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# Constructivism: An Introduction

By Maysam Behravesh on February 3, 2011

As a form of "reflectivist" critique of the scientific approach to the study of social sciences, constructivism was initially developed as a mostly interpretive "metatheory,"[1]stemming from the works of such philosophers as Wilhelm Dilthey, Ludwig Wittgenstein, and R. G. Collingwood.[2] Hence, the central argument about constructivism, according to Adler, relates not to the theoretical clash between "science" and "literary interpretation or 'stories'", but to "the nature of social science itself and, therefore, the discipline of International Relations." "In other words," he elucidates, "the issue pits a naturalist conception of science, almost entirely based on contested philosophies of science and on physical concepts and theories that physics has long since abandoned, against a concept of social science that is *social*." As a methodological caveat, however, Adler notes significantly that categorizing "constructivism, post-structuralism and post-modernism" all as varieties of the same "reflectivist" approach is a "mistaken belief."[3]

Nicholas Greenwood Onuf was the first theorist who introduced the term "constructivism" in International Relations theory in 1989, contending that states much the same as individuals are living in a "world of our making," as the title of his famous book bears,[4]where many entities such as "social facts" are made by human action, as opposed to "brute facts" that do not depend for their existence on human action but rather are phenomena of human condition.[5] The fact that constructivism emerged as a metatheory about how social sciences in general operate appears to have been the main reason the practice of constructivism in IR drew a good deal of criticism at the outset. Critics charged that "constructivism had provided little in the way of substantive knowledge, or even hypotheses, about the behavior of states or state systems."[6] It was in the middle of 1990s that the alternative works of some IR theorists helped to develop and present constructivism as a substantive theory of international behaviour. In fact, the end of the Cold War set the stage for the rise to prominence of the constructivist school of thought in IR which caused a profound remoulding of debates within the dominant discourse of international relations theory. Central to constructivist arguments are such core concepts as "discourses," "norms," "identity," and "socialization" that are frequently used in contemporary discussions over various issues of international concern including "globalization, international human rights, security policy, and more."[7]

Such a theoretical event was prompted by a few major developments: (1) the challenging persuasion of critical theorists by leading rationalists to move beyond meta-theoretical critique of rationalism and produce substantive theories of international relations; (2) the failure of neorealists and neoliberals to predict the end of the Cold War and the consequent challenge to explanatory and analytical capacities of their theories; (3) the emergence of a new generation of critical theory-inclined scholars who moved to explore the untapped potentials of theoretical and conceptual scholarship in international relations theory; and (4) the enthusiasm shown by disappointed rational choice-oriented theorists in IR to welcome alternative constructivist perspectives.[8] While owing dearly to sociological theorizations and debates,[9]constructivism has been regarded by some theorists as belonging to, or being an "outgrowth" of, the critical discourse of international relations theory, as "many of its pioneers explicitly sought to employ the insights of that theory to illuminate diverse aspects of world politics."[10]

However, constructivism differs from critical theory, modernist or post modernist, in its simultaneous engagement with meta-theoretical scholarship and emphasis upon employment of substantive "empirical analysis," as well as in its endeavour to apply the characteristically counter-rationalist insights of critical theory – theorization of humans as "socially embedded, communicatively constitutive and culturally empowered" beings – to aspects and issues of world politics "that were anomalous to neorealism and neoliberalism." In other words, where modern critical theorists – inspired by Frankfurt School thinkers such as Adorno, Horkheimer and Habermas, and adopting a position of "critical interpretivism" or "minimal foundationalism" – and postmodern critical theorists – influenced by the works of French philosophers like Derrida and Foucault and assuming a stance of "radical interpretivism" or "anti-foundationalism" – share a common condemnation of neopositivist methodology and call for more "interpretive, discursive and historical" methods of investigation, constructivists utilize these methods and ideas "to further their empirical explorations."[11]

Along parallel lines and on epistemological as well as methodological levels of analysis, Adler notes that constructivism as an alternative theory of IR holds "the middle ground between "rationalist" theories – realism, neorealism and neoliberal institutionalism – and "interpretive epistemologies" – post-modernism, Frankfurt School-oriented critical theories and feminism.[12] He contends that,

[T]he true middle ground between rationalist and relativist interpretive approaches is occupied neither by an interpretive version of rationalism, nor by some variety of 'reflectivism' as described by Keohane[13], nor even by all sorts of critical theories as imprecisely portrayed by Mearsheimer[14], but by constructivism. Constructivism is the view that *the manner in which the material world shapes and is shaped by human action and interaction depends on dynamic normative and epistemic interpretations of the material world*.[15]

Established as recently as the late 1980s and early 1990s by such thinkers as Nicholas Onuf, Alexander Wendt, Emanuel Adler, Friedrich Kratochwil, John Gerard Ruggie and Peter Katzenstein, constructivism is a "social theory of international politics" that emphasizes the social construction of world affairs as opposed to the claim of (neo)realists that international politics is shaped by the rational-choice behaviour/decisions of egoist actors who pursue their interests by making utilitarian calculations to maximize their benefits and minimize their losses, hence the materiality of international structures. In spite of itself currently forming "a new mainstream" in international relations theory as some scholars maintain,[16]constructivism might still be seen as "an oppositional movement within IR theory" and "a genuinely radical alternative"[17]to such conventionally entrenched IR theories as neorealism and neoliberalism, or a "distinctive approach" to international relations that stresses the social, ideational and intersubjective character of world politics.[18] The major thesis of constructivism is that the international system is "socially constructed," that is, it "consists of," explains Chernoff, "the ways in which human beings think and interact with one another."[19] In contrast to realism, for which international relations are driven by the states' security and material interests defined in terms of power, and to liberal internationalism that concentrates upon the interdependency of international actors and their operation within institutional constraints, constructivism considers international politics as a sphere of interaction which is shaped by the actors' identities and practices and influenced by constantly changing normative institutional structures. It maintains that states' goals, either material/objective such as ontological security and economic development, or immaterial/subjective such as international recognition and standing, are generated by their social corporate identities or how they view themselves in relation to other actors in the international community.[20] Where realists and liberalists alike see international actors as inherently pre-social "atomistic egoists" whose interests are formed "prior to social interaction" and who initiate such an interaction solely for material gains and "strategic purposes," for constructivists actors are intrinsically "social" beings whose identities and interests are "the products of inter-subjective social structures."[21]

Arguing that the international relations structures are "socially constructed" and that "these structures shape actors' identities and interests rather than just their behaviour," the constructivist theory – which has different forms and foci and thus has been termed by some as an "approach" to the analysis of world politics – challenges the materialist and rationalist underpinnings of the old mainstream IR theory. The difference between the neorealist and constructivist arguments is primarily one derived from their views of the nature of structure; in other words, whereas neorealists regard systemic structures as made "only of distribution of material capabilities," constructivists hold that they are "also made of social relationships" which are themselves constructed by three elements of "shared knowledge, material resources and practices." This is why constructivist theorists advocate a "sociological rather than a micro-economic structuralism."[22] What they mean by social "construction" of the world politics is its creation through "a process of interaction between agents (individuals, states, non-state actors) and the structures of their broader environment," that is, through a process of "mutual constitution" between "agents and structures."[23]

While for neorealists "anarchy" is a determining condition of international system that by itself renders competition and conflict endless strong possibilities, and thus the international system a more conflictual than peaceful environment, for constructivists anarchy alone does not make much sense as it cannot by itself bring about a predetermined state of affairs among state actors. Rather, what makes much sense for the constructivist is that under anarchy different social structures and arrangements, cooperative and conflictual, can be formed and defined on the basis of actors' social identities, and accordingly, the way they construct their national interests and devise relevant means to secure them.[24] In other words, as Wendt puts it, "[a]narchy is what states make of it," that is, the "nature" of international anarchy appears to be conflictual if states show a conflictual behaviour towards each other, and cooperative if they behave cooperatively towards one another. Therefore, it might be compelling to argue that there is no pre-given "nature" to international anarchy, but it is states themselves that determine anarchy's nature. With such an argument in mind, then, to understand conflict and cooperation in international politics, we must focus upon what states do, which in turn depends on their identities and interests, not on the perceived "nature" of

systemic international “anarchy.”[25]

Following the “anarchy” debate and the constructivist emphasis upon its variable character, constructivism holds the view that states’ identities and interests in international politics are also subject to change. As anarchy lacks a constant “nature” and is shaped by actors’ identities and interests, identities and interests too lack such fixity and stability and are determined by states’ actions and practices. So constructivists do not take anarchy for granted and ascribe the condition of a group of states to the inescapable requirements of anarchy, but what matters for them is to examine how states’ identities and interests are constructed as well as the role their certain international interactions play in this regard.[26] With evident focus on, and inclination towards, the “sociality” of international politics, constructivism in contrast to neorealism lays due emphasis upon social relationships in the international system. More significantly, the meaning of material capabilities in terms of power is constructed on the basis of social interactions and shared understandings, that is, the latter give meaning to the former.[27] Holding that the existence of international system is not distinct from the “human conceptions” of it and socio-cultural dimensions of international politics are as significant as its economic and security dimensions, constructivists criticize natural science-oriented IR theorists for ignoring these sociological aspects. Identities and preferences of international actors, for constructivism, are shaped by the social structures that are not fixed or unchanging.[28]

It should also be noted that there are various strands of constructivism ranging from those that “reject scientific-style theorizing and stress the interpretive nature of social science and other sciences” to those that allow for the use of natural science-like and empirical theoretical insights in explaining international relations dynamics.[29] Broadly speaking, as a widely discussed theory of IR, constructivism has appeared in two major varieties, North American and European, which differ principally in the questions they ask about international relations and foreign policy-making as well as the methods they use to answer them. The North American variant emphasizes the role of “social norms” and “identities” in constructing international politics and determining foreign policy outcomes and is dominated by “positivist” scholars who are interested in “uncovering top-down/deductive mechanisms and causal relationships between actors, norms, interests and identity.”[30] In this camp, which prevails mostly in the United States and might be dubbed “conventional,” “standard” or “American” constructivism, are such theorists as Alexander Wendt, Emmanuel Adler, Nicholas Onuf, John Gerard Ruggie, Peter Katzenstein and Martha Finnemore.[31] The European variant, on the other hand, pays attention largely to the role of “language,” “linguistic constructions” and “social discourses” in constructing social reality, and is dominated by “post-positivist” or “interpretivist” scholars who are interested not in explaining the causes and effects of (identity) change through deductive research methods, as conventional constructivists are, but in exploring the conditions of possibility for such change and the ways in which they are created in the first place, using “inductive (bottom up)” research strategies. Such theorists as Friedrich Kratochwil and Ted Hopf belong to the camp of “interpretive/interpretative constructivism.”[32] Differences among constructivists notwithstanding, they are all common in giving “greater weight to the social – as opposed to the material – in world politics.”[33]

From an alternative perspective, constructivism as evolved during the 1990s has also been categorized into three different forms: “systemic,” “unit-level,” and “holistic.” Systemic constructivism, which is exemplified by the influential writings of Alexander Wendt, follows the Waltzian neo-realist “third-image” level of analysis and thus concentrates particularly upon “interactions between unitary state actors” and what happens between them at the expense of what happens within them, that is, this type of constructivism is believed to have bracketed or de-emphasized states’ domestic politics and its role in constructing or transforming their identities and interests.[34] Being the “inverse” of systemic constructivism, unit-level constructivist theory, which is well represented by the views of Peter Katzenstein, focuses on the states’ domestic political realm, or in the words of Reus-Smit, on “the relationship between domestic social and legal norms and the identities and interests of states,” and thus their national security strategies.[35] And finally, holistic constructivists stand at the intersection of systemic and unit-level constructivism and in fact strive to bridge the divide between “the international and the domestic” in explaining how state identities and interests are constituted. Epitomized by the writings of John G. Ruggie and Friedrich Kratochwil, holistic constructivism sets to integrate the domestically constituted corporate identities of states and their internationally driven social identities into “a unified analytical perspective that treats the domestic and the international as two faces of a single social and political order.”[36]

In his seminal *Social Theory of International Politics* (1999) Wendt articulates the central tenets of constructivism and drawing on the philosophical views of Thomas Hobbes, John Locke and Immanuel Kant theorizes three cultures of anarchy characterized respectively by “enmity,” “rivalry,” and “friendship.” He calls his “moderate” version of constructivist theory “thin constructivism” as it “concedes important points to materialist and individualist perspectives [of neorealism] and endorses a scientific approach to social inquiry.”[37] In fact, it is an originally “cultural” theory of international politics explained by different “cultures of anarchy” constructed by states themselves, which challenges the “ontological atomism” and “epistemological positivism” both neorealism and neoliberalism as traditional theories of IR share in

principle.[38] As a social theory, constructivism contests materialism by hypothesizing the structures of human association as "primarily cultural rather than material phenomena," and rationalism by arguing for their function as not only behaviour-regulating but also identity- and interest-constructing, though "material forces," it admits, "still matter," and "people," it acknowledges, "are still intentional actors." What it strives to illuminate, however, is that the meanings of these forces and intentionalities of these actors "depend largely on the shared ideas in which they are embedded, and as such culture is a condition of possibility for power and interest explanations."[39] It stresses the significance of normative structures that exert as great impact on the conduct of international relations[40]as material structures, upholds the role of identity as a factor that shapes states' interests and behaviours and attaches a high degree of importance to the dynamic interplay between agents and structures. For Wendt,

*Constructivism is a structural theory of the international system that makes the following*

*core claims: (1) states are the principal units of analysis for international political theory; (2)*

*the key structures in the states system are intersubjective rather than material; and (3) state*

*identities and interests are in important part constructed by these social structures, rather*

*than given exogenously to the system by human nature [as (neo)realists maintain] or domestic*

*politics [as neoliberals favour].[41]*

Despite being a state-centrist scholar of international politics, Wendt criticizes neorealists and neoliberals for reifying the structure of states system and taking for granted its ontological and ideational properties, which precludes us from considering and assessing the potentials for structural and institutional change in the international politics. He contends that states are "intentional and corporate actors whose identities and interests are in important part determined by domestic politics rather than the international system," and as states change so does the international structure. This does not contradict the argument for the structural social construction of states and their identities as well as interests, but that "this is a different level of construction; relative to the international system, states are self-organizing facts. This means that if we are interested in how the states *system* works, instead of how its elements are constructed, we will have to take the existence of states as given, just as sociologists have to take the existence of people as given to study how society works."[42] This is perhaps the major reason why Wendtian constructivism is widely viewed as being a quintessentially systemic theory. There lies, however, a fundamental critique of conventional thinking in the contention, namely, as Wendt puts it, "systemic theory cannot problematize the state all the way down" since this would involve a change of subject "from a theory of the states system to a theory of the state," which neorealists already treat as a "fixed" phenomenon having essential features inherent to it such as egoism, sovereignty, rationality and power pursuit.[43] According to him, "[b]y denying or bracketing states' collective authorship of their identities and interests … the realist-rationalist alliance denies or brackets the fact that competitive power politics help create the very 'problem of order' – that realism is a self-fulfilling prophecy."[44]

However, concession of theoretical ground and employment of positivist methods to so theorize constructivism as Wendt does, have come under attack by interpretive, and in a different sense unit-level, constructivists. In a challenging article, for example, Kratochwil, an interpretive constructivist, points to Wendt's "radical compromises" and censures his theoretical "*magnum opus"* for running "into heavy weather despite his tranquil exposition of the explosive issues involved," and significantly, for its real likelihood to turn into a "new orthodoxy":

*In a way, I am more worried that, instead of remaining a provocative and fruitful*

*new departure, true to its constructivist premises, the 'reasonable middle ground'*

*that emerges from Wendt's engagement with unreconstituted Waltzian realists, with*

*somehow disoriented political scientists of the mainstream, and with rational choice*

*believers, might actually succeed in becoming the new orthodoxy.[45]*

All told, however, Wendt does criticize neorealism and neoliberalism as "undersocialized" in the sense that they understate the social construction of actors in world politics.[46] As teased out above, there are two principal conceptions, according to Wendt, that fundamentally distinguish constructivism from the traditions of realism and liberalism. First, for constructivism, international structures consist both of social and material components, and second, these social factors influence actors' identities and interests along with material

factors.**[47]**

Ultimately, among various strands of constructivism which look at international relations from nuanced perspectives and thus maintain differing foci, the constructivist theorizations of Richard Ned Lebow merit due attention. Representing a characteristically cultural and psychological take on world politics, Ned Lebow develops "a cultural theory of international relations"**[48]**that is based upon the theoretical formulations of primary human motives and identity foundations – "appetite," "spirit," "reason," and "fear" as he categorizes them – and presents a "paradigm of politics" that seeks to explain various modes of political order and governance over time, from ancient Greece to the Iraq war of 2003. Generally speaking, however, debates and developments within constructivism have remained largely unaffected by the events of 11 September 2001 and the international environment created after them as "an innovative constructivist response to the post-9/11 world" has hardly been observed. This has transpired to the astonishment of some scholars, since a great number of "big" and challenging questions that now face the IR community, including those on "the nature of power, the relationship between international and world society and the role of culture in world politics," "play to constructivism's strength."**[49]**

Constructivism's substantial and wide-ranging influence, which was the case particularly in the late 1990s and early 2000s, perhaps derives from the fact that "what is says seems to be just common sense."**[50]** Its insights apply to our individual experiences in life; as individuals our identities change over time and so do our interests. For it, it is states that make the international environment conflictual or cooperative. Constructivism's emphasis on the agential capacity of states in making the international system and determining its course enables it to steer clear of the trap of determinism into which some of the conventional IR theories fall. It also "builds a bridge" between neorealist ideas and neoliberalist notions by basing the character of international anarchy upon decisions and practices of the states themselves. In the words of Weber, "[t]here is something for everyone in constructivism." This does not mean, however, that the constructivist theory of international relations is free of defects. Poststructuralists, for example, target its "state-centrism" and argue that constructivism, particularly the standard strand, fall into the same kind of trap it accuses neorealism of falling into, that is, while neorealists naturalize and reify the structure of international anarchy, constructivists reify the state itself.**[51]**

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**Notes**

[1]. "Metatheory" refers to a type of epistemological as contrasted with ontological theorization dealing broadly with the subject of theory itself, or "[a] theory the subject matter of which is another theory." (Encyclopaedia Britannica Ultimate Reference Suite, (Chicago: Encyclopaedia Britannica, 2010), s.v. "metatheory.") Put in a more precise manner, it refers, according to Griffiths et al, to "the criteria that are used to adjudicate among the different meanings of theory and which privilege particular meanings over others." For example, questions about the limits of human knowledge and the way, as well as the certainty with which, human beings can know things are questions of metatheory. Metatheoretical debates in IR draw heavily on social and political philosophy. See Martin Griffiths, Terry O'Callaghan and Steven C. Roach, *International Relations: The Key Concepts*, 2nd ed. (London and New York: Routledge, 2008), 313; For further details on details between substantive theory and metatheory especially with respect to constructivism, see Fred Chernoff, *Theory and Metatheory in International Relations* (Basingstoke: Palgrave, 2008), 151-53.

[2]. Fred Chernoff, *Theory and Metatheory in International Relations* (Basingstoke: Palgrave, 2008), 68, 132.

[3]. Emanuel Adler, *Communitarian International Relations: The Epistemic Foundations of International Relations* (London and New York: Routledge, 2005), 88.

[4]. Nicholas G. Onuf, *World of Our Making* (Columbia: University of South California Press, 1989).

[5]. John Searle, *The Construction of Social Reality* (London: Allen Lane, 1995); Cited in Chris Brown with Kirsten Ainley, *Understanding International Relations*, 3rd ed. (London and New York: Palgrave, 2005), 49.

[6]. Fred Chernoff, *Theory and Metatheory in International Relations* (Basingstoke: Palgrave, 2008), 68.

[7]. Jeffrey T. Checkel, "Constructivism and Foreign Policy," in *Foreign Policy: Theories. Actors. Cases*, ed. Steve Smith, Amelia Hadfield and Tim Dunne (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2008), 72.

[8]. Christian Reus-Smit, “Constructivism,” in *Theories of International Relations*, 3rd ed. Scot Burchill and others (Basingstoke: Palgrave, 2005), 195-96.

[9]. For a superb example of the influence of sociology – in this case sociological “institutionalism” – on constructivist theory or the sociological orientation of constructivism in IR, see Martha Finnemore, *National Interests in International Society* (Ithaca, New York: Cornell University Press, 1996), especially chapters 1 and 5.

[10]. Christian Reus-Smit, “Constructivism,” in *Theories of International Relations*, 3rd ed. Scot Burchill and others (Basingstoke: Palgrave, 2005), 194-95; Alexander Wendt, *Social Theory of International Politics* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1999), 4.

[11]. Christian Reus-Smit, “Constructivism,” in *Theories of International Relations*, 3rd ed. Scot Burchill and others (Basingstoke: Palgrave, 2005), 195. The terms “minimal foundationalism” and “anti-foundationalism,” which refer to the extent of opposition respectively modernist and postmodernist critical theorists mount to (rationalist and positivist) “foundations” of knowledge claims, belong to Mark Hoffman. For further details, see Mark Hoffman, “Restructuring, Reconstruction, Reinscription, Rearticulation: Four Voices in Critical International Theory,” *Millennium: Journal of International Studies* 20, no. 2 (1991): 169-85.

[12]. Emanuel Adler, *Communitarian International Relations: The Epistemic Foundations of International Relations* (London and New York: Routledge, 2005), 89.

[13]. Adler refers to the following article by Robert Keohane in which he uses the term “reflectivist” to describe, as he notes, “all interpretive IR scholars, including constructivists” as opposed to rationalists: Robert Keohane, “International Institutions: Two Approaches”, *International Studies Quarterly* 32 (1988): 379-96.

[14]. Adler’s reference here is to John J. Mearsheimer, “The False Promise of International Institutions,” *International Security* 19, no. 3 (1994-95), 5-49; The article has also been included in Michael E. Brown and others, eds. *Theories of War and Peace* (Cambridge and London: MIT Press, 1998), 329-83.

[15]. Emanuel Adler, *Communitarian International Relations: The Epistemic Foundations of International Relations* (London and New York: Routledge, 2005), 90.

[16]. Personal communication with Dr Katerina Dalacoura, Lecturer in International Relations, Department of International Relations, London School of Economics, April 2010.

[17]. Chris Brown with Kirsten Ainley, *Understanding International Relations*, 3rd ed. (London and New York: Palgrave, 2005), 48-49.

[18]. Martin Griffiths, Terry O’Callaghan and Steven C. Roach, *International Relations: The Key Concepts*, 2nd ed. (London and New York: Routledge, 2008), 51.

[19]. Fred Chernoff, *Theory and Metatheory in International Relations* (Basingstoke: Palgrave, 2008), 68.

[20]. Martin Griffiths, Terry O’Callaghan and Steven C. Roach, *International Relations: The Key Concepts*, 2nd ed. (London and New York: Routledge, 2008), 52.

[21]. Christian Reus-Smit, “Constructivism,” in *Theories of International Relations*, 3rd ed. Scot Burchill and others (Basingstoke: Palgrave, 2005), 193.

[22]. Alexander Wendt, “Constructing International Politics,” in *Theories of War and Peace*, ed. Michael E. Brown and others (Cambridge and London: MIT Press, 1998), 416-18.

[23]. Jeffrey T. Checkel, “Constructivism and Foreign Policy,” in *Foreign Policy: Theories. Actors. Cases*, ed. Steve Smith, Amelia Hadfield and Tim Dunne (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2008), 72.

[24]. Martin Griffiths, Terry O’Callaghan and Steven C. Roach, *International Relations: The Key Concepts*, 2nd ed. (London and New York: Routledge, 2008), 52.

[25]. Cynthia Weber, *International Relations Theory: A Critical Introduction*, 3rd ed. (London and New York: Routledge, 2010), 62.

[26]. *Ibid*., 62; Also refer to Nicholas G. Onuf, *World of Our Making* (Columbia: University of South California

Press, 1989); and Alexander Wendt, “Collective Identity Formation and the International State,” *American Political Science Review* 88 (1994): 384-96.

[27]. Martin Griffiths, Terry O’Callaghan and Steven C. Roach, *International Relations: The Key Concepts*, 2nd ed. (London and New York: Routledge, 2008), 52.

[28]. Fred Chernoff, *Theory and Metatheory in International Relations* (Basingstoke: Palgrave, 2008), 68.

[29]. *Ibid*., 69.

[30]. Jeffrey T. Checkel, “Constructivism and Foreign Policy,” in *Foreign Policy: Theories. Actors. Cases*, ed. Steve Smith, Amelia Hadfield and Tim Dunne (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2008), 72.

[31]. Fred Chernoff, *Theory and Metatheory in International Relations* (Basingstoke: Palgrave, 2008), 69.

[32]. Jeffrey T. Checkel, “Constructivism and Foreign Policy,” in *Foreign Policy: Theories. Actors. Cases*, ed. Steve Smith, Amelia Hadfield and Tim Dunne (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2008), 73.

[33]. *Ibid*., 72.

[34]. Christian Reus-Smit, “Constructivism,” in *Theories of International Relations*, 3rd ed. Scot Burchill and others (Basingstoke: Palgrave, 2005), 194-95; Alexander Wendt, *Social Theory of International Politics* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1999), 199.

[35].*Ibid*., 200.

[36]. *Ibid*., 201.

[37]. Alexander Wendt, *Social Theory of International Politics* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1999), 1.

[38]. Martin Griffiths, *Fifty Key Thinkers in International Relations* (London and New York: Routledge, 1999), 200.

[39]. Alexander Wendt, *Social Theory of International Politics* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1999), 193.

[40]. For a concise and adequate explanation of how norms and normative structures exert regulative as well as constitutive impacts upon state behaviour and identity, see Thomas Risse, “Let’s Argue: Communicative Action in World Politics,” *International Organization* 54, no. 1 (2000): 1-39. Risse explains this in the light of “rule-guided behavior,” “normative rationality,” and in broad terms, the “logic of appropriateness” as introduced by James March and Johan Olsen: See James G. March and Johan P. Olsen, *Rediscovering Institutions: The Organizational Basis of Politics* (New York: Free Press, 1989); as well as James G. March and Johan P. Olsen, “The Institutional Dynamics of International Political Orders,” International Organization 52, no. 4 (1998): 943-69. Following Jürgen Habermas’s theory of communicative action, Risse also suggests that the “logic of arguing” or “argumentative rationality” transcends the rational choice-based “logic of consequentialism” and sociological institutionalism-oriented “logic of appropriateness” in international relations (p. 4, Figure 1) and, once employed and adhered to, can change their ideational terms, assumptions and foundations (p. 7).

[41]. Alexander Wendt, “Collective Identity Formation and the International State,” *American Political Science Review* 88 (1994): 385; Also for a critical explanation of Neoliberals’ emphasis on domestic politics in theorizing state interests, see Alexander Wendt, *Social Theory of International Politics* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1999), 35.

[42]. Alexander Wendt, *Social Theory of International Politics* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1999), 246.

[43]. *Ibid*.

[44]. Alexander Wendt, “Anarchy is What States Make of It: The Social Construction of Power Politics,” *International Organization* 46, no. 2 (1992): 410.

[45]. Friedrich Kratochwil, “Constructing a New Orthodoxy: Wendt’s *Social Theory of International Politics* and the Constructivist Challenge,” in *Constructivism and International Relations: Alexander Wendt and His Critics*, ed. Stefano Guzzini and Anna Leander (London and New York: Routledge, 2006), 22.

[46]. Alexander Wendt, *Social Theory of International Politics* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1999), 1-4.

[47]. Fred Chernoff, *Theory and Metatheory in International Relations* (Basingstoke: Palgrave, 2008), 69.

[48]. See his book of the same name, Richard Ned Lebow, *A Cultural Theory of International Relations* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2008).

[49]. Christian Reus-Smit, "Constructivism," in *Theories of International Relations*, 3rd ed. Scot Burchill and others (Basingstoke: Palgrave, 2005), 209; For a useful overview of the major contemporary debates over the mentioned "big" questions, see pp. 209-11.

[50]. Cynthia Weber, *International Relations Theory: A Critical Introduction*, 3rd ed. (London and New York: Routledge, 2010), 62.

[51]. For a short illustration of this criticism, see *Ibid*, pp. 68-81 especially 79-81.

Tags: Constructivism