Case Comparisons

Department of Government
London School of Economics and Political Science

What is a case study?

- Definition: "an intensive study of a single unit for the purpose of understanding a larger class of (similar) units" (Gerring 2004, 342)
- Broad uses:
  - Description
  - Concept definition and measurement
  - Induction/Theory development
  - Theory testing
  - Exploration of mechanisms

1: Description

- Case study might be descriptive
- Historical or interpretive
- Think “biography” of a case

2: Concept Definition

- Sometimes you don't know what you are studying
- Case studies can clarify what something is a *case of*
- This helps you to:
  - Refine your concept definition
  - Improve measurement

3: Theory development

- Case is an instance of a phenomenon
- There is some outcome to be explained
  - Outcome is case itself
  - Outcome of a case
  - Outcome as part of case
- Look for "Causal Process Observations"
- Attempt to identify generalizable explanations

Causal Process Observations

- Definition: "An insight or piece of data that provides information about the context, process, or mechanism, and that contributes distinctive leverage in causal inference"[1]
- Essentially pieces of evidence that offer insight into within-case counterfactuals

[1] Brady and Collier 2004, p.277

4: Theory testing

- "Actual case" comparisons
  - Mill's methods
- Fearon's "Counterfactual method"
- Process tracing

5: Mechanisms

- Imagine you already have evidence for a causal relationship
- A case study can help you explore or test for "mechanisms" of that effect
- This is our focus next week

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- Consistent with or an improvement upon past methods
- Test using different data than data used to generate theory

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- Across-time comparisons, or
- Between-case & across-time comparisons
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Doner, Ritchie, Slater (2005)

In pairs, discuss the following:

- What is the outcome?
- What is the theory?
- What are the cases examined?
- How are the cases compared?

You have 3 minutes.

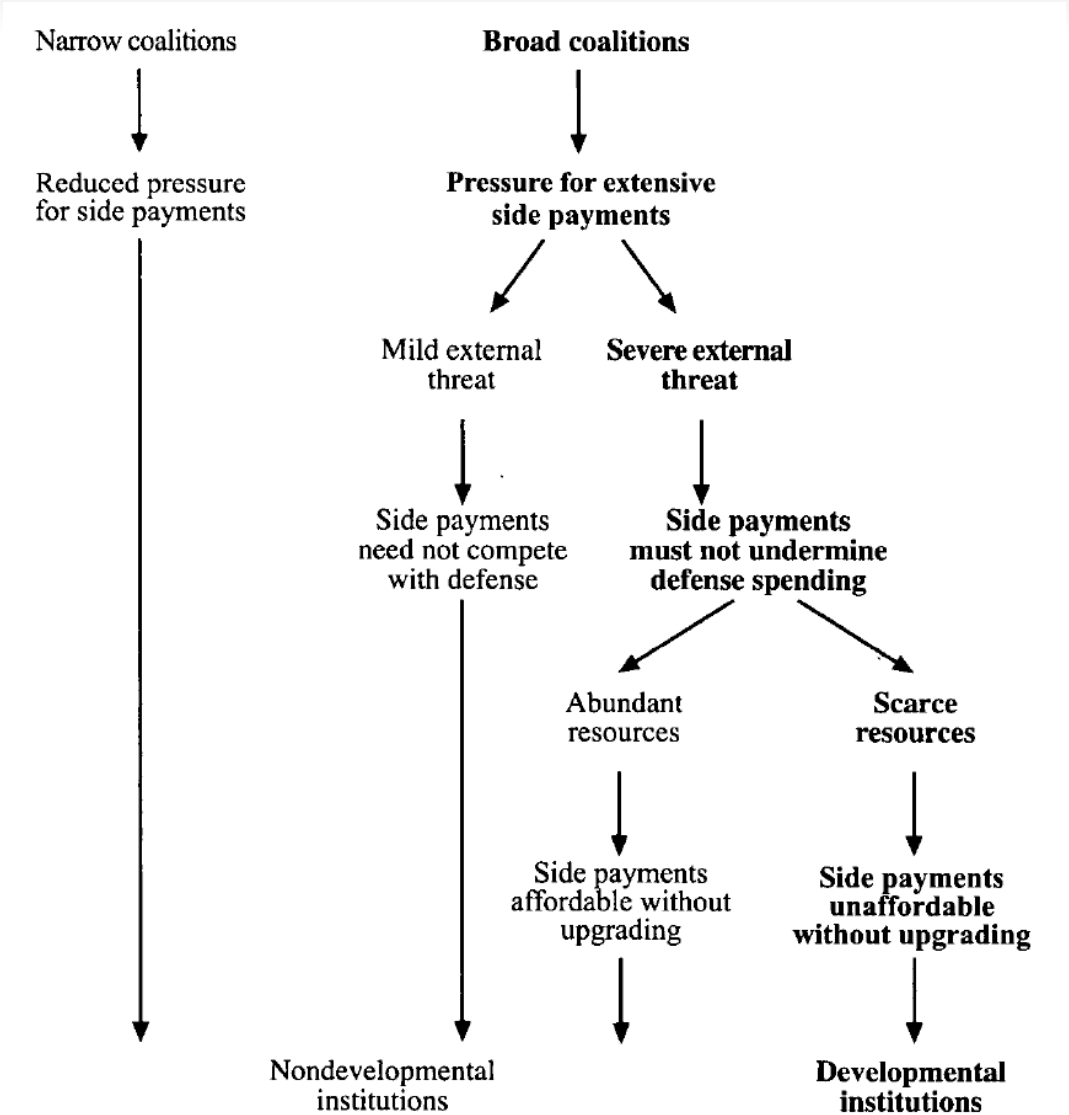
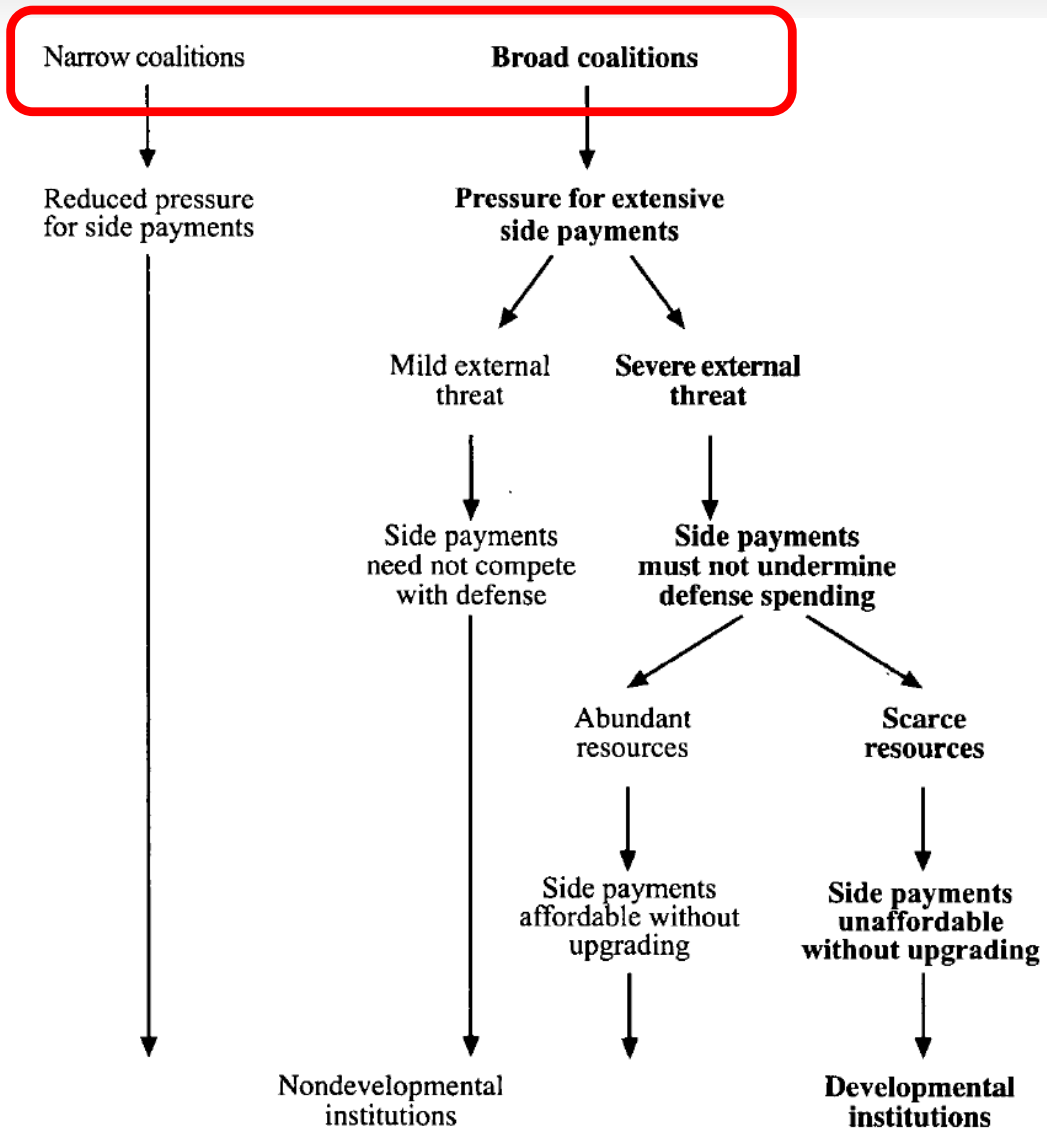


Figure 1 from Doner, Ritchie, Slater (2005). "Systemic Vulnerability and the Origins of Developmental States." *International Organization* 59: 327–361.



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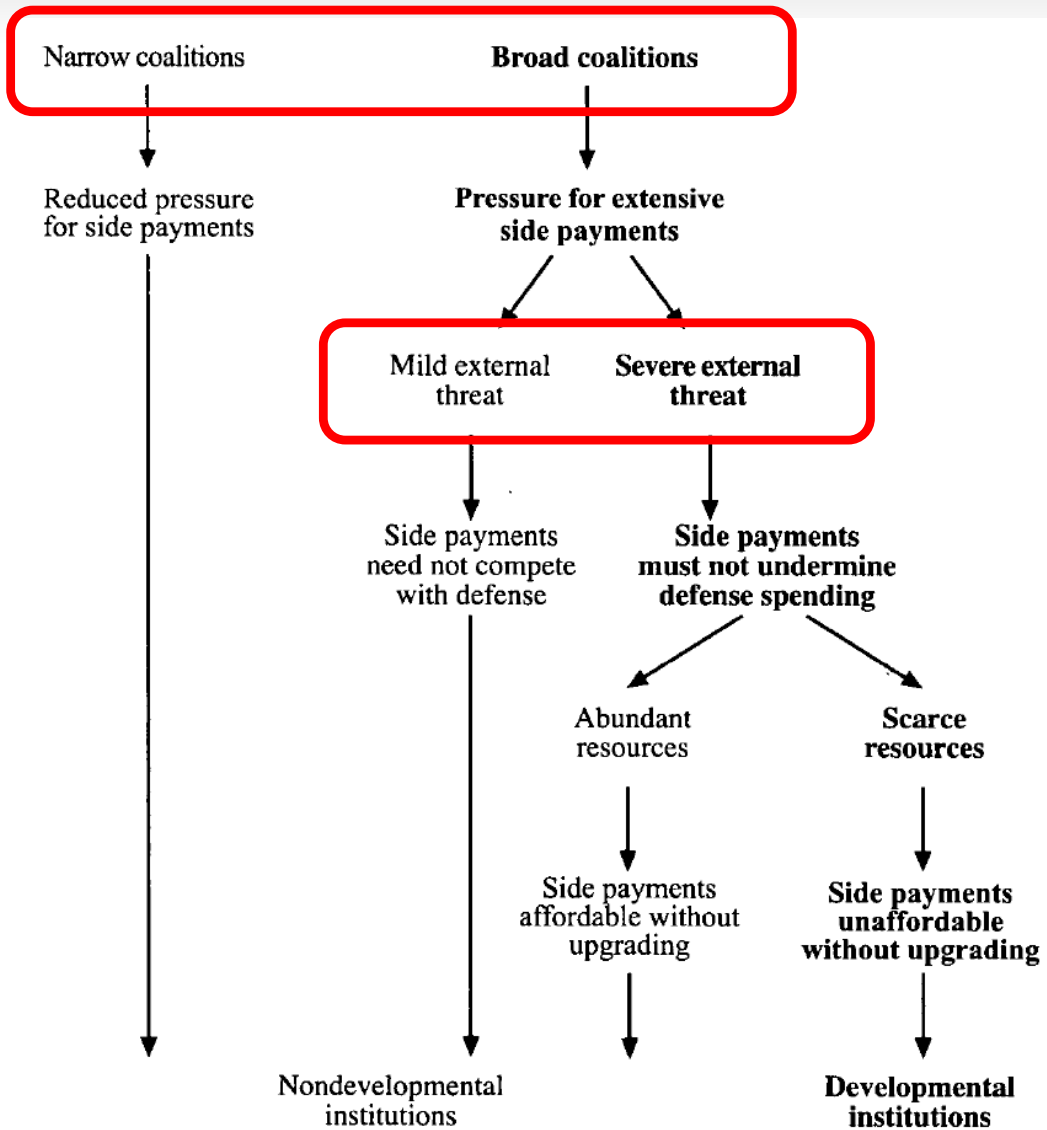

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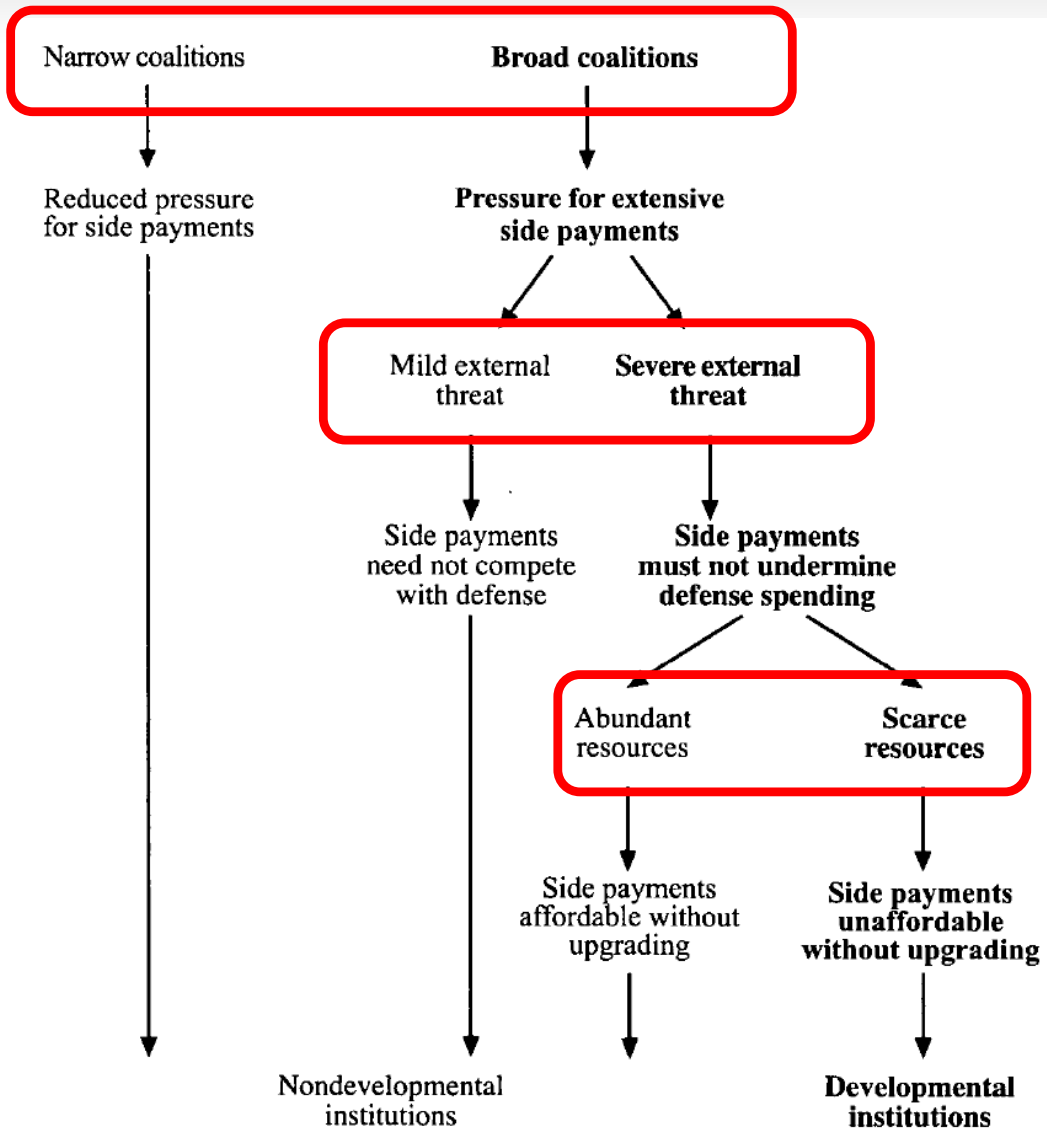

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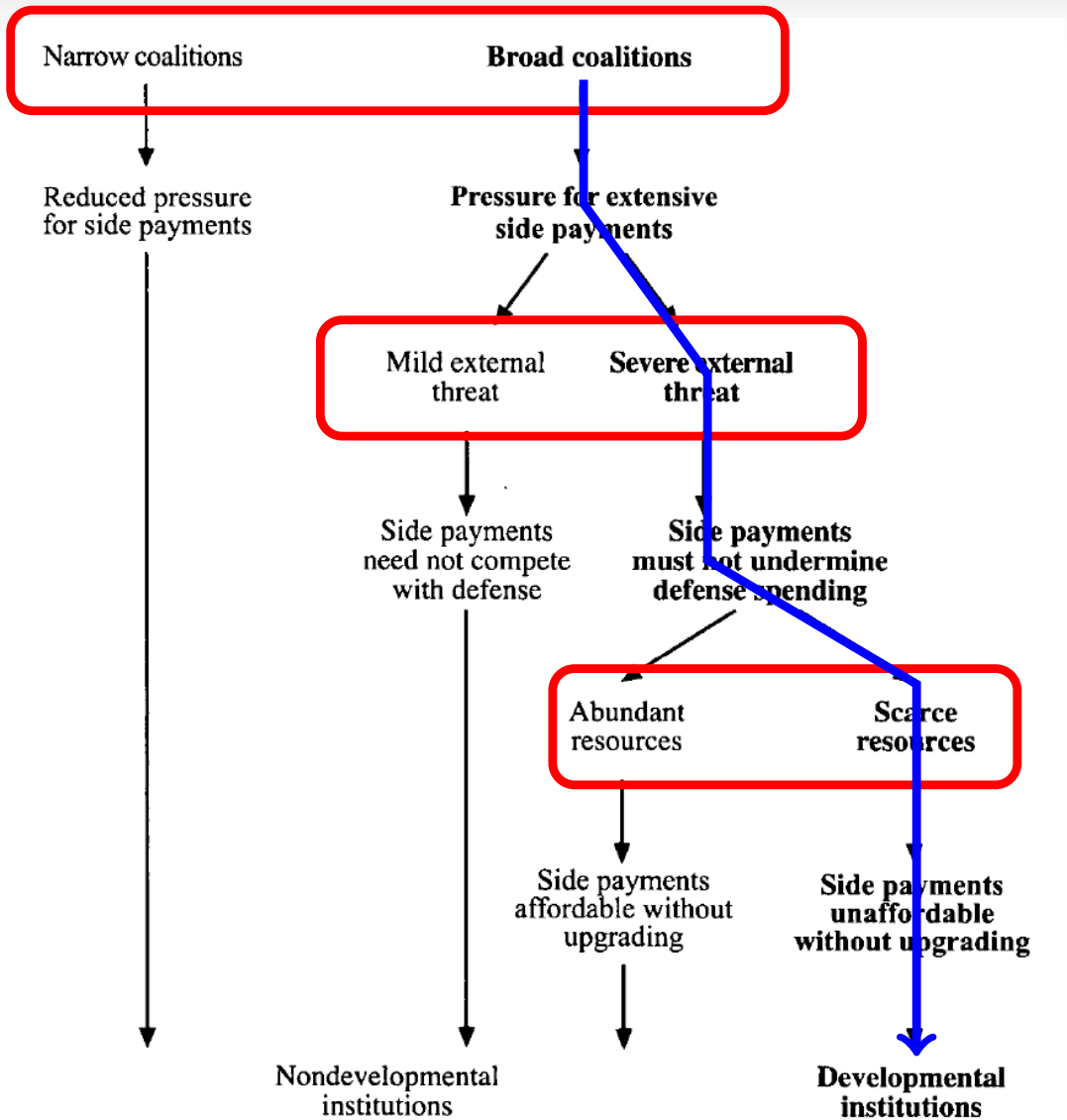

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Mill's methods[2]

1. Agreement
2. Difference
3. Agreement and Difference
4. Residue
5. Concomitant variations

[2] Discussed in Holland (1986)

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2. **Difference**
3. **Agreement and Difference**
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Using Mill's Methods

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4. Apply Mill's methods to:
   - Identify deterministic causes
   - Eliminate deterministic causes

Agreement

> *If two or more instances of the phenomenon under investigation have only one circumstance in common, the circumstance in which alone all the instances agree, is the cause (or effect) of the given phenomenon.*

Often called "most different systems" design.

TABLE 2. *Variables*

	Control variables				*Independent variables*		
	COLONIALISM	FOREIGN CAPITAL (5)	ETHNICITY (4)	RELIGION	COALITIONS (2)	EXTERNAL THREATS	NATURAL RESOURCES (3)
NICs							
Korea	Japanese	Closed	Homogeneous	Confucian	Broad	Severe	Scarce
Taiwan	Japanese	Closed	Homogeneous	Confucian	Broad	Severe	Scarce
Singapore	British	Open	Heterogeneous	Confucian	Broad	Severe	Scarce
ASEAN-4							
Indonesia	Dutch	Open	Heterogeneous	Islam	Broad	Mild	Abundant (oil)
Malaysia	British	Open	Heterogeneous	Islam	Broad	Mild	Abundant (rubber, tin)
Philippines	U.S./Spanish	Open	Heterogeneous	Christian	Narrow	Mild	Abundant (sugar)
Thailand	Independent	Open	Heterogeneous	Buddhist	Narrow	Mild	Abundant (rice)

Sources: (1): Rauch and Evans 2000 (2) Crone 1988, Campos and Root 1996; (3) Sachs and Warner 1995, Auty 1994; (4) Mauro 1995, R and Telberg 1964; (5) Keller and Samuels 2003.

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Difference

> *If an instance in which the phenomenon under investigation occurs, and an instance in which it does not occur, have every circumstance save one in common, that one occurring only in the former; the circumstance in which alone the two instances differ, is the effect, or cause, or an necessary part of the cause, of the phenomenon.*

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Agreement and Difference

If two or more instances in which the phenomenon occurs have only one circumstance in common, while two or more instances in which it does not occur have nothing in common save the absence of that circumstance; the circumstance in which alone the two sets of instances differ, is the effect, or cause, or a necessary part of the cause, of the phenomenon.

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  - Hypothesis generating: "deviant" cases

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- How would we know if smoking causes lung cancer on average across many individuals?
  - What's the relevant counterfactual?

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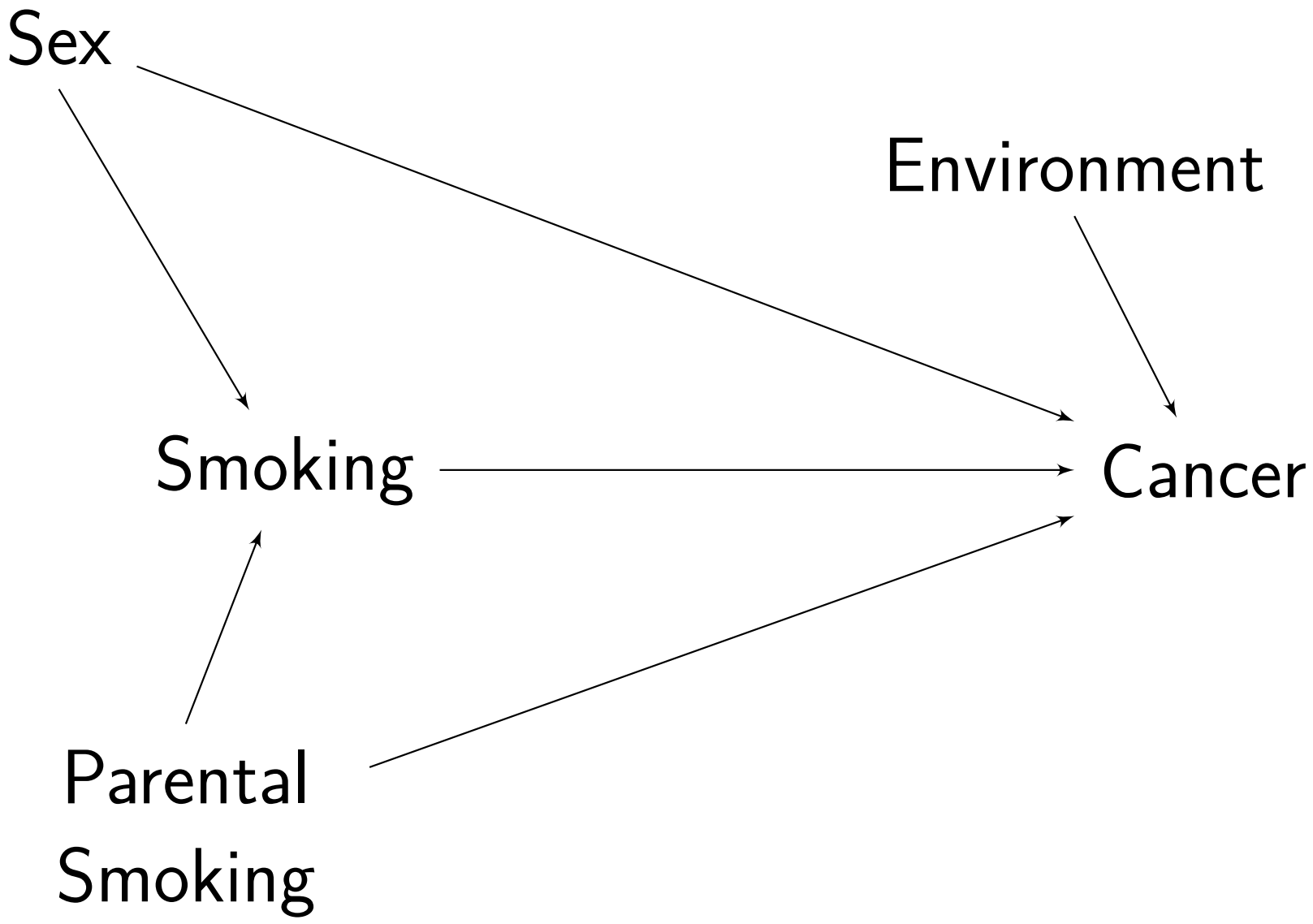
2. Identify possible confounds
   - Sex
   - Age
   - Income
   - Education
   - Parental smoking
   - Diet
   - etc.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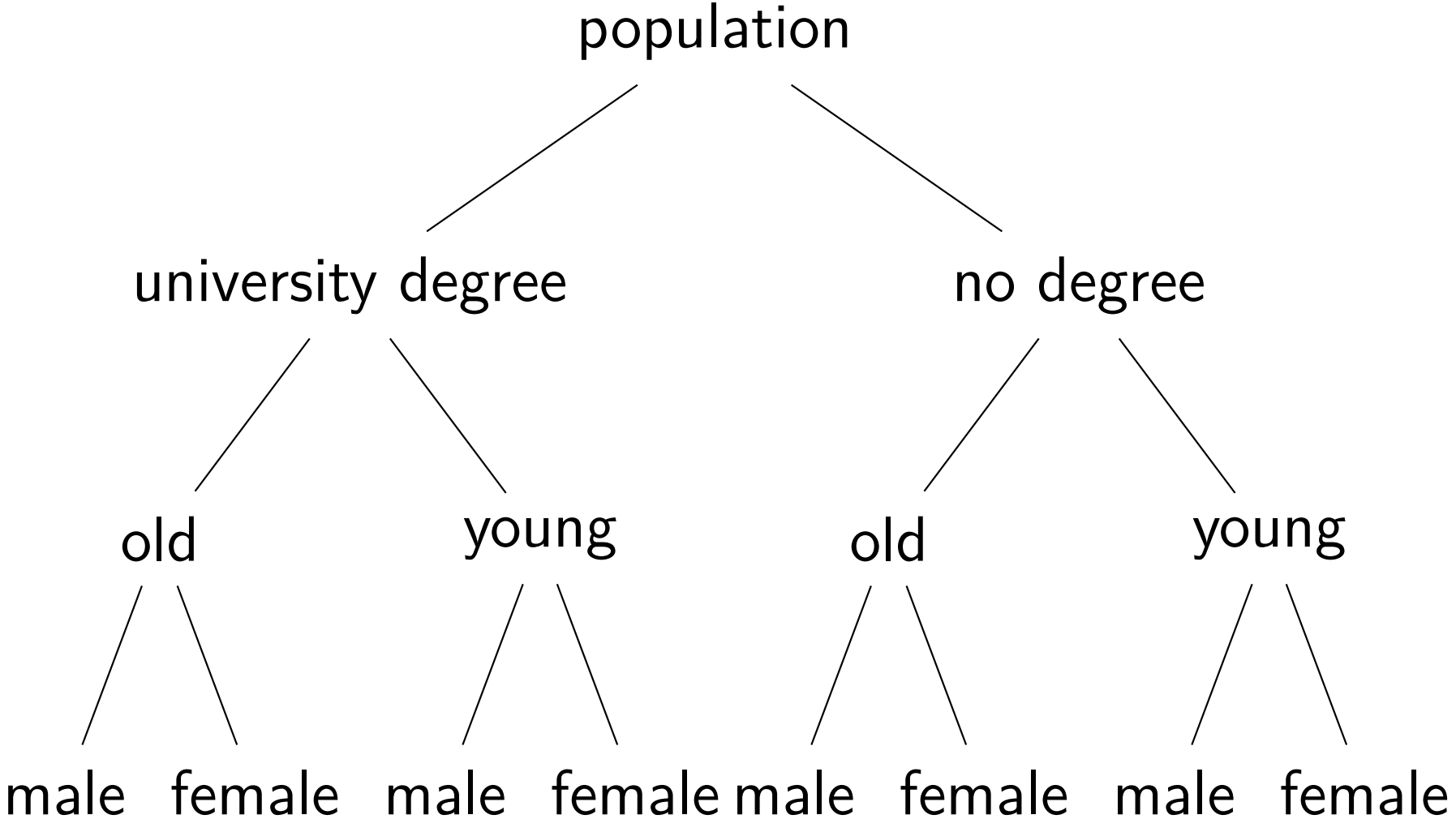
population
university degree
no degree
old
young
old
young
male
female
male
female
male
female
male
female

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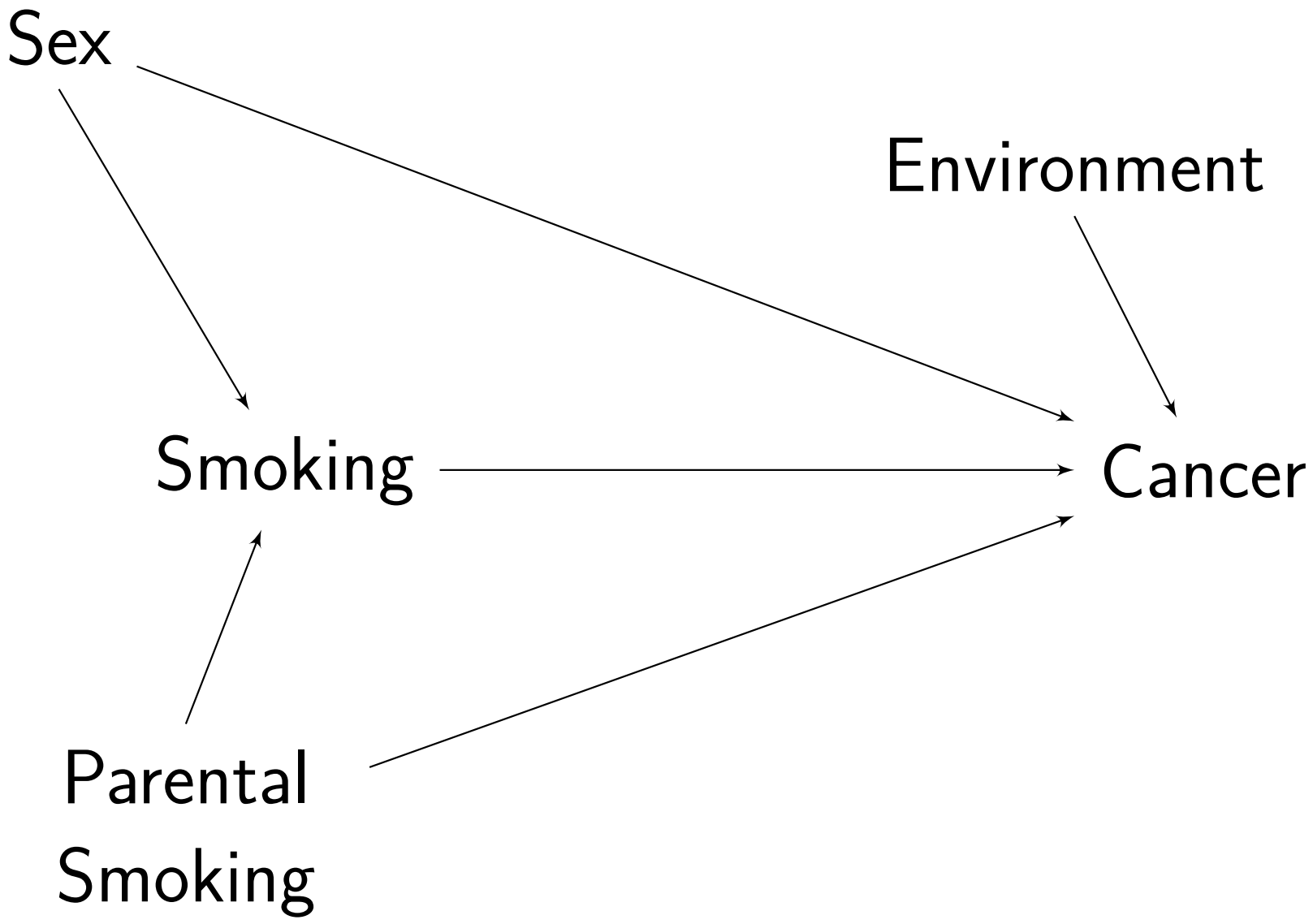
3. Estimate difference in cancer rates between smokers and non-smokers within each group of *covariates*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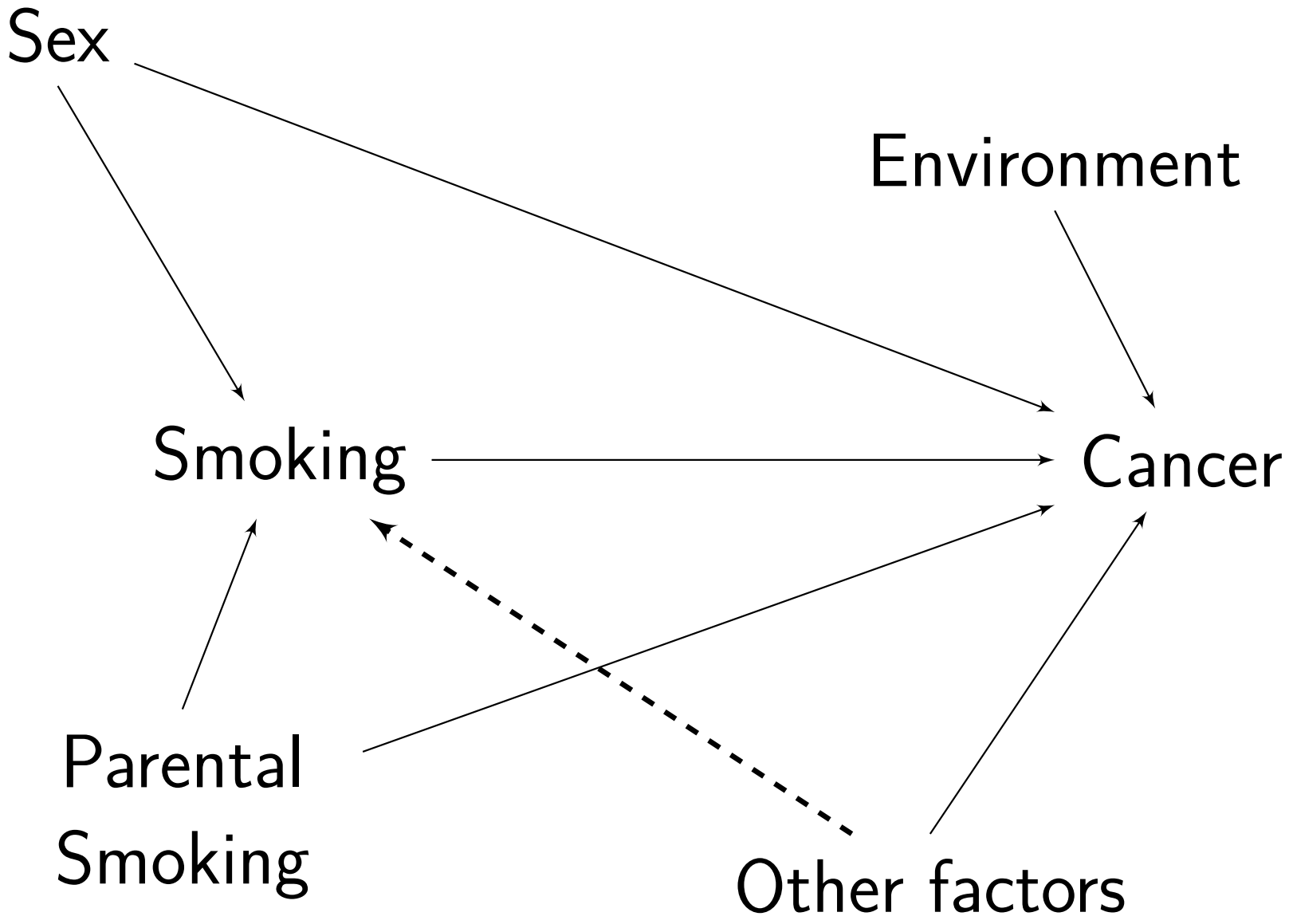
Sex
Environment
Smoking
Cancer
Parental Smoking
Other factors

Activity!

1. Think about the population of all television programmes
2. Identify **one factor** that you think might affect **viewership**
3. Identify **other factors** that may confound the effect of the factor and partition the population based upon those factors
    - What are the other factors?
    - Do you have "treated" and "comparison" cases in every "cell"?