

IPRES Tutorial 7: Experiments and comparative case studies



Milan Babic

m.babic@uva.nl

Department of Political Science - Political Economy and Transnational Governance

05 April 2019



Agenda

- 1.) Check-in and recap of part 1/assignment
- 2.) Experiments
- 3.) Comparative research
- 4.) Group exercise: designing comparative research

Check-in (also Google doc)



Assignment Feedback formalities

- Next week: Publication of grades on Canvas
- Evening/Next day: I will send you **three** files:
 - a **grading scheme** w. your scores
 - a **txt-file** with some feedback
 - a **PDF** of your assignment text w. remarks:
 - **yellow highlight** + sticky note: comment
 - **squiggly red underlined**: grammar/language mistake
 - **green underlined**: weird phrasing/unusual wording/inappropriate sentence

General points about the assignment

- Citations
- Read, re-read, re-read...until there are no mistakes.
- Use some standard formatting: 12pt font, 1.5 text spacing etc.
- Always read the data/text given to you closely
- Be cristal clear about your concepts, ideas, formulations, where things are in the paper etc.
- Be careful with language: e.g. social-democratic, not socialist
- Use grading scheme to check your scores

Where we are

Part 1:

- Different perspectives on research, its quality criteria and requirements (**Tutorials 1-3**)
- Different types of qualitative research: Content analysis, Interviews, Surveys, Ethnography (**Tutorials 4-6**)

Part 2:

- Prerequisites of quantitative research (**Tutorial 7**)
- How to do quantitative research (**Tutorials 8-12**)

Experiments

What is an experiment (in social science research)?

Experiments

- Why do experiments?
 - Isolation of causal effects (which X causes Y?)
 - However: logic is rather: what happens when X?

Experiments

- Why do experiments?
 - Isolation of causal effects (which X causes Y?)
 - However: logic is rather: what happens when X?
- Basically three phases:
 - (Pre-test), treatment, post-test - splitting into test and control groups

Experiments

- Why do experiments?
 - Isolation of causal effects (which X causes Y?)
 - However: logic is rather: what happens when X?
- Basically three phases:
 - (Pre-test), treatment, post-test - splitting into test and control groups
- Different types: natural, laboratory, field

Issues with experiments

- Specific role of the researcher: “God”
 - Related ethical issues

Issues with experiments

- Specific role of the researcher: “God”
 - Related ethical issues
- Validity
 - Internal: extremely high (isolation of causes)
 - External/ecological: could be threatened (esp. lab exp.)

Issues with experiments

- Specific role of the researcher: “God”
 - Related ethical issues
- Validity
 - Internal: extremely high (isolation of causes)
 - External/ecological: could be threatened (esp. lab exp.)
- Good for “small” questions, tricky for big ones
 - not possible to manipulate big IV’s like culture, structures, the economy, elections etc.

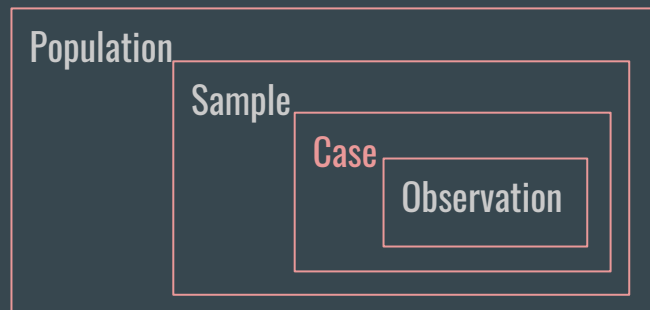
What is a case? (Gerring 2006)

Try to give a formal definition of what a case is (in political science research)

tps: 1min-2min

What is a case? (Gerring 2006)

- It depends:
 - Unit of analysis?
 - What do you want to know?
- All empirical work is (more or less) a case study (Gerring 2006)
 - BUT: not all research follows a cs research design!
- Cross-case and in-case variation



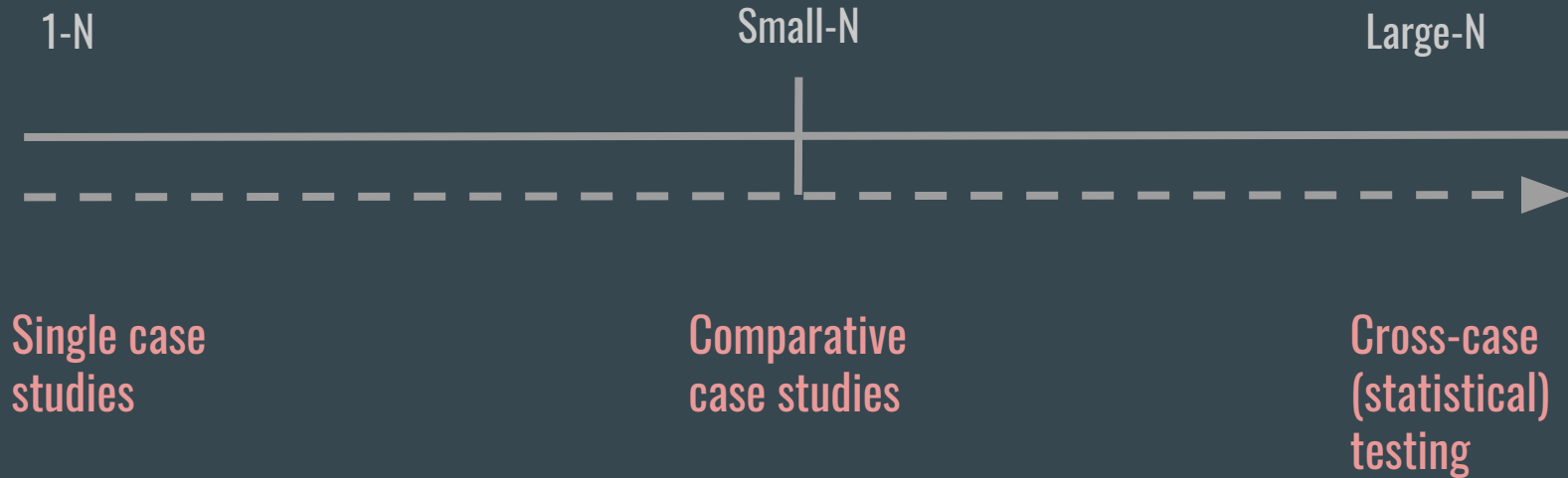
Comparative research

Why should we compare in political science research?

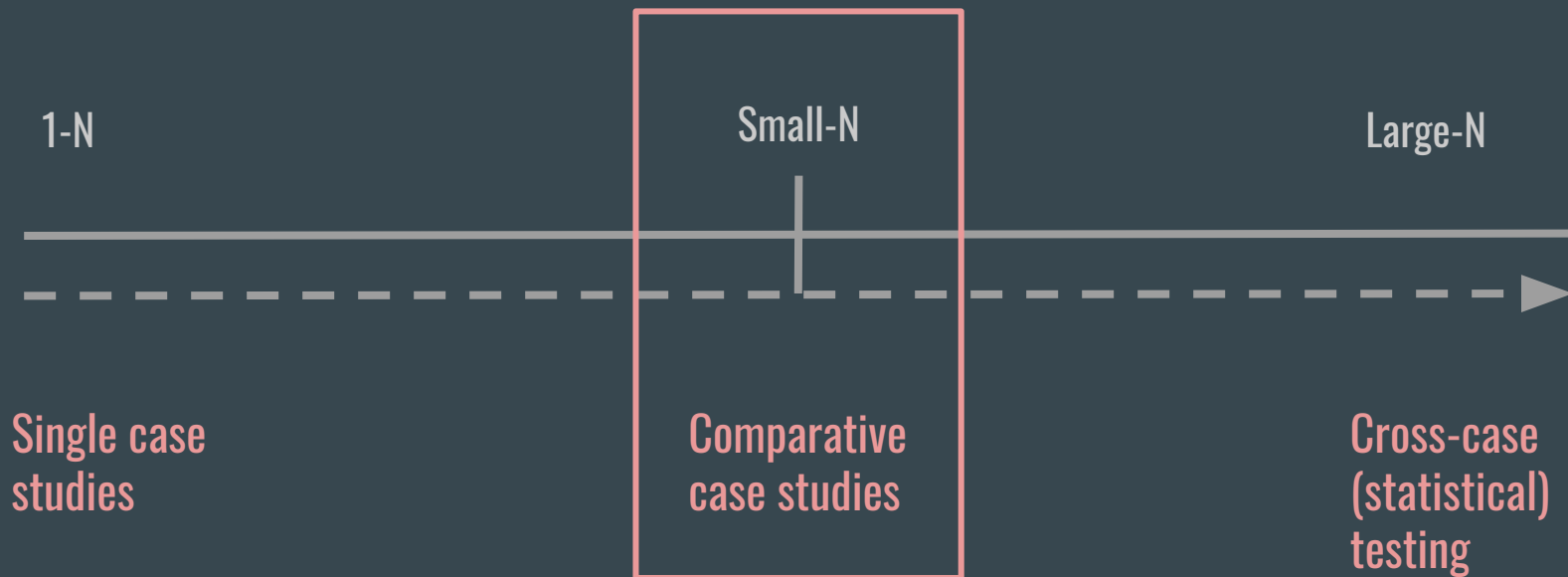
Comparative research designs



Comparative research designs



Comparative research designs



MSSD: *Similar* cases with
one different
characteristic/variable

	Case 1	Case 2	Case 3
Variable 1	A	A	A
Variable 2	B	B	B
Variable 3	C	B	C
Outcome	Y	X	Y

MDSD: *Different* cases with
one similar
characteristic/variable

	Case 1	Case 2	Case 3
Variable 1	A	B	C
Variable 2	B	A	C
Variable 3	A	A	A
Outcome	Y	Y	Y

Group exercise: Designing comparative research

- 4 Topics, 4 Groups
- Read your topic and come up with a good research design that addresses:
 - What is the **research question**?
 - What are your **cases**? Why are they good/best?
 - **Purpose** of the comparison?
 - Type of **comparative design**? (MSSD, MDSD?)
 - Could it be **experimental**?
 - If so: what is a good question, what would be treatment and control groups?

Sources (all pictures CC license)

Image Wave Emoji: https://upload.wikimedia.org/wikipedia/commons/thumb/4/48/Emojiione_1F44B.svg/2000px-Emojiione_1F44B.svg.png