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MODERN DIPLOMACY: ENTREPRENEURSHIP AS A DIPLOMATIC INSTRUMENT?

EXPLORING ENTREPRENEURSHIP-BASED DIPLOMACY

E I K O N

București, 2022

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CHAPTER 1.

SETTING THE THEORETICAL BACKGROUND: CONSTRUCTIVISM

Introductory considerations

This opening chapter outlines the theoretical foundation of the thesis, providing an overview of constructivism. The starting point was to identify a framework able to facilitate the understanding of the complexity and dynamic of the international environment nowadays. In this sense, I reviewed the main theories of international relations¹², looking for an approach supporting the description of the potential and of the evolution of diplomacy in this new world politics.

Realism, one of the central approaches in international relations, states that international politics is governed by objective rules rooted in the human nature which is dominated by egoism, malice and the will for power. According to its theoreticians, the state interest is defined in terms of power and the nature of the international system is the anarchy. In this conditions, the war cannot be avoided due to the conflicting interests of states which causes states a permanent suspicious attitude in their relation with others. Also, realists see a distinction between moral aspirations and moral rules. In this context,

¹² Miroiu, A., Ungureanu, R.S., coord., *Manual de relații internaționale* (Iași: Polirom, 2006)

the political field is autonomous in relation to other domains which have to subordinate. Shortly said, the international system is, in the view of realists, similar to a pool table where states are the balls and the clashes around them are irregular and inevitable.

Liberalism offers a moral perspective on international relations, considering that the individual decision is able to shape a peaceful world. Liberalists explain that conflicts can be solved through peaceful methods, presenting security as a common good, but also a common responsibility. In other words, liberalism promotes the idea of all against one in the sense that if a member of the international system interrupts the common peace it has to face the force of all the other members. Summarizing, in liberalism, individual is the main actor, while state is an institutional construction.

Rationalism or the English School is defined through concepts such as: international society, evolutionary change, peaceful co-existence and security regime. According to the rationalists, the international relations consist in an international society (also called society of states) – a group of states which have common values and interests, are linked through common rules and share common institutions. All the states are eager to preserve this type of system and to prevent the recurrence of the anarchy which is synonym with chaos and uncertainty. Thus, even if there is no central authority, the order is maintained.

Neorealism explains that the interactions happening in the international system are shaped by its structure, i.e. the binding conditions affecting the behaviour of actors, modelling the political process through socialisation of actors and the competition among them. For neorealists, states are the main actors of the system and anarchy is its organising principle. State interests are defined in terms of

capabilities, the agenda being top-down ordered from high politics to low politics topics.

Neoliberalism emphasises the cooperation between states through institutions. The main actors of the system are not only the states, but anyone able to influence the dynamic of the international life. They guide their actions based on their preferences and intentions which are shaped differently according to the systemic conditions. The international agenda is, thus, flexible, the main aim being to cooperate when there is a common interest.

Constructivism outlines that the actors and their social structures are mutually built. According to its theoreticians anarchy does not put pressure on the states and does not determine their behaviour, because actors are the result of the cultural environment. In this sense, the interests of the states are shaped through interaction. Thus, the social framework determines the actors' identities. A central assumption of constructivists is that the international system is a social fact, its existence being dependent on the awareness of the actors on it.

This short review reflects that the majority of these approaches is focused on the international system - level three of analysis in international relations, fact that is also observed in the literature by Todorean¹³, who explain the concept of diplomacy through the lens of each theory:

- For realists, diplomacy is a tool through which states operationalize, keep and also increase the power of the state if it is based on other attributes of power, as for example military force; in this sense, it is part of the high politics and only a small number of people – the elites- can access it. Thus, the diplomacy specific to realism is classic or club diplomacy.

- Liberalists, who promote equality between big and small power, the right of people to self-determination and the collective security system, call for an open diplomacy which have to ensure the monitoring of the security policy by the public. The correspondent type of diplomacy for liberalism is conference diplomacy.

- For neorealists, diplomacy and foreign policy are irrelevant due to the systemic approach, a comprehensive perspective which does not give importance to the international institutions.

- Neoliberalism emphasizes diplomacy as an institutions of the international system, some of its assumptions being closely connected with the diplomatic practice – e.g. flexibility of the international agenda, security regimes, international organisations, acceptance of various actors in international relations along with the states. In this context, it explains the emergence of multilateral diplomacy.

- Constructivism offers a broad framework to understand the evolution of diplomacy, mainly its modern evolution. The common elements are: the diplomatic contacts are able to shape identities through their interactions; the significance of the manner in which a state sees itself and the states around; the importance of symbols and status which shape and transmit identities; the relation between institutions and values and the capacity of communication – the diplomatic discourse – to change the status quo.

From all these, constructivism appears to be a forward-looking approach for the aim of our thesis. Todorean provides also an argument supporting this selection. According to the author, constructivism is an adequate framework to study diplomacy because it interferes with all the three levels of analysis in international relations. Specifically, its assumptions place constructivism between the third and the second levels (international system and state) while open the

¹³ Todorean, O., "Diplomația", in *Relații Internaționale Contemporane: Teme centrale în politica mondială*, ed. Biro, D. (Iași: Polirom, 2013), 62

contribution of the first level (individual) by its emphasis on perceptions, identities and communication among actors: “constructivism is focused on theorising and identifying complex processes through which actors define each other and themselves through the interactions among them and, as a result of this interaction, they “build” each other and themselves”.

Below the corpus of ideas of constructivism will be presented in detail, its main rationale guiding the entire work of this thesis.

1.1. Defining constructivism

Constructivism is one of the main approaches of international relations, introduced in literature in the 90s by Professor Alexander Wendt¹⁴. It caught on with the scholars and practitioners in the field, being one of the most popular perspectives used to understand and to explain the international relations. The central point of the theory is represented by the social space¹⁵, social rules being vitally in the world politics¹⁶. Briefly, constructivism is shaped by the following ideas: the things surrounding us are meaningful only if taken into consideration with social processes; actors change their behaviour depending on the significance given to certain processes and phenomena; the

¹⁴ Among the articles which coined the concept there are: Wendt, A. „Anarchy is what states make of it: the social construction of power politics”, *International organization* 46, no. 2 (1992): 391-425.; Wendt, A., *Social theory of international politics* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1999)

¹⁵ Todorean, O. „Constructivismul în Relațiile Internaționale”, in *Manual de Relații Internaționale*, coord. Miroiu A., Ungureanu, R.S. (Iasi: Polirom, 2006), 157

¹⁶ Troncota, M. „Bosnia Herzegovina, forever at cross roads? Constructing „the other” in Brčko District”. *Eurolimes*, Supl. 3, (2011), 49. <https://nbn-resolving.org/urn:nbn:de:0168-ssoar-293763>

interests of actors are shaped as a result of their interaction, based on their previous experience¹⁷.

1.1.1 The emergence of constructivism in international relations

Constructivism emerged as a midway in the dispute between realism and liberalism, contesting both of them due to their rationalist character¹⁸: Christiansen, Jorgensen and Wiener¹⁹ considers constructivism as a mid-range approach, between rationalism, covering mainly neoliberalism and neorealism and reflectivism, framed by a broad set of approaches such as: postmodernism, feminism, normative theory, critical theory and historical sociology, all intersecting at points they reject.

Reus-Smit²⁰ made an in-depth analysis of how constructivism was framed along time, offering key insights on for understanding how the approach emerged. The author explains that constructivism may be considered as an extension of the critical theory which disapproves the way in which rationalists portray the social actors as atomistic egoists with interests shaped prior to the social interaction and argues that the interests and identities of the actors are socially constructed. The differentiation between the two approaches consists in the focus of constructivism on empirical analysis and, more specific, on

¹⁷ Reus-Smit, C., “Constructivismul”, in *Teorii ale relațiilor internaționale*, ed. Burchill, S et al., trans. Cristina Bobu (Iași: Institutul European, 2008), 218

¹⁸ Ion, O.A., *Guvernanta Uniunii Europene. Abordari actuale*. (Iași: Polirom, 2013).

¹⁹ Christiansen, T., Jorgensen, K.E, and Wiener, A., „The social construction of Europe”, *Journal of European Public Policy*, 6:4 (1999), 528-544

²⁰ Reus-Smit, C., “Constructivismul”, 207-231

the analysis of world politics based on a systematic analysis of the empirical pieces which define it.

According to Reus-Smith, four factors contributed to the emergence of constructivism: firstly, there was the opportunity to prove the explanatory capacity of the non-critical approaches as a response to the challenge addressed by rationalists for an in-depth analysis of the international relations; secondly, the end of the Cold War proved the limits of the neorealism and neoliberalism theories as none of them were able to explain the transformations which shaped the new global order at that time, as well as the assumptions of the critical theory according to which practice is determined by theory because the global dynamic had an evolution different from the theoretical predictions; thirdly, the generation of scholar activating in the period which marked the end of the Cold War and in the years after faced new questions on the world politics which required explanations (e.g. the dynamic of international change, the role of non-state actors, human rights); fourthly, there was a shift of interests from rationalism to constructivism which put the latter in the forefront of the theoretical debate. All these nurtured the evolution of three types of constructivism: systemic, unit-level and holistic. The systemic perspective is focused on the interaction between the state actors and it sees the world politics as the sum of their international interaction. Wendt²¹, which is also the main representative of constructivism, is the author who promote this perspective, considering that the state activities and interested are influenced by the state identity (the role which is attributed to a state at international level and the features – human, material, cultural, etc. – which form the state). The second type of constructivism presented by Reus-Smith is the unit-level which is focus on the liaison between the legal and social

²¹ Wendt, 1992 in Reus-Smit, „Constructivismul”, 218

norms and the state identity and interests. The main scholar promoting the concept is Katzenstein²² who advocates for the idea that the internal determinants of national policies matters. Holistic constructivism, the third type mentioned by Reus-Smith, merges the first two approaches, considering that domestic and international are two faces of the same coin, the world politics. In this sense, Ruggie²³ focuses on the changes of international systems and highlight the importance of frameworks of knowledge as the sovereign states nowadays evolved on the wreck of European feudalism. Under the same umbrella of holistic constructivism, scholars such as Koslowski and Kratochwil²⁴ analyse the change within the modern system, underlining the role of changing ideas on international order and security. Together, both these approaches show the capacity of the holistic constructivism to explain not only the evolution of the international system, but also the social identities which generated them.

1.1.2 Main assumptions of constructivism

In presenting constructivism, the literature uses the plural „approaches” or „theories”. In this sense, Ungureanu²⁵ remarks that it is a theoretical work, including various frameworks, fact that can be observed also in the previous section.

The work of Todorean²⁶ entails an inquiry into the corpus of ideas of constructivism. Gathering various theoretical perspectives, the author highlights that,

²² Katzenstein, 1996, in Reus-Smit, „Constructivismul”, 219

²³ Ruggie, 1993, Reus-Smit, „Constructivismul”, 220

²⁴ Koslowski and Kratochwil, 1995, Reus-Smit, „Constructivismul”, 220

²⁵ Ungureanu, R.S, *Securitate, suveranitate și instituții internaționale: crizele din Europa de Sud-Est în anii '90*. (Iași: Polirom, 2010), 90-98

²⁶ Todorean, O., „Constructivismul în Relațiile Internaționale”, 155-163

according to the constructivists' vision, the social world has three components: intersubjective meanings, subjective knowledge and material objects. This means that no one can contest the existence of the material things, but their sense is given by the knowledge of each actor and the meaning attributed by the members of a community. In other words, the same material data can produce different social consequences if the contexts are changing.

Going further, Todorean presents a new assumption of constructivism by referring to the fact that the way in which actors act with regard to phenomena, processes, other actors – in a word, with social objects- is shaped by the perceived significance of these. From this perspective, the changes in the international system are produced by the manner in which states redefine themselves and their relations with the other actors, the latter being also subject to the same process of redefining their relations with old friends or enemies. In addition, another constructivist statement refers to the interactions of agents, which frame the meanings assigned to the social world. Advancing the explanation from this angle, the past interactions become a fundamental element in the process of attributing roles and identities to other actors activating at international level. The main ingredient of the process of building identities is represented by the interests of actors which are also shaped by interaction, being permanently defined and redefined. During this process, their identity and the meaning of their contextual situations are also remodelled.

Following this, the assumption on international system arises: this is a social fact. More precisely, "constructivism states that international system, as part of social reality, <builds> actors, contributes to their development and to the manner they define themselves"²⁷. In other words, the international system is the sum of

²⁷ Ibid., 159

interactions between the international actors. Todorean explains that this is easy to understand by comparing with the domestic level, as no society exists in the absence of its main components, people and institutions, which transform the society once they transform themselves. In the same rationale, the agents and the institutions act, give significance to their external environment and perceive themselves depending on the lines of the society where they live in, as individuals or groups.

Shortly said, constructivists explain the international dynamic through cultural and not through materials factors. Two assumptions highlighted by Ungureanu²⁸ have the capacity to enrich the current section. One mentions that non-material structures are responsible for shaping identities, the interests of the actors being co-develop and not only stated. This reflect the perspective of Wendt²⁹, who explained that the relations between states are based on an identify-given process – i.e. a process in which the representation of the other is shaped. Acknowledging the role of sovereignty as the cornerstone of the international system, the author considers that this results from mutual recognition and non-intervention, perspective that explains why wars are not characteristic to the cotemporary period.

Another assumption of constructivism mentioned by Ungureanu focuses on the role of international institutions, understood as formal and informal rules which shape the preferences and the identities of the actors³⁰. According to

²⁸ Ungureanu, R.S., *Securitate, suveranitate și instituții internaționale: crizele din Europa de Sud-Est în anii '90*, 95

²⁹ Wendt, 1992, 1995 in Ungureanu, R.S., *Securitate, suveranitate și instituții internaționale: crizele din Europa de Sud-Est în anii '90*, 92

³⁰ Pollack, M. A., „Elaborarea politicilor UE- teoretizări”, in „Elaborarea Politicilor în Uniunea Europeană”, coord. Wallace H., Wallace W. și Pollack M.A, trans. by Filip Gâdiuță (București: Institutul European din România, 2005), 22