

Qual+ Newsletter

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Welcome to the inaugural Qual+ newsletter!

“Because the world we live in is characterized by major disruptions and societal transitions, research aiming to predict the future and identify recurring patterns is not very useful. Therefore, we need qualitative methods that can address causal complexity, future uncertainty as well as systemic and processual change.” –

Rebecca Piekkari, Director of the Qual+ (Aalto Center for Qualitative Management Research)

We are excited to introduce you to Qual+ that is a new International Center for Qualitative Management Research, which advances connections across researchers and brings new ways to look at qualitative methods within management studies. Qual+ promotes methodological and theoretical pluralism and invites all forms of qualitative research, including mixed and merged methods to address contemporary phenomena and future uncertainty. The center's main objectives include helping researchers learn and develop new methodologies and promoting multidisciplinary dialogue concerning the use of qualitative methodologies. The center brings researchers together by organizing seminars, workshops, and community-building events, and encourages them to build close ties with practitioners to gain a deep understanding of the phenomena they are studying. Building on a long tradition of qualitative research scholarship at the School of Business (and its predecessor, the Helsinki School of Economics), it leverages Aalto's world-class qualitative research skills internationally.

Qual+ is for those curious minds at Aalto and other universities in Finland and abroad who are interested in seeking to expand their knowledge of methodological innovations. In the Executive Board of the center we have representatives from three Aalto Schools, Aalto Executive Education as well as Aalto Data Agents. The center responds to Aalto's strategic enablers. First, embracing radical creativity it fosters paradigm-challenging qualitative research. Second, embracing sustainability, it encourages multidisciplinary dialogue to tackle societal challenges. Third, embracing entrepreneurial mindset, it advances experience-near research that does not shy away from risk-taking.

Through this first newsletter, we are happy to provide you highlights of **the Qual+ opening event**, **Qual+ Roundtable event with Robert Galliers**, and **Qual+ research workshop with Aleks Niittymies**, and announce future events (e.g., **Saija Katila's** book launch and Workshop with **Eero Vaara** on Narrative Analysis), courses, calls, and books. If you have an idea for innovative collaboration, or an event related to qualitative (and qualitative-plus) methods (e.g., mixed, blended), let's bring your ideas to life together. Please be in touch if you have any events, courses, calls or new books that we could include in future issues (contact and sign-up details at end of newsletter). For more information please see: <https://www.aalto.fi/en/department-of-management-studies/qual>

Events

Earlier in the Qual+ opening week, Qual+ presented two interesting methods workshops: **Tine Köhler**, Co-Editor-in Chief of Organizational Research Methods (**How to write research methods papers that make a methodological contribution**), and Joep Cornelissen (**How to develop and write (about) theory**).

Qual+ Opening Event: A New International Center for Qualitative Management Research

Rebecca Piekkari officially opened Qual+ on September 7th and 8th, as Director of the Center, joined by the Chair of the Board of Aalto University, **Mikko Kosonen**. Rebecca highlighted that quantitative methods alone are not enough to address causal complexity, future uncertainty, and systemic and processual changes. She emphasized the timeliness of qualitative research focus to produce racially new solutions in a world characterized by drastic geopolitical disruptions and societal transitions. Mikko emphasized the importance of investing in deep understanding of the phenomena and close ties with practitioners, which often go unrecognized in current career systems at universities.



Keynote speech at Qual+ Opening Event. Picture: Aalto University/Roope Kiviranta

John Van Maanen kicked off the substantive content with a retrospective keynote speech, “**There and back again: Ruminations on ethnographic studies**”. **Eero Vaara** rounded off John’s keynote with a commentary, “**Genres of qualitative work**”. **Henri Schildt** delivered the second keynote speech of the event, “**Cyborg inquiry: Can AI help us do better qualitative research?**”. The day concluded with two less formal speech events. Chairman of Qual+ International Advisory Board **Saku Mantere** moderated a panel discussion “**The future of qualitative management research**”, with Joep Cornelissen, Tine Köhler, Michael Pratt, John Van Maanen and Catherine Welch as panelists. Second, an academic speed-dating session sparked intensive conversation about how we relate to qualitative research.



Panel discussion at Qual+ Opening Event. Picture: Aalto University/Roope Kiviranta

Day Two kicked off with introductory remarks from institutional and international perspectives, thanks to **Ilkka Niemelä**, the Rector of Aalto University, and **Timo Korkeamäki**, the Dean of Aalto University School of Business. **Michael Pratt** delivered the final keynote speech of the opening event on the topic of “**New developments in qualitative methods**”, and **Susanne Tietze** led a workshop opening discussion on several critical angles on qualitative research. “**Are qualitative research methods dangerous? Cross-language perspectives**”.



Lively roundtable discussion at Qual+ Opening Event. Picture: Aalto University/Roope Kiviranta

Six parallel roundtable discussions highlighted some of the key themes of the opening events. Tine Köhler's roundtable focused on “**Longitudinal qualitative fieldwork projects: Design, execution, publication possibilities**”. Saku Mantere asked “**Can methodology be an impediment to reasoning?**”. Mike Pratt's group discussed the

possibility of “**Moving from data to convincing results?**” Henri Schildt led discussions on “**The creative leap in qualitative research**”. Susanne Tietze asked, “**How does qualitative research (not change) in cross-language contexts?**”. And John Van Maanen’s discussion focused on “**Challenges in your field work**”. The opening of Qual+ concluded with closing remarks and thanks from **Rebecca Piekkari**.

For a more detailed summary of the Qual+ opening event please see: <https://www.aalto.fi/en/department-of-management-studies/qual>

Qual+ Roundtable: Prof Robert Galliers

Bob Galliers led the first Qual+ Roundtable discussion based on his newly co-edited volume: [Cambridge Handbook of Qualitative Digital Research](#) (Simeonova and Galliers, 2023). Digitalisation is a growing phenomenon, and data analytics and data science programmes are proliferating. Yet, the management, societal and ethical considerations have so far received much less attention. Addressing this gap in the qualitative analysis of digitalisation, the book serves as a transdisciplinary complement to quantitative approaches and moves us closer to mixed methods that can tackle phenomena more adequately. It touches upon Philosophical, Epistemological and Theoretical Considerations, Methodological Considerations and Illustrative Examples and Emergent Issues. Addressing such an urgent and multifaceted lacuna this Qual+ Roundtable attracted a full room of students and senior academics from information systems, management studies, organization studies, law, accounting, and philosophy.

Qual+ research workshop – Historical research approaches in management studies

Aleksi Niittymies organized a world-class Qual+ research workshop - Historical research approaches in management studies. It highlighted the opportunities historical research approaches provide for management scholars, and the ways they can be employed in practice. The workshop had a lineup of superb speakers: **Stephanie Decker** (“Historical imagination as a methodological practice and the role of theory”), **Kalle Pajunen** (History, explanation, and causal mechanisms”), **Henrikki Tikkanen** (“Conducting microhistorical studies in organization research”), and **Aleksi Niittymies** (“Making sense of the paradigmatic pluralism of historical research approaches”). **Saku Mantere** hosted a panel “How to do historical management research”. The talks and panel complemented and extended each other. The event attracted PhD students, junior and senior scholars from many Aalto Schools, departments, and disciplines. The dialogue both between the invited speakers as well as with the audience was lively.

Upcoming events

December 2023: **Qual + Book release event with Saija Katila: [Handbook of Feminist Research Methodologies in Management and Organization Studies \(e-elgar.com\)](http://e-elgar.com)** Hybrid, December 15, 2023 [Qual+ | Aalto University](#)

January 2024: **Workshop with Eero Vaara on Narrative Analysis** January 15, 2024 [Qual+ | Aalto University](#)

March 2024: **SAMS Conference Call for Papers: Interdisciplinarity in Management Research: Premises, Pitfalls, and Promises** March 5-6, 2024 <http://www.socadms.org.uk/conference-call-for-papers-interdisciplinarity-in-management-research-premises-pitfalls-and-promises/>

March 2024: **Hackathon with the Department of Economics** March 7, 2024

April 2024: **The Northeastern qualitative research conference.** April 3, 2024.

June 2024, **Annual Meeting: AIB 2024 Seoul -Academy of International Business (AIB)** <https://www.aib.world/event/annual-meeting-aib-2024-seoul/>

Courses

EDEN Advanced Doctoral Seminar of Case Studies in Business and Management Research

4-9 December 2023, Aalto University, Finland

https://www.eiasm.org/frontoffice/eden_announcement.asp?event_id=1686%20

Journal of Management Studies Professional Development Workshop

<http://www.socadms.org.uk/journal-of-management-studies-professional-development-workshop-edinburgh-uk/>

4 March 2024, Edinburgh, UK

Calls

Qualitative Research in Organizations and Management

DL 1 January 2024

Special issue on research methods for the performative and communicative study of organizing and organizations.

<https://www.emeraldgrouppublishing.com/calls-for-papers/call-papers-research-methods-performative-and-communicative-study-organizing-and>

AIB 2024 Call for Papers

DL 10 January 2024

<https://www.aib.world/events/2024/contribute/call-for-papers/>**JIBS call for papers: Rethinking Firm International Involvement in a Changing World of Complex Realities**

DL 31 January 2024

<https://resource-cms.springernature.com/springer-cms/rest/v1/content/23599608/data/v2>

Podcasts

[Podcast | Stephanie Decker, "Postcolonial Transition and Global... \(newbooksnetwork.com\)](#)[Podcast | Stephanie Decker et al., "Handbook of Historical Methods... \(newbooksnetwork.com\)](#)

New books

[Cambridge Handbook of Qualitative Digital Research](#) (Simeonova and Galliers, 2023)[Handbook of Feminist Research Methodologies in Management and Organization Studies \(e-elgar.com\)](#) (Katila, Meriläinen and Bell, 2023)

This title contains Open Access chapters

For more books see [Qual+ | Aalto University](#)

Sign up for updates and announcements

Qual+ newsletter is published quarterly. It is for those curious minds at Aalto and other universities in Finland and abroad who are interested in seeking to expand their knowledge of methodological innovations. You can sign up for this newsletter via the webform at the bottom of our website:

[Qual+ | Aalto University](#)

You'll also receive invitations to selected events.

Contact [Kirsi Snellman](#), Qual+ coordinator, to contribute to future newsletters or other Qual+ activities