ICPSR Summer Program

Process Tracing in Qualitative and Mixed Methods Research

Three-day module – May 30 - June 1, 2018
University of Michigan, Ann Arbor, MI

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Course goals
The aim of this intensive three-day course is to provide participants with a good working understanding of the core elements of process-tracing as a distinct social science case study method, enabling you to utilize it in your own research. The course will develop its relative strengths and limitations, and how it can be combined productively with other methods in multi-method designs such as experiments or small/medium-n comparisons using Qualitative Comparative Analysis. The course will combine lectures and discussions with group work on exercises and individual work using your own research project.

The course develops the two core elements of process-tracing, focusing first on the theory-side by assessing what we are actually 'tracing' using process-tracing methods (i.e. causal mechanisms), and second, how we are able to make evidence-based causal inferences using within-case, 'mechanistic' evidence. The final session deals with case selection and how process-tracing can be combined with other methods.

Fee: Members = $1500; Non-members = $2800

For more information, please see: https://www.icpsr.umich.edu/icpsrweb/sumprog/courses/0215

Detailed course description
Course prerequisites: Participants should have encountered the basics of qualitative, case study research methods (e.g. Goertz and Mahoney (2012) A Tale of Two Cultures is a good starting point).

Day 1 – May 30
9 am - 12 am
Session 1 - an introduction to recent developments in case-based research

9.00 - 9.30 - Introduction
9.30 - 10.30 - Introductory lecture
10.45 - 12.00 - continue lecture + discussion

1 pm - 5 pm
Session 2 - working with theories of causal mechanisms

1.00 - 2.30 - lecture on what causal mechanisms are (theorizing them)
2.45 - 5.00 - groupwork and discussion

** Group work on mechanisms **

Day 2 – May 31
9 am - 12 am
Session 3 - making inferences with mechanistic, within-case evidence
• Doyle, Arthur Connan (1894) Silver Blaze can be downloaded free at: http://www.wesjones.com/doyle1.htm

9.00 - 10.30 - Lecture
10.45 - 12.00 - group work

** Groupwork - Sherlock Holmes **

1 pm - 5 pm
Session 4 - improving empirical tests

1.00 - 2.30 - lecture on operationalizing tests
2.45 - 5.00 - groupwork and discussion

** Groupwork - Tannenwald **
Day 3 – June 21
9 am - 12 am
Session 5- Process-tracing designs


9.00 - 10.30 - Lecture - different types of designs
10.45 - 12.00 - group work

** Groupwork - Löblová **

1 pm - 5 pm
Session 6 - Combining process-tracing with other methods


1.00 - 2.30 - lecture on case selection and nesting
2.45 - 4.00 - groupwork and discussion
4.00 - 5.00 - wrapping up

** Groupwork - case selection **

About the instructor:

Derek Beach is a professor of Political Science at the University of Aarhus, Denmark, where he teaches case study methodology, international relations, and European integration. He has authored articles, chapters, and books on case study research methodology, international negotiations, referendums, and European integration, and co-authored the books *Process-tracing Methods: Foundations and Guidelines* and *Causal Case Study Methods* (both with University of Michigan Press). He has taught qualitative case study methods at ECPR and IPSA summer and winter schools, held short courses at the APSA annual meeting on Process-tracing
and case-based research, and numerous workshops and seminars on qualitative methods throughout the world. He is also an academic co-convenor of the ECPR Methods Schools.