

## Empirical Social Research

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# Agenda

- Learning Objectives
- Research Strategies
- Q&A

# Learning objectives

Students are able to ...

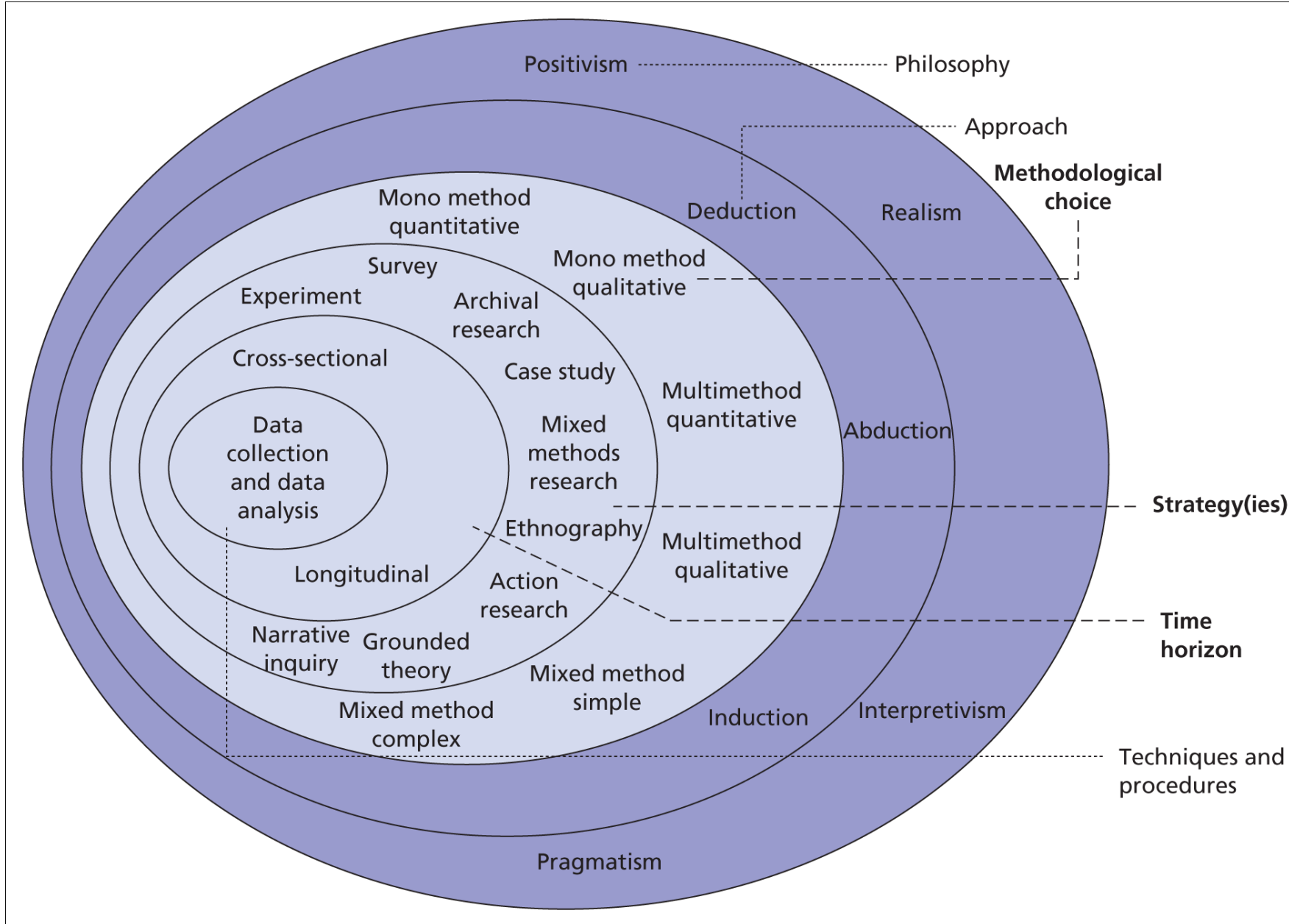
- ✓ ... identify and characterise the main research strategies.
- ✓ ... choose from amongst those strategies to achieve coherence throughout their research design.

# Introduction

Research strategy: quantitative or qualitative?

It is useful to classify business research methods into two distinctive clusters:  
– quantitative and qualitative

# The research onion



# Research design vs. research method

A research design provides a framework for the collection and analysis of data. Choice of research design reflects decisions about priorities given to the dimensions of the research process.

= general plan of how you will go about answering your research question or questions

A research method is simply a technique for collecting data. Choice of research method reflects decisions about the type of instruments or techniques to be used.

# Research design

The nature of the research design

Exploratory studies

“to discover what is happening and gain insights about a topic.....”

Explanatory studies

“to establish causal relationships between variables.....”

Descriptive studies

“to gain an accurate profile of events, persons, or situations.....”

# Research design

Main features of research design

Research strategies to answer a research question may involve :

- mostly quantitative methods (experiment, survey),
- mostly qualitative methods (archival research, case study, ethnography, action research, grounded theory, narrative inquiry),
- or mixed methods

Related stakeholders (ex. researcher himself, funding agencies...) matter, depending on their importance and impact potential



# Research strategies

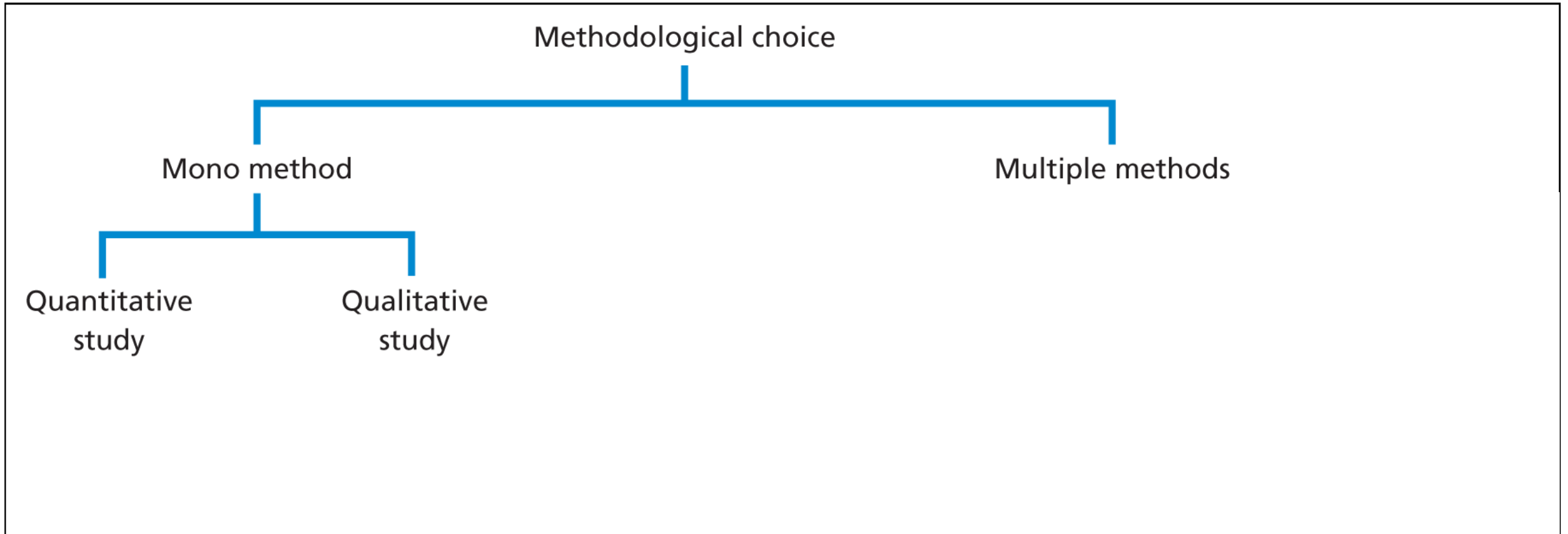
Research strategy can be used alone (mono-method)

It can also be used in combination with another method of its category: qualitative or quantitative (multi- method)

A research strategy can also integrate both qualitative and quantitative methods (mixed method)

It is guided by the nature of research question, research credibility and project feasibility concerns

# Research strategies



# Research strategies

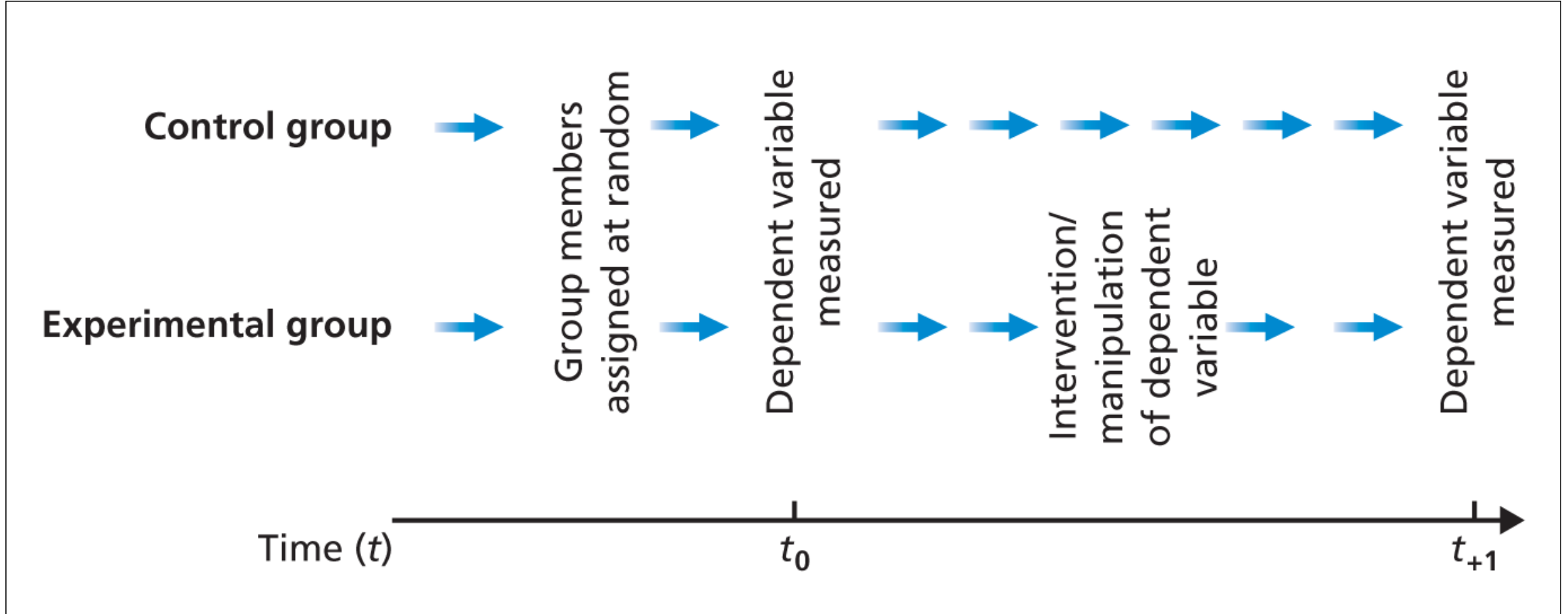
Research strategies to be discussed.....

- Experiment
- Survey
- Case study
- Ethnography

# Experiment

- Answer questions about causal links among variables
- Independent variable out of control of the cases studied (it is manipulated by a researcher or an exogenous event)
- Focus on relationship between groups of cases
- Classes: between-case or within-case; cross-sectional (measure once, “snapshot”) or longitudinal
- Use of pre-test, post-test, control group
- Internal vs. external validity (=generalisability)

# Experiment



# Experiment

Watch and critically evaluate the following experiment



# Group work

- Get together in your groups (Groups 1 to 6)
- Use the Saunders textbook (pdf), page **136f**.
- Answer the following question:
  - Is the Chewing Gup experiment (the video we just watched) an experiment? Why / Why not?
  - Prepare a short presentation showing your findings.

# Survey

- Used to answer questions: Who, What, Where, how much, how many?
- Focus on relationship between individual cases
- Classes: between-case or within-case; cross-sectional (measure once) or longitudinal (measure more than once)



# Survey

- Classical surveys:
- Assignment of cases: non-random assignment of cases to levels of an independent variable
- Sample: probability (example: Case selection among clients of fast-food restaurants)
- Use: to collect consumer opinions, to compare voter's preference for a candidate for election depending on age

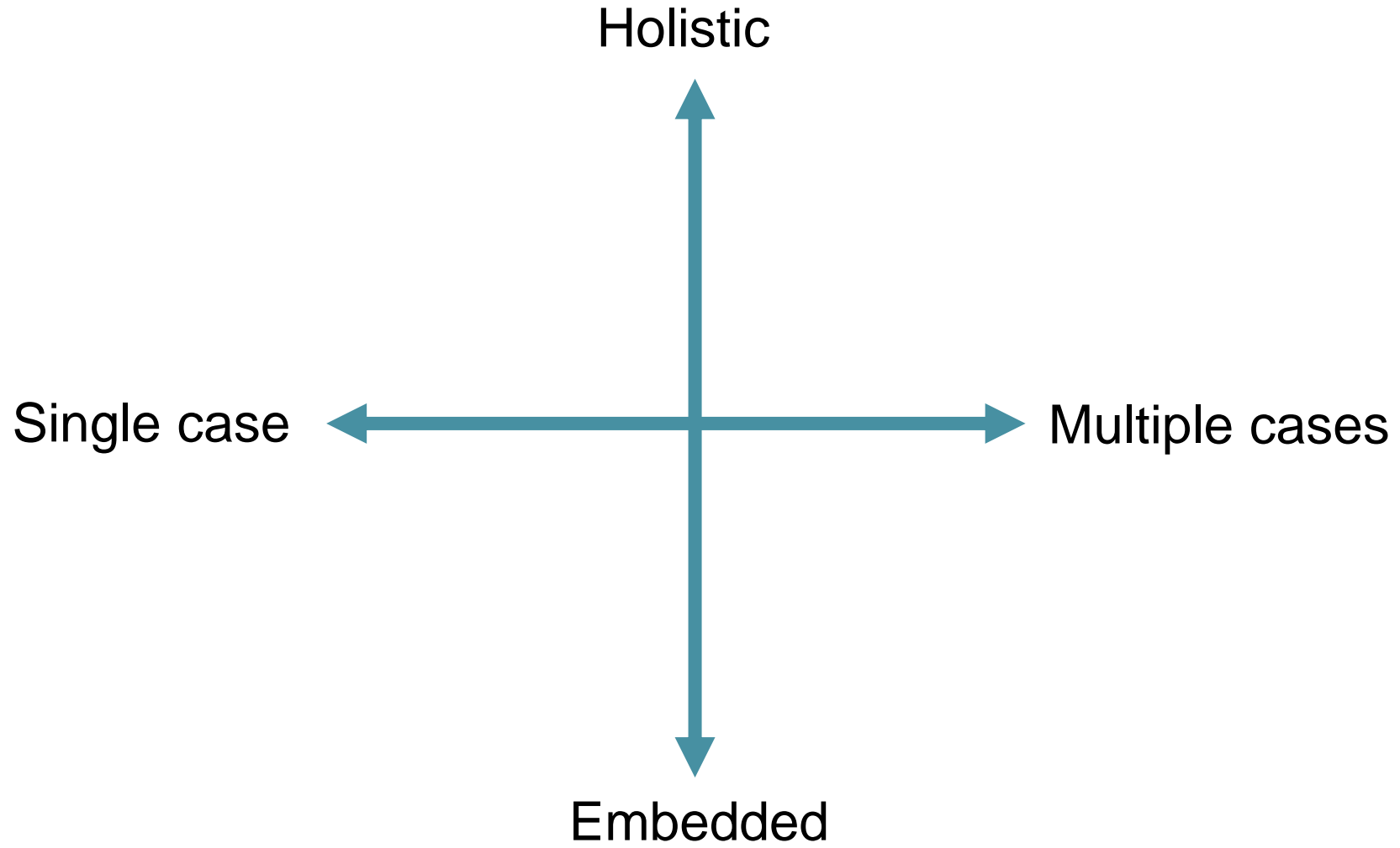
# Activity

- You want to find out what your classmates will have for lunch
- Will you conduct qualitative or quantitative research?
- Which research strategy will you use?

# Case study research

- Used to answer questions: “why?”, “what?”, and “how?”
- Focus on empirical investigation of a particular phenomenon within its context
- Opposite of experimental designs
- Used in exploratory and explanatory research
- Likely to use a combination of different data collection techniques (e.g. interview, questionnaires, observations, etc.)

# Case study research



# Ethnography

- Used to study groups
- Rooted firmly in the inductive approach, comes from the field anthropology
- Aims to describe the social world in which the researched is immersed
- Requires flexibility, as the researcher is constantly developing new patterns of thought of what is being observed

# Wrap-up

Students are able to ...

- ✓ ... identify and characterise the main research strategies.
- ✓ ... choose from amongst those strategies to achieve coherence throughout their research design.

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**Thank you very much for your attention.**

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