

Case studies, process tracing and causal mechanisms in comparative politics 14335.0701 – “Forschungsprojekt”

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first session: 13.10.17
last session: 02.02.18
room: Gottfried-Keller-Str. 6, EG, no. 0.06
time: 10.00-11.30

Please also regularly check the CCCP information on teaching on the internet:
<http://www.cccp.uni-koeln.de/en/public/teaching/>

The course introduces participants to the principles and practice of qualitative research in Comparative Politics. In our course, “qualitative research” as more narrowly understood as subsuming comparative case studies and process tracing. We first discuss the standard qualitative/quantitative distinction and the trade-offs involved in doing qualitative research. In the second part, we turn to case selection and the types of cases that are available for analysis. Part three covers “the comparative method”, varieties of comparative case studies and challenges in implementing them. The fourth part deals with process tracing and the analysis of mechanisms. We use multiple examples from different subfields of Comparative Politics for illustrating good practices and not-so-good practices in qualitative research.

At the end of the course, you will be familiar with the key terms, strategies and challenges of comparative case studies and process tracing in single cases. This will allow you to critically read qualitative research on a methodological dimension, evaluate its quality and construct qualitative research designs of your own.

Topics and readings

Part 1: General considerations

13.10.17: What qualitative research is

- Gerring, John (2004): What is a case study and what is it good for? *American Political Science Review* 98 (2): 341-354.
- Collier, David, Henry E. Brady and Jason Seawright (2004): Sources of leverage in causal inference: Toward an alternative view of methodology. Brady, Henry E. and David Collier (ed.): *Rethinking social inquiry. Diverse tools, shared standards*. Lanham: Rowman & Littlefield: 229-266.

20.10.17: Causal analysis

- Brady, Henry A. (2008): Causation and explanation in social science. Box-Steffensmeier, Janet M., Henry Brady and David Collier (ed.): *The oxford handbook of political methodology*. Oxford: Oxford University Press: 217-270.

27.10.17: Causal analysis

- Gerring, John (2005): Causation: A unified framework for the social sciences. *Journal of Theoretical Politics* 17 (2): 163-198.
- Mahoney, James (2010): After KKV: The new methodology of qualitative research. *World Politics* 62 (1): 120-147.

Part 2: Case selection

03.11.17: Case selection I

- Eckstein, Harry (1975): Case study and theory in political science. Greenstein, Fred I. and Nelson W. Polsby (ed.): *Strategies of inquiry. Handbook of political science, vol. 7.* Reading, Mass.: Addison-Wesley: 79-137.

10.11.17: Case selection II

- Gerring, John and Lee Cojocaru (2016): Selecting cases for intensive analysis: A diversity of goals and methods. *Sociological Methods & Research* 45 (3): 392-423.

Part 3: Comparative case studies

17.11.17: "The Comparative Method"

- Lijphart, Arend (1971): Comparative politics and the comparative method. *American Political Science Review* 65 (3): 682-693.
- Tarrow, Sidney (2010): The strategy of paired comparison: Toward a theory of practice. *Comparative Political Studies* 43 (2): 230-259.
- Example: Allison, Christine Rothmayr and Audrey L'Espérance (2017): Regulating Assisted Reproduction in Canada, Switzerland, and the USA: Comparing the Judicialization of Policy-Making. *Journal of Comparative Policy Analysis: Research and Practice* forthcoming: 1-15.

24.11.17: Critics of the comparative method

- Lieberman, Stanley (1991): Small ns and big conclusions: An examination of the reasoning in comparative studies based on a small number of cases. *Social Forces* 70 (2): 307-320.
- Goldstone, Jack A. (1997): Methodological issues in comparative macrosociology. *Comparative Social Research* 16: 107-120.

01.12.17: An extended view on comparisons

- Mahoney, James (2000): Strategies of causal inference in small-n analysis. *Sociological Methods & Research* 28 (4): 387-424.
- Skocpol, Theda and Margaret Somers (1980): The uses of comparative history in macrosocial inquiry. *Comparative Studies in Society and History* 22 (2): 174-197.

08.12.17: Comparison: Extended example

- Hale, Henry E. (2011): Formal constitutions in informal politics: Institutions and democratization in post-Soviet Eurasia. *World Politics* 63 (4): 581-617.

Part 4: Process tracing

15.12.17: What a causal mechanism is

- Hedström, Peter and Petri Ylikoski (2010): Causal mechanisms in the social sciences. *Annual Review of Sociology* 36 (1): 49-67.
- Craver, Carl F. and Lindley Darden (2012): *In search of mechanisms: Discoveries across the life sciences*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press: chap. 2 (it is on mechanisms in biology; just ignore the small biological stuff when reading the chapter)

22.12.17: Process tracing and analyzing mechanisms

- Bennett, Andrew and Jeffrey Checkel (2014): Process tracing: From methodological roots to best practices. Bennett, Andrew and Jeffrey Checkel (ed.): *Process tracing in the social sciences: From metaphor to analytic tool*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press: 1-37.
- Example: Brast, Benjamin (2015): The regional dimension of statebuilding interventions. *International Peacekeeping* 22 (1): 81-99.

12.01.18: Working with sources

- Yin, Robert K. (2013): *Case study research: Design and method*. Thousand Oaks: Sage: chap. 4.
- Lieshout, Robert H., Mathieu L. L. Segers and Anna M. van der Vleuten (2004): De gaulle, moravcsik, and the choice for europe: Soft sources, weak evidence. *Journal of Cold War Studies* 6 (4): 89-139.

19.01.18: Making sense of the evidence

- Rohlfing, Ingo (2012): Case studies and causal inference. Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan: chap. 8.
- Example: Fairfield, Tasha and Candelaria Garay (forthcoming): Redistribution under the right in Latin America: Electoral competition and organized actors in policymaking *Comparative Political Studies*.

26.01.18: Analytic narratives

- Levi, Margaret (2004): An analytic narrative approach to puzzles and problems. Shapiro, Ian, Rogers M. Smith and Tarek E. Masoud (ed.): *Problems and methods in the study of politics*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press: 201-226.
- Bates, Robert H., Avner Greif, Margaret Levi, Jean-Laurent Rosenthal and Barry R. Weingast (2000): The analytic narrative project. *American Political Science Review* 94 (3): 696-702.
- Example: Bates, Robert H., Avner Greif, Margaret Levi, Jean-Laurent Rosenthal and Barry R. Weingast (1998): *Analytic narratives*. Princeton: Princeton University Press: chap. 2 (Rosenthal: The political economy of absolutism reconsidered)

02.02.18: Wrap-up session

- No reading

Course requirements and grading

Prior exposure to qualitative methods is recommended, but not necessary for taking the course. The exam is a portfolio exam, meaning that you have to submit multiple written assignments over the course of the term. Each of the assignments is graded. The first four assignments get a weight

of 15%, the last assignment on an entire article 40%. The following table includes the deadlines for submitting the assignment and the text about which the assignment will be.

Deadline	Topic	Text
03.11.2017	Causal analysis	Harvey, Frank P. (2012): President Al Gore and the 2003 Iraq War: A Counterfactual Test of Conventional “W”Isdom. <i>Canadian Journal of Political Science</i> 45 (1): 1-32.
17.11.2017	Case selection	Theisen, Ole Magnus (2012): Climate Clashes? Weather Variability, Land Pressure, and Organized Violence in Kenya, 1989–2004. <i>Journal of Peace Research</i> 49 (1): 81-96.
15.12.2017	Comparisons	Altman, David (2008): Collegiate Executives and Direct Democracy in Switzerland and Uruguay: Similar Institutions, Opposite Political Goals, Distinct Results. <i>Swiss Political Science Review</i> 14 (3): 483-520.
02.02.2018	Process tracing	Jakobsen, Mads Leth Felsager (2010): Untangling the Impact of Europeanization and Globalization on National Utility Liberalization: A Systematic Process Analysis of Two Danish Reforms. <i>Journal of European Public Policy</i> 17 (6): 891-908.
15.03.2018	Final paper	Zibblatt, Daniel (2004): Rethinking the Origins of Federalism: Puzzle, Theory, and Evidence from Nineteenth-Century Europe. <i>World Politics</i> 57 (1): 70–98.

The four papers to be written during the course should:

1) summarize the paper along the usual criteria:

- what is the research question?;
- what is the author’s answer to the question, that is, the main finding?;
- what is the main theoretical argument and conclusion?;
- what is the research design for answering the question?

2) answer a small number of questions specifically on the topic at hand (second column in the table).

In total, each of the four papers should be 3-4 pages long. The final paper is a comprehensive discussion of the article and should be 6-8 pages long.