

## SELF-IDENTITY AS A CONSTITUTIVE ELEMENT OF INSECURITY

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### ABSTRACT

A research intention with the possibility of providing a certain model approach within the framework of the analysis of the creation and perception of the identity of an actor of international relations, namely in a specific form in the form of one's own self-identification, requires the following. First, to choose and apply an appropriate theoretical and methodological approach, and secondly, provide a corresponding empirical research base with relevant data. The theory of social constructivism with its main categorical corpus was chosen as the theoretical base in our study: in the form of norms, socialization, identity, culture, identity and difference, discourse. The method of discursive analysis was considered as the primary research method. The benefit of the purpose conceived in this way can be demonstrated by pointing out the appropriateness of the application of selected procedural steps of research in the form of a hermeneutic or heuristic insight

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to reveal the investigated phenomenon. It is therefore an attempt to confirm the functionality of the chosen research methodological framework, as well as the applied constructivist paradigm with its ontological and epistemological starting points.

#### KEY WORDS

self-identity, otherness, insecurity, social constructivism, norms, anarchy

#### ABSTRAKT

Zamiar badawczy z możliwością zapewnienia pewnego modelowego podejścia w ramach analizy tworzenia i postrzegania tożsamości aktora stosunków międzynarodowych, a mianowicie w określonej formie w postaci własnej samoidentyfikacji, wymaga następujących elementów. Po pierwsze, wyboru i zastosowania odpowiedniego podejścia teoretycznego i metodologicznego, a po drugie, zapewnienia odpowiedniej bazy badań empirycznych z odpowiednimi danymi. Jako podstawę teoretyczną w naszym badaniu wybrano teorię konstruktywizmu społecznego z jej głównym korpusem kategoryalnym: w postaci norm, socjalizacji, tożsamości, kultury, tożsamości i różnicy, dyskursu. Metoda analizy dyskursywnej została uznana za podstawową metodę badawczą. Korzyść z tak pomyślanego celu można wykazać, wskazując na trafność zastosowania wybranych proceduralnych kroków badawczych w postaci hermeneutycznego lub heurystycznego wglądu do ujawnienia badanego zjawiska. Jest to zatem próba potwierdzenia funkcjonalności wybranych ram metodologicznych badań, a także zastosowanego paradygmatu konstruktywistycznego z jego ontologicznymi i epistemologicznymi punktami wyjścia.

#### SŁOWA KLUCZOWE

tożsamość, inność, niepewność, konstruktywizm społeczny, normy, anarchia

#### INTRODUCTION

The given paper represents a possible model study in the form of a research paradigm the purpose of which is the analysis of identity, in the form of own self-identification – self-identity, of an actor of international relations in the constitutive process against an entity that is a threat to this identity. At the analytical level and contextual analysis, a model approach based on the theory of social constructivism will be chosen. This theory's key corpus of categories will be applied in the form of: norms, socialization

process, identity, culture, identity and difference. This corpus will represent an instrumental element of the constitutive process of self-identification, against the background of uncertainty of the actor himself, in the session *We – Ourselves* and the *Others*, – *Otherness*, as bearers of antagonistic attributes. As a supporting method to the constructivist approach, primarily within the framework of content analysis, the method of discursive analysis was chosen in the dichotomous discursive Actor vs. the Others. The main goal of the study is to verify the relevance and plausibility of the paradigm of social constructivism in the investigation of the mentioned issue.

#### THE CORPUS OF SOCIAL CONSTRUCTIVISM IN RELATION TO THE CREATION AND INTERPRETATION OF ONE'S OWN IDENTITY: NORMS, CULTURE OF ANARCHY

According to social constructivism, the identity of the actor shapes international politics. This happens within the framework of potentially intersubjective beliefs, which are not subsequently reduced to just the mode of thinking of the individual.<sup>4</sup> The sphere of international relations as a part of objective reality is thus, like all social phenomena, socially constructed by the actors themselves based on their knowledge, interpretation and subsequent institutionalization (intersubjectively agreed upon).

From the point of view of the needs of investigating one's own identity from the position of social constructivism, this study found inspiration in the article of the South Korean professor Cho, Y. Ch. *Conventional and Critical Constructivist Approaches to National Security: An Analytical Survey*<sup>5</sup>. According to Professor Cho, from the point of view of the relationship between the state's security and its identity, an ontological explanation of identity is important, as well as an examination of the constitutive elements and practices that participate in this creation. Cho points to the fact that it is precisely social constructivism that, in contrast to rationalist theories, primarily realism, partialism and liberalism, emphasizes the constitutive effect of norms in the structure of international relations.<sup>6</sup> In this context, norms

<sup>4</sup> J. Legro, *Rethinking the world: great power strategies and international order*, Cornell University Press, Ithaca, New York 2005.

<sup>5</sup> Y.Ch. Cho, *Conventional and Critical Constructivist Approaches to National Security: An Analytical Survey*, Korean Journal of International Relations 2009, Vol. 49, No. 3, pp. 75–102.

<sup>6</sup> Ibidem.

are: “collective expectations about proper behavior for a given identity.”<sup>7</sup> Norms either “...define (or constitute) identities, or prescribe (or regulate) behavior, or do both.”<sup>8</sup> An equally important category in the study and application of the theory of constructivism is the concept of culture. According to P. J. Katzenstein: “Culture refers to both a set of evaluative standards (such as norms and values) and a set of cognitive standards (such as rules and models) that define what social actors exist in a system, how they operate, and how they relate to one another.”<sup>9</sup> In this context, it is possible to describe culture as socially shared knowledge Cho.<sup>10</sup>

A. Wendt offers three different types of culture of anarchy in the international system: Hobbesian, Lockean and Kantian.<sup>11</sup> (Hobbesian culture), rival (Lockean culture) or friend (Kantian culture). These three forms of anarchy are inherently linked to the three forms of internalization – coercion, self-interest, and legitimacy – legitimacy, with a certain degree of connection to the currently dominant culture of anarchy. The relationship between culture (shared knowledge) and security, more precisely: security interests of the state expressed in P. J. Katzenstein's article “Norms, Identity, and Culture in National Security,” as follows: “security interests are defined by actors who respond to cultural factors. It is closely related to the topic of national security.”<sup>12</sup>

#### SELF-VIEW AS A PART OF STATE IDENTITY IN DISCURSIVE

According to Cho, the ontological basis of identity is created within discourse – as a narrative space of representations and practices involving the production of meaning that creates the identity of subjects and objects. In the process of discourse, however, an institutional definition occurs, in which the formative creation of representation is accompanied by the creation of political boundaries between inside/outside and domestic/for-

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<sup>7</sup> Ibidem.

<sup>8</sup> *The Culture of National Security: Norms and Identity in World Politics*, P.J. Katzenstein (ed.), Columbia University Press 1996, pp. 56–57.

<sup>9</sup> Ibidem, p. 6.

<sup>10</sup> Y.Ch. Cho, *Conventional and Critical Constructivist Approaches to National Security: An Analytical Survey...*, op. cit.

<sup>11</sup> A. Wendt, *Social theory of International Politics*, Cambridge University Press, Cambridge 1992.

<sup>12</sup> *The Culture of National Security: Norms and Identity in World Politics...*, op. cit., p. 2.

eign.<sup>13</sup> Likewise, E. Adler notes that: "... in (Wendt's) constructivism, states' identities and interests are created and changed through mutual social interactions in the international system, and not as a result of opportunities in their foreign policy decision-making processes politics. Indeed, according to constructivism – the research paradigm from which the author is based – identity lies at the core of the national interest, thanks to which it fundamentally shapes foreign policy."<sup>14</sup>

Regarding the problem of the ontological status of the state, Professor Cho relies on D. Campbell, who claims that "the state has no ontological status apart from the many and varied practices that bring it into existence, then the state is an artifact of a continuous process of reproduction that performatively forms its identity."<sup>15</sup> Therefore – as noted by Professor Cho: "...to examine the practices that (re)create the state itself, it is essential in (critical) constructivist security studies to understand the concept of identity."<sup>16</sup> It is therefore possible to state that difference-difference and identity have a mutual causal relational relationship, when the meaning of one gives an ontological justification to the other element. As such, they are two inherently linked entities. Thus, identity creates itself – within the framework of production and reproduction, an image of itself in the context of difference to Otherness. Moreover, as noted by Cho<sup>17</sup>: "in political practice, there is often a tendency within this binary relationship to perceive oneself as something superior to the oppositional constitutive element, which moreover represents an existential threat/threats, and creates uncertainty and security threats to the actor who is bearer of identity." As part of this, the need for protection against the "external" (inferior) arose. This creates another causal relationship: in which one's own security – as a variable – is determined, i.e. also produced by uncertainty. As J. Weldes notes: "...identity and insecurity are produced in a mutually constitutive

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<sup>13</sup> Y.Ch. Cho, *Conventional and Critical Constructivist Approaches to National Security...*, op. cit., p. 91.

<sup>14</sup> E. Adler, *Constructivism and International relations*, SAGE Publications 2002, p. 103.

<sup>15</sup> D. Campbell, *Writing Security: United States Foreign Policy and the Politics of Identity*, Manchester University Press, Manchester 1998, p. 57.

<sup>16</sup> Y.Ch. Cho, *Conventional and Critical Constructivist Approaches to National Security...*, op. cit.

<sup>17</sup> *Ibidem*.

process.” Thus: “the actor's identity is created as well as disrupted in relation to Otherness.”<sup>18</sup>

The main reason is that the performative constitution of identity takes place in discourse. On a general level, there is a tendency to define discourse as a specific way of talking about and understanding the world (or its aspects). In Foucault's sense, discourse refers to “...a specific series of representations and practices involving the production of meaning that creates the identity of subjects and objects.”<sup>19</sup> Therefore, as a secondary theoretical methodological approach, the article found its inspiration in David Campbell's analyzed work *Writing Security*, which is described by V. Beneš in his chapter dedicated to Discursive Analysis, which is part of *How to Examine Politics* by P. Drulák.<sup>20</sup> Campbell's work is a typical example of Foucault's genealogical discursive analysis in international relations, the aim of which is to use the example of American foreign policy and American identity to point out the need for a new perspective on foreign policy.

#### CONSTITUTIVE PROCESS OF CREATING SELF-IDENTIFICATION: *OURSELVES VS. OTHERNESS* ANALYTICAL LEVEL:

##### INTERSUBJECTIVISM, NORM, IDENTITY, CULTURE, ANARCHY

Neoconservatism, whose representatives were e.g. by Deputy Ministers of the Department of Defense (DOD) – P. Wolfowitz and D. Faith. The ideology of neoconservatism after the Cold War found its expression in the article by W. Kristol and R. Kagan *Toward a Neo-Reaganite Foreign Policy*, published in the journal *Foreign Affairs* in the summer of 1996.<sup>21</sup> (Kristol and Kagan 1996) The mentioned authors talk about a new historic leading role in world history, an opportunity to demonstrate American exceptionalism in the role of a global hegemon limited by no one and nothing with ideological and strategic dominance. A significant role is played here by the moralistic categorization of the enemy and the confrontation with him

<sup>18</sup> J. Weldes, M. Laffey, H. Gusterson, R. Duvall, *Introduction: Constructing Insecurity*, University of Minnesota Press, Minneapolis 1999, pp. 10.

<sup>19</sup> S. Hall, *The Work of Representation*, [in:] *Representation: Cultural Representation and Signifying Practices*, S. Hall (ed.), Sage Publications, London 1997, p. 51.

<sup>20</sup> V. Beneš, *Diskurzívna analýza*, [in:] *Jak zkoumat politiku*, P. Drulák, V. Beneš (ed.), Portál, Praha 2008, pp. 92–148.

<sup>21</sup> W. Kristol, R. Kagan, *Toward a Neo-Reaganite Foreign Policy*, „Foreign Affairs”, <https://carnegieendowment.org/1996/07/01/toward-neo-reaganite-foreign-policy-pub-276>, (accessed 12.10.2024 r.).

in the form of the dichotomy *Good vs. Evil*. M. Boot<sup>22</sup> holds that for this is characteristic the so-called Manichean view of the world, the world perceived in black and white colors mainly as a dangerous sphere. This sphere of confrontation between Good and Evil was supposed to require constant readiness and strength. The United States was presented as an exceptional actor, destined to lead those who sided with good. Their savior mission found its justification in noble motives that originate in American history, are universal: acceptable and beneficial to all.

The turning point for American foreign policy were the terrorist attacks of September 11, 2001, aimed at the buildings of the World Trade Center – WTC in New York, and the Pentagon – the US Department of Defense. Terrorist attacks were carried out by members of the Al-Qaeda terrorist network, whose main center was Afghanistan in 1996, when the Taliban comes to power. One of the main arguments against the United States as the “Evil Empire” was the presence of its troops on the territory of Saudi Arabia, where these troops were stationed during the Iraq-Kuwaiti conflict, which culminated in the ground operation Desert Storm in the summer of 1991. The cause of the controversy was, on the one hand, the presence of these troops on Saudi Arabian territory, both military operations and the surrounding countries, which allegedly led to the desecration of holy places for Muslims. So the radical Islamic organization decided to act.

Confrontation with terrorist groups and the states that support them is presented as a necessity without any alternative, and as a certain imperative for those who want to categorize themselves as American allies. Active participation in retaliatory measures from the American side thus represents a way and a way to save the civilized part of the world – as a confrontational dichotomy in the form of Civilized vs. Barbarians – those who spread global terrorism. As the one who claims the “final word” in this confrontation, it is the United States as the leader and representative of the group in the form of a civilized, threatened entity. Identifying with someone who chooses to take action against the desecrator meant a certain norm that became legitimate for making an attack, reciprocally, directly on the enemy (as much on his territory as where he was). Culture (shared knowledge) thus united Islamic terrorists, gave them an identity that was

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<sup>22</sup> M. Boot, *Neocons*, „Foreign Policy” 2004, No. 140, p. 20; DOI:10.2307/4147516 (accessed 12.10. 2024 r.).

accepted, not imposed (coercion). Only the decision to undertake terrorist attacks on the United States of America created a normative structure, the product of which are actors (agents) who, on the basis of intersubjectivity, the creation of ideas and self-identification, i.e.j. projections into the subject, created two hostile entities. It means creating a norm for both actors, i.e. what they can create and what they are created by.

After the attacks on the buildings of the Business Center in New York and on the Pentagon building, a new (social) structure is created within the framework of international relations, or primarily within the framework of the relations of these two participating actors (agents), where the so-called culture arises through interaction between them. Hobbesian anarchy. The Self-Identification of the USA as the Protector was realized on the basis of intersubjectivity within the framework of empirical knowledge created not through observation, but through the creation of one's own ideas, symbols and codes, so it was subjectively legitimate, not imposed. In the same way, the identification of who represents the enemy in a wide spectrum of ethical and moral dimensions took place, not only towards one actor, but also towards the larger community on a regional as well as a global level. Both actors thus legitimized their actions by producing the image of the other through an ideological and symbolic formula: *We = Sanctifying* vs. *They = Profaners*. That is, an actor that has full legitimacy to name, challenge, create coalitions, act outside its borders, on the other's territory. The norm based on the social structure created identities as a social construct based on a conditional relationship – *Terrorist* vs. *Attacked*, *Victim* vs. *The attacker*, the one who has the sanctification to name himself and the other, to undertake, to incite an attack. Next comes another set of intangible factors that determine and form international relations as an intangible entity: “strategy, intelligence, determination, socially constructed interests.”<sup>23</sup> State vs. non-state actor. A normative idea as a construct and at the same time a product of an immaterial structure thus results in entities such as strategy, determination, etc.

Through the constitutive intersubjective process, norms for self-identification and standing out against the other were gradually created within the framework of the new – anarchic structure. There were also normative processes, cultural self-identification, internalization, where both coercion,

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<sup>23</sup> J.J. Mearsheimer, *The Tragedy of Great Power Politics*, W.W. Norton & Company, New York 2001, p. 58.

self-interest, and full self-confirmed identity were present. A hegemon providing or offering economic, political and military stability, as idealistic and realistic levels, which is perceived as a propagator of the Kantian culture of cooperative anarchy, thus finds himself, or it is a product of the mental construct of an entity that has projected Him – this hegemon as an enemy. Intersubjectivity for both participants within the newly created structure produced norms, identities, which were fully institutionalized for both. New normative structure of relations: state actor vs. non-state actor, meant for the United States an almost unprecedented form not of a rival (Lockean), but directly of an enemy representing or carrying out an (existential) threat in the form of terrorist attacks. The result of the constitutive process within the new structure is both self-identity and uncertainty.

The United States of America, which represented at that time (as well as now) an actor that identifies itself and is constructed by a norm, primarily legalistically as well as moralistically on a multilateral level, a priori fully respecting the value and international law “manual”: the Charter of the UN as a legal and globally enacted document according to the Westphalian principles: equality and the right to self-determination of nations, the sovereign (sovereign) status of states based on equality, the peaceful way of solving international disputes, the prohibition of the use of force or the threat of its use in international relations, the principle of non-intervention in international relations, the obligation of states to cooperate with each other according to the UN Charter, the fulfillment of obligations arising from the UN Charter and the principles of international law – the right to live in peace (as a fundamental right). On the other hand, his enemy did not represent a state actor, that is, an entity that is e.g. a member of the UN, and therefore forced to respect the mentioned UN Charter, or an actor as a non-UN member, who will be treated in accordance with the principles of the UN in order to ensure international peace and security, i.e. settle the dispute with peaceful instruments, not resorting to the use of force and threats, will not disturb territorial integrity or political independence of a state. Terror was represented by Al-Qaeda itself as well as other terrorist groups connected to it.

As a structural component in the opposition of the state actor, in the role of a hegemon, a guarantor, providing a new, “better” order within the framework of liberalization and the benefits resulting from growing interconnectedness in the context of globalization (as well as dollarization), the second – “toxic element” appears. Al-Qaeda as a global extremist group

and its jihad – holy war. A forced alternative to Jihad by the sword (as opposed to what Jihad by the heart represents – i.e. upholding moral and ethical standards and strengthening them in Islam in the name of Allah) in defense of Muslims, an attack against those labeled as modern-day crusaders, those who desecrate what it is sacred.

## CONCLUSION

The change of identity of many countries due to new conditions represents a dynamic process of the model paradigm of self-identification. In international relations and also in the field of political sciences, it is necessary to take into account that individual identities are not only formed, but also subject to changes. In the research model of social constructivism, it is therefore necessary to identify the recurring contexts of acceptance of historical and cultural patterns, the geopolitical situation, as well as the relational bond of actors within interactive inherently connected entities. Identity and mechanisms of self-identification in narrative discourses demonstrate a mutual relationship with others, while this performative result results from the clarification of existing social structures, and in model situations based on assumptions for conflicts or cooperation, it can be indicated that social constructivism as a scientific theory of international relations can be not only an adequate basis for research own self-identification of the actor of international relations, but also predictive model constructs for reflexive and potential evaluation of the possibilities of how actors act. The overall interaction and dynamics form the prerequisites for contextual analysis. It is therefore possible to state that self-perception is a relational process and result as something completed or ongoing. However, this result also includes how the subject is perceived by the other. Such a paradigm can also be applied to the investigation of the self-perception of a specific state – i.e. j. how is that state compared to others and how are the Others, or the other states perceive, based on different parameters. Self-identification features are still a current and supporting element of many discourses in the intentions of self-affirmations or ideological justifications of one's own attitudes and practical steps undertaken for oneself.

It is therefore possible to state that self-perception forms a performative result of identity as opposed to one's own Self-Self, and this paradigm can also be applied to the investigation of the self-perception of a specific state, how it compares to others and how the state is perceived by other states. The identitarian methodological framework including the key fac-

tors of the typology of identities and their dynamics, which from normative to constitutive identities taking place in political discourse and in the anarchic international system, contributes to discussions in constructivism and revives reflections on self-identities in international relations and in politics itself.

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