

Sociology 748: Comparative Methods in Sociology*

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Course Description

The main objective of the course is to demonstrate that cross-national research provides an especially useful base for generating, testing, and further developing sociological theories. Many discussions of cross-national research contrast two strategies -- one that seeks statistical regularities, another that explores a complexity of particular cases. Using this distinction, exemplary cross-national studies will be evaluated by examining their goals and hypotheses, the functional equivalence of indicators, the choice of units of observations, applied comparison procedures, the logic of data analysis, and the interpretation of results. Cross-national similarities and differences are to be discussed in the context of theory construction. We will focus on the following topics:

- (1) Cross-National Research as an Analytic Strategy
- (2) Problems of Comparability and Credibility in Survey Research
- (3) Functional Equivalence of Indicators in Survey Research
- (4) The Nation as a Unit of Analysis and Cultural Pluralism
- (5) Cross-National Structural Explanations
- (6) Comparative Studies and a Changing World System
- (7) Comparative Studies and Macro-Sociology
- (8) Cross-National *vs.* Historical Approaches
- (9) Qualitative Methods and Case Studies
- (10) Comparative Studies and Social Theory

The course is intended to accommodate student interests in various substantive areas of sociology. Students will be encouraged to write a comprehensive thematic term paper that may be developed in the form of an article, thesis, or dissertation. Those students who are involved in various projects may use their analyses to write a paper from a cross-national perspective.

Required texts

- (1) Alex Inkeles and Masamichi Sasaki (eds.) **Comparing Nations and Cultures: Readings in a Cross-Disciplinary Perspective.** Englewood Cliffs, NJ: Prentice Hall, 1996.
- (2) Charles C. Ragin (ed.) **Issues and Alternatives in Comparative Social Research.**

* This material is available in alternative formats to students with disabilities. Please contact the Department of Sociology, 302 Bricker Hall, phone: 292-1175. Students with disabilities are responsible for seeking available assistance, and making their needs known to the instructor, in timely manner.

Leiden: Brill, 1991.

(3) Melvin L. Kohn (ed.) **Cross National Research in Sociology**. Newbury Park: Sage, 1989.

(4) **Packet** (To be distributed for copying)

Additional texts

Classic textbooks:

(1) Adam Przeworski and Henry Teune, **The Logic of Comparative Social Inquiry**. New York: Wiley, 1970.

(2) Robert T. Holt and John E. Turner (eds.) **The Methodology of Comparative Research**. New York: Free Press, 1970.

Other textbooks:

(1) Manfred Niessen and Jules Peschar (eds.) **International Comparative Research**. Oxford: Pergamon Press, 1982.

(2) Else Oyen (ed.) **Comparative Methodology: Theory and Practice in International Social Research**. Newbury Park: Sage, 1990.

Journal articles:

Selected papers from *ASR*, *AJS* and *SF*.

Three issues of the *International Journal of Sociology: Across Nations, Part I*, Guest editors: Kazimierz M. Slomczynski and J. Craig Jenkins (Fall 2003/Vol. 33, No. 3); *Across Nations, Part II*, Guest editors: J. Craig Jenkins and Kazimierz M. Slomczynski and (Winter 2003-4/Vol. 33, No. 4); and *Across Nations, Part III*, Guest editors: Kazimierz M. Slomczynski and J. Craig Jenkins (Spring 2004/Vol. 34, No. 1)

Course Requirements

1. **Class participation** (15% of the grade).
 - (a) One part of class participation is writing discussion questions each week on the week's readings. Discussion questions are due via e-mail to me by noon on dates listed in the schedule.
 - (b) For each substantive topic, class participants will discuss the main research questions, the research tradition behind the work, the data and methods used, and the main findings and their meaning. Your input to this discussion will be evaluated.
2. A **critical book review** of one of the books on the review list, presented to the class with additional materials (15% of the grade).

The review must be typed, double-spaced, and about 5-6 pages in length. It will be presented to the class, supplemented by an outline summarizing the book's content and handed out to class members before the oral presentation.
3. A **term paper** of 10-15 pages (70% of the grade). Students may do either a critical literature review that suggests directions for future research or a more narrow and in-

depth research proposal. Students will have scheduled meetings with the instructor to discuss their topics and outlines (required).

Schedule

Week One: Comparative Methods in Sociology - Introduction

(.) – Introduction (lecture)

(.) – The Methodology of Comparative Research (lecture). Initial discussion on paper topics

Week Two: Cross-National Research as an Analytic Strategy

Readings:

- (1) Melvin Kohn, Cross-National Research as an Analytic Strategy. In Inkeles and Sasaki.
- (2) Karl W. Deutsch, Prologue: Achievements and Challenges in 2000 Years of Comparative Research. In Inkeles and Sasaki.
- (3) Ariane Berthoin Antal, Meinolf Dierkes and Hans N. Weiler, Cross-National Policy Research: Traditions, Achievements, and Challenges. In Inkeles and Sasaki.
- (4) Dietrich Rueschemeyer, Different Methods--Contradictory Results? Research on Development and Democracy. In Ragin.
- (5) Adam Przeworski and Henry Teune, Introduction: An Overview of Problems & Chapter One: Comparative Research and Social Science Theory. In Packet.

(.) – lecture

(.) – discussion

(.) – individual meetings

Week Three: Problems of Comparability and Credibility in Survey Research

Readings:

- (1) Erwin K. Scheuch, Theoretical Implications of Comparative Survey Research: Why the Wheel of Cross-Cultural Methodology Keeps on Being Reinvented. In Inkeles and Sasaki.
- (2) D. Hymes, Linguistic Aspects of Comparative Political Research. In Packet.
- (3) Adam Przeworski and Henry Teune, Chapter Five: Measurement in Comparative Research. In Packet.

(.) – lecture

(.) – discussion

Week Four: Functional Equivalence of Indicators in Survey Research. General Issues and Examples of Analyses

- (1) Joanne Miller, Kazimierz M. Slomczynski, and Ronald Schoenberg, Assessing Comparability of Measurement in Cross-National Research: Authoritarian-Conservatism in Different Socio-Cultural Settings. In Packet.
- (2) Alex Inkeles, Making Men Modern: On the Causes and Consequences of Individual Change in Six Developing Countries. In Inkeles and Sasaki.

- (.) – lecture
- (.) – discussion

Week Five: Nation as a Unit of Analysis and Cultural Pluralism

- (1) Henry Teune, Comparing Countries: Lessons Learned. In UUPacket.
- (2) Gabriel A. Almond and Sidney Verba, Five Political Cultures. In Inkeles and Sasaki.
- (3) Geert Hofstede, The Cultural Relativity of Organizational Practices and Theories. In Inkeles and Sasaki.
- (4) Joahan Galtung, On the Meaning of “Nation” as a Variable. In Packet.

- (.) – lecture
- (.) – discussion

Week Six: Cross-National Structural Explanations

- (1) Donald Treiman and Kam-Bor Yip, Educational and Occupational Attainment in 21 Countries. In Kohn.
- (2) Patricia A. Roos, Marriage and Women's Occupational Attainment in Cross-Cultural Perspective. In Inkeles and Sasaki.
- (3) Carmi Schooler, History, Social Structure and Individualism. In Packet.

- (.) – lecture / discussion
- (.) – no class / final preparation of the term-paper outline

Week Seven: Comparative Studies and a Changing World System

- (1) Samuel P. Huntington, The Goals of Development. In Inkeles and Sasaki.
- (2) Immanuel Wallerstein, National Development and the World System at the End of the Cold War. In Inkeles and Sasaki.
- (3) Theotonio Dos Santos, The Structure of Dependence. Pp. 498-504 in Inkeles and Sasaki.
- (4) Michael T. Hannan, Issues in Panel Analysis of National Development:

A Methodological Overview. In Packet.

- (.) – lecture
- (.) – discussion / book review presentations (1)

Week Eight: Comparative Studies and Macro-Sociology

- (1) John W. Meyer, Conceptions of Christendom: Notes on the Distinctiveness of the West. In Kohn
- (2) Aaron Benavot, Yun-Kyung Cha, David Kamens, John W. Meyer, and Suk-Ying Wong, Knowledge for the Masses: World Models and National Curricula, 1920-86. In Inkeles and Sasaki.
- (3) Sylvia L. Thrupp, Diachronic Methods in Comparative Politics. In Packet.
- (4) Hubert M. Blalock, Contextual-Effects Models: Theoretical and Methodological Issues. In Packet.

- (.) – lecture
- (.) – individual meetings
- (.) – discussion / book review presentations (2)

Week Nine: Cross-National vs. Historical Approaches. Qualitative Methods and Case Studies

- (1) T. P. Wickham-Crowley, A Qualitative Comparative Approach to Latin American Revolutions. In Ragin.
- (2) F. Bradshaw and M. Wallace, Informing Generality and Explaining Uniqueness: The Place of Case Studies in Comparative Research. In Ragin.
- (3) E. Amenta, Making the Most of a Case Study: Theories of the Welfare State and the American Experience. In Ragin.
- (4) Daniel Bertaux, Oral History Approaches to International Social Movements. In Packet.

- (.) – lecture
- (.) – discussion / report on papers

Week Ten: Comparative Studies and Social Theory

- (1) Johan Galtung, Theory Formation in Social Research: A Plea for Pluralism. In Packet
- (2) Stefan Nowak, Comparative Studies and Social Theory. (In Kohn) – In Packet.
- (3) Erwin K. Scheuch, The Development of Comparative Research: Towards Causal Explanations. In Packet

- (.) – discussion / report on papers / summary

(.) – paper due