

THE UNIVERSITY OF CHICAGO

Department of Political Science

Political Science 509 Winter 1996

Seminar on Comparative Case Study Method

Stephen Walt

Course Description: This course examines the case study method for doing social science. The strengths and weaknesses of this approach will be considered. Emphasis will also be placed on the mechanics of doing case studies.

Course Requirements: It is expected that every student will do all the reading and attend all the class meetings. Each student will be expected to participate in the seminar discussion. The grade will be based on classroom participation (25%), and three five-page papers (25% each).

The papers will be due at the start of class on February 21, February 28, and March 6, and will deal with the specific book assigned for those class meetings. Each paper will be double-spaced, have at least 1-inch margins on all four sides, and have a standard-sized font.

Course Outline:

1. January 3, 1996 (Wed): Organizational Meeting and Overview

2. January 10 (Wed): Basic Epistemological Issues

A. Paul Rabinow and William M. Sullivan, "The Interpretive Turn: A Second Look," in Paul Rabinow and William M. Sullivan, eds., Interpretive Social Science: A Second Look (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1987), pp. 1-30.

B. Max Weber, "'Objectivity' in Social Science and Social Policy," in Max Weber, The Methodology of the Social Sciences, Edward A. Shils and Henrt A. Finch, trans. and eds. (New York: Free Press, 1949), pp. 49-112.

C. Milton Friedman, "The Methodology of Positive Economics," in Friedman, Essays in Positive Economics (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1953), pp. 3-43.

D. Imre Lakatos, "Falsification and the Methodology of Scientific Research Programs," in Imre Lakatos and Alan Musgrave, eds.,

Criticism and the Growth of Knowledge (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1976), pp. 91-196.

E. Carl G. Hempel, Philosophy of Natural Science (Englewood Cliffs, NJ: Prentice-Hall, 1966), chapters 1-3, 5-6.

3. January 17 (Wed): Case Studies and Theory - I

A. Arthur L. Stinchcombe, Constructing Social Theories (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1987), chapters 1-2.

B. John Stuart Mill, "Two Methods of Comparison," in A. Etzioni and F. Dubow, eds., Comparative Perspectives: Theories and Methods (Boston: Little Brown, 1970).

C. Harry Eckstein, "Case Study and Theory in Political Science," in F. Greenstein and N. Polsby, eds., Strategies of Inquiry: The Handbook of Political Science, Vol. 7 (Reading, MA: Addison-Wesley).

D. Arend Lijphart, "Comparative Politics and the Comparative Method," APSR, Vol. 65, No. 3 (September 1971), pp. 682-693.

4. January 24 (Wed): Case Studies and Theory - II

A. David Collier, "The Comparative Method: Two Decades of Change," in Dankwart A. Rustow and Kenneth Paul, eds., Comparative Political Dynamics: Global Research Perspectives (New York: Harper Collins, 1991), pp. 7-31.

B. 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 (New York: Free Press, 1979), pp. 43-68.

C. Alexander L. George and Timothy J. McKeown, "Case Studies and Theories of Organizational Decision Making," in Robert F. Coulam and Richard A. Smith, eds., Advances in Information Processing in Organizations, A Research Annual on Public Organizations, Vol 2. (Greenwich, CT: JAI Press, 1985), pp. 21-58.

D. Stephen Van Evera, "What Are Case Studies? How Should They Be Performed?" Unpublished Manuscript, 13 pages, September 10, 1993.

5. January 31 (Wed): Case Studies and Theory - III

A. Theda Skocpol and Margaret Somers, "The Uses of Comparative History in Macrosocial Inquiry," in Comparative Studies in Society and History, Vol. 22, No. 2 (1980), pp. 174-197.

B. Theda Skocpol, "Emerging Agendas and Recurrent Strategies in Historical Sociology," in Skocpol, ed., Vision and Method in Historical Sociology (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1982), pp. 356-391.

C. Charles Ragin, "Comparative Sociology and the Comparative Method," International Journal of Comparative Sociology, Vol. 22, Nos. 1-2 (March-June, 1981), pp. 102-120.

D. Charles Ragin and David Zaret, "Theory and Method in Comparative Research: Two Strategies," Social Forces, Vol. 61, No. 3 (March 1983), pp. 731-754.

E. Neil Smelser, "The Methodology of Comparative Analysis of Economic Activity," in Smelser, ed., Essays in Sociological Interpretation (Englewood Cliffs, NJ: Prentice-Hall, 1968), pp. 62-75.

6. February 7 (Wed): Critiques

A. Barbara Geddes, "How The Cases You Choose Affect The Answers You Get: Selection Bias in Comparative Politics," Political Analysis, Vol. 2 (1990).

B. Bruce Russett, "International Behavior Research: Case Studies and Cumulation," in Russett, Power and Community in World Politics (San Francisco: Freeman, 1974), chapter 1.

C. Chris Achen and Duncan Snidal, "Rational Deterrence Theory and Comparative Case Studies," World Politics, Vol. 41, No. 2 (Jan. 1989), 143-169.

D. George Downs, "The Rational Deterrence Debate," in Ibid., pp. 225-238.

E. Olav Njolstad, "Learning from History? Case Studies and the Limits to Theory-Building," in Nils Petter Gleditsch and Olav Njolstad, eds., Arms Races: Technological and Political Dynamics (London: Sage, 1990), pp. 220-246.

7. February 14 (Wed): Making Arguments

A. Teresa Johnson, "A Guide for Contributors: Writing for International Security: A Contributors' Guide," International Security, Vol. 16, No. 2 (Fall 1991), pp. 171-180.

B. James Fearon, "Counterfactuals and Hypothesis Testing in Political Science," World Politics, Vol. 43, No. 2 (January 1991), pp. 169-195.

C. "Symposium on Methodological Foundations of the Study of International Conflict," International Studies Quarterly, Vol. 29, No. 2 (June 1985), pp. 119-154.

D. Jack Snyder, "Richness, Rigor and Relevance in the Study of Soviet Foreign Policy," International Security, Vol. 9, No. 3 (Winter 1984/85) pp. 89-108.

E. Stephen Van Evera, "How Can Theories Be Made?" undated memorandum.

G. Jonathan Spence, "From the Stone Age to Tiananmen Square," review of John K. Fairbank, China: A New History, in The New York Times Book Review, May 24, 1992, p. 2.

I. Carl Brauer, "More Scholars Should Venture Forth to Confront, Enlighten, or Change the World," The Chronicle of Higher Education, March 14, 1990.

8. February 22 (Wed): Case Studies in Practice - I [PAPER #1 DUE]
 - A. Gary King, Robert Keohane, and Sidney Verba, Designing Social Inquiry: Scientific Inference in Qualitative Research (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1994).
9. March 1 (Wed): Case Studies in Practice - II [PAPER #2 DUE]
 - A. Lisa L. Martin, Coercive Cooperation: Explaining Multilateral Economic Sanctions (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1992).
10. March 8 (Wed): Case Studies in Practice - III [PAPER #3 DUE]
 - A. Ian S. Lustick, Unsettled States, Disputed Lands: Britain and Ireland, France and Algeria, Israel and the West Bank-Gaza (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1993).