

9th GESIS Summer School in Survey Methodology Cologne, August 2020

Syllabus for course 8: "Mixed-methods and Multimethod Research"

Instructor: Prof. Dr. Ingo Rohlffing
Email: i.rohlffing@uni-koeln.de
Homepage: <https://ingorohlffing.wordpress.com>

Date: 17-21 August 2020
Time: 09:30-12:15 + 13:45-16:15
Time zone: CEST, course starts on Monday at 09:30
Venue: Online via Zoom

About the Lecturers:

Ingo Rohlffing is Professor of Methods of Comparative Political Research at the Cologne Center for Comparative Politics, University of Cologne. He is doing research on social science methods, the practice of methods applications (metascience), Qualitative Comparative Analysis and mixed-methods and multimethod research. Ingo is author of *Case Studies and Causal Inference* (Palgrave Macmillan) and he has published articles in *Comparative Political Studies*, *Sociological Methods & Research*, and *Political Analysis*.

Selected Publications:

- Rohlffing, Ingo and Christina Isabel Zuber (2019): Check Your Truth Conditions! Clarifying the Relationship between Theories of Causation and Social Science Methods for Causal Inference. *Sociological Methods & Research*, advance access.
- Rohlffing, Ingo and Tobias Schafföner (2019): The Time-Varying Relationship between Economic Globalization and the Ideological Center of Gravity of Party Systems. *PLOS ONE* 14 (2): e0212945.
- Rohlffing, Ingo (2008): What You See and What You Get: Pitfalls and Principles of Nested Analysis in Comparative Research. *Comparative Political Studies* 41 (11): 1492-1514.

Short Course Description:

This course deals with mixed-methods and multimethod research (MMR) in the social sciences. We will discuss the broader understanding of combining qualitative and quantitative methods (mixed methods) and the narrower approach of nested analysis. The course aims to reflect the diversity of MMR studies in the discipline to accommodate participants' projects. The relative emphasis we put on specific variants of MMR designs will be adapted to the methods participants are applying in their own research.

The goal of the course is to understand the different varieties in which MMR can be done. We discuss the unique advantages and methodological and practical challenges confronted in mixed-method research.

Topics include the variety of mixed-method designs that are available; the use of concepts in the qualitative and quantitative analysis, case selection for qualitative research, the compatibility of theoretical expectations in the qualitative and quantitative analysis. The discussions are illustrated with examples from different fields of political science. By the end of the course, participants will be able to realize their own mixed-methods study in a systematic manner, and to critically evaluate published MMR studies.

Keywords:

macro research, micro research, qualitative analysis, quantitative analysis.

Course Prerequisites:

- Basic knowledge of the two (or more) methods that participants want to apply in their projects.
- Familiarity with meaning and standards of causal inference and causal explanation.

Target Group:

Participants will find the course useful if:

- they realize or plan to realize a project with a causal research question,
- that is answered by combining a statistical technique or QCA with a qualitative technique;
- they are familiar with single-method research and want to explore ideas on how to combine multiple techniques;
- they are interested in learning about the opportunities and limits of mixed-method and multimethod research.

Course and Learning Objectives:

By the end of the course participants will:

- be familiar with different varieties of mixed-method designs and the research questions that one can answer by implementing them;
- be able to choose and devise a mixed-method design suitable for answering their own research question;
- be familiar with the main design decisions in mixed-methods research;
- know the methodological and practical challenges of realizing mixed-methods research.

Organizational Structure of the Course:

The course has about 4 hours of classroom discussion per day about 2 hours that we spend on exercises, tutorials and assignments. The exercises will involve the analysis and discussion of published mixed-methods studies and the participants' projects. Participants are encouraged to apply concepts and insights from the course to their own projects and to discuss ideas for revising them and their further development.

Software and Hardware Requirements:

There are no special requirements regarding software.

Long Course Description:

Mixed-method research is an enduring topic in the social sciences (e.g., Creswell and Piano 2011), but multimethod research (MMR) more narrowly defined, also known as nested analysis in political science, is a relatively new topic. After longstanding antagonistic discussions about the pros and cons of qualitative and quantitative methods, we now find a growing consensus (maybe slowly) that each method has its distinct advantages and that they work best in combination with each other. This course builds on the debate about mixed-methods and multimethod research and focuses on their unique advantages and challenges for empirical researchers seeking to combine two or more methods.

Day 1:

We lay the foundations by learning about different conceptions of causation, purposes of mixed-methods research and how they can be integrated in a single mixed-methods analysis. You will learn about different varieties and dimensions of mixed-methods research such as the timing of the methods' applications and their relative importance in the broader design. This will show that mixed-methods research and multimethod research come in many different flavors that might seem detached from each other at first sight. On day 1, we will discuss whether there is a core understanding and how the different flavors relate to each other. At the end of day 1, participants should be able to locate their own study in the MMR field and know what type of design they want to implement (or have implemented already).

Day 2:

One purpose of combining qualitative and quantitative tools is concept and construct development and validation. We begin with a reflection on concepts and concept formation in MMR as the cornerstone of all empirical research. This session is based on two interrelated claims one finds in the political science methods literature. First, it is argued that concepts are thin in quantitative and thick in qualitative research. Second, it is claimed that this discrepancy creates problems of conceptual stretching, undermining causal analysis. We question whether these assertions are warranted and, to the extent that they are accurate, how concept formation can be

improved. We then broaden the perspective beyond this debate and discuss examples of mixed-methods approaches for survey development and validation of items.

Days 3 & 4:

MMR that aims at integrated inferences from the large-n and small-n part face the challenge of case selection. Depending on the mixed-methods design, case selection challenges can be diverse, ranging from the recruitment of participants for focus groups to the residual-based choice of countries after a macro-comparative regression. We will discuss the current state of debate on case selection in nested analysis (regression (or QCA) with follow-up process tracing) and reflect on additional case selection strategies pertinent to participants' designs.

Day 5:

On the last day, we discuss the limits of MMR and research questions and constellations for which it is inferior to single-method designs. We turn attention to the more practical aspects of MMR and discuss how to construct a design, how to present and write down a complex study and how it is regarded by journals and "the job market".

The course will have synchronous and asynchronous elements. The asynchronous elements will be short recordings that I will prepare ahead of the course. From day to day, the participants might also get short quizzes and questions to think about and work on until the next day. During the course, we will have interactive elements (breakout sessions, for example) and discussions. The goal is to supplement the general discussions of methods' elements with their application to published research. Depending on their research projects, participants will also have the opportunity to present and discuss their research projects in class.

Day-to-day Schedule and Literature:

Day	Topic(s)
1	<p><i>The idea behind mixed-methods research.</i></p> <p><u>Compulsory reading (have to be read before the session):</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Creswell, John W. and Vicki L. Plano Clark (2011): Designing and Conducting Mixed Methods Research. Los Angeles: SAGE Publications: chapter 3. ▪ Lieberman, Evan S. (2005): Nested Analysis as a Mixed-Method Strategy for Comparative Research. American Political Science Review 99 (3): 435-452. ▪ Small, Mario Luis (2011): How to Conduct a Mixed Methods Study: Recent Trends in a Rapidly Growing Literature. Annual Review of Sociology 37 (1): 57-86. <p><u>Suggested reading (suggested, yet do not have to be read before the session):</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Creswell, John W. and Vicki L. Plano Clark (2011): Designing and Conducting Mixed Methods Research. Los Angeles: SAGE Publications: chapter 2. ▪ Johnson, R. Burke, Federica Russo and Judith Schoonenboom (2017) Causation in mixed methods research: The meeting of philosophy, science, and practice Journal of Mixed Methods Research 13 (2): 143-162. ▪ Seawright, Jason (2016): Multi-Method Social Science: Combining Qualitative and Quantitative Tools. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press: chapter 3.
2	<p><i>Theorizing and concept formation</i></p> <p><u>Compulsory reading:</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Ahram, Ariel I. (2013): Concepts and Measurement in Multimethod Research. Political Research Quarterly 66 (2): 280-291. ▪ Illustration (used by Ahram): Lange, Matthew (2009): Lineages of Despotism and Development: British Colonialism and State Power. Chicago: The University of Chicago Press: chapter 1. ▪ Goerres, Achim and Katrin Prinzen (2012): Can We Improve the Measurement of Attitudes Towards the Welfare State? A Constructive Critique of Survey Instruments with Evidence from Focus Groups. Social Indicators Research 109 (3): 515-534. <p><u>Suggested reading:</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Coppedge, Michael (1999): Thickening Thin Concepts and Theories - Combining Large N and Small in Comparative Politics. Comparative Politics 31 (4): 465-476.

3	<p><i>Case selection for (aggregated) macro outcomes</i></p> <p><u>Compulsory reading:</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Seawright, Jason and John Gerring (2008): Case Selection Techniques in Case Study Research: A Menu of Qualitative and Quantitative Options. <i>Political Research Quarterly</i> 61 (2): 294–308. ▪ Weller, Nicholas and Jeb Barnes (2016): Pathway Analysis and the Search for Causal Mechanisms. <i>Sociological Methods & Research</i> 45 (3): 424–457. ▪ Illustration: Lange, Matthew (2009): Lineages of Despotism and Development: British Colonialism and State Power. Chicago: The University of Chicago Press: chapter 3. <p><u>Suggested reading:</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Harbers, Imke and Matthew C. Ingram (2017): Geo-Nested Analysis: Mixed-Methods Research with Spatially Dependent Data. <i>Political Analysis</i> 25 (3): 289–307.
4	<p><i>Mixed-methods research with micro outcomes</i></p> <p><u>Compulsory reading:</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Goerres, Achim and Katrin Prinzen (2012): Using Mixed Methods for the Analysis of Individuals: A Review of Necessary and Sufficient Conditions and an Application to Welfare State Attitudes. <i>Quality & Quantity</i> 46 (2): 415–450. ▪ Bartham, Bernadette, Jacqueline Waterfield, Annette Bishop, Melanie A. Holden, Panos Barlas, Khaled M. Ismail, Christine Kettle and Nadine E. Foster (2018): The Role of Qualitative Research in Clinical Trial Development: The Ease Back Study. <i>Journal of Mixed Methods Research</i> 12 (3): 325–343. <p><u>Suggested reading:</u> [might be added later]</p>
5	<p><i>Limits of mixed-methods research and practical challenges</i></p> <p><u>Compulsory reading:</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Ahmed, Amel and Rudra Sil (2012): When Multi-Method Research Subverts Methodological Pluralism—or, Why We Still Need Single-Method Research. <i>Perspectives on Politics</i> 10 (4): 935–953. ▪ Fetter, Michael D. and Dawn Freshwater (2015): Publishing a Methodological Mixed Methods Research Article. <i>Journal of Mixed Methods Research</i> 9 (3): 203–213. <p><u>Suggested reading:</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Schoonenboom, Judith and R. Burke Johnson (2017): How to Construct A mixed Methods Research Design. <i>KZfSS Kölner Zeitschrift für Soziologie und Sozialpsychologie</i> 69 (2): 107–131.

Preparatory Reading:

There are many books on mixed-methods research aiming at a readership on the BA, MA or PhD level and having a different disciplinary background (education, political science, psychology). This makes it difficult to recommend two or three books here. Instead, I recommend searching for a book meeting your requirements in book catalogue. SAGE is having many mixed-methods books listed in his catalogue. (I do not have any ties to SAGE.)

Additional Recommended Literature:

Political scientists who are interested in a more advanced perspective rooted in a potential outcomes framework can have a look at Seawright's book or Dunning with a specific focus on natural experiments and the role of qualitative methods therein. Goertz's book is on a more introductory level and takes a stronger qualitative and set-theoretic perspective.

- Dunning, Thad (2008): *Natural Experiments in the Social Sciences: A Design-Based Approach*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Seawright, Jason (2016): *Multi-Method Social Science: Combining Qualitative and Quantitative Tools*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Goertz, Gary (2017): *Multimethod Research, Causal Mechanisms, and Case Studies: An Integrated Approach*. Princeton University Press.