

Gov 62 Section 1

Chris Chaky

February 12, 2019

TF Information

TF: Chris Chaky

Email: chaky@g.harvard.edu

Office Hours: Tuesdays, 2-4pm, CGIS Cafe (or by appointment)

Introductions

Please introduce yourself with the following information:

- ▶ Name
- ▶ Concentration
- ▶ Research Interests

Section Goals

Overview of Section Goals:

- ▶ Understand required readings
- ▶ Discuss methodological theories and strategies
- ▶ Understand application of methods in exemplary works
- ▶ Use your knowledge of the readings to move forward your own research
- ▶ To achieve the above, sections will require that you actively engage in discussions and in-class exercises

Looking Ahead

Upcoming:

- ▶ Make an appointment with myself and/or Prof. Soroka by Friday, using the Canvas calendar.
- ▶ Short Paper 2 due Friday, March 1.

Today's Section

Goals for Today's Section:

- ▶ Understand the key points put forward by the readings, and to evaluate the research designs of the exemplary readings.
- ▶ We will dedicate the second portion of section to workshop your ongoing research topics.

What does a Political (Social) Scientist do?

Key Tasks in Keohane (2009):

- ▶ Puzzles
- ▶ Conceptualization (definitions)
- ▶ Description and Interpretation
- ▶ Causal Inference

What does a Political (Social) Scientist do?

Two general goals of social science in Gerring (2012)):

- ▶ Discovery (conjecture, exploration, innovation, theory formation)
- ▶ Appraisal (assessment, demonstration, evaluation, justification, proof, testing, verification/falsification)

Puzzles

What is a puzzle?

- ▶ A question where the answer or explanation is not intuitively obvious.
- ▶ Or, the currently existing explanations are not fully satisfying.
- ▶ Keohane (2009): “Puzzles are anomalies: what we observe does not fit with our preconceptions based on established theory.”

Puzzles

Puzzle definition example:

Krook (2009): “The mere advent of gender quotas has not resulted in uniform increases in the percentage of women in parliament worldwide. Rather, some countries have seen dramatic increases following the adoption of new quota regulations, while others have witnessed more modest changes or even setbacks in the number of women elected to national assemblies.”

Causal Inference

What is a causal theory?

- ▶ “a causal law ... together with an explanation” (Van Evera 1997).
- ▶ “Causal theories are designed to show the causes of a phenomena or set of phenomena ... any theory includes an interrelated set of causal hypotheses” (King, Keohane and Verba 1994).
- ▶ Causal inference is the study of counterfactuals: what would happened if we were to change some aspect of the world? (Blackwell)

Hypotheses

What is a hypothesis?

- ▶ “Each hypothesis specifies a posited relationship between variables that creates observable implications: if the specified explanatory variables take on certain values, other specified values are predicted for the dependent variables” (King, Keohane and Verba 1994).

Hypotheses

Examples from Krook (2009):

- ▶ “Women mobilize for quotas, usually when women’s groups come to realize that quotas are an effective—and perhaps the only—means for increasing women’s political representation.”
- ▶ “Political elites adopt quotas for strategic reasons, generally related to competition with other parties.”

Causal Inference

Two models of thinking about causal inference:

KKV: Experimental Model

- ▶ Large-n vs. Small-n

Collier et al: Causal-Process Observations

- ▶ Quant-Qual differences more nuanced

Data-Set Observation vs. Causal-Process Observation

	A	B	C
Case 1	7	10	20
Case 2	3	8	2
Case 3	4	2	17

Adding a new data-set observation:

	A	B	C
Case 1	7	10	20
Case 2	3	8	2
Case 3	4	2	17
Case 4	3	18	19

Data-Set Observation vs. Causal-Process Observation

	A	B	C
Case 1	7	10	20
Case 2	3	8	2
Case 3	4	2	17

Adding a new variable:

	A	B	C	D
Case 1	7	10	20	1
Case 2	3	8	2	1
Case 3	4	2	17	0

Data-Set Observation vs. Causal-Process Observation

	A	B	C
Case 1	7	10	20
Case 2	3	8	2
Case 3	4	2	17

Adding a new causal-process observation:

	A	B	C
Case 1	7	10	20
Case 2	3	8	2
Case 3	4	2	17

+ context, records, mechanisms, etc.

Quantitative vs. Qualitative

Table 9.1. Four Approaches to the Qualitative-Quantitative Distinction

<i>Approach</i>	<i>Defining Distinction</i>	<i>Comment</i>
1. Level of Measurement	Cut-point for qualitative vs. quantitative is nominal vs. ordinal scales and above; alternatively, nominal and ordinal scales vs. interval scales and above.	Lower levels of measurement require fewer assumptions about underlying logical relationships; higher levels yield sharper differentiation among cases, provided these assumptions are met.
2. Size of the N	Cut-point between small N vs. large N might be somewhere between 10 and 20.	A small N and a large N are commonly associated with contrasting sources of analytic leverage, which correspond to the third and fourth criteria below.
3. Statistical Tests	In contrast to much qualitative research, quantitative analysis employs formal statistical tests.	Statistical tests provide explicit, carefully formulated criteria for descriptive and causal inference; a characteristic strength of quantitative research. Yet this again raises question of meeting relevant assumptions.
4. Thick vs. Thin Analysis^a	Central reliance on detailed knowledge of cases vs. more limited knowledge of cases.	Detailed knowledge associated with thick analysis is likewise a major source of leverage for inference; a characteristic strength of qualitative research.

Exemplary Readings

- ▶ Let's dig into the exemplary readings!
- ▶ Beath et al (2013) and Fox & Lawless study similar topics, but employ different methods in different contexts.
- ▶ Split up into five groups of three to four students. Each team will discuss the following for one of the readings:
 - ▶ Topic or puzzle
 - ▶ Research questions
 - ▶ Theory
 - ▶ Hypotheses
 - ▶ Independent variables
 - ▶ Dependent variables
 - ▶ Mechanisms
 - ▶ Methods for testing hypotheses
 - ▶ Data

Your turn!

In the same groups as before, describe your research puzzle, question and potential hypotheses.

How do I get started?

Gerring (2012):

- ▶ Study the tradition, contours of field, trends, cutting-edge
- ▶ Begin where you are: choose something that is personally connected, motivated by ideas, normative sense of something wrong - but stay scientific
- ▶ Get off your home turf - academia is a unique/privileged space, new contexts, transplanted ideas from one place to another, look at other fields
- ▶ Play with ideas - be open-ended, creative, think analogically, recombining old ideas

How do I get started?

Gerring (2012) continued:

- ▶ Practice dis-belief - skepticism
- ▶ Observe empathically - understand people's perspectives
- ▶ Theorize wildly - work among several tracks simultaneously, juxtapose things that don't seem to fit naturally together, push a conventional idea to its logical extreme
- ▶ Think ahead - good topics need good theory and a workable design, map out how the idea might work (designs, article/book, what results or findings might come of it)
- ▶ Conduct exploratory analyses - case study, limited data analysis

How do I get started?

Mills (2010):

- ▶ Keep a journal, put everything into it, use categories.
- ▶ Use prior works to restate systematically, accept or refute with arguments, suggestions for own projects: how can I test this?
- ▶ Logically think through an ideal design
- ▶ Re-arranging notes into different categories
- ▶ Be playful toward phrases/words/definition
- ▶ Think about extremes and contrasts, comparative cases
- ▶ Notice themes and distinguish from topic