

THE RUSSIAN INVASION OF UKRAINE THROUGH THE LENS OF CONSTRUCTIVISM

Risto Damovski¹

Master of Arts in Political Science – Iustinianus Primus Faculty of Law

Abstract: The Russian invasion of Ukraine has considerably reshaped the global security landscape, exposing and presenting significant defense strategy challenges. The wider analysis of the invasion has been presented from the perspective of realism and liberalism, as the two dominant theories of international relations, for other theories which may be critical in understanding the issue at hand, have been overlooked. For instance, constructivism offers a unique perspective by emphasizing the role of identity, historical narratives and social structures in shaping state behavior. Drawing on Alexander Wendt's theoretical framework, this study explores how Russia perceives Ukraine as an inseparable part of its historical and cultural identity and how such perception has influenced its foreign policy. Additionally, the study delves into how Ukraine's post-2014 identity shift and alignment with Western institutions have challenged Russia's self-construed image of a dominant power. Findings suggest that constructivism provides valuable insights into the roots of the invasion, the importance of individuals, highlighting motives behind Russia's decision-making processes, and their impact on European and global security.

Keywords: International Relations Theories, Constructivism, Russian invasion of Ukraine, Alexander Wendt, Identity, Nationalism

Introduction

International relations ("IR") theories represent a crucial starting point in the attempt to analyze and interpret complex events related to IR and international politics. One such complex event is the Russian invasion of Ukraine, which began on February 24th, 2022. The commencement of the invasion precipitated a state of threatened world peace, while great powers grew increasingly anxious for their national security. This created an environment in which such countries will readily enter war, hence, the reason for analyzing and elaborating on the Russian invasion of Ukraine through IR theories, as a "peace-threatening event".

The research topic of this paper delves into the Russian invasion of Ukraine through the lens of constructivism as an IR theory. This study is socially justifiable merely because it offers a perspective completely neglected in IR discourse related to the Russian invasion of Ukraine – an analysis of a specific militarily aggressive behavior of one state to another through the lens of constructivism. Existing dominant theories, i.e. realism and liberalism, prove insignificant for an extensive analysis, while constructivism offers a unique angle necessary to understand the invasion and supplement existing analyses and perspectives.

¹ Contact address: risto_damovski@hotmail.com

Peace negotiations and attempts on reaching a ceasefire have been discussed in the course of 2025, therefore, analyzing the invasion may seem counterintuitive. However, it is still necessary to deeply examine the reasons for its initiation, precisely due to the prospects of establishing peace.

From a methodological point of view, this paper follows descriptive, historical and comparative methods supported by theoretical analysis and literature review in the attempt to interpret both history and contemporary context within the framework of the constructivist theory.

More specifically, the first part of this paper focuses on the general aspects of social constructivism, drawing from the research and conclusions of its most notable thinkers. Social constructivism as an undermined IR theory needs to be used in explaining and providing a unique theoretical outlook on the war in Ukraine. In so doing, Alexander Wendt's "soft" constructivism is essential in dissecting reasons for the invasion which lie below the surface, while deeply examining great power politics as a focal point in IR and international politics. The second part of this paper focuses narrowly on the research topic – the Russian invasion of Ukraine through the lens of constructivism, so as to provide an otherwise overlooked perspective.

1. Social Constructivism

Social constructivism, as a social meta-theory, is heavily influenced by Georg Wilhelm Friedrich Hegel. Such influence has become further expanded by pioneering thoughts and works in the field of sociology, predominantly by Max Weber and Émile Durkheim. "The Social Construction of Reality: A Treatise in the Sociology of Knowledge" (Berger & Luckmann, 1967) attempts to explain that reality is a social construct, indirectly implying that constructivism can be used as an IR theory. An additional influence upon the social-constructivist theory in IR is Giddens' "The Constitution of Society: Outline of the Theory of Structuration" (Giddens, 1984). Giddens defines the term "structuration" as used to analyze relations between structures and social actors. By use of the word "structures", Giddens refers to norms and rules facilitating social action, yet these do not determine social actors. Additionally, even if "structures" represent a form of limitation on social actors, it does not signify that social actors cannot change structures – an argument used when criticizing neorealist's understanding of anarchy. The structure of the anarchic international system is a type of predecessor to IR, without implying that such structure is unchangeable.

The term "constructivism" in the context of IR is firstly used by Nicholas Onuf in his work "World of Our Making: Rules and Rule in Social Theory and International Relations" (Onuf, 1989). In the 90s of the 20th century, primarily due to the crisis stemming from neo-realism and the fall of the bipolar world configuration, constructivism in IR is already developing at large speed. Realism, as historically the most dominant IR theory, has always had a materialistic bias towards the explanation of IR and international politics. Power, and balance of power by great state actors, are key factors in IR and are determined by material aspects, such as war, economic capabilities and/or geographic location. For constructivists, the social, and by extension, the political world, are wholly human domains, which signifies they cannot exist outside of the human psyche, and neither can IR. Therefore, ideas stemming from such human consciousness (e.g. identities, political mythology, political ideologies, beliefs, etc.) must be studied. This results in forming systems of shared knowledge which contain all socially

constructed elements and are inherently a part of IR. Likewise, international politics cannot exist outside this scope and simply be materially programmed and determined. International politics and IR exist because they are human creations upon which ideas, norms and identities have significant influence, same as the mere sovereign state on which IR are based. To summarize, if ideas and systems of shared knowledge change, so would the international system. That is why constructivism has extensive influence, as the shift in understanding that some features of IR (e.g. anarchy) are not simply materially programmed and determined has far-reaching implications on IR theories.

1.1. Alexander Wendt's Constructivism

Alexander Wendt, as the most prominent constructivist author, disputes the traditional acceptance of anarchy as materially assigned and immutable through his monumental essay "Anarchy is what states make of it: the social construction of power politics" (Wendt, 1992), further outlined in his thought that "500 British nuclear weapons are less threatening to the United States than 5 North Korean nuclear weapons" (Wendt, 1995: 73). According to Wendt, this conclusion arises from the social meanings we ascribe to material elements, which are crucial in shaping how they are to be perceived. Namely, nuclear weapons by themselves are insignificant if isolated from the social context in which they exist. By way of this example, Wendt demonstrates that with the help of constructivism, IR and international politics can be better understood if socially constructed elements are incorporated in the studies and understanding of the material world. Refusing the predetermined and purely materialistic meaning of anarchy in terms of IR, especially the meaning of anarchy in the context of neorealism, Wendt differentiates between three types of anarchy: Hobbesian, Lockean and Kantian (Wendt, 1995: 246-312). The Hobbesian type of anarchy, according to Wendt, represents a sort of mirroring of Hobbes' natural state in IR: states perceive each other as enemies and war is an adequate means to resolve issues and ensure survival in IR. This type of anarchy, according to Wendt, was historically the most dominant means of action up until the Thirty Years' War (Jackson & Sorensen, 2013: 215-218). In the Lockean type of anarchy, the states perceive, and largely experience each other as rivals, taking into consideration the right of existence of other states in IR. According to Wendt, the Lockean anarchy is historically noticeable after the Peace of Westphalia in 1648 (Jackson & Sorensen, 2013: 215-218). The Kantian anarchy contains Kant's ideal of eternal peace among the republics. Based on this type of anarchy, states perceive each other as allies who resolve issues and disputes in a peaceful manner and through mutual collaboration in order to achieve mutual interests. For Wendt, this type of anarchy has been established between liberal democracies at the end of the Second World War (Jackson & Sorensen, 2013: 215-218). Through differentiating between three types of anarchy, for the first time Wendt questions its meaning and completely challenges anarchy in the domain of socially acceptable elements.

Wendt considers two starting points of constructivism - the first being the structure of human association as determined by shared ideas, instead of material forces, while the second being that identities and interests of actors are construed by ideas, instead of being naturally and formally assigned (Wendt, 1999: 1). Taking into consideration the aforementioned, Wendt considers himself to be a representative of a "soft" constructivism, due to the fact that he accepts part of the material and established perspectives so far. In doing so, Wendt does not dispute the revolutionary influence of neorealism on IR and the basis for further analy-

sis and understanding of IR originating in Kenneth Waltz's book "Theory of International Politics" (Waltz, 1979). Neorealism's influence on other theories, especially on liberalism, was extensive, and Wendt goes as far as to question whether fundamental differences between neorealism and neoliberalism even exist. Namely, in line with Wendt's propositions, it seems as though the debate surrounding both theories is based in discussion for a particular state's risk-assuming appetite for achieving national interests (Wendt, 1999: 1). As was relayed above, Wendt does not believe in the absolute determination of anarchy. According to neorealists, the structure of the anarchic international system leads to states relying on "self-help".

Wendt additionally outlines an interesting aspect within the sub-forms of neorealism, i.e. the undermining of Waltz's conclusion that structure determines state action. Consequently, state action is determined by Stephen Walt's "balance of threat" principle, instead of Waltz's traditional balance of power. Although Walt (1985) does not explicitly define the nature of threats, he implicitly implies that threats are socially constructed. As a result, except by defining socially constructed elements, such as identities and ideas, Waltz's structure cannot predict state actions in the anarchic international system. Thus, the principle of "self-help" represents a system of shared knowledge and practice established in the structure of the anarchic international system (Wendt, 1992: 396). For Wendt, states' interest and their socially constructed identity are two inseparable issues. States by themselves do not have a national interest and they reflexively and mechanically try to achieve it. With this, there is a noticeable opposition to neorealism and its principle that state interests, to a larger or smaller extent, are determined by the structure of the anarchic international system. The identities that states ascribe to each other and those deriving from their own creation are also important in determining national interest. Wendt illustrates this through the example that the USA and the USSR could not have been able to determine their national interest without the contribution of threats and enemy actions arising from the Cold War. It is evident that the threats and insecurities that states experience and perceive are socially constructed and exist only in relations with other states. Taking these perspectives on security and perceived threats into consideration, as well as the explanation of the concept of 'self-help' through the lens of constructivism mentioned above, it is important to elaborate on the concept of sovereignty. For Wendt, sovereignty represents a system of shared knowledge and accepted practice, instead of a once-and-for-all creation and norm assigned to states outside of their interaction (Wendt, 1992: 413). Despite criticism towards realism, in a general sense, and neorealism, more specifically, Wendt agrees that the state should be a key factor in the research agenda of IR theories. What should be altered instead is the incorporation of the constructivist perspective and analysis of national interest through the lens of socially constructed elements. It is important to afford great attention to the systems of shared knowledge and already established practices in the key concepts of IR, such as: anarchy, large states' balance of power, security, survival and interests. Constructivism is essential in analyzing and elaborating on the Russian invasion of Ukraine due to the lack of a fundamental understanding of how Russia perceives itself, its interests and its established practice in interacting with states which are in its domain of interest. If one considers that these perspectives are isolated from the discourse surrounding the Ukraine invasion, constructivism is necessary.

2. The Russian Invasion of Ukraine through the lens of Constructivism

Applying constructivism to research of the Russian invasion of Ukraine provides a perspective otherwise neglected by all existing theories. Highlighting Russia's self-perception and how it interprets its own history will result in understanding the reasons behind the invasion, instead of simply accentuating material elements without contextual insight. Constructivism provides for a fundamental understanding of the material world through systems of shared knowledge and the social context, as outlined in Wendt's example of "threats" by nuclear weapons, more specifically which state has nuclear weapons at its disposal and the nature of its relations with other states. Identities, values and ideas, as well as interpreting the meaning of the material world through these elements, are important in understanding state relations and state actions driven by national interest. Wendt, as a "soft" constructivist, recognizes the ontological advantage of the material world, and consequently, the meaning that realists afford to anarchy, security dilemmas, military and economic power, geography and geopolitics. However, all these material elements and the implications they would have (and they have) upon IR depend on their interaction with socially constructed ideas, identities and values. Such interaction illustrates what an existential threat entails in terms of survival and great powers' interest. The threat that states perceive is not exclusively determined by the material capabilities of other states in IR but also largely depends on the ideas and narratives built on identities and how a great power shares and proclaims them in IR and international politics. Constructivism also rejects determinism in relation to socially constructed elements. Namely, identities, values and ideas are facts, but they exist only as long as people agree that they exist, that is, they form a system of shared knowledge. These systems of shared knowledge are in a state of constant possibility of change, and that change would then have an impact on reality itself.

Russia perceives itself and generally has always been recognized as a great power. The status of a great power is historically supported and is necessary in creating a political myth to justify such a status. The identity, created on historical political myths contributes towards determining state interest and state action. Therefore, Russia perceives its status as a great power through its "exceptionality". Representing itself as the "Third Rome" and calling upon the Byzantine heritage, as a protector of orthodox Christianity, its followers and believers, the leader of Pan-Slavic ideas, as well as the center of the Comintern, are aspects which historically have confirmed the "exceptionalism" of Russia in its own eyes (Kotkin, 2016: 3-5). These identity narratives undoubtedly represent a source of power and "tool" states use, which influences the creation and fulfilment of state interest. Concluding that there is some sort of "exceptionality" which supports the existence and action of Russia in IR is not unique to Russia, to the contrary, it can be noticed in the context of other great powers through history. China, for instance, expresses its "exceptionality" through the call for its "Mandate of Heaven" (Kotkin, 2016: 3-5). The USA builds its "exceptionality" in emphasizing differences and "progressiveness" in comparison to European states after its 1776 independence (Kotkin, 2016: 3-5). France and Great Britain project their "exceptionality" through projecting their way of life and the narrative that they are representatives of what is to be considered "civilized" and "progressive" in the world (Kotkin, 2016: 3-5).

At the end of the Cold War, Russia was met with difficulties in defining its "exceptionality", and with that, the handling of threat over its status of a great power due to the dissolution of the Soviet Union. Consequently, Russia lost its status of a unique type of

communist empire, negatively impacting its status of a great power. Suddenly, a need for fast identity creation emerged, and primarily, defining what Russia represents in IR, so that it can survive and retain the status of a great power after the Cold War. Taking into consideration the short timeframe and the speed with which changes in Russia happened internally in the 1990s, as well as changes in IR after the Cold War, a type of amalgamation and attempt to unify the complex imperial and communist historical Russian heritage was created. Precisely by this attempt at merging and reconciling the complex Russian historical heritage, Russia built its self-perception and projected it into the world, and to that extent, in IR. Today, Russia perceives itself as a “civilizational” entity assuming a special international role thanks to the Euro-Asian geographic position (Titov, 2005), justifying the influence it has over former republics of the Soviet Union, especially Belarus and Ukraine. The perception of Russia for Belarus and Ukraine is different to other former Soviet republics, predominantly because of ethnic, cultural and linguistic closeness. Such closeness is interpreted by Russia as an undisputed and crucial part of the Russian civilization.

Russia does not observe and define Belarus and Ukraine solely as a part of its domain of interest and influence exercising its right to protect it due to its status of a great power, as purported by neorealists (Smith & Dawson, 2022: 176-195). To the contrary, these two states symbolize a part of the mere Russian identity and are essential components of the Russian “civilization” and the “Russian world” (Putin, 2021). Any attempt to remove or distance Ukraine from the Russian “civilization” is perceived as an attack on the Russian identity.

Based on the aforementioned, Russia evidently considers the influence of the West over Ukraine (as well as the possibility of the integration of Ukraine into the EU and NATO) as a threat to the Russian identity, escalating into the “inevitable” so-called “special military operation”. Hence, it is clear that Russia perceives the EU’s eastward enlargement as an identity threat. Russia’s lack of power to oppose the great EU expansion of 2004 additionally feeds the adversary perception of expansionism towards Ukraine, as Ukraine represents part of the “Russian world”. Along the same viewpoint, the Russian national narrative asserts that Ukraine and Ukrainians are not considered a separate state and people. This is largely due to the historical closeness, as well as the dissolution of the Soviet Union, which suddenly “separated” Russia from its civilizational components and loosened the foundations of the “Russian world” (Putin, 2021).

Similarly, if one considers the above, any attempt from Ukraine to construct a Ukrainian identity by emphasizing differences with Russia and resemblance to the West would be perceived as a threat. Therefore, the Russian invasion of Ukraine may be interpreted as Russia’s attempt to suppress the possibility of deepening the identity differences between Russia and Ukraine, which can only be accelerated by the integration of Ukraine into Western international organizations. The role of NATO and the West could be considered a catalyst of the invasion of Ukraine from Russia’s point of view, which in turn, has fundamentally affected IR. Russia’s stance in relation to the West, the EU and NATO, is far from surprising. The Cold War ended with the dissolution of the Soviet Union and Russia was positioned as a “loser” – for that reason Russia harbors resentment and maintains a negative perception that has persisted, persists and will continue to persist.

Russia’s narratives for justifying the invasion, as well as the possibility of Russia being perceived as a solidarist power, are connected to the question of identity. Namely, Russia points towards its obligations to protect the Russian population in Ukraine, whose identity

is endangered with Ukraine's attempt to create identity differences and position itself as an entity outside of the "Russian world". Additionally, Russia's self-ascribed obligation to protect is expanded towards the Russian speaking population, thereby asserting itself as a defender of the identity of the Russian "civilization" and the "Russian world". If one considers that Ukraine is undoubtedly a part of the Russian civilizational entity, one can draw the same conclusion, that is, the inevitable need to protect the Russian identity. It is worth noting that the endangerment and threat to the Russian identity in Ukraine, such as understood by Russia, trace back to the beginning of the Euromaidan protests and the Revolution which began in 2013 (Masters, 2023). Upon the annexation of Crimea in 2014, the conflicts in southern Ukraine began as well, with Russia supporting the separatist powers (Masters, 2023). The annexation of Crimea is Russia's geopolitical strategy to present itself as a dominant power in the Black Sea (one NATO member-states also have access to). However, it would be shortsighted and naïve to overlook the historical significance of Crimea for Russia, as it undoubtedly influenced the actions Russia took. This historical meaning defined the Crimea annexation as a risk worth taking because it plays a key role in fulfilling state interest. So far, it is clear that identity questions and the protection of identity play a large role in Russian state action in IR. To that extent, Russia, by way of emphasizing identity questions, creates a premise on which its imperialist appetites are protected. This does not dispute the constructivist viewpoint, to the contrary, it accentuates their role in creating state interest, and by extension, the role and influence such constructivist viewpoint has on the material world.

The constructivist perspectives based in historical and identity questions can be observed in Vladimir Putin's essay titled: "On the Historical Unity of Russians and Ukrainians" (Putin, 2021). The Russian president expresses his identity views on the Russian, Ukrainian and Belarussian population and goes as far to purport that Ukrainians and Belarussians are inseparable from Russia and the Russian "civilization". Putin interprets history in chronological order, starting from the ancient Russians, i.e., the Kievan Rus, until today, in his attempt to prove that there are no fundamental differences between what is "Russian" and what is "Ukrainian".

Ukraine and its history are entirely part of the Russian "civilization", and posing so-called "national questions" in the context of Ukraine is a historical fallacy and a product of anti-Russian communist perceptions. The "collective West's" influence, however, finds purpose in advancing its anti-Russian project which continued after the end of the Cold War, through Ukraine (Putin, 2021).

"But the fact is that the situation in Ukraine today is completely different because it involves a forced change of identity. And the most despicable thing is that the Russians in Ukraine are being forced not only to deny their roots, generations of their ancestors but also to believe that Russia is their enemy. It would not be an exaggeration to say that the path of forced assimilation, the formation of an ethnically pure Ukrainian state, aggressive towards Russia, is comparable in its consequences to the use of weapons of mass destruction against us. As a result of such a harsh and artificial division of Russians and Ukrainians, the Russian people in all may decrease by hundreds of thousands or even millions". (Putin, 2021)

Based on the above, it is more than evident that Vladimir Putin perceives the events in Ukraine as an existential threat, largely due to the attack on what he defines as the Russian identity. He compares the consequences from the alleged ethnic cleansing of the Russian population which happened in Ukraine with the consequences from the use of nuclear weapons

against Russia. In the context of Crimea, Putin expresses in his essay that its population had an opportunity to vote on a referendum for separation from Ukraine thanks to Russia and its intervention. In this manner, Russia has enabled the local Russian population in Ukraine to “rescue itself” from the possibility of being subjected to ethnic cleansing and the use of military force by Ukraine (Putin, 2021). Putin, at the end of his essay, poses the question of whether the existence of a sovereign Ukraine is possible, which simply attest to Russia’s historical imperialist appetites.

“I am confident that true sovereignty of Ukraine is possible only in partnership with Russia. Our spiritual, human and civilizational ties formed for centuries and have their origins in the same sources, they have been hardened by common trials, achievements and victories. Our kinship has been transmitted from generation to generation. It is in the hearts and the memory of people living in modern Russia and Ukraine, in the blood ties that unite millions of our families. Together we have always been and will be many times stronger and more successful. For we are one people”. (Putin, 2021)

Besides rejecting that there could be a sovereign Ukraine, Putin decidedly disputes the possibility of a Ukrainian identity that exists apart from the Russian one. As a result, any attempt to change the Ukrainian identity, excluding the Russian civilizational perspective, shall be considered as a threat to the mere identity of the Russian Federation. The independent and sovereign Ukrainian state should exist exclusively parallel to the Belarussian state, i.e. *de jure* independent and sovereign, while *de facto* under almost full control of its parent state – Russia. This essay was published in July 2021. Not a year after its publishing, i.e. February 24th 2022, the Russian invasion of Ukraine would begin. In some way, Putin’s essay is a declaration of war against Ukraine, whereby the lack of the West’s comprehension of this as a serious imperial motto contributes towards the start of the invasion. Regardless of whether Vladimir Putin, as Russia’s leader, truly believes in the viewpoints outlined in his essay, they nonetheless affect the creation of the Russian positions and interests in IR. The frivolous understanding and simple rejection of these stances by the West actually contributes towards Russia removing itself from its responsibility as a great power in maintaining stability in IR. This is additionally strengthened by the neorealist perspective, which position Russia as a reactive actor.

The constructivist views on Russia’s identity and self-perception have strongly influenced its decision to invade Ukraine. Refusing to recognize these views actually provides Russia with the opportunity to form an alibi and position itself as solely having a reactive role in the context of the EU and NATO expansionism eastward. Russia views the invasion and war in Ukraine through a civilizational perspective. NATO’s expansion, and by extension – the threat it represents for Russia, does not exist outside the domain of interaction between the material world and the world of socially constructed ideas, identities and values. In the case of the Russian invasion of Ukraine, they are deeply rooted in Russian history and its ideological position. Dismissing these factors, whether deemed absurd or not, has contributed towards an increase in the possibility of carrying out the invasion largely due to the lack of serious diplomatic discussions before it happened. To that extent, the responsibility lies with both the USA and Russia. The lack of diplomatic relations prior to the invasion, despite operating with the information that Russia had begun mobilizing its military power deriving from intelligence sources, strengthens the argument that Russia was determined to carry out the invasion in the past as a reactive act. Russia tries to justify the invasion specifically by accentuating cultural,

spiritual and identity perspectives, although such perspectives can be found in the roots of national interest creation – interests that ultimately drove the decision to invade Ukraine. The material world does not exist outside of socially constructed elements. Only through research, analysis and interpretation of interactions between the material world and social constructs can one try to explain the true complex state called ‘war’. Realists’ opinions on Ukraine’s integration to the West and the possibility of EU and NATO membership undeniably present a security threat for Russia, however, dismissing the expressed constructivist perspectives, as well as the Russia’s self-perception, represent a fundamental error in analyzing the Russian invasion of Ukraine. Constructivism offers an exclusive perspective to understand complex states, such as war, so that one can reach a position of establishing peace and stability in IR.

Conclusion

On February 24th 2022 the world was confronted with a new threat to global peace. The complexity of the events that unfolded contributed towards the need to interpret them through IR theories as an irreplaceable apparatus in the human efforts to understand state relations. Without applying this method, and without analyzing events in IR (especially war), there is a risk of exposure to simple reductionism of the events and a lack of opportunity to form crucial conclusions, and to that extent, build on human knowledge for IR and international politics. For those reasons, the research topic of this paper is the Russian invasion of Ukraine, by way of a theoretical analysis and application of the traditional, classical research approach that is characterized by the explicit reliance upon the exercise of judgment, giving a more accurate overview of a specific military-aggressive action from Russia against Ukraine.

The initial conclusion of this paper, drawing on its social justifiability, is to highlight a perspective that is evidently left out from the mainstream observations on the Russian invasion of Ukraine through IR theories. Constructivism offers a nuanced and layered angle necessary for understanding the research topic. It emphasizes the undoubted importance of identity and political myths created by states, especially great powers, in the attempt to justify their actions in IR and international politics. Additionally, it dismisses the simple materialistic and reductionist outlook on the war in Ukraine, most notably referenced in neorealist research agenda.

Constructivism positions identity questions as key factors in international politics. Namely, if Russia’s self-perception is considered, it is apparent that its determined area of influence does not rely purely on a materialistic necessity and protection of its mere existence as a great power, rather, illustrates that any sort of threat to its area of influence as a great power at the same time presents a fundamental threat on Russian identity. This is, in fact, a central constructivist position, while refusing to accept the correlation between military and economic power, geopolitics, the material world with its systems of shared knowledge, as well as ideas and value systems as socially constructed, presents a cardinal mistake in analyzing and interpreting IR and international politics.

Furthermore, constructivism emphasizes the importance of ideas shared by leaders of great powers, such as Russia’s president, Vladimir Putin. The analysis of Putin’s essay depicted Russia’s self-perception and how it views its indisputable imperialistic-civilizational appetites through an identity prism.

Constructivism not only offers a unique approach to analyzing the research topic, it subsequently “enriches” already established theoretical perspectives. Every military inva-

sion should be condemned. Establishing peace and initiating the process of reconciliation between Russia and Ukraine, is essential for establishing and maintaining peace in Europe, and by extension, world peace. Thus, the use of IR theories should result in understanding the invasion as is, in order to gain the necessary knowledge to pursue peace through diplomatic negotiations. In other words, understanding an issue starts at its root, while resolutions for suppressing war cannot be found in the analysis of surface-level factors and simple judgment, which, historically have proven to achieve only temporary, instead of long-term peace.

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