Division of Qualitative Research

Newsletter

Welcome Back!

We are excited to bring you the second issue of the ASC Division of Qualitative Research newsletter! A big thank you to everyone who has contributed to the newsletter and helped make this space possible. We hope it continues to be a way to keep up with what's happening across the Division and feel connected to fellow qualitative researchers. We've got plenty to share in Issue 2, so take a look below to see what's inside!

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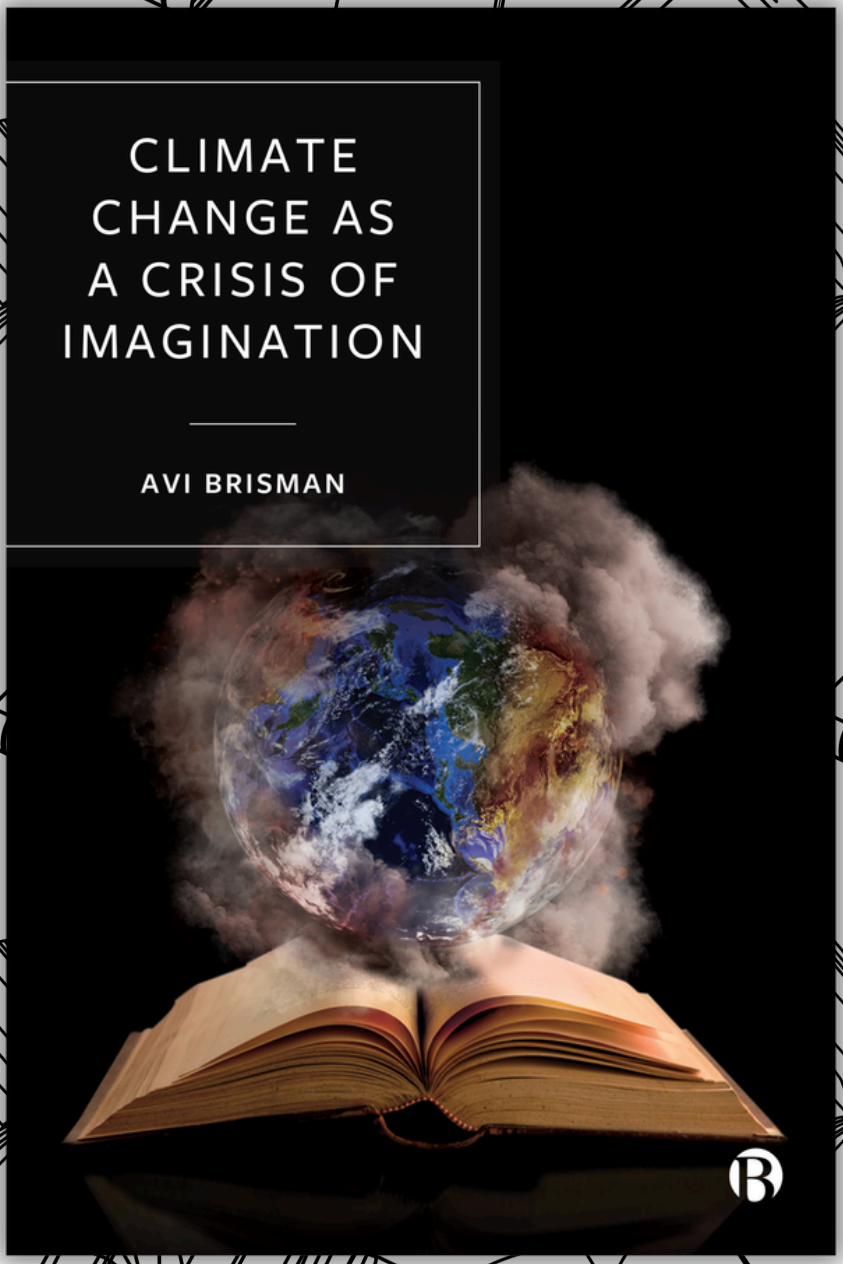
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DQR Workshop

A two-session workshop featuring advanced qualitative research methods.

Intentional, Deep, Analytic Qualitative Analysis within Criminology that Moves Way Beyond "Themes Emerged"
Danielle Rudes & Bryce Kushmerick-McCune
Unwanted Methods: A Critical Framework for Qualitative Research in Criminology
Jason Williams
Narrative Analysis: Studying the How's of Storytelling
Lois Presser
One More Time, With Feeling: Creating Verstehen in Qualitative Research & Writing
Jamie Fader

This workshop will be Fri, Nov 20, 11:00am to 1:50pm, Salon 3 - 3rd Floor and does not require registration

DQR Sponsored Panels

The Use of Qualitative Methods in Life-Course and Developmental Research
Thursday, November 19th, 8:00 am to 9:20 am, Burnham 4 – 7th floor

Qualitative Approaches to Understanding Crime, Deviance, and Illicit Markets
Wednesday, November 18th, 5:00 pm – 6:20 pm, Crystal Room – 3rd floor

Qualitative Research on Pretrial Processing
Saturday, November 21st, 9:30 am to 10:50 am, Salon 2 – 3rd floor

Qualitative Research on Victimization
Time & Place: Wednesday November 18th, 2:00 pm – 3:20 pm, Salon 7 – 3rd floor

Qualitative Research on Punishment and Inequality
Thursday, November 19th, 8 am to 9:20 am, Madison Room – 3rd Floor

Qualitative Research on Courts, Corrections, and Punishment
Wednesday, November 18th, 11:00 am to 12:20 pm, Marshfield Room – 3rd floor

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100% of your tax-deductible donation goes to DQR with most of our funds supporting graduate student travel, awards, and a small grant for research projects.

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MEMBERS ON THE MARKET



JORDAN DITULLIO

Jordan Ditullio is a Ph.D. Candidate at Rutgers-Newark School of Criminal Justice. Her research examines how the criminal justice system impacts vulnerable populations such as racial and ethnic minorities, juveniles, the LGBTQIA+ community, and persons with mental illness and/or substance use disorders.
LinkedIn:
http://www.linkedin.com/in/jordanditullio



HWANHEE PARK

Hwanhee Park is a PhD Candidate in the Criminal Justice department at Temple University. Originally from South Korea, she graduated with a BA in Psychology and Criminology from Pennsylvania State University in 2019. Her research examines the intersections of cybercrime, social media, artificial intelligence, youth and crime, social engineering, and cybersecurity education.
Website:
https://sites.temple.edu/hwanheepark/



SUKANYA BHATTACHARYA

Sukanya Bhattacharya is a doctoral candidate (ABD) in Sociology at the University of Tennessee, Knoxville with a focus on Criminology (gender-based violence and justice).
She is open to teaching, research, or writing about crime and justice in South Asia.
LinkedIn:
https://www.linkedin.com/in/sukanya-bhattacharya-2007263b/



JANE MAHON

Jane Mahon is a Criminal Justice PhD Candidate in the College of Arts and Sciences. Jane earned her B.A. in Criminal Justice and Psychological Brain Sciences from George Washington University. Her academic journey is fueled by a deep commitment to addressing the complexities of gender-based violence, sex trafficking, and the evaluation of victim services.
LinkedIn:
https://www.linkedin.com/in/janemahon2000/



EMILY GREBERMAN

Emily Greberman is a PhD Candidate at Rutgers University whose research centers on individuals who work within and are impacted by criminal-legal institutions and systems, primarily prisons and courts. Her research strives to form a deeper understanding of how the criminal justice system and its actors influence social and occupational relationships.
CV:
https://drive.google.com/file/d/1jre_QY32RsP4y58y_SPDqJSxlBc0rzq7/view

AN ACCIDENTAL CRIMINOLOGIST: HOW QUALITATIVE RESEARCH LED ME TO WRITE KID COPS

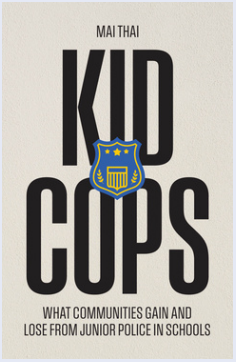
BY MAI THAI

My new book, **KID COPS: What Communities Gain and Lose from Junior Police in Schools** (University of Chicago Press), is an ethnography of junior police academies—school-police partnerships in which police officers expose young people to criminal justice activities, educational resources, and mentorship. The accompanying Reading, Teaching, and Discussion Guide includes reflection questions for those teaching or conducting qualitative research. Below is an excerpt from KID COPS' methodological appendix where I explain how fieldwork discoveries led me into criminology and allowed me to conceptualize one of the book's main concepts, valorization:

I did not initially set out to study themes on criminal justice. Having more familiarity with the sociology of education at the time, I went into fieldwork broadly interested in how processes of class, race, and gender shaped social groups and status in a racially diverse school that I call Taylor High [a pseudonym]. What led me to pivot into the criminological world was the normalization of a junior police program within the school's landscape. I was intrigued by the routines of kids who wore police uniforms. I was fascinated with the student leadership, which consisted mostly of girls. I could not imagine a program like this happening at predominantly White and wealthy schools. I ultimately shifted my focus to examining the intersection of educational and police institutions.

While I now identify with scholarly communities researching criminal justice themes, being an initial outsider to that area of literature was analytically advantageous. Not yet entrenched in the subfield's paradigms, I was able to stay curious and open to discovery while analyzing the junior police from various angles.





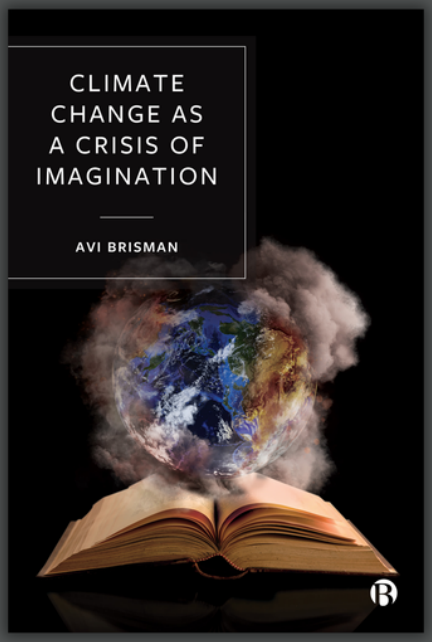
Like many scholars of youth and the criminal justice system, I first approached these young people's experiences by applying the framework of punishment and criminalization…[Yet, I later realized that these junior police] were the "good kids," an interpretation that helped me move past the punishment and criminalization paradigm to understand what was at stake in promoting such favorable perceptions of youth members and the law enforcement organization.

With this analytical seed planted, I wondered, if they're not being criminalized, what is the opposite?

Decriminalize?
Legitimize?
Legalize?
Humanize?
Praise, honor, revere, dignify?

What about . . . valorize? After settling on this term, things started clicking. I saw my data in a new light, where the youth cadets were held up as model citizens relative to their school and community (even if their behaviors did not always align), showing that their valorization often existed alongside the stigmatization and criminalization of their peers.

For more, check out KID COPS from the University of Chicago Press or email maithai@oxy.edu.



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MEMBER PUBLICATIONS

Maryanne Diaz

- Martin, K., Baker, B., Diaz, M., & Stoneberg, D. (2026). From conference to community: Embedding mutual aid into academic criminology. Journal of Applied Social Science, 1–21.
- Diaz, M., & Lopez, K. (2026). Trauma-informed digital ethnography: Insights from an ethnography of the Satanic Temple Sober Faction. Journal of Contemporary Ethnography.
- Diaz, M. (2026). Satanic recovery: Transforming our understanding of stigma and recovery capital. Journal of Substance Use Addiction and Treatment, 191, 1–11.

Patrice D. Collins

Collins, P. D. (2026). "They don't care about families": Complex emotional preparedness for visiting incarcerated loved ones. The Prison Journal. https://doi.org/10.1177/00328855261473232

Christian Bolden

Bolden, C. L., Aiello, B., & Colby, A. (2026). "I don't know you and you don't know me": Family dynamic complications during reentry for individuals formerly serving life sentences. Homicide Studies. https://doi.org/10.1177/10887679261450202

Vincent Cheng

- Cheng, V. S. (2026). Wasted lives: The social exclusion of older triads who use drugs in the Hong Kong illegal employment market. Routledge.
- Cheng, V. S., Zhang, S. Y., Jiang, W., & Chui, W. H. (2025). The role of Christianity in residential drug rehabilitation in Hong Kong: A lens of respectability politics. International Journal of Drug Policy, 146, Article 105065. https://doi.org/10.1016/j.drugpo.2025.105065

Janani Umamaheswar

Herrity, K. Z., Sharma, K., Umamaheswar, J., & Warr, J. (Eds.). (2026). The Routledge international handbook of sensory criminology. Routledge.

Mai Thai

Thai, M. (2026). Kid cops: What communities gain and lose from junior police in schools. University of Chicago Press. https://press.uchicago.edu/ucp/books/book/chicago/K/bo263809689.html

Teairstayn Jones

Jones, T. K., Huebner, B. M., Garcia-Hallett, J., Givens, A., & Canada, K. (2025). Indirect and psychological victimization in prison: The role of staff and incarcerated persons interactions in shaping perceptions of safety. Criminal Justice and Behavior, 53(4). https://doi.org/10.1177/00938548251397532

Janet Garcia-Hallett

- Canada, K. E., Givens, A., Garcia-Hallett, J., & Huebner, B. M. (2025). Community-engaged research with marginalized populations. SAGE Publications.
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Katie Owens-Murphy

Owens-Murphy, K., & Keeton, K. (2026). "Take deep breaths": Medical ethics and visual satire on Alabama's death row. International Journal of Offender Therapy and Comparative Criminology. https://doi.org/10.1177/0306624X261475328

Bo Zhang

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Shannon Malone Gonzalez

- Malone Gonzalez, S. (2026). The secrets of silence: The everyday policing of Black women and their stories about violence. Princeton University Press.
- Powell, A. J., Deckard, F. M., Malone Gonzalez, S., & Battle, B. P. (2026). Abolition feminist storytelling as methodology: Lessons within the stories we (re)tell about violence. Feminist Criminology. https://doi.org/10.1177/15570851261445970

Katalin Parti

Parti, K., & Midkiff, A. (2026). Interactive theatre as an andragogical tool: Assessing a cybersecurity program across adult age groups. Social Sciences, 15(6), Article 367. https://doi.org/10.3390/socsci15060367

Eileen Ahlin

Ahlin, E. M. (2025). 'Black dealers kill people and come from the projects; Whites dealers kill people and come from nice families': Contextualized racialized perceptions of related criminal behaviors within an attribution theory framework. Journal of Crime and Justice, 48(3), 317–336.

Abigail Henson

- Henson, A., Umamaheswar, J., & Silver, J. (2026). Negotiating the "bad guy": A qualitative study of moral ambiguity in police work. Journal of Research in Crime and Delinquency.
- Henson, A., Bennett, J. Z., Forney, M., & Martinez, G. (2026). The good, the bad, the ugly: A qualitative exploration of life-course posttraumatic growth for individuals formerly sentenced to juvenile life without parole. Criminology, 1–26. https://doi.org/10.1111/1745-9125.70051

Iolanthe Brooks
Northwestern University, Department of Sociology



Project Title: Supervising Intimate Life: How Parole Supervision Transforms Social Relationships and Shapes Reentry Outcomes

Description: *Supervising Intimate Life* is a multi-method qualitative dissertation about how post-release supervision polices, constrains, and reshapes the social networks of formerly incarcerated people, with impacts on their reentry outcomes. Focusing on Chicago, Illinois, it draws on interviews with people on post-release supervision and parole agents, as well as ethnographic observations of parole revocation hearings.

Tashawn Nicole Reagon
University of Maryland College Park,
Department of Criminology and Criminal Justice

Project Title: Defending Equity, Reproducing Hierarchy: Race, Gender, and Organizational Practice in Criminal Public Defense



Description: Tashawn's qualitative study examines how race and gender shape the organizational experiences of public defenders, drawing on interviews and participant observation with attorneys across urban, suburban, and rural offices. Integrating racialized organizations theory with Acker's concept of inequality regimes, it investigates how routine practices such as case assignment, mentorship, and informal norms may reproduce or challenge intersecting racial and gender hierarchies within institutions committed to equitable representation.

A TEACHING NOTE

Stephanie DiPietro, PhD
Department of Sociology and Criminology, University of Iowa

The stories people tell about their lives are inherently messy. In the context of qualitative interviews, individuals may try, however unwittingly, to present themselves in a socially desirable light, to protect themselves from shame or embarrassment, or to exert control over the interview or their own lives. Although the traditional view of qualitative interview data as a factual rendering has given way to new analytic directions that take seriously the inconsistencies, ambiguities, tangents, and outright falsehoods contained within personal narratives—not to mention the silences, hems and haws, and self-conscious jokes that may go unnoticed or unrecorded—such tensions in the data remain challenges for qualitative analysis.

The inherent messiness of qualitative data can be frustrating, particularly when pieces of narrative do not align with dominant themes or findings, and the temptation to discount them is real. These points of deviation, however, are often where the most interesting questions and observations are to be found. When it comes to handling various inconsistencies in data, I offer my own students the following advice, which I have cobbled together from scholars in the field who have pioneered methods for dealing with the mess.

First, always use all the data. Ensuring methodological rigor in qualitative analysis necessitates examining all the data, including those pieces that do not fit neatly with our major arguments or findings. Resist the temptation to discount pieces of data simply because they complicate the story you are trying to tell.

Second, rather than treating inconsistencies as a threat to validity, dive deeper into the mess to examine what lies beneath. What is objectively "true" or "factual" in narrative accounts is not always easy to establish, but this does not render such accounts less analytically valuable. Strategic evasions, hesitations, incongruities and outright fabrications may feel to students like issues of data quality, when they are in fact, the data.

Third, recognize that the collaborative and contextual nature of interviews—the reflexivity between interviewer and interviewee—renders the idea of a truly "factual" account problematic. Always remain attentive to how the broader context of the interview, as well as your own ideas, assumptions, and interpretive choices, shapes the stories people share as well as the insights that emerge from them.

A qualitative scholar once described meanings and interactions within qualitative interviews as "a shifting carnival of ambiguous complexity, a moving feast of differences interrupting differences" (Scheurich, 1995:243). Ultimately, our goal in rigorous data analysis is not to render accounts more tidy and consistent than they are, but to understand the nature of the mess, and the layers of meaning within complicated accounts.

Reference:
Scheurich, J. (1995) 'A Postmodernist Critique of Research Interviewing', Qualitative Studies in Education 8(3): 239-252 .

WEBINAR RECAP
LED BY BOARD MEMBER DR. UMAMAHESWAR



On messiness, contradictions, and surprises in fieldwork:

I began conducting in-depth interviews with formerly incarcerated Americans soon after President Trump was re-elected in November 2024. Of course, I had begun thinking about my book project (Somewhere Like Home: Formerly Incarcerated Americans' Quest for Belonging, under contract with University of California Press) well before this momentous event. I wanted Somewhere Like Home to grapple with the existential question of where formerly incarcerated Americans feel they belong. As soon as I began data collection, however, it was evident that my participants' sense of belonging was deeply impacted by the political turmoil that the U.S. was (and still is) facing. Elaborating on some of the findings that I presented at a recent DQR webinar, I use this short essay to discuss how my fieldwork made me rethink many of my assumptions about how marginalized Americans feel about their place in the nation.

In my graduate-level qualitative research methods class this semester, I remind students weekly that fieldwork is riddled with uncertainty and unpredictability, and that good things can happen if we embrace this messiness instead of resisting it. An interview guide, for example, is just that—a guide. It's a living document that can and should be continually updated as our participants share new and surprising things with us.

Daniel (one of my earliest participants) referenced the chaos in American politics, laughingly telling me that, "what it means to be an American is to strap on your seatbelts and prepare for the ride."

I wonder what would have happened if I hadn't diverged from my interview questions in that moment to probe Daniel on why he felt the way he did about America. His extended narrative about corruption and his own cynicism about politics prompted me to revise my interview guide to explicitly ask participants about their thoughts on the current state of American politics. That's how I learned that, for formerly incarcerated Americans, patriotism is consistent with political apathy; civic engagement is compatible with social marginalization; and devotion to one's nation can exist in tandem with legal cynicism.

What began as a project about abstract belonging began to take shape as I worked through narratives not only of political apathy, but also of a profound national pride that seemed squarely at odds with the immense difficulties that defined so many of my participants' lives. I repeatedly found myself wondering, "how can they believe such wonderful things about a nation that has treated them so poorly?"

Field research can produce findings that fly in the face of all our expectations. When this happens, we should do more than simply take a superficial "themes emerged" approach; we should invest the time and intellectual energy required to connect individual stories to broader institutional and structural arrangements, develop sophisticated theoretical explanations for why our participants feel the way they do, and share our participants' social realities without sanitizing them. When we are surprised and perplexed by what we find in the field, we must—in Daniel's words—"strap on [our] seatbelts and prepare for the ride."

I am an Associate Professor preparing to go up for promotion to Full Professor in the next few years. My concern is that, while I have maintained a strong publication record, nearly all of my publications over the last four years have been collaborative projects in which I was not the lead author. Do external reviewers and promotion committees may place greater weight on first-authored or sole-authored work when evaluating readiness for Full Professor? How can I best prepare my dossier to demonstrate scholarly leadership and independence when my recent publications are primarily collaborative? Are there particular types of evidence or narrative framing that I should consider?

Scan to submit a question to the DQR Helpline, receive responses from professionals, and be featured in future newsletters!

RESPONSE 1

Norms for first/sole author versus co-authored papers certainly differ depending on the department or university, with higher ranked institutions caring more about first-author records. In my R1 university, the guidelines for Full Professor usually center around leadership in research and mentoring/ professional activity. If, for example, other authors are graduate students, these publications count for both. Prestige of the outlet, number of times cited, number of publications since tenure, and name recognition for co-authors can help mitigate lower status on the list of authors. As of 2013, it looks like CCJ is a largely collaborative field, with 75% of published papers. The most important advice is to read your promotion guidelines very closely and tie your statement to the wording of that document. In my department, it's also standard to meet individually with each Full Professor to discuss the strength of your case, so that there are no surprises as you come up. These folks will do the first round of voting and that statement coming out of the personnel committee in the department will set the stage for all other levels of review. Optimally, one or more full professors will give you feedback on your statement before it's complete.

RESPONSE 2

I think this depends a lot on departmental norms and what kind of institution you're in. In R1 departments, authorship order may matter quite a bit, but at R2s or teaching-focused departments, it may not matter at all. Senior faculty who are inviting external reviewers will typically share guidance on departmental expectations with reviewers, but if you aren't sure what these expectations are—ASK! To attain the Full Professor rank at a research-focused institution, I would think most reviewers will expect to see a solid record of independent scholarship, so if this is your situation, I would highly recommend prioritizing first or solo-authored projects for the next few years. If the reason you aren't lead author is that you've been collaborating with junior folks/grad students and want to give them more credit, then saying that and being explicit about what your contribution was in each publication would go a long way. You might also consider taking leadership on projects with the teams you already work with, and candid conversations with your co-authors about how they can support you taking on this leadership role might be helpful (if they are senior to you, that is). Finally, if mentorship in your department isn't readily available, seeking outside mentorship from senior figures who are already Full Professors might be really helpful.

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