The social construction of internal and external identities of international institutions

by

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WP-10-07

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Abstract

This paper explores the organizational identities of international institutions through a social constructionist lens. Topics covered include the manifestation of social constructionism in international relations, how the theory of organizational identity can be considered a socially constructed process and how one can apply this to an understanding of international institutions as well as its effect on their goals. It is thus proposed that the congruence of an internally constructed identity and an externally constructed identity has a positive effect on organizational outcomes when the organization spans multiple nations. A case study of the European Union is used as an example to highlight the proposed assertion.

Introduction

International institutions are unique in that they encompass a large number of diverse internal stakeholders and they interact with a large number of external stakeholders, all of whom can hold their own identities. Because of this large scale diversity, it may be difficult to navigate all the opposing desires necessary to achieving large scale goals. For this reason, it is beneficial to understand ways in which success can be enhanced or hindered for international institutions.

Organizational identities of international institutions are explored here through a social constructionist lens. The focus will be on the social construction of organizational identity and its affect on the goals of international institutions. The proposition of this paper is that the congruence of an internally constructed and externally constructed identity has an effect on organizational outcomes when the organization spans multiple nations (i.e. an international institution). That is, when the identity constructed by members within an international institution is more congruent to the identity constructed by those outside the institution then the institution will achieve its specific goal faster and more efficiently. Identity as seen by outsiders should have a moderating effect on the relationship between the internal identity and the success of the international institution goals.

This paper assumes the position that organizational identities are socially constructed, meaning they are created through social processes, based on the assertion of Burger and Luckman's (1967) work on the social construction of organizations. As such, the identity of an organization will create a reality in which internal members and external stakeholders will function. If the internal and external stakeholders function within the same reality, meaning they both view the identity of the organization the same within the given context, then they should be better able to function with each other. Functioning within the same reality allows the members

of the organization to communicate on the same level with the external stakeholders granting the organization a better reputation, increased communication, and increased access to resources all of which are necessary to achieve specific goals of the organization. International institutions must rely on good relationships with external stakeholders to aid and advance crucial initiatives that cannot be achieved through internal processes alone. If their external identity does not match their internal identity then they may find themselves at a disadvantage (access to resources, negotiating position, etc).

Structure of Paper

Part 1 Overview

This paper discusses the proposed argument in three parts. Part 1 has two sections. The first (1.1) presents a brief history of the development of Social Constructionism through the Psychology and Sociology literature. This review will include seminal works of social constructionist literature starting with a relatively modern view and trace backwards through the history of the theory. This order was chosen because the modern view is the one that this paper draws upon the most so it is introduced first before discussing what led to it.

The second section (1.2) reviews Social Constructionism as a theory of International Relations, an area of study within the Political Science field. This is partially a re-conceptualization of Social Constructionism through the Political Science lens and partially an application of Social Constructionism in the Political Science field. It will include three perspectives of institutions as they have been defined through the theory of Social Constructionism: social structures, regional associations and organizations. The relevance of this literature is that it gives a distinctive, international view of Social Constructionism and it also provides a transition to the external perspective of identity presented in Part Two.

Part 2 Overview

Part 2 has one section (2.1) that covers the Organizational Identity literature specifically dealing with the development of an organizational identity. Organizational identity literature is a relatively new area of study but a great deal has been published on it(Albert & Whetten, 1985; Ashforth & Mael, 1996; Brickson, 2005; Cheney & Christiansen, 2003; Dukerich, Golden & Shortell, 2002; Dutton & Duckerich, 1991; Elbach & Kramer, 1996; Elstak, 2007, 2008). Therefore, this section will try to only highlight those areas of Organizational Identity literature relevant to this paper.

Part 3 Overview

Finally, Part 3 is where the above concepts are brought together to form a basic proposition of how socially constructed identities of international institutions can effect success. The first section (3.1) looks at the Organizational Identity concepts discussed in Part 2 from the framework of Social Constructionism discussed in Part 1. This is followed by section two (3.2), where I discuss the proposition, the logic that leads to it and its significance. The last section (3.3) will briefly discuss further avenues of research. A case study is used to provide a practical example. The process of accepting the Euro as the new currency for candidate states into the European Union was chosen as a prime example because information on the construction of the EU's identity both internally and externally and information on the EU's economic objectives are available. Before moving on to the literature reviews several clarifications need to be made.

Clarifications

First, in International Relations literature the term Construct*ivism* is used. This can be a source of confusion because in Psychology and Sociology, Constructivism is distinct from Social

Construct*ionism*. Constructivism is a theory of learning based on the works of Jean Piaget. It refers to how knowledge is constructed within an individual's mind from the individual's experiences (Piaget, 1953, 1955). Constructivism in International Relations is a school of thought whereby researchers use Social Constructionism as a lens when studying international phenomena. Therefore, the name refers to scholars' own understandings of the world, (the researcher's viewpoint) and not necessarily the process used in creating that understanding. The concepts and principles used by researchers when viewing the world through this lens are related to, and in some cases re-conceptions of, Social Constructionism.

Second, in Psychology and Sociology literature there is a distinction between Constructionism and *Social* Constructionism. Constructionism on its own is a theory of learning based on the works of Seymour Papert. It refers to the way knowledge is created by individuals through an active process of constructing mental models (Papert, 1980). It is mostly found in Psychology literature and focuses on the individual as the unit of analysis. Social Constructionism, however, looks at the construction of these models through interactions. It refers to the way people create understandings of the world *among* each other (or collectively as a group/society) (Gergen, 1985)

International Relations literature uses the concepts of Social Constructionism but the term "Social" is not used. Textually this can be confusing; however, conceptually the term "Social" does not need to be used because of the nature of the field. That is, it is understood by those within it that the field is interested not only in the characteristics of the units of analysis, known as "actors," but the interactions between those units as well. These interactions are by nature social processes so the term "Social" does not need to be used among the scholars of the field (Reus-Smit, 1996). In order to maintain consistency of terms, however, in this paper I will

use the term "Social Constructionism" when describing concepts of Political Science with the understanding that scholars within the field do not usually do so.

Third, the variables within the proposition of this paper will be discussed in more detail, however, it is worth quickly identifying them now. The internal identity of institutions is taken as the coherence of the identity by the members. Coherence is defined here to be the uniformity or agreement of the identity by those within the institution. Success can be defined in a number of ways but for the purpose of this paper it is defined as achieving the objectives of the institution in a given situation. Given this, the external identity is taken to be the socially constructed identity by external stakeholders in that situation. As will be seen, Social Constructionism is context specific so a socially constructed identity can vary depending on the situation, the stakeholders involved and the objectives of the institution.

Part I

1.1: Social Constructionism in Psychology and Sociology

Social Constructionism is the idea that what we know is created through the relationships and interactions between people. Social Constructionists intend to describe and understand common forms of understandings of the world including themselves (Gergen, 1985). Since the concepts used in Social Constructionism date back centuries, it will be impossible to be exhaustive. For this reason, this review will examine the theory in Psychology, Sociology and Political Science as the relevant fields to the topic through a discussion of the seminal works in each and attempt to bring in several examples of articles influenced by them.

Since the modern conception of Social Constructionism will be the focus, the review will start with this and work backwards tracing the theory's development as it weaved back and forth

between Sociology and Psychology. This will be followed by its formulation and explication in Political Science. The first step is several pieces by Kenneth Gergen followed by Karl Weick's *The Social Psychology of Organizing*. The next link will be Peter Berger and Thomas Luckmen's *Social Construction of Reality*. The final step will be the origin of the concepts in Kant who did not create the theory (or even use the term) but put forward the basic concepts that were later reformulated into the concepts of Social Constructionism. Figure 1 summarizes the path and connections between each author.

Insert Figure 1 Here

Social Constructionism as a theory has its roots in theories by Karl Mannheim (1951) who developed the "Sociology of Knowledge." The sociology of knowledge tries to understand how different forces create knowledge and what type of knowledge is created. What was seen as scientific fact was questioned and subsequently believed to be a manifestation of scientific discourse. They became fact through the process of agreement by the scientific community and not by any objective measure of what constitutes fact (Hruby, 2001).

Kenneth Gergen has had many books and articles published on the topic of Social Constructionism. His formulation has melded the fields of Psychology and Sociology in that he believes social inquiry is used to understand the nature of knowledge (1985). For him, psychology alone is not enough to provide a means by which to understand how humans understand the world and how knowledge is created in that world. Rather, he views psychology as a social process which calls into question all that is known and what can be known in the future. Social inquiry encompasses both epistemological inquiry and the philosophy of science itself (Gergen, 1985, 1994a). Social constructionist inquiry, according to Gergen, is interested in

explaining the processes by which people account for the world in which they live. This includes understanding and explaining themselves within that world (1985). He describes four assumptions that are used in any process of understanding the world through a Social Constructionist view.

Assumption 1

The first assumption is that what humans experience as the world is not itself a direct description of the world (Gergen, 1985, 1994b). Rather, Social Constructionism is a shared understanding of the world as well as the process used to generate, stabilize and change that understanding (Gergen, 2000). This is a concept at the core of Social Constructionism and how it deviates from other schools of thought.

This assumption means that there is no objective world in which we live, but rather everything we understand to be the world comes from our social processes of inquiry and thus our understanding of the world is highly subjective and individualistic. (Gergen, 1985, 1994b). There is no independent representation of reality that humans can observe uniformly. What people use to describe the world are not products of the natural world but rather are simply constructs created from social interaction (Averill, 1982; Coulter, 1979; Gergen & Davis, 1985; Gergen, 2000). Such an assumption can lead to questioning anything that humans take for granted. For instance, Suzanne Kessler and Wendy McKenna (1978) used Social Constructionism to question the idea that there are two genders.

Assumption 2

The second assumption Gergen presents is that the terms people use to understand the world are "social artifacts," created in historical contexts (1985). Historical knowledge can be

revisited and understood in terms of the historical contexts in which it was created because knowledge is culturally and historically contingent (Mannheim, 1951). Further, since the social construction of knowledge is an active process, it can be recreated through modern contexts thus giving it new meaning.

Assumption 3

The third assumption is that the degree to which a given form of understanding is prevalent is not dependent on empirical validity but on the interchange of social processes (Gergen, 1985, 1994b). This is a temporal aspect of Social Constructionism in that interpretations of a given event can be plentiful as each person can interpret things differently. Also, interpretations can change with the change in relationship as they unfold over time (Gergen, 1985).

Assumption 4

The last assumption is that negotiated understandings in social life (those that are actually discussed) are connected with many other activities in which people engage. Therefore explanations of the world are themselves social actions and are a part of other human activities (Gergen, 1985, 1994b). The importance of this assumption is that a wide range of actions constitute an understanding of the world so to put boundaries on human action through rigid definitions limits the full range of understandings. For instance, taking a person's words at face value limits the understanding gained from the actions of their eyes and facial expressions. These four assumptions are the underlying assumptions Gergen uses in his works out of which two major points have manifested.

Action vs. Meaning

The first point is a way to understand the reasoning behind Social Constructionism. For Gergen, any action can be observed and agreed upon by any observer. It is simply the objective account of an action (Gergen, 1994b). For instance, a person raising their hand is an observation of an action: the objective truth is that a person raised their hand. What Gergen and other social constructionists are interested in is the meaning behind the action (1994b). Why did the person raise their hand?

Traditionally, science attempts to look for an objective truth and meaning behind action that can be applied in a general sense (i.e. blanket theories that are universal) (Gergen, 1994a). This is more than just a distinction between the natural and social sciences but goes to the core of what science is in general. However, through a Social Constructionism lens the world is contextual and dependent on the ways humans construct the meaning behind action. While these two seem to contradict each other, Social Constructionism is not meant to be an alternative to the traditional objective of science. On the contrary, social constructionists tend to use the truths that are sought in traditional sciences as a starting point by questioning the accepted meanings within it and change the way humans understand those meanings (Gergen, 1994a). One cannot make sense of actions with the use of an objective measuring tool but rather must rely on ancillary information (Gergen, 1994b). As such, the process for constructing theory and conducting human affairs depends on the meaning of actions, which is given to infinite revisions, the basis of that meaning, which is not empirical data but a network of interdependent and continuously modifiable interpretations from which empirical research can take place. However, since any action is subject to multiple interpretations depending on the people observing it issues will arise over the relative strength of those interpretations (Gergen, 1994b). It is the last point that is

negotiated and leads to the creation of a collective framework through which further interaction takes place.

This search for meaning behind action can be seen as an expansion of what Karl Weick spoke of in his book *The Social Psychology of Organizing*. Weick's book was originally published in 1969 but it is the second edition, published in 1979, that is most widely cited and praised because of Weick's reformulations of previous thoughts and expansion of others (Czarniawska, 2005, Wicker, 1980). Weick was principally interested in a new way of understanding organizations but he included a great deal on how sense-making takes place within organizations. While Gergen does not directly apply the concepts found in Weick, many of the concepts Gergen discusses are similar.

Weick first questions the assumption that organizations are rigid, solid and static. Rather, he sees them as continual processes where meaning is made more clear through coordinated actions of the individuals working within them (Weick, 1979). The actions of individuals are not taken as given either but are actually a series of actions and reactions. That is, actions are dictated by the individual and by the response of others to those actions (Weick, 1979). In essence, people are constantly readjusting themselves due to social interactions with others within the organization and that constitutes sense-making forming the basis for organizing (Weick, 1995).

Weick's criticism of taken-for-granted assumptions of organizations rest primarily on what he refers to as ambivalence. This is somewhat similar to Gergen's point that it is impossible to have an objective reality. Ambivalence for Weick is a recognition that one does not have a complete picture of an event, but rather that the world exists in a continual process. Ambivalence allows a person to separate themselves from a situation and allows for more diversity of thought

among members of an organization (Weick, 1979). By doing this, multiple "templates" for action can manifest. One can liken these multiple perspectives to the different understandings of the world as described by Gergen.

Action within organizations is a process of determining what to act on and what meanings are given to the results of those actions. For Weick, this process is complicated by the multitude of opinions and varying interpretations and a great deal of time in organizations is spent on consensus building (1979). Organizational outcomes then are the result of interactions of individuals with diverse perspectives (Wicker, 1980). This is similar to the idea that Gergen uses in his discussion of the social aspect of knowledge creation. While Gergen takes the idea one step further to describe sense-making in general, Weick explores it in a very directed way in describing sense-making specifically within organizations.

Importance of Language

The second point that Gergen emphasizes is the power of language in the creation of knowledge. Words are granted meaning through their use in social contexts (Gergen, 1994a; Wittgenstein, 1963). Language is highly subjective in that what one word means to one person may mean something completely different to another. As such, humans must collectively agree on a language and a meaning for the words in that language (Gergen, 1994b).

Language is used in discourse to convey ideas but the use of language is dependent upon the social agreement on what language represents. Since a large degree of knowledge is transmitted linguistically, it is inherently a social phenomenon, not an objective truth. Knowledge is a construct of the social processes of agreement on a standardized language used to describe it (Berger & Luckman, 1967). Since language plays such a large role in knowledge creation and understanding one cannot independently verify knowledge. Language constrains the

meaning behind knowledge creation because agreement on the meanings of words is restricted to the language conventions of a particular group (Gergen, 1994b). Thus, knowledge cannot be universal because conventions of language are localized to specific groups of people.

Weick touches upon a similar idea. For him, sense-making requires a frame of meaning, something that is large and lasting (Goffman, 1974). A person's understanding of organizational processes come from and is shaped by these frames. One type of frame he mentions is an inherited vocabulary used by society. While this idea of an ingerited vocabulary as a frame of reference touches upon the power of language, it is Berger and Luckman's (1967) *Social Construction of Reality* that provides the basis for Gergen's belief in the influence language has on the creation of knowledge and the understanding of the world.

Burger and Luckman discuss what they call objectification or the objective world. This is what they see as a manifestation of human expressivity in products of human activity (1967:34). This includes an objective reality as well as a socially constructed one. It is the whole of what we know as a common world. Signification is a type of objectification but is different from other forms in that the use of symbols is done with the explicit intention to serve as an index of subjective meaning (1967:34). The emphasis is on the explicit intention of these symbols to create meaning or a symbol of something a person intends to convey even if the object as it was originally intended may not have that meaning. Burger and Luckman give an example of a knife stuck in a wall. The original purpose of the knife is not to convey fear but when it is stuck in a wall, it may convey a meaning of threat (1967:35). It is not the knife itself but the meaning associated with it being stuck in a wall that is interpreted as a threat.

Language for Burger and Luckman is a signification that is used to maintain the reality of everyday life. Reality exists by means of commonly agreed upon languages (1967). Language is

used to not only accumulate and store information but to transmit it to future generations. It is inherently reciprocal and facilitates the synchronizing of intentions between individuals. Language was socially constructed to facilitate the construction of knowledge. Thus, not only is knowledge socially constructed but the tools used to construct are also socially constructed.

Gergen agrees with Burger and Luckman that language is constrictive and forces the person using it to conform to its rules and norms (1967). The reason is because of the social necessity to have an agreed form of communication. This, however, also makes it impossible to describe the world exactly as it exists. All human understanding of the world is translated into the language of respective communities and subject to the conventions of those communities. Therefore, the understanding of knowledge is inherently a social process because of its reliance on the use of a socially constructed language.

Burger and Luckman also take this concept into the realm of human development. Because our knowledge of the world is dependent upon the language used in the community we live in then our development from childhood is dependent upon the context in which we grew up in. Therefore, humans' ways of becoming and being human are as numerous as the cultures that exist (Burger & Luckamn, 1967:48). According to this view, there cannot be a universal human nature or what Gergen would refer to as an objective truth existing outside of social interaction (Gergen, 1994a; 2000). To understand a person or be understood by another is impossible if one ignores the context in which they exist. The same is true of knowledge, which itself includes an understanding of the individual. Therefore, knowledge as well cannot be understood outside the context in which it exists. Gergen's work developed the implications of this concept beyond what Berger and Luckman had done (Hruby, 2001).

Historical Roots of Social Constructionism

While Mannheim was the first to develop the sociology of knowledge, the conceptual roots of Social Constructionism can be traced back to Immanuel Kant. Modern social constructionists do not explicitly link their work back to Kant but the conceptual connections to the earlier works, such as those by Mannheim, that form the basis for modern social constructionists is apparent. Kant believed that human consciousness had an amazing ability to be self reflective. Humans can step back and reflect on various desires that produce normative questions (Tiffany, 2006). This is a direct result of the autonomy of reason that formed the basis for Kant's work. For Kant, an autonomous person (one who possesses an autonomy of reason) is a person who has the freedom to make use of their own mind without relying on the direction of others and holds themselves morally obligated to the public (Jackson, 2007). Kant (1898a) argues that knowledge comes from the social processes of critique so in order for critical knowledge to come from social interaction, individuals must have autonomy in order to freely interact. Further, he acknowledges the individual differences that people bring to knowledge in that one's own experiences play a role in their understanding of the world (Jackson, 2007).

While Kant emphasized an individual freedom to critique, he limited the extent of that freedom to the point of differing from the community interests. Creating knowledge was a social service dependent on collaboration within today's society and future societies (Kant, 1993). Confirmation of knowledge then is done through a process of public submission and critique. An autonomy of reason is dependent upon a shared sense of truth or what is right and wrong as Kant sees it (1898b).

Modern Social Constructionists such as Gergen see a collaboration on a common means of understanding such as the use of a common language with an agreed upon meaning of words.

The foundation of this idea can be found in Kant as well, though his conceptualization is slightly different. An autonomy of reason allows individuals to work collaboratively on critiquing knowledge. However, he believes that people should come to a consensus on a single model of moral and practical knowledge rather than just the means by which knowledge is understood (Jackson, 2007). For Kant, reality is a universally agreed upon concept where for Gergen, it is context and situation specific. There is no universal agreement because there is too much variation in the context and between individuals creating knowledge.

Kant's work has found its way into many fields. One such field is that of Political Science where John Rawls uses Kantian theories to discuss things such as justice and political philosophy (1971). However, as is shown in the next section, Political Science uses a more modern conceptualization of Social Constructionism. Here, it has been applied to the realm of International Relations in terms of describing international institutions.

1.2: Social Constructionism in Political Science

International institutions come in many different forms such as individual organizations or in groupings of nations. Because of their influence, International Relations theories have had to include discussions and explanations of the increasing prominence of international institutions in their analysis of international phenomena. Identity plays a large role in these discussions because some within the field believe it provides a purpose for institutions. Gearge McCall and J.L. Simmons (1966) argue that identities provide a reason for action by informing what an actor's goals are and the strategies they use to achieve them. Christian Reus-Smit adds another, reason; action can be rationalized based on identity (1997). For example, if an institution holds a militaristic identity then military action can be justified.

Social Constructionism in Political Science offers not only an explanation of the influence of institutions but also an explanation of the creation of these institutions. This review will focus more on the latter. Three distinct views of socially constructed institutions are covered as a core of the Political Science literature review. This section will begin with a more abstract conceptualization of institutions and work up to a more concrete one. The first area of research is a review of social structures using works by Alexander Wendt as a foundation. Second is a review of regional associations using the work of Christian Reus-Smit. Finally, looking at Dirk Nabers' work, is a review of the Social Constructionist view of actual organizational institutions.

As the forms and numbers of institutions have increased so too have the explanations of their existence and influence. Many states now find themselves members of an institution of one form or another lending credence to the influence institutions can have globally. Social Constructionism views institutions transcending the power arrangements of states because of the ability of institutions to adjust to changing power arrangements (Reus-Smit, 1996). This ability to adapt to change comes from the Social Constructionist view that institutions are social constructs based on social commonalities that come from the naturally occurring characteristics of the members (Reus-Smit, 1996). This makes the institution stronger because of the existence of commonalities prior to the inception of the institution and provide a pre-existing identity from which an organizational identity can be based on.

Through a study of Social Constructionism views on institutional development, the idea of shared characteristics will be presented through a discussion of socially created bonds among members of institutions. The three perspectives used as the core of this review will be described according to each author's definition of institutions, what each author sees as the required characteristics for their respective institutions and the authors attempt to describe a causal reason

for the creation of institutions. Each author presents a different type of institution but they do not contradict each other. Rather, they offer descriptions of varying types of institutions with the understanding that Social Constructionism does not presuppose a single general definition. See table 1 for a summary of the three types of socially constructed institutions. Additional articles will also be included to show how Social Constructionism has been used in International relations.

Social Structures

There needs to be some requirements fulfilled before an institution can be viewed as an institution. Each of the three types of institutions discussed here have different sets of requirements but they all have a common thread. They each see communication leading to the creation of the institution. For Alexander Wendt this is shared knowledge because social structures exist in process and this process is a constant give and take of ideas and information (Wendt, 1995). This is very much in line with Gergen's belief in the importance of language as a substrate for the social construction of knowledge (Gergen, 1985).

In *Constructing International Politics* (1995), Alexander Wendt discusses institutions as social structures. This does not mean formal organizations but rather groups that exist on the basis of shared understandings. He states that social structures share three elements: knowledge, material resources and practices (1995). Under this definition, communities of like-minded members exist based on social characteristics grounded in common understandings, expectations or knowledge. Material resources only "acquire meaning for human action through the structure of shared knowledge in which they are embedded" (Wendt, 1995:73). This coincides with Berger and Luckman's idea of signification.

Shared information and knowledge naturally leads to shared beliefs and common interests in regions where the evolution of that knowledge within the states is closely linked to the surrounding states. Social construction for Wendt is the analysis of "how processes of interaction produce and reproduce the social structures" (Wend, 1995). States that share common bonds will naturally interact more by virtue of having a shared culture, language or social norms of behavior. The knowledge they share comes from a history of interaction that leads to institutional norms that Wendt calls social structures (Wend, 1995). This history is what makes regional commonalities natural and strong.

Wendt's definition includes structures that are not traditionally thought of as institutions but still rely on a commonality of social ideas. He gives an example of sovereignty as an institution which creates a security community. For Wendt, sovereignty is an internalization by states of the institutional idea of self-help in an anarchical world (1995). This internalization manifests itself in the ways states interact with each other. A region with similar social norms that are historically based will communicate more facilitating a shared sense of community leading to trust. This is the process Gergen describes as the social construction of reality. Transmission of knowledge through social processes enact the reality of a trusting community.

Since the institutions Wendt speaks of are social structures, states will try to enter into what Karl Deutsch et al. call "Security Communities" where collective security is established through social norms (1957). Deutsch and his colleagues believe that if states know they can trust each other then they will try to collectively protect themselves against an aggressor. How they know they can trust each other comes from historically established sets of norms that inform state identities. Wendt states, "if past interactions have created a structure in which status quo states trust and identify with each other, predators are more likely to face collective security

responses" (Wendt, 1995:77). In contrast, a region lacking similar social norms may form a security dilemma (Wendt, 1995). Wendt's version of institutions has implications for international relations because of its subsistence on socially shared understandings. It is based on the concept of common knowledge which tends to be more likely among groups with common histories, languages or cultures applying Berger and Luckman's, as well as Gergen's, regional aspect of Social Constructionism.

Reus-Smit takes this idea further in his requirements for states to enter institutions. For him, a constitutional structure is essential before the institutions are to be formed (1997). By requiring "norms of procedural justice" as he puts it, Reus-Smit has provided a more concrete definition of what Wendt calls shared knowledge. Wendt emphasizes the importance of shared knowledge in social structures but gives very little in the way of examples. Reus-Smit sees shared knowledge or, more generally, common bonds among member states as being shared constitutional structures (1997).

Regional Associations

In his article *The Constitutional Structure of International Society and the Nature of Fundamental Institutions* (1997), Reus-Smit presents fundamental institutions as "'generic' structural elements of international societies" that differ from one society of states to another (1997:555). He defines international institutions as instances of the practices of international law and multilateralism. In other words, institutions are based on agreements to cooperate on the same level.

States adopt certain rules to facilitate interaction between themselves. These rules "prescribe behavioral roles, constrain activity, and shape expectations" (1997:557). They can be formal or informal and because different groups of states have different norms of behavior, rules

prescribing them can vary (Reus-Smit, 1997). This explains why there are international institutions that hold different values and norms. The difference from Wendt's definition of institutions is that there is actual agreement, verbal or written, on the norms of behavior rather than a generalized sense of community.

Reus-Smit offers an interesting reason for forming institutions. Going along with his definition of institutions as being based in constitutional rules he attaches to these rules the concept of justice. For Reus-Smit, the formation of institutions is directly related to a desire for constraining influence on state action (570). A moral norm of behavior where "right" behavior is socially agreed upon and therefore collective action can occur by members to deal with dissenters. The reason for forming institutions is to "solve cooperation problems and facilitate coexistence" (Reus-Smit 570).

For Reus-Smit, this is the reason why Social Constructionists see institutions as socially constructed. The basic requirement of fundamental institutions is socially agreed upon constitutional rules of procedure or behavior. The metavalues of constitutional structures shape the outcome of the institution-building and ultimately lead to the fundamental institutions (Reus-Smit, 1997). When states formulate institutional norms through discourse and communicative action those norms have to be backed by applicable reasoning. Ultimately, the reasoning with the greatest weight are those that "appeal to deep-rooted, collectively shared ideas that define what constitutes a legitimate social agent" (Reus-Smit, 1997).

Discussion of institutions based on these assumptions requires inclusion of regional associations and shared concepts of understanding because it is this shared knowledge that the institutions are founded on (Reus-Smit, 1997). Since "elementary rules" shared among states comprise institutions, states that share common cultures or ways of life may naturally form

institutions among each other. These states will view other cultures or societies with different ways of life as not having a place within the institution or if they must have a place, they will not hold as strong a position as those with the same rules of conduct. One exception to this is when a greater identity is agreed upon in which different cultures or societies are seen as pieces of a greater culture or society based on norms shared by all those. In essence, commonalities are emphasized more so to create an umbrella culture distinct enough from other regions to form a coherent internal identity (see example of the formation of a European identity and how it was used to form the EU in McCormick, 2004). This leads to the final definition of institutions.

Institutions as Formal Organizations

Dirk Nabers provides a definition of institutions that is even more tangible than Reus-Smit's definition. Nabers' *The Social Construction of International Institutions: The Case of ASEAN +3* (2003) presents a similar definition as the first two articles in its reliance on shared social norms but Nabers discusses the creation of an actual organizational institution by describing the social interactions that were the driving force behind its construction.

Nabers uses the Association of South East Asian Nations +3 (ASEAN +3) as an example, which he argues is a social structure resulting from communication processes (2003). The members of ASEAN +3 were already closely aligned with each other in the way described by Wendt and had informal rules, as Reus-Smit discusses, in the form of common cultural norms of behavior. For Nabers, the key to institutions is the communication processes that take place between nations and how it is formalized within the context of an institutional identity (2003). This perspective of identity creation through discourse has gained some footing in International Relations. For example, Larsen (1997) studies identity of international institutions through an exploration of speeches, writings, interviews and conversations.

Regions that share values prior to the creation of an institution will have stronger ties with one another within the institution (Nabers, 2003). The common meta-values serve to facilitate the interactions within the institutions because members will be more likely to interact when other states understand them. This collective understanding is derived from the social interactions of the members but if the interaction is historical and a commonality already exists, the understandings will be stronger and therefore the institution will be stronger (Nabers, 2003). For Nabers, the increasing interdependence, common fate and homogenous culture are all factors that explain why states would enter into institutions.

Looking at institutions from Nabers' perspective offers insight into the importance of regional similarities in institution-building. His emphasis is on communication and similar cultures, language or even rules of behavior which act as a catalysts for communication processes. From a Social Constructionist stance, the creation of institutions can only be enhanced or strengthened if the institution is based on shared social norms. This occurs because the states involved are already social and already see each other as having common interests. The communication process culminates in the establishment of a formal institution.

The three views above use different definitions of institution but the characteristics of states entering the institutionalization process are similar and have some overlap. Social interaction is needed before an institution is formed accounting for the social construction of that institution. Regional homogeneity works with this need by facilitating social interaction through historically shared norms of behavior and cultures. The communication processes among institutional members is strengthened by these norms and cultures which ultimately strengthens the institution. Table 1 summarizes the three types of institutions as well as the Social Constructionism concepts associated with them.

In summary, Social Constructionism is a theory of how people understand the world. It emphasizes the creation on knowledge through the processes of interaction between people with a special emphasis on the use of language as a form of symbolic sense-making. The theory has been expanded upon by many researchers from Weick to Gergen. It has also been applied in other fields including the one discussed in this paper, Political Science. In this field, Social Constructionism has been used to describe three forms of institutions; social structures, regional associations, and formal organizations. These three each form through the facilitation process of communication and interaction, which is the core of the Social Constructionism theory.

Part II

2.1: Theory of Organizational Identity

Organizational Identity was first introduced as an area of study by Albert and Whetten (1985). They provided the first theoretical framework suggesting that organizations can have identities just as individuals have identities. Since then, the concepts has been applied to a variety of topics from issue management (Dutton & Dukerich, 1991), individual roles and identities within organizations (Ashforth and Mael, 1996; Kreiner et. al., 2006), and strategy (Gioia & Thomas, 1996). However, there has been some disagreement on what Organizational Identity means and what to make of it (Rekom et al., 2008).

At first researchers attempted to identify what an organizational identity could be (Albert & Whetten, 1985; Gioia & Thomas, 1996). Later questions arose surrounding how an organizational identity could change (Dutton & Dukerich, 1991; Fox-Wolfgramm et al., 1998). Others were interested in how threats impact it (Elsbach & Kramer, 1996; Ravasi & Schultz, 2006).

Origins of Organizational Identity

Ideas on what an Organizational Identity is vary somewhat so it may be helpful to go back to the original source of the idea. Albert and Whetten presented three criteria for what an Organizational Identity is or should be. The first is what they call "The Criterion of Claimed Central Character" (1985:205). The purpose of this criterion is to identify what the essence of the organization is. A statement of central character should distinguish an organization on the basis of something important and essential (Albert & Whetten, 1985). However, because importance is difficult to distinguish (i.e. what characteristics are important and what are not), Albert and Whetten admit that this criterion is dependent on the situations in which characteristics of the organization are examined. Instead they propose that one must judge what is and is not central to each organization separately given a specific purpose and theoretical viewpoint (1985:206).

The second criterion is what they call "The Criterion of Claimed Distinctiveness" (1985:205). This criterion is the one most associated with the concept of identity because it is meant to identify characteristics of an organization that are distinctly different from other organizations. Under this criterion, Albert and Whetten take the definition of identity from Erickson (1980) who examined individual identity. An identity that has claimed distinctiveness is a classification that identifies an organization as recognizably different from others (Albert & Whetten, 1985:207).

The final criterion is "The Criterion of Claimed Temporal Continuity" (Albert & Whetten, 1985:205). This criterion is concerned more with the maintenance of identity over time, however, this is not always easy. The problem is that organizations can change over time and so this criterion may suggest that change is difficult. Albert and Whetten do not explain this in much detail but rather discuss how change over time involves some form of loss. They are

concerned with rituals conducted for events such as closings of plants or selling off of divisions or subsidiaries and how these change identity (1985:412). The point of the criterion, however, is that there must exist some degree of persistence of the identity over time. See table 2 for a summary of the three criteria.

They believed that these criteria should be used to either create an Organizational Identity or to evaluate one that already exists. They view defining identity as a scientific concept that meets all these criteria. Each criterion provides good insight into what goes into creating an identity. A good definition, and one that will be used in this paper is a "collective, commonly-shared understanding of the organization's distinctive values and characteristics" (Hatch & Schultz, 1997).

Weick's view of organizations as processes of interaction offers an interesting perspective of what Organizational Identity can be. He assumes that an Organizational Identity is dependent upon the interactions of the individual members within the organization and therefore, an organizational identity is formed through a shared image by a critical mass (1979). This view is something that resonates in David Cooperrider's *Positive Image, Positive Action: Affirmative Basis of Organizing* (2000). Here, Cooperrider views organizations as products of human interaction and found in the mind rather than some objective expression of nature. This image of organizations is shared by many other researchers (McGregor, 1960; Berger & Luckman, 1967; Pfeffer, 1981; Unger, 1987).

Taking this idea of organizations and applying it to the concept of Organizational Identity, it can be clear that the identity of an organization is dependent upon the members of the organization. However, it is not the sum of individual identities but rather a socially constructed identity created through the collaborative efforts of the members as they interact with one

another (Nabers, 2003). The individual member and the institution are connected and should not be seen as separate in this respect. Weick argues this by advocating that we ignore the level of analysis and view organizations not as the sum of the individual parts but rather a discursive identity (Weick, 1996; Salancik, 1977).

This definition is interesting because it emphasizes the rules and norms of behavior. The implication is that institutions base their existence on socially shared concepts of cooperation and collective action. The differing types of institutions across the globe highlight the natural differences in culture or social norms that are officially or unofficially adopted by the members of those institutions. The social system that makes up organizations is therefore a combination of the social values shared by members of the organization and the practices of the members (Torbert, 1983).

One avenue of research looks at Organizational Identity as a product of culture. This fits in with the Social Constructionism view of knowledge as context specific. Organizations are created within a context specific to the area they are founded in. As such, the culture of the region will impact the Organizational Identity (Hatch & Schultz, 1997). This links back to Gergen's and Berger and Luckman's view that knowledge is region specific. Here, Organizations can be substituted for knowledge since both are socially constructed. Further, organizations can create internal cultures of their own. An organizational culture involves members at all levels of the organization and is based in the material aspects of the organization. These materials, known as Cultural Artifacts, grow largely through symbolic processes (Hatch & Schultz, 1997). Cultural artifacts can range from physical materials such as buildings or products but they do not necessarily have to be actual physical products. They can be symbols themselves such as logos

or the company name (Hatch & Schultz, 1997). All these in combination can add to the organizational culture and comprise an internally constructed Organizational Identity.

Organizational identity exists irrespective of the identities of the individual members and thus represents a collective framework within which members develop their own perceptions of the organizations' identity (Elstak, 2008). It is not the collective identities of the individuals but rather the collective perceptions of what the organization's identity is by those individuals. This perception forms the reality within which members function. This socially constructed process forms the main driver for organizational identification and desired behavior (Elstak, 2008). However, the constructed identity of an organization from within may be different from the identity constructed from outside the organization.

Issues in Organizational Identity Literature

A recent issue in Organizational Identity literature is the ability of organizations to reconcile internal and external demands that may be in conflict when perceptions are shifting (Van Rekom et al., 2008). Researchers look for the role identity plays in influencing managerial choices. Several articles have discussed the dichotomy of an internally constructed and externally constructed identity with variation in the degree to which the two influence each other (Dutton & Dukerich, 1991; Elstak, 2008; Gioia & Thomas, 1996; Hatch & Schultz, 1997; Van Rekom et al., 2008). An internal identity is simply understood as the identity members hold of the organization. An external identity is a little more difficult to understand and may best be defined as the image or reputation of the organization (Hatch & Schultz, 1997). Specifically it is the image or reputation held by the external stakeholders.

The next section will discuss the congruence between the internal and external identities a little more. What is important, however, is that there are always large numbers of internal and

external stakeholders that will define, understand and evaluate organizations. This process hinges upon an Organizational Identity since a poor or weak identity can have negative consequences for an organization including lack of acceptance, poor reputation, reduced legitimacy and can negatively impact access to resources (Cheney & Christianson, 2003; Fombrun, 1996; Glynn & Abzug, 2002; Hsu & Hannan, 2005).

Another issue that has arisen in the Organizational Identity literature is the problem with measurement. Since identity is difficult to pin down, it is equally difficult to measure quantitatively (Elstak, 2008). Few publications have used quantitative methods to measure identity (Brickson, 2005; Dukerich et al., 2002; Foreman & Whetten, 2002; Gioia & Thomas, 1996) but for the most part there is disagreement as to how measurement of identity can take place because of the difficulty in deciding what form Organizational Identity takes (Elstak, 2008). Two of these forms have been presented in the literature. The first is the extent to which members agree on what the Organizational Identity is and the second is the extent that members find the Organizational Identity appealing (Elstak, 2008).

Miridita Elstak conducted two studies, measuring both forms, to see which one had a stronger influence in the organization. The first looked at an organization that faced a collective threat. The hypothesis was that the attractiveness of the Organizational Identity would play more of a role in members' actions than the impact of the agreement on the Organizational Identity. The results of the study found the opposite to be true (Elstak & Van Riel, 2004). In fact, it was more important for members to agree on the identity. The second study looked at the driving forces behind organizational identification and behavior. In this study, Elstak had the same results. The attractiveness of the Organizational Identity was the least important driver and agreement was the most important (Elstak, 2007 as cited in Elstak, 2008).

In summary, Organizational Identity is a concept first introduced by Albert and Whetten. It describes the characteristics of an organizational level identity similar to that of an individual level identity. Albert and Whetten (1985) first introduced three criteria for what makes an organizational identity. An Organizational Identity should be based on some central characteristic to the organization, this characteristic should be distinctively different from other organizations and it should persist over time. Some recent issues include reconciling identities created internally and those created externally as well as how to measure it. Elstak (2007) and Elstask and Van Riel, (2004) have provided an empirical way to overcome the issue of measurement by showing that coherence by members is more important in creating an Organizational Identity than other factors.

Part III

3.1: Social Construction of Institutional Identity

Of primary concern here are international institutions and not organizations in general. The distinction is that an organization is a single entity working under one hierarchy. International institutions, however, are groups of organizations working alongside each other under a single organizing framework. This assumption is made from observations of major international institutions such as the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO), the United Nations (UN), the Association of South East Asian Nations +3 (ASEAN+3) and the European Union (EU). For instance, the European Union is made up of member states, each of which are sovereign nations working under their own systems of government. However, as members of the EU, they work alongside each other under a common name (the EU) and for common purposes though not exclusively so (i.e. not everything the member states do is done through the EU). The

Organizational Identity literature looks at the identity of organizations made up of individuals working within them. Here, this concept is applied to larger level, international institutions where the individual members are actually organizations themselves. In the case of the EU, they are individuals nations.

The assumption is that a nation-state represents the collective identity of the citizens. This assumption comes from International Relations literature whereby a state is viewed as a unitary actor, that is, a state can be considered a uniform entity as their governments are assumed to represent the collective will of its citizens (Burchill, 1996). With this in mind, we look at the EU as a prime example of how this assumption can work. The EU is made of member states within Europe. Membership in the EU is a lengthy process with many requirements. One such requirement is that a candidate nation's parliament must vote to ratify membership in the EU (Glenn, 2003). This is done so that government leaders do not act unilaterally but rather the voice of the people are represented in the decision through their parliament. By holding a vote in their respective parliaments, candidate nations can be said to have made a democratic decision representing the nation as a whole and thus are acting as unitary actors. As such, if members of international institutions can be viewed as unitary actors then they can be likened to individuals within an organization and the Organizational Identity concepts can be applied to international institutions.

Application to International Institutions

We have seen that social constructionists believe that members collectively create a shared understanding of who their organization is through social interaction (Elstak, 2008). From an International Relations perspective international institutions do the same thing, through a communication process facilitated by historical, cultural and regional ties. Regional

commonalities form the basis for international institutions' collective identities but these identities are grounded in natural characteristics. Common cultures, languages or norms of behavior based on metavalues are historically shared by groups coexisting within a region (Nabers, 2003). In the example of the European Union below, even though there are distinct national cultures and no common language, it is argued that there is a distinct European culture as well as European norms of behavior that distinguish European nations from other nations (McCormick, 2004). The Social Constructionism view sees the institution-building process as a socializing process of communicating these similar natural characteristics to others in the region which leads to an eventual institution.

Using the three criteria of Albert and Whetten (1985) it is clear where international institutions get their identity from. First, shared histories, cultures and norms of behavior give members of an international institution a claim to a central character. Developing around a historical tie or a common culture (in whatever form be it ethnic culture, economic interests, common heritage, etc.) provides a core from which an identity is formed. Second, having historical ties and common cultures also gives the members unique perspectives that are not shared with outsiders. This gives them a distinctiveness that distinguishes them from other international institutions (see discussion of China, Japan and S. Korean entry into the ASEAN +3 in Nabers, 2003). Further, by being within the same region, certain international institutions have a geographic distinction that is absolutely different from other institutions. Lastly, temporal continuity is preserved through historical and cultural ties leading up to the institutional identity formation and through geographical similarity moving forward into the future. Table 2 summarizes the link between Albert and Whetten's criteria and international institutions.

Origins of the European Union

Within the EU, the process of institutional identity formulation took place over a period of over 50 years. The EU's origins began as the European Coal and Steel Community (ECSC) made of only six nations. The members were nations whose infrastructure had been destroyed during World War II. After the war, they came together to create an organization to help with the rebuilding of their nations using the two materials that were in the highest demand: coal and steel (McCormick, 2004). This gave them a common historical tie as well as a form of cultural commonality from which to base the beginnings of a union. Later the purpose of the institution was renegotiated and it became the European Economic Community (EEC), which worked toward creating common economic goals among the members beyond just coal and steel.

In the 1950's, the members, who by this time had a culture of open dialogue within the EEC, discussed creating a more unified institution that would create a closer union among Europeans. This brought the geographic aspect into the identity they were creating. The members recognized a uniquely European culture based on regional affiliation and wanted to make it more institutionalized. After this, other nations were allowed to join and the EEC became the European Union (Phinnemore, 2003). With the recent push for a constitution, the EU has worked toward establishing a more structured characteristic to their identity, which further fulfills the temporal continuity criterion as it implies a commitment to an even more formal union.

The EU came from a long standing desire for a united Europe after centuries of war between the nations (Urwin, 2003). This desire did not manifest until after World War II when the continent saw how devastating violence can be and sought other means to achieve objectives. It was diplomacy and, more specifically, increased interaction between the nations that initiated

the creation of the ECSC and created lines of communication that were strengthened and broadened as the Union evolved (McCormick, 2004). While we see a wide array of cultures throughout Europe today, most of the nations have become members of the EU. This shows that through increased interaction, European nations have created and strengthened a European identity highlighting a regional commonality that new member candidates are beginning to realize even though national identities are still somewhat strong (McCormick, 2004).

3.2: Congruence of Internal and External Identities

The proposed relationship of this paper between identity and success is that a strong internally constructed identity will lead to success. The reason for this is because that identity creates a reality in which members function within. If there is coherence on the identity, then internal processes will function efficiently since all members will function based on the same reality. Further, an institution's externally constructed identity moderates this relationship because success can depend upon external forces. Figure 2 shows the proposed relationship. The external identity also creates a reality in which external stakeholders function. As such, if both the organization and its external stakeholders function within the same reality then external stakeholders will be more likely to understand and cooperate with the institution. Further, external stakeholders should be less likely to question the motives of the institution or to distrust the institution as a whole. For the institution, this eases the facilitation process of working with external stakeholders necessary to achieving its goals.

What form an internally constructed identity takes has already been discussed. However, taking the two studies by Elstak as a foundation, the internally constructed identity of an institution is operationalized as the extent to which the identity is agreed upon (the coherence of

the identity) by the members of the institution. The collective understanding of member states highlights a point that links the socially constructed organizational identity to international institutions, the idea of collective identity. Nabers states:

> In international politics, identity can be treated as a property of states that generates behavioral and motivational dispositions. Interests can thus change during the process of interaction. The meanings of identities often depend on whether other states' representations are similar or different. The formation of collective identity makes cooperation possible in the first place (2003:131).

State identities are important in building viable institutions because if the members of the institution do not have a shared identity, there is nothing keeping them together within the institution. For an international institution this is important as the coherence of an internal identity is a foundation for the institution. For the EU, this would be the agreement that the member nations have a united European identity.

An externally constructed identity is operationalized the same way, however, who the 'members' are will vary. Because socially constructed identities are situation and individual specific, it would stand to reason that an externally constructed identity will vary quite a bit and overall there may not be any coherence by all groups outside the institution. However, by limiting the identity construction to the specific stakeholders of a given situation it may be possible to have agreement and it still allows comparison with the internal identity as well as remaining within the bounds of the specific situational goal of the institution.

In order to be similar enough to measure a relationship with the internally constructed identity of an international institution, success will have to be situation specific. In something as large as an international institution, an overarching measure of success will be difficult. Therefore, success is defined as accomplishing a specific goal to the satisfaction of the

institution. While you may not always have complete satisfaction by all the members, the degree of satisfaction may be enough as the identity variable is a degree measure as well (degree of coherence).

The congruence of the two identities is important because often times institutions rely on external stakeholders to accomplish goals. Price and Gioia (2008) advocate a constant monitoring of the internal and external congruence because it can minimize the harmful effects of divergent representations of the institution. These can include lack of acceptance, reduced legitimacy, reduced access to resources, etc (Foreman & Parent, 2008). Further, King and Whetten (2008) delve into issues of legitimacy and reputation and the effects of external perceptions on these organizational goals. They believe that an organization must manage the image they present to outsiders in order to gain legitimacy and gain a positive reputation, the former they believe is a requirement of all organizations (King & Whetten, 2008). These in turn translate into positive relationships with external stakeholders and increased access to resources, both of which can lead to success in achieving institutional goals.

Case of the EU

The EU has a number of identities including cultural, legal and political. However, it is the distinctive economic identity that is most associated with it. As such, one specific goal of the EU is to not only maintain its economic status but to expand it as well. One way of doing this is to accept new economies into the union in the form of candidate nations. This benefits the EU because it grants the EU to access to new resources, labor and other economic interests that would otherwise require extensive negotiations and treatise (Glenn, 2003).

A major step in including new economies into the union is for candidate nations to adopt the Euro as their currency. This is important for the EU because it extends the "Euro Zone" and

allows for the efficient transfer of economies from individual nations to the EU. By having new nations use the same currency, the EU is better able to access and incorporate those nations' economies into the union's (Glenn, 2003). As such, success for the EU is for the candidate nations to adopt the Euro, which is why it is one of the requirements for inclusion into the union. However, the identity the candidate nation constructs of the EU is important in deciding to adopt the Euro.

The members of the EU have created an identity of being a strong economic entity and in turn this creates a reality in which the members function. Believing that the EU is a strong economic entity, members work to maintain and increase the economic stability and strength of the union (McCormick, 2004). At the same time, the candidate nations create what they believe the identity of the EU is. In this specific context, it is an image of what they believe is the economic identity of the EU. If a candidate nation creates an identity of the EU as a strong economic entity then they will be more inclined to want to join and adopting the Euro will not be seen as a bad thing. This agreement between the two identities, internal and external, will lead to the success of the specific goal of the EU to have potential new members adopt the Euro.

3.3: Further Avenues of Research

Two potential avenues of research that go beyond the scope of this paper are how can or do international institutions change their identities to fit their goals and to what extent does the internally constructed identity effect the externally constructed identity. With the first, there is an implied normative characteristic to having congruence between internal and external identities. When incongruence exists, institutions would want to know how to change either their identities (only if the goal is a major one) or how to change the external identity. As such, research looking

at how the latter can be done would provide a great benefit to organizations but to international institutions especially because they function on a large scale. It is one thing to change an organizational identity and another to change the identity of an international institution in a manageable way.

The second avenue is somewhat related to the first but it looks at the influence of the internally constructed identity on the externally constructed one. An assumption attached to this avenue of research is that external stakeholders construct their image of the institution's identity from two sources of information. One is directly from the institution (press releases, speeches by leaders, etc) and the second is from secondary information such as news reports and sources other than the institution itself. It would be expected that the former would show that the internal identity has more influence on the external identity while the latter would show the opposite (or no effect at all). Provided that the proposed relationship in this paper is demonstrated through a full research study, these two avenues of research would provide very helpful information to international institutions and consultants.

By viewing organizational identity as a socially constructed phenomenon, the proposed relationship can take on a prescriptive characteristic. If identity is socially constructed then it can be changed so that incongruence can become congruence. The processes that allow such a change encompass another body of work and will be proposed for further avenues of research.

Appendix 1: Tables and Figures

Table 1: Summary of Social Constructionism in International Relations Literature

Type of Institutions	Main Characteristic	Social Constructionism
Social Structures (Alexander Wendt)	-Share three elements: knowledge, material resources and practices -No formal agreement	-Interaction required for the sharing of knowledge and practices and facilitates the sharing of resources -Importance of interaction in sense-making (Weick)
Regional Associations (Christian Reus-Smit)	-Instances of practices of international law and multilateralism -Formal agreement on cooperative practices only	-Agreements symbolize construction of entity -Objectification and signification (Burger & Luckman)
Formal Organizations (Dirk Nabers)	-Formal organizational entity encompassing the elements of the first two types of institutions	-Shared understandings, social artifacts and social processes formalized -Formality allows institution's activities to be part of other human activities (Gergen)

Table 2: Link between Organizational Identity Criteria and International Institutions

Criteria	Definition	International Institution
Criterion 1: Claimed Central Character	-Essence of an organization -Distinguish organization on basis of something important and essential	-Sharing of common norms of behavior, culture and/or history
Criterion 2: Claimed Distinctiveness	-Characteristics distinctly different from other organizations -Recognizably different from other organizations	-Common culture and history provides unique perspective -Regional Distinctiveness
Criterion 3: Claimed Temporal Continuity	-Maintenance of identity over time -Identity persists for some period of time	-Historical and Cultural ties allowed for creation of institution -Geography allow them to persist in future

Figure 1: Summary of Social Constructionism literature review in Psychology/Sociology
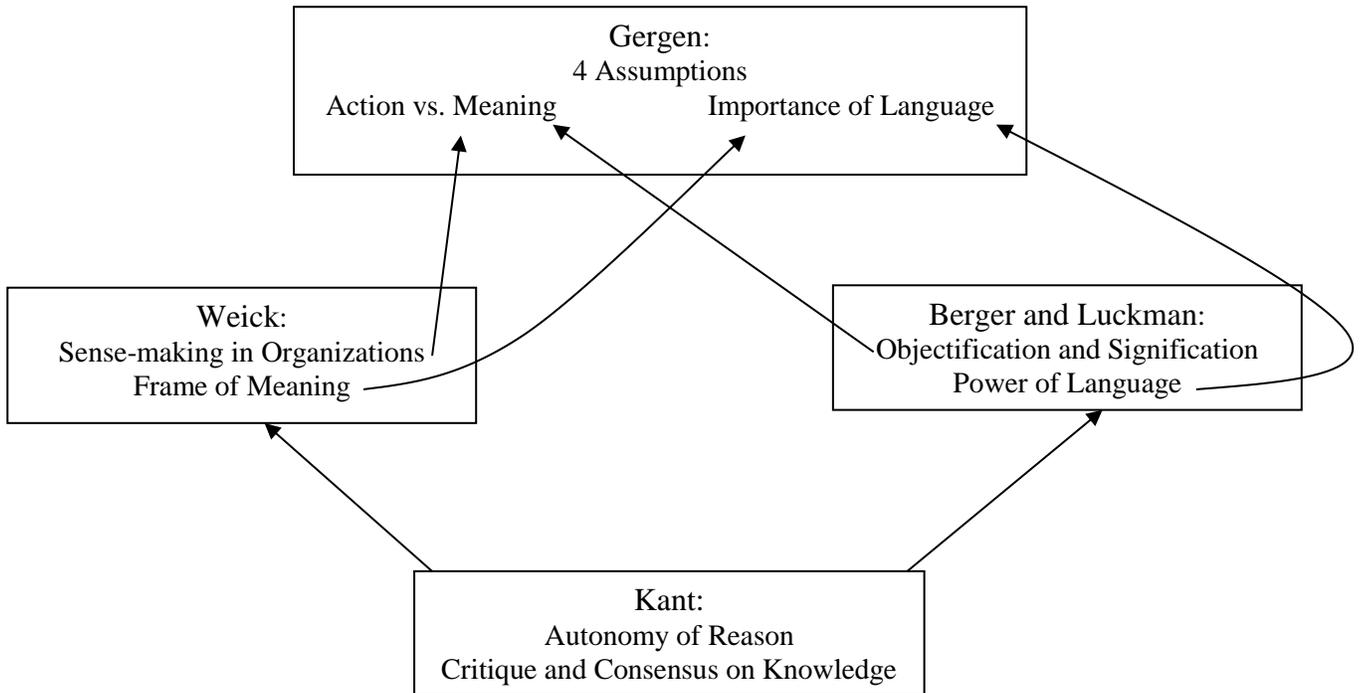
Gergen:
4 Assumptions
Action vs. Meaning   Importance of Language

Weick:
Sense-making in Organizations
Frame of Meaning

Berger and Luckman:
Objectification and Signification
Power of Language

Kant:
Autonomy of Reason
Critique and Consensus on Knowledge

Figure 2: Proposed Relationship between Socially Constructed Identities (Internal and External) and Success

Internally
Constructed
Identity

Success in regard
to Institutional
Goals

Externally
Constructed
Identity
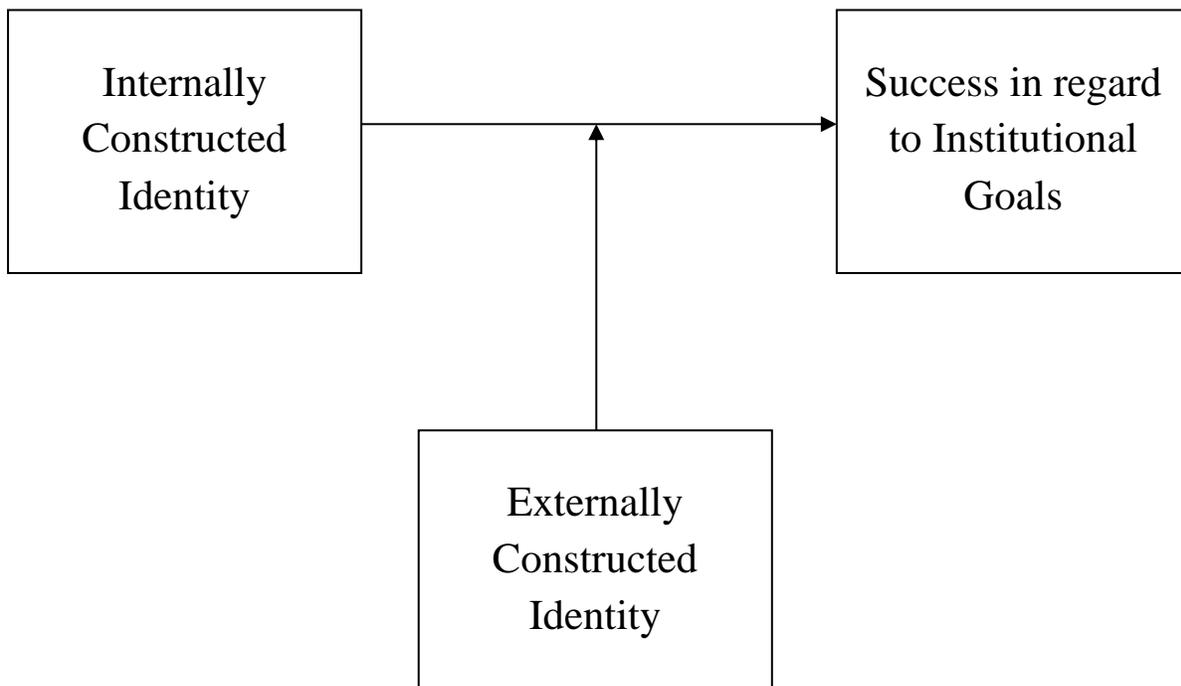
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