

Syllabus
Methods in Comparative and Historical Sociology.
(5 ECTS)

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Meeting Minute #5 dated 28th of August 2019

1. Course Description

a) Pre-requisites: Basic knowledge of concepts and theories of sociology/social sciences are required for this course.

b) Abstract

Comparative and historical sociology (CHS) tries to give causal explanation to historical outcomes. CHS employs comparative method, social scientific theories and concepts, traces large-scale trajectories and transformations and long-term historical processes for offering more holistic understanding of the origins of our times.

Comparative historical methods examines historical events in order to create explanations that are valid beyond a particular time and place, either by direct comparison to other historical events, theory building or with reference to the present day.

CHS is highly interdisciplinary in nature. Using readings drawn from disciplines such as sociology, history, geography, anthropology, institutional economics and political science, this course discusses the methods of comparative and historical sociology – mainly qualitative aspects and, to some extent, mixed methods.

There can be no method without a theoretical base, and CHS is particularly theory-intensive and places emphasis on theory-laden narratives. These narratives include cases such as changing dynamics of state–society relations, revolutions, and other kinds of macro-transformations. Based on research and cases from western and non-western worlds and perspectives, this course covers the range of methodological and geographical aspects of comparative and diachronic studies of societies.

In doing that, the course discusses various kinds of research designs, techniques, reasoning, issues of causality and methodological approaches such as single and small-N case studies, process tracing, necessary and sufficient conditions, and contingency-path dependency, which are used in CHS.

2. Learning Objectives

- To study contemporary texts on CHS.
- To study the methods in CHS.
- To acquire updated knowledge on CHS theories and methods.

3. Learning Outcomes

- Learn comparative and historical research design.
- Develop methodological, conceptual, and analytical capabilities required for CHS analyses.
- Understand causality, reasoning and theoretical framing in CHS.

4. Course Plan

The course is planned in 10 sessions (comprising of lectures and seminars) of 4 hours each i.e. a total of 40 hours taught over the first semester (September-December), 2019-2020. The seminars will comprise discussion of the course materials by students in pre-assigned groups. Seminars will also include practice sessions such as on case writing, process tracing, identifying necessary and sufficient conditions, and framing cases.

5. Reading List

Week 1: Basics of CHS Methods

This lecture gives an overview of fundamental aspects of comparative and historical methods used in sociology. It gives a general view of case study method and comparative framing of cases.

Required

John Gerring (2013) Case Study: What is and What it Does?

Link:

<https://www.oxfordhandbooks.com/view/10.1093/oxfordhb/9780199604456.001.0001/oxfordhb-b-9780199604456-e-051>

Optional

Stefan Timmermans, Iddo Tavory (2012) Theory Construction in Qualitative Research from Grounded Theory to Abductive Analysis, *Sociological Theory*, 30(3): 167-186.

Link: <https://journals.sagepub.com/doi/full/10.1177/0735275112457914>

Theda Skocpol and Margaret Somers (1980) The Uses of Comparative History in Macrosocial Inquiry, *Comparative Studies in Society and History* 22(2):174-97.

Link: https://www.jstor.org/stable/178404?seq=1#metadata_info_tab_contents

Week 2: Small N Comparative Analysis

This lecture is about how to compare small number of cases and draw significant inferences from these, and methodologically defend the findings.

Required

Liebertson, Stanley (1991) Small N's and Big Conclusions: An Examination of the Reasoning in Comparative Studies Based on a Small Number of Cases, *Social Forces* 70(2): 307-320.

Link: https://www.jstor.org/stable/2580241?seq=1#metadata_info_tab_contents

Optional

Theda Skocpol (1979) State and Revolution: Old Regimes and Revolutionary Crises in France, Russia and China, *Theory & Society*, 7 (1-2):7-95.

Link: https://www.jstor.org/stable/656999?seq=1#metadata_info_tab_contents

Michael Burawoy (1989) Two Methods in Search of Science: Skocpol versus Trotsky, *Theory & Society*, 18(6):759-805.

Link: https://www.jstor.org/stable/657481?seq=1#metadata_info_tab_contents

Week 3: Single N Cases

This lecture is about how infer from a single cases study, and from those cases which do not fit a theory/model and hence is regarded as exceptional cases.

Required

Michael Armato, and Neal Caren (2002) Mobilizing the Single-Case Study: Doug McAdam's Political Process and the Development of Black Insurgency, 1930–1970. *Qualitative Sociology*, 25(1):93-103.

Link: <https://link.springer.com/content/pdf/10.1023%2FA%3A1014360308993.pdf>

Optional

John Krisnly and Ann Mische (2013)) Formation and Formalism: Charles Tilly and the Paradox of the Actor, *Annual Review of Sociology*, 39, 1-26

Link: <https://www.annualreviews.org/doi/full/10.1146/annurev-soc-071312-145547>

Ivan Ermakoff (2014) Exceptional Cases: Epistemic Contributions and Normative Expectations, *European Journal of Sociology*, 55(02):223-43.

Link: <https://www.cambridge.org/core/journals/european-journal-of-sociology-archives-europeennes-de-sociologie/article/exceptional-cases-epistemic-contributions-and-normative-expectations/A24C469D5D4F41FDAB361EE1B1EE4D90>

Week 4: Negative Cases and Counterfactuals

This lecture is about how negative/deviant/outlier cases are crucial for framing small-N CHS methodological framework, and how to construct/frame a counterfactual along with case study method to draw inferences, with the help a strong theoretical framework.

Required

Rebeca Emigh (1997) The Power of Negative Thinking: The Use of Negative Case Methodology in the Development of Sociological Theory, *Theory & Society*, 26(5):649-684.

Link: https://www.jstor.org/stable/658025?seq=1#metadata_info_tab_contents

Optional

Jack S. Levy (2008) Counterfactuals and Case Studies The Oxford Handbook of Political Methodology, *Edited by Janet M. Box-Steffensmeier, Henry E. Brady, and David Collier*.

Link: <https://www.oxfordhandbooks.com/view/10.1093/oxfordhb/9780199286546.001.0001/oxfordhb-9780199286546-e-27>

Gary Goertz and James Mahoney (2005) The Possibility Principle: choosing negative cases in comparative research , *The American Political Science Review* 98(4): 653-669

Link: https://www.jstor.org/stable/4145330?seq=1#metadata_info_tab_contents

Week5 : Extended Case Method

This lecture is about how ethnographic study can be used in a translocal and historical context by linking, everyday life to the contemporary and the historical.

Required

Michael Burawoy (1998) The Extended Case Method, *Sociological Theory*, 16(1): 4-33.

Link: <https://www.nyu.edu/classes/bkg/methods/burawoy.pdf>

Optional

Nina Eliasoph and Paul Lichterman (1999) We Begin with Our Favourite Theory . . .?: Reconstructing the Extended Case Method.” *Sociological Theory*, 17(2):228-34.

Link: <https://onlinelibrary.wiley.com/doi/epdf/10.1111/0735-2751.00076>

Michael Mann (1984) The autonomous power of the state: its origins, mechanisms and results, *European Journal of Sociology*, 25(2): 185-213.

Link: https://www.jstor.org/stable/23999270?seq=1#metadata_info_tab_contents

Week 6: Temporality and Periodization

This lecture is about why temporality is one of the most crucial dimensions of CHS, and how to classify temporal dimensions by periodizing events and processes in different phases and according to various conceptual schemas to draw inferences.

Required

William H. Sewell,, Jr. (1996) Three Temporalities: Toward an Eventful Sociology, in *The Historic Turn in the Human Sciences*, edited by Terrence J. McDonald, Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press. Pp. 245-80

Link:

<https://pdfs.semanticscholar.org/472e/e065720d81c7fb7a332b45c981b8bb63669e.pdf>

Optional

Perry Anderson (1974) Chap2: Class and State: Problems of Periodization, in *Lineages of the Absolutist State*. London: Verso

Link: <https://bit.ly/2kqbAsz> (google books)

Ronald Aminzade (1992) Historical Sociology and Time, *Sociological Methods and Research* 20:456-480.

Link: <https://journals.sagepub.com/doi/pdf/10.1177/0049124192020004003>

Week 7: Path Dependency and Contingency

This lecture is about how history matters and has enduring influence on a particular path that has been chosen over other paths, and the way it influences discourses, institutions and individuals in 'path dependent' manner. But sudden changes in path also occur through contingencies.

Required

James Mahoney (2000) Path Dependence in Historical Sociology, *Theory and Society*, 29(4): 507-48.

Link: https://www.jstor.org/stable/3108585?seq=1#metadata_info_tab_contents

Optional

Ivan Ermakoff (2015) The Structure of Contingency, *American Journal of Sociology*, 121(1):64-125.

Link: <https://www.journals.uchicago.edu/doi/pdfplus/10.1086/682026>

Bernhard Ebbinghaus (2005) Can Path Dependence Explain Institutional Change? Two Approaches Applied to Welfare State Reform, MPIfG Discussion Paper, No. 05/2, Max-Planck-Institut für Gesellschaftsforschung, Köln.

Link: <https://www.econstor.eu/bitstream/10419/19916/1/dp05-2.pdf>

Week 8: Causality and Constitutivity

There is a direct relation between cause and effect in deterministic and positivist explanations, this lecture explains how causality has different meanings in objective,

subjective and historical realms, and how objects/subjects in historical pathways are ‘constituted’ through the subjective agencies.

Required

Michael McCann (1996) Causal versus Constitutive Explanations (or, On the Difficulty of Being so Positive...), *Law & Social Inquiry* 21(2): 457-482.

Link: https://www.jstor.org/stable/828850?seq=1#metadata_info_tab_contents

Optional

Larry J. Griffin (1993) Narrative, Event-Structure Analysis, and Causal Interpretation in Historical Sociology, *American Journal of Sociology* 98(5):1094-133.

Link: <https://www.uzh.ch/cmsssl/suz/dam/jcr:00000000-5103-bee3-0000-00006294448a/05.19.griffin.pdf>

James Mahoney (1999) Nominal, Ordinal, and Narrative Appraisal in Macrocausal Analysis, *American Journal of Sociology* 104(4):1154-96.

Link: https://www.jstor.org/stable/10.1086/210139?seq=1#metadata_info_tab_contents

Week 9: Process Tracing of Causal Mechanisms

This lecture is about how causal processes operate in the socio-historical realm and how they can be traced through process tracing and mechanisms can be further hypothesized and conceptualized.

Required

Derek Beach (2016) It’s all about mechanisms – what process-tracing case studies should be tracing, *New Political Economy*, 21(5): 463-472.

Link: <https://www.tandfonline.com/doi/full/10.1080/13563467.2015.1134466>

Optional

David Collier (2011) Understanding process tracing, *PS: Political Science and Politics*, 44(4): 823-30

Link:

<http://polisci.berkeley.edu/sites/default/files/people/u3827/Understanding%20Process%20Tracing.pdf>

Peter Hedstrom and Petri Ylikoski (2010) Causal Mechanisms in the Social Sciences, *Annual Review of Sociology*, 36: 49-67.

Link: <https://www.annualreviews.org/doi/pdf/10.1146/annurev.soc.012809.102632>

Week 10: Sources, Evidences and Theory

This lecture is about what kinds of sources are used in history and for CHS, and which kinds of evidences are allowed, and how innovative and methodologically sound sources and evidences can be used in CHS. It also deals with theoretical framing of cases that are of supreme importance.

Required

Mariampolski, Hyman, and Dana C. Hughes (1978) The Use of Personal Documents in Historical Sociology, *The American Sociologist*, and 13(2):104-113.

Link: https://www.jstor.org/stable/27702322?seq=1#metadata_info_tab_contents

Optional

Edgar Kiser and Michael Hechter (1991) The Role of General Theory in Comparative-Historical Sociology, *American Journal of Sociology*, 97(1):1-30.

Link: https://www.jstor.org/stable/2781636?seq=1#metadata_info_tab_contents

Jill Quadagno and Stan J. Knapp (1992) Have Historical Sociologists Forsaken Theory?"
Sociological Methods & Research, 20(4):481-507.

Link: <https://journals.sagepub.com/doi/pdf/10.1177/0049124192020004004>

6. Grading System and Exam Type

Grade will be based on an essay and a presentation, and the students have to regularly participate in the lectures and actively take part in class discussions and debates, which will also be graded. There is no end semester exam.

- Final Essay (fully referenced maximum 4000 word essay) 50%
- Final Presentation of the essay (with Power Point slides) 20%
- Participation in regular class discussions (on reading materials) 30%

If the final grade is non-integer, it is rounded according to algebraic rules. If has a half (.5) at the end, we are rounding upward.

7. Methods of Instruction

Class lectures, discussions, and student presentations.

8. Special Equipment and Software Support (if required):

Not required.