

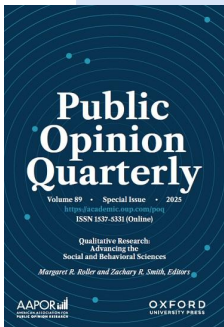


Qualitative Research: Advancing the Social & Behavioral Sciences

Margaret R. Roller & Zachary R. Smith, Editors

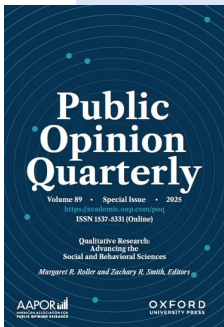
What was the impetus for this special issue?

Although POQ has historically published mostly quantitative research to advance the study of public opinion, there have been significant qualitative research contributions on diverse topics, including Beatty and Willis (2007; cognitive interviewing), Merton (1987; focus groups) and Kracauer (1952; content analysis). These and other qualitative articles in POQ have stressed the unique insights gained from qualitative inquiry.



Out of QUALPOR...and with creativity from *POQ*

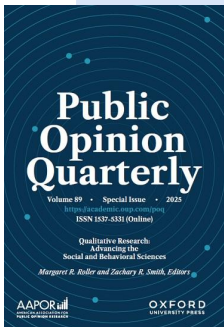
- QUALPOR meetings in early 2022 discussed the aspiration of a future qualitative research journal
- May 2022: *POQ* solicits proposals for the **2024** special issue
- June-July 2022: *POQ* invites us to submit a full proposal
- August 2022: *POQ* reaches out to propose we edit the **2025** special issue to give us more time to work with authors and to include methodological pieces
- June-July 2023: Call for Papers sent out
- December 2023: Submissions due



As stated in the Call for Papers, the purpose was to shine a light on

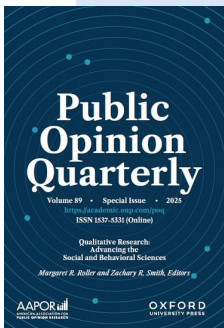
qualitative-only designs and mixed methods designs where qualitative research forms the dominant component, with the emphasis on articles that further the use of qualitative methods to inform and empirically advance substantive issues in the social and behavioral sciences, including but not limited, to:

- *Hard-to-reach and vulnerable populations*
- *Healthcare-related attitudes and behavior*
- *Diversity, equity, and inclusion*
- *Elections, voting behavior, and other political issues*
- *Online behavior and social media*
- *Social and civic communication*



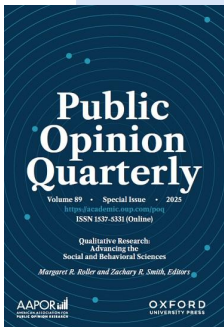
Importantly, submissions were expected to demonstrate the

- Unique contribution that qualitative methods make to advancing knowledge.
- Quality elements of the research design, including scope (e.g., sample design and sampling), data gathering (e.g., construct validity, bias, nonresponse), analysis (e.g., data format and tools, procedures, coding), and transparency (e.g., data collection instrument(s), coding protocols).



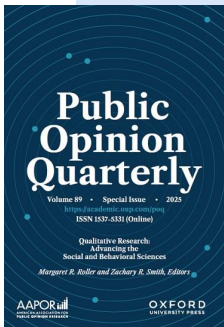
By the December 18, 2023 deadline, we had

- 35 submissions
- Political issues/public opinion
- Hard-to-reach/vulnerable population segments
- Healthcare/mental health/disability
- Survey design/analysis
- Unique qualitative method/design
- In-depth interviews
- Focus groups
- Cognitive interviews
- Qualitative content analysis
- Observation



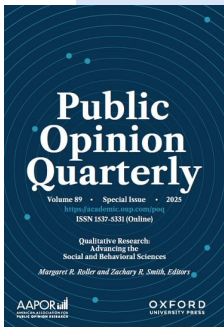
We initially rated these submissions on whether

- Qualitative research was dominant
- Dealt with a substantive issue
- Made a novel contribution
- Presented a quality approach
 - ❖ Scope (sample design, nonresponse)
 - ❖ Data gathering (method & mode, data integrity)
 - ❖ Analysis (processing, verification)



Of the 35 submissions, 18 were desk rejected

- Qualitative research not the dominant method
- Weak or absent novel contribution
- Quality concerns
 - ❖ Weak or absent discussion of
 - ❑ Sample design
 - ❑ Data integrity
 - ❑ Analytical processing
 - ❖ No consideration of nonresponse
 - ❖ Lack of verification



Scoring System

QR Dominant		Substantive Issue		Novel Contribution		Scope		
						Sample design & sampling		
Selections	Score (max 9)	Selections	Score (max 9)	Selections	Score (max 9)	Selections	Score (max 12)	
Margaret: Not so much Zach: For the most part Paul: Not at all	3	Margaret: Not so much Zach: Absolutely Paul:	#N/A	Margaret: Not so much Zach: Not so much Paul: For the most part	4	Margaret: Not discussed Zach: Weak Paul: Weak	2	Margaret: Not discussed Zach: I Paul: M
L		M	N		O	P		Q
Considerations								
		Data Gathering						
Nonresponse		Method & mode				Data integrity		
Selections	Score (max 12)	Selections			Score (max 9)	Selections		Score (max 12)
R		S	T		U	V		W
					Decisions		Total Score (max 96)	
Analysis								
Processing		Verification						
Selections	Score (max 12)	Selections						

Desk Rejects (9) ▾

Move Forward (5) ▾

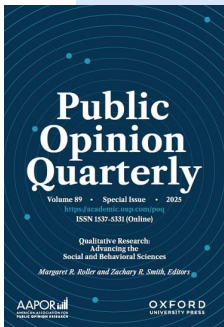
Leans Toward Move Forward (11) ▾

Leans Toward Desk Reject (10) ▾



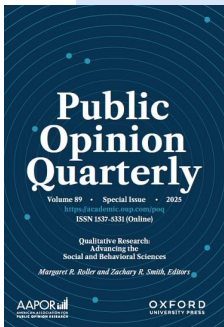
Our Call for Reviewers

- Resulted in a roster of nearly 60 researchers from a wide assortment of academic, governmental, and research organizations who volunteered to review
- Supplemented by an additional 20 researchers from our networks



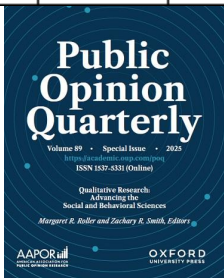
For the remaining 17 manuscripts, we

- Assigned each manuscript to an editor who was responsible for reaching out to reviewers, keeping track of the timeline, and making a final decision
- Kept track of our progress on all manuscripts and the decision-making process and reasoning for the final decision via Google Sheets



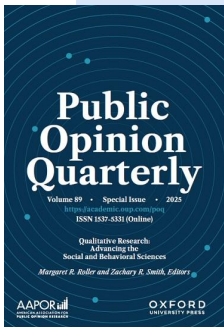
Scoring System & Shared Evaluation of Round 1

Assigned AE	Review Status				AE Decision/Comments	Decision Letter Sent
	Accept (1)	Accept-Minor Revision (2)	Accept-Major Revision (3)	Reject (4)		
Margaret		XXX			? - I am still waiting on the third review but I am in a quandary. Reviewers believe that it is a well-written manuscript and well thought out and highly appropriate. I am struggling with considerations of quality, such as the apparent disconnect between the objectives and interview questions, the disregard for the sample diversity, and, importantly, an analysis that is conducted without sufficient context. 2 - After another careful review of the manuscript and the reviewers' comments, I sent a "minor revision" letter to the authors. The biggest factor for me in making this decision was the idea, sparked by one reviewer, that what this manuscript is missing is a complete discussion of the research method. This is a unique approach that needs a foundational discussion and, in doing so, will enlighten readers. In my letter, I also state that the authors need to pay more attention to the research objectives.	Yes
Margaret				XX	4 - I am not inviting another reviewer for this manuscript. My initial concerns regarding the focus on method and nothing on analysis or results are confirmed by the reviews that have been received. I thought initially that this submission might be a good candidate for a research note with the emphasis on method, yet this is not a good candidate. There is no there there. If you would like to comment on this decision, please do so by Thursday April 18.	Yes
Margaret			XXX		4 - Reviewers agree that this paper does not address the mission of the issue - "The emphasis of this special issue is on articles that further the use of qualitative methods to inform and empirically advance substantive issues in the social and behavioral sciences" - and is not a good fit. Rather than advancing issues it focuses on other matter. And there are lots of questions about the author's involvement, data details, and importantly, from my standpoint, quality of designs (integrity of the data and analysis).	Yes
Margaret	X	X		X	3 - I very much support this article and want to see it succeed; however, it needs a major revision. Rather than repeating much of what has been written in the literature, it is strongly recommended that the authors offer a unique focus. This manuscript also needs to do a better job of adding relevant references (I gave the authors a few) and targeting the discussions to the purpose as well as integrating the authors' own thinking and insights. I have offered to work with the authors through the revision.	Yes



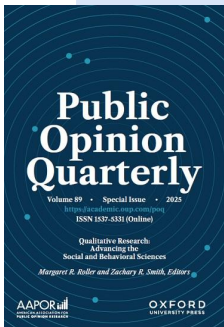
Based on the reviews after Round 1, we

- Rejected eight manuscripts
- Decided – after considering reviewers' comments – that these manuscripts were weak in terms of methodology or not a good fit (not advancing a substantive issue)
- One case, asked for a “major revision” upon which the authors withdrew their submission



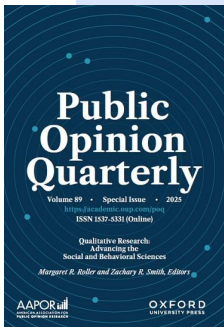
All remaining 9 manuscripts went on to Round 2

- There was a total of 4-6 rounds of reviews for each of the nine manuscripts
- All nine manuscripts were accepted in the January-February 2025 time period



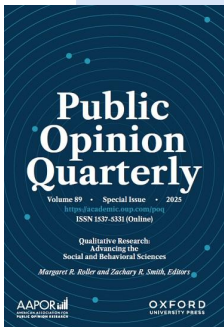
Among the nine articles in this special issue

- Four discuss research with hard-to-reach or at-risk people
- Three articles are focused on ways to improve survey design and its implementation
- Two articles discuss distinctive forms of analysis, that is, qualitative secondary analysis and thematic analysis



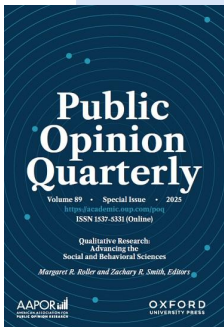
Hard-to-reach or at-risk people

- **Qualitative Methods for Research on a Hard-to-Reach and Vulnerable Population in Burma** by Jieun Baek
 - A methodological article concerning the key principles of qualitative research (e.g., scope, unit of analysis, identifying context, sampling, ethical considerations, data management) told by way of the author's research on high-risk political dissent in Burma
- **How the Age-Friendly Domains Apply to Low-Income Cities and Guide Improvements: Perspectives of Long-Term Residents in New Jersey** by Amanda Jones-Layman, Francine P. Cartwright, Seran Schug, Jennifer Kitson, Lisa Siegert, and Rachel Pruchno
 - In-depth interviews were conducted with long-term residents of New Jersey urban areas designated as high poverty and low median income to understand if and how the Age-friendly Cities and Communities Framework (ACF) (WHO 2007) applies to these types of communities.



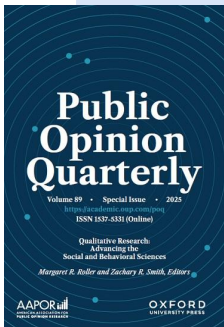
Hard-to-reach or at-risk people (continued)

- **Concerns About Medications for Opioid Use Disorder Among American Indian Community Members: A Qualitative Secondary Analysis** by Fiona Grubin, Morgan E. Neavill, Tessa Sawyer, Amanda Larson, Emily Maltaverne, and Monica C. Skewes
 - Medications for opioid use disorder (MOUD) are effective treatments for opioid use disorder, yet barriers prevent more frequent use of MOUD. The authors conducted a qualitative secondary analysis study to understand and define the barriers within a rural American Indian reservation community.
- **Relationships, Trust and Accountability, and Critical Reflexivity: Developing Quality Data with the “Hard to Reach”** by Anna Kopec, Alison Smith, and Genevieve Fuji Johnson
 - This is a methodological paper that discusses an approach grounded in the construct of *relational research* (Fujii 2018) to raise the quality of qualitative data when conducting research within marginalized communities. By way of three vignettes, the authors detail their in-the-field adoption of best practices towards building relationships, trust and accountability, and critical reflexivity.



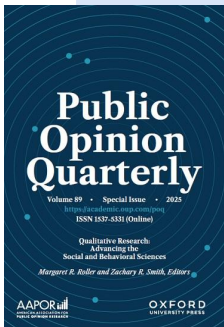
Improve Survey Design & Implementation

- **Participants' Reported Discomfort with Live Video as a Mode for Answering a Sensitive Survey Question** by Shlomit Okon, Rebecca S. Dolgin, and Michael F. Schober
 - An open-ended item on a survey questionnaire asked respondents to report their opinions about being asked a sensitive question concerning their sexual behavior via different data collection modes, including VALI (Video Administered Live Interviewing). The qualitative content analysis revealed video-specific concerns and advantages that are likely to be important to understand as VALI emerges as a new survey data collection mode.
- **Beyond Functional Limitations: A Multimethodological Approach to Questionnaire Pretesting of New Disability Measures** by Robin L. Kaplan, Tywanquilla Walker, and Rebecca L. Morrison
 - The authors showcase a multimethod research design incorporating two qualitative methods for evaluating survey questions—cognitive interviewing and card sorting—highlighting how multimethod research can not only capture whether respondents have a functional disability, but also the specific type of disability a respondent has. This paper adds to a growing body of literature on asking survey questions about disabilities.



Improve Survey Design & Implementation (continued)

- **Using Semi-Structured Interviews to Better Understand Nonresponse to a Government-Sponsored, Mail-Based Survey of Households** by Rebecca L. Medway, Melissa Scardaville, Paula Dias, and Christopher Paek
 - The authors provide nuanced and rich insight into the drivers of survey nonresponse through 70 qualitative semistructured interviews with nonrespondents to the National Household Education Survey, a mail-based federal survey sponsored by the National Center for Education Statistics. In the interviews, participants talk about the multiple, competing demands on their time, the impact their feelings toward the government had on completing federal surveys, and their concerns about privacy and data use.



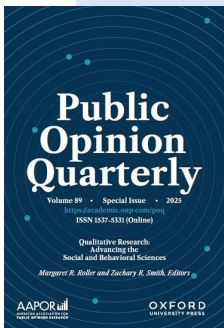
Forms of Analysis

- **To Report or Not to Report? A Qualitative Analysis of Journalists' Perspectives on Harm to Public Opinion** by Ricardo R. Ferreira and Jean-François Daoust

- The authors conducted 36 semistructured in-depth interviews with Brazilian journalists covering that country's political landscape to understand their decision concerning whether or not to publish "problematic content." A thematic analysis was conducted to systematically identify, organize, and interpret patterns (themes) within the interview data.

- **Using a Blended Approach to Thematic Analysis: A Case Study on Fatherhood and Imprisonment** by Marieke Haan and Simon D. Venema

- The authors build on the three main approaches to thematic analysis (TA) as outlined by Braun and Clarke (2022), demonstrating a unique "blended" approach to TA by way of a case study concerning incarcerated fathers' experiences with an in-prison family-focused program utilizing 39 semistructured in-depth interviews. This case study shows the benefits of combining a fairly structured, objective TA approach with a more flexible approach that is designed for the researcher to reflect closely on the data and derive nuanced, contextual interpretations.



QUALPOR Journal Club

August 27, 2026

Hear From the Authors!

SEPTEMBER

❖ **Wednesday, September 16, 2:00pm ET**

Using Semi-Structured Interviews to Better Understand Nonresponse to a Government-Sponsored, Mail-Based Survey of Households with Rebecca L. Medway, Melissa Scardaville

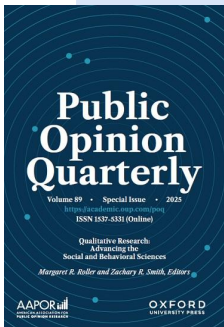
OCTOBER

❖ **Wednesday, October 7, 2:00pm ET**

Participants' Reported Discomfort with Live Video as a Mode for Answering a Sensitive Survey Question with Shlomit Okon, Rebecca S. Dolgin, and Michael F. Schober

❖ **Tuesday, October 27, 2:00pm ET**

How the Age-Friendly Domains Apply to Low-Income Cities and Guide Improvements: Perspectives of Long-Term Residents in New Jersey with Amanda Jones-Layman, Francine P. Cartwright, Jennifer Kitson



QUALP^{OR} Journal Club

August 27, 2026

Hear From the Authors!

NOVEMBER

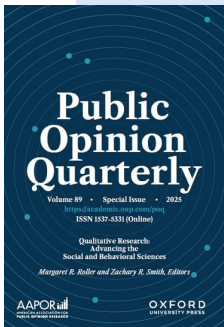
❖ **Thursday, November 5, 2:00pm ET**

Using a Blended Approach to Thematic Analysis: A Case Study on Fatherhood and Imprisonment with Marieke Haan and Simon D. Venema

DECEMBER

❖ **Wednesday, December 2, 2:00pm ET**

Beyond Functional Limitations: A Multimethodological Approach to Questionnaire Pretesting of New Disability Measures with Robin L. Kaplan, Tywanquilla Walker, and Rebecca L. Morrison



We received incredible support!

Thank You!

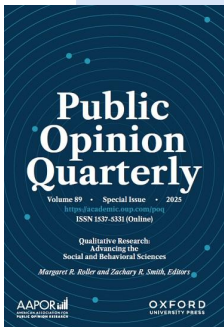
Allyson Holbrook & Phil Jones, editors-in-chief

Eric Plutzer, former editor-in-chief

Phyllis Silverstein, managing editor

Many amazing reviewers

Everyone who submitted



QUALP^{OR} Journal Club
August 27, 2026