**Resource Materials for Process Tracing**

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*Table 1: Recommended resources for further reading and practice with process tracing*

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| **Resource** | **Description** |
| ***Process tracing theory and practice*** | |
| Beach, D. and Pedersen, R.B. (2019). [Process-Tracing Methods: Foundations and Guidelines](https://www.amazon.co.uk/Process-Tracing-Methods-author-Rasmus-Pedersen/dp/0472037358/ref=sr_1_1?dchild=1&keywords=process-tracing+methods%3A+foundations+and+guidelines&qid=1629450138&sr=8-1), Second Edition. Ann Arbor MI: University of Michigan Press. | One of the best books on process tracing. However, this is a difficult read. |
| Bennett, A. and Checkel, J.T. (Eds.), (2014). [Process Tracing. From Metaphor to Analytic Tool](https://www.amazon.co.uk/Process-Tracing-Metaphor-Analytic-Strategies/dp/1107686377/ref=sr_1_1?dchild=1&keywords=Process+Tracing.+From+Metaphor+to+Analytic+Tool&qid=1629450995&sr=8-1), Cambridge: Cambridge University Press. | A more accessible introduction to and discussion of process tracing and how it has evolved. |
| Collier, D. (2011). “[Understanding Process Tracing](https://polisci.berkeley.edu/sites/default/files/people/u3827/Understanding%20Process%20Tracing.pdf),” PS: Political Science and Politics, Vol. 44, No. 4, pp. 23 – 30. | A good explanation of process tracing tests, including the Silver Blaze case to illustrate these. |
| Fairfield, T. and Charman, A. (2017). [Explicit Bayesian analysis for process tracing: guidelines, opportunities, and caveats](http://eprints.lse.ac.uk/69203/2/Fairfield_Explicit%20bayesian%20analysis_author_2017%20LSERO.pdf). *Political Analysis*, Vol. 25, No. 3, pp. 363-380. | The best explanation of the Bayesian roots of process tracing. |
| Befani, B. and Stedman-Bryce, G. (2017). [Process Tracing and Bayesian Updating for Impact Evaluation](https://journals.sagepub.com/doi/abs/10.1177/1356389016654584), *Evaluation,* 2017;23(1):42-60. | A paper on contribution tracing (process tracing with formal numerical evidence tests), using an example of a real evaluation for Oxfam in Ghana. |
| Dart, J. (2018). [The What Else Tool: A Basic way to Strengthen your Impact Claims and avoid having Egg on your Face!](https://www.clearhorizon.com.au/all-blog-posts/the-what-else-tool-a-basic-way-to-strengthen-your-impact-claims-and-avoid-having-egg-on-your-face.aspx) | An excellent alternative to formal process tracing which uses the same logic. |
| Wadeson, A. Monzani, B. and Aston, T. (2020). [Process Tracing as a Practical Evaluation Method: Comparative Learning from Six Evaluations](https://mande.co.uk/2020/media-3/unpublished-paper/process-tracing-as-a-practical-evaluation-method-comparative-learning-from-six-evaluations/) | A paper explaining the practical application of process tracing variations in six evaluations. |
| Wadeson, A. (2020). [Top tips for Process Tracing Evaluation: Making the Most of the Method](https://medium.com/@alixsara/top-tips-for-process-tracing-evaluation-making-the-most-of-the-method-e26bf6dbe5f9). *Medium.* | A short accessible read with practical and applicable tips for those interested in using process tracing for evaluation. |
| Aston, T. (2020). [Miracles, False Confessions and What Good Evidence Looks Like](https://thomasmtaston.medium.com/miracles-false-confessions-and-what-good-evidence-looks-like-e8a49f7ff463). *Medium*. | A brief introduction to the logic of process tracing, using a murder case from a Netflix show. |
| Aston, T. (2021). [What’s wrong with process tracing?](https://thomasmtaston.medium.com/whats-wrong-with-process-tracing-81ffe51b85f3) *Medium*. | Discusses different views and critiques on process tracing. |
| Monzani, B. (2018). [IIED Support to the Least Developed Countries Group: Influencing global climate change negotiations.](https://pubs.iied.org/17466iied) Evaluation Case Study. *IIED.* | An evaluation applying contribution tracing to assess IIED’s work to support and advance the Least Developed Countries (LDC) Group positions leading up to the Paris Agreement in 2015. |
| ***Rubrics*** | |
| Aston, T. (2020). [Rubrics as a harness for complexity](https://thomasmtaston.medium.com/rubrics-as-a-harness-for-complexity-6507b36f312e), *Medium*. | An explanation of what rubrics are, why they are increasingly popular, and how they can enhance evaluation practice. |
| Aston, T. (2020) [Contribution Rubrics](https://static1.squarespace.com/static/5555daace4b0bd68287c4b64/t/5e2f05199109395792b52938/1580139803081/Contribution+Rubrics.pdf) | A brief paper explaining contribution rubrics and its basic steps. |
| [Rubric resources](https://learningforsustainability.net/rubrics/) by Will Allen | An excellent collection of resources on rubrics. |
| ***Combining process tracing with other methods*** | |
| Talcott, F. and Scholz, V. (2015). [Methodology Guide to Process Tracing for Christian Aid](https://www.christianaid.org.uk/sites/default/files/2017-10/bangladesh-process-tracing-and-realist-evaluation-methods-guide-research-oct2015.pdf) | An effort from INTRAC and Christian Aid to combine process tracing with realist evaluation. |
| Aston, T. (2020). [Bricolage and alchemy for evaluation gold](https://www.linkedin.com/pulse/bricolage-alchemy-evaluation-gold-thomas-aston/). *Medium.* | Explores the potential of combining process tracing with other evaluation methods. |
| Befani. B. and Mayne, J. (2014). “[Process Tracing and Contribution Analysis: A Combined Approach to Generative Causal Inference for Impact Evaluatio](https://onlinelibrary.wiley.com/doi/abs/10.1111/1759-5436.12110)n,” *IDS Bulletin*, Special Issue. Vol. 45, Issue 6, pp. 17–36. | An effort to combine process tracing with contribution analysis. |

*Figure 1: General Tips for Applying Process Tracing in Practice*

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| **Box 1. General Tips for Applying Process Tracing in Practice**  **Stakeholders buy-in and communication**: The level of stakeholder involvement that Process Tracing often requires of a commissioning organization is important to clarify up front to manage expectations. As evaluators, it is critical to ensure buy-in by senior staff and those with whom you will work directly due to the level of effort involved. While this does not have to mean high-cost evaluation budgets or endless workshops, it likely means a little more staff time involved than the average evaluation as much key information on context and evidence is often best known by implementers.  **Human Resources**: This depends on the level of participation desired and the staff time and budget available. In our experience, a team of 2-4 people (including the primary evaluator) should be working throughout the evaluation to provide information and support for the different steps.  **Capacities**: It is important to include internal staff and partner representatives with different capacities. It is not essential for all participants to be experienced in M&E; it is more important that they are well-versed with the intervention; understand the context and actors involved; bring thematic or technical expertise related to the intervention; and can offer different perspectives to mitigate biases and offer critical insight on potential evidence and its probative value.  **Budgeting**: It is difficult to put a price tag on Process Tracing evaluation as it depends on the key outcome(s) chosen, outsourcing of external expert evaluator time, and the type of data collection required. In a scenario with a dedicated internal staff member to lead with 1-2 other staff members to support it, and the use of an external evaluator (for about 25-30 days), a Process Tracing evaluation can be done for between $15,000-25,000 USD. This includes budget for a bit of travel but does not include staff time costs.  **Timeframe:** This is inherently linked to the human resources involved, their availability to work on the evaluation, and the complexity of outcome(s) evaluated. In our experience, a Process Tracing evaluation usually takes between 3 to 6 months with team members who can dedicate a few days each month to the process. It is important to note that the front-end time to develop the Theory of Change, causal mechanisms, and identify the right evidence can be more time intensive than the later stages.  From Wadeson et al. 2020: 28 |

*Figure 2: Simplified explanations of the 4 process tracing tests*

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| **Hoop**  Shape  Description automatically generated with low confidence  Failing test **reduces confidence in your proposed** **explanation.**  Passing test simply means the **proposed** **explanation is still plausible.**  \*Evidence here is necessary. If you don’t find this evidence, parts or all of your explanation are inaccurate. | **Smoking gun**  Shape  Description automatically generated with low confidence  Passing **increases confidence in your explanation** and may reduce confidence in alternative explanations.  Failing test simply means you **cannot increase confidence in the explanation.**  \* Evidence here is unique. Evidence should make a clear connection between your explanation and the outcome. |
| **Straw-in-the-wind**  Shape  Description automatically generated with low confidence  Passing or failing the test **makes no significant difference** to the plausibility of the explanation.  \*Evidence here is neither necessary nor unique. It is neutral, coincidental, or irrelevant to proposed and/or alternative explanations. | **Doubly decisive**  Shape  Description automatically generated with low confidence  Passing test fully **confirms your explanation** and **rules out alternative explanations**.  Failing test simply means you **can’t fully rule out alternative explanations.**  \*Evidence here is highly unique. You are very unlikely to find this evidence, it is extremely rare. |