INDEPENDENT KOSOVO. AN ATTEMPT OF NEOREALIST VIEW

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Abstract:
This paper focuses on the reaction of the international community to the proclamation of Kosovo as an independent state, in an attempt to demonstrate the relevance of the realist theories in the contemporary international relations. The intention is to prove that the realist theory of international relations, in its “neo” version, can explain the international situation created by the independence of Kosovo in a non-contradictory way.

Key words: realism, independence, international system, state interest, security dilemma

Looking at Kosovo’s Independence through Neorealist Lens1

At a quick glance, the independence of Kosovo seems to contradict the realist theories. The fragmentation of an existing state, as a result of its internal contradictions and conflicts can be interpreted as an indicator of the fact that the state is a less viable entity on the international system today. However, before we proclaim its obsolescence, we have to take a closer look. Kosovo’s break up with Serbia was only with the purpose of creating another state. The case-study will focus on two major points:

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1 As well as identifying and exploiting the existing neorealist theory, we will try to prove that being open to changes not only does not affect the theory in a negative way, but it makes it even more applicable today.
firstly, the situation of Kosovo’s separation. Secondly, the international reaction to Kosovo’s independence in an attempt to prove that, regardless of whether states accept or not the independence of Kosovo, the neorealist theories can explain their position. Simply put, either accepting a new state or recognizing just the original one, means validating the realist theory in the international relations (IR).

Neorealism’s main focus is on the structure of the international system. Unlike classical realism, which sympathizes with the constraints of the anarchical system, neorealism is more focused on explaining its structure and internal liaisons. For Realism, the important thing is what states do with their foreign policies, as foreign policies make the international relations. The ultimate emphasis is on the state. As neorealists see it, “the realist error was to suppose that no clear distinction between the system of states and the nature of the sovereign units could be drawn”\(^2\). Simply put, the international relations and the foreign policies of the states are not overlapping concepts. This is the basic premise of neorealism today.

One basic view expressed by realism (also in its neo version), is that the issues of security, power and state interest have always been the main principles of action in the international system. But while for classical realism war among states is always imminent, because of the security dilemma, neorealism sees things a bit differently. As a matter of fact, it has to do so, in order to keep itself among the top theories of the contemporary international relations. It is rather easy for anyone able to make sense of the international reality to see that war among states is not really imminent today. Far from being a perfect world, we can agree the international system today is one of the quietest in history, from the point of view of interstate conflicts. Neorealists\(^3\) find the reasons for international behaviour in the anarchical structure of the international system. So far, nothing wrong. However, we consider there is one crucial thing neorealism has to look at when trying to explain situations like the independence of Kosovo. That is, that war may be less imminent among states, but it is more imminent, for different reasons, inside states, between territories and communities that want to become states. Two points have to be made here.

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3 From Kenneth Waltz (“Theory of International Politics”, 1979), up to the present.
One is that (neo)realism has its inconsistencies. One of them is the assumption that states always act as unitary actors. The internal problems of a state influence its behaviour at the international level, because they shape the state’s interests and, therefore, its international behaviour or response to certain situations⁴. There are many examples in this way⁵. However, these internal problems are assumed by the states as such and tried to be solved. The problems big enough to burst out and generate international echo are usually like the one we discuss in our study: those of a community being unsatisfied with the governments’ policies and seeking to achieve its own sovereignty.

This brings us to the second point that has to be made. Apparently, in this kind of situation, the problems of a state are solved through the separation of the problematic region, more precisely through the creation of another state.⁶ All the communities, regions, territories and separatist movements inside a state that fight against the legitimacy of the government and its policies ultimately want the same thing: independence and sovereignty. Simply put, they fight for exactly the same thing they challenge in the state that encloses them.

The simplest and most viable solution to a state’s serious internal problems is the creation of another state. What proof can be more valuable for the relevance of neorealist theories today? In a world that highly promotes globalism and interdependence, states are being built under our own eyes. The struggle remains one for power, the power that gives independence, security and legitimacy. The state becomes, in these conditions, a purpose in itself.

In our attempt of neorealist view, we will mainly focus on three major concepts: state interest (power in terms of interest), the international context (or structure of the international system) and the security dilemma.

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⁴ A state that faces ethnic problems, for example, will support another one in the same situation. However, let us not forget this benevolent and sympathetic attitude is originated in the state’s interest and it can therefore change according to it.

⁵ One example that comes to mind is that of India supporting both sides in the Sri Lankan conflict, according to its interests. Hoping to gain international prestige and regional power, India initially supported the Tamil leaders in their fight for independence. Later, being afraid of similar claims from its own Tamil minority, it stepped to the other side, supporting the government in Colombo.

⁶ “Solved” is a way of referring to it, as it is obvious that the respective state does not consider the separation of its territory, no matter how problematic, as a good solution.
Analysing Kosovo’s independence from a realist perspective of the IR does not mean accepting or rejecting it. Because today Kosovo is *de facto* an independent state, a reality. The question is how was this reality possible?

In order to answer this, neorealists have to agree on the following point: once an internal problem of a state becomes an international issue, it cannot be considered simply an internal matter of that state anymore. This is obviously the situation of Kosovo. As we know from history, the attempts to solve the situation in Kosovo diplomatically have continuously failed. The only thing that gave results was the realist use of force. From a neorealist perspective, the situation in Kosovo was for years in row a security dilemma. It is not a dilemma between states, but *inside* a state, between ethnical groups. In the case of Kosovo, the ethnical tensions between the Serbs and the Albanians generated fear for both sides. For the Serbian government there was the fear of losing Kosovo in favour of its neighbour, Albania, with whom it had territorial disputes from the creation of the Yugoslavian state. Moreover, the government in Belgrade was also afraid that the increasing tensions in the Balkans would attract the international reaction (as it actually happened) and interference in its internal matters. On the other side, the Kosovar Albanians feared the intervention of the government from Belgrade, whom they barely recognized and accepted. They also feared international reaction, as long as that could mean a rejection of their claims for independence as a violation of state sovereignty. This dilemma was somehow kept under control in Tito’s years. But in the context of Yugoslavia falling apart, it evolved and eventually led to international war.

The long Kosovo war left the situation only partially solved. The Albanian community in Kosovo was already acting as a separate state with separate interests from the ones of the Serbian government. The Self-Proclaimed Assembly of Kosovo was adopting resolutions in the name of community it governed. Although declared illegal several times by the Belgrade authorities, it did not cease its activity. The interest of Kosovar Albanians was to obtain independence, an interest totally opposed to the one of the Serbian state who could no longer offer autonomy without

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7 The most significant was the Rambouillet Conference, held in February/March 1999, with the purpose of ending the Kosovo war. However, the Serbian government did not sign the agreement.
affecting its territorial and communitarian integrity. The ultimate interest of any state is its self-preservation (survival) and integrity, as well as the protection and security of its people. In this particular situation, the interests of Serbia and Kosovo (which was acting as a separate government which knows what’s good for its people) were divergent.

The logical (realist) consequence was therefore for Kosovo to break up with Serbia, as it considered that this is the best way of representing the interests of its citizens. At the same time, it is absolutely obvious that this decision will not be accepted by the Serbian government, for which it is a violation of sovereignty.

They said “I do”

When the Self-Proclaimed Assembly of Kosovo publicly declared the independent Republic of Kosova⁸, on February 17th 2008, it knew it could definitely count on some serious unconditional support. And it was not anyone’s support, but the support of probably (still) the world’s greatest power: the United States of America. That is way, although unilateral, the “yes” Kosovo said to its own independence from Serbia was a strong and decided one.

By the 31st of March 2009, Kosova⁹ was recognized by 56 out of the 192 UN member states¹⁰. Among the states that recognized the independence of Kosovo without any other amendments the United States take the first place. This reaction was expected. As we could see in the theoretical part, many American political and IR analysts supported the independence of Kosovo as the only solution to finally put an end to violence. From a realist point of view, the USA support for Kosovo’s independence is a direct result of its interests in the Balkans. Through the intervention in Kosovo, the United States showed the world that being a super power gives you enough credit to act as you wish. NATO’s intervention in Kosovo did not initially have a UN mandate, although the declared reason for intervention was the violation of human rights in the region. Moreover, if we were to take into consideration NATO’s anatomy,

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⁸ The new name of the independent state.
⁹ The name given to the newly of the independent state.
structure and purpose, there would have been no reason for the organization to intervene there. However, the mighty easily imposed its interest in this case.

Recognizing the independence of Kosovo was, as we said, expected from the United States. At the Rambouillet Conference, the Americans supported the Albanian side more or less explicitly. At a first glance, the main reasons (publicly declared) are the following: the right of auto determination of the people in Kosovo, putting an end to the eternal conflict between Serbs and Albanians and pacifying the Balkan area. From a realist pint of view, however, the interest of the United States is the one that can validly explain the reaction.

It is clear that nothing pressured the American in recognizing Kosova: neither security, nor survival issues. But in the context of the international role the United States adopted, that of promoting peace, security, democracy and human rights, its reaction could not have been neutral. During the UN and NATO administration of Kosovo\textsuperscript{11}, the US, which financed and ran most of the operations, had control over the region. Now, by recognizing Kosova, it further increases its power and influence in the region, its position being the same with the other ex-Yugoslavian countries and Albania.

One of USA’s major interests is that of NATO enlargement. Realists don’t believe in the effectiveness of the international organizations. Not unless they are essentially driven by a great power. Like the United States. As the 2008 Summit in Bucharest proved, the organization seems to be in continuous expansions, in areas and for purposes that are outside the ones initially established by the North-Atlantic Treaty. If we were to look at the initial core objective of NATO, which was the defence against the Soviet Union, than its presence on the international stage after the Soviet collapse in 1990 could not be easily explained. However, the USA quickly found another purpose for NATO, probably anticipating the existential issues that could threaten the alliance: NATO became the organization in charged with defending Europe. Who or what was threatening the Europe? It appeared, in the context of Balkan wars (Bosnia 1992-1995, Kosovo 1996-1999), that Europe was threatened by itself. More recently, after the terrorist attacks of

\textsuperscript{11} Since June 1999, when the UN Security Council Resolution no. \textsuperscript{1244} placed Kosovo under transitional UN administration
9/11 in New York, the role of NATO was again re-invented: the fight against global terrorism.

The continuous re-invention of NATO’s role and its enlargement attempts can be interpreted as a legitimacy crisis of the organization. This idea is also induced by the fact that several member countries have redrawn their troops from NATO operation areas. A valid neorealist explanation of this kind of action is that these states do not consider it to be in their interest to risk the lives of their soldiers for that specific NATO purpose. However, by recognizing and supporting the independence of Kosovo, the USA supports its major objective of strengthening NATO. Kosovo, as well as the other ex-Yugoslavian republics and states from the Balkans who said “yes” to the newly independent state, is a possible candidate for NATO enlargement.

Nonetheless, the influence of the United States in NATO is visible if we look at the fact that 21 out of the 26 NATO member states recognized the independent Republic of Kosova. The ones who did not, as we will see, had serious reasons not to do it.

Since we got to the American continent, Canada also recognized Kosova on March 18th 2008. We cannot talk about special and particular Canadian interests in Kosovo or in the Balkans. However, Canada has been a traditional USA partner, especially in NATO. Moreover, the recognition of Kosova would not negatively affect the Canadian interests in any way. If we were to look at it from a neorealist perspective, Canada’s reaction can be interpreted as forward: recognizing or not recognizing Kosova does not have any kind effect on Canadian interests on the short run. However, on the long run, the recognition of Kosova seems more “profitable” than the non-recognition, especially since the traditional partner, the USA, determinedly recognized Kosova.

A similar position was adopted by Australia, who took less time than Canada to consider its interests and recognized Kosova on February 19, 2008. In this case, the traditional partnership with the United States of America and with the United Kingdom definitely had an influence on Australia’s position, as it can be see from the recognition text: “Australia respects the decision of the people of Kosovo. The United States and the

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12 NATO member states which did not recognize Kosova (yet?) are Greece, Portugal, Romania, Slovakia and Spain
United Kingdom have also indicated their recognition of Kosovo’s new sovereignty, and a number of others are expected to do so soon.”

In its turn, the United Kingdom gave Kosova a “yes” on the next day after its proclamation of independence. As in the case of USA, Britain’s position was more than predictable. Firstly, if we look at history, the UK has continuously had the same position regarding Yugoslavia as the USA (see Slovenia, Croatia, Bosnia, Kosovo war). The British interests have most of the times identified themselves with the American ones. Kosovo was not an exception. France’s position was similar (and immediate – February 18) and for similar reasons, if we were to take into consideration the support France gives to NATO.

A special “I do” was given to Kosova by the ex-Yugoslavian countries, with the exception of Bosnian and Herzegovina, which we will deal with later. Slovenia said yes to Kosova on March 5. Its position was, however, different from the one expressed by Croatia, the latest taking more time in recognizing the new state (March 19th). Both states gained independence from former Yugoslavia in 1991. The historical background is therefore similar. Why, then, the difference of opinion? In this case, we can use both historical and structural realist views to explain it. From the point of view of historical realists there are no general guidelines for acting in the international system. The responses and actions of a state are contextual. For Slovenia, a member of the European Union (whose presidency it held at the moment of Kosovo’s proclamation of independence), the context was different than for Croatia. EU membership means, first of all, more support for the country, both internally and externally (international backup). Slovenia therefore tried to mobilize the other countries of the Union in recognizing Kosovo, as well trying to strengthen relations with Serbia. Obviously, this is very hard to achieve. But at the same time, it is very relevant for the position of the European Union, whose interests Slovenia at this point represents. Being first of all a conglomerate of peoples and cultures, the European Union cannot adopt a partisan position, supporting only one of the sides. Therefore, Slovenia acted consistently with the international context and recognized Kosova, as well as trying to maintain good relations with Serbia.

In its turn, Croatia recognized Kosova a bit later. The decision was not simple, but it was consistent with Croatian interests. Being a former Yugoslavian country which obtained independence and international recognition is good reason to sympathize with the Kosovar Albanian cause. At the same time, Croatian-Serbian relations have been rather good (especially economic relations). Also, Croatia is hoping to be accepted in the European Union. In this international context, its interests are mainly two: maintain positive relations with the neighbours (firstly) and be consistent with the position of the EU. As a result, Croatia recognized Kosova, while at the same time addressing the Serbian government, in the hope of further maintaining good relations.

In a structural neorealist interpretation, the anarchical structure of the international system is the one that determines similar reactions from the states. This assumption is valid if we look at the countries from former Yugoslavia. They all (except Bosnia) recognized or will recognize Kosovo, since they are all influenced, ultimately, by the same context. Macedonia and Montenegro have not recognized the Republic of Kosova yet, but they both made announcements that they will in the near future. Moreover, as we know from the theoretical part, neorealists are not particularly concerned with the problem of state sovereignty. From this angle, the reaction of the former Yugoslavian states (as well as the others who said “yes” to Kosovo) matches the realist assumptions: state interest above everything else. Another crucial point worth taking into consideration is the security issue. During the past two decades, the Balkans has been a centre on insecurity and instability which created a security dilemma for the states of the region (and not only for them). There are high hopes that with the independence of Kosova the tensions of the region will finally end. In a realist calculation, the benefits of an independent Kosovo are higher than the losses. More precisely, the only one who has something serious to lose is Serbia.

Last but definitely not least, Albania was probably one of the most decided countries in recognizing Kosova as independent from Serbia. It would be superfluous to analyse the reasons here, as we have done throughout the historical exposé. It is useful to say also that Albania was the only state who recognized Kosovo’s proclamation of independence in 1990. Albania’s interests in Kosovo are directed towards a future union. The rest, as we say, is history. Just for sustaining what we said, let us take a look at Albania’s declaration of recognition: “The Government of Republic
of Albania considers the creation of the State of Kosovo as a historical event, sanctioning the right of Kosovo citizens for self-determination and makes the Balkans freer and fairer than ever throughout its history of a century. Independence of Kosovo puts an end to disintegration process of Yugoslavia, creates essential conditions for constant development of the entire Kosovar society, including its concrete perspective for quick integration in European and Euro-Atlantic integration. After the Declaration of Independence, the Republic of Kosovo turns into a dignified actor in international arena, major factor of peace and stability in the region, clearly Euro Atlantic-oriented, important factor of peace, stability, security, development and harmonized integration of Southeastern Europe region.\(^{14}\)

We cannot go further without analysing the positions of the Asian states that said recognized the independence of Kosovo. Among them, Japan said “yes” on the 18\(^{th}\) of March 2008. The Asian power does not have particular interests in the Balkans and is one of the top powers of the world. Therefore, the decision to recognize Kosovo has no serious implications for the Japanese interests. All these can be deduced from the extremely short document of recognition the Japanese Foreign Affairs Minister issued: On March 18, Japan recognized the Republic of Kosovo as an independent state. As the Government of the Republic of Kosovo has made its intention clear that it will run the country pursuant to the "Comprehensive Proposal for the Kosovo Status Settlement" made by the U.N. Special Envoy, Japan expects that Kosovo’s independence will contribute to the long-lasting stability of the region. Japan has traditionally good relations with the Republic of Serbia and it has no intention to make its recognition of Kosovo impede the friendly relations with Serbia. Japan hopes that such friendly relations with Serbia will be continued.\(^{15}\)

These are, therefore, the countries who accepted Kosovo as an international actor. One last consideration deserves to be made here. When looking at freshly independent Kosova with cold realist eyes, the expectations would rather be those of a non recognition of the state. After


all, the creation of a new state in the international system should not be something desired by the rest of the actors, which are interested in maximizing their power and influence. However, this does not seem to be the case. This is where the principle of relative versus absolute gains comes into the scene. Simply put, everyone would have more to win from recognizing Kosovo than from not recognizing it. Plus, an independent Kosovo would not pose any problems for the international system, since we are talking about a rather poor and weak state. No threat of dominance or security troubles in the area.

This is obviously not the opinion of the countries that refused to recognize Kosova. For them, neorealist theories can also offer a valid explanation, as we are about to see.

They said “No Way”

Just as the countries which said “yes”, the ones that openly refused to recognize Kosova have their reasons, in terms of interests. The whole interpretation that follows promotes the following idea: these countries said “no” because, at this point, their interests required them to do as such. In realist terms, the first major interests of a state are those of survival (self-preservation) and the protection and welfare of its citizens. These are the ones which dictated the international response of the countries that said “no”. But, as in times interests might vary and change, the answers of these states might change accordingly.

However, there is one response highly unlikely to ever change: the one expressed by the ex-mother country of Kosovo, Serbia. We do not have to be realist thinkers to understand the basic reasons for Serbia’s “no”. What country would happily accept to give away part of its territory? Centre of the former Yugoslavian, Belgrade gradually assisted in the last

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16 Except Serbia, although ultimately it is questionable whether the gains of peace and security for its citizens are not worth more than territorial integrity.
17 And if any, definitely less than Kosovo has caused so far anyway.
18 As we could see in most of the countries who recognized the independence, their primary interests (which in Realists’ view are survival and protection of their citizens) are not directly influenced by either a “yes” or a “no” answer given to Kosova. In other words, their immediate destinies are far from depending on whether they recognize the new state or not. However, there were other interests that dictated the “yes” (economic, strategic etc).
two decades to the fall-apart of its empire. But the loss of the Yugoslavian republics is easier to accept than the loss of a territory that had historically been recognized as part of Serbia. The inviolability of Serbian territories, as well as the belonging of Kosovo to Serbia was internationally and officially recognized at least three times in history: 1913 (Ambassadors’ Conference in London, ending the Balkan War), in 1919-1929 (through the peace treaties at the end of the First World War), as well as at the end of the Second World War. Moreover, as we could see, the Helsinki Accords signed in 1975 were reiterating the same principles of respect of sovereignty and state territoriality, as well as non-interference in internal matters of the states. As expected, Serbia considers independent Kosovo as illegal, as well of a clear violation of its sovereignty. In a realist interpretation, Serbia’s reaction is more than natural. A state is first of all interested in survival, preservation and the well state of its people. Or, losing Kosovo means quite the opposite for Serbia.

This is the point in which realism is more than relevant. Supposing an independent Kosovo would actually mean peace and stability for the region, as well as for the Serbian people themselves. Serbia would not benevolently accept to give up part of its territory for that. State interest and preservation comes above anything else. If (as liberals say) states are more likely to cooperate one with another rather than fight, this would be a point in which Serbia should cooperate for the stability of the region. But giving up Kosovo for general stability of the region is a matter Serbia cannot even take into consideration.

Serbia’s position was backed-up by its traditional ally, Russia. The Russian UN envoy, Vitaly Churkin, declared that there is no legal basis for the recognition of the independence of Kosovo and that a unilateral declaration should not be taken into consideration by the international community.19

Russia’s position suffers the following realist interpretations. First, as classical Realists would see it, one of Russia’s international policy main characteristics is the opposition with the United States. Despite the end of the Cold War, the American and Russian foreign policies have still remained mostly antagonistic. So one of the reasons why Russia refuses to recognize Kosovo can be precisely this. An increased American influence in

the Balkans is definitely not what Russia seeks. Nor is the strengthening of NATO. As a matter of fact, the creation of the Collective Security Treaty Organization\(^{20}\) (CSTO) and the Shanghai Organization for Cooperation\(^{21}\) (SOC), in which Moscow constitutes a basis are considered by many analysts as a reaction to NATO. Nor Russia or China declares the organizations against NATO. However, from a neorealist point of view this comes rather obvious. The anarchical structure of the international system generates similar behaviour of the states. Therefore, the Russian response to NATO is a similar Asian organization. This is something Realists consider normal. It is also proof of the fact that state security issues are not an obsolete component of the international relations. More to the point, this is very likely to constitute a security dilemma\(^{22}\). Russia further considers NATO intervention in Kosovo an open disrespect of UN policy and a violation of state sovereignty. At the same time, the unilateral independence of Kosovo is considered a dirty business.\(^{23}\)

China, as well as all the other Asian CSTO states also said “no” to Kosovo. In the case of the CSTO states, the situation is rather clear: their interests are convergent to (not to say guided by) the ones of Moscow. Having Russia as neighbour and regional power is the only ace these Asian countries have for expressing themselves at an international level. If they know what’s best for them, these states will continue to be Russia’s allies if they want to matter internationally.

The precedent issue needs a closer look-at, since it is one of the core reasons for which the states which said “no” to Kosovo. Most of these states have similar internal situations. As Realists say it, the internal matters of a state should remain internal. We have agreed, basically, in the theoretical part, on the fact that we cannot totally agree with such a statement. An internal matter of a state can have serious international impact, especially when it finds echo in the internal situation of other states. This is the case of Kosovo. For the states which have similar internal

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\(^{20}\) The CSTO groups countries form Asia: Armenia, Belarus, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Tajikistan, Uzbekistan and Russia (the initiator).

\(^{21}\) This organization is controlled by Beijing and Moscow. See Petre Munteanu, “Un NATO prea indepartat?”, in *Foreign Policy Romania*, April/May 2008, pp. 28-29.

\(^{22}\) Especially if we take into consideration the fact that Iran, a nuclear problematic state, wants to join both CSTO and SOC.

situation and are therefore afraid for their preservation, integrity and security, denying independence for Kosovo and offering support for Serbia is the only option.

In our opinion, such a reaction is sufficient prove that a state’s interests come above anything else in international relations. The anarchical international system really makes it hard for states to cooperate unless they have similar interests. As we could see in the case of some countries that answered affirmatively to Kosovo’s independence (like Japan), if their interests are not seriously impacted, the “yes” rather means “I don’t care much”. However, on the long run, a “yes” seems more profitable than a “no”. The main point here is that states are likely to recognize/cooperate with other states only if they have something to win from it. Otherwise, indifference (if not hostility) are more profitable and power-preserving.

Among the countries which saw in Kosovo a (negative) example of their own future there are also Romania, Slovakia and Spain. In these countries’ cases, the “no” was a very determined one. Also, as they declared, their position is unlikely to change anywhere in the near future. For Romania, the recent internal events regarding the claim for autonomy from the counties of Harghita and Covasna\footnote{Counties where the great majority of the population is Hungarian.} weighted heavily in determining the answer given to Kosova. So did the generally cordial relations with Belgrade. These relations are strengthened in this case by the similar interests. In its turn, Slovakia rejected the independence of Kosovo, considering it as not giving more stability to the Balkans. Having its internal problems with the autonomous Basque Country, Spain’s position could not have been any different.

What is very interesting in Romania’s case is the fact that it did not shape its answer according to the American one (which it usually does) or with the one of the majority of the EU members\footnote{Currently, 20 out of the 27 EU member states have formally recognized the Republic of Kosova.}. One more proof of the fact that cooperation gets second place when crucial interests are in the game.

One particular situation among the countries that rejected Kosova is the one of Bosnia and Herzegovina. This former Yugoslavian state gave its answer after a referendum in which the Bosnian people were asked what they think about Kosovo. The majority of them population (Serbian) said
no. In this case, Bosnia is maybe the best example of realist behaviour: a country whose main interest is survival and well-state of its people. After all, these are the main purposes which guide international behaviour of state.

Nonetheless, although we could not find a specific declaration of rejection of Kosovo’s independence, we can with very little chances of error that Sri Lanka will not recognize Kosova. The conflict between the government from Colombo and the Liberation Tamil Tigers that want independence for what they consider the “Tamil homeland” is now continuing with the 4th Elam War. Realistically speaking, how could the government of Sri Lanka support Kosovo when it represents the worst image of what could happen to its own country?

These are only a few examples of “no” answers. Hopefully, enough to prove the connection between state interest and international position adopted by states. We will also take a look at the international actors which have not yet expressed a position on Kosovo.

They Don’t Know What to Say

Last, but not least, we the states and actors that did not express a clear position whether they accept or not a new state in the international system. Here it is useful to make a distinction between the states that did not specifically present a position and the actors which could not agree on a point they could express at an international level. These last ones are international organizations.

The website kosovotahnksyou.com presents a list of the state that will recognize Kosova in a more or less intermediate future. The question that arises is how does Kosova know that its independence will be recognized by these states, which expressed so far no announcement or intention to do so? The answer, the only one that seems viable, is the fact that these states have so far not rejected the newly independent state. In a simple deduction, if these states did not have a serious reason to object from the very beginning, it is very likely they will end by accepting Kosovo as independent. However, the most we can do when analysing the position of these states is suppositions. And these suppositions can be based only on the interests these states might have.
We consider that the reason for which these countries have not given an answer to Kosova yet lies in the fact that they have difficulty in shaping their interest. In other words, they are not quite sure whether recognizing Kosova or not recognizing it is in their own interest. As we can see from the list, most countries that will recognize Kosova at some point in the future are Third World countries. As we know, these countries have a lot of internal issues and problems which represent their immediate concern. A lot of them struggle for their own survival. The issue of the independence of Kosovo is far from them, first of all if we are to think only geographically. These former colonies of great world powers have troubles shaping their international position because they have difficulties in defining their own interests.

If we look at Annex 3, the list of the country that will “eventually recognize” Kosova contains China and India. However, we have a lot of reasons to doubt that both these states will eventually give a “yes” to independence. In China’s case, the considerations for not recognizing Kosovo as independent are slightly different. Throughout history, the most populated state in the world had several issues that have somehow defined its international reaction in situation like this. First, there is the traditional China-Taiwan conflict. China does not recognize the government from Taipei (and has not throughout the years), while Taiwan’s position versus China resembles a state-to-state relation. In other words, although not independent, Taiwan often reacts like a sovereign entity.

Another internationally well-known issue is the one between China and Tibet. While the later claims it has a long history of independence, the first has always considered it as territorial and cultural part of it. The relations China-Tibet are rather similar with the ones Serbia-Kosovo. Knowing its sovereignty and territoriality can be even more seriously affected by an eventual independence of Tibet (since Taiwan is already acting sovereign), China cannot afford to recognize Kosovo, since it can constitute a precedent.

India’s case is similar, if we are to think only about the eternal conflicts about India and Pakistan. These states with common history and

\[\text{Start in 1949 and going on today. Taiwan seeks independence from China and internationally acts as such.}\]

\[\text{Taiwan is organizing elections and adopting independent international position and establishing relations with world states (especially with US).}\]
culture have fought three serious wars on territorial partitions, two of which on the region of Kashmir\textsuperscript{26}. It is highly unlikely that India would admit a territorial break of Serbia when it is trying to prevent one of its own. This would mean a serious inconsistence in regarding its interests. At the same time, we can remember India’s position regarding the Sri Lankan conflict. In the end, this regional power had to re-think its position in sustaining the Tamil guerrillas that seek secession. India has a region with major Tamil population that could also seek independence. As a consequence, India’s support was redirected towards the Sri Lankan government.

Pakistan, on the other hand, has supported the Kosovar cause inside UN. Although it did not recognize its independence yet, it is very likely it will do so in the near future. We have yet another case of different positions expressed by states which have general hostile relations (in this case, India and Pakistan). From a realist point of view, this kind of behaviour increases the existing hostility and intensifies the suspicions between states. This is very likely to cause further security dilemmas. The ‘Kosovo issue’ divided the international system.. Thus, cooperation between states seems less and less easy to achieve.

We have so far discussed the positions of state actors regarding Kosovo’s independence. Some examples were presented in order to prove that the state interest comes before anything else. It would be interesting to take a short look at the international organizations also. As we know, realists and neorealists consider the international organizations rather irrelevant actors, as they are mainly manipulated by a few powerful states. We will analyse the international reaction of some of these alliances and organizations. The conclusion, we hope, will be self-imposed.

The European Union did not express (as we could see by the reactions of its members) a clear position on the independence of Kosovo. Currently, 23 out of the 27 member states have recognized the Republic of Kosova. Not at the same time, not in the same circumstances and, as we saw, highly depending on their interests. Most of the other states, as we saw, said “no”. The Union is basically divided according to the interests of its member states. EU’s incapability of answering in one clear voice, as well

as its attempt to get involved while at the same time remaining neutral weakens its international value. Also, the lack of a Constitution accepted by all member states makes it rather hard for the European Union to count internationally. Technically speaking, it is actually impossible for the Union to have a unitary position regarding Kosova. Despite what it is trying to be, the European Union remains the sum of its components – the EU member states, which are by far more influential taken separately than as part of the whole. The Common Foreign and Security Policy of the Union appears therefore to be less “common”. The question arises whether the Union can “think” separately of its member states and express an opinion of its own. At this point, our answer to this question would be no. It is vital for the coherence of the European Union that the common reaction does not contradict the position (and therefore interest) of any of the member states. In Kosovo’s case, . As a consequence, as Javier Solana, EU’s representative for Common Foreign and Security Policy stated it, the position of the Union remains neutral, being interested only in peace and security for the region. In realist terms, this can be interpreted as a non-position, in which case the European Union does not count as an actor at the international level, since it is highly dependent on the positions of each of its member states.

Not much different is the reaction of the United Nations. UN’s involvement in Kosovo has deeper roots, for a longer time and mainly for humanitarian purposes. But UN’s mission in Kosovo was, let us face it, nothing but a failure. In the end, it could not prevent war, mass crimes and destructions. It also could not impose the acceptance of a general solution for Kosovo. The divergent interests of UN members, as well as the inconsideration of UN Security Council’s decisions by some of the member states make the United Nations a rather weak actor of the international system. UN’s missions and purposes are laudable. However, in most cases, they fail or are only partially successful. The examples history offers in this way are many. Ultimately, the greatest argument realists could find against UN is the Security Council privileged membership and right of veto.

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29 Currently, the ratification of the Treaty of Lisbon is blocked.
30 All the countries whose positions we have analyzed in the case-study are UN members.
31 Such as the USA in the Kosovo War.
of the permanent member. Is there need for any more proof that the worlds’ decisions are taken by only a few, the most influential states? UN’s missions and Security Council’s decisions take time and effort to be adopted and to take place because it is so easy for states to sabotage them and orient them according to their interests.

Some Conclusions

All throughout this paper and especially in the case-study we were able to prove, hopefully, that states continue to be the major actors of the international system to such an extent that any other actors (international organizations, trans-national organizations etc) are highly dependent on them. The UN and the EU eventually do what their member states tell them to do. The most powerful states make the rules (see American intervention in Kosovo in 1999) and eventually the rest of the world conforms to them (UN eventually motivated USA’s intervention in the name of humanitarian purposes). At the same time, the break up of Kosovo with Serbia, as we could see, can be interpreted in two different ways and both of them support realism as explanatory theory. All the communities, regions, territories and separatist movements inside a state that fight against the legitimacy of the government and its policies ultimately want the same thing: independence and sovereignty. Simply put, they fight for exactly the same thing they challenge in the state that encloses them. The simplest and most viable solution to a state’s serious internal problems is the creation of another state. What proof can be more valuable for the relevance of neorealist theories today? In a world that highly promotes globalism and interdependence, states are being built under our own eyes. The struggle remains one for power, the power that gives independence, security and legitimacy. The state becomes, in these conditions, a purpose in itself. The positions adopted by the international actors regarding the independence of Kosovo can be explained by the neorealism in a viable and non-contradictory way. This supports our hypothesis that realist theories continue to offer solid grounds for explaining and understanding the international system today. Thus, they are accurate, updated and not at all obsolete.
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Abstract

Realism is, without exaggeration, the most important theory of International Relations (IR). It draws its significance from the fact that ‘it provides the most powerful explanation for the state of war’, which, embracing different forms and intensities, is the defining feature of world politics. Regardless of its imposing theoretical position, or maybe because of it, realism is judiciously criticized by alternative approaches to IR, such as idealism or, more recently, social-constructivism. However, despite its most frequent imputations, like scientism, objectivism, dogmatism and, overall, the accusation that it provides a static and obsolete paradigm for the understanding of the relations between the international actors, realism’s abilities to improve and readapt itself to the present theoretical requirements still attracts many IR scholars. The stake of this paper is to prove that realism and its main tenets, like power, international anarchy and national interest - adjusted in order to comply to its most powerful and pertinent critics, can still be considered a valid and fertile approach to the study of IR.

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2 Dunne, Tim; Schmidt, Brian C., ‘Realism’, in Baylis, John; Smith, Steve; Owens, Patricia, op. cit., p. 91
Key-words: conservatism, realism, neorealism, neoclassical realism, idealism, social-constructivism

Historical and philosophical premises

Occupying the central position among the theories of IR, it is understandable that realist attitudes have been reperable long before the structuring of the realist theory itself. Starting with the Antiquity, authors like Thucydides recognized that power was the propelling force of the international system (reduced in those times to Athens, Sparta and the Persian Empire) and also the fundamental cause of war.3

In general, many scholars perceive Thomas Hobbes as being the most influential predecessor of modern realism4 and tend to overlook or minimize the importance of Machiavelli in this regard. Indeed, the Florentine secretary offered the most powerful and striking distinction between the real and the imaginary states. He wrote that ‘there are many who have imagined republics and principalities which no one ever saw and no one ever knew as existing in reality’, and warned about the dangers which result from such a pernicious confusion.5 Machiavelli’s tumultuous posterity hypertrophied The Prince, without contextualizing enough its teachings, in comparison to his other major work, The Discourses, a reflection of his republican, rather than autocratic convictions.6 However, some authors argue that Machiavelli was a republican in the same extent that he was a partisan of autocracy7: the social and cultural diversity of

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5 Machiavelli, Niccolo, Principale, București: Antet, 2000, p. 56
mankind required both political forms, each fitted to a certain civilizational context. But, when it achieves enough political maturity, every principality should develop into a superior form of organization and this is the republic; only this type of political organization can balance ‘the party of the strong’ with ‘the party of the people’ and thus ensure freedom, the main condition and guarantee of a functional republic.

Another major contribution of Machiavelli to the realist legacy resides in his new and intriguing acception of morality. If in the medieval political thought morality had to precede every political activity, now, morality becomes a consequence of a successful political gesture. Utility and morality are congruent, not antagonistically opposed, for a Prince is responsible in the first instance for the well being of all its subjects and only in the second place he is allowed to follow its inner morality and conscience.

Only after this brief introduction of Machiavelli we can adequately focus upon Thomas Hobbes. This philosopher stressed out the overwhelming importance that fear plays both in relation between humans and between states. If societies overcame their state of nature, partially renouncing their freedom in order to gain security and thus constituting a superior political organization, the states, due to their sovereignty, find themselves inevitable trapped in the state of nature. Therefore, war, ‘consistenth not in battle only, or the act of fighting; but in a tract of time, wherein the will to contend by battle is sufficiently known’ becomes the natural condition of the international system. Realism adopted and

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‘upgraded’ this anarchical condition of world politics stating that, far from being chaotic and violent, international anarchy is only the consequence of the sovereignty and independence of states and the absence of a global, centralized political leadership.

Although Hegel is not usually mentioned as a notable influence for realist thinkers, his ‘belief that the state’s highest duty lies in its own preservation is found in realist theory’. Furthermore, Hegel insisted on the dissociation between the state and his citizens which implies, like in Machiavelli’s case, a differentiation between the ‘moral standards’ of the first in comparison with the norms ‘acceptable within a civilized society’.

When writing about war, Carl von Clausewitz accentuates its essentially political nature and also the continuity between politics and war. For him, ‘the political intention is the purpose’, while ‘war is the means’ resorted to in order to achieve that certain purpose. Modern societies still wage brutal wars, despite their apparent moral progress. But, ‘in matters as dangerous as wars, the errors roused from kindness are the most harmful ones’. The international arena remains a hobbesian one, with states having to choose from being either predator or pray. ‘Any belligerent that refuses to resort to certain brutalities must fear that the adversary will gain the advantage by abandoning all scruples’.

Beside those already mentioned, Max Weber can also be considered one of the forerunners of the realist theory. His insistence on power as being ‘the principal characteristic of politics’ and the observation that every state would chose to have “weaker rather than stronger neighbors” certainly place him among the long line of thinkers who have anticipated and contributed in a great extent to the foundations of power politics. Furthermore, like classical realists, Weber stresses that the economic international relations are embedded into and underlied by political activities. When it comes to morality, the German sociologist recovers and extends Machiavelli’s acception of the concept. Consequently, the issue is
divided between an ‘ethic of conviction’ and an ‘ethic of responsibility’. Without being immoral, on the contrary, Weber proves that firm ethical principles can entail unsatisfactory and even harmful outcomes, because ‘leaders in an imperfect world confront the need to behave by a political ethic, in which the achievement of good ends may make necessary the utilization of less than morally accepted means’.19 Or, as Raymond Aron wrote, with undeniable literary craftsmanship, ‘The politician who obeys his hart without concerning himself with the consequences of his acts is failing the duties of his trust and is for this very reason immoral’.20

In my opinion, one more author should be added to the panoply of realism’s predecessors, even if it was very much contemporary with the zenith of this theory. Although he provided the Nazi regime with a juridical matrix, Carl Schmitt was far too intelligent to subscribe to the racial aberrations which constitute the theoretical surrogate of the Third Reich. Instead, the support offered to Hitler and its followers can be fully understood only if we integrate it within Schmitt’s profound anti-liberal convictions.21 For this peculiar author, the essence of politics lies not in the preference for certain institutions or life stiles, ‘but in the criteria [used] to take a certain type of decision’.22 Therefore, the adequate criteria for the analysis of politics consist in the friend-enemy dichotomy. For Schmitt, the identity of both individual and community is structured with permanent reference to its enemies. As a consequence, Hobbes’s anarchy and the constant threat of war become the defining characteristics of the international system. ‘Decizionism’ implied that everything is essentially political because art, religion, or economy ‘can become a political matter, an encounter with the enemy’ and thus ‘a source of conflict’.23 The liberal ideal of a peaceful world, underlined by moral principles – Schmitt argued – is opposed and, therefore precarious, to ‘the natural enmity between human groups’.24 To conclude, a ‘world without war would be a world without politics; a world without politics would be a world without

19 Dougherty, James A.; Pfaltzgraff, Robert L., op. cit., p. 64
20 Aron, Raymond, op. cit., p. 634
22 Ibidem, p. 99
23 Ibidem, pp. 99-100
24 Ibidem, p. 101
enmity; and a world without enmity would be a world without human beings’.  

**Ideological premises**

Realism, as a theory of international politics, is in direct continuity with conservatism, as a political ideology. The syntagm ‘political ideology’ may be improper to describe conservatism, due to the hostility of its adherents towards any abstractization, ideological structure or simply ‘ism’. Conservatives possess limited or no trust at all regarding human rationality – this does not mean that they reject rationality, on the contrary, but they insist that the true rational disposition lies in recognizing the frontiers of rationality, not in transforming it into a panacea for all human problems - valuing instead an empirical approach to life, based on experience, observation, moderation and, above all, an inborn distrust to political exaltation, manifested through universal ideas and the afferent plans to reificate them. When entering the political arena, utopias represent the greatest danger ever to have threatened a community, not to mention its neighbors. However, although conservatism usually refers to itself as an ‘attitude of the mind’, it encompasses nevertheless ‘a particular set of political beliefs about human beings, the society they live in and the importance of a distinctive set of political values’. In this regard, its ideological mark is undeniable.

In general, modern conservatism developed as a reaction to the Enlightenment ideas and their product, the French Revolution. It was influenced both by the Greek sophist philosophers (who argued that the values of mankind were strictly particular, not universal, conditioned in a great extent by time and space, and based on ‘a fluctuating human convention’), and also by theologian thinkers like Augustine or rationalist philosophers like Spinoza, which insisted upon the limits and
imperfections of the human nature, the cause of all evils that plague the world.\textsuperscript{29}

Although contemporary conservatism is highly divided, it has a common denominator in Edmund Burke’s ideas. This emblematic figure of conservatism struggled against the principles and also the outcomes of the French Revolution, which he perceived as being a major political error. However, Burke did not opposed all revolutions – he agreed to the Glorious Revolution from 1688 and to the American independence, as being a ‘restoration of the rights’ that those citizens had previously enjoyed – but only those who aimed to ‘uproot the stabilized order of their society and government in order to replace it with something new and unverified – and for this very reason surely foredoomed to disaster’.\textsuperscript{30} Following Burke’s ideas, most of the contemporary conservatives subscribe to four main tenets: ‘representative government’, ‘natural’ – opposed to artificial or hereditary – ‘aristocracy’, ‘private property’ and ‘the small platoons’ – an emphasis on the necessity that social problems should be solved, as much as possible, at the local level;\textsuperscript{31} therefore, this tenet could be translated in contemporary terms as decentralization or the much appreciated subsidiary principle. Burke does not value liberty in itself. Liberty, like fire, can cook your meal, but in the same time, burn your house down. What matters is the social dimension of liberty, its conformity with the basic aims of a community. Hence, anti-social liberty is harmful and should be, by no means, eradicated. Actually, freedom exists because ‘the government prevents the people to do everything they occasionally desire’\textsuperscript{32}. In Burke’s own words, ‘governance’, ‘public force’, ‘the correct collecting and distribution of a real tax’, ‘morals and religion’, ‘private property’, ‘peace and order’, ‘civic and social behavior’ – all of these are inextricably bound to freedom, because ‘without them, liberty, as long as it lasts, is not a blessing; as well as without them, the chances for freedom to exist are much too small’\textsuperscript{33}

\textsuperscript{29} Waltz, Kenneth, \textit{Omul, statul și războiul. O analiză teoretică}, Iași, Institutul European: 2001, pp. 24-34
\textsuperscript{30} Ball, Terence; Dagger, Richard, \textit{op. cit.}, p. 104
\textsuperscript{31} Ibidem, pp. 105-107
\textsuperscript{32} Ibidem, p. 103
\textsuperscript{33} Burke, Edmund, \textit{Reflcțiile asupra Revoluției din Franța}, București: Nemira, 2000, p. 45
For Michael Oakeshott, the most important conservative thinker of the XX-th century, the present counts actually more to a conservative than the past, because of its ‘familiar character’. ‘To be conservative’ - Oakeshott writes – ‘means to prefer the familiar to the unknown, to prefer the tried to the untried, fact to mystery, the actual to the possible, the limited to the unbounded, the near to the distant, the sufficient to the superabundant, the convenient to the perfect’, and the ‘present laughter to utopian bliss’.\textsuperscript{34} The British philosopher invalidated the frequent and preconceived idea that conservatism is inimical to change; although it is resistant to it, conservatism is also and, especially, ‘a modality to adapt to changes’.\textsuperscript{35}

**Classical realism**

After this short historical and intellectual assessment of the origins of modern realism, I shall focus next on some authors regarded as figurative for the classical form of this theory. Paraphrasing Carl Schmitt, classical realism developed its epistemical identity within the confrontation with interwar idealist theory. Idealism’s ideological equivalent is liberalism; therefore, the international liberal project, masterminded by the American president Woodrow Wilson, was calcld on universal ambitions like the eradication of war, collective security and the prosperous development of mankind based on variations of the democratic model and free-market economy.\textsuperscript{36} The ‘Great Debate’, or the ‘Utopian-Realist’ debate,

\textsuperscript{34} Oakeshott, Michael, Raționalismul în politică, București: Bic All, 1995, p. 79
\textsuperscript{35} Ibidem, p. 81
as it came to be known, propelled realism as the main theoretical approach of the IR. Of course, events like the rearming of Germany or the outbreak of the Second World War and the Cold War massively contributed to this result. Even before the beginning of the Second World War, the naïve label applied by the realists to idealism already earned its reputation. Authors like E. H. Carr, or later, Hans Morgenthau, accused the lack of responsibility and the failure of the idealist prospects and solutions for a peaceful world. Less ambitious, but more feasible plans, like the maintenance of a balance between the world powers – a central concept of the realist theory– real, national security instead of imaginary collective security and local models of political and economical efficiency, not universal harmony and democracy – those would have been the adequate measures to prevent the escalation of the conflict between the great powers.37

Before a brief analysis of the main classical realists, it is necessary to clearly outline the tenets of this theory. In its consecrated form, power politics includes

several assumptions that shaped the paradigm which formed the basis for much of the theoretical development of that period: (1) that the international system is based on nation states as the key actors; (2) that international politics is essentially conflictual, a struggle for power in an anarchic setting in which nation-states inevitably rely on own capabilities to ensure their survival; (3) that states exist in a condition of legal sovereignty in which nevertheless there are gradations of capabilities, with greater and lesser states as actors; (4) that states are unitary actors and that domestic politics can be separated from foreign policy; (5) that states are rational actors characterized by a decision-making process leading to choices based on maximizing the national interest; and (6) that power is the most important concept in explaining, as well as predicting, state behavior.38

38 Dougherty, James A.; Pfaltzgraff, Robert L., op. cit., p. 58
Besides E.H. Carr – who blamed America for using a particular and thus limited type of international experience and attempted to enforce it on the whole international system, without taking into account that war is a inevitable outcome of the diverse interests of states and cannot be eradicated through moral means, but contained to some extent\(^{39}\) – and Hans Morgenthau – remembered especially for his ‘six principles of political realism’, which can be comprised through the assumption that international politics is articulated by ‘objective laws, embedded in human nature’ and that states structure their interests ‘in [flexible] terms of power’, therefore abstract and universal moral principles must be adapted to particular political circumstances\(^{40}\). Another classical realist author certainly worth mentioning is Reinhold Niebuhr.

Theologian as intellectual formation, Niebuhr rejected both the ‘idea of the perfectibility of men’ and also ‘the idea of progress’.\(^{41}\) For him, as for modern conservatives, liberalism and communism shared a common ideological root, the philosophy of Enlightenment. Due to their universal projects of reconfiguring the world, one must disavow and denounce both ‘the soft utopianism of the liberal world and the hard utopianism of communism’\(^{42}\). When writing about realism and idealism, Niebuhr stresses out their inherent inexactity, because of their affective, rather than ‘doctrinal’ nature; the last one is firmly condemned as a ‘disposition to hide self-interest behind the façade of [a] pretended devotion to values’, which would ‘transcend self-interest’.\(^{43}\)

Curiously, even if he had leftist political convictions, Raymond Aron was perceived as a realist thinker within the field of IR. And, except several differences that he had in respect to the realist ‘canon’, he was one. Unlike the above mentioned authors and their predecessors, the French sociologist criticized the reduction of politics to the mere pursuit of power; this was, in his opinion, an inadequate and dangerous way to conduct

\(^{39}\) Miroiu, Andrei; Ungureanu, Radu-Sebastian (ed.), *op. cit.*, pp. 96-97

\(^{40}\) Morgenthau, Hans, *op. cit.*, pp. 44-55


\(^{42}\) *Ibidem*, p. 5

\(^{43}\) *Ibidem*, p. 120
international politics. Second, Aron disregarded the predictive capacities with which the realist theory was entrusted in a great extent by its adherents, thus neglecting the teachings one should extract from permanent references to history. The monism of power, like any other monism, is not enough to understand the complexities of social reality. Third, internal politics should not be minimized with reference to foreign policy, because the international behavior of states is not exclusively a consequence of the distribution of power inside the international system, being influenced also by ideological considerents. And, finally, when analyzing former empires, like the British one, Raymond Aron concludes that the international economy should not be politically circumscribed. A hegemonic power does not guide itself only by military principles; economy plays a key and separate role on its external behavior. But the proof that Aron was after all a realist lies in the prominent role that he ascribes to prudence within the frame of ‘diplomatic-strategic’ behavior, considering it ‘the statesman’s supreme virtue’.

Henry Kissinger is also an author who can be included in the category of classical realism. Not only that he was contemporary to the ascension of this theory, but the contributed a lot to its empirical validation. A professor, but especially a diplomat, Kissinger played a major role in shaping the American foreign policy during the 70’s. However, the former Secretary of State does not agree upon the limited role of internal politics in international affairs, nor on the sharp distinction between them. The ‘domestic structure’ fully influences the external behavior of the state. The more morally compatible the ‘domestic structures’ are, the more ‘a consensus about permissible aims and methods of foreign policy develops’. Furthermore, when ‘domestic structures are reasonably stable, temptations

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44 ‘It would be useless to define the objectives of states by exclusive reference to power, to security, or to both. What life does not serve a higher goal? What good is security accompanied by mediocrity?’ Raymond Aron, op. cit., p. 598
46 Raymond Aron, op. cit., p. 16. The French sociologist distances itself once again from the classic realist theory when he writes ‘that diplomatic-strategic behavior does not have an obvious objective [like power], but (…) the risk of war obliges it to calculate forces or means’.
47 Ibidem, p. 585
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To use an adventurous foreign policy to achieve domestic cohesion are at minimum'. 48 Moreover, Kissinger acknowledges the significance of ideology and psychological factors in the development of foreign policy. 49 In this field, the decision-maker should distinguish the possibilities of foreign policy from the desirabilities it also encompasses. States solve their disputes not only through force, but also ‘by compromise or by imposition’. The final solution ‘depends on the values, the strengths and the domestic systems of the countries involved’. 50 Finally, like Carr or Morgenthau, he warns about the misuses of morality in the conduct of foreign policy. Therefore, ‘when policy becomes excessively moralistic, it may turn quixotic or dangerous. A presumed monopoly of truth obstructs negotiation and accommodation. Good results may be given up in the quest for everelusive ideal solutions. Policy may fall prey to ineffectual posturing or adventuristically crusades’. 51

Neorealism

Neorealism, or structural realism, appeared mainly as a consequence of the metamorphosis the international relations stage had suffered in the 70’s, namely the geopolitical relaxation between the United States and the Soviet Union. Therefore, the realist theory was revised in order to comply with this new stage of the Cold War. 52 Conscious of the

49 Ibidem, pp. 58-9
52 This does not mean that the classical realists were not striving to incorporate the changes of world politics within basically the same theoretical parameters. Even if he recognized the major changes the relations between the United States and the USSR had suffered, Hans Morgenthau tried minimizing the importance of ideology in the Washington-Moscow rivalry, arguing that the Moscow-Pekin conflict proved that ideology had a limited range in explaining the decisions of international actors. ‘Changing Issues, Conditions and Perspectives’, in Graebner, Norman A. (ed.), *The Cold War. A Conflict of Ideology and Power*,
dangers the nuclear era could entail the superpowers and their allies focused now on obtaining security, rather than amplifying their power.\textsuperscript{53}

The main exponent of neorealism is an author that has been already quoted, Kenneth Waltz. In his first major work, \textit{Man, State and War. A Theoretical Analysis}, Waltz sustained that foreign policy can be explained through three factors, or ‘images’: the psychology of the leader, the ideological matrix of a political regime, or the pressures of the ‘structure’, which is the distribution of power within the international system. Although all these factors contribute to the understanding of international politics, the third one was the most important.\textsuperscript{54} In his later book, entitled \textit{Theory of International Politics}, the argument was extended: the international structure exclusively dictated the foreign policy of states – or ‘units’ – while the first two images, referred to, now as ‘levels of analysis’, were considered ‘reductionist theories’.\textsuperscript{55} The bipolar structure of international politics was the most appropriate one for achieving and maintaining a satisfactory level of security.\textsuperscript{56}

Another well-known structural realist is Robert Gilpin. He tried to improve Waltz’s mechanized and static model by stating that change is a major variable in the equation of international politics.\textsuperscript{57} The international system, ‘a repeating struggle for richness and power between independent actors within a state of anarchy’\textsuperscript{58}, has also a pronounced hierarchical character, being dominated in every historical period by a hegemonic

\begin{footnotesize}
\begin{itemize}
\item\textsuperscript{53} Waltz, Kenneth, ‘Realist Thought and Neorealist Theory’, in \textit{Journal of International Affairs}, 44:1, 1990, pp. 21-37
\item\textsuperscript{54} Waltz, Kenneth, \textit{op. cit.}
\item\textsuperscript{55} Waltz, Kenneth, \textit{Teoria Politicii Internaționale}, Iași: Polirom, 2006, pp. 47-70, 97-118
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\item\textsuperscript{58} Gilpin, Robert, \textit{Război și schimbare în politica mondială}, Craiova: Scrisul Românesc, 2000, p. 24
\end{itemize}
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power. Changes, which reflect certain interests, occur through a ‘hegemonic war’, which is ‘the beginning of another cycle of growth, expansion and, eventually, decline’.

Barry Buzan, an author recognized especially for his preoccupation for international security, can also be considered a neorealist. He identified five main dimensions of security: a military one, a political one, a social one, an economical and, finally, an ecological one. Of course, the above mentioned dimensions were deeply intertwined and no serious approach of international security should overlook this aspect.

Finally, John Mearsheimer closes this short and inevitable incomplete list of neorealist scholars. His main contribution to the renewal of realism was the ‘offensive realism’ concept. ‘Offensive realism’ stresses, like classical realism, the importance of great powers - and their military capabilities - as the coordinators of the international system. Each great power competes with the others in order to dominate the international arena and become the hegemonic power. ‘However, because not a single state seems to have a chance in obtaining global hegemony, the world is condemned to an eternal competition between the great powers’.

This kind of realism follows the ‘defensive realism’ of Kenneth Waltz, where states sought security, not dominance and, the ‘realism of human nature’ theorized by Hans Morgenthau, which postulates that states, like humans, possess ‘an insatious appetite for power’.

Post-Cold War era: theoretical challenges

The tumultuous and rather unexpected dismantling of the bipolar international system left realism in a drift. Due to its scientific pretension in explaining the dynamic of international relations, ‘it is not surprising that [its] inability to foresee (...) the end of the bipolar cold war’ certainly

59 Ibidem, p. 27. For a typology of change in international relations, see pp. 27-28
60 Ibidem, p. 269
63 Ibidem, p. 19
discredited the dominant theory of IR.\textsuperscript{64} Besides that, alternative approaches to IR, like social-constructivism or the resurgence of liberalism, represented serious contesters to the realist paradigm. The collapse of communism refueled hopes of a democratic and universal world order. Realism, with its inborn pessimism, its ignorance of internal political factors and mechanistic explanation of foreign policy, was no longer able to offer pertinent answers to the dynamic and unforeseeable international politics.\textsuperscript{65} Moreover, another blame resided in its alleged dubious international moral character. The distinction between individual and statal morality (raison d’état) was no longer accepted, ‘because there is not \textit{a priori} reason why the teachings of any moral code and the formulation of any state’s national interest should conflict’. On the contrary, due to the accentuated interdependence between the international actors, ‘an international moral consensus is a prerequisite to a more orderly and stable world order’.\textsuperscript{66} Furthermore, some scholars argued, state were no longer the only international actors and were also rapidly loosing their privileged position as the main ones; international corporations, therefore economical and know-how grounds were now at least equally important. Realists, Susan Strange argues, ‘are no longer sure how precise can define it [the state] and how to recognize the factors susceptible to his authority’.\textsuperscript{67} In addition, multinational companies, banks or crime organizations can be, in some circumstances, at least equally important as states, which, at a closer analysis, are not even ‘homogeneous actors’.\textsuperscript{68} As a proof of the capacity of realism to renew itself, this conclusion (that states are not homogeneous actors) was accepted and incorporated into the theoretical texture of post Cold War neoclassical realism.

On the other hand, social-constructivism’s debate with power politics is especially an ontological one. Constructivists recognize the

\textsuperscript{64} Dunne, Tim; Schmidt, Brian C., ‘Realism’, in Baylis, John; Smith, Steve; Owens, Patricia., op. cit., p. 94
\textsuperscript{65} Fukuyama, Francis, \textit{The End of History and the Last Man}, New York: Free Press, 2006, pp. 245-253
\textsuperscript{68} Strange, Susan, \textit{Retragerea Statului. Difuziunea puterii în economia mondială}, București: Trei, 2001, pp. 91-92
existence of an international structure, but do not agree with realists when it comes to is nature. For the last ones, the structure has an objective existence, separated from the will of the states and acting coercive upon their foreign behavior; for the first, it represents a permanent interaction between ideas, values and socially constituted interests. The international actors extract their protean and dynamic identity from this never-ending global interaction, which they also create. There is no superior and exterior instance which models the behavior of international and national actors or even individuals: everything in the social world is a result of a peremptory axiological interaction, because every value, belief, morality, political conviction or economical interest is socially constructed, transformed and intercepted. ‘Reality does not exist there waiting to be discovered; instead, historically-produced and culturally-bound knowledge enables individuals to construct and give meaning to reality’.

The individual, and not the state, as it is the case for the realist theory, is the irreducible unity for the analysis of world politics, although the most influential constructivist, Alexander Wendt, insisted, in order to avoid theoretical stagnation and confusions, that the state should not be abandoned as the main unit of international political analysis. Because identities are extracted within permanent social interaction, the language is a main theoretical reference mark for constructivism. Furthermore, all institutions, including the state, represent deposited knowledge, socially accumulated over centuries; therefore, their alleged differentiation with reference to societies is unfounded.

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71 Wendt, Alexander, Social Theory of International Politics, Cambridge University Press, 1999, p. 9
72 Mișcoiu, Sergiu, ‘Câteva răspunsuri la întrebarea “De ce a avut success socio-constructivismul ca teorie a relațiilor internaționale?”’, in Ruxandra Ivan (coord.), Direcții principale în studiul relațiilor internaționale în România, Iași: Institutul European, 2007, pp. 82-86
By insisting on the overwhelming role that ideas play in structuring world politics, constructivism reveals its idealist extraction. However, unlike idealism, this new IR theory represents the most pertinent and articulated challenge that realism had to cope with until now.

How can realism respond to these powerful and judicious critics? First of all, the liberal argument according to which states are no longer the most influential actors in international politics is an inconsistent one. Idealists, or ‘globalists’, as Linda Weiss calls them, ‘tend to exaggerate the powers of the state from the past, in order to sustain its present weakness’. It is true that non-statal actors, like the multinational corporations, are becoming very important within the dynamic of world politics, but they do not possess the means to substitute themselves for governments. ‘The forms of government have modified in order to respond to the changes of the world economy, but the idea that the global market itself could offer its own mechanisms of governance it is naïve’. In fact, multinational corporations – which have a strong national-cultural basis, embedded in their identity, even if their range of activity spreads over many continents - find it more profitable to benefit from the advantages and the protection offered to them by the states. ‘A world kept safe by the important states is cheaper and more efficient for companies than the one in which these should ensure their own commercial environment within a chaos generated by the decline of the state’.

As for the constructivist challenge, this should be treated very seriously. Even if it was condemned for its eclectism or its inability to articulate a coherent and empirically validable set of theoretical tenets,

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76 Hirst, Paul, Război și putere în secolul XXI. Statul, conflictul militar și sistemul internațional, București: Antet, 2003, p. 103
77 Toderean, Olivia, ‘Constructivismul în Relațiile Internaționale’, in Miroiu, Andrei; Ungureanu, Radu-Sebastian (ed.), op. cit., p. 162 Mișcui, Sergiu, ‘Câteva răspunsuri la
constructivism clearly pointed out the flaws and the shortcomings of realism and especially of structural realism. In fact, are realism and constructivism totally incompatible? Some scholars would incline to respond negative to this question. Constructivism – they argue – focused its critics mainly on structural realism, due to its incapacity to absorb morality and values inside its theoretical texture; classical realism, however, is more receptive to moral arguments, although it considers that they need to be ‘moderated by a politics of power’. In order to adequately cope with its strong critics, realism developed, once again, a new form.

**Neoclassical realism**

Unlike structural realism, which derives the foreign behavior of states from systemic pressures, neoclassical realism argues that ‘factors such as the perceptions of the state leaders, state-society relationships and the motivation of states’ are at least as important when deciphering their international politics. Furthermore, the international structure receives now a subjective meaning; the ‘objective, independent (...) distribution of power’ is contested in favor of ‘how state leaders derive an understanding of the distribution of power’. To be truly powerful, states must have the ‘ability to extract and direct resources from the societies that they rule’. In this point, neoclassical realism’s departure from neorealism is obvious, due to the fact that not all states share in the same extent the capacity to mobilize their social resources. Taking into account the internal factors, the states are very much different; therefore, the Waltzian label ‘units’ is no longer adequate because, as we have seen, they are not at all homogeneous actors.

**Concluding remarks**

The new century brought a new and probably decisive challenge to power politics. Should realism incorporate constructivist premises and accept the major role of ideas and values in the social structuring of world

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79 Dunne, Tim; Schmidt, Brian C., ‘Realism’, in Baylis, John; Smith, Steve; Owens, Patricia, *op. cit.*, p. 99

80 Ibidem
Revising realism: from scientism to a more empirical approach

Politics? It would be a solution, but one which would amputate its intimate essence, for ideas or morality could never replace political power or military capacities as the main poles of realist theory. Should it become more liberal than? This experiment already took place. It was incarnated by the English School of IR. Also known as rationalists, its supporters tried to combine the two theories; accepting the anarchical logic of the international system, they focused in a great extent the capabilities of international institutions to create consensus among the international actors and therefore, an international society, able to satisfy the security and also to entail the prosperity of its members. However, given the amplitude of its challenges, realism needs perhaps another solution: instead of desperately trying to incline towards liberalism or social-constructivism, it should make efforts to rediscover its conservative background.

Hedley Bull identified, in its consecrated work, *The Anarchical Society*, a conflict between order and justice in international politics. The contemporary international environment could not be better understood outside this antagonistic duality. For classical realists, an international order that would satisfy all of the actors is impossible; therefore, an order which would please as much actors as possible is the most desirable one. For revolutionaries, justice, the supreme moral value, should prevail with any cost. Finally, liberals acknowledge the inevitable tension between the two, ‘and constantly seek ways to reconcile them’. Indeed, this seems to be the main question of the globalization era.

How should the 21st century realists respond to it? Whatever the answer will be, it will prove decisive for the future of this respected international theory. It is intriguing how realism developed along a consistent scientifically itinerary, when its conservative ancestors were firmly against any ‘ism’. It seems that a rediscovery of the cherished empirical legacy of conservatism could truly guide realism into the present century. Having proved its ability to renew itself whenever the situation called for it, ‘Realism shares with Conservatism (its ideological godfather)

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82 Bull, Hedley, *op. cit.*, p. 89
the recognition that a theory without the means to change is without the means of its own preservation’.83

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83 Dunne, Tim; Schmidt, Brian C., ‘Realism’, in Baylis, John; Smith, Steve; Owens, Patricia, *op. cit.*, p. 94
HOW SUCCESSFUL HAS SOCIAL CONSTRUCTIVISM BEEN IN ESTABLISHING THAT THE FIELD OF INTERNATIONAL RELATIONS IS ABOUT ‘IDEAS ALL THE WAY DOWN’?

Corina Folescu*

Abstract
The aim of this paper would be to argue that the success of social constructivism in establishing the idea that the international realm is about “ideas all the way down” has been at best partial. And this is due not to the invalidation of constructivism’s premise that agents and systems are constrained by social normative structures, but to the missed opportunity to deliver two of its main promises: creating a via media between paradigms and inevitably a common view for the understanding of the international realm, and restoring the focus on process and practice in international politics.

Key Words: Via media, process, constructivism, identity, neo-realism.

The Constructivist side of the coin

Formulating itself on the spectrum of paradigms as being in between the reflectivist and the rationalist accounts, constructivism has managed to underline the silence that the realist approach adopted when having to analyze the changes of identities, social practices, and of

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institutions that constitute the present global order. However, the approach that constructivism has chosen for the analysis of structural change has proven to contain certain incongruities that have obstructed the theory’s ascent towards becoming a single voice in the field of international relations.

The aim of this paper would be to argue that the success of social constructivism in establishing the idea that the international realm is generated by “ideas all the way down” has been at best partial. And this is due not to the invalidation of the premise of the constructivist theory that agents and systems are constrained by social normative structures, but to the missed opportunity to deliver two of the theory’s main promises: creating a via media between paradigms and inevitably a common view for the understanding of the international realm, and restoring the focus on process and practice in international politics.

As Checkel observes, it is not enough for constructivism to demonstrate that the preferences of states vary in theoretically interesting ways and that this variation reflects a certain commitment to broad norms or ideas. Constructivism needs to replace its focus from the role of ideas in foreign policy-making onto the process of socialisation of influential actors.

In order to evaluate the feasibility of constructivism and its intrinsic obstacles, one shall appeal sequentially to the rump materialism of Alexander Wendt and to the more liberal approaches of Martha Finnemore.

When asserting that constructivism has been partially successful in establishing the constitutive role of ideas and norms, one must consider inevitably the failure of constructivism as an attempted via media between the rationalist and reflectivist paradigms, and thus the failure of constructivism to formulate a ‘common language’ that would bridge the gap between the main paradigms of the international theory.

While acknowledging that neo-realism does not sufficiently consider the relationship between material and social forces, even if it conceptualises a certain process of social programming, it is the ‘material

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objection to constructivist analysis that disables the latter’s attempt to relate to all other approaches on their own terms.

Constructivists do not examine the potential effects of material change on the production and reproduction of shared knowledge and thus exclude ab initio the most important point from where inter-paradigmatic dialogue can commence.

Moreover, the emphasized materialism-idealism dichotomy, often regarded as indefeasible, enlarges the gap between the two main paradigms. Kowert and Legro maintain that “students of norms cannot afford to ignore the material world” for norms “are attached to real physical environments and are protected by real human agents.” But in order to better comprehend the material objection let us turn to Alexander Wendt’s rump materialism.

For Wendt the international structure is “exactly what Waltz says is not: a social rather than material phenomenon (...) a ‘distribution of knowledge’ or ‘ideas all the way down’ (or almost anyway).”

The international life is determined by the beliefs and expectations that agents have about each other, and these are predominantly socially constituted. Moreover, both the international environment and the identities of states are created and recreated through processes of intersubjective practice (which generate norms and institutions such as sovereignty). Thus, the world that Wendt pictures is one in which “anarchy is what states make of it”, and if states may have shaped the system as a competitive, self-help one, this does not imply that “only simple learning or behavioural adaptation is possible.”

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As Zehfuss\(^7\) observes, Wendt’s world supports change through identity, which is a ‘property of international actors that generates motivational and behavioural dispositions’\(^8\) (or interests) and which is not given, but developed, sustained or transformed in interaction.

Thus, identities are significant because they provide the basis for interests. After observing that power is being given meaning by interest, Wendt reiterates the ideational foundation of interests, stating that a small part of what constitutes them is material, the rest revolving around schemas and deliberations that are in turn constituted by shared ideas or culture.\(^9\)

Otherwise said constructivism sees interests as ideas, as ontologically intersubjective, but epistemologically objective interpretations about, and for, the material world.\(^10\) Thus, what kind of anarchy prevails, whether Hobbesian, Lockean or Kantian, depends on how states shape their interests and identities in relation to others. As Adler summarises, constructivism’s added value is to “take change less as the alteration in the positions of material things than as the emergence of new constitutive rules (…) the evolution and transformation of new social structures (…), and the agent-related origins of social processes.”\(^11\)

Nonetheless, Wendt acknowledges to a certain point the fact that brute material forces can influence the realm of IR through the distribution of material capabilities, the technological composition of these capabilities and through characteristics of geography and natural resources, but he clearly emphasizes the constructivist imperative that material forces have the effects that they do only due to their interaction with ideas.\(^12\) The international structure contains both material and ideational elements, but


\(^8\) Alex Wendt, *Social Theory of International Politics*, p. 224.


\(^12\) Alex Wendt, *Social Theory of International Politics*, pp. 110-12.
ultimately it is ideas that determine whether a certain distribution of capabilities will lead to warfare or not.

The Rationalist side of the coin

However, as Krasner argues, ideas, norms and rules may endure, but they do not have the supposed impact on the actual behaviour of states as Wendt advocates.\textsuperscript{13}

It is material forces, nuclear weapons to be more exact, that have induced a certain conduct to states especially after 1945, a certain level of caution among states that has not characterised earlier periods of international politics (more will be better theory).\textsuperscript{14} A relevant study that would support this argument would be that of Joon Jo and Gartzke, which demonstrates through statistical analysis that nuclear threat decreases the predicted probability of the development of a nuclear weapons program mainly due to fear of preventive war.\textsuperscript{15}

In addition to what one might call the material drawback to constructivism’s goal of becoming the \textit{via media} between reflectivism and rationalism, there is also the double-edged concept of identity. As Ruggie observes, neo-utilitarianism provides no answer to the core foundational question in international relations theory: how did the constituent agents of the international arena come to acquire their current identity and the interests that are assumed to go along with it.\textsuperscript{16}

For rationalists, state preferences are unproblematic, exogenously formed and based on power-maximising rationality. Actors begin with a certain identity and a portfolio of specific interests prior to social interaction.\textsuperscript{17}


While tackling the process of identity formation, Wendt focuses on the mechanism of social learning which he puts into application in the hypothetic case of initiatory interaction between two actors, Alter and Ego. At this point, Wendt explains that the two agents are not “blank slates”, but that they bring two types of baggage: material in the form of bodies and associated needs, and representational in the form of some *a priori ideas* about who they are. During interaction, actors through either role-taking, or alter-casting create their own definitions of the situation which they try in the end to share with each other. If one of the actors revises its own ideas because of the other’s action, then learning and consequently the first step towards attaining a shared knowledge have been reached and nevertheless identities and interests have been shaped.\(^\text{18}\)

It is interesting to observe that, although Wendt mentions the existence of *a priori* ideas regarding possible roles that one can play in interaction, he does not equate these ideas with a pre-existing incipient identity. At this point, authors such as Smith argue that it is impossible to enter interaction without a sort of pre-existing identity. Rather than “our identities being created via interaction our identities are in part prior to that interaction.”\(^\text{19}\)

It would be difficult to picture a social agent prior to interaction as almost an empty vessel that would be filled through the process of learning. How should the agent understand, internalise and identify himself with a certain role as Wendt argues, if he bears a Walzerian veil of ignorance, if he lacks an incipient identity?

The other blade of identity is best analysed by Cynthia Weber, who observes that Wendt’s conceptualisation of identity emphasises an intrinsic contradiction in his theory. States are the agents that shape the character of anarchy, be it conflicting or cooperative. But by recognising states as key decision-makers in the configuration of the international realm, Wendt arrogates to agents an identity that cannot be changed. And if “the identity


of the state as decision-maker were questioned, the constructivist myth ‘anarchy is what states make of it’ would not function.”

Nevertheless, the trenchant dichotomy materialism-idealism did not facilitate the road for constructivism towards *via media*. Keohane argues in fact that the overemphasis placed on this distinction is actually ungrounded especially when one focuses on the elasticity of concepts such as ‘interest’ or ‘power’, concepts that cannot and are not given an unique material basis, not even by classical realist theory.

Starting from this premise, it is interesting to take into consideration Williams argument regarding the centrality that Morgenthau offers to political judgement (thus ideas and norms) when conceptualising power in politics and when differentiating it from pure physical violence.

Thus one might argue that Wendt is asking the wrong question: one should not focus on establishing which of the two change generators plays the crucial role, but on how exactly do ideas corroborated by material forces produce certain outcomes.

Another major cause for the partial success of constructivism has been the missed opportunity to offer a clearer image of the social processes that take place in the international arena. Although Wendt emphasizes the role of the practices of socially constructed states in shaping of anarchy, he does not focus on what Weber calls a ‘second set of social practices through which states are constructed as decision-makers’.

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Wendt’s social practices “create/re-create structures which create/re-create agents which create/re-create practices, and so on” without providing a clear causality of the model. One does not know why states decide to do what they do, why they chose certain roles and not others that would provide them a specific type of scripts to follow in their relations, and nevertheless why in the end certain ideas and norms prevail over others.

While Finnemore succeeds in creating a causal relationship in the model of mutual constitution of agents and structures, first bracketing agency, then structures, as Checkel observes, she does not focus on the groups and individuals within particular states, the true entrepreneurs who are responsible for the creation of norms.

In her attempt to investigate the international configuration of meaning and social value, she starts from states’ interests and identities. But instead of looking at the social interaction between states, the author focuses on norms of international society which affect state behaviour, for in her view states’ identities and interests are shaped by international norms embedded in international organisations that socialise states to accept new political goals and values.

Thus, the causal chain would be defined as structures create/re-create agents, and agents, through socialisation and the internalisation of new norms and values, create/re-create the structure. State interests are defined in the context of internationally held norms and understandings of what is good, and this normative context in turn influences the behaviour of decision-makers and of mass publics. Finnemore appeals to three interesting cases in order to probe her hypothesis, namely to that of the United Nations Educational, Scientific, and Cultural Organisation (UNESCO), which taught states that science bureaucracy was a necessary component of the modern state, that of the International Committee of the

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27 Jeffrey Checkel, ‘Review Article. The Constructivist Turn in International Relations Theory’, p. 332.
28 Martha Finnemore, National Interests in International Society, p. 2.
Red Cross (ICRC) that facilitated the adoption of the first Geneva Convention in 1864, and that of the World Bank that reshaped the development policy by placing great emphasis on poverty alleviation and the meeting of basic human needs.

As Burchill notices, Finnemore starts from an untested hypothesis that considers states as unproblematic, unified agents that can speak with one voice on the question of national interests. Otherwise said the problem of norm internalisation or of social learning at the state level is not completely addressed, one not being able to know when, how and why does social construction take place.

Moreover, the problem of differentiated impact of norms is not being clarified, especially in such cases as poverty alleviation, where the author invokes reasons such as corruptive or incompetent governments, without extending the debate over why certain ideas acquire a generally accepted status, whilst others fail to do.

To this theoretical gap that constructivist approaches nurture, Adler responds by suggesting the need for constructivism to be complemented by a ‘cognitive evolution’ theory that would focus on “an account of the agents, the innovators, the carriers of collective understandings who socially construct the alternatives, and the ‘proofs’ that legitimate the choices.”

In an attempt to bring constructivism back to the process of socialisation and consequently to Adler’s cognitive evolution theory, Checkel proposed a new research programme that would explain the process of structural change by distinguishing between the strategic manipulation of actors with exogenously given preferences (explanation thought to be given in large by rationalist theories of persuasion for the process of socialisation), and the sincere persuasion that can socialise actors

to accept new identities and preferences (explanation offered by constructivist theories).\textsuperscript{32}

However, as Moravcsik observes, this theoretical demarche is at best unclear, being based on a vague view of human psychology that reduces political actions to either principled or coerced, and at worst misleading, for the claims regarding principled and manipulative behaviour cannot be tested.\textsuperscript{33}

**Conclusion**

Thus, when having to evaluate the success of the constructivist approach in equating the international realm with shared knowledge (or “ideas all the way down”), the estimation would be that it has been at best partial, and this is due to the missed opportunities of constructivism to deliver two of its main promises: creating a *via media* in IR and inevitably succeeding in convincing that “anarchy is what states make of it”, and restoring focus on the process of socialisation in international politics.

Until constructivism is going to find a theoretical path to escape its intrinsic contradiction - between states as key decision-makers and identity as a developing and not given ensemble of ideas -, and nevertheless a way to soften the often indefeasible trenchant materialism-idealism dichotomy (which as we have seen is not overemphasised neither by realism nor by liberalism), its tribute to IR is going to remain questioned and disputed. Moreover, as long as the constructivist approach is not going to provide clarifications (mutually shared) regarding the causality of the model of socialisation which produces shared knowledge, the identity of agents, the reasons why agents accept and adopt certain ideas and norms to the detriment of others and nevertheless, clarifications regarding the particular circumstances that favour the developing of new shared ideas, its premise regarding the ideational foundation of the international realm is going to remain an alluring picture that cannot be proved through viable theoretical means.


\textsuperscript{33} Ibid., p. 235.
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Abstract
This paper analyzes the theory of socio-constructivism and its contributions to the understanding of anarchy as a concept in international relations. I took as example Alexander Wendt’s theory, who considers that anarchy is what states make of it: the Social Construction of Power Politics. In this article I made an incursion in his ideas regarding envisaged subject, and I concluded that identity and interest are defining for the anarchical character of the state by the simple reason that states dispose of themselves.

Key words: socio-constructivism, anarchy, identity, interests, states

Par cet ouvrage on essaie d’analyser deux concepts d’une grande importance dans la théorie des relations internationales: le socioconstructivisme et l’anarchie, et par le biais du premier, on pourrait expliquer et comprendre le second. C’est par le biais d’un représentant important du socioconstructivisme qu’on essaie de trouver des réponses concernant ce sujet.

Concernant le premier concept, il est important d’avouer le fait que même la réalité est une construction sociale, soutenue par l’interaction entre les individus. Selon Auguste Comte, c’est la sociologie, la science qui s’occupe de l’analyse des groupes sociaux, l’organisation et les relations

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étalies entre différents groupes. L’interaction entre les individus est déterminée par la structure du système social, un système qui puisse être différent d’une société à l’autre. Cette interaction, mais cette fois-ci au niveau institutionnel, entre les états, peut être comprise comme une interdépendance qui peut déterminer la perte des influences des états. Une baisse influence des états sur la scène des relations internationales peut être une conséquence de la perte de l’autonomie de décision pour la plupart des états impliqués dans un certain échange international, et l’action des états est dans ces conditions limitée.\(^1\)

Il est important d’affirmer que le mot clé pour socioconstructivisme est la structure et l’existence des structures sociales, comme un élément essentiel entre les relations internationales. De plus, le socioconstructivisme comprend trois importants principes.

Premièrement, on constate que l’élément essentiel de la structure est représenté par une série de connaissances partagées, et on mentionne ici l’exemple des relations communes concernant le monde, c'est-à-dire, les alliances. Celles-ci sont créées par les acteurs des relations internationales pour un intérêt commun, pour lequel ceux-ci doivent agir, et c’est la sécurité collective, un exemple sur lequel on doit nous rapporter.

Deuxièmement, on met accent aussi sur le rôle des ressources naturelles qui ne représentent pas un sens en soi, mais elles reçoivent un certain sens dans la manière où les connaissances partagées réussissent ou non de leur accorder une signification (la conquête des territoires ne représente un objectif en soi, et par le biais du discours et des alliances, ces territoires deviennent nécessaires).

En dernier lieu, la structure sociale dans les relations internationales n’est pas un concept abstrait, sans fondement, mais elle représente plutôt une multitude de pratiques qui contiennent une réalité objective. Les structures sociales sont des phénomènes collectifs dans lesquels les individus de la société et les acteurs des relations internationales s’impliquent, ils définissent l’identité et leurs intérêts, par tous ceux-ci, on peut remarquer une certaine évolution chez eux.

Les structures de la vie internationales sont idéalistes, et non exclusivement matérialistes. Les valeurs communes des acteurs sont celles qui détermineront le modelage des identités et intérêts de ceux-ci dans les relations internationales. Cette théorie du constructivisme met en lumière l’interaction des états dont les identités et intérêts sont influencés par les relations transnationales et l’interdépendance.²

Pour comprendre le monde il y a deux idées fondamentales comme : le matérialisme de l’objet et non matérialisme de la structure. L’objectif en soi n’est pas relevant à l’extérieur de la structure où il se trouve.

Il y a deux conceptions qui prennent en considérations le component explicatif sur lequel on insistera brièvement. Le component explicatif gagne une importance plus grande que celui normatif selon les idéalistes, tandis que les réalistes considèrent plus important celui descriptif. Ces affirmations mettent en évidence le fait que, même si les structures sont des créations sociales, rien ne peut montrer que celles-ci puissent être changées volontairement grâce aux critiques des réalistes concernant le socioconstructivisme.

En ce qui concerne le second concept, l’anarchie, on peut affirmer que celui-ci est un mot qui provient de la langue grecque, anarkhia, et représente généralement parler, l’absence d’une autorité politique des règles et ordres précises³, l’état d’une société caractérisée par un gouvernement qui ne dispose pas d’une autorité nécessaire et peut être vulnérable à toute sorte de conflits désordonnés⁴. Les anarchistes sont considérés les ennemis radicaux de n’importe quelle hiérarchie dans tout état. L’anarchie n’est pas une structure fixe du système international, mais une construction sociale qui suppose une évolution dans le processus de l’interaction.

Nous sommes habitués d’affirmer que le système international est un système anarchique. Il n’y a pas un équivalent d’un gouvernement national qui oblige le respect général des règles de comportement par tous les états, il n y a pas de lois qui soient acceptées par tous les états, on ne

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² N.Paun; A.C Paun; G. Ciceo, R. Albu-Comanescu, Socio-constructivismul in Finalitatea Europei, Ed. Efes, Cluj-Napoca, 2005
³ Encyclopedie Universelle, Larousse, 2002, CD-ROM, PC, cd.2
⁴ Dictionnaire Hachette de la Langue Francaise, Hachette 1980
doit pas oublier qu’on parle des états démocratiques et non démocratiques. Les états se caractérisent par la notion d’identité et intérêt, même si nous sommes les témoins d’une union européenne, on ne peut pas parler d’une perte importante de l’identité et intérêts d’un état. Ainsi, l’analyse du système de relations internationales doit tenir compte d’analyse de leurs unités componentielles, chacun voulant atteindre ses propres intérêts. Les conventions voient cette situation regrettable, et en même temps inévitable.

Il faut préciser aussi, l’existence d’une école constructiviste, l’Ecole Anglaise, qui a gagné son renom grâce à ses tentatives de trouver une variante théorique avancée du socioconstructivisme, basée sur l’idée centrale de société internationale. Cet exemple de société internationale s’oppose à la conception réaliste de système international. On parle d’une société qui s’appuie sur l’idée d’un consensus international entre les acteurs des relations internationales, il s’agit d’un consensus qui est soutenu par un intérêt commun. D’autre part, dans le système des relations internationales, où il y a des valeurs communes, droits et obligations réciproques à l’échelle internationale; ce système de relations internationales devient non normatif et suppose l’existence des obligations négatives.

La société internationale a une structure anarchique, en temps que la règle principale est représentée par le droit des états de disposer d’eux-mêmes (ainsi on souligne le concept d’identité), mais ce droit peut être exercé sous la pression des grandes contraintes, en tenant compte des coûts. Cette société est soutenue par un choix pré-rationnel des acteurs, basée sur les structures d’identité de ceux-ci. Elle tient compte du fait que la relation contemporaine des acteurs est une relation culturelle et d’accommodation réciproque. Conformément à ce qu’on a décrit antérieurement, on souligne le fait que l’Ecole Anglaise démontre l’existence d’un but de l’entièr humanité, celui de déterminer d’une manière non normative l’acceptation réciproque des divers acteurs et d’une manière tolérante l’interaction des acteurs qui représente une vision inacceptable par les réalistes.

5 A voir  Eric Remacle , L’Union Européenne dans les relations internationals, Presses Universitaires de Bruxelles, 2005
6 Michael Nicholson, Formal Theories in international relations, Cambridge, University Press, 1989
En observant les jeux d’intérêts, on peut affirmer qu’il y a certaines dynamiques fondamentales comme: la logique de l’action collective, le calcul et la stratégie que les acteurs développent en fonction de coûts et bénéfices attendus des éventuels conflits ou coopérations.\(^7\)

Le socioconstructivisme est une liaison entre les théories rationalistes (réalisme, néoréalisme) et celles de réflexion (post modernisme, la théorie féministe, normative, critique et la sociologie historique)\(^8\). C’est celui-ci l’objectif déclaré d’Alexander Wendt. Les théories de réflexion se distinguent de celles rationalistes par le fait qu’elles ne mettent pas au centre de l’analyse, l’objet assumé rationnel, mais la manière dans laquelle le sujet assume l’objet. En ce qui concerne la théorie de la réflexion, on revient permanent à l’identité et à la compréhension subjective de la réalité. Du point de vue social, les deux théories composent des parts de vérité et parts d’erreur scientifiques.

La critique que les socio constructivistes apportent aux théories rationnelles fait référence spécialement à la confiance totale de celles-ci en rationalité des acteurs. Le socioconstructivisme ne décrit pas un fait en soi, mais il essaie de poursuivre le fil d’action et une fin avec des solutions viables. Quant à la théorie de réflexion, celle-ci se dirige vers le sujet et son identité.

Le plus important représentant du socioconstructivisme est Alexander Wendt par son travail "Anarchy is what states make of it: The Social Construction of Power Politics". L’idée principale du travail c’est que les anarchies sont des systèmes d’auto aide qui justifient la formation des intérêts et le désintérêt envers les processus qui concernent l’identité. La fonction d’auto aide n’est pas une fonction anarchique, mais l’une de processus, et donc elle-même est une institution qui détermine la compréhension de l’anarchie et la distribution du pouvoir pour l’action de l’état.\(^9\) Wendt affirmait que l’auto aide et les politiques de pouvoirs ne dérivent pas logiquement ou casuellement de l’anarchie (de la structure du système des relations internationales), mais des processus. Il n’y a pas une „logique“ de l’anarchie, sauf les pratiques qui créent et installent une

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\(^8\) Steven Smith, *Reflectivist and Constructivist Approaches*, p.228;

\(^9\) http://links.jstor.org/;
certaine structure de l’identité et intérêts à la faveur d’une autre ; la structure n’a pas une existence ou un pouvoir causal en dehors du processus. „ L’auto aide et les politiques de pouvoir ne sont pas nécessairement des caractéristiques de l’anarchie. L’anarchie est ce que les états font d’elle”\textsuperscript{10}.

Si les néo-réalistes voient l’auto aide comme une logique du système, et pour cet auto aide, les acteurs ne comprennent pas seulement d’acquérir et garder des biens, mais leur protection envers la menace des autres acteurs,\textsuperscript{11} Wendt affirme que les sens collectifs définissent les structures, qui organisent nos actions et identités par la participation à ces sens collectifs.

Si on trouve des états dans des situations d’auto aide c’est parce que leur pratique a déterminé une telle situation, et si ces pratiques changent, on parlera d’une connaissance intersubjective qui constitue le système. Cette connaissance intersubjective peut seule se perpétuer, tenant compte que le système d’auto aide peut être facilement changé, comme tout autre système social. Dès qu’il est formé, ce système soutiendra des formes de comportement et la punition de certains acteurs, en devenant une part de l’identité en soi des acteurs. Par les identités en soi, Wendt comprend « un rôle relativement stable, une compréhension et des attentes spécifiques concernant le soi », par le biais desquelles les acteurs définissent leurs intérêts\textsuperscript{12}.

Wendt offre trois solutions au système de relations internationales basé sur l’auto aide: par la pratique de la souveraineté, par une évolution de la coopération, et une stratégie critique. Si on s’arrête aux trois solutions proposées par Wendt, il est facile à remarquer que celles-ci sont les caractéristiques des états démocratiques, mais on en trouve la question suivante: est-ce que ces solutions peuvent écarter l’état de conflit entre les états sur la scène des relations internationales ? A notre avis la réponse est négative, la coopération peut se transformer en compétition, et peu à peu cette compétition déterminera l’apparition du conflit. On ne peut pas ignorer le fait que dans les relations internationales il y a un vainqueur et

\textsuperscript{11} Kenneth N. Waltz, Theory of International Politics, New York, Random House, 1979, p.105
\textsuperscript{12} http://www.ciaonet.org/isa/hae01/hae01.html;
un vaincu, donc un déséquilibre entre les acteurs qui peut leur apporter beaucoup de pertes. Il y a aussi des conflits où, paradoxalement, certains acteurs ne désirent pas gagner, et on donne comme exemple le modèle gandhien de conflit.13 Sur le plan national ou international, le contact génère du conflit, qui peut avoir un caractère violent.

On doit mentionner le fait que Alexander Wendt soutient que les identités et intérêts que les rationalistes considèrent donnés et qu’ils voient se transformer dans des politiques internationales observables, ne sont pas en réalités données, mais des choses créées par les gens. Dans ces conditions, l’anarchie internationale n’est pas fixe, et elle n’implique pas automatiquement un comportement dans le but de la réalisation de ses propres intérêts de la part des états, que les rationalistes voient comme impliqué dans le système. Wendt considère que l’anarchie peut prendre beaucoup de formes, puisque les identités et les intérêts assumées par les rationalistes sont des produits de l’action et non antérieures à celle-ci.

L’anarchie peut contenir des dynamiques qui puissent déterminer des politiques de pouvoir compétitives, mais il y a des cas quand elle ne peut pas les détenir, et dans cette situation, on parle des structures spécifiques d’identités et intérêts qui pourraient apparaître. Wendt ne conteste pas la description néo réaliste du système d’états comme étant un monde basé sur compétition et auto aide, mais il conteste l’explication de ce fait. C’est lui qui prend en considération les trois dimensions politiques définies par Kenneth Waltz: des principes ordonnateurs (dans ce cas, l’anarchie) des principes de différenciation (exclues par Wendt) et la distribution des capacités. Il considère que celles-ci ne peuvent pas prévoir la manière dans laquelle les états se comportent, ni la dynamique et le contenu de l’anarchie, et il soutient qu’elle peuvent être prévues si on prend en considération le fait que les acteurs agissent selon des objectifs et la compréhension de ces objectifs, d’où le comportement différent envers les amis et ennemis résulte. L’anarchie et la distribution du pouvoir sont insuffisantes pour faire une différence entre les acteurs, comme dans les exemples donnés par Wendt: d’une part les États-Unis et le Canada (pouvoir proche des États-Unis comme dimension et considéré ami), et de l’autre part, les États-Unis et le Cuba (pouvoir plus petit et vu comme

13 Luc Reychler, Peace Research and Conflict Management, Ku Leuven, Departement Politieke Wetenschappen, 2005
ennemi). La manière dont on interprète la distribution de pouvoir dépend « de la distribution des connaissance » (ententes et attentes) qui constitue la conception des acteurs sur soi et les autres. Ces sens collectifs constituent les structures qui organisent les actions des gens. Les acteurs acquièrent des identités, en participant à ces sens collectifs.

Comme exemples concluants à ce que nous venons d’affirmer, c’est la situation quand un petit état (et on ne fait pas références aux dimensions géographiques, mais à sa position sur la scène des relations internationales, et ici on mentionne la République Fédérale Allemande pendant la Guerre Froide) veut participer aux alliances avec les états plus grands, afin d’atteindre ses buts. Au cas de RFA, on voulait former des relations étroites avec l’Occident, et implicitement son intégration dans les structures européenne et trans-atlantique. Après 1990, les intérêts de l’Allemagne réunifiée sont différents.14

De l’autre coté, il y a des acteurs sur la scène des relations internationales qui se considèrent suffisamment forts et savent agir et réagir, et on parle dans ce cas de Grande-Bretagne et sa susceptibilité qu’elle a montrée envers les structures européennes durant les années ’50.15

En ce qui concerne la formation des identités, les conceptions sur soi et intérêt tendent refléter les pratiques des autres au long du temps. On retrouve ce principe dans la notion „de soi reflété” (looking-glass self), qui affirme que le soi est une réflectivité de la socialisation d’un acteur. Prenons comme exemple deux acteurs : chacun veut survivre et disposer de certains capacités matériaux, mais aucun n’a d’impératifs biologiques ou intérieurs pour le pouvoir, gloire ou conquête, et il n’y a pas une histoire de sécurité ou insécurité chez eux. Comment se comporteraient-ils ? Les réalistes considéreraient qu’ils choisiraient leur comportement sur la pire supposition concernant les intentions de l’autre, en se justifiant ainsi par le biais de la prudence envers une erreur qui pourrait lui apporter l’échec. Ces possibilités ne sont pas les uniques qui puissent prendre en considération.

15 A voir Marie-Thérèse Bitsh, Histoire de la construction européenne de 1945 a nos jours, Editions Complexe, 2001, pp.149-151
La plupart des décisions sont et devraient être prises par le calcul des possibilités, et celles-ci sont produites par l’interaction.

Le support sur lequel on forme les intérêts c’est l’identité. Les identités sont définies dans le procès de définir les situations. Parfois, elles sont nouvelles, sans précédent dans l’expérience des acteurs, et dans ce cas, ils construisent des sens, et par ceux-ci des intérêts qu’ils inventent parfois sur place. Pour définir un certain rôle ou comportement, les acteurs doivent établir la relation entre différentes situations qui imposent différentes actions. Au cas de l’absence ou l’échec des rôles, la définition de la situation et des intérêts est plus difficile et peut déterminer une confusion d’identité. Wendt exemplifie cette affirmation en faisant appel à la situation créée entre les États-Unis et Union Soviétique à la fin de la Guerre Froide. Sans les attributions mutuelles de menace et hostilité qui définissent leurs identités, ces états ont donné une image d’insécurité concernant leurs intérêts.


Il y a aussi un système de sécurité compétitif, dans lequel le gain d’un autre s’identifie avec la perte de l’autre. L’identification négative dans les conditions de l’anarchie constitue un système de politiques de pouvoir, réalistes, où les états sont préoccupés de pertes et gains relatifs. De plus, il y a la guerre contre tous, et l’action collective est presque impossible dans un tel système, puisque chaque acteur devient prudent, ayant peur d’être trahi.
par un autre. On parle aussi d’un système de sécurité individualiste, où les états sont indifférents envers la relation de leur propre sécurité et celle des autres états. Cette situation donne naissance au système néo libéral : les états sont encore préoccupés de leur propre sécurité, et intéressés plutôt des gains absolus que relatifs.

Les deux systèmes, compétitif et individualiste, représentent des formes d’anarchie de type auto-aide, dans le sens que les états n’identifient pas positivement la sécurité propre avec celle des autres états, mais ils la voient comme une responsabilité individuelle de chacun. Dans ce système, les politiques de pouvoir consistent dans des efforts de manipuler les autres afin de satisfaire ses propres intérêts. Si le soi est représenté par la communauté, et les intérêts nationaux étant des intérêts internationaux, alors on ne peut pas parler d’auto aide. Un système d’auto aide peut être déterminé par le phénomène de conquête, avec la présence de l’anarchie.

Par différentes raisons, certains états peuvent recourir à l’agression. Le comportement de ces conquéreurs détermine les autres états de s’engager dans des politiques de pouvoir compétitives, au nom de l’auto aide, car s’ils ne font ce geste, ils risquent d’être détruits. Dans ce cas, le pacifisme n’est pas indiqué, puisque l’anarchie n’offre pas de garanties. La possibilité de la conquête ne suppose pas que les états doivent l’anticiper à priori par des politiques propres de pouvoir, mais dès qu’un conquéreur apparaît, l’identité et les intérêts doivent être définis.

Alexander Wendt identifie trois cultures anarchiques différentes: hobbesienne, lockéenne si kantienne. Celles-ci sont formées sur une notion qui décrit les relations principales entre les états : c’est-à-dire, un état peut considérer un autre état comme ennemi, rival ou ami. Chaque culture comprend trois raisons pour lesquelles, les états jouent conformément aux règles: la coercition, l’intérêt et légitimité.16

La plupart de l’histoire de l’humanité est caractérisée par une anarchie hobbesienne, par laquelle les états considèrent que c’est dans leurs intérêts d’éliminer d’autres états quand ils peuvent le faire, et de maintenir un équilibre défensif quand ils ne peuvent pas. La paix de Westphalie a créé une anarchie lockéenne, basée sur le principe de la souveraineté : il y

16 Alexander Wendt, Social Theory of International Politics, Cambridge, University Press, 1999, Chapters 6 and 7
avait la possibilité que les états utilisaient la violence les uns contre les autres, mais sans extérioriser les rivaux.

Selon Wendt, la présence partagée des idéaux ne signifie pas un haut niveau de coopération. Dans un système anarchique hobbesien, la guerre est un moyen nécessaire et honorable. Les états peuvent être encadrés dans une culture kantienne dans les relations avec les voisins, mais ils peuvent reconnaître l'existence d'un système anarchique lockéen concernant le reste du monde.

La théorie socioconstructiviste nous offre un modèle de „sélection culturelle”, dans lequel les états, qui ne sont pas adaptés à la compétitivité, sont éliminés du système. Pour qu'on puisse comprendre la politique contemporaine, on a besoin de deux mécanismes de sélection culturelle: l'imitation et l'apprentissage social. La différence entre les deux est donnée par le fait que le second est réalisé mutuellement: les deux acteurs qui interagissent, apprennent et se changent l'un envers l'autre par une évaluation réflexive. De l'autre part, l'imitation implique des changements dans une seule direction. L'apprentissage social détermine les états de reproduire des comportements dictés par leur propre compréhension du monde.

Wendt identifie les mécanismes d’apprentissage social, en suggérant la manière dans laquelle les états peuvent instaurer l’anarchie kantienne et la possibilité que les états deviennent plutôt des amis que des rivaux. Ces mécanismes sont: l’interdépendance, le destin commun, l’homogénéité et l’autolimitation. Les premiers sont des causes efficaces d’une identité collective et le dernier représente une cause permissive. Wendt ne spécifie pas clairement comment les états ont réussi passer de l’anarchie hobbesienne à celle lockéenne.

On peut conclure en affirmant que la théorie de socioconstructivisme met en lumière l’interaction sociale qui influence les sens intersubjectifs L’identité et l’intérêt sont mis en évidence par le caractère anarchique des états, par la simple raison que les états disposent d’eux-mêmes, un droit qui nécessite être exercé sous la pression des contraintes, mais en tenant compte aussi des pertes.

C’est Alexander Wendt, l’un des plus grands représentants du socioconstructivisme, qui met en évidence la manière dans laquelle l’anarchie est construite du point de vue social, par le biais des trois
cultures différentes du système international : anarchie hobbesienne, lockéenne et kantienne. Chaque culture correspond à une théorie des relations internationales, comme par exemple : la culture hobbesienne est caractérisée par réalisme, celle lockéenne par institutionnalisme, et celle kantienne par idéalisme. Du réalisme on remarque les conflits et les guerres qui deviennent dominants sur la scène des relations internationales. L’institutionnalisme nous montre un rôle indépendant des institutions internationales et le gain des avantages absolus, et en ce qui concerne le constructivisme ou idéalisme, les acteurs peuvent avoir un sens développé de l’identité collective, chaque état en s’identifiant avec le destin d’un autre. L’anarchie devient dans le cas du socioconstructivisme ce que le états font d’elle (what states make of it), où les intérêts et les identités des acteurs sont déterminés par le contexte international.

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BOOK REVIEW

Teodora Malița


Le livre ci- donné a une double fonction: d’une part, il s’agit de faire preuve de la validité d’une nouvelle théorie pour l’analyse des relations internationales, en donnant des exemples concrets où la Théorie du discours s’applique avec du succès, d’autre part il représente un outil pour les jeunes chercheurs en leur offrant un modèle d’analyse des réalités politiques.

Structuré en trois parties, chacune développant un cas spécifique pour appliquer la théorie du discours, l’œuvre ne se veut pas un tribut pour celle-ci, mais essaie de donner compte des nouvelles débouchées que cette nouvelle théorie ouvre en ce qui concerne la recherche politique. Ainsi, le lecteur peut trouver des exemples assez diverses, allant du radicalisme anti-systémique roumain, au radicalisme populiste francias et hollandais et à l’interventionisme américain, ceux-ci ayant le rôle de lui aider à mieux percevoir la contribution de la théorie du discours au développement de l’analyse du politique.

La première partie du livre montre l’applicabilité de la théorie du discours dans l’étude des mouvements rebels roumains, mouvements qui appartiennent « au monde de la contestation anti-système »1, teste qui est fait

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surtout à travers un projet de recherche international, *L’Europe rebelle*. Avant de se lancer dans le vrai exercice, l’auteur entreprend une courte, mais précise introduction dans le terrain d’étude, en évoquant l’idée et surtout l’objectif central de ce travail de recherche et en synthétisant les idées fondamentales de la théorie du discours. C’est une bonne occasion de vérifier ses connaissances dans le domaine, mais aussi de renforcer ses abilités de mener une recherche scientifique car on est présenté la méthodologie pour mettre la mettre en œuvre, couvrant les critères pour sélectionner les sujets de la recherche et les moyens concrets pour la démarer.

Le côté le plus *interactive* de ce chapitre le représente les interviews pris aux différents militants des formations contestataires. A travers ces interviews, le lecteur est transporté dans un autre espace, un espace qui lui est inconnu et même lui semble irrationnel, mais à l’aide des hypothèses-cadre de l’approche discursive, ces phénomènes peuvent être expliqués et ainsi transposées dans le champ de l’intelligible. Par exemple, on apprend que c’était grâce aux *luttes hégémoniques* entre plusieurs « echeëllons identitaires » ou bien les *signifiants libérés*, que M.D. est arrivée à définir son identité *radicale lesbienne*. La séquence approche aussi des éléments qui viennent de la direction de la psychologie sociale tout en soulignant le processus de la construction de l’identité par rapport à l’Autrui dans le cadre de l’*antagonisme social*.

L’intention de l’auteur de la deuxième partie du livre a pour but l’analyse dans le cadre de la théorie du discours de la manière dont le Front national et parti hollandais Lijst Pim Fortuyn ont construit leur identité en tant que partis radicaux populists. En suivant une logique méthodologique assez stricte, Oana Crăciun dedique une grande partie de son étude au cadre théorique de la problématique. Ainsi, elle s’arrête d’abord sur des concepts-clé de la théorie du discours, en faisant une description sélective des principales définitions et des approches des théoriciens les plus avisés dans le domaine. Son travail est utile car il offre une synthèse des études consacrées dans l’analyse du discours, en évoquant les opinions des auteurs tels que Gunther Kress, Wendy Holloway, Sue Widdicombe, en ce qui concerne la conceptualisation du discours, et surtout les œuvres de Chantal Mouffe et Ernesto Laclau, les pionniers de la troisième génération de
la théorie du discours, qui reposent sur deux concepts centraux : hégémonie et antagonisme.

Avant de se lancer dans l’analyse des deux partis radicaux, le lecteur est fixé dans le cadre conceptuel de l’ *Analyse critique du discours*, en se familiarisant avec les outils discursifs de celle-ci : les stratégies référentielles, les mouvements sémantiques, la réthorique, les topos et les contes narratifs. Comme mademoiselle Crăciun observe, les deux partis sujets de l’analyse se sont construits une identité hégémonique de nature *populiste radicale* tout en « plaçant les identités hétérogènes dans une chaîne d’équivalence et en opposant la chaîne à un élément »². Pour le Front national et le LPF, les identités subordonnées, selon l’autrice, se réfèrent à l’identité fasciste, l’identité raciste et celle populiste. Pour chaque de ces identités, les partis se qualifient plus ou moins marquent ainsi différences entre eux ; par exemple, le FN possède une identité fasciste plus évidente que le LPF, car il emploie des thèmes du discours fasciste et soutient des principes fascistes ; de la même manière se contournent des différences en ce qui concerne le degré dans lequel les groupes politiques s’encadrent dans les cadres idéologiques des autres identités qui forment l’identité dominante radicale populiste.

L’article sur l’intervention américaine en Iraq peut susciter au début une recérence vu qu’il s’agit d’un sujet saturé, mais si on contrevient cette première impression, on se rendra compte qu’il s’agit en fait d’une toute autre vision sur le sujet. L’autrice veut donner une analyse moins conventionnelle à la guerre contre la terreur, en approchant le dessous du discours sur le terrorisme des États-Unis et surtout du discours qui a été mis en place pour rendre possible l’ « Operation Iraqi Freedom ».

Elle s’est établie comme point de départ les événements du 9 Septembre qu’elle soumet à une laborieuse analyse pour voir comment les États unis en ont fait un « turning point », pas seulement de leur histoire, mais aussi de l’histoire mondiale. Pourquoi cet événement est tellement grandieux ? D’abord, souligne l’autrice, parce qu’il en donne l’impression, mais on peut découvrir des raisons plus « sérieuses », comme la taille de l’objectif des attaques. Puis, quel est le sens de l’événement ? Une tragédie, un crime ou bien un acte de guerre ? On est clairement expliqué que le sens attribué au 9/11 a en fait justifié les actions ultérieures des États unis dans la

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² *Ibidem*, pp. 68.
direction de la guerre contre la terreur et le terrorisme et surtout ont offert une ligne directrice pour construire le discours identitaire américain, car « la nomination du 9/11 comme acte de guerre mène à une certaine vision de la politique autour de la dichotomie ami/ennemi »3, dichotomie qui structure de même le monde entier dans deux champs : les amis ou bien les ennemis des États-Unis.

L’Opération Iraqi Freedom représente en fait une matérialisation de la guerre contre la terreur, car avec celle-ci l’ennemi- le terrorisme, une notion vague, qui n’avait de définition précise, prend une forme spécifique : le rogue state. Pourquoi on est arrivé à faire cette équivalence, car jusqu’aux événements de 9/11, bien que les rogue states existaient, on ne les avait pas considérés comme une menace terroriste ? Voilà une question à laquelle l’autrice repond en mettant en évidence l’évolution de la définition des menaces à la sécurité nationale et internationale et qui détermine aussi une nouvelle approche de la question de la défense nationale. Le lecteur se rendra compte bien que la manière dont les États-Unis ont construit la menace posée par les réseaux terroristes et les rogue regimes, à travers le discours politique, a engendré une certaine perception de ceux-ci en tant que menaces de la sécurité américaine tout en justifiant ainsi le preemptive attack pour éviter qu’un nouveau 9/11 ait lieu.

L’analyse de la guerre en Iraq met en évidence des aspects qui ne sont pas approchés dans les œuvres traditionelles. Ainsi, on perçoit des éléments du discours officiel américain justifiant l’opération et du discours de la presse qui, à une première vue, sont imperceptibles. Par exemple, l’invocation de l’intervention humanitaire comme trait de l’intervention américaine, est dissoute, car en fait l’intervention ne servait pas à la protection d’un Autrui vulnérable, le peuple irakien, mais à la protection du Soi. D’une manière générale, l’autrice montre que toutes les actions des États-Unis faites dans le cadre de la guerre contre la terreur sont légitimées du point de vue idéologique à travers un discours identitaire, conturé autour l’image d’un Soi défini par l’antagonisme avec un Autrui. C’est un discours

3 Ibidem, pp. 85.
à double portée : acquérir la légitimité des actions gouvernementales en face de l’électorat et obtenir l’adhérence et ainsi l’appui de la communauté internationale.

Suivant l’idée selon laquelle la qualité prevaut en face de la quantité, le lecteur ne devrait pas se laisser trompé par la dimension du livre, car il y trouvera une densité d’idées assez considérable, ce court article n’ayant pour but que l’inciter à découvrir une nouveau et subtile cadre d’analyse du politique. La théorie du discours représente une voie d’accès à des aspects plus profondes de la réalité ; c’est un outil pour apprendre comment lire critiquement les données et ainsi pour se familiariser avec aux tertypes que le pouvoir met en œuvre pour aboutir à ses fins.

Les jeunes chercheurs y trouveront une vraie leçon de recherche méthodologique ; exemple qui leurs apprend comment approcher les faits matériaux par le filtre des hypothèses sur lesquelles est fondée une théorie.
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