Western European Journal of Historical Events and Social Science
Volume 2, Issue 6, June, 2024
https://westerneuropeanstudies.com/index.php/4
ISSN (E): 2942-1926 Open Access| Peer Reviewed

THE CONCEPT OF "CONSTRUCTIONISM" AND THE MAIN ASPECTS OF ITS STUDY. NECESSARY CONDITIONS FOR THE EMERGENCE AND HISTORY OF CONSTRUCTIONISM.

Nurmetova Fazilat Ilhomovna,
Teacher at Journalism and Mass
Communications University of Uzbekistan,
Department of Political Sciences
fnurmetova@list.ru
+998936317999

The study of international relations can be transformed by using the substantial and multifaceted significance of social construction in global politics. Fundamentally, social constructivism reveals the primary mechanisms that form the international scene and redirects attention away from simply material explanations, such economic and military prowess, and toward the ideological and social aspects of world politics. This change is essential to comprehending the modern world, in which identity politics, soft power, and international standards all have a growing impact on state behaviour and international outcomes.

Conventional paradigms frequently fall short of providing an explanation for new and developing occurrences in a world marked by intricate linkages and swift change. By studying how realities are socially built through interactions, discourse, and shared meanings, social constructionism fills this vacuum in knowledge. This method highlights how ideas like state sovereignty, authority, and legitimacy are continuously reinterpreted through social practices and institutional frameworks in the fluid and dynamic field of international relations.

The focus that social construction places on the function of speech and language in the creation of political reality is one of its primary contributions. In addition to reflecting reality, media representatives, politicians, and diplomats actively influence how the world's problems are viewed and resolved. This viewpoint offers a greater comprehension of the processes that determine global agendas, shape conflicts, and create and sustain alliances.

In addition, social constructionism provides valuable insights into the construction of identities and interests. Unlike traditional theories that often consider these elements to be given or static, social constructivism sees them as products of social interactions and historical contexts. This perspective is particularly useful in analysing why countries with similar material capabilities may pursue very different foreign policies based on their structured identities and perceived interests. For example, the foreign policies of the United States and Canada, despite their geographic proximity and economic similarities, differ significantly due to their national identities and historical experiences.

Furthermore, in international politics, social constructivism highlights the significance of norms and normative shifts. International discourses and practices are continually constructing and negotiating international norms, such as environmental protection, nuclear non-proliferation, and human rights, which are not static. Gaining an understanding of how these

Western European Journal of Historical Events and Social Science
Volume 2, Issue 6, June, 2024
https://westerneuropeanstudies.com/index.php/4
ISSN (E): 2942-1926 Open Access| Peer Reviewed

norms evolve offers a thorough framework for examining changes in international law and global governance.

In addition, the concept of social construction includes not only material capabilities, but also the ability to form ideological power-beliefs, norms and values. This broader understanding of power is essential to understanding the influence of non-state actors, international organizations, and transnational networks in global politics. For example, the promotion of democracy and human rights by the United States can be seen as an exercise of normative power that shapes global expectations and behaviour.

The construction of legitimacy and authority in the international system is another important area covered by social constructivism. Legitimacy derives not only from legal statutes or material forces, but also from general trust in the authority of international institutions and laws. This belief is formed through diplomatic practices, international agreements and the actions of influential states [1.184-207].

Social constructivism is a sociological theory of knowledge, according to which human development is socially situated and knowledge is formed through interaction with others. Like social constructivism, social constructivism emphasizes that people work together to actively construct artifacts. However, while social constructivism focuses on knowing, social constructivism focuses on creating social reality. A very simple example is an object like a cup. An object can be used for many things, but its shape suggests some "knowledge" of transporting fluids (see also Affordance). A more complex example is an online course - the "patterns" of software tools not only dictate how online courses should work, but the actions and texts produced within the group as a whole help shape how everyone behaves within this group. A person's cognitive development is also influenced by the culture they participate in, such as language, history, and social context. For a philosophical account of a possible social constructionist ontology, see the Critique of Representational Realism. Strong social constructivism as a philosophical approach proposes that "the natural world has little or no role in the construction of scientific knowledge." According to Maarten Boudry and Philip Buekens, Freudian psychoanalysis is a good example of this approach in practice.

However, Boudry and Buekens do not claim that "honest" science is completely immune to all socialization and paradigm shifts, just that the strong social constructivist claim that all scientific knowledge is constructed ignores the reality of scientific success.

One of the distinctive features of social constructivism is that it rejects the role of supernatural necessity in the invention/discovery or justification of knowledge. In the field of invention, he plays an important role in the emergence of knowledge by chance, with historical interests and sources, changing the direction of the growth of mathematical and scientific knowledge. Acknowledging the role of logic and reason in the test, in the field of reasoning, it also accepts that acceptance criteria change and change over time. Thus, as Paul Earnest points out, mathematical proofs follow different standards in different periods in the present and in the past. Social constructivism is studied by many educational psychologists who are concerned with its impact on teaching and learning. Social constructivism extends constructivism to include other actors and the role of culture in development. In this sense, it is possible to contrast the theory of social learning by emphasizing the interaction through observation. For more on the psychological dimensions of social constructivism, see the work of A. Sullivan Palincsar. Psychological tools are one of the main concepts in Lev Vygotsky's socio-cultural perspective.

Western European Journal of Historical Events and Social Science
Volume 2, Issue 6, June, 2024
https://westerneuropeanstudies.com/index.php/4
ISSN (E): 2942-1926 Open Access| Peer Reviewed

Research on increasing the use of student discussion in the classroom supports and builds on social constructivist theories. There are all the benefits of having a classroom discussion. Participating in group discussions allows students to summarize and transfer their learning in class and provides a solid foundation for verbal communication of ideas. Many studies suggest that discussion plays an important role in improving students' ability to test their own ideas, synthesize the ideas of others, and develop a deeper understanding of what they are learning. Large and small group discussions also provide opportunities for students to exercise self-regulation, self-determination, and persistence. In addition, discussion improves students' motivation, cooperation and problem-solving skills. Increasing opportunities for students to talk to each other and discuss their ideas increases their ability to support thinking, develop critical thinking skills, and argue their points confidently and respectfully. In addition, the sense of community and collaboration in classrooms is increased by giving students more opportunities to talk together.

Research has shown that students are not used to engaging in academic discourse on a regular basis. Martin Nystrand points out that teachers rarely choose classroom discussion as a teaching format. Nystrand's (1996) three-year study of 2,400 students in 60 different classrooms found that the average classroom teacher spent less than three minutes per hour allowing students to talk about ideas with each other and with the teacher spends Even within three minutes of discussion, most speeches do not count as real discussion because they depend on teacher-directed questions with predetermined answers. Many observations show that students in lower socioeconomic schools and lower grades have fewer opportunities for discussion. Discussion and interactive speaking support learning because they give students the opportunity to use language to express their independent thinking. Discussion elicits sustained responses that encourage students to create meaning by negotiating with others' ideas. This type of learning "facilitates the storage and deep processing of information associated with cognitive manipulation."

One recent area of work exploring social constructivist learning perspectives focuses on the role of social technologies and social media in facilitating the creation of socially constructed knowledge and understanding in online environment [2].

Social constructivism is a compelling theoretical framework that questions the notion of objective reality, proposing instead that our understanding of the world is shaped by human interaction, language, and shared meanings. Originating in sociology, this theory has profound implications in various fields, including psychology, education, and international relations. Social constructivism argues that knowledge and social phenomena are not fixed or inherent, but are constantly constructed and reconstructed through social processes. This essay examines the concept of social construction, focusing on its main principles, the role of language and discourse, the construction of identities and interests, and the importance of social practices and institutions.

Basic principles of social constructionism

Social constructionism, at its core, asserts that reality is socially constructed rather than naturally constructed. This perspective differs from positivist approaches that seek to uncover objective truths about the world. Instead, social constructionists argue that what we accept as reality is shaped by social interactions and cultural contexts. This means that concepts such as race, gender, and even scientific knowledge are constructed through collective human activity rather than internal reality.

Western European Journal of Historical Events and Social Science
Volume 2, Issue 6, June, 2024
https://westerneuropeanstudies.com/index.php/4
ISSN (E): 2942-1926 Open Access| Peer Reviewed

A central tenet of social constructionism is the idea that knowledge depends on historical and cultural contexts. This means that what is considered true or authentic in one society or time period may not be true in another. This perspective emphasizes the importance of studying the processes of knowledge production and the power dynamics that influence these processes.
The role of language and speech.
Language and speech are central to social construction. Language is not just a means of communication, but a powerful mechanism that constructs social realities. Through language, people create and negotiate meanings, construct identities, and shape their perceptions of the world. Discourse or structured ways of talking about and understanding the world play a crucial role in this process.
In the field of international relations, political discourse shapes and reshapes our understanding of global events, identities, and power dynamics. For example, how terrorism is portrayed in political discourse and the media can influence public perceptions and attitudes towards politics. By analysing discourse, social constructionists reveal how certain narratives dominate and how they shape social and political reality.
Construction of identity and interests
One important contribution of social constructionism is its emphasis on the structured nature of identities and interests. Traditional theories often treat identities (such as national, ethnic or gender identities) and interests (such as economic or security interests) as given and static. In contrast, social constructionism considers them to be dynamic and formed through social interactions and historical contexts. For example, national identities are shaped not by nature but by education, the media, and political discourse. The interests of states in international relations are also considered to be socially constructed. This perspective may explain why countries with similar material capabilities may have different foreign policies, as their interests are shaped by their particular identities and historical experiences. [3.103-120]
Importance of social practices and institutions.
Social practices and institutions play an important role in maintaining constructed reality. Institutions such as governments, schools and international organizations are not only passive structures, but active participants in the construction of social reality. These institutions establish norms, produce knowledge, and enforce rules that shape social behaviour and perceptions.
For example, international organizations such as the United Nations help create and maintain global norms and practices that influence state behaviour. Through treaties, resolutions and diplomatic activities, these institutions contribute to the construction of concepts such as human rights, state sovereignty and international law [4.11].
Results and Applications
The implications of social constructionism are far-reaching and affect how we understand social phenomena and how we solve social problems. In education, social constructivism informs teaching practices that emphasize critical thinking and the co-construction of knowledge between teachers and students. In psychology, he questions the idea of fixed mental illnesses, emphasizing instead how society's assumptions and cultural norms shape "normal" or "abnormal" behaviour.
Social constructivism in international relations offers valuable insights into the dynamics of global politics. This theory focuses on the social and ideological aspects of international relations and provides a more complete understanding of how international norms are

Western European Journal of Historical Events and Social Science
Volume 2, Issue 6, June, 2024
https://westerneuropeanstudies.com/index.php/4
ISSN (E): 2942-1926 Open Access| Peer Reviewed

established, how state interests are formed, and how power is exercised outside of material capabilities [5.159-179].

The emergence of social construction depended on several basic conditions:

Intellectual changes in philosophy and sociology: the decline of positivism and the rise of interpretive and critical paradigms in the social sciences were very important. Positivism, which emphasizes objective observation and scientific methods, has been criticized for its inability to account for the subjective and socially constructed aspects of human experience. Influenced by thinkers such as Max Weber and Wilhelm Dilthey, the interpretive turn in sociology emphasized understanding social phenomena from the perspective of those who experience them.

Linguistic Turn: The linguistic turn in philosophy and social theory, expressed in the works of Ludwig Wittgenstein and Ferdinand de Saussure, emphasized the centrality of language in shaping human reality. This shift emphasized that meaning is not inherent to objects, but is constructed through language and social interaction.

Postmodernism and Critical Theory: The rise of postmodernism and critical theory created a fertile ground for the development of social constructivism. Thinkers such as Michel Foucault and Jacques Derrida deconstructed traditional notions of power, knowledge, and truth, emphasizing the contingent and structured nature of these notions. Frankfurt School critical theorists such as Theodor Adorno and Max Horkheimer also criticized the Enlightenment's emphasis on reason and objectivity, paving the way for more relativistic and constructivist approaches.

Cultural and social movements: The cultural revolutions of the 1960s and 1970s, including the civil rights, feminist, and postcolonial movements, challenged established norms and power structures. These movements emphasized the role of social structures in perpetuating inequality and injustice, and reinforced the need to examine how social reality is constructed and maintained [6.345-375].

Historical development of social constructionism

The historical development of social construction can be traced through several main stages:

Early Foundations: The roots of social constructionism can be found in the writings of early sociologists such as Emile Durkheim, who emphasized the role of collective representation and social facts. However, it was George Herbert Mead's symbolic interactionism and Alfred Schutz's phenomenology that directly influenced the development of social constructivist ideas. These theorists focused on how people create and maintain social reality through interaction and shared meanings.

Contribution of Berger and Luckmann: The formalization of social constructionism is often attributed to the seminal work of Peter L. Berger and Thomas Luckmann, The Social Construction of Reality (1966). In this book, they argued that reality is constructed through social processes, including normalization, institutionalization, and legitimation.

Their work provided a comprehensive framework for understanding how knowledge and social phenomena are produced and maintained.

Expansion and Diversification: After Berger and Lackmann, the social construct expanded and spread into different fields. In psychology, Kenneth Gergen's work on social constructionist psychology challenged traditional notions of identity and emphasized the relational and dialogic nature of identity. In education, social constructivist approaches influenced by Lev Vygotsky emphasized the role of social interaction in learning and knowledge construction.

Western European Journal of Historical Events and Social Science
Volume 2, Issue 6, June, 2024
https://westerneuropeanstudies.com/index.php/4
ISSN (E): 2942-1926 Open Access| Peer Reviewed

Foucault and the Influence of Poststructuralism: Michel Foucault's analyzes of power and knowledge enriched the theory of social construction. Foucault argues that what we consider to be truth and knowledge is deeply bound up with power relations and social practices. His concepts of discourse, power/knowledge, and lineage provided powerful tools for analysing how social realities are constructed and contested.

Contemporary Developments: In recent decades, social constructivism has continued to evolve and influence various disciplines. It has been applied to the study of gender (e.g. Judith Butler's theory of gender performativity), race (e.g. critical race theory), and science and technology (e.g. sociology of scientific knowledge). Contemporary social constructionist studies often focus on issues of identity, power and resistance, examining how social structures are produced, challenged and transformed in different contexts.

Social constructivism has found application across disciplines and has enriched our understanding of social phenomena in various contexts:

Gender and sexuality: Judith Butler's theory of gender performativity has been influential in feminist and queer studies. She argues that gender is not a fixed identity but a social marker that is reproduced and reinforced through everyday actions. This perspective challenges critical views of gender and opens up opportunities for understanding the fluidity and diversity of gender identities.

Race and Ethnicity: Critical race theorists apply social constructionist principles to examine how racial categories are socially constructed and maintained. They emphasize how racial identities and hierarchies are shaped by historical, political, and economic processes rather than biological differences.

Science and Technology Studies (STS): In STS, scholars study how scientific knowledge is shaped through social processes, including experience, peer review, and discourse. The sociology of scientific knowledge (SSK) studies how scientific facts relate to social contexts and interactions between scientists.

Health and Illness: Social constructionism is used to understand how medical diagnoses, definitions of illness, and the experience of health are socially constructed. It challenges medicalization and highlights the role of cultural beliefs, social norms, and power dynamics in shaping health outcomes.

Education: Social constructivist approaches to educational theory emphasize active learning and the co-construction of knowledge between teachers and students. This approach recognizes that knowledge is not passively transmitted but is actively shaped through interaction and participation.

Criticisms of Social Constructionism

Although social constructivism offers valuable insights, it also faces a number of criticisms:

Relativism and Determinism: Critics argue that social constructionism can lead to relativism, where all beliefs and truths are equally valid because they are socially constructed. Furthermore, it can be deterministic in its emphasis on social influences, potentially neglecting individual agency and choice.

Ignoring Material Reality: Some scholars criticize social constructionism for ignoring material realities such as economic structures, natural environments, and technological advances that shape social phenomena. They require a more holistic approach that takes into account both social structures and material conditions.

Western European Journal of Historical Events and Social Science
Volume 2, Issue 6, June, 2024
https://westerneuropeanstudies.com/index.php/4
ISSN (E): 2942-1926 Open Access| Peer Reviewed

Overemphasis on Language: The emphasis on language and discourse in social constructionism has been criticized for neglecting the nonverbal forms of communication, embodied experiences, and material practices that contribute to social reality.

Current relevance and future directions

Social constructivism remains relevant in contemporary debates and academic research:

Globalization and digital technologies: Social constructionism provides insight into how global identities, norms, and practices are constructed and contested in an increasingly interconnected world. The rise of digital technologies and social media platforms also increases the role of speech and communication in shaping public opinion and social movements.

Identity Politics and Social Movements: Social constructionism provides a lens for analysing identity politics, social movements, and the struggle for recognition and rights. It emphasizes the role of discourse in shaping collective identity and mobilizing political action.

Ethics and Politics: Social constructionist perspectives have implications for ethical debate and policy development. By revealing the structured nature of social norms and practices, they encourage critical thinking about societal values, justice, and human rights [7.449-472].

In summary, social constructionist theory offers a profound lens through which to interpret and analyse world politics. This theory argues that reality is not an objective fact, but a product of social processes, and opposes traditional realist and liberal views that emphasize material factors and state interests. Instead, it emphasizes the role of language, discourse, and shared understandings in shaping international relations.

In this essay, we have explored the basic principles of social constructionism, its origins in sociological thought, and its evolution into constructivist approaches within international relations theory. We have seen how concepts such as identity formation, norm construction, and the negotiation of power dynamics are all influenced by social constructions. These concepts provide valuable tools for understanding complex global phenomena, from alliance formation to conflict resolution.

In addition, case studies have demonstrated the practical application of social constructionism in the analysis of real events and policies. Whether studying the construction of European identity in the EU, the structure of human rights discourse on the global stage, or the impact of constructed narratives on international interventions, social constructionism enriches our understanding by illuminating the social processes at play.

Despite its strengths, social constructionism is not without its criticisms, particularly of its potential to ignore material realities and structural inequalities. However, its ability to uncover implicit assumptions, challenge dominant narratives, and reveal the contingent nature of political outcomes remains invaluable [8.32].

Going forward, the relevance of social constructionism in international relations theory will increase as global interactions become increasingly complex and interdependent. Future research should continue to examine how social structures evolve in response to technological advances, global crises, and changing geopolitical landscapes.

Ultimately, by embracing social constructionism, scientists and policymakers can gain a deeper understanding of the forces shaping our world, making more nuanced analyses and informed decisions to ensure a more just and peaceful global order.

In this essay, we have considered the main principles of social constructivism and its application in the constructivist framework of international relations. We see how identities,

Western European Journal of Historical Events and Social Science
Volume 2, Issue 6, June, 2024
https://westerneuropeanstudies.com/index.php/4
ISSN (E): 2942-1926 Open Access| Peer Reviewed

norms, and institutions are not fixed objects but the products of ongoing social processes and negotiations between actors on the global stage.

Applied research has demonstrated the theory's relevance in a variety of contexts, from shaping regional identities such as the European Union to shaping global responses to environmental crises and human rights issues. These examples show how social constructionism allows us to uncover the underlying beliefs and narratives that influence state behaviour and international cooperation.

Critically, while social constructionism offers insights into the subjective dimensions of politics, it also faces challenges. Critics argue that its emphasis on socially constructed realities can obscure the material inequalities and power differentials that underlie global politics. Nevertheless, his ability to highlight the contingent nature of political outcomes and reveal the fluidity of international relations remains invaluable.

Going forward, social construction theory will continue to make significant contributions to the field of international relations. As the world becomes increasingly interconnected and information flows more freely across borders, understanding how social structures evolve and affect global interactions becomes increasingly important.

In sum, social constructionism invites us to rethink conventional wisdom about international relations by foregrounding the role of ideas, perceptions, and discourses in shaping the global landscape. By adopting this perspective, scholars and policymakers can develop more nuanced analyses and strategies that better reflect the complexities of our interconnected world, thereby supporting more effective and inclusive approaches to global governance and cooperation [9.146–162].

REFERENCE

1. McKinley, J. (2015). "Critical Argument and Writer Identity: Social Constructivism as a Theoretical Framework for EFL Academic Writing" (PDF). Critical Inquiry in Language Studies. **12** (3): 184–207. doi:10.1080/15427587.2015.1060558. S2CID 53541628. Retrieved 4 March 2016.
2. Schwandt, Thomas A. (1998). "Constructivist, Interpretivist Approaches to Human Inquiry". In Denzin, Norman K.; Lincoln, Yvonna S. (eds.). The landscape of qualitative research: theories and issues. Thousand Oaks (Calif.) London New Delhi: Sage Publications. ISBN 978-0-7619-1433-4.
3. See also Wright, Edmond (2005) Narrative, Perception, Language, and Faith. Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 103–120.
4. Collins, H. M. (1981). "Stages in the Empirical Program of Relativism - Introduction". Social Studies of Science. 11 (1): 3.
5. Boudry, M & Buekens, F (2011) The Epistemic Predicament of a Pseudoscience: Social Constructivism Confronts Freudian Psychoanalysis. Theoria, 77, 159–179
6. Palincsar, A. Sullivan (1998). "Social Constructivist Perspectives on Teaching and Learning". Annual Review of Psychology. 49: 345–375
7. Reznitskaya, A., Anderson, R.C., and Kuo, L.J. (2007). Teaching and Learning Argumentation. Elementary School Journal, 107: 449–472.
8. Hale, M.S. & City, E.A. (2002). "But how do you do that?": Decision making for the seminar facilitator. In J. Holden & J.S. Schmit. Inquiry and the literary text: Constructing

Western European Journal of Historical Events and Social Science
Volume 2, Issue 6, June, 2024
https://westerneuropeanstudies.com/index.php/4
ISSN (E): 2942-1926 Open Access| Peer Reviewed

discussions in the English classroom / Classroom practices in teaching English, volume 32. Urbana, IL: National Council of Teachers of English.

9. Dyson, A. H. (2004). Writing and the sea of voices: Oral language in, around, and about writing. In R.B. Ruddell, & N.J. Unrau (Eds.), Theoretical Models and Processes of Reading (pp. 146–162). Newark, DE: International Reading Association.