

Case Study

INF5220

March 13th Guri Verne,

Design group

(based on Sisse Finken's
lecture notes)

FEEDBACK INTERVIEW

- Please remember your group number and names!
- How to present an interview – and information from an interview
- How can your informants answer your research questions?
 - How do we ask?
 - Yes/no
 - Instrumental/practical questions
- Interviewing a familiar or unknown person
- Note-taking on computer or paper
- When does your interpretation start?
- Interview data used for design
- Digital living = smartphones?
- What kinds of technology?
- Generalising

WHAT IS A CS?

- A choice of what to study
 - A case is a **specific, unique, bound system**
(Stake 2005)
- The study of complex phenomena in their context
(Baxter & Jack 2008)
- A case study is a situated and detailed inquiry for learning – not proving (Flyvbjerg 2006)
- Case studies focus on activities, functionings and local meaning within specific case(s) (Stake 2005)

PARADIGM

Origin: Social sciences

- Interpretive
- CS can also be critical and lean towards positivism

TYPES OF CASE STUDIES

- Intrinsic
- Instrumental
- Collective case study
(Stake 2005)

CASE STUDY RESEARCH

- Figure out what is important about the case within its own world: its own issues, contexts, and interpretations, its “thick description”¹
- Focus on the case and its activities and functioning + its contexts (social, cultural, economic, legal, political, historical)
- What is going on? – What can be learned from the case?
- Be reflective: think about what you encounter. Dig into meanings, relate them to contexts and experiences. Revise.
- Seeking the particular more than the ordinary

(Stake 2005)

- 1) Clifford Geertz is one of the founding fathers of this notion by which is meant that ethnographic accounts should include contexts to fully capture and lay bare a case.

CASE STUDY RESEARCH

When probing the particular and common (but mostly the uncommon) of a case, take into account and gather material on:

- The nature of the case, particularly its activity and functioning
- Its historical background
- Its physical setting
- Other contexts, such as social, economic, political, legal and aesthetic
- Other cases through which this case is recognized, and
- Those informants through whom the case can be known

(Stake 2005:447)

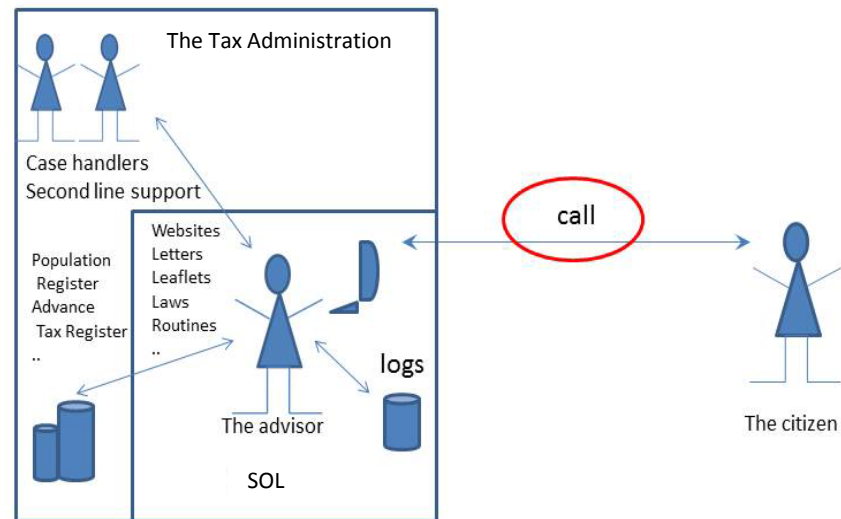
CASE STUDY EXAMPLES

- The Balinese cockfight (Geertz 1972)
 - Getting access
 - “Much of Bali surfaces in a cock ring”
- For further readings on Geertz and ‘thick description’ see e.g. Atkinson & Delamont (2005) + Hylland Eriksen (2006).

The case =
unit of analysis
(Baxter&Jack 2008)

CASE STUDY EXAMPLES

- The calls to Skatteopplysningen (SOL)



METHODS

- Documents
- Interview
- Observation
- Coding (GT)
- Interpretation (GT)

(Stake 2005)

SELECTING A CASE

- Learn from atypical cases
- Gives opportunity to learn
- Accessible cases
- Possibility to stay long
- Strategic choice of case

(Stake 2005, Flyvbjerg 2006)

DESCRIBING THE CASE 1

- Report the collection of field data
 - The research sites
 - The reason for this choice
 - The number of people interviewed
 - Their positions
 - Other data sources
 - Over what period
- How the iterative process between field data and theory took place and evolved
(Walsham 2002)

DESCRIBING THE CASE 2

- Converge data from multiple sources
- Chronological report, a story or address issues (Baxter and Jack 2008)
- Good narratives express complexities of real life
- Details, not general conceptualizations (Flyvbjerg 2006)
- “Present a coherent point of view with grace, wit and felicity” (Van Maanen 1989, p 32)

ISSUES TO CONSIDER

- Bounding the case, conceptualizing the object of study
- Selecting phenomena, themes, issues (i.e. the research questions to emphasize)
- Seeking patterns of data to develop issues
 - Data collection and analysis occur concurrently
- Triangulating for clarification and diversity
- Selecting alternative interpretations to pursue
- Developing assertions about the case

(Stake 2005)

- Generalizations – the black swan
- What is this case a case of?

(Flyvbjerg 2006)

Literature not listed on syllabus

Atkinson, P. & Delamont, S. (2005): Analytical Perspectives. In Denzin & Lincoln (eds.): *The Sage Handbook of Qualitative Research*. Sage Publications.

Hylland Eriksen, T. (2006): *Hva er Socialantropologi*. Universitetsforlaget, Norge