

Research Design: Comparative Case Studies

Version as of October 14th, 2023

Wednesday, 10 a.m. – 12 p.m. PEG 1.G 191

Tutorial: Monday, 12 p.m. – 2 p.m. SP 2.03

There are various ways to think about social science methods. While most of methods teaching at the Bachelor level deals with specific techniques (e.g., interviews, participant observation, regression analysis, etc.), there is yet another (more abstract) layer that looks at **research design issues**. These deal with the planning and potential pitfalls of research projects. Over the years, there has been a notable amount of contributions to this field. The literature differentiates between various research design types (such as quantitative, comparative, interpretive, or theoretical research designs, etc.) and has developed different rules and recommendations for them. In this course, we focus on comparative research designs (or, more precisely: **comparative case study** research designs).

Comparative case study research exists in nearly all sub-disciplines of political science and sociology. It usually looks at a limited number of cases (sometimes even only one) and is empirically oriented. Examples include the rise of populist parties in European democracies, or democratization processes in Latin America, or peace agreements after 1990, or the formal and informal structures of universities in Hesse, or the comparative study of two neighborhoods, etc. etc.

Topics of this course include: the difference between qualitative and quantitative designs; the specificities and challenges of comparative case studies; different phases of the research cycle, such as research questions, concepts, case selection, inference, and writing-up; process tracing methods; set-theoretic methods; professional application of methods, etc.

There are at least four goals which the course wants to achieve: (1) Participants will be enabled to differentiate between various types of research designs. (2) They will know the principles and elements of various comparative case study research designs in order to implement them in their own MA theses. (3) They will enhance their capacity to read, understand and work with publications that are based on comparative case study research designs. (4) They will be introduced to the social science sub-discipline of methodology and will get to know the most important contemporary debates.

This course is **compulsory** for students of the MA program in Comparative Democracy. It is highly recommended for those students of the other MA programs in political science and sociology who are interested in this type of designs. Ideally, the course is taken during the first semester of the MA programs. [Students with other methodological preferences are invited to choose an alternative research design course. Please note that Prof. Ruhe offers a parallel course on quantitative research designs and statistical inference in the summer semesters.] Since this is a compulsory course for students in Comparative Democracy, many examples and texts, etc., will be mainly (but not exclusively) oriented towards political science and the sub-field of comparative politics. However, students of all MA programs are welcome.

The course is assigned to the modules CD-MA-C (compulsory), PW-MA-1, IS-MA-1, SOZ-MA-7, SOZ-MA-8, WISOZ-MA-2 and MEAS 3a/b.

During the end of every session, the topic of the subsequent week will be introduced by the instructor. This should help to deal with the obligatory course readings which will be discussed in the subsequent session.

Bonald Perkola offers a weekly tutorial, placed inbetween two sessions and preparing for the course. The tutorial is especially recommended for all students taking the *Modulabschlussprüfung*, above all for the MA Comparative Democracy students for whom this course is compulsory.

Course rules:

Registration via the official ways of the department is mandatory. Students who are not registered with the department are not allowed to participate. Students who are accepted into the course are required to participate in the first session or to inform Bonald Perkola (perkola@em.uni-frankfurt.de) **before** the first session about their absence. Otherwise, inscription to the course will be discontinued, and the student loses her*his place in the course.

The course will be held in English. After the first week of the semester (23 Oct 2023), all relevant information will only be communicated via the OLAT platform. Therefore, registration with the OLAT course is absolutely essential. Note that also all readings will be provided via OLAT.

Students receive 3 CP for active participation. Three requirements have to be met for a confirmation of participation: (a) presence and active participation at 80% of the sessions (attendance lists will be circulated); (b) participation in an oral group introduction of one of the obligatory readings (5 min); (c) an individual 1 ½ pp. review of the same text, to be submitted before the subsequent course session.

For the *Modulabschlussprüfung*, a written exam will be organized (date tbc). For students of the MA program in Comparative Democracy, this exam is part of the compulsory *Modulabschlussprüfung* and will last 60 minutes. For MEAS students, the *Modulabschlussprüfung* is also compulsory. They receive 3 CPs, and their exam lasts 80 minutes. Finally, for all other students, the *Modulabschlussprüfung* is optional (i.e., they can also opt for only 'active participation'). If they decide in favor of a *Modulabschlussprüfung*, then they receive 5 CPs, and their exam lasts 120 minutes.

For more information, please consult regularly the website of the chair (English version: https://www.goethe-university-frankfurt.de/47929351/Chair_in_Qualitative_Empirical_Research_Methods?locale=en). Please, direct **all** organizational questions to the student assistant Bonald Perkola (perkola@em.uni-frankfurt.de). However, before writing an e-mail, just check whether the answer to your request can be found on the website or in this syllabus. When communicating with us, please exclusively use your official student e-mail address (@stud.uni-frankfurt.de). We do not reply to any other e-mail address. When sending a doctor's note, please send this exclusively to Frau Anlauff (anlauff@soz.uni-frankfurt.de), for data protection reasons.

This course will take place for the next time during the winter term 2024/25.

18 Oct 2023

Organizational Aspects

Introduction to next week's topic: The Debate on Research Designs

25 Oct 2023

The Debate on Research Designs

Mahoney, James, and Gary Goertz (2006). "A Tale of Two Cultures: Contrasting Quantitative and Qualitative Research." *Political Analysis*, 14, 3: 227-49.

Kühn, David, and Ingo Rohlfing (2022). "Does the Application of Qualitative and Quantitative Methods Reflect Two Distinct Cultures? An Empirical Analysis of 180 Articles Suggests 'No.'" *Sociological Methods & Research*, online first: <https://doi.org/10.1177/00491241221082597>

Introduction to next week's topic: Comparative Case Study Designs

1 Nov 2023

Comparative Case Study Designs

Lijphart, Arend (1971). "Comparative Politics and the Comparative Method." *American Political Science Review* 65, 3: 682-93.

Goerres, Achim, Markus B. Siewert, and Claudius Wagemann (2019). "Internationally Comparative Research Designs in the Social Sciences: Fundamental Issues, Case Selection Logics, and Research Limitations." *Kölner Zeitschrift für Soziologie und Sozialpsychologie* 71, supplement issue 1: 75-97.

Introduction to next week's topic: Research Questions

8 Nov 2023

Research Questions

Gerring, John, and Jason Seawright (2022). *Finding Your Social Science Project*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, pp. 73-101.

Halperin, Sandra, and Oliver Heath (2020). *Political Research*. Oxford: Oxford University Press, pp. 93-122.

Introduction to next week's topic: Concepts

15 Nov 2023

Concepts

Sartori, Giovanni (1970). "Concept Misformation in Comparative Politics." *American Political Science Review* 64, 4: 1033-53.

Goertz, Gary (2020). *Social Science Concepts and Measurement*. Princeton and Oxford: Princeton University Press, pp. 26-56. [additionally optional for a quick reading: pp. 1-25]

Introduction to next week's topic: Case Selection

22 Nov 2023

Case Selection

Collier, David, and James Mahoney (1996). "Insights and Pitfalls: Selection Bias in Qualitative Research." *World Politics* 49, 1: 56-91.

Mahoney, James, and Gary Goertz (2004). "The Possibility Principle: Choosing Negative Cases in Comparative Research." *American Political Science Review* 98, 4: 653-69.

Introduction to next week's topic: Inference

29 Nov 2023

NO CLASS

6 Dec 2023

Inference

Maggetti, Martino, Fabrizio Gilardi, and Claudio M. Radaelli (2013). *Designing Research in the Social Sciences*. Los Angeles et al.: Sage, pp. 42-68.

Gerring, John (2010). "Causal Mechanisms: Yes, But...". *Comparative Political Studies* 43, 11: 1499-1526.

Intermediate summary on the research cycle

Introduction to next week's topic: Presenting Research Results

13 Dec 2023

Presenting Research Results

Becker, Howard S. (2020). *Writing for Social Scientists*. Chicago and London: The University of Chicago Press, pp. 24-60.

Gerring, John, and Jason Seawright (2022). *Finding Your Social Science Project*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, pp. 218-241.

Research between Passion and Profession

[20 Dec 2023]

Make-up class (if needed) in case of sickness or similar reasons.

END OF THE YEAR BREAK

10 Jan 2024

Typology of Case Study Research Designs

Introduction to next week's topic: Process Tracing

17 Jan 2024

Process Tracing

Bennett, Andrew, and Jeffrey T. Checkel (2015). "Process Tracing: From Philosophical Roots to Best Practices." In Andrew Bennett and Jeffrey T. Checkel (eds.), *Process Tracing. From Metaphor to Analytical Tool*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, pp. 3-38.

Beach, Derek (2020). "Case Studies and Process Tracing." In Dirk Berg-Schlosser, Bertrand Badie, and Leonardo Morlino (eds.), *The SAGE Handbook of Political Science*. Los Angeles et al.: Sage, pp. 288-304.

Introduction to next week's topic: Set-Theoretic Methods

24 Jan 2024

Set-Theoretic Methods

Mahoney, James, and Rachel Sweet Vanderpoel (2015). "Set Diagrams and Qualitative Research." *Comparative Political Studies* 48 (1): 65-100.

Wagemann, Claudius (2020). "Configurative Methods." In Dirk Berg-Schlosser, Bertrand Badie, and Leonardo Morlino (eds.), *The SAGE Handbook of Political Science*. Los Angeles et al.: Sage, pp. 341-356.

Group work on good quality research (designs) and introduction to next week's topic

31 Jan 2024

Good Quality Research Designs

Schmitter, Philipp C. (2008). "The Design of Social and Political Research." In Donatella della Porta and Michael Keating (eds.), *Approaches and Methodologies in the Social Sciences*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, pp. 263-295.

Beach, Derek, and Jonas Gejl Kaas (2020). "The Great Divides: Incommensurability, the Impossibility of Mixed-Methodology, and What to Do about It." *International Studies Review* 22, 2: 214-35.

Summary and preparation for the exam

7 Feb 2024

EXAM