Foundations of Comparative Sociology

Seminar, 1st term 2015-2016

Organised by Rasmus Hoffmann

Please register online

Contact: Mariana.Spratley@eui.eu

Description
This seminar is about international comparative sociology with a focus on social inequalities. The aim is to reveal and discuss causes and consequences of inequalities in European countries in a comparative perspective and how different welfare states address inequalities. Europe is an ideal framework for empirical comparative sociology because the available data and comparable and well-documented cultural and historical contexts allow a valid comparison and interpretation of differences in concrete welfare state arrangements, policies and their outcomes.

The seminar addresses methodological, design- and data-related problems in comparative research and covers the following topics with in-depth readings and discussion: Social structure, social inequality and mobility; demographic changes in fertility and mortality and their relation to family structures and the life-course; different welfare state regimes and how they address demographic challenges, retirement issues and poverty; different health care systems and how they address health inequalities.

Requirements
Researchers are expected (1) to come to class fully prepared and to have thoroughly completed the assigned readings before each meeting, (2) participants will be asked to reflect on these readings with brief questions in advance of each session, (3) participants are required to critically present the readings of one of the sessions and lead the discussion on how they contribute to the key questions of the seminar. For this purpose they have to send a PowerPoint presentation to the course website the night before class. 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.

Those who wish to write a term paper should consult with me and send it to me by email (rasmus.hoffmann@eui.eu with cc to mariana.spratley@eui.eu). The deadline for the submission of the paper is 15 January 2016.

This seminar is worth 20 credits.
Schedule
The seminar takes place on Wednesdays at 15:00-17:00, in Seminar Room 4 in the Badia, and will run from Wednesday 7th October to Wednesday 16th December. The full list of the seminar sessions is the following:

Session 1: Thursday 8th October Seminar room 4
Session 2: Wednesday 14th October Seminar room 4
Session 3: Wednesday 21st October No session
Session 4: Wednesday 28th October Seminar room 4
Session 5: Wednesday 4th November Seminar room 4
Session 6: Wednesday 11th November Seminar room 4
Session 7: Wednesday 18th November Seminar room 4
Session 8: Wednesday 25th November Seminar room 4
Session 9: Wednesday 2nd December Seminar room 4
Session 10: Wednesday 9th December Seminar room 4 (10:00 – 12:00)

Readings

Session 1: Wednesday, October 7th, 2015
Introduction and overview


General and additional literature:

Crow, G. (1997), Comparative Sociology and Social Theory: Beyond the Three Worlds, Palgrave Macmillan.


Please also have a look at the International Journal of Comparative Sociology at http://cos.sagepub.com
Session 2: Wednesday, October 14th, 2015
Methods of international comparisons


Additional readings:


Session 3: Wednesday, October 28th, 2015
Equivalence of measures in comparative research

All texts are from the edited volume: J. H. P. Hoffmeyer-Zlotnik and C. Wolf, Advances in cross-national comparison: A European working book for demographic and socio-economic variables, NY et al.: Kluver


Additional readings:


Session 4: Wednesday, November 4th, 2015
Social structure, social inequality and mobility


Rose, D., and E. Harrison (2009), Social Class in Europe: An Introduction to the European Socio-Economic Classification, London: Routledge, pp. 3-36.

Session 5: Wednesday, November 11th, 2015
Demographic changes and their relation to family structures and life-course


Session 6: Wednesday, November 18th, 2015
Welfare state regimes …


Session 7: Wednesday, November 25th, 2015
… and how they address demographic challenges, retirement issues and poverty


Session 8: Wednesday, December 2nd, 2015
Health care systems and health inequalities in Europe


**Session 9: Wednesday, December 9th, 2015**

**Austerity, health care and health inequalities**


**Session 10: Wednesday, December 11th, 2015**

**Session for presentations of the researchers’ projects, remaining topics and literature, concluding discussion and evaluation of the seminar**

*Last updated 13.11.2015*