COCTA NEWS

Purposes

The Committee on Conceptual and Terminological Analysis (COCTA) is an international committee whose members share an interest in the relation between "terms" and "concepts". It is our understanding that a term is simply a word (or expression) used to designate a concept, and a "concept" is a unit of knowledge that can be signified by a term. Many related questions that concern the identification and evaluation of concepts, as such, belong to philosophy, notably to philosophy of science; and other questions that arise from the relation of words to language and to the meanings of words, belong to linguistics and semantics. These concerns, important as they are, do not fall within the focus of COCTA's activities. They have, indeed, received a great deal of systematic attention. The raison d'etre for COCTA arises from the fact that the systematic study of how terms are related to concepts has languished – except in some of the closely related contexts that will be mentioned later.

Why readers of *International Classification* should be interested in these conceptual/terminological problems is readily apparent from the journal's subtitle, for it contains the expressions, "concept theory" and "systematic terminology". Why members of COCTA should find I.C. a congenial journal in which to place their newsletter may not be readily apparent to them. For this reason, consider the fact that the basic element of any "classification" is a "class", and the analogy between classes and concepts is illuminating. Both require definition in order to distinguish, as well as may be possible, between items belonging to the class or concept, and those that do not, and in both cases a term – notation or name – is required in order to designate the concept/class conveniently. Thus the problems of term/concept relations are also central to the field of classification research. The importance of this convergence of interest and focus will become more and more apparent in future issues of this newsletter.

History

COCTA was established a decade ago, during the Congress of the International Political Science Association (IPSA) in Munich, West Germany, August 1970. A history of the committee is given in the Preface to *Tower of Babel: On the Definition and Analysis of Concepts in the Social Sciences* by Giovanni Sartori, Fred W. Riggs, and Henry Teune (Pittsburgh, PA: Univ. of Pittsburgh, Center for International Studies, International Studies Association, Occasional Paper, May 1975). This document remains still the most comprehensive statement of the views of committee leaders.

However, considerable development has occurred also during the second half of the decade of the 1970's. Importantly, COCTA became a research committee of the International Sociological Association (ISA), in addition to its IPSA connection, and it is now also a Standing Committee of the International Social Science Council (ISSC). Three foci of attention have emerged within COCTA that correspond to these three organizational contexts:

1) As a research committee of IPSA, COCTA seeks to advance the understanding of *key terms and concepts used in political science.* Papers on many terms have been presented at congresses of the Association, and more will be given at the next Congress, to be held in Rio de Janeiro, Brazil, from August 11–14, 1982. Members interested in presenting papers under COCTA sponsorship at that time are invited to write the editor of this newsletter.

2) As a research committee of ISA, COCTA will promote the study of *metaconcepts used in the analysis of terms and concepts*, and it will, more specifically, pay attention to the special problems involved in the operationalization of concepts and the measurement of variables. This activity is carried out in cooperation with the ISA's research committee on the Logic and Methodology of Sociology. Professor Henry Teune, University of Pittsburgh, and Dr. Alberto Marradi, University of Catania, Italy, have taken joint responsibility for this activity, organizing a preliminary set of panels during the conference of the American Political Science Association in Washington, D.C. Sept. 1979, at which papers on this theme were presented. The next ISA Congress will be held in Mexico, Aug. 23–28, 1982.

3) As a standing committee of the ISSC, COCTA seeks, necessarily, to serve the interests of the dozen leading international associations of the social sciences. An opportune approach to the solution of this problem arises from the results of the UNESCO-sponsored INTERCONCEPT pilot project, which have demonstrated important new criteria and *guidelines for the construction of subject field glossaries.* The preparation of such glossaries, by specialists in any subject field of the social sciences, will facilitate the writing of research reports in which unambiguous identification of key concepts is of critical importance. The complementarity of the COCTA-sponsored approach to the design of glossaries with the different, but also necessary, principles that govern the design of standardized vocabularies, based on principles (following, not preceding, the writing of texts) and the design of standargized vocabularies, based on principles of terminology, will be made evident to specialists in the social sciences who have, hitherto, followed the inappropriate design features of works having different objectives: notably dictionaries, thesauri, and standards. Nevertheless, it is important for social scientists to learn from information scientists, and for this reason the Bielefeld conference –announced below–has been designed so as to afford ample opportunity for social and information scientists to enter into a more fruitful dialog.

Unesco Meeting on an Integrated Social Science Thesaurus

COCTA members will learn more about the potential utility to social scientists of activities rooted in the information sciences when the program recommended in Paris (9–11 June, 1980) by Unesco's consultative meeting on "The Establishment of an Integrated Thesaurus of the Social Sciences" has been implemented. This meet-

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ing, which was organized by Unesco's Division for the International Development of Social Sciences, was called in response to recommendations that had been made during the past six years by several Unesco-sponsored conferences and committees, including the Ad Hoc Committee for the Interconcept pilot project.

The long-term objective recommended by the consultative meeting calls for the creation of a "general integrated thesaurus for the social sciences". Such a thesaurus would identify, so far as possible, all fields of knowledge in the social sciences, and would permit the linkage (both by manual and computerized services) of the diverse and often incompatible information languages now used in different disciplines and subject fields of the social sciences. A descriptor bank, containing terms drawn from different thesauri, will be established as a working tool. In order to pave the way for successful accomplishment of this long-term objective, a number of specific projects to be carried out during the next three years were recommended.

These projects include the following:

1. A *bibliography* of social science dictionaries, thesauri, and special classification systems, based on materials collected by Mrs. M. Krommer-Benz, Infoterm, Vienna, will be selectively distributed in provisional draft and, eventually, published for wider distribution.

2. A set of *guidelines* will be prepared for use in the development of compatibility matrices between different social science thesauri and classification systems.

3. *Preliminary tests* will be carried out using data on selected social science themes taken from several such thesauri and classification systems.

4. A *feasibility study* and pilot project for the descriptor bank will be carried out.

5. The COCTA-sponsored *Bielefeld conference* (May 1981) will provide an opportunity for reports on the first cycle of projects to be reported and discussed.

6. In the following year a *descriptor bank* will be launched, containing in machine-readable form the terms used in a number of existing social science thesauri, so organized that information can be supplied about the source of terms, their equivalents in different languages, the hierarchical and other relations of each term, and whatever scope notes or definitions may be available for each. The descriptor bank will not only facilitate the preparation of a new integrated thesaurus, but it will also support several other related and special applications.

7. Special emphasis is to be placed on the mobilization of organized *user groups* – notably through the research committees of international professional associations in the social sciences – so as to elicit their suggestions for further revision of the new integrated thesaurus and its associated descriptor bank, and also to enable them to make effective use of these new tools for conceptual and terminological purposes.

Participants in the Paris consultative meeting included I. Dahlberg and F. Riggs – who were elected to serve as chairman and rapporteur, respectively – plus M. Krommer-Benz, J. Meyriat, J. C. Sager, J. Viet, and M. Palnicov. Ms. M. Grawitz participated as an observer for the ISSC, and K. Plötz of the D.R.G. also attended. Unesco secretariat members in attendance included P. Lengyel, J. Litoukhin, and E. Ronquillo from the Social Science Sector, and P. Vásárhelyi from the General Information Programme.

Working papers prepared for the meeting by J. Litoukhin, and J. Meyriat, and I. Dahlberg, are reproduced in this issue of *IC*.

Related Events

COCTA News is open to reports of meetings and other activities relevant to its concerns.

1. The *World Forum of International/Transnational Associations* meeting in Brussels, Belgium, from 23 to 27 June, 1980, sponsored a Commission (one of four that constituted its main program) on the theme, "International and Transnational Language and its Associative Significance". This Commission, chaired by Prof. H. Arntz, FID-president, received papers by COCTA members I. Dahlberg, H. Felber, and F. Riggs. The paper by Dahlberg was entitled, "Concepts, Definitions, Classification Systems: A New Approach". Felber's contribution was entitled, "A Plan for Improving the Terminological Situation for International Intercommunication", and a paper by Riggs, entitled "Technical Jargon and Ordinary Language", was juxtaposed with a discussion of four semantic modes designed to facilitate transnational communication, making use of material contained in his essay, "The Design of Glossaries". (This paper, which was prepared by Riggs as a supplement to his report for Unesco on the INTERCONCEPT pilot project, is available, on request, to COCTA members).

H. Arntz opened the sessions of Commission III by presenting a paper on "Information, Communication, Language: The Origins", and A. J. N. Judge presented a long essay entitled "Tensing Associative Networks to Contain the Fragmentation and Erosion of Collective Memory". Copies of these papers are all available from their authors.

2. Preceding the World Forum, the *"Second World Symposium on International Documentation"* was held in Brussels (20–22 June, 1980) under the sponsorship of the UN Institute for Training and Research (UNITAR) and the Association of International Libraries (AIL). In Panel III of this Symposium, entitled the "Utilization of International Documents, papers were also presented by A. J. Judge (as rapporteur), and by F. W. Riggs. Their presentations related, respectively, to "social memory and innovative learning", and to the preparation of "subject field glossaries".

3. Concurrently with the International Symposium, the First World Congress of the *International Voluntary Action and Research Organization* (IVAR) was held in Brussels. A panel presentation on "Problems in Voluntary Action Terminology", chaired by David Horton Smith, executive secretary of IVAR, and Dan Bernfeld, University of Strasbourg, focussed attention on the key words, in several languages, used in research on voluntary action. Fred Riggs, as an invited guest, explained the approach taken in COCTA to the preparation of Glossaries, leading to an animated and fruitful discussion. Other active participants in this debate were Victor Pestoff, University of Stockholm, and David Yeldin, Open University, England.

4. While he was in Paris attending the Unesco meeting, Fred Riggs called on Charles Kecskemeti, executive secretary of the *International Council of Archives*. The

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ICA is sponsoring, under contract with Unesco, the preparation of a glossary of archival terms, now in its third revision. A working group engaged in the work of revision was actually at ICA headquarters during the time of Riggs' visit. Both Mr. Kecskemeti and members of the working group displayed a lively interest in the approach to glossary design that has emerged from the INTERCONCEPT pilot project, and would like to take part in the Bielefeld conference next year.

5. *Moscow symposium*, "Theoretical and Methodological Problems of Terminology", was held 27–30 November 1979. Papers and discussion relevant to the interests of COCTA members are reported in the INFOTERM Newsletter # 16, reproduced in I.C. 7 (1980) 1, pp. 29–32.

Conference on Conceptual and Terminological Analysis Announced

A special conference will be held in Bielefeld, West Germany, from 25–27 May, 1981, with the following objectives:

a) to establish a dialog between social and information scientists on their shared conceptual and terminological concerns;

b) to bring into this dialog concerned scholars of the third world;

c) to utilize for this purpose the relevant findings of several UNESCO-sponsored programs, notably the "INTERCONCEPT" pilot project; and

d) to pave the way for launching terminology banks and glossaries in the social sciences.

Sponsors of the conference include the International Social Science Council's Committee on Conceptual and Terminological Analysis (ISSC/COCTA) the German UNESCO Commission, the Deutsche Gesellschaft für Dokumentation e.V., the Gesellschaft für Klassifikation e.V., the Informationszentrum Sozialwissenschaften, Bonn; and the FID Committees for Classification Research and for Social Sciences.

The conference organization includes the presentation of six theme papers during morning plenary sessions on a) the theory of concept analysis; b) the evaluation of descriptor languages and c) the establishment of glossaries and the use of term banks. Working groups, during afternoon sessions, will discuss theme papers and consider addtional documentation supplied by participants. The third day is reserved for the evaluation of working group findings and for special interest meetings.

A pre-conference seminar will take place on May 24 in order to supply participants from third world countries with information about relevant activities and resources generated through COCTA and UNESCO projects, and to clarify the special problems faced by scholars in these countries as they seek to identify concepts and terms that are more suitable for use in their own countries and languages than are many importations from Western societies.

Interested persons are invited to write for additional information to the Conference co-chairmen, Ingetraut Dahlberg, Woogstr. 36a, D–6000 Frankfurt 50, and Fred W. Riggs Department of Political Science, University of Hawaii at Manoa, Honolulu, Hi. 96822, USA.

The opportunity still exists for additional papers to be included in the conference program. Abstracts should be sent to both co-chairmen.

Further details about plans for Bielefeld will be found elsewhere in this issue of I.C.

COCTA Working Papers

In previous years a number of *working papers* by COCTA members have been distributed through the courtesy of the International Studies Association. Among the authors who have contributed essays in this form are: E. Brent, H. Felber, F. Frey, G. J. Graham, A. Judge, D. G. Hays, M. S. G. Klein (with K. Janda), D. R. Morrison, G. M. Patrick, J. Pool, F. W. Riggs, G. K. Roberts, G. Sartori, P. Zannoni, and A. Zuckerman. (A full list of authors and titles may be obtained from F. Riggs, in Hawaii.) The various approaches and methods used by these authors and the concrete information they supplied did much to stimulate the thinking and interest of COCTA members in conceptual and terminological problems.

Now, with the help of *International Classification*, a new series of COCTA working papers will be launched. Some of these papers may be selected for publication in I.C. itself. As its subtitle shows, this journal is a particularly appropriate place for essays which focus on methodological problems, and on the metaconcepts required for conceptual and terminological analysis. Other papers directed more specifically to particular concepts and terms used in the social sciences ought to be published in the various journals open to specialists in these disciplines.

In either case, *pre-publication drafts* may be freely distributed to COCTA members, with a request that they send their comments and suggestions directly to the author. The procedure to be followed is that authors of manuscripts should send an abstract containing no more than 100 words to the editor of *COCTA News* for inclusion in a forthcoming issue. Accompanying the abstract will be an open invitation to readers to write directly to the author requesting an advance copy of the manuscript. The author will, of course, have the final say on distribution, subject especially to cost limitations that affect the reproduction and dissemination of such materials. It is anticipated that the comments received from interested members will help authors to revise and improve the quality of their work.

The revised copies of working papers will, no doubt, be sent *for publication* to appropriate journals, including *International Classification*. Fred Riggs will act as co-editor for I.C. of this series, and should receive manuscripts proposed for use in this format. Members interested in having their papers considered for publication in I.C. should give careful attention to the special style and length requirements set forth in the "Instructions to Authors".

A new series of "COCTA Papers" will be launched, containing the published essays that have undergone the treatment described above, namely preliminary submission of a working draft for critical review by fellow members, followed by publication in a scholarly journal of the author's choice. Hopefully also members will be able to supply reprints of their published papers, on request, to other COCTA members. By this means inter-

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ested members should be able to secure copies of the essays most likely to be of use to them, and we may continue to operate successfully on the basis of our "no-budget" condition. Needless to say, members whose essays are included in the *COCTA Series* should mention this fact in a footnote of their published text.

Relevant Publications

Future numbers of COCTA News will carry bibliographic information on publications especially relevant to the analysis of key concepts in the social sciences. In addition, the attention of COCTA members is called to the broad coverage of related literature contained in the bibliographical section of *International Classification.* Items especially relevant to COCTA interests are contained under heading numbers 77 (for general problems of terminology) and 78 (special terminology problems).

A few recent papers by COCTA members may be mentioned here. More information can be supplied by their authors.

Guide to Information Resources in Language Planning, Jonathan Pool, Program in Ethnicity and Nationality, University of Washington, Seattle, 98195, U.S.A.

Representation, Comprehension, and Communication of Sets Fundamental to Social Science and Policy Formulation: The Role of Number. Anthony J.N. Judge, Union of International Associations, 1 rue aux Laines, 1000 Brussels, Belgium.

"*The Importance of Concepts:* Some Considerations on How They Might be Designated less Ambiguously", Fred W. Riggs, in *The American Sociologist*, Vol. 14 (Nov. 1979) no. 4, pp. 172–215 (includes comments and a rejoinder by the author).

"Shifting Meanings of the term 'Bureaucracy'" Fred W. Riggs, in *The International Social Science Journal*, Vol. 31 (1979) no. 4, pp. 563–584.

A report by Fred W. Riggs, based on the INTERCONCEPT pilot project, will be published in UNESCO's series, *Reports and Papers in the Social Sciences.* It carries the provisional title: "A New Paradigm for Solving the Terminology Problems of the Social Sciences".

Journals and Newsletters

Serials containing material of special interest to COCTA members will be identified in future issues. Examples now available are:

Language Planning Newsletter, edited by Joan Rubin and Bjorn Jernüdd, is published by the Culture Learning Institute at the East-West Center. News and short articles on language planning are the focus of attention, but occasional notes on term planning and terminological problems appear. Subscriptions are complimentary: Culture Learning Institute, East-West Center, Honolulu, Hawaii 96848, USA.

IASSIST Newsletter is an international publication containing news and substantive articles of interest to persons managing, operating, or using machine-readable data archives, data libraries and data services in the social sciences. One of the IASSIST action groups, reported in this newsletter, is concerned with problems of classification, indexing, and hence terminology, in the use of machine-readable data files. Ms. Sue Dodd, University of North Carolina, chairs the group. Membership and subscriptions are channeled through different regional and national secretariats. In the U.S.: Judith Rowe, Computer Center, Princeton University, 87 Prospect Ave., Princeton, N.M. 09540. She will provide names for anyone writing from outside the U.S.

Organization

From its inception COCTA has been an open membership organization: anyone interested in problems of conceptual and terminological analysis is invited to join. Its governing body is an executive committee whose current members are: George J. Graham, Jr., Anthony Judge, Jan-Erik Lane, Jonathan Pool, Fred W. Riggs, Giovanni Sartori, Gunnar Sjoblom, and Henry Teune. Some members, representing the interests of the International Sociological Association, are elected. Others are coopted. The Committee elects its own chairman.

From its origins in 1970, Professor Giovanni Sartori, then of Florence University, Italy, and currently of Columbia University, New York, served as chairman. On his own request, Sartori gave up the chair in 1979, and Fred Riggs was elected to replace him. It is appropriate here to add a word of warm appreciation and gratitude to Professor Sartori for his leadership and initiative without which the establishment of COCTA could scarcely have been possible. Members value his assurances of continuing interest and involvement in the work of the Committee. Currently he is completing work on a symposium volume of essays by COCTA members dealing with key concepts in political science.

Information about COCTA's activities is supplied, in summary form, through the newsletters of the parent association:

ISA Bulletin. International Sociological Association, B.P. 719, Station A, Montreal, Que. Canada. H3C 2V2.

Participation. International Political Science Association, c/o University of Ottawa. Room 320, Tabaret, Ottawa, K1N 6N5, Canada.

International Social Science Council Newsletter. I.S.S.C., UNESCO, 1, rue Miollis, 75015 Paris, France.

Anyone with access to *International Classification* will, henceforth, be able to secure more complete information about COCTA and its related activities. For those who do not have such access, arrangements are being made – to be announced later – so that reprints of the COCTA newsletter can be distributed independently of the journal.

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