making processes, assess the sources and impacts of potential variation in researcher choice, and share best practices.

Third, ethically important moments can become opportunities to reveal new perspectives and information, develop the next phase of research, shift the focus of a project, generate new lines of inquiry, function as metadata, and witness how power structures shape data generation. They can also push researchers to think about other ways of gathering information, like visiting other field sites, interacting with other populations, or using other methods. For these reasons, scholars should discuss productive approaches to further investigation in their research outputs. This offers pathways for advancing inquiry based on researchers' direct, relevant experience and insights.

These steps provide a starting point for further mainstreaming the process of analyzing ethical problems and parsing out and addressing their analytic implications. Such considerations are critical because, as this article demonstrates, the politics of the field can shape researcher decision-making and the data and findings from research at all stages of the process, from design to dissemination.

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Balancing Standardization and Flexibility: How to Get the Most Out of Your Interviews

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When positivist researchers use observational data, they make research design decisions that consider both standardization and accuracy. They take a theory, or a simplification of the world based on a hypothesized relationship between an independent and dependent variable, and test that theory with observational data. This requires an empirical approach that accurately represents the world, while ensuring extraneous factors don't impact the outcomes from the data. In other words, positivist researchers consider standardization, in that they want to justify that their findings are not the result of units being treated differently (King et al. 1994). Positivist researchers also consider accuracy, in that they want to justify that the data collected reflects their phenomenon of interest, in order to facilitate rich interpretation or make causal claims (Martin 2013; Mosley 2013). In my own research, I use interviews to study how the tactics candidate training organization's use impact women's political ambition. In this context, I compared organizations focused on women and organizations not focused on gender. I wanted my findings to accurately reflect the approaches used by these organizations, and I wanted to affirm that *if* responses from women's and non-gendered organizations were different, it was because of organizational approach and not differences in the interview method itself.

In interview research, accuracy is achieved through flexibility. Interview researchers may adjust their tone and question-wording to build rapport or get respondents to open up (Rubin and Rubin 1995). Researchers who carry out interviews may also take an interview in a new direction, based on something a respondent brought up (Berry 2002). The virtue of interview research comes from maximizing flexibility, because adaptable approaches can increase the accuracy of the information gained from different respondents. Interviewing lets the respondents provide as much insight and context as they would like, allowing researchers to build and test theories through the words and perspectives of the people most relevant to the question at hand. However, positivist researchers may worry about how this flexibility introduces potential threats to inference, or the possibility that your findings result from differences in the interview style across respondents and are not the result of real-world differences between the people or groups you spoke to. This introduces a tension for positivist researchers who use interview methods. How can one maximize the benefits of flexibility, for the purposes of gaining new insights and depth of information, while still minimizing the risk that are findings are being of differences in the interview approach and not differences in the people interviewed?

I propose a framework for balancing standardization and flexibility in qualitative interviewing. When researchers believe that tailoring their tactics to a particular respondent will increase their ability to generate more accurate data, then they should prioritize flexibility. When researchers believe that keeping their approach constant across units will minimize major threats to inference, then they should prioritize standardization. Overall, this approach is framed around two questions for interview researchers to consider when making decisions – **Will this decision make it more likely that the information I gather and how I interpret it accurately reflects the phenomenon of interest?** – and – **Will this decision introduce noise into my findings that could change my results, because of how that decision introduces differences in treatment across units, rather than real differences in respondents?**

Being flexible does not necessarily introduce a risk of systematic bias that correlates with outcomes of interest, and not every decision to standardize across units will prevent the researcher from gaining nuance with their insights. But the sheer number of research design choices and in-the-moment decisions inherent to interviews calls for a framework for considering the competing goals of standardization and accuracy. Interview researchers are often operating on the fly, responding in the moment to their respondents. So, a simple framework is necessary for evaluating the decisions they make in those moments, and whether those decisions are worth it for the extra accuracy potentially gained or whether they risk introducing bias to the data.

By considering whether a particular decision will improve accuracy, or whether it risks introducing bias to the outcomes, because of how differences in the interview method may drive differences in responses, researchers can decide what to do with their many small but potentially significant interview style, question wording, and ordering decisions. For example, if a researcher worries that a particular topic will prime respondents to answer future questions differently, for reasons other than the actual factors of interest, then they may want to ask that potentially priming question at the same point in the interview for all respondents. Alternatively, if a researcher learns through initial interviews about a factor that they did not anticipate that could be relevant to their question, they may want to prioritize flexibility by following their instincts and exploring this new point, even if it means diverging from their script. Similarly, researchers who use interviews may wonder whether particular changes in question wording and order that are used to build rapport and adapt the questions to a respondent's particular experiences may impact their results.

I used this framework in my own research on the role of candidate training organizations in increasing women's representation, to determine when to prioritize standardization and flexibility. For example, I reasoned that *when* in my interviews I asked questions about identity might prime different organizations differently, with non-gender organizations more likely to highlight programs that might not have been top of mind if I hadn't primed them to think about gender. So I only asked about those topics outright at the end of my interviews. But if an organization mentioned race or gender organically, I gave myself the flexibility to follow up – based on the respondent's own raising of the topic. Additionally, because I was initially unsure about which strategies candidate organizations perceive as most effective to increase candidate recruitment, I knew that questions about organizational strategy needed to be adapted to the specific organization. I was flexible with the phrasing of these questions, based on the specific strategies the organization mentioned and the particular barriers to running they referenced. I asked considerable and varied follow-ups when organizations talked about new forms of support that had not been mentioned in other interviews. This framework provided guidance for the tradeoffs built into interview design decisions, and allowed me to make defensible claims about differences between women's and non-gendered candidate organizations because I had thought through how different decision decisions improved accuracy or minimized bias.

The intentionally broad nature of this framework also allows a wide range of researchers who use interview methods to apply this approach. Some qualitative researchers know a lot about their sample beforehand and can identify major threats to inference before they start interviewing, allowing them to prioritize standardization at moments when they expect potential biases to their findings, and prioritize flexibility when they expect it will increase the depth and nuance of the information gleaned. Alternatively, researchers may learn through their initial interviews what the major threats to inference are, in which case greater *initial* flexibility allows the researcher to adapt their interview method to gather initial findings, while greater standardization later allows for confirmation of initial findings. Overall, this framework provides simple and clear questions to consider that will allow a broad range of researchers who use interviews to decide for themselves how to best prioritize flexibility and standardization within their methodology, and allow them to make defensible claims from the rich interview data they have collected.

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Shifting Between Modes and Roles in Participant Observation

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The COVID-19 pandemic disrupted fieldwork as we knew it and forced many researchers to conduct fieldwork using digital tools, platforms, and data (see Digital Fieldwork 2021). Nevertheless, to some extent, increasing use and availability of digital fieldwork tools and platforms also "leveled the playing field," especially for younger, technologically adept, and less privileged researchers who lack funding, support systems, training, and favorable passport status that facilitate access to fieldwork Grimm (2022, 34). Since digital research practices are now here to stay, I argue that we need to go beyond considering these practices as mere ways of compensating for on-the-ground fieldwork and come up with propositions about how researchers who have limited time and resources for various reasons can integrate online and offline fieldwork in more or less structured or systematic ways. Slightly different from Murthy (2008, 839), who argues for "a balanced combination of physical and digital ethnography" while highlighting the superior nature of physical ethnography by claiming that "new media and digital forms of 'old media' are additional, valuable methods," I argue that work conducted digitally/online is not merely "additional," and both modes can be equally valuable for researchers.

Participant observation is a research methodology that might entail the active involvement of the researcher in an online or offline social, cultural, or political setting. Researchers can gain real-time insight into the context, processes, and mechanisms behind a social or political phenomenon by immersing themselves in the settings of the observed (Ross and Ross 1974, Bositis 1988, Gillespie and Michelson 2011).

In this piece, I propose ways of integrating online and offline participant observation by taking shifting modes (online and offline) and roles of the researcher into consideration. The paper is based on my experiences of studying political engagement and mobilization of emigrants from two authoritarian states, Turkey and Zimbabwe, in London, United Kingdom.

The main goal of my research is to explore how and why emigrants from authoritarian regimes politically engage with their home countries. ""What," "how," and "why" questions are central to the study of contention and that ethnographic methods are particularly well-suited to answering them" Fu and Simmons (2021, 1967).