

EUROHESC - workshop and event meeting

Institutional case study - Kassel, 16.06.2010.

Case study workshop (Jonathan Brennan)

Comparative Case Studies: theoretical foundations and potentials

- 14.00 – 14.30 – introduction
- 1 hour – group work first and then project meeting to prepare for the plenary session
- the idea is to find out what other project want to do in the case selection during the parallel sessions and then be able to introduce other projects in the plenary sessions

Case study research tends to be:

- qualitative
- exploratory
- use range of data collection techniques
- focus on “naturally occurring” phenomena
- in depth
- developing, rather than testing theory

Key choices in using case study methods:

- how many cases?
- Basis for selection? (generalise to population or to the theory)
- Basis of comparison
- Data collection

Key choices in data collection:

- single or multi-method? (Getting beyond what people are telling you, what the document are revealing, what is actually going on)
- Discourse – action – outcome
- Which actors? (gatekeepers and power)
- Case studies within a case
- Triangulation (checking out the stores form different actors/resources)

Case contexts (institutional):

- the importance of history (the “saga”)
- competing narratives (“making sense”)
- compliance cultures
- power (within the institutions/different levels/)
- distinguishing levels – system/institution/basic unit
- distinguishing types – research intensive/widening participation/business facing

Fieldwork:

- researcher pre-conceptions!!! (we have to aware of our own pre-conceptions)
- structured vs. open data collection
- interviewee – biography or “expert witness?” (are you asking them about themselves (their own experience in biographical matter) or using them as witness for the situation/phenomena you are searching for, for finding out what is going around? – usually mix of those approaches is the best, but you have to be aware of the differences)
- “looking around”
- writing up

Analysis:

- counting things or selecting things?
- Bringing “order” or “confusion”?
- Describing the case
- Comparing the case

Case-oriented research strategies:

- are intended to show how specific social processes develop and combine to produce particular outcomes in certain settings
- are implicitly or explicitly comparative
- examine multiple, interdependent causes
- are insensitive to the frequency of cases
- require detailed knowledge of cases
- much more useful for studying complex social phenomena – their goal is to understand how and why is something happening, influencing, changing...how and why particular causes generate particular effects

Degree of generality**LOW****HIGH**

Degree of abstraction from concrete instances: LOW Emerge as specific phenomena in the course of research, e.g. occupational communities	Are generic conventional objects (university department)
Degree of abstraction from concrete instances: HIGH Are theoretically constructed as particular phenomena (collective acts of rebellion)	Are general theoretical constructs (firms as rational actors)

Variations between intensive and extensive research (Richard Whitley)

	Intensive research	Extensive research
Research questions	nature of generative process and actions in particular cases	Nature of regularities and distribution of properties in a population
Relations between elements	Substantive connections	Formal relations of similarity of properties
Groupings	Causal	Taxonomic
Nature of accounts	Causal explanations of how objects and events were produced	Descriptive generalisation of relations between properties
Appropriate tests	Corroborations of accounts	Replicability
Limitations	Generalisability of phenomena, closure of system	Contextual differences between population, limited explanatory power

- this is not to be compared with qualitative/quantitative paradigm – the issues is what you are trying to understand and how – that should determine research strategy
- what is theoretical potential and outreach of different research strategy
- both intensive and extensive can be done within quantitative and qualitative
- general misunderstanding that case study is exclusively in the domain of qualitative study
- central point for selecting case study: what do we actually want to find out?

Jochen Glaser: Selection of Cases (introduction of group work)

Important Questions	Major problems
Why do we study cases?	Applying quasi-statistical thinking Ignoring case analysis when selecting cases
What is a case?	Confounding empirical object and theoretical case
When should we select cases?	Trade-off between time restrictions and knowledge about cases
How many cases?	Trade-off between breadth and depth
Which cases?	Unclear research strategy Refusal to hypothesis

Why do we study cases?

- distinctions like testing theory – creating theory are useless
- two approaches to case studies in the literature:
 - a) intensive study of a small number of cases in order to shed a light on a population
 - b) intensive study of a small number of cases in order to explain a specific social phenomenon
- “weak approximation of the statistical method”
- representativeness of cases remains central concerns
- theory development by (predominantly) qualitative research
- generalization on the basis...

Lieberson, 1992 – reference to find!

Description	Explanation (3 types)			
	Exploratory	Implicit	Causal relationship	Causal mechanisms
Description of variations	thick description	Causes and effects	Initial condition	
e.g. To what extent has NPM permeated German University	e.g. HOW?		Sequence of causally linked events	
			outcomes	

What is a case?

- social phenomenon (event, process, constellation of actors) that can be analytically separated from its environment
- empirical object or theoretical construct?

When should we select cases?

- a) **all at once** – Advantages: efficient, consistent; Disadvantages: insufficient a priori knowledge about cases may distort investigation
- b) **select as you go** – Advantages: adaption of case, selection to new insights

Theoretical and Practical Considerations

- importance of variations (t)
- degree of variation needed (t)
- number of cases that can be studied (p)
- external audiences that must be kept happy (p)
- access to empirical objects (p)

Questions for group sessions: part 3 from the materials

TRUE PROJECT

Transforming Universities in Europe (TRUE) The aim of TRUE is to clarify how steering and governance have affected organisational characteristics of higher education institutions (HEIs) and how this has affected the differentiation of the European higher education landscape. The transformation will be analyzed by means of three perspectives: 1) universalism assumes that universities are specific organisations; 2) instrumentalism assumes that universities are just like any kind of organisation; and 3) institutionalism assumes that the crucial question is the fit between the norms and values of universities and reformers. The CRP focuses on three interrelated themes: governance and steering, organisational change and the higher education landscape.

RHESI

Re-Structuring Higher Education and Scientific Innovation (RHESI): The consequences of changes in authority relations for the direction and organisation of research The aim of this project is to find out how the changing governance of public science systems and higher education systems are altering key features of scientific innovation, particularly the selection of research goals and the evaluation and integration of results

CINHEKS

Change in Networks, Higher Education and Knowledge Societies (CINHEKS) This project will analyse how higher education institutions (HEIs) are networked within distinct knowledge societies in Europe, the USA and Japan. The study will illuminate the nature of linkages between academics, HEIs and crucial actors within the dynamics of knowledge production in these regions. The objectives of CINHEKS are based on the juxtaposition of historically distinct societies, global policy debates and conceptually defined empirical data, chosen to reveal their key similarities or differences. These objectives are:

- The historical analysis of key features shaping and explaining contextual differences underlying present patterns of knowledge production.
- The analysis of policy discourse explaining how nation states and regions have understood and promoted the development of knowledge transfer and use.
- Empirical studies based on institutional case studies and surveys explaining the way in which basic units, HEIs and academics are networked in distinct knowledge societies.

EUROAC

The Academic Profession in Europe: Responses to Societal Challenges (EUROAC) The aim of this CRP is to establish how the academic profession perceives, interprets and “digests” recent changes in its societal environment and the organisational fabric of higher education

systems. As regards the former, attention will be paid notably to the growing relevance of knowledge, diversification and internationalization. For the latter, groups of Individual Projects will explore the impact of changes in government, management and evaluation, changing academic career settings, and professionalization, both within academic roles and through modes of interaction and division of labor between new higher education professionals and the academic profession.

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Working groups:

- What are the variables about which information needs to be collected?
- What possible sources of these data exist (document, people)?
- How accessible are the data (distributed among few or many documents, documents unlikely to be accessible, few or many people, knowledge not easily accessible because its tacit...)

Working groups assignment:

POLAND:

Units of analysis: type of HEIs / academic disciplines / junior – senior staff

Interviewees: academics /

Comment [Tv1]: ESF typology?

ROMANIA:

Units of analysis: type of HEIs / academic disciplines / junior – senior staff

Interviewees: academics / dean / vice-dean / scientific secretary

CROATIA:

Units of analysis: type of HEIs / academic disciplines / junior – senior staff / governing position?

Interviewees: academics / rectors / deans

DOCUMENTS:

- OECD reports
- World bank report
- EUROAC reports
- EUROAC context we already developed

Conclusion session

- najava nove edukacije u Twente-u
- future networking and information dissemination – developing a strategy of mutual informing about relevant researches conducted in our countries?
- Future communication with ESF on organizing joint EUROHESC events
- Information managers – 1 person per CRP
- New education suggestions – 2 hot topics: organizational theory; governance and authority relations;
- IP organizira edukacije – javiti se ukoliko ima interesa/resursa obzirom da zahtjeva pisanje projekta/kompletnu logistiku
- Poslati Žarku reference za Good Governance