

QUALPOR NEWS

Fall 2024



Kathleen Kephart, QUALPOR Co-Chair

Happy Fall, QUALPOR Members!

As the year starts to wrap up, we're looking forward to a great 2025 for QUALPOR!

A few updates as we look at the year to come:

First, after 3 years of tremendous leadership, Kathleen Kephart is stepping down as co-chair. We thank her for her leadership and dedication in stewarding

QUALPOR, along with previous QUALPOR Chair Colleen Colbert. This means we are opening nominations for a new co-chair! To learn more about this role, please see the [nomination form](#), where you can nominate yourself or a fellow QUALPOR member you think would be excellent for the role. Please submit your nominations by **November 30, 2024**.



Melissa Dunn Silesky, QUALPOR Co-Chair

Second, we are excited to announce a new QUALPOR initiative starting in 2025: QUALPOR Coffee/Tea Chats! Coffee/Tea Chats will be monthly, 30-minute, lightly structured chances for QUALPOR members to discuss qualitative methods, best practices, and research experiences. We intend for Coffee/Tea Chats to be a lower-lift way for members to engage with one another, including members in all stages of their career path. Coffee/Tea Chats will be a complement to our current Learning Bursts educational offerings. If you are interested in learning more and joining the inaugural planning committee, please email Melissa at melissahdunn@gmail.com.

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Finally, as always, we're looking forward to the 2025 annual conference! This year's theme is "Reshaping Democracy's Oracle: Transforming Polls, Surveys, and the Measurement of Public Opinion in the Age of AI." While polling and AI can often seem like quantitative endeavors, we as qualitative researchers play a pivotal role in both understanding our democracy and guiding the direction of AI's use in the research world and beyond. During our Fall QUALPOR Member Meeting, Conference Chair Gina Walejko reminded us of the necessity of qualitative contributions in these spaces. We look forward to seeing many excellent qualitative presentations, including those at the QUALPOR Affinity Group panel!

If you have questions about QUALPOR or would like to get involved in an initiative, please contact the QUALPOR co-chairs Kathleen Kephart (Kathleen.kephart@gmail.com) or Melissa (melissahdunn@gmail.com).



Hello, QUALPORers and QUALPORites!

As you may know, on May 14-16, the 80th Annual AAPOR conference will be held in St. Louis at the historic St. Louis Union Station Hotel. (Check out the website; I absolutely loved the venue when I visited in October!) This year's conference theme focuses on how AI is transforming polls, surveys, and public opinion & election research. The timing of the 80th Annual Conference also means we will hear talks and panels related to the US general election, and our co-location with the World Association of Public Opinion Research (WAPOR) provides the opportunity for us to have a co-sponsored track dedicated to international and comparative public opinion topics.

Qualitative research plays a vital role in this year's conference theme as well as the U.S. general election. Qualitative research provides us the ability to get richer insights than surveys – from understanding people's opinions about AI to voting preferences to a myriad of other topics. AI is also shaping the way qualitative researchers perform their work. (As a mixed methods researcher, I have been using generative AI in a variety of my qualitative workflows. Just 2 years ago, I could not have imagined this.)

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I encourage you all to submit or attend the conference! To me, one of the best things about AAPOR is the mix of qualitative and quantitative methodologists dedicated to both understanding public opinion and gathering high quality data.

Gina Walejko

2024-2025 Conference Chair

The Backlash Against Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion Programs - Call for Papers!

The primary goals of this special issue of EDI are to foster research (a) on the underlying bases for the backlash against DEI programs, (b) consider the reasons that DEI programs are perceived as ineffective, and (c) develop strategies to help enhance the diversity and inclusion of outgroup members.

Potential paper topics might include a) evidence citing the extent of the backlash, b) reasons for the backlash, including but not limited to the misperceptions of DEI programs and initiatives, reactions toward increased diversity, perceptions of threat, c) links between anti-DEI and other current beliefs and movements, d) the experiences facing those threatened by backlash, d) how targets of this backlash are responding, coping, and trying to protect themselves, and e) how individuals and organizations can be allies to this backlash.

Submissions open February 1, 2025. <https://www.emeraldgroupublishing.com/calls-for-papers/backlash-against-diversity-equity-and-inclusion-programs>.

Guest Editors

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A Novel Approach to Collecting Real-Time Qualitative Data at Scale

By Darby Steiger and Kristen Conrad, SSRS

SSRS recently conducted a novel qualitative study in which we were asked to gather real-time qualitative feedback during the only 2024 presidential debate held between Donald Trump and Kamala Harris. The goal of the study was to be able to capture immediate feedback on the candidates' statements throughout the debate from a large and diverse group of potential voters who had not yet solidified their vote preference and to be able to publish the results instantly.

We found that our traditional qualitative toolkit did not seem to be able to meet the needs of this study, including allowing for nearly real-time publication of findings per the client's request. A live focus group would have had several disadvantages, including a small size, the innate disruption of having to interrupt the debate to ask participants to share their reactions, the inability to collect reactions from every participant to every probe, and the challenges of providing the client with instant access to the data. A dial test would have been able to capture reactions in a numerical format (for example, capturing moment-by-moment reactions on a 100-point scale) but would have only allowed us to gather the reasons behind their reactions in a post-survey focus group, at which point participants may have forgotten why they felt that way in the moment. And an asynchronous board would have required us to pre-set the questions, which would not have allowed us to probe on what was actually being discussed during the debate.

Our solution involved using a novel methodology that allowed for larger-scale qualitative insights in real-time. Using Sago's Crowd Survey platform, we were able to pose tailored questions that were created in-the-moment, thus allowing us to gather simultaneous feedback from dozens of prescreened potential voters and to view and download their responses in real-time. In practice, this meant that as soon as the candidates finished discussing a particular issue, we could launch a question on the platform asking which candidate made better arguments about that specific issue and to explain why they chose their answer. Similarly, we could ask for reactions to a specific statement made by a candidate, such as whether the statement made sense (and why) or whether they agreed or disagreed with the statement (and why). Participants remained logged into the platform throughout the entire debate, and each time a question was posed, we typically



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received 100% response within about 8 minutes. Data were available for immediate download, displaying the responses along with participants' demographic characteristics.

Since this was such a new methodology, one of the challenges we faced was making sure that the participants understood how to log onto the platform and what would be happening throughout the evening. To address this, we designed a communication "campaign" in the days leading up to the debate, sending daily emails and texts to participants to give them basic tips about what to expect. When they arrived on the platform a few minutes before the start of the debate, this information was repeated to them on the landing page of the platform. This active communication was helpful for building rapport between the research team and the participants and contributed to a 100% show rate and a 96% completion rate.

We are excited by the possibilities that this new methodology offers for gathering large-scale qualitative feedback during live events. Whether the results are made public or used internally for strategic insights, the potential to capture instant reaction – and "the why" – in the moment offers a variety of potential applications for future consideration.

QUALPOR *Initiatives*

Learning Bursts – We Need YOU!

Dear QUALPOR members, the Learning Bursts (LB) committee needs your help and new members. The LB committee is a great way to professionally network and socialize. While people of all work experience levels are welcome, we are hoping that graduate students and new career professionals will consider joining the committee to help organize sessions. Often, we just need people to help come up with ideas for topics and then coordinate with presenters. No work experience or vast professional network is required. We are looking for new members to join for limited terms of only 1-2 years, serving any longer is optional. If you are interested or have questions, please reach out to Kathleen.kephart@gmail.com.



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Sensitive Topics Group

The Sensitive Topics group met on October 8 to discuss current and future projects. Currently, the Sensitive Topics group is working on developing several tools and informative articles for use by researchers working on sensitive topics or with vulnerable populations, including a template for distress protocols and key considerations for tailoring distress protocols. Planned future work will include interviewer training and train-the-trainer guidance for implementing distress protocols and emotional and physical safety for interviewers and respondents. Moving forward, the Sensitive Topics group will meet on the second Tuesday of the month at 3pm ET. Interested individuals should contact Mariel McKone Leonard at m.mckone.leonard@mmckone.com.

For QUALPOR members able to attend [ESRA](#), sign up for the Developing Distress Protocols short course! This short course will provide participants an introduction to developing distress protocols for survey respondents. Participants have opportunities to share their own experiences and lessons learned, as well as work in small groups to outline elements required for their own distress protocols.

Standards and Best Practices Committee

The AAPOR standards committee has asked QUALPOR to develop standards associated with qualitative research. Rather than focusing on communications guidelines – our group’s initial effort – the standards and best practices subcommittee is going to shift gears to develop quality standards. If anyone works for an organization that has their own qualitative standards and would be willing to share them, that would be really helpful for us to use as a starting point. Please contact Amber Ott at amber@hudsonpacific.co if you have any guidelines to contribute. The committee is also always looking for members. Send Amber a note if you’d like to be added to the group.



Coming in 2025!

Public Opinion Quarterly

First-ever Special Issue Devoted to Qualitative Research

TITLE: Qualitative Research: Advancing the Social & Behavioral Sciences

Co-editors: Margaret R. Roller, Zachary R. Smith, Paul J. Lavrakas

Less is More - the Art of Interviewing Sensitive Topics

By Kai Fuentes, Ebony Marketing Systems

The “Less is More” approach has been refined by [Ebony Marketing Systems](#) over years of moderating sensitive topic interviews. topics that come with high societal judgment or stigmas. Sometimes the client will identify a topic as sensitive, sometimes that’s our role as researchers.



Here are just a few of the sensitive topics that our agency has handled:

- Persons living with HIV/AIDS
- Persons with addictions – drug and alcohol
- Sex workers
- Transgender and nonbinary persons
- Breastfeeding

Perhaps you were surprised to see breastfeeding on this list. Breastfeeding (or not) comes with a LOT of judgment. Breastfeeding also increases in sensitivity within the Black community related to awareness and education. Recently, Ebony Marketing Systems (EMS) partnered with 1000 Days to explore current perceptions about CDC dietary guidelines and nutrition during pregnancy through the end of the 2nd birthday, known as the 1,000-day window.

The objective was to identify and promote policies and programs that reduce malnutrition among Black mothers and children. The research included 3 cohorts:

- (1) Black pregnant people
- (2) Black postpartum people who breastfed
- (3) Black postpartum people, not breastfeeding

Research objectives were broad:

- (1) understand awareness of and attitudes toward the recommendations in the CDC Dietary Guidelines
- (2) to share results with the advocacy community

Less is More – Project Design and Discussion Guides

Despite this sweeping range of cohorts and goals, we employed a “Less is More” approach throughout the research stages. In the project design stage, we used n= 9. How can 9 interviews cover that scope? We extended each interview to one hour and 15 minutes We did 4 phases of 9 interviews each. Phased interviews were critical. The four phases were designed to inform the next phase with insightful knowledge.

Less is More – the Art of Interviewing Sensitive Topics continued on page 8

That phased approach helped us distill the discussion guide to four questions.

1. How did you find out you're pregnant?
2. How did you plan to give birth to your baby?
3. Talk about your weight, blood pressure, pre-diabetes during the pregnancy. (Note that number three was purposively not worded as a question to make the interview more of a conversation, less of an interrogation. However, it still performs as a question.)
4. Did you consider breast-feeding your baby? Why or why not?

Less is More – Probes and Pauses

I hold off probes until we're deeper in the conversation. I hold the probe in my head. Usually, you're probing in the moment but if the person is telling you a story and if their rhythm of speech is such that they're speaking fast, that's a cue to just listen. People speed up their speech when they are emotional. I need to just listen.

It's interesting because sometimes when you hold onto the probe, your probes are answered anyway. That's practicing patience in research. Sometimes clients don't understand that and start messaging you: "You didn't get this!" Give me a second. The interviewee will get there; they will take us there because it's part of their story.

Another clue not to probe is when the interviewee goes silent. Be with her in her silence and practice what I call the pregnant pauses of nine seconds. A mnemonic trick to remember nine seconds as nine connects to pregnancy. This pause is the difference between a game show host and a moderator. For a game show host having a pause or "dead air" is bad as viewers turn the channel. For moderators, silence does the opposite, it invites people to stay with you.

Less is More – Ultimately More Respect for All

As you practice using fewer questions, fewer probes and more pauses, you will untap more stories. Which can mean you will hear some things that sound, well, bananas. There's all kind of things that happen to people. That they experience in their lives as a card that they were dealt or a card they played. Regardless, we all need grace and we all need empathy.

Before the interview, I take deep breaths. I remind myself that the interviewee is somebody's mother, brother, sister. This person could be my neighbor. This person could be my family member. This person could be my best friend. I am going to treat this interview with the utmost respect. This humble mindset does get easier with time – it's like humble muscle memory. Again, it's about using our qualitative researcher gifts of empathy and being non-judgmental. Understanding that even though they are using these terms, or they feel a certain way, that's their story. They still have the right to their story to be heard.



AAPOR 80TH ANNUAL CONFERENCE

Reshaping Democracy's Oracle: Transforming Polls, Surveys, and the Measurement of Public Opinion in the Age of AI

May 14 - 16, 2025

St. Louis Union Station Hotel
1820 Market St.
St Louis, Missouri, 63103

New Member Corner

QUALPOR currently has more than 200 members and continues to grow. Becoming a member is easy, just contact the QUALPOR Membership Director, Alex Piccirillo (alexandra.a.piccirillo@census.gov), and be put on the list to receive all QUALPOR communications. Please welcome our newest members:

Lona	Choi-Allum
Kelly	Daley
Chelsea	Goodale
Stacey	Greene
Cora	Henry
Maxwell	Hope
Sherri	Mamon
Tara	Nicola
Sheldonn	Plummer-Duff
Jorge	Restrepo
Pat	Riordan
Nora	Schenkel
Martina	Smith
Frances	Tarbell
Carolyn	VieraMartinez
Theresa	Wright
Elizabeth	Young
Sandrine	Zerbib
Eunice	Yau



Workshops/Courses/Webinars & Conferences

Workshops/Courses/Webinars

- **Many seminars and courses related to qualitative inquiry**, throughout 2024 and 2025, hosted by ResearchTalk.
- **The 'Growing' Cannabis Market as Seen by Global Qualitative Experts**, Virtual, November 15, 2024, hosted by QRCA.
- **"Fireside Chat about AI for Instructors of Qualitative Research,"** Virtual, December 6, 2024, hosted by Quallab at The Ohio State University.
- Photovoice Worldwide **"Talking with Pictures: Photovoice,"** 5 sessions, 2 hours each, Virtual, January 9-23, 2025.
- **"Autoethnographic Storytelling in Qualitative Research"** with Carolyn Ellis and Arthur Bochner, Virtual, January 15, 2025, hosted by The Qualitative Report.

Workshops & Webinars from CAQDAS (computer-assisted qualitative data analysis software)

Providers

- **MAXQDA**
- **NVivo**
- **Quirkos**

Conferences

- **9th World Conference on Qualitative Research**, Kraków, Poland, February 4-6, 2025, Virtual February 11-13, 2025.
 - **QRCA Annual Conference**, Philadelphia, PA, February 11-14, 2025.
 - **TQR 16th Annual Conference**, Nova Southeastern University, Ft. Lauderdale, FL, March 5-6, 2025, Virtual March 27-28, 2025.
 - **QRCA Worldwide Conference**, Berlin, Germany, May 14-16, 2025 – Presentation submission deadline November 15, 2024.
 - **80th Annual AAPOR Conference**, St. Louis, MO, May 14-16, 2025 – Submissions deadline November 15, 2023
 - **21st International Congress of Qualitative Research. "Qualitative Inquiry Under a Big Tent"** Virtual only, May 14-17, 2025.
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