

Special issue: ‘Probability and Nonprobability Sampling: Sampling of hard-to-reach survey populations’

Survey Methods: Insights from the Field

Editors: Johann Bacher, Johannes Lemcke, Andreas Quatember & Patrick Schmich

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With the following collection of articles, *Survey Methods: Insights from the Field* aims to give an overview about the current state of the hard-to-reach research and the ongoing dispute between the two above mentioned sampling methods. Moreover, this Special Issue attempts to combine theoretical discussions, methodological considerations with experiences from the fields. It offers insights into possible links between non-probability sampling and hard-to-reach populations on the one hand, and, on the other hand, different approaches to address the aforementioned problems via the praxis of each methodology.

This special issue was inspired by a PUMA-Symposium 2017, which was organized by two of the guest editors of the Johannes Kepler University Linz (JKU), Johann Bacher and Andreas Quatember, within the PUMA-project of the Austrian social sciences. In this context, different sampling issues and different solution attempts were discussed. The editorship by two researchers of the Robert Koch Institute (RKI), Johannes Lemcke und Patrick Schmich, was guided by the Institute’s interest to a better integration of the hard-to-reach groups into its health monitoring system. The RKI, as *the* public health institute in Germany, has the obligation to monitor the health status of the *whole population* in order to offer policy makers valid information within the decision process. As a result of this commitment, various feasibility studies were carried out, which are presented in this special issue alongside initial results. In this respect the inclusion of elderly and people with migration background is a crucial task for the RKI.

The contributions can be divided into four groups

Of course, the assignment of a paper to a certain group is not distinct in every case. Nonetheless, the below grouping should provide some guidance.

1. Two papers discuss the fundamental theoretical aspects of our topic.
2. Two papers provide a comparison of probability and non-probability sampling from an applied perspective.
3. Reports about experiences of concrete studies build the majority of the paper. Nine papers belong to this group. However, these are not only reports in a strict sense; they provide literature reviews, describe the designs and the underlying assumptions and reflect on the design. They cover migrants and refugees as hard-to-reach-groups mentioned by Willis et al. (2014) as well the elderly as one group sometimes ignored.
4. The fourth group contains papers that can be labeled as “reflections and methodological proposals”. One paper suggests a model to increase the recruitment of old people; the second one applies simulations methods.

