



**European University Institute
Department of Political and Social Sciences**

Compulsory core methods seminar

Fall term 2005

Donatella Della Porta and Michael Keating

Winter term 2006

Donatella Della Porta, Michael Keating and Pascal Vennesson

Seminar room 2 – mostly Mondays 11-13

NB Check calendar for days!

The aim of this seminar is to discuss main approaches to political science and sociology, the principal steps in designing research, and some methods in data collection. Taking into account the diverse national and disciplinary background of first year research, the seminar attempts at developing some common knowledge, without however losing the richness of plurality. The seminar as a whole, as well as the single sessions, aim therefore at critically contrasting the advantages as well as problems of the various strategies in the construction of scientific knowledge. In this perspective, the seminar sees the participation of guest speakers and round tables. In dealing with general approaches, research designing and methods for data collection, we shall focus especially on those which seem more useful for addressing the specific concerns and topics addressed by the researchers in their PhDs projects, as well as the main empirical and theoretical concerns present in the department. In the last part of the seminar, the class will be divided in three smaller groups. The knowledge acquired in the first part of the seminar will be activated in the presentation and discussion of researchers' projects; one hour will be devoted to the presentation and discussion of each project.

First term (October-December; Mondays 11-13) Donatella della Porta and Michael Keating

Part 1. Epistemological questions and general approaches (sessions 1-5)

Session 1: *Epistemology: the main problems in social science research*: round table with Keating, Della Porta, Rhodes, Stankiewicz, Wagner

In this session, we aim at discussing some main epistemological problems in social science research, the main ethical choices as well as the debate about potential and limit of scientific knowledge.

Suggested readings:

McKeown, Timothy J., *Case Studies and the Limits of the Quantitative World View*, in Henry E. Brady and David Collier (eds), *Rethinking Social Inquiry. Diverse Tools, Shared Standards*, Lanham, Rowman and Littlefield, 2004, pp. 139-167.

Whyte, Street Corner Society, appendix @@

Brent Flyberg, *Making Social Science Matter*, Cambridge, 2001, pp. 38-65.

Session 2: *Causal analysis* (guest speaker: Adrienne Heritier)

Suggested readings:

@@ Last year:

Frankfort-Nachmias, Ch., David Nachmias, *Research Methods in the Social Sciences*, New York, St. Martin's Press, chapters 2 and 3.

Gerring, John, "What Makes a Concept Good? A Criterial Framework for Understanding Concept Formation in the Social Sciences", *Polity*, 31, 1999, pp. 357-93.

Little, Daniel, *Varieties of Social Explanation: An Introduction to the Philosophy of Social Science*, Boulder, Westview Press, 1991, chapter 2.

Session 3: *Constructivistic approaches* (guest speaker: Fritz Kratochwil)

Suggested readings:

@@Last year

Kratochwil, Fritz, *Constructivism and the Practices of (International) Politics: The Case for an Interdisciplinary Approach*, mimeo, 2001

Adler, E., *Constructivism in International Relations: Sources, Contributions, Debates and Future Directions*, in W. Carlsnaes, Th. Risse and B. Simmons (eds.), *Handbook of International Relations*, Thousand Oaks, Sage, 2002.

Little, Daniel, *Varieties of Social Explanation: An Introduction to the Philosophy of Social Science*, Boulder, Westview Press, 1991, chapter 4.

Session 4: *Rational choice* (guest speaker: Christine Chwaszcza)

Suggested readings:

@@add

Session 5: *Persistence and Change. Institutionalism, Culture and History* (Keating)

Suggested readings:

Paul Pierson, 'Big, Slow Moving, and...invisible', in James Mahoney and Dietrich Rueschmayer (eds), *Comparative Historical Analysis in the Social Sciences*, pp.177-207

Marc Howard Ross, 'Culture and Identity in Comparative Political Analysis', in Mark Irving Lichbach and Alan S. Zuckerman (eds), *Comparative Politics*, Cambridge, 1997.

Part 2. Research design (sessions 6-10)

Session 6: *Introduction to research designs*: round table with Brustz, della Porta, Keating, Kohli, Vennesson

The aim of this round table is to discuss different approaches in designing scientific research.

Suggested readings:

@@Add

Suggested readings:

King, G., R. O. Keohane, S. Verba, *Designing Social Inquiry. Scientific Inference in Qualitative research*, Princeton, Princeton University Press, 1994, pp. 3-149.

Collie, David, Jason Seawright and Gerardo L. Munck, *The Quest for Standard: King, Keohane and Verba's Designing Social Inquiry*, in Henry E. Brady and David Collier (eds), *Rethinking Social Inquiry. Diverse Tools, Shared Standards*, Lanham, Rowman and Littlefield, 2004, pp. 21-50.

Session 7: *From theory to research. Operationalization, hypotheses, variables* (Keating)
Piergiorgio Corbetta, *Social Research. Theory, Methods and Techniques*, Sage, 2003, pp.57-87.

Session 8: *Sociological mechanisms: micro, meso and macro approaches* (della Porta and Alessandro Pizzorno)

Thus session will focus on sociological mechanisms in the explanation of the macro-micro links. In particular, it will discuss the understanding of the actor's logic in different approaches.

Suggested readings:

Boudon—see last year@@

Coleman, James S., 1986, "Social Theory, Social Research and a Theory of Action", *American Journal of Sociology*, 91, 1309-35.

Pizzorno, Alessandro, *The Limits of Rational Choice*, mimeo

Session 9: *Comparing and miscomparing* (guest speaker: Peter Mair)

Suggested readings:

@@Add

Session 10: *Case-oriented, variable-oriented and QCA* (della Porta)

This session will discuss the different logics involved in Durkheim's variable-oriented research strategy versus the Weber's case-oriented one. It will address the advantages and limits of case studies as well as Qualitative Comparative Analysis.

Suggested readings:

Ragin, Charles and David Zaret, 1983, "Theory and Method on Comparative Research: Two Strategies", *Social Forces*, vol. 61, n. 3, pp. 731-754.

Ragin, Charles, 1994, *Using Comparative Methods to Study Diversity*, in ID., *Constructing Social Research. The Unity and Diversity of Methods*, Thousand Oaks, Pine Forge Press.

Rueschemeyer, Dietrich, 2003, *Can One or a Few Cases Yield Theoretical Gains?*, in James Mahoney and Dietrich Rueschemeyer (eds.), *Comparative Historical Analysis in the Social Sciences*, New York, Cambridge University Press, pp. 305-336.

Second term (January-March; Mondays 11-13) Donatella della Porta, Michael Keating and Pascal Vennesson

Part 3. Methods of data collection and data analysis (sessions 11-14)

Session 11: *Interviews* (della Porta/Trechsel)

Interviewing (surveys, semistructured interviews, in-depth interviews, life histories, focus groups) is one of the most widespread methods for collecting data in social sciences. In this session, we shall

focus on some main choices in the use of this instrument, discussing the role of the interviewer, the selection of interviewees, the phrasing of questions, etc..

Suggested readings:

Holstein, James A. and Jaber F. Gubrium, 2002, "Active Interviewing", in D. Wenberg (ed.), *Qualitative Research Methods*, Oxford, Blackwell, pp. 112-126.
Handbook@ @last year

Session 12: *Discourse analysis* (della Porta/Guiraudon)

Texts are a basic source of information for social science research. This session focuses on the various (quantitative and qualitative) strategies to analyze documents through different forms of content, discourse, claim analysis.

Suggested readings:

Franzosi, Roberto, 2004, *Content Analysis*, in Alan Bryman and Melissa Hardy (eds.), *Handbook of Data Analysis*, Beverly Hills, Sage, pp. 547-566.
Levi, Margaret, *Modelling Complex Historical Processes with Analytic Narratives*, in Renate Mayntz (ed.), *Akteure-Mechanismen-Modellen*, Frankfurt am Main, Campus, 108-127.
Mohr, John, "Measuring Meaning Structures", in *Annual Review of Sociology*, 24, 1998, pp. 345-370.

Session 13: *Quantitative methods* (guest speaker: Jaap Dronkers)

add@

Suggested readings:

Session 14: *Conceptual analysis* (Guest speaker: Christine Chwaszcza)

@ @add

Suggested readings:

Part 4. Researchers presentation (sessions 15-20)

In session 15 to 20 researchers will be divided in three groups of about 12 members each and will present and discuss their research projects. The groups will be led by Donatella Della Porta, Michael Keating and Pascal Vennesson.