

POLITICAL SCIENCE 205
INTRODUCTION TO RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

Research Design II
Monday, July 2

Week 3, Day 1

Agenda

- I. What is research design?
- II. Case Studies
- III. Other Small-N Studies
- IV. Sampling methods

Research Design Case Studies Other Small-N Sampling

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Lecture Question

What does a "small-n", qualitative research design look like?

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What is 'Research Design' again?

The plan that guides the investigator in the process of collecting, analyzing, and interpreting observations.

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What is 'Research Design' again?

There are different types of research design that we choose from:

- Quantitative (large-n):**
survey research, experiments, content analysis
- Qualitative (small-n):**
case study, interviews, fieldwork, theory

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What is research design again?

Typically, research design differs on the level of internal and external validity.

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Case Studies

A comprehensive examination of one or a few cases.

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Case Studies

Objective: To describe and discover multiple factors that may influence your dependent variable.

1. Have a hypothesis
2. Identify your independent and dependent variables.
3. Determine your observation or cases.
4. Rule out other factors (Z variables) and how that may affect your dependent variable.

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Activity 3, Part B

European countries with an exploitative political system are more likely to experience revolution.

Redistributive government systems are likely to increase the life expectancy of citizens.

Substantial foreign policy experience is likely to influence voters in the Iowa caucus.


Polarization amongst the political parties determines the popularity ratings for president.

A lack of fashion sense is likely to influence voters in the Iowa caucus.

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Most-Similar Design



Purpose: To examine cases that are very similar, with one exception—the probable cause, and to use that to explain differences on the dependent variable.

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Causes of Revolution

Hypothesis: European countries with an exploitive system are more likely to experience revolution.

Potential Causes (Independent Variable)	England	France
Repressive Monarchy	Yes	Yes
Non-propertied agrarian proletariat	Yes	Yes
Expensive foreign wars	Yes	Yes
Stagnant standard of living	No	Yes
Outcome	Stability	Revolution

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Life Expectancy

Hypothesis: Redistributive government systems are likely to increase the life expectancy of citizens.

Potential Causes (Independent Variable)	India	China
Disadvantaged backgrounds	Yes	Yes
Moderate economic growth	Yes	Yes
Adequate calories	Yes	Yes
Government redistribution of resources	No	Yes
Outcome	57 years old	69 years old

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Iowa Caucus


Hypothesis: Substantial foreign policy experience is likely to influence voters in the Iowa caucus.

Potential Causes (Independent Variable)	Clinton 2008	Clinton 2016
Consistent campaigning in Iowa months before election	Yes	Yes
Adequate social media presence	Yes	Yes
Liberalness on social issues	Yes	Yes
Substantial foreign policy experience	No	Yes
Outcome	Loss	Victory

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Most-Different Design



Purpose: To examine cases that are **very different**, with one exception—our probable cause, and using that to **explain similar outcomes** on the dependent variable.

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Presidential Popularity

Hypothesis: Polarization amongst the political parties determines the popularity ratings for the president.

Potential Causes (Independent Variable)	Bush (2007)	Obama (2015)
War in Iraq	Yes	No
Economy doing well	No	Yes
Party has majority in Congress	No	No
Gas under \$2.00	No	Yes
Outcome	Ratings below 50%	Ratings below 50%

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Fashion in the Primaries


Hypothesis: A lack of fashion sense is likely to discourage voters in the Iowa caucus.

Potential Causes (Independent Variable)	McCain (2008)	Rubio (2016)
The candidate has military experience	Yes	No
The candidate is a member of a minority group	No	Yes
The candidate is considered fashionable	No	No
The candidate is from southern state	No	Yes
Outcome	Loss	Loss

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Single Case Studies



Purpose: To examine only one case in depth.

Extreme Case: A clear case of a hard-to-measure or rare concept (Nazi Germany, North Korea)


Typical Case: A common case that is explained in detail.

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Problems with the Case Study Method

Case studies are problematic because we are determining the parameters of what we set out to examine.



We are setting ourselves up for success, but this is a deterministic process which has the potential to ignore multiple factors.

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Activity 3, Part B



Answer Q5

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Other Small-N Research

There are other types of research design that only involve a small number of cases:

1. Interviews
2. Fieldwork
3. Theoretical Research

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Interviews

Interviewing is good for elite populations and exploratory research.

1. Preparation
2. Recording
3. Transcription

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Fieldwork

Ethnographic fieldwork allows us to directly observe phenomena.

1. Direct
2. Participant
3. Overt

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Fieldwork

Fieldwork allows researchers to examine behavior as it occurs.

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Theoretical Research

Theoretical research requires us to make normative arguments.

1. Application
2. Critique

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Activity 3, Part B

Answer Q6-Q10

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Sampling

The process in which we select our sample from a larger population.

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Iraqi Civilian Deaths

654,965 Iraqi deaths

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Dewey Defeats Truman

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Increasing the Sample Size

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Types of Sampling

Probability: Every element has a known probability of being included in the sample.

Nonprobability: Every element has an unknown probability of being included in the sample.

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Probability Sampling

Sampling Method	Description	Example
Simple random sample	Every single element has an equal chance of being included in the sample	Random number generators

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Nonprobability Sampling

Sampling Method	Description	Example
Purposive sample	The researcher exerts a considerable amount of discretion over the observations included.	Surveying members of Congress
Convenience sample	The researcher includes specific observations in the study because it is convenient to do so.	Sampling students on campus
Quota sample	The researcher samples elements proportionally, but non-randomly	Racial/ethnic quotas
Snowball sample	The researcher asks respondents to help identify other respondents of interest	Drug users, campaign or political activists

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The Message



Why is this conversation on sampling even important?

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