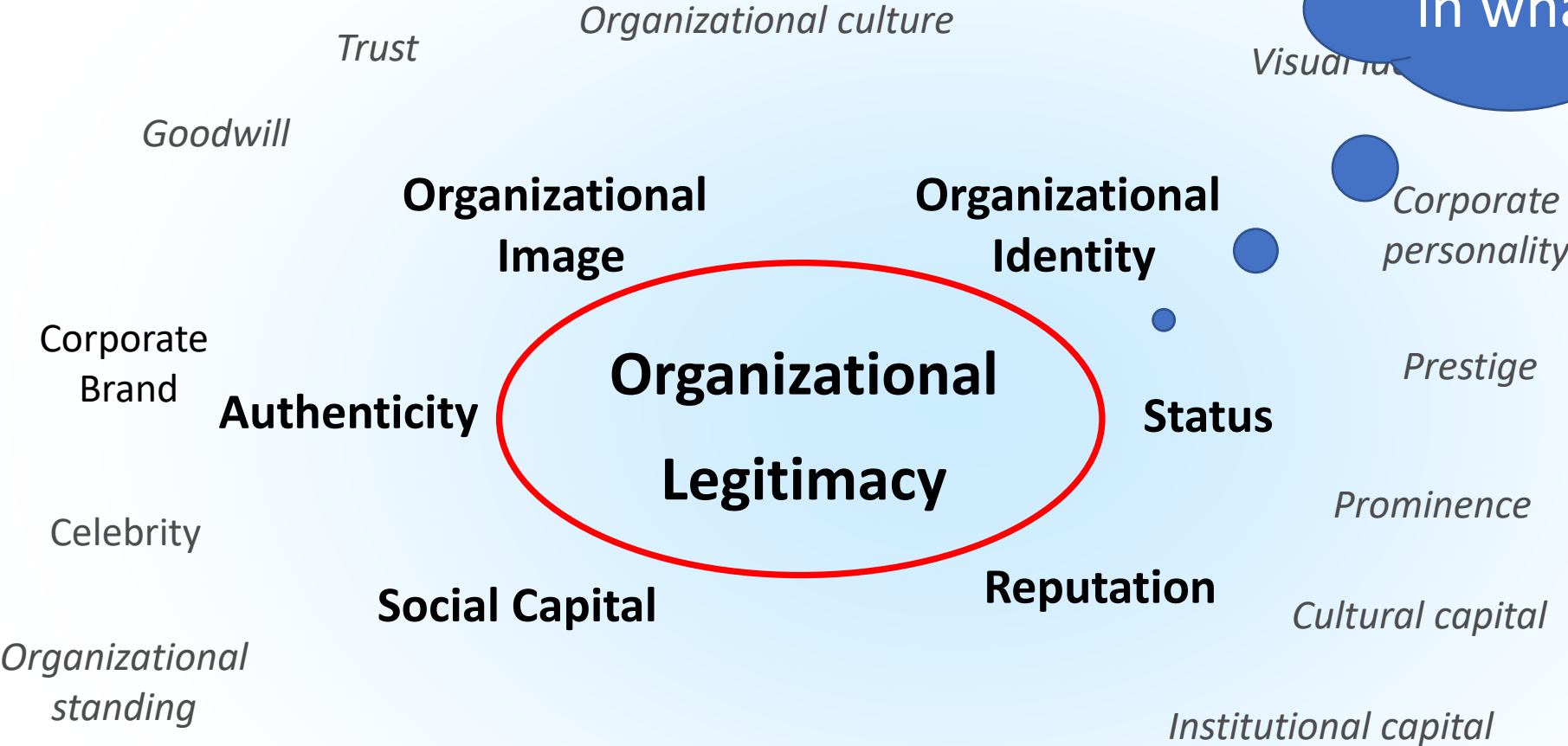


# LEGITIMACY AND OTHER EVALUATIONS

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# Legitimacy in the Net of Related Concepts

Is legitimacy different? If yes, in what respects?



# Early Discoveries

## There is a lot action:

- “Terminological innovations” ...
- “Terminological fiefdoms” ...
  - “Turf wars” (e.g.: stigma or illegitimacy?)
  - “Social closure” around some terms
- “Semantic trap” or the natural language trap
  - Cf. social evaluations in other languages: guanxi, sovest’
  - We take our concepts for granted...

## Recurring questions

- Are we talking about the same thing?
- Is it really legitimacy or something else?
- How can we accumulate and systematize knowledge?
- How can we overcome silos?



# Some useful solutions

- Cronbach and Mehl (1955) argued that a necessary condition for a construct to be scientifically admissible is that it occurs in a **nomological network** that would relate
  - (1) theoretical constructs to observables,
  - (2) different theoretical constructs to one another, and,
  - (3) observable properties or quantities to each other (291)
- Occam's razor principle: 'no entity without necessity'
  - Explanations that posit fewer entities, or fewer kinds of entities are the best
- Make explicit typology bases (features that distinguish two types)
  - Practice: try to identify typology base of moral, pragmatic, and cognitive legitimacy types...

If you follow those principles...

# ...still, you will not get a clean typology...

The problem of “hyper-positivist”:

- Social evaluations are latent constructs (cannot be measured directly)
- => measured through antecedents and consequences

BUT:

## Antecedents

- Performance
- Behavior
- Features
- Social Ties
- Other signals



Legitimacy  
Reputation  
Status  
Trust...



## Consequences

- Performance
- Survival
- Access to resources
- Support from others
- Other benefits

- “hyper-positivist” conclusion:

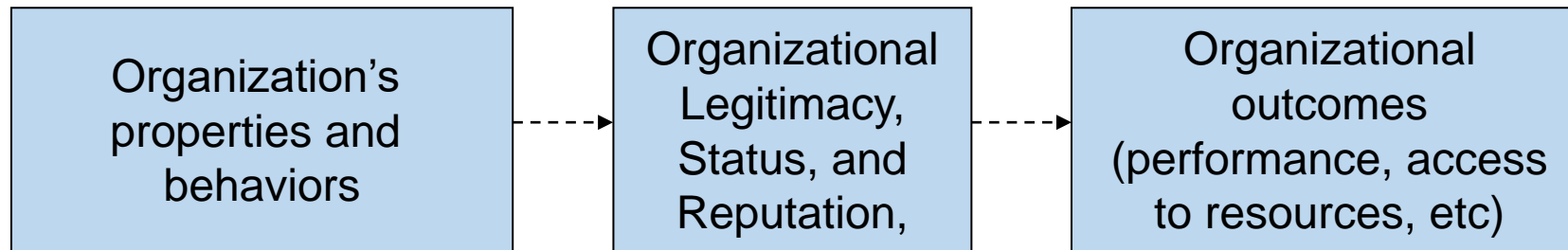
We cannot infer that these constructs are different

But intuitively  
we know they  
are different!!!

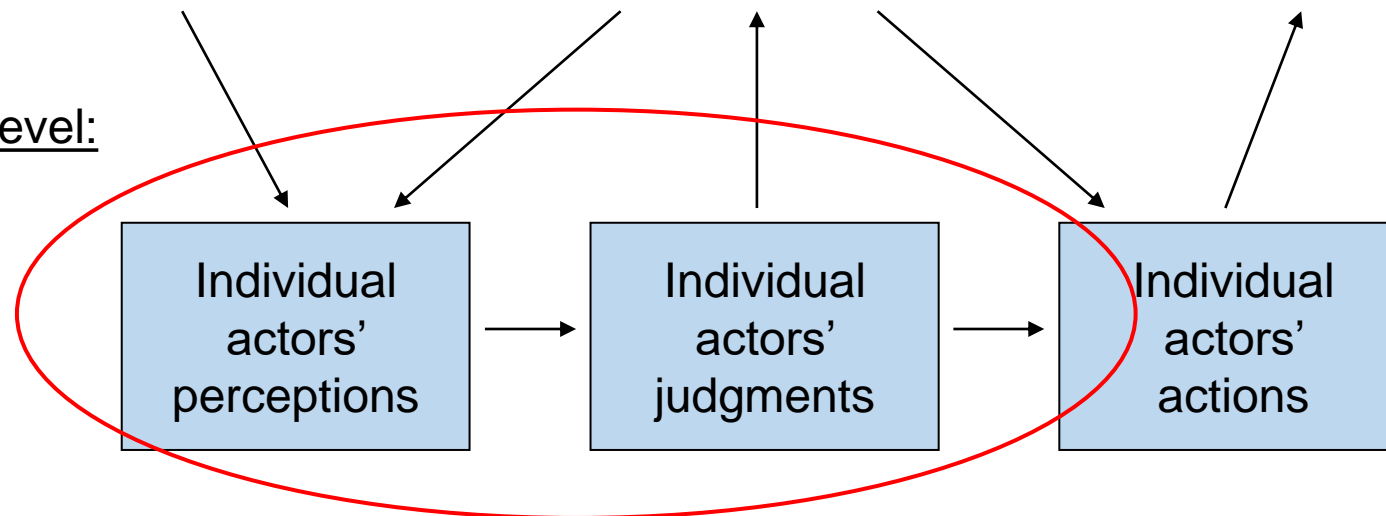
# Maybe we are looking for differences in a wrong place?

## Methodological individualism perspective

Macro-level:



Micro-level:



How about judgments of individual evaluators?

# Judgments of individual evaluators

From Bitektine, Hill, Song, Vandenberghe (AMD 2020)

## Study 3: Canadian grocery retailers (Loblaws, Sobeys, Metro)

	1	2	3	4	5	6
1. Cognitive legitimacy	1					
2. Sociopolitical legitimacy	.13	1				
3. Reputation	.40***	.79***	1			
4. Status	.32***	.72***	.92***	1		
5. Elsbach's legitimacy	.20*	.78***	.62***	.56***	1	
6. Fombrun's RQ	.22**	.91***	.77***	.77***	.72***	1

### Study 3 – Estimated Factor Correlations

Note: N=276; \* p < .05; \*\*p < .01; \*\*\*p < .001.

### Scale items:

#### Cognitive legitimacy

1. It is a normal company for this industry
2. It is a typical company that operates in this industry
3. It is a company typical of its industry

#### Sociopolitical legitimacy

4. The company contributes positively to society
5. The company follows the best management practices
6. I agree with the company's business practices

#### Reputation

7. The reputation of this company is excellent
8. It is a reputable company
9. It is a dependable company

#### Status

10. This company is very prestigious
11. This company has a high status
12. This company ranks highly compared to most others



# Does context matter?

From Bitektine, Hill, Song, Vandenberghe (AMD 2020)

## Stable Industry vs. Industry in turmoil

Study 3 – Estimated marginal means and pairwise comparisons of social judgments (controlling for familiarity)

Evaluation target <sup>a</sup>	Cognitive legitimacy	Sociopolitical legitimacy	Reputation	Status
1 Loblaws	5.30	4.73 <sup>c</sup>	5.52 <sup>b,c</sup>	5.54 <sup>b,c</sup>
2 Sobeys	5.48	4.46	5.10	4.90 <sup>c</sup>
3 Metro	5.40	4.42	4.85	4.34

a – The sequence of the firms reflects industry ranking as described in (Holloway, 2016) and in (Arbulu, 2017)  
 b – mean is significantly higher than that of Sobeys  
 c – mean is significantly higher than that of Metro

Study 4 – Estimated marginal means and pairwise comparisons of social judgments

Evaluation target	Cognitive legitimacy	Sociopolitical legitimacy	Status
Atlas	6.08	4.44 <sup>b</sup>	3.77
Uber	4.40 <sup>a</sup>	4.78 <sup>b</sup>	5.01 <sup>c</sup>
Teo	4.77 <sup>a</sup>	5.47	5.15 <sup>c</sup>

a – mean is significantly lower than that of Atlas  
 b – mean is significantly lower than that of Teo  
 c – mean is significantly higher than that of Atlas

Tip: If you want to empirically show how social evaluations differ from each other, use fields/categories that are in turmoil

- To individual evaluators, differences among judgments matter, but not always
- In stable environments, judgments converge (hence ‘halo effect’) – you can infer one judgment from another
- How different judgments are can be context-specific



# So what exactly differentiates legitimacy from other judgments?

## FUNCTIONAL PERSPECTIVE

- Evaluators make judgments because they need them
- The needs of the evaluators arise from their relationship with the entity
- They need to find answer to a particular question about the entity
  - Is it socially acceptable?
  - Is it really what it is claimed to be?
  - Will it take advantage of me?
  - How does it compare to similar entities? ...etc.
- Then in all other respects they must be similar?  
But are they? **<answers needed>**



# Agenda for future research

- Why evaluators make judgments? <the functional perspective>
- What cognitive strategies they use to find answers to their questions about organizations? Are these strategies specific to each of the questions?
- Sometimes heuristic inferences can be used to infer one judgment from another. How? When?
- Sometimes evaluators can borrow from others How? When?
- More generally, we know a lot about validity...
  - But what is the role of 'invalid' judgments?
  - What is the role of 'minority' judgments?
  - What is the role of social identity in this process?



Thank you!