

# QUALPOR NEWS

September 2021

## Qualitative Shines at AAPOR!



Margaret R. Roller MA,  
QUALPOR Chair

If you attended the 2021 AAPOR conference in May, you are most likely aware of the tremendous work being conducted utilizing qualitative methods among researchers within AAPOR. This was evident by the QUALPOR Panel, a five-paper session concerning qualitative techniques used to understand nonresponse by the National Center for Education Statistics and the American Institutes of Research. There was also an all-new Qualitative Track including a total of 14 presentations plus a mini-conference session called “Qualitative Data Collection Methods: COVID-19 Adaptations.” As if this wasn’t enough, QUALPOR member Nicole Brown gave a short course on creative qualitative methods, which received enthusiastic reviews from attendees.



Paul J. Lavrakas PhD,  
QUALPOR Co-chair

QUALPOR is an 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 106 members. 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 Panel session at the AAPOR conference, and encouraging member initiatives. If you are not already, become a member by contacting Margaret Roller ([rmr@rollerresearch.com](mailto:rmr@rollerresearch.com)) or Paul Lavrakas ([pjlavrakas@comcast.net](mailto:pjlavrakas@comcast.net)).

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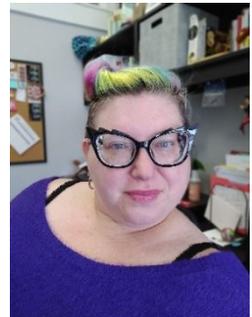
## QUALPOR Was Everywhere at the 2021 AAPOR Conference

The AAPOR 76<sup>th</sup> Annual Conference was held virtually on May 3-14, 2021 and, from beginning to end, qualitative research was on the agenda. On May 5<sup>th</sup>, QUALPOR member Nicole Brown conducted a short course to a sold-out audience titled “Deepening and Enriching Qualitative Data Collection and Analysis with Creative Methods.” On May 12<sup>th</sup>, the five-paper QUALPOR Panel – [“Blood From a Stone? Using Qualitative Techniques to Understand Why Households Don’t Participate in Surveys”](#) – aired live with presenters from the National Center for Education Statistics and the American Institutes of Research.

The conference also included two qualitative research tracks – “Qualitative Research Methods and Applications” with seven presentations – including those from QUALPOR members Annie MacFadyen and Maria Montenegro (who has, along with her co-authors, contributed an article to this newsletter discussing their research, see p. 5) – and “Qualitative Methods for Questionnaire Development and Pretesting” with seven presenters – including QUALPOR members Amanda Wilmot, Lauren Creamer, Daniela Glusberg, and Mandi Martinez. To top it off, the qualitative mini-conference session titled “Qualitative Data Collection Methods: COVID-19 Adaptations” with five presentations – including two from QUALPOR members Kathleen Kephart and Andrew Stavisky – was conducted on the afternoon of the final day of the conference. All these presentations are available for download at the [2021 Annual Conference Proceedings](#) page on the AAPOR site.

Several QUALPOR members were recognized during the presentation of the 2021 AAPOR Awards at the conference.

- The 2021 AAPOR Public Service Award went to Dawn Nelson from the U.S. Census Bureau for her “outstanding commitment to public service and dedication to maintaining AAPOR standards and consistently contributing to the quality of government surveys during her career.”
- Margaret Roller and Paul Lavrakas, both independent consultants, won the 2021 AAPOR Book Award for *Applied Qualitative Research Design: A Total Quality Framework Approach*, the award stating that this approach “may well serve to open floodgates for a substantial broad new boom and emphasis on theoretical and empirical qualitative research.”
- The 2021 Student-Faculty Diversity Pipeline Award is given to student-faculty pairs who are interested in becoming colleagues while supporting the interests of members of historically underrepresented racial and ethnic groups in the study of public opinion and survey methodology. QUALPOR member Alian Kasabian (shown here) and her student Alexandria Williams, at the University of Nebraska-Lincoln, were one of four student-faculty award winners.



## Public Opinion Quarterly Invites Qualitative Work



In the spring 2021 issue of *Public Opinion Quarterly*, editors-in-chief Allyson Holbrook and Eric Plutzer reflect on their core values and direction for the publication. One of the central drivers of their editorial approach is the idea of inclusion and diversity, not only in the newly expanded editorial team but also in the methods and perspectives represented in *POQ*. To this end, the editors are actively engaging with researchers utilizing methods not typically published in *POQ* – Eric Plutzer

is a QUALPOR member – and invites submissions of qualitative research work. As they state,

*“...we are taking active steps to engage with communities of research who use a wide range of methods. These include engaging with QUALPOR and public opinion scholars using qualitative methodologies, whom we encourage to submit their work to POQ.”*

## As-salaam alaykum! Greetings to QUALPOR Members from Saudi Arabia

By Karen Kellard – Consultant, National Center for Social Studies, Riyadh, Saudi Arabia



Originally from the UK, and after 10 years in Australia at the Social Research Centre, I moved to Saudi Arabia in April 2021. This is a short summary of the journey that took me here, and what I've learnt so far from the country I realized I knew so little about.

Home of Islam's two holy cities (Mecca and Medina), Saudi Arabia is one of the few remaining countries with an absolute monarchy (the King holds supreme authority). Until 2018, it was closed to

tourist visitors and females were forbidden to drive or to travel without a guardian's permission. It is also fair to say that the country has had somewhat of a rocky ride globally in terms of reputation and relationships. Furthermore, it happens to be one of the hottest places in the world during the summer months – and I can confirm that having just lived through four months of temperatures in the high 40s (that's over 115 in Fahrenheit)!

I was contacted about a year ago by a Ministry in the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia (KSA) as they were seeking a social researcher with strategic and managerial experience. After numerous pandemic-related delays, I landed in the capital, Riyadh, in April this year to take up a role as a consultant and advisor to a government-funded social research center. My role is to help them become a leading social research center in the Kingdom (and potentially beyond).

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Applied social research in KSA is relatively limited – most of what is done is undertaken by university academics, occasionally by one of the Big 4 consulting firms, and very rarely by market research companies. From what I have seen so far, evaluation is also quite limited, and tends to be based mostly on administrative data (although



there are a couple of national call centers doing some survey work). Qualitative research here (my one true passion) is really underdeveloped – not least because of the cultural norms and expectations in the Kingdom (for example, only recently have males and females been permitted to mix in public and the country remains relatively conservative in its expression of views and opinions).

However, the demand for robust research evidence is increasing rapidly as it is needed to inform public policy and to measure the impact of changes underway. Through its Vision 2030 strategy, the Kingdom is in the midst of monumental social and economic reform. Vision 2030 outlines the Kingdom’s framework across three key goals – a vibrant society, a thriving economy, and an ambitious nation. There are many (speculative and actual) reasons behind these goals, which include a need to move away from dependency on oil as well as meeting United Nations sustainable development goals. In addition, KSA has a very young population – over a third (37%) of the population is between 15-34 years of age according to the country’s General Authority for Statistics – so undoubtedly the youth appetite for change is influential.

I’m still a relative newcomer to the Middle East and have much more to learn about this fascinating country and culture. I feel very fortunate to have been given this opportunity and I look forward to sharing an update with readers in a future edition of QUALPOR News. You can also find me on LinkedIn and at [karen@ncss.gov.sa](mailto:karen@ncss.gov.sa).

## QUALPOR Leadership Transition

**By Paul J. Lavrakas, QUALPOR co-Chair, Independent Consultant**

As you may recall, Margaret Roller and Paul J. Lavrakas are stepping down as the Chair and co-Chair of QUALPOR, respectively, at the end of this year. Thus, the QUALPOR Leadership Transition Planning Team (QLTPT) was formed in August to, first, set up a new governance structure for QUALPOR taking effect in January 2022 and, second, establish guidelines for the selection of new QUALPOR leadership to take on their new responsibilities as of January 2022. The new governance structure will include a Chair, a co-Chair, and a Secretary, and the length that each will serve will not exceed two years (unless they choose to serve again and are selected again to do so).

In addition to Lavrakas and Roller, respectively chairing and co-chairing the QLTPT, other QUALPOR members who are serving on the team are: Jennifer Franz, David Harris, John Huffman, Kathleen Kephart, and Dawn Nelson. The goals of the QLTPT are to (1) announce the new QUALPOR governance structure by early October, (2) issue a Call for Nominations (including self-nomination) and identify those by early November, (3) choose a “slate” with at least two candidates for each of the three positions and hold the “election” by the end of November, and (4) help the new QUALPOR leadership in December with their transition from the current leadership to when they will begin their service to QUALPOR effective January 2022.

With a QUALPOR membership of more than 100 AAPOR members, we believe QUALPOR has been a very successful AAPOR affinity group. We are fully optimistic that the new leadership will continue to enhance what QUALPOR contributes to AAPOR and its members, and to the role of using qualitative research to better understand public opinion and other social and behavioral science topics.

## A Preliminary Qualitative Study Examining the Influence of Religion on US-Based Latinx Abortion Attitudes

**By Maria Montenegro<sup>a</sup>, Julie Maier<sup>b</sup>, Brandon Crawford<sup>c</sup>, Kristen Jozkowski<sup>c, e</sup>, Wen-Juo Lo<sup>d</sup>, and Ronna Turner<sup>d</sup>**

<sup>a</sup> Department of Spanish and Portuguese, Indiana University, Bloomington, IN, USA. <sup>b</sup> Independent Scholar. <sup>c</sup> School of Public Health, Indiana University, Bloomington, IN, USA. <sup>d</sup> College of Education & Health Professions, University of Arkansas, Fayetteville, AR, USA. <sup>e</sup> The Kinsey Institute for Research in Sex, Gender, and Reproduction, Indiana University, Bloomington, IN, USA.

Abortion attitudes are nuanced and influenced by various factors, including religion and ethnicity (Bruce, 2020). For example, religiosity is consistently one of the strongest predictors of abortion attitude (Frohworth et al., 2018; Jelen & Wilcox, 2003). In addition,

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researchers have shown that highly religious people have less supportive attitudes toward abortion than non-religious or unaffiliated people (Bartkowski et al., 2012). Another important aspect of this issue is how religiosity relates to diverse ethnic and cultural groups, especially Latinxs. Given the history of colonialism and the propagation of Christianity in Latin America, religion tends to be embedded in most Latinx communities (Jurkowski et al., 2010). Still, Latinx are not a homogenous group, and differences in their abortion attitudes may be associated with variations in their religious beliefs. For example, although some people may not be personally religious, the social environment in which they grew up and the religious attitudes of the people in their community may also affect their abortion attitudes (Adamczyk & Valdimarsdóttir, 2018). While there is research on the relationship between religiosity and abortion attitudes in the general population, there is a dearth of research focusing specifically on the US Latinx population. This study examines the nuance of *whether* and *how* religion influences Latinx's views on abortion.

Our analysis is based on a larger study that assessed people's abortion beliefs through a salient belief elicitation (SBE)—a method that uses open-ended questions to elicit participants' top-of-the-mind beliefs about a particular health behavior (Fishbein & Ajzen, 2010)—and cognitive interviews—or interviews that evaluate how participants interpret the meaning of questions (Miller et al., 2014). We first administered a SBE to understand participants' salient abortion beliefs. Then, to understand how participants arrived at their answers, we followed up with cognitive interviews. For this study, we focus specifically on Latinx participants who brought up the relationship between religion and abortion beliefs in both English and Spanish (n = 23). We conducted a thematic analysis of these participants' interviews, examining the role of religion in shaping their abortion beliefs.

Participants described varying degrees of religious beliefs, which they indicated, directly and indirectly, affected their abortion views. Many participants identified as religious and believed abortion is killing or ending a life given by God. For example, a participant indicated, "I believe that a baby is alive at the moment of conception and that's why I think I consider that a death [...]. For me, it is to take a life and it is a sin because of what I believe in the bible." Alternatively, some participants indicated that although they do not identify as religious, religion permeates the Latinx culture and indirectly influences their thoughts on abortion. For example, although some participants may support abortion, they see it as something shameful due to the way it was discussed in their community growing up. One participant indicated, "I never identified as Catholic. My parents just put that on me [...]. I was always told, as I was growing up, you can't have an abortion. If you do, that's a lot of shame and you're just—that's not a choice [...] if I were to have an abortion, I think no matter what, I would just feel a lot of shame."

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Our findings show that Latinx participants have diverse religious and abortion beliefs, which challenge the misconception that all Latinx people are Catholic and anti-abortion. Our findings are in line with previous research that shows that the Latinx community is experiencing a religious diversification (Ellison et al., 2005; Reyes-Barriénte, 2019). Interestingly, some participants perpetuated the idea that all Latinx people are Catholic and anti-abortion. For instance, a participant mentioned, “I think there are several reasons why it might be difficult [to have an abortion]. I am not Catholic and in fact my family did not grow up in that ideology, but I think that that religion has a very strict ideology towards abortion and there is not—that is not even an option for most women.” At the same time, some acknowledged that their views have changed and that the Latinx community is not homogenous.

Our findings are also in line with research that shows that the relationship between religious beliefs and abortion attitudes is impacted by other factors such as the surrounding culture, personal experiences, and family relations (Adamczyk & Valdimarsdóttir, 2018; Bruce, 2020). In other words, there is often not a straightforward or deterministic relationship between religion and abortion beliefs.

While religion informs participants’ attitudes toward abortion, some participants’ views on abortion are nuanced, complex, and sometimes contradictory. More research is needed to examine how communities largely influenced by religious beliefs and norms (e.g., Latinx community) conceptualize abortion and reconcile their religious beliefs with their abortion attitudes.

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## Conference Update with New Dates for 2022

By Darby Steiger, Conference Chair

Hey QUALPOR! It's time to think back on all the great work you've done over this past year and [submit abstracts](#) for the 77<sup>th</sup> Annual AAPOR conference! We are seeking abstracts for a variety of [submission types](#) - Papers, Methodological Briefs, Posters, Panels, and Roundtables. Abstract submissions will be accepted through Friday, November 5, 2021, at 11:59 PM EDT.

The theme of this year's AAPOR conference is "Come Together: Advancing Inclusion and Equity Through Data Collection, Measurement, and Community." We remain optimistic that we can "come together" in Chicago in May and celebrate being reunited in person as an AAPOR community. The conference theme encourages us to showcase how our measurement and research is being refined, repurposed, reimagined, and redesigned to explore issues of justice, diversity, inclusion, and equity among historically underrepresented and underserved populations. As always, we also welcome submissions on a broad range of topics across public opinion, survey research methods, qualitative methods, and social science research related to the 2022 [conference tracks](#).

Due to the possibility that COVID-19 may still be active in May, we have made the decision to shorten and shift the days of the conference in order to reduce the time that attendees need to be away from home. While the conference traditionally takes place from Thursday afternoon to Sunday morning, **the 2022 conference will begin at approximately noon CDT on Wednesday, May 11, and conclude after the banquet and awards ceremony on Friday night, May 13.**

Please know that we are carefully and continuously monitoring the public health situation in Chicago and around the country to ensure that it will be safe to hold an in-person conference. If we are able to meet in-person, we will implement a number of public health measures to make sure we all stay healthy. For example, we are likely to require that all

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attendees are vaccinated; we may also have masking requirements and collect proof of negative COVID tests upon arrival, among other measures. For those who are unable to travel to Chicago, we will be creating a digital AAPOR-77<sup>th</sup> library with slides, video recordings, and any other supplemental materials for papers that are presented at the conference.

In the meantime, during the abstract submission process, you will be asked about your willingness to present in-person in Chicago, along with your willingness to present virtually, in the event that the conference needs to be moved to a virtual format. Thanks in advance for your flexibility as we make this tough decision!

Whether we come together IRL (in real life) or URL (online), we are standing by, ready to receive abstracts from QUALPOR members about the research you and your colleagues have been conducting. Please submit your abstracts by November 5 and please also consider signing up to be an abstract reviewer when the request comes out in the next few weeks!

## New Member Corner

QUALPOR membership continues to grow and currently has 106 members. A few of the newest members introduce themselves here:

### **Patricia Goerman – Language and Cross-Cultural Research Group, Center for Behavioral Science Methods, U.S. Census Bureau**



My name is Patricia Goerman and I lead the Language and Cross-Cultural Research Group in the Center for Behavioral Science Methods at the U.S. Census Bureau. I have 17 years of experience in the development and pretesting of multilingual survey instruments at the Census Bureau, with a focus on Spanish-language materials. My research interests include questionnaire design and translation, cross-cultural issues in surveys, inclusion of respondent voices in questionnaire development through pretesting and interviewer doorstep messages. I have a Ph.D. in Sociology from the University of Virginia and that is where my love of qualitative research first developed. My dissertation was an in-depth interviewing project where I spoke with immigrants from Spanish-speaking countries to learn about their lives and the trend of immigrants branching out to a new receiving area in the U.S. I'm very happy to have joined QUALPOR and I look forward to learning more about the exciting work being done by qualitative researchers in the group. I have co-chaired the AAPOR Cross-Cultural and Multilingual Research Affinity Group since 2016 and we would love to have QUALPOR members who are interested in those topics join that affinity group as well. I'll be serving as President of DC-AAPOR in 2022 and I have been a member of the Comparative Survey Design and Implementation (CSDI) executive committee since 2017.

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**Kathryn LaRoche - Postdoctoral Research Fellow, Indiana University, Bloomington**

I am a public health social scientist and applied anthropologist who uses qualitative methods to carry out action- and intervention-oriented research related to health policy, health service delivery, and health equity. My topical areas of expertise include sexual and reproductive health, abortion, contraception, and pregnancy, and I am involved in projects in the United States, Canada, and Australia. I am currently a Postdoctoral Research Fellow in the Department of Applied Health Science at Indiana University, Bloomington where I am contributing to a mixed-methods study developing and assessing measures to understand better the attitudes of US adults toward complex social issues. I am excited about being a member of QUALPOR! I joined to learn more about how qualitative methods can be used within public opinion research and to network with other qualitative methodologists.



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**Annie MacFadyen - Associate Service Fellow, National Center for Health Statistics**

I joined the National Center for Health Statistics (NCHS) as a public health analyst in 2019. I contribute to question evaluation projects through cognitive interviewing, data analysis, and report writing. My research interests include cross-cultural perceptions and patterns of behavior and how question sensitivity affects survey response. My background is in cultural anthropology and my prior work focused on rural livelihood change. I recently joined AAPOR in 2020, and I am happy to become part of QUALPOR this year in order to learn more about ongoing applied qualitative work within AAPOR and to share ideas and experiences.

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**Melissa Dunn Silesky - Senior Research Manager, Public Good Projects**

I recently started as the Senior Research Manager at Public Good Projects (PGP), a public health communication nonprofit. I currently lead evaluations with qualitative components on COVID-19 vaccination uptake, opioid use stigma reduction, and the role of influencers in digital health campaigns. My previous qualitative projects focused on understanding the motivations of cancer survivors to participate in a physical activity program, and understanding the challenges housing authority directors face in implementing smoke-free rules. I earned my Masters in Public Health with a focus in Public Health Research Methods from Columbia University.



I'm passionate about qualitative research because of its capacity to provide context and draw out stories that even the most excellent survey questions cannot capture. I joined QUALPOR because its offerings (AAPOR conference sessions, webinars, etc.) teach techniques that improve surveys and enrich results, spotlighting the intersection of survey design and storytelling.

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**Zachary Smith - Behavioral Scientist, Collaborating Center for Questionnaire Design and Evaluation Research (CCQDER), National Center for Health Statistics (NCHS)**

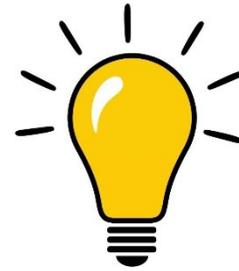
I am a Behavioral Scientist at the Collaborating Center for Questionnaire Design and Evaluation Research at the National Center for Health Statistics. In my work, I conduct in-depth cognitive interviews on a variety of topics, contribute to and author analyses of questionnaires, and conduct methodological research. In particular, I am interested in evaluating qualitative data quality and integrating reflexivity into assessing the data quality of cognitive interviewing projects. I joined QUALPOR because, as a qualitative researcher by training, meeting and hearing from other like-minded researchers was and is essential to me as I orient myself in our quantitatively-driven field.

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## Webinars & Conferences

### Webinars

- **QualLab Lunches** from The Ohio State University
- Free webinar **Introduction to Grounded Theory Data Analysis with Delve**, October 6<sup>th</sup>.
- **Atlas.ti for Scoping Reviews**, CAQDAS Networking Project, University of Surrey, October 13<sup>th</sup>.
- **Graduate students' modes of engagement in CAQDAS: Findings and illustration of thematic analysis in ATLAS.ti**, CAQDAS Networking Project, University of Surrey, December 8<sup>th</sup>.



### Conferences

- **77<sup>th</sup> Annual AAPOR Conference**, Chicago, IL, May 11-13, 2022 – Call for submissions (Deadline: November 5<sup>th</sup>)
  - **TQR 13th Annual Conference** – Accepting submissions on a case-by-case basis
  - **European Congress Qualitative Inquiry 2022** – Call for submissions (Deadline: October 11<sup>th</sup>)
  - **17<sup>th</sup> International Conference on Interdisciplinary Social Sciences**, Athens, Greece, July 21-23, 2022 – Call for submissions
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