

# EUROHESC

## case study workshop

Comparative case studies:  
theoretical foundations and  
potentials

# Features of case study methodologies

Case study research 'tends' to be:

- Qualitative
- Exploratory
- Use range of data collection techniques
- Focus on 'naturally occurring' phenomena
- 'in depth'
- 'developing' rather than 'testing' theory

# Key choices in using case study methods

- How many cases?
- Basis for selection?  
(generalise to population or to theory)
- Basis of comparison
- Data collection

# Key choices in data collection

- Single or multi-method?
- Discourse – action – outcome?
- Which actors? ('gatekeepers' and 'power')
- Case studies 'within' a case
- Triangulation

# Case contexts (institutional)

- The importance of history (the ‘saga’)
- Competing narratives (‘making sense’)
- Compliance cultures
- Power
- Distinguishing ‘levels’ — system/institution/basic unit
- Distinguishing ‘types’ — research intensive/widening participation/business facing

# Fieldwork

- Researcher pre-conceptions
- Structured v open data collection
- Interviewee – biography or ‘expert witness’?
- ‘looking around’
- Writing up

# Analysis

- Counting things or selecting things?
- Bringing 'order' or 'confusion'?
- Describing the case
- Comparing the cases