

# CASE STUDY RESEARCH

## Tim May and Beth Perry

- There are now multiple definitions and interpretations of what is a case study, related to varying schools of thought in social research.
- Critical choices for the researcher relate to the bounding of the case, the number of cases, the relationship between generalisation and particularisation, linked to theory development, and the importance of comparison.
- Multiple methods are essential to case study research, requiring triangulation and iteration. Qualitative and quantitative approaches to analysis relate to different research traditions.
- There continues to be a lively debate over the use and usefulness of case studies and their proliferation, particularly when they are deployed as 'best practice' by decision-makers.

**If anything can be a case study, then what is its distinctiveness ...and its relevance for social practice and theory development?**

(May and Perry, 2022: 208)



### DISCUSS

- Is there anything distinctive about case study research?
- What is the relationship between case study research and theory development?
- What can we learn from a single case and how?
- What and who are case studies for?

### DO

*You are asked to use a case study design to understand the effectiveness of forms of citizen participation in decision-making.*

- What is your unit of analysis?
- How many cases will you use and why?
- What other considerations will inform the design of your study?
- Who is your case for?