



Opening up the Black Box of Causal Relationships: Process Tracing as a Tool for Qualitative Research

23.-25.05.2022

Academic Year 2021-2022, 3rd Term

10 Credits

Organisers

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Instructor

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With presentations by

Marek Naczyk, University of Oxford

Judith Rohde-Liebenau, Hertie School

Jeffrey Checkel, European University Institute

Magnus Schoeller, University of Vienna

Sponsoring Professor

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Description

Process tracing is “a methodology aiming to open up the ‘black box’ of relationships linking dependent and independent variables in a causal chain, a process evolving over time” (Mayntz 2016, p. 484). It is an approach that researchers can deploy in order to establish causality in within-case analyses. But what does this entail in practice? How do we apply it rigorously and transparently? During this workshop, we will discuss the fundamentals and limits of process tracing before diving into three very different applications of the methodology, in order to provide the participants with hands-on knowledge of how to use process-tracing in different research settings. On the last day, researchers can present own research designs.

Requirements

- Active participation, including submitting 1-2 discussion questions for each session.
- Either presenting on day 3, or acting as a discussant during one of the other sessions.

Programme

Monday 23 May

Session I, 9:00 – 9:45

Jan Karremans (European University Institute)

Introduction and theory: what is process tracing and why should we do it?

Beach, Derek, and Rasmus Brun Pedersen. *Process-Tracing Methods: Foundations and Guidelines*. University of Michigan Press, 2019 – Chapters 1, 2 and 3.

Bennett, Andrew, and Jeffrey T. Checkel, eds. *Process Tracing: From Metaphor to Analytic Tool*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2015 – Chapter 1.

Hedström, Peter, and Petri Ylikoski. "Causal Mechanisms in the Social Sciences." *Annual Review of Sociology* 36, no. 1 (2010): 49–67.

<https://doi.org/10.1146/annurev.soc.012809.102632>.

Session II, 9:45 – 10:45

Magnus Schoeller (University of Vienna)

Application I: how to 'do' deductive process tracing? From theory to operationalization in practice

Schoeller, Magnus G. "Centrifugal Forces in a Hegemonic Environment: The Rise of Small-State Coalitions in the Economic and Monetary Union." *European Political Science Review*, August 10, 2021, 1–17. <https://doi.org/10.1017/S1755773921000254>.

Beach, Derek, and Rasmus Brun Pedersen. *Process-Tracing Methods: Foundations and Guidelines*. University of Michigan Press, 2019 – Chapters 5 and 8.

Schimmelfennig, Frank. "Efficient Process Tracing." In *Process Tracing*, edited by Andrew Bennett and Jeffrey T. Checkel, 98–125. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2014.

Session III, 11:00 – 12:30

Jeffrey Checkel (European University Institute)

Process tracing and practice tracing: state of the art and where next

Checkel, Jeffrey T., "[Process Tracing – Towards a New Research Agenda](#)," Paper presented at the American Political Science Association Annual Convention (September-October 2021).

Adler, Emanuel, *World Ordering: A Social Theory of Cognitive Evolution* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2019) – Chapter 4.

Pouliot, Vincent, *International Pecking Orders: The Politics and Practice of Multilateral Diplomacy* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2016) – Appendix.

Tuesday 24 May

Session IV, 9:00 – 10:45

Judith Rohde-Liebenau (Hertie School)

Application II: From empirics to theory: inductive process tracing

Rohde-Liebenau, Judith. "Raising European Citizens? European Identity in European Schools." *JCMS: Journal of Common Market Studies* 58, no. 6 (2020): 1504–22.

<https://doi.org/10.1111/jcms.13050>.

Beach, Derek, and Rasmus Brun Pedersen. *Process-Tracing Methods: Foundations and Guidelines*. University of Michigan Press, 2019 – Chapter 9.

Falleti, Tulia G. "Process Tracing of Extensive and Intensive Processes." *New Political Economy* 21, no. 5 (September 2, 2016): 455–62. <https://doi.org/10.1080/13563467.2015.1135550>.

Session V, 11:05 – 12:50

Marek Naczyk (University of Oxford)

Application III: Transparency and formalization. Organizing and presenting process-tracing research in a structured manner

Naczyk, Marek. "Taking Back Control: Comprador Bankers and Managerial Developmentalism in Poland." *Review of International Political Economy* (2021): 1–25 and appendices.

<https://doi.org/10.1080/09692290.2021.1924831>.

Collier, David. "Understanding Process Tracing." *PS: Political Science & Politics* 44, no. 4 (October 2011): 823–30. <https://doi.org/10.1017/S1049096511001429>.

Fairfield, Tasha, and Andrew E. Charman. "A Dialogue with the Data: The Bayesian Foundations of Iterative Research in Qualitative Social Science." *Perspectives on Politics* 17, no. 1 (March 2019): 154–67. <https://doi.org/10.1017/S1537592718002177>.

Wednesday 25 May

Introduction, 9:00 – 9:15

Researchers' presentations, 9:15 – 12:40 (with breaks)

Wrap-up and takeaways, 12:40 – 13:00

Further theoretical readings

Barrenechea, Rodrigo, and James Mahoney. "A Set-Theoretic Approach to Bayesian Process Tracing." *Sociological Methods & Research* 48, no. 3 (August 1, 2019): 451–84.

<https://doi.org/10.1177/0049124117701489>.

Beach, Derek. "It's All about Mechanisms – What Process-Tracing Case Studies Should Be Tracing." *New Political Economy* 21, no. 5 (September 2, 2016): 463–72.

<https://doi.org/10.1080/13563467.2015.1134466>.

Bengtsson, Bo, and Hannu Ruonavaara. "Comparative Process Tracing: Making Historical Comparison Structured and Focused." *Philosophy of the Social Sciences* 47, no. 1 (January 1, 2017): 44–66. <https://doi.org/10.1177/0048393116658549>.

Fairfield, Tasha, and Andrew E. Charman. "Explicit Bayesian Analysis for Process Tracing: Guidelines, Opportunities, and Caveats." *Political Analysis* 25, no. 3 (July 2017): 363–80.

<https://doi.org/10.1017/pan.2017.14>.

Mahoney, James. "Process Tracing and Historical Explanation." *Security Studies* 24, no. 2 (April 3, 2015): 200–218. <https://doi.org/10.1080/09636412.2015.1036610>.

Mayntz, Renate. "Mechanisms in the Analysis of Social Macro-Phenomena." *Philosophy of the Social Sciences* 34, no. 2 (June 1, 2004): 237–59. <https://doi.org/10.1177/0048393103262552>.

Tansey, Oisín. "Process Tracing and Elite Interviewing: A Case for Non-Probability Sampling." *PS: Political Science & Politics* 40, no. 04 (October 2007): 765–72.

<https://doi.org/10.1017/S1049096507071211>.

Trampusch, Christine, and Bruno Palier. "Between X and Y: How Process Tracing Contributes to Opening the Black Box of Causality." *New Political Economy* 21, no. 5 (September 2, 2016): 437–54. <https://doi.org/10.1080/13563467.2015.1134465>.

Zaks, Sherry. "Updating Bayesian(s): A Critical Evaluation of Bayesian Process Tracing." *Political Analysis* 29, no. 1 (January 2021): 58–74. <https://doi.org/10.1017/pan.2020.10>.

Extra applications (good and... less good)

Berkovich, Izhak. "Educational Governance Transition in a Social Democratic Country: A Process-Tracing Analysis." *Journal of Educational Change* 20, no. 2 (May 1, 2019): 193–219.

<https://doi.org/10.1007/s10833-019-09340-8>.

Grech-Madin, Charlotte. "Water and Warfare: The Evolution and Operation of the Water Taboo." *International Security* 45, no. 4 (April 20, 2021): 84–125.

https://doi.org/10.1162/isec_a_00404.

Kaminska, Monika Ewa, Ertila Druga, Liva Stupele, and Ante Malinar. "Changing the Healthcare Financing Paradigm: Domestic Actors and International Organizations in the Agenda Setting for Diffusion of Social Health Insurance in Post-Communist Central and Eastern Europe." *Social Policy & Administration* 55, no. 6 (2021): 1066–81.

<https://doi.org/10.1111/spol.12724>.

Kuhlmann, Johanna, and Tobias ten Brink. "Causal Mechanisms in the Analysis of Transnational Social Policy Dynamics: Evidence from the Global South." *Social Policy & Administration* 55, no. 6 (2021): 1009–20. <https://doi.org/10.1111/spol.12725>.

Sacher, Martin. "Avoiding the Inappropriate: The European Commission and Sanctions under the Stability and Growth Pact." *Politics and Governance* 9, no. 2 (May 27, 2021): 163–72. <https://doi.org/10.17645/pag.v9i2.3891>.

Sebastian, Marcel. "The Influence of Social Movements on Policy Change: Delayed Success in Banning Dog Slaughter in Germany." *Social Movement Studies* 0, no. 0 (September 1, 2021): 1–16. <https://doi.org/10.1080/14742837.2021.1967126>.

Slaven, Mike, Sara Casella Colombeau, and Elisabeth Badenhoop. "What Drives the Immigration-Welfare Policy Link? Comparing Germany, France and the United Kingdom." *Comparative Political Studies* 54, no. 5 (April 1, 2021): 855–88. <https://doi.org/10.1177/0010414020957674>.

Weiss, Moritz. "Varieties of Privatization: Informal Networks, Trust and State Control of the Commanding Heights." *Review of International Political Economy* 28, no. 3 (May 4, 2021): 662–89. <https://doi.org/10.1080/09692290.2020.1726791>.