Conceptually Confused, but on a Field Level?

A Method for Conceptual Analysis and its Application

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Abstract

This paper develops and applies a Conceptual Analysis Method (CAM). The CAM is a critical reflection on multiple definitions and descriptions of concepts and terms all used to refer to a phenomenon or the experiences of it. The method particularly helps researchers working in emerging research fields to discover any conceptual confusion and elucidate multiple terms and concepts. We demonstrate the utility of the CAM by discovering conceptual confusion on an example field: business relationship uncoupling, and elucidating its terms and concepts. This paper adds to the discussion on the importance of conscious conceptual language for theory development, on the level of a research field.

Key words: Conceptual Analysis Method, Conceptual Confusion, Concepts, Defining, Dissolution, Termination, Exit, Switching, Buyer-Seller Relationships

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The Conceptual Analysis Method and its Application

Introduction

Concepts are the basic building blocks of theory; the *what* of Whetten (1989). Without understanding concepts, one cannot discuss the relationships between concepts; the *how* of Whetten (1989), or their underlying rationale and basic axiomatic assumptions (the *why*). Bartels (1970, pp. 5–6) argues that in theory development it is important to define the key terms[1] used, as without concepts no theory can be developed (Bagozzi, 1984; Suddaby, 2010) or tested (Sartori, 2009: 80). Only once the cultural question of 'what is it?' (see Alvesson and Deez, 2000:42) is known, the readers of the study can understand what was studied and build upon or criticise the results.

Nevertheless, not even all the positivist marketing studies explicitly define the main concepts. The issue has been acknowledged before and remains pertinent today. For example, in an oft-cited article, Peter (1981) argues that the first focus of research should be on providing explicit definitions of the key terms. Roughly ten years later, Bagozzi (1995) wondered why relationship marketing neglects to define its main concept. Again, years later, MacKenzie (2003: 323) claims that authors '*tend to overlook*' the need for adequate definitions and labels the lack of conceptual definitions as a '*fundamental failure'* that reduces validity.

Using a pragmatic mindset (see Friedrichs and Kratochwil, 2009) we refer to the lack of explicit conceptual language at a research field level as *conceptual confusion*. Conceptual confusion means that studies focusing on the same phenomenon, use a variety of labels and

[1] In this paper, we use 'label' to refer to the name given to a term. Once defined a term is referred to as a concept.

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terms to refer to the phenomenon or the experiences of it, without explicit definitions or descriptions. In addition, some different concepts are defined similarly, and some same definitions relate to more than one concept.

The reasons for such a confusion can be related to the difficulty of attaining conceptual clarity (Jacoby, 1978) as concepts are theory-, domain- (Anderson, 1986; Deshpande and Webster, 1989), and context-related (see the *who/where/when* of Whetten, 1989). Consequently, the same label can be defined as a concept differently in different studies and research programmes (see Anderson, 1986), as each may have its own theoretical perspective and ontological standing. However, no matter which ontological standing a study applies, conceptual confusion on a research field level is detrimental to theory development (Suddaby, 2010) and demands elucidation. Suddaby (2010: 355) states that the necessity to define the concepts in positivist studies comes from the desire to capture the essence of the focal phenomenon; concepts as core variables need to "accurately represent reality". In non-positivist studies conceptual language does more than transmit information; it is a theoretical interpretation and its relationship to the focal phenomenon can be negotiated (Astley, 1985). Accordingly, several theoretical interpretations can be made of the same phenomenon through intersubjective dialogue with researchers and research participants (Astley, 1985). Hence, in a research field, different definitions and variations of the concepts may reflect the multifaceted nature of the phenomenon, the experiences of it, or different dimensions of the observational plane, that is, different facets related to the phenomenon. However, this conceptual variety is beneficial and aids theory development only if it is discussed and clear to scholars in the field.

If faced with conceptual confusion, any conscious and reflective researcher must review the confusion and try to elucidate it. Such efforts rarely take place as guidance on how to undertake them is lacking. Most review guides (e.g. Gough et al., 2012; Tranfield et al.,

2003; Webster and Watson, 2002) target dominant stand-alone aggregative reviews that focus on research findings. Booth, Papaioannou and Sutton (2012) acknowledge conceptual analysis and MacKenzie (2003) argues for careful definition of concepts, but neither suggests how to discover and elucidate a conceptual confusion over several concepts within a field. Even the advances on redefining (Gilliam and Voss, 2010) and reconstructing concepts (Welch et al., 2016) and recent conceptual reviews (e.g. Helkkula, 2011; Mortensen, 2012) focus on a single main concept. Hence, elucidating conceptual confusion within a research field calls for another type of method.

This paper constructs and applies a Conceptual Analysis Method (CAM) to discover and elucidate conceptual confusion on a research field level. The CAM opens the scholar's (and research participants') eyes to the conceptual state of the field (whether it or any individual studies suffer from conceptual confusion) and deconstructs the different terms and concepts used. In the deconstruction, CAM illustrates the meanings and boundaries of the concepts, as well as their theoretical roots and assumptions. The CAM can be used to deconstruct all concepts, whether used as core variables (in positivism) or interpretive frames (in non-positivism) (see Charmaz 2006: 139-140). Thus, the CAM contributes to theory building within a study, but also within a field. In this paper, we show how an application of CAM can deconstruct the terms and concepts used in an exemplar research field: business relationship uncoupling.

We stress that the Conceptual Analysis Method does not look for the '*single correct or best meaning*' (Collier and Adcock, 1999: 539) for concepts. The CAM can benefit scholars following either a positivist or a non-positivist research tradition (see Suddaby, 2010: 353, 355). Once the concepts have been deconstructed, a researcher following a positivist tradition may continue his/her study by choosing a concept and its definition that best describes the

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focal phenomenon. In turn, a researcher following non-positivist tradition might use the deconstructions to compare, contrast, and criticise the language.

The main contribution of this paper is the Conceptual Analysis Method. The method aids critical reflection on its objects; multiple concepts and their definitions and/or terms and their descriptions (see Gough et al., 2012: 40-41, 52) used to refer to a phenomenon in a research field. First, the CAM, when applied, advances understanding of any shared and/or the various meanings of the terms and concepts in focus. Hence, the method acknowledges and highlights that it is likely that meanings are different and change over time, as concepts take their content from the context; from ontological standings, theory, discourse, and speech communities. Secondly, the CAM illustrates distinct dimensions of the focal phenomenon; the dimensions will be revealed by the various meanings attached to the terms and concepts in existing research. In a positivist-oriented study the method thus helps to choose a label and its definition that best helps to explore the phenomenon and answer the particular research question(s) posed in a study. In a non-positivist study, the CAM helps to interpret and deconstruct the concepts used in existing research, so that their relations to each other can be sketched to present a dialogue between them.

Another contribution of this study is the outcome of applying the CAM to the example research field; business relationship uncoupling[2]. It shows that the field suffers from conceptual confusion. Here, by deconstructing and communicating the current meanings, boundaries, and roots of the terms, this paper also shows that the phenomenon is more complex than has been stated. In addition, CAM reveals, for example, which aspects of the phenomenon are highlighted and which remain hidden, and thus helps future research to accelerate knowledge creation particularly on those dimensions.

[2] We use 'uncoupling' as a neutral and general umbrella-term as it has only been used in a conceptual study by Dwyer et al. (1987) to refer to the phenomenon where a commercial relationship between two organisations ceases to exist.

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This paper adds to the ongoing discussion on the importance of conscious conceptual language for theory development (see, e.g. MacKenzie; 2003; Suddaby, 2010; Welch et al., 2016). This discussion has remained less concerned about potential conceptual confusion on the level of an emerging research field. This paper focuses on the challenges that such a conceptual confusion poses to theory development within the field.

The Need for and Challenges to Conceptual Clarity

To ground our discussion, we apply Sartori, the 'leading voice in the study of social science concepts' (Collier and Gerring, 2009: 1) and his tradition in concept analysis (see e.g. Berenskoetter, 2017). Sartori's work since the 1970s has been both further developed (e.g. Collier and Adcock, 1999; Collier and Mahon, 1993; Weyland, 2001) and criticised for its positivist flavour (e.g. Bevir and Kedar 2008). However, we read and apply his work with a pragmatic mindset (see Friedrichs and Kratochwil, 2009) to highlight the need for conceptual analysis and to help generate useful knowledge relevant to a wide range of ontological traditions. Even Bevir and Kedar (2008:509) in their critique acknowledge that what they describe as Sartori's request for '*consciously and purposefully crafted use of language*' with '*lucidity and precision*' fits well with non-positivism.

Although the mainstream marketing research seems to produce (and value) more empirical studies than conceptual ones (see, e.g. MacInnis, 2011; Stewart and Zinkhan, 2006), the latter are central to conceiving new ideas to advance the discipline (Suddaby, 2010; Yadav, 2010). Bagozzi (1984: 27) even argues that only conceptually clear studies can pose research questions that advance the field.

Hence, to propose or hypothesise on ideas, events, or phenomena, a study must identify them. When the ideas/events/phenomena are named, they are seen through the given label, without which they cannot be talked about (Sartori, 2009: 98). Following this line of

thinking, the label is turned into a concept by defining it. This first challenge to conceptual clarity may often appear in an emerging research field, when little is known about the phenomenon and different terms are used without adequate definitions or descriptions (see Mattsson and Johanson, 2006). This is the situation in our example field, B2B buyer-seller (henceforth business) relationship uncoupling.

Ambiguity in Defining Concepts

When a concept is used as a core variable but is not explicitly defined, two outcomes occur. First, one cannot know exactly what the study is about and what is being measured (MacInnis, 2011), as definitions of concepts must precede their measurement (Rossiter, 2013) to avoid weak validity (MacKenzie, 2003). If the concepts lack an identity apart from their measurement, the measures cannot even be evaluated (Jacoby, 1978).

Second, in the absence of explicit definitions, readers will apply their own, which may be quite different from those the authors intended. Such differences in the meaning of a concept within a school of thought (see e.g. Sheth et al., 1988) might not be radical; however, between different schools and in interdisciplinary settings they can be fundamental. Clearer conceptual categories can bridge divergent schools of thought, and reach a broader audience (Suddaby, 2010).

Sartori (2009: 98) argues that each core concept should be defined using three forms of definition.[3] First, a definition that declares the meaning of the concept; the declarative definition. It reduces ambiguity (Sartori, 2009: 107), and thus meets the minimum standards for theory construction (Lenski, 1988). Second, a definition that addresses the question of referents, that is, the objects in the real world that the concept refers to. A denotative

[3] This and the following chapter are especially fitting for positivist studies.

definition clarifies what to include and exclude (Sartori, 2009: 107). Third, a study's operational definitions concern the properties of the object that can be empirically measured (Teas and Palan, 1997). The selected properties should be those necessary to identify the concept and its boundaries (Sartori, 2009: 109-110).

Sartori (2009: 108) stresses that the leap from the first declarative definition to the third operational definition would be too wide, as the latter curtails much of the richness of the connotations of the concept. Hence, the logic of the chain from the declarative definition to denotative and operational ones is the guarantee of measuring the phenomenon that was originally defined. This chain confirms the importance of first defining a concept and only thereafter designing measurements for it.

Definitions ensure that both authors and readers know what was studied, can validate the measures, and can communicate the results. However, renaming concepts changes the subject vocabulary and causes ideas, events, and phenomena to be viewed differently. This is because 'language affects thought' (Starbuck, 2006: 143) to the extent that words and their connotations determine our thinking (Kohli, 2006). This brings us to the second challenge, using several labels.

Ambiguity in Using Concepts

Sartori (2009: 111-115) argues that the core challenge for researchers is to reduce ambiguity. In common language, few words have only one meaning, which is why research should not use undefined or undescribed labels; they increase ambiguity and lead to confusion over meanings.

Ambiguity has two sources; homonymy and synonymy. Homonymy is the use of one concept to convey different meanings (see Figure 1). For instance, in relationship uncoupling research, *dissolution* can refer to either 'a completely broken tie' (Baker et al., 1998: 162) or

'a relationship failure' (Zhang et al., 2006: 86), where the latter could also refer to a severe failure within a continuous relationship, unless more clearly defined. Synonymy refers to the use of several concepts, for example *switching* and *termination*, to refer to the same phenomenon, without any other descriptions. In scholarly texts, the use of similar words creates ambiguity, because 'a *similar* meaning is not the *same* meaning' (Sartori, 2009: 112).

--- Insert Figure 1 approximately here ---

Figure 1. Two Types of Ambiguity: Homonymy and Synonymy

Confusion of meanings or ambiguity can take place on two levels: individually and collectively (Sartori, 2009: 111). Individual ambiguity takes place within an article. It can be avoided by checking that a single core concept is used throughout the text to refer to a phenomenon; and furthermore, that the concept is defined consistently. This applies mostly to positivist studies. If, as in other traditions, a study addresses the research participants' language use as action, the conceptualisations reflect the participants' different experiences or interpretations of the phenomenon. In what Sartori (2009) labels collective ambiguity, the research field suffers from researchers attaching their own definitions to the same core concept (homonymy), and/or using the same definitions but attaching different labels to the definitions (synonymy).

Following Sartori (2009), avoiding ambiguity, both in the form of defining and using concepts, aids theory development. Nevertheless, for the scientific process to advance, concepts need to be open to changes (Sartori, 2009), and their meaning cannot be reduced to a single 'strict definition' (Kaplan, 1964: 70–73). The Conceptual Analysis Method is designed to foster both these aims.

The Conceptual Analysis Method

We developed the CAM in a situation where choosing a label and a definition for our own research was challenging. Existing research used a number of labels, mostly undefined, and among those defined, two terms could share a definition. Hence, we faced a conceptual confusion and needed to elucidate it. Although methods to re-define a concept (e.g. Stern, 2006; Welch et al., 2016; Weyland, 2001) are available, we failed to find a suitable method to deconstruct several concepts. Thus, CAM was developed while asking the following questions; How could we make sense of what the different concepts used in existing research were about? How could we relate the concepts to each other? The CAM does not produce any exhaustive definitions but instead deconstructs multiple theoretical tools.

Figure 2 places the CAM in its wider context and shows its tasks and overall logic. The CAM targets a research field with multiple and unexplained terms. Through the tasks of CAM, the conceptual confusion in a field can be elucidated.

--- Place Figure 2 approximately here ---

Figure 2. The Evolution of a Research Field and the Role of the Conceptual Analysis Method

After using the CAM, scholars can choose from multiple paths to take their research forward. For example, Suddaby (2010) suggests positivist research can choose a theoretical stream to connect with and use its declarative definition to design constructs and measurements accordingly. Non-positivist research benefits from the deconstructions that explore and distinguish the limitations and assumptions of the concepts used in existing research. Deconstructions may further guide a critical elaboration of the study participants' experiences

and the related power structures (see Maclaran et al., 2009). CAM helps to reveal to whom the existing research has given a voice and whose views have been suppressed (see Maclaran et al., 2009) so that the concepts can be "*recovered*" and "*reconnected*" (Alvesson and Deetz, 2000: 146) to the different ways the study participants talk about and experience the phenomenon. CAM also helps to convey the relationships between the focal concepts and others in the field (see Suddaby, 2010).

Next, we present the tasks of the CAM using the field of business relationship uncoupling as an example. The example is important because sharing our process shows not only how we developed the model, but also helps to evaluate it, to demonstrate its usefulness and illustrate how it might be applied.

Collecting Data for a Review of Concepts or Terms

A concept review differs from a systematic review (see e.g. Boland et al., 2014) as its sole focus is on the concepts and their definitions and/or terms and their descriptions. However, the data collection follows the logic of a systematic review to achieve transparency and reproducibility (Tranfield et al., 2003), and thus, an analytical review scheme is applied to both the search and the evaluation of the literature (Ginsberg and Venkatraman, 1985), and predefined selection criteria (i.e. keywords and search terms) are used to avoid subjectivity (Tranfield et al., 2003). The search terms can be selected based on their existing usage in an esteemed article or an earlier review when available. The criteria are applied to electronic databases (e.g. Web of Science, ABI/INFORM, Business Source Complete) to ensure that the review covers a wide range of established journals (Podsakoff et al., 2005). During a peer-review process, vital aspects of research quality, including the definitions of the major concepts, are usually polished, which aids the review. It is important to use a broad time span (all years), as the first definitions are commonly referred to in subsequent studies.

When applying the method to our *example research field*, business relationship uncoupling, we used the Web of Science database and search terms found in Dwyer et al. (1987) and Tähtinen and Halinen (2002). In addition, we applied a synonym for a business relationship, namely *a market tie*. The search terms (topic subjects, or TS) used were 1) combinations of 'business' and 'relationship', and 2) 'market' and 'tie' in conjunction with 'dissolution', 'ending', 'exit', 'switching', or 'termination' in truncated (e.g. dissol*, end*, etc.) form. The search was limited to abstracts of articles published in English in peer-reviewed academic journals and produced 1652 hits.

When compiling a consideration set, the articles included should be limited to those belonging to the research field (Tranfield et al., 2003). The process involves reading article abstracts and, when necessary, articles in their entirety, and removing non-relevant ones. The removal decisions can be made bearing in mind that definitions are theory related, so journals outside marketing and management disciplines can be excluded. In our *example*, we read the abstracts separately, and if we disagreed, also parts of the whole article. The removed articles focused on personal relationships, end consumers, termination of short-term contracts, or exit/switching costs, or were published in journals outside marketing and management. Because of its outstanding impact, we added Dwyer et al. (1987)[4], after which the example compilation set consisted of 42 articles.

Evaluating the Conceptual Status

First, the analysis focuses on what Sartori (2009: 111–115) labels the ambiguity in the use of concepts, in other words, homonymy or synonymy. First, the task is to determine which words or labels are used to describe the phenomenon and how each article defines or

[4] Because our search was limited to abstracts, Dwyer et al. (1987) that presents a framework of business relationships and not only their un-couplings, did not appear in the search.

describes the label(s). This might involve using a word search (e.g. using qualitative analysis software) for *concept**, *construct**, *defin**, and *refer**; expressions that can all be associated with definitions. If this search fails to find explicit definitions, the task should transition to reading the articles to catch implicit ways of describing the phenomenon.

Second, the CAM includes a comparison of the concepts and their definitions and descriptions. Accordingly, the method first focuses on the possible ambiguity caused by the use of one word/label with many meanings (homonymy) and, thereafter, on the use of many words/labels with one meaning (synonymy).

In our *example*, we included both the labels used to define the phenomenon (using NVivo) and words used in common language (using reading). We isolated 64 different ways (words and their variations) to express business relationship uncoupling. Next, we excluded the words used in common language to discern how the articles define concepts. After this exclusion, 21 articles of the 42 were found to either present an explicit definition of the applied concept or describe it in the focal context.

Is there a collective confusion or are some concepts defined and used with little ambiguity? A total of 31 different concepts appeared in our *example*; grouping concepts sharing the same basic form produced 19 groups. We excluded any labels used only in the empirical data (e.g., interview quotations) or a reference study. Table 1 illustrates that no single concept is broadly used, although five stand out (‘dissolution’ 29 articles, ‘termination’ 25, ‘ending’ 19, ‘exit’ 15, ‘switching’ 14). When this research field emerged in Dwyer et al. in 1987, no conventions existed, but the situation has not changed noticeably. Overall, 29 articles (69 %) used more than two concepts; thus, the example research field suffers from ambiguity caused by synonymy.

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Table 1. Concepts and terms applied in business relationship uncoupling articles

Concept/ Term (& variations)	Appears in
Dissolution, dissolving, dissolved	Baker et al. 1998, Bermiss and Greenbaum 2016, Biong & Ulvnes 2011, Broschak 2004, Davies & Prince 1999, Dwyer, et al. 1987, Freeman & Browne 2004, Gedeon, et al. 2009, Geersbro & Ritter 2013, Goodwin, et al. 1997, Haenlein & Kaplan 2009, Halinen & Tähtinen 2002, Harris & O'Malley 2000, Havila & Wilkinson 2002, Helm, et al. 2006, Mittilä et al. 2002, Payan et al. 2010, Perrien et al. 1995, Ping 1993, Ping 1999, Pressey & Qiu 2007, Purinton et al. 2007, Ritter & Geersbro 2011, Rogan 2014, Schreiner 2015, Spedale et al. 2007, Vaaland 2006, Yang et al. 2012, Zhang et al. 2006 // 29 articles
Termination, terminate	Bermiss and Greenbaum 2016, Broschak 2004, Davies & Prince 1999, Dwyer, et al. 1987, Geersbro & Ritter 2013, Haenlein & Kaplan 2009, Halinen & Tähtinen 2002, Harris & O'Malley 2000, Havila & Wilkinson 2002, Helm, et al. 2006, Mittilä et al. 2002, Payan et al. 2010, Petersen et al. 2000, Pick & Eisend 2014, Ping 1993, Ping 1995, Ritter & Geersbro 2011, Rogan 2014, Saparito et al. 2004, Schreiner 2015, Tsiros et al. 2009, Vaaland 2006, Wathne et al. 2001, Yang et al. 2012, Zhang et al. 2006 // 25 articles
End, ending	Broschak 2004, Davies & Prince 1999, Gedeon, et al. 2009, Geersbro & Ritter 2013, Haenlein & Kaplan 2009, Halinen & Tähtinen 2002, Helm, et al. 2006, Holmlund & Hobbs 2009, Low & Johnston 2006, Payan et al .2010, Pressey & Qiu 2007, Purinton et al. 2007, Ritter & Geersbro 2011, Rogan 2014, Schreiner 2015, Selos et al. 2013, Tsiros et al. 2009, Vaaland 2006, Zhang et al. 2006 // 19 articles
Exit, exiting, exit behavior/our	Baker et al. 1998, Dwyer, et al. 1987, Ferguson & Johnston 2011, Gedeon, et al. 2009, Hibbard, et al. 2001, Payan et al. 2010, Pick & Eisend 2014, Ping 1993, Ping 1995, Ping 1999, Schreiner 2015, Spedale et al. 2007, Vaaland 2006, Yang et al. 2012, Zhang et al. 2006 // 15 articles
Switch, switching	Baker et al. 1998, Broschak 2004, Davies & Prince 1999, Gedeon, et al. 2009, Heide & Weiss 1995, Karantiou & Hogg 2009, Low & Johnston 2006, Petersen et al. 2000, Pick & Eisend 2014, Saparito et al. 2004, Selos et al. 2013, Tsiros et al. 2009, Wathne et al. 2001, Zhang et al. 2006 // 14 articles
Break, breaking, breakdown, break-up	Baker et al. 1998, Biong & Ulvnes 2011, Dwyer, et al. 1987, Halinen & Tähtinen 2002, Helm, et al. 2006, Spedale et al. 2007, Vaaland 2006 // 7 articles
Disengage, disengagement	Dwyer, et al. 1987, Havila & Wilkinson 2002, Hibbard, et al. 2001, Perrien et al. 1995
Divorce	Baker et al. 1998, Havila & Wilkinson 2002, Perrien et al. 1995
Withdrawal	Dwyer, et al. 1987, Harris & O'Malley 2000
Losing, a loss	Perrien et al 1995, Rogan 2014
Abandon	Haenlein & Kaplan 2009
Aftermath	Havila & Wilkinson 2002
Change	Selos et al. 2013
Cut-off	Mittilä et al. 2002
Firing	Haenlein & Kaplan 2009
Lapse	Davies & Prince 1999
Separation	Dwyer, et al. 1987
Threatened withdrawal	Hibbard, et al. 2001
Uncoupling	Dwyer, et al. 1987

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The next task was to determine those articles using concepts clearly and that were free from synonymy and homonymy, namely: Freeman and Browne (2004), Goodwin et al. (1997), Heide and Weiss (1995) and Karantinou and Hogg (2009) as shown in Table 2. Of those, Freeman and Browne (2004) presents an explicit definition of the applied concept, and Goodwin et al. (1997) and Heide and Weiss (1995) provide either an empirical description or measurement. However, Freeman and Browne (2004) refers to multiple and partially contradictory definitions, which may indicate homonymy.

Table 2. Terms applied in articles that were free from synonymy and homonymy

Article	Term	Definition and/or Description
Freeman & Browne 2004	dissolution	p. 170: 'Relationship dissolution can be defined as the permanent dismemberment of an existing relationship (Duck, 1982). A process where activity links, resource ties and actor bonds are broken, disconnecting the former parties from each other (Tähtinen and Halinen-Kaila, 1997, 560). … Although the formal communication between the entities involved may no longer continue, personal bonds may be maintained between individuals from both companies (see Havila, 1996; Tähtinen and Halinen-Kaila, 1997). … … a relationship may not completely dissolve when individuals retain personal bonds developed during the dissolved relationship (Havila, 1996; Havila and Wilkinson, 1997; Salminen 1997).'
Goodwin et al. 1997	dissolution	p. 168: Loss of a major account; 'Nine lost a proposal to a new account, while seven lost a bid to bring in large additional business from an existing customer. Of the seven, five lost the account completely while two retained the account but lost a potentially significant sale'
Heide & Weiss 1995	switching	Operationalised on p. 35; 'Specifically, a single categorical (Yes/No) measure was administered that asked respondents, "Did one of these existing suppliers provide the workstations that were purchased?" A "No" response to this question indicated that the buyer had switched to a new vendor, whereas a "Yes" response indicated a decision not to switch'.
Karantinou & Hogg 2009	switching	not found

Hence, the field of business relationship uncoupling seems to suffer from a collective confusion of meanings. The challenges of synonymy, from which almost all articles suffer, and homonymy, although relatively rare, may hinder theory development in the field.

Categorising the Meanings and Boundaries of the Concepts and Terms

This task requires studying the explicit declarative and denotative definitions (Sartori 2009:107-110) or (if rare) any descriptions of the key terms (or if rare, the measurements in empirical studies) to discern what they reveal about the phenomenon. Gerring (2012: 133-35) refers to this as classifying the 'fundamental attributes' of a concept. We suggest two methods for this task; interpretative content analysis (Holsti, 1969; Neuendorf, 2002) or objective word analysis (see Stern, 2006). The texts to be analysed are the definitions of the concepts and the descriptions of the terms found in the data (see examples in Table 2).

The definitions and descriptions can be content analysed (Holsti, 1969; Neuendorf, 2002) inductively without pre-existing categories or themes, allowing the categories to emerge from the data. These categories then illuminate what researchers consider essential; features in the phenomenon or its construction, their meanings and boundaries (Sartori 2009:107). The task should encompass all categories emerging from explicit definitions, whether complementary or contradictory, so as to reveal any differences. Alternatively, the method can be objective word analysis (see Stern, 2006), where the categories (e.g. function, nature, locus, valence) are decided beforehand.

Next, the task compares the meanings and boundaries of the concepts in terms of whether they are uniform or varied. If there is variation, the CAM continues with a search for the dominant meanings and boundaries of each concept. Here, *dominant* refers to the combination of categories that are most often connected with a concept in its definitions and

descriptions. Tables (e.g. Table 3) can be used as a tool for the analysis and to make the outcome visible. Second, the evolution of conceptual definitions over time is analysed. The process involves asking if, when placed on a time line, any trends appear in the descriptions or if changes appear in the labels or descriptions.

In *the example* field, as explicit declarative definitions were rare, we incorporated denotative definitions (i.e. descriptions of terms) too, as both types include a theoretical attempt to define the concept before operationalising and measuring it. By applying interpretative content analysis, the first conceptual category of meaning and boundary to emerge from the definitions was *existence*; whether the uncoupling phenomenon had already occurred (existing uncoupling) or if it was likely to occur in future (intention for uncoupling). Thus, the first category consists of two alternatives: actual occurrence or future intention.

The second category is total versus partial and refers to whether the concept expresses strict boundaries. Either the parties no longer interact in any shape or form (total uncoupling) or some interaction (e.g. social or periodic commercial), albeit less frequent or intensive, continues (partial uncoupling). The third set of categories consists of three meanings of the concept; a decision process, a process, or an outcome. The definitions also differ by perspective, that is, a single actor's or a dyadic view; typically, the perspective considered was that of the so-called *disengager*, presented as the dominant actor.

The remaining categories were less common. However, because they emerged from the data, we applied the qualitative logic of incorporating the full range of data into the analysis. Hence, some definitions separate the company-level uncoupling from the individual level (individuals might stay in touch). Some indicate that the uncoupling state is permanent, and some label it a failure, thus excluding relationship uncoupling pursued to free resources (at a particular time) to initiate other relationships. Finally, some definitions include the start of another relationship to replace the uncoupled one.

Our analyses of the historical development of the definitions did not find any trends towards more similar content, for example.

Overall, the meanings and boundaries of the definitions from the example field vary considerably, as reflected in the 14 dichotomous categories (*actual, intention, total, partial, decision process, process, outcome, perspective: actor or dyad, company level, individual level, permanent, failure, starting another*). The state of the example field; the use of several concepts with considerable variation in their definitions, may be beneficial for theory development if the variety can be refined to explicitly articulate different dimensions or experiences of the phenomenon. Hence, we continued the task by searching for the dominant meanings of and boundaries for each concept by applying the categorisation developed earlier.

As noted, the frequency of the use of the concepts presented in Table 1 and the frequency of the concepts' definitions do not equate. A common feature of the definitions is that some reveal more than others; hence, some of the meaning and boundaries (e.g., whether the definition of dissolution includes only total or also partial dissolutions) remain unknown. As mentioned, some articles not only apply several concepts, but also more than one definition for a single concept.

Table 3 shows that the concept of *dissolution* is predominantly defined as something that has taken place and, hence, as actual rather than as intention. Dissolution is always viewed from the dyadic perspective, and mostly at the company level. Although six articles (Baker et al., 1998; Broschak, 2004; Geersbro and Ritter, 2013; Halinen and Tähtinen, 2002; Pressey and Qiu, 2007; Schreiner, 2015) refer to dissolution as total, they use two different definitions. The last four articles share a definition by Tähtinen and Halinen-Kaila (1997: 560); 'when all activity links are broken and no resource ties or actor bonds exist between the companies…' Although the word *broken* has a negative connotation, Tähtinen and Halinen-

Kaila (1997) stress that relationships do not dissolve only because of problems. Baker et al. (1998) and Broschak (2004) define dissolution as '*a completely broken tie*' and Bermiss and Greenbaum (2016) as '*not-existing'*. Baker et al. (1998) specifically exclude a weakening of the tie from the definition. However, three articles (Freeman and Browne, 2004; Helm et al., 2006(1); Zhang et al., 2006) include partial dissolutions in the concept, but those articles do not address the difference between a partial dissolution and a weakening of a relationship.

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Table 3. The meanings and boundaries of the *dissolution* concept: an example table analysing a concept

	The characteristics of the concept 'dissolution'												
Appears in Article	**Actual**	**Intention**	**Total**	**Partial**	**Decision process**	**Process**	**Outcome**	**Perspective: actor or dyad**	**Company level**	**Individual level**	**Permanent**	**Failure**	**Starting another**
Baker, et al. 1998	✓		✓				✓	Dyad	✓				
							✓		✓				
Bermiss and Greenbaum 2016	✓		✓				✓	Dyad	✓				
	✓							Dyad					
Broschak 2004			✓										
Freeman & Browne (1)2004	✓						✓	Dyad		✓	✓		
Geersbro & Ritter 2013	✓		✓				✓	Dyad	✓				
			✓				✓	Dyad	✓				
Halinen & Tähtinen (1)2002	✓		✓				✓	Dyad	✓				
			✓				✓	Dyad	✓				
Pressey & Qiu 2007	✓												
Schreiner 2015	✓												
Freeman & Browne (2) 2004	✓			✓		✓		Dyad	✓	✓			
						✓		Dyad	✓	✓			
Helm, et al. (2) 2006	✓												
Helm, et al. (1) 2006	✓			✓			✓	Dyad					

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Yang, et al. 2012		✓						Dyad				✓	
Zhang, et al. 2006	✓			✓			✓	Dyad				✓	

(1) and (2) refer to two different definitions presented in the same article

Although the dominant view of dissolution refers to it as an outcome, two articles define it as a process. Both Helm et al. (2006) and Freeman and Browne (2004) essentially share the definition of 'a process where activity links, resource ties and actor bonds are broken, disconnecting the former parties from each other' that originates from Halinen and Tähtinen (2002:166), who use the label *ending*. Finally, Yang et al. (2012) and Zhang et al. (2006) define dissolution as a failure, thus restricting the meaning of the concept to unwanted dissolutions and leaving the boundaries of the concept quite open. Overall, the dominant definitions limit the borders of the concept of dissolution to an actual, relationship-level outcome.

The second most frequently-defined concept, *exit*, takes the perspective of a single actor either leaving or planning to leave the relationship or to discontinue it. Ferguson and Johnston (2011), Ping (1993) and Purinton et al. (2007) view exit as an actual event; however, Purinton et al. (2007) and Ping (1995, 1999) view exit as an intention, labelling it '*exit intention*' (Ping 1995) or '*exit propensity*' (Ping 1999). Because Ping (1999) explicitly distinguishes exit intentions and physical exits, we see that the dominant meaning of exit is actual, thus leaving intention beyond its scope. Definitions of exit consider a single actor's perspective and includes starting a new relationship with another supplier.

The concept of *ending* is defined in two articles adopting the dyadic view. Halinen and Tähtinen (2002: 166) define business relationship ending as '*a process where these links, ties, and bonds are broken, disconnecting the former parties from each other*'; they follow the wording of a definition of a *dissolved* relationship by Tähtinen and Halinen-Kaila (1997). Halinen and Tähtinen clarify what happens during the ending process (2002: 171): '*the process of ending disconnects the former partner companies from each other by cutting the activity links, the resource ties and actor bonds that have kept them together*'. Holmlund and Hobbs (2009: 267) develop an original definition of *ending*, namely, '*situations in which*

some form of communication might still take place after the ending of a business relationship, but in which no economic exchange of any kind continues between the two parties'. That definition differs from Halinen and Tähtinen's in viewing an ending as an outcome. Both articles view an ending as actual, dyadic, and total at the company level.

The final four terms defined in the studied articles; *aftermath*, *disengagement*, *threatened withdrawal*, and *termination* have little in common. Havila and Wilkinson (2002: 200) define *aftermath* as '*a stage after dissolution, disengagement or sleeping'* where trading has stopped. However, social interactions and knowledge sharing might continue and because those activities and the individuals' awareness of each other maintain their social bonds, the business relationship never completely uncouples. The perspective of aftermath is dyadic.

Dwyer et al.'s broad description (1987: 18) merely states that *disengagement* '*is a poorly understood strategic marketing process*'. Hibbard et al. (2001: 46) apply disengagement as a label to cover both threatened withdrawal (i.e., a propensity to terminate or threatening to discontinue the relationship) and neglect, and in both cases, adopt a single actor's viewpoint. Tsiros et al. (2009: 263) define *termination* as '*the ending of a business relationship between two firms*', which reveals little of the term's meaning, apart from its company-level perspective. It is interesting that *termination* only appears in a single definition, despite being the second most used concept, and none of the articles defines *switching*. This suggests that switching and termination are viewed as self-explanatory concepts. We argue that no concept is self-explanatory.

Tracing the Theoretical Roots of the Concepts and Terms

A notable variation in the content of the key concepts and terms indicates that they might stem from different ontological and theoretical backgrounds (Anderson, 1986; Deshpande

and Webster, 1989; Kaplan, 1964). The dominant theoretical roots can be traced by investigating the sources of the definitions and the theoretical discussion the definition/description is based upon.

Our *example* of business relationship uncoupling has at least three theoretical roots. First theoretical root is Hirschman's (1970) exit-voice-loyalty (EVL) framework. Hirschman defines exit as '*...the member ceasing to buy the firm's product(s) or leaving the organization*' (Hirschman 1970: 4), and '*the customer who, dissatisfied with the product of one firm, shifts to that of another …*' (Hirschman 1970: 15). Blois (2008: 3) refers to the latter description when discussing exit in B2B context as '*moving from an existing supplier to one of its competitors*' The original definitions have been modified to study responses to both destructive acts (Hibbard et al., 2001) and dissatisfaction (Ferguson and Johnston, 2011) and to study the antecedents (e.g. Ping, 1993; Purinton et al., 2007) and moderators (e.g. Ping, 1994) of channel exit intentions. In addition, Yang et al. (2012) follow this stream on the level of empirical measurement. Interestingly, all the empirical articles focus on exit *intention* using the scale first used by Ping (1993), which was adapted from a study on employee exits by Mobley (1977). Hibbard et al. (2001) also refer to Ping (1993; 1995), but label the variable '*threatened withdrawal, a propensity to terminate or threats to discontinue the relationship*'. This stream originating in the EVL framework also uses research on job satisfaction and employee turnover to operationalise the concept. Hence, the meaning and boundaries of exit, as established in the previous task, align with its origin; a single actor exiting the relationship.

Second, a diverse stream draws its conceptual inspiration from social psychology and the interpersonal relationship dissolution studies of Duck (1982; 1991), Baxter (1985), and Montgomery (1988). In this stream, the most frequently used definition of a dissolution process is, '*a process where these links, ties and other bonds are broken, disconnecting the*

former parties from each other' (Halinen and Tähtinen, 2002: 166) and of a dissolved outcome is, '*when all activity links are broken and no resource ties or actor bonds exist between the companies, a relationship can be considered dissolved*' (Tähtinen and Halinen-Kaila 1997: 560). The stream consists of seven conceptual or qualitative articles that, for example, study salespersons' responses to the loss of a major account (Goodwin et al., 1997), and examine suppliers' willingness to end unprofitable relationships (Helm et al., 2006).

Although these two conceptual roots are very distinct (the first is rooted in economics and employee turnover studies, and the second in social psychology and interpersonal relationship research), some articles reference both (e.g. Hibbard et al., 2001; Pressey and Qiu, 2007; Yang et al., 2012). This dual use may reflect the lack of knowledge about the conceptual roots and the underlying differences in how the phenomenon is understood. This usage has resulted in the ambiguous positioning of research.

Third, a smaller and more heterogeneous stream is rooted in the business network approach (the IMP approach) (e.g. Håkansson and Snehota, 1995) and views business relationship uncoupling as partial because social bonds cannot be destroyed. Havila and Wilkinson (2002: 200, 192) define aftermath as a stage after dissolution, where '*the activity links and resource ties are "destroyed" ... but social interaction among personnel and knowledge sharing could continue*'. Harris and O'Malley (2000) also view the phenomenon as partial and occurring when either party perceives the relationship to be unsuccessful or lacking commitment. Finally, Freeman and Browne (2004) use both this conceptualisation and the previously mentioned second stream when defining dissolutions as partial.

The fourth discussion stream examines the phenomenon from the level of markets and their social embeddedness. Studying the dissolution of inter-organisational market relationships, Baker et al. (1998) and Broschak (2004) define them as '*completely broken ties*'. The theoretical roots these two articles share are institutional theory (Williamson, 1985)

and social embeddedness theory (Uzzi, 1996), although their influence on the definition and measurement of the key concept is untraceable.

Outlining the Conceptual Maps

This task combines the outcomes of the two earlier deconstructing tasks; namely the concepts' meanings, boundaries, and theoretical roots into conceptual maps. The task helps discover the differences and similarities between the key concepts and which aspects of the phenomenon or the experiences of it they highlight and which they hide, in other words, the task involves adopting a critical view. Outlining the conceptual map follows the qualitative logic of categorising concepts and highlighting differences in meaning, boundaries, and theoretical roots.

In the *example*, the conceptual analysis revealed that the various concepts used in the field refer to either different phenomena or different theoretical perspectives with respect to the phenomenon. The concepts approach the phenomenon either on a dyadic level (including both actors) or on a single-actor level (including only the powerful disengager or the party that leaves). The conceptual maps convey this difference between interactive and non-interactive views (see Sheth et al., 1988).

Figure 3 shows the meanings, boundaries, and theoretical roots of the three dyadic-level concepts: dissolution, ending, and aftermath. Accordingly, dissolution refers to the actual outcome at the company level, and both actors' views are considered; aftermath refers to an actual outcome at the company level, however, one that is never total, as individual ties (e.g. memories) always remain; and ending refers to an actual uncoupling process that produces a total outcome from the interactive perspectives of both companies (as actors).

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--- Insert Figure 3 about here ---

Figure 3. Conceptual map of the interactive concepts referring to business relationship uncoupling

Although only Havila and Wilkinson (2002) defines the *aftermath* concept, we suggest it is important to include all the explicit definitions. Aftermath differs from dissolution in that aftermath can be partial, whereas dissolution rejects partiality. The difference seems to stem from the respective theoretical roots. The concepts of dissolution and ending draw inspiration from social theories on individuals, which separate company-level business relationships from personal relationships. However, aftermath relies firmly on the IMP approach, wherein social relationships are perceived as part of business relationships, and which holds that when social relationships are maintained, the business relationship is necessarily maintained.

The concepts of *exit* and *threatened withdrawal* share a single actor's perspective on the phenomenon. Figure 4 shows that exit is predominantly defined as a decision taken by a single actor rather than a process involving both actors in a dyad. Although it is usually defined as actual, it is most often empirically measured as exit intention or propensity. Exit is also separate from the outcome view of dissolution, because exit transcends the relationship the actor is exiting, as it also includes starting a new relationship to replace that exited. Using exit, the focus is thus on the exiting actor and the decision to leave the relationship and to start another.

--- Insert Figure 4 about here ---

Figure 4. Conceptual map of the non-interactive concepts referring to business relationship uncoupling

Hibbard et al. (2001) define and measure threatened withdrawal by referring to single actors' intentions or a threat to partially withdraw from the relationship or to add another supplier. The addition of threats and the intention to add another supplier also restricts the sphere of the phenomenon that can be labelled threatened withdrawal. Hence, this concept refers to a very specific type of uncoupling intention. Exit and threatened withdrawal share the common theoretical root of Hirschman's (1970) EVL framework, and both include the starting a new relationship.

--- Insert Figure 5 about here ---

Figure 5. Concepts requiring further effort to define them

The final two concepts remain on a highly abstract level (see Figure 5). *Disengagement* as defined by Dwyer et al. (1987), seems close to the ending concept. However, apart from it being an actual process, the concept's other characteristics remain undefined. Tsiros et al. (2009) view *termination* at the dyadic level, but the definition lacks further detail. Neither definition explicitly presents its theoretical roots.

Finally, an examination of the example field's conceptual language inspired by critical theory (Maclaran and Stevens, 2012) shows that although 'dissolution' incorporates the views of both actors, it stresses that of the companies, thus playing down the roles of the individuals who act on behalf of those companies. Moreover, 'dissolution' pays little attention to how the outcome (or entity) came to be. The labels of 'exit' and 'threatened withdrawal' favour and

give power to the actor that leaves the current partner and starts a relationship with another one. The other party seems to have little or no power over the exit itself or the establishment of a new relationship. 'Ending' also masks the roles of individuals and 'aftermath' views individuals as representatives of the companies, even in their social relationships. As all the concepts understate the role of individuals, they also hide any psycho-social aspects of uncoupling. Nevertheless, Goodwin et al. (1997) report that individuals experience strong and powerful emotions during and after relationship uncoupling. Hence, emotions should be an inherent part of the participants' and the researchers' construction of the situation.

Viewing the conceptual language critically and changing it may contribute to changing how business relationship uncoupling is seen in companies. If managers for example apply exit-language and construct the situation as a simple decision, the psycho-social experiences of the individuals making the decision, executing it, or otherwise facing its consequences in both companies are neither seen nor cared about. With different language highlighting the emotional aspects, boundary spanners' well-being may become an important issue.

Scholarly use of CAM

The Conceptual Analysis Method (CAM) presented above is designed to be used in situations where the key concepts of an emerging research field are implicit, and where the conceptual language is confusing. A novel research topic may attract researchers from various backgrounds, enriching the field but also increasing its conceptual variation. By applying CAM, a scholar can discover and elucidate any conceptual confusion to develop crisp concepts, but also to highlight the complexity of the phenomenon and the diversity and power relations the existing conceptual language reflects. The method enables the sometimes shared

but often differing meanings of terms to be understood, and their dimensions to be deconstructed and articulated (see Appendix 1 for a summary of CAM).

For researchers applying a non-positivist tradition (see e.g. Maclaran et al., 2009), the application of CAM elicits the theoretical voices used in studying a phenomenon. In so doing, CAM paves the way to elucidate the different interpretations of the basic tool of our trade (the concept). It shows the power of the tools to highlight and mask, to give voice to one and to suppress the voice of another. This aids the awareness of what aspects research has highlighted or shadowed and how the basic assumptions behind the concepts differ. Such awareness has also become increasingly important because the fragmentation of marketing research in general has increased (see e.g. Maclaran et al., 2000). CAM also allows a researcher to build upon and mould concepts to best correspond to the storyline(s) and theorizing that the researcher and the study targets jointly construct (see Welch, et al., 2103). Hence, we argue the method can be useful to both positivists and non-positivists (see Berenskoetter, 2017; Suddaby, 2010), although each will use it in different ways and for different purposes.

Discussion

This paper presents a situation where an emerging research field may suffer from what we label conceptual confusion; several key terms are applied, some defined, some not, some different concepts share the same definitions and some same are defined differently. We have argued that such conceptual confusion jeopardizes a field's theory development, necessitating actions. Existing research on crisp concepts and the importance of defining has, for instance, focused on problems with weak conceptualizations (e.g. MacKenzie, 2003), the importance of clarity (Suddaby, 2010) and the need for the redefinition or construction of single concepts (Gilliam and Voss, 2010; Welch et al., 2016). This paper is, in addition to Welch et al.

(2016), one of the first to apply, adapt (and somewhat stretch) Sartori's tradition to foster theory development in marketing. Our approach differs from that of Welch et al. (2016) as we focus on situations where the use of multiple concepts and terms is creating confusion in an emerging research field. However, advice on how to progress a field facing conceptual confusion to dispel any ambiguity, reveal the different facets of the phenomenon, and deconstruct the concepts has been missing. Hence, this paper adds to the research on conceptual analysis by addressing it on a research field level and discussing how to discover and elucidate a field's conceptual confusion.

The Conceptual Analysis Method (CAM) developed in this paper can be used to discover and elucidate conceptual confusion. The CAM can be used for multiple purposes, adapted to suit researchers' ontological approaches, and can advance the development of any emerging research field. The CAM sensitises its user to the theory-related and contextual nature of concepts, whether or not s/he considers that nature to be a problem or a resource (see Berenskoetter, 2017). The CAM discovers and elucidates any conceptual confusion, it distinguishes the concepts, shows distinctions between them and helps to draw conceptual maps. The CAM offers a means to establish whether the results of studies applying different conceptualisations can be used to build a theoretical framework or cumulative theoretical knowledge. In addition, using CAM helps to reveal any mismatches between the theoretical roots of a definition and its operationalisations. The CAM helps to show how researchers and study participants experience and construct different meanings and actions (see Charmaz, 2006: 130-131). The CAM can be used to start a process of changing the conceptual language used both in research and in practice to give voice to those not heard before.

The CAM also serves as a preliminary stage of a meta-theoretical review and thereby identifies theoretically meaningful distinctions among the concepts from those arising from an unclear communication of the concepts (see Teas and Palan, 1997). Without such

identification, meta-analysis may fail to integrate existing research, distinguish what influences how the phenomenon comes into being and with what results, or to illustrate the knowledge gaps. Using CAM does not require years of research experience in the particular research field (as critical reviews often do) and researchers can apply it to grasp the emerging field unsupported by comprehensive reviews.

The application of CAM to the field of business relationship uncoupling confirms a conceptual confusion that has impeded the field's conceptual progress and the discovery of the multifaceted nature of the phenomenon. The conceptual maps of dissolution, ending, aftermath, exit, threatened withdrawal, disengagement, and termination show the theoretical roots of the concepts and how the concepts distinguish different features of the phenomenon. Moreover, the elucidated uncoupling concepts were far from neutral, the most obvious deficit and thus also a road to future research being the lack of interest in the emotional aspect of uncoupling.

We can argue that because business relationships themselves have been classified to reflect their differences (Wong et al., 2010), the uncoupling of these different types of relationships should also be classified. This paper contributes to relationship uncoupling research by highlighting concepts that, for example, reveal both the processual and entitative dimensions of the phenomenon (see Thompson, 2011). The conceptual maps drawn in the study can aid relationship uncoupling researchers to paint a more detailed picture of it.

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Appendix 1

Table 4. Conceptual Analysis Method (CAM); Tasks and Key References

Task	Sub-tasks	Key references
Collecting data for a review of concepts and terms	Systematic search of electronic databases with predefined criteria (known key words and their synonyms) for analytical review. Limiting the results to a consideration set by excluding studies beyond the focus.	Tranfield et al. 2003 Ginsberg & Venkatraman 1985
Evaluating the conceptual status	Searching for the terms and concepts and their descriptions / definitions in each article. Comparing the results against each other to detect indications of synonymy and homonymy. Choosing terms and concepts to further analysis (if necessary).	Sartori 2009
Categorising the meanings and boundaries of the concepts and terms	Inductive analysis of the meanings and boundaries to derive the classification categories and scheme Detecting terms and concepts without any definitions/descriptions Forming tables for each term and concept and applying the classification scheme. Eliciting the dominant meanings and boundaries for each term and concept. Analysing the temporal development of the meaning and boundaries	Sartori 2009, Stern 2006
Tracing the theoretical roots of the concepts and terms	Investigating the sources or schools of thought that the descriptions/definitions are rooted in.	Anderson 1986 Deshpande and Webster, 1989 Kaplan, 1964
Outlining the conceptual maps	Combining the meanings, boundaries, and theoretical roots of conceptual maps	-

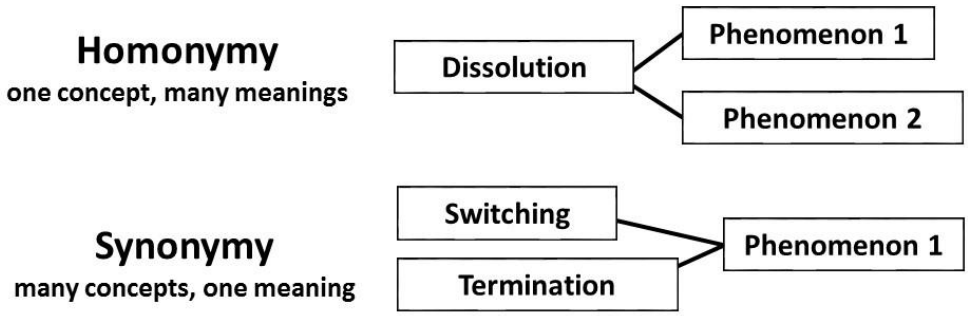

Figure 1. Two types of ambiguity: homonymy and synonymy

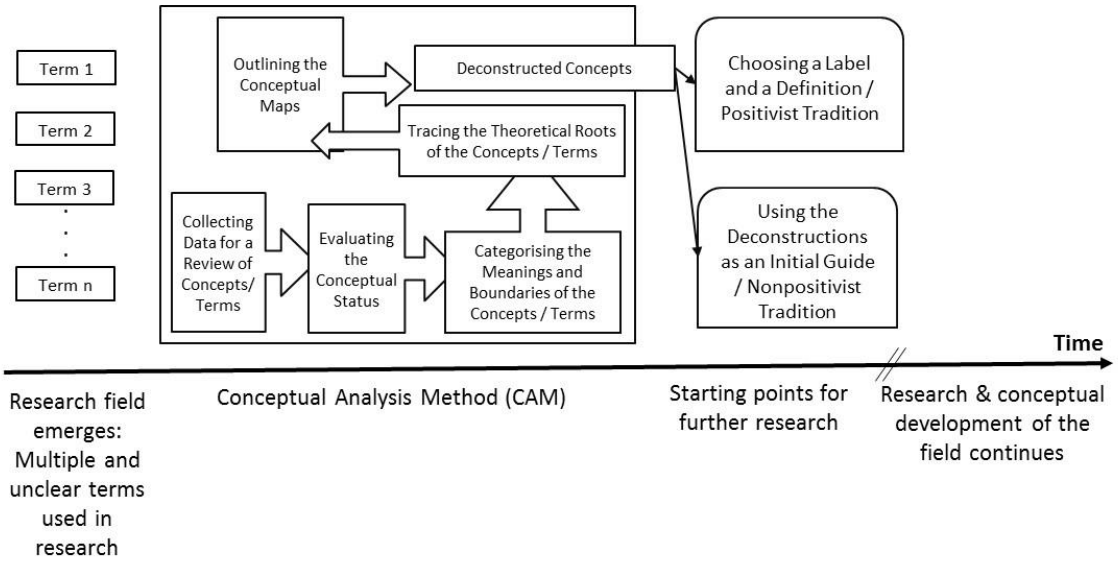

Figure 2. The Evolution of the Research Field and the Role of the CAM

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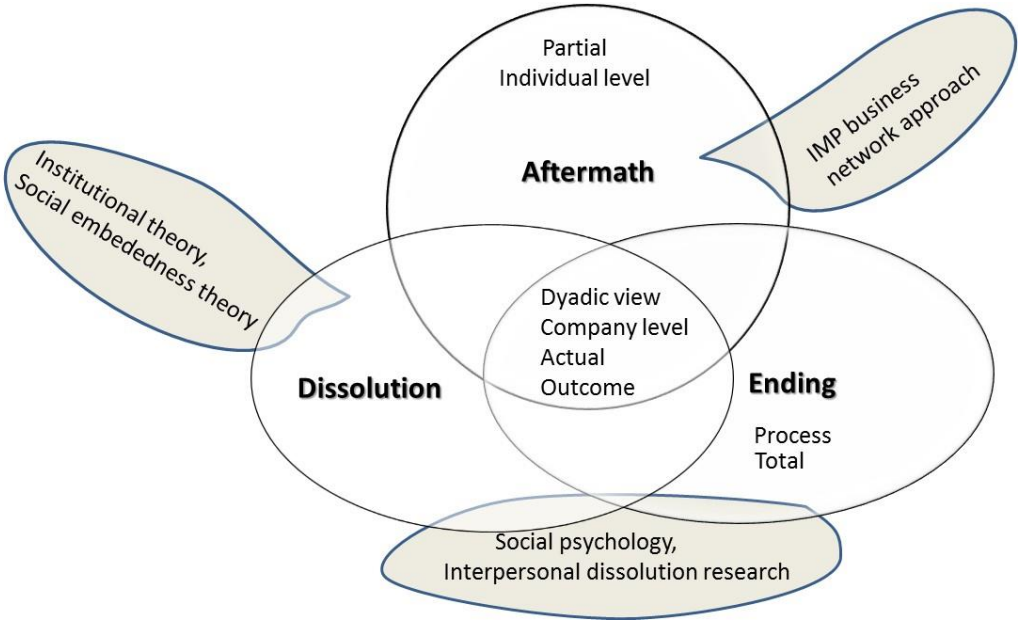

Figure 3. Conceptual map of the interactive concepts related to business relationship uncoupling

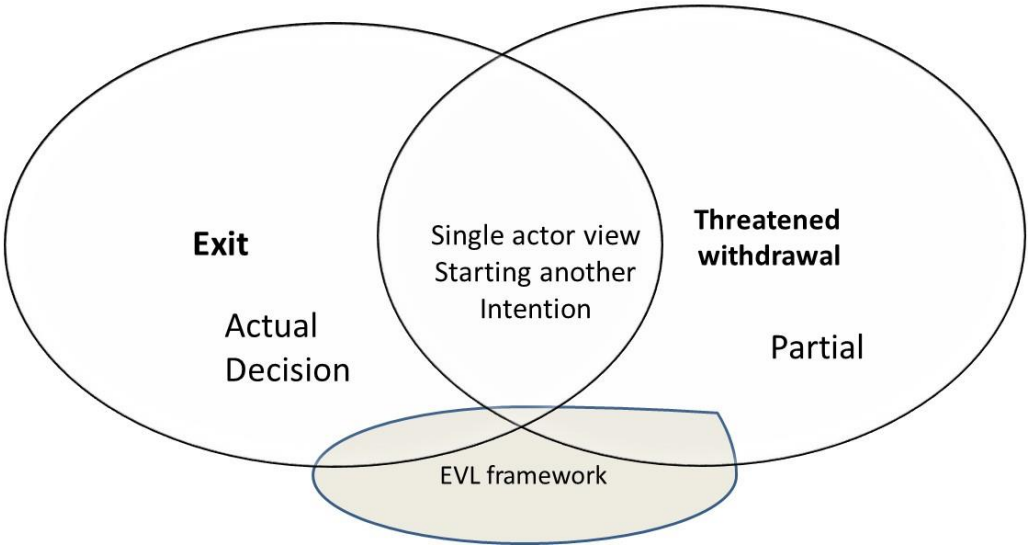

Figure 4. Conceptual map of the non-interactive concepts related to business relationship uncoupling

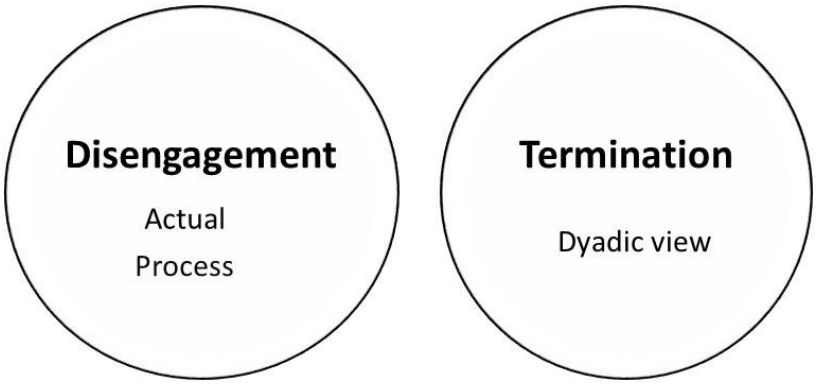

Figure 5. Concepts requiring further effort to deconstruct them