



Workshop: Concept Analysis

20-22 May 2024, Badia Fiesolana

Convenors (in the order of appearance)

Stefano Guzzini, EUI

Kimberly Hutchings, Queen Mary University of London

Felix Berenskötter, SOAS University of London

Administrative contact:

Sofia.Altisini@eui.eu

Dates and venue:

20 + 21 May 2024, 09:00-17:00, Seminar Room 2 (Badia Fiesolana)

22 May 2024, 09:00-17:00, Seminar Room 3 (Badia Fiesolana)

Description

Concepts are phenomena of social reality and the building blocks of all our knowledge. The workshop covers the theorisation of concepts and methodologies of concept analysis. This includes the rules of concept formation for the definition of variables, the use of concepts in theoretical analysis and critique, as well as the empirical analysis of concepts as performatives (e.g. speech acts), that is, on the way in which we name phenomena can interact with the phenomena so named.

Credits and attendance

Attendance and active participation: 10 credits.

We aim at maximum 15 participants to keep it as participatory as possible.

Day 1 (20 May): Concept formation as a means for empirical analysis

STEFANO GUZZINI, EUI

Day 1 is dedicated to concept analysis as concept formation for empirical analysis as understood in the positivist tradition. This is constitutive for the definition of variables, but also for the conceptualisation of ideal-types prominent in comparisons.

The morning session, a lecture and Q&A, will show many of the challenges such concept formation faces. Contrary to common acceptance, also shared by some of its protagonists, this approach does not only treat concepts as instrumental tools for coding information and data. When used for basic or essential concepts – ‘democracy’ is often used as an example – concept formation in this tradition is very attentive to properties

that *constitute* its ontological core (Goertz) and are connected to the historically evolved semantic field (Sartori). Also, this type of concept formation and the level of its analysis can be distinguished from the actual variables and their use in causal analysis. Here, they are considered *descriptive*, yet highly significant for the analysis as such (Gerring). This level of concept formation is not necessarily conceived as inferior to causal variable definition or just a handmaiden for the latter, because both do something else.

Yet, these levels are connected and need to be connected in the problematisation of research / developing the terms of a research question and the strategy for its answer. In this context, Sartori had introduced the problem of the ‘ladder of abstraction’ and the connected ‘intension-extension problem’, which can lead to undue ‘conceptual stretching’, all challenges that will be explored in the session. This more fundamental level of concept formation connects also to the problematiques of how concepts travel across linguistic and cultural contexts and how they relate to underlying political theories, both issues, on which positivist concept formation has been challenged.

The afternoon session invites participants to present the way they conceptualized the central terms of their research. Participants should prepare a 1-2 page memo on one of their central concepts which will then be discussed collectively.

Essential Reading (in chronological order) for the morning session

Sartori, Giovanni (1970) “Concept Misformation in Comparative Politics”, *American Political Science Review* 64 (4): 1033–53.

*Sartori, Giovanni (2009 [1975]) “The Tower of Babel,” in David Collier and John Gerring, eds, *Concepts and Method in Social Science: The Tradition of Giovanni Sartori* (London et al.: Routledge), pp. 61–96.

*Collier, David & James Mahon (1993) “Conceptual ‘stretching’ revisited: adapting categories in comparative research”, *American Political Science Review* 87 (4): 845–855.

Goertz, Gary (2006) *Social Science Concepts: A User’s Guide*. Princeton: Princeton University Press, chapter 2 (Structuring and Theorizing Concepts), pp. 27–68.

*Gerring, John (2011) *Social Science Methodology: A Unified Framework*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, chapter 5 (Concepts), pp. 107–140.

As a rejoinder:

Bevir, Mark & Asaf Kedar (2008) “Concept Formation in Political Science: An Anti-Naturalist Critique of Qualitative Methodology,” *Perspectives on Politics* 6 (3): 503–17.

Richter, Melvin (2005) “More than a two-way traffic: analyzing, translating, and comparing political concepts from other cultures”, *Contributions to the History of Concepts* 1 (1): 7–20.

Schaffer, Frederic Charles Schaffer (2016) *Elucidating Social Science Concepts: An Interpretivist Guide* (New York: Routledge), chapter 1 (pp. 1–25).

Schwartz-Shea, Peregrine and Dvora Yanow. 2012. *Interpretive Research Design*. New York, Abingdon: Routledge, chapters 1 and 2 (pp. 15–44).

For General Background, see under Day 3.

Day 2 (21 May): Concepts and Practices of Peace

KIMBERLY HUTCHINGS, QUEEN MARY UNIVERSITY OF LONDON

The aim of Day 2 is to introduce students to different modes of conceptual analysis in political theory and to demonstrate their relevance to the realm of political practice. This will be illustrated through a focus on the concept of ‘peace’.

The morning session, consisting of lecture and Q&A, will explain three different ways of approaching the understanding of political concepts within political theory: genealogically, analytically and performatively. It will trace different meanings of ‘peace’ across time. It will then introduce the case of feminist peace movements, the integration of their agenda into UNSCR1325 and the subsequent Women Peace and Security (WPS) architecture that has developed over the past two decades. It will become apparent that the meaning of ‘peace’ is always related to the purposes for which the term is being used, whether in the work of social scientists studying peace, of policymakers attempting to resolve conflict and ‘make’ peace, or of social movements seeking a different kind of peace. At the same time, it will be clear that the legacies of earlier conceptualisations of peace continue to operate in contemporary debates about, as well as uses of, the concept of peace.

Participatory Activity

The afternoon activity will focus on ongoing political contestation about how to conceptualise ‘peace’ within the WPS agenda. The activity will start with a brainstorming session in which participants will analyse the text of UNSCR to see whether and how it directly or indirectly uses the concept of ‘peace’. This will be followed with an exercise designed to get students to think through the meaning of peace in the WPS framework from the perspectives of 3 different kinds of actor: a social scientist; a policymaker; and a peace activist, drawing on the literature designated below. The students will be split into 3 groups to represent each perspective and answer specific questions related to their role (see below). They will then be asked to defend the conceptualisations of peace associated with those perspectives and to engage with each other to see if they can find common ground.

Perspective 1: Social Scientist

Why does the use of the concept of ‘positive peace’ in peace research decline from the 1990s onwards?

Why do research articles that mention ‘violence’ get more citations than those which mention peace?

How can you identify ‘peace’ in the WPS agenda empirically?

What do you see as the most crucial research questions about WPS today? Are these questions about peace?

Perspective 2: Policymaker

What was the rationale for UNSCR1325 and subsequent resolutions relating to Women,

Peace and Security?

What have been the main achievements and what the main failures of the WPS agenda?

What does the greater inclusion of women in the military have to do with peace?

Does the term 'peace' in 'Women, Peace and Security' have any substantive meaning?

Perspective 3: Feminist Activist

What connections between women/ gender and peace encouraged your advocacy of UNSCR1325?

In what ways has the WPS agenda succeeded, in what ways has it failed?

Is gender equality necessary for peace?

How would you relate your understanding of peace to the negative/ positive peace distinction?

Essential Reading – Preparation for the participatory session in the afternoon

Cockburn, Cynthia (2012) “Snagged on the Contradiction: NATO, Resolution 1325, and Feminist Responses”, *Women in Action* 2012 (1): 48–57.

Galtung, Johan (1969) “Violence, Peace and Peace Research”, *Journal of Peace Research* 6 (3): 167–191.

Gleditsch, Nils Petter, Jonas Norkville & Håvard Strand (2014) “Peace Research – Just the Study of War?”, *Journal of Peace Research* 51 (2): 145–158.

Kirby, Paul & Laura J. Shepherd (2021) “Women, Peace, and Security: Mapping the (Re)Production of a Policy Eco-System”, *Journal of Global Security Studies* 6 (3): oga045.

United Nations Security Council. 2000. “S/RES/1325 Resolution 1325 (2000).”

Background Reading

Addams, Jane (1906) *Newer Ideals of Peace*. New York: Macmillan (Project Gutenberg, 2023).

Basu, Soumita, Paul Kirby & Laura J. Shepherd, eds (2020) *New Directions in Women, Peace and Security*. Bristol: Bristol University Press.

Gittings, John (2018) *The Glorious Art of Peace: From the Iliad to Iraq*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.

Hinton, Alexander Laban, Giorgio Shani & Jeremiah Alberg, eds (2019) *Rethinking Peace: Discourse, Memory, Translation and Dialogue*. London & NY: Rowman and Littlefield.

Mackenzie, Megan & Nicole Wegner, eds (2021) *Feminist Solutions for Ending War*. London: Pluto Press.

Day 3 (22 May): Concepts at Work: Contesting International Order

FELIX BERENSKÖTTER (SOAS UNIVERSITY OF LONDON)

The morning session will consist of a 60 min lecture and discussion thereafter.

The main part of the lecture will discuss the political nature of Koselleck's notion of 'basic' concepts by highlighting their purpose of meaningfully organising socio-political relations in space and time. It will present the political relevance of such concepts as their ability to provide (cognitive, affective, and moral) orientation, and to their operation across academia and the 'real world'. It considers the argument that the meaning of basic concepts is dependent on context and suggests tracing this to socio-political positions and associated life-worlds. The lecture then will discuss the notion of concepts as performative. It will present an actor-focused angle that grounds the operation of concepts in their *existential and strategic usefulness*, and that analyses their contestation in conservative, coercive, critical, and creative uses within and across life-worlds.

The final part of the lecture will engage a concrete example: the concept of international order. As a starting point, it picks up voices diagnosing the crisis/decline of the 'existing' – generally understood to mean liberal – international order. While this is considered a major event in world politics, there is no consensus on how to measure and evaluate it. The lecture argues that assessments of 'international order' are grounded in experiences and expectations, its link to power, and our place within it. Understanding the uses of the concept along these lines sheds light on the nature of contestation and the (in)compatibility of different readings of 'international order'.

The lecture will be followed by a Q&A/discussion about the themes and angles presented.

The afternoon session will ask students to use pointers from the lecture (and previous sessions) to analyse different 'real world' uses of the concept of international order. The aim is to carve out the lines along which contestation occurs: the political appeal and stakes of different readings, their (in)compatibilities and the implications for world politics.

In preparation, students are expected to research four expressions/assessments of international order by a state/government source, representing:

- A US position
- A European position (could be from Ukraine)
- A Russian or Chinese position
- A Global South position (Brazil, India, or South Africa)

The class will be divided into groups, each discussing one perspective along the following questions:

- *What is the socio-political position of the speaker and their intended audience?*
- *What kind of international order are they (a) criticising and (b) advocating?*
- *What is the historical experience they associate with the concept?*

- *What is the normative (future oriented) aspiration they associate with the concept?*
- *What conceptions of (a) power and (b) Self-identity does the concept contain?*
- *What kind of political agenda/action does it call for?*

Background Literature (* indicates required)

(A) Concept Analysis

- * Berenskoetter, Felix (2016) “Approaches to Concept Analysis”, *Millennium: Journal of International Studies* (45) 2: 151–173.
- Connolly, William E. (1993) *The Terms of Political Discourse*, 3rd edition (Princeton: Princeton University Press).
- Cooper, Frederick (2005) *Colonialism in Question. Theory, Knowledge, History* (University of California Press).
- Guzzini, Stefano (2005) ‘The Concept of Power: A Constructivist Analysis’. *Millennium: Journal of International Studies* 33 (3): 495–522.
- Guzzini, Stefano (2009) *On the Measure of Power and the Power of Measure*. Copenhagen: Danish Institute for International Studies), Working Paper 28.
- Koselleck, Reinhart (2002) *The Practice of Conceptual History: Timing History, Spacing Concepts*, transl. by Todd Samuel Presner and Others (Stanford University Press).
- Palonen, Kari (2014) *Politics and Conceptual Histories: Rhetorical and Temporal Perspectives* (Nomos: Baden-Baden).
- Richter, Melvin (1995) *The History of Political and Social Concepts: A Critical Introduction* (Oxford: Oxford University Press).
- Schaffer, Frederic (2016) *Elucidating Social Science Concepts: An Interpretivist Guide* (Abingdon: Routledge).
- Wedeen, Lisa (2004) “Concepts and commitments in the study of democracy”, in I. Shapiro, R. M Smith and T. E. Masoud, eds, *Problems and Methods in the Study of Politics* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press), pp. 274–306.

(B) International Order

- Barkawi, Tarak (2010) “Empire and Order in International Relations and Security Studies”, *Oxford Research Encyclopedia*.
- Bajpai, Kanti and Evan A Laksmana (2023) “Asian conceptions of international order: what Asia wants”, *International Affairs* 99 (4): 1371–1381.
- Disher-Onar, Nora and Emilian Kavalski (2023) “From Trans-Atlantic Order to Afro-Eur-Asian Worlds? Reimagining International Relations as Interlocking Regional Worlds”, *Global Studies Quarterly* 2: 1–11.
- Goh, Evelyon (2019) “Contesting Hegemonic Order: China in East Asia”, *Security Studies* 28 (3): 614–644.
- * Ikenberry, John G. (2018) “The End of Liberal International Order?” *International Affairs* 94 (1): 7–23.
- Kang, David C. (2019) “International Order in Historical East Asia: Tribute and Hierarchy Beyond Sinocentrism and Eurocentrism”, *International Organization* 74

- (1): 65–93.
- Lacurettes, Kyle M (2021) “International Order in Theory and Practice”, *Oxford Research Encyclopedia*.
- McKeil, Aaron (2023) “Order without Victory: International Order Theory Before and After Liberal Hegemony”, *International Studies Quarterly* 67 (1): sqad002.
- Singh Chandam, Jonson (2021) “India’s Interplay with International Order: Potentials and Constraints”, *India Quarterly* 77 (3): 329–345.
- Younis, Musab (2022) *On the Scale of the World: The Formation of Black Anticolonial Thought* (University of California Press).
- Welch Larson, Deborah (2024) “Is the liberal order on the way out? China’s rise, networks, and the liberal hegemon”, *International Relations* 38 (1): 113–133.