A Case for Case Studies in Social Work Research

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Case study research is a good fit with many forms of social work practice. Although disparaged as uncontrolled and uninterpretable, the case study has great potential for building social work knowledge for assessment, intervention, and outcome. This article defines case study research, presents guidelines for evaluating case studies, and shows the relevance of case studies to social work research. Guidelines for evaluation also are guidelines for developing and interpreting case studies that will meet the rigorous demands of scientific research and be useful to social work practitioners.

Key Words: *case study; evaluation; guidelines; practice; research*

The case study is a neglected and maligned approach to social work research. Rejected more for how uninformed researchers have used it and less for flaws intrinsic to its nature, the case study is compatible with many forms of social work practice and policy research. Although case studies are not useful for estimating prevalence rates or for probabilistic generalization, they are useful to study problems in depth, to understand the stages in processes, or to understand situations in context (Greene & David, 1984; Yin, 1989). Other practice professions such as medicine, law, and business have long used case studies for research and teaching. Case studies have provided the basis for the development of psychotherapy (Kazdin, 1981), for the science of cognitive development as pioneered by Piaget (1951, 1952, 1954), and the science of human behavior (Garmezy, 1982). The foundation work for family therapy and family sociology was based on case studies (Gilgun, Daly, & Handel, 1992; Handel, 1991).

This article defines the case study, presents guidelines for evaluating case studies, and shows the relevance of case studies to social work research. The guidelines for evaluation also provide guidelines for developing and interpreting case studies. The application of these guidelines will result in case studies that meet the rigorous standards of scientific research and are useful to social work practitioners.

Background

Definitions

Case Study. The *case study* is an intensive investigation of a single unit (Handel, 1991; Runyan, 1982; Yin, 1989). Most case studies involve the examination of multiple variables. The interaction of the unit of study with its context is a significant part of the investigation. Examples include life history research on individual lives in context and "thick description" (Geertz, 1973, p. 6) ethnographies of social settings. Thickly described case studies take multiple perspectives into account and attempt to understand the influences of multilayered social systems on subjects' perspectives and behaviors. However, some case

studies, such as single case evaluations as commonly practiced (Bloom & Fischer, 1983; Hersen & Barlow, 1984), look at a few variables measured over time and virtually ignore context. The defining characteristic of a case study, then, is its focus on an individual unit.

The unit of study may be an individual person (Cooper, 1990; Fraiberg, 1981; Kivnick, 1988), but case studies can be done of other units such as a family (Davis & Reid, 1988), a treatment team (Gilgun, 1988), a segment of a clinical session (Sands, 1988), police in patrol cars (Ferraro, 1989), a community (Eckert, 1980), or a country (Ozawa, 1985). Case study research also can investigate multiple individual units (Gilgun, in press; Gilgun & Connor, 1989; Vera, 1990).

Idiographic versus Nomothetic Research. Case studies are *idiographic,* meaning a single unit is studied, multiple variables are investigated, and generalizing is analytic rather than statistical and probabilistic (Runyan, 1982; Silverstein, 1988). In analytic generalization, findings extracted from a single case are tested for their fit with other cases and with patterns predicted by theory or with previous research and theory (Campbell, 1979; Gilgun, 1992; Yin, 1989). Researchers can argue for the generality of findings when findings are based on a wide variety of cases and are congruent with related research and theory (Gilgun, 1991, 1994; Green & David, 1984; Kazdin, 1981). Still, there is no guarantee that a set of findings will fit any other cases except those on which the findings have been constructed; the next case may contradict previous findings. Case study findings, then, are open-ended, subject to revision when they do not fit new cases.

Idiographic research often is contrasted with *nomothetic* research, in which a few variables are investigated using groups of subjects. Nomothetic research, the dominant form of social research today, seeks to generalize to a larger population, and the search is for general laws (Runyan, 1982; Silverstein, 1988). Nomothetic researchers value large probability samples, because they can use powerful statistics and can claim a probabilistic generalizability. Nomothetic studies generally do not take contextual factors into consideration but focus sharply on the variables of interest.

The intermediate step of testing whether a general statement fits a particular case is necessary for the application of knowledge derived from an idiographic or a nomothetic level of analysis. Test-

ing general findings in individual situations helps avoid the *ecological fallacy* (Rubin & Babbie, 1989), which is the assumption that general findings fit individual situations. Cronbach's (1975) observation almost two decades ago supports this point of view: "When we give proper weight to local conditions, any generalization is a working hypothesis, not a conclusion" (p. 125). Understanding these principles of generalizability is important when applying general findings to individual situations. Both idiographic and nomothetic research can generate knowledge useful for social work practice. Idiographic findings are particularly useful because they can provide detail on practice issues and the environments in which practice is embedded.

Fit with Practice

Idiographic findings fit well with practice. Embedded in context and characterized by multiple variables, practice situations themselves are idiographic. Caseloads are not probabilistic samples but rather sets of individual cases. In addition, practitioners use a form of analytic generalization. When practitioners enter new case situations, they bring their knowledge of past cases and of related research and theory; they attempt not to impose their prior knowledge on new cases, but to assess how this knowledge fits. Questions that guide assessment include, How does my knowledge of other applied situations help me understand this situation? What do research and theory say about similar situations? What hypotheses can I formulate to guide me in my work with this system? Is this case similar enough to other cases that I can use interventions that were effective in previous cases? Am I willing to modify these interventions if I see that the interventions do not fit the present situation? This thinking is not probabilistic, but it represents characteristic processes in analytic generalization. Like case study researchers discussed earlier, practitioners can argue for the generality of their knowledge by demonstrating the wide variety of cases on which it is based and the congruence of their knowledge with related research and theory. In the final analysis, generalizability depends on how well case studies are conceptualized, whether they are presented in sufficient detail so that they are interpretable and can be tested in individual situations, and whether they are sufficiently compelling to convince practitioners of their usefulness.

The fit between practice situations and case study research is not an argument to exclude nomothetic research from social work. Rather, it is an argument for including both idiographic and nomothetic research. Knowledge of prevalence and probability, as well as understanding situations in depth and understanding stages in processes, all contribute to practice knowledge. These two types of research can provide powerful hypotheses that illuminate practice.

Heterogeneity

Although case studies are idiographic, they also are heterogeneous in several ways. Their philosophical underpinnings can be phenomenological, positivistic, postpositivistic, constructivist, naturalistic, or many combinations of these and others. The results can be basic or applied. Their connection to theory can be inductive or deductive or a combination. Case studies are not linked to any particular type of data or data collection method (Yin, 1989), and methods include participant observation; various types of interviewing ranging from unstructured to structured; document analysis; surveys; and standardized and non-standardized instruments such as questionnaires, checklists, and goal-attainment scales. The use of multiple methods is common in case study research. Data can be qualitative, quantitative, or a combination. Cases can take place at a single time and setting, or they can be longitudinal and take place in more than one setting. There are several general types of case studies, such as change process research, ethnography, anthropological research, field research, life histories, and single case evaluations.

Case studies can serve many purposes, including but not limited to description, explanation, prediction, hypothesis testing, and hypothesis generation. For example, case studies can describe the subjective meanings an individual attributes to life events, identify themes in individual lives, and investigate causal relationships between variables (Runyan, 1982).

Case study investigation that seeks to test theory is analytic induction (Gilgun, 1991, in press; Glaser & Strauss, 1967; Taylor & Bogdan,

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1984). The investigation begins with a hypothesis to be tested on a series of individual cases. The hypothesis is modified to fit the data of the cases. The final product is a hypothesis tested and modified on a variety of individual cases. The procedures of the grounded theory approach (Charmaz, 1990; Glaser & Strauss, 1967; Strauss & Corbin, 1990) also are inductive. Grounded theory studies do not begin with hypotheses to test; they are used to develop concepts based on data and to develop hypotheses grounded in data. Gilgun et al. (1992) provided an up-to-date collection of many types of primarily qualitative case studies, and LeCroy (1992) presented a set of brief case studies of social work treatment.

What Case Studies Are Not

Campbell and Stanley's (1966) disparagement of the "one-shot case study" as having "almost no scientific value" (p. 6) summarized for at least the past 30 years prevailing scientific judgment on case studies in the social sciences. This judgment was based on the near impossibility of ascribing causation in a single case where no pretest is available and few variables are measured at posttest. Researchers have labeled this type of research the uncontrolled case study (Kazdin, 1981). As Cook and Campbell (1979) later pointed out, this negative judgment was not meant to include "case studies as normally practiced" in social and behavioral sciences (p. 96).

Case studies as normally practiced, according to Cook and Campbell (1979), can yield valuable scientific information when they take place in "settings where many variables are measured at the posttest; contextual knowledge is already rich, even if impressionistic; and intelligent presumptions can be made about what this group would have been like without X" (p. 96). Pretests and baselines strengthen the ability to make causal inferences because the researcher can assess trends before the intervention. Cook and Campbell stated that case studies are useful for other than studies of causation. As examples, they listed research on treatment implementation, research on the nature of treatment, and studies whose purpose

is the generation of new hypotheses. Cook and Campbell, then, endorsed the case study approach as one of many types of social research. Strongly identified with nomothetic research and an anti–case study bias, Cook and Campbell provided arguments that may persuade nomothetically trained researchers to consider the contributions case studies can make to knowledge development.

The case study as practiced by psychoanalysts before Campbell and Stanley (1966) also may have contributed to its disparagement. The early psychoanalytic use of the case study was based on the assumption that the analyst knows more about the patient than the patient because the patient's motivations are subconscious. This thinking gave permission to attribute unverifiable motivations to patients. The early psychoanalytic users of this approach lived in a time and context much different from our own, without the guidelines now available to researchers. Knowledge of the necessity of ruling out or accounting for competing hypotheses, of the limits of generalizability, and the need for multiple indicators from multiple sources using multiple methods simply was not available to the early users of case studies.

Interpretability

Although case studies have much that recommends them, they are not easy to use. A significant issue in interpreting case studies is the need for sufficient descriptive material (Cook & Campbell, 1979). For example, the family therapy literature is replete with accounts of major improvements in clients' functioning. Practitioners who attempt to replicate the methods used in these case studies often become frustrated, and some may question their own competence when their interventions fail. If the cases had been more thoroughly described, practitioners might have been able to see the differences between their cases and the cases in research reports and thus to understand why their assessments, interventions, and evaluations might not replicate published reports. Well-described case studies can be an effective means of communicating information and a rich source of hypotheses for other practice situations.

For example, Cooper's (1990) case study showed how descriptive material helps readers interpret findings and develop hypotheses that could be useful in other cases. Cooper reported deep changes in her client, whom she treated for obsessive–compulsive disorders. She attributed these changes to behaviorally oriented treatment.

Yet other variables also may have affected outcome. The client had experienced several years of psychodynamic treatment before entering the behavioral treatment program. Cooper did not address whether this prior therapy might have helped the client to be especially receptive to behavioral interventions. In addition, the woman's marriage in the course of treatment and other possible extratreatment influences could have affected the outcome. The strength of her case study report, however, was that she provided sufficient descriptive material of the client's situation to allow readers to make independent judgments of what might have led to client change. Another practitioner might have a similar case using similar behavioral methods and obtain very different results, because contextual variables are likely to be different.

Practice-Relevant Case Studies

In direct practice research, case studies may be classified as relevant to assessment, the processes of intervention, or the outcome of intervention (Runyan, 1982). Research in social work, however, has focused primarily on outcome. More than 60 years ago, social work pioneer Edith Abbott warned that practitioners were in danger of becoming "headless machines" unless they were knowledgeable of the "problems that are to be solved" (Abbott, 1931, archival records cited in Marsh, 1983, p. 582). To be effective, practitioners need some understanding of the situations in which they intervene, and case study research is well suited to provide assessment-related information.

Process research, too, has been neglected in social work and is not well understood. These studies can be useful in describing and understanding "patterns, linkages, and plausible explanations related to intervention" (Patton, 1990, p. 462). Process case studies can advance understanding of the complexities of implementing interventions at the individual, program, and policy levels. Research on policy implementation is well suited to case study research (Cook & Reichardt, 1979; Gilgun, 1990; Smith & Robbins, 1982); case studies show how individuals interpret and apply the mandates of public policy to the individualized situations in which they operate. The processes of and barriers to implementation, including contextual features and characteristics of both implementers and subjects of the implementation, can be investigated through case studies (McCorcle, 1984). Knowledge of processes, contexts,

implementers, and subjects is necessary for the replication of programs from one setting to others (Cook & Campbell, 1979; Patton, 1990; Rossi & Freeman, 1982).

The thick descriptions of case study research can supplant the "thin" descriptions of outcome-oriented single-system designs. Although technology for the conduct of single-system outcome studies has greatly advanced over the past decade, their usefulness may have been compromised by neglecting context and the multivariable nature of practice. What works with whom under what conditions is a classic question in outcome research. Case study outcome research can be responsive to this question because of its emphasis on careful descriptions of persons, contexts, interventions, and outcomes.

Guidelines for Developing Practice-Relevant Case Studies

Today social work practitioners have guidelines for judging the validity of social research. When practitioners apply these guidelines, they can have as much confidence in the findings of case study research as in the findings of nomothetic research. Like nomothetic findings, the scientific value of case study research resides not in the results of any one individual study but in the replications and corrections of other studies. The clinical value of case study research is whether findings increase clinicians' understandings and thus provide information useful for assessment, intervention, and evaluation. Although not all case studies will fit all of these guidelines, the extent that they do builds a case for their quality.

General Guidelines

Conceptual Issues. As in any type of social research, conceptual issues are important in case study research. The conceptual framework entails stating the purpose of the study; presenting the principles guiding the study, either as hypotheses or research questions; sharing the reasoning that led to the hypotheses or questions; and carefully defining concepts. The construction of the framework is based on a combination of a literature review and the researcher's experience.

Contextual Detail. The unit of analysis in case study research rarely is isolated from and unaffected by factors in the environment in which it is embedded. Therefore, to understand and interpret case studies, researchers describe the context in detail (Cooper, 1990). The ecosystemic frame-

work, with its notions of multiple, interacting contextualized systems, helps conceptualize the contexts in which the unit of analysis is embedded (Bronfenbrenner, 1979, 1986; Hartman, 1978; Meyer, 1983). This framework leads to the identification of contextual variables that influence the unit of analysis. Such a description is part of a methods section, in which researchers provide enough information about subjects, setting, and data collection and analysis to permit readers to make judgments about the adequacy of the method and to permit replication.

Multiple Sources of Data. Using multiple sources of data is important (Rosenblatt, 1981; Runyan, 1982; Yin, 1989); this involves using more than one method, multiple interview or observation occasions, and a variety of informants when the research question calls for them such as in ethnographic studies or multiple-person case studies. Number and type of methods, number of informants and researchers, and number of interview occasions depend on the nature of the research questions. Life histories, for example, may involve 50 or more interviews of the same person by a single researcher, with no other source of data than the subject and no other method than the interview (Taylor & Bogdan, 1984). The product of such a research process would be a thickly described life history from the point of view of the subject.

The rationale for using multiple sources of evidence is based on the ideas of replication and convergence (Cook & Campbell, 1979; Cronbach & Meehl, 1955). From the ethnographic tradition, thick description means using multiple perspectives on multiple systems using multiple methods and sources of evidence (Geertz, 1973). In replication, as the number of occurrences of a phenomenon mounts, the more confidence the researcher can have that a finding is reliable. Because phenomena not only are rooted in context but also are contingent on place, time, the investigators, and the subjects, replications can be difficult and sometimes impossible to achieve (LeCompte & Goetz, 1982). Yet some findings may hold over place, time, context, and person. The difficulties inherent in replication are another reason to test previously developed knowledge in new situations.

In convergence, multiple sources of evidence are brought to bear on variables of interest either by using multiple methods, such as an interview and participant observation, or by interviewing

about phenomena of interest in slightly different ways in different interview occasions. In a multiple-case study, convergence can be achieved by asking about the same phenomenon across cases. Using multiple sources of evidence, sometimes called *triangulation* (Denzin, 1978), can represent aspects of thick description.

Organization and Communication of Findings. Organization and communication of findings are serious challenges given the amount of data collected for each case study (Patton, 1990). Organization and communication are done after developing clear conceptual categories for the empirical data, which provides a focus for the findings. The discussion of the categories of the findings is separate from the presentation of the findings (Patton, 1990). Research reports must account for the findings' multidimensionality, which is done by presenting the multiple patterns of phenomena and by describing the context and conditions under which the patterns appear. These presentations are characteristic of studies using multiple sources of evidence and represent dimensions of thick description.

Style of Generalization. Generalizations are based on evidence provided by the data. Findings are tested for their fit with previous knowledge, including direct experience with similar cases, as well as with previous research and theory. The generalizability of case study findings is demonstrated through showing the linkages between findings and previous knowledge. Analytic generalization, not the probabilistic type, fits such findings.

Theory Development. Case studies have great potential for theory development; however, many researchers do not attempt to relate findings to previous theory and research, nor do they discuss the theoretical relevance of their findings. LeCroy's (1992) collection of case studies exemplifies this style of case study, whereas Gilgun et al. (1992) included many examples of cases studies that strive for theoretical relevance. As Adler and Adler (1987) said of ethnographic case studies, "By looking for the transsituational relevance of ethnographic descriptions, we can generate, modify, and expand the conceptualizations that shape our scientific understandings" (p. 6). The focus of their statement can be expanded to include many types of case studies.

Interpreters of Data. Because researchers bring their own perspectives and biases to the research, information about them aids interpretability. Whether more than one researcher was involved in the study and whether subjects of the study were given the opportunity to read the case study can help build a case for the quality of a case study. Case study researchers commonly have other researchers not involved in the project read their studies, which can enhance validity. Increasing the number of interpreters of the data aids in triangulation (Denzin, 1978; Patton, 1990). Case study reports might not contain information on whether subjects or other researchers read the study, but they remain important considerations for researchers who construct the studies.

Assessment-Relevant Guidelines

Assessment-relevant case studies take particular care in representing the points of view and the contexts of clients. How thoroughly the perspectives of clients are represented is central to the conduct of social work: "The perspectives and experiences of those persons who are served by applied programs must be grasped, interpreted, and understood, if solid, effective applied programs are to be created" (Denzin, 1989, p. 12). Thus, guidelines specific to evaluating the usefulness of case studies include whether they convey the subjective experience of subjects, including how they see the world, how they interpret their experiences and relationships with others, and how they account for their own behavior. Often clients' experiences are emotionally compelling and evocative; when these experiences stir empathic responses in policymakers, program planners, and practitioners, this could be a major force for change.

Example. Gilgun and Reiser's (1990) research on the development of sexual identity of three men sexually abused as children meets many of the guidelines for assessment-relevant case studies. Their method was open-ended life history interviews, and their conceptual framework was clearly described. Each subject was interviewed several times, and topics were discussed more than once on several interview occasions. The data

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were interpreted by more than one researcher. The subjects read the report, as did members of the homosexual community. The researchers' interpretations were based on the data, and clinical and theoretical relevance was discussed.

The perspectives of the subjects were presented in detail in their own words. For example, one subject described being sexually abused by his father: "He'd start rubbing my buttocks and he'd work around to the front side. And I'd tell him 'No'" (Gilgun & Reiser, 1990, p. 519). Although he would not become aroused, his father continued to masturbate him until "I would have sores on my penis" (p. 519). For not becoming sexually aroused, his father verbally attacked him and called him "queer" and "pansy" and "dumbfucker." The subject became homophobic; he wanted to join the high school chess club but was afraid his peers would call him a "faggot."

The words of this man probably would be emotionally evocative and compelling to most readers. The study provided information that might help in other practice situations, including insight into how some men experience sexual abuse and how sexual abuse affects their sexual development. Multiple dimensions of the life histories of these men were presented, including descriptions of the abuse and reactions to it, homophobia, relationships with peers, dating, and finding partners for long-term relationships. The study, however, could be faulted for using one interviewer and one research method and having subjects as the only sources of data. Both the research question, which focused on the perspectives of the subjects themselves, and the sensitive nature of the research influenced these methodological choices. Research often involves tradeoffs; no one study is likely to follow all the guidelines developed in this article.

Other Types of Knowledge Needed. Although the perspectives of clients are essential, practitioners also need additional information from many other sources. Knowledge of demographics, trends, other research, and incidence are examples of information that can help practitioners interpret clients' perspectives. For example, Gilgun and Reiser (1990) devoted several pages of their research to discussing research and theory on the sexual abuse of male children, sexual identity development, and homophobia. As Allen-Meares and Lane (1990) pointed out, effective practice is based on triangulation of methods, types of data, and data sources.

Process-Relevant Guidelines

To be interpretable, process case studies pay heed to the other guidelines discussed earlier, but their particular focus is on what happened, that is, on how the intervention worked and what the major actors in the implementation process did.

Process studies also illuminate outcomes by showing the practical activities and steps leading to the overall impact of interventions (Loeske, 1989). How this is done may vary from study to study, but the central guideline is how well the processes are described.

Ferraro's (1989) study of the implementation of a new arrest policy in women-battering cases fulfills most of the criteria developed in this article for process-oriented case studies. Six researchers, both women and men, rode with police in patrol cars for 44 10-hour night shifts to observe how police implemented the policy. Research methods included interviews with six police administrators, direct observations of the officers in the field, and interviews with the officers after their interventions in family fights. Ferraro organized findings into four categories of considerations that officers took into account when making decisions to arrest or not arrest: legal, ideological, practical, and political. Each category was described in thick detail. For instance, in a discussion of legal considerations leading to arrest, she described an incident in which a man was obviously in violation of the laws against violence and was arrested: "When the officer arrived, the man greeted him at the door with a raised ball bat. The officer drew his gun, and the man slammed the door in his face. Police subsequently chased and captured the offender, threw him to the floor, tightly cuffed his hands and feet and carried him to the car" (p. 65). Ferraro also contextualized her findings through a discussion of previous research, theory, and public policy on woman battering. This study clearly showed how public policy is implemented on the individual, idiographic level. Contextualizing findings makes this study helpful in understanding, planning, and interpreting the implementation of policy in other local situations.

Outcome-Oriented Guidelines

Outcome research focuses on whether change occurred and whether the change can be attributed to the intervention. Yet understanding outcome requires at least a minimum understanding of the situation to be changed and how the change process

works. Outcome case studies, therefore, may be the most demanding of all because, to be interpretable, they pay some attention to all the other guidelines already discussed plus those directly relevant to estimating the effects of the intervention. In-depth discussions of guidelines specific to outcome-oriented single-system studies are in Bloom and Fischer (1983), Hersen and Barlow (1984), and Kazdin (1981). Guidelines specific to outcomes of qualitative case studies are in Patton (1990). Cook and Campbell (1979) and Campbell and Stanley (1966) discussed more nomothetically oriented guidelines that can be adapted to case study research.

Interpretable outcome case studies are concerned with many issues, which Cook and Campbell (1979) organized into four categories: statistical conclusion validity, construct validity, external validity, and internal validity. Statistical conclusion validity is concerned with whether the context in which the intervention takes place is understood and described, with the use of reliable and valid instruments, and with appropriate statistics. Construct validity encompasses such ideas as thick description, adequate definitions of concepts, convergence and divergence, multiple sources of data, and multiple methods. External validity is concerned with generalizability, including ideas of analytic generalization and careful descriptions of contexts, subjects, interventions, and interveners. These issues are thoroughly discussed in research texts and will not be discussed further here.

Internal validity, based entirely on qualitative reasoning, involves a search for variables other than the intervention that can account for change or lack of it. Careful descriptions of subjects, prior conditions, and contexts are guidelines for estimating internal validity. Knowledge of trends before, during, and after intervention can rule out and account for rivals to the general hypothesis that the intervention caused change. Any change in trend is examined for rival hypotheses before researchers can conclude that the intervention brought about the outcome. For example, Cooper's (1990) conclusion, discussed earlier, that her behavioral interventions accounted for changes in her client has strong rival hypotheses. Prior treatment and fortuitous extratreatment events also may have influenced outcome. To demonstrate the usefulness of behavioral methods in cases of obsessive–compulsive behavior, Coo-

per would have to replicate her findings with several other case studies.

Discussion and Conclusion

Direct practitioners should be encouraged by the discussion in this article and might think about how they can transform their practice experiences with individual cases into articles and presentations. The guidelines developed in this article for evaluating the quality of case studies can serve as guidelines for translating practice knowledge into case study research. Strauss and Hafez (1981) pointed out that clinical practitioners can "delineate important clinical phenomena" if they pay "careful attention to the nature of evidence" and if their observations are "elaborated by the study of several subjects" (p. 1592). The guidelines developed in this article clear the way for this to happen.

Social work deals with some of the most intractable and personally painful social problems of the day. In addition, social work practice is informed by the ideals of social justice and deeply held ethical principles. To dismiss any approach to social work knowledge building without careful examination of the issues and without widespread discussion is unjust and possibly unethical. It is time to reexamine case study research. This article is a step toward what could become a far-reaching discussion of the relevance of one form of social research to the discipline of social work. ■

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