

Dear Prof. Roberts:

Someone asked me the other day whether I was still coming to the Hungarian seminar, so I thought I should send you a belated notice of the fact that I can't come, since I'm not even getting done all the other things I am supposed to be doing.

I thought you might be interested in a note which I originally wrote some time ago after reading the Kozcauer and Berkman study, on their notion that studies of public opinion and behavior should be somehow related to analyses of institutional systems. I don't know if it has any great relevance to the Hungarian situation since that has now been resolved by sheer violence.

*Allen Barton*

Allen H. Barton  
Bureau of Applied Social Research

The Use of Qualitative Models of the Political-Economic System  
in Analyzing Opinion Data from Satellite Countries

In their study Satellite Mentality, Kracauer and Berkman write that their aim is "not only to present existing modes of thought and behavior but to relate them to the general state of affairs in these countries." They want to relate individual opinion and behavior data to institutional description and analysis - two areas which have heretofore been largely separate in the literature.

This suggests a general methodological principle: that in designing a questionnaire or in analyzing interview data it is useful to have some "model" of the institutional system under which the people live, which will suggest which kinds of mass opinion and behavior are important to the system, and which aspects of the system are important to mass opinion and behavior. Likewise analysts of the institutional system should work out a more specific "model" of what public opinion and behavior are important to their problems than has been customary (witness the stereotyped phrases about "how "public opinion generally supported" or "reacted strongly against" certain measures found in institutional descriptions.)

An examination of Satellite Mentality discloses the following variables on the level of individual attitudes and behavior:

INDIVIDUAL-LEVEL VARIABLES IN SATELLITE SYSTEMS

A. Economic

1. General economic satisfaction or dissatisfaction
2. Actual level of consumption
3. Individual consumption aspirations
4. Identification with long-range economic program of government  
(investment program, nationalization program, "socialism")
5. Work pressures on the individual (norms, quotas)
6. Economic security or insecurity
7. Opportunities for individual advancement
8. Feelings of identification with others, with working-class

## B. Non-Economic

1. General political satisfaction or dissatisfaction
2. Resentment and insecurity due to secret police terror
3. Resentment at compulsory "political" activities
4. Desire for freedom of personal expression
5. Desire for freedom of political activity and organization
6. Nationalist resentment at Russian domination
7. Religious demands (for religious freedom, for state support of religion)

Related to

~~These variables~~ these individual-level variables are the following

kinds of variables on the level of the political-economic system:

## SYSTEM-LEVEL VARIABLES

### A. Economic

1. Consumer-goods production and imports
2. Rate of investment
3. Labor input, productivity
4. Technological advancement
5. Income-distribution policies
6. Capital-ownership policies
7. Production-management policies (centralization or decentralization, market-oriented or bureaucratic pricing and production decisions, pressures to produce or to restrict production)
8. Government social-welfare expenditures and programs

### B. Non-Economic

1. One-party monopoly on political activities, communications media
2. Leadership-domination within the Communist party
3. Police-terror policies against critics, potential oppositionists
4. Interest-group structure of the potential electorate
5. Religious policy of the government
6. Soviet controls on satellite government

With such a two-level model, we can ask how our information on public attitudes bears on the government's choice of alternative policies. Is it possible for the government to grant the workers the right to run their own trade unions and to strike for higher wages, without destroying the investment ~~exit~~

program of the government? Could the peasants be allowed to form their own political party and elect representatives to parliament, if the government is trying to shift labor from unproductive peasant agriculture into industry? Is it possible to permit the intellectuals to freely discuss government policies, while forbidding them ~~from~~ to publish their ideas; or to permit them to publish without permitting organization of opposition political parties?

The answers to such questions depend in part on certain mass reactions and opinions which occur also in democratic political systems. In some countries with free trade unions there has been a policy of wage restraint (e.g., Sweden, Holland, Norway) while in others there has been continual pressure for inflationary wage increases (Great Britain, the U.S.). In most democratically governed countries the farm population has succeeded in extracting high price supports, tariffs, or subsidies from the government through its farm bloc in the legislature. Whether ending the one-party system and the suppression of free unions and peasant organizations would result in the destruction of the basic "socialist" policy of public ownership of large enterprise, whether it would destroy the policy of rapid industrialization, depends on public-opinion variables and on the characteristics of mass organizations.

In Norway, for example, a very high rate of investment (and corresponding restriction of consumption) was maintained for <sup>now, over</sup> ten years after the war under a popularly elected government with free trade unions. The confidence of the public and especially the working class in this government and its program of economic development was strong enough to permit considerably wage restraint by the union leaders. Whether the investment program was as productive as it should have been, and whether the strict economic controls and high taxes held down productivity, are questions of importance, but apparently they had not become politically serious for the Labor party, which won the 1957 elections handily. Comparative ~~practices~~ per-capita income figures suggest that Norway did as well with its system as Belgium or West Germany with their laissez-faire programs.

(For details on the Norwegian case, see <sup>my</sup> Sociological and Psychological Problems of Economic Planning in Norway, unpublished Ph.D. dissertation, ~~1952~~ Columbia, 1957.)

Could the Polish or Yugoslav governments have followed a similar policy of industrial development under free political institutions? Could they now revert to such a policy? Kracauer and Berkman suggest that there was right after the war a good possibility of getting the public to identify with the economic reconstruction program. However, the fantastic promises made to the public by the Communist party in its efforts to achieve total power, the drastic pressures imposed on the labor force to raise production, the utter deficiency of consumer-goods supplies under their bureaucratically planned economies, and the police-terror tactics used to secure a power-monopoly have completely destroyed the confidence of the mass of the people in the Communist party. Recent events and reports from Eastern Europe suggest that in most of the ~~next~~ satellites a free election would not only reduce the Communist party to a small minority (as it was in all free elections in the power-war period) but ~~would~~ that the party would virtually disappear as an organized movement. A major question is whether these Communist parties can find any policies, <sup>not resulting</sup> ~~which~~ <sup>in</sup> ~~their~~ self-liquidation, which would gradually win over the confidence of a majority of the public; and if not, whether they can maintain their rule in the face of majority opposition without reverting to full totalitarian policies of repression of free discussion and police-terror.

The impact of public reactions on various alternative policies is of course only one factor in the actual decision-making of satellite governments. The values and beliefs of the government-party leaders are of enormous importance, as is the extent of Soviet domination. But the analysis of <sup>totalitarian</sup> elite behavior, and of Soviet policies with respect to nations in their sphere of military control, are much harder to render scientific and systematic than studies of mass behavior. They remain perhaps inherently arbitrary within very broad situational limits.