

A CONSTRUCTIVIST VISION OF SECURITY

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ABSTRACT

In the article its author has attempted to systematize various concepts and ways of approaching the issue of security by representatives of political constructivism. Constructivism is a relatively young concept, which emerged as an alternative to liberalism and political realism. The article presents the main assumptions of the constructivist vision of security, the approach to security by representatives of conventional and critical constructivism, as well as the concept of ontological security developed by constructivists.

KEY WORDS:

security, international security, constructivism, ontological security, Copenhagen school.

INTRODUCTION

In the world of security sciences, there is currently a discourse about the identity of this relatively young discipline of social sciences. In this discourse, it is important to define a security paradigm, which will allow the unification of fundamental views on its ontological, epistemological, methodological and axiological essence. But can we talk today about only one security paradigm, or rather many security paradigms? Pluralism in science, which freed us from the loop of the positivist way of practicing science, allows us to apply many ways, and thus many paradigms, in our

knowledge. Existing observations of the scope, character and, above all, the method of conducting research in the field of security sciences allow us to distinguish at least three orientations – paradigms of security research:

1. It was born out of realistic thought, and above all of political neorealism, of the paradigm of systemic security research;
2. originating from neoliberal social thought and critical theories of the humanistic paradigm;
3. which has grown mainly from the social constructivism of the cultural paradigm of security research.

Constructivism is an interesting concept, whose representatives try to explain the complexities of security through the prism of socio-cultural phenomena and processes, which can be applied to both studies and empirical research. This article was written as a result of research work carried out by the author on the search for theoretical foundations of security sciences and the search for paradigms, which would make it possible to analyse security from different perspectives, and thus give it a fuller picture and delineate new research fields. It attempts to answer the question: can a constructivist vision of security developed on the basis of international relations sciences be applied to security sciences and to what extent?

GENESIS AND MAIN ASSUMPTIONS OF CONSTRUCTIVISM

Constructivism is currently one of the main methodological orientations and theoretical constructs applied both in theory and practice of international relations. The constructivist trend is quite young if we compare it with two “great” paradigms – liberalism and realism. It developed in the 1980s in response to the dominance of neo-realism and neo-liberalism in security studies, but became established in the 1990s for good in international relations sciences. Proponents of this view, based mainly on social constructivism, criticised the positivist approach to international relations. It is therefore worth tracing the main principles of social constructivism and its inspirations for a constructivist vision of security.

At the outset, however, it is worth mentioning that constructivism is not a uniform trend. One can even speak of a general constructivist perspective, which is determined by a set of all positions (adopted on the basis of social, natural and formal sciences), which take on a weaker or stronger form of constructivist assumption. Within this general constructivist perspective, the most important varieties can be distinguished. These undo-

ubtedly include *social constructivism*, epistemological constructivism and *cognitive constructivism*¹.

Social constructivism, which is the basis of the traditional conventional vision of security, has emerged from the sociology of knowledge and has spread with the rise of postmodern theory. It is a rather troublesome position, or rather a collection of positions present in modern science. The most important feature common to different forms of social constructivism is the assumption that man, as a “social being”, constructs (produces) knowledge (both theoretical and practical) about the world. The world is understood by the representatives of this trend as a *social and cultural reality*. The world, therefore, is a world inhabited, known, explored, interpreted, processed, and above all – constructed by *man* (and more precisely – by any kind of *human community*). Constructivism is therefore based on the conviction that people perceive reality through the prism of their culture and experience, attributing what they note specific meanings, and therefore nobody can observe an objective reality, detached from the meanings and contexts assigned to it, although it can be an objective reality, mainly in the form of different kinds of cultural products. Following this path of thinking, one can assume that security is a social construct represented in various kinds of cultural products. From the perspective of international relations sciences, it is worth stressing that constructivists focus on the role played by imaginative factors and social construction in world politics².

Nevertheless, constructivism is treated first and foremost as a general theory of society. According to Peter Berger and Thomas Luckman, promoters of this trend in sociology, this theory is based on the following theses: “Society is a product of man. Society is an objective reality. Man is the product of society”³.

Constructivism is idealistic in terms of ontology – it proclaims that ideas influence reality. It seeks to explain the emergence and meaning of norms, identities and interests in social life. In terms of epistemology it is differentiated: the conventional current is positivist, it says that causal re-

¹ See: M. Wendland, *Konstruktywizm komunikacyjny*, Poznań 2011, p. 12.

² M. McDonald, *Konstruktywizm*, [in:] *Studia bezpieczeństwa*, P.D. Williams (ed.), Kraków 2012, p. 59.

³ P.L. Berger, T. Luckman, *The Social Construction of Reality: A Treatise in the Sociology of Knowledge*, New York 1966, p.61.

relationships can be determined; the critical current is reflexive; it says that the researcher's beliefs affect the properties of the phenomenon⁴ studied.

How then, in this differentiated approach to fundamental epistemological and ontological issues, to build a constructivist paradigm capable of resisting neoliberal and neo-realistic visions of security? The answer to this question is not simple and requires a closer look at the development of constructivist thought in the sciences of international relations.

CONSTRUCTIVISM IN THE SCIENCE OF INTERNATIONAL RELATIONS

In 1992, the International Organization published Alexander Wendt's article *Anarchy Is What States Make of It: the Social Construction of Power Politics*⁵, regarded as a breakthrough for the constructivist vision of international relations. For Wendt, the change in Soviet policy (the so-called new thinking), presented by Mikhail Gorbachev, with all its consequences (the collapse of the USSR, the end of the Cold War, the break-up of the Warsaw Pact, the maintenance of NATO) was a strong proof that materialism, rationalism and the neo- and neo-liberalism drawing on these beliefs cannot explain the changes taking place in international relations. Without completely rejecting the achievements of realism, Wendt declared his willingness to build a "bridge" between realists and liberals, as well as rationalism and reflexionism. Wendt called the new approach to international relations, referring to the work of Nicholas Onuf, "constructivism", and presented it in his article, among other things by deconstructing and giving a new meaning to the institution of anarchy. Wendt has thus become the forerunner of conventional constructivism.

Wendt pointed out first of all that anarchy, so strongly associated by realists with the principle of relying only on oneself (*self-help*), is in fact only one of a few possible ideas about it. In reality, the dynamics of relations in the realities of anarchy may favour the formation of various security systems – not only hostile (*competitive security system*), but also neutral (*individualistic security system*), or a system based on *cooperation* (*cooperative security system*)⁶.

⁴ A. Klotz, C. Lynch, *Strategies for Research in International Relations*, Armonk 2007, p.17.

⁵ A. Wendt, *Anarchy Is What States Make of It: the Social Construction of Power Politics*, "International Organization" 1992, vol. 46, no. 2, p. 391–425.

⁶ *Ibidem*, p. 400.

Alexander Wendt has put the identity of countries at the centre of his interests. He defined identity as a relatively stable idea and expectations of the subject towards oneself, as well as the way in which the subject understands one's own roles. He stated that entities form their identities in interaction, acting in the realities of intersubjective (shared by many entities) meanings⁷. This is how a collective identity is created, in which the ideas of a given country with its own status and role in the international are shaped under the influence of the characteristics attributed to this country by the "international community". Nevertheless, the collective identity associated with the structure of international relations differs from the other type of identity, i.e. social identity, which is formed within a given country under the influence of national factors⁸.

One of the creators of the new Nicholas Onuf trend has a slightly different approach to the issue of security. In his opinion, constructivism is not a theory that could offer a general explanation of how the world works, but a way of studying social relations. People are social beings who create the world for themselves, giving meaning to the material reality around them, and the world of these intersubjective meanings affects people in turn. This mutual influence is made possible by rules that show how to proceed in a given situation. The principles are the causal factor in the operation of the entity in its environment. The existence of rules creates scope for entities to act, gives them a choice – they can obey the rules or violate them. Observing the behaviour of states, we can therefore deduce what principles they are guided by, and this is also the basis for analysing the principles that states follow in the sphere of security. Existing rules, not actual material disproportions, condition inequalities between subjects, because it is the rules that determine how social relations (and thus relations between states) are organised. Ideas, discourse, knowledge, words are the source of the power of individual states, not their military power⁹.

Wendt's and Onuf's works have had a significant influence on the formation of contemporary constructivism, which is based on both classical sociological (positivist) theories and critical theories. In European studies,

⁷ Ibidem, p. 397.

⁸ See: A. Curanović, *Konstruktywizm*, [in:] *Teorie i podejścia badawcze w nauce o stosunkach międzynarodowych*, R. Zięba, S. Bieliń, J. Zając (eds.), Warszawa 2015, p. 107–109.

⁹ N. Onuf, *Making Sense, Making Worlds. Constructivism in Social Theory and International Relations*, New York 2013, p. 1–2.

constructivism also takes the form of sociological institutionalism. For the purposes of the theory of international relations and *security studies* he was adopted in the form proposed by Nicholas Onuf in his work *World of Our Making*¹⁰. Constructivists point out that their approach to security allows for a more detailed interpretation of motifs traditionally associated with a realistic concept of security, such as power, security dilemma or balance of power. Constructivists, through their way of interpreting security, differ from representatives of critical theories perceiving security as a commitment to emancipation, or realists embracing security through the prism of the state, force politics and military relations¹¹.

The basic thesis which integrates the constructivist trend in the reflection on security is the conviction that security is a social construct. Constructivists try to avoid universal and abstract definitions of security, claiming that they change with the context, and the understanding of security is shaped by the social interaction between actors. Actors believe that, while military capabilities matter, beliefs change over time, as exemplified by the recognition of the decisive influence of digital technology on war¹².

Constructivists believe that security is largely determined by the identity of the subject and social norms. This is connected with another fundamental assumption for the whole current, that intangible and imaginative factors usually determine how security is constructed and implemented in international politics.

Constructivism is primarily concerned with the social process of forming an individual and collective identity¹³. By participating in a common sense, states gain an identity defined as awareness of their role and expectations towards each other. The identities and interests of states depend, according to constructivists, on the social context. Identity is the result of the impact of the norms prevailing in a given community, repetitive action, and interaction between states¹⁴. Collective identities, however, are the product of historical processes and arise as a result of national-forming

¹⁰ Idem, *World of Our Making*, South California 1989.

¹¹ See: M. McDonald, *Konstruktywizm*, op. cit., p. 60–61.

¹² Cf.: J. Czaputowicz, *Bezpieczeństwo międzynarodowe. Współczesne koncepcje*, Warszawa 2012, p. 164.

¹³ E. Adler, *Seizing the Middle Ground. Constructivism in World Politics*, "European Journal of International Relations" 1997, vol. 3, no. 3, p. 322–324.

¹⁴ J. Fearon, A. Wendt, *Rationalism v. Constructivism. A Skeptical View*, [in:] *Handbook of International Relations*, W. Carlsnaes, T. Risse, B. Simmons (eds.), Thousand Oaks

processes. States may have selfish identities or may be oriented towards the common good. A change of identity often requires a change in the identity of the countries that have a relationship with the country¹⁵ in question.

As mentioned earlier, apart from identity, i.e. the sense of who we are, the second factor shaping world politics are social norms, most often understood as the prevailing beliefs that the most important members of the international community, i.e. states, should act properly. Standards are constructive and regulatory, legitimise the objectives pursued by the actors and thus define their interests, which are another factor influencing security. The above statements are based on the concept of structure proposed by Alexander Wendt. In his opinion, the structure not only limits the ability of the agents participating in it, but also formulates or even constitutes their identities and, consequently, their interests. Structures do not exist without intersubjectively recognized norms and practices. "Without ideas there are no interests, without interests there are no essential material conditions, without material conditions there is no reality at all"¹⁶, wrote Wendt.

In their view, security is constructed in the sense that threats invoke existence, make it a policy tool and not by comparing a specific situation with a set of abstract criteria. In the name of threats imagined by politicians, it is possible to provoke war, initiate persecution of certain ethnic groups and even justify acts of genocide. It all depends on the context and the way in which threats are presented to society. Security is for constructivists, as mentioned earlier, a social construct with variable content depending on the contexts. By doing so, they abandon the abstract definition of security and focus on the process of shaping its meanings in the different contexts and policy implications of this mechanism¹⁷.

Constructivism undoubtedly gives a new perspective on the perception of security. According to the constructivists, it is conditioned not only by the distribution of military forces, but also by the culture that dominates the system. From the point of view of this position, security and threats are constructed in the social process as a result of the influence of history, culture, ideology and dominant discourses. Constructivists, like represen-

2002, p. 58; C. Reus-Smit, *The Moral Purpose of the State. Culture, Social Identity, and Institutional Rationality in International Relations*, Princeton 1999, p. 30.

¹⁵ A. Wendt, *Społeczna teoria stosunków międzynarodowych*, Warszawa 2008, p. 211–223.

¹⁶ *Ibidem*, p. 134.

¹⁷ See: M. McDonald, *Konstruktywizm*, op. cit., p.61–64.

tatives of the liberal movement, focus on society, not the state. They share the opinion that conflict can be used to create and strengthen national identities. They attribute a special role to the elites who create ideas, define security threats and thus influence the behaviour of countries on the international arena. States approach other countries according to what they mean to them, not just from the point of view of their military power and strength. In their opinion, power has a discursive nature, it is connected with knowledge, ideas, culture or language. It is created through discourse, similar understanding, perception and action of actors, common hierarchy. War, in turn, is constructed by discourse, which is legitimate state violence, terrorism, by discourse banning violence that does not originate from the state, and treaty violations by discourse on what constitutes an obligation¹⁸. Constructivists believe that national interests depend not only on the geopolitical situation, but also on the society in which the nation is. An example of this can be the United States, whose policy is influenced both by the military power of the state and national identity¹⁹.

To sum up, it is worth emphasizing that conventional constructivism tries to explain the essence of security, but only from the political-military perspective, joining the traditional, characteristic for political realism discourse, although, unlike realism, it makes the society and not the state the main subject of security.

ONTOLOGICAL SECURITY

An interesting proposal of constructivists, which is worth developing in security sciences, is the concept of *ontological security* introduced by them to the science of international relations. Ontological security is in general the sense of duration and order of events, including events that go beyond the area of direct experience of the individual. The concept of ontological security concerns mainly the subjective feeling of who you are. Ontological security is a condition of subjectivity, separate identity and self-awareness, and as such it creates human existence and ensures its continuation. In their opinion, self-awareness is not given to man *a priori*, but is constructed and sustained by reflective actions. To be ontologically secure means to know the answer to the fundamental questions of existence: where we

¹⁸ See: J. Czaputowicz, *Bezpieczeństwo międzynarodowe...*, op. cit., p. 166–168.

¹⁹ H.R. Nau, *At Home Abroad. Identity and Power in American Foreign Policy*, Ithaca 2002, p. 16.

come from, where we go, what is our place and role in society, etc.²⁰. According to Anthony Giddens, the basis for ontological security in every culture is the predictability and fluidity of everyday routine in life. The routine is based on so-called practical knowledge, i.e. silent, non-competitive skills for dealing with social interactions. Practical knowledge also includes a sense of one's own identity and physical integrity and the reality of the surrounding world, including the identity of other people and objects²¹.

Ontological security is opposed to physical security by constructivists. As Noa Epstein points out, physical security is mainly concerned with risks to the physical body. Ontological security, in turn, refers to the sense of sense of action and role in society, thus influencing the ability to act rationally, i.e. it is related to the identity of the subject, consisting of a natural feature and social identity. The ontological danger is therefore always the result of an attack on the identity of the subject²².

What is characteristic for constructivists, the notion of ontological security they try to adapt to the needs of state security analysis. Jennifer Mitzen claims that not only human beings, but also states strive for ontological security. The physical security of a state concerns its sovereignty, while ontological security refers to its national identity. States seek ontological security by stabilising their own identity and routine in international implementation with other States²³. Brent Steele argues that incoherence of identity can even force the state to act to strengthen its ontological security. States shall, in his view, take moral measures to meet the needs of their own identity, even if they threaten their physical existence²⁴. Security is therefore of a dual nature. On the one hand, states strive to ensure physical security, while on the other hand, they strive to achieve ontological security, which translates into their identity.

²⁰ A. Giddens, *Modernity and Self-Identity. Self and Society in the Late Modern Age*, Cambridge 1991, p. 47; idem, *Konsekwencje nowoczesności*, transl. Ewa Klekot, Kraków 2008, p. 65–66.

²¹ Idem, *Stanowienie społeczeństwa. Zarys teorii strukturacji*, Poznań 2003, p. 51, 55, 65.

²² N. Epstein, *Explaining the War on Terrorism from an Ontological-Security Perspective*, "MIT International Review", Spring 2007, p. 14; J. Czaputowicz, *Bezpieczeństwo międzynarodowe...*, op. cit., p. 179.

²³ J. Mitzen, *Ontological Security in World Politics: State Identity and the Security Dilemma*, "European Journal of International Relations" 2006, vol. 12(3), p. 341–370.

²⁴ B.J. Steele, *Ontological Security in International Relations. Self-Identity and the IR State*, New York – London 2008, p. 2–3.

Security categorization into ontological and physical is an interesting concept, which allows to perceive security through the prism of socio-cultural factors. It is worthwhile to carry out further research in this respect, which may prove extremely useful for representatives of the cultural trend in security sciences.

ATTEMPTS TO CATEGORISE CONSTRUCTIVIST CONCEPTS

There is no unanimity in the scientific world as to whether constructivism is a unified theoretical trend. Maja Zehfuss takes the view that, unlike other paradigms, there is still no great debate within constructivism or specific divisions²⁵ regarding the different approaches to ontological or epistemological issues.

However, John Ruggie, analysing various constructivist concepts, proposes their division into two main currents: neoclassical, similar to structuralist theories, and postmodern, drawing mainly from the achievements of deconstructivists, and in the long run – individualistic theories of Nietzsche's²⁶ works. Alexander Wendt divides constructivism into weak and strong, and Steve Smith into rational and reflective²⁷. As can be seen from the above attempts to classify constructivist theories, the main dividing line between rationalistic and post-positivist approaches. American constructivism is close to positivist neoliberalism, while European proposals are close to critical theories²⁸, hence, according to Ted Hopf, there are two basic currents of constructivism: conventional, based on positivist theories and critical, close to critical and post-positivist²⁹ theories.

Ted Hopf's concept finds its numerous supporters also in the Polish scientific community. Quite a broad approach to the issue of categorization of constructivist theories allows for the analysis of many interesting concepts of security, often those that can be classified as the theory of the borderline of different currents. Thanks to this, the achievements of the

²⁵ See: M. Zehfuss, *Constructivism in International Sciences: The Politics of Reality*, Cambridge 2002, p. 250–263.

²⁶ See: J.G. Ruggie, *What Makes the World Hang Together? Neo-utilitarianism and the Social Constructivist Challenge*, [in:] "International Organization" 1998, 52(4), p. 881.

²⁷ J. Czaputowicz, *Teorie stosunków międzynarodowych. Krytyka i systematyzacja*, Warszawa 2007, p. 301–302.

²⁸ Ibidem, p. 301.

²⁹ T. Hopf, *The Promise of Constructivism in International Relations Theory*, "International Security" 1998, vol. 23, no. 1, p. 181–185.

representatives of the 'Copenhagen school', which are part of both constructivism and critical theories, can be regarded as constructivism. The main assumptions of constructivist theories, emphasizing the differences between conventional and critical constructivist approaches to security, are summarized in Table 1.

TABLE 1 MAIN ASSUMPTIONS OF CONSTRUCTIVIST THEORIES

KEY PRINCIPLES OF CONSTRUCTIVISM		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> – security is a social construct with variable content depending on the context – intangible and imaginative factors usually determine how security is constructed and implemented in international politics – security is to a large extent determined by the identity of the subject and social norms, as well as by the interests of the main actors, i.e. the states – the risk is claimed to exist and not found to exist by comparing the specific situation with a set of abstract criteria – society, not the state, becomes the main actor of security – security has a dual nature, consisting of physical security and ontological security 		
MAIN REPRESENTATIVES		
Alexander Wendt, Nicholas Onuf, John G. Ruggie, Friedrich Kratochwil		
MAINSTREAM CONSTRUCTIVISM		
Characteristic	Conventional constructivism	Critical constructivism
Epistemology	Adoption of the positivist paradigm	Rejection of the positivist paradigm
Purpose	Explanation of how identity influences actions	Explanation, why people accept one truth and what interests hide behind their actions
Strength and power	Analytically neutral	Creates hierarchy and relation of domination
Identity	Cognitive nature of identity	The reason for striving for identity is alienation.

MAINSTREAM CONSTRUCTIVISM		
Research programme	Creating new knowledge and ways to understand reality	Analysis of social constraints from the point of view of public interest and its emancipation
Occurrence	United States	European countries

Source: own elaboration on the basis of: J. Czaputowicz, *Bezpieczeństwo międzynarodowe. Współczesne koncepcje*, Warszawa 2012; M. McDonald, *Konstrukttywizm*, [in:] *Studia bezpieczeństwa*, P.D. Williams (ed.), Kraków 2012; T. Hopf, *The Promise of Constructivism in International Relations Theory*, "International Security" 1998, vol. 23, no. 1.

CRITICAL CONSTRUCTIVISM IN THE LIGHT OF THE ACHIEVEMENTS OF THE 'COPENHAGEN SCHOOL'

Conventional constructivism is undoubtedly a concept that has contributed significantly to the differentiation of epistemological and ontological positions in security reflection. Nevertheless, in addition to the work of this trend, the achievements of the 'Copenhagen School', and mainly the concept of securitisation, which requires a little more attention, play an important role in the development of the theoreticality of security sciences.

The term 'Copenhagen School' became widely used in security sciences in 1994, when it was proposed at the Copenhagen Security Research Group meeting by Bill Mc Sweeney. Professor Wojciech Kostecki participated in the work of this group on the part of the Polish side, thanks to which already in the mid-1990s the achievements of the Copenhagen school were disseminated in academic circles in Poland³⁰. The Copenhagen School sees security as a social construct, and in this sense it is linked to constructivism.

A characteristic feature of the concept is the so-called extended security concept, which crystallised at the end of the 1990s in the classic work of scholars gathered around the Copenhagen School entitled *Security. A New*

³⁰ See: W. Kostecki, *Europe after the Cold War. The security complex theory*, Warsaw 1996; K.P. Marcuk, *Bezpieczeństwo wewnętrzne w poszerzonej agendzie studiów nad bezpieczeństwem (szkoła kopenhaska i human security)*, [in:] *Bezpieczeństwo wewnętrzne państwa. Wybrane zagadnienia*, S. Sulowski, M. Brzeziński (eds.), Warszawa 2009.

Framework for Analysis, which distinguishes five basic areas of security and their corresponding five categories of basic threats, namely: military security (threats related to the military sector and its use of coercion), political security (threats related to the functioning of the power and management apparatus), economic security (threats resulting from the links between trade, production and the financial sphere), social security (threats to a common identity) and environmental security (threats related to the degradation of the Earth's biosphere due to human activity)³¹. The Copenhagen School also draws attention to regional aspects of security policy, which are neglected in security studies.

The concept of *securitisation*, understood by the representatives of the Copenhagen School as "(...) a process in which an entity identifies an issue or other entity as an »existential threat« to it, and that term is accepted by the public"³² plays a key role in the approach of the Copenhagen School to security. Sectors are covered as areas of security, within which securitisation practices are developed and regional security complexes as sets of conditions determining the success or failure of securitisation in particular regions of the world³³. At the centre of the securitization process is the so-called speech act, i.e. a discursive representation of a given issue as an existential threat to security. Thus, securitisation is treated more broadly as an *act of speech* (usually by a political leader) describing an issue as a *threat to survival*, which then allows (with the consent of an important group of recipients) to use extraordinary means and to suspend the "normal policy" procedure in order to deal with the issue³⁴. Securitisation can, however, pose a threat to security when its elites can use the magic word 'security' for their own ends, or it can become a factor in restricting citizens' freedom if 'extraordinary measures' are taken. In this situation, security can be guaranteed by formwork.

The theory of securitisation is currently one of the key concepts in security studies, around which the debate is still ongoing in order to develop and improve it, as well as to identify the limits and limits of its possible ap-

³¹ Zob.: B. Buzan, O. Wæver, J. de Wilde, *Security. A New Framework for Analysis*, Boulder - London 1998.

³² M. McDonald, *Konstruktywizm*, op. cit., p. 68.

³³ Ibidem, p. 68–69.

³⁴ Idem, *Securitization and the construction of security*, "European Journal of International Relations" 2008, vol. 14, no. 4, p. 567.

plication. Contemporary research on securitization is interdisciplinary and focuses on terrorism, migration, epidemics, natural disasters, identity and women's rights³⁵. Despite numerous criticisms, it is an interesting attempt to include new phenomena in security research while maintaining the analytical usefulness of the notion of security itself, hence it is worthwhile to follow the direction in which it will develop and to reflect on the possibility of using it to study security in its personal and structural dimension.

SUMMARY AND CONCLUSIONS

To sum up, it is worth stressing that constructivism, despite its significant advantages, does not yet have the potential to develop into another great theory in the field of *security studies*. Despite providing valuable insights into the current functioning of structures and actors, the extension of the scope of subjective and physical security, this approach lacks a philosophical basis and internal cohesion to become a paradigm commensurate with realism and liberalism³⁶. Moreover, according to Samuel J. Barkin, the internal logic of constructivism does not correspond to the possibility of extrapolation from historically established cases to a fully-fledged great theory³⁷. Constructivism can be described as a borderline theory, pluralistic, open to alternative approaches to security research, and thus not radical in paradigmatic issues. From these considerations, which are the result of research conducted by the author of the article on the search for theoretical aspects of security³⁸, there are several important comments and conclusions:

1. Constructivism is undoubtedly an interesting concept on the basis of which one can try to build a cultural paradigm of security, in which security itself is treated as a social construct and a product of culture.
2. Conventional constructivism can be used to explain phenomena related to political-military security, provided that the subject of security in analytical work will be not the state, but society.

³⁵ See: C. Charrett, *A Critical Application of Security Theory: Overcoming the Normative Dilemma of Writing Security*, Barcelona 2009, p. 11.

³⁶ A.B. Philips, *Constructivism*, [in:] *International Relations Theories in Twenty-first Century. An Introduction*, M. Griffiths (ed.), London – New York 2007, p. 70.

³⁷ S.J. Barkin, *Realist constructivism: rethinking international relations theory*, Cambridge 2010, p. 150.

³⁸ See: A. Urbanek, *Współczesny człowiek w przestrzeni bezpieczeństwa. W poszukiwaniu teoretyczności bezpieczeństwa personalnego*, Słupsk 2015.

3. Conventional constructivism emerged from the broad trend of social constructivism, however, has its limitations in the way security is interpreted in its broadened agenda, mainly in relation to risks that are not of anthropogenic origin. Threats of this type are ignored or marginalised by social constructivists, although nothing stands in the way of addressing this problem by taking into account the achievements of constructivist thought to date.

4. No less interesting and promising for the development of theoretical studies and empirical security research is the concept of ontological security developed by constructivists, which contrasts physical security. Separation of ontological security as a separate category of security allows its mechanisms to be explained through the prism of threats to national identity manifested in the form of various pathologies of social awareness.

5. Undoubtedly, the achievements of the representatives of the Copenhagen school are important for today's perception of security. The concept of securitization deserves special attention. It is worth keeping a close eye on the ongoing work on it, as it is a construction that allows us to explain the complexities and mechanisms of the security policy conducted by the state, both in the external and internal dimension.

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