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# Cocta News

This time we report on an interesting paper presented at the COCTA panels at the Annual Meeting of The American Political Science Association in Chicago, September 1-4, 1983. The paper by Janda analyses some aspects of the relationship between theory and data or theoretical concepts and empirical concepts which constitutes an important theme that COCTA will pay attention to in its subsequent work. How are we to understand the interaction between theoretical terms and observational terms?

## **Concepts to Data: The Problem of Political Parties, by Kenneth Janda at Northwestern University.**

This paper describes the crucial concepts-to-data theoretical linkage in a large scale research project comparing political parties across the world. The project covered 158 parties operating during 1950 to 1962 in 53 countries representing all regions of the world. The data sources consisted of more than 60,000 pages of material on party politics in over 3,500 books, articles, newspapers, and other documents. The parties were scored on 111 basic variables subsumed under ten major concepts. This conceptual framework was created in 1969, before a single party was scored on a single variable. It took more than a decade just to complete the data collection. Because the data were generated to fit concepts in a newly-defined conceptual framework, they had to be "made" rather than "collected." This is common for those who seek to do empirical research under a new paradigm.

The dynamic interplay of theory and research is essential to the development of knowledge in all fields. This interplay has been sadly lacking in the study of political parties and their functions in political systems. A quarter century ago, Duverger spoke of the need to break out of the "vicious circle" which required that general theory be based on profound studies of parties but that studies could not be profound without general theory (1961: xiii). Duverger's answer was to sketch out a general theory to guide detailed studies, and his work sparked more than two decades of theoretically oriented inquiries into the formation, organization, and performance of political parties in political systems (Eckstein, 1968: 439).

Despite the outpouring of research, these inquiries have not yielded satisfactory results. Crotty observed, "The investigation of political parties within compatible theoretical frameworks and across cultural lines has not progressed far" (1970: 267), and Mayer deplored the "disparate nature of the questions raised, the lack of comparable units of analysis, the lack of agreement on an appropriate conceptual framework, and a disturbing dissensus on the objects of a study of parties" (1972: 212). More recently, Sartori recounted his frustrations in dealing with the "conceptual morass" which had defeated his attempts at cumulating theory and evidence in the study of parties (1976: x). Maisel and Cooper

later wondered whether the concepts and findings "now available" were not too limited and ambiguous for the development of general theory (1978: 23).

Some would seek to break the vicious circle in parties' research by puncturing it with theory (Lawson, 1976: 237-238), but others would favor hammering it with more and harder data (Crotty, 1970: 290). While both theory and data are needed to improve our understanding of political parties, this paper argues that fruitful interplay between the two is currently retarded more by the lack of good data than by a shortage of intriguing theory. More properly, it is due to the lack of data collected to fit theoretical concepts.

Writing on the critical and early role that data play in theoretical formulation, Singer (1982: 190) contends that "data are made, not born." Singer argues that readily "available" data are often inappropriate to test the theory for which they are used. We must instead "make" certain data that are dictated by our theories. Unfortunately, Singer says, "Of all the skills that go into the growth of social science knowledge, the least developed is that of data generation." (1982: 212).

Data generation often requires concentrated effort as well as intellectual skills. McClelland, who has generated his share of data in international relations, says that specific facts needed to test a theory must often be quarried "by hand out of hard rock" (1972: 36). Those who have labored in theoretically-oriented cross national research projects, especially those involving Third World countries, know the feeling. Typically, more time is spent in data collection than analysis. Deans and research sponsors may become impatient with the lack of substantive results (i.e., publications) when other scholars are creating impressive cross-national data banks with hundreds of variables in far less time. But many of these justifiably impressive data banks are composed of data culled easily from published sources with little attention given to their theoretical relevance.

In the absence of an explicit paradigm to guide data collection, Kuhn notes that all nonirrelevant facts seem equally relevant:

As a result, early fact-gathering is a far more nearly random activity than the one that subsequent scientific development makes familiar. Furthermore, in the absence of a reason for seeking some particular form of more recondite information, early fact-gathering is usually restricted to the wealth of data that lie ready to hand. (1970: 15)

Obtaining the proper data to operationalize and test a complex social theory is often more a matter of creating the data than finding them.

This paper describes the crucial concepts-to-data theoretical linkage in a large scale research project comparing political parties across the world. The International Comparative Political Parties Project was founded in 1967 with support from the National Science Foundation to conduct the first comprehensive, empirically-based analysis of political parties across the world. The ICPP Project studied 158 parties operating during 1950 to 1962 in 53 countries representing all regions of the world. The parties were scored on over 100 variables in a conceptual framework that was developed before any data were collected. The information to code the parties came from thousands of pages of library material stored

in a microfilm and computer information retrieval system (Janda, 1982). It took more than a decade just to complete the data collection, validate the conceptual framework, and prepare the data file for deposit in the Inter-University Consortium (Janda, 1979). Truly, the project "made" more data on parties than it "found."

The scope and complexity of the ICPP Project make it difficult to summarize. It is described at length in the first 175 pages of *Political Parties: A Cross-National Survey* (Janda, 1980), a 1,000 page volume that reports the basic data. The discussion below tries only to convey an understanding of the research and resulting data base while skirting unnecessary detail.

A "political party" was defined in the ICPP Project as "an organization that pursues a goal of placing its avowed representatives in government positions". This definition was designed to accommodate diversity among entities called "political parties" across political cultures. The term "placing" was interpreted broadly to mean "through the electoral process" (when a party competed with one or more others in pursuing its goal), or "by internal selection" (when a ruling party permitted no electoral competition) or "by forceful imposition" (when a party aimed at subverting the system and capturing the government).

To insure a broad selection of parties across the world, a stratified sampling procedure was used. First, all countries with functioning parties of some durability were identified and classified into one of ten cultural-geographic "regions" – namely the "Anglo-American" area, West Central Europe, Scandinavia and the "Benelux" nations, South America, Central America, Asia and the Far East, Eastern Europe, Middle East and North Africa, West Africa, and Central and East Africa. From each of these ten areas, five countries were selected at random, producing a set of fifty countries representing all ten regions. Three countries which were not drawn by this random sampling procedure (U.S., U.K., and Canada) were added subsequently due to their special appeal.

The party situation in each of these 53 countries was surveyed from 1950 to 1962. All organizations that met the conceptual definition of a "political party" were required to meet certain minimum levels of strength and stability before inclusion in the study. "Legal" parties had to win at least 5 percent of the seats in the lower house of the national legislature in two elections during the period, while "illegal" parties required evidence of support by at least 10 percent of the population over five years. These criteria yielded a set of 158 parties which differed greatly in their characteristics and political roles.

To capture some measure of changes in parties over the period from 1950 to 1962, each party was scored separately (whenever possible) for its characteristics in the first part of the period (1950 to 1956) and in the second part (1957–1962). Because not all parties existed in both parts and not all variables were scored separately, some complexities arise in the numbers of cases in the data base. Briefly, the cases distribute as follows: 158 parties met qualifications for study sometime during the overall time period, but only 135 parties existed in 1950–1956 and 147 were in 1957–1962. Because the parties were scored separately for the first and second parts of the period, they can be treated as a

combined sample of 282 parties for assessing the success of the data collection (discussed below).

Because the sample is representative, it is heterogeneous. Not only do the parties range across ideologies and represent extremes in organizational characteristics, but they also differ dramatically in their orientations toward politics and in their cultural settings. One school of thought would argue that such a collection of disparate entities called "parties" is nothing more than a stew of apples and oranges and that little can be expected from any effort at "comparing" the German Social Democratic Party, for example, with the Kabaka Yekka of Uganda or the Paraguayan Liberals. To the contrary, the intellectual impetus behind the ICPP Project is that the enormous diversities among political parties throughout the world can be accommodated within a relatively few major concepts or dimensions of variation. Moreover, diversities within these dimensions conform to patterned relationships, specified in advance, which hold among political parties of all types and across cultural settings.

The conceptual framework of the ICPP Project was based on ten major concepts which subsumed 111 "basic variables" serving as indicators of the concepts. The ten major concepts can be divided into those that pertain to a party's *external relations* with society and those relating to its *internal organization*. They are listed below along with the numbers of indicators subsumed by each:

<i>External Relations</i>	<i>Basic Variables</i>
1. Institutionalization	7
2. Governmental Status	8
3. Social Support	18
4. Issue Orientation	13
5. Goal Orientation	33
6. Autonomy	5
<i>Internal Organization</i>	
7. Degree of Organization	7
8. Centralization of Power	8
9. Coherence	6
10. Involvement	6

Overall, six of the ten clusters of variables performed virtually as expected and two performed mostly as expected. One of the remaining clusters could not be properly validated, and the other simply did not bear out expectations. One might summarize the results in another way. In all, a total of eighteen scales and subscales were formed to tap the concepts in the original conceptual framework. The reliabilities of these scales ranged from .69 to .96 and averaged .82. Scholars who wish to utilize the existing data base prepared by the ICPP Project and deposited with the Consortium should find it helpful to know that the basic variables in the data base do tend to interrelate as originally conceptualized. These scales can be used to measure such concepts as party institutionalization, governmental status, social diversity, issue orientation, goal orientation, degree of organization, centralization of power, coherence, and involvement.

These concepts and supporting data have been used in a variety of theoretical studies. Most recently, the data have been used by Harmel (1981) to assess the effects of environment on party centralization; by Harmel and Janda (1982) to probe the limits to party reform imposed by the environment; and by Janda and Gillies

(1983) to analyze parties by world regions. Of course, those who operate with alternative conceptual frameworks may use the basic variables in other ways according to their own theoretical expectations. This is true of the book by Katz (1980), who tested his theory about the effect of electoral systems on parties' issue positions, factionalism, and cohesion. However, the data cannot be removed far from their conceptual underpinnings without decreasing their utility for theoretical research.

*Concluding Remarks.* Those interested in the Janda argument may write to him at his address: Department of Political Science, Northwestern University, Evanston 60201 Scott Hall, Sheridan Road, USA, in order to receive a complete version of the paper presented here including the references made in the statement.

Jan Eric Lane  
Secretary of COCTA

Department of Political Science  
University of Umea, S-90187 Umea, Sweden

### International Political Science Association (IPSA)

Two regular COCTA-sponsored panels at the IPSA Congress to be held in Paris, 16-20 July 1985 will include papers on the interaction between theory and concepts, organized by *Judith Gillespie*, as a follow-up to presentations made during the forthcoming APSA conference in Washington, DC - as announced in *Int. Classif.* 1984, No.1, p.40. A third panel, co-sponsored by COCTA and the IPSA research committee on Ethnicity and Politics, will have "Concepts of Ethnicity" as its theme. There will also be a COCTA business meeting during the Congress.

### European Symposium

According to plans made by *Alberto Marradi*, Bologna, working with *H. Artus*, Bonn, and *R. Pawson*, Leeds, the "European Symposium on Concept Formation and Measurement" will be held in Rome at the Centro Studi Evoluzione Umana from September 26 to 29, 1984. The person to contact is Professor Alberto Marradi at the Istituto Politico-Amministrativo, Via G. Petroni 33, I-40126 Bologna, Italy. Some 34 scholars are expected to attend: those who are giving papers are listed below. We look forward to a very exciting and fruitful meeting, hopeful also that its proceedings will be published.

The first topic of the symposium will concern "Concept formation and the relationship of concepts to theories" with papers by *H. Artus*, *H. Blaikie*, and *J.-E. Lane*. The second set of papers, by *I. Bynner*, *A. Cicourel*, *J. Morton-Williams*, and *R. Pawson*, will deal with "Concepts, indicators, and operational definitions". Finally, a third set of papers on "Measurement and other code-assigning procedures" will be presented by *J. Kriz*, *A. Marradi* and *L. Van Doorn*.

### Progress on INTERCOCTA

Pursuant to terms of the ISSC contract with UNESCO, six project reports have been completed in accordance with recommendations made at the INTERCOCTA Round Table held in Caracas, Venezuela, June 1983. These reports include: (1) a pilot project by *Fred W. Riggs* to create an INTERCOCTA glossary in the field of ethnicity research; (2) plans for a second pilot project

second pilot project in the field of development studies, in Spanish, under the direction of *Lourdes Yero* at CENDES, Central University of Venezuela; (3) preliminary work by *Henry Teune* on the design of a "key-concept" volume for INTERCOCTA, on the theme of "growth"; (4) a set of guidelines by *Jean Aitchison* on the format and structure of data to be supplied in an INTERCOCTA glossary; (5) a report on problems concerning the classification and definition of concepts, by *Ingetraut Dahlberg*; and (6) a study of technical problems involved in the choice of computer hardware and software for the decentralized preparation of INTERCOCTA glossaries, on microcomputers, by *Linda Smith*.

Additional materials prepared for the first pilot project include an introductory essay by *Riggs* that explains the distinctive features of the onomasiological (concept-definition to terms) format found in each record of an INTERCOCTA glossary, and specifies how they can be used in the environment of a continuously revisable automated data base to support the development and clarification of concepts arising out of research in a subject field like the study of "ethnicity".

A second essay has been prepared by *Eric Casino*, from the Philippines, to explain various perspectives, paradigms and user orientations involved in the study of ethnicity. Both essays are available from *Riggs*, on request. He is also willing to supply interested members with a printout of the text of the glossary which, as of this writing, contains records that define about 250 concepts, drawn from 38 bibliographic sources. The alphabetical index contains some 1150 terms, referring not only to their definitions but also to the records where they are used to define other concepts.

Because continuous interaction with specialists in a subject field is a necessary condition for the fruitful development of an INTERCOCTA glossary, *Riggs* is meeting with members of the IPSA Round Table on Ethnicity in Glasgow, Scotland, on August 15-17, 1984 to explain the pilot project and to elicit their continuing involvement in the exercise. Detailed plans will also be made then for the joint panel on "Concepts of Ethnicity" at the Paris Congress next year. Plans for follow-up activities will be announced in future issues of *COCTA News*.

The basic underlying rationale and motivation for the INTERCOCTA project is explained in a new paper by *Riggs*, entitled "The Interdisciplinary Tower of Babel", prepared for a symposium edited by *Mattei Dogan*, entitled "Progress at the Borders of the Social Sciences". Copies are available from *Riggs*, on request.

### COCTA Business

A ballot will be sent to all COCTA members during the Fall of 1984 to enable them to vote for BOARD members, and also to vote on the draft of a Charter which spells out concretely the informal rules that have evolved from experience since COCTA was formed in Munich in 1970. Subsequently the Board will elect its new officers. A report on past accomplishments and future plans will be presented at the COCTA business meeting to be held during the IPSA Congress in Paris.

*Fred W. Riggs*, COCTA President