



# Introducing the International Disaster Archive for Narratives, Oral History, and Folklore



Amber Wutich<sup>1</sup>, Margaret V. du Bray<sup>2</sup>, Patrick Thomson<sup>1</sup>, Arif Chowdhury<sup>1</sup>, M. Jobayer Hossain<sup>1</sup>, Melissa Beresford<sup>3</sup>

<sup>1</sup>Arizona State University; <sup>2</sup>University of Northern Colorado; <sup>3</sup>San José State University

## ABSTRACT

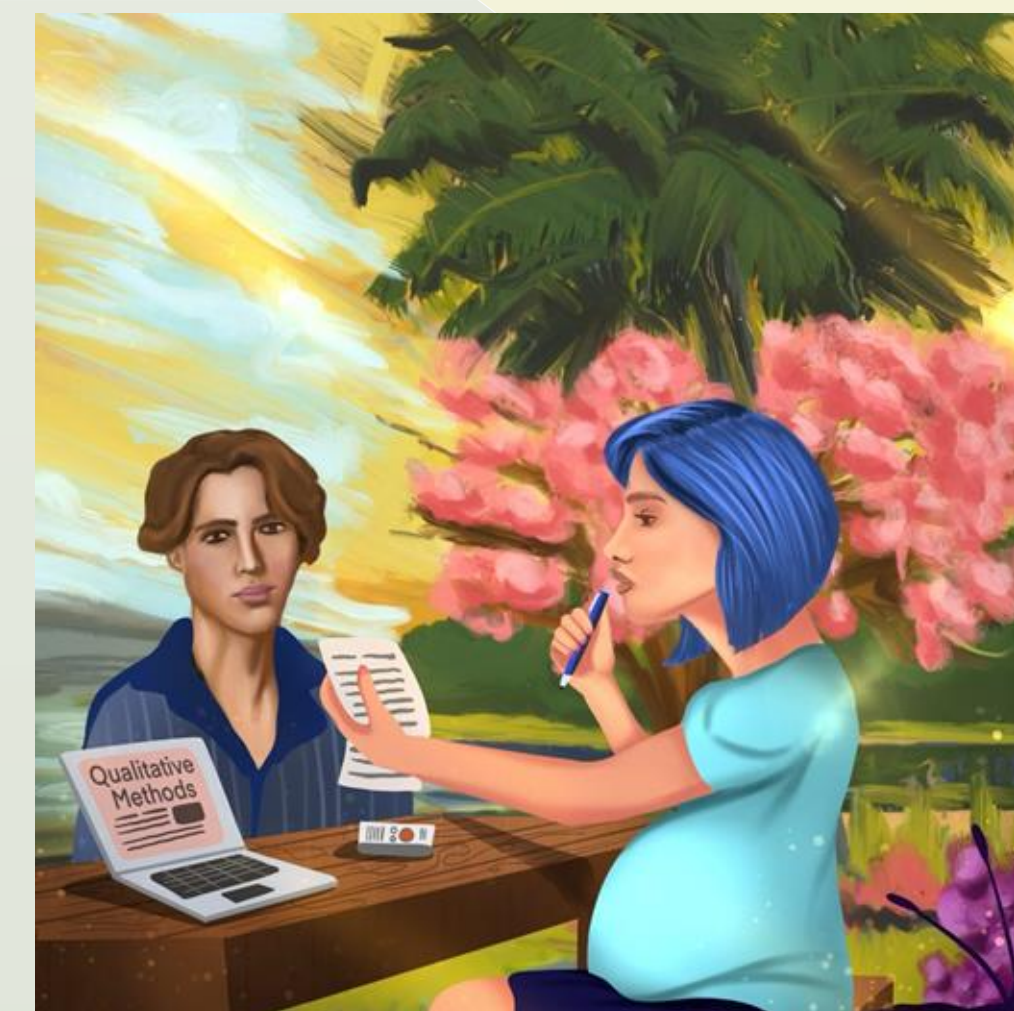
While there are multiple disaster archives for singular events, including Hurricane Katrina and Hurricane Harvey, a large-scale repository of oral histories and narratives that spans disasters has not yet been organized. Our team has begun to elicit and organize narratives and oral histories from disasters across the world to develop a cross-cultural disaster archive. In this poster, we focus on describing the development of the archive, from generating an interview protocol, to testing the protocol and data analysis strategies. We also discuss the different sampling strategies that will be used to populate the archive. As we work toward a public release, we envision an archive of disaster narratives provides the opportunity for researchers to engage with oral histories and narratives of these events.

## BACKGROUND

- Existing disaster archives for singular events, including Hurricane Katrina and Hurricane Harvey
- A large-scale repository of oral histories and narratives that spans disasters is needed for cross-cultural research and public understanding
- Research methods training for undergraduate and Master's students
- Research Question 1:** How do individuals describe and make sense of disasters they have experienced?
- Research Question 2:** How do disasters affect people's lives, livelihoods, health, and communities in both the short and long term?
- Research Question 3:** How do individuals and communities recover, rebuild, and remember disasters?

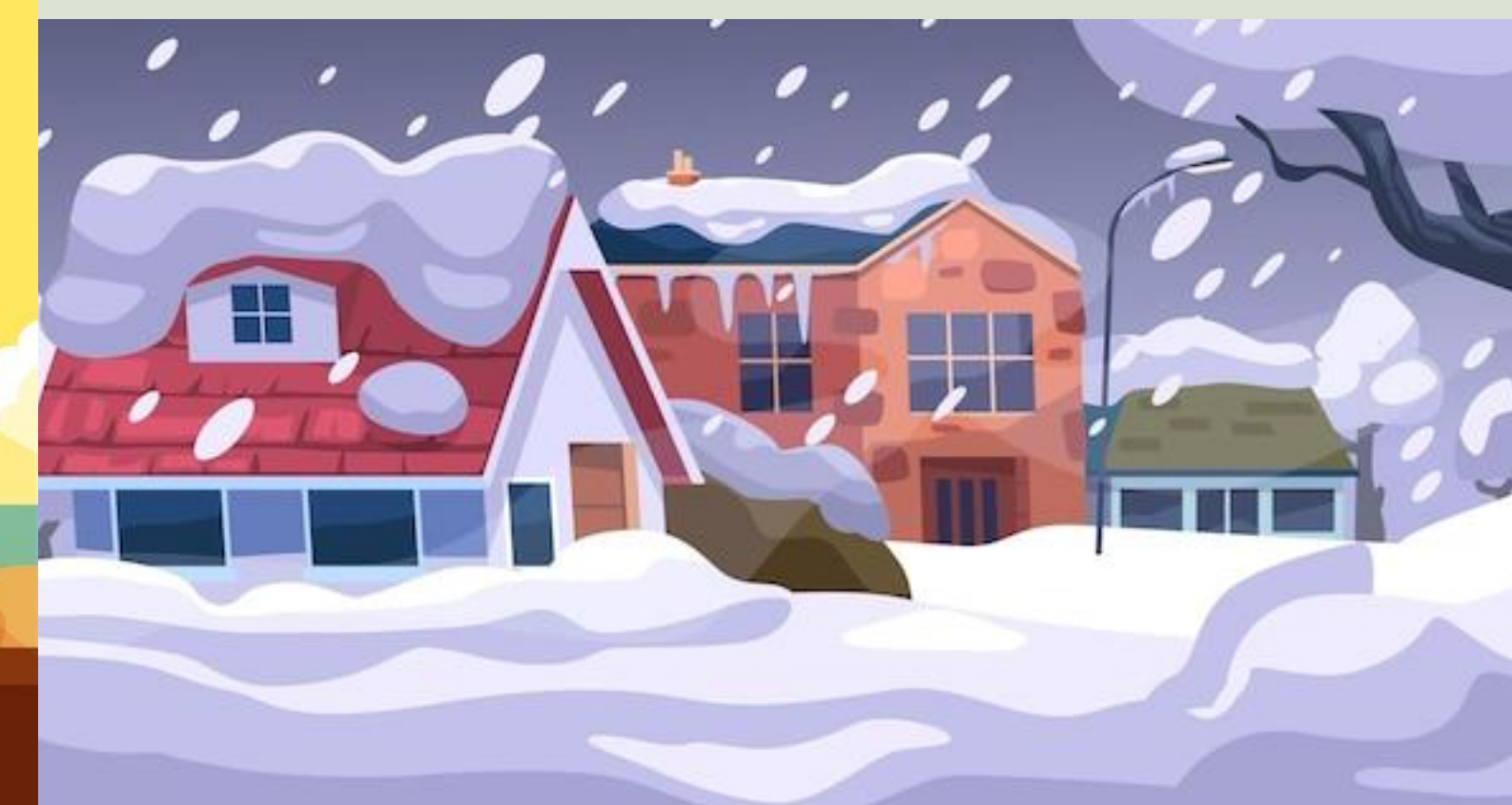
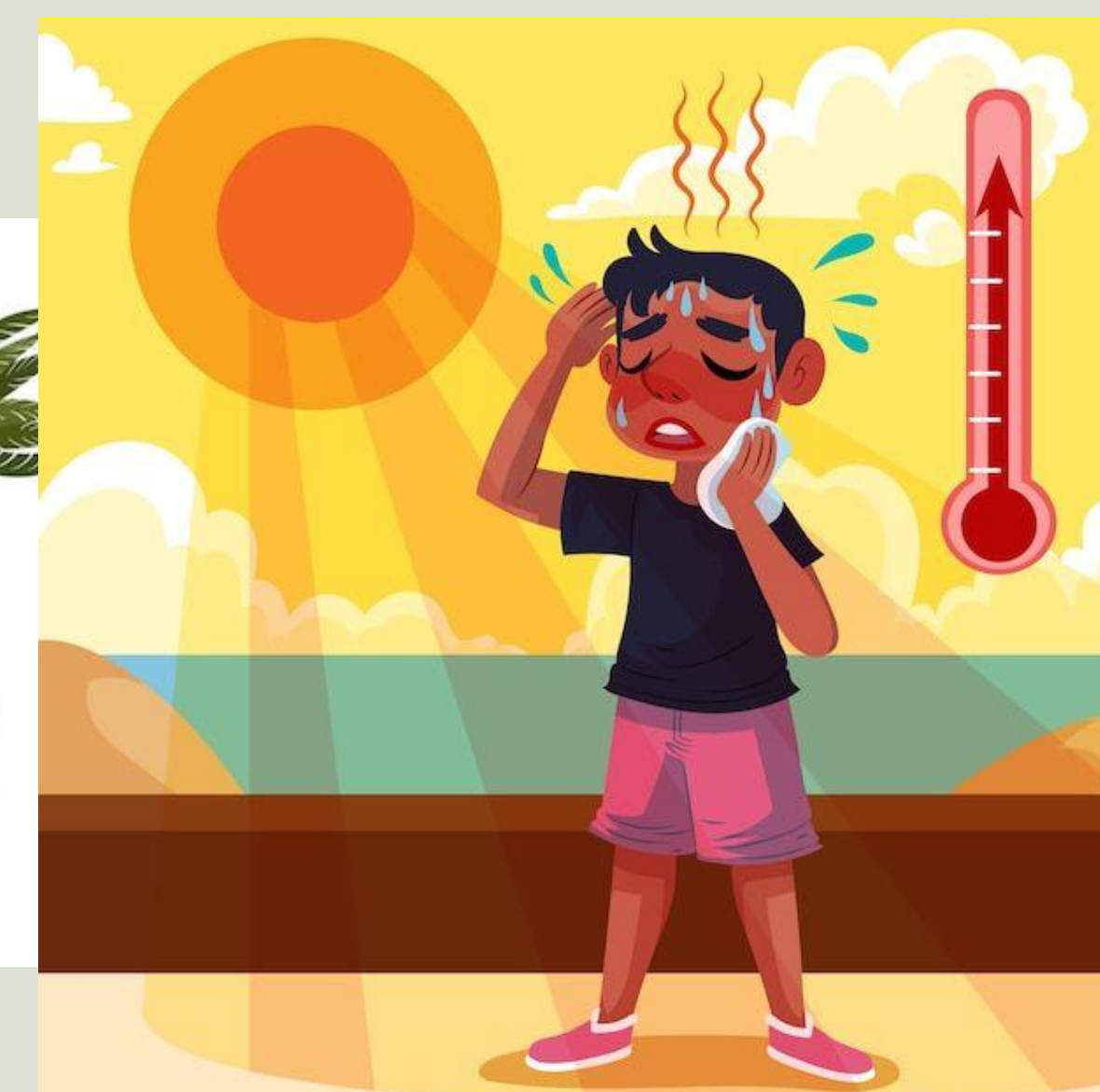
## METHODS

- Maximum variation sampling vs. convenience sampling
- Semi-structured interview protocol (n = 16)
- Participants describe a disaster they experienced, how it affected their lives and communities, and how recovery and change unfolded following the event
- Eliciting detailed personal accounts of disaster events, community responses, recovery processes, and the meanings people assign to these experiences over time
- Student interviewers tasked with initial comparative analysis



## RESULTS

- Respondents: 4 men, 12 women
- Disasters represented:
  - Blizzard (n = 5)
  - Hurricane (n = 3)
  - Tornado (n = 3)
  - Monsoon/Rainstorm flooding (n = 3)
  - Extreme heat (n = 2)
- Most interviewers used convenience sampling rather than maximum variance sampling
- Student interviewers reflected on comparisons between different disaster occurrences, different respondents



## PRELIMINARY INSIGHTS

- Undergraduate interviewers noted that socioeconomic status and insurance access influenced outcomes for respondents
- Blame for intensity of experiences attributed to local politicians
- Humor as a coping mechanism – respondents turned to social media to make jokes understood by the community
- More exposure leads to greater adaptation
- Duration of disaster experience is more difficult to deal with than "extremity" of disaster

## APPLICATIONS

- Documenting how people understand and narrate life before, during, and after a disaster
- Disaster Archive: research and teaching resource that preserves firsthand disaster experiences.
- Research methods and professional development opportunity for students across three universities

## ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

We thank the participants of our first round of interviews for contributing their time and knowledge.

## CONTACT

AMBER WUTICH: [amber.wutich@asu.edu](mailto:amber.wutich@asu.edu)  
 MARGARET du BRAY: [meg.dubray@unco.edu](mailto:meg.dubray@unco.edu)  
 PATRICK THOMSON: [pgthomson@asu.edu](mailto:pgthomson@asu.edu)  
 ARIF CHOWDHURY: [mchowd31@asu.edu](mailto:mchowd31@asu.edu)  
 M. JOBAYER HOSSAIN: [mhossa31@asu.edu](mailto:mhossa31@asu.edu)  
 MELISSA BERESFORD: [melissa.beresford@sjsu.edu](mailto:melissa.beresford@sjsu.edu)