

Paper development workshop: Qualitative research

May 30, 2024

Prof. Nina Granqvist

Meetings

Fri 26.1. at 9-12 Introductions, and characteristics of qualitative empirical research

Fri 9.2. at 9-16: Presenting empirical analyses and considering “what is this a case of”?

Fri 12.4. at 9-16: The art of reviewing – assessing the quality of qualitative papers for publication

Fri 30.5. at 9-16: Making contributions

Presenting and discussing your full papers

Q&A with Saku and Nina

Programme of the day

09.00 – 10.00 Nina Granqvist: Crafting contributions

10.00 – 10.15 *Break*

10.15-11.45 Parallel sessions 1a and 1b

Parallel session 1a (Nina) – Istuntosali (V101)

Presenter

Yeon Kyu Lee
Hanne Savolainen
Anna-Riikka Smolander

Commentators

Anna-Riikka and Hanne
Kyu and Thomas
Claire and Johanna

Parallel session 1b (Rebecca Piekkari) – Otto Stenroth (U113)

Presenter:

Elizaveta Sakhnovskaia
Lin Chen
Karelia Dagnaud

Commentators

Xiaoqi and Karelia
Elizaveta and Emilia
Jori and Lin

11.45-12.30 *Lunch*

12.30-14.00 Parallel session 2a and 2b

Parallel session 2a (Tiina Ritvala) – Kyösti Järvinen (1004)

Presenter

Claire Shaw
Johanna Niskavaara
Xiaoqi Feng

Commentators

Johanna and Anna-Riikka
Karelia and Xiaoqi
Lin and Claire

Parallel session 2b (Saku Mantere) – Istuntosali (V101)

Presenter

Emilia Eräpolku
Thomas Hoeger
Jori Mäkkeli

Commentators

Hanne and Kyu
Emilia and Jori
Thomas and Elizaveta

14.00-14.15 *Break*

14.15-15.15 **Saku Mantere: Theorizing by categorization, reasoning and interpretation**

15.15-16.00 **Discussion and Q&A (with Nina & Saku)**

Visiting discussants



Rebecca Piekari

Professor
International Business
Aalto U.

*Language, careers, qualitative
methods, especially case studies*



Tiina Ritvala

Associate Professor
Assistant Dean
International Business, Aalto U.
*Cross-sector partnerships in the
contexts of energy transition,
industry renewal and sustainable
cities; institutional theory,
organizational stigma, and
stakeholder theory.*



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*

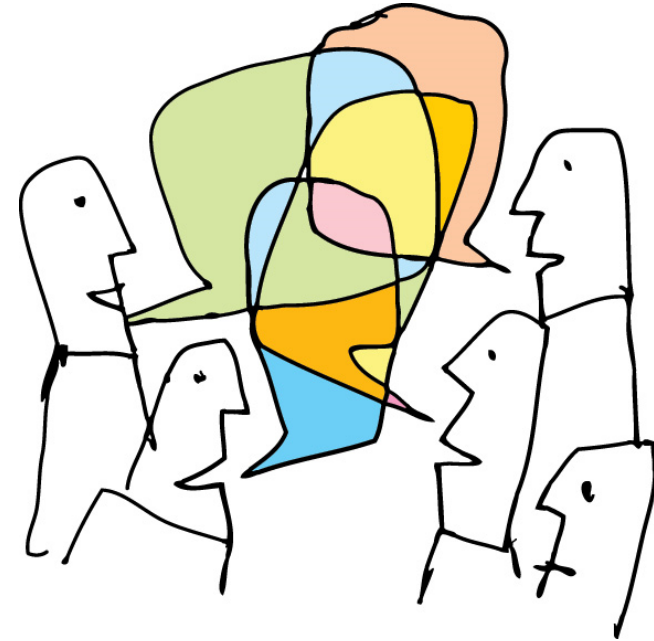
Writing a full review for two papers

- **Commenting on two papers**
 - Short written comments on one
 - Provide a full review letter (about 2 pages) for the other paper you comment (see MyCourses)
 - DL for both reviews: **Fri 7.6.2024**
- **Look at the slides from the previous session for an example of a review letter, and search for other examples as well**

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, discipline and context

- **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, post-humanist

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 making a clear 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, or completely unclear

Revise and resubmit

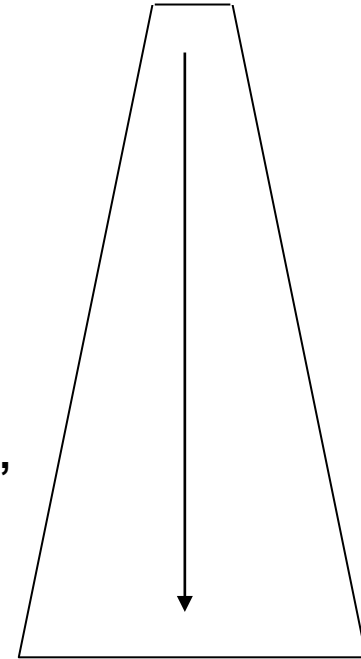
- "Great" data though analyses can be lacking; perceived capability to develop theoretical framing and conduct analyses; something interesting going on – "potential"

2nd Revise and resubmit

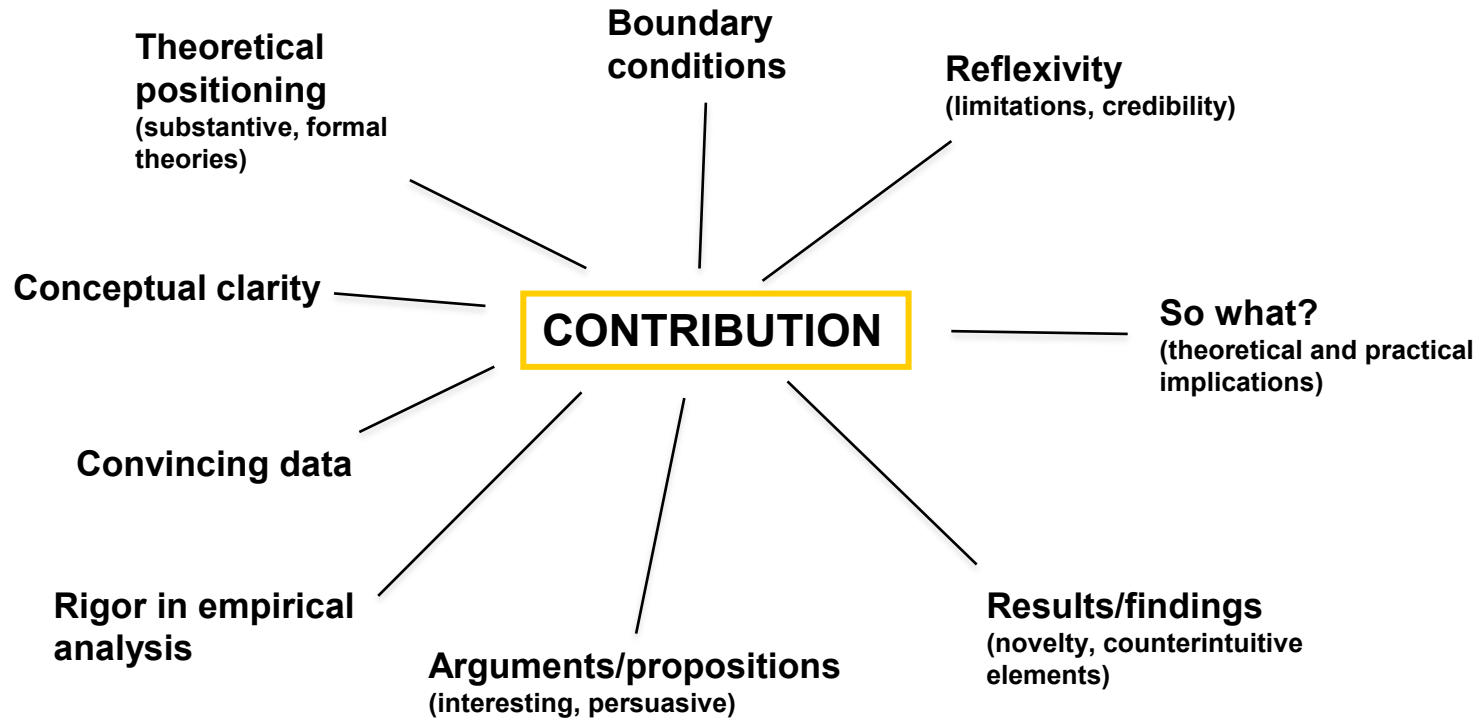
- Coherence throughout the paper but work needed on some aspects, clearly articulated (potential) for contribution

Conditional acceptance:

- Full coherence, exact and elaborated contribution statements



Contribution is an outcome of the research process



Questions?
