

Telling a Collaborative Story:
Searching for a “Common Good” with Inclusive Roots, not just Inclusive Borders

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**Note:* This is a theory chapter draft of the book manuscript based on my dissertation.

Introduction

How is it possible to create a more inclusive definition of the “common good?” In this paper, I design a feminist constructivist model for developing more just and inclusive interests. This conceptual model outlines structural opportunities and constraints on inclusion and provides a standard by which to evaluate discussions of the “common good.” I also clarify existing discussion by distinguishing between two different kinds of inclusion. These involve varying degrees of social justice, and together address the the failure of good intention in creating common goods.

The “Common Good” in International Relations

International Relations (IR) as a discipline has historically been defined at least implicitly in terms of addressing the need for greater common goods. IR scholarship has historically been oriented around explaining and understanding what Martin Wight (1966) famously called the “recurrence and repetition” of conflict in the international system, or how to increase the opportunity for peace and reduce the opportunities for and impact of war. Even while belief in the possibility of sustained peace has waxed and waned, and even while normative frameworks have gained and lost currency, this orientation has continued to inform the discipline.

Despite this, a paradox of inclusion is evident in that efforts to create a “common good” can be colonizing rather than empowering, because “common goods” may be less “common” than first appear. In particular, when common goods are defined by elites, their definition can be skewed towards elite interests and their distribution can be skewed toward elite recipients.

Consequently, defining particular interests as the “common good” – without evaluating who defines those particular goods and who benefits from them – can rationalize unjust systems with biased definition and distribution of goods, rather than promote more just systems with more substantively “common” goods by and for all.

This paradox of inclusion has been at the source of a wide range of discussions of what can be understood as common goods in IR scholarship: In the area of global, state, and community governance, it is highlighted by efforts to promote deeply inclusive deliberative democracy rather than limited meaningful democratic engagement (e.g., Young 2002). In the area of economic development, it is highlighted by efforts to define development as “freedom” rather than a “Washington Consensus” about how to best organize global goods and services (e.g., Sen 2001). In the area of human rights, it is highlighted by efforts to promote a “capabilities approach” rather than an elite interpretation of rights as the basis for promoting human flourishing (e.g., Nussbaum 2011). Finally, in the area of world orders, it is highlighted by efforts to promote dialogical cosmopolitanism rather than empire as the basis for more just human rights and world orders (e.g., Mendieta 2009). Across the board, efforts to untangle this paradox support more substantive forms of inclusion as the basis for encouraging greater justice (see also: Young 2001: 17).

Substantive and Seductive Forms of Inclusion: Inclusive “Roots” and “Borders”

Despite the importance of inclusion in issues of global politics today, scholarly discussion has been hampered by ambiguous language which conflates multiple practices under the term “inclusion.” Affirming discussions of American Empire (e.g., Mallaby 2002),

neoliberal “one size fits all” decrees for poor nations to “stabilize, privatize, and liberalize” (see: Rodrik 2006: 973), and human rights interpretations which prioritize public interpretations of civil-political rights over private access and socio-economic rights (see, e.g., Charlesworth 1994; Normand and Zaidi 2008: 205) all appear to support inclusive common goods. However – whether intentionally or unintentionally – they end up having a colonizing, rather than empowering, impact.

To clarify discussion, I introduce new language which differentiates between at least two different forms of inclusion which are at issue. Drawing on a plant metaphor, I describe these as inclusive “roots” and inclusive canopy “borders.” First, inclusive *roots* can be understood as being defined based on a diverse range of group members, rather than being defined by elites. Groups which treat the voice of all group members as equally viable and equally address those voices in defining group goals have *inclusive* roots; groups which exclude, minimize, or discount viewpoints of certain group members (e.g., “groupthink”) have *exclusive* roots. Second, inclusive canopy *borders* can be understood as being applied to a broad membership. Big groups have *inclusive* borders; small groups have *exclusive* borders. As the plant metaphor illustrates, inclusion is a living and ongoing process, which involves continuously drawing on varyingly rich or poor bases for articulating meaning as well as extending these interpretations to varyingly small or large circles of influence.

Inclusive roots and borders are not incompatible, at least in theory. For example, big groups can sometimes be characterized by inclusive roots as well as borders at least to some degree (e.g., democracies: for the people and by the people). And small, elite groups are frequently characterized by explicitly exclusive roots and borders (e.g., “white-only” men’s clubs: for a white male membership but about a subset of racist white males). However, they do

not always overlap. For example, small groups (with exclusive borders) can be characterized by inclusive roots (e.g., non-hierarchical, co-actively led, or consensus-based, feminist groups). And relatively big groups (with inclusive borders) are frequently characterized by exclusive roots (e.g., fundamentalist religious groups which claim that particular interpretations of their religion are the standard for all members of that religion or all people). Furthermore, feminist scholars demonstrate that big groups which claim to be inclusive (e.g., democracies) often have inclusive borders but exclusive roots: in the language of feminist scholarship, groups (which include women and men) are frequently based on a “male model” that prioritizes interests based in men’s (rather than women’s) experiences (e.g., Charlesworth 1994; Okin 1999). As such, group claims to inclusiveness can be seductive rather than straightforward, because they can fail to differentiate between inclusive roots (the source of interests) and borders (group size or membership). So, too, pursuing interests with more inclusive borders must be understood as a shallow form of inclusion which may begin, but does not complete, efforts for substantive inclusion and meaningful justice.

The Influence of Power on Interests

Underlying the confusion between what I call inclusive “roots” and “borders” is the too frequently sidelined issue of power. In International Relations, questions of how interests are constructed and how power influences these constructions are primarily addressed from constructivist, critical, and feminist theory, which explore constructions of interests, rather than leaving them inside a “black box,” and tend to be normative scholars who are particularly interested in pursuing opportunities for greater social justice.

In constructivist research – which analyzes how people’s interpretations of the world shape their action towards it – power should be a critically important issue: If action depends on meaning assigned rather than any “objective” qualities, who assigns that meaning becomes very powerful, and debate over dominant language or frames becomes particularly important. Yet, even though constructivists repeatedly refer to the idea of “intersubjectively constructed” reality, they usually fail to question this concept (see also Rumelili 2002, 59). A major exception is Nicholas Onuf, who does take power seriously (see: Onuf 1989, 1998). According to Onuf, because there are different levels of resources available to agents, certain agents influence rules and their level of success in being followed more than others (Onuf 1998, 75). This means that such agents can “use rules to exercise control and obtain advantages over other agents” more than others. Consequently, “rules yield rule” – an asymmetrical pattern of relations (75, 63).

In support of Onuf’s argument is Gramsci’s critical theory argument that ideological hegemony supports social inequalities and injustice. According to Gramsci, hegemonic ideologies reflect overlapping interests shared between an alliance of the ruling elite and certain members of less powerful groups, who must be included in order to “ensure that force will appear to be based on the consent of the majority” (Gramsci 1972, 79, footnote 49; quoted in Friedman 2005, 245). This “hegemony of ideas” promotes what Karl Marx and some feminists have called “false consciousness” and what Bourdieu (following Marx) described as “misrecognition”: it pushes people to consent to, legitimize, and naturalize forces of domination by disguising coercion so that people can go along with it, all the while believing that they are consenting of their own free will (Friedman 2005, 242-243; see also: Gramsci 1985, 130; Ives 2002, 330).

Both Onuf and Gramsci would agree that dominating social narratives can be combated

with more emancipatory alternatives, at least to some degree. First, Gramsci argues that “a band of self-conscious, dedicated, and active supporters” who recognize that an alternative “historical block” based on shared worldview and interests exists can work together to build an different, counter-hegemonic, historical block where divisions between dominant leaders and subordinate followers “is no longer necessary” (Gramsci 1972, quoted in Rupert 2005, 4881; Germino 1990, 256). Second, Onuf argues that certain kinds of rules (e.g., assertive rules) produce greater levels of domination than others (e.g., commissive or directive rules).

Despite this, even these critical and constructivist scholars are skeptical of the opportunity for equal control over and interpretation of social rules needed to support egalitarian social relationships. This is because both assume that a lack of *autonomy* (freedom to act) requires some form of *domination* (asymmetrical relations). In particular, both assume that the interests of the elite (rule makers or hegemonic historical bloc) are defined at the expense of the rest (rule or subordinate followers). However, this assumption conflates inclusive roots with inclusive borders and does not necessarily follow from either of these frameworks. As such, reject this skepticism about emancipatory norms and argue that more rootedly inclusive or “win-win” interests supporting such rules may be possible in situations structured by empowering – rather than dominating – relationships, such as when multiple perspectives are valued and used to inform hegemonic or rule-maker interests.

Feminist scholarship can shed particularly useful light on how dominating or empowering forms of power influence opportunities for substantive and seductive forms of inclusion. According to such scholarship, dominating forms of power and power as unequal distributions of resources can support exclusionary practices which limit who participates in defining the common good as well as whose interests are prioritized in creating that definition.

In the worst case, people intentionally abuse their position of power (e.g., the phrase, “power corrupts and absolute power corrupts absolutely”). John Stuart Mill warned against this kind of corruption within the family in 1869, arguing that: “it was in the interests of children and of society that equal rights within the family be the basis of marriage, otherwise, the family would become a school of despotism [when it ought to be] the real school of the virtues of freedom” (paraphrased in Fraser 1999, 867). This tendency has since been borne out by research showing, for example, that violence against women within the family is fostered by cultural beliefs that “men are superior and that women with whom they live are their possessions to be treated as the men consider appropriate” (Joachim 2007: 118). As this indicates, the interests of individuals in dominant positions can be seen as more important than the interests of those in subordinate positions, which makes subordinates particularly vulnerable. Arvonne Fraser (1987) notes that “[d]ependency can be crippling to either nations or women, leaving them at the mercy of others. The ‘others’ may have neither the resources nor the political will to improve the status of the dependent” (88). Overall, hierarchies from relational structures within families, to among social groups (such as defined by ethnicity or class), to among states (such as defined by developed or developing status) and otherwise are all at risk of exclusionary interests and behavior because of reliance on dominating rather than egalitarian relational structures.

As noted previously, however, no negative intent is required for dominating relationships to have negative consequences. According to feminist scholarship, this may be because of limitations on the intelligibility of others’ experience: it is difficult to understand what it is like to “walk in other people’s shoes,” (Hartsock 1983; Lugones 1987; Collins 1989; Crenshaw 1991; Sylvester 1994; Young 1994; Yuval-Davis 1997; Harding 1998; Ackerly 2000; 2008). Nira Yuval Davis (1997) points out that within the family, different members have different social

positioning and different interests; consequently, even in paternalistic family structures where fathers seek the best interest of the family, fatherly interpretations of “family interests” may be limited to a *father’s* interests *for* the family, rather than interests *of* particular family members. Overall, dominating forms of power restrict opportunities for inclusive interests both for those with the best of intentions (e.g., because of limited imagination of elites and restricted participation by subordinates), and those without them (e.g., due to corruption or abuse).

As an alternative, feminist scholarship supports empowering forms of power as the basis for more substantively inclusive interests, rather than the seductively inclusive or exclusive interests fostered by dominating power relationships. This includes “power-to” – which involves individual capacity influence building (for example, through education) – as well as or “power-with,” which involves collaborative efforts which as a whole are greater than the sum of the parts (Rowlands 1997: 13; Allen 2008). Unlike dominating forms of power, which assumes a “zero-sum game” where the interests of some come at the expense of others, these empowering forms of power assume the possibility of a “positive-sum game” where “win-win” solutions which incorporate interests of multiple parties are possible.

As this indicates, the level of substantive or seductive inclusion of common goods is built on the kind of (dominating or empowering) power structures which shape group discussion defining that good. These power structures exist between discourses as well as between them. Consequently, efforts at substantive inclusion must consider the “big picture” as well as the “little picture.” In particular, they must address hierarchies which exist across multiple-level “games” (e.g., those prioritizing “state security” over “human security” or “women’s rights”) rather than focusing on hierarchies within particular discourses (e.g., prioritizing a focus on men not women in development).

Brooke Ackerly (2000; 2008) provides an exemplary approach to creating more inclusive interests which recognizes these power constraints. She proposes a “curb cut feminism” methodology to justify universal human rights. Ackerly argues that this avoids cultural imperialism by allowing participants to “challenge unreflective ways of knowing in order to reveal forms of power concealed in institutions and habituated practices” (2008: 27) with a “destabilizing epistemological perspective” (35). As such, this focus on process over principles can enable more substantively inclusive consideration of rights because it minimizes sources of potentially exploitable power based in particular or elite interpretation or application of human rights principles. This approach builds on feminist insights (e.g., Collins 1989; Crenshaw 1991; Lugones 1987; Sylvester 1994) which highlight how drawing on and valuing diverse perspectives is critical to *defining* interests, as well as *extending* those interests, in more inclusive ways. And it recognizes the critical importance of power in that process.

Despite this, Ackerly’s approach remains limited by its reliance on “deliberation” without standards of inclusiveness for that deliberation. Although I agree with her that “[t]hrough collaboration we become increasingly attentive to the invisible among us... and the invisible outside of ‘us’” (245), I am not convinced that increased visibility of complex memberships will guarantee equal valuing of those diverse perspectives. In practical terms, even if the deliberative group involved has different perspectives (e.g., insiders, outsiders, multi-sited critics, and silent or silenced critics), the people at the discussion table are only a subset of the larger population, and frequently are more elite than that population. And since there will always be those who cannot be at the table, and concerns which are not always adequately (or at all) addressed or prioritized in the discussion, any discourse among those who do participate is likely to remain limited either by limited recognition or limited prioritization.

Consequently, while attentive deliberation among diverse critics in “domains of continued dispute” is an excellent starting point in pursuing more inclusive interests, more is needed. A standard of inclusiveness which is not tied to any particular perspective would enable “deliberations” to be evaluated in a way that recognizes potential limitations due to limited or elite participants in the conversation. This paper develops and illustrates this kind of standard through its model of inclusive interests. In the process, it seeks to contribute to the conversation by Ackerly and others about how to create the foundation for more just and inclusive behavior.

Traditional Assumptions about Inclusion

How can we understand the opportunities and challenges for creating substantive and seductive forms of inclusion? From a constructivist International Relations (IR) perspective, language defines appropriate behavior by giving meaning to “facts” or “objects.” Consequently, creating more inclusive common goods requires creating more inclusive discourse. According to Alexander Wendt’s classic *Social Theory of International Politics*, states can act to reduce the “recurrence and repetition” of the international system by defining relationships more inclusively: in particular, he argues for defining others in the international system as “friends” (a “Kantian” approach) rather than “enemies” (a Hobbesian approach) or “rivals” (a Lockean approach) (Wendt 1999, 259). Because “anarchy is what states make of it,” redefining relationships in the international system has the potential to redefine the international system itself (Wendt 1992; see also Wendt 1999; Zehfuss 2002, 15). While Wendt’s argument importantly highlights how greater inclusion is possible by expanding the ingroup to avoid excluding the outgroup, it remains limited to a shallow form of inclusion that focuses on

inclusive borders, not roots. As a result, it cannot distinguish between colonizing and empowering international relationships.

This emphasis is largely based in the social psychological assumptions which provide the foundation for Wendt's argument. In particular, Wendt draws on an early form of Social Identity Theory (SIT), which argues that the way individuals identify in a range of social ingroups (as "me" and "us") relative to social outgroups (as "them") are the basis for intergroup processes including conflict, cooperation, and efforts at social justice and peace (see, e.g., Tajfel and Turner 1986; Hymans 2002: 6). As one of the only approaches which links individual to group psychological processes, this approach is a powerful tool. However, Wendt's (1999) discussion relies on an outdated version of SIT which assumes that people are only able to favor ingroups at the expense of outgroups. Consequently, inclusive action is limited to the seductive inclusion of expanding the borders of the ingroup to avoid exclusionary outgroup denigration.

Despite this, SIT has developed since its early articulation, and current social psychological research provide more other, more substantively inclusive, opportunities. In particular, the psychological consensus in the 2000s – building from Marilyn Brewer's (1979) article and rooted in experiments as early as Allport's classic (1954) experiments – dismisses assumptions of relative ingroup affirmation as invalid, and instead assumes that ingroup favoritism is *independent* from outgroup hostility. For one example, it is possible to patriotic (being proud of and attached to one's nation) without being nationalistic (claiming superiority over other nations) (Hewstone et al. 2002, 593). As such, psychologists have overcome what game theorists and negotiation theorists call the "fixed pie bias" of assuming that identities are defined in a zero-sum game, and now recognize that it is possible (although not necessary) that

identities can be defined in a positive-sum “game” (e.g., Brewer 1999, 431). However, many international relations scholars have not yet made this jump.

Identities as Narratives

According to SIT, individuals define themselves both as individuals and as part of various social groups. This self-definition can be understood as an identity narrative, where individuals tell themselves stories about themselves within their social context.

Identity narratives are an essential part of what makes us human. As neuroscientist Antonio Damasio states, “[c]onsciousness begins when brains acquire the power, the simple power I must add, of telling a story” (1999, 10). Building on Dan McAdams’s development of William James’ (1963) differentiation between the self as knower (“I”) and known (“me”), I argue that identity can be understood as the story that I tell about me or us. Here, there is the knower self (“I”), the known self (“me”), and the identity (the story I tell about me or us). From this perspective, while the “me” encompasses a cacophony of known aspects of the self (including our bodies, social roles, and histories), storied “identity” creates a unified and meaningful story from this hodgepodge by focusing on certain elements of “me” or “us” and sidelining other elements; this story changes all the time, but at any given time aims at coherence, unity, and meaningfulness.

This framework is functional for a variety of reasons. First, it recognizes that “life stories are designed as much to conceal as to reveal” and never fully demonstrate all psychic experience (Craib 2000 referenced in Smith and Sparkes 2006, 174). Second, it resonates with the cognitive insight that we experience ourselves as split between a central Subject (this can be understood as

the “I”) and everything else about us (the “me”), and that the relationship between these two are mediated by metaphors (culminating in storied “identity”). Third, this is compatible with the SIT focus on “me” (the particular self) versus “us”) (the self as part of a group): SIT would reformulate McAdams’ statement to say that “identity is the story that I tell about me/us” (where “me” refers to the known particular self, and “us” refers to the known self as part of a group); in this case, “identity” still refers to the story, but it can be a story either about “me” (in particular) or “us” (as part of a group).

Overall, I take a more or less “unitary perspective” in assuming that although there are many different, and (often disordered and fragmented) roles and stories which people draw on, people seek coherence and meaning in their lives, and define their identities or tell their stories using (always changing, but at any given moment) unified narrative sequences (e.g., MacIntyre 1981, referenced in Smith and Sparkes 2006, 176). From this perspective, while the “me” encompasses a cacophony of known aspects of the self (including our bodies, social roles, and histories), storied “identity” creates a unified and meaningful story from this hodgepodge by focusing on certain elements of “me” and sidelining other elements; this story changes all the time, but at any given time aims at coherence, unity, and meaningfulness. As such, this perspective recognizes postmodern arguments about fractured and disunified elements of identity, but argues that this description is primarily relevant to the “me” part of the self, rather than the storied “identity,” which I see as usually more unified and coherent.

Drawing on the “roots” and “borders” distinction outlined earlier, identity narratives can be understood as encompassing four major ideal types, depending the source and subject of the narrative (see Table 1, below): 1) autobiographical (by me about me), 2) colonizing (by me about us), 3) escapist (by us about me), and 4) collaborative (by us about us). These ideal types can

guide the application of the ideas of “roots” and “borders” as a standard for evaluating the inclusiveness claims of common goods.

On one hand, autobiographical narratives which focus on the self are explicitly and straightforwardly exclusive, as they are explicitly about the self, rather than others. On the other hand, collaborative narratives which focus on the group, by the group – such as collaborative stories told around campfires where everyone contributes to telling the tale – are substantively inclusive, as they are by the group and about the group. In between these extremes are seductively inclusive narratives where the roots and borders do not match: projecting narratives create a thin story about the group by the self; while escapist narratives create a thick story about the self by the group. Of these, the most straightforward and substantive inclusion involves the collaborative story – where all actors participate in taking turns to tell a single story about all of us.

Table 1. Identity Narrative Ideal Types

	Subject (Borders)	
Narrator (Roots)	<i>Me</i>	<i>Us</i>
<i>Me</i>	Autobiographical (Exclusive)	Projecting (Seductively inclusive)
<i>Us</i>	Escapist (Seductively inclusive)	Collaborative (Substantively inclusive)

Four ideal types can further clarify this discussion. On one hand, more straightforward narratives include “autobiographical” narratives, which are explicitly exclusive, and “collaborative” narratives, which are substantively inclusive. On the other hand, more ambiguous narratives include “projecting” and “escapist” narratives, where a mis-match between “roots” and “borders” results in more seductive inclusion.

What shapes our identity narratives?

Research oriented towards individual or social level phenomena emphasize different aspects of the “agent-structure” debate in IR, which asks to what extent individuals can make choices independently of social structures. However, they converge in affirming the importance of identities as the basis for meaningful action. A narrative model of identity can provide the dialectical link between the individual and the social by drawing on social discourse to interpret physical experience. In the process, it conveys how individuals tell themselves stories about themselves which are rooted in metaphors from embodied experience; how these stories identify people on a continuum from individual to part of a group; and how these stories support either relations of domination or equality.

Individual Opportunities and Constraints on Narrative Identity: Embodied Experience

Individual identities which define inclusive or exclusive interests are shaped by both individual and social constraints. At the individual level, research in cognitive psychology shows that people’s understandings of themselves is based on embodied experience which fundamentally structures abstract thought and reasoning especially through metaphors (Lakoff and Johnson 1999). How we understand ourselves, our world, our relationship to it, and our moral and ethical judgments about it, are related through metaphors rooted in our physical bodies. From this perspective, metaphors are fundamental to identities, because metaphors structure our understanding of ourselves. Specifically, “we experience ourselves as split” (269) between a central Subject (the “locus of consciousness, subjective experience, reason, will, and our ‘essence,’ everything that makes us who we uniquely are”) and everything else about us

(e.g., “our bodies, our social roles, our histories, and so on”), the content of both of which are in flux (268).

The relationship between these two elements of who we are is mediated by simple metaphors. We understand body control in terms of experience controlling physical objects, feeling a sense of control in terms of being in normal surroundings, having others evaluate our actions in terms of how we evaluate our own actions, interpreting our own experience with the way we imagine ourselves projected onto others, and finally understanding entities as containers of natural, causal essences (287). Beyond this, we build on simple metaphors with more complex metaphors. Lakoff and Johnson argue that without metaphor, abstract thought would not be possible. So, we draw on our embodied experience to tell ourselves stories about ourselves using metaphors.

Metaphors structure our relationship with and responsibility towards our world as well as our understanding of ourselves. Our understanding of who we are influences what we do: if we assume that we are “rational actors” who use literal, logical, conscious, transcendent, dispassionate reason, we will act in a way that tries to change the world to conform to this rational-actor model – for example by structuring and maintaining global markets to promote corporate wealth (the narrow wellbeing of rational actors) while ignoring environmental and cultural diversity (the broader well-being of non-rational actors) (Lakoff and Johnson, 526-538). If instead we recognize that we are “embodied actors” who use “embodied, mostly imaginative and largely metaphorical, largely unconscious and emotionally engaged” understanding (536), we may be able to act in a way that tries to promote a broader conception of well-being (including other embodied actors) that is more attentive to environmental and cultural diversity (see also: Warren 2000; Mies and Shiva 1993; Shiva 1989). As such, we draw on our body

experiences to understand ourselves using metaphors, but we also draw on understandings of ourselves to guide how we act in the world.

Structural Opportunities and Constraints on Narrative Identity: Ideological Hegemony

At the social level, research in sociology shows that individual stories can contribute to larger social narratives that then become resources for articulating, critiquing, and redefining particular selves within a broader social context (e.g., Ewick and Silbey 2003). These include a range of narrative scripts including “master narratives,” “meta-narratives,” “stereotypes,” and “hegemonic ideologies.” These scripts both enable and constrain: they provide elements which individuals can draw on to define their own storied identities; however, they also limit individuals by restricting narrative elements available to be drawn on in that definition. As Seyla Benhabib argues, “Although we do not choose the webs in whose nets we are initially caught or select those with whom we wish to converse, our agency consists in our capacity to weave out those narratives and fragments of narratives a life story that makes sense for us, as unique individual selves” (1999, 344).

In Gramscian terms, these “nets” which we are caught in are part of a larger social context of ideological hegemony which includes relational narratives of social equality and inequality. Relating the concept of “ideological hegemony” to Social Identity Theory, I argue that ideological hegemony can be understood as a spectrum ranging from perfect “ideological hegemony” to perfect “ideological choice,” with each of these extremes illuminated by conditions evident in new to longstanding social groups. This builds on Sabine Otten’s (2002) dual process model of positive ingroup distinctiveness, which argues that people tend to define others as either similar and therefore equally valuable to themselves, or different and therefore

less valuable than themselves; and that people can define themselves in a range of social spheres, from unique individuals to members of social groups. In doing so, this interpretation of ideological hegemony creates a useful framework for understanding how different relational narratives available under different conditions along this spectrum differentially shape opportunities for more substantive or seductively inclusive definitions of common goods, and greater or lesser egalitarianism and social justice.

Structural Constraints on Inclusion

Advances in social psychological theory suggest that there is more than one way to create more inclusive behavior, and that expanding the ingroup (as Wendt argues) is not always the best one. Different conditions of ideological hegemony create different paths toward – more substantive or more seductive – forms of inclusion.

Ideological hegemony or choice can be understood as a spectrum between the ideal points of perfect ideological hegemony and perfect ideological choice, with the fuzzy conditions of limited ideological choice in between these two extremes. On one hand, conditions of perfect ideological choice approximate the conditions of being part of a newly defined group, without existing stereotypes or narratives. Here, inclusive interests and behavior are not limited by existing narratives, because individual narratives are not restricted by dominant narratives. Instead, inclusion is limited by individual imagination: without social narratives to appropriate or reappropriate, individual identity narratives have impoverished resources to draw on, and consequently are limited in both comprehending and being intelligible to others. Because the self is the primary basis for identity narration, social groups are easily homogenized because of the

assumption that others are “like me.” Consequently, these conditions of perfect ideological choice support inclusive borders, but not inclusive roots.

On the other hand, conditions of perfect ideological hegemony approximate the conditions of being part of a longstanding group with stereotypes and narratives which are normalized and therefore appear “invisible.” Here, inclusive interests and behavior are limited by the domination of the existing major narrative which facilitate conforming behavior. Although a dominating social narrative is available to be drawn on here, individual identity narratives are restricted because of a lack of existing or equally valued alternatives. Furthermore, normalization of the dominant narrative restricts opportunities for its critical reappropriation in particular narrative identities. While in this case homogenization happens because of dominating social narratives, rather than projection of self-centered viewpoints (as under perfect ideological choice), the result is very similar: Because a single dominating social narrative as the primary basis for particular identity narration, social groups are again homogenized, in this case because of the assumption that others are “like us.” Consequently, these conditions of perfect ideological hegemony again support inclusive borders rather than roots; however, this time this is the result of group, rather than individually-based, homogenizing assumptions.

In between these extremes, conditions of imperfect ideological hegemony approximate the conditions of being part of a group with emergent but still debated stereotypes and narratives which are not yet normalized and therefore appear “visible.” These are cases where “intersubjective understandings” are questioned and revised, where “culture” changes, and where new narratives become possible. Here, inclusive interests and behavior are limited by the number, kind, framing, and interpretation of the variety of narratives available. However, these conditions allow for the greatest creativity in overcoming obstacles to inclusion based in both

individual imagination and collective dominant narratives. This is because they allow individuals to draw on a variety of narrative options and enable actors to react or creatively interpret (rather than simply conform to) dominant narratives.

Dominant Relational Narratives: Bullies and Friends

The conditions of ideological hegemony evident across the spectrum both enable and constrain opportunities for creating inclusive common goods by providing tools for narrating particular narrative identities and interests in more or less inclusive ways. As just discussed, relational assumptions of being “like me”, “like us,” or “not like” me or us are important influences on how individual identity narratives are defined in terms of ingroups and outgroups. These relational assumptions can also be thought of as what I call a “bully” model and a “friend” model, which are both metaphors and narratives foundational to many people’s lives.

These “friend” and “bully” models are stories in that they refer to particular iconic narratives about mythologized roles of bullies and friends (e.g., about a schoolyard bully or a childhood friend). However, they are metaphors in that they are applied in multiple contexts (e.g., romantic to business relationships, but also interpersonal to interstate relationships) by different kinds of actors (individuals and groups) as the basis for meaningfully interpreting and acting in their situations. Furthermore, they can be understood as providing two completely different models of relationships and the power distributions characterizing them.

Bully Model

On one hand, a “bully” model refers to narratives of self and other which affirm the self or ingroup by denigrating the outgroup. The iconic bully is someone who lives by what Weinhold (2000) calls a “dominator value system” which supports violence. They repeatedly take physical or verbal action (such as violence, threats, and intimidation) to “to gain power over or to dominate another person” by exploiting those who they see as having less power, status, or influence, without regard for their rights or needs. They also rationalize their actions by refusing to admit mistakes and believing that “might makes right” (Weinhold 2000). Bully narratives are perpetuated by established group stereotypes where narratives which assume hierarchical relationships between groups or which assume a range of perceived threats. As a result, they creates exclusive interests defined in zero-sum terms: affirmation of “us” at the expense of “them.”

Friend Models: Potential Friends and Old Friends

On the other hand, a “friend” model refers to narratives of self and other which affirm the self or ingroup independently of (and without denigrating) the outgroup. The iconic friend is someone who lives by what Weinhold (2000) calls a “humanistic or democratic value system” (Eider 1987 quoted in Weinhold 2000). They “[s]eek equalitarian relationships based on mutual respect, trust, and caring” and they draw on shared norms and non-violent conflict resolution in order to look for win-win solutions for all involved. They also take responsibility for their actions, admit mistakes, and try to learn from them. Friend narratives assume equal or collaborative relationships among group members who are not threatened by and do not devalue

or distrust each other. As a result, they create greater opportunities for inclusive interests defined in positive-sum terms: affirmation of “us” without being at the expense of “them.”

Within this framework, “potential friend” narratives are possible among either newly formed groups or among established groups where “we” are willing to admit “them” into our group. Here, seductive inclusion (with inclusive borders but not roots) is possible by defining others as extensions of the self, who are included in ingroup membership, but who do not change the definition of self interest. Beyond this, “old friend” narratives may be possible among established groups where “we” work with “them” to redefine “our” interests based on all of our voices. Here, substantive inclusion (with inclusive roots, not just borders) is possible by having all involved contribute their voices to redefining “our” interests. Here, people define others as different from but also equally valuable to themselves. Consequently, they can recognize, value, and learn from different experience to reconceptualize their own experience without just projecting self understandings onto others.

Overall, the ways “we” define “us” and “them” importantly shape the extent to which we can create substantively inclusive, seductively inclusive, or exclusive common goods. Table 2 summarizes these foundational relational narratives.

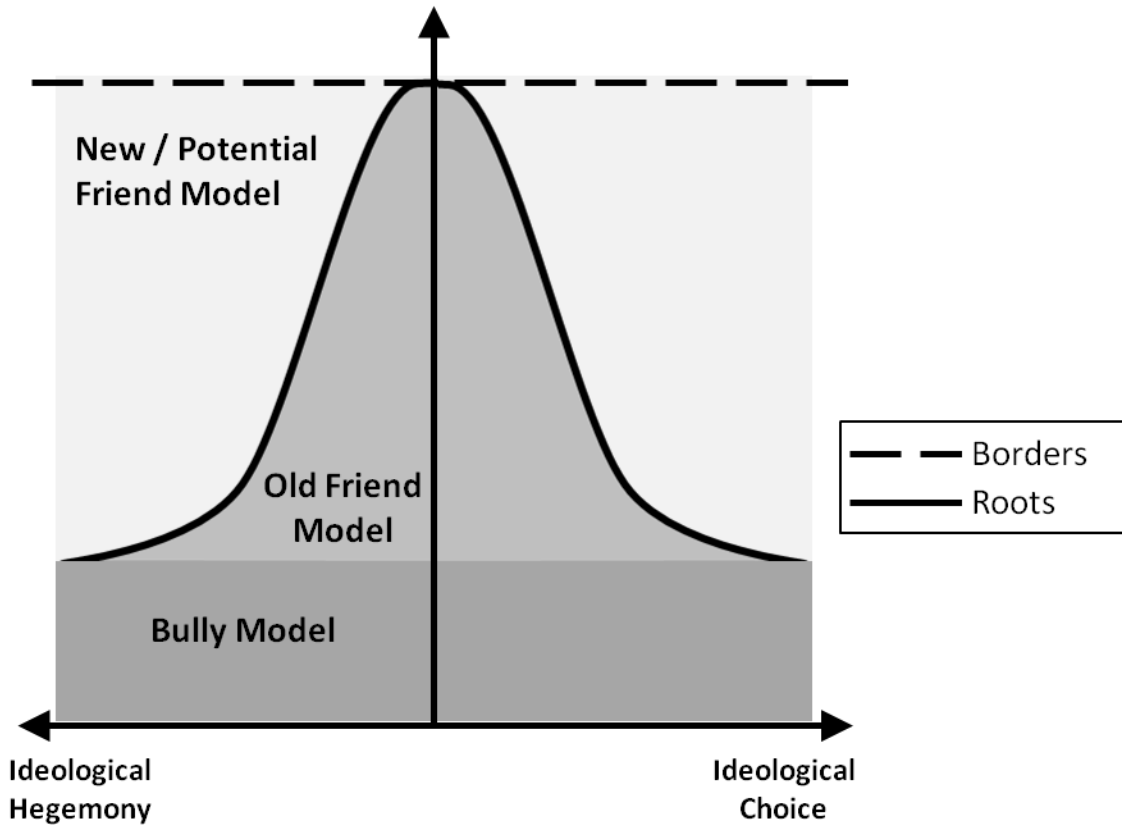
Table 2. Relational Identity Narratives about the Self and Others

	Respect	
Similarity/Difference	<i>Valued</i>	<i>Devalued</i>
<i>Like Us</i>	New Friends (seductively inclusive)	--
<i>Not Like Us</i>	Old Friends (substantively inclusive)	Bully (exclusive)

Because different conditions of ideological hegemony create make different relational narratives available, opportunities for substantive or seductive forms of inclusion also across the spectrum of ideological hegemony. At extreme conditions closer to perfect ideological hegemony and perfect ideological choice, social narratives are highly limited. This can be either because of the newness of group formation and the consequent lack of existing established narratives, or because of the dominance of a single social narrative that is taken as “normal.” These kinds of conditions facilitate seductive inclusion which treats the “other” as equally valuable as and similar to the “self” (e.g., “new friends”). In between these extremes in conditions of imperfect ideological hegemony, there is a greater number and variety of social narratives. This can be because groups have developed social narratives, but have not yet had a single set become “normalized” or predominate. These kinds of conditions facilitate more substantive inclusion which treats the “other” as equally valuable as but different from the “self” (eg., “old friends”). Table 3 (next page) summarizes the availability of these relational narratives.

Because relational narratives involve assumptions of power between “us” and “them” which are foundational to defining interests in “zero-sum” or “positive-sum” ways, having different narratives available provides different constraints for opportunities for efforts at inclusive common goods. Seductive inclusion – or defining interests with inclusive borders but not roots – is possible across the ideological spectrum. However, substantive inclusion – or defining interests with inclusive roots, not just borders – is only possible in between ideological extremes. Here, the availability of multiple social narratives makes it possible to most creatively and intelligibly recognize and value the “self” and the “other.”

Table 3. Kinds of relational models available depend on levels of ideological hegemony



Towards More Inclusive Definitions of the “Common Good”

How is it possible to create a more inclusive definition of the “common good?”

Traditional approaches to this question, such as Alexander Wendt’s discussion of “friends,” “enemies,” and “rivals” take the first step necessary by overcoming explicitly exclusive practices which define the “self” as separate from and more valuable than the “other.” However, they are limited to promoting a seductive rather than substantive form of inclusion. Despite potentially good intentions, they can promote colonizing, rather than empowering, definitions of the

“common” good. Overcoming this problem requires recognizing the impact of power on our constructions of our world, and cultivating worlds defined by fewer inequalities and greater justice.

Recognizing the impact of dominating and empowering forms of power highlights the importance of questioning how “common goods” are defined, rather than just focusing on to whom they are extended. Common goods which end up being colonizing may be extended inclusively to a broad membership (inclusive canopy “borders”). However, they remain based exclusively in elite perspectives (exclusive “roots”). Common goods which are substantively, rather than seductively, inclusive – which are empowering rather than colonizing – must involve inclusive roots, not just borders. In recognition of this distinction, assessing purportedly “common goods” based on the inclusiveness of their “roots” and borders” (e.g., as autobiographical, collaborative, projecting, or escapist) creates a standard by which to evaluate inclusiveness claims.

To create substantively (rather than seductively) inclusive “common goods,” actors must create substantively (rather than seductively) inclusive identities. In particular, the stories we tell ourselves about ourselves must not just welcome “others” to be part of an unchanging “us” (a “potential friend” model); instead, they must allow our expanded ingroup to be redefined based on new membership (an “old friend” model). In doing so, this creates space for more egalitarian social relations as the basis for defining common interests and common goods: recognizing others as different from but equally valuable as us enriches our own self definition and changes the very idea of what the “common good” involves. This is a much more meaningful step than simply extending elite definitions of common interests or common goods to a broad membership.

While seductively inclusive identities are always possible, the most substantively inclusive identities are only possible under imperfect conditions of ideological hegemony. Here, actors can creatively reappropriate elements from a variety of social narratives in telling their own particular stories. These conditions avoid the ingroup homogenization which occurs in extreme conditions of perfect ideological hegemony or perfect ideological choice, where available options are restricted by either a dominant, naturalized narrative or a lack of narrative options. Creating more inclusive “common goods” can start with the first step of creating interests with inclusive borders, which is possible at any time. However, for more substantive inclusion, this must be followed up with a second step of creating interests with inclusive roots.

French writer Anatole France once said, “to accomplish great things, we must not only act, but also dream, not only plan, but also believe.” So, too, changing the world requires changing our vision of the world: our action is limited by the poverty of our ideas. In this paper, I have explored the structural opportunities and constraints on our vision of “the common good,” and propose how to navigate them in order to imagine and create a more sustainably just and peaceful world.

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