

Management and Organization Review
Special Issue ‘Doing Qualitative Research in
Emerging Markets’

Call for Papers

Guest Editors:

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Special Issue Theme Background

The *Management and Organization Review* (MOR) special issue on ‘**Doing Qualitative Research in Emerging Markets**’ aims to advance the quality, diversity, and understanding of qualitative research methods in management in the context of emerging markets. The value of qualitative research is increasingly embraced by management scholars thanks to its merits for building new theories and testing existing ones, as well as exemplifying new phenomena by surfacing contextual idiosyncrasies (Bansal & Corley, 2011; Birkinshaw, Brannen, & Tang, 2011; Eisenhardt & Graebner, 2007; Rynes, 2007; Welch, Piekkari, Plakoyiannaki, & Paavilainen-Mantymaki, 2011). As Bansal and Corley (2011: 234) suggest ‘The beauty of qualitative research is that it accommodates different paradigms and different styles of research and research reporting. Although there are merits to having norms emerge for the style of qualitative research manuscripts, we do not want to stifle creativity’.

This diversity of underlying philosophical positions, multiple research paradigms, nonstandard research designs, multiple theoretical purposes, and variable quality of writing, render qualitative research suitable to scholars who wish to generate nuanced accounts of high complexity settings (Pratt, 2008; Siggelkow,

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2007; Suddaby, 2006). Empirical studies in social science require high-quality research to pursue truth through rigorous research (Lewin, Fey, Levine, McDermott, Murmann, & Tsang, 2016). The criteriology of qualitative research can be pluralistic inspired by different philosophical orientations. Qualitative studies might employ 'positivist' quality criteria such as construct validity, internal validity, external validity and reliability (Yin, 2009, 2014) or naturalistic criteria, namely credibility, transferability, dependability and conformability (Symon & Cassell, 2012). As suggested by Welch et al. (2011), philosophical and methodological pluralism may be desirable and critical in producing insights of phenomena in novel, idiosyncratic, and multiple contexts.

With the recognition of the criticism on generalization because of the small-N problem (Gerring, 2007; Steinmetz, 2004), we appreciate the relative merits of qualitative research in three aspects of generalization: theoretical generalization, falsification and empirical within-population generalization (Tsang, 2014). Furthermore, the most recent editorial from *Journal of International Business Studies* (JIBS) emphasizes on the trustworthiness in qualitative research by ruling out alternative explanations (Cuervo-Cazurra, Andersson, Brannen, Nielsen, & Reuber, 2016). Detailed recommendations have been outlined for establishing trustworthiness in qualitative research in three dimensions: research context, research design, and empirical analysis (Cuervo-Cazurra et al., 2016).

Contextualization calls for more qualitative research to capture phenomena, explore comprehensive insights and develop context-specific theories (Tsui, 2006). It has been well recognized that the philosophy and approach in doing business vary between emerging markets and developed ones (Barkema, Chen, George, Luo, & Tsui, 2015). Management theories developed in western countries may not adapt well to the emerging context described by multiple embeddedness (or polycontextuality, see Shapiro, von Glinow, & Xiao, 2007). Therefore, context-informed theory-building and -testing becomes an imperative if we are to explain the uniqueness of management in emerging markets, and so qualitative research becomes critical for scholars.

We are aware that the need for encouraging qualitative research has attracted the collective imagery and the joint attention of researchers, executives, and consultants in both transforming and established economies. Context-specific theories contribute both to scholars and practitioners in western and eastern world. However, even though some of the journals accept qualitative papers, the number of theories based on emerging markets is still limited.

We believe that a special interest on qualitative research in emerging markets has the potential to significantly draw the attention on qualitative research and enhance the understanding of qualitative methods. We echo Tsui (2007: 1353) and view this special issue as an opportunity for 'serious engagement in deep contextualization, novel questioning and innovative theorizing'. The MOR special issue will contribute to establishing the groundwork for reviewing, motivating, and illustrating rigorous qualitative research in emerging markets, by adopting a wide range of

qualitative methods (case study, grounded theory, historical data, interviews, observation, visual methodologies, etc.). It seeks to attract and publish a diverse array of empirical, theoretical, and methodological contributions that significantly add to the state-of-the-art qualitative research in emerging markets. Through, 'reverse exporting' (White, 2002: 306) this special issue may offer novel ways to revisit phenomena in other contexts therefore contributing to the wider discourse of qualitative management research. Potential topics included but not limited to an overview of qualitative research in emerging markets, context-specific theories built by qualitative research, and empirical pieces adopting qualitative methods.

Topics

The following list of research topics is not intended to be exhaustive or complete.

- How to engage in qualitative theory-building and/or theory-testing research in emerging markets?
- Mixed method studies in emerging markets, combining different qualitative methodologies (e.g., case study, focus groups, and observations).
- Qualitative research in emerging markets, which focuses on various phenomenon and makes attempts to understand the underlying mechanism.
- Innovative qualitative research practices inspired by the emerging market context.
- Qualitative studies that employ various management theories (e.g., resource-based view, institutional theory, social network, etc.) to enrich existing understanding and elaborate theories in emerging markets.
- Generating management theories through qualitative analysis in the context of emerging markets.
- Adopting qualitative research methods to analyze empirical pieces in various fields of management studies (e.g., innovation, entrepreneurship, international management, organizational behavior, and human resource management) in emerging markets.

Questions about the special issue may be directed to guest editor Tian Wei (weitian@fudan.edu.cn). Papers for the special issue should be submitted electronically through *MOR*'s ScholarOne Manuscripts site at <http://mc.manuscriptcentral.com/mor> and identified as submission to the 'Doing Qualitative Research in Emerging Markets' special issue. All submissions should follow the '*MOR* Author Guidelines', available online at http://journals.cambridge.org/images/fileUpload/documents/MOR_ifc.pdf

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