

From Research Question to Research Design: Investigating Preferences for and Beliefs about Redistribution and Inequality, S 2023

Thursdays, 14:00-16:00
101 Seminarraum
Garystr. 55

Institute for Sociology
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Visiting hours: Tu., 11:30-12:30
(only after prior arrangement via
E-mail)

Course plan and literature

20.04.2023 Introduction and overview

Getting up to speed: inequality, redistribution, and the state of the art

27.04.2023 Inequality and its measurement.

Weil, David N. 2013. *Economic Growth*. 3rd ed. Boston, MA, Chapter 13. Income Inequality: 363–396.

04.05.2023 The history of inequality and redistribution in Europe

Scheidel, Walter 2017. Introduction: The Challenge of Inequality. In: *The Great Leveler: Violence and the History of Inequality from the Stone Age to the Twenty-First Century*. Princeton: Princeton University Press. 1–22.

Alfani, Guido. 2021. "Economic Inequality in Preindustrial Times: Europe and Beyond." *Journal of Economic Literature* 59(1):3–44.

11.05.2023 The history of taxation and the origins of progressive taxation. (Exercise: How to phrase a research question)

Ortiz-Ospina, Esteban, and Max Roser. 2016. "Taxation." *Our World in Data*. Retrieved from: '<https://ourworldindata.org/taxation>' [Online Resource].

Scheve, Kenneth and David Stasavage. 2016. "1. Why Might Governments Tax the Rich?" In: *Taxing the Rich: A History of Fiscal Fairness in the United States and Europe*. Princeton: Princeton University Press. 1–23.

25.05.2023 State of the art debates in empirical research on inequality and redistribution (Exercise: How to write a good introduction)

Hing, Leanne S. Son, Anne E. Wilson, Peter Gourevitch, Jaslyn English, and Parco Sin. 2019. "Failure to Respond to Rising Income Inequality: Processes That Legitimize Growing Disparities." *Daedalus* 148(3):105–35.

Different research questions with different research designs

01.06.2023 (Simple) survey experiments (Research topic/question due)

Trump, Kris-Stella. 2018. "Income Inequality Influences Perceptions of Legitimate Income Differences." *British Journal of Political Science* 48(4):929–52.

Cruces, Guillermo, Ricardo Perez-Truglia, and Martin Tetaz. 2013. "Biased Perceptions of Income Distribution and Preferences for Redistribution: Evidence from a Survey Experiment." *Journal of Public Economics* 98:100–112.

08.06.2023 Multilevel regressions and factorial surveys (Exercise: How to write a good research proposal)

Ahrens, Leo. 2022. "Unfair Inequality and the Demand for Redistribution: Why Not All Inequality Is Equal." *Socio-Economic Review* 20(2):463–87.

Schechtl, Manuel, and Daria Tisch. 2023. "Tax Principles, Policy Feedback and Self-Interest: Cross-National Experimental Evidence on Wealth Tax Preferences." *Socio-Economic Review*. Online First.

15.06.2023 Panel regressions and wealth inequality (Exercise: Qualitative and quantitative empirical research – linking research question to research design, method, and analysis)

Killewald, Alexandra, Fabian T. Pfeffer, and Jared N. Schachner. 2017. "Wealth Inequality and Accumulation." *Annual Review of Sociology* 43(1):379–404.

Pfeffer, Fabian T. 2018. "Growing Wealth Gaps in Education." *Demography* 55(3):1033–68.

22.06.2023 Regression discontinuity designs and differences in differences (Research proposal first draft due)

Barnes, Lucy. 2020. "Trade and Redistribution: Trade Politics and the Origins of Progressive Taxation." *Political Science Research and Methods* 8(2):197–214.

Limberg, Julian, and Laura Seelkopf. 2022. "The Historical Origins of Wealth Taxation." *Journal of European Public Policy* 29(5):670–88.

29.06.2023 Field experiments and laboratory experiments

Nishi, Akihiro, Hirokazu Shirado, David G. Rand, and Nicholas A. Christakis. 2015. "Inequality and Visibility of Wealth in Experimental Social Networks." *Nature* 526(7573):426–29.

Sands, Melissa L., and Daniel de Kadt. 2020. "Local Exposure to Inequality Raises Support of People of Low Wealth for Taxing the Wealthy." *Nature* 586(7828):257–61.

06.07.2023 Linking governmental and survey data (Potentially reserved for proposal presentations I)

Bastani, Spencer, and Daniel Waldenström. 2021. "Perceptions of Inherited Wealth and the Support for Inheritance Taxation." *Economica* 88(350):532–69.

Hvidberg, Kristoffer B., Claus T. Kreiner, and Stefanie Stantcheva. 2023. "Social Positions and Fairness Views on Inequality." *The Review of Economic Studies*. Online First.

13.07.2023 Proposal presentations (14:00-20:00) Garystr.55/323

Aims, content, and methods of this course

The seminar has three overarching goals: First, it will introduce students to the current research on belief and preference formation on economic inequality and redistribution. In doing that, we will take particular emphasis on the difference between redistribution and inequality on the supply side (market incomes) and on the welfare demand side (taxes and benefits), considering both wealth and the more commonly studied income inequalities. Other topics may also include regional segregation, gender gaps, and ethnic inequalities (all in the context of economic inequalities) depending on students' interests.

Second, it will provide students with a basic understanding and the necessary tools to move from the literature, over the research question, to developing a research design and starting a research analysis. Third, the seminar will provide instructions on how to write short research proposals and a short empirical paper concerning the topic of the seminar. To achieve these goals, students will read compulsory literature and answer related questions ahead of each lesson. In addition, they will hand in a first research question, develop a research proposal, and write a first draft of their short empirical paper by the end of the semester (if students choose to write a seminar paper in this course).

Minimum requirements and assessment standard

The minimum requirement for receiving a positive grade includes the attendance of the course (max. 2 absences), the duly upload of the answers to the questions on the compulsory readings, the presentation of the research proposal, in line with the specifications provided in the lectures. Grade criteria:

- Answers to the questions on the compulsory readings
- Active participation during the lessons
- Presentation of the research proposal
- Abstract
- Research proposal

Exam material

Active participation

(1) Active participation in the course: preparation for course meetings by reading the basic literature and written preparation of questions to be answered briefly.

(2) Discussion contributions: Participants actively discuss the required literature. At the end of the semester, the initial version of the proposal will be presented in a 5-minute short presentation. The subsequent discussion serves to improve the student's own work.

(3) First draft Exposé and Research topic: In the course of the seminar, the participants will propose a research topic/research question on which they want to write the research proposal. (2-5 sentences). For the final two lessons participants will write a two-page short research exposé in which they embed their research topic in the literature and specify the research question, theoretical perspective, and method. Each participant will receive written feedback on this research proposal.

“Exam” (only for those who want to write a seminar paper)

(4) Term paper: Preparation of an empirically oriented research paper on the chosen topic (~3000 words excl. cover page, table of contents and bibliography). It should be a research proposal on a topic of your interest related to the overall topic of the seminar (could be a basis for your master thesis). The literature discussed in class can be used as a starting point but the research proposal must also refer to further scientific literature. Possible data sources for the empirical analyses will be mentioned in the course and participants should only propose data sources which they can access or generate. When preparing the written work, the rules of scientific work must be observed.

The written answers to the questions (on blackboard)

- SHORT answers to the questions (most of the times 1-2 sentences each)
- Short statements regarding comprehension problems: What was not understood in terms of content? Where do I suspect a weak argumentation?

The research topic

- Which topic of labor market sociology are you interested in?
- What specific questions do you have about this topic?
- Goal: Phrase question as detailed as possible (the question should specify most of these questions: Who, How, What, Why, When, Where).

The first draft of a research proposal and presentation

- Short version of the final research proposal which should already contain most (2 pages)
- Embed their research topic in the literature and specify the research question, theoretical perspective, and method
- Final two lessons will be spent presenting these drafts (~5 min presentation ~15 min discussion)

The research proposal

- Details of requirements and structure will be discussed in a separate lesson:
- Main content:
 - Topic relevance
 - Research question embedded in and motivated by the literature
 - Short literature intro
 - Hypotheses or Expectations derived from theory-based considerations
 - Research Design and Methods
 - Data

The empirical research paper

Details of requirements and structure will be discussed in a separate lesson (see also “Exam”)