

Research Design and Methods II

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CEU Credits: 2

Aim and structure of the course

The course explores the philosophy of (social) science, research design and techniques of qualitative data gathering and analysis. We investigate what social scientists do and how they evaluate their theories and empirical material. In the course we explore research design (finding a research question, defining concepts and measurement and case selection), data gathering (interviews, focus groups and surveys), and techniques of data analysis. The course consists of eleven seminars. The format is based on introductions by the lecturer(s) and group work exercises.

Learning Outcomes

The general goal of the course is raising awareness of methodological problems and solutions in qualitative research. The material is based on book chapters and papers of the respective field, new contributions in the field and a selection of applied studies. As specific learning outcomes students should be able to develop a coherent research design on their own and chose the appropriate method of data gathering and data analysis tailored to their research question. In addition, students should be able to critically review research and policy papers regarding their research design and methodological choices.

Readings and extra material

This course uses CEU's e-learning platform (ceulearning.ceu.edu). For each seminar there is one required reading, several recommended readings and research examples. Preferably, students should read the required reading, one recommended reading and one journal article from research as an example to illustrate the course topic (research example). The readings comprise a variety of textbook chapters and journal articles. They are selected to constitute basis for the discussions and exercises in the seminars.

For students who want to acquire a general introduction to research design and/or qualitative methods, especially in relation to public policy, we recommend the following:

- King, G., Keohane R., & Verba S. (1994). *Designing Social Inquiry: Scientific inference in qualitative research*. Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press.
- Majchrzak, A. & Markus. M., L. (2014). *Methods for policy research: taking socially responsible action*. Thousand Oaks, Calif.: SAGE Publications.
- Ritchie, J. & Lewis, J. (Eds.). (2003). *Qualitative research practice: a guide for social science students and researchers*. Thousand Oaks, CA: SAGE Publications.
- Yin, R. (2011). *Qualitative Research from Start to Finish*. New York: Guilford Press. Available via the CEU library as e-book.

Course Requirements

All written assignments must be submitted on the CEU e-learning platform for the course.

- *Group assignments*: 30 %
- *Take-home exam*: 35%
- *Research paper review*: 35%

Participation: Students are expected to attend seminars regularly, to prepare the required readings and to participate in the group activities. Attendance is mandatory. Students must notify the course instructor in advance of their absence, and in the case of overstepping the limit of unexcused absences specified by general SPP guidelines, a written justification of a legitimate reason (e.g. medical note) has to be submitted to the programme coordinator. Please note that in case of absence for any reason, students have to submit a make-up assignment to the course instructor and the teaching assistant. The assignment is a 500-word summary of the required reading for the missed class.

Group assignments: Each session is based on specific group work. The groups are expected to write the answers on a flip chart.

Take-home exam: The take-home exam is comprised of a number of questions, each referring to a research paper (to be uploaded on the e-learning) and relating to one methodological issue discussed in class. The answers should be uploaded on e-learning. Deadlines will be announced in due course.

Research paper review: The major requirement of the course is a methodological review of a published or presented scholarly paper. The review should discuss benefits and drawbacks of the applied research design with specific emphasis on the topics discussed in the class. Students should strive to provide a

substantiated critique and take a position within a given debate or towards a scholarly contribution. The structure is not pre-set, but students are encouraged to be inspired by the style and structure of reviews published in scholarly journals. Students will be able to choose among a selection of articles posted on the e-learning site. The reviews will be evaluated upon the accuracy with which the research design and methods are summarized, the quality of insight into benefits and drawbacks of the choices the researcher has made, and the clarity with which this is presented. The reviews should be about 1,500 words (+/- 10%) and should be submitted by the end of the term (deadline tba).

Transferable skills

Students are strongly encouraged to consciously apply principles and methods discussed in qualitative methods seminars for the assignments in other courses and in their thesis research. Specific voluntary assignments may be designed together with the instructor on an individual basis, covering for instance the preparation and conduction of a qualitative interview or observation of a phenomenon. Students interested in such voluntary assignments should signal this no later than week 8 of the course. Note that only textual feedback is provided to such assignments and they do not count towards the final course grade. During and after the course (while enrolled in the program) students can also ask for consultations with the course instructor and teaching assistant on general issues related to research design.

Schedule

Session	Date	Topic
1	September 17 September 18	Introduction to the course
2	September 24 September 25	Causal mechanisms
3	October 1 October 2	Concepts and measurement (TA)
4	October 8 October 9	Case selection
5	October 15 October 16	Group workshop – Research design
6	October 22 October 23	Archives – Reading week
7	October 29 October 30	Interviews (TA)
8	November 5 November 6	Focus groups
9	November 12 November 13	Surveys
10	November 19 November 20	Focused comparisons
11	November 26 November 27	Mixed methods
12	December 3 December 4	Summary and conclusion

1 Introduction: Why do we need research methods?

Group... : September 17, 11.00-12.40

Group...: September 17, 1.30-3.10

Group...: September 18, 11.00-12.40

Research methods are our tools to make sense out of complex social phenomena and data. But more importantly, they help to make convincing arguments for ourselves and our audience and to start a sensible debate, which is the essence of scientific discourse and enquiry. Using qualitative methods is one approach, although the distinction between quantitative and qualitative research is not as clear as it may seem. Qualitative methods are also often used for applied policy analysis, as it is important for policy makers to be familiar with their possibilities and limitations. Also, formulating a research question is a key step in the research process. For positivist scholars the explanation to this question will be called a theory, which can be supported or rejected by empirical data.

Required reading

Snape, D. and Spencer, L. (2003) "The Foundations of Qualitative Research." In: Ritchie, Jane, and Jane Lewis (Eds.), *Qualitative research practice: a guide for social science students and researchers* (1-23). Thousand Oaks, CA: SAGE Publications.

Recommended reading

Majchrzak, A. & Markus M. L. (2014) *Methods for policy research: Taking socially responsible action*. Thousand Oaks, Calif.: SAGE Publications. Ch. 1.

Finding a research question

King, G., Keohane R., and Verba S. (1994) *Designing Social Inquiry*. Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press. Ch. 1.

Recommended reading

Brady, H. (2010) "Doing Good and Doing Better: How Far Does the Quantitative Template Get Us?" In: Henry E. Brady and David Collier (Eds.) *Rethinking Social Inquiry. Diverse Tools, Shared Standards* (67-82). 2nd edition. Lanham: Rowman & Littlefield Publishers.

2 Causal mechanisms

Group... : September 24, 11.00-12.40

Group...: September 24, 1.30-3.10

Group...: September 25, 11.00-12.40

Theories tell us how public policy interventions (should) work. Theories can also be called causal mechanisms. They specify a chain of events that lead from a cause to a final outcome. By trying to understand these chains of causal mechanisms we are better able to design specific policy interventions and/or understand events.

Required reading

Astbury, Brad and Leeuw, Frans L. (2010) “Unpacking Black Boxes: Mechanisms and Theory Building in Evaluation.” *American Journal of Evaluation*, 31:3, 363-381.

Falleti, Tulia G. and Lynch, Julia F. (2009) “Context and Causal Mechanisms in Political Analysis.” *Comparative Political Studies*, 42:9, 1143-1166.

Recommended reading

Dalkin, Sonia M. et al. (2015) “What’s in a Mechanism? Development of a Key Concept in Realist Evaluation.” *Implementation Science*, 10:49.

Hedström, Peter and Swedberg, Richard (1998) *Social Mechanisms: An Analytical Approach to Social Theory*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press. Ch. 1.

Pawson, Ray (1989) *A Measure for Measures: A Manifesto for Empirical Sociology*. London: Routledge. Ch. 6.

Research example:

Mehdipanah, R. et al. (2015) “Exploring Complex Causal Pathways Between Urban Renewal, Health and Health Inequality Using a Theory-driven Realist Approach.” *Social Science and Medicine*, 124: 266-274.

Coldwell, Mike (2019) “Reconsidering context: Six Underlying Features of Context to Improve Learning from Evaluation.” *Evaluation*, 25:1, 99-117.

3 Concepts and Measurement

Group... : October 1, 11.00-12.40

Group...: October 1, 1.30-3.10

Group...: October 2, 11.00-12.40

We can conceive the social world only through theoretical constructs – concepts – we use to describe. Sometimes, the conceptual ideas we use do not correspond to social reality or they are too vague and encompass too many social phenomena to be useful for research. The concept itself is not enough, we also have to be able to measure it by numbers or words to be meaningful for scientific debate.

Required reading

Adcock, R. and Collier D. (2001) "Measurement Validity: Toward a Shared Framework for Qualitative and Quantitative Research." *American Political Science Review*, 95: 3, 529–546.

Sartori, G. (1970) "Concept Misinformation in Comparative Politics." *American Political Science Review* 64:4, 1033–1053.

Recommended readings

Gerring, J. (1999) "What Makes a Concept Good?" *Polity*, 357-393.

Research examples:

Baldwin, D. A. (1997) "The Concept of Security." *Review of International Studies*, 23: 5-26.

Bowman K., Lehoucq F. & Mahoney J. (2005) "Measuring Political Democracy: Case Expertise, Data Adequacy, and Central America." *Comparative Political Studies*, 38:, 939-970.

Soifer, Hillel (2008) "State Infrastructural Power: Approaches to Conceptualization and Measurement." *Studies in Comparative International Development*, 43:3-4, 231-251.

4 Case Selection

Group... : October 8, 11.00-12.40

Group...: October 8, 1.30-3.10

Group...: October 9, 11.00-12.40

'Not in my village' is an ironic quote from anthropology to portray empirically working anthropologists - they know their village so well that they cannot see the larger picture. Most of the time cases in qualitative research are not unique. But this is good news, as it is difficult to learn from unique cases. According to the aim of our research we have to choose cases carefully. In this seminar we aim to answer questions such as 'How do we select cases?', 'How do we interpret the generated data?', and 'Under what conditions can the findings of case studies be generalised to the wider population?'

Required reading

Geddes, B. (1990) "How the Cases You Choose Affect the Answers You Get: Selection Bias in Comparative Politics." *Political Analysis*, 2:1, 131-150.

Beach, Derek and Pedersen, Rasmus Brun (2018) "Selecting Appropriate Cases When Tracing Causal Mechanisms." *Sociological Methods and Research*, 47:4, 837-871.

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

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

Recommended reading

Gerring, J. (2008) "Case Selection for Case-study Analysis: Qualitative and Quantitative Techniques." In: Box-Steffensmeier, J. M., Brady, H. E. & Collier, D. (eds.). *The Oxford Handbook of Political Methodology* (645-684). Oxford: Oxford University Press.

Yin, Robert K. (2013) "Validity and Generalization in Future Case Study Evaluations." *Evaluation*, 19:3,

Example from research

Posner, D. (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.

5 Workshop – research design

Group... : October 15, 11.00-12.40

Group...: October 15, 1.30-3.10

Group...: October 16, 11.00-12.40

Blair, Graeme et al. (2019) "Declaring and Diagnosing Research Designs." *American Political Science Review*, 113:3, 838-859.

6 Reading week – Archives

Group... : October 22, 11.00-12.40

Group...: October 22, 1.30-3.10

Group...: October 23, 11.00-12.40

There is a lot of written evidence of what policy makers decide and do. Bureaucrats love to archive stuff, and most policy researchers will engage with documents in some form. In order for these documents to bring additional insights to your analysis you will need a clear idea how to approach these texts. Some

researchers also gather data from larger archives. This is sometimes misunderstood as a tool for specialists of medieval history only. But it is actually a great source also for public policy research.

This class will take a practical approach by engaging with the OSA Archives, particularly those dealing with the UN Expert Commission on Investigating War Crimes in the former Yugoslavia, which collected material later used at the International Criminal Tribunal for the former Yugoslavia.

Required reading

Trachtenberg, Marc (2006) *Working with documents*. Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 140-168. Ch 5.

Recommended reading

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

Examples from research:

Tabeau, Ewa and Bijak, Jakub (2005) War-related Deaths in the 1992–1995 Armed Conflicts in Bosnia and Herzegovina: A Critique of Previous Estimates and Recent Results, *European Journal of Population* 21:2 187-215.

McKeown, Timothy J. (2009) How US Decision Makers Assessed Their Control of Multilateral Organizations, 1957-1982. *Review of International Organizations*, 4: 3, 269-291.

7 Elite and expert interviews

Group... : October 29, 11.00-12.40

Group...: October 29, 1.30-3.10

Group...: October 30, 11.00-12.40

Talking to people is one of the most direct ways of acquiring qualitative data. The advantage is that interviewees often participated in the events we are interested in and report details we wouldn't know otherwise. The disadvantages, however, is that interviewees often have their own agenda, are biased, or difficult to access. When can we use interview data and how can we avoid bias?

Required reading

Manzano, Ana (2016) "The Craft of Interviewing in Realist Evaluation." *Evaluation*, 22:3, 342– 360.

Bleich, Erik and Pekkanen, Robert (2013) “How to Report Interview Data.” In: Mosley, Layna (ed.) *Interview Research in Political Science*. Ithaca: Cornell University Press. Ch. 4.

Recommended reading

Keats, D. M. (2001). *Interviewing: a practical guide for students and professionals*. Buckingham – Philadelphia: Open University Press. Chapter 4 and 5.

Pawson, Ray and Tilley, Nick (1997) *Realistic Evaluation*. London: Sage. Ch. 6.

Example from research:

Jackson, Suzanne F. and Kolla, Gillian (2012) “A New Realistic Evaluation Analysis Method: Linked Coding of Context, Mechanism, and Outcome Relationships.” *American Journal of Evaluation*, 33:3, 339-349.

Zippel, Kathrin (2003) “Practices of Implementation of Sexual Harassment Policies: Individual Versus Collective Strategies.” *Review of Policy Research* 20:1 175-197.

8 Focus groups

Group... : November 5, 11.00-12.40

Group...: November 5, 1.30-3.10

Group...: November 6, 11.00-12.40

Focus groups do not seem to be the right tool for analysing ‘high stakes’ politics, as most of such events have strictly limited access (think of crisis management within the ECB during the Euro-crisis, etc.). But there are many occasions relevant for public policy research that make use of focus groups. They can offer significant insight in how group dynamics work.

Required reading

Ryan, Katherine E., Gandha, Tysza, Culbertson, Michael J. and Carlson, Crystal (2014) “Focus Group Evidence: Implications for Design and Analysis.” *American Journal of Evaluation*, 35:3, 328-345.

Barbour, Rosaline (2007) *Doing Focus Groups*. London: Sage. Ch. 8.

Recommended reading

Namey, Emily, Guest, Greg, McKenna, Kevin and Chen, Mario (2016) “Evaluating Bang for the Buck: A Cost-Effectiveness Comparison Between Individual Interviews and Focus Groups Based on Thematic Saturation Levels.” *American Journal of Evaluation*, 37:3, 425-440.

Example from research:

Galport, Nicole and Azzam, Tarek (2017) “Evaluator Training Needs and Competencies: A Gap Analysis.” *American Journal of Evaluation*, 38:1, 80-100.

9 Surveys

Group... : November 12, 11.00-12.40

Group...: November 12, 1.30-3.10

Group...: November 13, 11.00-12.40

Surveys are useful and versatile tools of systematic data collection. Despite their popularity and accessibility, they need to be designed and interpreted with caution in order to avoid common pitfalls which can lead to biased observations. How can strategies of survey design, inference and sampling help policy researchers to derive meaningful data from surveys?

Required reading

Groves, Robert M. et al. (2009) *Survey Methodology*. 2nd Edition. Hoboken, NJ: Wiley. Ch. 2 (Inference and Error in Surveys), 39-67.

Groves, Robert M. et al. (2009) *Survey Methodology*. 2nd Edition. Hoboken, NJ: Wiley. Ch. 7 (Questions and Answers in Surveys), 201-241.

Recommended readings

Bowen, Merle L. and Tillman, Ayesha S. (2015) “Developing Culturally Responsive Surveys: Lessons in Development, Implementation, and Analysis from Brazil’s African Descent Communities.” *American Journal of Evaluation*, 36:1, 25-41.

Freedman, D., Pisani, R., and Purves, R. (2007) *Statistics* (4th ed.). New York: Norton Ch. 19 (Sample Surveys), 333-349.

Ritchie, J., Louis J. and Elam G. (2003) “Designing and Selecting Samples.” In: Ritchie, J., and Lewis, J. (eds.), *Qualitative research practice: a guide for social science students and researchers* (77-108). Thousand Oaks, CA: SAGE Publications.

Research example:

Morris, Michael and Clark, Brittany (2012) “You Want Me to Do What? Evaluators and the Pressure to Misrepresent Findings.” *American Journal of Evaluation*, 34:1, 57-70.

10 Focused comparison

Group... : November 19, 11.00-12.40
Group...: November 19, 1.30-3.10
Group...: November 20, 11.00-12.40

Required reading

George, Alexander L. and Bennett, Andrew (2005) *Case Studies and Theory Development in the Social Sciences*. Cambridge, MA: MIT Press. Ch. 3.

George, Alexander L. and Bennett, Andrew (2005) *Case Studies and Theory Development in the Social Sciences*. Cambridge, MA: MIT Press. Ch. 9.

Recommended reading

Slater, Dan and Ziblatt, Daniel (2013) "The Enduring Indispensability of the Controlled Comparison." *Comparative Political Studies*, 46:10, 1301-1327.

Research example:

11 Mixed methods

Group... : November 26, 11.00-12.40
Group...: November 26, 1.30-3.10
Group...: November 27, 11.00-12.40

Required reading

Lieberman, E.S. (2005) "Nested Analysis as a Mixed-method Strategy for Comparative Research." *American Political Science Review*, 99:3, 435-452.

Mele, Valentina and Belardinelli, Paolo (2019) "Mixed Methods in Public Administration Research: Selecting, Sequencing, and Connecting." *Journal of Public Administration Research and Theory*, 29:2, 334-347.

Recommended readings

Abadie, Alberto; Diamond, Alexis; Hainmueller, Jens (2015) "Comparative Politics and the Synthetic Control Method." *American Journal of Political Science*, 29:2, 495-510.

Small, Mario Luis (2011) "How to Conduct a Mixed Methods Study: Recent Trends in a Rapidly Growing Literature." *Annual Review of Sociology*, 37: 57-86.

By: Rohlfing, Ingo (2008) "What You See and What You Get Pitfalls and Principles of Nested Analysis in Comparative Research." *Comparative Political Studies*, 41:11, 1492-1514.

Research example:

Green, Jessica F. (2017) “Blurred Lines: Public-Private Interactions in Carbon Regulations.” *International Interactions*, 43:1, 103-128.

Evertsson, Nubia (2017) “A Nested Analysis of Electoral Donations.” *Journal of Mixed Methods Research*, 11:1, 77-98.

Tallberg, Jonas, Sommerer, Thomas and Squatrito, Theresa (2016) “Democratic Memberships in International Organizations: Sources of Institutional Design.” *Review of International Organization*, 11:1, 59-87.

12 Conclusion

Group... : December 3, 11.00-12.40

Group...: December 3, 1.30-3.10

Group...: December 4, 11.00-12.40