

Somer Semester 2019

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Comparative Method and Historical Institutionalism: Reflections on South Asia

This is a BA/MA Vorlesung that seeks to marry the methodology of qualitative Comparative Politics and International Relations with the evolution of Historical Institutionalism as a substantive method. Historical Institutionalism takes history and path dependence seriously. It concerns itself with policies and institutions and takes policy ideas and materialistic factors seriously to explain how institutions persist, evolve and change. The course will draw from wide ranging non South Asian literature on historical institutionalism to reflect on South Asian materials.

Aims

This Vorlesung is designed for BA and MA students who work on their research design. It can also benefit PhD students who wish to participate. This is a discussion in qualitative methods. Qualitative methods engage with serious historically informed research dealing with a few cases. The class will engage with the following issues:

1. What is a social theory?
2. How do we locate a research puzzle? Central to defining a research design is the issue of finding a problem in a research area which defies existing explanations.
3. The second stage is to select cases where this problem has arisen and seek ways of addressing the research problem.
4. Third, we will spend some time trying to understand path dependence and process tracing. Many social phenomena depend on a particular kind of path they take. It becomes imperative then to trace the processes through which paths evolve and change.
5. There will also be substantive sections such as critical junctures that change institutional paths; gradual endogenous change; the state and ideas; and the impact of groups based on class and ethnicity.
6. There will be a Tutorium attached to this class taught by Ms. Ronja Gottschling. The Tutorium will be worth two credit points and will help the students prepare for this class.

Calendar and Syllabus

1. 23 April 2019

Introduction: What is science in Political Science?

This seminar will discuss the matter of progress in science and Political Science.

Required Reading:

Terence Ball, "From Paradigms to Research Programs: Toward a Post-Kuhnian Political Science," *American Journal of Political Science* XX, 1 (Feb 1976): 151-75.

Andrew Moravcsik, "Liberal International Relations Theory: A Scientific Assessment." In Colin Elman and Miriam Fendius Elman, eds., *Progress in International Relations Theory: Appraising the Field*. (Cambridge: MIT Press, 2003): 159-204.

Supplementary:

Thomas Kuhn, *The Structure of Scientific Revolutions* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press 1970), 2nd edition, Chs. 2-6, 8-10, 12-13, parts of the Postscript. (i.e. pp. 1-65, 77-135, 144-173, 198-210).

Imre Lakatos, "Falsification and the Methodology of Scientific Research Programmes" in Lakatos and Alan Musgrave, eds. *Criticism and the Growth of Knowledge* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press 1970): 91-100, 114-122, 132-138, 173-180.

2. April 30 2019: Social Theory

Can we find a theory in a causal story? Unless we can do that we cannot be puzzled by it. Did Lenin do it right?

Required

Gary King, Robert O Keohane and Sidney Verba, *Designing Social Inquiry* (Princeton University Press, 1994): 75-114.

Vladimir Ilyich Lenin, *Imperialism, the Highest Stage of Capitalism*.

See: <https://www.marxists.org/archive/lenin/works/1916/imp-hsc/>

Supplementary

Neil Gross, "A Pragmatist Theory of Social Mechanisms," *American Sociological Review* 74 (June 2009): 358-79.

Pepper D. Culpepper, "The Politics of Common Knowledge: Ideas and Institutional Change in Wage Bargaining," *International Organization* 62 (Winter): 1-33.

3. May 7 2019: Research Puzzles

Can we now get puzzled by existing social theories? Puzzlement comes only when you have some ideas about conventional wisdom.

Required:

Arthur L. Stinchcombe, *Constructing Social Theories* (Chicago University Press, 1968): chapter 2.

Supplementary

Ian Lustick, "Lijphart, Lakatos and Consociationalism," *World Politics* 50 (Oct 1997): 88-117.

4. May 14 2019: Case Selection: The Comparative Method

How do you select cases if you find puzzles in a theory and address those puzzles?

Required:

Arend Lijphart, "Comparative Politics and Comparative Method," *American Political Science Review* 65, 3 (1971): 682-93.

Supplementary

Gary King, et al, *Designing Social Inquiry* (Princeton University Press, 1994): chapter 4 & 6.

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

5. May 21 2019: The Single Case

It is important to study social processes even within a single case. How can that be executed?

Required:

Andrew Bennett and Jeffrey T Checkel, *Process Tracing: From Metaphor to Analytic Tool* (Cambridge University Press, 2015): 3-37.

Supplementary:

Alexander George and Andrew Bennett, *Case Studies and Theory Development in the Social Sciences* (MIT Press, 2004): 205-32.

6. May 28, 2019: Counterfactuals in Social Science

Sometimes we do not have comparable cases to answer our questions. What would have happened if Kennedy was not the US President at the time of the Cuban Missile crisis? Or, what would have happened if there was no Shiekh Mujib at the time when East Pakistan was being exploited by the West? Was the individual important or the structural situation?

Required

James D Fearon, "Counterfactuals and Hypothesis Testing in Political Science," *American Political Science Review* (Jan 1991).

Supplementary

Philip E Tetlock and Aron Belkin, eds., *Counterfactual Thought Experiments in World Politics* (Princeton University Press, 1996).

7. June 4, 2019: Path Dependence

Social phenomena are driven by the past. This past or history shapes the current state of being. How can we unpack the importance of the past?

Required

Paul Pierson, "Big, Slow-Moving, and Invisible Macrosocial Processes in the Study of Comparative Politics. " in James Mahoney and Dietrich Rueschemeyer, eds, *Comparative Historical Analysis in the Social Sciences* (Cambridge University Press, 2003).

Supplementary

Paul Pierson, "Increasing Returns, Path Dependence, and the Study of Politics," *American Political Science Review*, Vol. 94, No. 2 (June 2000), pp. 251-267.

Paul Pierson, *Politics in Time* (Princeton University Press, 2004).

Tim Buthe, "Taking Temporality Seriously," *American Political Science Review* 96, 3 (September 2002): 481-493.

James Mahoney, "Path Dependence in Historical Sociology" *Theory and Society* (August 2000).

8. June 11 2019, The Qualitative Quantitative Divide

This week will reflect on what qualitative methods are suited for that quantitative methods cannot easily address. The vice versa is also true. Some aspects of empirical research are better handled by quantitative methods.

Required Reading

Michael Shalev, "Limits and Alternatives to Multiple Regression in Comparative Research," *Comparative Social Research* 25 (Spring 2006).

Peter Hall, "Aligning Ontology and Methodology in Comparative Research," in James Mahoney and Dietrich Rueschemeyer, eds., *Comparative Historical Analysis in the Social Sciences* (Cambridge University Press, 2003).

Supplementary Reading

Alexander George and Timothy J. McKeown, "Case Studies and Theories of Organizational Decision Making," *Advances in Information Processing in Organizations* 2: 21-58.

Harry Eckstein, "Case-Study and Theory in Political Science," in Fred Greenstein and Nelson Polsby, eds., *Handbook of Political Science Vol. 7* (Reading: Addison-Welsey 1975), pp. 79-139.

9. June 18, 2019: Critical Junctures

Sometimes institutions change due to an exogenous shock. This shock external to the environment may be relatively short compared to its impact.

Required Reading

Giovanni Cappoccia, "Critical Junctures" in Orfeo Fieretos, Tulia G Falleti and Adam Sheingate, eds., *Oxford Handbook of Historical Institutionalism* (Oxford University Press, 2016).

Supplementary Reading

Giovanni Cappoccia and R Daniel Kelemen, "The Study of Critical Junctures", *World Politics* (2007): 341-69.

10. June 25, 2019: Reading and Reflection

There will be no class during this week. This is a good time to think about a research puzzle, which can be discussed during the tutorial.

11. July 2, 2019: Gradual Endogenous Change

A lot of political change occurs as a result of gradual changes internal to the institutions such as the state. Processes within the state and other organizations matter for understanding how change occurs.

Required Reading

James Mahoney and Kathleen Thelen, "A Theory of gradual endogenous change," in James Mahoney and Kathleen Thelen, eds., *Explaining Institutional Change* (Cambridge University Press, 2010).

Supplementary Reading:

Rahul Mukherji, "Interests, Wireless Technology and Institutional Change," *Journal of Asian Studies* (2009): 491-517.

Wolfgang Streeck and Kathleen Thelen, "Introduction", in Wolfgang Streeck and Kathleen Thelen, eds., *Beyond Continuity* (Oxford University Press, 2005): 1-39.

12. July 9, 2019: The State and Ideas

Is the state an actor in its own right? Does the way the state thinks make an impact on policy and institutions?

Required:

Rahul Mukherji, *Globalization and Deregulation* (Oxford University Press, 2014), chapter 1.

John L Campbell and Ove K Pederson, *The National Origins of Policy Ideas* (Princeton University Press, 2014), chapter 1.

Supplementary:

Sudipta Kaviraj, "Critique of the Passive Revolution," in Partha Chatterjee, ed., *State Politics in India* (Oxford University Press, 1997).

Stephen D Krasner, *Defending the National Interest* (Princeton University Press, 1978).

Peter Evans, et al, *Bringing the State Back in* (Cambridge University Press, 1985).

13. July 16, 2019: Society – Class and Ethnic Groups in Research Designs

How do class or ethnic based groups make an impact on institutions?

Required:

Perna Singh, *How Solidarity Works for Welfare* (Cambridge University Press, 2015).

Supplementary:

Atul Kohli, *The State and Poverty in India* (Cambridge University Press, 1987).

Kanta Murali, *Caste, Class And Capital* (Cambridge University Press, 2017).

Hamza Alavi (1972). The state in post-colonial societies Pakistan and Bangladesh. *New Left Review*, 1(74), 64-74.

Pranab Bardhan, *The political economy of development in India* (Oxford University Press, 1998).

14. July 23, 2019 - Exam

Prior Requirements

This class does not require any prior knowledge of South Asia. What is required is a commitment to South Asia and to social theory. The instructor and the lecturers are happy to work with students. Students are required to go through the readings mentioned just below the titles. This is essential for taking the exam. The supplementary materials are further readings for students who want to learn more about a particular topic.

Tutorial

Ms. Ronja Gottschling will be the tutor for this class. There is a compulsory tutorial for this class. This is a good place to discuss matters discussed in class with your tutor and fellow students.

Organization

The Vorlesung will be a 90-minute lecture with discussions wherever possible. We encourage students to ask questions, even though lecturing will be the main component of the class. Questions and comments make for a lively class for both the lecturer and the pupils. Otherwise, the class becomes boring. I will use slides, which will come with lecture notes.

The lecture slides and essential readings will be uploaded on Moodle. The supplementary material will be available in the library reserves. Following the lecture and essential readings will earn you a good grade. If students engage the supplementary material as well, that will be impressive. There is no limit to how much you can learn from this class.

Students who desire a “Schein” must register on Moodle by the second week after the lecture begins.

Please enter the password to access Moodle. It is **IFP19**.

Assessment

Attendance in the Vorlesung is voluntary for those who do not wish to get a ‘Schein’ at the semester’s end. For others, attendance is compulsory. BA and MA students will take a 90-minute closed-book exam on July 23. The question paper will be distributed in the previous class on July 16. BA students will answer two questions and MA students will answer three.

Students who do not take the exam will receive no grade, unless they have a good reason. Absent students are required to submit a paper within a week. MA students will have to write a 4000 - word paper. BA students are should turn in a 3000 word paper. The right to turn in such a paper is not automatic. We will need to be convinced that circumstances beyond the student’s control led to the student’s absence at the time of the exam.