



Approaches and Methodologies in the Social Sciences

Workshop offered by Donatella Della Porta and Sven Steinmo

First Term 2011

September 28, October 5 and 7, 2011

Seminar Room 2

Compulsory (10 Credits)

The aim of this workshop is twofold: We want to introduce 1st year researchers to both the multiple and diverse approaches used in our department and to the faculty of the department. Taking into account the diverse national and disciplinary background of first year researchers, the seminar attempts to develop some common knowledge, without losing the richness of plurality. The seminar as a whole, as well as the individual sessions, aim at contrasting the advantages as well as problems of the various strategies in the construction of scientific knowledge.

The seminar stems from SPS department's commitment to methodological pluralism and informed debate. Specifically its aims are:

- To provide an overview of some of the approaches in the social sciences, in order to help students to choose their own approach for the thesis, to justify this approach, and to situate it within the discipline;
- To introduce researchers to the main issues of debate and contention in the methodology of social sciences and to demystify some of this debate, identifying commonalities, historic continuities, and genuine differences;
- To give first year researchers a common experience and socialization and to encourage them to discuss their own work across sub-disciplines and methodological approaches.

Our first session will be devoted to discussions of the aims of this course and the values of intellectual diversity. Next we discuss some more specific issues dealing with theories, methods and concept formation in the social sciences. In the following sessions we will interview members of the department. The central aims of these introductory interviews is to give the students a sense of the intellectual and ontological perspectives of the department and to explore how and why these professors came to the work that they are now engaged in. We hope that these interviews will in fact be quite personal. We want to know more than what books the professors have read and/or what articles they have written. Instead, our focus will be on what experiences they have had and how did they come to be the kind of social scientists that they are today.



The readings for the workshop will consist of chapters of the volume "Approaches and Methodologies in the Social Sciences. A Pluralist Perspective", D. Della Porta and M. Keating (eds), Cambridge University Press, 2009. The book is available in the EUI library. Those of you who wish to buy a copy at the author's discount can contact the secretary responsible for the workshop.

Schedule

Day 1: September 28, 2011

Readings for day 1:

Chapter 1. Introduction, by *Donatella Della Porta and Michael Keating*

Chapter 2. How Many Approaches in the Social Sciences? An Epistemological Introduction, by *Donatella Della Porta and Michael Keating*

Chapter 10. Concepts and Concept Formation, by *Peter Mair*

Chapter 15. The Design of Social and Political Research, by *Philippe C. Schmitter*

Session 1. 10:30-11:30

What do we mean by pluralism and what do we want to do in this seminar

Session 2. 11:30-12:30

Concepts and Methods in the Social Sciences

Session 3. 13:30-14:30

Interview: László Bruszt

Session 4. 14:30- 15:30

Stefano Bartolini on Peter Mair

Session 5: 15:30-16:30

Interview: Donatella della Porta



Day 2: October 5, 2011

Readings for day 2:

Chapter 3. Normative Theory and Empirical Research, by *Rainer Bauböck*

Chapter 4. Causal Explanation, by *Adrienne Héritier*

Chapter 5: Constructivism: what is it (not) and how it matters, by *Friedrich Kratochwil*

Session 6. 10:00-11:00

Interview: Adrienne Héritier

Session 7. 11:00—12:00

Interview: Chris Reus-Smit

Session 8: 13:30—14:30

Interview: Rainer Bauböck

Session 9. 14:30-15:30

Interview: Pepper Culpepper

Day 3: October 7, 2011

Readings for day 3:

Chapter 12. Case Studies and Process Tracing: Theories and Practices, by *Pascal Vennesson*

Chapter 13: Quantitative analysis, by *Mark Franklin*

Chapter 14. Ethnographic Approaches, by *Zoe Bray*

Chapter 16. Comparing Methods and Approaches. Some Concluding Remarks, by *Donatella della Porta and Michael Keating*



Session 10: 10:00-11:00

Interview: Fabrizio Bernardi

Session 11: 11:00-12:00

Interview: Pascal Vennesson

Session 12: 13:30-14:30

Interview: Olivier Roy

Session 13: 14:30-15:30

Interview: Martin Kohli

Session 14: 15:45-16:45

Interview: Alexander Trechsel

Session 15: 16:45-17:45

Interview: Sven Steinmo