

NEWSLETTER

of the Research Committee on Conceptual and Terminological Analysis

December 2024





CONTENTS

Editor's Introduction	.3
Composition of the Board 2023-2027	,4
List of Social Media Links	.5
Contributions to Conceptual Analysis	.6
List of Sessions 5th ISA Forum Rabat1	11





EDITOR'S INTRODUCTION

I hope you are all doing well, despite all contexts.

This new issue of the Newsletter brings some important information.

First, the composition of the new Board, starting this very year, and in place for the next four years, including some newer members.

Second, the list of our RC's Social Media links, where we can publish all the academic news of our members.

Third, the 3rd set of Contributions to Conceptual Analysis, which is the novel Section for our RC Newsletter, where we hope to encounter, in a summarized way, our colleagues' latest research from around the world.

Fourth, the list of approved Sessions for the upcoming 5th ISA Forum of Sociology to take place in Rabat, Morocco.

Wishing all this information will be of interest and use, I send you all the best wishes, until next time,

Eugenia Fraga, Newsletter Editor.





RC35 BOARD 2023-2027

After the RC35 Business Meeting elections, the new composition for the RC35 Board, which will span the period 2023-2027, is the following:

President

Arthur BUENO, University of Passau, Germany, arthur.bueno@uni-passau.de

Secretary & Treasurer

Alejandro BIALAKOWSKY, Universidad de Buenos Aires, Argentina, alejbialakowsk@gmail.com

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Board Members

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President Emeritus

David STRECKER, Goethe University of Frankfurt, Germany, david.strecker@campus.tu-berlin.de



List of RC35's New Social Media Accounts,

where you can send any info you would like to share regarding our common interests.



FACEBOOK: https://www.facebook.com/100094996534162



TWITTER: https://twitter.com/ISARC35



INSTAGRAM: https://instagram.com/rc35.isa/



CONTRIBUTIONS TO CONCEPTUAL ANALYSIS

Power and theory: toward a multidimensional explanation of the dynamic political field

by Jeffrey Broadbent

My paper, titled "Power and Theory: Toward a Multidimensional Explanation of the Dynamic Political Field", and published as pre-print available for free download in the Journal of Political Power, is relevant to RC35's interests. That is because it defines a wide range of theories, by their core causal factors, and measures that by their representative mechanisms, in micro power relations, in the political field. More specifically, the paper asks: What theories explain a dynamic political field and its outcome? Can we judiciously combine theories into a better hybrid explanation? To be valid, a theory's claimed causal factor must manifest in the field as a representative mode of micro power used between actors in dyads (its mechanism). The modes' relative presence indicates the theories' relative causal validity. The Integrated Structurational Analysis method analyzes (hundreds of) actor dyads to find evidence on the relative presence of the modes.

The results indicate a shifting, multidimensional causal timescape driving the field and its outcome. Findings from a Japanese case study illustrate the method.

<u>Reference</u>: Broadbent, J. (2024). Power and theory: toward a multidimensional explanation of the dynamic political field. *Journal of Political Power*, 1-30.

Download link: https://doi.org/10.1080/2158379X.2024.2408017



CONTRIBUTIONS TO CONCEPTUAL ANALYSIS

Aesthetical theory of alterity

by Eugenia Fraga

This essay investigates the foundations of Greek, Latin, Medieval and Renaissance thinkers of different origins in order to recuperate their philosophical contributions to the key concepts of any contemporary aesthetic theory, such as singularity, difference, innovation or creativity. Based on interpretations of canonical authors of social theory, such as Weber, Todorov, Horkheimer, Foucault or Habermas, on historians of ideas such as Lovejoy, Rougemont, Huizinga or Scholem, and on analyses of art scholars such as Panofsky, Eco, Bruyne, Gilson or Maritain, the essay attempts to shape a novel perspective that will be called "aesthetical theory of alterity". It will be based on the seminal turn that involves exchanging the classical value of unity-identity for that of differenceotherness, and its main dimensions, systematized in the conclusions to the essay, will be variety, unity and ethics.

The main themes explored in the essay are: a) the interweaving of beauty, goodness and truth; b) the aesthetic vision of the universe; c) the false value of the one, which is exchanged for multiplicity, variety and otherness; d) beauty between matter and form; e) the whole and the parts, the exterior and the interior; f) harmony and proportion; g) organic beauty: singularity and contrast; h) the tetralogical organism and its polyphony; i) light and colour as sources of beauty; j) symbols, analogies, metaphors and allegories; k) incongruity, strangeness and dissatisfaction; I) meaning and overmeaning: art as a mirror; m) images, between concepts and fables; n) loving and peaceful contemplation; o) friendship despite individuality; p) the ineffable infinity of inner beauty; q) art as creation, nature as inspiration; r) narrative arts and poetic arts; s) the dignity of art and the desire for the other; t) fantasy and imagination; u) madness, transcendence and immortality; v) the principle of contradiction and plurality of worlds; w) openness of possibilities and creative restlessness; x) luminous copulation, cosmic sympathy and aesthetic life; y) helping nature versus intervening in it; and z) interpretative freedom for all.

<u>Reference</u>: Aesthetical theory of alterity, or The beauty of becoming another. Ancient, medieval and renaissance antecedents, and their current relevance / Teoría estética de la alteridad o La belleza del devenir otro. Antecedentes antiguos, medievales y renacentistas y su relevancia actual, Documentos de Jóvenes Investigadores N° 48 - Instituto de Investigaciones Gino Germani, Buenos Aires. Diciembre 2020. ISBN 978-950-29-1886-0.



CONTRIBUTIONS TO CONCEPTUAL ANALYSIS

Prolegomena to a genealogy of "society"

by Volker H. Schmidt

I have recently published a paper (which gives a preview of a forthcoming book on the subject) that reconstructs the evolution of the semantics of one of the social sciences' most important concepts, that of society. It follows two main conceptualizations, those of the societas and the societas civilis, respectively, through a millennia-long history rooted in Greco-Roman civilization. This history exhibits remarkable continuity across time. With some regional variation in prominence and adapted to modern circumstances, both conceptualizations survive to the present day. The social sciences appear to know only the latter which, in the form of the nation-state or national society, they contingently adopted as their default model under the intellectual leadership of Talcott Parsons. This model now informs both their empirical research and theoretical logic. However, recent developments in the social world, as well as its Eurocentrism, have rendered this model untenable. This leaves the social sciences in dire straits, as they have failed to develop a persuasive alternative. The only currently available contender for such an alternative is Niklas Luhmann's systems theory of world society. But that theory is barely known outside small niche circles, especially in the alobally dominant Analophone world, whose empiricism and strong aversion to "abstract" theorizing unfortunately discourage any serious engagement with general theory. The article ends on a brief speculative note about what might account for the odd tenacity of an apparently misleading concept.

<u>Reference</u>: Volker H. Schmidt: "Prolegomena to a Genealogy of 'Society'", *European Journal of Social Theory*, published online first on October 15, 2024.



CONTRIBUTIONS TO CONCEPTUAL ANALYSIS

Humanity and uncontrollability

by Simon Susen

Focusing on the work of Hartmut Rosa, this book provides an in-depth account of the extent to which we, as humans, are obliged to face up to the uncontrollability of the world. Rosa is widely regarded as one of the most original contemporary European social theorists. Along with the concepts of 'acceleration', 'alienation', and 'resonance', the notion of 'uncontrollability' [Unverfügbarkeit] ranks among the most important reference points in Rosa's critical theory, especially in his recent work. It is no accident, then, that – following his extensive inquiries into 'acceleration' and 'alienation' and the publication of his magnum opus on 'resonance' – Rosa has found it necessary to offer a brief, but powerful, account of the place occupied by the concept of 'uncontrollability' in his critical theory. The first half of this book comprises a detailed outline of Rosa's central arguments on 'uncontrollability', before moving, in the second half, to a thorough assessment of the most significant limitations of his approach.

<u>Reference</u>: Susen, Simon (2024). Humanity and Uncontrollability: Reflections on Hartmut Rosa's Critical Theory, Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 324 pp. https://link.springer.com/book/10.1007/978-3-031-48914-3



<u>Title</u>: The Present Situation of Critical Theory: 100 Years of the Institute for Social Research (Parts 1, 2 and 3).

<u>Format</u>: Oral

Joint Session with RC16 Sociological Theory

Session Abstract:

The recent centenary of the founding of the Institute for Social Research, which under Max Horkheimer's subsequent leadership gave rise to the program of a critical theory of society, is a timely conjuncture for addressing the questions of whether and how that program can be pursued today. Indeed, contemporary capitalist modernity has reposed some of the questions that shaped Critical Theory in ways closer to its original formative conditions. These include concerns about the continuing consequences of economic crises, a new phase of the rationalization of the domination of nature and society, the antinomy between the liberation of subjectivity and the decline of autonomy, the mutation of legitimating ideologies, and the ominous rise of authoritarian political movements. While Critical Theory continues to circle around a series of core considerations, the claim to derive from these original committments a sociologically transformational critique of injustice and irrationality makes it necessary to address a series of questions: Have the 'generational' reconstructions of Critical Theory eventuated in a rupture with its original template? What theoretical illumination of societal developments, human subjectivity, or domain of practices today offers the possibility for a synthesis equivalent to the program of 'interdisciplinary materialism' or the one centered around communication pragmatics? How does Critical Theory stand in relation to other perspectives, like strands of feminism and post-colonial theory that adopt the broader label of critical theories or those that reject the idea of critique altogether? In which ways may these and other approaches enrich or challenge Critical Theory?

Session Organizer: Craig BROWNE Dept Sociology & Social Policy The University of Sydney Australia Email: craig.browne@sydney.edu.au

<u>Session Organizer:</u> Arthur BUENO Assistant Researcher and Lecturer University of Frankfurt Germany Assistant Researcher and Lecturer University of Passau Germany Email: arthur.bueno@uni-passau.de



<u>Title:</u> Dalumat: Exploring and Embracing Indigenous Concepts As Alternative to Western Sociological Terminologies

<u>Format</u>: Oral

Joint Session with RC16 Sociological Theory

Session Abstract:

The Western, English-language Sociological Canon extrudes Western ideas and concepts to fit local experiences of the Global South. This often leads to indescribable and alienating discussions of local societal experiences. Therefore, this session aims to create a space to discuss local and indigenous sociological concepts from the Global South. As a springboard, we can learn from the term "dalumat", a Filipino term used to describe a depth of understanding and comprehension towards any subject matter. It may also serve as a means of embracing sensibilities to the native and indigenous way of living in order to conceptualize, theorize, and discern a certain phenomenon or experience. Informed by the principle that considers language as a vessel of cultures and knowledge, this session aims to uncover deeper understandings of our societal experiences from our own local societies. It is an invitation for scholars to consider their local experiences and cultures as repositories of valuable knowledge, and set alternatives to Western sociological canon. Largely, this session shall stimulate discourses on possible pathways to rethink Western sociological terminologies, and navigate our ways to decolonize Sociology by exploring and embracing local and indigenous knowledges. It welcomes scholars from every walk of life to share their valuable local knowledges and native agencies on different societal experiences

<u>Session Organizer</u>: Glen Christian TACASA Department of Filipino & Philippine Literature University of the Philippines Diliman Quezon City, Philippines Email: gatacasa@up.edu.ph



<u>Title</u>: Rethinking Social Life and Knowledge from the Borders of Fragility and Wasted Lives

Format: Oral

Session Abstract:

Human and social life finds itself in the center of a huge global techno-economic mechanism shaping a society characterized, on the one hand, by a technosphere that becomes dominant in its relationship with the biosphere and the social sphere; on the other hand, by a growing entropy where many human beings are becoming mere externalities of a performative system that does not tolerate vulnerabilities or imperfections, with the risk of reducing social life to a technical matter.

In this frame, the sociological thought is challenged to adopt an internal point of view of the human condition which is globally faced in term of social life chances in a (un)sustainable world. A particular 'border' can be considered as a privileged space to rethink 'social life' and the knowledge on it: the border of fragility (in a broad, anthropological and social sense). In the Anthropocene era, fragility remains on the edges of social life, where what is inadequate according to the technical standards is confined. Moreover, even in situations of extreme deprivation, life is capable to flourish and to generate new forms of conviviality. From this peripheral place, social sciences can contribute to shape the idea of what social life means. The call for participation is open to contributions in the social thought, global social theory, critical theory examining relevant theoretical approaches and significant case-based empirical material related to research projects in different fields (e.g., inequalities studies, migration studies, urban sociology, sociology of organizations, and religion, and education).

<u>Session Organizer</u>: MONICA MARTINELLI Università Cattolica Milano Italy Email: monica.martinelli@unicatt.it



<u>Title</u>: Concepts in Crisis: Contemporary Tensions between Democracy and Capitalism

<u>Format</u>: Oral

Session Abstract:

Throughout modern configurations, "capitalism" (as the predominant mode of production) and "democracy" (as the primary form of the political regime) have been articulated. Far from being simple and linear, this articulation has shown diverse and complex historical modalities, both in "central" or "Global North" societies and in "peripheral" or "Global South" societies. There have been periods in which "capitalism" and "democracy" seemed to fit together, reinforcing and stimulating each other, as well as other scenarios in which their nexus proved problematic -for example, European fascisms or Latin American dictatorships-. Since the last part of the 20thcentury and in a pronounced manner in the current 21st century, a new decoupling between the two seems to have been set in motion. Both in the North and the South, democracy is being strongly challenged, even sieged. Faced with this epochal rupture, certain key categories of sociology have also entered into crisis. Thus, this historical scenario is prone to a critical review of concepts, such as those of "masses", "people", "society", "state", "progress", "development," among others. This also calls to for the proposal of new terminologies that are better able to capture the changes underway. This session is offered as a framework for debate, for papers interested in problematizing sociological concepts in crisis, based on the contemporary tensions between democracy and capitalism, in the multiple, asymmetrical and simultaneous modulations that they assume, both in the "South" and in the "North".

<u>Session Organizer</u>: Alejandro BIALAKOWSKY Universidad de Buenos Aires Argentina Email: alejbialakowsk@gmail.com

<u>Session Organizer</u>: Pablo DE MARINIS Instituto de Investigaciones Gino Germani Universidad de Buenos Aires - CONICET Email: pablodemarinis@gmail.com <u>Session Organizer</u>: Gina ZABLUDOVSKY FCPyS UNAM Mexico Email: ginaza@unam.mx



<u>Titl</u>e: Digitalisation Beyond Technology. Conceptualising Digital Transformation the Sociological Way

<u>Format</u>: Oral

Session Abstract:

Digitalisation is a leading topic in public and academic discourse worldwide and is widely understood as being the most powerful driver of change in economics, politics and social life. However, in order to assess in which way digital transformation helps to tackle current societal challenges, including climate change and the myriads of social and political crises around the world, cannot be left subject to a technology-based concept of digitalisation alone.

So far, technological determinism inherent in prevailing discourses around digitalisation has prevented us from attaining a more comprehensive and in-depth understanding of the far-reaching consequences of digitalised processes. In turn, analysing digital transformation from a more general perspective of the trajectory of social change, and moreover, within specific empirical contexts shows how digital transformation has different consequences for different social groups. The aim is to provide a new framework for analysis and empirical research of digitalisation. Such a framework serves to also shed light on digitalisation in regard to implementing social inequalities and bypassing unjust power structures through digitalized processes. Studying the diverse consequences and experiences of digitalised processes can also help us to better understand social problems not yet associated with digital transformation.

This regular session discusses approaches which conceptualise the trajectory of digital transformation within social science theories and/or approaches which contribute to theconceptualisation of digital transformation by empirical research, including how digital technology is used, focused on (unjust) outcomes of digitalised processes.

<u>Session organizer</u>: Kornelia HAHN Professor University of Salzburg Austria Email: kornelia.hahn@sbg.ac.at



<u>Title</u>: Crisis, Challenges and Possibilities for Social Theory from a Latin American Perspective

<u>Format</u>: Oral

Session Abstract:

About 30 years ago, intensive theoretical debates took place in the social sciences in general, and in sociology in particular, which this panel would like to look at from a Latin American perspective. These debates in Latin America were not driven by the desire to overcome European theories, the objective was not to define a kind of "Southern theory", but to come to terms with concrete political, social and academic issues: 1. The need for a theoretical reorientation especially on the part of the left after the end of "real-existing socialism". 2. The need for theoretical tools compatible with concrete political and social challenges, especially that of democratization. 3. The economic transformations from an industrial capitalism based on national production to a globalized financial capitalism represented important theoretical challenges that are manifested in the theoretical discussions on globalization. 4. The consolidation and "academization" of the social sciences, especially sociology in the university systems.

Today, there are signs that this boom of theoretical discussions and debates has run out of steam. The panel would like to address the following questions: What are the intellectual and institutional reasons for this crisis? What are the consequences? Finally, suggestions will be made as to how the crisis might be overcome. This panel is based on the assumption that this will be feasible if current social-theoretical debates succeed to reconnect with the issues of the 1990s, many of which are still pending.

<u>Session Organizer:</u> Oliver KOZLAREK Facultad de Filosofia Universidad Michoacana de San Nicolas de Hidalgo Mexico Email: okozlarek@yahoo.com



<u>Title</u>: Critical Theory from the Americas

Format: Oral

Session Abstract:

In Critical theory, the key concept needed to understand the specific dynamics of the formation of consciousness (partially formed by the collective unconscious and also spontaneous forms of organization in collective life) is that of reification, inherited from Lukács' "History and Class Consciousness". Despite the relevance of this work for understanding capitalist society, one of its disadvantages is its inability to significantly describe the breadth of forms of everyday life that underlie capitalist reproduction. We can see the concept of 'reification' as something which captures a specifically prevalent form in North-Western Europe, one which the Ecuadorian-Mexican philosopher Bolívar Echeverría conceives as the 'realist ethos.'

It is because of reification that one is unable to perceive the inherit contradictions in social forms today. In turn, it redefines them as 'things' which are unquestionable and no longer subject to change. The 'baroque ethos', on the other hand, allows us, both to perceive and live with these contradictions without negating or denying them; unlike the realist ethos, it plays with them and refunctionalizes them. On the one hand, what Echeverría calls the 'baroque ethos,' which in Latin America coexists with the 'realist ethos,' is not adequately acknowledged by classical critique of ideology based solely upon the concept of reification; on the other, it is necessary to note that Echeverría's theory of the historical ethe pays a certain price for the contributions it makes, thereby falling prey to some of the limitations that have actually been overcome by the critique of ideology.

<u>Session Organizer:</u> Stefan GANDLER Profesor-Investigador Universidad Autónoma de Querétaro Mexico Email: stefan.gandler@gmail.com



<u>Title</u>: Toward a Buddhist Sociology: Alternative Perspective on Relational Being

<u>Format</u>: Oral

Session Abstract:

This session calls for wide range of papers that challenge the Global North canonical understanding of self/other dichotomy, social problems, social changes, identity, collective memory, etc. by exploring the potential links between Buddhist thoughts and Sociology. The Peripheral Turn in sociology is for Global Sociology and Citizenship. More than ever, we aspire more ethical, harmonious society based on the interdependence of individuals and the nature. Buddhist sociology according to Janine Schipper (2012) may challenge sociologists to awaken to the broader range of "illusions that we may not identify via the rational critical thinking mind alone." Enlightenment by achieving inner peace and wisdom is the final goal for the Buddhist way of thinking. And such practices may contribute alternatively to re-socialize currently antagonistically fractured and/or atomized individuals as self-as-dependent-construct in the future (Immergut & Kaufman 2014).No abstracts have been submitted to this session yet.

<u>Session Organizer:</u> Sachiko TAKITA-ISHII Yokohama City University Yokohama City Japan Email: stakita@yokohama-cu.ac.jp



<u>Title</u>: Social Classification and Class: Theories and Concepts for Contemporary Justice

<u>Format</u>: Oral

Joint Session with RC35 Conceptual and Terminological Analysis

Session Abstract:

Since the beginnings of sociology, the concept of "class" has been central to analyzes of modern social configurations, in particular their hierarchies, identities and conflicts. Today, multiple other classifications are increasingly important in theoretical discussions and struggles for justice: "feminist," "racial/ethnic," "postand decolonial," or "environmental" classifications, among many others, including the term "Anthropocene" itself. This has produced various theoretical and practical consequences and dilemmas. Some perspectives have relativized the importance of the concept of "class" in favour of other categories, despite the fact that class continues to be key to comprehending capitalist relations and their injustices. While other perspectives have deepened the links between classes and categorizations of a different kind. Class has been fundamental to theories of intersectionality, interpretations of revived authoritarian nationalism, research in core domains of life chances, like health and education, analyses of subjective experiences of disrespected identities and the consolidation of global social divisions. Class, once again, appears to be a conception capable of making sense of shared conditions and structural constraints, but this perception nevertheless requires clarification. Finally, theoretical and conceptual work has emerged which critically and reflexively seeks to account for the meaning of the very process of social classification. From this work, it is possible to understand the historical and complex character of social classes today, as well as their ties with other categorizations. We invite proposals from the most diverse perspectives to continue these reflections on social classification and class, which will contribute to the current debates on justice.

<u>Session Organizer:</u> Alejandro BIALAKOWSKY Universidad de Buenos Aires Argentina Email: alejbialakowsk@gmail.com

<u>Session Organizer:</u> Craig BROWNE Dept Sociology & Social Policy The University of Sydney Australia Email: craig.browne@sydney.edu.au



<u>Title</u>: 'Anthropocene Cradle of Juridical Wisdom': Face-to-Face Contemporary Types of Societal Analysts

Format: Roundtable

Joint Session with RC55 Social Indicators

Session Abstract:

- 1: On and about a 'PLEISTOCEN CRADLE OF JURIDICAL WISDOM' and the modern recourse:

-1.1 On (a quasi-unknown) Neolithic to Ancient human - to be community killed as next messengers to Gods / versus the modern/contemporary 'war-peace-war' stance...

-1.2 About the (embedded / 'inborn') juridical wisdom within the pre-historic and paleo-historic communities [Romulus VULCANESCU]

-1.3 About the knowledge of Saint Apostol Andrew's 'in ovo' analytic approach to the world and the life.

- 2: About a finite set of "societal analysts-types":

-2.1 Felix GEYER's knowledge elicited/exposed set of three analysts.

-2.2 Case-studies 'Known' by the proposer: four types of high-level analysts.

- 3: On and about a Limits, Paradoxes, Heritage, Challenge, Perspectives on the Humans' outlook on life and religion, justice and progress.

-3.1 Göblek Tepe (10,000 years ago) turning the human (retro-)reflection on the 'Culture-Religion-Work' succession

- 3.2 Tartaria Tablets – 'Danubien Civilisation' versus Mésopotamie Egypt Hittites...

- 4: About a Paradigm: "What Next Is?" / Mihai DRÃGÃNESCU's 'Consciousness Society' World's future(s)

- 5: On and about a possible Retro-Forecasting as critical stated methodology in front of the divergent accumulation of models through the contemporary Economics, Sociology, History, Neuro/Psychology, ...Other evolutions...

<u>Session Organizer</u>: Nicolae BULZ Associate Researcher Center for Studies and Research on Agrosilvical Biodiversity Email: nbulz@yahoo.com*

<u>Session Organizer:</u> Dorien DETOMBE Prof. dr. Sichuan University, Chengdu, P.R. China Netherlands Email: detombe@nosmo.nl

<u>Session Organizer:</u> Gerhard-Wilhelm WEBER Professor Ph.D. Habil. and Chief of Department Poznan University of Technology, Poland Email: gerhard.weber@put.poznan.pl



<u>Title</u>: RC35 Business Meeting <u>Format</u>: Oral <u>Session Abstract</u>: The session aims to provide a space for the discussion of RC 35's members' issues.



