POLS 531

Qualitative Research Methods

Spring 2023

Instructor: Berk Esen

Office: FASS 2137

E-mail: besen@sabanciuniv.edu

Office Hours: Wed 3.30-4.30 & Thu 1.30-2.30 (or by appointment)

Class Hours: Th: 2.40-5.30

This course is designed to equip graduate students with an advanced understanding of the different tools and methods of qualitative research in political science. Its primary goal is to prepare students for a research career. We will focus on major techniques of qualitative research, including case study, comparative methods, process tracing, interviews, focus groups and historical/archival research. The course also deals with formulating a research question, preparing a research design, and dealing with ethical issues in qualitative research.

GRADING

Class Attendance and Participation %30

This course will be conducted in a seminar format. Students are therefore expected to complete the weekly reading assignments before each session and participate to class discussions in an informed and active manner. The assigned readings for each week are listed in the course schedule below. Although I will shortly summarize each week's content, bulk of our time will be allocated to open and free discussion of the assigned material. 30 per cent of the student's final grade will come from this component. This is a discussion-based course that requires your regular attendance and active participation. Students are encouraged to send the instructor one question derived from the readings before the weekly session.

Response Paper % 10

Some weeks include recently published articles that are exemplary examples of the method discussed in that session. These empirical pieces are listed at the bottom of each week's readings. Students are expected write a short response paper (1-2 pages) that briefly describes the main argument of the article and evaluates the empirical evidence used to support it. They also need to assess how and why a particular method was employed in that study. This assignment needs to be handed in before class on the week that article will be discussed.

Method Assignments % 30

Students are expected to complete three short method assignments, each worth % 10 of their grade. A one to two-page research question assignment is due before class on week 5. This question should be informed by an empirical puzzle and framed in a clear way that can be understood by non-

specialists outside the student's narrow research area. Make sure to explain the significance of this research question in light of the extant scholarship on that topic.

For the second assignment (due in week 8), students are expected to design a study that addresses the research question chosen in the first assignment using at least two of the following methods (1000 words): case study, comparative method, process-tracing. They should make sure to explicitly note the advantages and risks of picking these research methods. The assignment should also address how these limitations can be overcome.

Finally, students are expected to design (due in week 13) another study that addresses the research question chosen in the first assignment using at least two of the following methods (1000 words): fieldwork, interview, natural experiment, and archival/historical work. They should make sure to explicitly note the advantages and risks of picking these research methods. The assignment should also address how these limitations can be overcome.

Research Proposal/Paper % 30

Students are expected to write a research proposal (7000-8000 words) based on the research question/puzzle they had picked for their first assignment. A good research proposal should explain what the proposed research seeks to investigate embedded within the existing scholarship; what the main hypotheses and alternative explanations are and how the investigator will gather evidence to test these hypotheses. Students are free to expand on their previous assignments at this stage and benefit from the feedback offered by the instructor.

In case you are at thesis-writing stage, you have the option to write an empirical paper with a detailed methodology section. If the student chooses this option, he or she should make sure to operationalize their question, formulate a hypothesis, and discuss alternative explanations in the paper prior to the empirical part.

All assignments are expected to be completed individually, though with prior approval students may work with a co-author in their final assignments provided that they choose the research paper option.

WEEKLY SCHEDULE

Week 1 Introduction

Gustafsson, K., & Hagström, L. (2018). What is the point? teaching graduate students how to construct political science research puzzles. European political science, 17(4), 634-648.

Grofman, Bernard. Political Science as Puzzle Solving. Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 2001. Chapter 1 "Introduction," pp. 1-11.

Gary King, Robert O. Keohane, and Sidney Verba. (1994). Designing Social Inquiry: Scientific Inference in Qualitative Research. Princeton: Princeton University Press, pp. 14-19.

Weber, Max. Science as a Vocation. From H.H. Gerth and C. Wright Mills (Translated and edited), From Max Weber: Essays in Sociology, pp. 129-156, New York: Oxford University Press, 1946.

Keohane, R. O. (2009). Political science as a vocation. PS: Political Science and Politics, 42(2), 359-363.

Week 2 Mapping the Field of Qualitative Methods

Gerring, J. (2017). Qualitative methods. Annual Review of Political Science, 20, 15-36.

Sil, R., & Katzenstein, P. J. (2010). Analytic eclecticism in the study of world politics: Reconfiguring problems and mechanisms across research traditions. Perspectives on Politics, 8(2), 411-431.

Ahmed, A., & Sil, R. (2012). When multi-method research subverts methodological pluralism—or, why we still need single-method research. Perspectives on Politics, 935-953

Mahoney, James. 2010. "After KKV: The New Methodology of Qualitative Research." World Politics 62 (1): 120-147

Monroe, K. R. (2005). Perestroika!: The raucous rebellion in political science. Yale University Press.pp. 9-11; 525-547

Week 3 Conceptualization and Typologies in Qualitative Research

Sartori, Giovanni. "Concept Misformation in Comparative Politics." American Political Science Review vol.64 no.4 (December 1970): 1033-1053.

Kreuzer, M. (2019). The structure of description: Evaluating descriptive inferences and conceptualizations. Perspectives on Politics, 17(1), 122-139.

Collier, D., LaPorte, J., & Seawright, J. (2012). Putting typologies to work: Concept formation, measurement, and analytic rigor. Political Research Quarterly, 65(1), 217-232.

Goertz, G. (2006). *Social science concepts: A user's guide*. Princeton University Press. Ch. 3

Ziblatt, Daniel. "Of Course Generalize, But How? Returning to Middle Range Theory in Comparative Politics." American Political Science Association-Comparative Politics Newsletter 17.2 (2006): 8-11.

Levitsky, S., & Way, L. A. (2002). Elections without democracy: The rise of competitive authoritarianism. *Journal of democracy*, *13* (2), 51-65.

Week 4 Interpretive Approach

Bevir, M., & Rhodes, R. A. (2015). Interpretive political science: Mapping the field. In *Routledge handbook of interpretive political science* (pp. 3-27). Routledge.

Geertz, C. (1973). Thick Description: Toward an Interpretive Theory of Culture. In The Interpretation of Cultures: Selected Essays by Clifford Geertz. Basic Books. Chapter 1, 3-30.

Wedeen, L. (2002). Conceptualizing culture: Possibilities for political science. *American political science review*, *96*(4), 713-728.

Wedeen, L. (1998). Acting "as if": symbolic politics and social control in Syria. *Comparative Studies in Society and History*, *40*(3), 503-523.

Week 5 Case Study and Selection Bias (1st assignment due)

John Gerring. "What is a Case Study and What is it Good For? American Political Science Review (2004), 98 (2): 341-354

Collier, David, and James Mahoney. "Insights and pitfalls: Selection bias in qualitative research," World Politics (1996), 49 (1): 56-91.

Seawright, Jason and John Gerring, "Case-Selection Techniques in Case Study Research: A Menu of Qualitative and Quantitative Options," Political Research Quarterly, Vol. 61, No. 2 (2008), pp. 294-308.

Bennett, A., & Elman, C. (2007). Case study methods in the international relations subfield. *Comparative political studies*, *40*(2), 170-195.

Geddes, Barbara. "How the Cases you Choose Affect the Answers You Get." Political Analysis 2 (1990): 131-149.

Kirshner, J. (2007). *Appeasing bankers: Financial caution on the road to war*. Princeton University Press. Ch. 6

Week 6 Comparative Method and Comparative Historical Research

Lijphart, Arend. (1975) "The Comparable Cases Strategy in Comparative Research." Comparative Political Studies: 158-177.

Mahoney, J., & Thelen, K. (Eds.). (2015). *Advances in comparative-historical analysis*. Cambridge University Press. Ch. 1

Bernhard, M., & O'Neill, D. (2021). Comparative Historical Analysis. *Perspectives on Politics*, *19*(3), 699-704.

Tarrow, S. (2010). The strategy of paired comparison: toward a theory of practice. *Comparative political studies*, *43*(2), 230-259.

Yom, S. (2015). From methodology to practice: Inductive iteration in comparative research. *Comparative Political Studies*, *48*(5), 616-644.

Ocakli, F. (2015). Notable networks: Elite recruitment, organizational cohesiveness, and Islamist electoral success in Turkey. *Politics & Society*, *43*(3), 385-413.

Week 7 Macro-Historical Comparisons, Critical Junctures, and Path Dependency

Collier, D., & Munck, G. L. (Eds.). (2022). *Critical Junctures and Historical Legacies: Insights and Methods for Comparative Social Science*. Rowman & Littlefield. Ch. 2 and 5

Lieberman, Evan S. "Causal Inference in Historical Institutional Analysis: A Specification of Periodization Strategies." Comparative Political Studies 34.9 (2001): 1011-1035. (read until 1024)

Giovanni Capoccia and R. Daniel Kelemen, "The Study of Critical Junctures: Theory, Narrative, and Counterfactuals in Historical Institutionalism," World Politics 59(3), 2007: 341-369

Dunning, T. (2017). Contingency and Determinism in Research on Critical Junctures: Avoiding the" Inevitability Framework". Qualitative and Multi-Method Research, 15(1), 41-47.

Slater, D., & Soifer, H. D. (2020). The Indigenous Inheritance: Critical Antecedents and State Building in Latin America and Southeast Asia. *Social Science History*, *44*(2), 251-274.

Week 8 Process Tracing and Causal Mechanisms (2nd assignment due)

Collier, D. (2011). Understanding process tracing. *PS: Political Science & Politics*, *44*(4), 823-830.

Gonzalez-Ocantos, Ezequiel, and Jody LaPorte. "Process Tracing and the Problem of Missing Data. Sociological Methods & Research 2021 50 (3)

Grzymala-Busse, A. (2011). Time will tell? Temporality and the analysis of causal mechanisms and processes. Comparative Political Studies, 44(9), 1267-1297.

Bennett, A., & Checkel, J. T. (Eds.). (2015). *Process tracing*. Cambridge University Press. ch 1 and 5

Ricks, J. I., & Liu, A. H. (2018). Process-tracing research designs: A practical guide. PS: Political Science & Politics, 1-5.

Week 9 Interview and Focus Groups

Mosley, Layna, ed. 2013. "'Just Talk to People'?: Interviews in Contemporary Political Science." In Mosley, ed., Interview Research in Political Science. Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, p. 1-28.

Jennifer Cyr. 2017. "The unique utility of focus groups for mixed-methods research." PS: Political Science & Politics 50(4): 1038-1042.

Tansey, O. (2007). Process tracing and elite interviewing: a case for non-probability sampling. *PS: Political Science and Politics*, *40* (4), 765-772.

Rivera, Sharon Werning, Polina M. Kozyreva, and Eduard G. Sarovskii. "Interviewing Political Elites: Lessons from Russia." PS: Political Science and Politics vol. 35 no.4 (December 2002): 683-688.

Cyr, Jennifer. "The pitfalls and promise of focus groups as a data collection method." Sociological Methods & Research 45, no. 2 (2016): 231-259.

Stanley, L. (2016). Using focus groups in political science and international relations. *Politics*, *36* (3), 236-249.

Schwedler, Jillian. "The Third Gender: Western Female Researchers in the Middle East." PS: Political Science and Politics 39.3 (July 2006): 425-428

Sugiyama, N. B., & Hunter, W. (2013). Whither Clientelism? Good Governance and Brazil's Bolsa Família Program. *Comparative Politics*, *46* (1), 43-62.

Week 10 – Individual Meetings on Research Proposals

Week 11 Ethnography, Fieldwork and Participant Observation

Gillespie, A., & Michelson, M. R. (2011). Participant observation and the political scientist: Possibilities, priorities, and practicalities. *PS: Political Science and Politics*, *44*(2), 261-265.

Kapiszewski, D., MacLean, L.M., Read, B.L. (2015). Site-Intensive Methods:

Ethnography and Participant Observation. Field Research in Political Science: Practices and Principles. Cambridge University Press. Chapter 7.

Schatz, E. (2009). Ethnographic immersion and the study of politics, and What kind(s) of ethnography does political science need? In Schatz, E. ed., Political Ethnography: What Immersion Contributes to the Study of Power. University of Chicago Press, 1-22, 303- 318.

Lisa Wedeen, "Reflections on Ethnographic Work in Political Science," Annual Review of Political Science, Vol.1 3 (May 2010), pp. 255-272

Wedeen, L. (2019). *Authoritarian apprehensions: Ideology, judgment, and mourning in Syria*. University of Chicago Press. Ch. 1

Week 12 – Natural Experiments

Kocher, Matthew A., and Nuno P. Monteiro. 2016. "Lines of Demarcation: Causation, Design-Based Inference, and Historical Research." *Perspectives on Politics* 14(4): 952-975.

Dunning, T. (2012). Natural experiments in the social sciences: A design-based approach. Cambridge University Press. Chapter 1 and pp. 105-121.

Posner, Daniel N. 2004. "The Political Salience of Cultural Difference: Why Chewas and Tumbukas Are Allies in Zambia and Adversaries in Malawi." *American Political Science Review* 98(4): 529-545.

Week 13 Historiography and archival work (Third assignment due)

Lustick, Ian. (1996). "History, historiography, and political science: Multiple historical records and the problem of selection bias," American Political Science Review 90: 605-618.

Thies, Cameron. "A Pragmatic Guide to Qualitative Historical Analysis in the Study of International Relations." International Studies Perspectives 3:4 (2002), pp. 351-372.

Capoccia, G., & Ziblatt, D. (2010). The Historical Turn in Democratization Studies. Comparative Political Studies, 43(8–9), 931–46.

Auerbach, A. (2018). "Informal Archives: Historical Narratives and the Preservation of Paper in India's Urban Slums." Studies in Comparative International Development, 53: 343-364.

Belge, C. (2016). Civilian victimization and the politics of information in the Kurdish conflict in Turkey. *World Politics*, *68*(2), 275-306.

Week 14 Ethics

L. R. Woliver (2002), "Ethical Dilemmas in Personal Interviewing," PS: Political Science and Politics, 35 (4), 677-678

Wanda Pillow (2003) Confession, catharsis, or cure? Rethinking the uses of reflexivity as methodological power in qualitative research, International Journal of Qualitative Studies in Education, 16 (2), 175-196

Elisabeth Wood (2006) "The Ethical Challenges of Field Research in Conflict Zones," Qualitative Sociology 29 (3): 373-386.

Loyle, C. E., & Simoni, A. (2017). Researching under fire: Political science and researcher trauma. PS, Political Science & Politics, 50 (1), 141-5.