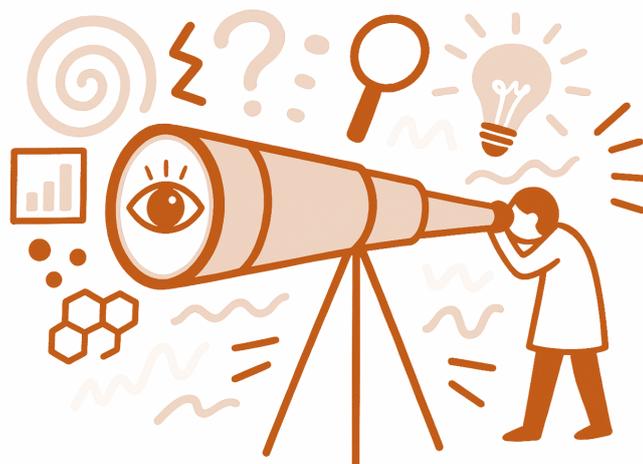


Qual+

Newsletter - Issue 8

Winter 2026



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Dear readers,

Welcome to the eight issue of the Qual+ Newsletter! We are sharing this newsletter with you to look back at events that we hosted during the autumn term, and to share with you our exciting spring and summer programme.

In October, Professor Silvia Gherardi visited Aalto University School of Business and delivered an impactful keynote on post-qualitative inquiry. In December, the EDEN Advanced Doctoral Course on Case Studies in Business and Management Research was held. In addition, we hosted a seminar with Professor Matti Rossi on multimethod research in information systems. In January, Qual+ hosted a seminar on comparative designs in collaboration with Hanken School of Economics.

Looking ahead, in April, Dr. Christina Lüthy and Assistant Professor Alice Wickström will host a workshop on putting posthuman theory to practice. Then in May, Professor Emerita Eleanor Westney will deliver a keynote on how to study industries as a level of analysis. In June, we will initiate our collaboration with CARMA (Consortium for the Advancement of Research Methods and Analysis), and host two events: a workshop in Advancements in Qualitative Research Methods together with Professor Tine Köhler, Professor Catherine Welch, and Lecturer Maria Rumyantseva, and a doctoral course Introduction to Qualitative Methods: Ethnography, delivered by Professor Michael Pratt. Moreover, just before the summer break, Professor Jo Angouri's advanced course Learning to See: A Course in Ethnography and Discourse Analysis will take place.

Below a visualization of some of the ways in which Qual+ has supported junior and senior researchers in their work since its establishment in 2023. As always, we are happy to share information about your forthcoming events, relevant calls-for-papers and conference calls for the Qual+ community through our mailing list and newsletter. Please, send any information you wish to distribute to qual-plus@aalto.fi.



Upcoming Qual+ Events

1. Qual+ seminar: Attuning to the field! Workshop on putting posthuman theory to practice, April 10

Led by Dr. Christina Lüthy (Lund University School of Economics and Managements) and Assistant Professor Alice Wickström (Aalto University School of Business)

Are you drawn to post-qualitative inquiry but struggling to move from theory to practice? In this workshop, participants will explore the role of affect, rhythms, and the agency of matter in field research. We will discuss how to attune to material-discursive relations when being in the field, and how to move with data towards understanding organizational phenomena. The workshop is structured around two lectures, which will serve as a basis for discussions about common research challenges and group explorations of 'research sites.' Emphasis will be placed on how the relational ontology that underpins post-qualitative inquiry encourages us to reconsider field research by questioning the privileged place of the human in qualitative inquiry.

Date: 10th of April 2026,

Time: 13.00-17.00

Place: Aalto University

If you are interested in attending the workshop, please submit a letter of motivation to Alice (alice.wickstrom@aalto.fi) by the **13th of March**. In the letter, introduce yourself and your research, and explain how the workshop could advance your work. You should also formulate a question or methodological challenge related to post-qualitative inquiry that you currently are struggling with. Selection will be based on the submitted letter of motivation, with priority given to PhD researchers and early career researchers.

2. Qual+ seminar: 'Why should we study industries, and how?', May 20

Led by Professor Emerita Eleanor Westney (MIT Sloan School of Management and the Schulich School of Business).

In business research, industry is often used as a 'control variable', all too often without serious consideration of what is being controlled. Building on a recently completed major project on industry dynamics, the seminar looks at the conceptual and methodological challenges of incorporating industry more effectively into our research.



Date: 20 May 2026

Time: 11.00-12.00

Location: 1501 (Sklodowska-Curie), Kide

Eleanor Westney, Professor Emerita at the MIT Sloan School of Management (US) and the Schulich School of Business (Canada), is a leading scholar renowned for her work in international business, organizational theory, and Japanese studies. Her research has greatly enhanced the understanding of multinational corporations by applying institutional theory and, more recently, the concept of organizational translation. Her interdisciplinary approach integrates perspectives from sociology, cultural studies, economics, and international management, contributing to a multifaceted understanding of organizational and environmental dynamics. She served as a Distinguished Visiting Professor at the School of Business from 2014 to 2017.

3. Qual+ workshop in collaboration with CARMA: Advancements in Qualitative Research Methods, June 8-9

Facilitated by Professor Tine Köhler (University of Melbourne), Professor Catherine Welch (Trinity College), and Lecturer Maria Rumyantseva (University of Sydney).

This symposium is open to all researchers with an interest in qualitative research methods, but especially those with ideas for future research projects on qualitative research methods scholarship. The symposium will consist of: 1) two methods workshops during which we will share recent advances in qualitative research methods, focusing on strengthening and elucidating the links between qualitative methods and theorizing. 2) a paper development workshop, during which symposium attendees can present their ideas for future qualitative research methods projects and receive feedback from research methods experts.

June 8, 3-6pm: *Qualitative Techniques for Theorizing* held by Tine Köhler and Catherine Welch

Covering theorizing from qualitative research, the process of abduction and its connection to qualitative data analysis, qualitative techniques and their facilitation of theorizing, practical examples of the process of theorizing with qualitative techniques

June 9, 9am-12pm: *Qualitative Restudies and their value for retheorizing* held by Catherine Welch, Maria Rumyantseva, and Tine Köhler

Covering introduction to qualitative restudy designs, research planning and execution, opportunities for theorizing with restudies, practical examples of qualitative restudies, practical learnings and experiences with the peer review process related to restudy designs

June 9, 1-4.30pm, *Paper development workshop*

Symposium attendees interested in participating in the paper development workshop are encouraged to submit ideas for future projects or work in progress related to research methods scholarship, on which they would like to receive feedback from methods experts. Most suitable are papers related to one of the two workshop topics, i.e., Qualitative Techniques for Theorizing and Qualitative Restudies and their value for retheorizing, but other topics related to qualitative methods scholarship will also be considered.

Submission process

In order to participate in the paper development workshop, participants will be required to submit an outline of their paper idea containing the goal of their study, relevant literature, intended contribution to that literature, and an outline of the design of the empirical part of the paper (maximum 1000 words, excluding references). Submissions will be taken until May 1, 2026, and confirmation of acceptance will be provided on a rolling basis, typically within 3 weeks from the date of submission of the outline. Please submit to tkoehler@unimelb.edu.au.

4. Qual+ course in collaboration with CARMA: Introduction to Qualitative Methods: Ethnography, June 10-12

Facilitated by Professor Michael Pratt (Boston College).

The purpose of this course is to gain a solid foundation in qualitative methods by learning ethnographic methods. The course will involve: 1) understanding what qualitative methods are and how they are different from quantitative methods; 2) learning to design and implement an ethnographic study; and 3) learning core qualitative skills such as interviewing, observing, coding and as time allows, writing and publishing.

During the course, the following topics will be covered:

- I. Qualitative Basics (overviews, “myths”, comparisons with other methods) & Introduction to Ethnography
- II. Preparation Work (e.g., selecting context, research question, access)
- III. Observing
- IV. Interviewing
- V. Coding
- VI. Writing & Publishing (as time permits)



Registration will open in March 2026.

5. Advance doctoral course in Aalto University: Learning to See: A Course in Ethnography and Discourse Analysis, June 15-17

Facilitated by Professor Jo Angouri (University of Warwick).

The course provides an overview of theory and method for discourse research. It is structured in two parts, a theoretical and an empirical one; for the latter, the students design and carry out a research project. Through class meetings and independent learning, the course familiarizes students with the principles and practices of designing a discourse project, collecting data, analysing interaction, and presenting and writing up findings.

The aims of the course are:

- To examine critically how different theoretical and methodological approaches in discourse studies help us understand, describe, and interpret language use in different multilingual and multicultural contexts,
- To extend and develop the students' knowledge of issues surrounding discourse in society,
- To develop a critical awareness of the relationship between the features of language and the social context at both micro and macro levels, and
- To extend and develop the students' knowledge of ethnographic research.

Application method:

Please register by sending email to Jo Angouri (J.Angouri@warwick.ac.uk) and course assistant Jhoomer Chandra (jhoomer.chandra@aalto.fi) with very basics about your project (title/year of study). Aalto students also need to register through SISU closer to the course. (The registration period through SISU starts from 17arch 2026 and ends on 7 April 2026)

Past Event Spotlights

1. Qual+ Seminar: 'What is post-qualitative inquiry, and why do we need it?' by Professor Silvia Gherardi

Across the social sciences, there has been growing interest in post-qualitative inquiry and its potential to critically challenge the foundations of conventional qualitative research. This turn has sparked important conversations about what counts as knowledge, evidence, and data, and has highlighted the need to develop more ethical and response-able ways of knowing – approaches that move beyond linear research designs and traditional disciplinary conventions. In October we had the pleasure of hosting Professor Silvia Gherardi (University of Trento) at Aalto University for a seminar and a full-day workshop. Below, a recollection from one of the organizers, Martta Nieminen.



Professor Gherardi after the seminar, with senior university lecturer Saija Katila, one of the organizers. Picture by Rebecca Piekkari.

“Professor Silvia Gherardi visited us at the Department of Management last autumn, and I had the pleasure of being part of the hosting team. Looking back, the first thing that comes to mind is Silvia’s sense of humour – I love laughing, and I got plenty of that with Silvia and her entire entourage. Professor Gherardi’s full-day workshop began with a treat: all participants were asked to bring their favourite published post-qualitative research paper (importantly, in print!), which we then discussed in small groups. What a breath of fresh air this was, compared to the well-practiced devil’s advocate positioning so common in academia – not critiquing or arguing, nor stretching models, but instead enjoying someone’s work and being inspired by what one’s own tone of writing might become.

My most precious insight from Silvia’s visit was a way of relating to post-qualitative data: surrender intertwined with agency. I wish to thank Professor Gherardi for the insightful couple of days, until next time! (Meanwhile, can’t wait for the workshop on post-qualitative inquiry, with a focus on field research with Assistant Professor Alice Wikström and Christina Lüthy (CBS) in April 2026!).”

*Reflection written by **Martta Nieminen**, a doctoral researcher at the Department of Management Studies, Aalto University School of Business.*

2. EDEN Advanced Doctoral Seminar on Case Studies in Business and Management Research, by Professor Catherine Welch and Professor Rebecca Piekkari

The EDEN Advanced Doctoral Seminar on Case Studies in Business and Management Research took place at the Aalto University School of Business on December 1-5. The course is co-organized by EIASM (The European Institute for Advanced Studies in Management) in Brussels and Kataja (The Finnish Doctoral Program in Business Studies). The purpose of this seminar was to introduce doctoral students from Europe and around the world to the diversity of ways of conducting case study research and to improve their own research practices.



Picture by Berit Virtanen-Thewlis

In my first year as a PhD student, I have asked myself many times what it means to conduct a case study and how it differs from other types of qualitative research approaches. If I'm being honest, this question has been haunting me since my undergraduate studies. With this question in mind, I enrolled in EDEN's advanced doctoral course on case studies in business and management research, hoping to finally find an answer. I think that after the 5 days at the course, I'm finally understanding why this question has been so difficult to get a clear answer to.

During the course, we analysed various aspects and perspectives on case studies by discussing different types of research designs and ways of theorising from a case, as well as the importance of framing and presenting the case. One of the things I really enjoyed was the discussions and brainstorming that took place when we were working on different poster presentations, where we delved into the details of the various articles.

Of course, having the two case study experts, Professor Rebecca Piekkari and Professor Catherine Welch, leading the course and sharing their knowledge and experience with us was a great pleasure. Additionally, I also learned a great deal from the other participants in the course. Although we were at different stages in our PhD journey, with different research focuses from different universities and countries, the issues and questions we faced were, in many cases, shared.

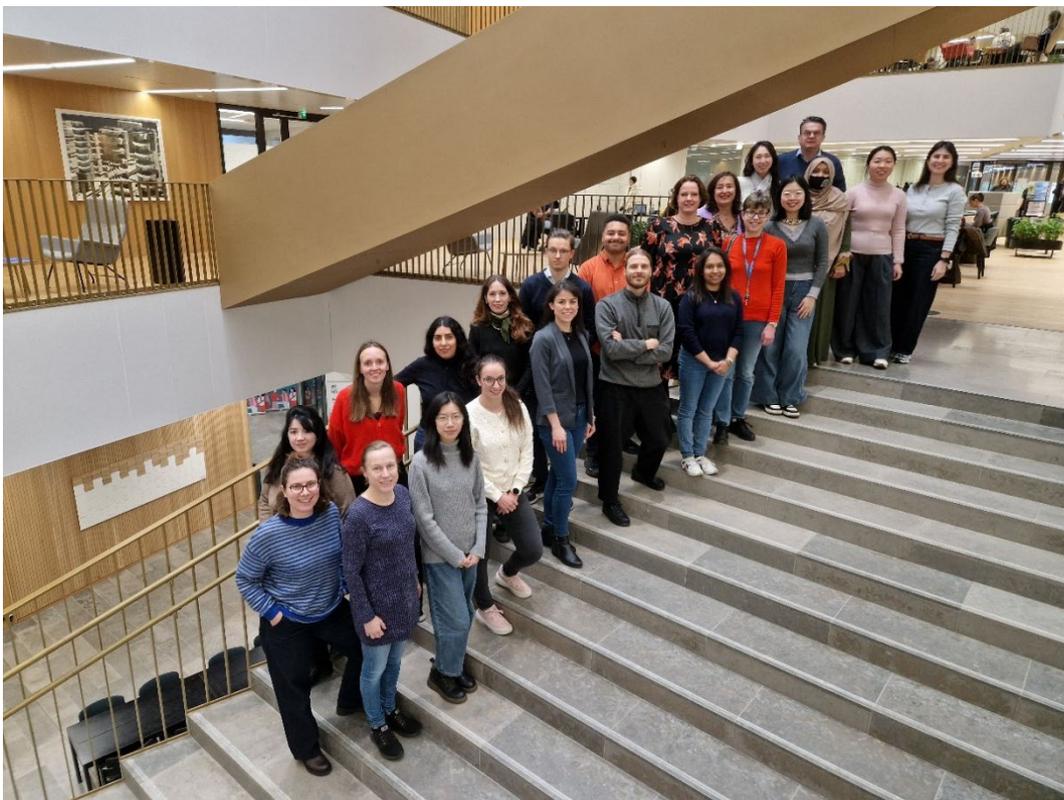


Coming back to understanding why it has been so challenging to get a clear answer to what it means to do a case study. One of the key takeaways I gained from the course was that there are many ways to conduct a case study, so you will never find a perfect recipe to follow for carrying out and writing up the “perfect” case. However, to conduct a high-quality case study that brings meaningful contributions to your research community, one needs to understand how the different components in a case study (research question, design, data, theory, etc.) are connected to each other and to one’s ontological and epistemological assumptions.

While there are many questions still to be answered regarding the case study methodology, after this course, I see it more as a friendly ghost that I’m getting to know, rather than being haunted by a hostile spirit.

Picture by Berit Virtanen-Thewlis

Reflection written by **Sofia Zetterlund**, PhD Student at Uppsala University, Department of Business Studies, Sector for Industrial Marketing.



Participants of the EDEN Advanced Doctoral Seminar on Case Studies in Business and Management Research. Picture by Valentina Voimavuo.

3. Qual+ Seminar in collaboration with Hanken seminar series: Thinking comparatively: Advancing theory through ‘thick’ comparative designs in qualitative management research, by Associate Professor Hanna Gajewska-De Matto, Professor Rebecca Piekkari, Professor Catherine Welch, and Assistant Professor Sergi Casals.



Picture by Rebecca Piekkari.

Comparison is a fundamental form of scientific reasoning, but it is rarely discussed in these terms in management research. The dominant approach to qualitative data analysis, ‘controlled comparison’, overlooks variations and differences in the quest for establishing regularities and similarities between units. In this seminar, the presenters proposed a new agenda for the use of comparative reasoning in qualitative management research. Doctoral researcher Neema Komba from Hanken School of Economics wrote a reflection of the January seminar.

Is it time for management theory to move from generalization to translation?

Management theory should (and could) do more than just generalize. In our heterogeneous social world, meaning doesn’t often travel between contexts. There is always an underlying question of suitability of concepts across contexts [especially for those with constructivist and pragmatic world views]. Therefore, instead of generalizability, qualitative researchers can aim to build theory that translates from one context to another. This entails capturing the differences between contexts and making concepts ‘comprehensible across space, time or cultural contexts’.

This was one of the key takeaways of the research seminar on comparative designs in qualitative management research held on January 20 2026, in a collaboration between Qual+ and Hanken School of Economics. The seminar, held both on site and online, featured a presentation by Hanna Gajewska-De Mattos (University of Leeds, UK), Rebecca Piekkari (Aalto University, Finland), Catherine Welch (Trinity College Dublin, Ireland and Distinguished Visiting Professor, Aalto University, School of Business) and Sergi Casals (Universidad EAFIT, Colombia) titled: Thinking Comparatively: Advancing Theory Through ‘Thick’ Comparative Designs in Qualitative Management Research.

The presenters inspired researchers to think about ‘thick comparisons’ to generate theory that considers contextual differences and variations. Comparisons aren’t new; they are at the heart

of management theorizing. However, most researchers tend to focus on similarities (which simplifies and generalizes the complex world but leaves the theory wanting) There is also a lack of transparency in how researchers construct their comparisons (i.e., what they compare, and what they leave out and why). To remedy this, they proposed ‘thick comparison’ as a more transparent interpretative approach to comparison. Thick comparative designs should consider contextual differences and incorporate deeper reflexivity into the way researchers construct their comparisons. With thick comparisons, management researchers can generate theory without erasing differences.

Neema Komba is a doctoral researcher in Entrepreneurship at Hanken School of Economics, interested in responsible entrepreneurship and curious about institutions, corruption, intersectionality, and sustainability. Her thesis explores entrepreneurship in practice with a specific focus on strategies for survival and growth for entrepreneurs in corrupt and institutionally unstable business environments.

Upcoming doctoral course on historical approaches to business research

Course title:	Historical Approaches to Business Research
Credits:	6 ECTS
Target Group:	Doctoral students in any major interested in historical research
Grading:	Fail/Pass
Format:	Block seminar course, 3 seminar days (14.-16. April, 2026), room Kide/Meitner 1571
Timing:	Period 5, Spring term 2026
Language:	English
Faculty:	Prof. Henrikki Tikkanen , A. I. Virtanen Professor of Consumer Research, Professor of Business Administration in Marketing, Aalto University School of Business, Helsinki, Finland Dr. Antti Sihvonen , Senior Lecturer, University of Helsinki, Finland To register for the course, register at Sisu (Aalto students) or email henrikki.tikkanen@aalto.fi (also for questions regarding the course)

This course introduces the participants to the multi-faceted world of how various historical approaches and related historical methodology can be applied to contemporary business research. Thus, the course is both meta-theoretical and pragmatic. Three examples of historical studies conducted by the teachers (two on the evolution of the Nokia corporation, and a third one on the history of doctoral education at the Helsinki School of Economics/Aalto University

School of Business), are examined more deeply to shed light on conducting historical studies from different paradigmatic and methodological perspectives.

Lectures in ethical review and data management by Aalto's Research services

Training offered in two workshops:



14 April, 2026 **Qualitative methods and research ethics review at 1-2.30 pm**

This lecture is intended for Aalto researchers who need to go through the ethical review process for their research projects. The lecture will focus on qualitative research with human participants. The Finnish TENK guidelines require an ethical review for specific research designs. In addition, academic journals require ethical review statements from all manuscripts involving human participants submitted for publication.

The questions covered include:

- Have you considered that your research project could cause harm or have risks to your research participants, to other individuals, to yourself, or to society in general?
- How to mitigate them, and minimise potential risks by planning?
- How to take care of informed consent in changing research questions and contexts? What are the best practices in this area ?

Zoom link for the session: <https://aalto.zoom.us/j/68514403678>.

23 April 2026 **Personal data in research at 1-2.30 pm**

Are you handling personal data as part of your research project? If you are doing research with any type of data from a living individual (for example, questionnaires, interviews, biomedical signals, data from registries, data from social media, pseudonymised data), then you are handling personal data. Come and join this lecture to learn the best practices from Aalto experts.

The lecture includes the following topics:

- What are personal data? Why do we need to handle them differently?
- Handling of personal data step-by-step
- Open questions and cases from the participants

Zoom-link for the session: <https://aalto.zoom.us/j/63145548019>.

Highlighted published works

Musca Neukirch, G., & Gherardi, S. (2026). Writing the fascination for extreme contexts: Darwin's reverie. *Culture and Organization*, 1–25.

Abstract: Fascination, as an affective, material and non-rational force, creates a particular bond between human beings, nature, and the materialization of space in an extreme context. This article, in relation to the 'Darwin Expedition' in Patagonia, explores affect as a poetic reverie under the dreamscape influence of Gaston Bachelard. This poetic reverie, quilts together multiple voices, multiple writings and photographs, bringing to mind and to text, the unspeakable and the silenced absence–presence of fascination in an extreme context. Darwin's Reverie is performed as a composition of heterogeneous elements that stage an encounter between the human and the more-than-human, where human exceptionalism is unsettled and the anthropocentric fantasy of mastery over nature is undone. This experimenting-with-writing enriches how we think, how we feel, and how our feelings affect us and the world around us. A poetic approach allows us to consider and enact the materiality of language, while experimenting with writing differently.

Full paper available at: <https://doi.org/10.1080/14759551.2025.2593983>.

Kibler, E., Salmivaara, V., Lutman-White, E., Farny, S., & Angouri, J. (2026). Collectively Committing to 'What Is Interesting' in Qualitative Research: A methodological application of interactional sociolinguistics. *Organization Studies*.

Abstract: Selecting which aspects of empirical phenomena to investigate is a fundamental yet underexplored challenge in qualitative research. This paper introduces an interactional sociolinguistic methodology to examine how a qualitative research team navigated this challenge during a three-year project. By analysing real-life team discussions, we identify four types of interactionally co-constructed commitments—straightforward, uncertain, repeated and withheld commitments—that enable teams to balance exploratory openness with the need to narrow their focus within the interplay between the observed empirical field and academic discourse. Building on these insights, we propose an interactional sociolinguistic model of collective commitments to 'what is interesting' in qualitative research. Our study contributes to methodological scholarship by revealing how linguistic interaction shapes shared direction and methodological decision-making in team-based qualitative inquiries.

Full paper available at: <https://doi.org/10.1177/01708406261418190>.

De Donà, M. (2026). What if the Case is 'Elusive'? Methodological Challenges for Qualitative Research in International Relations and Global Governance. *International Journal of Qualitative Methods*, 25.

Abstract: Case study research plays an important role for social and political scientists working within the qualitative tradition, with the field of international relations (IR) being no exception. This article provides methodological reflections on the challenges of investigating ‘elusive’ cases within the global governance domain of IR. Taking stock of my experience of studying global multi-stakeholder partnerships (MSPs), I discuss the advantages and drawbacks of conducting online elite interviews and online event observation. I show that the practical benefits of carrying out online fieldwork come with the downside of possibly obtaining only a superficial understanding of individual cases.

Arguing that challenges stem not only from logistical constraints but also from ‘inevitable’ methodological limitations, I reflect on the potential impact of these dynamics on interpretive research. Ultimately, I call for deeper epistemological debates on the role of qualitative case study research in the IR field. In addition to providing insights into methodological challenges arising from studying ‘elusive’ case studies, the article offers three potential counterstrategies: I argue that a combination of careful case selection, enhanced triangulation and transparent reporting can help mitigate these methodological challenges. In the conclusion of the article, I also suggest potential avenues for future case-study based global governance research as far as type of actor and policy field are concerned.

Full paper available at: <https://doi.org/10.1177/16094069261429329>.

Keep in touch with us!

Qual+ Newsletter is published a few times per year. If you come across new interesting articles or books, calls for special issues or edited volumes, or are organizing an event or course related to qualitative, mixed, or merged methods, [please send a message our way](#): We would happily include this information in future issues and share it with our continuously growing Qual+ community.

In addition, in case you publish research that uses qualitative methods in innovative ways, and would like to see your work highlighted in the newsletter or on our LinkedIn page, be in touch with us!

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