

suffered from a horrible cocktail of toxic medication and the looming reality of hospice care. We said a beautiful goodbye and stayed in touch via texting until it likely just exhausted her and she just sort of faded and vanished.

I am still waiting for her to text me back. I miss her every day.

## References

Day, Christopher, and Kendra Koivu. 2019. "Finding Question: A Puzzle-Based Approach to the Logic of Discovery." *Journal of Political Science Education* 15, no. 3: 377–86.

# Kendra Koivu: Remembering a Qualitative Methodologist

James Mahoney  
Northwestern University

“I think fuzzy-set analysis is really useful.” Those are the words that I remember Kendra Koivu saying as she began to make a comment during an APSA meeting in which some leaders from the qualitative methods section were chatting with graduate students. Kendra was still a graduate student herself, and the context of the meeting was a brown bag lunch for students participating in the qualitative methods working group sponsored by APSA. I blushed as she began talking because she learned about fuzzy-set analysis from me, and I wanted to keep anything related to set-theoretic analysis out of the discussion. As she continued to speak, however, my emotion shifted from a twinge of discomfort to a sweeping feeling of admiration and pride. She spoke about the value of set-theoretic methods with authenticity, conviction, and intelligence. I thought her remarks were courageous. I never told Kendra that her comment was inspiring for me, but it was. I returned to that memory many times over the years.

Another memory: Kendra Koivu and Erin Kimball (now Damman) come knocking at my office door to visit me to discuss methodology. Kendra gets right to the point, “You said not enough women are working in methodology in political science. We are here to try to change that.” Kendra was referring to my complaining about gender bias in the field of methodology that generations of Northwestern students have had to endure. Kendra and Erin wanted to work in this area, and they proactively reached out to me seeking collaboration. I was working on an article related to set-theoretic causality and historical sequences, and I was pretty stuck on several fronts. We soon began a collaboration that led to one of my all-time favorite articles for which I am an author. In that article, we coined the term SUIN

condition, which is now often used in the QCA field.

Kendra was fascinated with set diagrams illustrating the set-membership relations between categories, and she did much to move forward the visualization of set-theoretic analysis. Along with her, I became fascinated with set diagrams. I trace our fascination back to Charles Ragin, who suggested a solution to a problem we were having with our article on historical sequences. We were trying to figure out how we could help people understand why certain causal conditions were necessarily more important than others in causal chain arguments. Ragin suggested that we illustrate the idea with diagrams, and Kendra and Erin carried out the task of working out our argument in diagram form.

For Kendra and me, this work led to a subsequent interest—some might say obsession—with using diagrams to explore and understand the logic of social science arguments. Kendra and I never discussed academic matters without drawing pictures and creating set-theoretic figures to illustrate our ideas. Whereas some scholars communicate using the language of statistics, algebra, or calculus, we communicated using the language of logic and its set-theoretic expression.

Kendra had a talent for thinking spatially and relating set-theoretic logic to social science matters. This way of thinking came naturally to her, and I know she loved to think abstractly in this manner. The logic of methodology no doubt gave her that sublime worldly escape that comes with totally engrossed intellectual thinking. Kendra and I could discuss issues that built on an enormous shared foundation. This shared foundation allowed us to achieve the kind of intersubjective understanding that makes you feel as if you are on a special intellectual wavelength with another person. We were right there together appreciating

the ideas that reverberated on that wavelength.

For me personally, Kendra was an extra special colleague: she embraced a set-theoretic methodology for the same reasons as me. Kendra believed that set-theoretic analysis is an ontology for understanding the social world. Set-theoretic analysis is a tool for capturing the way in which categories reflect our substantive knowledge and embody substantive claims about the world. Kendra believed that our categories construct our social reality as much as the reverse. And she believed that set-theoretic analysis could capture this interaction between categories and social reality.

For the discipline more generally, Kendra was also a special colleague. Her methodological work made substantial contributions on a number of fronts besides set-theoretic analysis, especially in the field of multi-method research. Her substantive research made significant contributions to the study of political order, political violence, and the rule of law. She was a generous colleague, offering high quality insight, comments, and help with regularity and without an expectation of reciprocation. She was a rising star in the field of qualitative methodology, serving in leadership roles for the APSA section. She participated in research development meetings in conjunction with the Institute for Qualitative and Multi-Method Research at Syracuse. She was a founding director of the Southwest Workshop

on Mixed-Methods Research. She was centrally involved in the development and proliferation of new initiatives in the field of qualitative methodology.

Another memory: On a gray morning, Kendra and I walking uphill together by Syracuse University approaching the building that looks like the house from the Addams family. We are discussing a paper she is writing on counterfactual analysis, but the conversation shifts to how things are going more generally. She gives me a truthful summary of the life of an academic with children at a major research university who is living with cancer and worried about getting tenure. At the end of the conversation, Kendra peels off because she is not feeling well because of her cancer treatments. I peel off to go to the men's room so I can cry quietly for a couple minutes. Those tears consisted of both sorrow for what Kendra had to endure and admiration for the way in which she was enduring it.

Kendra Koivu was a passionate, kind, generous, and original scholar with an ability to both think abstractly about general categories and conduct serious field research on the ground. She was a deeply valued colleague and friend to many of us. Kendra's academic contributions will continue to influence the field for years to come. Her presence will stay with us through these contributions, and, even more, through our fond memories of good times together.

## Sisu

Jami Nelson-Nuñez  
*University of New Mexico*

When we lost Kendra Koivu in September 2019, we felt the impact in so many different spaces and ways. Her contribution and impact in her role as a professor at the University of New Mexico (UNM) was powerful. I only knew UNM with her in it, as I started as an assistant professor four years after her. She brought a lot of laughter to our hallways and created a supportive space that immediately made me feel like I belonged. It's been a challenge to write this tribute—for the obvious reason that the pain of her loss is still sharp—but also because I know many of the people who are reading this were incredibly important in Kendra's life. So in this tribute to Kendra, I want to honor her scholarly achievements and her contributions as a teacher and mentor at UNM, but I also hope to relate how special she was given her perseverance, rare talents,

and the impact she made on so many people.

Kendra saw the world from an uncommon angle, one that reflected (and perhaps resulted) from her unconventional path to this profession. Her lived experiences coupled with a sharp mind allowed her to make connections that many miss. For example, in the epic tales of the Icelandic sagas, she saw a case study of a unique state-building process. In studying Finnish history, a case connected to her family's roots, she focused on what was missing and how the case demonstrated overlooked variation in the persistence of criminal activity. She tore into historical archives to develop the Finnish case of the Age of Knife Fighters, tracing not only how they arose, but also brilliantly finding ways to test her theories on why gangs sometimes disappear. She extended Tilly's work on state-building and war to the connections between state-building and crime, focusing