

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