

Syllabus

Hauptseminar

„Advanced Research Design and Innovative Methods in the Social Sciences“

Instructors: Nicolas Legewie & Anne Nassauer

Venue: Seminar room (ground floor) of the Graduate School of North American Studies (Lansstraße 5, 14195 Berlin)

Time: Sa., 24.01.15 (10-18.15h); Sa., 31.01.2015 (10-18.15h); if suitable Sun., 01.02.15 (10-16h)

For full citations, see list of references.

*** indicates optional readings**

Deadline for submission: January 10, 2015

- 1-2 pages research outline: Research gap, question, case/data selection, data collection, analytic methods. You don't need to be set on these issues, just give an idea of what you're planning to do.
- 1 page response paper for each thematic section (see below part B, 1. – 4., i.e. four response papers in total). You can reflect on issues or questions the papers raise, point to aspects you did not get or would like to elaborate on in class, or formulate criticism. Preferably, you include some notes on how the papers relate to your own research undertaking.
- Please state in your email or your response papers in which of the sections you are most/least interested. We will try to tailor the class to your needs and preferences.

First Session: Saturday, January 24, 2015

A Introduction and presentation of research outlines

- Introduction to the class
- Students *briefly* present their research outline (2 minutes *maximum* per student)

* Schmitter (2008): The design of social and political research (pp. 263-295).

B Thematic Sections

Each section takes up about 90 minutes. In each section, we will spend around 45 minutes discussing the papers. After that, we will split up and work in smaller groups to apply the content to your own research.

1. Research questions

- Ragin (1994): Constructing Social Research, Chapter 3 (pp. 55-76).
- Geddes (2003): Paradigms and Sand Castles (pp. 27-43).
- King, Keohane, and Verba (1994): Designing Social Inquiry (pp. 14-19).

2. Logic of Explanation and Causality

- Hopkin (2002): Comparative Methods (pp. 249-267).
- Mahoney (2008) Toward a unified Theory of Causality (pp. 412-436).

*Brady (2008): Causation and Explanation in Social Science.

*Liebersson (1991): Small N's and Big Conclusions.

*Goertz&Mahoney (2012): Tales of Two Cultures:" Chs. 3-6.

*Goertz&Levy (2007): Causal Explanation, necessary conditions, and case studies.

*Mahoney (2010): After KKV.

3. Cases & case selection

- Ragin (1992) What is a case? Introduction (pp. 1-11) & 'Casing' and the Process of Social Inquiry, Ch. 10 (pp. 217-226).
- Gerring (2008): Case Selection for Case study research (pp. 645-684).

*Mahoney and Goertz (2004): The Possibility Principle.

*For a large-N perspective: King, Keohane, and Verba (1994): 208-231.

*For a small-N perspective: Small (2009): 'How many cases do I need?'

4. Concepts and Operationalization

- Goertz & Mahoney (2005): Two-Level Theories and Fuzzy-Set Analysis, pp. 497-524.
- Collier et al. (2008): Typologies: Forming Concepts and creating categorical variables (pp. 152-173).

*Goertz (2006): Social Sciences Concepts.

*Coppedge (1999): Thickening Thin Concepts and Theories.

*Goertz and Mahoney (2012): A Tale of Two Cultures. Chs 10-13.

Second Session: Saturday, 31.1.2015

Third session as suitable: Sunday, 01.02.2015

A Presentations of Research Designs

Each student will give a short presentation on her/his research design (max. 10 minutes). After the presentation, there will be 20 minutes of feedback from the group. The goal for the presentations is *not* to present the own research design in the best light possible and gloss over problems or open questions. Rather, the idea is to openly address those problems and questions in order to get the most out of the feedback.

B Innovative Methods (Optional)

If students are interested, we can use part of session two to briefly present and discuss some new(ish) research methods that might be interesting for current or future use.

Qualitative Comparative Analysis (QCA):

A method based on set theory and Boolean algebra, QCA focuses on the analysis of combinations of conditions that lead to an outcome. It offers a systematic, formalized way to analyze equifinality (i.e.,

where several different combinations of causes lead to an outcome) in anything from medium to large-N data sets. QCA requires intimate knowledge of the processes at work, either through prior research or in-depth case studies.

Readings:

- *Berg-Schlusser et al. (2009): QCA as an approach.
- *Pennings (2009): Fuzzy Sets and QCA.
- *Ragin (2008): Redesigning Social Inquiry.
- *Schneider&Wagemann (2012): Set-Theoretic Methods for the Social Sciences.
- *Legewie (2013): An Introduction to Applied Data Analysis with QCA.

Sequence Analysis:

Sequence analysis uses optimal matching to compare changes in states of a variable over time and to analyze processes. The goal is to identify different types of sequences that can be used descriptively to sort the data or as independent variables or dependent variables in a later analysis. Sequence analysis is prominently used in life course research, e.g., on topics such as labor market entry.

Readings:

- * Aisenbrey&Fasang (2010): The "Second Wave" of Sequence Analysis.
- * McIndoe & Abbott (2004): Sequence Analysis and Optimal Matching Techniques for Social Science Data.

Process Tracing:

Process tracing is an approach to case studies that aims to use data triangulation to provide as detailed an account as possible of an event or process. It often uses visual diagrams of events to clarify temporal and causal order and looks for detailed evidence to verify each step in the model.

Readings:

- *Blatter (2012): Ontological and Epistemological Foundations of Causal-Process Tracing.
- *Gerring (2007): Case Study Research. Ch. 7 (pp. 172-185).
- *Mahoney (2012): The Logic of Process Tracing Tests in the Social Sciences.

Network Analysis:

Network analysis captures very different approaches (from formal modeling to qualitative interviews or ethnography), which put networks of social relations at the center of attention. The rationale for this focus is that understanding social phenomena requires understanding the relations between actors or other entities (rather than focusing on macro-structures or individual action).

Readings:

- *Crossley (2010): The Social World of the Network
- *Emirbayer&Goodwin (1994): Network Analysis, Culture, and the Problem of Agency
- *Fuhse&Mützel (2011): Tackling Connections, Structure, and Meaning in Networks.
- *For a technical introduction: Wasserman&Faust (2012): Social Network Analysis.

References

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- Berg-Schlosser, Dirk, Gisèle De Meur, Benoît Rihoux, and Charles C. Ragin. 2009. "Qualitative Comparative Analysis (QCA) as an Approach." Pp. 1–18 in *Configurational Comparative Methods: Qualitative Comparative Analysis (QCA) and Related Techniques*, edited by Benoît Rihoux and Charles C. Ragin. Thousand Oaks: Sage.
- Blatter, Joachim. 2012. "Taking Terminology and Timing Seriously: Ontological and Epistemological Foundations of Causal-Process Tracing: Configurational Thinking and Timing." ECPR Joint Sessions, Antwerpen. Retrieved (<http://www.google.de/url?sa=t&rct=j&q=&esrc=s&source=web&cd=1&ved=0CC8QFjAA&url=http%3A%2F%2Fwww.unilu.ch%2Ffiles%2Fblatter-taking-terminology-and-timing-seriously-ecpr-antwerp.pdf&ei=uOUbUajdFlitAai74DoDA&usg=AFQjCNF-HniqQPzzpA0q63PRrWQzKFYCBA&bvm=bv.42261806,d.Yms>).
- Brady, Henry E. 2008. "Causation and Explanation in Social Science." Pp. 217–70 in *The Oxford handbook of political methodology*, edited by Janet M. Box-Steffensmeier, Henry E. Brady, and David Collier. Oxford: Oxford University Press.
- Collier, David, Jody Laporte, and Jason Seawright. 2008. "Typologies: Forming Concepts and Creating Categorical Variables." in *The Oxford handbook of political methodology*, edited by Janet M. Box-Steffensmeier, Henry E. Brady, and David Collier. Oxford Handbooks Online.
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