Conducting Case Studies

Topics Covered:

• Purpose of conducting case studies

• What is the unit of study?

• How to conduct case studies
Purpose

- Explore
- Describe
- Explain
  - A particular event – idiographic approach
    (reasons behind city X’s economic decline)
  - A class of events – nomothetic approach
    (reasons behind decline of medium-size cities of Mid-West)

What is the Unit of Study?

- A geographic unit (neighborhood, city county, country)
- Physical Entity (Transit oriented development, affordable housing project)
- An organization (university, non-profit organization)
- Class of people (elderly, ethnic minorities)
- Time period (1990-2000; 18th Century)
- Or a combination (18th century Italian cities)
How to Conduct Case Studies

- Identify how and why the conduct of case study will fulfill the objectives of the study and answer the research question

- Identify the exact research methods to be used (in-depth interviews, close-ended surveys, personal observation, participant observation, collection of archival information, etc.)

- Prepare a plan for data/information collection and analysis

- Ensure reliability and validity

- Ensure generalizability (if you are seeking it – as in case of nomothetic approach) by employing comparable case study approach