What is ‘identity’?

1. Identity is “people’s concepts of who they are, of what sort of people they are, and how they relate to others” (Hogg and Abrams 1988,

2. “Identity is used in this book to describe the way individuals and groups define themselves and are defined by others on the basis of race, ethnicity, religion, language, and culture” (Deng 1995,

3. Identity “refers to the ways in which individuals and collectivities are distinguished in their social relations with other individuals and collectivities” (Jenkins 1996,

4. “National identity describes that condition in which a mass of people have made the same identification with national symbols – have internalised the symbols of the nation ...” (Bloom 1990, 52).

5. Identities are “relatively stable, role-specific understandings and expectations about self” (Wendt 1992, 397).

6. “Social identities are sets of meanings that an actor attributes to itself while taking the perspective of others, that is, as a social object. ... [Social identities are] at once cognitive schemas that enable an actor to determine ‘who I am/we are’ in a situation and positions in a social role structure of shared understandings and expectations” (Wendt 1994, 395).

7. “By social identity, I mean the desire for group distinction, dignity, and place within historically specific discourses (or frames of understanding) about the character, structure, and boundaries of the polity and the economy” (Herrigel 1993, 371).

8. “The term [identity] (by convention) references mutually constructed and evolving images of self and other” (Katzenstein 1996, 59).

9. “Identities are ... prescriptive representations of political actors themselves and of their relationships to each other” (Kowert and Legro 1996, 453).

10. “My identity is defined by the commitments and identifications which provide the frame or horizon within which I can try to determine from case to case what is good, or valuable, or what ought to be done, or what I endorse or oppose” (Taylor 1989, 27).

11. “Yet what if identity is conceived not as a boundary to be maintained but as a nexus of relations and transactions actively engaging a subject?” (Clifford 1988, 344).

12. “Identity is any source of action not explicable from biophysical regularities, and to which observers can attribute meaning” (White 1992, 6).

13. “Indeed, identity is objectively defined as location in a certain world and can be subjectively appropriated only along with that world. ... [A] coherent identity incorporates within itself all the various internalized roles and attitudes.” (Berger and Luckmann 1966, 132).

14. “Identity emerges as a kind of unsettled space, or an unresolved question in that space, between a number of intersecting discourses. ... [Until recently, we have incorrectly thought that identity is] a kind of fixed point of thought and being, a ground of action ... the logic of something like a ‘true self.’ ... [But] Identity is a process, identity is split. Identity is not a fixed point but an ambivalent point. Identity is also the relationship of the Other to oneself” (Hall 1989)