

Call for Contributions - ICA Pre-Conference 2026 (to be published on website)

Title: PRECONFERENCE: Analyzing and Theorizing Raw Qualitative Data as a Collective - Developing Sensitivity for Inequality and Difference

Format: In-person preconference

Format length: One half day

Date: Thursday, June 4

Start time: 8:00am

End time: 12:00pm

Location/Venue: On site

Division affiliation: Organizational Communication

Organizers (in alphabetical order):

Stina Brøgger, (University of Twente, Netherlands)

Pascale Caidor (Université de Montréal, Canada)

Joelle Cruz (University of Colorado Boulder, USA)

Monica Nadegger (LMU Munich, Germany & MCI – The Entrepreneurial School, Austria)

Ellen Nathues (University of Twente, Netherlands)

Registration fee: to be confirmed by the end of the year

Description:

Much of what we do as qualitative researchers in the field of communication when making sense of our data remains implicit, hidden, or hard to articulate—especially those first moments of engaging with the material in search of intriguing hooks, puzzling contradictions, or potential theoretical connections. This is even more pronounced when our work touches on issues of inequality, power dynamics, and difference, as what stands out in the data or not may greatly depend on our positionality, theoretical approaches, scholarly background, personal experiences, cultural upbringings, etc. Some of the questions we might encounter in the first moments of collecting and working with our data include: Am I attuned enough to whose voices are amplified or silenced in my data? Do my interpretations risk reproducing dominant perspectives, or do they challenge them? How might my cultural or linguistic background or my experience of marginalization or privilege shape what I see—or fail to see—in the material? Which theoretical lenses can help

illuminate the uneven effects of communication across different, and especially marginalized communities, and what insights might my data contribute to (de-)westernizing or (de-)colonizing the field? In our experience, such questions are best addressed through collective reflection and dialogue, centering voices that have historically been sidelined.

The pre-conference facilitates knowledge exchange, fosters new connections and collaborations, and offers a hands-on workshop where a select number of presenters share their data for joint analysis with other participants. In doing so, we aim to bridge the space between discussing raw data in the pre-conference and exploring more 'polished' findings at the main conference, deepening both critical reflexivity and analytical sensitivity in communication research. By "raw data," we refer to the original, unprocessed materials collected during research, such as transcripts or recordings of interviews or natural conversations, field notes, open-ended survey responses, or visual documents, before any coding, categorization, or interpretation has been applied.

The pre-conference consists of three main parts:

- Part 1: Welcome and short input session by organizers, including guiding questions and 'threads' related to analytical sensitivity for power, difference, and inequalities for participants to keep in mind during the collective discussion of data (Part 2) and the subsequent reflection (Part 3)
- Part 2: Presentation and collective discussion of raw qualitative data (approx. 3 data sets with around 45minutes of discussion). The conveners will make a selection of all submitted material in the Call for Papers beforehand regarding which empirical material will be shared and discussed.
- Part 3: Collective reflection on the practices and principles of collective qualitative data analysis and key takeaways from the organizers with a particular focus on positionality, differences, and sensitivities for power and inequality in qualitative analysis

Objective:

In this ICA 2026 pre-conference, we seek to create a space for collective data analysis drawing on communication-constitutes-organization (CCO), discursive, performative, arts-based, feminist, queer, and critical approaches, where scholars can collaboratively examine 'raw' qualitative data, grapple with these complexities, and generate ideas that are empirically grounded while remaining sensitive to issues of power, difference, and inequality. Echoing next year's ICA conference theme, the pre-conference equips communication researchers at all career stages, and from diverse geographical and cultural backgrounds to reflect on differences,

inequalities, and how they are shaped through analytical frameworks when encountering data.

Anchored in five years of experience in facilitating such spaces with the CCO Data Collective (at EGOS, AOM, as well as online events; see also: www.ccodatacollective.com), the time seems ripe to also collectively reflect on the practices and principles of conducting qualitative data analysis together with an eye on inequality, power, and difference and including a diversity of voices at ICA. Our ultimate objective is to show how collective reflection and sense-making can help us not only better understand communicative and interpretive approaches to data analysis, but also how we as a global scholarly community of communication researchers can develop analytical repertoires that are sensitive to power, inequality, and difference and how these shape what becomes in/visible in our data. To reach this objective, we specifically highlight the inclusion of queer, postcolonial, feminist, and critical approaches as well as empirical data sets that reflect such realities in the call for contributions to our pre-conference.

Call for Contributions and participation formats:

We invite applications from scholars with interest in how to analyze raw qualitative data from a variety of interpretive perspectives that encompass but are not limited to, communication-constitutes-organization (CCO), discursive, performative, arts-based, feminist, queer, and critical approaches. There are two ways of participating: **(a)** with sharing your own data or **(b)** without sharing your own data (discussing others' data). **The deadline for all applications is March 15, 2026. Please send your application in a pdf-format to monica.nadegger@lmu.de.**

- (a)** If you would like to participate and share your own data, by [date] a single document (.doc, .docx or .pdf file) that includes the following information:
- Your name, affiliation, contact details, and career stage;
 - A short introduction to your empirical data (including what intrigues, puzzles, or in another way touches you about the data)
 - An extract/description of or a link to your raw data (if the data is not anonymized or publicly available, please make sure to acquire the needed consent)

We welcome various data types, including (but not limited to) the following:

- Textual (e.g., archives, emails, reports, blogs, social media, etc.)
- Audio (e.g., audio recordings + transcriptions of interviews, conversations, etc.)
- Visual (e.g., video recordings + transcriptions of meetings, interventions, as well as Youtube videos, images, drawings, etc.)

We explicitly welcome 'unconventional' data (artworks, co-created data, poetry, diaries, etc.) and underrepresented contexts in our pre-conference. (Please make

sure that transcripts are translated to English for the application and the pre-conference).

(b) If you would like to participate without sharing your own data, please submit by [date] a single document (.doc, .docx or .pdf file) that includes the following information:

- Your name, affiliation, contact details, and career stage;
- A short text about your interest in attending the pre-conference and what sort of data you typically or presently work with, including the perspective(s) you apply
- *If applicable:* Your prior experience with collective analysis and critical reflections thereof (or of working with qualitative data more generally). Think of questions such as those listed in pre-conference description or questions such as: What excites/frustrates you when analyzing data individually vs. collectively? What is data to you, and specifically, what is data beyond just the empirical basis of your work?

If you have any questions or hesitations, please get in touch with the organizing team monica.nadegger@lmu.de and e.nathues@utwente.nl.