sophie

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ON INNER CITY HEALTH

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Explanatory Case Study (ECS) Method: A Brief Summary

Work Package 2:
Welfare and Social Protection Policies

About Us

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Our SOPHIE team, working on Work Package 2: Welfare and Social Protection Policies, is based at the Centre for Research on Inner City Health in Toronto, Canada.

Our Team:

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Case Study Definition

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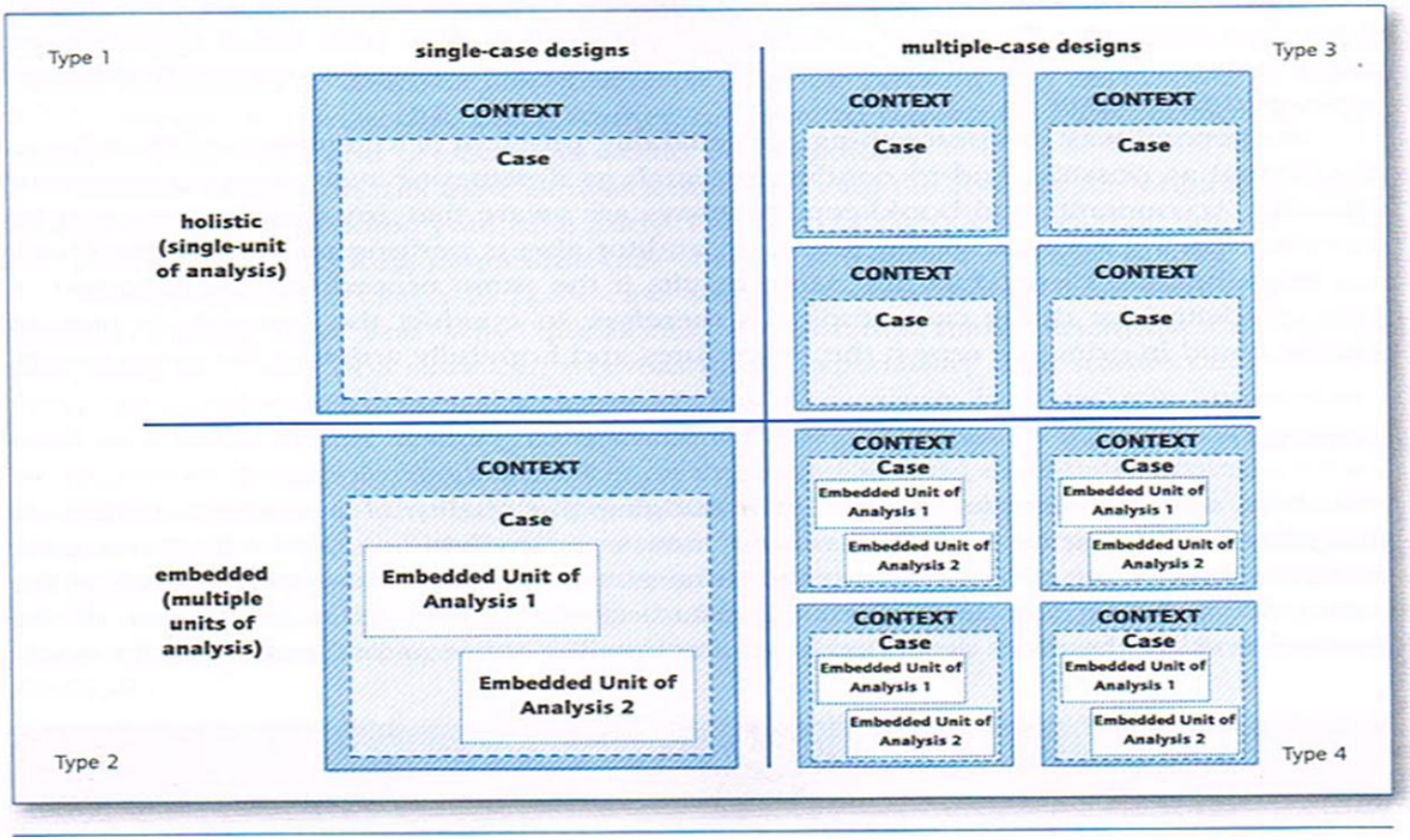
The essence of a case study is that it tries to illuminate a decision or set of decisions: *why they were taken*, *how they were implemented*, and *with what results* (Schramm 1971 as cited in Yin 2014).

ECS: Single and Multiple Designs

Figure 2.4 Basic Types of Designs for Case Studies



Source: COSMO Corporation cited in Yin, 2014, p.50.

ECS: Process

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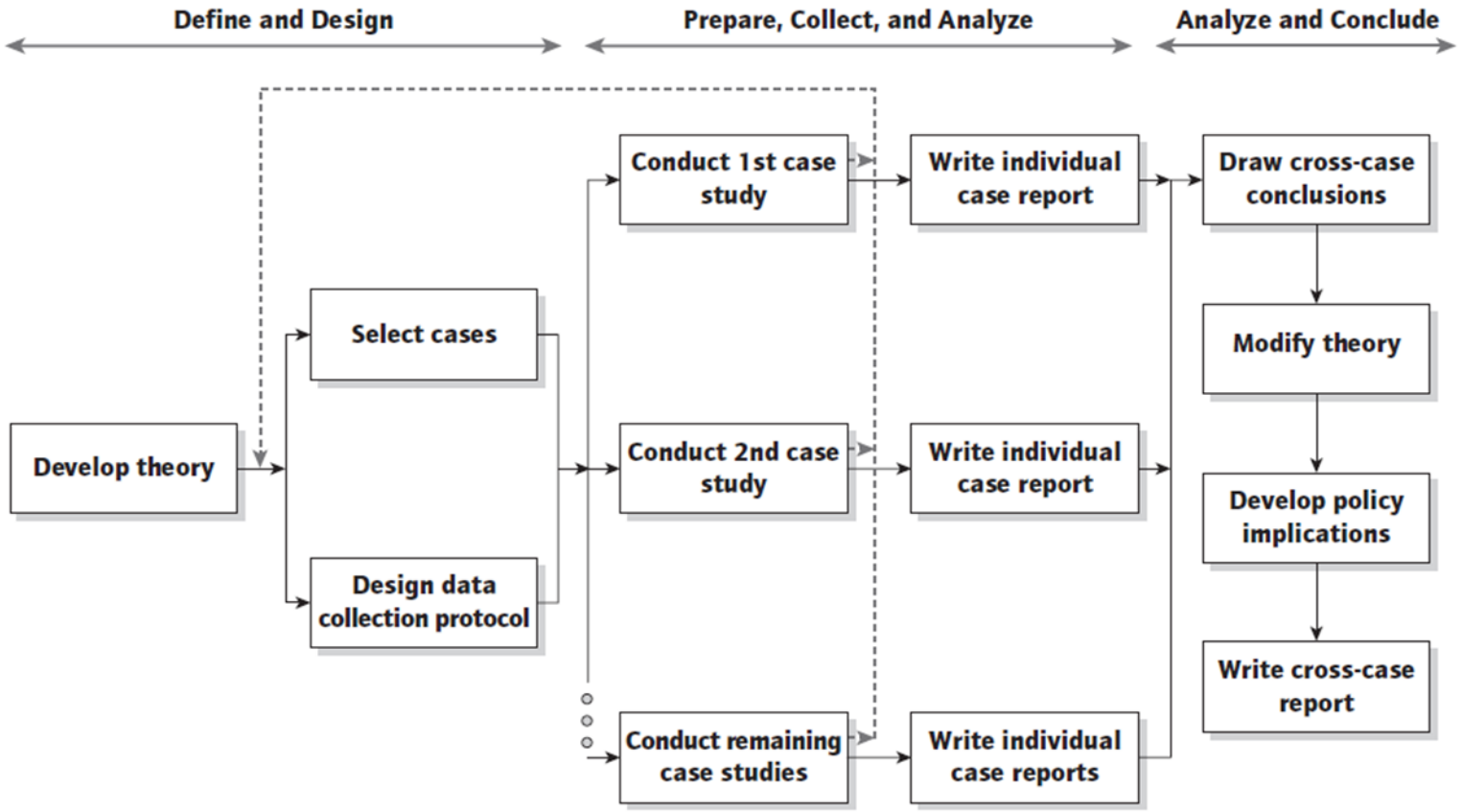

Source: COSMO Corporation cited in Yin, 2014, p. 60.

ECS: Case Study Selection

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Three conditions must be met to be deemed suitable for an explanatory case study method. The research project must (Yin, 2014):

- seek to explain "how"/"why" a phenomenon occurs,
- seek to examine a contemporary phenomenon, and,
- the researchers must have no control over the phenomenon.

ECS: Data Collection

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Examples of ECS data sources:

- Documents (e.g., newspapers such as la Repubblica; articles, books)
- Archival records (e.g., government reports)
- Interviewers (e.g., open-ended conversations with key informants)
- Direct observations (e.g., observing parliamentary proceedings)
- Focus groups (e.g., group interviews with key stakeholders)

**ECS are stronger when there are multiple sources of data as it enables triangulation of evidence.*

ECS: Data Collection

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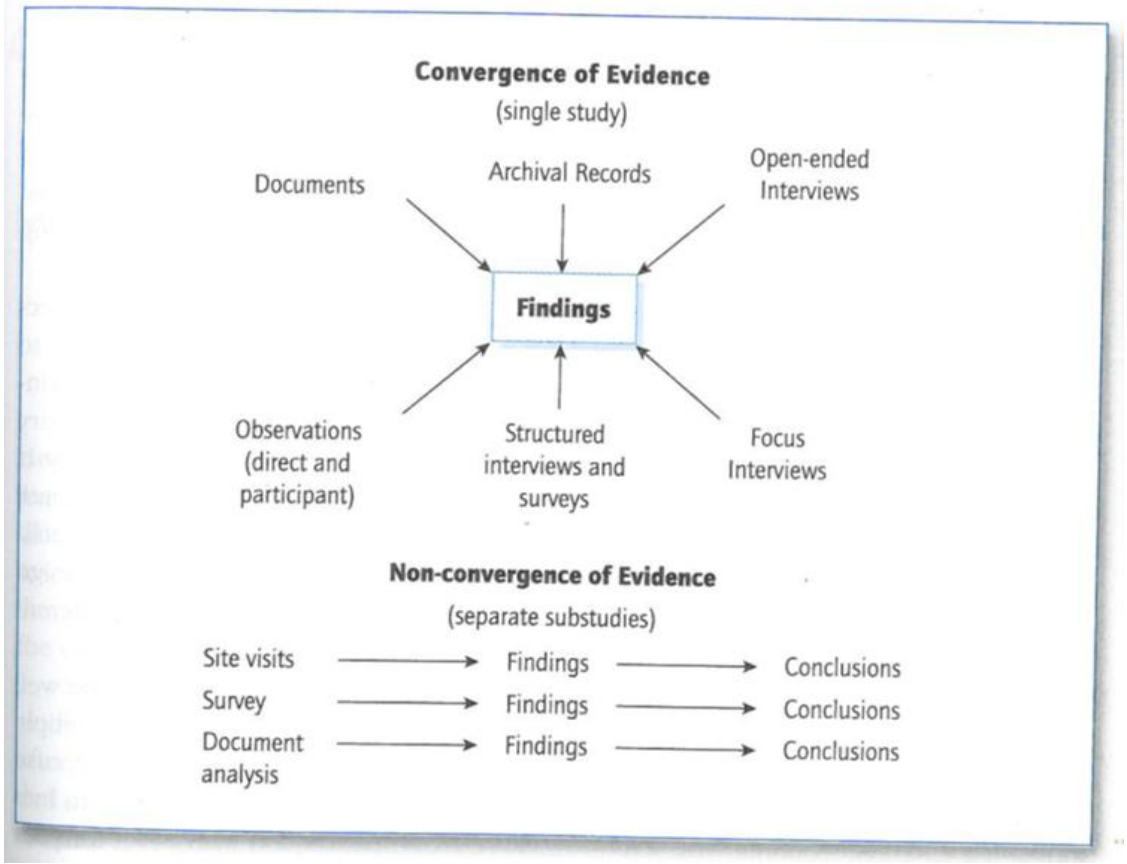
Figure 4.2 Convergence and Non-convergence of Multiple Sources of Evidence



- ***Data Triangulation***: Establishes *converging lines of evidence* to increase the robustness of findings.
- Use multiple sources of evidence to establish the same set of events or "facts".
- Evidence can include qualitative and quantitative types of data.

Source: Yin, 2014, p.121.

ECS: Data Analysis Approaches

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- Pattern-matching: Assessing collected evidence against expected outcomes
- Explanation building: Explaining a case and identifying a set of causal links
- Cross-case synthesis: Using multiple case studies to augment study aims

**Increasing the robustness of findings involves developing and testing rival explanations or alternative perspectives.*

ECS: SOPHIE Examples

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Explanatory *Single*-Case Study:

Using an explanatory case study method, we explain *how* opposition efforts (i.e. strategies and activities) have influenced the maintenance of fuel poverty policies and programmes in England during a time of fiscal austerity (O'Campo et al., Manuscript in preparation).

Explanatory *Multiple*-Case Study:

Following the single-case study, we hope to undertake a subsequent *multiple*-case study that compares our findings with other SOPHIE explanatory case studies. The purpose of a multiple-case analysis is to find similarities across cases, and to further explain the broader mechanisms around opposition efforts and policy change in a time of widespread austerity.

ECS: HiAP Example

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Explanatory *Multiple*-Case Study:

In addition to the SOPHIE projects, we have undertaken another explanatory *multiple*-case study that uncovers *how* well-established Health in All Policies (HiAP) initiatives managed to sustain implementation across sectors and across geographic levels of government (Shankardass et al., 2014).

Useful References

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- O'Campo, P., Muntaner, C., Frieler, A., Ali, F., Butt, A. & Mitchell, C. Opposition Efforts to Fuel Poverty Cuts: An Explanatory Single-Case Study (*Manuscript in preparation*).
- Shankardass, K., Renahy, E., Muntaner, C., & O'Campo, P. (2014). Strengthening the implementation of Health in All Policies: a methodology for realist explanatory case studies. *Health Policy and Planning*, czu021.
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- Yin, R. K. (2014). *Case Study: Design and Methods* (5th ed.). Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.
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