

ing power does not exist, is to compound parochial distortion with the mistaken expectation that its effects will be ameliorated in the political arena and the "marketplace of ideas."

All decision strategies implemented in uncertainty-laden task environments entail costs and risks. Identifying types of complex problems in the context of which various types of costs are likely to be more consequential can help us cope with uncertainty more effectively and help explain variation in organizational responses to complexity. Obsession with complexity as the only variable of consequence in the design of organizations and explanation of organizational behavior will lead to a *standardization* of analysis and advice (to decentralize and become more incremental) which directly contradicts the insight on which that response is based.

IAN LUSTICK

Dartmouth College

Comment on Jennings
(Vol. 73, June 1979, pp. 414-29)

TO THE EDITOR:

Researchers studying the effects of interparty competition on state policy outputs have typically assumed that in competitive situations both parties try to appeal to disadvantaged voters, thereby liberalizing welfare policies. In a recent issue, Edward Jennings (1979) argues that the key party system characteristic affecting welfare policies is not competition per se but rather the extent to which support for the parties is divided along social class lines. After presenting his theory, Jennings derives two propositions and tests them using cross-sectional data from eight states and longitudinal data from six states. We contend that one of these propositions is inconsistent with Jennings' stated theory, and then develop and test here a somewhat more general version of Jennings' key hypothesis.

Jennings contends that interparty competition leads to more liberal welfare policies only if (1) support for the parties is divided along class lines and (2) the party supported by the lower and working classes controls the government:

The generosity of a state's social welfare policies depends upon the organization and mobilization of the lower classes in the electoral process. When a party or faction which receives substantial electoral support from the lower-class voters attains office, social welfare benefits should increase. When a party or faction which receives minimal support from the disadvantaged attains office, social welfare benefits should remain constant or decline. Party systems which

organize the electorate along lines of class cleavage should generate more generous welfare policies than party systems which do not organize the electorate, so long as the lower- or working-class party has enjoyed success in its pursuit of office. When a party system fails to organize the electorate along class lines, welfare policy is likely to have low salience and neither party will use welfare benefits to reward its supporters (pp. 416-17).

Jennings derives two propositions from this theory: (1) "States with class-based electoral politics will score high on measures of welfare policy relative to states without class-based electoral politics"; and (2) "In states with class-based electoral systems, change in welfare policy will be positively related to the degree to which the party or faction with lower- and working-class support gains control of government." In our view, Proposition 1 is inconsistent with Jennings' stated theory, for his logic does not lead to the prediction that states with class-based electoral politics will necessarily have more liberal welfare policies than states without class-based electoral politics; whether they will or not should depend on which party or faction controls state government. Thus, for example, in direct contrast to Jennings' first hypothesis, states with class-based electoral politics, and in which the government is controlled by the upper- and middle-class party or faction, should have *less* liberal welfare policies than states without class-based electoral politics.

Although Proposition 2 is consistent with Jennings' theory, we know of no reason why "the extent of class-based politics" should be considered a dichotomous rather than a continuous variable. With this in mind, we can derive a hypothesis which subsumes Proposition 2 and which deals with *non*-class-based as well as class-based electoral systems: the extent to which electoral politics in a state is class-based and the degree to which the lower- and working-class party or faction controls the government *interact* in influencing the "generosity" of state welfare policy. In particular, if we let P represent the "generosity" of state welfare policy, C represent the extent of class-based electoral politics in a state (where C ranges from 0 to 1), and G represent the degree to which the lower- and working-class party (or faction) controls state government (where G ranges from 0 to 1 and equals .5 when the upper- and middle-class party [or faction] and the lower- and working-class party [or faction] share equally in the control of government), then Jennings' theory can be expressed as a multiplicative model:

$$P = b[C(G - .5)] \quad (1)$$

where b is a constant greater than 0.

If we denote "the slope of the linear relationship between G and P " by b_{PG} , and "the slope of the linear relationship between C and P " by b_{PC} , model (1) is consistent with the following expectations about the relationship among C , G , and P :

1. When $C = 0$, $b_{PG} = 0$ (i.e., in states where class-based electoral politics are completely absent, the generosity of welfare policy should be unaffected by the degree to which the lower- and working-class party controls the government).
2. When $C > 0$, $b_{PG} > 0$, and as C increases toward 1, b_{PG} increases in magnitude (i.e., in states where there is some degree of class-based electoral politics, the "extent of working-class governmental control" should be positively related to "welfare generosity" [as in Proposition 2], and as the degree of class-based politics increases, the strength of the relationship between "working-class governmental control" and "welfare generosity" should increase).
3. When $G = 0$, $b_{PC} < 0$, and as G increases toward .5, b_{PC} decreases in magnitude until $b_{PC} = 0$ when $G = .5$ (i.e., when the upper- and middle-class party has total control of government, the degree of class-based electoral politics should be negatively related to "welfare generosity," and as upper-class governmental control diminishes toward the point of even party strengths, the strength of the relationship between the degree of class-based politics and "welfare generosity" should decrease).
4. When $G > .5$, $b_{PC} > 0$, and as G increases toward 1, b_{PC} increases in magnitude (i.e., when the lower- and working-class party has greater control of government than the upper- and middle-class party, the degree of class-based electoral politics should be positively related to "welfare generosity," and as working-class governmental control increases, the strength of the relationship between degree of class-based politics and "welfare generosity" should increase).

We can test this theory with a regression model in which P is regressed on the product $C(G - .5)$ as in

$$P = b_0[C(G - .5)] + e. \quad (2)$$

Jennings' theory predicts that b_0 should be greater than 0. In estimating the model, we use the same six indicators of welfare "generosity" (P) that Jennings employed; these indicators—identified in Table 1—all measure the *change* in an aspect of state welfare policy during the gubernatorial administration in office during 1969. This time

frame was employed to make the P indicators correspond temporarily to our indicator of C . Using data for 11 states from the Comparative State Elections Project (CSEP), we measured C as the difference between (1) the percentage of working-class respondents in the 1968 CSEP survey who identified with the state Democratic party, and (2) the percentage of middle- and upper-class respondents who identified with the state Democratic party; class was determined on the basis of the blue-collar versus white-collar/professional distinction. (Two states were excluded from the CSEP sample: Minnesota, because of its non-partisan legislature during the period under analysis, and Texas, because of its class-based *intra*-party factionalism, the precise extent of which could not be measured.) Finally, G is measured by the unweighted average of three components: (1) the percentage of seats in the state senate controlled by the Democrats, (2) the percentage of seats in the state house controlled by the Democrats, and (3) a variable which equals 1 if the governor was a Democrat and 0 if Republican. (In all states in the sample, identification with the Democratic party was more frequent among lower- and working-class respondents than among upper- and middle-class respondents.)

The parameter estimates for regression model (2)—given in column 1 of Table 1—do not support Jennings' theory, for b_0 is not consistently positive; instead, the results are mixed. For two policy indicators, b_0 is positive, while for four indicators it is negative. Indeed, for the indicator that Jennings considers "the best single indicator of welfare policy"—per capita welfare expenditure— b_0 takes on its strongest *negative* value, thereby indicating that in states with some degree of class-based electoral politics, the degree to which the lower- and working-class party controls government is negatively related to the generosity of welfare policy. In addition, the values obtained for b_0 are very weak. In fact, a comparison of b_0 with the simple correlations between P and G (r_{PG} in column 3) and between P and C (r_{PC} in column 2) shows that for five of the six policy indicators, C alone and G alone are better linear predictors of P than the multiplicative term $C(G - .5)$. Thus, when Jennings' theory is accurately specified (in an interactive multiplicative model), empirical analysis fails to demonstrate support for the theory.

WILLIAM D. BERRY
LEE SIGELMAN

University of Kentucky