
Cocta News

Editor: Jan-Erik Lane, Umea, Sweden

IPSA & ISA Congresses

The programs for the major social science events for the year – the IPSA and ISA world congresses – are now final. COCTA will feature two panels at IPSA in Rio and four panels at ISA in Mexico. In addition there will be opportunities at both congresses to discuss and develop ongoing projects as e.g. the Intercoccta project. George Graham has compiled the program for IPSA, whereas Henry Teune and Alberto Marradi have put together no less than four panels for ISA.

Organization

The increased complexity of COCTA activities dictates a more elaborate structure, which we are beginning to build as follows: George Graham has taken responsibility for liaison with IPSA, Henry Teune, with a major assist from Alberto Marradi handles our contacts with ISA Congress in Mexico City. Marradi's efforts at Mexico City put us into a jointly sponsored panel with the ISA Research Committee on Methodology.

Riggs is taking responsibility for our activities under ISSC sponsorship. We are receiving a contract from UNESCO to prepare working papers for a Round Table on the "INTERCOCTA" activity. We are also seeking other UNESCO funding. We have taken the important step of starting to collect \$ 5 annual dues for membership (an additional \$ 5 for those who want reprints of the *News*). Those who subscribe to *International Classification*, or get their libraries to subscribe, will receive, in addition to the *News*, an increasing flow of information and articles on matters related to conceptual and terminological analysis. We have coopted Kenneth Janda of Northwestern University to help us with two important projects. Lane and Janda are working together on plans for a membership directory that would be computerized and analyzed to show diverse skills and interests of our members. Janda is also computerizing an extensive bibliography of articles and other publications on selected concepts. We plan to make this bibliography available to members who would like to update it with respect to a selected concept (or term), for eventual publication. The ISSC has promised us an allotment of \$ 500 for this purpose.

Political Sociology Concept Formation

Political sociology discourse is inferential; it speaks about entities the manifestations of which are only visible: political stability, party system, authority, participation and representation structures etc. It is generally agreed that these phenomena are to be pinned down by means of indices or indicators, through which data may be assembled. The basic problem is that it is not at all clear

how concepts should be linked up with indices. Political sociology concepts for some reason appear to be elusive, which makes the choice of a set of indices all but determinate. Indices are not there to be found, they have to be invented. Basic to deliberations about the construction of indices is theoretical ideas about the entity to be analyzed. If this entity is difficult to catch in a concept there will be difficulties and disagreement about what indicators should be employed, i.e. what data is relevant. If the concepts are ambiguous, the choice of indicators is indeterminate; if the choice of indices is an open one, a variety of different concepts may result. This COCTA project will take a close look at the concept – indicator problem in political sociology focussing on some key concepts and discussing various solution alternatives. More specifically, it will focus on the tendency towards *theoretical overdefinition* and *empirical underdefinition* of political sociology concepts.

Pacific Science Notice

The 15th Congress of the Pacific Science Association will be held in Dunedin at the University of Otago, New Zealand from the 1st to the 11th of February, 1983. The theme will be: "Conservation, Development and Utilization of the Resources of the Pacific". This theme will be introduced in four interdisciplinary symposia, and will be further developed in the programmes arranged by the fourteen Scientific Committees of the Association. Dr. Michael L. Forman, Linguistics Department, University of Hawaii, and Dr. Björn H. Jernudd, Culture Learning Institute, East-West Center, have accepted the task of organizing discussion under Section N, *Science Communication and Education*, on a language topic. They have chosen to focus their session's topic on *development, standardization and intertranslatability of names of fish in the Pacific*. They invite your participation, the participation of members of your organization, or of your colleagues wherever they may be, in discussing this topic at the Pacific Science Congress. For information write to: Björn Jernudd, East-West Center, Culture Learning Institute, Honolulu, Hawaii 96848, USA.

New Publications

Hogeweg-de-Haart, H.P.: *Characteristics of Social Science Information; a selected review of the literature*. Budapest: FID/SD 1981. 82p., 64 refs. = FID Studies in Social Science Information and Documentation 1. FID Publ. 606. hfl 25.– (available from FID, P.O. Box 90402, NL-2500 LK, The Hague, Netherlands).

CONTA Conference Proceedings

In a few weeks time the CONTA Conference Proceedings will be available at the INDEKS Verlag, Frankfurt. Please, see the announcement on p. 104 of this issue.

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