

CAN ALEXANDER WENDT'S APPROACH PROVIDE A CONVINCING CONSTRUCTIVIST ACCOUNT OF INTERNATIONAL POLITICS THAT WOULD HELP EXPLAIN CONTEMPORARY CONFLICT?

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Abstract

In the world of contemporary conflicts that lead to new states and development issues, new theories are needed to explain these events. This essay argues that the widely acclaimed approach to constructivism taken by Alexander Wendt is inadequate to account for the constant change in international politics, especially in recent post-conflict zones. The reason for the failure to explain war as a social practice is found at a profound theoretical level, i.e. in the very construction of agency and structure proposed. Wendt's constructivism relies on state-based methodology, which in turn leads to the neglect of other actors and identities vital for contemporary conflict analysis.

The essay also shows how his idea of international anarchy as the context for international politics reinforces these same deficiencies primarily due to abandoning the constructivist argument. It points to the works of other constructivists who illustrate these deficiencies and offer more convincing alternatives to segments of Wendt's argument. All this is to show that contemporary theories often do not follow political events and hence become useless to account for the ever-changing nature of conflict.

Introduction

Constructivism as an IR approach is extensively used to account for conflict. In the world of contemporary conflicts that lead to the creation of new states and development issues (often related to transition), new theories are useful to better follow and explain these events. The reason lies in the changing nature of international relations. Yet the question remains whether the new theories always improve understanding and facilitate explanation of these variations. This essay argues that the widely acclaimed strand of constructivism taken by Alexander Wendt fails to account for the constant change in international politics, especially in recent post-conflict zones.

While pointing to relevant contributions of Alexander Wendt's theory to the field of International Relations, this essay will argue that Wendt shows weaknesses in providing a convincing constructivist account of current international politics on two

accounts: first, as social constructivist and, second, as an independent account. It will argue this by focusing on his inability to account for one crucial aspect of international politics: contemporary conflict. First taking a bottom-up approach, the basic reason for the failure to explain war as a social practice will be found at a more profound theoretical level, i.e. in the very construction of agency and structure that Wendt proposes. This essay will further show that Wendt's constructivism relies on state-based methodology, which in turn leads to the neglect for other actors and identities vital for the analysis of contemporary conflict. This leads not only to weak analysis of conflict itself but also to an inability to contribute to conflict prevention and resolution.

It will then take up a top-down approach and show how his idea of international anarchy as the context for international politics reinforces these same deficiencies primarily due to abandoning the constructivist argument. It will also point to the works of Zehfuss, Jabri, Suganami and Reus-Smit that illustrate these deficiencies and offer more convincing alternatives to segments of Wendt's argument that help to better account for conflict in the international politics of today.

Wendt's theory promises to close the gap between narrower scopes of research offered by positivists and post-positivists. It emphasises the utility of using both explanation and understanding¹ to answer causal and constitutive questions about international politics. He offers a more encompassing scientific-realist account that resolves the agency-structure problem by refusing to ontologically presuppose the structure to agency or vice versa.² The resulting question is: does his theory help to better understand international politics? This critique is an attempt to trigger new ways of approaching IR theory and demonstrate the need of its constant revision.

Construction of agency and structure

An important contribution of Wendt's constructivism consists in overcoming the explanation vs. understanding approach to IR theorizing. Positivist epistemic inclination toward science and post-positivist rejection thereof suggests an epistemological difference between the social and natural sciences. Wendt believes such a difference does not exist and both Explanation and Understanding should be "practiced in *both* domains"³ and be seen as "mutually implicating",⁴ zero-sum arguments about epistemology being misleading.⁵ Elegantly constructing the utility of

¹ 'Explanation' and 'understanding' are here used as International Relations concepts.

² The agency-structure debate is at the heart of the structuration theory first introduced by Giddens in sociology. The approach is widely used by the followers of social constructivism in International Relations.

³ Alexander Wendt, "On Constitution and Causation in International Relations," *Review of International Studies* 24 (Oct. 1998): 102.

⁴ *Ibid*, 103.

⁵ *Ibid*, 102.

using both explanation and understanding to answer causal and constitutive questions enfolded in the philosophy of scientific realism, Wendt's theory aims to close the gap between research options offered by positivists and post-positivists.

Wendt insists that when theories answer how states are constituted, they cannot ignore territoriality, monopoly on violence or sovereignty (i.e. internal norms presupposed and determined by practice). Post-positivists would say understandings are based on subjective backgrounds that cannot be directly tested against the world, but Wendt – while allowing for the argument that observation is theory-laden – persists on using competing theories to indirectly test the primary theory.⁶

He thus sees states as constituted by structures that give them a territorial monopoly over organized violence.⁷ Theoretically, they are intersubjective constructions based on intersubjective knowledge.⁸ They are also constituted by their relationship to other states (rouge states becoming such only in the context of the international system and not solely by violating the norms of the international community – Israel and Syria serving as telling examples)⁹ and capable of forming collective identities (like the European Union).¹⁰ But, while he insists that this theory is system- and not unit-based,¹¹ he accounts for Self and Other as exclusively one state in relation to another. Their roles are “objective, collectively constituted positions”¹² that dominate a Kantian culture. Therefore, his agents do not go beyond individual relationships inside the system.¹³

This causes the first difficulty in using his argument to analyse war. Wendt considers that a deeper analysis of forces within the state would render his theory reductionist.¹⁴ However, it is exactly this approach that suffers from reductionism. Contemporary conflicts make it increasingly obvious that structures not inextricably linked to the state and the institution of sovereignty often explain conflict's underlying motives. Neglecting other levels of analysis, Wendt fails in accounting for other influential social agents and structures. Most relevant for this discussion are those of identity, culture and non-state political structures which stand central to contemporary conflicts around the world.

⁶ Wendt, “On Constitution and Causation in International Relations,” 106-7.

⁷ Wendt, “On Constitution and Causation in International Relations,” 112.

⁸ Alexander Wendt, “Anarchy is What States Make of It: The Social Construction of Power Politics (1992),” in *International Theory: Critical Investigations*, ed. James Der Derian. (London: Macmillan, 1995): 143-4.

⁹ Wendt, “On Constitution and Causation in International Relations,” 113.

¹⁰ Alexander Wendt, *Social Theory of International Politics* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2006), 242.

¹¹ Ibid, 4.

¹² Ibid, p. 259

¹³ Paul Skoczylas, “Review of Social Theory of International Politics, by Alexander Wendt,” *Online Journal of Peace and Conflict Resolution* 3 (Apr. 2000)

¹⁴ Wendt, “On Constitution and Causation in International Relations,” 112.

The issue of identity is directly linked to the argument of social construction: Wendt “needs identity to be constructed but at the same time in some ways given”.¹⁵ Yet if given, it cannot be constructed and, being aware of this, Wendt claims international relations are socially constructed while identities remain ‘relatively stable’.¹⁶ This is where the second problem appears.

Since identity formation is actually a discursive and time-dependent process, as Zehfuss highlights, ignoring this aspect allows him to assume “that states are pre-given, unitary actors”,¹⁷ identities bound to them, excluding others. If this is the case, there is little political in how international relations function. Identity formation is thus neglected and culture, which directly influences knowledge as it determines the ways of understanding, is ignored, which is in direct opposition to the constructivist argument that “[t]here is [...no] universal, trans-historical, disembodied, culturally-autonomous idea or identity”.¹⁸ This is the first place where Wendt drifts away from the constructivist argument.

Hence, according to Wendt, state sovereignty surmounts other identities and, thus, one might conclude that a more primitive ontological unit of a people or group is irrelevant. This would cause difficulty in accounting for civil wars or independence movements. It can also be hypothesized that it would imply the War on Terror makes no sense since terrorism knows no state boundaries and would, therefore, need to be contained within and identified with a state first and then be fought against.¹⁹

Accounts of international politics differ on this point: e.g. in Foucauldian terms, “[s]overeignty is reigned in and historically gives way to the governmentality of populations”.²⁰ Within the constructivist thought, Reus-Smit focuses on the dynamics of global change, particularly the “rise and possible demise of the sovereign state”.²¹ Wendt’s approach to identity has produced the following interpretation.

Intentional state transformation

Theoretical tools of self-reflection, practice and roles of states are used to explain identities and interests employed for ensuring security, critical strategic thinking and power politics.²² His best developed theoretical framework for dealing with war

¹⁵ Maja Zehfuss, “Constructivism and Identity: A Dangerous Liaison,” *European Journal of International Relations* 7 (Aug. 2001): 316.

¹⁶ Ibid, 326.

¹⁷ Ibid

¹⁸ Christian Reus-Smit, “Constructivism,” in *Theories of International Relations*, ed. Scott Burchill (London: Palgrave, 2001): 222.

¹⁹ This might actually help explain divided views on the issue from around the world.

²⁰ Vivienne Jabri, “War, Security and the Liberal State,” *Security Dialogue* 37 (Jan. 2006): 56.

²¹ Reus-Smit, “Constructivism,” 221.

²² Wendt, *Social Theory*

currently available is that of intentional state transformation.²³ Maja Zehfuss believes this theoretical move evades “the implications of the argument that that which we call reality is constructed rather than given”.²⁴ This evasion makes it both a weak constructivist argument and too narrow to account for how identity, agents and structures correlate to produce the social action of war. This can be considered the third major weakness of his theory.

Most obvious other agents (individuals, international institutions, multinational corporations and non-governmental organisations) and a more profound intrastate and interstate analysis relevant for international politics and, hence, conflict resolution are simply bypassed. The self-reflection, practice and roles of states that Wendt analyses to explain identities and interests employed for ensuring security, critical strategic thinking and power politics²⁵ are unfulfilled potentials of a possibly far deeper theory. Transposing these theoretical tools to related ontological units would enrich the theory immensely.

The first stage of state post-conflict transformation, according to Wendt, is “the breakdown of consensus about identity commitments”²⁶ that had led to the conflict since states need to realise how their own behaviour influences their relation to others. Identity is a constitutive feature of the state, dependent on interpretation, and conflict is reinforced as an aspect of the state as a social system.²⁷ Superficially, this is a convincing tool that overcomes much of previous scholarship but two main problems emerge.

First, identity is not necessarily allied with and constructed at the state level. Identifications with an ethnic group were the core causes of the Bosnian and Kosovo wars, historical tribal associations have characterised wars throughout Africa for decades, interest-driven friction lies at the heart of the war in Sudan, and numerous wars have been spurred by religious motivations. These, in turn, are the main but not the only causes. Economic, political and social factors intermingle to create a complex network of causes and consequences. Using Wendt’s proposal for breaking down identity commitments would mean very different things for the aforementioned conflicts since, as Wendt maintains, social threats are constructed and not natural.²⁸ It is their construction and deconstruction that takes place in a spatial and temporal context subject to emergence, modification and disappearance that he fails to account for.

²³ Wendt, “Anarchy is What States Make of It,” 158-9.

²⁴ Zehfuss, “Constructivism and Identity,” 338.

²⁵ Wendt, *Social Theory*

²⁶ Zehfuss, “Constructivism and Identity,” 338.

²⁷ Ibid.

²⁸ Wendt, in Zehfuss, “Constructivism and Identity,” 320.

Ego and Alter of international politics today are: self-determination seeking peoples and the institution of a state; a single state and the international community as a whole; and supra-state formations (like the European Union) and sovereign states within and outside them. While Wendt mentions these identities²⁹ he places them in inert boxes that define a historical period. Quite on the contrary, a more insightful analysis of these crucial social relationships that lie in the core of conflicts and coalitions is needed, especially in the light of structures such as the European Union gaining on relevance and strength.

Secondly, a critical examination of “old ideas about self and other and, by extension, of structures of interaction by which the ideas have been sustained”³⁰ might help explain how the Gorbachev regime overcame role identities and structures that reified the Cold War, but fall short of explaining how to deal with new emerging threats, especially those of terrorism, religious pan-state movements or warlord economic incentives for prolonging civil conflicts. Actually, this very tool is exceedingly helpful if ‘self’ and ‘other’ are not seen exclusively as states but, e.g., ethnic groups within a state, or the Western and the Islamic world in the context of what ideas the “war on terror” has reinforced about the ‘other’, or how their divergent cultures have reinforced prejudice that in turn make the idea of the “clash of civilisations” more digestible to both. A critical examination of these ideas is vital for overcoming deep-rooted misunderstandings of the ‘other’.

Also, ‘self’ being a state, the ‘other’ is the international system. How these two interact is illustrated in relation to internal conflicts and the response to them with international humanitarian and military intervention. Following Wendt’s constructivist argument, intervention places normative over materialist principles. But, the reinforcement of sovereignty undermines his plea for normative values. This constitutes another vacuum of his theory: economic and political implications of civil wars in a regional context have been recognised as critical for international stability (wars in Bosnia and Herzegovina and Sierra Leone and the ways they economically destabilised their respective regions being relevant examples).³¹ The international system has identified this interconnection and is working on approaching normative implications posed by this type of violence from a perspective divorced from reifying the institution of sovereignty.

Furthermore, he considers the mirror theory of identity-formation a third stage necessary for identity and interest change. The refined technique of ‘altercasting’³² is again only useful for viewing enemies with a shape and a face. Enemies do not always allow easy categorisation and the tool is more useful if its methodological units are

²⁹ Wendt, *Social Theory*, 261, 308.

³⁰ Wendt, “Anarchy is What States Make of It,” 158.

³¹ Michael Pugh and Neil Cooper, *War Economies in a Regional Context* (London & Boulder: Lynne Rienner Publishers, 2004)

³² Wendt, “Anarchy is What States Make of It,” 159.

modified. This is particularly significant when tackling the issue of terrorism. Also, this technique can only produce desired effects “if the other reciprocates, [...] takes up the new role”.³³ The fourth proposal to transpose security systems and “teach” other states that it is in their best interest to cooperate is also too exclusionary when contemporary conflict is in focus.

Finally, he does not dissect actors to explore their desires and beliefs that shape their response in conflict, which a more detailed discussion on the construction of agency would inevitably demand. As Jabri explains, desires and beliefs are linked to normative expectations and institutional roles they hold and provide reasons why actions and responses are pursued.³⁴ They relate to all actors and take into consideration different actions.

To conclude on this point, it appears that Wendt’s theory on conflict would better suit the post-Westphalian European political state power-politics setting than the contemporary one. This investigation into intentional state formation fails to account for how conflicts of the 1990s and 2000s have been solved or how to approach the ones still lasting. Motives, desires and beliefs driving political action refuse to be confined to state boundaries. Contrary to the constructivist argument, his theory is also deterministic, as he assumes how states will behave (as is even more obvious in his international state discussion).

International anarchy

Maintaining that there is no single ‘logic of anarchy’³⁵ – as the tendencies and structure of it depend on three political cultures that can dominate states’ behaviour: those of enemy, rival or friend³⁶ - Wendt describes the so-called Hobbesian, Lockean and Kantian cultures.³⁷ Thus he further waives his theory of conflict. These cultures are portrayed as representative of world politics and dependent on security conceptions of actors. The ways they construe their identities in relation to others, identity – as Zehfuss notes – is again crucial for the culture of anarchy and, hence, for his systemic argument.³⁸ While it serves as a good starting point for differentiating environments for conflicts in both a temporal and spatial sense, there arise several problems with this particular discussion.

To begin with, rules and norms that characterize structures change as available systems are prone to change. Wendt believes the world escaped the Hobbesian

³³ Zehfuss, “Constructivism and Identity,” 323.

³⁴ Vivienne Jabri, *Discourses on Violence* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1996), 76.

³⁵ Hidemi Suganami, “On Wendt’s Philosophy: A Critique,” *Review of International Studies* 28 (2002): 24.

³⁶ Wendt, *Social Theory*, 259.

³⁷ *Ibid.*, 246-312.

³⁸ Zehfuss, “Constructivism and Identity,” 318-9.

culture “some years ago”³⁹ and through compliance with norms of peaceful settlement of disputes “states gradually internalize the institution of the pluralistic security community”,⁴⁰ echoing Bull’s argument that the international society has become averse to seeing war as law enforcement and has been striving towards containing it.⁴¹ The fact is that states modify their interrelationship, progression not moving in the post-Westphalian, post-World War II and contemporary terms as Wendt suggests,⁴² but being simultaneously relevant everywhere and at any time. Wendt’s constructivism is too static to account for development and change. As critical theorists remind us, besides there being no single logic of anarchy, “[t]he logic of conflict and competition cannot be regarded as unalterable” either.⁴³ This is a crucial conclusion for understanding deficiencies of his argument.

Furthermore, Wendt’s assumption that the world has “managed to escape”⁴⁴ the Hobbesian and embrace Lockean and Kantian cultures is highly problematic. Suganami considers this a hypothetical path pointing to some factors that might bring about such a change, but “not aimed to explain any specific case of transition”.⁴⁵ At a deeper theoretical level, Suganami also finds a logical fallacy in assuming that the Hobbesian culture is “constitutive of state identity of enmity”⁴⁶ finding Wendt’s argument to be ultimately a collection of causal narratives and not constitutive relationships that characterise international politics,⁴⁷ which would be more appropriate for a constructivist argument.

One explanation for this is that his philosophy is limited in being Western-centric. While inter-liberal states conflict might have become almost unimaginable, conflicts between and within other types of regimes and structures are both imaginable and present as are intrastate clashes among societal groups. He offers variables to explain how transformation is achieved in order to reshape the identity and role of states to become ‘friends’. These are interdependence, homogeneity and common fate. While being theoretically elegant, the variables offered fail to account for two major factors: power inequality among states and cultural diversity of the contemporary world.⁴⁸ Therefore, the way he conceives of the international system is flawed in the same way his construction of agents is: states are seen as equal in their possession of sovereignty

³⁹ Wendt, *Social Theory*, 339.

⁴⁰ Suganami, “On Wendt’s Philosophy: A Critique,” 25.

⁴¹ Hedley Bull, *The Anarchical Society* (Hampshire: Palgrave, 2002), 191.

⁴² Wendt, *Social Theory*, 297.

⁴³ Andrew Linklater, “The Achievements of the Critical Theory,” in *International Theory: Positivism & Beyond* Steve, eds. Ken Booth Smith and Marysia Zalewski (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1996). 283.

⁴⁴ Wendt, *Social Theory*, 339.

⁴⁵ Suganami, “On Wendt’s Philosophy: A Critique,” 25.

⁴⁶ *Ibid*, 33.

⁴⁷ *Ibid*, 34.

⁴⁸ *Ibid*, 26.

and identity and as citizens of the international society; and cultural diversity more profoundly related to identity is completely neglected.

So, how does Wendt see the progression of war? In a more recent work, he maintains that the world of increasing threats will grow to realise that full recognition of 'Others', sacrifice of sovereignty under the pressure of hardships of life under anarchy and the creation of a world state is the only rational decision states (including Great Powers) should make.⁴⁹ This resembles the English School's idea of anarchical society taken one step forward. Shannon finds multiple fallacies in such a proposal: while Wendt reintroduces agency, contingency and choice, he simultaneously violates them with the notion of inevitability; the possibility of nonlinear change in human history is thereby denied; and motivations of individuals and groups are not allowed to vary spatially and temporally.⁵⁰ Even more paradoxical is the proposal that the world state must embrace nationalism.⁵¹ Why, then, was nationalism bypassed in previous stages of his theory and why would nationalist groups reject independence and submit to yet another ruler?⁵² This question remains unanswered as do many others and introduces a touch of naiveté in his theory by neglecting such an obvious obstacle to the construction of a new agent.

It can finally be said that Wendt does successfully overcome the positivist thought in the sense of allowing a more profound analysis of structures. He especially succeeds in shedding light on the state as a focus of observation. Problems only arise when a deeper analysis of intra-state structures and practices comes into focus. The relevance lies in the ever-changing nature of international politics, and thus conflicts, that clearly demonstrates the relevance of a people as an ontological unit, independence movements are a practice and – becoming more relevant by the minute – terrorism as a new form of war. Analyzing intentional state transformation, or the international anarchy for that matter, does not help offer viable explanations for actual events.

Alternatives

Reus-Smit emphasises the importance of “discursive mechanisms that link intersubjective ideas of legitimate statehood and rightful state action to the constitution of fundamental institutions”.⁵³ State communicative action determines its identity. Sovereignty does not create a coherent identity as it lacks purposive

⁴⁹ Alexander Wendt, “Why a World State is Inevitable,” *European Journal of International Relations* 9 (Oct. 2003): 523-5.

⁵⁰ Vaughn P. Shannon, “Wendt’s Violation of the Constructivist Project: Agency and Why a World State is *Not* Inevitable,” *European Journal of International Relations* 11 (Oct. 2005): 584-5.

⁵¹ *Ibid*

⁵² *Ibid*

⁵³ Christian Reus-Smit, “The Constitutional Structure of International Society and the Nature of Fundamental Institutions,” *International Organization* 51 (Oct. 1997): 563-4.

content.⁵⁴ Identity belongs to a wider complex of values; it is a constitutional structure. At the international level, the structure consists of the moral purpose of the state, organising principle of sovereignty and norm of procedural justice.⁵⁵ Procedural justice is seen as paramount for agreements among states about the rules of cooperation and coexistence and a basis for collective action and conflict resolution.⁵⁶ And, importantly, the structure embraces non-state actors relevant for conflict resolution.

Also, a particularly insightful case for presenting alternatives to Wendt's account of war in relation to agency-structure construction is Jabri's analysis of the "war on terror". This war transcends space and defies conventions. Jabri sees it as a global war, permeating the "normality of the political process"⁵⁷ and international politics as dominated by a "'matrix of war' constituted by a series of transnational practices that variously target states, communities and individuals".⁵⁸ The matrix of war is a practice constitutive of institutional and discursive structural continuities.⁵⁹ Underlying this practice is a tension between Self and Other. It constitutes and is constituted by war and "locates the discourse of war at the heart of politics, not just domestically, but, more crucially in the present context, globally".⁶⁰ This kind of analysis is missing in Wendt's account – the relation between the structure and conflict resolution, practice of war and non-state actors; discursive structural continuities; and the tension between Self and Other in a global sense.

Conclusion

The inability to explain and understand why wars start and end, or at least to understand them fast enough to save lives and political systems, has led to a powerlessness of international and national structures to help those that are suffering from contemporary ways of perceiving rights and sovereignty. If attempts to overcome existing systems are recognized as such in time, and if both theoretical and practical tools are in place to negotiate, mediate and assist those in struggle, conflict prevention and resolution tools will be able to achieve more and faster.

At the same time, the world being faced with the threat of global terrorism, new ways of thinking are desperately needed to identify the threat as such and prevent the suffering of innocent people who happen to fall into 'suspicious categories' only because the international system has not faced anything similar in the past and is incapable to deal with such a new enemy.

⁵⁴ Ibid, 565-6.

⁵⁵ Ibid, 567.

⁵⁶ Ibid, 568.

⁵⁷ Jabri, "War, Security and the Liberal State," 49.

⁵⁸ Ibid, 50.

⁵⁹ Ibid

⁶⁰ Ibid, 52.

If “anarchy is what states make of it” and sovereignty is the right triggered by internal structure that allows states to survive in an anarchical world,⁶¹ how would much of contemporary warfare can be explained by the international community? Wendt maintains that epistemology distracts the attention from the real business of International Relations, which is international politics.⁶²

However, his theory does not demonstrate how. Quite the contrary, his theory demonstrates how the neglect for the way knowledge has been acquired, the world understood and structures explained, renders impossible understanding and explaining contemporary international politics and, by extension, current forms of conflict.

The strength of other constitutive relations between actors does not undermine the institution of sovereignty, but complements it to a degree that is not negligible. Understanding forces, desires, beliefs and identities inside and outside states is imperative for theorising about conflict as an aspect of international politics that has become almost omnipresent. Theoretical tools he offers for conflict analysis are crucial for showing how structures and agents mutually constitute each other, but not developed and flexible enough to help explain more intricate nuances of conflict formation, development, prevention and resolution.

Additionally, the changing logic of anarchy he uses to explain how the international system operates would benefit from establishing constitutive relationships of structures other than states. While offering “a more comprehensive picture of the ‘evolution of co-operation’”,⁶³ Wendt’s study of the international anarchy and its utility for achieving ‘obsolescence of war’⁶⁴ is deterministic, Western-centric and, hence, not helpful for explaining contemporary conflict. As Linklater emphasises, the logic of conflict changes too and, hence, theories that serve to explain it should be more easily adaptable, they should be able to account for the ever-changing nature of international politics. Then Reus-Smit’s criticism of Wendt “bracketing everything domestic”⁶⁵ and thus excluding important normative and ideational forces that might prompt change seems accurate in that the illustration of states as “unitary actors with intrinsic motivational dispositions”⁶⁶ does not offer enough insight into driving forces of political action. Therefore, his theory suffering from a deficiency to account for a wider spectre of social structures and agents renders it incapable to account for contemporary conflict.

The reason why this and similar inquiries into International Relations theories are important stands in the attempt to overcome the current paralysis of theoretical

⁶¹ Wendt, “On Constitution and Causation in International Relations,” 114.

⁶² Ibid, 115.

⁶³ Suganami, “On Wendt’s Philosophy: A Critique,” 26.

⁶⁴ Wendt, “Why a World State is Inevitable”

⁶⁵ Christian Reus-Smit, “Constructivism,” 220.

⁶⁶ Wendt, *Social Theory*, 243.

backing to actual events. This critique has attempted to trigger new ways of analyzing the 'new theories' in order to demonstrate that IR theory should be alive, constantly revised and adapted to arising circumstances. If it is new, it does not necessarily need to be better.

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