
COCTA NEWS

This year COCTA arranges a number of panels at the World Congress of the International Sociological Association at New Delhi in August 18–22 1986. For further information contact Professor Alberto Marradi at the University of Bologna, Via G. Petroni 33 in Italy (40126 Bologna). The following is an excerpt of the First INTERCOCTA Newsletter launched in Oct. 1985 to inform on further thoughts and activities concerning the glossary on Ethnicity Research (by F.W. Riggs).

1. Interaction

The INTERCOCTA process will, indeed, become a “process” only to the degree that participants in its network of correspondents exchange views and join in the further development of our conceptual glossary. At present the only vehicle open to us to carry on our interaction is this “newsletter” and the exchange of correspondence – eventually, we hope, electronic mail and computer conferencing, to say nothing about actually getting together at meetings, will become more feasible.

To call this a “newsletter” may be a *misnomer*. Certainly we will undertake to supply relevant news, but this will constitute only a small part of our offerings. Basically, we want this vehicle to support a continuing and lively exchange of views about the use and development of concepts and terms relevant to research on ethnic phenomena and to the theories tested in this research. To illustrate, concretely, most of this first issue is devoted to extracts from letters received and comments on them.

Please continue this dialogue by *sending the editor* comments based on problems encountered in your own work. You may also, of course, respond to points made in the letters quoted here as well as to the comments made on them. Please also share problems that come up in the use of the Glossary. To help us promote the INTERCOCTA process, we need positive statements about your good experiences as well as the negative ones about difficulties you may experience.

It would be helpful if you could separate your personal remarks to me, and the ideas you would like to share with others in the network. Put the latter in a memo addressed “To Participants” and send it to me with a cover note. To help others place your remarks in context, please give adequate references, both to points in this newsletter and to records in the Glossary.

A Better Name. To set the stage for our interaction, I think we need a better name for our vehicle than “Newsletter” – after all, the “news” will be only a small part of its contents. Please help by suggesting a more suitable name – this is itself an onomasiological process, as is the whole INTERCOCTA enterprise. Some ideas that have occurred to the editor include such words as “symposium,” “intercommunication,” “intercom,” “com-

munique,” “nexus,” or “modem.” The point is that we need a name that suggests a medium for the interchange of ideas among participants in a network. What shall we call it? How about a “prize”: a free copy of the Glossary for the winning suggestion?

To facilitate direct *correspondence between participants*, their names and addresses are given in Annex 3, (Their names are also listed on pages xxviii–iv in the Glossary) All who receive this “newsletter” (intercom, nexus, modem?) are, indeed, urged to correspond directly with anyone else in the network. Our goal is to reach such a representative cross-section of scholars doing research on problems relating to ethnicity that everyone working in this subject field will not only feel comfortable when using the Glossary but will also want to contribute to its further growth.

Help. In addition to substantive comments on ethnic concepts and terms, please help us enhance the other features: news, bibliographic references (especially to your own work, calling attention to any concepts or terms discussed in it) organizational and procedural proposals – indeed, anything that you think might interest other participants in our network. This cannot be a “one-man” job: it will only succeed to the degree that it becomes truly a collective enterprise.

2. News

Panel. 32 scholars from 12 countries participated on July 19, 1985 in an open forum discussion of the INTERCOCTA Glossary for Ethnicity Research, during the recent Political Science Congress in Paris. Many helpful suggestions were offered by participants, all of whom showed genuine interest in the prospects and utility of the project. This “newsletter” will be sent to them with an invitation to become participants. Their names and addresses are given in Annex 4.

This panel was jointly sponsored by COCTA, as a Standing Committee of the International Social Science Council (and as a Research Committee of the International Political Science Association), and also by the Research Committee on Politics and Ethnicity of IPSA. *Dennis Thompson*, secretary/treasurer of the latter committee helped to organize the panel and served as its co-chair.

Although most of the participants were political scientists, as one might expect at a disciplinary congress, a significant number of participants represented other disciplines, notably anthropology, sociology and history. One journal editor came: *Thomas Spira*, of the CANADIAN REVIEW OF STUDIES IN NATIONALISM. His enthusiastic support for our enterprise is most helpful and encouraging. At his request, I prepared an essay, “What is Ethnic? What is Nationalism? Let’s turn the Tables.” It will be published in a future issue. Meanwhile, copies of the pre-print draft are available and will be sent on request.

In addition to this special joint panel, the Research Committee on Politics and Ethnicity held several lively sessions during which a number of conceptual and terminological problems were discussed. Any participant in the INTERCOCTA network who wishes to join the

Politics and Ethnicity Committee is invited to do so, and should send an inquiry to Professor *Dennis Thompson*, Political Science Department, Brigham Young University, Provo, Utah 84602, U.S.A.

Vienna Centre. A conference on ethnicity will take place in the Soviet Union early in 1986. It is being planned by the Vienna Centre of the International Social Science Council. Professor *E. Gellner* of the London School of Economics and Politics will chair the meeting, at which invited participants will present papers on selected topics relevant to research on ethnicity.

According to a preliminary memo, the theme of ethnicity is particularly suitable for an East/West conference because the concepts, methods and conclusions of scholars working in these contexts have often been quite different from each other. As an example, the memo states that "a great deal of work has been carried out in Soviet anthropology on ethnogenesis, which is rare enough in the West to be considered almost as a Soviet speciality." (Two senses of ethnogenesis are distinguished in the Glossary in records [HO1] and [TA1]) "In the West," the memo continues, "there has been a great deal of research on labour migrants and on the new regional nationalisms, some of which have only emerged in recent decades."

It is anticipated that the INTERCOCTA project will be presented and discussed at this conference where it should facilitate improved communication of research findings across ideological and cultural barriers. Currently the development of a parallel Russian-language glossary for research on ethnicity (and nationalism), based on the INTERCOCTA model, will be planned. It is expected that this project will be carried out in the Institute of Ethnography of the Soviet Academy of Sciences, with the technical assistance of INION, the Academy's Institute for Scientific Information in the Social Sciences.

COCTA Subcommittee. During its meeting in Paris the COCTA Board approved recognition of a new subcommittee for the INTERCOCTA process, giving priority to the pilot project for a glossary in the field of ethnicity research. Members of the subcommittee include information as well as social scientists, from the Third World, as well as from Eastern and Western countries. Support for the parallel glossary in Russian was approved, under a contract with the International Social Science Council, subject to the availability of funding from UNESCO.

Dr. *N. Guboglo* from the Soviet Institute of Ethnography attended the planning committee meeting, and also the joint panel discussed above. He will be working with his colleague, Dr. *T. Tabolina*, who is expected to carry primary responsibility for work on the new glossary. As this project takes shape, readers of this newsletter will be kept informed. Any participants who read the Russian language are urged to identify themselves to the editor.

A Challenge. One methodological point that came up during this meeting deserves the attention and reactions of participants in our network. *Jan-Erik Lane*, from the University of Umeå in Sweden – he is the new President of COCTA – said that he found the formal structure of

the Glossary's data base rather rigid and not sufficiently "user-friendly." By contrast, he said, he could more easily use and enjoy the introductory essay by Dr. *Eric Casiño*. He and other participants in the meeting urged the editor to find ways to enhance the readability of the main text, and to point out the more important conceptual and terminological problems that it raised.

COMMENT: To some degree, of course, the correspondence and comments offered in this Newsletter should offer a "user-friendly" commentary on concepts and terms found in the glossary. In fact, we could index the newsletter in parallel with the glossary so as to facilitate its use as a supplementary reference tool.

3. Correspondence

Letters from participants in our network may contain suggestions for new concepts and/or terms to be added to our data base. Such suggestions are, indeed, most welcome and they will be acted on. However, a question of principle needs to be considered and your reactions are invited.

Up to now, we have sought to enter only concepts that could be justified by reference to a paper or document in which they had been used – exceptionally we entered other concept definitions that seemed to be called for by the logic of others already recorded. Should we now expand our criteria for entering concepts by relying also on proposals offered in letters – especially letters from members of our network of correspondents?

This practice will raise some questions. Users will sometimes want to investigate the theory or research relevant context of a concept by looking up its cited source. When that source cannot readily be found they will, of course, be frustrated. We intend to initiate a service that will make available microfiche copies of the unpublished cited papers. If we extended that service to include letters, of course, we could make them available to any user of the glossary. If we reproduced the letters – or portions of them – in this newsletter, then they could also be made more generally available in the future by offering to sell microfiche copies of the newsletter.

Sometimes letters just contain proposed concepts and terms without any real evidence of how they have been used. Ideally, the letter-writer will forward a marked copy of a paper or published document in which each recommended concept and term is employed. We simply do not have the resources to do a library search for citations that are not supported in this way. Should we therefore make a rule to exclude from the data base any records that cannot be justified by a text (using "text" to include any professional paper or published document, while excluding letters)?

Please help us decide how to proceed. Think about these issues while reading the letters and comments that follow, and send in your comments.

For further information about how to participate in the INTERCOCTA process please contact Professor Fred W. Riggs at the Political Science Department at the University of Hawaii at Manoa (2424 Maile Way, Hawaii 96822).

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