Reviewer's report

Title: The case study approach

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Reviewer: Joseph Watine

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With time the manuscript improves more and more. In particular the practical examples of case studies that the authors performed become more and more understandable to me. However I still have a few proposals for improving the clarity of these practical examples so that a lay person (and I am almost a lay person) can better understand what it is about.

Each of the 4 examples contains a “key findings” section. Wouldn’t it be appropriate to add, just after this section, a “main limitations” section? After all not only is research about finding but it is also about identifying areas of improvement. May I suggest, for example:

In box 1, the “main limitations” section might perhaps contain a statement of this kind (if it is correct): “it has not been explored whether or not the ethic minorities are more or less represented among the UK researchers than among the US researchers”. If this statement is not correct, then maybe an opposite statement could be inserted in the “key findings” section?

In box 2, the “key findings” section begins thus: “For many PCOs...”. However the cases studied comprise only four PCOs. Is four enough to make “many”? Haven’t we got here some kind of limitation? Also the people who were interviewed in these PCOs probably belong to different professions. Did the author explore a possible heterogeneity of views within those diverse professions? The same question probably applies to the 4 examples (in boxes 1, 2, 3 and 4)

In box 3, what this example means is still not crystal-clear to me. Maybe the authors’ judgment regarding “the unrealistic, politically driven, timeline...” might be balanced against the authors’ own political views, and also against the views of the people that the authors interviewed? By the way may I suggest that the authors declare their conflicts of interest, particularly their political conflicts of interest because this may be an important source of limitation for a study in which political judgments are made.

Level of interest: An article whose findings are important to those with closely related research interests

Quality of written English: Acceptable
**Statistical review:** No, the manuscript does not need to be seen by a statistician.

**Declaration of competing interests:**
I declare that I have no competing interests