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Congruence Theory Explained

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The authors of the essays that constitute this book have made a theory I first developed in the 1960s its unifying thread. This theory may be called "congruence theory." It has been elaborated several times, in numerous ways, since its first statement, but has not changed in essentials.[1] I do not want to explain and justify the theory in all its ramifications here; for this, readers can consult the publications cited in the references. I do want to explain it sufficiently to clarify essentials.

The Core of Congruence Theory

Every theory has at its "core" certain fundamental hypotheses. These can be used as if they were "axioms" from which theorems (further hypotheses) may be deduced; the theory may then be tested directly through the axioms or indirectly through the theorems. A good deal of auxiliary theoretical matter is generally associated with the core-hypotheses, usually to make them amenable to appropriate empirical inquiry. These auxiliary matters are subsidiary to the core-postulates of a theory, but they are necessary for doing work with it and generally imply hypotheses themselves.[2]

Congruence theory has such an underlying core, with which a great deal of auxiliary material has become associated; the more important of these auxiliary ideas will be discussed later. The core consists of two hypotheses. The first pertains to the viability and performance of political systems regardless of type. This says that:

Governments perform well to the extent that their authority patterns are congruent with the authority patterns of other units of society.

More specifically, high performance (above a threshold) requires high congruence, and, for all cases, performance increases monotonically as a function of congruence.

The second hypothesis pertains to the viability and performance of democratic governments. This says that:

Democratic governments perform well only if their authority patterns exhibit "balanced disparities"--that is, combinations of democratic and non-democratic traits.

This hypothesis is not separate from the first, but is an extension of it. Congruence remains the fundamental condition of high performance by democratic governments, but the second hypothesis adds that the congruence condition will not be satisfied by democratic governments unless they exhibit such disparities.[3]

Hypothesis 1 and 2 then are general and special versions of the same proposition. In this, hypothesis 2 differs from other hypotheses about the performance of democracies in an important way. Other hypotheses about the performance of democracies cover only democracies, not governments generally. This ignores the fact that democratic governments are also governments in general terms, so that any general theory of governmental performance should hold in them as in other types. However, since democracies are a special type of government,

special conditions of performance should also hold in them; but these should be consistent with, preferably derived from, the more general hypothesis. The fact that the congruence hypothesis connects a theory of democratic performance with a more general theory of governmental performance does not of course make it valid, but it does make it more "powerful" than competing hypotheses, if corroborated. This will especially be so if other well-grounded hypotheses about the performance of democracies can be considered special instances of the general hypothesis. I will try to show later in this essay that they can.

Concepts

It is necessary now to clarify the concepts used in these core hypotheses. In this section, I will only deal with the concepts used in the general hypothesis; those used in he second will be discussed later.

Authority Patterns
The General Nature of Authority Patterns

Patterns of authority are the structures and processes by which social units are directed, or, put otherwise, their structures and processes of governance. Authority relations are the interactions that constitute the patterns.

We tend to think of "government" as pertaining only to the most inclusive level of society, the "State," and to geographic subunits of the State. We extend study of the State to entities that directly affect it, political parties and pressure groups, but mainly in regard to how they affect the State, not as social units that have systems of governance in their own right. Other units of society (e.g., families, schools, workplaces) we tend to ignore or to treat superficially. We do relate general social conditions--like socio-economic stratification, economic development, or literacy-- to government, but not the particular units of society that are not comprised in the State.

This is unfortunate in that it leaves out of study most patterns of governance and most political relationships. Every social unit must be directed and managed in some way. Governance, in that broader sense, is found in political parties, workplaces and businesses, professional societies, trade unions, voluntary associations, community associations, friendly societies, hospitals, churches, sports teams and leagues, schools and universities, teams that produce films or plays, and, not least, families. What mainly distinguishes their governance from that of the State is scale, which may or may not be important. States also differ from other social units in complexity, but even rather small-scale entities, like schools, have structures and processes of direction that are far from simple; and these, as Gurr and I have shown (1975), vary on the same set of dimensions on which States vary. National government also is distinguished by its claim to sovereignty, or ultimate power, over all units of society; but even if this claim could be sustained, it does not mean that the State's authority patterns are constituted differently from others.

"Social units" are, so to speak, collective individuals, not just aggregates of individuals. They have their own identities, separate from the individual identities of members. Their members always, to some extent, define themselves in terms of the units--not only as, say, Americans, but also as Catholics, members of a university faculty, Republicans, and the like. The

units persist despite turnover in their memberships, and they have goals of their own, as well as their own functional differentiation of roles.

To function as entities, social units require governance. This is needed to define the unit's goals and means to attain them; to specify proper conduct in the unit; to "police" the members to assure that propriety and directives are observed; to allocate roles and functions in the units; to coordinate these efficiently; and to relate the unit to others that affect it. The task of direction, in turn, always requires, to some extent, a certain inequality among members: hierarchical arrangements in which some direct, as superordinates, and others are directed, as subordinates. Something like universal and equal participation in governance may have been approached in some utopian communities, but just this fact may explain the characteristically short life-spans of such communities.

Clearly, States and their governments are not the only structures of direction. Societies contain a multitude of social units, all having their own structures and processes of governance. If they did not, the units would be doomed to be chaotic and ultimately extinct.

Dimensions of Authority Patterns

We can argue this point further by showing that the elements of authority patterns are much the same in all social units, regardless of size or function.

Patterns of authority vary on many dimensions and sub-dimensions. Some of these refer to relations among superordinates and subordinates, others to relations among superordinates as decision-makers and traits of the structures in which they operate. "Super-sub" relations obviously are at the core of authority, but authority patterns also vary in regard to relations among "elites" that occur in decision-making processes. These relations may in fact matter more in regard to efficacy than super-sub relations.

In a co-authored book, Ted R. Gurr and I (1975) identified eleven general dimensions on which all authority patterns vary, and divided these further into some forty subdimensions and elements. For comprehensive discussions of these, readers should consult the book, but summary discussions of a couple of the dimensions will illustrate the general nature of what we did. These discussions should help readers to see that authority patterns large and small, "public" or "private" (in the terminology used by Charles Merriam, 1944), are much the same.

Directiveness. An important aspect of any authority pattern is what we call "directiveness," which denotes the extent to which activities in a social unit occur because directives, not the free choice of members. This is plainly a continuum. At one pole it involves total regimentation of the unit's members; at the opposite pole is total permissiveness. These are abstractions to bound a directiveness scale, not conditions that might actually exist.

The degree of overall directiveness is the result of variations on several sub-dimensions that determine it in a "value-added" way. It involves, most basically, the extent to which directives exist that cover activities in a unit in the first place. This, however, never gives a complete description and measure of directiveness. Also important is the extent to which directives allow latitude to subordinates to choose particular actions under them. Latitude results mainly from the vagueness or generality of directives; for instance, the directive that "students should be neat in appearance" allows more choice than "students must wear the school uniform." Also important is the extent to which activities are supervised; loose supervision or none obviously enlarges the extent to which personal choices of action may be pursued with impunity. For the same reason, directiveness also involves what might be called the unit's "sanction

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threshold:" the severity of sanctions used in cases of non-compliance and the thresholds at which they are invoked. Lax sanctions, used only against extreme non-compliance, mitigate directiveness.

The most directive social authority pattern thus is one in which all the activities of subs are covered by highly detailed directives, in which there is close policing (supervision), and in which severe sanctions are used even against mild non-compliance.

To make this concrete: A study by Schonfeld (1976) of authority in French schools found a level of directiveness in elementary schools that would certainly not be approached in their American counterparts. Pupils' time is filled with study requirements defined by detailed national curricula, and these are further detailed by school administrators, senior teachers, and particular instructors. Not only is the work to be done prescribed in great detail, but so is the manner of doing it: the kind of pen to be used, the size of margins on pages, and so on. Proper comportment in class is also prescribed with petty precision. There is also continuous supervision to ensure compliance, and the results of this are reported in weekly written evaluations of the pupil's work and conduct. Sanctions, however, are just "moderately severe" and not invoked against petty misconduct; however, one may suspect that the steady stream of reports leads to sanctions at home that may be more severe than those in schools.

This pattern changes when pupils enter higher grades. At this level detailed coverage decreases. However, says Schonfeld, explicit coverage is largely replaced by implicit coverage-- that is, the internalization of directives by earlier conditioning. This changes the manner in which schools are directive, but not the extent to which they are. We may surmise that directiveness often occurs in this way--by internalization--rather than by explicit command.

High directiveness in the schools, however, does not mean high compliance; the French are not afflicted with what Germans call *Kadavergehorsamkeit.* Pupils frequently respond to high directiveness by rebellious behavior, especially by the *chahut*, an institution intended to cause teachers misery and embarrassment. Schonfeld speculates about the effects of this state of affairs on adult French orientations toward authority, on the plausible assumption that norms and practices of authority in childhood and youth will condition adult orientations.[4] Overall, Schonfeld finds that childhood experiences provide bases for the alternation of authoritarian and liberal-revolutionary traditions which, so it was often argued, characterized French government and politics from Louis XVI to the Fifth Republic.

In my own work on the authority relations of poor people, such as people who live in the inner city or the lower working-class in general, I have found even greater directiveness, including the frequent use of severe sanctions at low levels of non-compliance (1992: ch. 10 and 11). Moreover, authority in the social units of the poor seems to be similar regardless of the unit studied (e.g., families, schools, "street corner" societies), and regardless of the particular society and culture in which they exist. I have argued that this is the result of the very fact of poverty: the frustrations it induces and the adaptations required by having to manage with extreme scarcity. I have also argued that this helps to understand why a measure of "parochialism" (lack of involvement in politics)--most prevalent in lower socio-economic groups--may be a constructive, perhaps even necessary, component of the "civic" culture that seems conducive to stable democracy.

Other general dimensions on which super-sub relations vary are participation, compliance, responsiveness, social distance, and comportment. I will not discuss any of these here, but it should be obvious that there can be more or less participation by subordinates in the direction of social units, more or less responsiveness to participation by superordinates, higher or

lower general levels of compliance with directives, more or less distance in the general social positions of supers and subordinates, and more or less familiarity in their interactions.

Decision-Rules. A critical aspect of superordinate behavior involves the rules that determine when decisions have been taken, and taken properly, so as to be binding. Anyone familiar with the formal decision-rules of national legislatures or constitutions, not to mention their informal norms, will realize that these rules vary greatly. So they do also in other social units.

In general, decision-rules may be distinguished on a dimension defined by the number or proportion of participants in decision-making required for a decision to be considered properly taken. At one extreme is "monocracy," in which the decision of a single individual prevails. (For instance, the traditional German family, the family of "Fatherland," was generally considered a model of monocracy.) At the other pole are consensual rules. These require the existence of a "sense of the meeting," that is the agreement of everyone or nearly everyone involved in deliberations about decisions, or at least their abstention from overt opposition. (Quaker meetings are an example.) Majority rule obviously is at mid-point between these poles; extraordinary majorities fall in the upper half of the dimension; and a variety of oligarchic rules fall in the lower ranges.

Decision-rules are sometimes specified explicitly in constitutional documents, but more often they are implicit in the understandings of members of social units. Where the rules are formally explicit, operative decision-rules often are different. The rules also are generally more complex than may seem to be the case on the basis of written rules pertaining to them.

As an example, consider the decision-rules that seem to prevail in typical American academic departments, as I understand them.[5] Simple majority rule is always the formal rule in the departments; in the case of my university it is specified again and again in voluminous written rules governing procedures. If we go by actual behavior, however, the operative rules are different and more complex. Gurr and I (1975) summarized them thus: (1) Simple majorities suffice in matters of routine departmental housekeeping. (2) On more consequential matters that do not involve personnel, majorities also prevail, but these must include members most affected by the decisions (for instance, course requirements, curricular innovations, or the frequency with which courses or seminars may be given); these are extraordinary majorities of a kind, or at least not "simple" majorities. (3) All decisions on faculty personnel - hiring, promotion, dismissal - are not regarded as properly taken unless agreed to by large extraordinary majorities, and these must usually include a preponderance of the senior professors. (4) The more senior the faculty member, the closer decisions must approach unanimity.

Since, for the sake of departmental harmony, minor decisions usually are agreed to unanimously anyway, and since consequential ones are expected to approach unanimity, the overall rule seems to be consensus, or, perhaps better, quasi-consensus.[6] Pure consensus rules would probably not use voting at all; literal consensus emerges and is discovered, and this is so because the idea of consensus implies a unified collective will (a "corporate" will) whereas voting is done by separated individuals.[7]

A consensus process could not be effective unless certain conditions are observed.[8] Both an etiquette of consensual behavior and an operational code for achieving consensus apply where the consensus rule operates. There is no manual for these. They are learned by experience, as are all rules of etiquette and operational codes. The rule also has consequences that are probably the same for consensual decision-rules regardless of social unit or general culture. Other decision-rules, of course, have their own associated operational codes and consequences.

In these terms, a serious problem with radically "new" authority patterns will almost certainly be that no one quite knows what the operative rules are, or if they are known, how to operate them effectively.[9]

Forms, Norms, and Practices. Authority on these and other dimensions comes in three modes that should be distinguished. The discussion of decision-rules exemplifies these.

One of the modes is the "forms" of authority--formal prescriptions pertinent to the dimensions, of the kind found in constitutions, charters, by-laws, or written compilations of conventions. A second is "norms" pertaining to the dimensions. These, as in the case of the academic decision-rule just discussed, may differ substantially from the forms. The third is "practices:" that is, what is actually done, which may differ from both forms and norms of behavior.

Correspondence or the lack of it between forms, norms, and practices will probably have important consequences for the unit. One may surmise, for instance, that forms that do not correspond to norms will tend to be inoperative, and that a disjunction of practices from norms will produce severe "dissonance," in the psychological sense (as, for instance, in France just before the revolution).[10] I have also tried to specify the special conditions under which forms will be taken particularly seriously, so that they will greatly determine behavior (1979b: 11-15).

Congruence

Ideally congruence means isomorphism (sameness of form), as in geometry. In this sense it either exists or not, never as something more or less; figures either can or cannot be exactly superimposed. Congruence in this sense can only exist in geometric abstraction. The geometric conception, however, is derived from a more common, more inexact, and perfectly proper use of the term: congruence as a condition of broadly corresponding to something or being in agreement with it in essentials. The geometric use is an abstracted, idealized version of this more general meaning of the concept.[11]

It is manifestly unreasonable to expect all the multifarious units of societies to have identical authority patterns on all dimensions, or even to expect that all the patterns will greatly resemble one another. Plainly one cannot expect this in democracies, because some social functions simply cannot, for reasons of effectiveness, be performed in a highly democratic manner.[12] To determine whether congruence exists between "public" government and governance in "private" units, or in what degree, certain social units should therefore be singled out as more, others as less, significant.

It is obvious that some social relationships impinge on government much less, or less directly, than others. Political parties, for instance have a much closer bearing on government and politics than, say, sports teams. It should be obvious similarly that some units that impinge on government do so only through intervening units, like those that "aggregate" their interests. In the particular case of Great Britain, certain secondary schools--the public schools--have in these senses been more significant for government than other kinds of secondary schools (or perhaps any non-elite units), because of the large proportion of political and administrative leaders that were schooled and socialized in them.

Congruence then particularly requires resemblance among what I have called "adjacent" (or contiguous, or proximate) social units--units that impinge on government or one another directly and significantly. It is of course necessary to specify what these units are, and since they

vary from case to case, to specify them in general terms that may have different "contents" in different instances.

I have stated two such general criteria for determining "adjacency" (1969: 296-297). One is that adjacency varies with extent of "boundary-exchange" between social units--that is, the extent to which one unit serves as a special unit for recruitment into another, especially into its higher positions of superordination. In democracies, political parties always matter greatly in regard to this criterion. In particular democracies, other social units may matter as much--for instance, as stated, the British public schools, and especially a small number of them, the so-called "Clarendon Schools." In Norway, as another example, there is particularly close contiguity between local and national governance; national leaders (e.g., members of the Storting) typically serve long apprenticeships in local government, far more so than in other countries. In all cases, when evaluating congruence, one should thus start with the social units from which the political elite is predominantly drawn.

Secondly, social units are adjacent if one plays a significant role for socialization into another--for learning the norms and practices that pertain to the other unit's roles. What these are in regard to political socialization is, in all cases, a problem for research. One could, however, make plausible educated guesses. For instance, family life probably is less important for congruence in advanced industrial societies than in others, the reason being that development is associated with the existence of numerous secondary or tertiary institutions that can attenuate primary socialization. This includes all of the organizations and institutions that have been called "civil society."

It follows that adjacency is greatest when a social unit serves both as a source of recruitment for another and of socialization into it. Once more, the British public schools are a choice example. Other cases will not be so clear-cut, but we can, through research, find units that matter on both criteria. These then are, to use an awkward label, special "congruence-relevant" social units.

Although the more adjacent units count for more in regard to governmental performance, all units count for something, since all are contiguous with others. Families in advanced societies, for example, may not count for as much as in other societies, but socialization always begins in them and serves as a filter for later learning. The "primal" persists in the developed, but only as a note may persist in a chord (or, if the mixture is bad, a dissonance). Family socialization is followed, and may be attenuated, by socialization in elementary schools, the influence of which is attenuated, but never erased, by secondary schools; the influence of which is mitigated by experiences in adult contexts. Despite all this attenuation, it is inconceivable that a democracy could be highly stable and effective if authority relations in families and/or schools are despotic.

From this we can state two definitions of congruence:

(1) *Congruence exists if the authority patterns of all social units in a society are similar*.

This is a slightly watered-down version of ideal congruence; but congruence even in this diluted form usually can only be approximated. The definition applicable to concrete cases is that:

(2) *Congruence exists if the authority patterns of a society exhibit a pattern of graduated resemblances*.

This means that similarities are greater in more adjacent than in less adjacent units, but that they exist to some extent in all, so that experiences in one social unit will in no case be sharply in conflict with those in other units with which it is connected. This will especially be the

congruence condition in complex societies that have considerable functional differentiation, since traits of authority will to some extent be adapted to the effective performance of the different functions.

Performance

I discussed the meaning of governmental performance at length in a monograph on that subject (1971). In very brief summary: By "performance" I mean, of course, how well polities do what they are supposed to do; and this I consider to be a syndrome of conditions that are closely related to one another in that none is likely to exist in high degree without the others. These are:

(1) Durability: the persistence of a polity over time.

(2) Civil order: the absence of collective resorts to violence, or other coercive actions, to achieve private or public objectives.

(3) Legitimacy: the extent to which a regime is considered by its members as worthy of support.

(4) Decisional efficacy (or output efficacy): the extent to which governments make and carry out policies in response to political demands and "challenges."

The monograph provided justifications for including each of these criteria in a general performance syndrome. It also provided extensive guidelines for empirical research into each of the criteria and for their measurement. This material should be useful aside from congruence theory, for investigating any hypothesis about governmental performance.

The Bases of Congruence Theory

Congruence theory initially rested on four different bases, which can be a source of plausible hypotheses separately, and which make hypotheses particularly plausible in conjunction.

Authority Relations as a "Linkage" (Relational) Variable

The process that led to congruence theory began with the compilation of an inventory of propositions about the conditions of stable democracy. I wanted to work on that subject, and so wanted to know what others had said about it. One should of course always build upon existing ideas, to the extent that these exist and have merit.13

An extraordinarily large number of ideas turned up: several dozen.14 These fell into two broad categories. Some invoked variables "endogenous" to government: traits of their internal structures and processes. As an example among many, it was argued that much of the secret of success of British parliamentary democracy has been the executive's unlimited power of dissolution over parliament. The reason for this was that the power supposedly started a chain of effects running from party discipline (to avoid the risks and costs of new elections), to cabinet stability, to decisional efficacy. Others invoked variables "exogenous" to government: traits of societies, or even larger environments, in which governments exist. Overall, there was scarcely an aspect of society that was not invoked as important for stable democracy by someone, from economic development, religion, and class structure, to climate, physical terrain, and geographic latitude.

Some of these hypotheses seemed well-founded, but none seemed fully convincing. Yet just about all conceivable exogenous and endogenous variables had been invoked. At the same

time, it seemed hard to believe that the stability of governments should not have much to do with their internal structures, or, conversely, that it had little to do with their social settings. The question then naturally arose whether there were any variables that were neither endogenous nor exogenous to government, and perhaps ignored just because of that fact. The two broad categories, exogenous and endogenous factors, may seem to exhaust all the possibilities, but there is in fact a third possibility. This is that there might be variables both internal and external to government - in other words, traits shared by governments and their environments. From this it was a small step to the general idea of authority, or governance, as something common to both governments and other social units.[15]

Using the idea of governance as a basis for theory about the performance of democracies had a particular advantage to recommend it. A problem with the then-existing hypotheses was that it was generally hard to see why there should be a link between their independent and dependent variables. The hypotheses specified empirical regularities, but they did not supply reasons to explain why the regularities should exist. For instance, level of per capita GNP and stability of democracy might be empirically associated, but the nature of the link between them is far from obvious or demonstrated.[16] This problem would not arise with variables that themselves describe how variables are interrelated--or, otherwise put, variables characteristic of the "field" between them, as in field psychology ala Lewin or in physics. The idea of congruence suggested itself here, as a condition that describes such a relationship, rather than disconnected traits of separate units.

Thus, the first basis of congruence theory was that it singled out a variable common to both governments and other social units (authority patterns) and also a variable that describes the "field" linking them (congruence).[17] This in itself, however, only indicated that the theory might be on the right track. Additional bases for considering it plausible seemed necessary, and were supplied.

The Empirical Basis

It is now generally supposed in political science that hypotheses should always be supported by large bodies of data expressed in quantitative relationships. The data might preexist in numerical form (e.g., voter turnout, GDP), or they might be collected by systematic, large-n empirical researches, like surveys. Hypotheses based on such data are generally called "grounded hypotheses." They identify regularities in phenomena and trust that these will reveal the underlying laws that explain them.

It is, of course, always desirable to have extensive empirical grounds for hypotheses. However, hypotheses may rest on other bases, including other empirical bases. The view that hypotheses apparently based on large aggregate data are somehow privileged over others--that is, that they are somehow validated by the researches themselves--is epistemologically naive. No matter where hypotheses come from, they must be corroborated by appropriate tests, preferably "strong" tests.[18] If so corroborated, their origins are irrelevant; appropriate tests equalize the status of hypotheses, however derived.

As originally stated, congruence theory did have an empirical basis, but this was not large-scale, original empirical research. Its empirical basis was wide and "deep" knowledge of two countries and their political systems which, it seemed, congruence theory had to fit to be plausible. These were Great Britain and Germany. Along with the United States, the former was generally used as the prototype of a stable, effective democracy.[19] The Weimar Republic was

generally used as an extreme case of the unstable, ineffective variety; and this was surely correct. I knew both cases in "depth" since I had lived in them,[20] written extensively about their political systems, taught courses and seminars about them, done fieldwork (for two books) in Britain; and was schooled in the countries' histories and in sociological and social-psychological researches regarding them. Some of these researches, in both cases, were themselves extensive empirical researches, including survey researches.

It seemed to me then, as it still seems now, that this was sufficient basis at least for an initial try at formulating a hypothesis that had a chance to stand up to tests. It also seemed to me then, as now, that the first requirement for testing an idea is to have one. Ideas may come from "intensive" (n=few) knowledge no less than from the extensive (n=many) variety.

Both countries supported the theory extremely well. I will not provide details of this here, for reasons of space and because the supporting details can be read about in the original statement of the theory (1992: ch.5).

A more telling empirical basis was provided by a research project carried out in 1964-1965, to help determine whether it might be worthwhile to invest more effort in the theory. I was aware from the start that the empirical researches called for by the theory would be unusually onerous--hard to carry out, expensive, and time-consuming. Not the least reason for this was the neglect by social scientists of researches into "private governance." Such researches had been repeatedly called for by political scientists (for instance by Merriam and Dahl), but nothing much had ever been done to respond to the calls. It was of course impossible to ignore entirely relations of authority in writings about social institutions, but the relations were rarely the focus of researches. Authority in social units other than government was then, and remains now, the *terra incognita* of social life, despite the fact that human lives are immersed in authority relations at all ages, in every sphere of existence. On the subject of authority patterns, then, nothing like accumulated research findings, let alone convenient data banks, existed. All the data requirements of the theory would have to be supplied nearly from scratch, and these were large and costly requirements.

Before going on with the theory, then, it seemed desirable to do research that might establish its plausibility still more strongly--that is, that might indicate whether the theory's promised payoff might justify the onerous and costly researches for which it called.[21] For this purpose I decided to do a field study of Norwegian government and social institutions. There was a special rationale for choosing Norway for this purpose.

Norway is one of the oldest and most stable democracies, minimally on a par with the United States and Britain; but, beyond this, I knew almost nothing about it. Nor did others whose works might have informed me. Books and articles in English for learning anything about Norway were, to put it mildly, rare. This was as it then was with other small European countries, but less was known about Norway than even some of these. This made possible a genuine predictive test, and such tests are always the strongest that one can carry out, because they are risky--that is, likely to refute theory. The hallmark of strong corroboration of a hypothesis is that one has correctly deduced from it something previously unknown, by applying the hypothesis to known "initial conditions" (in this case, that Norwegian democracy was in fact very old and stable), in conformity with Hempel's (1965) analysis of "scientific explanation." The prediction of course was that great and manifest congruence between the governmental and other authority patterns would turn up. Not only was this unknown to me and other English-speaking researchers, but it was also unknown to Norwegian social scientists. Indeed, no research on the

subject had ever been done--although many researches pertinent to it, but on other subjects, were available.

I will only outline some essential findings of the research in Norway here; for details and elaborations readers should consult the book I wrote about Norwegian politics and society on the basis of the research (1966: ch. VIII and IX).

(1) An extraordinary degree of congruence turned up among all aspects of Norwegian life, from families to schools, workplaces, trade unions, trade associations, other associations, political parties, local governments, and national government. In all cases the themes manifested in authority relations were equality (low social distance), permissiveness, and participation. These, of course, turned up in different ways, in different degrees, in different social units, but they were major themes in all.

(2) Particularly noteworthy was the fact that organizations and associations of all types were even more common than in the United States and Britain; they were ubiquitous and tended to have "dense" memberships.22 They included not only large and familiar organizations, like trade unions, but also small and exotic kinds--for instance, a Film Critics Society, which had all of 28 members--and also a formal constitution. Almost without exception, in fact, organizations had written constitutions, and these were much alike, being modeled on the structure of local government--which means that they were highly democratic constitutions.

(3) An extraordinary proportion of children and youths were active in such organizations and had occupied leadership positions in them.23 Consequently, the experience of organizational authority, and authority in a particular form, is part of the early socialization process. The authority patterns experienced have all the trappings of democracy that are usually lacking in the experiences of young people: elections, service on collective decision-making bodies, coalition-making, and so on.

(4) Norway has political and social divisions that are normally associated with political instability. It is, in some ways, even a "plural society." However, it is extremely homogeneous in one respect: authority relations. The nature of such relations are in fact an essential aspect of Norwegian national "identity."

Because of these and other findings, the research in Norway, which had been intended to be a "plausibility probe," might be considered to have amounted to much more - something like a strong test of congruence theory in a crucial case.

The Motivational Basis

There is another way in which one can show that associations between variables in the social sciences are genuine connections. This is to show that the associations make sense (should exist) in light of well-established theories of human behavior. I thus tried to show, from the start, that congruence theory does make sense in this way. To illustrate this, I will discuss here just one such theory, that of "role-strains."

Societies always have a division of labor, and in "advanced" societies functional differentiation is particularly complex. It is possible, therefore, to think of societies as complexes of "roles." It is also possible to think of individuals in this way. Doctor X, say, is a physician, a lecturer in a medical school, a businesswoman, a spouse, a mother, a member of the executive committee of her church, and a voter. This probably expresses the sum of her as a social (not individual) being. Throughout the day or week, she passes from one role to another. All of these roles are defined by complexes of norms, which may be similar or different. If the norms are

contradictory, or inconsistent, Dr. X obviously might experience discomfort: "strain." A too familiar example is the sexual harassment of female subordinates by male superordinates; the roles of boss and employee and of being sexual partners are different and in contradiction, but they can all too easily get mixed up.

Role-strains can, of course, be "managed"--there are ways of reducing them. For instance, when a male doctor examines an undressed female patient he is expected always to do so in the presence of another female. But all conflicting norms attached to roles can have more or less severe dysfunctional consequences, and all can reduce role performance.

The point is that congruence of authority relations means similar norms, thus less strain, as one passes from role to role in one's social existence. It should be evident that congruence also reduces the difficulties and costs of proper socialization into the variety of roles that constitute individuals. A separate process of socialization for every social role might be imaginable; but even if it were possible, congruence would reduce the burdens of socialization and, more important, increase the chances of its success by constant reinforcement.

Congruence Theory as Higher-Order Theory

Hypotheses can be supported not only by facts but also by other hypotheses. Scientific progress in the more mature sciences often in fact is made via higher-order, unifying theories that subsume separate lower-order theories that are well-corroborated themselves. The ability to do this is a particularly powerful way to progress from good theory to better theory. The most powerful argument in favor of a higher-order theory is the ability to show that it can account for everything that the separate hypotheses account for, and more. One way to do this is to show that the unifying theory explains both the strengths and shortcomings of other hypotheses. Theories that can pass muster as likely higher-order theories still require independent testing, but evidence for subsumed lower-order theories also counts as evidence for the higher-order hypothesis. This is important because it means that evidence for a hypothesis may strengthen or broaden the evidentiary basis of another that may seem different.

In my initial statement of congruence theory, I did try to show that it can serve as such a higher-order theory. This aspect of the theory has been generally overlooked, but it was an especially important basis for considering it plausible.

The inventory of hypotheses about stable democracy that led to the original formulation of the theory suggested that there were three high-grade (well-supported) hypotheses that had considerable explanatory power--but still not quite enough. One linked stable democracy to the influence of religion; the second to level and rate of economic development; the third (and, I thought, the most powerful) to the existence of "intermediate" organizations that operate in the space between individuals and government--what is now called a strong "civil society." Both the strengths and shortcomings of these hypotheses, I argued, could be explained by congruence theory.

Here I will discuss only the civil-society hypothesis. This had been argued by many people over a long span of time--among others by Tocqueville, Ortega y Gasset, Mannheim, Lederer, Arendt, and especially William Kornhauser (1959) and the great number of studies on which he draws. The hypothesis has always been well-supported, and is now particularly strongly supported by Putnam (1993).

The connection between a vibrant group life in society and the congruence variable should be rather straightforward to establish, just because the civil-society hypothesis is such a strong hypothesis. Very simply stated, it goes like this:

(1) The primary institutions of society (family and kinship) and other institutions which almost everyone experiences (schools, workplaces) can only be conducted democratically up to a point, for hard functional reasons. Parent-child relations or teacher-student relations can in some cases be more liberal, egalitarian, permissive, or participatory than in others, but they will be dysfunctional in all if they are liberal and permissive beyond a threshold. The dependency needs of children are always in conflict with permissiveness, and the teacher-student relationship is, and must always be, asymmetrical to an extent. Workplaces generally are oriented toward some bottom-line; therefore they require considerable discipline, direction, and coordination. They can be more or less participatory, but never fully democratic. Thus the most important institutions in which most lives are immersed will always be, to a greater or lesser extent inconsistent with a"pure" democracy.

(2) A large number and variety of intermediary organizations can reduce the strains inherent in these facts and provide contexts for learning the more sophisticated patterns of democratic behavior. Along with local governments, they are, as Tocqueville said, the "primary schools of democracy."

(3) Intermediary groups are in fact logically necessary for "graduated resemblances" among the authority patterns of society to exist.

Hence the strong connection between a vital civil society and stable, effective democracy.

But why is there not an even stronger connection? The reason provided by congruence theory is that organizations might themselves be directed in authoritarian ways; in that case these arguments are off. Unless we assume, absurdly, that this is never the case, the association between successful democracy and a strong civil society should be very close but still imperfect--as seems to be the case.[24]

Putnam (1993) explains the association via the conception of "social capital," which essentially means having learned how to function in collective working relationships. I agree with him, except only for this: the social capital for a "working democracy" cannot be developed if collective social life is itself inconsistent with democracy. It remains, of course, to be shown that if a strong civil society and weak democracy coexist it will be found that intermediary organizations are in fact more schools for authoritarian than for democratic rule; here there is potential for a very strong predictive test of congruence theory.

The Balanced Disparities Hypothesis

On the basis of what has just been said, we can also explain why the balanced disparities hypothesis should hold, and how it is derived from general congruence theory, as applied to democracies.

If the social institutions that are the most widely experienced and consequential in people's lives are inherently inconsistent with pure democracy, it follows that high congruence is likely to exist only in democracies that in some degree combine democratic with other traits. The organizations that constitute civil, or intermediate, society may reduce the degree to which democratic elements must be balanced by others, but they can hardly eliminate the need for this altogether.

The position that mixed democracy, as it were, is the best-performing democracy has long been argued and is well-supported in contemporary research. The most important corroboration comes from Almond and Verba (1963); they argue, and voluminously support with survey data, that the "civic culture" conducive to successful democracy is a compound of "participant" attitudes that pertain to political activism,, with "subject" attitudes that pertain to subordination, with "parochial" attitudes that in effect detach people from politics. All the better for the performance of democracy if the parochials come mostly from social milieus in which authoritarian relations predominate--the milieus of lower socio-economic groups--as in fact they generally do (Verba and Nie, 1972, ch.10).

Needless to say, not every mix of disparate elements is "balanced." Thus we should be able to distinguish functional from dysfunctional mixes. This, however, is not possible in general terms, because it depends on the varying circumstances of societies--for instance, the extent to which institutions like families have democratic traits, even if imperfectly; the extent to which economic stratification is great or small; and to what extent democratically organized intermediate organizations exist. From the fact that a democracy has a mixed authority pattern, its success cannot be deduced. However, from the fact that a democracy is successful one should be able to infer correctly that it is a mixed democracy.

A striking example of disparities in balance is again provided by Norway. As stated earlier, a high level of "democraticness" was predicted (correctly) to exist in Norway's social life. A second prediction was made at the same time: namely that some element or elements of special authority would modify democraticness at the level of government, and perhaps in other organizations as well. This also turned out to be the case.

Liberal-democratic traits at the level of government were modified by a pervasive non-democratic trait: deference to technical experts (including bureaucrats) on subjects of their expertise. The importance of such deference was augmented by a tendency to regard many realms, including rather unlikely ones, as areas of technical expertise. Hence, these areas were substantially out of the realm of normal democratic politics. This deferential element, I argued, supplied much of the energy and decisional efficacy of Norwegian government. It also seemed to "balance" without great dissonance the highly egalitarian principles of Norwegian authority, since it located special authority in abstract knowledge and skill, not directly in persons. This tendency to defer to assumed expertise turned up in other realms of social life as well. Thus Norway, as it should have, displayed congruence in almost an ideal way for the functioning of democracy: high similarity of authority patterns, the general existence of balanced disparities and of similarly balanced disparities in authority patterns, and a particular mix of democratic and nondemocratic traits that was bound to limit perceptions of dissonance.

Non-democratic aspects of democratic governments not only may enhance congruence but are required to energize government, to provide leadership, to allow a degree of autonomous action (which is often necessary for effective government), as well as for reasons of symbolism and ceremony. They can provide figures above mundane politics, and figures that somehow "embody" the idea of the political system. Constitutional monarchies, for example, are not anomalies in democracies but strongly associated with their success. In Britain, the Prime Minister and Cabinet also enjoy a great deal of autonomy; they govern. They are "constitutionally" subject to parliamentary controls, but in practice these are more fictional than real--though they are fictions that have useful effects.

Change toward Congruence

What happens to authority patterns if they are incongruent, and if performance problems consequently arise? In what ways can congruence be established or enhanced?

A frequent misinterpretation of congruence theory has been that congruence can only be enhanced by adapting government to conform to social authority patterns. This would preclude the effective and creative construction of governmental structures--successful "constitutional design," or "engineering." It is thought that the theory implies that social authority either is mimicked on the governmental level or else government is condemned to low performance.

If this were really so, one might be disappointed, but the theory's plausibility would not be impugned; nothing says that only happy theories are valid. However, it is not so. The allegation comes from a misreading of the original statement of congruence theory and from overlooking a subsequent companion essay (1969). The latter explicitly went into the question of how social units, including governments, may respond to the existence of incongruence and its effects. This is an important part of congruence-theory, which should at least be summarized here.[25]

The core hypothesis concerning how authority patterns change if seriously incongruent is that:

Incongruent authority patterns tend to change toward increased congruence.

One could call any such a process toward greater congruence "adaptive" change. The hypothesis implies that congruence should be considered the "normal" state--not necessarily the most frequent state (that depends on what research turns up) but the state toward which socio-political systems always tend.[26]

On what is this hypothesis based? One reason for it is that the bearing of incongruence on performance might be "sensed" even if not consciously understood. Revolutionaries who try to transform society, for example, have always seemed to sense that transformation must proceed on all fronts of society in order to succeed on any. Thus, their attempts not only to reconstruct government or the economy, but family life, education, workplaces, and so on.

There is another, more tangible, reason for the hypothesis. Incongruence in authority patterns must induce a degree of "cognitive dissonance," similar to what we called strain. Such dissonance is always discomfiting, and may be seriously damaging. It must be uncomfortable to live with norms in one context of one's life that are contradicted in another, but binding in both. It must also be uncomfortable, and certainly confusing, not to be able to transfer practices learned, at cost to the learner, from one context to another. One can therefore posit a general tendency to try to make perceptions and beliefs about authority consistent. There is much experimental evidence to the effect that reducing dissonance of any kind is in fact a general tendency in human behavior (Festinger, 1957).

It is true that two inconsistent beliefs can often be squared by a third that reconciles them. A simple example (from the real world): You believe that businessmen only do things that are good for the bottom line. You learn that the CEO of a large firm has installed an ambitious program of workers' participation in management, and that he says that he has done this "to save his soul" (Witte, 1980). You could make these perceptions consistent by changing your whole conception of managerial behavior, but that would entail changing many, probably deep, beliefs. The more "efficient" solution is to conclude that the CEO has not been candid, but has actually installed the scheme for self-interested ends, like more commitment and production by workers or to undermine a trade union.

It is not as easy as this to manage the dissonance that results from norms and practices in one kind of social unit being contradicted by those of others; there are no simple "third-sentence" solutions in that case. One might perhaps reduce dissonance in such a case by attributing the differences simply to different functional requirements, but this calls for much sophistication and will certainly not get rid of the inconsistency. The best way to reduce dissonance in this case clearly is to reduce incongruity itself.

This is not to say, of course, that adaptation must succeed. Institutions may resist adaptive changes for a variety of reasons, and people often do wrong things for right reasons. Wherever there is adaptation there is also the possibility of maladaptation. Consequently, the hypothesis posits only a tendency.

Incongruence in authority patterns, in light of earlier arguments, might be reduced in one or both of two ways: by changes in the patterns that increase their similarity, or because of the notion of graduated resemblances, by the creation of intermediary units that increase the distance between incongruent units. But what changes to conform to what?

Logically, congruence might be increased by changes either in the governmental pattern or that of social authority patterns. There is no logical reason to suppose that it must always be the governmental pattern that is adapted. Consequently, the direction of change should be stated in a more general manner. I do this by a second hypothesis that is "auxiliary" to the first:

Adaptation toward increased congruence occurs toward conformity with authority in the less labile social units--those most resistant to change

This may be considered a version of the apparently universal tendency of any "motion" to take the path of least resistance.

It is not true, though widely believed, that governments are always artificial and other aspects of society somehow "natural," so that government, but not society, can be adaptively engineered. This is very dubious: governments can certainly be less labile than other social units. What then makes social units more or less labile?

We may posit, first, that lability varies with strength of institutionalization: the more deeply norms of behavior pertinent to certain social units are internalized the less labile are the units. Given the well-supported hypothesis that early socialization generally goes deeper than later socialization--that it acts as a "filter" for the later processes--we can infer that childhood patterns (family, school) generally tend to dominate adult patterns of all kinds. Hence perhaps the Confucian belief (and Montesquieu's) that the well-constructed kingdom must be like a well-constructed family.

However, it is certainly possible that norms pertaining to government and politics could dominate other norms. If internalized early and deeply, and held intensely, such norms may certainly induce a tendency to change others. In all advanced democratic societies, in fact, a strong tendency now exists to democratize "everyday life"--to make it more permissive, participatory, and inclusive--so that it will be more consistent with deeply held political values. How far this process can go is still open to question, particularly since the imperative to adapt toward congruence will often clash with the imperative to adapt institutions to functions; but that the process goes on is certain.

Lability will also vary with the capacity to control and resist. Here modern governments have a great advantage over other social units because of their monopoly on legitimate coercion-- the ability to impose violent sanctions and other severe deprivations--and, less obviously, because of the technical and administrative capacities they command, alongside overwhelming resources of wealth and numbers. It might be hypothesized that as societies advance the realm of

government constantly becomes stronger (less labile) vis-a-vis other social realms, so that the tendency toward congruence increasingly involves the adaptation of social to governmental patterns.27

Adaptation toward congruence thus may occur in both directions, and is likely to involve the adaptation of social authority patterns to the governmental pattern at least in certain specifiable conditions. This implies further that "constitutional engineering" is possible, but also unlikely to succeed if not extended in some degree to other social units, especially those adjacent to government.

Congruence Theory and Democratization

Since this book deals with democratization, it is appropriate to make some remarks about the bearing congruence theory might have on that process.

Congruence theory, needless to say, says nothing directly about democratization. It is certainly not a theory of democratization of the currently dominant genre, "transition theory."28 This sort of theory, as I understand it, is concerned with the problem of how a new democracy might be safeguarded against early demise--political infant mortality, so to speak. This problem is obviously important; for there can be no long run without a short run. The leading idea about it is "pact theory" or the practice of garantismo. This theory says that new democracies can only be safeguarded if existing elites perceive a critical need to institute them (through shortcomings in the old regime, exacerbated by "crisis") and if, by a series of understandings akin to treaties, the old elites (economic, military, bureaucratic, religious) are guaranteed that their special interests will not be seriously harmed by the change to democracy.

This makes sense as far as it goes. Existing elites always command powerful resources for resisting and undermining major changes. But for two reasons it does not go far enough. First, regimes can fail for reasons other than the opposition of old elite groups. Regimes may fail to persist simply because of their inefficacy; if they are seriously ineffective, then all interests will be adversely affected and pacts are beside the point. There is also much historical evidence to the effect that opposition by old elites tends to become serious mainly when normal government is weak--especially if, as in the case of Weimar or prefascist Italy, it is paralyzed in the face of situations that call urgently for action. Second, it is not reasonable by logic and evidence to hold that a transition to a new order is accomplished when the order has made it through a few years--through infancy. If that were so, then almost all failed democracies had made successful transitions.

How long is a transition anyway? I have heard it said that the transition to democracy is over when democratic institutions have been put in place. Clearly, this trivializes the idea of transition. A more extensive period must be involved; but how much more extensive?

I have argued (in 1996:22) that this depends on the extent to which conditions under which democracies may flourish are already in place when democratization starts, which seems truistic. Even if we lack exact knowledge about this, however, we can make a stab at specifying a minimal time period for accomplishing transition by calculating, as Gurr has (1974), the statistical chances of longer-term survival if a regime has lasted a specified period of time. In general, this seems to be something approaching a generation. In less time just about anything still seems equally likely, from early demise to eternal life. This also makes intuitive sense in light of conspicuous cases. For instance, the Bonn Federal Republic was not generally regarded as entrenched until the late 1960s or early 1970s. The Fifth French Republic was regarded for a

similar period as DeGaulle's personal regime--which, so it was assumed, would vanish with him-- rather than as an entrenched impersonal order.

It seems clear that a good deal of governmental efficacy is required for successful passage through a transitional period. It is just as clear that foundations for enduring democracy must be laid during this period, or at least begun to be laid. It is sometimes argued (e.g., by DiPalma, 1990) that the only such foundation needed is a constitutional order; but this flies in the face of all historical evidence. A proper social environment for democracy is also required. This is elementary logic if the fact of democratization does not insulate or separate the polity from society; if anything, democracy, being an "open" system, has the opposite effect. In any case, societies do not come neatly divided into hermetically sealed compartments, corresponding to the subjects of academic departments. On these grounds it is inconceivable that, aside from pacts, only the constitutional order should affect governments in transition.

Thus, the prudential maxims of pact-theory must be supplemented, even during initial transition, by prudential maxims based on general theories of democratic performance. Here, of course, enter congruence theory (or other theories about governmental performance). What sort of prudential counsels for transition might it imply? I will outline a couple.

No doubt a constitutional order of some sort is needed almost immediately after an authoritarian regime disintegrates, and this requires constitutional design. A sizable new literature on constitutional design has recently come into being. This literature, however, is flawed by treating the design of governmental institutions as if it occurred in a social vacuum. Are presidential systems, it is asked, superior to parliamentary regimes, or vice versa? Should there be strong or weak emergency powers, or none? What is a good electoral systems? The answer to all such questions should be, it depends--it depends on traits of the society for which governmental constitutions are designed.

Engineering of any kind always requires originality and imagination, mostly in finding ways to accomplish goals in contextual givens. For the civil engineer--or anyone--an abstract question like "what is a good bridge to build" would be absurd. Obviously it depends; you would not want to imitate the Golden Gate bridge, which is certainly good, if you wanted to bridge the Charles River. What you engineer depends on what you want to bridge, the loads the bridge is expected to bear, the materials you have to work with, and numerous other factors, not excluding aesthetics. So it is also with constitutional contrivances.

We need research and thought about the appropriateness of new institutions to varying social conditions; this will be difficult research requiring knowledge of institutions, social conditions, and how the latter affect the former. It will certainly require the collaboration of theorists (who have general hypotheses) with country and area specialists (who can contribute deep contextual information). Unfortunately, our theories say next to nothing about fitting engineered political institutions to given conditions, and this is due simply to the fact that the issue, remarkably, is not raised.[29]

Congruence theory implies that new institutions must be designed at least in a way that does not dramatically violate the congruence condition--in other words, that adapts in some degree to the preestablished order. If it is advisable to pacify old elites by guaranteed concessions, then it is also advisable to come to terms with the fact that there are old ways of doing things--old patterns of socialization, old organizational behavior patterns, and so on. New regimes, like it or not, must compromise with old regimes, both of persons and of institutions.

If congruence theory has merit, then, two things follow for the practice of democratization. One is that the crucial consideration in fitting new structures to old is the nature

of preexisting authority patterns, particularly those "close" to the realm of government. The other is that laying long-run foundations for democracy means to democratize as much as possible social life in general. Since this is hardly possible on a comprehensive scale, it requires fostering intermediary institutions (of the right kind) that link and mediate between government and aspects of social life resistant to democratic traits.

In some cases, this may permit democratization in early stages only in a petty sense. A saving grace here is that constitutional orders may be treated as provisional, while foundations for more permanent orders are developed. Another saving grace is that the constitutional order, if "short and vague," might adapt itself little by little without over-rational design to fit social conditions, in something like an evolutionary manner. In that case, history might do what is hard or impossible to contrive. The more long-lived democracies in history developed in that manner anyway.[30]

Empirical Demands of the Theory

Congruence theory has come in for its share of objections, some of which need to be taken seriously in developing the theory and basing work on it. Here I will only go into the objection most commonly made and most consequential for the theory's future. It is claimed that the demands the theory makes on empirical inquiry are too great ever to be satisfied. The researches called for by the theory, so it is alleged, are so taxing as to be paralyzing, so that the theory is doomed always to have a flimsy empirical basis. If so, this would of course be a fatal flaw.

I agree with some of this criticism: the theory does impose heavy tasks in regard to all facets of empirical research. Indeed a genuinely convincing empirical "test" of it, consisting of hard data, is probably impossible at this point. Consider that authority patterns exist in all social units and that there are many kinds of social units, even in relatively simple societies, and that the patterns vary on many dimensions and subdimensions, each of which poses considerable difficulties of its own in regard to conceptualization, appropriate research methods, and measurement. Not least, determining degrees of congruence among many units as a summary of their variations on the various dimensions of authority is an intimidating task.

These tasks can be lightened by focusing on special "congruence-relevant" social units, as discussed above. As Gurr and I suggested (1975: 208-221), the task can be lightened further by positing that certain dimensions of authority will also be particularly congruence-relevant, and confining research to these.[31] Both of these modes of lightening the empirical load contain hypotheses of their own, but as stated at the start, it is normal and necessary to posit untested auxiliary hypotheses in relating theory to empirical research. Even if these ways of narrowing the researches called for by the theory make sense, it remains empirically onerous.

The problem is compounded by the extraordinary paucity of research, especially systematic research, into the subject of private governance. As I said earlier, it is almost impossible to write about social units without touching on their authority relations, but statements about them are scattered in a myriad books and articles, very few of which deal thoroughly and directly with the subject. The researcher thus is faced with the need to start practically at the bare beginning in regard to empirical information, concepts, methods, and measurements.

I speak here from experience. Shortly after publishing the original statement of the theory I began a large project of empirical study inspired by it. Fourteen graduate students, plus a co-director and research assistant, participated in this over several years. The students were to do

(and did) fieldwork on authority patterns in a large number of societies. The directors supplied the fieldworkers with most of the voluminous materials later published in Eckstein and Gurr (1975). These materials were worked out initially over a period of a year, and refined later. They included careful conceptualization of all the dimensions and subdimensions, detailed discussion of appropriate sources and techniques for inquiry into them (including questionnaire items for surveys), and specified modes of expressing research results in numbers.[32] The participants in the project thus went into the field armed with an almost unprecedented amount of conceptual and operational material to inform their work.

The project certainly produced results (summarized in Eckstein and Gurr (1975: x-xi)), but far fewer and flimsier results than expected. The studies certainly did not provide a basis for an extensive comparative evaluation of congruence theory. Why so? No doubt for more than one reason. But the most important reason, I now think, was precisely the fact that so much conceptual and operational material was provided to the fieldworkers in an attempt to make the researches readily comparable and cumulative and the results exact. Although the participants themselves wanted guidelines as comprehensive as possible for their researches, overall these must have had a paralyzing effect on them when confronted with the actual tasks of research.

More would surely have been done if less had been expected. This especially applies to demands for rigor and exactitude. These are crucial scientific values in the abstract, but there is such a thing as premature, thus dysfunctional, empirical rigor in practice. Particularly in the early stages of research, the important thing is that studies report some findings (almost any) pertinent to a large subject, so that cumulation can begin and exactitude can gradually be increased. Genuine science cannot be rushed, nor produced by following guidelines. The participants in the project would probably have accomplished more if advised to do more impressionistic work, if that was necessary to get work done in the first place.

I would now even advance this as a general methodological precept, so that useful work might be done on important new subjects, and so there would be less choosing of research subjects just for their conduciveness to exactitude, not their significance--a regrettable trend in contemporary political science. Exactitude increases in the course of normal scientific development, as one of several aspects of scientific progress, but it is never absolute, and most important, it is not the only or even the dominant scientific value.

The efforts that went into the guidelines to research have surely not been wasted, because their published results are available to guide anyone who might want to do research on authority patterns. There exists a framework, the result of much labor, that can inform researches into the subject. But at this stage this framework is to be treated cautiously. It should be used only as an aid to research, not as an extensive program for research.

The definitive rejoinder to the objection that the theory makes daunting empirical demands is, however, very simple: difficulty is not a reason for not trying, only a reason for trying harder. The only issue is whether a theory promises enough to be worth making the efforts for which it calls.

Readers should bear these points in mind as they read the subsequent chapters in this book. Not having deep and systematic researches into Russian authority patterns on which to draw, the discussions here are inevitably preliminary and tentative; but they do make a substantial start. Hopefully, these discussions will encourage others to widen and deepen knowledge of authority in Russia and elsewhere, and of its consequences for the processes of democratization now under way.

Endnotes

1. The restatements and elaborations of the theory include Eckstein, 1966, 1969 and 1992; and Eckstein and Gurr, 1975. (Throughout, references to my own publications are cited by date only.)

2. Consider one of the most widely used research techniques, survey research, as an example. Survey researchers know that some respondents answer dishonestly or express "non-attitudes." Nevertheless, they posit that the overall results of surveys researches are trustworthy. This is a hypothesis. The fact that we cannot test all matters auxiliary to hypotheses, and auxiliary to the auxiliary hypotheses, is one reason why scientific theories are never definitively established.

3. We can probably leave the word democracy undefined, without serious consequences. Most people probably would agree on whether most regimes are democratic or not. However, things are not so simple when we talk about democratic aspects of authority patterns, as we often will here. For this purpose, Dahl's conception of "polyarchy" (1971) is particularly useful. Polyarchy, ala Dahl, has two broad facets: "public contestation" (institutionalized competition) for positions of leadership and inclusive rights for citizens to participate in leadership and contestation for it. Dahl further argues that a certain "liberal" order is required to make contestation and inclusive participation meaningful. This includes the right to vote and run for offices, freedom of expression, freedom to form organizations, and the existence of alternative sources of information., We might add to this list the possibility of directly participating in decision-making, as a kind of inclusion that goes beyond voting. All of these traits are dimensional; each exists in greater or lesser degree in particular cases. On this basis one can speak of organizations and institutions as having democratic traits in certain respects and degrees. For instance, families will not have voting for office, but they may have free expression, openness instead of secretiveness, and participation by children in family decision-making. These criteria for degree of "democraticness,:" so to speak, will be especially important for grasping the notions of congruence and balanced disparities discussed later in this chapter.

4. For full discussion consult Schonfeld (1976).

5. I have discussed this subject at length in 1975: 126-132.

6. Shortly after writing these lines, my department deliberated on a mid-level professorial appointment. A majority of 9 to 4 were in favor of making the appointment. The matter was dropped.

7. The rule-set discussed here is far from universal. As stated, it is, by my experience, typical. However, I have the impression that the idea of a university department as a "corporation," not just an aggregate of individuals, has weakened (though not yet disappeared) during the course of my academic life. In the United States, the decision-rules have become more congruent with the individualistic biases and practices of the larger society.

8. These were discussed in 1975.

9. Other general dimensions of authority patterns include the structural conformation of the patterns (e.g., their simplicity or complexity in various senses), recruitment to superordinated positions, and bases of legitimacy.

10. This is discussed further in the next section of the paper.

11. Congruence also sometimes denotes being in harmony with something, or being fit or suitable for a condition (for instance, the reception of divine grace). Almond and Verba (1963) seem to me to use the concept in the latter sense, despite reference to my use.

12. Thus is discussed more fully below, in the section that gives the basis for the balanced disparities hypothesis.

13. Inventories of findings and hypotheses are not compiled enough in the social sciences. This is one reason for their lamented lack of cumulativeness. Inventories have yielded important results before. The most fruitful was an inventory of existing knowledge about political behavior conducted in the fifties in Columbia's Bureau of Applied Social Research. This led to several truly seminal works: Lipset on the social bases of politics, Hyman on political socialization, and Kornhauser on mass society. It is high time to repeat that inventory.

14. Most of the propositions were pretty low-grade--vague, or interpretations of a case, or notions without discernible basis. Several hypotheses, however, were substantial and seemed important to take into account as a basis for possibly still better theory. This was done in the development of congruence theory, as discussed below in the section on congruence as a "higher-order variable."

15. Reading Merriam (1994) at this time no doubt suggested this.

16. Lipset (1960) does supply post hoc explanations of the empirical association. In the original statement of congruence theory I showed that these explanations could be subsumed under congruence theory.

17. There might be other variables that satisfy this criterion, but I have not been able to think of any.

18. For the nature of "strong tests," see Watkins (1984: 294-297).

19. For example, Great Britain was so used by Almond and Verba (1963)--a work written and published at about the same time as congruence theory.

20. This basis of hypotheses has been reviled as merely "anecdotal," and also dignified by a technical methodological expression: "participant observation."

21. In 1979a I called researches so conducted "plausibility probes," suggesting that such probes should be far more commonly used in the field than they are.

22. Density here refers to the proportion of eligibles who actually are members.

23. A survey of 11,000 19-year-olds, conducted in 1952, found that 22 percent had served as officers of organizations (1966: 104).

24. This point applies most obviously to societies in which typical organizations, or those "close" to government, are governed in authoritarian ways. But even if organizations are not generally authoritarian, some - including some close to government - may not be. Readers should not have difficulty thinking of American cases in point.

25. For elaboration, see 1969: 315-322.

26. Such change can of course be the result of human contrivance, in which case it may well lessen congruence.

27. I argued a more general version of this point in 1992: ch.6.

28. Some leading examples of the genre are Linz and Stepan (1996); O'Donnell, Schmitter, and Whitehead (1986); and Di Palma (1990).

29. An honorable exception to this is Lijphart's (1977) counsels on constitutional orders appropriate for "plural societies."

30. In 1969 I made an important addition to congruence theory which I called "consonance theory." I will not describe this theory here because it is complicated and because it was always treated as subsidiary to congruence theory as a hypothesis about successful government.

31. The dimensions we singled out for this purpose were recruitment, directiveness, and participation (in that order of importance).

32. The students themselves contributed a great deal to these guides to fieldwork. They were devised in many hours of discussions with them.

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