Guidelines for Case Study Research and Teaching

Association of African Planning Schools (AAPS)

Case Research Toolkit

CONTENTS

This toolkit contains teaching and training material on the use of the case study research method in urban planning. It comprises this resource document and an interactive CD.

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THE ROCKEFELLER FOUNDATION

About this project

About the AAPS

The Association of African Planning Schools (AAPS) is a peer-to-peer network of educational institutions offering urban planning and related degrees. The network has been engaged in an initiative, funded by the Rockefeller Foundation, to rethink planning education. It is informed by three core questions:

- How can urban planners be trained to be more relevant and effective?
- How can urban planning researchers capture the many dimensions and realities of African urban spaces?
- How can this knowledge be used to enhance the learning of urban planning students?

At the inaugural workshop of the AAPS held in Cape Town in October 2008, participants spent much time discussing the value of case research in achieving these objectives. As a result, the AAPS initiated a project on case research and documentation, also funded by the Rockefeller Foundation.

About this toolkit

This toolkit (comprising this resource document and an interactive CD) synthesises the content and learning outcomes of three AAPS workshops on case research held in Dar es Salaam, Johannesburg and Accra in 2010. The workshops were designed to enhance participants' theoretical and practical understanding of the case study research method. The toolkit contains many practical insights offered by the workshop facilitators (all of whom have extensive experience of case research in Africa), as well as responses to issues and questions commonly raised by participants.

■ **View *AAPS and Case Research .ppt* – on the CD**

The toolkit provides:

- An **introduction** to the overall philosophy, purpose, and strengths of case research;
- **Practical advice** and tips about the application of case research, including case selection, research design, fieldwork, and drafting;
- **Guidance** on how a simple case study can be incorporated into a planning education programme; and
- **Further resources** to help planning educators develop case teaching approaches, or use case studies as teaching aids.

It is not intended to be a comprehensive manual on case research. It is also not a textbook on research methods. There are many major publications which provide detailed information about the rationale for and methods used in case research, some of which are referred to in this resource. However, it is aimed at elucidating some methodological and conceptual issues, and offering practical advice that are often neglected by academic texts. It should therefore be used to complement existing teaching resources.

www.africanplanningschools.org.za; www.rockefellerfoundation.org

Acknowledgements

This work was made possible by the ongoing funding and support of the Rockefeller Foundation. In this regard, Anna Brown and Katherine Namuddu in particular are acknowledged for their inputs.

The toolkit is based on three workshops facilitated by Dr Fred Lerise and Prof Jørgen Andreassen. Prof Bent Flyvbjerg co-facilitated the pilot workshop in Dar es Salaam. The material was developed by the three facilitators. The work of Prof Flyvbjerg and Dr Lerise in particular needs to be acknowledged, as this formed the template for the workshops. Dr Tumsifu Nnkya and Prof Vanessa Watson also gave extensive inputs.

The workshops and the associated project were co-ordinated by Dr Nancy Odendaal and Prof Vanessa Watson. James Duminy and Heidi Tait provided invaluable support. The first version of these guidelines was prepared by James Duminy.

The text was edited by Riaan De Villiers, and the toolkit was designed and produced by Welma Odendaal Editorial Design.

Photographs by Nancy Odendaal, James Duminy and Welma Odendaal.

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Who should use this toolkit

THE CASE RESEARCH TOOLKIT – comprising this resource document and an interactive CD – has been created for:

- **Urban planning students and researchers** with varying degrees of experience who are considering undertaking case research;
- **Planning educators** interested in case-based teaching, and those seeking to devise educational course work, workshops, small conferences, or field trips based on this approach;
- **Students, academics, or practitioners** interested in conducting case research workshops;
- **Research degree supervisors** who wish to encourage students to use case research;
- **Teachers and trainers** interested in using case research in **related disciplines**;
- Students, academics, or practitioners from any discipline with an interest in **experiential approaches to knowledge-building.**

The toolkit has been designed as a flexible resource for meeting these users' needs.

How to use this toolkit

THE TOOLKIT consists of a series of modules which can be combined in various ways to build different teaching or training outcomes. Each outcome comprises a particular pathway through these teaching/training modules. All the modules appear in this document, as well as on the interactive CD.

The CD also contains a number of supplementary resources, including PowerPoint slides, voice recordings and HTML links, which have been built into the various pathways.

Six outcomes have been configured, namely:

- A **refresher course or academic workshop** on case research
- A **doctoral/postgraduate workshop** on case research, with an emphasis on methodological issues
- A **module on case research** for inclusion in a general course on research methodologies
- A **short teaching input** on the case research method
- A **short field trip** to conduct a concise case study
- Using the case method for **teaching.**

These outcomes are described in greater detail overleaf. To use this toolkit, simply refer to the desired outcome, and follow the appropriate pathway through the relevant modules.

Users can also combine these modules and supplementary resources in other ways that fulfil their particular teaching or training requirements. All the modules included in this document are listed in the table of contents, and all the modules and supplementary resources appear in a live table of contents on the CD. Simply select the components best suited to your needs.

6 teaching/training outcomes

OUTCOME 1. A refresher course or academic workshop on case research

Mid-career academics and researchers may benefit from a short refresher course on the merits of the case study research method, as well as its main tenets. This pathway provides educators with a framework for building such a course.

Pathway: *Modules 1, 2 & 4*

OUTCOME 2. A postgraduate workshop on case research

Postgraduate students wishing to utilise the case study research method need a strong understanding of its epistemological and methodological foundations. This pathway provides a framework for an interactive three- to four-day workshop that will provide them with the necessary insights and tools.

Pathway: *Modules 2, 3, 4 & 5*

OUTCOME 3. A module on case research for a general course on research methodologies

While case study research has traditionally been something of a 'Cinderella' among research methods, it has recently been defended as an important approach to research in the social sciences. This pathway provides the framework for a one-day workshop that will outline the basic features of case research which distinguish it from other research methods.

Pathway: *Modules 1 & 2*

OUTCOME 4. A short teaching input on case research

A shorter input – such as one or two lectures on case research for graduate (or senior undergraduate) students – may be required. This pathway provides a framework for a concise exposition of the essentials of case research.

Pathway: *Modules 1 & 2*

OUTCOME 5. A short field trip to conduct a concise case study

A one- to two-day field trip can provide enough data to build a compact case study. Proper preparation is important, and requires effective planning in order to ensure that the limited timeframe does not detract from the integrity of the study. This pathway provides researchers with a framework for planning an effective field trip.

Pathway: *Modules 1 & 2*

OUTCOME 6. Using case studies as a teaching method

This toolkit is not intended to be a comprehensive pedagogical guide. However, this pathway does provide educators with concise guidelines and principles for case-

About case research

See PowerPoint files:
The Case Study Method;
Case research in Africa

THE CASE STUDY METHOD of social research, or case research, refers to a process in which a case is examined in detail and analysed in depth using research tools most appropriate to the enquiry. This is done developmentally, and over time. It is highly contextual. Data collection and analytical methods can be qualitative or quantitative, depending on what best suits the research question and the type of case.

In comparative case research, researchers compare two or more cases relevant to a particular research question.

Why is case research appropriate to Africa?

Curricula reform by African planning schools requires that teaching content and methods respond to current African urban issues. Teachers and planners need to engage with the many different dimensions of cities on the continent. This has implications for the training of planners, the legislative environments in which planning is practised, and the research capacity of planning educators. Planning academics require the tools and resources to engage with regional and local planning experiences. Learning from this through research, which then informs practice, is the first major objective. The second is to effectively disseminate this learning in order to ensure that planning education remains relevant.

The case format allows for a deeper interrogation of context and a more nuanced understanding of African urban spaces and planning practices. One of the key principles informing the work of the AAPS is that future curricula reform will best be achieved via a deep contextual engagement. The practical and concrete knowledge gained from the interrogation of cases will greatly contribute to the body of research on African cities, and provide material for teaching. The narratives contained in case study documentation sometimes challenge assumptions and preconceived notions of events and trends (Flyvbjerg 2001). The methodological challenge is to identify cases that allow for rich enquiry, are contextually relevant, and contribute to African scholarship.

Case research and planning

Planning is an applied field as well as a profession. In line with this, case research is used in planning in the following ways:

Research: documentation of rich cases for learning and knowledge creation is common in the planning literature. This method is popular with African planning academics, and evident in publications such as *Environment and Urbanization*. The challenge is to use this method to build theory, particularly theory from the Global South (*www.eau.sagepub.com*).

Teaching: Planning education literature on different modalities of studio teaching and forms of case teaching is skewed in favour of the Global North. Established universities such as the Harvard Business School (*www.hbs.edu/learning*) and the Kennedy School of Governance (*www.ksgcase.harvard.edu*) are famous for their interactive use of case studies for experiential learning. The Development

Planning Unit at the University College London (www.ucl.ac.uk/dpu) has a rich bank of information on cases used in teaching. The challenge is to correct this bias and establish a new tradition of using case teaching to advance planning education in the Global South.

Practice: Best practice cases – including those which appear in UN Habitat publications – are widely used for professional learning. Best practice cases are popular, but are sometimes presented uncritically. Context is important.

The advantages of case research

African urban systems are highly complex: we require research methods that are capable of understanding and communicating this institutional, environmental and socio-economic complexity.

Cultivating active participation

A measure of the success of case research is the extent to which those being studied, policy-makers, and other researchers participate in the research. However, many people perceive research as 'the researcher's business'. Why should it involve them? This issue can limit case research in some contexts.

Conventional planning theory is heavily biased towards experiences in Northern countries, and its relevance to the African urban context is questionable (Watson 2002). Conventional planning education also generally fails to provide graduates with the skills they need to understand and negotiate the power relations that cut across developmental contexts. We require teaching approaches that emphasise the importance of local contexts as a determinant of planning processes.

Towards a Southern research method?

Like much of planning theory, case research also has Northern origins. Is there potential for a research method originating in the Global South? And how would it differ from current practices?

Case research could play a valuable role in analysing and teaching African urban planning systems, but is underpractised in Africa.

Case research is well-suited to analysing complex planning processes, as it involves a detailed study of developmental factors (i.e. changes over time), and emphasises the importance of local and regional contexts.

Any research method should be judged in terms of its capacity to help planning praxis achieve certain ideals. One of the strengths of case research is its usefulness for analysing power relations, as well as issues relating to ethics and values in social action. It can aid in the struggle for democratic, accountable, and inclusive planning practice by explaining how decisions are taken, to what end, and to whose benefit. Value constructs are informed by contextual specifics, and can be uncovered in the course of case research. Revealing power relations are vital to an understanding of the unequal distribution of spaces and resources (Nnkya 2008).

Lastly, different post-colonial experiences have created varying conditions across the continent, which case research can potentially reveal.

References

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More about case studies

THE WEBSTER'S NEW COLLEGIATE DICTIONARY defines a case study as 'the intensive analysis of an individual unit (as a person or community) stressing developmental factors in relation to environment'.

'Intensive analysis' refers to the fact that case studies are rigorous and exhaustive analyses which demand a great deal from researchers. However, case studies do not have to take years or decades to complete; even a single day's intensive research can be turned into a case study, depending on what you want to analyse.

As the definition points out, a case study involves the analysis of a unit, which defines the minimum level of your study. The three basic units of analysis are the individual, the household, and the community. You could, for example, investigate the effects of a planning intervention at one of these levels.

'Developmental factors' refers to the fact that case studies essentially involve the analysis of changes occurring over a certain period. They therefore record and analyse a dynamic process rather than a static set of circumstances, or state of affairs. This reflects the case study's emphasis on the question of 'how' – how did this situation come about? This requires researchers to analyse the process by which a state of affairs came into existence.

'Environment' refers to the case study's concern with building an understanding of the various factors surrounding a given process. Social action cannot be reduced to predefined elements or 'structures' that are not connected to context and the interpretations of researchers. Thus case studies always involve relating particular events or actions to their contexts, which may be local or global, political-economic or social, discursive or physical / environmental. They focus on actors as well as structures, with the intention of showing actors in relation to structures rather than granting analytical primacy to either structure or agency.

The patient and the illness

The choice of a suitable case depends on the research question. It is difficult to create a good research question if the focus of a given study has not been clarified. The researcher should have a precise understanding of how the object of analysis (the patient) relates to the investigation of the problem (the illness). A lack of clarity can lead to two polarised analytical tendencies: insufficient reference to empirical evidence (i.e. too much attention given to the illness or its context without reference to the patient); or too much interest in the immediate circumstances of the case without reflecting adequately on the generic issues which it may (or may not) represent. The illness informs the research question, while the patient acts as a vehicle for analysing the illness and answering the question.

- View ***What is a case study.ppt*** on the CD

The case study as research method

The case study research method and its use in social science is often misunderstood and misrepresented. It has its own set of techniques and methods, and its own rules. The fact that the researcher allows the story of a particular case to unfold, with all its unexpected elements, potential surprises, and contradictions, means that case research is deeply contextual. This often leads to a questioning of the assumptions underpinning social policy – including urban planning policy – and its implementation.

It is widely believed that one cannot generalise on the basis of an individual case, and that, as a result, case studies cannot contribute to scientific knowledge. However, this is incorrect; one can often generalise on the basis of a single case, and this can contribute significantly to the development of scientific insights, either as a supplement or alternative to other research methods. Formal generalisation is widely overvalued as a source of scientific development, while 'the power of the good example is underestimated' (Flyvbjerg 2001:77).

Why case research?

The study of human affairs does not easily lend itself to universal truths and accurate predictions; therefore, as Flyvbjerg has noted, concrete, context-dependent knowledge is 'more valuable in the study of human affairs than the vain search for predictive theories and universals' (Flyvbjerg 2001:73).

Case studies are eminently suited to reaching these sorts of insights. They are useful for disproving generalisations which ignore context, and for reaching a deeper understanding of ways in which wider forces are manifested at the local level.

Case study research is a form of learning created – and enhanced – by the situatedness of the researcher. The intersubjectivity of the scientist and the subject of study allows for a more authentic and nuanced understanding of a given problem.

The case study method also allows for an uncovering of the dynamics of power as well as the role of values – what those values are, and how they vary in different contexts.

The value of stories

‘ … We set out to explore how the planning system was put to work in the management of land use change in Moshi Town …’ (Nnkya, 2008:291)

‘ The reader was deliberately taken through a long journey … the intention being to show, rather than tell what happened …’ (Nnkya 2008:291)

‘ It has been the intention to enable the reader to come to her or his own interpretation of what the case study has shown …’ ‘it has been the intention to enable the reader…’ (Nnkya, 2008:291)

These quotes from a book entitled *Why planning does not work* (2008) by the Tanzanian urban planner Tumsifu Nnkya, touches on some of the most cogent aspects of case study research.

The book seeks to cast light on land allocation processes in Tanzania by examining land allocation in a single location: the town of Moshi in the Kilimanjaro region of Tanzania. By ‘taking the reader on a journey’, i.e., by telling a story, Nnkya reveals processes of exclusion, insensitivity to land rights, and conflicting perceptions of land value as key factors contributing to the ineffectiveness of planning in that country. Nnkya likens this process to opening a ‘black box’, which the reader helps to do, in answering the rather weighty research question: why does planning not work in Tanzania?

Tumsifu Nnkya tells his story.

There is a plan for Moshi; it has a chief town planner and staff; and property rights are exchanged on a regular basis; yet the process hasn’t worked. Why is this the case?

Nnkya tells a story in order to provide the answer.

- Listen to the voicefile *Nnkya.mp3* on the CD

The issue of how and why

When researchers start by asking why something has occurred, they are forced to engage immediately with all the intractable theoretical and practical issues relating to causality. However, when they start by asking how, they allow the question of why to enter the research process in a much less pressurised way.

A classic case study pays close attention to reality and focuses on the details of events as they actually happened. The real value of the case study is its capacity to show what has actually happened in a given setting, and how. Therefore, researchers adopting this method face the challenge of constructing a detailed case study that other researchers and practitioners can relate to their own situations, thus helping them to improve their insights and judgments about their respective areas of enquiry.

Thus, providing a detailed description of events, and placing them in their real-life context, enhances a case study’s explanatory power, as well as its wider validity.

Presenting the case study

Classical case studies are dialogical. This means that they allow the reader to test them against his or her own experiences or field of interest, thus contributing to an ongoing social and political dialogue. The dialogical attitude is based on the idea that no single voice can claim final authority in matters of knowledge and truth. It requires trusting the communicative dynamics of the public sphere in addition to the outputs of scientific study. In line with this, producing a case study often involves two-way communication with 'dialogue partners' such as case actors, research colleagues, members of the public, and the media. Capturing a 'polyphony of voices' is one of the hallmarks of definitive case study research.

The narrative is a powerful way of presenting case studies: it involves giving a detailed account of events as they actually happened.

Issues of feedback and validation are central to the case study research method. Case studies require the active participation of the subjects of research as well as the researchers involved, other members of the research community, as well as policy-makers.

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Selecting a suitable case

- View *Case selection.ppt* on the CD
- Listen to *Case selection.m4a* on the CD

When selecting a case, you are interested in its richness in dealing with the relevant research question(s). You should ask, is this case a good example to learn from? Is it easy to manage? Do I have ready access to case location and data?

To allow the continuous interpretation of a set of related events, the fewer cases you select, the better. Thus case selection is strategic, as those selected may have many purposes.

Case selection is effectively illustrated by the 'good patient' metaphor. In medicine, a 'good patient' has an 'illness' that provides a 'challenge to medical practitioners'. Through that challenge an illness becomes better understood, and this can be elaborated for other medical practitioners to learn from.

Case research may have shortcomings in terms of creating generalised knowledge, which reflects a basic difference between the social and natural sciences. This results from the highly contextual nature of social action. Case research does not allow findings and conclusions to be generalised to all other cases (i.e. those with different contexts), but it does allow generalisation to theory, and the formulation of theoretical propositions.

The idea that generalisations cannot be made on the basis of a single case is a common misunderstanding. It can be done, and the case study is ideally suited for the scientific test known as 'falsification'.

Choosing a case

Be personal, because everything else is not true

Case selection is partially determined by your personal interest in an issue or problem. Be open about your personal motivations for doing the research.

How do you identify a good case? The honest answer is that there are no predetermined criteria for case selection. However, you should always keep in mind what it is you wish to understand and reveal through your case study. What is the problematic phenomenon that you wish to investigate, and how should it relate to a potential case so that you can learn from it? Having a clear understanding of this issue is vital for designing a good case study.

One of the perceived shortcomings of case research is its incapacity to generate theories that are independent of context. It is true that the 'primacy of context' in case study research makes it more difficult to generalise. However, as Flyvbjerg (2001) has shown, case studies can be used for formulating theoretical propositions, and are particularly suited to subjecting existing hypotheses to the scientific test known as 'falsification' (see the section on 'generalisation from cases' below).

Despite these difficulties, and the absence of general principles for predicting whether one case would be 'better' or 'richer' than another, certain criteria should be kept in mind when selecting a case. One would be your personal interest – a desire to study and address a problem which interests you particularly strongly, or even involves you emotionally. Others would be the probable richness of a case for analysis and learning,

The patient and the illness

It is difficult to create a good research question if the focus of a study is not clear. You should have a precise understanding of how the object of analysis (the patient) relates to the investigation of the problem (the illness). A lack of clarity can lead to two polarised analytical tendencies: insufficient reference to empirical evidence (i.e., too much attention given to the illness or context without reference to the patient); or too much interest in the immediate circumstances of the case without reflecting adequately on the generic issues which it may (or may not) represent. The illness informs the research question, while the patient acts as a particular vehicle for analysing that illness and answering the question.

and the degree to which its findings would be conducive to generalisation.

A useful way of conceptualising the case selection process is the 'good patient' metaphor. If a scientist wishes to study a particular illness, he or she will seek a patient infected with that illness, who provides a challenge to medical practitioners. Through that challenge an illness becomes better understood, and can be elaborated for other medical practitioners to learn from. It is imperative that you carefully consider the characteristics of the patient (the case) and the illness (the problematic phenomenon manifest by the case) before embarking upon your research. What is the relation between the patient and the illness? How does this patient differ from other patients in terms of this relation? Which aspects of the illness are knowable through the patient?

Several highly important practical considerations should also inform your case selection. For one, you need access to the case location and to case data. This may take the form of physical and/or political access. Can you visit the case location(s) often enough to develop a 'feel' for its specific geographic, social and institutional context? Are the necessary travel costs in your research budget? Political and institutional considerations are also very important. Is the data stored in an accessible way, or is it reserved for 'insiders'? Do the case actors wish to talk to you, and trust you enough reveal their 'real' rather than 'public' opinions? Producing a good case requires intimate inside knowledge of key events and actors. It requires breaking through the surface of 'how things appear' to reach the messy, ambiguous world of 'how things are'.

Many researchers have failed in their attempts at case study research due to political and interpersonal barriers. Before finally selecting your case, it is vital to consider all the potential obstacles to access.

Deciding on the purpose of your case is a particularly important and difficult process. Certain types of case are more conducive to achieving particular research objectives. If your basic objective is to acquire a great deal of information about a particular problem or phenomenon, 'typical cases' may not be the most appropriate (see Table 1). Typical or average cases often do not reveal as much information as atypical or extreme ones, which 'activate more actors and more basic mechanisms in the situation studied' (Flyvbjerg 2001:78). Random sampling approaches aimed at producing representative samples may be relevant to 'describe the symptoms of a problem and how frequently they occur', but will rarely provide insights into 'the deeper causes behind a problem and its consequences' (ibid.). Table 1 summarises various strategies for case selection, emphasising that the type of case you select depends upon the purpose for which you intend it.

Table 1: Strategies of case selection for different case types

Type of selection	Purpose of selection	Type of case
Random selection (random sample or stratified sample)	To avoid systematic biases in the sample. The sample size determines its generalisability. Random sampling seeks a representative sample allowing for generalisation for the entire population. Stratified sampling seeks to generalise for specific population subgroups.	Typical/representative
Information-oriented selection (cases are selected on the basis of expectations about their information content)	To obtain information on unusual cases, 'which can be especially problematic or especially good in a more closely defined sense'.	Extreme/deviant
	To obtain information about how a particular variable affects case process and outcome; e.g. three to four cases which differ greatly in one respect (size, location, etc.).	Maximum variation
	To achieve information permitting deductions of the type, 'if this is (not) valid for this case, then it applies to all (no) cases.'	Critical
	To develop a metaphor or establish a school for the domain which the case depicts.	Paradigmatic

Source: Adapted from Flyvbjerg 2001:79.

An example of critical case selection

An educational science researcher wishes to investigate whether a particular national educational policy aimed at boosting student performance has had a positive effect. Rather than conducting a representative sample survey, the researcher chooses to study a single institution where the new educational policy has been carefully implemented. This institution becomes a critical case, because if its students have not improved, those at other institutions are unlikely to have improved either. This saves the researcher time and money in investigating the problem.

Strategies of case selection are not always mutually exclusive. A case can be extreme, critical, and paradigmatic all at once, and may therefore be a particularly rich source of information, 'because one obtains various perspectives and conclusions on the case according to whether it is viewed and interpreted as one or another type of case' (Flyvbjerg 2001:81).

The key features of the case selection process may be summarised as follows:

- Select a case that interests you deeply;
- Consider ease of access to case location;
- Consider ease of access to case data (including assurances from gatekeepers);
- Evaluate whether the case really illuminates your area of interest;
- Decide on the purpose of the case;
- Select a case that makes best use of your time and resources. Is one case enough?

Generalising from cases

The 'generalisability' of a case can be increased by selecting critical cases. These are cases which are strategically important in respect of the problem being studied. They permit generalisations of the following kind: 'If it is (not) valid for this case, it is (not) valid for all, or many, cases.'

There are no 'universal methodological principles' for identifying a critical case with certainty. 'The only general advice that can be given is that when looking for critical cases, it is a good idea to look for either "most likely" or "least likely" cases, that is, cases which are likely either clearly to confirm or irrefutably to falsify propositions and hypotheses' (Flyvbjerg 2001:78).

Cases of the 'most likely' type are useful for falsifying propositions. For example, a hypothesis that informal urban settlements are sites of social disorganisation can be irrefutably falsified by the observation that social organisation is indeed present in a particularly poor settlement that is generally recognised as a 'most likely' site of disorganisation.

A paradigmatic case

Historians such as Thomas Kuhn and Michel Foucault organised their research around 'specific cultural paradigms'. Foucault used the examples of European prisons and particularly the Benthamite 'Panopticon' to illustrate some of the general characteristics of post-Enlightenment society and associated spatial and governmental practices. It may be particularly difficult for a researcher to pre-emptively identify a paradigmatic case (i.e. one with metaphorical and prototypical value), but if found and presented properly, the paradigmatic case 'shines' – it provides a generally accessible metaphor for understanding the extremely complex intersection of discourse, action, and context in society.

Cases of the 'least likely' type are useful for verifying propositions. The hypothesis that informal modes of service provision are ubiquitous in African urbanisation can be confirmed by observing that even wealthy residents of a publicly serviced and maintained neighbourhood in a relatively affluent African city are dependent upon informal service arrangements.

Specific advice on critical case selection is, as Flyvbjerg points out, very difficult to provide. This is equally so for 'paradigmatic cases'. Ultimately, selecting a 'good case' depends strongly on a researcher's experience, or perhaps even a vague 'hunch' that a particular case is rich in information and learning potential. These facts are somewhat problematic in institutional contexts where researchers are meant to observe rigorous criteria for selecting cases, and justify their decisions. Flyvbjerg puts the dilemma succinctly: 'A research council ideally operates as society's test of whether the researcher can provide collectively acceptable reasons for the researcher's intuitive choice, even though intuition may be the real reason why the researcher wants to execute the project' (2001:81).

You know when you have a good case

There are no hard and fast criteria for determining 'what is a good case'. The selection process is always associated with your experience and intuition as a researcher. Cases are often selected intuitively, and justified afterwards. This is not necessarily a problem: many intuitively selected cases turn out to be exemplary. Post-selection justification can be viewed as a 'test' of the collective acceptability of your intuitions, and will give you the confidence to proceed with that case study.

How to make your case 'generalisable'

During the research stage:

- **construct and present the stories in detail in their relevant context;**
- **devise chapter headings to represent the progress of the 'plot';**
- **test the case design in feedback sessions;**
- **make it clear what your case is about: be clear about the 'illness' your 'patient' is suffering from.**

Following research activities:

- **present some of the stories in seminars and workshops with other researchers;**
- **publish the case in journals, books, or in the media.**

The requirement that case researchers should justify their selection, even if this was not based on predefined criteria, is not necessarily problematic. Retrospective justification 'can be the ex-post test of whether individual intuitive reasons are also generally valid and collectively acceptable' (Flyvbjerg 2001:80-81).

'We have noted that the generality of case studies may be increased by strategically selecting critical cases. Indeed, the case study is well suited for generalising through the 'falsification' test – the idea that a scientific or theoretical proposition ('all swans are white') can be invalidated by just a single observation (a black swan). What are some of the practical means by which case study generalisability can be promoted?

Generalising from case research findings is about making these findings the basis for action, not only in the study area but also elsewhere, nationally and internationally. You can make the findings from your case study generalisable by ensuring their 'relatability' and 'transferability'. This means that readers should be able to relate their situations to that of the case. They should also be able to transfer insights offered by the case to their own lives as a means of improving their practical judgement.

The strength of a case study is its capacity to show what happened and how, but it must be made 'generalisation friendly' by representing stories and events in detail, in their relevant contexts. In sum, the challenge is to construct a detailed case that increases the possibility for comparison and knowledge transfer by locating the case in its real-life context.

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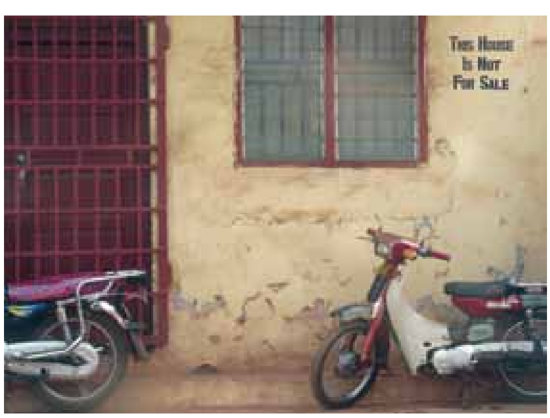

Collecting and analysing data

Listen to *Methods and context*.mp3 on the CD

Too often, social scientists, including urban planning researchers, adopt an either/or approach to the question of whether to undertake qualitative or quantitative research. Flyvbjerg argues that the strict separation of these two research methods is spurious, 'an unfortunate artefact of power relations and time constraints in graduate training', rather than a logical approach to securing the best research outcomes (2006: 242). He further holds that:

'[G]ood social science is opposed to an either/or, and stands for a both/and on the question of qualitative versus quantitative methods. Good social science is problem-driven and not methodology-driven in the sense that it employs those methods that for a given problematic, best help answer the research questions at hand. More often than not, a combination of qualitative and quantitative methods will do the task best' (2006: 242)

Therefore, in certain circumstances a 'mixed' approach can greatly enhance research findings – particularly when assessing initiatives according to their proclaimed/predicted outcomes. For example, did a particular planning intervention result in the promised or predicted levels of socio-economic development? Determining the overall social and economic impacts of any planning process will rely on 'hard quantitative facts' (e.g., how many jobs were created? What was the average increase in income?) as well as 'soft qualitative data' (e.g. how were perceptions, dispositions and livelihood practices changed?). Ultimately, the balance of quantitative and qualitative methods and findings depends on the object being studied and your intentions for the research – what is it about the 'patient' and the 'illness' that you want to learn?

Main principles of data collection

Closeness to data sources and factuality

Being close to your data sources is important. Investigating individuals, households or communities requires the development of trust, allowing you to gather information as an 'insider'. Suspicion of 'outsiders' is nearly always a problem for case study researchers, and can result in a lack of access to respondents, the withholding of information by interviewees, or the recollection of biased versions of actual events. Remember, though, that the veracity of responses can be checked with triangulation techniques (i.e., comparing data on the same subject from different sources) and feedback procedures (*see Module 3*).

Wear dirty shoes

Building trust with actors and communities may require making small gestures, and projecting a certain image of yourself and your work. It is often advisable to avoid a formal 'clipboard' approach. Accept a cup of tea from your host, even if you have seen the dirty water from which it was made!

Having a 'descriptive relationship' with data

Your task as a case researcher is to collect and analyse as many facts as possible about a particular event or phenomenon, and to produce an honest and detailed account of events. Your key challenges are to construct a detailed case study that planning practitioners can relate to their own situations and use to improve their own judgement; and to place the case in its real-life context in order to enhance its value as a good example to learn from. For case study data collection and analysis, the researcher requires a historian's open, patient and meticulous attitude to facts; his or her role is to present the 'facts as they are', to describe the process as it unfolds or previously unfolded, while minimising subjective interpretation. Leave the task of interpretation to the reader.

Types and sources of data in case study research

Given that a case study entails an in-depth analysis of processes, actors and events, research can and should draw upon a wide variety of data sources and types in order to explain 'how things actually happened'. Case data may include artefacts, statistics, recorded actions and the outcomes of decisions, as well as data that may be regarded as unconventional and 'unreliable' by mainstream, theory-oriented social science.

Case researchers are particularly interested in the activities and behaviour of relevant actors, including subtle observations of language, intonation and 'body language', besides more overt actions such as meetings, resolutions, consensus-seeking, conflicts, and so on. Case research seeks to record not only actions, but also inactions – if actor A fails to act on decision X, this is regarded as just as important and worthy of as much explanatory attention as any other fact.

Potential data sources include plans and reports, maps and photos, gatherings and meetings (including minutes), official letters, interviews, quantitative surveys, media articles, recorded and unrecorded informants, and the physical environment or landscape, among others. In-depth interviews are particularly significant sources of information, and rich interview data (using extensive direct quotations) are a hallmark of good case research. That is because interviews can reveal 'hidden' agendas and perspectives as well as values and power relations, which enrich your understanding of real-world processes.

- **View *Data Collection 1.ppt* and *Data Collection 2.ppt* on the CD**

Planning data collection and analysis

Most case studies involve different forms and methods of data collection. Analysing documents, surveying procedures, and interviewing actors are common and important examples. A key question that pre-empts the actual collection of data is how to order these different methods of collection. In other words, how should the researcher plan document analysis, preliminary interviews, quantitative surveys, and in-depth interviews in order to extract the maximum amount of useful information?

Different researchers will answer this question in different ways. A typical sequence of data collection is as follows:

1. Explorative interviews and observation ('wandering around' or 'hanging out' at the case location).
2. Document analysis (records, diaries, reports, memorandums and minutes, etc.), aimed at: establishing the chronology of case events and the 'eventualisation' of actions and processes; identifying key case actors; developing targeted lines of questioning for in-depth interviews; and providing a basis for triangulating and verifying interview results. Document analysis is essential for a good case study. Conducting a preliminary document analysis before embarking on in-depth interviews is usually advisable. Be careful to treat documents critically, and watch out for fake minutes.
3. In-depth interviews, broadly aiming to uncover 'hidden' values and attitudes; gain access to 'behind the scenes' perspectives; uncover power relations active in the case; and to make cross-checks of some actors' statements against others.

It is generally possible to analyse documents and conduct interviews in parallel. However, it is usually unwise to conduct quantitative surveys at the same time as other collection methods. Surveys should be 'inserted' into the data collection sequence when you think the time is right to secure quantitative information about an issue. The precise timing of the quantitative survey is crucial in order to maximise its explanatory potential. For example, if it is created and distributed too early in the research process, it may be rendered meaningless by subsequent qualitative findings, which change your perspective on the research problem at hand. In other words, you may find that your survey targeted and investigated the wrong aspect of the problem only after it has been completed.

Keeping a case journal …

Allows you to sort and store data as it is collected. Early data categorisation facilitates initial data analysis.
Indicates the volume and distribution of data amongst research question areas.
Draws your attention to gaps in the case data.
Facilitates referencing when writing up your findings.

1. BACKGROUND/CONTEXT: events outside the case but relevant to the story
2. LAND USAGE DECISIONS CHANGE OVER TIME: what is happening on the land?
3. ACTORS AND FRAME OF REFERENCE: customary, ujaama and villagisation; irrigation project
4. LAND USE: land usage plans and planning influence changes in land usage
5. RESULTS/OUTCOMES FROM ACTIONS: social, economical and environmental

'Eventualising' the case

Those events and actions that have been discovered and categorised in the case journal can be extracted and sequenced in an Events Chart. Use the chart to structure and write the case narrative:

1. **Create a sequence of the events plus their date, location and sources of information.**
2. **Add relevant contextual information.**
3. **Link the events with appropriate words.**

The actual data collection sequence will vary according to your particular case and research objectives. In reality, different stages of data collection are never completely separate: you will probably have to analyse documents while you are conducting interviews. Yet it is still necessary to depict these stages as discrete in order to give the overall research design a 'logical flow'.

Organise your data collection and analysis around a case journal. This is a database (a flip file, dividing folder, computerised spreadsheet, etc.) divided into various research themes or subcases. Any case can be subdivided into several 'constituent parts' that relate to the research question(s). Structure the case journal according to these constituent parts. Then cut and paste data from different sources to relevant sections within the journal. Remember to keep uncut copies of all transcripts and documents (etc.) in a separate file, in case you may need them at a later stage. Those events and actions that have been discovered and categorised in the case journal can then be extracted and sequenced in an events chart.

The Events Chart

- **It shows how actors drive the case processes.**
- **It reveals those who are expected to act but fail to do so: What made them not act?**
- **It helps the researcher to eventualise the case.**
- **It clearly indicates different sources of information and thus helps to ensure the factuality of research findings, through 'triangulation'.**

Example of an Events Chart

When did it happen?	• What happened? • How and where? • With what outcomes (relevant to research questions)?	Sources of information	Case Actors and their institutions (who?)				**Remarks** • Relate event to the case • Indicate potential respondents
			1	2	3	…	
7/11/2010	Actor 2 wrote to Actor 3 and requested a meeting (re. security planning at WC stadiums)	Document		x	x		Consensus-seeking turnaround by Actor 2. Confirm with Actor 1.

Selecting and performing interviews

Interviews with relevant actors are a key means of gathering qualitative data. However, mastering the art of the qualitative interview is not easy; it takes considerable skill and experience to extract detailed 'insider' information from a respondent. The truth is that most people are unwilling to reveal their 'real' personal experiences and opinions as opposed to their 'public' opinions, especially in cases where they do not trust the interviewer / researcher. In this section we provide some practical tips for planning and conducting interviews.

First, there is no substitute for conducting interviews in person. Some researchers employ assistants to conduct and transcribe interviews, but the responses are invariably distorted in the transcription process. This means that you will receive a 'filtered' version of events which will always be far less insightful than observing the responses at first hand.

Second, it is important to think carefully about whom to interview. Some potential interviewees would have been more deeply involved in relevant events than others, and are capable of providing more meaningful and reliable information. Moreover, some people are more open, verbally gifted, and self-reflective than others. Finally, you should also take into account practical considerations. Does the potential interviewee have the time to speak to you, and you can gain access to him or her?

Preparing for interviews, including formulating questions and lines of questioning, is vital. This should be informed by the overall objectives of the study, as well as the research question(s). Findings from document analysis can also be useful. Essentially, you should think carefully beforehand about how you wish to balance empathic and critical (fault-finding) questions; how to sequence the interview, and the types of information you would like to gather. Different people will respond to the same sets of questions in different ways, and you may have to allow for this. Therefore, it might be a good idea to test your questions on colleagues as a means of gauging the potential range of responses, and to clarify their meanings where necessary.

When conducting an interview, observe the maxim, 'Events first, concepts later'. Remember that the strength of case study research lies in its emphasis on developmental factors – on how a particular process unfolded. Therefore, most questions should (at least initially) target the events and personal stories that constituted this process. Interviewers must give respondents room to build their accounts in their own words. This means you should ask open-ended questions, and listen patiently to the responses. Insisting on the use of theoretical concepts can result in respondents providing an altered account of events. Start the interview with general, exploratory questions and solicit descriptive answers. Let the interviewee 'settle in' and become comfortable with your questions. Only introduce critical issues towards the end.

Good respondents

Good interview respondents are those with:

- **Experience of the case history and related events**
- **Relevant information**
- **Differing values and perspectives**
- **The capacity and willingness for self-reflection**
- **Good verbal competency**
- **A degree of 'openness' to other people**
- **The time to conduct interviews**
- **The appropriate 'level' of involvement in the case (did they participate in the decisions you are trying to investigate?)**

Translating interviews

In many cases it is necessary to conduct interviews in one language and translate them afterwards. This hinges on an accurate and comprehensive transcript. If research assistants are employed to conduct interviews, they must be well-trained, familiar with the research objectives, and reliable transcribers. It may also be necessary to retain certain expressions in their original form, if they are not easily translatable.

An interview is essentially a conversation – a dialogical engagement aimed at uncovering the 'real story' behind a sequence of events; it is not a simple input-and-response session. As such, try to keep eye contact with the interviewee (although in some cases cultural differences may make this impossible or ill-advised). This means using a voice recorder, and refraining from excessive note-taking – instead, do whatever it takes to extract their story. But be prepared to be flexible: in some cases your lack of activity (i.e. writing) may seem suspicious (why are you simply looking at them without writing anything down?). If you sense such discomfort, use more ink!

Always use your ears and eyes. The substantive content of verbal statements is not your only source of qualitative information. Unconventional data sources, such as language, intonation and body language are also emphasised within case study research. Take care to observe your interview's surroundings: do the respondent's statements agree with what you see? Observe their body language and take note of the language and intonation used. Do they appear uncomfortable, or perhaps too comfortable, with what they are saying? Such incongruencies can be important findings, as they may reveal hidden agendas and power relations at work. Be prepared to use your intuition in such cases.

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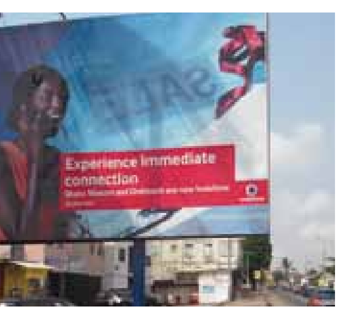
Building a narrative

View the file *Narrative _1. ppt* on the CD

WHILE CASE STUDIES can be presented in various ways, this often involves 'a substantial element of narrative', which is necessary to adequately describe the complexity and ambiguity of real-world events and processes. 'Good narratives typically approach the complexities and contradictions of real life. Accordingly, such narratives may be difficult or impossible to summarise in neat scientific formulae, general propositions, and theories' (Flyvbjerg 2001: 84).



The narrative is a powerful way of presenting complex case study findings: it involves giving a detailed account of events as they actually happened. The essence of the narrative approach is to tell a valid and coherent story. To narrate is to tell a story, to give an account of incidents or events by combining qualitative and quantitative data. A good narrative makes it impossible for the reader to ask, 'So what?'

A good narrative progresses from 'harmony' to 'conflict,' and then to 'harmony at a higher level'. Nearly all folk tales, regardless of cultural background, follow this basic structure. It arrests the attention of the audience or reader, and enables you to present your research findings in a common, understandable form.

Basic characteristics of the narrative approach

The basic purpose of a narrative approach is to tell a valid and coherent story. Put differently, to narrate something is to tell a story in some detail.

- A 'story' is an account of a series of interlinked or mutually influential incidents or events; a process, or a range of facts pertinent to a situation in question.
- To 'tell' (in the academic context) is to count, to make known, to give an account of events which combines qualitative and quantitative data.
- To examine something 'in detail' is to cut it into pieces, to itemise it, and to pay extended attention to particular elements, keeping in mind their relation to the broader 'whole'.

Producing a narrative always begins with empirical reality: actual events in a given set of circumstances.

The key questions underpinning a narrative are:

- How did a state of affairs come about?
- How were particular events and actions perceived and interpreted by relevant actors?
- How were subsequent actions affected as a result?

Answering these questions requires a detailed examination of real-world processes. Theoretical considerations then emerge in response to these empirical accounts; they do not pre-empt and predetermine the analysis, as is often the case with structuralist approaches.

Starting with a close examination of reality, and allowing theoretical considerations to emerge as the analysis proceeds, requires a particular sensibility on the part of the researcher-narrator. Thus Flyvbjerg notes that, 'in order to stay close to the complexities and contradictions of existence, case researchers … demur from the role of omniscient narrator and summariser in favour of gradually allowing the case narrative to unfold from the diverse, complex, and sometimes conflicting stories that people, documents, and other evidence tell them' (2001:86). Therefore, researchers conducting case studies must cultivate a patient, detached, and pre-conceptual perspective of events and processes. Such processes may seem incomprehensively complex at first glance. Producing a valid and coherent account of events means taking time to reflect on findings, deferring personal judgements, and giving the story space to emerge and achieve coherence on its own accord. The story is an open process, which changes as new facts and interpretations come to light.

Even when published, the case study should not be thought of as 'closed' or 'finished'. A good narrative does not seek to 'instruct' the reader about the meaning and value of a case in a unidirectional way; rather, it encourages a dialogical attitude by leaving room for the reader to develop his or her own interpretations and conclusions. It allows for the reader's 'voice' to enter the research, alongside the voices of case narrators and actors. The narrative approach is therefore a primary means of ensuring that case research involves a polyphony of voices.

'Don't tell me, show me … '

In order to 'show,' good case study narrators make extensive use of direct quotes, yet avoid overanalysing their content. A general guide for researchers is to include direct quotations in a ratio of 1:3 with the main text. Refer to the quotes when necessary, but be wary of 'overstretching the facts' by imposing your interpretation. Observe the proposition, 'the best quotes don't need to be explained'.

Plot structure is a crucial aspect of any story. The account may be full of vivid detail, expressed in consummate language, emphatic rhythm, and visual metaphor, but if the overall plot is unsatisfactory, the story will have little meaning. Good stories take you on a journey; they unsettle and disturb at first, but gradually guide you towards a cathartic resolution. As such, case studies progress according to the same basic structure: from 'harmony' through 'conflict' to 'harmony at a higher level.'

- The beginning, a plateau that sets the scene: *harmony*;
- The introduction of a tension whose resolution is not obvious: *conflict*;
- The ending, a new plateau where the *conflict* is resolved or at least explained: *harmony at a higher level.*

Elements of Plot 1

Time
Place / location
Actors
Actions
Consequences
Tension / conflict
Context
Questions to tease out the plot:
When?
Where?
Who?
What?
How?
Why?
With what consequences?
Who gains and who loses?

- **Listen to Vanessa Watson telling her story; *Watson.mp3* on the CD**

The two plots

A case narrative involves two 'plots'. Plot 1 is concerned with actual sequences of actions and events. Plot 2 is the conceptual and theoretical plot, comprising all the theoretical propositions made in the course of the study. These plotlines are integrated within the narrative, and the researcher moves between the two as the story progresses.

Plot 1 is concerned with actual processes: sequences of actions and events. It is the story created in response to the questions: when, where, who, how, why, to what end, and for whose loss or benefit? Plot 2 is a conceptual and theoretical account, comprising all the propositions made by means of the case narrative. The task of the skilful narrator is to weave these plot lines together; to move between the 'real world' and the 'conceptual' world. It is sometimes suggested that the best case narratives rarely refer to Plot 2 through theoretical propositions – the 'propositions' are implicit in the 'real world' plot; they reveal themselves to the reader without need for explanation. This is no easy task; few people write well enough to artfully weave together complex events and insights into a clear and understandable form. Nevertheless, when done properly the case method is unparalleled in the interest and insight it can evoke.

View the file *Narrative_2.ppt* on the CD

Feedback and verification

A good case narrative has been rigorously checked for validity and reliability. Effective feedback and validation procedures are therefore vital. They will give you confidence in the veracity of your account of events.

Feedback and validation can be achieved in different ways. Two particularly effective methods are as follows:

A basic narrative progression

'Once upon a time there lived in a certain village a little country girl, the prettiest creature who was ever seen. Her mother was excessively fond of her; and her grandmother doted on her still more. This good woman had a little red riding hood made for her. It suited the girl so extremely well that everybody called her Little Red Riding Hood. One day her mother, having made some cakes, said to her, 'Go, my dear, and see how your grandmother is doing, for I hear she has been very ill. Take her a cake, and this little pot of butter.' Little Red Riding Hood set out immediately to go to her grandmother, who lived in another village. [HARMONY] As she was going through the wood, she met with a wolf, who had a very great mind to eat her up, [CONFLICT] but he dared not, because of some woodcutters working nearby in the forest' [HARMONY AT A HIGHER LEVEL]
Nearly all folk stories, regardless of cultural context, follow this progression (think of famous children's stories, movies and books).

Send respondents your written account of your interviews with them. This will enable them to identify any omissions, discrepancies, and misinterpretations. If the interview was conducted in a different language, they will also be able to correct poor translations. This may also provide you with an opportunity for a second interview, in order to discuss problems and possible amendments.

Structuring case narratives

Structure the narrative before data collection

Allow the structure to change

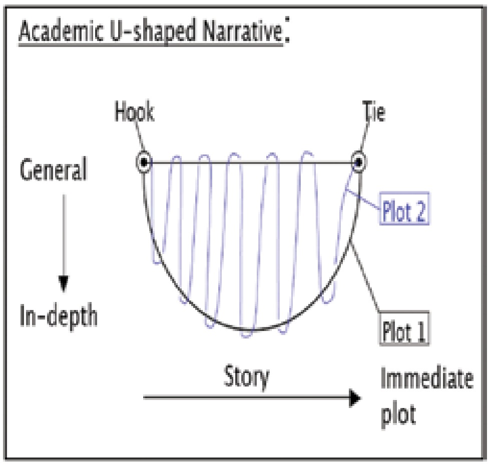
Use chronology to build the structure

Use actors to build the structure

Develop a good 'hook:' a particularly captivating event/problem or situation that leads into the main story

Develop a good 'tie:' a paragraph that sums up your study particularly well

Use small hooks to keep the reader interested, but not too many!



Select a group of relevant actors to sit together and discuss the narrative. Their combined reflection may help them to remember important events or influences.

Another way of representing the basic narrative structure is the progression from 'hook' to 'tie'. Creating a 'hook' involves presenting and describing a particularly captivating event or situation. The 'hook' is designed to capture the reader's attention; to set the scene and mood for the rest of the story. It may involve the entry or exit of an apparently significant actor, a tense meeting, an open conflict, or any other situation which the reader can sense as being atypical and extraordinary. 'Hooks' can be strategically used throughout the narrative (for example, at the beginning of chapters or sections) to maintain the reader's interest.

The 'tie,' on the other hand, is the story's harmonious, resolved conclusion. Not all endings are 'happy,' but at least they should provide some sort of explanation, a 'summing up,' of why events happened as they did.

Writing and presenting your case in this way arrests the attention of the audience or reader, and enables you to present your research findings in a common, understandable form.

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How to plan a short field trip

MUCH CAN BE LEARNT from a one- to two-day field trip aimed at documenting a small case. It gives the researcher an opportunity to be immersed in the field for a short period, and to learn from short interviews, observations, and documentation. Some preparation is required, but small cases are worth pursuing for workshop or teaching purposes.

What can one learn from a short field trip?

- An intuitive understanding of context;
- A snapshot of all the salient issues related to the case;
- Insight into the complexity of the problem;
- An overview of the many actors influencing the case.

Criteria for selecting a field trip or small case

- **Boundedness**: when researchers have significant time constraints it is advisable to choose a case that is compact enough to grasp easily, without extensive preparatory reading. Individual development projects usually make ideal cases, as they often have a definite geographical boundary and project timeline.
- **Accessibility**: the case must be located nearby to minimise travelling times and costs. You must also have a degree of institutional access to the case (e.g., a contact in the planning office of a development project).
- **Documentation**: a wide variety of documents must be readily available, for example NGO reports, local government plans, and published articles.
- **Generalisability**: the case must have potential for relating and transferring the findings to events/projects/actions in other contexts. Does it represent a general planning-related problem ('illness')?

Preparation

- Contact relevant officials, and ask them for permission to enter the study area. Request assistance from local authorities in the form of guides and interviews with residents, community leaders, NGO representatives, local government planning officials, and so on.
- A contact person is essential. It is best to avoid senior officials, who tend to provide the 'official story' only. It is best to arrange interviews with three or four stakeholders in order to provide some texture.
- Confirm the date, time, and purpose of the field visit with local authorities/ NGOs or other actors.
- Find and distribute reading materials about the study area to all participants a week or so before the field visit.
- Divide participants into groups, and instruct each group to investigate a particular aspect of the case: for example, one group could focus on institutional power relations, another on the perceptions of local residents or socio-environmental dynamics, and so on.

For an example of a case constructed from a short field trip, view *Field Trip.ppt* on the CD

Teaching using the case method

THE DEBATE about approaches to planning education largely centres on the question of how planners, and indeed all students and professionals, learn. Is learning best achieved through exposure to theories and textbooks, intensive technical training, or empirical evidence and direct experience? This question does not have a simple answer. Clearly, theoretical, technical, and experiential knowledge are all valuable to the researcher or practitioner. However, in our view a major problem with conventional planning education in many African contexts is the neglect of 'the power of example'. We regard experiential learning as a pre-eminent mode of learning that is underutilised in planning education. We further propose that case teaching can foster shared, experiential learning and thus a more nuanced understanding of complex African planning processes.

Experiential learning is a pre-eminent mode of learning. All professionals, from engineers to architects, continuously learn from their practical experiences. The 'power of example' is the basis of the case teaching method.

As researchers we are always students who keep on learning

Experiential learning is not only about ensuring that students can learn from real-world practical experiences, but also learning and reflecting as a teacher. Educators who conduct research often use the insights borne of their research to inform their teaching content and approach.

The Harvard method

The Harvard Business School method is one influential case teaching approach. It is resource-intensive, meaning that teachers must research cases, write them up, and prepare class materials before the teaching session. It therefore requires having extensive access to relevant case data. The case is presented as 'open-ended' so that students prepare by discussing solutions and outcomes within learning groups. In the classroom, the lecturer plays the role of facilitator by encouraging interactive discussions and calling on students to provide solutions.

While the Harvard method is recognised globally as an effective teaching method, the fact remains that it depends upon simulation – the classroom situation is used to simulate real business cases. This lack of contact with the real world limits its learning potential, especially for disciplines , such as planning , which are based on the analysis and production of the physical built environment.

View *Teaching 1.ppt*

Using the case method to teach planning

A single case can be viewed from many different perspectives, and can therefore be used to teach a range of subjects. An individual development project, for example, can be used to reflect on a range of issues, such as:

- Local historical dynamics of urbanisation and the urban economy;
- The practical difficulties associated with a particular planning approach (e.g. master planning);
- Local, regional and national policy contexts and their implementation;
- Power relations and rationalities in planning.

The major challenge is to simulate case conditions in such a way as to enhance the problem-solving capacity of the students. Generally this will require preparing the case to be as 'authentic' as possible. As a teacher, the amount of preparatory work will increase as such authenticity is sought.

The case method is useful for teaching the complexities of African urban areas. By going on field trips and experiencing urban spaces hands-on, students develop a nuanced understanding of how complex African cities work. They might learn that conventional housing and employment categories such as 'formal' and 'informal' seldom exist in a clear-cut fashion. Talking to 'informal' residents or entrepreneurs may give students a better understanding of how the urban poor create livelihoods and perceive conventional planning practice.

Having fun

People learn best when they are having fun. Allowing students to have fun and share in a collective learning experience is a possibility and benefit of the case teaching approach.

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http://www.ksgcase.harvard.edu/content/Teaching_Resources/Using_the_Case_Method.html

Urban Landmark

http://www.urbanlandmark.org.za/research/prof_development.php

UK Department for International Development (DFID)

http://www.dfid.gov.uk/Media-Room/Case-Studies/

World Business Council for Sustainable Development

http://www.wbcsd.org/templates/TemplateWBCSD5/layout.asp?type=p&MenuId=ODY

University College London Development Planning Unit

http://www.ucl.ac.uk/dpu-projects/Global_Report/home.htm