



Research Design Seminar: Comparative Politics and Comparative Method

Adrienne Héritier and Peter Mair

Tuesdays 11-13, Badia Seminar Room 2, 12 January - 16 March 2010

Please register with Alessandra.Torre@eui.eu

This seminar builds on the first-term core methods programme and deals with some of the main problems and alternatives that are confronted when designing and conducting comparative research. The topics we deal with include the problems of concept formation and theorization; the understanding of causation and explanation; most similar and most different case-study design and comparative statics; as well as analytical narratives; conducting case-studies and process-tracing; and (an introduction to) qualitative comparative analysis (QCA). The seminar will also deal with the problems of generalising research results, and we will discuss the challenges facing comparative research as a result of globalisation, Europeanisation, diffusion, and the decline of the boundedness of nation-states. The purpose of the seminar is to offer students a more detailed and hands-on introduction to the ways in which comparative research can be designed as function of a variety of comparative politics and comparative policies research questions.

Each student will be expected to read and comment on the designated literature for each of the topics and to participate actively in the weekly discussions. Researchers will also be expected to formally present and discuss the particular problems of research design that they face in their own thesis work.

Topics:

12 January Introduction

Richard Snyder. 2007. The Human Dimension of Comparative Research. In Gerardo L. Munck and Richard Snyder (eds), *Passion, Craft, and Method in Comparative Politics*. Johns Hopkins University Press, 1-31.

Gerardo L. Munck. 2007. The Past and Present of Comparative Politics. In Gerardo L. Munck and Richard Snyder (eds), *Passion, Craft, and Method in Comparative Politics*. Johns Hopkins University Press, 32-59.



19 January Concepts, Classifications and Typologies

Giovanni Sartori. 1970. Concept Misformation in Comparative Politics. *American Political Science Review* 64:4, 1033-53
David Collier and James E Mahoney, 1993. Conceptual Stretching Revisited. *American Political Science Review* 87:4, 845-55.
John Gerring. 1999. What makes a concept good? A criterial framework for understanding concept formation in the social sciences. *Polity* 31:3, 357-93.
Cas Mudde. 2007. *Populist radical right parties in Europe*. Cambridge University Press. Pp 11-59 offer a good example of the application of some of the approaches discussed here.

26 January Causation and Explanation (1)

Daniel Little (1991) *Varieties of Social Explanation*, Westview Press, 1991:
Chapter 2 Causal Analysis 13 – 37; Chapter 3 Rational Choice Theory 39-67;
Chapter 4 Interpretation Theory 68-87; Chapter 5 Functional and Structural Explanation 91-113.

2 February: Causation and Explanation (2)

William H. Riker 1957, Events and Situations, *Journal of Philosophy*, pp 57- 70
Jeffrey Frieden 2002 Actors and Preferences in International Relations, in David Lake and Richard Powell, eds. *Strategic Interaction in International Relations* 39-76
James Mahoney 2007 Qualitative Methodology and Comparative Politics, *Comparative Political Studies*, 122-144
Gerald L. Munck and Richard Snyder 2007, Debating the Direction of Comparative Politics, in *Comparative Political Studies*, 5-31

9 February Most similar and most different systems design

Adam Przeworski and Henry Teune. 1970. *The Logic of Comparative Social Inquiry*. Wiley, 17-87.
Gisèle de Meur and Dirk Berg-Schlosser. 1996. Conditions of Authoritarianism, Fascism, and Democracy in Interwar Europe: Systemic Matching and Contrasting of Cases for 'Small N' Analysis. *Comparative Political Studies* 29:4, 423-68.
Jonathan W. Moses and Torbjørn L.Knutsen. 2007. *Ways of Knowing: Competing Methodologies in Social and Political Research*, Chapter 5 (94-115): The Comparative Method.
Example of MSSD: Fritz Scharpf, 1991. *Crisis and Choice in European Social Democracy*. Cornell University Press.



Example of MDSD: Sidney Verba et al, 1978. *Participation and Political Equality: A Seven Nation Comparison*. Cambridge University Press.

16 February Case Studies

Arend Lijphart 1971. Comparative Politics and the Comparative Method. *American Political Science Review* 65:3, 682-93

Arend Lijphart, 1975. The Comparable Cases Strategy in Comparative Research. *Comparative Political Studies* 8:2, 158-77.

Alexander George and Andrew Bennett, 2005. *Case Study and Theory Development*. MIT Press, 3-36.

John Gerring, 2004. What is a Case Study and What is it Good for? *American Political Science Review* 98:2, 341-354.

Evan S. Lieberman, 2005. Nested Analysis as a Mixed-Method Strategy for Comparative Research. *American Political Science Review* 99:3, 435-52

23 February Process Tracing and Analytic Narratives

James A. Caparaso. 2009. Is there a quantitative-qualitative divide in comparative politics? The case of process-tracing. In Todd Landman and Neil Robinson (eds), *The Sage Handbook of Comparative Politics*, Sage.
[manuscript copy available]

Margaret Levi. 1999. Producing an Analytic Narrative. In John Bowen and Roger Petersen (eds), *Critical Comparisons in Politics and Culture*. Cambridge University Press, 152-172.

Peter Hall. 2008. Systematic process analysis: what it is and how to use it. *EPS* 7, 304-317

Tim Bueth. 2002. Taking Temporality Seriously: Modeling History and the Use of Narratives As Evidence, *American Political Science Review*, 481-493

Jonathan W. Moses and Torbjørn L. Knutsen. 2007. *Ways of Knowing: Competing Methodologies in Social and Political Research*, Chapter 9 (197-221): From Story Telling to Telling Histories

2 March QCA (guest speaker: Claudius Wagemann)

Readings to be added.



9 March Multi-Level Politics and Comparative Research Design (with guest speaker Quinton Mayne)

David Lake and Richard Powell, 2002, International Relations: A Strategic Approach, in Lake and Powell, *Strategic Choice and International Relations*, 3-38

Liesbet Hooghe and Gary Marks, 2003. Unravelling the Central State, But How? Types of Multi-Level Governance. *American Political Science Review*, 97:2, 233-243

Additional reading to be added.

16 March Comparative Politics and Policy Diffusion: Vertical and horizontal perspectives.

Dietmar Braun and Fabrizio Gilardi. 2006. Taking 'Galton's Problem' Seriously: Towards a Theory of Policy Diffusion. *Journal of Theoretical Politics*, 18, 298-322

Sarah Brooks, 2007. When does diffusion matter? Explaining the spread of structural pension reforms across nations. *Journal of Politics*, 69:701-715

Beth A. Simmons, Frank Dobbin and Geoffrey Garrett. 2006. Introduction: International Diffusion of Liberalism, *International Organization*, 60, 781-810