

METHOD AND PRACTICE IN COMPARATIVE HISTORY

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Özet

Bu makalede temel olarak karşılaştırmalı tarihçiliğin ortaya çıkışı, uygulanışı ve bazı temel teorik özellikleri ele alınacaktır. Ancak bunun yanında karşılaştırmalı metodun teorik yaklaşımlarının daha iyi ortaya konulabilmesi için sosyal bilimlerde karşılaştırmalı metoda bazı noktalarda değinilecektir. Bu çerçevede, ilk olarak karşılaştırmalı tarihçiliğin ortaya çıkışı ve alanın sistemli ve çığır açıcı bir uygulayıcısı olarak Marc Bloch'un karşılaştırmalı tarihçilik anlayışı ele alınacaktır. Daha sonra, karşılaştırmalı tarihçiliğin önde gelen bazı uygulayıcılarının önemli çalışmaları ve metodolojik yaklaşımları ortaya konulacaktır. Son olarak, karşılaştırmalı metod içinde yer alan; olay ve değişken yönelimli yaklaşım, sentetik strateji, içsel ve dışsal analiz gibi bazı teorik yaklaşımlar tartışılacaktır.

Anahtar Kelimeler: karşılaştırmalı tarih, metod, Marc Bloch

Abstract

This article mainly focuses on the emergence of comparative history, its application and some theoretical aspects. However, the comparative method in social sciences is also mentioned in some points so as to give a better understanding of the comparative method. In this frame, firstly, the emergence of comparative history and the comparative historiography of Marc Bloch as a leading practitioner of the field will be evaluated. Secondly, works of some significant practitioners of comparative history and their methodological approaches will be discussed. Finally, some theoretical concepts of the comparative method such as case-orientation, variable-orientation, synthetic strategy, internal and external analysis will be evaluated.

Keywords: comparative history, method, Marc Bloch

INTRODUCTION

Comparison is one of the oldest methods used more or less by historians and social scientists in their works. In the simplest sense, the method includes demonstrating similarities and differences between nations, states, revolutions, regions, cases etc. However, theoretical implications of the comparative method are highly complex and they require a careful analysis and observation to be fully understood. In the content of this paper some peculiarities of the comparative method will be evaluated and discussed.

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Throughout history, historians relied on the comparative method in their works whether consciously or unconsciously. At the beginning they were not aware of the methodological and theoretical questions of the method. However, this changed in time and historians and social scientists began to formulate the conditions of comparative methodology.

Before the emergence of comparative history, there was a serious attempt of John Stuart Mill for formulating a comparative methodology for understanding social and political phenomena. Mill formulated two methods of comparisons as the 'Method of Agreement' and the 'Method of Difference.' In the Method of Agreement, analysts "*can try to establish that several cases having in common the hypothesized causal factors, although the cases vary in other ways that might have seemed causally relevant*" and in the Method of Difference, analysts "*can contrast cases in which the phenomenon to be explained and the hypothesized causes are present to other (negative) cases in which the phenomenon and causes are both absent, although they are as similar as possible to the 'positive' cases in other respect.*"¹ The methodology of Mill became inspiring for many historians and social scientists like Barrington Moore and Theda Skocpol.

The practice of comparative history began to take a form like other methods of history in 19th century when professionalism increasingly settled. Increasing nationalism and nation-state building processes especially played a significant role in favoring comparative history. In order to support nationalism and nation-state building, the historians aimed to prove uniqueness of their national experience and they tried to demonstrate historical differences which their states experienced. Thus the task of the historian was to find differences rather than finding similarities. Moreover, the historian was to play a role like a politician rather than a scientist. Then attempts for a scientific comparative history were initiated. Comparative history "*began to emerge with Spengler. There were, however, precursors. Danielevski, in 1868-70, was a premature full member. G.B. Vico was a true precursor of the philosophy of history as well as comparative history.*"²

Through the late 19th and early 20th century, comparative history began to be widely applied by many historians and social scientists. Later practitioners of the comparative method were more ambitious and more theoretical-minded in respect to the formers. Their main concern was to understand 'societal dynamics' and "*epochal transformations of cultures and social structures.*"³

¹ Theda Skocpol - Margaret Somers, The Uses of Comparative History in Macrosocial Inquiry, *Comparative Studies in Society and History*, XXII/2, April 1980, p. 183.

² Rushton Coulborn, , A Paradigm for Comparative History?, *Current Anthropology*, X/2-3, April-June 1969, p. 176.

³ Skocpol and Somers, op.cit., p. 174.

MARC BLOCH'S COMPARATIVE HISTORY

One of the most important practitioners of comparative history in early 20th was Marc Bloch and he is still regarded as a leading figure in the field. His famous article *Pour une histoire comparée des sociétés européennes*⁴ became a milestone in the field of the comparative history. According to Bloch, history cannot be intelligible “unless it can succeed in establishing explanatory relationship between phenomena” and the comparative method “is essentially a tool for dealing with problems of explanation.”⁵ Although Bloch uses comparative method for some various aims and in different contexts, ‘a single logic’ underlines all these different uses. This is “the logic of hypothesis testing.”⁶

In Bloch's understanding, the comparative method in social sciences was substituting the experimental method of sciences. Because it was impossible to adopt the experimental method for social sciences, the comparative method may serve as a mean of systematic collection of evidences for testing the validity of explanations.⁷ In his historical explanations, Bloch frequently used the comparative method for testing his hypothesis. This was a significant step for a scientific and explanatory approach in historical studies.

Bloch was influenced by the French linguists Antoine Meillet's work *Comparative Method in Historical Linguistics* (1925) while creating his methodology. Meillet had asserted that there are two different ways of practicing comparison which are drawn from either ‘universal laws’ or ‘historical information.’ Bloch declared his insistence to follow ‘historical’ rather than ‘universal’ and described the two methods as follows⁸:

Type I (Universal Comparison): The historian select some societies so widely separated in time and space that any analogies observed between

⁴ Marc Bloch, ‘Pour une histoire comparée des sociétés européennes,’ paper delivered at the Sixth International Congress of Historical Sciences, held in Oslo, August 1928, and printed in *Revue de synthèse historique*, XLVI, 1928, pp. 15-50.

⁵ William H. Sewell, Jr., Marc Bloch and the Logic of Comparative History, *History and Theory*, VI/2, 1967, p. 208.

⁶ Ibid, p. 208. Sewell urges that Bloch never explicitly stated such a logic. Sewell explains the logic as follow: “If an historian attributes the appearance of phenomenon A in one society to the existence of condition B, he can check this hypothesis by trying to find other societies where A occurs without B or vice versa. If he finds no cases which contradict the hypothesis, his confidence in its validity will increase, the level of his confidence depending upon the number and variety of comparison made. If he finds contradictory cases, he will either reject the hypothesis outright or reformulate and refine it so as to take into account the contradictory evidence and then subject it again to comparative testing. By such a process of testing, reformulating, and retesting, he will construct explanations which satisfy him as convincing and accurate.”

⁷ Ibid, p. 209.

⁸ Alette O. Hill - Boyd H. Hill, Jr., Marc Bloch and Comparative History, *The American Historical Review*, LXXXV/4, 1980, pp. 829-30.

them with respect to such and such phenomena can obviously not be explained either by mutual influence or by a common origin.

Type II (Historical Comparison): This is to make a parallel study of societies that are at once neighboring and contemporary, exercising a constant mutual influence, exposed throughout their development to the action of the same broad causes just because they are close and contemporaneous, and owing their existence in part at least to a common origin.

Bloch favored Type II. He stated in '*histoire comparée*' that he preferred to compare the various European societies that are contemporary, close to each other, and that have common origins.⁹ This indicates Bloch's attitude towards the scope of comparison in historical studies. He pays a great attention to proximity in terms of geography, economy, culture etc. To illustrate, we can consider one of the historical studies of Bloch on Florence and Genoa. These were the first principalities in Medieval Europe issuing gold coin. This was generally attributed to the wealth and the economic growth of the principalities. However, Venice, despite its wealth, introduced gold coin several decades after Florence and Genoa. When Bloch studied the reasons of such a difference between principalities he reached the conclusion that Florence and Genoa had some advantages in their trades with the Orient. They received gold in trade. Although Venice had also favorable trade with Levant, it was paid silver in trade due to its more traditional trade connections. Thus Venice failed to receive gold and was not able to issue gold coin.¹⁰

As can be seen from the study of Bloch, deep similarities in terms of politics, geographical positions and economic activities between the Italian principalities make it easier to make comparison. Otherwise, it would be very difficult to look at many other factors to make a comparison. Again, this sample reveals the logic of Bloch's methodology. Bloch "*uses comparison to demonstrate the insufficiency of one explanatory hypothesis, and then formulates a new hypothesis consistent with his comparative evidence.*"¹¹

When we consider Bloch's approach on the unit of comparison Bloch rejects the common assumption that comparative history can be applied for comparisons between different nations and states and he concludes that we must "*abandon obsolete topographical compartments in which we pretend to enclose social realities...For each aspects of European social life, in each historical instant, the appropriate geographical framework has to be found.*"¹²

⁹ Ibid, p. 831.

¹⁰ Sewell, op.cit., p. 209.

¹¹ Ibid, p. 209.

¹² Ibid, p. 211-12.

LEADING PRACTITIONERS' USE OF COMPARATIVE HISTORY

Many historians and social scientists followed the way opened by Bloch. The comparative method became highly popular and many works, not only in quantity but also in quality, were written in 20th century. Such scholars as Seymour Lipset, Reinhard Bendix, Barrington Moore, Jr., Clifford Geertz, Theda Skocpol etc. made comparative studies.

Theda Skocpol and Margaret Somers criticize those who have attempted to collapse various types of comparative history into 'a single methodological logic.' They state that "*this logic is seen as analogous in all important respects to the mode of hypothesis -testing through multivariate analysis that characterizes those areas of social sciences where statistical or experimental research design prevail.*"¹³ However, there are at least, according to Skocpol and Somers, three different logics of comparative history. These are as follows¹⁴:

1. Comparative history as the *parallel demonstration of theory*.
2. Comparative history as *macro-social analysis* actually does resemble multivariate hypothesis-testing.
3. Comparative history as the *contrast of contexts*.

By doing such a classification, Skocpol and Somers explain each method of comparative history and some leading practitioners of them. When we consider, firstly, the comparative history as the *parallel demonstration of theory*, the reason for comparison in this type is to prove the 'fruitfulness' of hypothesis and theory in every application of it to relevant historical trajectories. Two examples of this method are Eisenstadt's *The Political Systems of Empires* and Jeffery Paige's *Agrarian Revolution*.¹⁵

Eisenstadt asks the following question: "*Are we justified in grouping these various historically and geographically separate and distinct, societies under one heading, and claiming that they constitute or belong to one type?*" and he answers: "*To some extent, this whole work will continuously have to substantiate this claim.*"¹⁶ Although Skocpol and Somers did not stress any comment about success or failure on the work of Eisenstadt, it can be said that it is extremely ambitious and pretentious. He tries to reach a general theory for rise and fall of 'historical centralized bureaucratic empires.' However, it is hardly possible to say that his attempt was successful. First of

¹³ Skocpol and Somers, op.cit, p. 175.

¹⁴ Ibid, p. 175. The authors state that each of three major types of comparative history assigns a distinctive purpose to the juxtaposition of historical cases. Concomitantly, each has its own requisites of case selection, its own patterns of presentation of arguments, and- perhaps most important- its own strengths and limitations as a tool of research in macro-social inquiry.

¹⁵ Shmuel N. Eisenstadt, *The Political Systems of Empires: The Rise and Fall of Bureaucratic Societies*, Free Press, New York 1963; and Jeffery Paige, *Agrarian Revolution: Social Movement and Export Agriculture in the Underdeveloped World*, Free Press, New York 1975.

¹⁶ Skocpol and Somers, op.cit, p. 177.

all, Eisenstadt selects different empires from all over the world and from different times. Both geographical and historical distance among samples forces the consistency of the work. Secondly, empirical data used in the work is insufficient to reach satisfactory results.¹⁷

The second method of comparative history suggested by Skocpol and Somers is the comparative history as the *contrast of contexts*. Such scholars as Clifford Geertz in *Islam Observed*, James Lang in *Conquest and Commerce* and Reinhard Bendix in *Nation-Building and Citizenship* and *Kings or People* are some of the practitioners of the method¹⁸. In this method, it is aimed to “bring out unique features of each particular case” and to reveal “how these unique features affect the working out putatively general social processes” above all “contrasts are drawn between or among individual cases.”¹⁹

Reinhard Bendix is seemingly the most important applicant of the comparative history as the ‘contrast contexts.’ In his *Nation-Building and Citizenship*, Bendix studied authority relations in both private and public spheres as transformed directly and indirectly by democratic and industrial revolutions of Western Europe. The transformation of the social structure and authority relations are widely discussed and then compared with the patterns and developments in both the Tsarist and Communist Russia. Analysis furthers the European context by comparing perquisites of nation-building and industrialization in Japan and Prussia. Both are the late comers but they had an effective and nation-wide public authority before rapid the industrialization of their economy.²⁰ Bendix makes his rationale and logic on the comparative method clear in the *King or People*:

By means of comparative analysis I want to preserve a sense of historical particularity as far as I can, while still comparing different countries. Rather than aim at broader generalizations and lose that sense, I ask the same or at least similar questions of divergent materials and so leave room for divergent answers. I want to make more transparent the divergence among structures

¹⁷ Ibid, p. 178. The authors say that “it is characteristics of all works of parallel comparative history to elaborate theoretical models and hypotheses before turning to historical case illustrations. Yet whereas Paige does all of his theorizing before discussing the case histories, Eisenstadt develops his theory in stages and divides historical cases into bits and pieces relevant to each theoretical aspect as he presents it. Much more apparently than in Paige’s book, therefore, the historical cases in Political Systems function strictly to substantiate the completeness of coverage and the consistent applicability of Eisenstadt’s theoretical approach.”

¹⁸ Clifford Geertz, *Islam Observed: Religious Development in Morocco and Indonesia*, University of Chicago Press, Chicago 1971; James Lang, *Conquest and Commerce: Spain and England in the Americas*, Academic Press, New York 1975; Reinhard Bendix, *Nation-Building and Citizenship*, University of California Press, Los Angeles 1977; Reinhard Bendix, *Kings or People: Power and the Mandate to Rule*, University of California Press, Los Angeles 1978.

¹⁹ Skocpol and Somers, op.cit, p. 178.

²⁰ Dietrich Reuschmeyer, Reinhard Bendix’in Karşılaştırmalı Sosyolojisinde Teorik Genelme ve Tarihsel Tikellik, *Tarihsel Sosyoloji* (çev. Ahmet Fethi), ed. Theda Skocpol, Tarih Vakfı Yurt Yayınları, İstanbul 1999, p. 151.

*of authority and among the ways in which societies have responded to the challenges implicit in the civilizational accomplishments of other countries.*²¹

Lastly, the practitioners of contrast-oriented history “aim to place historical limits on overly generalized theories,” but they do “not aspire to generate new explanatory generalizations through comparative history.”²²

The third method proposed by Skocpol and Somers is comparative history as *macro-causal analysis*. Barrington Moore, Jr. in *Social Origin of Dictatorship and Democracy*; Theda Skocpol in *States and Political Revolutions*; Frances V. Moulder in *Japan, China and the Modern World Economy* are among the leading followers of the method.²³ These scholars use comparative history so as to reach “causal inferences about macro-level structures and processes.”²⁴

In *Social Origins*, Barrington Moore made case studies on six countries; England, France, the United States, Japan, India, and China, additionally an extensive study on Germany and Russia. Moore offers three distinct ways of political modernization and each characterized by specific conditions: the path to parliamentary democracy, the path to fascist dictatorship, and the path to communist dictatorship. According to Moore, “these three routes are not alternatives that are in principle open to any society” rather “they are tied to specific conditions characteristic of successive phases of world history.”²⁵

According to the analysis of Moore, firstly, conditions of the route for a communist revolution can be listed as follows: a highly centralized state, a weak bourgeoisie, a land-owning class which relies on labor repression as a political mean and a ‘peasantry with a good chances of collective action’ which are bound to the solidarity of village communities and have weak ties to the landlords. These premises are closely similar to those of the Russian revolution. Secondly, the conditions for the reactionary revolution that tend to end with fascist dictatorship follow such a logic: the coalition of a strong state with powerful landowning classes including a bourgeoisie that does not have the same strength but depends on the support of the state through “trade protectionism, favorable labor legislation and other measures that in

²¹ Skocpol and Somers, op.cit, p. 180.

²² Ibid, p. 181.

²³ Barrington Moore, Jr., *Social Origins of Dictatorship and Democracy: Lord and Peasant in the Making of Modern World*, Beacon Press, Boston 1966; Theda Skocpol, *States and Social Revolutions: A Comparative Analysis of France, Russia, and China*, Cambridge University Press, Cambridge and New York 1979; Frances V. Moulder, *Japan, China and the Modern World Economy: Toward a Reinterpretation of East Asian Development*, Cambridge University Press, Cambridge and New York 1977.

²⁴ Skocpol and Somers, op.cit, p. 182.

²⁵ Dietrich Reuschemeyer, Different Methods-Contradictory Results? Research on Development and Democracy, *Issues and Alternatives in Comparative Social Research*, ed. Charles Ragin, E.J. Brill, Leiden 1991, p. 19.

different combinations characterize top-down, state-sponsored industrialization. Agricultural labor remains significantly controlled by repressive means rather than primarily through the market." These and some other factors can stir the fascist revolutions up. Developments in Argentina and Brazil in 1960s and 1970s are seemingly following this route.²⁶ Thirdly, the emergence of parliamentary democracy stands as the oldest way to modernity and Moore suggest a more complex picture than the other two routes.²⁷ According to Moore, peculiarities of the process are as follows: the conflict and the balance of power between the landlords and the crown; a strong bourgeoisie conflicting its interests with the rural dominant class.

Moore like other macro-analysts continuously looks 'back and forth' between 'alternative explanatory hypotheses and comparisons' of related sides of historical cases. In short, macro-analysts try to specify, as Moore stated, "*configurations favorable and unfavorable*" to particular outcomes they are trying to explain.²⁸

In addition to above mentioned eminent practitioners there are many other historians and social scientists practicing the comparative method in all over the world. Although comparative method is not widely practiced by the Turkish historians, there are many foreign scholars of the Turkish history applying the comparative method in their studies. Karen Barkey is one of these scholars and she made many comparative studies on the Ottoman Empire.²⁹ In *Rebellious Alliances: The State and Peasant Unrest in Early 17th Century France and the Ottoman Empire*, Barkey compares these two agrarian societies. Barkey claims that France and the Ottoman Empire had similar social and economic problems in the 17th century. Although there were many serious peasant revolts in France in the century, there were less peasant revolts, Barkey argues, in the Ottoman Empire. Barkey finds the difference between two societies in their provincial structuring. In France, centralization policies of administration fostered antagonism of different groups in provinces where the peasants could find allies among other social groups including nobility. Thus the peasants could successfully stage rebellious movement. However, the Ottoman provincial structure was different.

²⁶ Ibid, p. 20-21.

²⁷ Ibid, p.21.

²⁸ Skocpol and Somers, op.cit, p. 182.

²⁹ Karen Barkey, "Rebellious Alliances: The State and Peasant Unrest in Early 17th Century France and the Ottoman Empire," *American Sociological Review*, 56 (December 1991), pp. 699-715; "Changing Modalities of Empire: A Comparative Study of the Ottoman and Habsburg Decline," in *Empire to Nation* eds, Joseph W. Esherick and Hasan Kayali, Rowan and Littlefield, London 2006; *Empire of Difference: The Ottomans in Comparative Perspective*, Cambridge University Press, 2008; *After Empire: Multiethnic Societies and Nation-Building: The Soviet Union, and the Russian, Habsburg and Ottoman Empires*, ed. with Mark von Hagen, Westview Press, 1997;

It promoted disunity and competition among different groups. Thus the peasants could not find allies for collective action and sustained rebellion.³⁰

In *Empire of Difference: The Ottomans in Comparative Perspective*, Barkey provides a comparative study of imperial organization and longevity that brought the Ottoman Empire both success and failure against other empires having similar characteristics. She studies and examines the Ottoman Empire's ruling mechanisms and social organization at the turning points from emergence to decline. And Barkey argues that the Ottoman Empire successfully managed these moments and responded crisis that she faced by adopting flexible techniques. In this study, Barkey demonstrates similarities and differences of the Ottoman Empire with Habsburg, Roman, Byzantine and Russian empires.

There are also other names like Gabor Agoston, who is mainly concerned with Ottoman military in comparison with other European powers³¹; Linda Darling, who is mainly concerned with early Ottoman period, Ottoman fiscal system and Islam³² that they used comparative method in their studies and they made valuable contributions to historical studies on the Ottoman Empire. However, the Turkish history still needs more qualitative and quantitative studies and participation of more practitioners of comparative method.

THEORETICAL ASPECTS OF COMPARATIVE METHOD

There are many distinct theoretical approaches to the comparative method and the theoretical dimensions of the method are highly complex. Here, some theoretical aspects of the comparative method will be mentioned. To begin with, Charles Ragin, one of the most influential theoretician of the comparative method, states that "*good comparative social science balances emphasis on cases and emphasis on variables.*"³³

³⁰ Barkey, *Rebellious Alliances*, p. 699. Barkey examines the subject within the historical framework of "the crisis of seventeenth century". For comparing the thoughts of Barkey about the crisis; See also Jack A. Goldstone, "East and West in the Seventeenth Century: Political Crisis in Stuart England, Ottoman Turkey, and Ming China", *Comparative Studies in Society and History*, Vol. 30, No. 1 (Jan., 1988), pp. 103-142; Oktay Özel, "Population Changes in Ottoman Anatolia During the 16th and 17th Centuries: The Demographic Crisis Reconsidered", *International Journal of Middle East Studies*, Vol. 36, No. 2 (May, 2004), pp. 183-205.

³¹ Gabor Agoston, "Ottoman Artillery and European Military Technology in the Fifteenth and Seventeenth Centuries", *Acta Orientalia Academiae Scientiarum Hung.*, XLVII (1-2), (1994), pp.15-48; *Guns for the Sultan: Military Power and the Weapon Industry in the Ottoman Empire*, Cambridge University Press, New York 2005.

³² Linda Darling, "Contested Territory: Ottoman Holy War in Comparative Context", *Studia Islamica*, No. 91 (2000), pp. 133-163; "Rethinking Europe and Islamic World in the Age of Exploration" *Journal of Early Modern History*, 2/3 (1998), pp. 221- 246.

³³ Charles C. Ragin, Introduction: The Problem of Balancing Discourse on Cases and Variables in Comparative Social Sciences, *Issues and Alternatives in Comparative Social Research*, ed. Charles Ragin, E.J. Brill, Leiden 1991, p. 1.

Historical cases give necessary meaningful materials for a comparative study. When we consider that comparative studies aim to reach 'general statement about relation', the need for cases becomes apparent. In this point, Ragin stresses the necessity of using concepts so as to make general statements. And he urges that "*concepts are represented through observable variables*" and continues as follows:³⁴

Even the statement that 'case 2 is different from case 1 with respect to attribute A to be considered a comparable instance' involves using general concepts to define comparability and thus engages researchers and audiences in discourse about variables. Concepts and variables permeate almost all social scientific discussion of cases, no matter how much or how little homage is paid to their singularity as cases. The alternative is to see each case as an irreducible essence.

Balancing *case-orientation* and *variable-orientation* is a problematic issue and it is possible to talk about a tension between these orientations. The first one assumes a quantitative and cross-national approach. On the other hand, the variable-oriented approach assumes a qualitative and historical approach for comparative social sciences.³⁵ Dietrich Rueschemeyer considers the tension as two radically different research traditions in studying macro-social subjects. He divides the approaches as *cross-national statistical work* and *comparative historical study*. According to Reuschemeyer, the difference between two approaches is a reflection of age-old opposition between 'quantitative and qualitative inquiry' and more radically between 'social science and humanistic scholarship'.³⁶ However, Reuschemeyer insists that these research methods should be integrated and used together.

Reuschemeyer makes clearer theoretical oppositions with *Research on Development and Democracy*. According to the practitioners of quantitative cross-national comparison, there is consistently a positive correlation between development and democracy in many countries. Thus they have an *optimistic* conclusion on the chance for the settlement of democracy in today's developing countries. On the contrary, the practitioners of comparative historical studies state that 'qualitative examination of complex sequences' tend to find the conditions of democracy in early capitalism. Thus their conclusions are more pessimistic for today's developing countries.³⁷

The selection and the interpretation of cases and variables are very problematic and complicated processes. Adapted methodology for comparative study may give different results according to the followed strategy. In order to prevent reaching falsified or insufficient outcomes, it is necessary

³⁴ Ibid, p. 1.

³⁵ Ibid, p. 3-4.

³⁶ Reuschemeyer, op.cit, p. 9.

³⁷ Ibid, p. 10-11.

to take all possibilities into consideration. In this point, C. Ragin suggests the *synthetic strategies* of comparative research that integrate various methods within comparative research studies. According to Ragin, synthetic strategy “*should address a large number of cases, embody a logical experimental design, afford a parsimonious explanation, provide a holistic analysis of cases, and consider alternative explanations.*”³⁸ All these requirements are laudable but difficult objectives. However, Thomas Janoski offers a simpler methodology for the synthetic strategy for comparative researches.

Janoski states that all comparative researches ‘explicitly or implicitly’ use two distinct kinds of analysis that are internal and external. He continues that internal analysis considers one country and makes generalizations about single units. On the other hand, external analysis concerns comparisons of countries and it is applied after the internal analysis of countries is completed. The balance of two methods may change.³⁹

In small-N studies, the internal analysis receives considerable attention and the external analysis less. In large-N studies, external analysis tends to be dominant, with scholars giving little attention to internal analysis. Indeed, some authors of large-N studies rarely refer to case-based analysis. However, even in the most extreme case, the large-N analyst must have a theory of explaining events or outputs within each unit of analysis even though he/she may have left the internal data collection to other scholars or an international agency.

³⁸ Thomas Janoski, Synthetic Strategies in Comparative Sociological Research: Methods and Problems of Internal and External Analysis, *Issues and Alternatives in Comparative Social Research*, ed. Charles Ragin, E.J. Brill, Leiden 1991, p. 59.

³⁹ *Ibid.*, p. 60.

INTERNAL ANALYSIS AND EXTERNAL ANALYSIS

1. Selection of the Problem and Theory	2. Research Design I: Initial External Analysis	3. Data Collection
a. Abduction/Sociology of Knowledge b. Theoretical Traditions and Background c. Literature review d. Initial Visit to the Countries/Archives	a. Choosing the Countries on the Basis of Similarities and Differences: Mill's Canon: Agreement, Difference, Concomitant Variation; Boolean Methods; and Statistics. b. Choosing the Time Period Based on the Coverage of Before and After Periods of Significant Events.	a. Set up Files for Each Variable in Each Country Paying Close Attention to Differences in Definitions. b. Collect Data in Systematic Fashion. c. Collect Field Notes in Systematic Fashion.
4. Research Design II and Internal Analysis	5. Reformulation of Theory	6. Refit Theory in Internal Analysis to Overall Theory in External Analysis
Method of Analysis: a. Archival/Documentary b. Secondary History c. Field Interview d. Time Series e. Cross-Sectional f. Survey/Census	a. Reformulate Concepts, according to Equivalence for Each Country. b. Reformulate Theory According to the Models for Each Country.	a. Refit Internal Theory into Final Theory. b. Redo external Analysis: Millaeen Methods: Boolean Minimization. Statistics: Cross-Sectional Pooled Time/Cross-Sectional or Other Methods.
7. Write up Results		

Figure 1. A Model of the Comparative Research Process⁴⁰

Balancing the internal and external analysis or synthesizing them requires also the synthesizing of qualitative and quantitative methods. However, the use of them necessitates a highly complex methodological concern. Qualitative and quantitative methods could be combined in the internal analysis alone, and not be explicitly comparative. Or qualitative analysis could be used in the internal analysis and then quantitative analysis in the internal analysis. As a last alternative, qualitative and quantitative methods could be used in internal analysis and then qualitative methods used in the external analysis. Janoski suggests nine possibilities and seven of them are proper for synthetic strategies.⁴¹ The table for combinations of qualitative and quantitative methods possible in synthetic analysis as follows:

⁴⁰ Ibid, p. 62. This model was prepared for demonstrating a possible comparative study in terms of internal and external analysis.

⁴¹ Ibid, p. 67.

Table 1. *Combinations of qualitative and quantitative methods possible in synthetic analysis*⁴²

Types of Comparative Analysis	Possible Combinations of Qualitative (QL) and Quantitative (QN) Methods								
	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9
1. Internal	QL	QN	QN	QL	QL-QN	QL-QN	QN	QL	QL-QN
2. External	QL	QN	QL	QN	QL	QN	QL-QN	QL-QN	QL-QN

QL= Millsean Methods, Boolean Minimization, Historical Analysis, Field Interviewing, and Participant Observation.

QN= Cross-sectional, Time-series, World Systems Network, Event History, Pooled Time, Cross-sectional Analysis.

The determination of the proper method or the combination of methods is the prerequisite of a good comparative study. Concerning all aspects of a subject is also a necessity. Balancing theoretical and case concerns is another important part of the comparative work. This is also an implication of the above-mentioned tension between qualitative and quantitative methods. Another subject of tension in comparative study is between generality and uniqueness.

Bradshaw and Wallace stress a tendency of social scientists who highly concerns generality and theory-testing while considering case studies as *“less valuable than explicitly comparative research.”*⁴³ However, according to Bradshaw and Wallace, case studies are very essential parts of comparative research because and they are useful when⁴⁴:

1. *Researchers do not have sufficient knowledge of a case to place it in theoretical perspective or a case does not fit any extant theory (a more common occurrence than often admitted).*
2. *A case partially supports (or deviates from) existing theories,*
3. *A case represents a special (perhaps unique) set of circumstances or phenomena that warrant intensive study, even if theoretical discovery is not their primary objective.*

When we reconsider Ragin’s division of comparative strategies as ‘case-oriented comparative method’ and ‘variable-oriented approach’, the first one involves the detailed and comprehensive comparison of entire cases. This is an approach closely connected with the Weberian tradition. According to that, comparison uses theory and ideal types. This method is

⁴² Ibid, p. 67.

⁴³ York Bradshaw and Michael Wallace, Informing Generality and Explaining Uniqueness: The Place of Case Studies in Comparative Research, *Issues and Alternatives in Comparative Social Research*, ed. Charles Ragin, E.J. Brill, Leiden 1991, p. 154.

⁴⁴ Ibid, p. 154-55.

used by many scholars including Barrington Moore and Theda Skocpol. This strategy “assesses the historical contexts that spawn different social processes.”⁴⁵ The variable-oriented approach is used for testing general theories by using cases taken among relevant and as much as possible samples. Here, the case is not studied as an entire entity but as a mean of hypothesis testing and confirmation.⁴⁶

CONCLUSION

The notion of comparison had been assumed and applied by many thinkers through the history as the way of understanding social phenomena but it remained away from methodological and theoretical aspects until 19th century. Historians were among the enthusiastic applicants of the comparative method. Comparative history began to develop in the second half of the Century and it became highly popular in the 20th century.

Comparative history was not only assumed and applied by historians. Many social scientists including political scientists and sociologists practiced comparative history as well. They aimed to find general explanations of macro-phenomena like origins of political systems or revolutions. All qualitative studies of historians and other social scientists combined theory and case study. That is to say that the comparative method involves and uses highly complex theoretical means. It requires painstaking processes of planning, researching and analyzing. Without a well-planned theoretical approach, presenting a good comparative study is not possible. However, all these theoretical processes need to be strengthened by relevant case studies.⁴⁷

⁴⁵ Ibid, p. 156: Charles Ragin, *The Comparative Method: Moving Beyond Qualitative and Quantitative Strategies*, University Of California Press, Berkeley 1987.

⁴⁶ Bradshaw and Wallace, op.cit, p. 157. “Investigators who use this variable based approach are more interested in testing propositions derived from general theories than they are in unraveling the historical conditions that produce different historical outcomes.”

⁴⁷ Ibid, p. 167. “...case studies will increase our substantive knowledge of less studied regions, thereby advancing the crucial link between substance and theory in social research. Unless we understand the economic, political, cultural and historical circumstances of a region, it is not possible to place it in the appropriate theoretical context.”

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