Research Design in the Social Sciences
UHH Graduate School / Summer Term 2018

Conveners
Prof. Dr. Antje Wiener
Dr. Philip Liste

Time Table - Block Seminar*

Planning Meeting: Monday 23 April 2018 (10:00 – 12:00)
1st Block: Friday 18 May 2018 (10:00 – 16:00)
2nd Block: Date Friday 22 June 2018 (10:00 – 16:00)

*All times remain to be agreed and confirmed; places remain to be assigned

Course Description

Summary
In the planning of research projects, research objects are addressed based on theory, methodology, and research methods. And, pending on the research object's empirical substance, specific research techniques are required to undertake fieldwork. While methodological 'triangulation' and 'mixed methods approaches' are possible, the choice of methodology requires careful consideration taking into account the researcher's epistemological standpoint, ontological preference. Against that background, specific methodologies and methods are identified to pursue the research question. Several research objectives and types of research questions can be distinguished, including for example, theory-based or problem-oriented research objectives, or 'how possible' and 'why' questions, respectively. To familiarise the students with these distinct perspectives and choices, this seminar on *Research Design in the Social Sciences* addresses the research process that leads scholars to the position from which problem-oriented research assumptions can be made and more particular research questions can be formulated.

Core Readings

Blumer, Herbert 1954, What is wrong with social theory? *American Sociological Review*, *18*, 3-10
Bowen, Glenn A (2006) Grounded Theory and Sensitizing Concepts, *International Journal of Qualitative Methods* 5 (3): 1-9
Garfinkel, Harold (1967) *Studies in Ethnomethodology*. Cambridge: Polity Press
George, Alexander L and Andrew Bennett (2005) *Case studies and theory development in the social sciences*. Cambridge, MA: MIT Press
Hollis, Martin and Steve Smith (1990) *Explaining and Understanding International Relations*. Oxford: Clarendon Press
Klotz, Audie and D Prakash, eds (2008) *Qualitative methods in international relations: A pluralist guide*, Basingstoke: Palgrave
Schwartz-Shea, Peregrine, and Dvora Yanow (2012) *Interpretive research design: concepts and processes*, New York: Routledge
Tilly, Charles (1984) Big *Structures, Large Processes, Huge Comparisons*, New York: Russel Sage
Charles Tilly and Robert Goodin, eds (2006) *The Oxford Handbook of Contextual Political Analysis*, Oxford: OUP

Titscher, Stefan, Michael Meyer, Ruth Wodak and Eva Vetter (2005) *Methods of Text and Discourse Analysis*, London et al.: SAGE.

Long Version

Since research objects, theory, and research methods need to be interrelated productively, designing research projects becomes a matter of 'reflexive methodology,' which involves a well-balanced account to the variety of qualitative work in the social sciences, including hermeneutic and/or interpretive methods, critical theory, or ethnography, to name but a few. Research design is thus to be understood as a reflexive process during which entails the following for central premises:

(1) An initial idea of a topic is embedded in a field of research to which the project seeks to contribute;
(2) Theoretical assumptions are reproduced (or operationalized) with regard to the problematique involved in the research topic;
(3) Concrete points of empirical observation are consolidated; and
(4) Corresponding research methods of relevance for the empirical research are arranged.

According to the rationale underlying a reflexive approach to the social sciences, the choice and operationalisation of specific empirical research methodology, method and techniques (such as for example, field-work, interviews or other empirical enquiries including data-generation and/or collection) must correspond with prior conceptual choices. In practice, this implies adopting a 'reflexive research process' that pays particular attention to this relation between concept and research methodology that is central to social science research. In turn, taking a reflexive research approach also implies that conceptual decisions may be revised in reflection of preliminary empirical results. A reflexive research process may hence stimulate conceptual change. Against this backdrop, the course seeks to help doctoral students (or graduate students more generally) to develop the research design for their respective projects including a sensible time-frame so as to make sure that the required steps towards completing their PhD dissertation correspond with and contribute to ongoing debates in their respective discipline.

In particular, the course will enable students to
- Incorporate their respective research topic in the relevant literature;
- Identify a convincing research puzzle;
- Become aware of the methodological disposition of their project (e.g. explanatory, explorative, normative methodology);
- Operationalize research assumptions from the relevant body of theoretical literature;
- Choose one or more cases that work with a view to address their projects' research puzzle;
- Locate their research within a given disciplinary field, and – if applicable – across various disciplinary fields;
- Understand the benefits but also pitfalls of research methods.

The course is organized as a two-day *en bloc* seminar in the second half of the summer term. To warrant a productive learning environment, preparatory meetings will be arranged earlier during the semester: the first will address administrative purposes, the second will focus on the thorough preparation of the in-depth discussion of the student's research designs during the *en bloc* seminar. For the *en bloc* seminar, students will prepare proposals of their research design taking account of their respective project's process-oriented reflexion as regards to their

choice of theory, methodology, method and research technique. Recommendations for the preparation of the research proposal will be discussed during the semester at the second preparatory session.

Background Literature**

**Please note that this selection is not meant to be comprehensive but intended to provide guidance for further research taking into account each student's dissertation requirements.

Blaikie, N W H 2000, Designing social research: The logic of anticipation, Cambridge: Polity

Blumer, Herbert 1954, What is wrong with social theory? American Sociological Review, 18, 3-10

Bowen, Glenn A 2006, Grounded Theory and Sensitizing Concepts, International Journal of Qualitative Methods 5 (3): 1-9

Bueger, Christian 2014, Pathways to Practice: Praxiography and International Politics, European Political Science Review 6 (3): 383–406

Bueger, Christian and Trine Villumsen Berling 2013, Practical Reflexivity and Political Science: Strategies for Relating Scholarship and Political Practice, PS: Perspectives on Politics, January: 115-119

Cox, Robert 1981, Social Forces, States and World Orders: Beyond International Relations Theory, Millennium 10(2) 126-155

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Gillespie, Alex and Flora Cornish 2014, Sensitizing Questions: A Method to Facilitate Analyzing the Meaning of an Utterance, Integrated Psychological Behavior, 48: 435–452

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Methodology: Social Science Issues, Bloomington and Indianapolis: Indiana University Press, 157–180

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Hurrell, Andrew 2016, Beyond Critique: How to Study Global IR? International Studies Review 18 (1): 149-151

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Klotz, Audie and D Prakash, eds. (2008) Qualitative methods in international relations: A pluralist guide, Basingstoke: Palgrave

Leander, Anna (2008) Thinking tools: Analyzing symbolic power and violence, in: Audie Klotz and D Prakash, eds, Qualitative methods in international relations: A pluralist guide, Basingstoke: Palgrave, 11–27

Liste, Philip and Antje Wiener (2014) Lost Without Translation? Cross-Referencing and a New Global Community of Courts, Indiana Journal of Global Legal Studies 21(1): 263-296

Merry, Sally Engle (2011) Measuring the World: Indicators, Human Rights and Global Governance, Current Anthropology 52 (3): 83–95

Niemann, Holger and Henrik Schillinger (2016) Contestation 'all the way down'? The grammar of contestation in norm research, Review of International Studies 43 (1): 29-49

Milliken, Jennifer. (1999) The Study of Discourse in International Relations. A Critique of Research and Methods. European Journal of International Relations 5 (2): 225–254.

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