# Comparative case studies

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# Lecture outline

- Case selection process
- Comparative case study
- Exercises

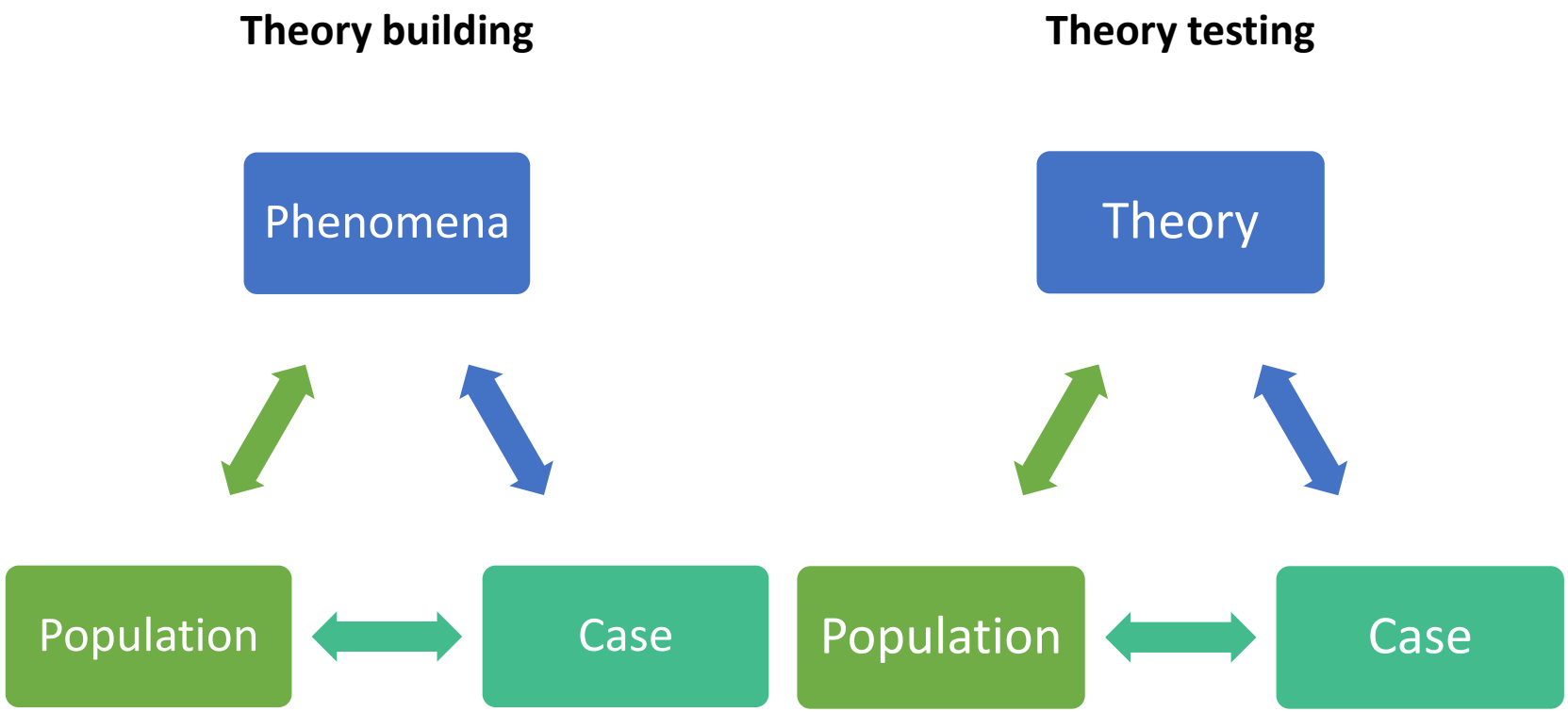
# Case selection

- Starts with definition of population
  - *Am I interested in particular case? Why? What is it that I want to study? What is this case a case of?*
  - Theory building or theory testing?
  - Restricting the population is crucial for inference we are about to make.
    - Case boundaries: *apples or fruit?*
    - Temporal boundaries: *what makes different periods of time different?*

# Exercise I

*What was the second war in Iraq a case of?*

# Case selection



# Theory building (Gerring 2007)

| | |
|---|---|
| Diverse | Cases (two or more) illuminate the full range of variation on $X_1$, Y, or $X_1$/Y. |
| **Extreme** | **Cases (one or more) exemplify extreme or unusual values on $X_1$ or Y.** |
| **Deviant** | **Cases (one or more) deviate from some cross-case relationship.** |
| Most-similar | Cases (two or more) are similar on specified variables other than $X_1$ and/or Y. |
| Most-different | Cases (two or more) are different on specified variables other than $X_1$ and Y. |

# Exercise 2

*Suggest at least one case for each of outlined theory building case selection techniques.*

# Theory testing (Gerring 2007)

| | |
|---|---|
| Influential | Cases (one or more) with influential configurations of the independent variables. |
| Crucial | Cases (one or more) are most- or least likely to exhibit a given outcome. |
| Pathway | Cases (one or more) where $X_1$, and not $X_2$, is likely to have caused a positive outcome. |
| Typical | Cases (one or more) are typical examples of some cross-case relationship. |
| Diverse | Cases (two or more) illuminate the full range of variation on $X_1$, Y, or $X_1$/Y. |
| Most-similar | Cases (two or more) are similar on specified variables other than $X_1$ and/or Y. |
| Most-different | Cases (two or more) are different on specified variables other than $X_1$ and Y. |

# Exercise 3

*Suggest at least one case for each of outlined theory testing case selection techniques.*

# Comparative CS

# Aims

- Simultaneous work with theory
  - Generating, testing, illustrating on two or more cases
- Macro-context analysis
  - New fundamental questions arising from comparisons
- Within-population analysis
  - Logic of understanding

# *Many variables, small N*

- Social reality is complex
- Equifinality is inherent
- How to differentiate among the effects of particular variables?

→ Reducing variables (aggregation, hierarchy)

→ Adding cases

# Comparability

- Cases must be comparable for a comparative CS to be valid.
- Comparability: majority of independent variables (X) show similar values.
- Achieving comparability
  - Geographical - simply more units
  - Diachronical  - same unit in more time periods

# Exercise 1

*Suggest comparable pair of cases.*

# Mill‘s methods

Elimination methods of Agreement x Difference

| Agr. | X1 | X2 | X3 | X3 | X4 | Y |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Case 1 | + | - | + | - | + | + |
| Case 2 | + | + | - | + | - | + |

| Dif. | X1 | X2 | X3 | X3 | X4 | Y |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Case 1 | + | + | + | + | + | + |
| Case 2 | - | + | + | + | + | - |

# Exercise 2

*Suggest examples of two cases based on (a) method of agreement, (b) method of difference*