

QUALPOR NEWS

April 2021

Welcome 2021!



Margaret R. Roller MA,
QUALPOR Chair

We begin the second quarter of 2021 with a feeling of cautious optimism that the challenges we faced in 2020 are receding, and we are ready to move forward with renewed energy. This energy can certainly be felt at QUALPOR, an AAPOR affinity group intended for any AAPOR member who is managing, conducting, or has an interest in qualitative research methods. QUALPOR membership continues to grow and is currently at 98 members. In terms of activities, you will read in this newsletter about members' initiatives to explore sensitive topics and offer learning "bursts" in qualitative methods and design. You will also see that QUALPOR is well-represented at this year's AAPOR conference, with the QUALPOR Panel session, QUALPOR Coffee Break, QUALPOR member Nicole Brown's short course on creative qualitative methods, and the QUALPOR meeting open to all attendees.



Paul J. Lavrakas PhD,
QUALPOR Co-chair

The purpose of QUALPOR is to advance the discipline of qualitative research within AAPOR by offering a forum in which AAPOR members can share best practices, exchange resources, and discuss new approaches to qualitative research. We do this by holding member meetings, providing networking opportunities and a member directory, coordinating the QUALPOR paper session at the AAPOR conference, and encouraging member initiatives. If you are not already a member, become a member by contacting Margaret Roller (rnr@rollerresearch.com) or Paul Lavrakas (pjlavrakas@comcast.net).

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The QUALPOR Panel at the 2021 AAPOR Conference

The [AAPOR 76th Annual Conference](#) will be held virtually on May 3-14, 2021. The week of May 3rd is reserved for short courses and open meetings, with conference presentations being held May 11-14. This year, each AAPOR affinity group was given an opportunity to submit a panel session and we are pleased that the QUALPOR panel submission – [“Blood From a Stone? Using Qualitative Techniques to Understand Why Households Don’t Participate in Surveys”](#) – was accepted. This is a five-paper, live panel session with presenters from the National Center for Education Statistics and the American Institutes of Research. Co-authors include researchers from these organizations as well as Paul Lavrakas (independent consultant) and Cameron McPhee from SSRS. The panel is scheduled for **May 12th at 11:00 a.m. ET**. You will want to add this to your conference schedule!

Sensitive Topic Initiative

By **Mariel Leonard**

The Sensitive Topics subcommittee is interested in all aspects of “sensitive topic” research conducted by AAPOR members, both qualitative and quantitative. We have identified several gaps in the general knowledge and practice of survey and qualitative research methods as they relate to sensitive topics, including:



- Standards for pre-identifying sensitive or distressing topics or situations;
- Standards for distress protocols;
- Standards and training for interviewers in recognizing and addressing respondent distress;
- Standards and training for interviewers and staff in supporting interviewers in the aftermath of respondent or interviewer distress; and
- Standards and training for interviewers and staff addressing inappropriate behavior by respondents, including of a sexual or racist nature.

In response to these needs, we are currently developing a Task Force proposal to submit to the AAPOR Executive Council. If successful, this task force will address these gaps by identifying best practices and standards from other research fields as well as soliciting resources from within the public opinion research sector. These guidelines can then be used by AAPOR members to develop tailored trainings to support their research and staff. Individuals interested in the work of the subcommittee are welcome to contact me at m.mckone.leonard@mmckone.com.

May 2021

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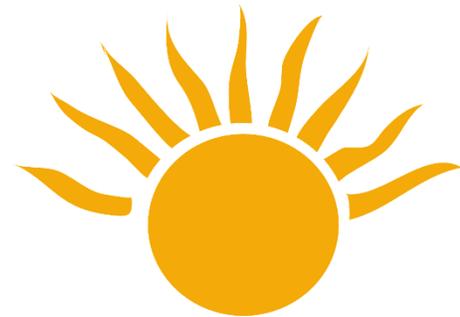
Save the Date!

The next QUALP^{OR} meeting will be held on Friday May 7th at 11:30 a.m. to 1:00 p.m. ET. This meeting takes place during the AAPOR conference and is open to all conference attendees. A full agenda is expected, including discussions of qualitative methods in cross-cultural and multilingual research, sneak peaks into sessions scheduled for the qualitative research track the following week, comments from Nicole Brown on her short course on creative methods (see page 8 in this newsletter), a preview of the conference from Darby Steiger (Associate Conference Chair and QUALP^{OR} member), and updates on QUALP^{OR} initiatives and activities. QUALP^{OR} members and nonmembers alike have a lot to look forward to. We hope to see you there!

NEW! The Learning Bursts Initiative

By Learning Bursts Team: Colleen Colbert, Ken Croes, Anna Sandoval Giron, David Harris

In the spirit of learning and professional development, we have launched an initiative (*Learning Bursts*) within QUALP^{OR} to advance the science and art of qualitative research. The Learning Bursts team is developing a series of live, virtual professional development sessions focused on key topics and skills in qualitative research. The plan is to offer up to three 90-minute virtual sessions each year to QUALP^{OR} members.



Currently, planned sessions include race/class in research, the fundamentals of validity, and methodological issues. All sessions are designed to be interactive and formats will include mini-lecture with discussion, panel discussion, and workshops, depending on the topic/skill being taught. To get the most out of these sessions, some pre-work (reading or video) will be expected.

We Need Your Help

We want to know which additional topics are important to you and would help the QUALP^{OR} community. You can also let us know if you are interested in facilitating an interactive Learning Bursts session. **Please email David Harris at david@imresearch.org and Colleen Colbert at colberc2@ccf.org.**

If you would prefer to discuss the initiative via Teams or Zoom, let us know and we would be happy to set up a meeting.

From *Public Opinion Quarterly*: A Qualitative Study on Deriving Public Opinion from Social Media

In the Special Issue 2020 of *Public Opinion Quarterly*, Shannon McGregor presents the results of a qualitative research study that she conducted to investigate “the role of social media in how campaigns assess, conceive of, and communicate public opinion” (McGregor, 2020, p. 240). The article – **“Taking the temperature of the room’: How political campaigns use social media to understand and represent public opinion”** – is open access to AAPOR members and an interesting account of the use of qualitative methods in public opinion research. McGregor conducted 13 in-depth interviews with senior (“top tier”) campaign professionals responsible for digital or social media during the 2016 primary and/or general election campaigns. The average interview length was approximately an hour; and, in the spirit of transparency, McGregor provides a list of participants as well as the key questions from the interview guide.



McGregor frames her study design and the research outcomes around a theoretical model built on the idea that social media provides campaign directors with both *quantitative* and *qualitative* measurements of public opinion that are used for *instrumental* and/or *symbolic* purposes. While she admits that “the [social media] universe from which this new form of public opinion is drawn would still not mirror the population,” she asserts that “social media may provide particularly fertile ground for gathering and gauging fuller, richer, and less constricted citizen input” (p. 251). McGregor, S. C. (2020). “Taking the Temperature of the Room” How Political Campaigns Use Social Media to Understand and Represent Public Opinion. *Public Opinion Quarterly*, 84(Special Issue), 236–256.

QUALPOR Coffee Break at the 2021 AAPOR Conference



Mark your calendar! The 2021 AAPOR virtual conference offers attendees many opportunities to mingle in the Virtual Exhibit Hall and in Zoom-powered Coffee Breaks. These are 30 minute time slots that give attendees the chance to catch-up with colleagues and establish new friendships.

The QUALPOR Coffee Break is scheduled for **May 12th at 2:00 p.m. ET**, immediately after Dan Merkle’s presidential address and just 90 minutes after the QUALPOR Panel session (see page 2).

QUALPOR members Kathleen Kephart and Mariel Leonard will be the hosts for the Coffee Break, and we encourage members and nonmembers to attend. This is a chance to learn more about QUALPOR, meet QUALPOR members, and, if not already a member, sign up to QUALPOR.

Maximizing the Impact of Qualitative Research

By Steph Wehnau – Research Project Manager, Center for Survey Research, Penn State Harrisburg



As a cost recovery unit at Penn State Harrisburg, the Center for Survey Research (within the Institute of State and Regional Affairs) does not receive any funding from the university and relies solely on research grants and projects to cover our staff, resources, and related costs. It forces us to be entrepreneurial and has given us the freedom to work with a wide variety of clients from state government, academia, non-profit organizations, and private industry. There are no limits to the types of research and data collection work that we do, but we tend to gravitate towards research opportunities that have an impact on real people. Specifically, in the past year, we have explored two challenging issues affecting our fellow Pennsylvanians: the opioid crisis and COVID-19's impact on child care centers. Both of these studies utilized a mixed-methods approach where the qualitative component greatly contributed to understanding survey results along with providing opportunities for community buy-in and collaboration.

First, we are involved with a project that centers around the Life Unites Us campaign (<https://lifeunitesus.com/>), which is an exciting effort to end stigma surrounding opioid use disorder in Pennsylvania. It is the first evidence-based substance use disorder stigma reduction behavior change campaign in the nation, and it would not be possible without our strong project team from the Pennsylvania Department of Drug and Alcohol Programs, the Public Goods Project, Shatterproof, and Penn State Harrisburg's Douglas W. Pollock Center for Addiction Outreach and Research. My unit is responsible for statewide surveys with the general public every 6 months, several series of interviews with community-based organizations and community leaders, an analysis of secondary data, and the creation and maintenance of a Pennsylvania-specific data hub (<https://padashboard.lifeunitesus.com/>). This is a large undertaking, and it is exciting to see how our contributions are connecting organizations and individuals to end stigma and remove the barriers to successful treatment and recovery.

To date, we have completed 40 interviews with individuals from community-based organizations and community leaders to understand their role in fighting the opioid epidemic, challenges they face, stigma reduction in their community, feedback on the Life Unites Us campaign, and a variety of other topics including COVID-19. Through the first two rounds of interviews, the team has targeted specific geographic regions, a mix of rural and

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urban areas, and organizations serving specific populations (i.e., veterans, women-only, etc.). Not only are these semi-structured discussions essential for improving and making additions to the campaign, but they also allow the team to fill in the gaps from other data collection efforts and secondary data analysis. Additionally, the interviews have provided an important opportunity to connect these organizations and leaders with the Public Goods Project to become a campaign partner and/or to provide a personal testimonial video in the campaign's story library. This qualitative effort draws out the often-raw human emotions that would not be apparent from surveys or datasets alone. Without these critical interviews, we would not be able to fully understand the topic or be able to support this important campaign to end the stigma of opioid addiction.

Additionally, we conducted a study last spring on the impact of COVID-19 on child care for the Pennsylvania Office of Child Development and Early Learning. This mixed-methods study (survey and interviews) was designed in collaboration with a faculty partner to provide a comprehensive picture and to measure the operational and financial impacts of COVID-19 on Pennsylvania child care providers. Insights from in-depth interviews of just over 40 directors and child care workers (i.e., teachers, aides, etc.) from a variety of provider types (family, group/small center, and large center), Keystone STARS (Standards, Training/Professional Development, Assistance, Resources, and Supports) designation levels, and locations around Pennsylvania were used to provide context for the statewide survey results, highlight impacts, and build community support for policy recommendations that were produced from the study findings. Insights from the interviews emphasized the emotional impacts that COVID-19 had on child care staff and added a personal and authentic voice to the report, which strengthened the credibility of this research. The interviews also served as a valuable tool to build support and buy-in from the early childhood community. Perhaps most importantly, the areas of financial impact identified in the interviews helped support the implementation of both short-term and long-term funding opportunities for providers in the form of grants from federal CARES Act funds, as well as allocation for additional rounds of federal funding.

As I reflect on these research projects, it is clear to me that without the strong qualitative component, we would not have understood the context, experiences, and emotions of the people behind our quantitative data. I am so grateful for my colleagues and network of research partners who pull together to tell these important stories and work tirelessly to investigate and report on many complex issues. When we find the best mix of qualitative and quantitative methods, we can truly understand the problem and improve the lives of so many people.



Preview of AAPOR's Annual Conference

By Darby Steiger, Associate Conference Chair

AAPOR's 76th Annual Conference is right around the virtual corner. We have over 550 papers being presented this year, and about 1,000 registrants as of this writing. If you haven't registered yet, be sure to do so before the conference begins on May 11 (**[Annual Conference - AAPOR](#)**). The conference is being held using a virtual platform called Pathable which allows for many opportunities to network and connect with other attendees, to watch live and pre-recorded sessions, and to connect with our sponsors and exhibitors. This year, there are plenty of options to choose from for qualitative researchers:

- The week prior to the conference is short course week, including a course on "Deepening and Enriching Qualitative Data Collection and Analysis with Creative Methods" taught by Nicole Brown on Wednesday May 5 from 10 am-1:30 pm Eastern (currently sold out, see page 8).
- QUALPOR will also hold a meeting that week (only accessible to conference registrants) on Friday May 7 from 11:30 am-1:00 pm Eastern.
- On Wednesday May 12 from 2:00 pm -2:30 pm Eastern, QUALPOR will host an informal coffee break for attendees to learn more about QUALPOR initiatives and meet fellow attendees.
- On Wednesday May 12 from 11:00 am -12:30 pm Eastern, QUALPOR will hold a live mini-conference panel session called "Blood From a Stone? Using Qualitative Techniques to Understand Why Households Don't Participate in Surveys".
- There is a qualitative track at AAPOR this year, with three sessions being held throughout the conference.
 - On Tuesday May 11 at 11:30 am Eastern is a pre-recorded session (live Q&A with the authors at 1:00 pm) called "Qualitative Research Methods and Applications."
 - On Thursday May 13 at 3:00 pm Eastern is a pre-recorded session (live Q&A with authors at 4:30 pm) called "Qualitative Methods for Questionnaire Development and Pretesting."
 - On Friday May 14 at 2:00 pm Eastern is a live mini-conference session called "Qualitative Data Collection Methods: COVID-19 Adaptations."

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Beyond the qualitative content, we have two great plenary sessions (an opening plenary on the 2020 elections, and a closing plenary kicking off the inaugural AAPOR Award Lecture, featuring the winners of the 2020 and 2021 AAPOR Awards for Exceptionally Distinguished Achievement). Throughout the conference, look for fun ways to make the most of the virtual platform, such as “EngAAge-POR”, our live Twitter wall, photo competitions, speed networking, and happy hours. I look forward to “seeing” you all at AAPOR!

QUALPOR Leadership Transition

At the end of 2021, QUALPOR will have chosen a new leadership team when Margaret Roller and Paul Lavrakas step down from their Chair and co-Chair positions. It is anticipated that the new 2022 leadership team will include a Secretary position in addition to the chairs. Work has begun to identify/detail and carryout a methodical approach for choosing the new leaders. It is anticipated that a call for nominations will go out by August and that the voting will be completed and transition to the new leaders will begin sometime in November 2021.

Deepening and Enriching Qualitative Data Collection and Analysis with Creative Methods



QUALPOR member Nicole Brown will be presenting a short course at the 2021 AAPOR conference titled “Deepening and Enriching Qualitative Data Collection and Analysis with Creative Methods” on Wednesday May 5 at 10:00 a.m. ET. Unfortunately for those who have yet to sign up, the course is sold out.

As stated in the program,

The aim of this interactive workshop is to explore creativity within research, to identify opportunities to use creative methods within the research process and to consider analysis in qualitative research with a specific focus on how to treat and deal with data that is not textual, but comes out of the use of creative methods (drawings, paintings, pick-a-card, LEGO models, etc.).

This looks to be an engaging and useful class! Nicole will talk briefly about this course at the May 7th QUALPOR meeting (see page 3).

New Member Corner

QUALPOR membership continues to grow and currently has 98 members. A few of the newest members share their interest in qualitative research and the QUALPOR community:

**Alian Kasabian – Director of the Methodology of Evaluation Research Core Facility,
University of Nebraska-Lincoln**

I see qualitative research as foundational and necessary to really understand complex and/or interconnected ideas, and increase understanding for our audiences. Qualitative research and mixed/multi methods are a core component of our services, and part of most projects I work on and oversee. But, because I work with some primarily qualitative researchers, I thought I wasn't qualitative "enough" to be a member of QUALPOR. Margaret let me know I was wrong – anyone even just interested in qualitative methods is welcome, so I definitely qualify. So here I am, and glad to be part of such esteemed and knowledgeable company!

Erin Pinkus – Senior Research Scientist, SurveyMonkey

Working at SurveyMonkey as a Senior Research Scientist, the vast majority of my current work is quantitative in nature. I am looking to find ways to explore and utilize more qualitative methods in my work. When I heard about QUALPOR, I was excited to find trusted AAPOR peers from whom I can learn. In my volunteer role as PAPOR's Conference Chair, I have seen feedback, after offering short courses on focus groups and mixed-methods, that the appetite for more qualitative content continues. I am excited to be a part of QUALPOR and look forward to ways PAPOR and QUALPOR might team up in the future!

Melinda Rea-Holloway – President & CEO, Ethnographic Research, Inc.

I have been providing ethnography for corporate clients for more than twenty years. I have also recently launched Sociology Now, an organization that looks at understanding and improving contemporary social problems through ethnographic research. With an MA in sociology and a PhD in community psychology, it has always been my goal to use qualitative research to improve the communities I study and I have done work to that end in both the public and private spheres. My research interests include gender, family systems, health and illness, and studies of everyday practices and routines. I joined QUALPOR with the hope of connecting with a community of other qualitative researchers. I am eager to learn what others are working on, to discuss methodology, and to share stories from the field with fellow researchers.

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Neil Ruiz – Associate Director of Race and Ethnicity Research, Pew Research Center

I joined QUALPOR because I want to learn from a community of researchers the best practices and standards for conducting qualitative research. I also joined QUALPOR because I am leading a large-scale focus group study that will provide a voice for hard-to-reach racial or ethnic groups that traditional survey tools will not capture.

Neil Shook – Data Specialist, Center for Survey Research, Penn State Harrisburg

In my role, I work on numerous quantitative, qualitative, and mixed-methods research projects. Qualitative research interests me because it shines a light on the uniquely human aspects of social science research. I enjoy how qualitative research gives people a distinct voice and allows them to share opinions and perspectives and ideas in their own words—this, to me, also connects with my interest in linguistics and language in general. Although my journey into qualitative research is just beginning, I am looking forward to delving more into qualitative methods and joining the QUALPOR community.

William J. Weaver – Senior Consultant, New Heights Research

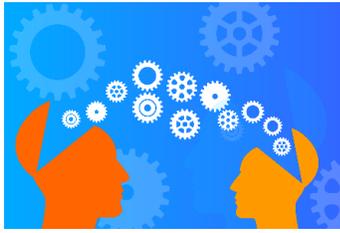
Part of the beauty of qualitative research is its flexibility and diversity of perspective. If you approach five different qualitative researchers with the same set of questions, you will get five disparate strategies for research design, data gathering, and analysis. You will even get five separate philosophical frameworks, each equally valid and meaningful.

I joined QUALPOR to learn how my peers handle rigor and methodological discipline within their varied research practices. I am fascinated by issues of data quality and actionability (particularly in my own practice) and I am often humbled by how much there is to learn.

I also joined QUALPOR because I love qualitative research, and I am inspired by those who use it well.

As for my own work, I study the phenomenology of commerce as part of a boutique market research firm. My job centers on interviewing participants in various markets (usually B2B or B2G), synthesizing the data into actionable insights, and presenting it in story-driven form to decisionmakers.

In this regard, I see qualitative research practitioners as playing the role of “trusted advisor” to those who need to make important decisions based on complex, multidimensional considerations. Well-executed qual methods can access the human experiences that underlie every quantifiable datum, but which often remain invisible until they are directly explored.



Webinars & Conferences

Webinars

MAPOR (Midwest Association for Public Opinion Research)

“Conducting Research in a Virtual Environment and What the Post-COVID “New Normal” Might Look Like for Qualitative Researchers”

April 30, 2021 12:00 p.m. – 1:00 p.m. Central Time

Andrew Stavisky, Assistant Director at The US Government Accountability Office in the Applied Methods and Research Group (and QUALP^{OR} member)

Issac Rogers, CIO at Schlesinger Group

Register [here](#)

Nvivo and SAGE Publishing – Culturally Responsive Research Webinar Series

Respecting and Responding to the needs of Communities of Color in the Research Space

April 29, 2021 12:00 p.m. EDT

Rasheetta Chandler, PhD, RN, Emory University

Register [here](#)

Culturally Responsive Focus Groups

May 4, 2021 2:00 p.m. EDT

Jori N. Hall, PhD, University of Georgia

Register [here](#)

Conferences

- [**TQR 13th Annual Conference – Call for Submissions Now Open**](#)
 - [**33rd Annual Ethnographic & Qualitative Research Conference**](#) – Call for Papers (Deadline: April 30th)
 - [**Virtual Advanced Methods Institute \(AMI\)**](#) “Advancing Culturally Responsive Research and Researchers” sponsored by The Ohio State University June 2-4, 2021, Registration closes May 18th 2021
 - [**16th International Conference on Interdisciplinary Social Sciences**](#) *The Opportunities of Crisis: Resilience and Change in World History*
 - [**Environments by Design: Health, Wellbeing and Place**](#) – Global conference – Call for abstracts (Deadline: June 25, 2021)
 - NVivo Virtual Conference – *Transcending Boundaries in Qualitative Research* – [**Call for Abstracts**](#) (Deadline: June 30, 2021)
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