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Dear Editors and Reviewers,

We appreciate the opportunity you gave us to undertake minor revisions on our manuscript "Identity Management and Role Branding in Security Affairs: Alliance-Building in Argentine Foreign Policy." We have followed the advice of R2 as suggested by the editors of JoGSS and we think the resulting revision of key minor points is greatly improved over the original. We explain the changes we have made below, following the helpful decision letter from the editors.

First, we have explained and expanded on what we mean by malleability and the context in which it is used in our argument. As we refer more to the strategic manipulation of identity in the article and this takes more centre stage, we decided to include a footnote on malleability which is a synonymous way to talk to strategic manipulation of identity (see footnote 4, pp. 12-13).

Second, we have also provided scholarly evidence to the following claims we made as suggested by R2: ("generated resentment in Brasilia as Argentina was seen as too close to the US" (in p. 33 in previous version) and "always grouped together with the Latin American countries"). Moreover, we rephrased these sentences and added more context to show that Argentina's relationship with the US created distance with Brazil. See p.32 with supporting scholarship for these claims and interpretations.

Finally, we have elaborated on the domestic contestation as requested by R2. We do this in a general way. Although we acknowledge that domestic role contestation is part of the contingent political process, this is not central to our argument on strategic and malleable identity. We feel that focusing too much on role contestation will deviate readers' attention from the core of what the two empirical cases are meant to show to the readers. Thus, we erased the rather passing reference to domestic role contestation on p. 21 (original version) as mentioned by R2, but we elaborated a bit more in each case study in footnotes, while also directing readers to the relevant literature that elaborates on the issue of domestic contestation in the case of Perón and in the case of Menem (see p. 26 and footnote 12 & p. 32 and footnote 15).

Overall, we believe we have addressed the suggested changes to the paper based on the editors' and R2's helpful recommendations. As a result of these revisions, we believe the final paper is greatly improved over the previous version.

Identity Management and Role Branding in Security Affairs: Alliance-Building in Argentine Foreign Policy

Abstract

This paper argues that states needing to engage in short-term, strategic manipulation of their identity will often turn to branding strategies. Branding allows leaders the flexibility to adopt new roles or reimagine existing roles to fit with the current security environment. Drawing on insights from role theory, social identity, and branding, we develop a theoretical framework to understand how leaders innovate in roles. We apply this framework to two episodes of Argentine-U.S. relations. The first case focuses on the Argentine role of active independent (1933-1945) despite U.S. efforts to ascribe the faithful ally role. Only near the conclusion of the war did Perón transition to an ally partner role for strategic reasons, and without much of a branding strategy. The second case is that of Argentina's adoption of the faithful ally role with the US accompanied by a strong branding strategy under President Menem beginning in 1989. While innovation in the first case was possible without branding (though short-lived), the second case shows a more substantive transformation in Argentina's role set. Branding helps to carve out space in the role-set for new roles that may compete with existing ones and ensure their successful adoption and enactment.

Identity is often thought to be a relatively stable, long-run feature of actors, including states in the international system. But where do identities come from? And how are they used strategically in security driven environments? Identities must have origins that we can investigate and trace over time, especially when examining their impact on the foreign security policy of a state. Do actors themselves have the ability to strategically choose identities, or is the identification process outside of their control when actors seek to establish new security alliances? We seek to examine the process by which states purposively choose identities to change their foreign security policy by focusing on the roles they adopt and enact. Leaders can strategically innovate the role repertoire of a state to achieve immediate foreign policy goals when they confront new foreign security policy situations, while maintaining other roles that are seemingly sewn into the constitutive fabric of the state. This role innovation can supplement or sometimes undermine the relatively stable role set that constitutes a state's identity over time and its existing security relationships. Short term strategic innovations in roles to face demands in the security arena of a state can potentially generate conflicting state identities, as new role conceptions can compete with existing ones, thereby generating changes in the role set, and/or eventually merging with long-term roles. As Harnisch (2011a: 9) states: "Changes in roles or role sets are important determinants for both *role enactments* and *identity formation*." However, identity formation by enacting a new role tends to create competing dynamics between old and new roles ranging from a total lack of integration of roles over security issues and beyond (when roles are inconsistent with each other) to complete embeddedness of new and old roles (when roles merge seamlessly) (Nabers 2011).

International actors are able to innovate in the composition of their role set, which is understood as the number of roles an actor has in its social life.[1] For example, China has had

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[1] Some roles may be active, while others are latent in the role set since all of a state's roles are unlikely to be played concurrently. Some roles may be seen as a stable in their enactment, while others may be more malleable

the role of anti-imperialist agent in its role set since the 1960s, but in recent years it added a new role of responsible great power to manage others' security driven suspicions about its global rise. Denmark under the leadership of Anders Rasmussen also innovated in its role repertoire by accommodating external expectations regarding the War on Terror by playing the role of faithful ally of the US, even as this meant displacing other salient roles in its role-set. Denmark shifted from a civilian actor and good international citizen roles that supported UN peacekeeping missions to a faithful ally role that strategically supported the pre-emptive actions of its allies (Browning 2007; Kaarbo and Cantir 2013). Argentina under the presidency of Carlos Menem in the 1990s adopted a role of faithful ally and follower of the US while downplaying its role of a Third World state and its strained relationship with the US during the Cold War (Corigliano 2000).

Thus, the purpose of this article is to develop a framework through which to capture and assess the different dimensions of competitive state identity by looking at the intentions, rationale and type of security alliances a state advances through roles. Some of the intentions and rationale may be short term to face a novel situation while others may be seen as a long term strategy of a state to achieve both political-diplomatic and security driven goals. While alliances may be a result of strategic thinking by actors, they bring their cultural repertoire to such strategically driven interactions, as identity and strategic calculations encounter each other in the form of role based behaviour in the official narratives of the state (Wehner 2020). Moreover, alliance building that starts in the security domain will have ramifications in other issue areas of the foreign policy of the state.

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based on the current context. Finally, some roles may be enduring aspects of a role set, while others are adopted temporarily and are later abandoned. The role set at any given time represents a snapshot of state identity that is relevant to foreign policy making (Thies and Nieman 2017: 46-50).

The framework on strategic-competitive identity is comprised of the following elements: theoretical concepts from role theory, social identity and branding strategies that bring together the *who I am* dimension of identity and the manipulative dimension of branding by choosing specific aspects of a social identity which can account for the strategic dimension in which identities are being used. Thus, we argue that competitive identities of a state involve both a strategic and normative dimension. The strategic side of role innovation deals with the capacity of states' leaders to detect policy windows and advance new roles through a branding strategy, so that the new role could eventually be adopted in the repertoire of the state and accepted by both domestic and international audiences.[2] On the strategic side, role set innovation is made possible by the agency of the leader and implies that identity can be malleable if required to achieve foreign security policy goals. The normative side of innovation in the role-set of an actor is that roles capture important aspects of the identity of a state. By innovating in the role set the leader can add a new sense of *who the actor is* via role learning experiences. Moreover, new roles may need to take root via social practice to normalize and stabilize them within the existing role set in terms of compatibility with the long-term roles of the state.

We develop the conceptual repertoire of role theory and show that the role location process offers a via media between constructivist and more rationalist approaches to identity. Role theory offers a theoretical basis for elaborating the reasons for an actor's actions and how identity causes such concrete actions. In this sense, this article adopts a more nuanced

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[2] Acceptance is different than granting legitimacy to a role. Acceptance involves a more strategic view of adopting a role, which can be kept at this level without further internalization. Legitimacy is a subsequent step that ends in a final step of internalization, in which the new role takes root and becomes an identity-marker for a state. Role play as a practice or habitus is key for the role to acquire a level of sedimentation in the role-set. This in a way resembles the three socialization steps developed by Kai He and Huiyung Feng (2014), that is, adaptation (strategic calculation), superficial socialization and fundamental socialization.

perspective on the opposing sides of the logic of consequences and appropriateness. Roles, understood as both a social position in an organized group and the type of actor it is possible to be (see Harnisch 2011a; Thies 2010), contain the normative dimension sought by constructivist research and the behavioural dispositions that rationalist seek in their respective research agendas. We do not suggest that all of a state's identity can be captured by role theory, but that important components of both stable and malleable aspects of identity can be understood through the role theory framework. Nor do we assume that all roles are adopted strategically, as many roles emanate from the deeper cultural reservoir that constitutes a state's identity.[3] Thus, a role set or number of roles an actor possesses in its life can be analytically used to trace and make a reliable representation of a state identity (Thies and Nieman 2017: 46-50).

The remainder of the article proceeds as follows. First, the article introduces the key dimensions and concepts of role theory. As role theory's conceptual and analytical advantages have been discussed elsewhere only a brief overview is provided (Breuning 2011, 2017; Cantir and Kaarbo 2016; Harnisch 2011a; McCourt 2014; Thies 2010). Second, the article establishes key differences between roles, identity and branding, as well as how these three concepts are related. In this section we develop the notion of roles as a mechanism of reaffirming who the actor is that can also be branded in the diplomatic and security domains. Third, we provide an illustrative example of the applicability of the notion of competitive identity that includes the notion of stable and malleable identity as well as the concept of branding a new role as a sequence of selection, projection and reception of the role being branded. We use the case of Argentina's role relationship with the US during two periods of time in which it sought to cast a security driven role as ally of the US. In the first case we observe role change in Argentina from active indepent to an alliance partner role, yet without a supporting branding strategy

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[3] Thus, while we recognize that states and those that speak on their behalf adopt and play roles for both strategic and non-strategic reasons, in this article we focus on roles that are adopted for strategic reasons.

(except to justify the neutral role during World War II), while in the second period we analyse Argentina's adoption of a faithful ally role, yet this time following a proactive branding strategy. The first case covers the years 1933-46, when Argentina first enacted the role of active independent and neutral, then experienced a change to alliance partner of the US at the end of World War II, and finally after the war retook its active independent role. The second case refers to the special relationship that president Carlos Menem (1989-1999) established with the US by enacting the role of faithful ally, which changed the traditional distant security and diplomatic relations between both states at least for ten years.

A Role Theory Framework for Competitive Identity Management

Symbolic Interactionist Role Theory in Foreign Policy Analysis

The notion of a role is a metaphor borrowed from theatre (Thies 2010). The metaphor suggests that all actors can play roles either taken from scripts or based on expectations about the most appropriate pattern of behaviour. However, scripts are rarely deterministic of how the actor must play the role. In the theatre, scripts can also be altered as actors improvise on their lines by adding new dimensions and characteristics to their role. Similarly, international actors such as states or leaders of states also conceive and play roles. However, such roles only make sense in a relational form as any role also needs a counterrole (Stryker and Statham 1985: 323). In other words, an individual cannot play the role of a leader if it does not have another individual playing the role of follower.

Analytically, role theory has descriptive, organizational and explanatory value (Thies 2010; Walker 1987). Its descriptive value lies in its rich conceptual vocabulary that captures different realities of foreign policy. The organizational value of role theory is given by its ability

to cross and bridge different levels of analysis, that is, people, states and international system. Finally it explanatory reputation comes from role theory's ability to adapt to other theoretical lenses. The framework advanced herein on competitive identity management relies on these three values. It uses the richness of concepts provided by role theory. Moreover, it builds from established connections between social constructivism and roles on the relationship and difference of roles, identity and branding. Strategic and competitive identity is a social phenomenon at the interplay of levels of analysis of people (leaders) and states.

Kalevi Holsti's (1970) seminal contribution on National Role Conceptions (NRCs) focused on state leaders' conceptions of roles. Holsti assumed that all leaders hold NRCs for their state to play. In Holsti's model the assumption is that leaders are the key driver of role-making. However, this work neglects the relational dimension of role-making in international relations; that is, a role conception involves ego's self-definition vis-à-vis alter's expectations of the most appropriate role for a given situation. The focus on leader's NRCs has been advanced through the analysis of leader's beliefs and the use of operational code analysis (Schafer and Walker 2006; Walker 2004). These works recognize the key importance of leader's beliefs and identities in the making of roles for the state. They also bridge the person and state level of analysis in foreign policy.

Individuals in top positions of the state are the agents who make and select roles from the role set to play according to the demands of the surrounding environment. Such changes of roles are made possible by the inherent agency of state leaders and their structural position within the governmental apparatus (see Aslam et.al. 2020; Cudahar et.al 2017; Thies and Wehner 2019). However, states theorized as corporate agents have been able to internalize and incorporate these new roles into a stable part of their role set. Such roles reflect important dimensions of an actor's identity. Thus, roles are cast relationally with significant others and also roles need to resonate in the cultural repertoire of the state (Wehner and Thies 2014; Wehner 2020). However, the process is not as simple as it sounds since strategic views of

leaders are key to advancing and selecting aspects of existing cultural repertoires to ground new role conceptions. In fact, there is a malleable component in the use of narratives to either select or justify the selection of a role over others (Wehner 2020). Domestic contestation of roles is a recurrent phenomenon in the role making process, which shows the complexities of the politics of role selection and play (see Brummer and Thies 2014a; Cantir and Kaarbo 2012, 2016; Kaarbo and Cantir 2013; Wehner and Thies 2014).

The principles of this aforementioned approach, such as the relational dimension, domestic contestation, the existence of significant others for ego, and the way actors play a role can be captured by the conceptual apparatus of role theory. In this sense, a role conception involves the ego's self-definition as much as the effects of alter's expectations for the role of the self (Harnisch 2011a: 8). Role expectations are understood as the expectations that alter ascribes and expects ego to enact (Kirste and Maull 1996: 289). A significant other is a primary socializing agent for ego, and the constitution of a significant other is often based on past experiences of the role holder (Harnisch 2011a: 11-12). A significant other can be either positive such as a role model or have a negative connotation for the type of actor the self wants to be (Beneš and Harnisch 2014). A general other takes form in social cues that emanate from the overall system in which agents interact with each other (Harnisch 2011a). Role contestation refers to the existence of domestic or societal consensus or dissensus around a NRC (Cantir and Kaarbo 2012, 2016). Moreover, role enactment refers to how well an actor performs a role once it has been selected (Thies 2010: 2). Finally, role location describes the process whereby a social actor locates a suitable role in a social structure (Thies 2012: 29).

Roles and Identity

Symbolic interactionist role theory works have located themselves within the constructivist paradigm and have sought to supplement identity-based works (see Beasley and Kaarbo 2018;

Beneš and Harnisch 2014; Breuning 2011, 2017; Harnisch 2012; McCourt 2014; Wehner and Thies 2014; Thies and Wehner 2019; Wehner 2020). Role theory frameworks grounded in symbolic interactionism supplement the analytical dimension of identity as this concept lacks motivational dispositions (McCourt 2012; Wehner and Thies 2014). McCourt (2014) notes that identity could artificially skip its inherent lack of agency by adding the label and connotations of the *social* to the concept of identity, that is, social identity. In other words, identity based works had to import agency to understand the reasons for actions of an international actor (see also McCourt 2011, 2012; Thies and Wehner 2019; Wehner and Thies 2014). Similarly, Klose (2020) shows how international actors experience identity crises to the extent of feeling ontologically insecure, and how through their inherent reflective intelligence, these actors can solve their identity crises by re-imagining the self and their societal roles. Thus, roles could be used as a *via media* to link identity and action as roles are patterns of appropriate or expected behaviour of an actor. This means that roles encompass the motivational dispositions that identity as a concept lacks and at the same time keep the normative dimension, which is part of an actor's identity.

Moreover, one of the problems of constructivism, especially of those using identity as a device to understand reasons for action, is that it falls short when it comes to explain why a specific course of action was chosen.

> Constructivism, however, generally focuses on the longer lines of foreign policy and not the specific decision. Indeed, particular decisions will probably be better explained by more traditional rationalist materialist approaches focusing on decision-making processes, such as game theory, liberal institutionalism or bureaucratic politics models. However, whilst constructivism cannot (and does not try to) say why a particular decision was made, what it can do is lay out the context and structure of acceptable and available meanings that made certain courses of action likely and possible in the first place. (Browning 2008: 69).

It is precisely the overlooking of roles in social constructivism that has not allowed this approach to advance towards providing closer explanations to more specific actions. Even if identity would have agency at its core, roles could be closer than identity to deal with one of the pitfalls of social constructivism, which is the provision of compelling reasons for specific courses of action of an actor. Role has agency at the core of its concepts, it is context sensitive, and can be grasped via the observed behaviour of an actor (Klose 2020, McCourt 2014; Thies 2010; Wehner 2020). Moreover, the role conceptions of actors can tell us about the type of actor we are facing in terms of material possessions and its core set of beliefs and values. In fact, roles as constructed in social interactions with others can be used as "identity markers" for elucidating the key characteristics of given states (Thies and Wehner 2019). In this sense, an identity marker is understood as any social characteristic presented to others to support a national identity claim as much as the characteristics that others see in the self when they seek to attribute particular identities to the self (Kiely et.al. 2001: 35-36; see also Thies and Wehner 2019).

If the international system is socially constructed, then its units—which constantly interact—can be discernible and distinguishable by their role conceptions and the way they play these roles. Roles reaffirm identity via identification. Identification is not only self identification with a role but also others tend to reaffirm the role by telling the self who s/he is, e.g. a leader, hegemon, mediator, ally, partner, great power or small power, security provider, faithful ally, and so on (Harnisch 2011b; Nabers 2011). This process in the language of role theory is one of role expectations and attribution. Significant others are the main external sources for the self on the roles it holds and they can either reaffirm or challenge the claim of having a determined social characteristic or quality. The dynamics of casting a role happens in the role location process.

Role location is a process of interaction between self and other, whereby the self locates its place within the social structure (Thies 2010). The individual must select a role from its

role-set that is appropriate to the current situation—these could include long-established roles that have been played in similar situations or all situations in the past. It may involve elevating latent roles to active status, reinterpreting old roles for the current situation, or even developing new roles. The key for the social interaction is that the role must be deemed as appropriate by relevant others. This means that the self must understand both the positions occupied by others (or the kinds of states that they are), and choose a role that is compatible. Walker (1979, 177) goes so far to say that the conduct of foreign policy is essentially the manifestation of the role location process. Thies (2012; 2013) argues that the role location process is also the place where we can view socialization between states in the international system (see also Beasley and Kaarbo 2018). Thus, states cannot strategically adopt roles without having them accepted by significant others and generalized others who make up the audience.

Roles enacted in different contexts may provide information on how the actor is expected to behave and how an interaction will play out between two or more actors is in a social setting. Most importantly, states' role relationships tell both sides of the social interaction—what type of actor the other is facing and also indicating the attached expectations on what behaviour or course of action is more adequate for the social setting where such role relationship formation is taking place. In other words, the role-set or the number of possible roles available to an actor can be used as a rough equivalent to a state identity as roles are identity-markers for social relationships (Thies and Nieman 2017). Yet, roles as much as identity are fluid and in constant evolution, meaning that change can take place in the role sets over time (Browning 2007; Nabers 2011).[4] One of the effects of innovating in the role set of an

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[4] The malleability of identity or its strategic manipulation by agents is essential to role theory. While the role set representing self-identity is comprised of many potential roles, an actor is likely to be playing no more than several compatible roles at a particular point in time. But an actor can switch from one role to another, typically with ease, unless something about the social context forbids or makes it difficult. Conversely, the social context may induce an actor to play a new role. For example, an actor may join a new social group, and must locate a role in that

actor is that some roles of the state that have achieved a high degree of stability over time can compete, clash and/or eventually merge with new roles advanced by leaders to respond to more strategic goals of a government foreign security policy. A new role is more likely to create role conflict and competition with an existing role if the latter has been central to giving meaning and providing direction for the foreign policy of state.[5] If the new role clashes with a role that is rather peripheral because is not used recurrently or rather sporadically by the state, then there is the possibility that these roles may coexist as one becomes a passive and the new one an active role. It may also be the case that the leaders of states as role entreprenuers will tend to ignore and contain the possible conflict between both roles and only tackle their incompability once the conflict is evident and undermines the international actorness of the state (see e.g. Breuning and Pechenina 2020). Thus, role change unfolds as pattern of competition between different notions of how the state as an actor should behave and when the roles producing tensions and competition are relatively central to the overall meaning and direction of the foreign security policy of a state. In this process of locating a new role, the use of branding can become an important and useful strategy to find and assure broader identification with the new role both at domestic and international levels.

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group. Or, a significant other may altercast the actor into a new role based on its cues about the social context. Role theory's expectations about the malleability of identity are therefore in line with psychological approaches to social identity more broadly (e.g., Onorato and Turner 2004). The branding literature has also considered the malleability of identity based on the interaction of the situational context and the self-schema (e.g., Aaker 1999). Highly salient situational cues are thought to stimulate chronically active parts of the self-schema (identity) when branding is effective, leading to positive consumer attitudes and personal identification with a product.

[5] The type of role conflict were are referring to here is known as interrole conflict, which is occurs when the requirements and expectations of a role interfere with those of another role (see Wehner 2016).

Branding as Identity Management

Branding is an activity rooted in the need to establish a personal and social identity, to both belong and stand out, and to establish a reputation (Bastos and Levy 2012, 349). The concept of branding has a long history that begins with marking animals as property and evolving into the use of brands as a marketing strategy to differentiate products from each other and denote higher perceived quality. Branding as a business practice arose in the twentieth century alongside the growth of radio, TV, print and electronic forms of marketing. As Bastos and Levy (2012, 357) note, the study of brands and branding took off after the 1950s. The resulting research found that brands are associated with specific functional and symbolic values, they may be seen by individuals as extensions of the self, and that individuals could have anthropomorphisized relationships with brands. By the 1990s, the idea of brand strategy management had solidified in marketing research and practice. Brands also evolved to encapsulate people, political parties, corporations, nations—essentially any kind of actor attempting to portray a certain type of image relative to others (Keller and Lehmann 2006).

Brands are therefore mechanisms by which we communicate important aspects of the self to others (Schulz and Stout 2011). This includes national identity, which is based on the nation's people, beliefs and history (e.g., Jaworski and Fosher 2003; Anholt 2007; Dong and Tian 2009). Fan (2010: 98) suggests a national brand is "concerned with a country's whole image on the international stage, covering political, economic and cultural dimensions." Polese et al. (2020) argue that nation branding, whether by elites or other societal actors, can be a means of nation building. However, other scholars recognize that the image of a country is far too complicated to reduce it to a single brand (O'Shaughnessy and O'Schaughnessy 2000).[6]

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[6] See Hao et al. (2019) for a review of definitions of nation branding, as well as a useful evolution of the concept in the literature.

Instead, brand management can be used to communicate a "diplomatic or strategic" message to a variety of audienes (Potter 2009); like for example, a new role and a new type of role relationship.

Polese et al. (2020: 27) similarly define national branding as targeting an international audience to (re)focus its national narrative on an element that it would like the world to notice, also known as "selling an 'image' of the country to external actors." A growing literature has emerged to think about various aspects of national branding (Gudjonsson 2005; Browning 2007, 2013; Volcic and Andrejevic 2011, Dinnie 2008, Fan 2006, 2010; Kaneva 2011). Nation branding may be undertaken to supplement diplomacy, establish legitimacy, or to "lead the state to position itself geopolitically" (Polese et al. 2020, 27; see also Browning and de Oliveira 2017, 490), which is what we would expect with our role theory approach to security. Branding may also be undertaken to pursue economic goals, such as trade, FDI, development and tourism. Finally, branding might be use to try and overcome a negative image or sentiment attached to the state (Gienow-Hecht 2019, 757).

Gienow-Hecht (2019: 757) outlines a tripartite method of nation branding that we also use below to analyse our case studies as a sequence of selection, projection, and reception. An actor starts by studying the images of the state held by the self and other, in particular the characteristics not jointly shared by self and other. After this selection process, then the actor moves to bridge the gap between the images held by self and other through targeting such characteristics. After projecting the desired characteristics, they then implement strategies to induce the other's recognition of the new characteristics of the self's image. She notes the importance of a changed corporate identity for the self as a result of the branding process, but we would also emphasize the relational aspect of branding. Ultimately, the role being managed by the self through branding must be accepted and the appropriate counterrole enacted by the other.

Previous research on nation branding and place branding has therefore considered the link between branding and identity. Brands were originally seen as inflexible entities with few and specific uses (e.g., a rancher's brand on a cow) (Bastos and Levy 2012, 359). Some approaches to nation branding considers identity relatively static, and it serves as something to be defined and manipulated. Branding allows actors to communicate the identity that they have defined, to audiences deemed to be relevant, and successfully convince those audiences that they are right (Kavaratzis and Hatch 2013, 74). The fixed approach to identity oversimplifies the complex processes that determine how nations/placed are viewed.

Brands are now increasingly viewed as multi-dimensional and malleable (Bastos and Levy 2012, 359). As Firat and Venkatesh (1995), branding offers a great deal of freedom to play with meaning in achieving and managing an identity. Consistent with our own role theory approach, more work on nation branding now sees the link between nation/place and identity as dynamic. For example, Hatch and Schultz (2002) examine organizational identity as the interplay between culture, identity and image. Culture is the "context of internal definitions of identity," image is "the site of external definitions of identity," and how the external and internal definitions influence each other is the process of identity. Identity is therefore a dynamic process whereby internal and external views of the self collide, conflict and coalesce. Kavaratzis and Hatch (2013: 79) argue that branding helps to facilitate the identity process to achieve greater symmetry between internal and external views, ideally privileging the self-conception. We would expect to view branding in the role location process, whereby role conceptions put forward by the self are rejected, modified or accepted by significant others. Successful role location occurs when branding convinces the other to adopt the counterrole completing a role relationship that reinforces the social identity of the self.

When it comes to nation branding in the security sphere, we suggest that roles are the best form of identity marker with which to observe the process. State identity is a complex phenomenon rooted deeply in culture and reflected in images held by others. Roles in a state's

role-set represent aspects of the state's identity for purposes of foreign policy and international relations. If a state is to engage in branding in the security sphere, then the use of roles is the most likely form of identity with which to engage. Of course, states cannot brand in a vacuum, by assuming a clean slate (van Ham 2002: 262). Roles are grounded in the cultural material of identity and experience—not any role can credibly be located with significant others. Branding encompasses strategic action to select and choose specific aspects of a state identity to be marketed to international and national audiences. Branding as a strategy manipulates identity as the brander develops a narrative to give meaning and generate acceptability of the specific aspect(s) of identity chosen at the expense of others that are also meaningful for the state as a corporate actor (Browning 2007).

We argue that leaders strategically innovating in the role repertoire of a state rely on branding in the process of selection, projection and reception of a new role to internal and external audiences in the short-run and to create a sense of minimum identification (positive) with the new role. This is especially necessary when new roles are not well grounded in the existing cultural repertoire or have had a peripheral relevance in the role set but have been reactivated to match new circumstances. New roles may also generate competitive dynamics with other roles in the role-set. Roles can be branded to generate acceptability at the level of domestic audiences (or parts of it) and among significant external others in the international system. Roles are branded when a state selects a role, when the same state starts to locate it or it projects the role within a social structure, and when the state seeks that role to be received by another actor to complete a role-counterrole interaction and/or by the audience of states that observe that role interaction. Thus, changes and expansion of a state's role-set implies a change or accommodation of the identity of a state as roles are identity-markers in the relationships of international actors. Moreover, states as corporate actors present a relatively stable set of roles that have been developed over time, but which sometimes are challenged by the short-term strategic needs of leaders to accommodate to new stimuli of the surrounding environment and

to achieve immediate goals for the state. Branding as a strategy reflects the power struggles on what is included and excluded from official narratives. Thus, branding through narratives are a simplifications and strategic manipulations of the national identity. The result of this process of casting a new role is role competition in the role set; that is, competitive identity dynamics that is captured in the role location process.

Below we apply our role theory framework enhanced through the incorporation of branding. Branding helps us to understand how states position themselves geopolitically through the use of roles as markers of identity. It gives role theory a mechanism to understand how less frequently used roles, new roles, or modified roles from a state's role set may be employed strategically in certain security contexts. It also helps us understand how competing identities may be managed by the self, as new roles may be in conflict with past roles played by the state. We examine this in the context of Argentine-US relations in two episodes of role play involving varying degrees of branding.

Empirical Illustrations of Competitive Identity Management: Two Episodes of Argentine-US Role Play

Holsti (1970) uncovered a series of roles a state or leaders speaking on behalf of the state can enact in diplomatic and security driven contexts. Those initial roles identified in his study have been found to be relatively consistent roles that many states have enacted over time (e.g., Brummer and Thies 2014b; Thies 2013). Two of these roles that are salient in different parts of Argentina's diplomatic and security history are the active independent and faithful ally roles. An active independent role encompasses types of foreign policy behaviour that protects and advances the national interest and not those of other states in a similar way as an independent role does, while it also adds a proactive element. This proactive component goes in the direction of cultivating relations with as many states and blocs as possible. In addition to an independent

foreign policy that relies on the principle of self-determination, a state adopting an active independent role is also in a good position to adopt mediating functions (mediator role), but above all its behavioural expectations are to create, keep and expand diplomatic and comercial relations with different states and areas of the world (cf. Holsti 1970, 262). A faithful ally role refers to a situation in which "…a government makes a specific commitment to support the policies of *another* government. Looked at in this way, many alliance partners are neither faithful nor allies" (Holsti 1970, 267). These two roles are particularly meaningful in understanding Argentina's foreign security policy orientations vis-à-vis the United States. The active independent role was played by Argentina during the period 1933-1945, when the US tried to secure its hegemonic role in Latin America by voicing its expectations about states in the region enacting the role of alliance partners in the context of World War II (Rapoport and Spiguel 2009a; Romano 2008).[7] Yet, traditionally the relationship between Argentina and the US was never close as the US opposed Argentina's sub-regional hegemonic project in the previous century due to its own role as regional hegemon. These key characteristics of the relationship remained in place during the period 1933-45.

After 1945, the bilateral relationship developed a greater degree of closeness, although pragmatic but intermittent cooperation is the best way to describe the security role relationship between both sides in the cold war period (Norden and Russell 2002). However, when Carlos Menem came to power in 1989 a new role was located regarding the relationship with the US. The enactment of the new role of faithful ally has been referred to in Spanish as a period of "relaciones carnales" (carnal relations) (Corigliano 2000). The new security role under Menem's initiative was sustained by his leadership and the context of domestic crises driven

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[7] In this sense, we describe and name actions that are not part of the faithfull ally role definition and characteristics as alliance partners following Holsti's work (1970, 267). The first period analyzed of Argentina-US relations fit more of an alliance partner role, while the second period of Argentina-US relations reflects a faithfull alliance role behaviour.

by hyperinflation. These conditions created acceptance of the new role enunciated by the president. Menem believed that once a close relationship on the security and diplomatic domains was established, then other US allies would be open to enhanced relations with Argentina, including a positive spill over into the economic sphere. As there was not much cultural material available to justify the new role given the traditional distant relationship between the two countries, the branding strategy adopted to justify the new role selection concerned building a new future and references to Argentina and the US living in a new post-Cold War world where the latter was now the undisputed leader.

The active independent role (1933-45)

Argentina, as all states do, plays different roles in different social settings that reflect their identity and allow them to achieve their strategic foreign policy goals. One specific role can also serve as basis to achieve and perform another related but different role. For instance, an independent role is essential to adopt and play an active independent role (see Holsti 1970, 262). In addition, an active independent role may be underpinned by principles of non-alignment and autonomy as well as in a security context of war as Argentina experienced, the (active) independent role can mutually reinforce and make possible the adoption and eventual performance of other roles such as neutral and non-belligerence roles. However, Holsti (1970) also outlines that certain roles are not compatible with each other. For instance, an isolate role is not compatible with an active independent role. If an actor tries to locate and perform both roles as demanded by the situation it is likely she will experience role conflict. Holsti (1970, 302-303) also stresses that actors may create role incompatibilities themselves. It is the actors's views and perspectives that in the end that make certain pairs of roles more incompatible than others. While in Holsti's research countries like India, Japan and France created the

incompability of the role pair active independent and regional leader, in the study case of Argentina we see instead the compatibility of the active indepedent role and the regional leader role. Argentina's foreign policy elite saw the active independent role as an asset to present its credentials as regional leader.

Thus, the active independent role was played along with other roles active in the Argentine role set, such as the aspiration to a regional leader role for Latin America. The "active" part of the independent role was Argentina's counterproposals regarding the idea of Pan-Americanism advanced by the US in the previous century (19th century) and during the early 20th century. In fact, Argentina contested and rejected most of the ideals and policies of Pan-Americanism offered by the US. It also offered counterproposals that involved South American security alliances and trade zones (Rapoport and Spiguel 2009a). At the same time, Argentina was also trying to keep its commercial connections to Europe, especially with the UK. Europe was seen as more culturally similar to Argentina than the US. One of the main interests of Argentina was to keep a partnership with the UK in commercial and political affairs, a tradition that came from Argentina's independence. In fact, the UK's role from the Argentinean perspective was to prevent an increasing dependence on the US in terms of trade and political influence (Otero 2002). The affinity toward the UK was also maintained during World War II despite the neutral role adopted by Argentina during most of the conflict.[8] Adopting the neutral role during World War II meant the lack of explicit support to any specific actor or coalition, despite the close relationship it enjoyed with the UK. In fact, the UK accepted Argentina's neutral role as a way to secure food provisions (see Esposto and Zabala 2010a, 98). Thus, Argentina branded the neutral role as part of its well-established role repertoire in order

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[8] See Thies (2013: 60) for more on the neutral role, which he defines similarly to Holsti's active independent role. It is an expression of an "independent foreign policy that is free of military commitments to any of the great powers. This role generally eschews permanent military or ideological commitments and emphasizes activity to extend diplomatic and commercial relations to many states."

to be accepted by most states involved in the conflict, despite the increasing pressure from the US to declare war on the Axis after Japan's attack to Pearl Harbour. Argentina had previously adopted a neutral role during World War I, which increased the acceptance of the role by both domestic and international audiences. Thus, autonomy, self-determination and security concerns—key aspects of the active independent role (Holsti 1970: 262) also underpinned Argentina's neutral role. The branding of active independent role was not strong as the branding focused mainly on highlighting the tradition of the neutral role. However, neutrality did not involve isolation from the conflict, rather exploiting the situation to establish different type of commercial and diplomatic relationships with both sides of the conflict, other neutral countries, and with the purpose of casting the aspirational leader role for Latin America. The role of leader was contested by Brazil, as a rival aspirant to regional leader, and by the US as the acknowledged regional hegemon in the Americas (Norden and Russell 2002: 15).

As mentioned, both the US and Argentina shared the neutral role and showed sympathy to the allied group at the beginning of the conflict. Yet, this common view did not mean close cooperation between both actors. In fact, Argentinean president Roberto Ortiz (1938-1942) proposed to the US to adopt a "non-belligerent" role, which was refused by President Franklin Roosevelt. This non-belligerent role was in practice adopted by the US later on in 1940 without granting acknowledging Argentina's previous idea. The non-belligerent role allowed the US to be sympathetic towards the allies cause without entering into war. In addition it created the space for the US to provide the allies with military equipment (Norden and Russell 2002: 17; Thies 2013: 94-95).

Once the US entered into war after Pearl Harbor, it increased pressure on Argentina to change its active independent role (and associated neutral role) for one of alliance partner, which Argentina refused. Argentina only changed its position and declared war against the Axis at the very end of the conflict, whereas most Latin American states supported the US from the beginning, especially Mexico and Brazil (Rapoport and Spiguel 2009a: 26). When foreign

ministers met in 1942 in Brazil to discuss a common posture of the Americas towards the war, Argentina was called a *bad neighbor* by the US as one of the few states along with Chile that did not declare war against the Axis (Cisneros and Escudé 1999: 250).[9] However, after the end of the Ortiz's presidency, most of the succeeding presidents did not innovate in the established role relationships of active independent and neutrality.[10]

Although we observe that under of the *de facto* government of Edelmiro Farrell (1944-1946), its leaders pursued innovation in their role set by manipulating certain aspects of the identity of Argentina. While General Juan Domingo Perón (the clear favorite to succeed Farrell) was serving as the Vice President (1944-45), Argentina finally declared war on the Axis Powers in March 1945 (Rapoport 1988: 20). The influence of Perón was key to the transition of Argentina's active independent and neutral roles to an alliance partner role with the US. In fact, the secret and then open negotiations of Argentina with the US to declare war against the Axis were mainly conducted by General Perón (see Rapoport and Spiguel 2009b).

This role change was in part due to the security expectations of the audience of Latin American states that were supporting the US and the allies. In addition, as the allies were perceived as winning the conflict and with known plans to establish a new international organization (The UN), Perón approached the US as an alliance partner to establish a new role relationship. This strategic move was also intended to secure trading relationships both with its traditional partner the UK, but also with the goal of diversifying its trade options where the

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[9] The bad neighbor role altercast by the US onto Argentina was rejected, despite pressure by other Latin American states serving as the audience for this social interaction. The language of the bad neighbor role drew heavily on the good neighbor role adopted for the US by President Franklin D. Roosevelt. The US as a good neighbor expected symmetrical good neighbor roles to be adopted by Latin American states as part of the exchange of non-intervention in the region, plus economic development.

[10] Vice-President Ramon Castillo assumed the Presidency due to Ortiz's illness. After Castillo, Argentina was governed by three *de facto* military presidents.

importance of the US market was key to achieve that end. Moreover, Perón envisioned a leadership role for Argentina, which could be achieved by participating in the building of a new order; thus, it became imperative for Argentina to be included in the creation of the UN (Norden and Russell 2002: 19). The audience of states of Latin America was also key to reassure Perón that if he adopted a new role of alliance partner of the US and its allies by declaring war on the axis, they would actively engage in making sure Argentina was not to be left out from the creation of the UN. In this case, the Foreign Affairs Minister of Mexico Ezquiel Padilla took the lead and spoke on behalf of the Latin American countries so that Argentina could be considered founding member of the UN (see Rapoport and Spiguel 2009b). Before being admitted to the UN, Argentina was also readmitted to the Interamerican System as Latin American states and the US allowed Argentina to subscribe to the Act of the Inter-American Conference on Problems of War and Peace held in Mexico (also known as the Chapultepec Conference). Argentina was originally excluded from Chapultepec's Interamerican Conference because of its refusal to join the Allies during the war. At the same time, the US also recognised the *de facto* government of Farrell-Perón; President and Vice President, respectively (Loaeza 2016: 880)

Perón's strategic thinking was key to changing the role relationship with the US by adopting an alliance partner role. However, the postwar period under the same Perón (this time as president of Argentina) also meant strategic accommodation vis-à-vis the US by leaving behind the alliance partner role and adopting a new one that was not as directly confrontational to the US as the role of active independent had been in the past. The latter role was a pillar to contain US influence in Argentina's foreign policy and sustain her aspirations for a regional leadership project. The new role enacted during the government of Perón after the war involved selective alignment with the US, keeping trading relationships with both the US and the Soviet Union, and not directly confronting the US political initiatives as in the past. Thus, Argentina adopted a position of non-aligned state and in that way it was able to re-establish its active

independent role, yet with new methods of enactment as the policy of avoiding open confrontation toward the US indicates.[11] Moreover, the enactment of such role was also key to playing the leadership role in Latin America. In fact, Argentina sought to re-launch the ABC pact (Argentina, Brazil and Chile) to show its leadership credentials in the region (Romano 2008, Rapoport and Spiguel 2009a).

It seems to be the case that the short-term enactment of an alliance partner role was meant to secure incorporation into the design and the establishment of the UN led by the winning coalition of the war. When conflict was ended and the goal secured, Argentina reverted back to its previous role of an active independent role. The strategic use of identities via role performance to accommodate the demand of the audience of international actors and the expectations of the US were key to changing the traditional role relationship pattern. Even though the alliance partner role with the US did not flourish in Argentina, it served to establish a new subsequent role relationship with the US where active independence was still salient but the way it was played vis-à-vis the US also changed (the end of direct confrontation and selective followership). This case indicates that roles evolve and that identities can be manipulated to achieve the short term goals of a state. In this case, we observe limited branding of the new role of alliance partners of the US.

One key element for the lack of branding of the new role was the issue of domestic credibility. While Perón held negotiations with the US to declare war and be part of the UN, Perón domestically adopted a narrative of anti-imperialism and hegemony and directly criticised the intentions of the US to control and dominate the Latin American region. In other words, branding the new role of alliance partner with the US did not resonate as part of the

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[11] In this sense, role play and enactment can vary vis-à-vis a specific actor depending on the role relationship (Holsti 1970). Similarly, roles can also evolve in historical terms as they are performed in new contexts and according to situational demands that emerge for an actor over time (see Wehner 2020).

identity of Argentina and certainly not with that of the Peronist movement being constituted and advanced in this country by his leader. The Peronist movement was anti-elite, nationalist in nature and favoured foreign policy principles of autonomy and anti-US hegemony (Esposto and Zabala 2010b, 133). Unlike the lack of branding on the active independent role, Argentina was able to promote its neutrality role. Argentina, when facing the outbreak of World War II, selected a role that was in its role-set, so it could be projected to the audience of states and the parties directly involved in the conflict. It also allowed Argentina's role to be located in the new social context of the war (reception). In fact, Argentina's neutral role selection and projection both domestically and internationally experienced a positive reception among others. Domestic groups in general identified themselves with a neutral role as this was the role adopted and branded during World War I, so its new enactment was considered as part of the stable role set of Argentina.[12] In addition, the role was also at first received and accepted by the US; yet it was the events of Pearl Harbor that changed the setting and created role conflict as the US's role expectations for Argentina changed. However, Argentina was still able to resist the pressures from the US, despite the use of sanctions to induce role change in Argentina. In this sense, the UK, which was directly involved in the war, facilitated not only the selection and projection of the role, but also its reception as the UK and other members involved in the conflict like Germany could still secure food provisions from Argentina by adopting and keeping the neutral role.

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[12] The roles of active independent and neutral during this period were domestically contested by different domestic groups that saw a benefit in either adopting a closer relation with the US and the Allies and/or a closer approach to Axis states (Esposto and Zabala 2010a: 95-97). For example, the official elite of the armed forces, nationalistic groups and groups that supported the premises of Nazism in Argentina contested the partner role of the US enacted by Argentina at the end of the conflict (Esposto and Zabala 2010a). On domestic role contestation of Argentina's foreign policy initiatives with regard to the US during this period, see Esposto and Zabala 2010a, 2010b; Cisneros and Escudé 1999.

Moreover, this case study also demonstrates social interactions of failure and success through the process covered herein. First, Argentina resisted the expectations of the US to change its role of active independent for one of ally during most of the wartime period. In fact, the US sanctioned Argentina by blocking arm sales, freezing Argentinean funds in the US and seeking to impose an economic blockade (Norden and Russell 2002: 17-18). Yet, Argentina updated its beliefs to be even more certain that the role it tried to adopt vis-à-vis the US was correct when sanctions were used. In fact, the audience of states in Latin America and Europe accepted the role of active independent, especially with its accompanying neutral role. However, Argentina changed its role for the alliance partner role in 1945 via the strategic manipulation of its national leadership. This change involved Argentina ceasing to desire its previous role vis-à-vis the US and updating its beliefs on the convenience of enacting the alliance partner role even if it would be for a short period. However, a successful social interaction also took place as Argentina's new role was located and accepted by the US to complete the role relationship. Finally, after Perón achieved his strategic goals by changing the role relationship with the US, he established a new round of social interaction with the US and the Soviet Union which allowed Argentina to enact and re-establish the active independent role but with new characteristics (non-confrontation to the US and selective engagement) that indicate variation and new characteristics in the role play process.

The role of faithful ally

Menem took power in 1989. He was elected under a campaign which promised not to change the course of the economy despite the hyperinflation the country was experiencing. In fact, Menem got elected on the promise of keeping heterodox measures in place by using a strong populist discourse that emphasized economic nationalism. Once in power, Menem implemented radical economic measures that were in line with the prescription of the

Washington Consensus. Since that time, Menem sought to establish close relations with the US in the economic, diplomatic and the security dimensions. These three dimensions are intertwined but the latter two were seen as key to achieving economic development as well as to sustaining and externally locking in place the radical economic reforms implemented to eradicate the hyperinflation. The new economic model needed not only trade partners to increase commercial ties but also political supporters (Corigliano 2000). A close relationship with the US would also offer the potential of opening new close relationships with its main partners in the trade and political diplomatic issue-areas as well.

However, Raúl Alfonsin (the previous president from 1983-1989) had already adopted a realist approach to re-establish a closer relationship with the US after the return to democracy and the end of the Malvinas War, where the US showed its support to the UK. Part of the new approach to the US was based on the need to sustain the economic measures introduced through the Plan Austral to control inflation and achieve economic growth. Alfonsin's attempts to adopt a pragmatic and closer relationship with the US clashed with the traditional scepticism that had always shaped the bilateral relationship. This distance was traditional in both the Peronist and radical governments. The clashed with the US and the continuation of an active independent role were expressed in the difficulty in continuing with the second phase of the Plan Austral, which involved structural reforms as well as continuing with policies of proliferation such as the missile plan Condor II. Moreover, Argentina refused to sign the non-proliferation treaty even under the direct pressure of the US (Russell 1987: 43-62). Thus, Argentina kept its traditional active independent role and did not advance and/or seek to establish a faithful ally role with the US during Alfonsin's government.[13] Once again, selective strategic cooperation

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[13] One difference in the way the active independent role was enacted in Latin America was that the role was not played along with a regional leadership role or plans of it as in the past. This was symptomatic of Argentina's process of relative decline and the devastating impact of the Malvinas conflict.

with the US and non-alignment describe the role relationship. Nonetheless, new leadership was key to change the extant role and create a new one for Argentina.

Carlos Menem brought all areas of the government's policy, especially those of defence and foreign affairs into the service of economic interests, i.e. economic development (Norden and Russell 2002: 74). During Menem's presidency the premise of following the US as a faithful ally in security and political-diplomatic issues was grounded in the idea that challenges to the leadership of the US in non-economic areas were detrimental to economic development as it created uncertainty and negative perceptions among American investors (Escudé and Fontana 1998: 51-79). In this sense, the foremost economic measure was the adoption of a parity of one dollar/one peso, which was a *de facto* dollarization of the Argentinean economy.

In the security sector the change of role to faithful ally was even more salient than in the economic domain as the relationship with the US was the top priority, though it was supplemented with other relationships such as with Mercosur, and European states. The Argentinean government did not want to make a similar mistake to that made during World War II of keeping a neutral position and not supporting the US. In fact, the lack of support to the US during the war was interpreted by officials of Menem's government as a strategic mistake as it impeded Argentina from materially benefitting from a closer alliance with the US during the Cold War. In fact, Argentina enacted the faithful ally role with a posture of complete alignment and followership to the US leader role in security issues under Menem's leadership. Argentina became a peacekeeper via the UN. In addition, it supported the US during the Gulf War. It sent two ships, which provided even more than material support by gaining symbolic meaning for the type of relationship it wanted to establish with the US. The support in the Gulf War was key to receiving from the US and its allies the status of major extra-NATO ally in 1997, though Argentina's most desired option was to be full member of this organisation. Argentina also supported the US occupation of Haiti in 1994 when all other Latin American states did not support such a venture. In these two actions Argentina showed the priority of the

faithful ally role at the expense of its traditional principle of non-intervention (Simonoff 2006). Moreover, Menem also changed Argentina's postures regarding non-proliferation by dismantling the Condor II project (Corigliano 2000). In the diplomatic arena, Argentina enacted the faithful ally role by condemning the human rights policies of Cuba and withdrawing criticisms of Israeli policies in the Middle East. These two issues were usually where the north-south and non-aligned movement diverged with the US and where Argentina was traditionally against the US (Norden and Russell 2002: 82).

The policies showing the enactment of a faithful ally role by Argentina and the acceptance of it by the US within the role location process went along with a branding strategy to justify and convince the domestic audience and the audience of states that this was indeed the appropriate role. In fact, when George H. Bush visited Argentina in 1990, both leaders showed rhetorically and through gestures the new role relationship, especially with regards to the Iraqi invasion of Kuwait. For instance, President Bush showed his gratitude to Argentina in a speech to the Argentinean Congress: "In the current crisis of the gulf, you have also shown strength and vision by helping to lead international efforts to stop Saddam's brutal aggression. Your contribution to the multinational force in the gulf is a statement of your commitment to peace and the rule of law, and a clear sign that you are assuming your rightful place as a leader among freedom-loving nations." Likewise, President Menem tried to contain domestic criticism and its impact on media by encouraging Argentinean people to think in terms of friendship. "It would be good that we understand that ideologies and everything that creates confrontation (...) is neither useful in these moments for Argentina nor for other places of the world. This is why ideologies make me sad when expressed by groups trying to make a demonstration against the president of the US (...) when all the people should go to the streets to salute this man who represents a great country" (quoted in Corigliano 2000).[14] As anecdotal as these quotes may

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[14] Authors' own translation.

sound, they reflect a pattern of trust and good will and overall support to each other's roles. These types of narratives that branded the new role of faithful ally in Argentina and ally on both sides were present most of the period of Menem's presidency. This type of purposeful narrative had the purpose of creating identification with the new orientation of Argentina to the world and thus with its new role vis-a-vis the US to create a tradition of a good and close relationship. The focus was on building a common future, as both states did not have sufficient past cultural material to refer to in order to sustain the new role. The new role was carried out and sustained on the shoulders of President Menem in Argentina and his ministers in the Foreign Affairs office.

The role location process of the faithful ally role was welcomed and accepted by the US (reception of the role), which is a successful process of locating a role in a social structure. Unlike the previous episode of Argentinean foreign policy history, this case did not involve a mismatch of mutual expectations between the self and the other. In addition, the audience of states and social cues from the system did not oppose and, indeed, they facilitated such a new role relationship and change in the identity of Argentina vis-à-vis the US. The context of the end of the Cold War, the triumph of neoliberalism, and the emergence of the US as superpower help to explain the new posture of Argentina towards the US and the acceptance of others to the new role of faithful ally (Norden and Russell 2002). It also seems to be the case that Menem used his presidential power and set of convictions to establish a new role based on the need to make the new economic model successful. Menem, in other words, was a role entrepreneur as other states in Latin America did not follow the same path as Menem, despite being influenced by the same systemic security pressures and economic needs. Other Latin American states and their leaders did not enact a faithful ally role with regard to the US. They followed the US with regard to economic cooperation, but did not have the same determination as Argentina when it came to security and diplomatic issues. Thus, Menem was able to innovate in the role set by creating a new role that was not historically rooted. At the same time Menem was able to

displace the active independent role that traditionally dominated in Argentinean foreign relations by generating a mechanism of competitive role identity and by branding the new role via rhetorical commitment.[15] The competitive identity was also expressed in the way others (the audience) saw Argentina. Argentina was no longer seen as always grouped together with the Latin American countries on issues like Cuba or in terms of the respect of the principle of non-intervention. Argentina started to be seen by others as a faithful ally of the US, which reaffirmed this new identity as this new role was the most salient identity marker for other states in Latin America. Despite the fact that Argentina and Brazil continued to develop the institutional apparatus of Mercosur, the close relationship between Argentina and the US created a sense of discomfort and scepticism in Brasilia (see Rapoport 2010, 780-782). In fact, Argentina under Menem did not give the same importance to the relationship with Brazil. Argentina saw the relationship with Brazil more from an economic rationale while the one with the US involved both economic and security driven issues (see Russell 2010, 279-280). Thus, it was the presidential figure of Carlos Menem and his agency capacity that was key for the new role actively played between 1989 and 1999 in Argentina to take root in the role repertoire of Argentina.

Therefore, the brand selection of the role of faithfull ally was based on the belief that Argentina's economic destiny and wellbeing was subject to the influence of the US in a new world context of unipolarity. Argentina also expected a close relationship with the US to use an eventual support from the US in any renegotiation of Argentina's debt with multilateral

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[15] Menem's new approach to the US experienced domestic role contestation. Corigliano (2000) describes the process of role contestation within the Argentine Congress over the faithful ally role, especially during the decision making process of sending two warships to the Gulf conflict. This contestation was a process of interparty competition (Peronist party vis-à-vis opposition parties) as much as an intraparty dispute over Menem's decision to support the US in this conflict (within Peronism). See Corigliano (2000) for the process of domestic contestation on the new role of faithful ally vis-à-vis active independent and non-aligned state roles.

financial institutions as well as a recognition of the good economic governance of the country following the benefits of neoliberalism (see Busso and Bologna 1994, 18). The projection in terms of branding the new role to the US started from the beginning of Menem's presidency. He believed that a closer alliance with the US would reposition Argentina and give the country visibility on the international stage (see Busso 1994). Moreover, the faithful ally role would serve the purpose of ameliorating the negative image of Argentina and its systematic diminishing status and mark the start of a new era of progress via neoliberalism and a new international image (brand) as the faithfull ally of the US (Pignatta 2010, 150).

Furthermore, the branding projection of the new role is contained in the meaning of "relaciones carnales" (carnal relations). "Relaciones carnales" became a brand on its own as it synthesizes the type of alliance Argentina projected with the US during the 1990s spanning the presidencies of George H. Bush and Bill Clinton. Top diplomats, policy-makers, political analyst and media in Argentina used the word "relaciones carnales" as an expression of the foreign policy orientation of Argentina contained in a new role relationship of faithful allies. As then Argentina's Ambassador in the US (before being appointed as Menem's Foreign Affairs Minister), Guido di Tella said during an interview: "We want to be part of the Western Club. We want a cordial relationship with the US and not a platonic love. We want a carnal love with the US; we are interested in this because we can obtain benefits from this relationship" (see Lejtman 1990).[16] The US reciprocated and welcomed the new brand of the role of faithful ally. Moreover, the support of media and reference to the *carnal relations* phrase made the domestic identification with the new role in Argentina possible. The branding strategy helped

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[16] Authors' own translation from the following Spanish text "Nosotros queremos pertenecer al Club de Occidente. Yo quiero tener una relación cordial con los Estados Unidos y no queremos un amor platónico. Nosotros queremos un amor carnal con Estados, nos interesa porque podemos sacar un beneficio" .

with the selection, projection and reception of the role domestically and internationally. The faithfull ally role was indeed branded to show a specific aspect of Argentina's new international identity that amplified the results Argentina obtained from its relationship with the US, while downplaying important achievements with other international partners in Europe and Latin America (cf. Busso 1994). In this case, president Menem and his advisers in foreign policy decided to highlight the faithfull ally role of the US and made other role relationships not center stage or as recurrent as the one with the US in the narrative of the government.

Conclusion

This article showed the importance of malleable and competitive identity through case studies of security alliance building. It also showed how the branding (selection, projection and reception of it) is the means by which actors can change and advance new roles as well as re-interpret their key characteristics when they have not been regularly played by the self. The agency of leaders to select a new role, project it into a social structure toward a specific actor to form a role relationship, and secure the reception of the other actor and audience of states is key to responding to the more immediate strategic goals of the state. In the process of selection, projection and reception of a new role, leaders' behaviour shows how strategic roles are not just pure material calculation as leaders used existing identities and cast new ones (via role conceptions) to achieve their ends. Roles as played on the international stage are identity-markers that indicate to others who the self is, which may be accomplished as a form of role branding process.

Roles encompass both strategic and normative dimensions as seen through the illustrative examples of Argentina vis-à-vis the US in two historical periods. Moreover, leaders' beliefs are also important to understand the reasons for trying to innovate in the role repertoire

of a state generating tensions and competition with the existing roles of the state. The cases show that not only changes in the social structure, the existence of domestic constraints, and the set of beliefs of the leader are key for role change, but also of the adoption of a simplification strategy of branding that shows credibility and a strategy to sustain the new role. As seen in the narrative, the change to an alliance partner role in the first case did not go along with a strong branding strategy from the leader, whereas the faithful ally role with Menem came with reciprocal vocal gestures during the playing of the roles and to show the audience that the new role was there to stay and orient the foreign policy of Argentina.

This project shows the importance of branding in the strategic manipulation of social identity. Neither constructivism, nor role theory has previously contained a mechanism such as branding to think about such alterations in the identity of self and other. The idea of nation branding has already proven usesful in other academic disciplines for a wide range of topics, including tourism and foreign direct investment. The goal is the same when considering the foreign security policy of a country—to shift domestic and international audiences' ideas about the identity of the country. Future research in role theory might theoretically explore when branding is needed as part of the role location process, versus situations where it is not. Constructivism may benefit from considering the agency inherent in a branding process, as well as the fluidity it brings to often static versions of identity. Empirically, branding may help us understand what might otherwise seem to be confusing and contradictory, radical shifts in identity and policy, such as illustrated in the Argentine-US relationship examples in the article. Branding, as an approach to competitive identity management, thereby offers a number of theoretical and empirical advances to international relations scholars interested in identity in the security sphere.

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