Contemporary Security Studies
Alan Collins

Approaches to Security Studies

Critical Security Studies:
A Schismatic History

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Critical Security Studies

Toronto Desire

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Toronto Desire

What is Critical Security Studies?

The Critical Security Studies label emerged from a 1994 conference in Toronto, and as the title for the book that conference produced.

As a label it has been fought over more than it has been applied. It does not denote a coherent set of views rather it indicates a desire.

It is a desire to move beyond the confines in a form of a critique.

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Toronto Desire

What Is the Critical Desire?

The initial agenda was set by a series of challenges to the traditional concept of security:

- The state was not a sufficient referent object for security
- Thinking more broadly about the sources of both insecurity and security
- These forms of rethinking required an epistemological move beyond the empiricist, positivist traditions of security studies

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Toronto Desire

The Broad Church of Critical Desire?

The desire drew scholars from a range of theoretical perspectives including:

- Constructivism,
- Post-Structuralism,
- Post-Marxism

However as it worked not to create a single approach it created the conditions for schism

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Critical Security Studies

Copenhagen Distinctions

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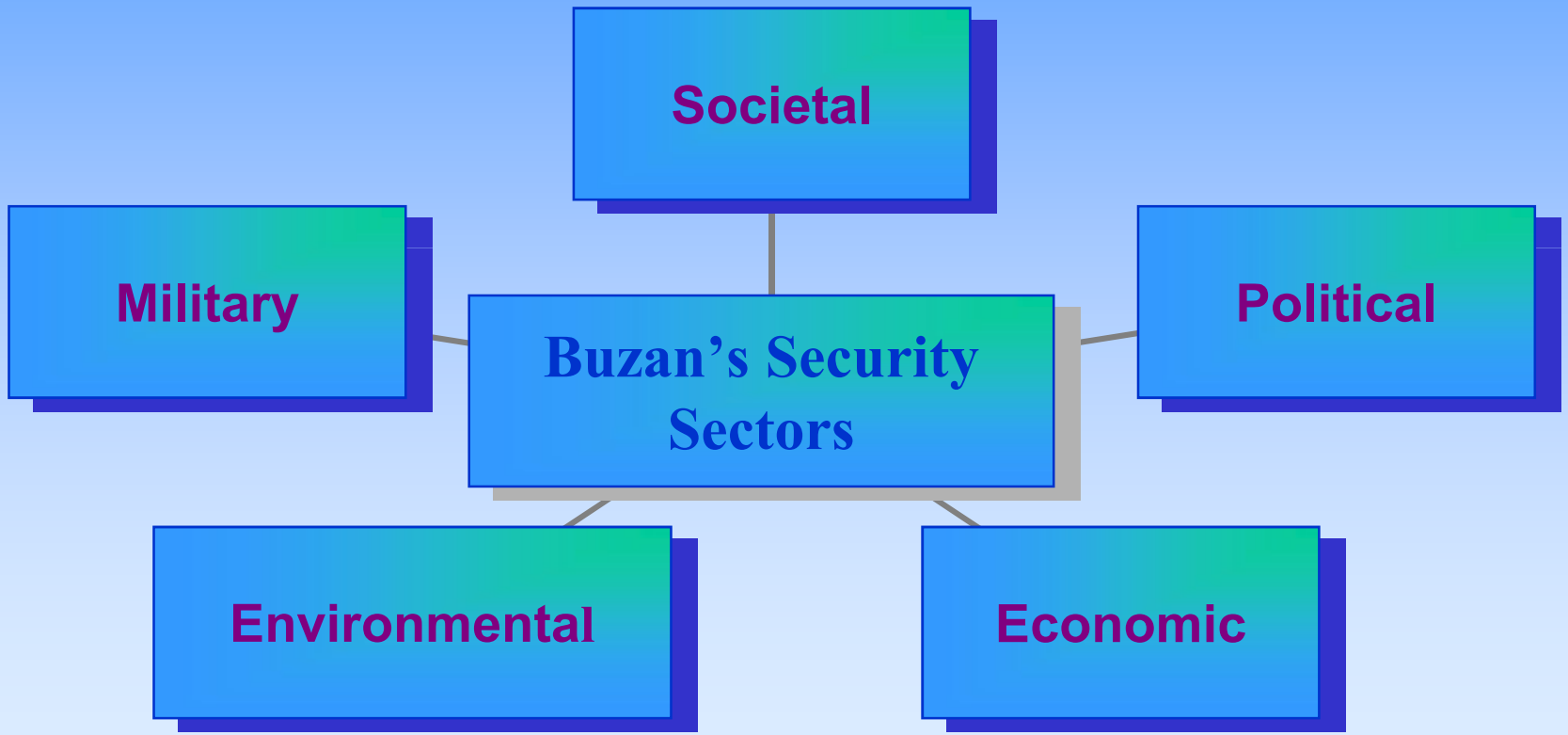
Copenhagen Distinctions

Security: A New Framework for Analysis:



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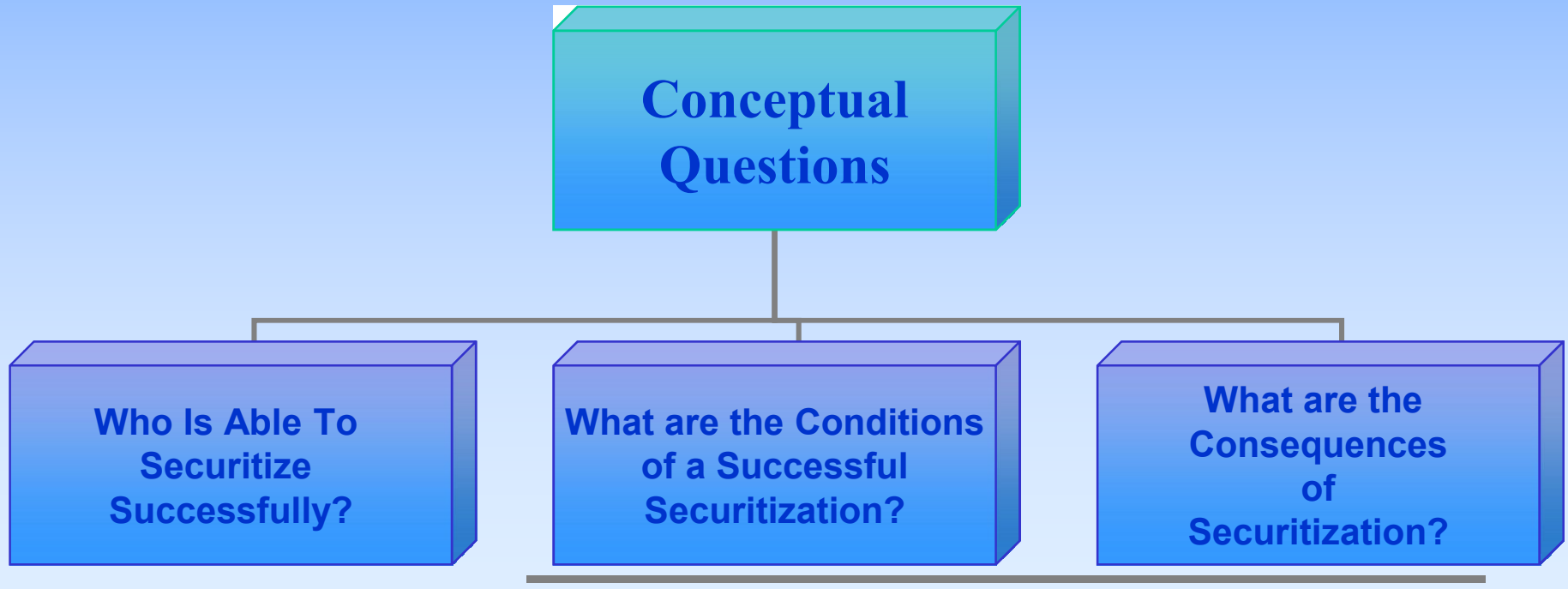
Copenhagen Distinctions

Security: A New Framework for Analysis:

Ole Waever and securitization: security is a "speech-act" a concrete action by virtue of being said



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Copenhagen Distinctions

Epistemological Incoherence?

❖**The Copenhagen School**

Resolves its incoherence by arguing social production of security is sufficiently stable to be treated objectively

❖**Security: A new framework for Analysis**

Seeks to distinguish between its approach and critical security studies, and in doing so tends to produce Critical Security Studies as an emerging 'school'

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Aberystwyth Exclusions

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Aberystwyth Exclusions

Critical Security Studies and World Politics

- The Welsh School argued for a specific critical **theory**

- It is a post-Marxist tradition identified particularly with the Frankfurt School of Critical Theory:

That all knowledge is produced socially, and thus politically

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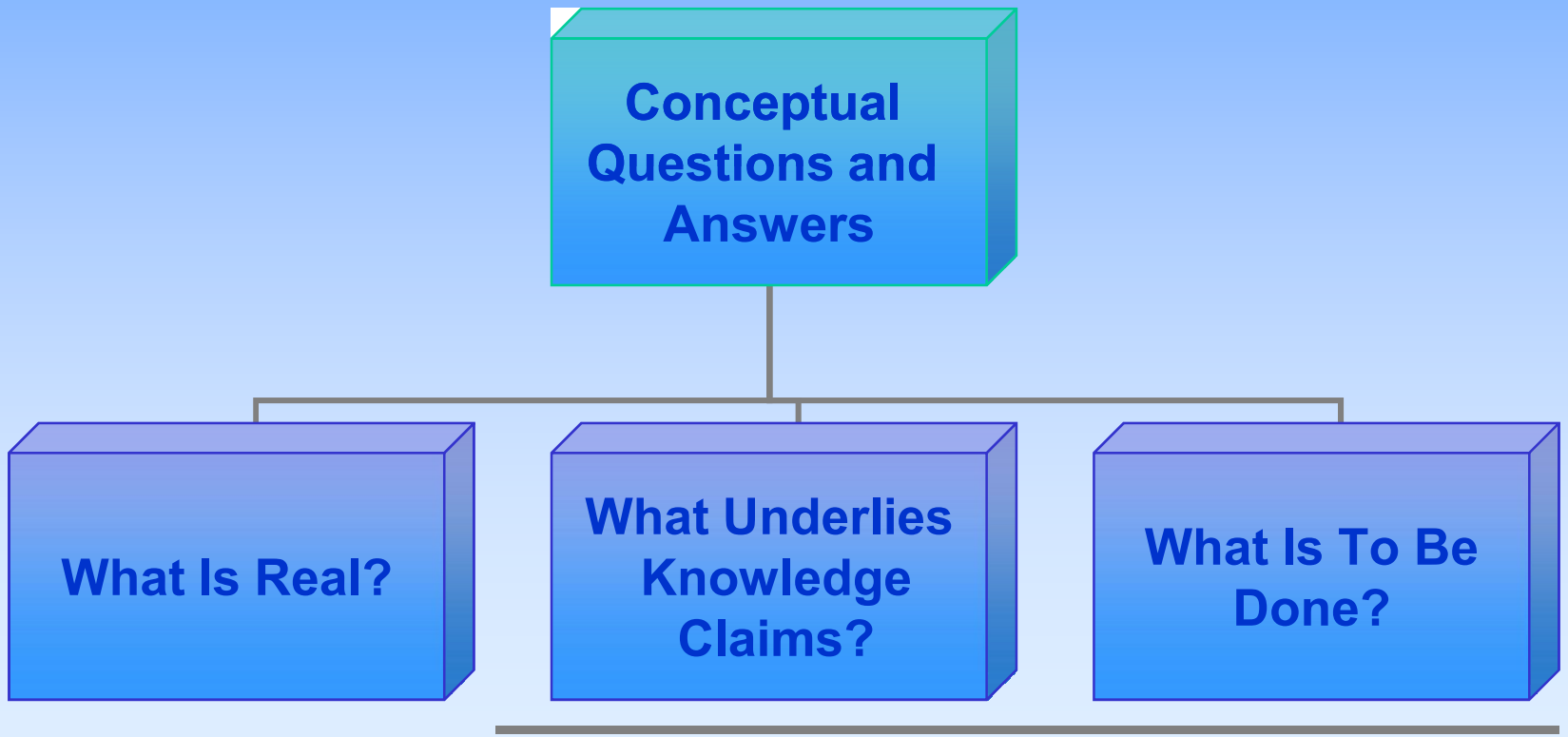
Aberystwyth Exclusions

Critical Theory Tradition



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Aberystwyth Exclusions

Critical Theory Distinctions

- Critical Security Studies should be organised around this critical security theory
- It is distinct from:
  - Feminism,
  - The Copenhagen School,
  - Constructivism
  - Post-structuralism.

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Critical Security Studies

Constructing Security

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Constructing Security

Keith Krause and Critical Security Studies

The Six Claims that tie Critical Security Studies together:

1. Actors are social constructs
2. Actors are constituted through political practices
3. Structures of world politics are socially constructed
4. Knowledge is not objective
5. Natural Sciences require interpretive methods
6. The purpose of theory is contextual understanding

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Critical Security Studies

Everyone's Other

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Post-structuralism and Security

Everyone's Other

Central to the political and critical nature of post-structural writing is the idea of fostering an ethos of critique

These are never finite, never reached, but for which we must constantly strive

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