Seminar 1st term academic year 2014-2015

Foundations of Comparative Sociology

Organized by Hans-Peter Blossfeld

Tuesdays 11:00 - 13:00, Seminar Room 2, Badia Fiesolana

Please register with Alina.Vlad@EUI.eu

Description

This seminar focuses on quantitative cross-national comparative sociology. The focus is on various key issues of inequality research in modern societies. Cross-national studies can greatly extend the scope of sociological knowledge by answering the question of whether a specific mechanism of social inequality established in one country also applies outside the particular context of this country. They also tend to deepen our understanding of cross-national differences when we are able to give a convincing explanation of the impact of institutional and socio-structural conditions on social inequalities in various nations. The seminar gives an overview of the history of theoretical approaches studying cross-national similarities and differences as well as recent methodological developments affecting the practice of cross-national research. Using several (classical) application examples advantages and limitations of cross-national comparative inequality studies will be discussed in the seminar.

Researchers are expected to come to class fully prepared and to have thoroughly completed the assigned readings before each meeting. Participants must present and discuss the key readings from one or two meetings. For this purpose they have to send a PowerPoint presentation to the course website the night before class. These presentations will then be discussed in class together with the readings themselves. Researchers also have the possibility to present their own cross-national research designs and findings. Advanced PhD students will report on their problems in dealing with comparative research.

Researchers can write a term paper for this class as part of their general term paper requirements. They need to make significant use of the readings and topics on the syllabus and make contributions to discussions on the theoretical and methodological issues of cross-national comparative research in inequality research. Those who wish to write a term paper should consult with me and submit both a paper copy and an email copy to me (hp.blossfeld@eui.eu with cc to Alina.Vlad@EUI.eu). The deadline for the submission of the second term papers is 30 January 2015.
Tuesday October 7th, 2014
Introduction and Overview


Tuesday October 14th, 2014
Methods of International Comparisons


Tuesday October 21st, 2014
Equivalence of Measures in Comparative Research


Tuesday October 28th, 2014
Classical Studies I: Social Stratification and Mobility


Tuesday November 4th, 2014
Classical Studies II: Educational Systems and Social Inequality


Tuesday November 11th, 2014
Classical Studies III: Welfare State Regimes


Tuesday November 18th, 2014
Determinants of Redistribution Preferences in International Comparison


Tuesday November 25th, 2014
Assortative Mating, Careers of Couples and Social Inequality in Comparative Perspective


Globalization and Social Inequality in Cross-national Comparison


Cross-national Comparison, Life Course Research, and Path-Dependence


