

Paper development workshop: Qualitative research

May 21, 2021

Prof. Nina Granqvist

Meetings

- Fri 15.1. at 9-12:** Introductions, and characteristics of qualitative empirical research
- Fri 12.2. at 9-16:** Presenting empirical analyses and considering “what is this a case of”?
- Fri 9.4. at 9-16:** Theorizing from the empirical data
- Fri 21.5. at 9-16:*** *Contributions, Theorizing from the data (contd.)
Presenting and discussing your full papers*

Programme of the day

09.15 – 10.15 **Nina Granqvist: Making Contributions**

10.15 – 10.30 Break

10.30 – 12.00 **Paper session I & II**

Session I: Henri Schildt

Mazurova, Villo, Xu

Session II: Nina Granqvist

Auvinen, Soini, Arrieta

12.00-13.00 Lunch break

13.00-14.30 **Paper sessions III & IV**

Session III: Saku Mantere

Leinonen, Seittu, Parikka

Session IV: Rebecca Piekkari

Padhaiskaya, Ginting-Sczesny, Ginting-Carlström

14.30-14.45 Break

14.45-15.45 **Saku Mantere: Theorizing from Qualitative Data**



Visiting discussants



Saku Mantere

Professor of Strategy & Organization,
Visiting Distinguished Professor at Aalto U.
Strategic change, middle management agency, strategy discourse, practice of qualitative research and reasoning in theorizing about organizations



Rebecca Piekkari

Professor
International Business
Aalto U.
Language, careers, qualitative methods, especially case studies



Henri Schildt

Professor
Organization and management (Biz);
Industrial Engineering and Management (Sci), Aalto U.
digitalization, technology strategy, organizational change, and strategies for creating social value

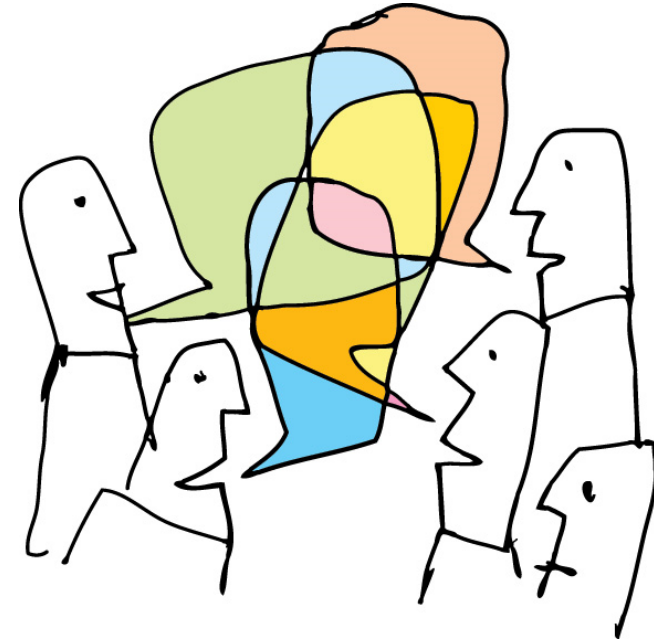
Writing a full review for two papers

- **Deadline for Friday 28th May**
- **Please provide a full review letter (about 2 pages) to each of your group members**
- **Look at the slides from the previous session for an example of a review letter**

Making contributions

What accounts for a contribution?

- Academic papers should make a contribution
- *What accounts for a contribution in a qualitative empirical paper?*
- Discussion in groups for 10 minutes



What accounts for a contribution varies by journals and discipline

- **Mainstream US journal vs. journals with a critical approach**
 - Requirement for a distinct theoretical contribution vs. challenging established conventions or presenting alternative viewpoints
- **Differences by discipline and literature, for example...**
 - Organization and management theory is considered by many as "elitist" and detached from practice – focus on *theoretical contribution*
 - E.g. sustainability and some strategy journals – aim is also to create *impact*
- **"The challenge in qualitative research is the continual push for novelty"** (Langley in Gehman et al., 2018)
- **Requirements for a contribution in a doctoral thesis are different from "A-journals"**

Theoretical contribution?

- **Theoretical contributions arise from the generation of new concepts and/or the relationships among the concepts that help us understand phenomena.**
- **The concepts and relationships developed from inductive, grounded theorizing should reflect principles that are portable or transferable to other domains and settings (both Gioia in Gehman et al., 2018)**
- **The analytic approaches to sensemaking that we adopt quite clearly influence the theoretical forms and types of contributions that we are able to make (Langley in Gehman et al., 2018)**

Broader view: Types of “originality”

Original approach

New approach

New question

New perspective

New appr. to tired/trendy topic

Appr. that makes new connections

New argument

Innovative appr. for discipline

Original theory

New theory

Connecting/ mapping ideas

Synthesis of literatures

New application of existing theory

Reconceptualization

Unconventional use of theory

Lens or a perspective, e.g. temporal, narrative, socio-technical

Types of originality (contd.)

Original method

Innovative method/research design
Synthesis of methods
Resolve old question
Innovative for discipline

Original topic

New topic
Noncanonical topic
Topic choice is unconventional

Understudied area

Understudied region
Understudied period

Original data

New data
Multiple sources
Noncanonical data

Original results

New insights
New findings

Langley on what is not a theoretical contribution

- **Generating a narrative without any obvious theorization.** “The case is interesting and well written. It could be useful in a strategic management course.”
- **Antitheorizing.** Pitting your case against a dominant view and saying, “actually it’s not like that.” Saying that “things are messy” is simply not enough.
- **Illustrative theorizing.** You start with a theory and apply it to your data. The author is simply labeling things that happened according to a preconceived theory – “not a test of the framework, but a mapping exercise.”

Langley on what is not a theoretical contribution (contd.)

- **Pattern theorizing.** Finding regularities but not explaining them. Identifying an empirical pattern is not a contribution per se. What explains that pattern?
- **Patchwork theorizing (or bricolage).** Authors take a few ideas from here, a few ideas from there, and stick the whole thing together in a kind of mashup. Not a contribution, as it lacks coherence and integration.
- **What makes a theoretical contribution is itself a moving target.** The kinds of theoretical framings that appeared insightful in earlier decades no longer have the same attraction today.

The review process perspective on contribution

Importance of articulating contribution increases as the review process proceeds

Reject

- Data is lacking; major lack of fit between framing and data; inadequate framing, methodology or analyses; no potential for contribution – nothing new

Revise and resubmit

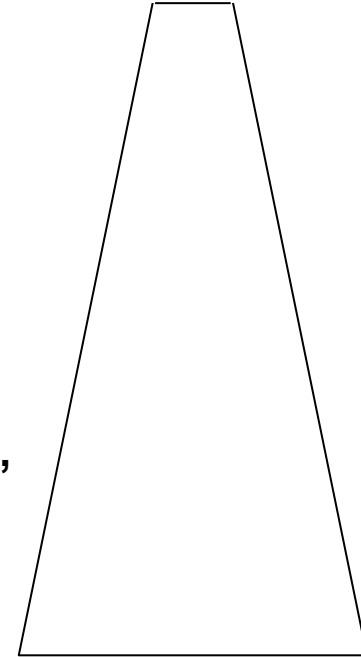
- "Great" data though analyses can be lacking; perceived capability to develop theoretical framing and conduct analyses; something interesting going on – "potential"

2nd Revise and resubmit

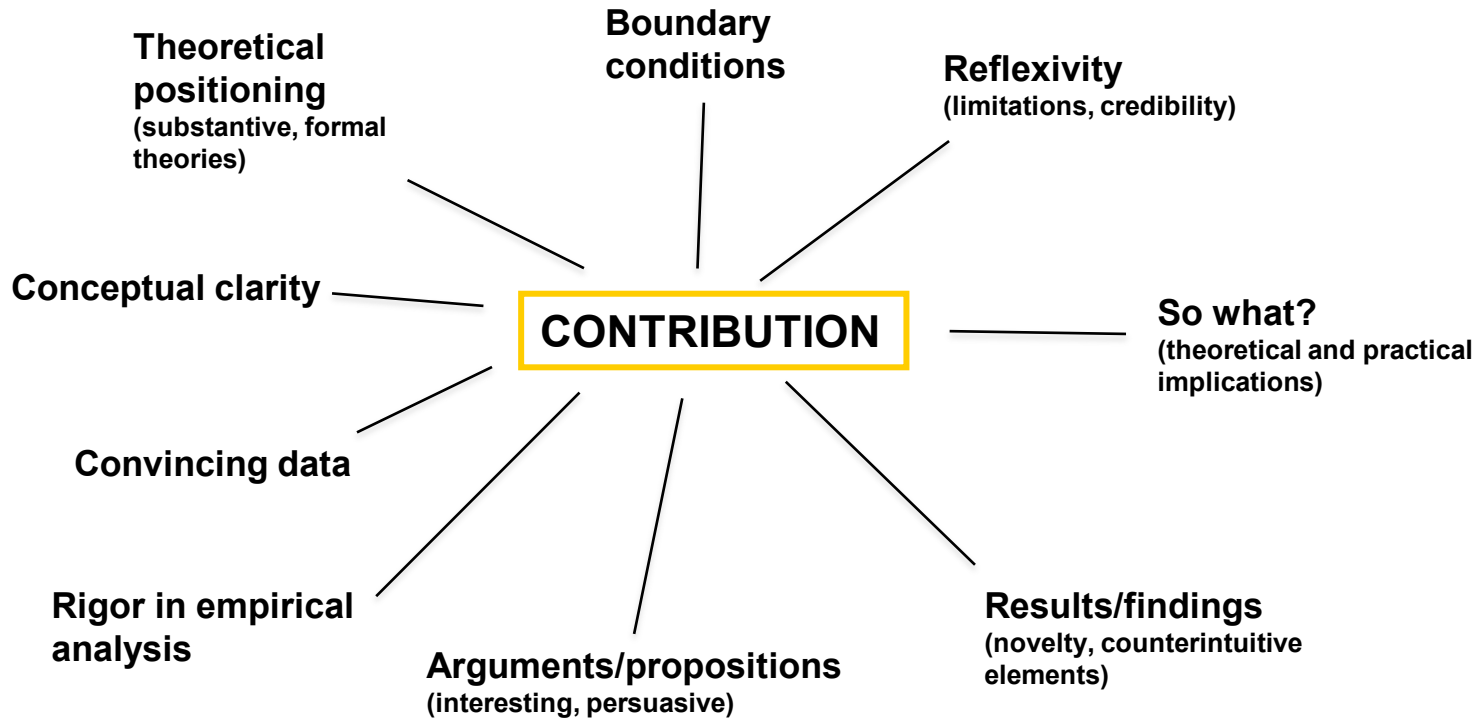
- Coherence throughout the paper but work needed on some aspects, clearly articulated (potential) for contribution

Conditional acceptance:

- Full coherence, fine tune contribution statements



Contribution is an outcome of the research process



**Questions, issues
to discuss?**
