

Seminar: Qualitative and Field Methods

I. COURSE SUMMARY

The seminar has three purposes. First, it introduces students to the state-of-the-art work in political science using various field methods to develop and test theory. Second, it provides students with an opportunity to develop research strategies that employ new techniques. Third, it prepares students to articulate a field research strategy *before* their field work begins, either as part of a field paper or a dissertation prospectus.

II. REQUIREMENTS

Weekly assignments are described below. A field research strategy that sums up the work completed during the quarter will be due at the end of exam week. The strategy should outline the theory and observable implications, provide a rationale for the selection of cases, and describe the methods that will be used in the field to gather data enabling you to run rigorous tests of your theory.

In addition, for four of the weeks in which empirical work is presented (weeks 4-9), students will be responsible for submitting 1-2 page analyses of one of the core papers or books assigned that week.

This analysis should take the form of “reviewer’s comments” – as if you were reviewing the piece for a peer-reviewed journal. At a minimum, the analysis should include the following: (1) a brief summary of the central hypothesis or causal proposition, the mechanism proposed that links cause to effect, and the findings; (2) a detailed discussion of the empirical strategy, including your thoughts about how the dependent and independent variables were operationalized, the empirical tests that were run, and the quality of the evidence used by the author to make his/her case; (3) some thoughts about additional empirical tests that might be employed to further prove (or disprove) the author’s proposition by testing direct observable implications, or indirect ones that follow from the logic employed. These papers are due to me over email by Tuesday at 8:00AM on the weeks they are required.

III. BOOKS AND ARTICLES TO PURCHASE

A number of books have been pre-ordered for the course and are available in the Stanford bookstore. A course-pack is also available for purchase in the bookstore. The available books are:

David Laitin, *Identity in Formation* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1998).

William Foote Whyte, *Street Corner Society: The Social Structure of an Italian Slum*, 4th Edition (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1993).

Elisabeth Wood, *Insurgent Collective Action and Civil War in El Salvador* (Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press, 2003).

IV. WEEKLY MEETINGS AND ASSIGNMENTS

Week 1: Introduction

Robert Adcock and David Collier, "Measurement Validity: A Shared Standard for Qualitative and Quantitative Research," *American Political Science Review* 95, No. 3, 2001.

David Collier, "Data, Field Work, and Extracting New Ideas at Close Range," *APSA-CP Newsletter*, Winter 1999: 1-6.

Donald Green and Alan Gerber, "Reclaiming the Experimental Tradition in Political Science," in Ira Katznelson and Helen Milner (eds.), *Political Science: State of the Discipline* (New York: Norton, 2002).

Elisabeth Wood, "Field Methods" in Carles Boix and Susan Stokes (eds.), *The Oxford Handbook of Comparative Politics* (2007).

"Symposium: Field Research," *Qualitative Methods*, Spring 2004: 2-14.

Further Reading

Zachary Elkins, "Gradations of Democracy? Empirical Tests of Alternative Conceptualizations," *American Journal of Political Science* 44, No. 2, 293-300.

Daniel Posner, "Measuring Ethnic Fractionalization in Africa," *American Journal of Political Science* 48, No. 4, 849-863.

Week 2: Theory and Field Research Strategy

Barbara Geddes, "Research Design and the Accumulation of Knowledge," in *Paradigms and Sand Castles: Theory Building and Research Design in Comparative Politics* (Ann Arbor: University of Michigan, 2003), 1-26.

Ian Shapiro, "Problems, Methods, and Theories in the Study of Politics, or What's Wrong with Political Science and What to Do About It," *Political Theory*, August 2002.

Charles Ragin, "Turning the Tables: How Case-Oriented Research Challenges Variable-Oriented Research," *Comparative Social Research* 16, 1997.

Theda Skocpol and Margaret Somers, "The Uses of Comparative History in Macrosocial Inquiry," *Comparative Studies in Society and History* 2, 1980.

Richard Snyder, "Scaling Down: The Subnational Comparative Method," *Studies in Comparative International Development* 36, No. 1, Spring 2001.

Charles Tilly, "Mechanisms in Political Processes," *Annual Review of Political Science* 4, 2001.

Assignment: Choose a research question and theory that you wish to explore using empirical evidence. It may be the theory you grappled with in PS 440C; it may be the core question around which you are building your field paper or dissertation. The theory you choose to work with should address a problem or puzzle you believe is: (a) important; (b) poorly explained by the existing theory; (c) amenable to empirical analysis using data gathered in the field and; (d) something about you wish to spend an entire academic quarter thinking seriously.

As with every assignment, you will be asked to make an in-class presentation of this research question. Your presentation should include a description of the puzzle or problem that motivates your thinking, the theory you wish to test, its observable implications, and the types of data you will need to confirm or disconfirm your hypotheses. You should describe as completely as possible the data you will need to gather and how you will go about collecting it. The memo should be distributed to me and to the group by noon the day before class to allow all members of the group to prepare comments and suggestions.

Week 3: Choosing Cases

Barbara Geddes, "How the Cases You Choose Affect the Answers You Get: Selection Bias in Comparative Politics," *Political Analysis* 2, 1990.

John Gerring, *Case Study Research: Principles and Practices* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2007), Chapter 5.

David Collier and James Mahoney, "Insights and Pitfalls – Selection Bias in Qualitative Research," *World Politics* 49, 1996.

Alexander George, "Case Studies and Theory Development: The Method of Structured, Focused Comparison," in Paul Gordon Lauren (ed.), *Diplomacy: New Approaches in History, Theory, and Policy* (The Free Press, 1979).

Stanley Lieberson, "Small N's and Big Conclusions: An Examination of the Reasoning in Comparative Studies Based on a Small Number of Cases," *Social Forces*, December 1991.

Charles Ragin and David Zaret, "Theory and Method in Comparative Research: Two Strategies," *Social Forces*, March 1983.

Further Reading

Jasjeet Sekhon, "Quality Meets Quantity: Case Studies, Conditional Probability, and Counterfactuals," *Perspectives on Politics* 2004 (June), 281-293.

Assignment: Identify the cases that you will use to test the observable implications of your theory. Write a three-page memo describing your rationale for selecting the cases and providing a brief narrative about how you believe your theory applies (or does not apply) to the cases you have selected. The final section of your memo should describe the data you will need specific to these cases, and the potential sources for information you have been able to identify.

Week 4: Ethnography and Participant Observation

Robert Aunger, "On Ethnography: Storytelling or Science?" *Current Anthropology* 36, No. 1, 1995.

Robert Emerson et. al. *Writing Ethnographic Field Notes* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1995), pp. 1-38, 142-168.

Arnold Epstein, *Politics in an Urban African Community* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1958), pp. 48-156, 224-240.

Clifford Geertz, "Thick Description: Toward an Interpretive Theory of Culture," in Clifford Geertz (ed.), *The Interpretation of Cultures* (New York: Basic Books, 1973).

William Foote Whyte, *Street Corner Society: The Social Structure of an Italian Slum*, 4th Edition (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1993), pp. 194-252, 279-373.

Further Reading (on the experience of doing ethnography)

Alma Gottlieb and Phillip Graham, *Parallel Worlds: An Anthropologist and Writer Encounter Africa* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1994).

Week 5: Interviews

Joel Aberbach et. al., "Exploring Elite Political Attitudes: Some Methodological Lessons," *Political Methodology* 2, 1975.

David Laitin, *Identity in Formation* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1998), pp. 1-35, 83-198, 394-397.

Stanley Payne, *The Art of Asking Questions* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1951), pp. 3-54, 228-237.

William Foot Whyte, "Interviewing in Field Research," in Robert G. Burgess, *Field Research: A Sourcebook and Field Manual* (London: George Allen and Unwin, 1982). pp. 111-22.

Elisabeth Wood, *Insurgent Collective Action and Civil War in El Salvador* (Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press, 2003), pp. 1-87, 193-256.

Further Reading (reflections on elite interviewing)

Sharon Werning Rivera, Polina Kozyreva, and Eduard Sarovskii, "Interviewing Political Elites: Lessons from Russia," *PS: Political Science and Politics* 35, No. 4, 683-688.

Assignment: Choose one of the cases identified during the third week of the quarter. For that case, develop a three-page research strategy employing participant observation and/or interview techniques to gather data to test the implications of your theory. Your written research strategy should include three components: (1) a list of the "types" of respondents (and if possible, the specific respondents) you will need to observe or speak with and; (2) a list of questions that you will need to have answered, either from behavioral observation or to be gathered through face-to-face interviews and; (3) a discussion of how this data will help you to accept or reject competing theories.

Week 6: Survey Methods

Edward Miguel and Daniel Posner, "Sources of Ethnic Identification in Africa," Manuscript, University of California Los Angeles, 2007.

James L. Gibson and Amanda Gouws, "Truth and Reconciliation in South Africa: Attributions of Blame and the Struggle over Apartheid," *American Political Science Review* 93, No. 3, 1999.

Macartan Humphreys and Jeremy Weinstein, "Handling and Manhandling Civilians in Civil War," *American Political Science Review* 100, No. 3, 429-447.

Daniel Posner, "The Political Salience of Cultural Difference: Why Chewas and Tumbukas are Allies in Zambia and Adversaries in Malawi," *American Political Science Review* 98, No. 4, 529-545.

Michael Tomz, "Domestic Audience Costs in International Relations: An Experimental Approach," *International Organization* (forthcoming).

Further Reading (including a good primer on survey methods)

Christopher Blattman, "The Causes of Child Soldiering," Manuscript, University of California Berkeley, 2007.

Herbert Weisberg, *The Total Survey Error Approach* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2005).

Week 7: Sub-National Data Collection

Raymond Fisman, "Estimating the Value of Political Connections," *American Economic Review* 91, No. 4, September 2001.

Benjamin Olken, "Do Television and Radio Destroy Social Capital? Evidence from Indonesian Villages," NBER Working Paper #12561.

John McMillan and Pablo Zoido, "How to Subvert Democracy: Montesinos in Peru," *Journal of Economic Perspectives*, 18, No. 4, 69-92.

Robert Putnam, *Making Democracy Work* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1994), pp. 63-82, 187-192.

Steven Wilkinson, *Votes and Violence: Electoral Competition and Ethnic Violence in India* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2004), p. 1-19, 137-171, 243-262.

Further Reading

Stathis Kalyvas, *The Logic of Violence in Civil War* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2006), Chapter 9.

Thad Dunning, "Improving Causal Inference: Strengths and Limitations of Natural Experiments," Manuscript, Yale University, 2007.

Assignment: Develop a dataset that would produce some statistical test of your theory. The dataset should not be a cross-country, cross-sectional, time-series dataset. If no such data is readily downloadable from the web, write a three-page memo outlining a research strategy for building the dataset with a description of the hypotheses amenable to quantitative tests, the variables you will need to gather, and a strategy for collecting that data in the field. You should feel free to choose strategies that employ sub-national data or survey methods.

Week 8: Experimental Methods I (Lab)

Colin Camerer, *Behavioral Game Theory: Experiments in Strategic Interaction* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2003). Introduction.

Raymond Duch and Harvey Palmer, "It's Not Whether You Win or Lose but How You Play the Game: Self-Interest, Social Justice, and Mass Attitudes toward Market Transition," *American Political Science Review* 98, No. 3, August 2004.

James Habyarimana et. al. "Why Does Ethnic Diversity Undermine Public Goods Provision: An Experimental Approach," Manuscript, 2007.

Joseph Henrich et. al., "Economic Man in Cross-Cultural Perspective: Behavioral Experiments in 15 Small-Scale Societies," Mimeo.

Karla Hoff and Priyanka Pandey, "Belief Systems and Durable Inequalities: An Experimental Investigation of Indian Caste," World Bank Policy Research Working Paper 3351, June 2004.

Jesse Shapiro and Daniel Bejamin, "Thin Slice Forecasts of Gubernatorial Elections," Manuscript, University of Chicago, 2006.

Further Reading

Dean Karlan, "Using Experimental Economics to Measure Social Capital and Predict Financial Decisions," *American Economic Review* 95, No. 5, 1688-1699.

Abigail Barr et. al., "To Serve the Community or Oneself: The Public Servant's Dilemma," Working Paper 2003-11, Centre for the Study of African Economies, 2003.

Steven Levitt and John List, "What Do Laboratory Experiments Tell Us About the Real World," Manuscript, 2006.

Week 9: Experimental Methods II (Field)

Raghavendra Chattopadhyay and Esther Duflo, "Women as Policymakers: Evidence from a Randomized Policy Experiment in India," *Econometrica* 72, No. 5, 1409-1443.

Dean Karlan, Alan Gerber, and Daniel Bergnan, "Does the Media Matter: A Field Experiment Measuring the Effect of Newspapers on Voting Behavior and Political Opinions," Manuscript, Yale University, 2006.

Benjamin Olken, "Monitoring Corruption: Evidence from a Field Experiment in Indonesia," *Journal of Political Economy* (forthcoming).

Claudio Ferraz and Federico Finan, "Exposing Corrupt Politicians: The Effect of Brazil's Publicly Released Audits on Electoral Outcomes," Manuscript, University of California Berkeley, 2006.

Ritva Reinikka and Jakob Svensson, "Local Capture: Evidence from a Central Government Transfer Program in Uganda," *Quarterly Journal of Economics* 119, No. 2, 2004.

Leonard Wantchekon, "Clientilism and Voting Behavior: Evidence from a Field Experiment in Benin," *World Politics* 55, April 2003.

Further Reading

Mary Kay Gugerty and Michael Kremer, "The Rockefeller Effect," Mimeo, January 2004.

Edward Miguel, "Tribe or Nation: Nation-Building and Public Goods in Kenya versus Tanzania," *World Politics* 56, 327-362.

Macartan Humphreys, Martin Sandbu, William Masters, "The Role of Leadership in Democratic Deliberation: Results from a Field Experiment in Sao Tome and Principe," *World Politics* (forthcoming).

Susan Hyde, "Do International Observers Reduce Election Fraud: Evidence from a Natural Experiment," Manuscript, Yale University, 2007.

Benjamin Olken, "Political Institutions and Local Public Goods: Evidence from a Field Experiment," Manuscript, 2007.

G.W. Harrison and J.A. List, "Field Experiments," *Journal of Economic Literature* 42, 1009-1055.

Assignment: Write a three-page research memo describing a lab or field experiment that could be used to put some aspect of your theory or the mechanisms underlying it to an empirical test.

Week 10: Final Presentations

Assignment: Each student should prepare a 15-minute summary (using transparencies, power point, or printed handouts) of his/her research question, theory and observable implications, and field research strategy.