

## Editorial

This issue of *mda* takes a special place in the hearts of the *mda* editorial team. The reason is that, in addition to three fine research reports by Melanie Revilla (RECSM – Universitat Pompeu Fabra, Spain), Uta Landrock (University of Kaiserslautern, Germany), and Taylor Lewis (U.S. Office of Personnel Management, United States), we were delighted to receive and ultimately accept a review article by two most distinguished survey methodologists: Eleanor Singer and Mick P. Couper (Survey Research Center, Institute for Social Research, University of Michigan, United States).

It is with even greater sadness then that we learned that Eleanor Singer died aged 87 on 3<sup>rd</sup> June 2017. Eleanor was a highly respected researcher, who inspired generations of survey methodologists in the U.S., Europe, and worldwide.

The connecting theme of her research was the validity of measurements – that is, whether issues such as privacy and confidentiality, informed consent procedures, or incentives have an effect on survey participation, bias, and the accuracy of survey response data. Her studies adapted to technological advances in survey settings over the years, and explored the implications of face-to-face, mail, phone, and online surveys.

ISR Director David Lam: “Eleanor was a major figure in the field of survey methodology and she will be greatly missed by all who knew her. We are fortunate that she spent the last decades of her illustrious career at ISR, where she made major contributions to research, training, and the intellectual life of the Institute.”

Bob Groves: “Eleanor was one of those productive scientists who was also an incredible magnet for collaboration. She ended up collaborating with half of the people in the building, was known as a wonderful mentor, and an exquisite writer. Whenever I would get back articles I submitted to her that she had rewritten, I realized she made my pieces better. As a collaborator you would discover that again and again.”

Michael Traugott: “Eleanor was editor of *Public Opinion Quarterly* at a time when survey research and public opinion research became established in the university setting. By her selection of content and manuscripts, she – in a very important but subtle way – promoted and encouraged the study of academic survey methods as well as the current state of knowledge that is very important to survey researchers.”

Eleanor Singer was born in Vienna, Austria, in 1930. When she was 8 years old, her family fled the rise of Nazi Germany in Europe and settled in Astoria, New York. She completed a B.A. in English at Queens College in 1951, where she met her late husband Alan Singer. In her early career, Singer worked as a book editor

at various publishing houses, including Teachers College Press, and increasingly specialized in books about social science.

During this time, survey research, public opinion, and polling began to grow as a field of study in the United States. Singer developed an interest in sociology – in particular surveys and survey research – and decided to pursue graduate school at Columbia University in 1959. She earned a Ph.D. in Sociology in 1966.

During the course of her studies, she met and worked with illustrious mentors including Paul Lazarsfeld and Robert Merton, and her dissertation sponsor Herbert H. Hyman, who introduced Singer to public opinion research and survey methodology. She went on to conduct research at Columbia University and University of Chicago, and worked as a social science analyst at the U.S. Bureau of the Census.

In her distinguished career she received numerous appointments and distinctions, including the Monroe G. Sirken Award in Interdisciplinary Survey Methods Research for “significant contributions in our understanding of survey participation, sources of nonresponse bias, and factors affecting survey responses; for pioneering research on the use and effects of incentives; and for leadership in developing awareness and understanding of ethical issues in survey research.”

I had the honor to meet Eleanor and discuss research with her during a research visit at SRC in June 2013. I was impressed by her inquisitive mind, passion for knowledge and research, humbleness and kindness. She will be sorely missed by colleagues, friends and family.

I borrowed liberally from a more detailed obituary on the ISR website:  
<http://home.isr.umich.edu/releases/survey-researcher-eleanor-singer-dies>

*Annelies G. Blom*  
*Editor-in-Chief*