

Case Study



INF5220

Feb 28 2017 Guri Verne,

Design group

FEEDBACK INTERVIEW

- Please remember your group number and names!
 - Submit one file
- Talking about the people we interview
 - Respondent, informant, interview subject, interview object
 - A matter of conventions as well as associations
- What are we producing in the interview
 - Inter-view* – co-creation of understanding more than to “figure someone out” or find “hidden” connections/meaning
- Remember informed consent
- Asking informants to answer your research question vs. asking about how their daily life (or work, life, choices...)
 - Asking informants for solutions vs “please tell me..”*
 - Body language can give useful information*
- Asking how much time people spend on something (eg. the mobile)
 - Ask people to describe what they do during a day, ask questions about whether they use the mobile in this situation.*

FEEDBACK INTERVIEW (cont)

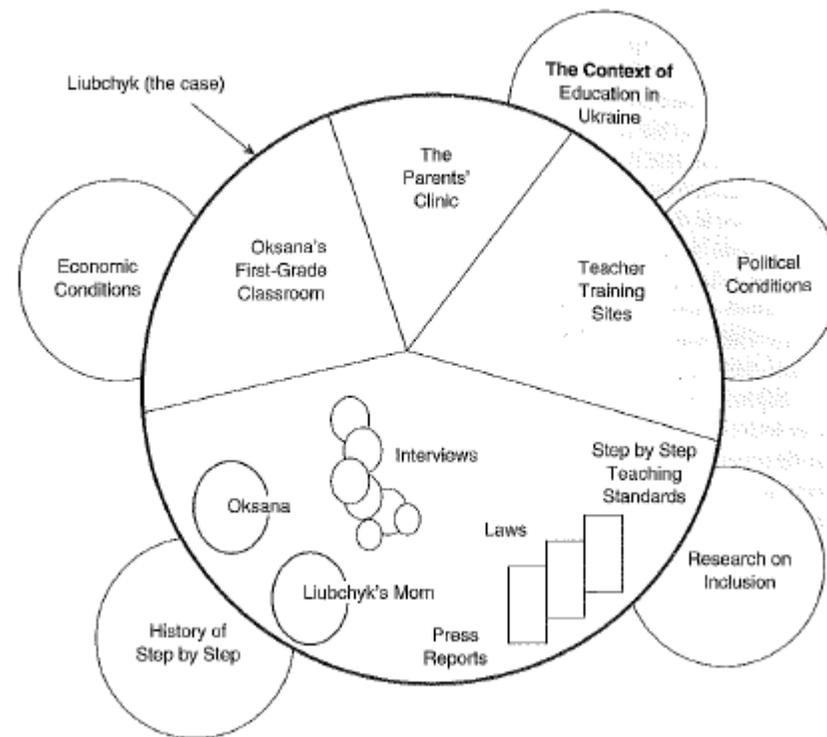
- Yes/no-questions and elaboration
- There is always a bias
- Writing up the interview
 - Description versus transcription, or narrative, like an interview, everything, relevant stuff ?
 - Make a title, define the theme
 - Can we find out who you interviewed?
 - (Keep in mind the mosaic effect)
 - Being precise about 'technology' – more than ICT
 - Consider the structure of the interview
 - Start with warm-up, end with wrapping up
 - Think about structure – what to ask when

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)

A case in its context



(Stake 2005)

PARADIGM



- Interpretive
- CS can also be critical, or lean towards positivism
- Origin: Social sciences

METHODS

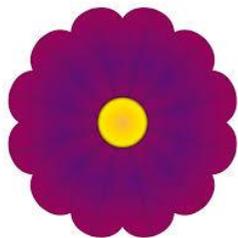
- Interview
- Observation
- Documents
- Coding (GT)
- Interpretation (GT)
(Stake 2005)



TYPES OF CASE STUDIES



- Intrinsic – the case itself
- Instrumental – to learn about something else
- Collective case study – to learn from many cases
(Stake 2005)



CASE STUDY EXAMPLES 1

- Deep Play: Notes on 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).

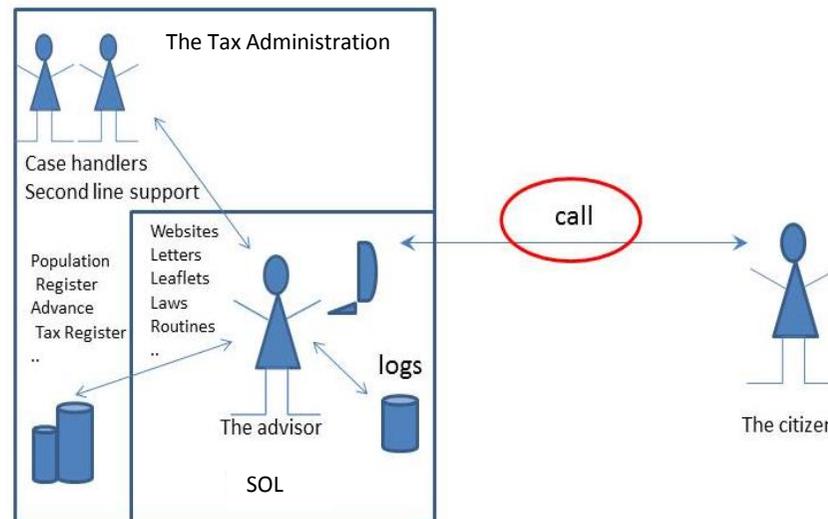
The case =
unit of analysis
(Baxter&Jack 2008)



CASE STUDY EXAMPLES 2

**”The winners are those who have used the old paper form”
On citizens and automated public services (Verne 2015)**

- an instrumental case study within a critical research paradigm ([Stake 2005](#); [Myers Living version](#)).



Description of the case

Chapter 4. The sociomaterial assemblage of doing taxes

- 4.1 SOL - The advisor's workplace
- 4.2 IT in the Tax Administration
- 4.3 The call advisor
- 4.4 The advisor in action
- 4.5 The callers
- 4.6 The call



Description of the case

Chapter 4. The sociomaterial assemblage of doing taxes

- 4.1 SOL - The advisor's workplace
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Example 5.2.1: The caller says that she will retire this month. She has talked with a SOL advisor last Friday, and she has received a form for changing her tax card. She needs help to fill it in. "What is included as income? What goes into entry 5.1?" Kathrine explains that costs for refinancing are deductible. The caller has more money in the bank, and Kathrine explains that she will need to check the value of her car; perhaps she has higher interest incomes now, and she will also need to check "other income". The caller says "This is not so easy; I would not have managed it without you". (20111017-16)

Chapter 5. Into the telephone calls

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)



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)



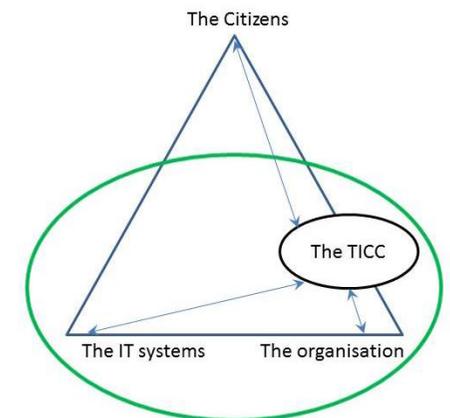
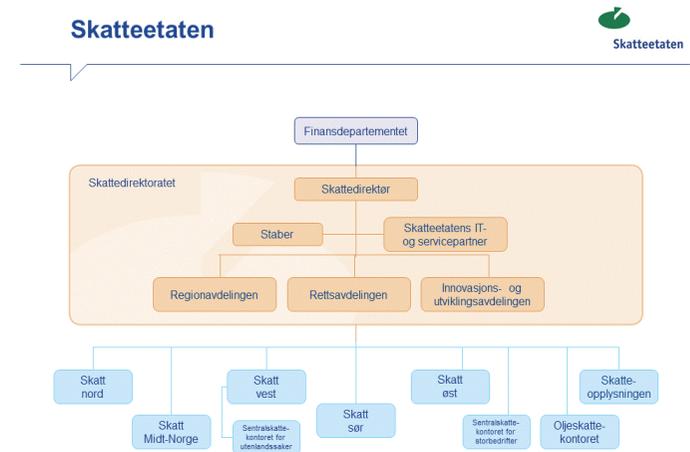
DESCRIBING THE CASE 1

- 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)



Tax advisors	6
SOL Managers	2
Employees in other units of the Tax Administration, working with their web, IT, or usability	6
Employees in an NGO	1
Sum interviews:	15

Table 1: Number of interviews with various groups inside and outside of the Tax Administration.



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