

SADE Master Thesis Guidelines

2017-2018

Sociology and Anthropology of Development (SADE)

Rural Sociology
(RSO)

Sociology of Development
and Change
(SDC)

MID | MCH | MDR | MFT | MLE | MLP | MOA

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Fast facts

Language thesis	English
Credits	30 – 39 ECTS
Period	1-6
Coordinator / contact person	Jessica de Koning, Jessica.dekoning@wur.nl
Supervisors	All teaching staff at RSO and SDC
Examiners	Prof Han Wiskerke (RSO) Prof Bram Büscher (SDC)
Secretariat	secretariaat.sade@wur.nl
Required reading before thesis	MSc Thesis Protocol for Social Sciences (for MID, MCH, MDR) MSc Thesis Course Guide (for MFT, MOA) SADE Master thesis Guidelines (this document)
Forms, contracts and more	OWI Reference site (contracts, assessment form, rubric) https://teamsites.wur.nl/sites/owi/diversen/owi%20refere%20nce%20site.aspx
More information on RSO	www.wur.nl/rso www.ruralsociologyWageningen.nl
More information on SDC	www.wur.nl/sdc http://developmentandchange.org

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Rural Sociology Group



Sociology of Development and Change

@RuralSociologyW

@SDC_WUR



1 Introduction

Sociology and Anthropology of Development (SADE) includes the two chair groups **Rural Sociology (RSO)** and **Sociology of Development and Change (SDC)**. These SADE guidelines are for all students planning to do a Master thesis research at RSO and/or SDC.

1.1 Which Master programmes and specializations?

The following specializations in master programmes have thesis possibilities at RSO and SDC.

Table 1 Master programmes with thesis opportunities at SADE

Master programme	Specialization	Supervision
Master International Development Studies (MID)	A Sociology of Development	RSO/SDC
	D Politics and Governance of Development	SDC
Master Applied Communication Sciences (MCS)	B Health and Society	RSO
Master Development and Rural Innovation (MDR)		SDC
Master Food Technology (MFT)	I Gastronomy	RSO
Master Leisure, Tourism, and the Environment (MLE)	A Tourism and Development	SDC
	B Tourism and Natural Resources	SDC
	C Tourism and Global Mobilities	SDC
Master Landscape Architecture and Planning (MLP)	A Landscape Architecture	RSO/SDC
	B Spatial Planning	RSO/SDC
Master Organic Agriculture (MOA)	B Sustainable food systems	RSO/SDC

1.2 Which chair group?

The SADE chair groups RSO and SDC share a common interest in development sociology. At the same time, both chair groups have their core expertise that sets them apart.

RSO studies the dynamics of rural and regional development processes in relation to dynamics and sustainability of regional food networks, agrarian and rural dynamics in metropolitan regions and rural images and identities.

SDC focuses on the structures and practices of development and change with a particular interest in inequality, marginalization and political agency. Research themes are resources, rights and livelihoods, crisis, reordering and resilience, reassessing divides and boundaries.

1.3 Which thesis track?

A *thesis track* is a trajectory of courses in combination with a thesis. Thesis tracks are the requirements of the chair groups to do a thesis with them.

The thesis tracks are different for each master programme. In general, thesis track includes a combination of a few thematic courses (Compulsory courses (CS) and Restricted Optional courses (RO)) and a thesis. Additionally, we encourage students to have a sufficient background in qualitative methodology.

1.4 Which supervisor?

Once you are in a relevant master programme specialization and on a certain thesis track, you will have access to certain staff members as your supervisor. The choice for a supervisor is based on 1) your topic of research, 2) your thesis track, and 3) the availability of the supervisor.

The decision on who is going to be your supervisor is made during a mandatory intake meeting with education coordinator Jessica de Koning.

2 Thesis tracks per Master programme

Within the different master programmes, students can follow different tracks that will allow them to do an MSc thesis Rural Sociology or MSc thesis Sociology of Development and Change.

Please note that the tables below only highlight the thesis track and not the programme requirements.

2.1 Master International Development Studies (MID)

Supervision: RSO and SDC

Students will only be admitted to the thesis after completion of two of the specialization courses. In addition, dependent on the study contract agreed upon with the study adviser, RO0-courses have to be completed before starting the thesis.

Table 2 MID thesis tracks

MID specialization A		
Thesis Track Rural Sociology		
RSO-31806	Sociology of Food and Place	RO2
RSO-80436	MSc thesis Rural Sociology	RO2
Thesis Track Sociology of Development and Change		
SDC-32306	Anthropology and Development	RO1
SDC-80436	MSc thesis Sociology of Development and Change	RO1
Thesis Track Disaster Studies		
SDC-34306	Studying Crisis: Conflict, Disaster and the Social	RO4
SDC-80736	MSc Thesis Disaster studies	RO4
MID Specialization D		
Thesis Track Sociology of Development and Change		
SDC-35806	Politics of Development: State, Property and Resistance	CS
SDC-80436	MSc thesis Sociology of Development and Change	RO1

2.2 Master Applied Communication Science (MCH)

Supervision: RSO

Students will only be admitted to the thesis after completion of two of the specialization courses. In addition, dependent on the study contract agreed upon with the study adviser, RO0-courses have to be completed before starting the thesis.

Table 3 MCH thesis tracks

MCH specialization B

Thesis Track Rural Sociology		
RSO-33306	Food, Health and Society: An Integrated Socio-Political Perspective	RO1
	<i>AND/OR</i>	
RSO-33806	Advanced Sociology of Body and Health	RO1
RSO-80436	MSc Thesis Rural Sociology	RO2

2.3 MSc Development and Rural Innovation (MDR)

Supervision: SDC

Before starting the thesis students should have completed the compulsory subjects.

Table 4 MDR thesis track

MDR

Thesis Track Sociology of Development and Change		
SDC-21804	Introduction to the Sociology of Knowledge and Development	CS
SDC-33306	Methodology for Field Research in the Social Sciences	CS
SDC-30806	Political Ecologies of Natural Resource Distribution	RO2
SDC-80436	MSc thesis Sociology of Development and Change	RO2

2.4 Master Food Technology (MFT)

Supervision: RSO

For this thesis track, there are compulsory courses (CS) and restricted optional courses (RO) that leads to the RSO thesis. Additionally, RSO strongly advises courses as well (A).

Table 5 MFT thesis track

MFT –Specialization I

Thesis Track Rural Sociology		
RSO-21806	Origin Food: a Market for Identity	CS
RSO-22306	Food Culture and Customs	RO2
RSO-80436	MSc Thesis Rural Sociology	RO3
YRM-60806	<i>Qualitative Data Analysis: Procedures and Strategies*</i>	A

* Strongly advised

2.5 Master Leisure, Tourism and the Environment

Supervision: SDC

Table 6 MLE thesis track

MLE Specialization A		
Thesis Track Sociology of Development and Change		
SDC-32306	Anthropology and Development	RO1
SDC-80436	MSc thesis Sociology of Development and Change	RO3
MLE Specialization B		
Thesis Track Sociology of Development and Change		
SDC-30806	Political Ecologies of Natural Resource Distribution	RO1
SDC-80436	MSc thesis Sociology of Development and Change	RO3
MLE Specialization C		
Thesis Track		
SDC-34306	Studying Crisis: Conflict, Disaster and the Social	RO1
SDC-80436	MSc thesis Sociology of Development and Change	RO3

2.6 Master Landscape Architecture and Planning (MLP)

Supervision: RSO and SDC

Before starting the thesis students are assumed to have knowledge on the following courses. These courses are not part of the MLP programme and should therefore be followed additionally to the normal program. These additional courses are marked with an *.

Table 7 MLP thesis track

MLP Specialization A		
Thesis Track Rural Sociology		
ENP-31806	Globalization and Sustainability of Food Production and Consumption	*
RSO-21806	Origin Food: a Market for Identity	*
	<i>OR</i>	
RSO-31806	Sociology of Food Provisioning and Place-Based Development	
RSO-80436	MSc thesis Rural Sociology	RO1
Thesis Track Sociology of Development and Change		
GEO-37306	Global Landscapes and Place-Making	RO1
SDC-32306	Anthropology and Development	*
SDC-80436	MSc Thesis Sociology of Development and Change	RO1

MLP Specialization B

Thesis Track Rural Sociology		
RSO-21806	Origin Food: a Market for Identity	*
RSO-30806	The Sociology of Farming and Rural Life	*
RSO-80436	MSc thesis Rural Sociology	RO1
Thesis Track Sociology of Development and Change		
GEO-37306	Global Landscapes and Place-Making	RO1
SDC-32306	Anthropology and Development	*
SDC-80436	MSc Thesis Sociology of Development and Change	RO1

* Course is not part of the MLP programme

2.7 Master Organic Agriculture (MOA)

Supervision: RSO and SDC

For this thesis track, there are compulsory courses (CS) and restricted optional courses (RO) that leads to the RSO thesis. Additionally, RSO strongly advises courses as well (A).

Table 8 MOA thesis track

MOA –Specialization B

Thesis Track Rural Sociology		
RSO-30806	The Sociology of Farming and Rural Life	RO8
	<i>OR</i>	
RSO-31806	Sociology of Food and Place	RO8
RSO-80433	MSc Thesis Rural Sociology	RO8
<i>RSO-22306</i>	<i>Food Culture and Customs*</i>	A
<i>ENP-31806</i>	<i>Globalization and Sustainability of Food Production and Consumption*</i>	A
Thesis Track Sociology of Development and Change		
SDC-30806	Governance, Livelihoods and Resources	RO7
SDC-80436	MSc Thesis Sociology of Development and Change	RO7
<i>RSO-30806</i>	<i>The Sociology of Farming and Rural Life*</i>	A
<i>SDC-21806</i>	<i>Introduction to Sociology of Knowledge and Development M*</i>	A
<i>SDC-32806</i>	<i>Sociology in Development: Towards a Critical Perspective*</i>	A

* Strongly advised course

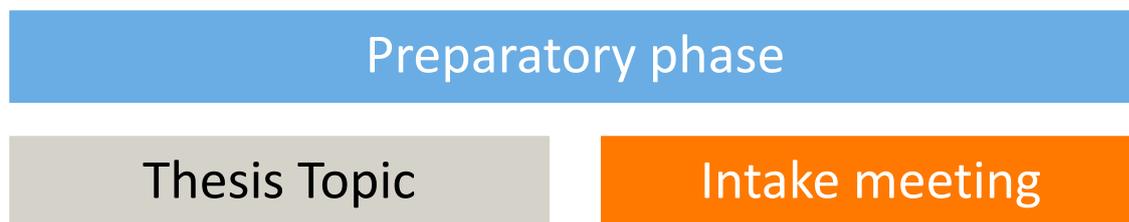
3 The process

Once a student is enrolled in a thesis track and have passed the required courses, the thesis process starts. There are several phases that are specific for SADE thesis students:

1. Preparatory phase
2. Proposal phase
3. Assessment phase

These phases indicate several mostly administrative and procedural phases of the thesis. The different phases are explained below. Please note that the textboxes in orange are mandatory steps to take.

3.1 Preparatory phase



3.1.1 Thesis Topics

Thesis topic ideas should be developed well in advance of the actual thesis. A couple of months before starting the thesis, a student should have more or less an broad idea. This can be further developed by actively brainstorming, reading articles and newspapers, or following courses. In general, students develop their own ideas on thesis topic. SADE does not offer projects or research proposals to thesis students.

The following website offer inspiration on topics:

- WUR webpages of RSO (www.wur.nl/rso) and SDC (www.wur.nl/sdc). Click on education and master thesis for topics
- Weblogs RSO (www.ruralsociologywageningen.nl) and SDC (www.developmentandchange.org) for an detailed overview of our research
- Twitter accounts of RSO (@ruralsociologyW) and SDC (@SDC_WUR) for our debates, research, and publications

When specific thesis opportunities do occur, they will be posted on the Facebook sites of the chairgroups:

- @Rural Sociology Group
- @Sociology of Development and Change

3.1.2 Intake meeting

The intake is mandatory. Students need to plan an intake meeting with education coordinator Jessica de Koning. During this intake, the education coordinator talks about the specifics of doing a thesis at RSO or SDC. She will also assign students a supervisor.

Students can plan a meeting with the education coordinator once they have an idea of what they want to study. Please note that there is a general summer stop in the holidays.

3.2 Proposal phase



3.2.1 Master thesis agreement

Master thesis agreement is a mandatory document that needs to be filled and handed to the SADE secretariat and study advisor before the student starts fieldwork (see for more information MSc Thesis Protocol for Social Sciences /MSc Thesis Course Guide). Three copies are needed:

1. Supervisor sends 1 copy to SADE secretariat
2. Student sends 1 copy to the study advisor
3. Student keeps 1 copy for himself.

Link thesis contract (intranet):

<https://teamsites.wur.nl/sites/owi/diversen/owi%20reference%20site.aspx>

3.2.2 Security protocol/ Risk assessment

The risk assessment is mandatory. All students going abroad to a country of risk require explicit and formal permission. Whether or not a country is of risk can be found at the website of the Dutch Ministry of Foreign Affairs (<https://www.rijksoverheid.nl/onderwerpen/reisadviezen>)

- Countries with Green classification: no risk, no security protocol required
- Countries with Yellow classification: there is an increased risk, security protocol required
- Countries with Orange: there is a high risk, security protocol required, travel is not always allowed
- Countries with Red: very high risk, no travel allowed.

Without an approved risk assessment, students are not allowed to leave for fieldwork. Calculate a minimum of two weeks for submitting the security protocol. As the university has the right to decline your travel, please do not book any tickets unless you are sure you can go.

More information and risk assessment form (intranet):

<https://intranet.wur.nl/umbraco/en/practical-information/safety-health/safe-travel/>

3.2.3 Proposal presentation

Each Master programme has its own specific requirements for student seminars. Regardless of this, SADE students are required to present their work 2 times during a SADE student seminar:

- 1 proposal presentation (before going to the field)
- 1 end-of-work presentation

The SADE student seminars take place every third Tuesday of every month. To plan a seminar presentation, contact the SADE secretariat.

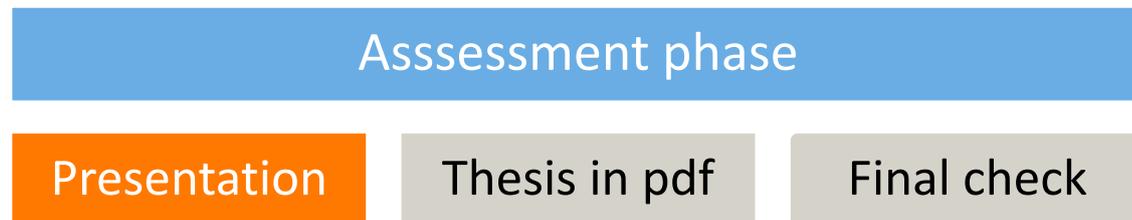
Contact: secretariaat.sade@wur.nl

3.3 SADE Inter-vision meetings

For students who want to share their experiences (good and bad) with other students in a secure environment, SADE organizes quarterly Inter-vision meetings where students can process their fieldwork experience outside the student-supervisor bubble. These meetings will be announced via email and on Facebook (RSO and SDC).

The inter-vision meetings are starting in 2017-2018 as a pilot project.

3.4 Assessment phase



3.4.1 End of work presentation

Each Master programme has its own specific requirements for student seminars. Regardless of this, SADE students are required to present their work 2 times during a SADE student seminar:

- 1 proposal presentation (before going to the field)
- 1 end-of-work presentation

The end of work presentation will be graded as part of your final assessment. Without a presentation, a student cannot complete the thesis.

The SADE student seminars take place every third Tuesday of every month. To plan a seminar presentation, contact the SADE secretariat.

Contact: secretariaat.sade@wur.nl

3.4.2 Thesis in pdf

Students hand in their thesis digitally (in pdf) to their supervisors. The timing of handing in the final version and the planning of your final evaluation meeting needs to be discussed with your supervisor. Take in mind that two weeks can be a necessary amount of time needed by your supervisor and a second reader to evaluate your report, plan the final meeting. Please note that as we do not request hard copies of the thesis, we also do not reimburse thesis printing costs.

3.4.3 Final check

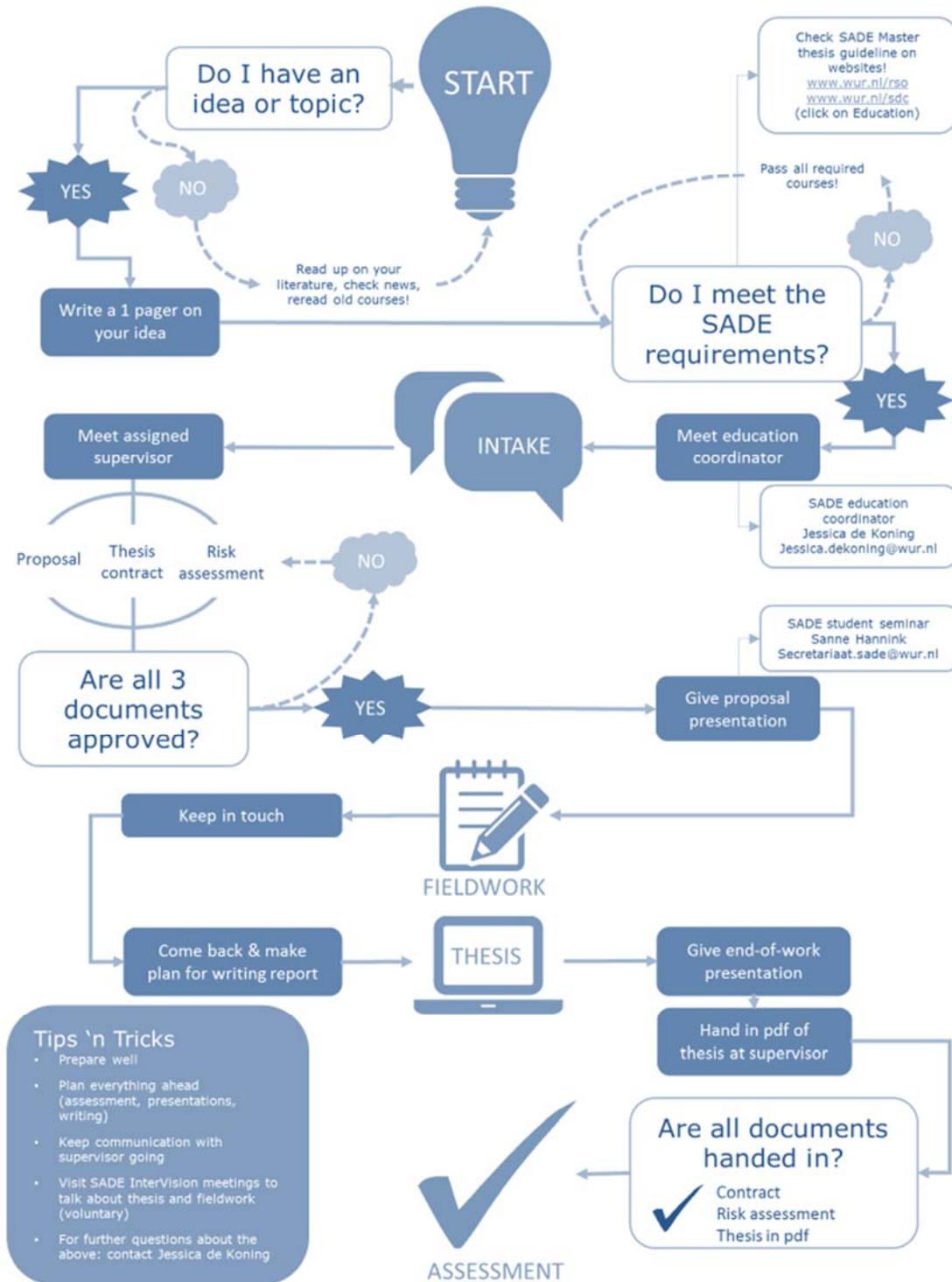
Students make sure that when the assessment is done, the supervisor has the complete set of documents:

- Master thesis agreement
- Risk assessment
- Thesis in pdf

The grade will be registered when the set is complete. Realise that grades will only be entered into the system on working days, and there are specific deadlines attached to filing the grades into the system and your participation in the graduation ceremony (See [MSc Graduation Schedule](#) for specific data).

3.5 Handy flow document

DOING A THESIS AT SADE



3.6 Handy checklist

Preparatory Phase	
<input type="checkbox"/>	Read required documents for the thesis
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • MSc Thesis Protocol for Social Sciences (for MID, MCH, MDR)/MSc Thesis Course Guide (for MFT, MOA) • SADE Master thesis Guidelines (this document)
<input type="checkbox"/>	Think about a topic
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Write if needed a one pager on your topic
<input type="checkbox"/>	Plan intake meeting with education coordinator
Proposal Phase	
<input type="checkbox"/>	Fill in Master thesis agreement
<input type="checkbox"/>	Fill in risk assessment
<input type="checkbox"/>	Present proposal
Assessment phase	
<input type="checkbox"/>	Present final thesis
<input type="checkbox"/>	Produce a pdf version of thesis
<input type="checkbox"/>	Do the final check
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Master thesis agreement • Risk assessment • Pdf version of thesis

4 Practical issues

Below is a general outline and list of expectations that a thesis should meet. Important to realise is that the final decisions on outline and expectations are done in communication with your supervisor.

4.1 Example outline of thesis

Proposal	
Title page	Title, author, supervisor, date, thesis course code
Introduction	Context of the research question Problem statement Objective, including scientific and societal relevance Research question(s)
Theoretical framework	State of the art Theory and concepts Theoretical framework
Methodology	Research design Methods
Planning	
Thesis	
Title page	Title, author, supervisor, date, thesis course code
Introduction	Context of the research question Problem statement Objective, including scientific and societal relevance Research question(s)
Theoretical framework	State of the art Theory and concepts Theoretical framework
Methodology	Research design Methods
Results	Context of the empirical case Case description Case analysis
Discussion	Relating the findings to the scientific debate
Conclusions	Answering the research question

	Overall conclusions on the whole research
	Reflection on theoretical framework and methodology
References	Consistent use of reference style
Appendices	<i>If applicable</i>

4.2 What is expected of a thesis?

Thesis expectations	
General	<p>Structure thesis and chapters is clear, coherent, and logical</p> <p>Writing style is clear and readable</p> <p>The lay-out is finished and consistent</p> <p>References, notes and bibliography are complete and consistent</p>
Introduction	<p>Topic of the research is clearly stated</p> <p>Problem statement is embedded in relevant scientific debate</p> <p>Problem statement is convincingly argued as scientifically, socially and/or policy relevant</p> <p>Problem statement is operationalised into a clear research objective(s) and research question(s)</p>
Theory	<p>The literature used is relevant and up-to-date</p> <p>Theory is thoroughly introduced and discusses different positions of different scholars in the field</p> <p>Theoretical concepts are relevant for the analysis of the research topic</p> <p>Concepts are linked in a research framework</p> <p>The student is able to position him/herself in the theoretical discussion</p>
Methodology	<p>Chosen methodology flows naturally out of the problem statement and theory.</p> <p>Research design is clearly stated</p> <p>Chosen cases are relevant in relation to the problem statement and theory</p> <p>Methods are clearly explained</p> <p>Validation of research results is clearly explained</p>
Results chapters	<p>Backdrop for the cases is provided</p> <p>The case description is focused and delimited in accordance with the research objective and question</p> <p>Theory is used explicitly to analyse case</p> <p>The case description is triangulated and validated</p>

	The case description does not present major lacunae
Discussion	Findings of the case study are linked to the major scientific debates surrounding the topic of the thesis Findings of the case study are related to societal relevant knowledge/insights
Conclusion	Explicit answers research questions and main research question Transcends a summary of chapters Discusses research findings in relation to theoretical framework Reflects on methodology used and its limitations Formulates relevant recommendations for further research
