

Table of Content

Preface	7
1. Introduction: choosing the question?	9
1.1 Starting from the key aspect	9
1.2 Further examples	10
2. Defining comparison	13
2.1 The key questions	13
2.2 Classic thinkers	14
2.3 Modern theorists	15
3. Why compare?	20
3.1 The goals of comparison	20
3.2 Nomothetic objectives and generalizations	21
3.3 Explanation and understanding	25
3.4 What kind of theory should be adopted in political science?	26
4. What to compare: the basic units	35
4.1 Identifying the issue	35
4.2 Concepts and classes	36
4.3 Properties and variables	37
4.4 Operationalization	40
4.5 The “many variables, small N” dilemma	43
5. What to compare: space and time	46
5.1 Dimensions of comparison	46
5.2 Deciding the space	50
5.2.1 Case study	51
5.2.2 Other strategies	53
5.3 Defining the time	55
5.4 The problem of multicollinearity	59

6. How to compare: the key mechanisms	61
6.1 The available tools	61
6.2 Ogden and Richards' triangle.....	61
6.3 The rules of conceptualization	65
6.4 The Tree of Porphyry	67
6.5 Classificatory strategies.....	71
6.6 Mill's canons	82
7. How to compare: recent developments	86
7.1 In search of new rules for conceptualization	86
7.2 Process tracing	89
7.3 The Configurational Comparative Method and Qualitative Comparative Analysis.....	93
8. Beyond comparison: other research methods	100
8.1 Data collection and relations between variables.....	100
8.2 More about explanation, generalization and theory	102
8.3 Experimental and non-experimental methods	104
8.4 Statistical method	106
8.4.1 The number of cases.....	108
8.4.2. Logic	108
8.5 Historical method	109
9. Conclusions. The limits of comparison.....	113
Bibliographical References.....	117
Index.....	127