

Causal Case Study Methods - June 6-17, 2016

FLACSO, IPSA Summer School

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The aim of this course is to provide students with a good understanding of case-based methods and how they can be applied in your own research. This course is designed for students in the early to mid-stages of a research project, where you have already defined your research question and are interested in learning about what case-based methods can offer. Some knowledge of basic social science methodology is helpful, although not required.

The focus will be on methods like small-n comparisons and in-depth case studies using Process-tracing. The core of the readings will be a forthcoming book on causal case studies co-authored by the instructor.

A constant theme throughout the course will be on debating the strengths and limitations of different case-based methods, illustrating the types and scopes of inferences that are possible, and how they differ from what variance-based methods enable.

The course will contain lectures and discussions in the morning sessions, followed by group exercises on most afternoons organized between participants. Many of the exercises will utilize aspects of your own research projects.

Day 1 - what are case-based methods, and how do they differ from variance-based methods? (June 6)

- King, Gary, Robert O. Keohane & Sidney Verba (1994), *Designing Social Inquiry. Scientific Inference in Qualitative Research*, Princeton, New Jersey: Princeton University press, Chapter 3, pp. 75-114
- Beach and Pedersen (2016) *Causal Case Studies*. Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, Chapter 1, 2.

Group work – afternoon session day 1

1. What is your research question?
2. What independent variables or causal conditions can explain the phenomenon you are investigating? Draw a pictogram representing your theory/theories.

Day 2 – Tuesday - Working with concepts and theories

- Goertz and Mahoney (2012) *A Tale of Two Cultures*. Princeton: Princeton University Press, Chapter 11, 12, 13, pp. 139-160.
- Beach and Pedersen (2016) *Causal Case Studies*. Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, Chapters 2, 3 and 4.

Group work – afternoon session day 2 – Mechanisms

1. Develop a causal mechanism that theoretically explains how economic development can contribute to produce democratization

Day 3 - comparative methods (June 8)

- Beach and Pedersen (2016) *Causal Case Studies*. Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, Chapter 7.
- Risse-Kappen, Thomas (1991) 'Public Opinion, Domestic Structure, and Foreign Policy in Liberal Democracies.', *World Politics*, Vol. 43, No. 4, pp. 479-512.

Group work – afternoon session day 3 – comparative methods

1. Describe Risse-Kappen's theoretical model. Are there any necessary or sufficient conditions?
2. Describe his research design (briefly). Is the study a most-similar or most-different systems design?
3. What role does process-tracing play in his analysis? In your opinion, does Risse-Kappen's research shed light on the causal mechanism(s) linking public opinion and foreign policy?

Day 4 - making inferences in case-based research (June 9)

- Beach and Pedersen (2016) *Causal Case Studies*. Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, Chapter 6 (on causal inference and the Bayesian framework)
- Doyle, Arthur Connan (1894) *Silver Blaze* can be downloaded free at: <http://www.wesjones.com/doyle1.htm>

Group work – afternoon session day 4 – Causality and inference

1. Describe an empirical test used by Holmes in the Silver Blaze story. Describe what hypothesis is being tested, and then provide justifications for the value of the prior and the theoretical certainty and uniqueness of the test.
2. What type of test have you described? A straw-in-the-wind, hoop or smoking gun?

Day 5 – Congruence case studies (June 10)

- Beach and Pedersen (2016) *Causal Case Studies*. Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, Chapter 8.
- Tannenwald (1999) 'The Nuclear Taboo: The United States and the Normative Basis of Nuclear Non-Use', *International Organization*, 53(3): 433-468.

Group work – afternoon session Day 5 - congruence

1. Describe the empirical test(s) used by Tannenwald (1999) in terms of certainty and uniqueness.
2. Discuss what type(s) of evidence used by Tannenwald to make inferences, and how she uses them in practice in the case study of the Korean war decision.
3. Discuss whether the test could be strengthened. If so, how? If not, why not?

Day 6 – Process-tracing methods (June 13)

- Beach and Pedersen (2016) *Causal Case Studies*. Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, Chapter 9.

Individual work – afternoon session Day 6 – Process-tracing

1. Develop a causal mechanism from your research, described in terms of entities engaging in activities.
2. Develop an empirical test of one of the parts of the mechanism, describing what evidence you should find, and whether it is certain and/or unique.

Day 7 - working with evidence in case-based methods (June 14)

- Beach and Pedersen (2013) *Process Tracing: Foundations and Guidelines*. Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press. Chapter 7.
- Case material on Cuban Missile Crisis. Will be provided

Group exercise – morning session Day 7 – Evaluating evidence

You are testing the missile-exchange hypothesis, which states that the US withdrew missiles from Turkey in exchange for a Soviet missile withdrawal from Cuba.

It is still contested whether the resolution of the Cuban Missile Crisis was a result of a quid quo pro agreement with the Soviet Union, where the Soviets agreed to withdraw Soviet Missiles from Cuba in exchange for a US withdrawal of missiles from Turkey. Your task is to test this argument using the sources in the materials provided, discussing whether the selected evidence enables you to conclude that either:

- 1) there was no deal
- 2) there was a tacit understanding with a degree of ambiguity
- 3) there as an explicit oral agreement

Evaluate what types of observations the three different conclusions would have produced in the empirical record, and discuss which best matches what has been found in the empirical record.

Day 8 - using case studies (Process-tracing) in practice (June 15)

- Brast, Benjamin (2015) 'The Regional Dimension of Statebuilding Interventions.' *International Peacekeeping*, 22(1).

Group exercise – afternoon session Day 8 – Process-tracing in practice

1. Discuss the causal mechanism developed by Brast. Does it exhibit 'productive continuity'?
2. Discuss how the evidence relates to the theory for one part of the mechanism.

Day 9 - case selection and mixed methods (June 16)

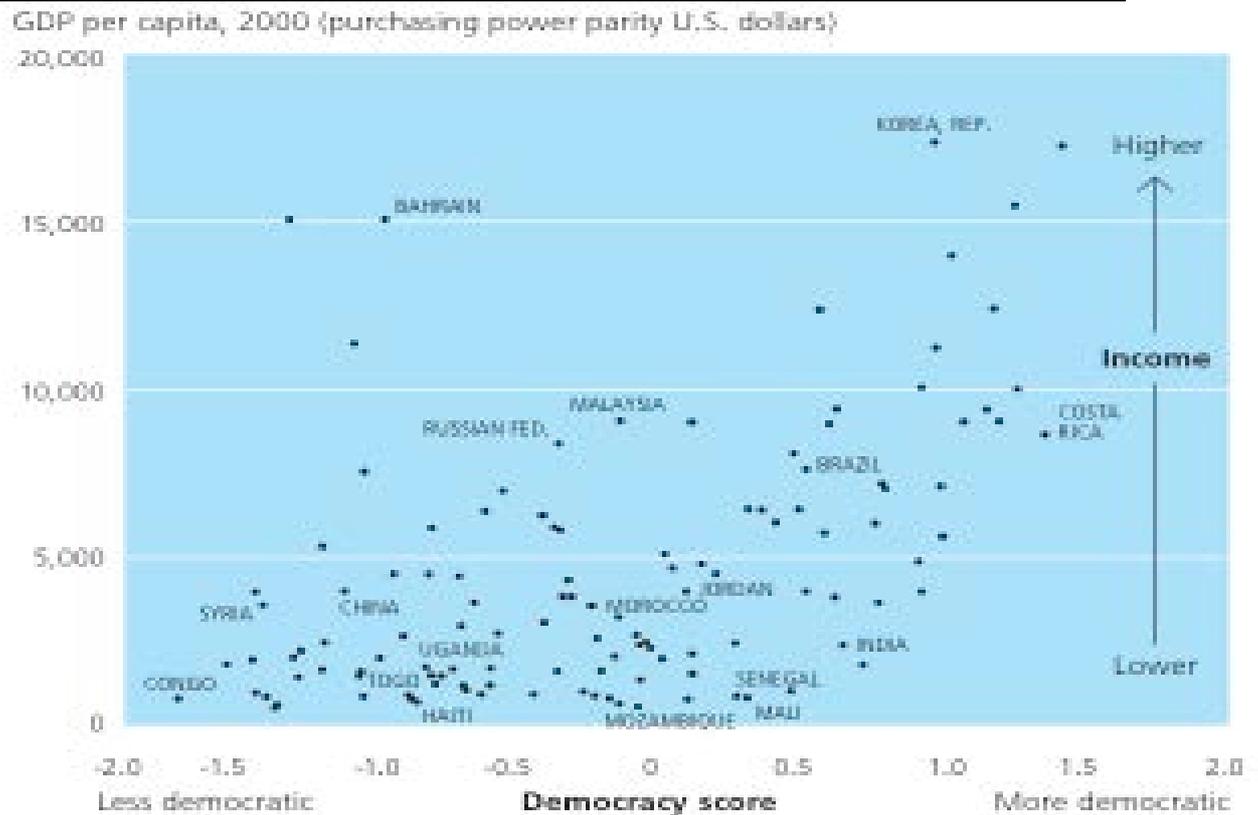
- Geddes, Barbara (1990), "How the cases you choose affect the answers you get: selection bias in comparative politics", *Political Analysis*, vol. 2, no. 1, pp. 131-150.
- Collier and Mahoney (1996) 'Insights and Pitfalls: Selection Bias in Qualitative Research', *World Politics*, Vol. 49, pp. 56-91.
- Lieberman (2005) 'Nested Analysis as a Mixed-Method Strategy for Comparative Research.', *American Political Science Review*, Vol. 99, No. 3, pp. 435-451.
- Beach and Pedersen (forthcoming) *Causal Case Studies*. Review chapters 7, 8 and 9.

Group exercise – afternoon session Day 9 – case selection techniques

1. Discuss what case(s) (see figure below) would be relevant for:
 - a. building a causal mechanism for how democracy produces economic development
 - b. finding the contextual conditions required for democracy to produce development

- c. testing a hypothesized causal mechanism linking economic development with democracy
- d. testing whether democracy is necessary for economic development.
- e. building a new theory about the contextual conditions required for development using a most-similar-system design

Figure for question 1 From UNDP (2002) *Human Development Report 2002*.



Note: Democracy score is the voice and accountability indicator from World Bank 2001c.
 Source: World Bank 2001c, 2002e.

Day 10 - designing case-based research in practice (June 17)

- No readings - presentations and discussion of designs