An Overview of Case Study Research Methods
What is a case study?
Why conduct a case study?

• **In-depth** analysis of topic using multiple sources of evidence
• Richly descriptive, grounded in deep and varied sources of information
• Good for showing how something happens/works in a real life situation / Understanding a complex issue
• Explore; Describe; Explain
Choosing Your Case Study

• Unit of Analysis

• Case selected because they are:
  • highly effective; not effective; representative; of special interest
Methods of Analysis (Types of Evidence)

• Documentation
• Interviews
• Direct Observation
• Participant Observation
• ...and Others (Survey, Artifacts, etc.)
• Why multiple? ...Triangulation
How to Conduct Case Studies

• Determine / define research question
  • good for “how” & “why” questions / limited number of events and their interrelationships

• Select cases & determine data gathering / analysis techniques
  • not a “sampling technique” -- select to maximize what can be learned

• with multiple cases, each is a single case with conclusions contributing to the whole study

• Prepare to collect data
  • systematic organization is key!

• Collect / evaluate data

• Prepare the report (and graduate!)
Resources


• *Case study research: principles and practices*, by John Gerring. NY: Cambridge Univ. Pr., 2007.
