

Introduction to Rein Taagepera, 'Science walks on two legs, but social sciences try to hop on one'

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Rein Taagepera was awarded the Karl Deutsch Award at the 24th World Congress of the International Political Science Association, Poznań, Poland, in July 2016. The editors are pleased to publish a revised version of the lecture he delivered at the award ceremony. The lecture is a wide-ranging and provocative critique of what he considers a fundamental design flaw in much quantitative research in political science, as well as a proposal for how to remedy the problem.

The Karl Deutsch Award honours a political scientist engaged in cross-disciplinary research and previous recipients include Pippa Norris (2014), Alfred C Stepan (2012) and Giovanni Sartori (2009). *International Political Science Review* (IPSR) has instituted an essay series by recipients of the Karl Deutsch Award and Taagepera's contribution is an excellent addition to the series. The first essay, by Stepan, was published in the November 2016 issue of IPSR.

Karl Deutsch (1912–1992) was one of the most distinguished social scientists of the twentieth century. He taught at the Massachusetts Institute of Technology, Yale and Harvard Universities as well as leading the International Institute of Comparative Social Research at the Science Centre in Berlin. Karl Deutsch was at the vanguard of the behavioural revolution in political science and so Taagepera's thoughtful and reflective contribution on logical modelling and statistical approaches in political science was especially fitting.

In his essay, Taagepera documents his own intellectual formation which was shaped by his early life in Estonia and his training as a scientist focused on nuclear and solid state physics. He maps his transition to political science and provides an overview of some of his most important contributions to the study of electoral politics. He is a persuasive advocate of the scientific method and is especially convincing in his point that science requires a combination of logical modelling and empirical testing. He argues that 'a cancer is eating at the social sciences' as he laments inappropriate use and overuse of statistical description. Otherwise put, he claims that political science often 'hops on one leg.' Further, he points out that much research in our discipline is based on the naïve and inaccurate assumption that statistical relationships are linear – which in fact is rarely the case in the social and political world. He challenges political scientists to develop and test more sophisticated models that reflect this complexity. In order to do so, he asserts that, rather than simply measuring connections, political scientists need to measure connections among connections.

As editors, we hope that his essay will provoke political scientists into wider reflection on what is studied and, what is published, in political science.

Mark Kesselman, Marian Sawyer and Theresa Reidy