

Department of Social and Policy Sciences  
University of Bath

## **SP50122 COMPARATIVE RESEARCH METHODS**

2006-7, semester 2  
Thursdays, 1115-1315, 1W 3.15

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### **Aims and objectives**

By the end of the course, students will have:

- In-depth knowledge of the major methodological approaches and debates in comparative social research
- In-depth knowledge of a number of research methods and techniques used to conduct comparative social research, and their strengths and weaknesses.
- Critical awareness of the major established studies in comparative social research and the strengths and weaknesses of their methodologies.

### **By the end of the course, students will be able to:**

- Explain and evaluate the main methodological and paradigmatic debates in comparative social research, and the methodological questions they address.
- Explain the significance of these debates for informing methodological choices when conducting comparative research.
- Evaluate a range of quantitative and qualitative comparative research techniques, and their suitability for addressing different research questions.

### **Course outline**

8/2	week 2	Introduction. Comparative social inquiry
15/2	week 3	Different methodologies, different problems.
22/2	week 4	Small-N studies. Case studies: interpretation or explanation?
1/3	week 5	Large-N studies. Causal analysis, comparison and data
8/3	week 6	Seminar: Choosing and evaluating methodological strategies

weeks 7-10: tutorial hours for individual students on assessment.

### **ASSESSMENT**

Students to write maximum 3000 word essay, answering the question below. The deadline for the essay is **2 May 2007**

Critically assess the advantages and limitations of the methodological strategy in the comparative study of your choice.

## READING LIST

### **Recommended general methods texts:**

Bowen, J. and Petersen, R. (eds) (2001) *Critical Comparisons in Politics and Culture* (Cambridge: Cambridge UP). (Series of essays by political scientists & anthropologists reflecting on the methodological strategies adopted in their comparative (also cross-time & cross-regional) research.)

\*\*Dierkes, M. et al (eds.) (1987) *Comparative Policy Research: learning from experience* (Aldershot: Gower). Chapters by Przeworski; Wilensky et al; Alber et al. [360.001.5 DIE]

Geddes, B. (1990) 'How the cases you choose affect the answers you get: selection bias in comparative politics', *Political Analysis*, 2: 131-50

Geddes, B. (2003) *Paradigms and sand castles : theory building and research design in comparative politics* (University of Michigan Press)

\*\*Hantrais, L. and Mangen, S. (eds) (1996) *Cross-National Research Methods in the Social Sciences* (London: Pinter) [300.001.5 HAN]

\*\**International Journal of Social Research Methodology* (1999) Special Issue on Cross-National Research, 2(2)

Kennet, P. (2001) *Comparative Social Policy* (Milton Keynes: Open UP), chapters 2 & 3. [360.1]

\*\*Kohn, M.L. (1989) *Cross-National Research in Sociology* (London: Sage) chapters by Kohn, Nowak

Landman, T. (2002) *Issues and Methods in Comparative Politics* (London: Routledge). Well-structured, easy-to-read textbook, with plenty of examples.

\*\*Lewis, P.G. & Potter, D.C. & Castles, F.G. (eds.) (1978) *The practice of comparative politics* (revised edn) (Milton Keynes: Open UP) Chapter by Sartori [321]

Mackie, T. and Marsh, D. (1995) 'The Comparative Method' in Marsh, D. and Stoker, G. (eds.) *Theory and Methods in Political Science* (London: Macmillan) [321.01 MAR]

\*\*Øyen, E. (ed.) (1990) *Comparative Methodology. Theory and Practice in International Social Research* (London: Sage) [300.001.5 OYE]

Peters, B.G. (1998) *Comparative Politics. Theory and Methods* (London: Macmillan)

Przeworski, A. and Teune, H. (1970) *The Logic of Comparative Social Enquiry* (Wiley). Chapters 1 and 2 [300.001.5]

Rose, R. (1986) 'The methodology of comparative policy analysis' in Mangen, S. and Hantrais, L. (eds.) *Doing Cross-National Research: Research Methods and Problems in Comparative Public Policy* (Birmingham: Aston University) [300.001.5 HAN]

\*\*Rose, R. (1991) 'Comparing Forms of Comparative Analysis', *Political Studies*, 39(3): 446-62

Tarrow, S. (1995) 'Bridging the Quantitative-Qualitative Divide in Political Science', *American Political Science Review*, 89 (2): 471-4

### **Causal relationships**

Kennett, P. (2001) *Comparative Social Policy* (Open UP), esp. ch. 3

Ragin, C. (ed.) (1991) *Issues and Alternatives in Comparative Social Research* (Leiden: Brill)

Ragin C. (1987) *The Comparative Method. Moving beyond qualitative and quantitative strategies* (Los Angeles, CA: California UP) [300.001.5 RAG]

Ragin, C. (1994) 'Introduction to Qualitative Comparative Analysis' in Janoski, T. and Hicks, A. (eds) *The Comparative Political Economy of the Welfare State* (Cambridge: Cambridge UP) (a more concise and focused contribution than the book above).

Sanders, D. (1994) 'Methodological considerations in comparative cross-national research', *International Social Science Journal*, 46

\*\*Skocpol, T. (1994) *Social Revolutions in the Modern World* (Cambridge UP)

### **Small-N studies**

#### a) Case studies

\*\*Dogan, M. and Pelassey, D. (2<sup>nd</sup> edn.) (1990) *How to Compare Nations: Strategies in Comparative Politics* (Chatham, NJ: Chatham House) [321 DOG]

Dogan, M. and Kazancigil, A. (eds.) (1994) *Comparing nations: concepts, strategies, substance* (Oxford: Blackwell) [321 DOG]

Kennett, P. (2001) *Comparative Social Policy* (Open UP), esp. chs. 1, 4

Kriesi, H., Koopmans, R. Dyvendak, J.W., and Giugni, M.G. (1995) *New Social Movements in Western Europe* (UCL Press), esp. chs. 8, 9 & appendix

\*\*Skocpol, T. (ed.) (1984) *Vision and Method in Historical Sociology* (Cambridge: Cambridge UP), chapter 11. [301.19 SKO]

#### b) Culture, interpretation & qualitative comparative research

Cross-National Research Papers [360.001 CRO], especially (1987); *Comparative social research the East-West dimension Language and culture in cross-national research; Research methods and problems in comparative public policy; Doing cross-national research*

\*\*Chamberlayne, P., Bornat, J. and Wengraf, T. (eds) (2000) *The Turn to biographical methods in social science comparative issues and examples* (London: Routledge)

Chamberlayne, Prue. (ed.) (2002) *Biography and social exclusion in Europe : experiences and life journeys* (London: Routledge)

\*\*Dion, D. (1998) 'Evidence and Inference in the comparative case study', *Comparative Politics* 39: 127-45

Hantrais in *International Journal of Social Research Methodology* (1999) Special Issue on Cross-National Research, 2(2)

Jentsch, B. (1998) 'The 'interpreter effect' : rendering interpreters visible in cross-cultural research and methodology', *Journal of European Social Policy*, 8(4)

Johnson, J.D. and Tuttle, F. (1989) *Problems in Intercultural Research* (Newbury Park: Sage)

Miller, G. and Dingwall, R. (eds) (1997) *Context and method in qualitative research* (London: Sage) [300.001.5 MIL]

Rose, M. (1985) 'Universalism, culturalism and the Aix Group: promise and problems of a societal approach to economic institutions', *European Sociological Review* 1(1): 65-83

Soydan (1996), and Chamberlayne and King (1996) in Hantrais & Mangen Cross-National Research Methods

\*\*Vijver, F. van de and Leung, K. (1997) *Methods and data analysis for cross-cultural research* [159.9.07 VIJ]

## **Large-N studies**

### a) Operationalisation and measurement

Atkinson, A B (1990) Comparing poverty rates internationally: lessons from recent studies in OECD countries (London : Suntory-Toyota International Centre) [361.6 ATK]

Bradshaw, J. (1994) 'Simulating policies: an example in comparative method' in Bradshaw, J. et al (eds) Comparing Social Welfare Systems in Europe (MIRE Recontre et Recherches) [362.04 MIRE]

Castles, F. (1998) *Comparative Public Policy. Patterns of Post-War Transformation* (Aldershot: Edward Elgar)

Castles, F. (2002) 'Developing new measures of welfare state change and reform', *European Journal of Political Research*, 41: 613-41.

Janowski, T. and Hicks, A. (eds.) (1994) *The Comparative Political Economy of the Welfare State* (Cambridge: Cambridge UP). Chapters 1, 9, 12 [339 JAN]

Rose, D. (2000) *Researching Social and Economic Change: the uses of household panel studies* (London: Routledge)

Tilak, Jandhyala B G (1989) *Education and its relation to economic growth, poverty and income distribution : past evidence and further analysis* (Washington: World Bank)

Previous sample studies that students have reviewed for their assessment include:

PLEASE NOTE: YOU SHOULD CHOOSE A COMPARATIVE, CROSS-NATIONAL STUDY WHICH IS IN YOUR RESEARCH AREA TO REVIEW FOR THE ASSESSMENT.

Qualitative:

Bonoli, G. (2000) *The Politics of Pension Reform* (Cambridge UP)

Della Porta, D. (1995) *Social movements, Political violence and the State: comparative analysis of Italy and Germany* (Cambridge UP)

McAdam, D., McCarthy, J.D., Zald, M.N. (1996) *Comparative Perspectives on Social Movements* (Cambridge UP)

Müller, K. (2000) *The Political Economy of Pension Reform in Central-Eastern Europe* (Cheltenham: Edward Elgar)

Evans, P.B., Rueschemeyer, D., Skocpol, T. (1985) *Bringing the state back in* (Princeton UP)

Rowley, Chris, (2004) *The Management of human resources in the Asia Pacific region: convergence reconsidered* (London: Frank Cass)

Quantitative/mixed:

Esping-Andersen, G. (1990) *Three Worlds of Welfare Capitalism* (Cambridge UP)

Gilbert, A. and Gugler, J. (1992) *Cities, poverty, and development urbanization in the Third World* (Oxford UP)

Goodin, R.E., Headey, B., Muffels, R., Dirven, H-J. (1999) *The Real Worlds of Welfare Capitalism* (Cambridge: Cambridge UP)

Muus, P.J. and van Dam, E.W. (1998) *Comparative research on international migration and international migration policy migration from the Maghreb and Turkey to the European Union, and from Mexico, Guatemala and El Salvador to the United States* (Office of the European Communities)

Norris, P. (2001) *Digital Divide. Civic engagement, information poverty and the Internet worldwide* (Cambridge UP)

Rueschemeyer, D., Stephens, E.H. and Stephens, J. (1992) *Capitalist Development and Democracy* (Cambridge UP)