(i) The names and contact details of the Coordinator, Vice-Coordinator and other Board members who were in office during the past term.

- **Outgoing Coordinators 2019-2021**
  - Coordinator: Florian Elliker, University of St. Gallen, Switzerland, florian.elliker@unisg.ch
  - Board member: Gerben Moerman, University of Amsterdam, The Netherlands, gmoerman@uva.nl

- **Incoming Coordinators 2019-2021**
  - Coordinator: Ulrike T. Kissmann, University of Kassel, Germany, ulrike.kissmann@uni-kassel.de
  - Vice-coordinator: Tea Torbenfeldt Bengtsson, VIVE – The Danish Centre of Applied Social Science, Denmark, ttb@vive.dk

- **Further members of the active board**
  - Silvia Cataldi, Sapienza Università di Roma, Italy, silvia.cataldi@uniroma1.it
  - Florian Elliker, University of St. Gallen, Switzerland, florian.elliker@unisg.ch
  - David Wästerfors, University of Lund, Sweden, david.wasterfors@soc.lu.se

(ii) Description of RN paper sessions and other activities undertaken at the ESA conference

**Barcelona Conference 2021**

The RN 20 has organized a stream of qualitative methods sessions, joint sessions, a semi-plenary, an evening special and a special session with the title “The State and Future of Qualitative Methods”.
Special session: The State and Future of Qualitative Methods

Engaging with a panel of experts and an open discussion with the audience, this session addressed the ambivalent situation that researchers using qualitative methods currently find themselves in. While there have been recent successes in institutionalizing qualitative methods in some European contexts, other colleagues still face a situation in which qualitative methods are not fully acknowledged. Yet, some scholars have started to use the notion of “post-qualitative” approaches, seemingly moving beyond what we know as qualitative research approaches.

How well are qualitative methods institutionalized and accepted in different European contexts? Given the current social and technological developments, what are the main challenges that qualitative approaches face? What are new directions in the field of qualitative research?

A panel of experts with Ann Mische and Paul Lichterman as well as RN20 board members, in particular Anne Ryen, discussed what they currently regard as main challenges for qualitative methods and how they see the future of qualitative approaches. The major part of the session consisted of an open discussion with the audience.

Qualitative methods sessions

In 14 qualitative methods sessions, 49 presentations were held amongst other themes on the situatedness of data collection, the use of digital media in qualitative research, of ethics in qualitative research methodologies, and on quality standards in qualitative methods. Particularly the themes on digitalization, ethics and quality standards continue to constitute themes that will be discussed at the mid-term conference 2022 in Copenhagen, Denmark.

Joint-sessions

The three joint-sessions were held in collaboration with RN09 Economic Sociology, RN21 Quantitative Methods, RN 29 Social Theory and RN32 Political Sociology.

Semi-plenary

In the semi-plenary with the title “Civic Action: Creating and Living Alternative Futures” Paul Lichterman and Ann Mische presented their perspective on civic action. The semi-plenary was organized together with RN 32 Political Sociology, RN 29 Social Theory and RN 25 Social Movements.

Evening special: Doing Human Service Ethnography

In this evening special Katarina Jacobsson, Jaber F. Gubrium and David Wästerfors presented their book on human service ethnography.

Executive board elections

With regards to the executive ESA-board, former RN20 chair and former member of the board Gerben Moerman ran as candidate again. As in the last elections in Manchester 2019, he was not voted in by a very small margin.

(iii) Description of other RN activities, e.g. any RN mid-term conferences, seminars or workshops held, publishing or other dissemination activities, number of issues of newsletters produced, etc.
Kassel mid-term conference 2020

The ESA RN 20 qualitative methods mid-term conference, originally envisaged for August 26-28, 2020, was held as online workshop in Kassel, Germany due to the Covid-19 pandemic. It was organized by Ulrike T. Kissmann and her team. The theme of the conference was “Seeing and the Other Senses – Making Sense of the Senses Through Language. Opportunities and Challenges in Qualitative Research”. The online workshop consisted of two parts: In an asynchronous online seminar the four keynote speakers, Alia Al-Saji (McGill Univ. Canada), Vaike Fors (Univ. of Halmstad, Sweden), Wolfram Fischer (Univ. of Kassel, Germany) and Michael Guggenheim (Goldsmiths, Univ. of London, UK) gave a lecture on the conference topic. The lectures were made publicly available under https://www.uni-kassel.de/fb01/institute/institut-fuer-sozialwesen/fachgebiete/sozialwissenschaftliche-methodologie-qualitativ-rekonstruktiver-forschung/abgeschlossene-tagungen. In the second part of the workshop, the keynote speakers and participants of RN20 discussed the conference topic in a synchronous roundtable discussion on Wednesday, July 22, 2020 (also available as video recording under the above link).

(iv) A report of the use of ESA financial support

The remaining funds from the period 2019–2021 will be used for the mid-term conference 2022 in Copenhagen. Some of the funding has been used to co-sponsor the two semi-plenary speakers in Barcelona. The funds from 2022–2024 will be dedicated to the upcoming mid-term conference in Copenhagen and eventually for other semi-plenary speakers at the next biennial conference.

Membership

RN 20 has currently (as of September 2021) 134 formally affiliated members that have paid the network membership fee. The members are from 34 different countries worldwide.

Next mid-term in Copenhagen

The next RN20 mid-term conference will be held in Copenhagen, Denmark from 24–26 August 2022, organized by our co-coordinator Tea Bengtsson. The theme of the conference is “Contemporary challenges for qualitative sociology: Digital developments, ethical requirements, quality standards”. The conference is organized along three major themes: Digitalization of societies and qualitative research, contemporary ethics and ethical requirements and, finally, quality standards of contemporary qualitative research.

For the former and the present coordinator and co-coordinator of RN20

February 2022

Ulrike T. Kissmann and Tea Bengtsson