the self, and create (and survive) social change. Consumption is thoroughly cultural in character.” Fredrick Jameson and Mike Featherstone write in the same vein as that of Baudrillard on consumer society. Jameson terms it as a postmodern “depthless culture” where social reality has become

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226 Grant McCracken, Cultural and Consumption: New Approaches to the Symbolic Character of Consumer Goods and Activities (Bloomington, Indianapolis, 1988), p.1. McCracken asserts that goods can be both “an instrument of continuity” and also as “an instrument of change”. Hence, “goods enter into the historical process of modern life as vital agents of continuity and change”, pp.130-7.
culturalised or the "liquefaction of signs and images" has taken place.\textsuperscript{227} Similar ideas were expressed by Mike Featherstone, emphasising that in the consumer society everything becomes cultural. There is no difference between mundane life and cultural life, since in the consumer society, "the overproduction of signs images and simulations leads to a loss of stable meaning, and an aestheticisation of reality in which the masses become fascinated by the endless flow of bizarre juxtapositions which takes the viewer beyond stable sense."\textsuperscript{228} Zygmunt Bauman, arguing in a similar vein asserts that the

distinctive mark of the consumerist society and its consumerist culture is not, however, consumption as such, not even the elevated and fast rising volume of consumption. What sets the members of the consumer society apart from their ancestors is the emancipation of consumption from its past instrumentality that used to draw its limits the demise of 'norms' and the new plasticity of 'needs'. Setting consumption free from functional bonds and absolving it from the need to justify itself by reference to anything but its own pleasurability. In the consumer society, consumption is its own purpose and so in self propelling.\textsuperscript{229}

These are the various ways in which consumerism and consumption has been taken up by theorists from the disciplines of Sociology, Economics, Anthropology and Marketing. Tim Dant gives a very illumination succinct categorization of these various theorists. It will do good to cite it, to recapitulate the various views.

- as signs of status and identity (Veblen, Bourdieu)
- as vehicles of meaning and equivalence within and between different cultures (Appadurai, Sahlins, Douglas and Isherwood, Baudrillard)
- as bearers of aesthetic value (Simmel, Baudrillard, Featherstone)
- as components of ritual (Douglas and Isherwood, McCracken)
- as indications of lifestyle and identity (Featherstone, Lunt and Livingstone).
- as knowledge and ideas (Appadurai)
- as potentially inalienable (Miller)
- objects as the focus of discourse, both institutional and local, about their value (McCracken).\textsuperscript{230}

\textsuperscript{230} Dant, n. 208, p.38.
The idea behind discussion of these various conceptions of consumerism and society is to emphasise the point that traditional international relations theorist accept the boundaries of nation states as unproblematic, while consumer society is unfolding itself. The predominant underlying theme has been sociological analysis of the changing patterns of lifestyle being practiced in society. At times, the tone is of nostalgic inevitable decline towards inauthentic life. But our concern is with emphasising consumerist identity and identification. Our conception is different from the other thinkers on consumer society in that thinkers like Veblen and Bourdieu, impress on one-sidedness of consumer process. That is an individual conceived as a rational creature from a high pedestal displays and affirms his status and identity through consumption. But we stress the mutually constitutive nature of this interaction. Even the idea of ethnococonsumerism explores how different ethnic and gender groups have different market needs and demands, and how profits can be given a fillip by exploiting these biases. But we stress on how similar consumption practices indeed affects people’s conception of themselves and people around us. In short, similar (not identical) consumption practices among divergent ethnic groups give fillip to another tie of identification with others. We do not see it as insignificant and coincidental that ethnic clashes are predominantly prevailing in those countries which can’t be termed consumerist.

Naomi Klein is perhaps the sole writer who accepts and cites cases, where people’s identities have become intertwined with brands. This is particularly significant since the use of brands not only asserts status, but also goes in making people identify with dissimilar people with similar brands. This is in contrast to conventionally held concepts of consumer theory which oscillates between Homo economicus and Homo sociologicus. Variants of the theory of Homo economicus have the Robinson Crusoe model of man, autarchic from his society and utility maximisers following a rational theory of choice. In contrast, Homo sociologicus theories progress from seeing man as utility maximisers, to man as a product of his social surroundings. Later variants, though an advance from the earlier positions, still see consumer action from the vantage point of individuals. That is, as if an individual’s culture, biases and prejudices affect consumer demand, but he is not affected by it.

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231 Literature on material culture and consumption in abundant. It is not possible to give an overview of literature coming from diverse fields, like sociology, marketing, anthropology and economics. Here a fairly representative literature review has been attempted and hopefully achieved.
Though various concepts assert their interdependence, but it is in the staid forms of demand and supply, and resultant variations in price. To be precise, they see individual’s consumption of goods and services in instrumental ways only. We impress on the reflexive nature of human interactions, and this extends to field of economic exchange between people and countries. In international politics, this economic interdependence, for example “complex interdependence” of Keohane and Nye emphasises, multiple channels of connections, absence of hierarchy among issues and decline of military importance, plus cooperation. But somehow this interdependence is resultant of utility calculation of states. We want to impress instead that the increasing economic interdependence in leading to reflexive identification.

**Global Consumerist Society**

Waltz conceptualised the world as a system, “... defined as a set of interacting units. At one level, a system consists of a structure, and the structure is the systems level component that makes it possible to think of the units as forming a set as distinct from a mere collection.” Waltz, further delineating the characteristics of the system argues that this international system as the “the parts (states) of international political systems stand in relations of coordination. Formally, each is the equal of all the others. None is entitled to command, none is required to obey. International systems are decentralised and anarchic”. The underlying epistemology of Waltzian structure or system is economic, were units (states) are interacting in a utility maximiser mould. This is also fortified by this reference to the analogy of market, which is based on *Homo economicus* model. Hence, structural realism is not only state-centric, but conveniently ignores values, norms and identity of states constituting the international system. All states, irrespective of their internal characteristics, behave similarly due to the structural constraints within which they operate. The noteworthy strain in Waltzian theory is of asserting and assuming states in a Leibnizian sense of window less monad, or billiard ball analogy (as often characterised in international relations literature).

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233 Waltz, n.12, p.40.
234 Ibid., p.88.
This characterisation of international system was contested by English school theorists of international relations. Hedley Bull, the representative theorist of English School, differentiated between international system and international society. Bull asserted that “a system of states (or international system) is formed when two or more states have sufficient contact between them, and have sufficient impact on one another's serious, to cause them to behave – at least in some measure – as parts of a whole.”

Bull argued that conception of international arena as anarchic is insufficient, and argued that we live in an anarchical society. Conceptions of system imbibe an economistic conception of behaviour and rationality, as evident in Waltzian stress on market analogy. Bull accepted that though the international arena is anarchic, but it is anarchical society. Anarchical society was defined as

A society of states (or international society) exists when a group of states (already forming a system), conscious of certain common interests and common values, form a society in the sense that they conceive themselves to be bound by a common set of rules in their relations with one another and share in the working of common institutions.

In the anarchical society, states are formally equal to each other with no power, or authority or government above them i.e. the world arena is anarchic. Even states in an anarchic world have common interests and values, hence form an anarchical society. The significant aspect of Bull’s anarchical society is that it solely consists of states. But, according to Stanley Hoffmann, the real advance had been in “…its view of international relations as a complex set of relations among states that form an international society, and not simply a 'system of states'”.

Bull’s conception of world as society was ostensibly seen as an advance in study of world politics. The key to this interpretation of advance lay in the very semantics of “society”. “Society” had hitherto been used by sociologists and anthropologists for domestic society, with its underlay of purpose, order and progressive goals. Recourse to “society” was at the minimum, undoubtedly, but it broke the mental strait jacket of seeing international politics as a Hobbesian state of war. But this attributed progressiveness was more semantic than real. The society of states school gave human interpretations of technical systemic terminology, not necessarily humane.

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236 Ibid., p.13.
ones. This was primarily because Bull’s society continued to emphasise “order” and condone war as a means of achieving order. Bull’s conception of international society talks of “common interests” in an instrumental way i.e. states are unitary actors interested only in survival. As Pasic points out, an implied element of culture is involved both in international system and international society approaches, and emphasises the “… sociality of state interaction, even in a technically anarchic world.”

Pasic asserts that international relations are “indeed social relations”, occurring within specific cultural contexts.

In particular, the fuzziness in Bull’s concept of common interest and common values belies the unprogressiveness of his conception. Bull’s conception of order was conservative. He delineated three strands of international order, firstly is “the goal of preservation of the system and society of states itself.” Auxiliary to this strand is the maintenance of the Westphalian concept of sovereignty, which has been recently contested by other thinkers. Though Bull gives as his third goal as maintenance of peace, but categorically denies “establishing of universal and permanent peace” as a goal. He justifies recourse to war in “special circumstance”. Hence, according to Bull, “peace in this sense has been viewed by international society as a goal subordinate to that of the preservation of the states system itself…”

Hence, in system and society, though the terminology has changed resulting in change in premises the conclusions and international politics itself is to continue as ever before. As Bull further asserts the elements of international society had always been present. In fact, Bull posits that even warring factions of Axis and Allied powers formed an international society.

Hence, the distinction between international system and international society is slight. As Alan James points out, the existence of any international system presupposes a set of common rules, communication and common interests. They are fundamental to the functioning of any interaction among units of the international system. As Berridge emphasises, “what Bull is really talking about is some kind of continuum in which so called “states system” is really just a weak form of “society of continuum in which so called “states system” is really just a weak form of “society of

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238 Pasic, n. 177, p.85.
239 Bull, n. 234, pp.16-17.
The most intriguing aspect of the international society school is that it gives pride of place to the "great powers". Great powers had twin roles in Bull's conception. Firstly, by their exemplary maintenance of interstate order among themselves, they help in imbibing traditions (of international society) among other powers. Secondly, through their dominant position great powers help in stabilizing the society of states. To be more precise the role of great power is in "(i) preservation of the general balance, (ii) avoidance and control of crises, (iii) limitation of war, (iv) the unilateral exercise of local preponderance, (v) spheres of influence, interest or responsibility, (vi) a great power concert or condominium." Wheeler contests this "great power responsibility" and asks whether they are guardian angels or global gangsters. Ken Booth, too, attacked the theory of international society, and argued that international society was akin to "global protection racket." Though it may have its pluses, but its ethical claims of enjoining human rights and duties is hollow, consequent and formation of international community is a misnomer. Booth repudiates the argument of English School, that states are conscious of legal obligations and duties. In fact, they follow rules which are in their self interest, and incase of conflict with legal claims they follow the former and ignore the latter. Fred Halliday is also dissatisfied with the English school of international society, and locates it in realism, but asserts that, "it remains curiously vague, as much a guardian angel as a hegemonic concept." Halliday points out that, "the elitist, exclusionary character of the society of states is, of course the basis upon which the whole story developed, and the 'expansion' occurred." As Bull and Watson maintain that, "the global international society of today is in large part the consequence of Europe's impact on the rest of the world over the last five centuries." Further Halliday pointed out, that, "it stretches and dilutes the concept of 'society' much further than a more rigorous image would suggest." An elastic conception of society could be gleaned from the fact that it doesn't proscribe war. Halliday, noted that, "inter-state

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relations may therefore constitute a society, not so much because of the shred values involved, but because it is a grouping established by the coercion of some states by others and maintained, with a variety of ideological and military mechanisms, by the more power members.\textsuperscript{247} Robert H. Jackson seeks to explore, the “political theory of international society.”\textsuperscript{248} This he seeks to explore through “the analysis of moral choice in foreign policy... [involving] devotion to one’s own nation and the well-being of its citizens; respect for the legitimate interests and rights of other states and for international law; and, respect for human rights and for common morality.”\textsuperscript{249} Jackson’s focus on moral choice might make states “failed guardian angels”. Wily statesman might condone all their actions as result of inevitable choice.

Terry Nardin conceived international society as a practical association made up of states, “each devoted to its own ends and its own conception of the good. The common good of this inclusive community resides not in the ends that some, or at times even most, of its members may wish collectively to pursue but in the values of justice, peace, security, and co-existence, which can only be enjoyed through participation in a common body of authoritative practices.”\textsuperscript{250} Nardin’s approach of international society is different that of Wight, Bull and Walzer. The latter try to defend international society as a good thing in contrast to realism and revolutionism. Nardin does not see international society as a purposive association aimed towards pursuit of a certain blueprint of order and justice. In fact, Nadin’s conception of international society is a procedural one. States are already in a just order, which is primarily procedural i.e. society of states are only agreed to exist in a peaceful coexistence, without trying to forward some normative goals of of justice. In short, Nardin’s conception of international society as compared to Bull, Wight and Walzer is a sanitised one.

John Vincent was another “card carrying” member of English school. Vincent worked on sovereignty and non-intervention.\textsuperscript{251} He takes historical study of norms and practice of non-intervention. He came to the conclusion that states do not follow principle of non-intervention if it is not in their interests. He asserts that since

\textsuperscript{247} Halliday, n. 245, p.102.
\textsuperscript{249} Ibid., p.115.
\textsuperscript{251} John Vincent, \textit{Nonintervention and International Order} (Princeton, New Jersey, 1974).
sovereignty is the product of international law and hence its practice is “limited by rule of international law binding upon it” he stresses on “relative sovereignty”, which “strikes a balance between the need to privilege sovereignty and the need to maintain the discourse on international law, and highlights the role played by the doctrine of non-intervention not only in immunizing states from interference, but also in serving as ‘as the frontier between international law and domestic law’. 252 Vincent dismisses the view that international organisations are guiding world politics. Interstate relations still dominate world politics, arguments asserting that individuals are subjects and actors of international law is mistaken. Though later Vincent begins to discuss “world society”, he asserts that there is not one world society of individuals and groups but many. He does not believe states centric international society is everlasting, but there is no world society presently worthy of practice. Michael Walzer, in the international society tradition, postulates as “just war theory”. He focuses on *jus ad bellum* i.e. appropriate reasons for going into war and *jus in bello* i.e. appropriate behaviour in conduct of war. This revolves around the conception of an international society of states where all the states have the sovereign right over territory and sovereignty. 253 The international society tradition focuses on the state as the defining constituent of society, and consequently disregards the role of the human individual and groups. Because of its state-centric focus, its focus and scope is limited. Hence, due to the very constitutive character of society, it replicates Martin Wight’s tradition of international politics as endless repetition, denying cumulative knowledge. Hence, one thing comes out clearly from this theoretical approach that membership is restricted to sovereign states, and key institutions and mechanism are restricted to war, great powers (guardian angles or global gangsters), balance of power and diplomacy. According to Robert Jackson, “international society, lime any other society, consists of members, but they are a very special category namely sovereign states.” 254 Alan James reiterates the above point and says that state sovereignty is “the very basis of international relations” because it is the qualification which states must


have before they can join international society.\textsuperscript{255} Robert Jackson tries to balance this state-centric focus by putting non-state actors in “the auxiliary framework of international society; other echelons are also involved. International society also consists of international organizations (IO), non-governmental organizations (NGOs) and transnational networks, and individual human beings seen as composing a world society.”\textsuperscript{256} International society transition’s focus on order ignores other relations and processes which are not only important but themselves also increasingly occupying important role in rapidly globalising world. Bull and Vincent reluctantly gave recognition to “world society”, which incorporated individual and other groups. Still, “world society” was an underdeveloped concept. Locating the individual as the locus of International Relations has been the recurrent debate in International Relations. This debate has revolved around the axis of the cosmopolitan versus communitarian debates. That is, the debate between universal and particular revolves around individuals and states. Or, in the words of Linklater, “a very significant part of the history of modern international thought has centered upon what may be termed the problem of the relationship between men and citizens.”\textsuperscript{257} In order to solve (or dissolve) this problem, much of international relations theorists continue to grapple with it. Even normative theory has revolved along this cosmopolitan/communitarian axis. As Molly Cochran notes, “normative theory in International Relations (IR) as it is discussed at present in the framework of cosmopolitan/communitarian debate, is at a standstill.”\textsuperscript{258} Chris Brown notes that “what is crucial to a cosmopolitan attitude is the refusal to regard existing political structure as the source of ultimate value”.\textsuperscript{259} Brown points out in particular two ways in which cosmopolitanism is misunderstood. Firstly, “cosmopolitanism has no necessary connection with the desire for some kind of world government”.\textsuperscript{260} Secondly, “cosmopolitanism is a universalist principle but not all universalist principles are cosmopolitan... it is possible to hold the nation as a universal source of particularist values.”\textsuperscript{261} Hutchings argues that, “moral cosmopolitanism refers in general to moral universalism, that is to any moral theory

\textsuperscript{255} Alan James, “International Society”, \textit{British Journal of International Studies}, 4, 1978, pp.91-106.
\textsuperscript{256} Jackson, n.253, p.105.
\textsuperscript{260} Ibid., p.24.
\textsuperscript{261} Ibid., p.24.
which presumes the universal validity and applicability of moral principles." For Janna Thompson, cosmopolitanism affirms "the idea that a social order must be justified in terms of how it effects the entitlements of individuals or their general welfare... independently of commitment to any particular social relations". Brown sees communitarianism as the antonym of cosmopolitanism. While cosmopolitanism asserts primacy of individual over other social values, communitarianism asserts the primacy of shared values and social practices which give meaning to an individual's life. As Brown maintains, "the root notion of communitarian thought is that values stems from the community, that the individual finds meaning in life by virtue of his or her membership of a political community." In short, communitarians stress the "social self" rather than atomistic self of cosmopolitanism. Cochran argues that the debate between cosmopolitan and communitarian views in due to different epistemological claims. She notes that

the impasse between cosmopolitans and communitarians is a product of the fact that they are locked into a debate about ontological issues, which actually rest on prior epistemological claims about how to ground attributions of moral significance to individuals or states, but which fails to acknowledge the primacy of this epistemological issue.

Linklater argues that it is "unwise to draw a sharp distinction between communitarianism and cosmopolitanism". He asserts that both cosmopolitans and communitarians stress on moral inclusion. Hence, he gives the notion of "think cosmopolitanism" which, "simply argues that existing political communities ought to increase the impact which duties to the rest of humanity have on decision making processes." Cochran argues that thinkers it the cosmopolitan/communitarian divide debate with weak foundations of knowledge but mistakenly fee that it will yield strong normative procedures. As she argues, "they proceed as if their weak foundations yield non-contingent ethical claims". Cochran favours "antifoundationalist approaches [that] represent in one respect an opening in the gridlock of normative theory at present: they understand the ethics that results from an

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264 Brown, n.259, p.55.
265 Cochran, n.258, p.17. (emphasis in the original)
267 Ibid., pp.54-55.
268 Cochran, n.258, p.16. (emphasis in the original)
anti-foundationalist position to be contingent\textsuperscript{269}. Cochran favours normative ethics as constructed from the mutual intersection of ontology and epistemology, and ground it in an anti-foundationalist epistemology of pragmatism. Here is a “international ethics as pragmatic critique”. According to Cochran

This method values social cooperation and group memberships which range in scope from the local to the international and distances it as far as possible from epistemologically centred thinking. It follows from this epistemological distancing that attention is thrown back onto ontology, however, with a difference. It does so with the acknowledgement that having no recourse to strong foundations means that our ethics, and our ontologies, can only come to provisional places of rest as solutions, conclusions or answers; they will continually be up for revision. For pragmatic critique, this revision always comes back to this weak ontological priority: growth, where growth is defined as making better and more meaningful worlds for themselves\textsuperscript{270}.

Instead of constructing elaborate, hair splitting arguments for cosmopolitanism, we seek to locate this cosmopolitanism in individuals. Ours is a form of consumer cosmopolitanism, which seeks to explore global consumerism as incorporating moral inclusion. The global flow of goods and services can be a very powerful drive in expanding the moral community, be it in the form of Klein’s anti-corporate movements against brand bullies or in the form of social standards e.g. in violation of child labour norms in the production of goods. Traditional debates over cosmopolitanism and communitarianism were revolving around epistemological categories, and the concept of person assumed was cogito man hence, at times the debate became rhetorical and exhortation was made to extend obligations around the world with abstract theories for abstract man. Though communitarians emphasise the social self and contented against the Rawlsian view of “unencumbered self”, but when applied in practice this community is equated with nation-state. It begins to mirror the Walker distinction of inside versus outside in international relations, where the state becomes the container of all identities, and no identity is allowed to spill over connect with the outside. Cosmopolitan theories were constructed to impress upon the statesmen to follow universal principles of human rights and obligations. Further, the cosmopolitan/communitarian debate revolved around issues of abstract principles, which was regarded somehow not to be concerned with contextual and sociological processes. The issue was to zero in on an abstract principle which can be implemented

\textsuperscript{269} Ibid., p.16. (emphasis in the original)
\textsuperscript{270} Ibid., p.18.(emphasis in the original)
primarily by states. However, interrelations besides states were beginning to be impressed with increasing contact among people and non-governmental organisations and thereby resulting in global civil society. It was not without tremendous impact on world politics, but it lacked a sociological base. Our conception of a global consumerist society tries to give a sociological base to various international relationships. A sociological turn is especially desired since it does not progress from an ahistorical concept of state, community and individual. We see our work in the constructivist tradition, accept its predominant notion that identities are constructed, but do not necessarily by implication accept that constructed identities lead to difference. In contrast, we locate global consumerist society in people's extension of moral community through global flow of goods and services.

A very pertinent example of consumer cosmopolitanism is the proliferation of consumer groups, both within states and internationally, which stress on consumer rights irrespective of gender, caste, race, religion and ethnicity. An international non-governmental organization working on consumers is Consumers International, whose name is perhaps inspired by communist international. The idea sought to be impressed is that cases at practical level emphasizing identification or collectivity on the basis of consumerism can be cited. Consumers International is such a case, howsoever fledgling it may be. It is the biggest consumer organisation in the world. It has a membership of over 250 organisations in 115 countries of its total membership of 271, there are representations from 123 countries. Its objective is "to promote a fairer society through defending the rights of all consumers, especially the poor, marginalised and disadvantaged by

supporting and strong linking member organizations and the consumer movement in general.

campaigning at the international level for policies which respect consumer concerns.271

Consumers International was founded in 1960 under the name International Organisation of Consumers Union (IOUC) by a collection of national consumer organizations. The motive behind its formation was that. The group recognized that they could build upon their individual strengths by working across national borders. The organisational rapidly grew and soon became established as the voice of the

271 http://www.consumersinternational.org
international consumer movement on issues such as product and food standards health and patient rights, the environment and sustainable consumption, and the regulation of international trade and public utilities.

The various rights and obligations asserted by this organisation are undoubtedly cosmopolitan, because the rights and duties established are universal, irrespective of national boundaries. This locus of rights and duties are invested not in man as moral personality, but man as a consumer. This shift from abstract philosophical injunctions to existential human being is very significant. It is not that it has restricted itself to developed countries, but that 75 per cent of its organisations are working in developing countries. It aims to empower the bargaining potential of consumers, which it asserts has become weak in the globalised market economy. It presses for establishment of legislation, institutions and information that can improve the quality of life and empower people to make changes in their own lives. It seeks to ensure that basic human rights are recognised, and promotes understanding of people’s rights and responsibilities as consumers. These are

- the right to satisfaction of basic needs
- the right to safety
- the right to be informed
- the right to choose
- the right to be heard
- the right to redress
- the right to consumer education
- the right to a healthy environment

The recurrent criticism of any study on consumerism has been to accuse of elitism. Though not entirely wrong, this has most often been made with value judgements about living standards equating them with opulence. Repudiating this Consumers International asserts that developing and protecting consumers rights and their awareness of their responsibilities are integral to:

- eradication of poverty
- good governance
- social justices and respect of human rights
- fair and effective market economies
It is not that this consumer organisation works only at the local level. In fact it actively participates in the United Nations and other international bodies. Consumers International takes active interest in various World Trade Organisation (WTO) Meetings. They focus on universal and equitable standard to be followed and adopted. Consumers International called on WTO members to launch a Consumer Round as its Fourth Ministerial Conference in Doha, Qatar, stating that “the goal of enhancing consumer welfare must be taken into account in national, regional and global policy making.” It has official representation on many global bodies, including

- United Nations Economic and Social Council (ECOSOC) and related United Nations agencies and commissions
- World Health Organisation (WHO)
- Codex Alimentarius Commission
- International Organisation of Standardisation (ISO)
- United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organisation (UNESCO)
- United Nations Children Fund (UNICEF)
- International Electromechanical Commission (IEC)
- United Nations Conference on Trade and Development (UNCTAD)
- United Nations Regional Economic Commission
- Economic Community for West African States (ECOWAS)
- Latin American Parliament (PARTLATINO)
- Pan American Health Organisation (PAHO)
- Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN)
- European Union (EU)

Another consumer organisation based in Jaipur (India) works on similar principles. The Consumer Unity and Trust Society established in 1984, has four centres in India and one in Africa. It emphasises, “the consumer movement is neutral to class, caste, gender, creed, race and religion, it is a non–partisan political movement wherein the rights of the richest and the poorest consumer deserve appropriate protection.272 The example of Consumers International and Consumer Unity and Trust Society is discussed to emphasise the cosmopolitan character of consumer movements. But our main thesis is that state or sovereignty is constructed around similar consumption practices. That is, consumption practices are one, if not

sole, ingredient in defining people’s identities. Here we are in agreement with Appadurai, who terms shifts in consumption commodities as “Trojan horse of value shifts.” It is our contention here that global culture has been unhelpfully discussed in terms of the binary dualisms of a epistemic homogeneous conception of national culture that is contrasted with global culture, leading to what Walker, terms as “inside/outside” dichotomy. Sociologists have variously defined globalised world as, “world society (John Meyer and associates, as well as Peter Heintze, John Burton, Ulrich Beck, Niklas Luhmann, Jan Aart Scholte and Martin Shaw); w.o.:ld–system (Immanuel Wallerstein and followers); global ecumene (Ulf Hannerz and followers); global system (Leslie Skliar, Anthony Giddens, Barrie Axford and Others); global society (various authors); the world-as-a-single place (Robertson) network society (Manuel Castells)... global arena (Jonathon Friedman) and global field (Robertson)...”273 Robertson, emphasises the multi-dimensionality of globalisation.

Since ours is an exercise in international politics, we emphasise the constructedness of national identity and sovereignty. And how it is transgressed leading to identification with others as persons of equal moral personality? This expansion of moral personality is not based on some abstract philosophical principles, which rarely go influence the practice of ordinary human beings but as consumers who in their existentialist demand for consumption recognise each other as consumers of similar goods. State sovereignty has increasingly been seen as a social construct. However, mostly as R.B.J. Walker reminds us it has remained in international politics as mostly an uncontested concept. As Biersteker and Weber argue

A focus on the social construction of state sovereignty directs us to a consideration of the constitutive relationship between state and sovereignty; the ways the meaning of sovereignty is negotiated out of interactions within intersubjectively identifiable communities; and the

273 Roland Robertson and Kathleen A White, “Globalization: An Overview”, in Roland Robertson and Kathleen E. White, eds. Globalization: Critical Concepts in Sociology: Analytical Perspectives, vol.7 (London, New York, 2003), p.4. (emphasis in the original) In fact sociological literature on globalisation has surplus of different terms and conceptions to seize the effects of globalization. This is so due to the very complex processes of globalization, which permits of use of many different terms (or also due to gain academic immortality in the footnotes). Since this thesis being predominantly international politics exercise (though wanderings into other discipline can’t be avoided), they do not entail a detailed discussion here. However, the predominant strain is multi-dimensional connection across, cultural, economic, and communication linkages.
variety of ways of which practices construct, reproduce, reconstruct and deconstruct both state and sovereignty.  
Robert Jackson, has shown how sovereignty varies in “quasi-state”, whose sovereignty, is more juridical than empirical. He argues, “they (third world) often appear to be juridical more than empirical entities.”  
Jackson stresses the institutional basis of sovereignty which is affected by context. Hence, positive sovereignty refers to capabilities while negative sovereignty refers to the negative injunctions (like nonintervention). Hence the emphasis of international society that states are equal moral communities is mistaken. Emphasising on the links between national identity and sovereignty, Lynn Doty argues that the practices of sovereignty are being continuously constructed with respect to the notions of national identity, it is not primarily territorial as it is made out to be. Further, the concepts of sovereignty are practiced in discursive aspects as required by the state. As Lynn Doty argues  

I suggest that (this) boundary is not simply or solely territorial. Nor is it simply based upon political authority understood as the right to determine the governing rules and policies within a specific geographic territory. Instead, the inside/outside boundary is a function of a state’s discursive authority, that is, its ability, in the face of ambiguity and uncertainty, to impose fixed and stable meanings about who belongs and who does not belong to the nation, and thereby to distinguish a specific political community – the inside – from all others – the outside.  

Lynn Doty’s emphasis on constructedness of sovereignty with changing national identity is desirable, but she reproduces the prevalent binary dualism playing in much of political theory, i.e. inside/outside. It ignores the claim that national identities can coexist with consumerist identity which will go beyond the nation state. R.B.J. Walker seeks to contest this inside/outside dichotomy of international relations, and emphasises the interlinkage between sovereignty and subjectivity. He argues:  

This formalized insistence on the more or less irrelevance of the relationship between sovereignty and subjectivity in the realm of international relations is simply the consequence of the claim crucial to the constitution of modern politics, that sovereignty and subjectivity

can be reconciled only inside the sovereign state. But the reassurance of interest in the proper relationship between sovereignty and subjectivity now occurs increasingly in contexts in which their spatial delineation of distinct realism inside the outside the modern state makes less and less sense, whether in relation to empirical tendencies or to normative aspirations.  

Hence, the global flow of goods and commodities will expand this subjectivity beyond the nation-state. But it is not emphasized here that this will lead to global integration. Our thesis is only that a major source of identificaiton has been consumption practices and commodities that, no matter how globalised the economy will predominantly imply local consumption. Secondly, we do not dismiss other mutually exclusionary identities. Countries which are more globalised have less protracted conflicts, while the world’s major areas of conflict have little to trade and hence do not constitute a consuming society. A related issue is that of borders and identities, where all identities are believed to be confined to the borders. This unproblematised assumption of borders has been central to international relations theory. Coupled with sovereign “sovereignty” reified out of practice and history, this makes international relations theory recurrent rather than progressive.

As Chris Brown asserts, that “borders and frontiers have a deep significance in identity formation and preservation and … their existence is not a contingent feature of social life.” This juxtaposition of identity with borders is fundamental to our present discussion of social and political theory. Even through abstract cosmopolitanism believes that the fundamental identity is that of human race and that other identities are secondary, this liberal definition of identity isn’t of much significance to us in our daily lives. This very definition of identity has made it a metaphysical element of faith, which is only to be believed but not to be practiced. Liberal theory’s rival communitarianism emphasises on our being a product of a particular culture and a particular background. This particularity can be maximised at a state’s borders not beyond that. As Michael Walzer maintains control of “membership” to the community is essential. Although the, liberal view of the self

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279 Michel Walzer, Spheres of Justice (London, 1983).
as individualist might on the surface look emancipatory and cosmopolitan, but it is not without its ethnocentrist biases. As Will Kymlicka maintained

Liberalism in its most attractive form, offers a very plausible and compelling account of community and culture. It recognizes the way that communal and cultural aspects of social life provide the possibility for, and locus, of the pursuit of human values.280

It is our contention that this silence of liberalism on culture has deeper underlying significances. This refusal to problematise culture gives credence to the obvious commonsensical view of communitarians locating identities within boundaries. It is argued here that is axis of individual is community, is akin to foundationalist vs. anti-foundationalist controversy over knowledge, which ostensibly asserts debate and difference, but is not without significant impact. This significant impact is in defining we as “we” and them as “them”. It is mistakenly assumed by third world scholars that their assertion of “us” as different from universalising proclivities of “them” is emancipatory and anti–western. Instead we argue that this assertion of our difference largely in categories which have been supplied by “them” is less culturally empowering and more recurring the debate which has led to their hegemony. It is not insignificant that Samuel Huntington attempts to reinterpret (or resurrect) world politics in terms of differences of cultural identity, described at the level of civilizations. As Huntington maintains that,

The idea (is) advanced that the spread of western consumption patterns and popular culture around the world is creating a universal civilization. This argument is neither profound nor relevant... The essence of western civilization is Magna Carta not the Magna Mac. The fact that non-westerners may bite into the latter has no implications for their accepting the former.281

Hence this attempt to define themselves in cogito terms is not without implication for international politics. This is aimed at reproducing the differences, which have been central to even the colonial era, despite witnessing a globalised world economy. Seeking economic interactions in the mode of instrumental “complex interdependence” is not a scholarly oversight, but an ethnocentric bias. Hence this reluctance to accept that our identities are not only spatially differentiated but temporally limited. This spatial fixation refuses to acknowledge that a globalised

world economy with globalised consumption patterns must result in a global society, with identities or identification spilling across the usual delineations of identity viz., race, ethnic, and nation. Hence, the need is to see identities as a product of the temporal context. As Walker maintains,

Temporality can no longer be contained within spatial co-ordinates. Given the history of thinking about concepts of space and time since Issac Newton stopped underwriting the guarantees for modernity, this should not be surprising. But given the extent to which modern political thought has depended on the claim that temporality can and must be tamed and shaped by the spatial certainties of sovereign states, it is undoubtedly quite perplexing, even threatening.²⁸²

CONCLUSION

Social and political theory has continued to be fixated with cogito rationality and cogito man. This tendency to locate essences and Archimedean points, fails to account or grasp the existence and collection of “water”, which is key to their location. This has resulted in spatially differentiated identity, especially defined in immutable terms. It is underlined here that contexts of consumption, if not wholly, at least partly do play a role in the construction of identity and identification. Hence, with widening contexts of consumption, identity, identification and moral community is and should be widened.

²⁸² Walker, n.80. p.178.