



# Workshop: Ideas, Identities, Causality and Epistemologies

**3rd Term, Academic Year 2020-2021**

**Thursday, 13 May 2021 & Friday, 14 May 2021**  
**Seminar Room 2, Badia Fiesolana / Zoom**

Organizer: Jan Lepeu, SPS Researcher (jan.lepeu@eui.eu)

Sponsoring Professor: Jeffrey T. Checkel (jeffrey.checkel@eui.eu)

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## Description

The core idea of this workshop is to investigate different research designs about ideas, beliefs and identities, conceptualized as both dependent and independent variables. The main question addressed will be how to uphold a commitment to epistemological and methodological pluralism, on the one hand, and rigorous research designs, on the other. The aim is to provide researchers with the skills necessary to link research designs dealing with ideational variables to credible and explicit epistemological and ontological commitments as well as justifiable causal and interpretive claims.

The workshop will survey different ways to investigate ideas and identities in the social sciences, with a first part on more positivist research designs and a second on more interpretive ones. Each session will focus on discussing what kind of causal/interpretive claims one could make, when researching ideas and identities in different ways.

## Format

The Workshop will alternate reflections on how epistemological and ontological commitments condition the research design and ability to make analytic claims, and more practical studies on how different scholars navigate those hurdles. Instructors will be a combination of internal, EUI (SPS, Max Weber Programme) and external – Professor Thomas Risse, Freie Universität Berlin; Professor Vincent Pouliot, McGill University; and Professor Stefano Guzzini, Uppsala University. Two sessions will be dedicated to research designs using mainstream and critical realist epistemologies, while two other sessions explore more interpretive approaches.

Each day will be composed of lecture-like sessions (II, III and V) investigating how particular research traditions propose to look at ideas, how they justify their focus on ideational variables (being independent, intervening or dependent ones), and what kinds of analytic claims they make. In addition, each day features sessions (I & IV) dedicated to exploring how scholars researching ideas and identities operationalize and justify their research designs.

For Sessions I and IV, workshop participants will be asked to select an academic article from a well-established journal (see examples below) and present it. The article should be uploaded to the workshop Brightspace [page](#) at the latest by 6 May - i.e., one week in advance of our first meeting. Participants will make a short presentation on the way the article investigates ideational-identity variables, addressing the following points.

- i. How does the article use ideational-identity variables in its research design?
- ii. What are its explicit or implicit epistemological and ontological foundations?
- iii. What methodological tools are used to investigate the research question(s) and how those tools relate to epistemological and ontological foundations described in point (ii).
- iv. What causal-interpretive claims the article is making, and how they are justified.

### Credits

The workshop would take place over two days and is worth 10 credits.

### Workshop Readings

Readings will be available as e-books or e-articles from the EUI Library or – failing this – will be uploaded to the workshop Brightspace [page](#).

If you encounter any problems accessing workshop readings, please contact Adele Battistini.

### Requirements

- a. Workshop Participation: Active participation in all sessions is mandatory.
- b. Presentation: For sessions I and IV, participants are required to select a research article of their choice investigating ideational-identity variables and to prepare a presentation addressing the points listed above.
- c. Paper: Participants will submit a short paper (roughly 1200 words) comparing two research articles discussed during the workshop, using one article from Session I and one from Session IV. Papers are due two weeks after the workshop, i.e., on 28 May.

### Workshop Schedule & Readings

#### *Day #1: Thursday, 13 May*

#### **Session I (09:00 – 11:00): Ideas & Identities in Mainstream Research Designs**

**Moderator**: Professor Jeffrey T. Checkel (EUI)

Three presentations of research articles by students (3x 20min) followed by an open discussion.

#### **Readings**:

Articles chosen by the students presenting during this session.

Examples of research articles

Finnemore, Martha, and Kathryn Sikkink. "International Norm Dynamics and Political Change." *International Organization* 52/4 (1998): 887-917.

Checkel, Jeffrey T. "International Institutions and Socialization in Europe: Introduction and Framework." *International Organization* 59/4 (2005): 801-26.

Lewis, Jeffrey. "The Janus Face of Brussels: Socialization and Everyday Decision Making in the European Union." *International Organization* 59/4 (2005): 937-71.

**Session II (14:00 – 16:00): Ideational Variables in Mainstream Epistemologies**

**Instructor:** Professor Thomas Risse (Freie Universität Berlin)

- Lecture by Prof. Risse: 45 minutes
- 10 minutes break
- Open discussion: 1 hour

**Readings:**

Risse, Thomas. *Domestic Politics and Norm Diffusion in International Relations: Ideas Do Not Float Freely* (London: Taylor & Francis, 2016) – Chapters 1, 3, 5. ([E-Book](#))

Checkel, Jeffrey T. "Why Comply? Social Learning and European Identity Change." *International Organization* 55/3 (2001): 553-588.

Jacobs, Alan, "Process Tracing the Effects of Ideas." In Andrew Bennett and Jeffrey T. Checkel, Editors. *Process Tracing: From Metaphor to Analytic Tool* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2015) – Chapter 2. ([E-Book](#))

**Session III (16:30 – 18:30): Interpreting Ideas & Identities through Post-Positivist Epistemologies**

**Instructor:** Professor Vincent Pouliot (McGill University)

- Lecture by Prof. Pouliot: 45 minutes
- 10 minute break
- Open discussion: 1 hour

**Reading:**

Hansen, Lene. *Security as Practice: Discourse Analysis and the Bosnian War* (London: Routledge, 2006) – Chapters 2 and 3.

Adler, Emanuel, and Vincent Pouliot, Editors. *International Practices* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2011) - Chapter 1. ([E-Book](#))

## ***Day #2: Friday, 14 May***

### **Session IV (10:00 – 12:00): Ideas & Identities in Post-Positivist Research Designs**

**Moderator:** Dr. Adelle Chevee (Max Weber Fellow, Robert Schuman Center), TBC

Three presentations of research articles by students (3x 20min) followed by an open discussion.

#### **Readings:**

Articles chosen by the students presenting during this session.

#### **Example of research articles**

Doty, Roxanne Lynn. "Foreign Policy as Social Construction: A Post-Positivist Analysis of US Counterinsurgency Policy in the Philippines." *International Studies Quarterly* 37/3 (1993): 297-320.

Huysmans, Jef. "The European Union and the Securitization of Migration." *JCMS: Journal of Common Market Studies* 38/5 (2000): 751-777.

### **Session V (14:00 – 16:00): Bridging the Gap - Researching Ideas & Identities across Epistemologies**

**Instructor:** Professor Stefano Guzzini (Uppsala University)

- Lecture by Prof. Guzzini: 45 minutes
- 10 minute break
- Open discussion: 1 hour

#### **Readings:**

Vucetic, Srdjan. "Identity and Foreign Policy." In *Oxford Research Encyclopedia of Politics* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2017). ([E-Book](#))

Hopf, Ted, and Bentley Allan, Editors. *Making Identity Count: Building a National Identity Database* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2016) - Chapters 1, 2, 13. ([E-Book](#))

Hopf, Ted. "The limits of Interpreting Evidence." In Lebow, Richard Ned and Mark Lichbach, Editors. *Theory and Evidence in Comparative Politics and International Relations* (NY: Palgrave Macmillan, 2007).

## Background Material

King, Gary, Robert O. Keohane, and Sidney Verba. *Designing Social Inquiry: Scientific Inference in Qualitative Research*. (Princeton University Press, 1994).

Jackson, Patrick, *The Conduct of Inquiry in International Relations: Philosophy of Science and Its Implications for the Study of World Politics* (London: Routledge, 2010).

Hopf, Ted. "Constructivism at Home: Theory and Method." In Hopf, Ted. *Social Construction of Foreign Policy: Identities and Foreign Policies, Moscow, 1955 and 1999* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 2002): 1-38.

Kurki, Milja. *Causation in International Relations: Reclaiming Causal Analysis* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2008).

della Porta, Donatella and Michael Keating, Editors. *Approaches and Methodologies in the Social Sciences: A Pluralist Perspective* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2008).

Aradau, Claudia, and Jef Huysmans. "Critical Methods in International Relations: The Politics of Techniques, Devices and Acts." *European Journal of International Relations* 20/3 (2014): 596-619.

Williams, Malcolm. "Interpretivism and Generalisation." *Sociology* 34/2 (2000): 209-224.