

Data Collection and Analysis for Migration Studies

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Choosing cases 8 April 2014

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- What is a case study?
- Case vs 'cross-case' studies
- Approaches to case selection
 - Examples
- Critique on case studies
- Thinking about the cases in your thesis project

What is a case study?

“..virtually every social scientific study is a case study or can be conceived as a case study, often from a variety of viewpoints.”

(Ragin, 1992:2)

What is a case study?

*“..a **case** connotes a spatially delimited phenomenon (a unit) observed at a single point in time or over some period of time. It comprises the sort of phenomena that an inference attempts to explain. Thus, in a study that attempts to explain certain features of nation-states, cases are nation-states”*

*[..] a **case study** may be understood as an intensive study of a single case for the purpose of understanding a larger class of cases (a population). Case study research may incorporate several cases*

Gerring (2009)

What is a case study?

“the case under study always provides more than one observation. These may be constructed diachronically (by observing the case of some subset of within-case units through time) or synchronically (by observing within-case variation at a single point in time” Gerring (2009)

What is something a case of?

Case study research involves ‘casing’ (Ragin), defining the topic of study.

Replacing proper names by variable names (Cf Przeworski & Teune, 1970):

Netherlands:

- Country of immigration
- European country
- Western-European country
- A highly secular society

Cases can be countries, groups, cities, events, etc

Single case – comparative case

There are two main types of case studies:

- 1) Single case studies
- 2) Comparative cases studies (2 or more cases)

Gerring talks about ‘cross-case studies’: *“At the point where the emphasis of a study shifts from the individual case to a sample of cases we shall say that a study is cross-case”* (2009:95)

Case studies vs 'cross-case' studies

Most (all?) social scientific *theories* postulate causal relations.

Most social scientific *research* aims to look at relations between (sets of) variables; either to test or develop theory (or both).

Case studies vs 'cross-case' studies

	Case Study	Cross-case study
Hypothesis	Generating	Testing
Validity	Internal	External
Causal insight	Mechanisms	Effects
Scope of proposition	Deep	Broad
Population of cases	Heterogeneous	Homogenous
Causal strength	Strong	Weak
Useful variation	Rare	Common
Data availability	Concentrated	Dispersed

Case selection techniques

Seawright & Gerring (2008):

1. Typical
2. Diverse
3. Extreme
4. Deviant
5. Influential
6. Most similar
7. Most different

Case selection techniques

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Case selection techniques

Typical case:

Number of cases: one or more

Role of theory: testing hypothesis: exploring causal mechanisms

Example: Saskia Bonjour (2009;2011)

Research question: Testing validity of the “control gap” hypothesis of migration policies: i.e. ongoing migration despite liberal states’ supposed desire to stop migration

Case selection: the making of family migration policies in the Netherlands from the 1950s until today [...] an almost prototypical example of the paradox of migration policy in liberal State” (2011:90)

Case selection techniques

Example: Saskia Bonjour (2009;2011) – continued

Conclusion: no evidence that “national policy makers have lost power to courts or to supranational institutions”, instead argues the importance of ideas, ideology and moral considerations

Case selection techniques

Example: Saskia Bonjour (2009;2011) – continued

“Answering the question “why liberal states accept unwanted migration” requires reconstructing decision making processes so as to account for their outcome. Only single case studies allow for this type of thick description over a longer period of time. [..].

Comparative research of course remains called for to improve theoretical hypotheses. However, in order to ascertain that our knowledge of policy making processes is meticulous and complete, and that we avoid biases related to a particular time and place, historical single case studies must have their place among our methodological tools.” (2011:118)

Case selection techniques

Diverse cases:

Number of cases: two or more with:

- Different scores on X and Y, *or*
- A different relation between X and Y

Role of theory: testing or exploring causal mechanisms

Example: Simona Vezzoli (in progress)

Research question: How do colonial links influence post-colonial migration patterns?

Case selection: Guyana (British Guiana), French Guiana, Suriname (Dutch Guiana); three neighbouring countries, all former colonies but of different countries and with different post-colonial migration patterns.

Case selection techniques

Deviant case:

Number of cases: one or more cases that do not fit a general pattern

Role of theory: exploratory or testing a deterministic relationship

Example: Bartram (2000)

Theory: Rich industrial countries attract migrants because of income differentials and labour market demands

Research question: Why does Japan have comparatively low immigration rates?

Conclusion: The structure of the Japanese government (developmentalist) allowed it to resist pressures from employers and develop other ways to address labour shortages

Case selection techniques

Most similar systems design (MSSD):

Number of cases: two or more

Role of theory:

- exploratory (select cases that are similar on a range of characteristics except the key independent variable)
- confirmatory (select cases that are similar on a range of characteristics except the key independent variable *and* the dependent variable)

Method of agreement/difference

John Stuart Mill (1834) *System of Logic*

Method of difference

(related to “most similar systems design”)

Colonial history (X1)	High GDP (X2)	Ageing population (X3)	High immigration (Y)
Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
No	Yes	Yes	No

Method of difference can be used to draw conclusions from a study based on a most similar systems design.

Case selection techniques

Most similar systems design (MSSD):

Example Bloemraad (2006)

Research question: Does multiculturalism lead to higher political integration? Why?

Case selection:

Real name	Variable name
Canada	Multicultural country
United States	'non-multicultural' country

Case selection techniques

Most similar systems design (MSSD):

Example Bloemraad (2006) – continued

Results:

Case	X1: naturalisation requirements	x2: country of immigration	X3: multicultural policy	Y1: Naturalisation rate
Canada	Modest	Yes	Yes	Higher
United States	Modest	Yes	No	Lower

Case selection techniques

Most similar systems design (MSSD):

Example Bloemraad (2006) - continued

Hypothesis: Multiculturalism leads to higher political integration because of government support

Double comparative design

Countries	Groups
Canada	Portuguese, Vietnamese
USA	<i>No support:</i> Portuguese <i>Support:</i> Vietnamese

Case selection techniques

Most different systems design (MDSD):

Number of cases: two or more that differ on a range of characteristics but have the same score on the key independent variable of interest and on the dependent variable

Role of theory: generating or testing

Case selection techniques

Most different systems design (MDSD):

Example: Garcés Mascareñas (2012)

Research question: to what extent are liberal democracies unique in dealing with labour migration?

Case selection:

	Regime type	Immigration
Spain	A liberal democracy	considerable undocumented migration
Malaysia	An authoritarian regime	considerable undocumented migration

Case selection techniques

Most different systems design (MDSD):

Example: Garcés Mascareñas (2012) - continued

Conclusion: it is not that immigrants could not be excluded in liberal democracies, but rather that they have only been excluded in a partial, temporary way. [...] While in Europe, via the guestworker programmes and Spain's situation in recent decades, the humanity of migrant workers has translated both in the medium and long term into permanent residence, in Malaysia it has been translated into illegality. (2012:204)

Case selection techniques : group exercise

For Gamlen and Ersanilli & Saharso determine:

- The cases
- The aim of the study (exploratory, confirmatory)
- The case selection technique

Research question

- How do states relate to their emigrants and their descendents?
- Why do they do this in different ways?
- How should they do so ‘better’?

Case selection

Phase 1: survey on state-diaspora relations

Phase 2: two cases for in-depth study

- Ireland
- New Zealand: embedded units: destination types (p328)

Selection technique:

- “atypical case studies” (p319),
- they are similar in all but their migration histories (p327) -> Most Similar Systems Design?

Case selection: Ersanilli & Saharso

Research question: relation between citizenship regime and immigrant integration

Theory

Hypotheses on the effect of two policies dimensions:

- Individual legal equality (citizenship, anti-discrimination)
- Accommodation of diversity (ethnic and religious consultative bodies)

Case selection: Ersanilli & Saharso

Real name	Variable name	individual equality	accommodation of diversity
Netherlands	Multicultural	High	High
France	Civic-assimilationist	High	Low
Germany	Ethnic assimilationist	Low	Low

Case selection: Ersanilli & Saharso

- H1: accomm of div leads to higher settlement identification
- H2: accomm of div leads to lower settlement identification
- H3: accomm of div leads to higher origin country identi.
- H4: indiv equality leads to higher settlement identification
- H5: indiv equality leads to lower origin country identification

variable	low	high
Turkish identity		F, D, NL
Host country identity	D	F, NL

Critiques on case study methodology

- Results cannot be used to generalise
- It cannot deal with probabilistic reasoning (Lieberson, 1991; Goldthorpe, 1997)

Probabilistic vs deterministic

Deterministic: if A then B

Probabilistic: if A then a higher chance of B

Why is it so difficult to make deterministic statements?

- Multiple causes (interactions, countering variables):
 - A leads to B only in the presence of C,
 - C counters the effects of A
- Measurement error
- Chance variation?

Lieberson (1991: 309) argues that ‘we are [...] obliged to relinquish a deterministic *measurement* of the influence of X1 on Y, even if we are prepared to make a deterministic statement about its influence’

Critiques on case study methodology

- Results cannot be used to generalise
- It cannot deal with probabilistic reasoning (Lieberson, 1991; Goldthorpe, 1997)
- It cannot deal with multiple causality and interactions (Lieberson, 1991)
- Bias towards verification (e.g. Geddes, 1990; Goldthorpe, 1997; but Lieberson, 1991)

Why/when a case study?

- To uncover causal mechanisms?
- To collect (more) context data
- If the useful variation is limited
- If data availability is limited
- Time & budget constraints

Appropriateness of case selection depends on what you want to investigate:

- How do you see your cases (as a case of what)
- Theoretical ambition (testing/falsification, generating, uncovering mechanisms)
- In a comparative study: variables should vary

Case selection: your dissertation

What is your dissertation project country/group a case of?

What selection technique have you used?

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