

METHODS IN COMPARATIVE POLITICS

Pablo Beramendi

May 23-25, Barcelona, UPF

The premise of the seminar is that comparative analysis is a key tool in the pursuit of the fundamental goal of the scientific inquiry, namely the identification of causal effects as predicted by theory. This turns out to be a highly ambitious ideal that constrains the ways in which scholars conceive of and implement comparative designs. The goal is to introduce participants to the principles of comparative politics. To this end, the seminar will focus on both general methodological principles and recent developments in comparative politics. More specifically, we will concentrate on three areas: (1) Counterfactuals, Hypothesis Testing, and the Logic of Comparisons; (2) The Experimental Turn in Comparative Politics; (3) Case Selection and Causal Identification: Applications to Institutional Analysis.

In each of the three sessions, the seminar combines lectures by the instructor with seminar discussions of previously assigned materials.

I list below a number of background readings for the seminar. I encourage students to read as much of these as possible ahead of the seminar. In addition, I expect participants to have read the assigned materials (listed by session below) prior to the meetings. During these sessions I may ask participants to briefly summarize some of the readings prior to its discussion.

In the final session, we will also devote two hours to collectively discuss outlines by students. Those students willing to receive feedback on their research proposal are encouraged to circulate to the class a small document (5 pages most) in which they are expected to clearly state:

- a) The research question of the thesis and the expected contribution
- b) The key theoretical argument guiding the research
- c) The research design intended to evaluate such an argument
- d) The nature of the data

We will all read these proposals ahead of our last session.

Background Readings

Henry Brady 2008. "Causation and Explanation in the Social Sciences" Oxford Handbook of Political Methodology, Oxford University Press.

Henry Brady and David Collier 2005. *Rethinking Social Inquiry*, Rowman and Littlefield.

John Dryzek 2006. "Revolutions without enemies: Key Transformations in Political Science" *American Political Science Review* 100, 4.

Jon Elster 1989. *Nuts and Bolts for the Social Sciences*, Cambridge University Press

Jon Elster 2007. *Explaining Social Behavior. More Nuts and Bolts in the Social Sciences*, Cambridge University Press.

Jeffrey Friedman (ed.) 1999. *The Rational Choice Controversy. Economic Models of Politics Reconsidered*, Yale University Press

Milton Friedman 1953 "The Methodology of Positive Economics" in *Essays in Positive Economics*.

Donald Green and Ian Shapiro 1994. *Pathologies of Rational Choice Theory*, Yale University Press.

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

Gary King, Robert O Keohane and Sidney Verba 1994. *Designing Social Inquiry*, Princeton University Press

Charles F. Manski 1995. *Identification Problems in the Social Sciences*. Harvard University Press

Stephen Morgan and Christopher Winship 2007, *Counterfactuals and Causal Inference. Methods and Principles for Social Research*. Cambridge University Press (chapters 1 and 2).

Jasjeet S. Sekhon 2009 "Opiates for the Matches: Matching Methods for Causal Inference" *Annual Review of Political Science* 12: 487-508.

Schedule and Assigned Readings

Session 1: May 23 2011: 15.00-20.00 pm

15.00-15.30: Introduction and Organization

15.30-17.15: Lecture: **Counterfactuals, Hypothesis Testing and the Logic of Comparisons**

17.15-17.45: Break

17.45-20.00: Discussion of the following readings:

James Fearon 1991. "Counterfactuals and Hypothesis Testing in Political Science" *World Politics* 43, 2 169-9.

Adam Przeworski 2007. "Is the science of comparative politics possible?" In Carles Boix and Susan Stokes (eds) *Handbook of Comparative Politics*, Oxford, Oxford University Press.

Theda Skocpol 1979. *States and Social Revolutions*. Cambridge University Press. Chapters 1-3.

Barbara Geddes 1990. "How the Cases you choose affect the answers you get: Selection Bias in Comparative Politics" *Political Analysis* 2, 131-150.

Jasjeet Sekhon 2004. "Quality meets Quantity: Case Studies, Conditional Probabilities, and Counterfactuals" *Perspectives on Politics* 2: 281-293.

Session 2: May 24 2011: 9.00-14.00 pm

9.00-11.00: Lecture: **An Experimental Turn in Comparative Politics?**

11.00-11.30: Break

11.30-14.00: Discussion of following readings:

Joshua A. Angrist 1990: "Life-time Earnings and the Vietnam Era Draft Lottery: Evidence from Social Security Administrative Records" *American Economic Review* 80,3: 313-36.

Benjamin Barber, Pablo Beramendi, and Erik Wibbels: "The Behavioral Foundations of Social Policy" Mimeo, Duke University (to be circulated)

Thad Dunning 2008, "Improving Causal Inference: Strengths and Limitations of Natural Experiments" *Political Research Quarterly*, 61 (2): 282-293.

Andrew Eggers and Jens Heinmueller 2009 "Mps for sale? Returns to Office in Postwar British Politics" *American Political Science Review* 103, 4.

Alan Gerber and Donald Green 2000. "The Effects of Canvassing, Direct Mail, and Telephone Contact on Voter Turnout: A Field Experiment." *American Political Science Review* 94: 653-663.

Susan Stokes 2011. "In Defense of Observational Research". Mimeo. Department of Politics, Yale University (to be circulated)

Session 3: *May 25 2011: 9.00-14.00 pm*

9.00-10.30: Lecture: **Case Selection and Causal Identification: Applications to Institutional Analysis**

10.30-10.45: Break

10.45-12.00: Discussion of following readings:

Adam Przeworski et al. 1997: "Modernization: Theory and Facts" *World Politics* 49, 155-183

Carles Boix and Susan Stokes "Endogenous Democratization", *World Politics* 55, 517-549

Przeworski, Adam. 2004. "The Last Instance: Are Institutions the Primary Cause of Economic Development?" *European Journal of Sociology* 45(2): 165-188

Daron Acemoglu, Simon Johnson and James Robinson 2002, "*Reversal of Fortune: Geography and Institutions in the Making of the Modern World Income Distribution*" *Quarterly Journal of Economics*, volume 117, pp. 1231-1294.

(See also: [Institutions as the Fundamental Cause of Long-Run Growth](#) in [Handbook of Economic Growth](#) Edited by Philippe Aghion and Stephen Durlauf, Elsevier, North Holland, 2005)

12.00-12.15: Break

12.15-14.00: Discussion of students' outlines of their own research designs