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Concepts of Legitimacy: Continuity and Change

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Conference Abstract

XVII ISA World Congress of Sociology: Sociology on the Move (Session: Sociological Perspectives on Conceptual and Intellectual History II), Gothenburg **2010**

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Concepts of Legitimacy: Continuity and Change

My paper discusses sociological perspectives on conceptual and intellectual history, between classical history of ideas and sociology of knowledge. I use the concept of legitimacy as an example and give a brief historical account of shifting attitudes towards the normative concept of political legitimacy, extending from the Comtian disdain of its metaphysical heritage to today's use of it as an uncontested part of common sociological knowledge and vocabulary. I am particularly interested in how this change came about.