

## **EPISTEMIC COMMUNITIES AND THEIR INFLUENCE IN INTERNATIONAL POLITICS: UPDATING OF THE CONCEPT**

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### **Abstract**

The decreasing importance of the state as a prominent actor in international politics has opened a debate about the rising importance of transnational relations. The research focuses on other actors, including epistemic communities. The paper traces previous research using the concept of epistemic communities and their influence in international politics and responds to its limitations. It uses the social constructivist approach for the elaboration of criteria of the professionalization process needed for recognition of epistemic communities. The paper also elaborates the concept of their influence in international regulation, including defining conditions of demand for epistemic communities' activities. The conditions include the introduction of complex problems with an element of uncertainty, acquisition of direct or indirect access to the political decision-making process in the arenas of international politics, and the ability of these arenas to execute international regulation. The paper also explains and elaborates the diffusion process of shared beliefs created by epistemic communities. The ability to diffuse shared beliefs supports modes of persuasion including statistical indicators, focusing events and narratives. Shared beliefs transfer via a process of institutional learning. Successful transfer means that shared beliefs become part of a political agenda. Utilization of the shared beliefs for creation, execution and enforcement of political decisions manifests the influence of epistemic communities in international politics.

### **Keywords**

Epistemic community, Complexity, Uncertainty, Focusing event, Statistical indicator, Narrative, International regulation, Social constructivism

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## **EPISTEMIC COMMUNITIES AND THEIR INFLUENCE IN INTERNATIONAL POLITICS: UPDATING OF THE CONCEPT<sup>1 2</sup>**

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### **1. Introduction**

The decreasing importance of the state as a prominent actor in international politics has opened a debate in international relations theory about the gradual transformation of international politics (Burton, 1967). The debate has focused the attention of international relations scholars on transnational relations, i.e. contacts and interactions across state boundaries that evade control by foreign policy institutions of governments (Keohane – Nye, 1971: 330-331). Transnational corporations have become new actors in international politics, because they influence the formation of North-South relations.

In the 1980s, social constructivism strengthened its position in international relations with its increased focus on the research of social and ideological structures rather than purely material factors (Kratochwil, 1989). At the same time, the intensity of bipolar conflict decreased, which has sparked the debate about the increasing importance and extent of interdependence (Rosenau, 1990: 11). Aside from states and transnational corporations, transnational advocacy networks (Finnemore – Sikkink, 1998), transnational civil society (Kaldor, 2003), transnational social movements (Tarrow, 2005) and criminal networks (Kahler, 2009) have become fully-fledged actors of international politics.

Networks of professionals called "*epistemic communities*" (Haas, 1990: 2) have also become actors of international politics. The previous research of epistemic communities has been based mostly on a positivist approach to social sciences (Greene, 2014). Only a couple of studies on epistemic communities have taken the social constructivist approach into consideration. However, these studies lack a complex theoretical and methodological approach. Instead, they focus only on partial aspects, such as formal communication among members of epistemic communities in journals (Toke, 1999) or the selection process of epistemic community members (Gjefsen, 2017) or they do not

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acknowledge the existence of common culture in an organization associating an epistemic community (Bueger, 2015).

This paper responds to the limitations of the previous research by clarifying the concept of epistemic communities and the influence of these communities in international politics. The paper proceeds in five steps. First, it presents the concept of epistemic communities introduced by Peter M. Haas and the main points of its critics. Second, the paper elaborates on the concept of epistemic communities using the social constructivist model introduced by Cross that emphasizes the presence of professionalization in governmental and non-governmental organizations. The social constructivism approach is also used for the study of epistemic communities' influence in international regulation.

Third, the paper develops aspects of complexity and uncertainty. Fourth, conditions of epistemic communities' access to decision-making processes in international politics arenas and the ability of these arenas to execute international regulation are discussed. Fifth, the presentation strategies of epistemic communities are specified and qualitative operationalization of their influence in international regulation clarified. Among presentation strategies the paper has included focusing events, statistical indicators and framing beliefs through narratives. For qualitative operationalization of the influence, the concept of institutional learning is applied.

## **2. The concept of epistemic communities**

The research on networks of professionals has drawn inspiration from studies published by Foucault (1970; 1980). In compliance with them, knowledge is based on the relationship between the historically- and culturally-based social rules of "episteme" (Foucault, 1970: 285-287). The epistemic function is to determine adequate resources and methods for organizing knowledge.

Ruggie (1975: 567-570) further developed Foucault's epistemic concept by generalizing the activity of epistemic communities. According to Ruggie (1975: 569-570), epistemic communities participate in the institutionalization of policies adopted in international political arenas for they form social reality by explaining the relationship between causes and consequences.

Drawing on previous authors, Haas (1992: 3-5) defined the epistemic community as a network or as a set of relations between professionals with a recognized degree of expertise and competence in a particular thematic domain (Carayannis et al., 2011: 132). Within this network, (1) a set of normative, value and (2) causal beliefs, (3) the concept of validity and (4) political belief are shared. The recognized degree of expertise and competence enables this network of professionals to have an authoritative claim to assess the state of knowledge in a given domain (Haas, 1992: 7-14). According to Haas (2001: 11579-11580), the shared criteria of the epistemic community for assessing the level of expertise are an essential feature that significantly differentiates epistemic communities from other actors influencing political decisions (e. g. social movements and interest groups – Haas, 1992: 17-19).

Despite the high degree of elaboration, the concept of epistemic communities and their influence in international politics has been criticized several times. Criticism explicitly challenged the criteria by which Haas defined the concept of epistemic communities



(Dunlop, 2000: 140-141). Haas put a great deal of emphasis on shared normative and causal beliefs, along with shared procedures for determining accuracy.

However, the criteria do not outline the relationship between the internal cohesion of the epistemic community and its ability to diffuse shared normative and causal beliefs among other actors of international politics (Waarden – Drahos, 2002: 930). Moreover, the criteria do not specify the precise conditions for admission of new members to an organization associating epistemic communities (Lorenz-Meyer, 2010: not paged). In addition to that, Haas did not allow for the possibility of change of these criteria (Dunlop, 2000: 41). However, this change occurs in the process of negotiation that takes place within the epistemic community and in its interaction with other actors (Sebenius, 1992: 324-325).

The theoretical framework must take into account the fact that the epistemic community is an active international policy actor interacting with other actors of international politics (Dunlop, 2012: 234). Therefore, the conditions for the entry of epistemic communities into the arena of politics should be specified in detail during the revision (Håkanson, 2010: 12-17).

The way of articulation and diffusion of the political beliefs of the epistemic community also requires more specification. It should be based on the analysis of used communication symbols, including statistical outputs such as image and graphical representations. Thus, the concept of epistemic communities should be broadened to encompass the findings of social constructivism. As such, its analytical capacity would be broadened and a wider spectrum of international networks might be included in the research program of epistemic communities (Zito, 2001: 600-601).

### **3. Professionalization in governmental and non-governmental organisations**

The weak points of the Haas's concept of epistemic communities have been addressed by Cross (2013: 147-159). Her revision of the original model puts emphasis on professionalization which offers more concrete criteria for identification of an organisation that gathers epistemic communities and for judging their influence on other actors of international relations (see Table 1). Her concept builds on the assumption that an epistemic community is a functioning social mechanism which coordinates the activity of its members (Cross, 2013: 149-150; Tarko, 2015: 65-66). The capability of an epistemic community to create shared normative and causal beliefs and to persuade other actors of international politics of them through a process of institutional learning depends primarily on the degree of internal cohesion of the organisation gathering the epistemic community rather than just the degree of recognised expertise and its governmental (or non-governmental) character (Carayannis et al., 2011: 138-139).

Cross is also the first to study the preconditions of an epistemic community for its adaptation and integrity (Schein, 2010: 17-18; Cross, 2013: 150-151). Adaptation and integrity influence the efficiency level of activity of the epistemic community and its relevance to other actors of international relations. An epistemic community is relevant and its activities efficient when the ways of perception, thinking and position-taking on problems that disrupt the adaptation and integrity of the epistemic community are transferred between the individual members of that community in the right way.



Cross (2013: 149) calls the social interaction between members of epistemic communities “*professionalization*”, or a special kind of it that establishes, refines, and re-establishes the role and status of a given profession. Professionalization reinforces internal cohesion of an epistemic community for it contributes to formulation, diffusion and adoption of ideas within the epistemic community (Cross, 2015: 91-93). This process exists within the organisation gathering the epistemic communities. In its framework, common visions, shared standards and the professional identity itself are formulated and modified.

On the national level, epistemic communities consist of professionals working in different institutions, including government, universities, private sector entities or non-governmental organisations (Carayannis et al., 2011: 131-132). On the international level, these professionals meet within international governmental and non-governmental organisations. In doing so, they create transnational networks with a degree of recognised knowledge and expertise in a particular domain (Carayannis et al., 2011: 134; Cross, 2013: 150).

Identification of an epistemic community thus requires an assessment of whether there is (in international organisations) the professionalization process that is delimited by three criteria: (1) common culture, (2) selections of members and opportunities for their further professional development, and (3) meeting frequency and quality.

Table 1: Criteria for recognition of epistemic communities by Haas and Cross

<b>Peter M. Haas</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>⇒ normative and value beliefs</li> <li>⇒ causal beliefs</li> <li>⇒ notions of validity</li> <li>⇒ policy enterprise</li> </ul>
<b>Mai'a K. Davis Cross</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>⇒ common culture (purpose, symbolism, heritage, identity, and consensus)</li> <li>⇒ selections of new members and their further professional development</li> <li>⇒ personal meetings</li> </ul>

Source: authors on the basis of the above identified used sources

*Common culture* comprises five elements (Schein, 2010: 14-16; Cross, 2013: 150-151). The first of them is the shared purpose, which are the common publicly stated values, for the realization of which the epistemic community struggles through its activities. It is through fulfilment of these publicly stated values that the epistemic community achieves scientific progress. It consists in the accumulation of scientific truths, which are a part of logical models representing scientific theories and which help us to realize, understand and explain phenomena of the surrounding world (Fano – Macchia, 2015: 65, 72).

The second element of common culture is the shared symbolism that consists of a set of characteristics of the epistemic community. It is imprinted in official materials, including buildings, office equipment or presentation on the internet. The third element is the common heritage which the epistemic community passes to next generations. It is



created in conformity with democratic values and it becomes a socio-economic contribution to the next generations (Lacey, 2016: 14).

The fourth element of common culture lies in shared identity. These are the ideological principles and mental models that determine the way of perception, thinking and acting of members of the epistemic community. The common ideological principles and mental models are based on neutrality, impartiality and resistance (Lacey, 2016: 2-3).

Lastly, the fifth element of common culture is the shared focus on reaching consensus (Tarko, 2015: 70). A consensus-driven process represents an alternative to voting and the final phase of deliberation, in which members of the epistemic community formulate and modify common visions, shared standards, and the professional identity itself.

According to Cross (2013: 150-151), professionalization is reinforced also by *selection of new members* and professional development of the current ones. Both types are dependent on the size of contribution to scientific progress and the consequent level of prestige (Tarko, 2015: 71-72). Contribution to scientific progress is assessed in a self-evaluative process. It is a kind of communication that is used, despite of its sizeable criticism (cf. Binswanger, 2014), for evaluation of professional quality and methodological admissibility of a broad range of epistemic communities' activities (Lee et al., 2013: 2-3, 10-12). The evaluation respects the principles of neutrality, impartiality, autonomy, methodology, cognitive criteria and resistance to outer influences. This reinforces its reliability from which is consequently derived the level of prestige and contribution to scientific progress which takes on the form of a quotation index (Lee et al., 2013: 4). An intensive professional preparation equally contributes to reinforcement of professionalization (Cross, 2015: 150-151).

The third element of the professionalised epistemic community is frequent long "face-to-face" meetings of individual members (Cross, 2013: 151). At these meetings, the members of the epistemic community strengthen shared professional norms, such as internal procedures, protocol, and standards of consensus-building, which is done in a less formal way than a conversation hosted by journal papers (Tarko, 2015: 74). During the meetings of epistemic communities, also informal (behind-the-scenes) meetings in smaller groups take place and enable a more intensive socialisation and strengthening of personal relations.

The reinforcement of shared professional norms can be considered effective when the cores of problems are dealt with in the formal and informal meetings and when the personal meetings are frequent (Cross, 2013: 150-151; Cross, 2015: 92). The meetings of epistemic communities' members are also a kind of a ritual where important events are recalled, awards granted, and results of professional activities of individual members announced. It is also the place where friendly relations and commitment to common objectives, or "*esprit de corps*", are reinforced (Cross, 2011: 28; Cross, 2015: 91-93).

The development of *esprit de corps* is more intensive when individual members of an epistemic community used to cooperate together in a professional way before or when they used to hold the same working positions in different periods of time. Due to that, the members do consider themselves as "*one team*" (Cross, 2011: 29; Cross, 2015: 92).



#### 4. Complexity and problems uncertainty

In international politics, demand for activities of epistemic communities tends to rise when complex problems with an element of uncertainty arise (Adler – Haas, 1992: 373, 375; Cross, 2015: 92). A complex problem is a problem where a cause-effect relationship is difficult to identify (Renn, 2015: 55-56). Complexity of problems in international politics is reinforced by globalisation (Turner – Holton, 2015: 14-15). Globalisation is a multidimensional planetary social process in the framework of which the number and quality of interdependent relations between cultures, commodities, information and people increase.

During political negotiations on complex problems of international politics, the causes and effects of these problems are dealt with (see Table 2). Impact of mutual relations and dependence are taken into consideration in the discussion. Mutual relations concern the relation between causes, effects and the problems of international politics. Discussion of mutual relations assesses whether two or more mutually independent causes lead to a problem of international politics and whether this problem does not produce two or more independent effects.

On the other hand, discussion of mutual dependence focuses only on the relation between causes and effects of problems in international politics, though not only on problems alone. The evaluation consists in examination of mutual influence between causes and effects of problems of international politics. When discussion of mutual relations and mutual dependence is combined, dilemmas occur. Their solution does not get by without coordination of mutually different actors of different identities and interests (Renn – Klinke, 2012: 61; Renn, 2015: 55-56).

Table 2: Complexity and problems uncertainty

<b>COMPLEXITY</b>	Difficulty in identification and quantification of cause and effect
	Widening and deepening of the influence of globalisation
	Mutual relations and dependence
<b>UNCERTAINTY</b>	Interferential effects
	Variability of problems
	Lack of knowledge
	Indeterminacy of problems

Source: author on the basis of identified used sources

Political actors have limited or even no knowledge of the element of uncertainty. This makes it more difficult to assess the expected positive and negative consequences of a political decision (Adler-Haas, 1992: 373, 375, Cross, 2013: 151-153). Subjective or objective lack of knowledge is a permanent part of international politics which goes even beyond the situations called "crisis". It exists in almost all of its areas, including political negotiations on global pandemics, mass migration, the way to fight pirates, or to slow down climate change even beyond the situations which are called "crisis" (Hay, 1999: 317-335). The lack of knowledge occurs if the problem shows at least one of the



uncertainty characteristics - interferential effects, variability of problems, lack of knowledge, and indeterminacy of problems (Renn – Klinke, 2012: 61-62, Türkşen – Özkan, 2014: 160).

The first two characteristics of uncertainty – variability and interferential effects – are subjective components of uncertainty. This arises as a result of faulty measurements that can be narrowed down or almost eliminated by improving the level of existing knowledge and assessment methods (Renn – Klinke, 2012: 61-62). Variability arises in a situation where the problem creates a different relationship with each political actor, leading to mutual disagreements. Interferential effects are related to the overlapping of the problem with other problems and the occurrence of systematic and random errors that emerge during problem evaluation by modelling, statistical methods, or experiments.

The remaining characteristics of the uncertainty - lack of knowledge and indeterminacy of the problem – are objective characteristics of uncertainty (Renn – Klinke, 2012: 61-62). Lack of knowledge is associated with a lack of information about the nature of the problem or a lack of information about the occurrence of a harmful event and its possible consequences. Indeterminacy of the problem lies in the presence of a random event and the inclusion of a suboptimal number of variables into the problem evaluation. An objective component of uncertainty may be, in contrast to its subjective one, only partially eliminated, but not entirely removed by the improvement of existing knowledge and evaluation methods (Türkşen – Özkan, 2014: 160).

## **5. Epistemic Communities' access to International Regulation**

To diffuse beliefs among other actors in international politics, epistemic communities must first acquire direct or indirect access to the political decision-making process in the arena of international politics (Adler – Haas, 1992: 375-378; Carayannis et al., 2011: 135). Direct access is understood as involving members of an epistemic community in political decision-making and in transferring responsibility for creating and implementing policies to members of epistemic communities or the epistemic community as such.

Organizations unifying epistemic communities can gain direct access by acquiring a consultative status, while individuals from epistemic communities can gain direct access to the decision-making process in the policy arenas by getting long-term jobs or by concluding one-time consultative contracts (Adler - Haas, 1992: 376, Carayannis et al., 2011: 135). Organizing professional symposia during political negotiations and the formulation of statements on political issues in professional studies is an example of indirect access by epistemic communities to the decision-making process in policy arenas.

Within the international policy arena, international political decisions are negotiated and implemented (Webber – Smith, 2014: 30). Their function is to exercise international regulation that represents a deliberate and direct intervention in activities of actors in a particular area of international politics through the making of a set of rules, norms, principles and decision-making procedures (see Table 3 / Krasner, 1982: 186, Koop – Lodge, 2017: 105). The rules are understood as abstract objects that exist independently of human activities outside of space and time and guide behaviour (Hage, 2015: 14). Human activity in the form of an expression of consent by an individual or community decides whether these rules are valid (Sainsbury – Tye, 2013: 42).



Table 3: Elements of international regulation

⇒ Rules
⇒ Norms
⇒ Principles
⇒ Decision-making procedures

Source: authors on the basis of identified used sources

The rules that define acceptable or forbidden manners of behaviour using a value-based reason are called norms (Hage, 2015: 14; Wang-Wang, 2015: 200). The value-based reason takes the form of a causal or guiding relationship (Hage, 2011: 156-157). The causal relationship explains the connection between the cause and consequence of the relationship between two or more events or between events and the mental state. In contrast, the guiding relationship defines the connection between events and acceptable or forbidden behaviour or between the mental state and the acceptable or forbidden manners of behaviour (Hage, 2011: 157-158). The principles are rules that alike norms create acceptable or forbidden behaviour using moral reason (Bix, 2015: 135-142). Moral reason is distinguished from norm assessment reason since its validity must be accepted - if possible - by all members of a particular group or society (Grabowski, 2015: 344).

Decision-making procedures are also elements of international regulation. They represent a process of negotiation during which political actors argue about formulation, execution and enforcement of political decisions (Krasner, 1982: 186; Wu et al., 2012: 50-51; Ciot, 2014: 64-65). Their form depends on the character of active actors participating in the political arena – particularly on their perceptions, preferences, attitudes to the problem and their capacity of power. An actor can be an individual or group of individuals that represent mentioned political and bureaucratic elites and has full responsibility for fulfilling their political goals. Within the negotiating process, they take up a particular position which affects their bargaining approach or, more precisely, their influence on a solution to an international political problem (Ciot, 2014: 107-111).

Actors' perceptions, preferences and positions to the problem are related to broader national interests, including security issues, which embrace values that are crucial to the actor's survival and its economic prosperity (Webber – Smith, 2014: 39-42). The form of a decision-making procedure dealing with a particular problem is determined by complexity and uncertainty levels. These are directly linked to an actor's ability to foresee consequences and outcomes of adopted political decisions (Wu et al., 2012: 53-54). If he is able to anticipate them in advance and supposing there is consensus on the development of a political decision between all of the relevant actors, their decision-making is considered to be rational, since they contemplate maximization of interests and values (Wu et al., 2012: 53).

Contrarily, if a given decision-making process is pressed for time and an actor's ability to forestall the consequences of a particular political decision is limited, decisions of actors active in the political arena depend on the given conflict, and their own ability to negotiate and make a compromise. In this case, the desired outcome would be successive



comparisons between proposed amendments and decisions that have been previously carried out and enforced. It usually indicates marginal alteration of the current state. The maximisation of individual goals is objectionable.

Regarding this marginal change, political decisions correspond with discharging of interests and values of individual actors rather than with the technologically most efficient problem-solving method (Wu et al., 2012: 53-54). Provided there is apparently high uncertainty between actors regarding decision consequences and there is a high number of actors involved in the process, the final political decision will be in accordance with the temporary goals and values of the actor or group of actors having the biggest power potential at their disposal (Wu et al., 2012: 54).

## 6. Diffusing beliefs of epistemic communities

Epistemic communities use modes of persuasion when introducing a problem, and their ability to diffuse shared normative and causal beliefs among other actors of international politics grows (see Table 4). Modes of persuasion include statistical indicators, focusing events and framing beliefs by narratives. Statistical indicators as an exact method demonstrate accuracy, correctness and objectivity through fine measuring (Stone, 2011: 184, 197). Before that, the data are sorted by analogy into two groups. The one having substantial characteristics of the problem becomes the subject of measurement, while the other one with inessential features will be omitted (Stone, 2016: 161). By commencing this process, the epistemic community indicates interest in pursuing further development which is related to the rising importance of the problem (Kingdon, 2014: 90-94; Stone 2016: 166). The course of categorization depends on the judgment of an actor who assesses the problem and on a form of created categories which is conditional on social culture in a particular place and time (Stone, 2016: 162).

Table 4: Modes of persuasion of epistemic communities

⇒ statistical indicators
⇒ focusing events
⇒ narratives

Source: author on the basis of identified used sources

Epistemic communities can diffuse their beliefs more easily by expressing the nature of the problem through figures. It expresses the common attributes of a particular problem and unifies them into groups (Stone, 2011: 194). Furthermore, diffusion is facilitated also by identification of problem magnitude through several statistical indexes from different sources (Birkland, 2011: 192-193). The ability of epistemic communities to do that is associated with the particular interpretation of indexes dealing with the problem (Kingdon, 2014: 93-94). If the statistical indexes are related to a crucial argument supporting adoption of a political decision, it increases (Pearson, 2010: 344-346).

Focusing events also significantly augment the ability of an epistemic community to diffuse its beliefs (Birkland, 2011: 180). They symbolise triggers that transform negligible



problems to ones that require fundamental decisions. They increase not only the probability of a long-lasting problem remaining on the political agenda but also the possibility of finding a solution to the given problem.

Their common characteristics are suddenness and relative rareness (Birkland – Warnement, 2013: 4). They cause consequences that are focused on an exact place and time and cover a large realm. They bring negative externalities to the immediate attention of political actors.

Narratives are another option for epistemic communities to diffuse their beliefs among other actors of international politics. These communication means comprise of four elements: the frame of the narrative, characters, storyline and lessons to be learned (Jones et al., 2014: 5). By its creation, the narrative is framed into a particular context (indisputable legal and institutional principles, commonly known and widely respected facts relating to specific geographical area – Jones et al. 2014: 6).

The characters of a given narrative as anthropomorphic abstractions of specific context do not have to be just persons. However, they always have human characteristics or appearance (Stone, 2011: 166-169). Characters play three different roles: heroes, if they solve a political problem; villains, if they cause one; and victims, if they are aggrieved by it. The storyline defines the relation between the characters and the story. It can be found all over the story.

The denouement of a given storyline can be detected by the alteration of problem-solving and by use of power. The second option can lead to both gain/loss of control over a political problem (Stone, 2011: 159-168). The story ends either with a moral which constitutes a draft of a political decision and strengthens the current situation, or information about uncertainty that requires thorough specification of a problem (McBeth et al., 2012: 163-164).

Epistemic communities diffuse their beliefs among other actors of international politics via a process of institutional learning (Carayannis et al., 2011: 138-140). Provided transfer of beliefs is successful, they are taken into consideration and beliefs gradually become part of a political agenda (Birkland, 2011: 169-170). An agenda comprises a list of problems and their solutions which are debated by actors of international politics in the international political arena. In practice, it means that a given problem has caught actors' attention. After a problem is solved, it is pulled out of the political agenda. Supposing actors utilize shared beliefs for formulation, execution and enforcement of political decisions during this process, epistemic communities' influence is manifested in a particular international political agenda, more precisely in international politics (Dunlop, 2012: 238-240).

## **7. Conclusion**

This paper traced previous research using the concept of epistemic communities and their influence in international politics and responded to its limitations. The paper used a social constructivist approach for elaboration criteria of the professionalization process needed for recognition of epistemic communities. It nominally concretized and elaborated elements of common culture, the selection process of new members, possibilities of their further professional development and the importance of frequent meetings of individual members.



It also elaborated the concept of their influence in international regulation. The paper specified conditions of demand for activities of epistemic communities. Among these conditions is the introduction of complex problems with an element of uncertainty, acquisition of direct or indirect access to the political decision-making process in the arenas of international politics and the ability of these arenas to execute international regulation.

Finally, the paper explained and elaborated the diffusion process of shared beliefs created by epistemic communities. It is diffused between other actors of international politics by modes of persuasion that are comprised of three main attributes: statistical indicators, focusing events and narratives. Shared beliefs are transferred between epistemic communities and other actors via a process of institutional learning. The process is considered successful when they become part of the political agenda. Utilization of the shared beliefs for formulation, execution and enforcement of political decisions is manifested in the influence of epistemic communities in international politics. Theoretical framework presented here opens the horizon for doing case study research on different specific areas, such as environmental and climate diplomacy, trade agreements, monetary unions reforms and many others.

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