

Sanctions and Russian Identity Construction: A Constructivist approach to Sanctions as a Normative Challenge

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Abstract

The article examines Russia's response to sanctions within a broader process of identity reconstruction after post 2022 Russia's foreign policy realignments. The paper proceeds as follows. The first section reviews the literature situating this study within existing debates on sanctions, identity, and Russian foreign policy. The second section outlines the constructivist theoretical framework, emphasizing how normative pressures shape state identities. The third section examines how Russia's leadership discourse, official rhetoric, and policy decisions reflect identity-driven responses to sanctions. The fourth and fifth sections examine Russia's deepening diplomatic and economic engagements with China and the Global South. The article concludes that the constructivist perspective explains Russia's diplomatic and economic realignment as a major shift for global governance and international order based on principles of sovereignty, non-interference, and resistance to Western liberal hegemony.

Keywords

Russia, sanctions, identity, constructivism, China

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Economic sanctions have long been a strategic tool that the great powers use to constrain adversaries and enforce international norms. The case of Russia, particularly following the reunification with the Crimea in 2014 and the Special Military Operation in Ukraine in 2022, is a case of the increasing use of sanctions as a means of geopolitical contestation. Western powers, led by the United States and the European Union, have implemented a series of increasingly stringent sanctions, targeting Russia's financial institutions, energy sector, defense industry, and access to global markets (Tsygankov, 2022). These measures have been framed as economic deterrents and part of a broader normative strategy to isolate Russia and change its foreign policy behavior. However, this approach failed since Russia did not divert away from its policy in the Ukraine, nor the sanctions significantly weakened Russia's economy.

While traditional realist theorists regard sanctions as a means of coercion through material deprivation, this article argues that the impact of sanctions is not limited to economic hardships but also forces countries to rebuild their identities under external pressure. Specifically, sanctions against Russia have separated Russia from the Western-led order and led to its strategic and ideological shift towards China and other Global South countries. These re-alignments are not simply expedient but are based on shared principles of sovereignty, non-interference, and resistance to Western liberal hegemony. This identity shift, grounded in the constructivist theory, underscores how state actions are shaped not only by material interests but also by socially constructed roles and self-perceptions (Wendt, 1999).

The article examines how Russia's response to sanctions reflects a broader process of identity reconstruction. The first research question is: how do Western

sanctions function as normative challenges that compel Russia to redefine its global identity? The second research question is how Russia's alignment with China and the Global South reflect a shared ideological resistance to Western hegemony. In answering these questions, this study contends that Russia's post-2014 and post-2022 foreign policy realignments are not solely dictated by economic necessity but by a conscious effort to reaffirm its great power status and promote an alternative multipolar world order. Hence, sanctions alone could not have influenced the Russian resolve to pursue its goals in the Ukraine.

The paper proceeds as follows. The first section provides a literature review situating this study within existing debates on sanctions, identity, and Russian foreign policy. The second section outlines the constructivist theoretical framework, emphasizing how normative pressures shape state identities. The third section examines how Russia's leadership discourse, official rhetoric, and policy decisions reflect identity-driven responses to sanctions. The fourth and fifth sections examine Russia's deepening diplomatic and economic engagements through two case studies of China and the Global South. Finally, the conclusion reflects the broader implications of this shift for global governance and international order.

Literature Review

The role of sanctions in shaping state behavior has been widely debated within International Relations (IR) scholarship. Traditional approaches, particularly within the realist and liberal institutionalist paradigms, focus on the material consequences of sanctions, interpreting them as instruments of coercion designed to alter state behavior through economic and political pressure (Drezner, 2011; Keohane, 1984).

However, constructivist scholars offer an alternative perspective. They emphasize the role of identity, norms, and social meanings in explaining how states react to international constraints (Wendt, 1999; Finnemore & Sikkink, 1998). This section reviews key theoretical contributions to the study of sanctions and state identity, highlighting the limitations of materialist interpretations and positioning this paper within a broader constructivist framework.

The constructivist perspective challenges the assumption that state behavior is determined solely by material capabilities or strategic calculations. Instead, Constructivists argue that state identities and interests are socially constructed through interactions with other states and the broader international community (Wendt, 1999). In his seminal work *Social Theory of International Politics*, Alexander Wendt contends that “anarchy is what states make of it” (1999: 6) meaning that international structures are not inherently conflictual or cooperative but are shaped by the identities, beliefs, and practices of states.

Martha Finnemore and Kathryn Sikkink’s (1998) research additionally illustrates the role of international norms in shaping state behavior, showing that states adopt policies due to social expectations and legitimacy pressures, not just economic or security calculations. In their words “diplomatic praise or censure, either bilateral or multilateral, is reinforced by material sanctions and incentives” (Finnemore & Sikkink, 1998: 902). This perspective is beneficial for making sense of Russia’s response to Western sanctions because it reveals not just an economy under pressure but also depicts a country engaged in a project to remap its collective identity as the source of resistance to the tools and norms of liberal hegemony. Constructivist scholars argue that when a state-preferred identity is challenged

through sanctions, it may reconstruct its identity, redefining its role and alliances to reaffirm its status in the international order (Leichtova, 2016).

Sanctions are typically understood as material tools of economic statecraft designed to coerce or punish states that violate international norms. As Drezner puts it, smart sanctions examples “included financial sanctions, asset freezes, travel bans, restrictions on luxury goods, and arms embargoes... targeting individuals, restrictions corporations or holding companies associated with the target government’s leadership” (Drezner, 2011: 100). However, the constructivist scholars argue that sanctions also function as normative challenges, signaling a denial of a state’s legitimacy or status within the international system (Panke and Petersohn, 2016). In the case of Russia, Western sanctions—particularly after 2014 (Crimea) and 2022 (Ukraine)—have been framed not only as punitive economic measures but as attempts to delegitimize Russia’s role as a global power (Tsygankov, 2022).

Andrei Tsygankov (2016) contends that Russia’s response to sanctions is shaped by its historical narrative of sovereignty and resistance, positioning itself as a civilizational alternative to the liberal international order. This aligns with Jennifer Mitzen’s (2006) concept of “ontological security,” which suggests that states seek stability in their self-identity, particularly when facing external threats. Therefore, Russia’s pivot toward China and the Global South can be interpreted as part of an identity reconstruction process, where it seeks validation as a leader of an alternative, multipolar world.

Russia’s foreign policy realignment post-2014 has been widely analyzed in terms of economic necessity and geopolitical pragmatism (Korolev, 2020). However, a growing body of literature emphasizes the identity-driven aspects of this shift. Tsygankov

(2022) argues that Russia's foreign policy is deeply rooted in its historical self-perception as a great power and Western attempts to isolate it through sanctions reinforce this narrative. Similarly, Miskimmon, O'Loughlin and Roselleet introduce the concept of strategic narratives, emphasizing how states construct narratives to justify their foreign policy choices. In their view, strategic narratives are "a means by which political actors attempt to construct a shared meaning of the past, present and future of international politics to shape the behavior of domestic and international actors" (Miskimmon et al., 2018, p.4). In this perspective Russia's emphasis on multipolarity, sovereignty, and anti-Western solidarity in its diplomatic discourse reflects a strategic narrative attempting to reshape its global identity in response to Western sanctions.

Russia's growing engagement with China and the Global South is the key to this identity shift. Scholars such as Alexander Korolev (2020) have examined how Russia's deepening ties with China, Africa, and Latin America are not only driven by economic necessity but also by shared ideological narratives of sovereignty, non-interference, and resistance to Western liberalism. These relationships allow Russia to reaffirm its great power status and project an alternative model of international order.

While these existing works offer essential perspectives into the impact of sanctions on changes in Russia's foreign policy, much of the analysis continues to be materialist. Drawing upon the constructivist scholarship, this paper argues that Russia's response to sanctions is fundamentally more than a pragmatic accommodation to economic interdependence; rather, it represents a reconstruction of its transnational identity. Through an engagement with the constructivist theories of identity, norms, and ontological security, this study contributes to an

emerging area of scholarship that considers the extent to which state identities adapt in response to external trends. Next, the theoretical background is presented, detailing how the constructivist theory offers the lens to analyze Russia's identity-based reorientation toward China and the Global South.

Theoretical Framework: Constructivism and Identity Reconstruction

The constructivist approach provides a crucial lens for understanding Russia's response to Western sanctions, emphasizing the role of identity, norms, and self-perception in shaping foreign policy. Unlike realist perspectives, which view state behavior as primarily driven by material constraints and power balances, constructivism asserts that state interests and actions are shaped by socially constructed identities and interactions within the international system (Wendt, 1999). States do not act solely based on economic incentives or security concerns; instead, they engage in foreign policy behaviors that reflect their perceived roles, historical narratives, and the expectations placed upon them by the international community. When a state's identity is challenged, it may undertake efforts to reconstitute and reaffirm its role in global politics.

Western sanctions imposed upon Russia in 2014 and after 2022 function as more than just economic restrictions—they represent a normative challenge to Russia's status as a great power. According to Finnemore and Sikkink (1998), sanctions serve as material deterrents and symbolic measures that signal exclusion from a normative order. In this case, the US and the EU have framed sanctions to reinforce the perception that Moscow is being denied legitimacy within the Western-led global system (Forsberg et al., 2014). This normative exclusion challenges Russia's

self-image as a central actor in global affairs, compelling it to seek alternative recognition and validation.

Alexander Wendt's (1999) concept of "role identities" provides a valuable framework for understanding Russia's diplomatic realignment. When a state's traditional identity is rejected or delegitimized, it seeks to reconstruct its position by engaging with actors who validate its self-perception. In Russia, exclusion from Western financial, political, and security institutions has prompted a redefinition of its global role, emphasizing multipolarity and anti-hegemonic alliances (Feklyunina, 2018). Rather than seeking reintegration into the Western system, Russia has aligned itself more closely with China and the Global South, promoting narratives of sovereignty, non-interference, and resistance to Western liberal norms (Tsygankov, 2016).

Such a process is consistent with the ontological security theory that states need a stable and consistent identity to serve as a basis for rationality and legitimacy (Pettman, 2001). The sanctions impose an ontological crisis, for Russia is built on the construction of its identity as a global power throughout its history, as well as its vision of creating a multipolar world order. Russia has also undergone enhanced interaction with various entities, such as BRICS and the Shanghai Cooperation Organization (SCO), as well as bilateral ties with China, India, and African countries. It is not merely that these partnerships are strategically beneficial: they fulfill an identity-affirming role, enabling Russia to represent itself as a leader in an alternative world system (Korolev, 2020).

Since then, Russia's foreign policy has been a quest to reject the symbolic primacy of the West (the "successful West") while legitimately producing complementary alliances that confirm the type of nation that foreign policy is creating on the ground. So its

growing dependence on China for their trade and economic partnership, as illustrated by the Power of Siberia-2 pipeline, is not simply material, with the need to have an outlet, it is a stated objective of going forward in reducing Western influence and creating a new world order independent of it. In turn, Russia's support for African states — especially in their efforts to challenge French imperialism in the Sahel — presents Moscow as a decolonial partner in a similar struggle with neocolonialism. These moves point to Russia's diplomatic pivot as the pragmatic reaction to its new economic realities and a more expansive identity reordering project to entrench its place as the global counterpoint to the West.

Using constructivist perspectives, this study moves beyond materialist accounts of sanctions. It centralizes agents' discourse and identity construction to its argument, showing how normative pressures shape state behavior and identity. As an external force, sanctions have forced Russia to recast its role in world politics, not by aiming at rapprochement with the West, but by constructing its new international identity on forged alternative alliances and ideological structures.

Russia's Identity and Response to Sanctions

Western-imposed sanctions have catalyzed Russia's foreign policy transformation, reinforcing its perception of exclusion from the Western-led global order. These measures, particularly after 2014 and 2022, have imposed economic costs and challenged Russia's self-conception as a great power, prompting a diplomatic and ideological realignment. Constructivist scholars argue that when a state faces normative rejection, it seeks to reassert its identity through alternative alliances and strategic narratives

(Wendt, 1999; Tsygankov, 2022). Therefore, Russia's response to sanctions is not merely a pragmatic adjustment to economic constraints but an effort to redefine its place in the international system through a shift toward China and the Global South.

Sanctions have thus been integral in transforming Russia's self-perception by questioning its historical role as an indispensable component of European and Western security architectures. Before 2014, Russia had a multifaceted relationship with the West, engaging in cooperation and competition inside Western institutions like the G8 and the NATO-Russia Council. The sanctions, diplomatic expulsion, and cultural boycotting excluded Russia from the Western-led governance institutions and drove it to find alternative mechanisms of legitimacy (Kirkhan, 2022). From a Constructivist perspective, this external delegitimization led to a deliberate reconstruction of Russia's global identity, moving away from its historical ties with Europe and toward a multipolar coalition centered around sovereignty, anti-imperialism, and non-Western solidarity (Lewis, 2022).

A significant aspect of this identity shift is the new Russian strategic rhetoric, which frames Western sanctions as an existential threat rather than a temporary diplomatic challenge. In speeches at forums like the Valdai Discussion Club (2023), Vladimir Putin has framed sanctions as a weapon of Western imperialism, confirming Russia's role as a defender of national sovereignty and a vanguard of the battle against Western hegemony. Such rhetoric is present in Russian state media, where multipolarity and the emergence of other power centers have been received with particular enthusiasm (Tsygankov, 2022). By building this narrative of resistance, Russia places itself as the leader of a much larger movement rejecting US- and EU-imposed international constraints.

Russia's diplomatic and economic response also reflects this reconstruction of identity. Russia needs economic relations with China and a deepening of its relations with Beijing, similar to the expansion of relations with India, Brazil, South Africa, and important countries in Africa and Latin America. Nonetheless, it is a symbolic rejection of the West's legitimacy. Economically, BRICS, the Shanghai Cooperation Organization (SCO), and similar institutions enable Moscow to maintain its status as a regional power and direct bilateral relations with third countries away from its traditional sphere of influence. In contrast, the Western sanctions regime tries to diplomatically and economically isolate Russia and those institutions endorse its assertions of great power status, further solidifying collective identity based on models of governance outside the Western world.

The shift is telling how Russia treats its economic and financial systems. Stripped of SWIFT and similar mechanisms within the Western financial systems, Russia has facilitated China in broadening its use of alternative financial infrastructures, which took the form of bilateral trade settlements in yuan and an attempt to undermine the role of the US dollar in global transactions (Korolev, 2020). This change is due to economic incentives, but it is also a willful act of identity repositioning, expressing Russian identification with an alternative economic order that further solidifies its role as a leader in the transition to a post-Western financial infrastructure.

Russia's courting of the Global South has picked up considerably since 2014 in its bid to position itself as a leader of an anti-hegemonic coalition. As a result, the BRICS (Brazil, Russia, India, China, South Africa) alliance and the Shanghai Cooperation Organization (SCO) have emerged as key pillars of Russia's diplomatic realignment, offer-

ing institutional competencies that advance multipolarity and economic collaboration outside the Western system.

The dynamic of sanctions and interrelated transformations in Russian foreign policy proves the constructivist claim that states do not simply react to external compulsion in material terms but work to redefine their position in the international order to reaffirm a claim to legitimacy. Sanctions have compelled Russia to build new narratives, alliances, and institutional arrangements that express its transformed identity as a sovereign power standing up to Western dominance. This process has influenced its increasing engagement with China and the Global South – not just its economic partners but its ideological allies in Russia's more extensive geopolitical realignment.

Russia's Diplomatic and Economic Engagement with China

Russia's growing alignment with China in the wake of Western sanctions represents more than a pragmatic response to economic constraints; it is a crucial aspect of Russia's identity reconstruction as a leader of a multipolar world order. While realists often interpret this relationship in terms of balancing against the United States, a constructivist perspective reveals that the Russia-China partnership is also driven by a shared ideological opposition to Western liberal norms and a commitment to sovereignty, non-interference, and alternative governance models (Wendt, 1999; Korolev, 2020). This section examines how Russia's engagement with China, particularly in diplomacy, trade, and multilateral cooperation, serves strategic objectives and reinforces its redefined international identity.

The Russia-China relationship has been framed in both countries' official discourse as a partnership of equals that contrasts

with Western alliances, which they portray as hierarchical and interventionist. Since the 2014, China has played an increasingly important role in providing Russia with economic and political support, shielding it from some of the more severe consequences of Western-imposed sanctions (Tsygankov, 2022). This deepening relationship was further solidified following 2022 special military operation in Ukraine, after which China maintained high levels of bilateral trade, and promoted alternative global governance mechanisms through institutions such as BRICS and the Shanghai Cooperation Organization (SCO).

Economically, Russia's reliance on China has grown significantly due to its exclusion from Western markets and financial institutions. Western sanctions have cut Russia off from SWIFT and European energy markets, forcing it to pivot toward China as a primary trading partner. In 2023, bilateral trade between the two countries surpassed \$200 billion, reflecting a rapid increase in Chinese purchases of Russian oil, gas, and agricultural products and Russian imports of Chinese technology and industrial equipment (OEC, n.d.). A significant development in this economic relationship is the Power of Siberia-2 pipeline, which, once completed, will allow Russia to redirect energy exports away from Europe and toward China, further solidifying their interdependence. This economic realignment is symbolically important, as it allows Russia to claim that it is not isolated but integrated into a parallel economic network that challenges Western dominance (Tsygankov, 2022).

Beyond trade, Russia and China have also intensified military and strategic cooperation, reinforcing their shared identity as sovereign powers resisting Western encroachment. Joint military exercises, such as Vostok-2022, have demonstrated their commitment to security collaboration, while

diplomatic statements from both countries repeatedly emphasize their opposition to NATO expansion and US-led security structures. Unlike traditional military alliances, often rooted in formal treaties and obligations, Russia and China's security partnership is framed as a flexible, non-binding co-operation model that aligns with their shared preference for multipolar governance and regional autonomy (Soluianov, 2021).

The third way Russia and China provide a competing international identity is through multilateral institutions. Both countries are proactively pushing for BRICS's enlargement. They promote de-dollarization and alternative financial mechanisms and are less reliant on Western financial institutions such as the IMF and the World Bank. Likewise, in the other major regional grouping where Russia and China meet, such as the Shanghai Cooperation Organization (SCO), the two powers try to portray themselves as the architects of a non-Western security version, an alternative bloc against the backdrop of a Western-led world order. These institutional memberships, therefore, are likely to deepen Russia's claim to great-power status, offering it a venue for leading despite diplomatic ostracization from the West (Belousova, 2024). Russia's relations with China validate its self-image as a sovereign actor who will not bow to Western hegemony. Through its economic, military, and institutional engagement with China, Russia is explicitly building a non-Western identity that denies subordination to the US and Europe while establishing itself as an equal partner in the new multipolar order (Finnemore & Sikkink, 1998).

In conclusion, Russia's strengthening ties with China are driven by economic pragmatism and a gradual process of reconstructing identity. Russia solidifies its status as a great power outside of the Western-led order through trade, military cooperation,

and engagement in alternative multilateral institutions. The next part builds on this analysis to explore Russia's expanding partnerships with the Global South, where parallel identity-centric strategies are pursued to embed its position in a post-Western order.

Russia's Engagement with the Global South

Russia's diplomatic and economic engagement with the Global South has intensified as part of its broader effort to reconstruct its international identity in response to Western sanctions and diplomatic exclusion. While much of the focus has been on Russia's relationship with China, its increasing presence in Africa, Latin America, and South Asia reflects a rational attempt to foster sovereignty, anti-imperialism, and multipolarity. Constructivist theory suggests that states seek recognition and validation from like-minded actors when their traditional identity is challenged (Wendt, 1999). By strengthening ties with the Global South, Russia reinforces its self-image as an alternative pole in global politics, legitimizing its rejection of Western-led norms and institutions.

A key element of Russia's engagement with the Global South is its framing of the West as a neo-colonial force while presenting itself as a supporter of post-colonial sovereignty. This narrative has been particularly compelling in Africa, where Russia has expanded its presence by offering military cooperation, economic partnerships, and diplomatic support to historically critical regimes of Western interventionism. The Russia-Africa Summit, held in St. Petersburg in 2023, exemplifies this approach, where Russian officials repeatedly emphasized their commitment to non-interference and security cooperation, contrasting their approach

with the conditional aid and governance requirements imposed by Western institutions (Tsygankov, 2022).

Beyond rhetoric, Russia has backed its narrative with tangible security partnerships. The Wagner Group's operations in Mali, the Central African Republic (CAR), and Sudan have provided military support to regimes seeking alternatives to Western security assistance. While framed as counterterrorism and stability efforts, these engagements serve a deeper ideological function, reinforcing Russia's position as a reliable partner for governments seeking to resist Western pressures. Unlike Western military alliances, which often come with political conditions, Russia presents its security cooperation as a mutual defense of sovereignty. This stance resonates with many Global South nations wary of Western interventionism.

Economic ties with the Global South have also become central to Russia's identity reconstruction. With restricted access to Western financial markets, Russia has turned to India, Brazil, and key African and Latin American states as alternative trading partners. The push for de-dollarization within BRICS, Particularly Russia's advocacy for trade settlements in local currencies rather than the US dollar, illustrates how its economic strategy circumvents sanctions and challenges the global financial order (Xu, 2024). The expansion of BRICS, with Russia advocating for the inclusion of countries like Argentina, Saudi Arabia, and Egypt, further reflects an attempt to reshape global governance structures to reflect a post-Western multipolar world (Tsygankov, 2022).

Latin America has also become an important region for Russia's efforts to build an anti-Western coalition. Venezuela, Nicaragua, and Cuba have kept close relations with Moscow, receiving economic assistance, energy contracts, and security collaboration. In these relationships, Russia counterbalanced

US hegemony in the Western Hemisphere. Similar dynamics can be observed in Russia's expanding energy diplomacy with Brazil and Argentina, which presents a trustworthy alternative to the Western energy markets.

Further, multilateral institutions are central to Russia's Global South engagement, providing institutionalized pathways for legitimizing Russia's reconstructed identity. Russia is at the forefront of moving away from Western-controlled global governance in BRICS and the SCO (Khan, 2025). In contrast to traditional Western alliances that tend to be built on liberal democratic political and economic norms, BRICS and the SCO maintain some degree of political and economic pluralism, consolidating the idea that a multipolar order is both desirable and inevitable (Korolev, 2020).

This focus on the Global South reflects a broader trend in Russian foreign policy since sanctions: the effort to construct an alternative global identity that actively pushes back against the current Western-led order rather than passively responding. The partnerships Russia is cultivating are not simply economic or military; they are identity-affirming, feeding Russia's sense of itself as part of a multipolar world where power is more evenly balanced, sovereignty is sacrosanct, and Western influence is tempered.

Conclusion

Russia's response to Western sanctions has been far more than a material adjustment to economic and diplomatic constraints; it represents a fundamental reconstruction of its international identity. As constructivist theory suggests, states do not merely react to external pressures based on material calculations alone but rather reinterpret their roles and interests in ways that reaffirm their self-perception and legitimacy within the international system (Wendt,

1999). The imposition of Western sanctions has reinforced Russia's sense of exclusion from the Western-led order, compelling it to seek alternative forms of international recognition and legitimacy. This shift is evident in Russia's deepening strategic, economic, and diplomatic engagements with China and the Global South, relationships that are not merely transactional but deeply intertwined with Russia's evolving self-identity.

Russia has sought to establish a partnership of equals through its engagement with China, presenting its alignment as part of a broader effort to resist Western dominance and promote multipolarity. Economically, China has become Russia's most important trading partner, providing an alternative to Western financial systems and serving as a critical market for Russian energy exports (Korolev, 2020). Diplomatic and military coordination within institutions like BRICS and the SCO further reinforces Russia's self-perception as a key architect of a post-Western global order, aligning with China in advocating for non-Western governance models. While often framed in strategic terms, this relationship plays an essential role in Russia's identity reconstruction, enabling Moscow to claim that it remains a great power despite its exclusion from Western institutions (Tsygankov, 2022).

Beyond China, Russia's outreach to the Global South has further validated its leadership of an alternative global order. By fostering economic and security partnerships in Africa, Latin America, and South Asia, Russia has framed itself as a champion of sovereignty and anti-imperialism, contrasting its approach with the conditionality of Western aid and military alliances. Its support for African governments seeking alternatives to Western security assistance, its advocacy for de-dollarization within BRICS, and its energy diplomacy with Latin American nations demonstrate how Russia is actively

constructing a global identity outside the Western sphere of influence (Silaev, 2022). Through these engagements, Russia not only counters the effects of sanctions but also advances a normative challenge to Western-led international governance, positioning itself as a leader of the Global South's resistance to the US and European influence.

These findings underscore the implications of Russia's adaptation of its identity for global governance more generally. Framing its posture in contrast to hegemony, Russia has played a role in the further fragmentation of the liberal international order. It has served to accelerate the transition to a multipolar system where alternative governance structures and economic regimes emerge. The growth of BRICS with non-Western countries seeking a more significant role in shaping the global agenda, Russia's recent standing in the African security environment, and the efforts to find alternatives to the dollar offer examples of how the post-Cold War has been reconfigured by forces that no longer see themselves as subordinate in a particular world order (Tsygankov, 2022). But this transition is not without its difficulties. Russia's increasing reliance on China has raised concerns about the asymmetry of the partnership.

Future research should examine the long-term sustainability of Russia's identity-driven realignment. While this study has demonstrated how the constructivist insights explain Russia's diplomatic and economic shifts, it is necessary to assess whether these partnerships will endure beyond short-term strategic necessities. Questions remain about whether China will continue to support Russia's global ambitions or whether the Global South will see Moscow as a genuine alternative to Western engagement.

Ultimately, constructivism can explain Russia's post-sanctions foreign policy trajectory well. Far from being isolated and

weakened, Russia has actively leveraged its diplomatic and economic ties with China and the Global South to redefine its role in global politics. Time will show whether this alternative vision of world order will be sustainable to effectively counter the Western influence,

but what is clear is that Russia's identity reconstruction is not merely a byproduct of sanctions—it is a strategic, ideological, and normative project that continues to shape global power dynamics in profound ways.

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КОНСТРУКТИВИСТСКИЙ ПОДХОД К САНКЦИЯМ КАК К НОРМАТИВНОМУ ВЫЗОВУ: САНКЦИИ И КОНСТРУИРОВАНИЕ ИДЕНТИЧНОСТИ РОССИИ

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Аннотация: В статье рассматривается ответ России на санкции через призму широкого процесса реконструкции идентичности после смены вектора внешней политики РФ в 2022 г.. Статья выстраивается следующим образом: в первом разделе автор дает обзор литературы, чтобы вписать исследование в современные академические дискуссии о санкциях, идентичности и внешней политике России. Во втором разделе представлена теоретическая основа исследования. Автор следует конструктивистскому подходу, согласно которому нормативное давление формирует и изменяет идентичность и самоидентификацию государства. В третьем разделе дискурс, официальная риторика и политические решения анализируются через призму идентичностного ответа на санкции. В четвертом и пятом разделах рассматриваются дипломатические и экономические связи России с Китаем и глобальным Югом. Автор приходит к выводу, что конструктивистский подход лучше объясняет смену вектора внешней политики России в русле трансформации международного порядка и утверждению принципов суверенитета, невмешательства и противостояния западной либеральной гегемонии.

Ключевые слова: Россия, санкции, идентичность, конструктивизм, Китай

Конфликт интересов: автор заявляет об отсутствии конфликтов интересов.

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