



checklist

- When preparing your research question, decide at the outset whether your project would benefit from a comparative research design. Explicit comparison, while not essential, can help in understanding how different systems and processes operate, especially when classifying information and creating typologies.
- Next, be sure to justify the selection of countries, cases and units of analysis by asking whether they will provide a sufficient number of appropriate variables to enable you to address your research question fully, and identify the factors that help to explain the outcome.
- Then, check that the concepts you are using are consistently applied across the nations and societies selected for comparison. For example, if you want to understand why some countries are more democratic than others, you should ask yourself: 'Does the concept of "democracy" have exactly the same meaning across international boundaries?'
- In carrying out your study, adopt a flexible approach to methods. Both quantitative and qualitative methods can play an important role, and combined or mixed methods are frequently used in international comparisons to explore, analyse and explain observed similarities and differences.



projects

The projects suggested below are based on a set of framing questions designed to guide researchers who are drafting International Social Research Methods Case Studies for the ReStore databank. See International Social Research Methods, Frameworks 1 and 2 at www.restore.ac.uk/ISResMeth/.

Framework 1 requires authors to respond selectively to questions that guide them through the various stages of project design, implementation, analysis and dissemination.

Framework 2 presents a non-exhaustive list of the key terms for searching the online International Social Research Methods Case Studies. The terms selected by each author are listed at the beginning of their case study under the relevant headwords.

Group project

Groups of 3–4 students, where possible from different cultural/linguistic backgrounds, are invited to read across selected Case Studies that have been written up using the Framework, and to review the materials presented on one aspect of the Case Studies in their area of disciplinary interest from the following list:

- Group 1: Research contexts
- Group 2: Research topics/themes
- Group 3: Aims, objectives and research questions
- Group 4: Resources and governance
- Group 5: Management and co-ordination
- Group 6: Rationale for the research and methods
- Group 7: Conceptual issues
- Group 8: Data collection and analysis
- Group 9: Interpretation and dissemination of findings.

A spokesperson from each of the groups should then present a critical review of the aspect selected, highlighting the challenges faced by the authors, the ways in which they were handled and the lessons that can be drawn from the case studies.

Individual or paired project

More advanced students, working individually or in pairs, and using the Framework 1 questions are invited to select a topic (real or imagined) for an international research project, and to write it up as a research proposal, justifying each stage in the design and execution of the project.
