

Mi401

Concepts and Methods in Social Inquiry: Research Design for the MSc Dissertation

Methodology Institute
London School of Economics and Political Science
Reading List, 2nd Term 2005

Teacher responsible:

Dr Paul Mitchell (PM)
Kings Chambers 308; p.l.mitchell@lse.ac.uk

Additional Teachers:

Dr Martin Bauer (MB)
Prof George Gaskell (GG)
Dr Ilina Singh (IS)

Wednesdays 14.00-16.00: Clement House, Room D1.

Abstract

This course focuses on research design in the social sciences, especially for those types of ‘qualitative’ studies that are less amenable to statistical analysis. After all, much of the political and social sciences are not strictly quantitative. For example, case studies have traditionally been one of the main methods of collecting evidence and suggesting arguments in comparative politics. A careful research design can help transform what otherwise may be an idiosyncratic case study of one country into a more theoretically informed contribution to knowledge.

The key purpose of this course is to think through the main stages of designing a research project such as an MSc dissertation. Most research projects, like most buildings, are better if they are carefully *designed*. (another way of saying this is that ‘neither architecture nor social science are much like impressionistic painting’). This course will help you to think through the stages of planning your dissertation. Having said that, it is a course about generic research design for the political and social sciences, and not ‘how to do footnotes properly’ (for advice on technical and style issues, see for example, the Government Departments *Handbook for MSc Students*, which has a section on ‘Advice on Writing Essays and the Dissertation’).

Mi401 has several parts. In week 1 there will be an overview of the process and organisation of writing an MSc dissertation. In week 2 we turn to a consideration of the scientific nature of social science; how is the latter different from natural science and with what consequences?

Then in the 'middle' part of the course (weeks 3-6) there are lectures on the sequential 'stages' of designing a research project. Any useful research project must seek to answer at least one significant question (otherwise it is just 'thick description'); thus the first thing that you logically have to do is to find a research topic that you are going to study, and develop some 'questions' within that 'topic'. Also, for the project to be of general interest it is better if the research questions are theoretically informed rather than haphazardly selected. These three related and vital matters - selecting a research 'topic', 'question(s)' and an appropriate 'theoretical motivation' are the subject of week 3. Once you are equipped with theoretically informed questions, the next consideration to think about is essentially – 'how can I seek to explain (rather than just describe – whatever I am interested in ?'. Thus week 4 focuses on 'explanation'. But of course once we have a theory, questions and an approach, we still need to decide 'what' are we actually going to study – for example, which cases or countries shall we analyse? Week 5 pays a lot of attention to the crucial matter of case selection. In week 5 we begin with the logic of comparative enquiry and case selection, and pay some attention to the problem of selection bias.

The final part of the course (week 6 through week 9), then present an overview of a variety of particular approaches. These are prominent examples, rather than a comprehensive account of the range of approaches that are available. We will cover rational choice theory in comparative studies, methods of content analysis of text (Week 7), the design of social surveys (Week 8) and the design, conduct and analysis of individual and group interviews (Week 9).

We believe that if you consider this material carefully and follow these research design steps you will write a better dissertation, than if you don't.

Organisation

Note that this is a lecture based course (crucially of course supplemented by the students own reading of the course materials). There are no seminars, tutorials or computer classes, or homework.

Assessment

A two hour unseen examination in the summer term.

Lecture Topics and Schedule

All lectures are on Wednesdays 14.00-16.00: Clement House, Room D1.

Week	Date	Topic	Staff
1.	12 Jan	Writing an MSc Dissertation: An Overview of the Process	GG, PM
2.	19 Jan	Is Social Science <i>Science</i> ? Explanation and Evidence in the Social Sciences.	GG, PM
3.	26 Jan	(A) Selecting a Research Topic: ‘How the questions you choose affect the answers you get’ (B) Selecting a theory: Literature review, theory development, and linking theory to empirics	PM
4.	2 Feb	How do I ‘Explain’ anything? it’s all about Inference	PM
5.	9 Feb	But which Cases should I study? (a) Intro to the logic and practice of comparative study (b) Case selection, case studies and selection bias	PM
6.	16 Feb	How the types of evidence and approach that you use affects the conclusions that you reach. (a) non-quantitative measurement and hypothesis testing rational choice in comparative politics. (b) rational choice in comparative politics	PM
7.	23 Feb	Content analysis of texts	MB
8.	2 March	Social Surveys	GG
9.	9 March	Conducting Interviews	IS

READING

While there is no course textbook, for a general overview and chapters that are relevant to several week's topics you should find some of these books useful, especially the first three books that are listed immediately below.

Gary King, Robert Keohane and Sidney Verba (1994), *Designing Social Inquiry: Scientific Inference in Qualitative Research*, Princeton UP. Hereafter referred to as KKV.

(The first chapter of this book can be downloaded for free using Acrobat Reader for PDF files from Princeton UP's web-site at

http://www.pupress.princeton.edu/sample_chapters/king. But you should also read chapters 2-6!). There are about 15 copies in the library.

Barbara Geddes (2003), *Paradigms and Sand Castles: Theory Building and Research Design in Comparative Politics*. University of Michigan Press. 10 copies in library.

B. Guy Peters (1998), *Comparative Politics: Theory and Methods*, Macmillan. (a very readable introduction to the methodology of comparative politics). There are 6 copies in the library.

Additional General Reading

A.F. Chalmers (1999), *What is this thing called Science?*, Third Edition, Open UP (treatment by a rationalist philosopher).

Paul Pennings, Hans Keman and Jan Kleinnijenhuis (1999), *Doing Research in Political Science: An Introduction to Comparative Methods and Statistics*, Sage

David Marsh and Gerry Stoker (eds) (1995), *Theory and Methods in Political Science*, Macmillan. (This is a very introductory undergraduate text that is not sufficient for this course. Nevertheless, genuine neophytes might take a look).

Elinor Scarborough and Eric Tanenbaum (eds, 1998). *Research Strategies in the Social Sciences: A Guide to New Approaches*. Oxford UP. (a guide to much more advanced mostly *quantitative* techniques).

Michael Laver (1997), *Private Desires, Political Action: An Invitation to the Politics of Rational Choice*, Sage. (an excellent introduction to, as the sub-title suggests, rational choice theory).

Karen Cook and Margaret Levi (eds) (1990), *The Limits to Rationality*, University of Chicago Press.

Jon Elster and Aanund Hyllan (eds) (1986), *Foundations of Social Choice Theory*, Cambridge UP.

Ada Finifter (ed.) (1993), *Political Science: The State of the Discipline 2*, APSA.

Robert E. Goodin and Hans-D. Klingeman (eds) (1996), *A New Handbook of Political Science*, Oxford UP.

Mark Lichbach and Alan Zuckerman (eds) (1997), *Comparative Politics: Rationality, Culture and Structure*.

Robert Nozick (1993), *The Nature of Rationality*, Princeton UP.

Dankwart Rustow and Kenneth Paul (eds) (1991), *Comparative Political Dynamics: Global Research Perspectives*, HarperCollins.

Kenneth Shepsle and Mark Bonchek (1997), *Analyzing Politics: Rationality, Behavior, and Institutions* W. W. Norton

In the reading guide on specific topics that follows, **all** books listed above will be referred to by author and year.

DETAILED READING WEEK-BY-WEEK

1. Writing an MSc Dissertation: An Overview of the Process

George Gaskell and Paul Mitchell

Patrick Dunleavy (2003) *Authoring a PhD: How to Plan, Draft, Write and Finish a Doctoral Thesis or Dissertation*, London Palgrave.

2 The Science in Social Science

Issues

- Is social science different to natural science? If so, in what sense?
- What is the relationship between explanation and prediction?
- What is the relationship between theories and their relationship to evidence?
- What is the difference between verification and corroboration?

Popper is one of the most famous philosophers of science, and his home for most of his academic life was the LSE. We will spend some time on his work, and consider briefly what he was criticising, and some of his critics including Imre Lakatos, who also lectured here at the LSE (see below for audio information). The main purpose of the lecture however, is not simply to introduce some philosophy of social science, but to interrogate the idea that explanation in the social sciences must bring together theory and evidence. It will consider their relationship, and what role theory should play in a dissertation; and what role empirical evidence should play. The answer, to some extent, depends on the nature of the questions that are asked.

Key questions

What is the relationship between prediction and explanation? What is the relationship between theory and evidence? How can evidence corroborate theories?

Audio

Lets listen to this 20 minute broadcast (on the LSE website at the address below) by Imre Lakatos first broadcast by the BBC in 1973 shortly before the speaker died at only age 51.

Science and Pseudoscience is Lakatos's most succinct public summary of his philosophy of science. In this talk he outlines his distinctive view of the importance of 'the demarcation problem' in the philosophy and history of science, namely the normative methodological problem of distinguishing between science and pseudo-science, and of why its solution is not merely an issue of 'armchair philosophy', but also one of vital social and political significance, and even of life and death itself. He outlines his own methodology of scientific research programmes, and argues that it solves some of the problems posed by the work of Karl Popper and Thomas Kuhn.

Science and Pseudoscience is Lakatos's most succinct public summary of his philosophy of science. (and of course his last). Go to -

<http://www.lse.ac.uk/collections/lakatos//scienceAndPseudoscience.htm>

Essential Reading

- 1) Peter Achinstein *The Nature of Explanation* (OUP, 1983) esp ch. 1.
- 2) KKV chapter 1.

Additional Reading

Brown, Fauvel & Finnegan (eds) (1981) *Concepts of Inquiry: A Reader*, OUP, samples from chapters 4, 5, 6, and 10 – i.e. J.S. Mill (pp. 96-100 & 145-149), Popper (pp. 100-107 & 138-140), Kuhn (pp. 107-114 & 127-138), Lakatos (pp. 114-121), Easton (pp. 149-154), Hempel (pp. 154-179), Weber (pp. 295-300)

Chalmers, A.F. (1999). *What is this thing called Science?* Buckingham: Open University Press, 3rd edition. At minimum read chapters 5 and 9 (ideally also 6 and 7). [You will discover that your lecturer KD does not think much of any of the commentators on Popper including Lakatos and Chalmers, so beware!]

KKV clearly believe that falsifiability is one of the hallmarks of social scientific inquiry and their remarks on this matter seem to be influenced by Lakatos as well as Popper. See KKV (1994), pp. 19-23, 100-105.

For anyone who wants to get into this material in more depth -

Popper: Falsifiability

Popper presents a variety of accounts of falsifiability while the 1959 text is the original, it is also the most complex.

Karl Popper (1959), *The Logic of Scientific Discovery*, Hutchinson, ch. 1

Karl Popper (1972), *Objective Knowledge*, Oxford UP, ch. 1

Karl Popper (1969), *Conjectures and Refutations*, Routledge and Kegan Paul, ch. 1

Karl Popper (1983), *A Pocket Popper*, David Miller (ed.), Fontana. See the essays collected in part II.

There are numerous textbooks and edited collections on the work of Popper. One of the most recent (and best) is:

Geoff Stokes (1999), *Popper: Philosophy, Politics and Scientific Method*, Polity

Lakatos and the Idea of a Research Programme

The key primary source for Lakatos's philosophy of science is:

Imre Lakatos (1970), 'Falsification and the Methodology of Scientific Research Programmes' in Imre Lakatos and Alan Musgrave (eds), *Criticism and the Growth of Knowledge*, Cambridge UP, also available as ch. 1 of the first volume of Lakatos's collected papers: Imre Lakatos (1978), *Philosophical Papers Volume 1*, John Worrall and Gregory Currie (eds), Cambridge UP.

The best available secondary accounts and critical commentaries are listed in the overview section. The best textbook on his work is:

Brendan Larvor (1998), *Lakatos: An Introduction*, Routledge.

3. Research Questions and Theories

Introduction

Once you have an idea of about what you want to research, the next stage is working out what “research question” you want to answer. Remember, “the question you choose affects the type of answer you get” (B. Geddes). The trick in an MSc dissertation is to ask a question that has a theoretical and empirical component, and that can be answered in 10,000 words. In general, “why” questions are better for theoretically-driven social science research than “what” questions.

Once you have a question, you need to do three things:

- 1) Find out how other people have answered the question already. This is where a the infamous “literature review” comes in. There are good and bad ways of writing ‘lit reviews’. For example, good lit. reviews critically evaluation the different types of answers rather than simply repeating the findings of individual pieces of research.
- 2) Work out your own answer to the question/theoretical ideas. Next week will cover this in more detail, but this week will discuss how to construct and evaluate a theory. For example, what makes a good theory – explaining everything poorly vs. explaining a few things well.
- 3) Work out what you need to do empirically to demonstrate that your theory/answer to the question is better than other theories/answers.

Essential reading

Geddes (2003) chapter 2, “Big Questions, Little Answers: How the Questions You Choose Affect the Answers you Get”

KKV (1994) chapter 1.

Patrick Dunleavy (2003) *Authoring a PhD: How to Plan, Draft, Write and Finish a Doctoral Thesis or Dissertation*, London Palgrave. (Although this book is designed primarily for PhDs a lot of it applies to any non-fictional writing project, such as an MSc dissertation. Of particular interest here are the parts of the chapters on “Envisioning the Thesis as a Whole” and “Organizing a Chapter or Paper” on finding a research question and how to organise a literature review).

Additional reading

Chris Hart (1998) *Doing a Literature Review: Releasing the Social Science Research Imagination*, London: Sage (selected chapters).

Chris Hart (2001) *Doing a Literature Search: A Comprehensive Guide for the Social Sciences*, London: Sage.

Richard Andrews (2003) *Research Questions*, London: Continuum.

Alan Zuckerman (1997), 'Reformulating Explanatory Standards and Advancing Theory in Comparative Politics' in Mark Lichbach and Alan Zuckerman (eds), pp. 277-310.

Rebecca Morton (1999) *Methods and Models: A Guide to the Empirical Analysis of Formal Models in Political Science*, Cambridge UP (chs 1-2). (advanced)

Lewis Minkin (1997) *Exits and Entrances: Political Research as a Creative Art*, Sheffield: Sheffield Hallam University Press.

Heather Dawson (2003) *Using the Internet for Political Research: Practical Tips and Hints*, Oxford: Chandos Publishing.

4. How do I 'Explain' anything? : its all about Inference

Introduction

How can we actually 'explain' rather than just describe something. Is there a useful distinction between quantitative and qualitative research, or between an inductive and a deductive logic of inquiry? The concepts of descriptive and explanatory inference, causality and uncertainty will be introduced. Remember, 'the content is the method'. In other words, social science, indeed all science, depends primarily on its rules and methods, not on its 'subject' matter.

Key questions

1) 'The only reliable method of making gains in knowledge and social progress is through scientific enquiry. Anything else is just chat.'

2) What is inference?

Essential reading

KKV (1994), ch. 1-2

Additional reading

KKV (1994), ch. 3. 'Causality' and 'Casual Reasoning' are difficult topics both in social scientific and philosophical accounts of established knowledge. There is no settled consensus. Ch 3 presents KKV's counterfactual definition of causality. This is not an easy chapter but it is worth reading carefully. In general, KKV is an excellent text on scientific approaches to social inquiry. Note, however, that we do not present it as a bible or other sacred text. Many political scientists contest aspects of KKV's book. For a sample see the next item on this reading guide.

American Political Science Review 89:2 (June 1995), 454-81. Five other political scientists review different parts of KKV's book and then KKV respond.

Geddes (2003), chpt 1 'Research design and the accumulation of knowledge'.

Laver (1997) chs 1-2

Kenneth Shepsle and Mark Bonchek (1997), chs 1-2 ('It Isn't Rocket Science, but . . .', and 'Rationality: The Model of Choice').

Jon Elster (1990), 'When Rationality Fails', and Geoffrey Brennan (comment on Elster above) 'What Might Rationality Fail to Do?', in Cook and Levi, ch. 1. Jon Elster's chapter is a very interesting and provocative argument that 'rational choice theory is first and foremost a normative theory and only secondarily an explanatory approach' (p. 19).

Davis Lalman, Joe Oppenheimer and Piotr Swistak (1993), 'Formal Rational Choice Theory: A Cumulative Science of Politics', in Finifter (ed.), ch. 4

Alan Zuckerman (1997), 'Reformulating Explanatory Standards and Advancing Theory in Comparative Politics' in Lichbach and Zuckerman, pp. 277-310 (difficult).

David Sanders (1995), 'Behavioural Analysis' in Marsh and Stoker, ch.3

Robert Nozick (1993), *The Nature of Rationality*, Princeton UP

Michael Nicholson (1992), *The Scientific Analysis of Social Behaviour*, Cambridge UP

From the philosophical literature see also:

Chalmers (1999), ch. 4 ('Deriving Theories from the Facts: Induction')

Alasdair MacIntyre (1985), 'The Character of Generalizations in Social Science and their Lack of Predictive Power'.

Hollis (1994), ch. 3 ('Positive science: the empiricist way')

5. Case Selection and the logic of comparative enquiry

Paul Mitchell (Methodology Institute / Government)

“A common error has been to equate sampling with survey research and to assume that field research does not involve any form of sampling”. (Burgess, 1982).

Introduction

Why compare? What is meaningfully comparable? And what should not be compared? This session will examine the importance of comparison and outline the logic of comparative inquiry. A range of common errors will be observed including parochialism, misclassification, degreeism and conceptual stretching. Note that many published academics break the rules of good comparative inquiry on an almost daily basis! But that is not a recommendation!

Small-N- Large N problems and strategies for ‘solving’ them will be considered.

How can we best ensure that our results are not merely an artefact of the cases that we chose?

Think of a comparative study that you would like to design? What would you compare and how?

Essential reading

- 1) Peters (1998), chs.1-3
- 2) Richard Rose (1991), ‘Comparing Forms of Comparative Analysis’ from *Political Studies*, 39, 446-62
- 3) Geddes (2003), chpt 3 ‘How the cases you choose affect the answers you get: selection bias and related issues’.

Additional reading

A. On the general logic of comparative enquiry:

Dogan and Pelassy (1990), part 1 (‘The Compass of the Comparativist’) and if possible part 2.

David Collier (1993), ‘The Comparative Method’, [Off-print] from Finifter (ed.).

Hans Keman (1999), ‘Part 1: Comparative Methodology’, chs 1-3 of Pennings, Keman and Kleinnijenhuis, pp. 1-72

Arend Lijphart (1971), ‘Comparative Politics and Comparative Method’, *American Political Science Review*, 65:3, 682-98

KKV (1994), ch 6

Lichbach and Zuckerman (eds) (1997), contains several useful essays.

Gene D. DeFelice (1980), ‘Comparison Misconceived: Common Nonsense in Comparative Politics’, *Comparative Politics*, 13, 119-26

David Collier and James Mahon (1993), "'Conceptual Stretching' Revisited: Alternative Views of Categories in Comparative Analysis', *American Political Science Review*

Stefano Bartolini (1993), 'On Time and Comparative Research', *Journal of Theoretical Politics* 5, 131-67.

Charles Ragin (1987), *The Comparative Method*, University of California Press

Mattei Dogan and Ali Kazancigal (eds) (1994), *Comparing Nations: Concepts, Strategies, Substance*, Oxford: Blackwell.

Many interpretive (anti-naturalist) social scientists are very sceptical about the very idea of a science of comparative politics. For Example

Alasdair MacIntyre (1971), 'Is a Science of Comparative Politics Possible?' from *Against the Self-Images of the Age*, London: Duckworth. Reprinted in Peter Laslett, W. G. Runciman and Quentin Skinner (eds.) *Philosophy, Politics and Society*, Fourth Series, Oxford: Blackwell, 1972 and in Alan Ryan (ed.), *The Philosophy of Social Explanation*, Oxford: OUP, 1974.

B. Selection of Cases (or Nations) for Comparison and Selection Bias

In principle anything could be compared with anything. In practice some comparisons are likely to be better than others, in the sense of producing meaningful non-obvious findings. Time permitting this session will focus on three or four aspects/problems in comparative studies:

1. Compare what? The need to segment before comparing. The choice of countries: which countries?; how many countries or cases? Most common choices: binary comparisons; comparing 'similar' countries; comparing 'contrasting' countries; asynchronic comparisons.
2. Does a Case Study really deserve to be called a 'comparative' method?
3. Problems of Selection Bias. Especially in qualitative (small n) research, the decision as to which cases, observations or countries to include is often crucial, indeed may even determine, the results that we get.
4. Problems of Endogeneity. This is the problem of ambiguous directions of causality. In other words, since most political research is not genuinely experimental (as in a laboratory), we usually cannot manipulate or alter our 'independent' (explanatory) variables. Our inability to do this leads to the problem of endogeneity, that is, that the values of our explanatory variables are sometimes a consequence, rather than the cause of, our dependent variable.

Additional readings

KKV (1994), chs 4-5.

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

Dogan and Pelassy (1990), parts 3-4

Peters (1998), chs 5, 8-10.

Stanley Lieberman (2000), 'Small N's and Big Conclusions: An Examination of the reasoning in Comparative Studies based on a Small Number of Cases', in Roger Gomm, Martin Hammersley and Peter Foster (eds, 2000). *Case Study Method*. Sage.

David Collier (1995), 'Translating Quantitative Methods for Qualitative Researchers: The Case of Selection Bias', *American Political Science Review*, 89:2, 461-66.

Ian Lustick (1996), 'History, Historiography, and Political Science: Multiple Historical Records and the Problem of Selection Bias', *American Political Science Review*, 90:3, 605-18.

Michael Coppedge (1999), 'Thinkening Thin Concepts and Theories: Combining Large N and Small in Comparative Politics', *Comparative Politics* 31:4, 465-76.

David Collier and Steven Levitsky (1997), 'Democracy with Adjectives: Conceptual Innovation in Comparative Research', *World Politics* 49, 430-51.

Giesele De Meur and Dirk Berg-Schlosser (1994), 'Comparing Political Systems: Establishing Similarities and Dissimilarities', *European Journal of Political Research* 26, 193-219.

Giesele De Meur and Dirk Berg-Schlosser (1996), 'Conditions of Authoritarianism, Fascism and Democracy in Interwar Europe: Systematic Matching and Contrasting Cases for "Small N" Analyses', *Comparative Political Studies* 29, 193-219.

Harry Eckstein (1975), 'Case Study and Theory in Political Science', in Fred Greenstein and Nelson Polsby (eds), *Handbook of Political Science* vol.7. Reading, MA: Addison Wellsley.

David Collier and J. Mahon (1993), 'Conceptual "Stretching" Revisited: Adapting Categories in Comparative Analysis', *American Political Science Review* 87, 845-55.

James D. Fearon (1991), 'Counterfactuals and Hypothesis Testing in Political Science', *World Politics*, 43, 169-95.

Alan Zuckerman (1997), 'Reformulating explanatory standards and advancing theory in comparative politics', in Lichbach and Zuckerman (eds), pp. 277-310.

See also the symposium entitled:

'Controversy in the Discipline: Area Studies and Comparative Politics' (Robert Bates, Chalmers Johnson and Ian Lustick), *Political Science and Politics*, 30:2 (June 1997), 166-79.

How do I design a ‘good’ case study?

‘You can’t prove anything with a case-study. Or can you?’ What is the purpose of case-study research? What are its advantages **and** the disadvantages. How should case studies be designed and conducted?

Essential Reading

Robert K. Yin (2003). *Case Study Research: Design and Methods*, 3rd edition. Sage.

Additional Reading

Charles Ragin ‘Introduction: Cases of “What is a Case”’, in Charles Ragin and Howard Becker (eds, 1992) *What is a Case: Exploring the Foundations of Social Inquiry*. Cambridge UP. [useful conceptual piece – other interesting chpts in this book as well]

Roger Gomm, Martin Hammersley and Peter Foster (eds, 2000). *Case Study Method*. Sage. [a reader of the most influential articles, including the Eckstein and Lieberson pieces]

Harry Eckstein (1975), ‘Case Study and theory in political science’, in F. Greenstein and N. Polsby (eds) *A Handbook of Political Science*, pp79-137. Reading, MA: Addison-Wesley. [this is still a classic worth reading]

Stanley Lieberson (2000), ‘Small N’s and Big Conclusions: An Examination of the reasoning in Comparative Studies based on a Small Number of Cases’, in Roger Gomm, Martin Hammersley and Peter Foster (eds, 2000). *Case Study Method*. Sage

Robert Stake (2000), ‘Case Studies’, in Norman Denzin and Yvonna Lincoln (eds) *Handbook of Qualitative Research*, 2nd edition. Sage.

Robert Stake (1995). *The art of case study research*. Sage.

Lars Christiannsen and Keith Dowding (1994) ‘Pluralism and State Autonomy? The Case of Amnesty International (British Section): the Insider/Outsider Group’ *Political Studies* 42(1): 15-24. (This is a case study that will be referred to during the lecture.)

6. How the types of evidence and approach that you use affects the conclusions that you reach.

Paul Mitchell (Government / Methodology Institute)

How the evidence you use affects your conclusions. Non- quantitative measurement and hypothesis testing
Rational choice theory in comparative politics.

Essential readings

1. Barabara Geddes (2003), 'How the evidence you use affects the answers you get', in Geddes , *Paradigms and Sand Castles: Theory Building and Research Design in Comparative Politics*. University of Michigan Press.
2. Barabara Geddes (2003), 'How the approach you choose affects the answers you get: rational choice and its uses in comparative politics', in Geddes , *Paradigms and Sand Castles: Theory Building and Research Design in Comparative Politics*. University of Michigan Press.

Additional readings

1. Evidence and Conclusions

Alan Zuckerman (1997), 'Reformulating Explanatory Standards and Advancing Theory in Comparative Politics' in Mark Lichbach and Alan Zuckerman (eds), pp. 277-310.

Rebecca Morton (1999) *Methods and Models: A Guide to the Empirical Analysis of Formal Models in Political Science*, Cambridge UP (chs 1-2). (advanced)

Robert K. Yin (2003). *Case Study Research: Design and Methods*, 3rd edition. Sage, especially chpt 5 'Analysing case study evidence'

Patrick Dunleavy (2003) *Authoring a PhD: How to Plan, Draft, Write and Finish a Doctoral Thesis or Dissertation*, London Palgrave, perhaps especially chpt 4 'Organizing a chapter or paper: the micro structure'.

Stanley Lieberon (2000), 'Small N's and Big Conclusions: An Examination of the reasoning in Comparative Studies based on a Small Number of Cases', in Roger Gomm, Martin Hammersley and Peter Foster (eds, 2000). *Case Study Method*. Sage.

Michael Coppedge (1999), 'Thinkening Thin Concepts and Theories: Combining Large N and Small in Comparative Politics', *Comparative Politics* 31:4, 465-76.

David Collier and Steven Levitsky (1997), 'Democracy with Adjectives: Conceptual Innovation in Comparative Research', *World Politics* 49, 430-51.

'Controversy in the Discipline: Area Studies and Comparative Politics' (Robert Bates, Chalmers Johnson and Ian Lustick), *Political Science and Politics*, 30:2 (June 1997), 166-79.

Dogan and Pelassy (1990), chpt 23-24 'From Comparison to Synthesis' pp171-178.

Norman Blaike (2000) *Designing Social Research*. London: Polity. Chpt 7 'methods for answering research questions'.

2. Rational Choice Theory

Laver (1997), chs 1-2

Shepsle and Bonchek (1997), ch. 10 ('Public Goods, Externalities, and the Commons')

3Michael Taylor (1990), 'Cooperation and Rationality: Notes on the Collective Action Problem and its Solutions', and Michael Hechter (comment on Taylor) 'On the Inadequacy of Game Theory for the Solution of Real-World Collective Action Problems', ch. 6 in Cook and Levi (1990).

Shepsle and Bonchek (1997), ch. 8 ('Cooperation') and ch. 9 ('Collective Action').

Laver (1997), chs 3 and 8

Russell Hardin (1990), 'The Social Evolution of Cooperation' in Cook and Levi, ch. 10.

William H. Riker (1990), 'Political Science and Rational Choice', in James Alt and Kenneth Shepsle (eds), *Perspectives on Positive Political Economy*, Cambridge UP, pp. 163-81.

Margaret Levi (1997), 'A Model, a Method and a Map: Rational Choice in Comparative and Historical Analysis', in Lichbach and Zuckerman, pp. 19-41.

Hugh Ward (1995), 'Rational Choice Theory', in Marsh and Stoker.

Davis Lalman, Joe Oppenheimer and Piotr Swistak (1993), 'Formal Rational Choice Theory: A Cumulative Science of Politics' in Finifter

Terry Moe (1979), 'On the Scientific Status of Rational Choice Theory', *American Journal of Political Science*, 23, 215-43.

Nozick (1993), ch. 5.

Donald Green and Ian Shapiro (1994), *Pathologies of Rational Choice Theory: A Critique of Applications in Political Science*, Yale UP.

Jeffrey Friedman (ed.) (1996), *The Rational Choice Controversy: Economic Models of Politics Reconsidered*, Yale UP.

Ian Budge (1993), 'Rational Choice as Comparative Theory: Beyond Economic Self Interest', in Hans Keman (ed) *Comparative Politics*. Amsterdam: VU Press.

Michael Nicholson (1992), *Rationality and the Analysis of International Conflict*, Cambridge UP.

Michael Laver (1997), *Playing Politics: The Nightmare Continues*, Oxford UP.

Robert Axelrod (1984), *The Evolution of Cooperation*, Basic Books.

Brian Barry (1978), *Sociologists, Economists and Democracy*, Second Edition, University of Chicago Press / Collier Macmillan.

Peter Ordeshook (1992), *A Political Theory Primer*, Routledge.

Robert Gibbons (1992), *A Primer in Game Theory*, Prentice Hall/ Princeton UP.

7. Content Analysis of Newspapers and Documents

Martin W Bauer (Methodology Institute / Social Psychology)

Issues: Since the Enlightenment newspapers and other mass media are part of the complex of public opinion and freedom of the speech and public expression. Mass media analysis makes at least two contributions to social and political research: First, mass media are reflections as well as agenda setters in the public opinion processes. Analysis of mass media allows us therefore to gauge past, present and maybe future public opinion on issues. Secondly, mass media reports allow us to reconstruct historical facts, such as involvement of various actors in social conflicts. The mechanics of how one conducts such analyses will be addressed.

Essential reading

Bauer MW (2000), 'Classical content analysis: a review', in: MW Bauer & G Gaskell (eds) *Qualitative researching with text, image and sound*, London, Sage, 131-151.

Woolley J T (2000), 'Using media-based data in studies of politics', *American Journal of Political Science*, 44, 156-173.

Additional readings

Althaus S L, J A Edy, P F Phalen (2001), 'Using substitutes for full-text news stories in content analysis: which text is best?', *American Journal of Political Science*, 45, 3, 707-724.

Franzosi R (2004) *From words to numbers. Narrative, data and social science*, Cambridge, CUP [Structural analysis in the social sciences, vol 22].

Janowitz M (1976), 'Content analysis and the study of socio-political change', *Journal of Communication*, 26, 4, 10-21.

Krippendorff, K (1980). *Content Analysis: An introduction to its methodology*. London, Sage.

Lindkvist, K (1981), 'Approaches to textual analysis', in: Rosengren, K E (ed) *Advances in content analysis*, London, Sage, 23-41.

Markoff J, G Shapiro, S R Weitman (1974), 'Toward the integration of content analysis and general methodology', in: Heise D R (ed) *Sociological Methodology 1975*, San Francisco, Jossey-Bass, 1-

Neumann W R (1989), 'Parallel content analysis: old paradigms and new proposals', *Public Communication and Behavior*, vol 2, 205-289

Schonhardt-Bailey Charyl, "Conservatives Who Sounded Like Trustees but Voted Like Delegates: The Reinterpretation of Repeal" Working Paper, (See "recent papers" page of website: <http://personal.lse.ac.uk/schonhar/recentpapers.htm>)

Weber, R P (1985) *Basic Content Analysis*, Beverly Hills, Sage.

8. Social Surveys

George Gaskell (Methodology Institute / Social Psychology)

Introduction

The social survey/questionnaire is probably one of the most widely used data collection instruments in social research. In an increasingly data dependent society, surveys are used in a variety of contexts to provide indicators of, for example, political participation, social capital and citizenship, political attitudes, expenditure patterns, transport use, public understanding of science, and in academic research to develop and test theory. This session outlines the key issues in the design of questionnaires and surveys.

Reading

Converse, P. (1964), 'The nature of belief systems in mass publics', in D. Apter (ed). *Ideology and discontent*. New York: Free Press

Dillman, D.A. (1978). *Mail and Telephone Surveys: The total design method*. Wiley.

Fishbein, M. (1967). *Readings in Attitude Theory and Measurement*. Wiley.

Gaskell, G, Wright, D and O'Muircheartaigh, C. (1995), 'Context effects in the measurement of attitudes: A comparison of the consistency and framing explanations', *British Journal of Social Psychology* 34, 383-393.

Gaskell, G, O'Muircheartaigh, C and Wright, D (1994), 'Survey questions about the frequency of vaguely defined events: The effects of response alternatives', *Public Opinion Quarterly* 58, 241-254.

Gaskell, G., Wright, D, and O'Muircheartaigh, C. (2000), 'Telescoping of landmark events: implications for survey research', *Public Opinion Quarterly* 64, 77-89.

Hoinville, G. & Associates (1978). *Survey research practice*. Heinemann.

Iyengar, S. (1987). *News that matters: Television and American public opinion*.

Krosnick, J. and Berent, M. (1993), 'Comparison of party identification and policy preferences. The impact of survey question format', *American Journal of Political Science*, 37:3, 941-964.

Loftus, E.F. et al (1985), 'Cognitive psychology meets the national survey', *American Psychologist* 40, 175-180.

O'Muircheartaigh, C., Gaskell, G. and Wright, D. (1993), 'Intensifiers in Behavioral Frequency Questions', *Public Opinion Quarterly* 57:4., pp. 552-565.

Oppenheim, A.N. (1992). *Questionnaire Design and Attitude Measurement*. London: Pinter.

Price, V. (1992). *Public opinion*. Beverly Hills: Sage.

Schwarz, N. (1994), 'Judgment in a social context: Biases, shortcomings and the logic of conversation', in M. Zanna (ed) *Advances in Experimental Social Psychology*, Vol.26, 123-161.

Sudman, S. and Bradburn, N. (1982). *Asking Questions*. Josey Bass.

Zaller, J. R. (1992). *The nature and origins of mass opinion*. Cambridge.

9. Qualitative Analysis: Conducting Interviews

George Gaskell (Methodology Institute / Social Psychology)

Introduction

The objective of qualitative research is a fine grained understanding, a 'thick description' of the beliefs, attitudes and values, and the motivations and behaviours of people in particular social contexts. It aims to understand how people construct and understand their social world, their paramount reality. This session outlines approaches to qualitative inquiry, with an emphasis on how to design, conduct and analyse individual and group interviews.

Reading

Becker, H and Geer, B. (1957), 'Participant observation and interviewing: a comparison', *Human Organisation*, 16, 3, 28-32.

Flick, U. (1998) *An introduction to qualitative research*. London: Sage

Gaskell, G. (2000), 'Individual and group interviewing', in M.W.Bauer and G.Gaskell, (eds). *Qualitative researching with text, image and sound*. London: Sage.

Jovchelovitch, S. and Bauer, M.W. (2000), 'Narrative interviewing', in M.W.Bauer and G.Gaskell, (eds). *Qualitative researching with text, image and sound*. London: Sage.

Merton, R. and Kendall, P. (1946), 'The focussed interview', *American Journal of Sociology*, 1, 541-557.

Morgan, D.L. (ed) (1993). *Successful Focus Groups: Advancing the state of the art*. Newbury Park: Sage.

Strauss, A. and Corbin, J. (1994), 'Grounded theory methodology: an overview', in Denzin, N.K. and Lincoln, Y.S. (eds). *Handbook of Qualitative Research*. Newbury Park, CA: Sage

