The social and interpretative context of judging quality

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• the ultimate determination of the quality of research will rest on the judgement of peers
• judging the quality of research depends on the position of the viewer and the reviewer and it is important to recognise that the judgement occurs as part of a social process.
• Placing research on a strong-weak continuum as far as quality is concerned carries the danger that unusual methods, unexpected findings or unorthodox analyses may be rejected. Arguably, in the natural sciences at least, some of the most important research and scholarship has been of this character – idiosyncratic and failing to conform to accepted norms for quality.