

NEWSLETTER

Second Quarter

2004

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AAPOR/WAPOR in Phoenix

By Dietram A. Scheufele
 2004 Conference Chair

In May AAPOR and WAPOR held their annual joint meeting in Phoenix Arizona. And for many WAPOR members from Europe and Asia that meant a long trip with multiple legs. Regardless, WAPOR 2004 had excellent turnout from many countries around the globe. And—as a result—we had a very internationally-oriented program.

In fact, the program opened on Wednesday with a session on “Public opinion around the globe” and panelists from China, New Zealand, and the USA. What followed were two days of sessions on “Social-psychological processes in opinion formation and measurement,” “Public opinion, media, and social capital,” “Public opinion over time and across cultures,” and many other topics related to measurement and theorizing about international public opinion.

Most prominently, WAPOR organized two panels this year that directly addressed some of the issues related to international opinion research that were made salient by the recent polling efforts in Baghdad and Iraq and the prosecution of pollsters in countries like Iran.

The first panel was devoted to the “Challenges of international polling.” Mary McIntosh from Princeton Survey Research Associates International (USA), David B. Lambert from TNS Intersearch (USA), Allan McCutcheon of the University of Nebraska-Lincoln (USA), and Robert Manchin from Gallup Europe (Belgium) discussed and sometimes disagreed about the problems related to quality control in international and comparative survey research.

The second panel—organized by Tom W. Smith—was devoted to the “Freedom to publish polls.” Frits Spangenberg of the Motivaction Group (The Netherlands) presented recently updated findings from the “Freedom to publish opinion polls” study, authored by him and council members of ESOMAR and WAPOR. Wolfgang Donsbach of the University of Dresden (Germany), Tom Smith of NORC and the University of Chicago (USA), and Kathy Frankovic of CBS Polling (USA) added findings from various other countries related to media coverage of polls.

Table of Contents

Phoenix.....	1
President’s Letter... 2	
Dinerman Award.....4	
Cadenabbia Recap.....6	
Conferences	
Pamplona.....7	
Cannes.....11	
IJPOR Report.....9	
Worcester Prize.....10	
Insert.....India 2004	
Insert.....Pamplona	

UPCOMING ANNUAL CONFERENCE:
SEPTEMBER 15-17, 2005
CANNES, FRANCE

(continued on page 3)

Letter from the President



*WAPOR President
Kathleen Frankovic*

In May and June of this year, WAPOR held two very successful conferences in two very different locations. One was in the desert of the American Southwest, with its rugged beauty and sunny dry heat. The other was in the lush but rocky environment of the magnificent Italian lakes. At both conferences, we were reminded of the international nature of our work, and the international successes, but we were also reminded that there are still many problems for public opinion polling in much of the world.

At our May Phoenix meeting, held in conjunction with AAPOR, more than 100 public opinion researchers discussed topics ranging from pulling in Iraq and the freedom to conduct polls throughout the world to the theory of public opinion formation. We awarded the Dinerman prize to Sydney Verba, for his work in helping us understand how people view governments and culture throughout the world. (A copy of that citation is on page four of this newsletter) Our Phoenix conference chairman Dietram Scheufele made sure that those of us who had to come from long distances (and many of the participants from Europe, South Asia, and the Pacific rim traveled nearly 24 hours to reach Arizona) were comfortable — even in the hot Arizona sun.

In June, Cadenabbia and the Villa la Collina was host once again to the thematic seminar promoting quality in survey research. This was WAPOR's fifth visit to the Villa la Collina, and this time Michael Traugott and Thomas Petersen organized and chaired the seminar. One of the striking aspects of the Cadenabbia meeting was the extremely high level of participation — the two-dozen attendees debated, shared experiences and cooperated to try to promote high quality research and high quality understanding of that research by journalists.

American uneasiness about the war in Iraq, and concerns about the prospects for another terrorist attack are fueling an election campaign that could very well be among the most negative in American history.

But what I learned from the meeting is how much further we have to go. In many places, the basic understanding of public opinion research by members of the news media is very low. Things that are so obvious to us who work and live in places where public opinion research has been around for nearly a century may not be obvious to others. Participants at the Cadenabbia heard complaints about journalists mistaking surveys conducted only in cities as representative surveys of an entire country. Surveys in India that have

correctly predicted the vote share in the recent election were castigated because the vote share did not directly translate into the number of parliamentary seats won and lost.

Some of these questions will be addressed again in November — at the Pamplona seminar that will focus on polls in the media and politics. That conference will be held at the end of November, after the US presidential election. Even in the United States, where polling has a long and distinguished history, we have questions and doubts about whether some journalists understand polls. The national Council on public polls has attempted to educate journalists about the difference between the good polls, and poor ones, but sometimes that effort is not clearly successful.

This is the period in the United States where presidential politics appear the most unsettled — each party will host a convention, and each party sequentially will receive maximum news coverage, but only for a few days. Historically, the general election campaign begins on Labor Day — this year Labor Day is only four days after George W. Bush accepts his party's nomination in New York. American uneasiness about the war in Iraq, and concerns about the prospects for another terrorist attack are fueling an election campaign that could very well be among the most negative in American history. The short, eight-week general election campaign will be one where polls will be reported on an almost daily basis. That means we are likely to see differences between polls highlighted in a way that may not reflect well on the public's assessment of opinion polls.

(continued on page 3)

(Phoenix continued from page 1)

As always, WAPOR members also met on Wednesday night for our annual awards banquet. This year's **Helen Dinerman Award** went to **Sidney Verba**, Carl H. Pforzheimer University Professor of Government at Harvard University (USA). The Helen Dinerman Award is presented annually in memory of Helen Dinerman's scientific achievements over three decades of public opinion research. Given since 1981, it honors particularly significant contributions to survey research methodology.

The **Worcester Prize** for the year's outstanding paper contributed to the International Journal of Public Opinion Research was presented by Bob Worcester himself to **Yariv Tsfati** of the University of Haifa (Israel) for his article "Media skepticism and climate of opinion perception" (International Journal of Public Opinion Research, 15(1), 65-82). Yariv Tsfati was unable to accept the award himself and Kate Kenski of the University of Pennsylvania accepted the award on his behalf.

The **Naomi C. Turner Prize** for the best paper presented by a graduate student at the annual conference went to **Yufen Chen** of Cornell University (USA) for her work on media framing and public opinion.

Of course, organizing this conference would have been virtually impossible without the help of so many people, including our President Kathy Frankovic, the 2004 conference committee (Allan McCutcheon, Patricia Moy, and Michael Traugott), the AAPOR conference chair Rob Daves, and of course Cindy Chatt and Renae Reis from the WAPOR secretariat.

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The Newest Member of the WAPOR Family

As those of you who attended the Annual Conference in Phoenix this year may know, Renae Reis (Office Manager/Newsletter Editor, etc.) was expecting a baby and was unable to make it to the Conference. We are pleased to announce the arrival of Max Joseph Reis on May 14, 2004 at 5:11 am. He weighed in at 8 pounds, 5 ounces (3.75 kg) and 21 1/4 inches (54 cm). Renae, Max and proud dad Ryan are all doing well and adjusting to life as a family.

"Thanks to all of the members who have sent their best wishes. It was so nice to receive your emails before and after the birth. We kept them for Max's baby book!"

--Renae & Ryan

(President's Letter continued from page 2)

But concerns about poll methodology and accusations of polling bias are common — so common that WAPOR is not the only organization worried about the media's use of polls. ESOMAR, the European Society of Opinion and Marketing Research, has established a polling committee to review the WAPOR/ESOMAR Guide to Opinion Polls and other questions surrounding polling, especially pre-election polling. Two WAPOR Council members, Liaison Committee head Nick Moon and myself, will be members of that committee. I hope that WAPOR members will take this opportunity to contribute to the discussion. The first committee meeting takes place in mid-September. Members should send their comments on the existing Guide to me. You can link to the Guide from the WAPOR web site.

It's important to remember that our best work may not appear to be our best work if it's not reported properly. So as opinion researchers, we need to form better partnerships with those people who report our work. The more journalists understand about opinion research, the better the public will understand, too. And that should leave to higher quality research and greater freedom for public opinion polls — important WAPOR goals.

Elections

Annual elections are coming soon! Nominations will be sought this year for Vice-President/President-Elect and Standards Committee Chair. Please watch your email for more information!



Renae and Max

2004 Dinerman Award Winner Dr. Sidney Verba

The name Sidney Verba is synonymous with excellence in scholarship on public opinion. Sidney Verba's work, much like the man himself, is comprehensive, thoughtful, imaginative, illuminating and rigorous. One need only scan the titles of the books and articles he has authored, co-authored and edited, and it will not take long to say to oneself, "I've read that," "Yes, that is a fine piece of work," or "This is the best piece on this subject."

Dr. Verba, known to many of us as Sid, is an exceptionally trained political scientist, whose appreciation for public opinion – what it is, how it is shaped, how it moves, and why – drives much of his work. One could teach a class on public opinion assigning only Verba's works. Such a class would be deep, insightful and remarkably detailed. Books including *Small Groups and Political Behavior*, *Political Participation in America*, *Political Culture and Political Development*, and *Vietnam and the Silent Majority* are but a few of his earlier works that are references for how to think critically and broadly about public opinion.

Sid Verba deserves recognition by WAPOR for his theoretical and methodological breadth and depth. A review of his scholarship reveals an admirable ability to blend the qualitative with the quantitative. For him, these worlds do not compete, but are the yin and yang of public opinion research. His groundbreaking works seek to explain important puzzles, the most plaguing of which concerns political participation. To quote Verba in his 1995 American

Political Science Association Presidential Address, "The problem of organizing and making sense out of the cacophony of voices is a problem for the polity and a problem for the political scientist."

Professor Verba has spent a lifetime tackling that puzzle, employing theoretical ingenuity and methodological pluralism, in the hope that we can make better sense of our voices.

Take, for example, his fine collaboration with Kay Lehman Schlozman and Nancy Burns, on gender and political participation. The authors ask an important question: why are women less politically active than men? Rather than seeking simple solutions, their work employs a variety of methodological tools. They tackle puzzles that cannot

"His groundbreaking works seek to explain important puzzles..."

be answered with a pithy phrase or a bold coefficient. The gender gap in political participation for example, concerns employment and the gender differences in workplace experiences. Only by through quantitative techniques, and appreciation for the qualitative subtleties of the workplace, could such a nuanced answer be attained.

Participation in America

Kammerer Prize of the American Political Science Association

The Changing American Voter

Woodrow Wilson Prize for best book in political science

Sid Verba holds the passionate belief that studying public opinion demands collaboration. The co-authors who have worked with him form a who's who of the leading scholars in the world. Lucian Pye, Ken Prewitt, Gary King, Robert O. Keohane, Norman Nie, Gabriel Almond, Henry Brady, Kay Schlozman, Nancy Burns are but a few. To social scientists worldwide, this list is a wish list of sorts, for these scholars are not only leaders in their respective fields, but they are leaders in various fields – American politics, methodology, and comparative politics.

When public opinion scholarship all too often provides data without meaning, Sid Verba's work sets the high standard of producing methodologically sound data, and insightful hypotheses and theories underlying those data. Not surprisingly, his colleagues appreciate the excellence surrounding Verba's public opinion scholarship. *Participation in America* won the Kammerer Prize of the American Political Science Association for the best book on American politics, and *The Changing American Voter* won its Woodrow Wilson Prize for the best book in political science.

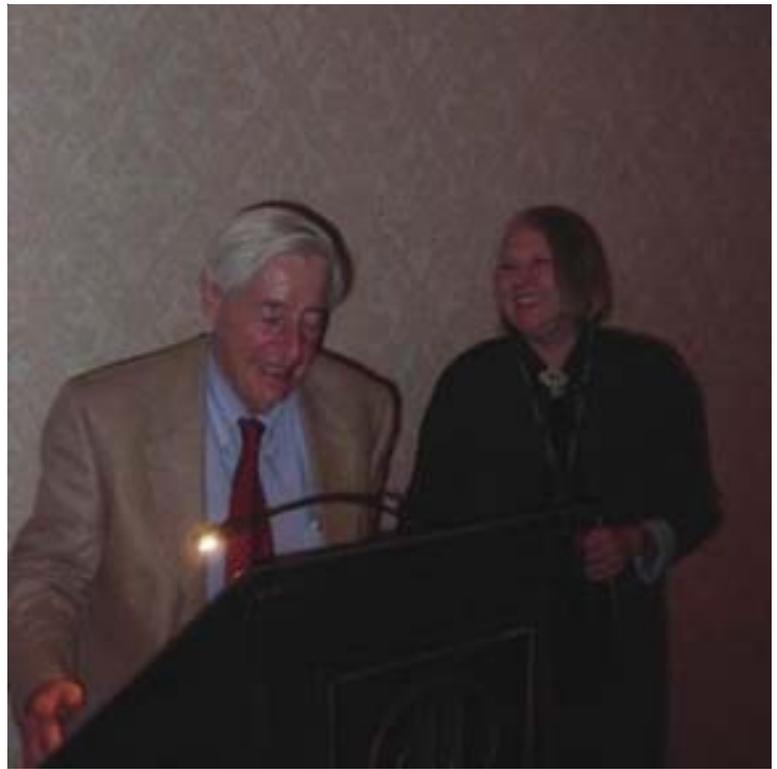
While Dr. Verba's area of expertise is the United States, his

"Dr. Verba is a tremendously generous scholar. Ask the leading social scientists what they think of Sid Verba, and you will only hear accolades. He finds the time to meet, provides the constructive criticism needed to improve one's work, mentors graduate students, provides counsel to colleagues, and does so while retaining a sense of humor, a love of learning and a devotion to improving the public opinion research, even as he continues to set the bar higher."

interest in democracy more generally, and in studying public opinion of democratic citizens throughout the world, serves as a model for us all. An early *Public Opinion Quarterly* article (1960), titled *Party Affiliation and International Opinions in Britain and France, 1947-1956*, reveals his interest in international public opinion research.

Finally, Dr. Verba is a tremendously generous scholar. Ask the leading social scientists what they think of Sid Verba, and you will only hear accolades. He finds the time to meet, provides the constructive criticism needed to improve one's work, mentors graduate students, provides counsel to colleagues, and does so while retaining a sense of humor, a love of learning and a devotion to improving the public opinion research, even as he continues to set the bar higher.

Dr. Sidney Verba, Carl H. Pforzheimer University Professor at Harvard University, Director of the Harvard Library, for your unparalleled scholarly accomplishments in the field of public opinion research, for your appreciation of collaborative research, for advancing future scholars, and for your generosity as a scholar and as an academic citizen, WAPOR is honored to bestow the 2004 Dinerman Award.



Dr. Verba accepting the Dinerman Award, presented by Kathy Frankovic, WAPOR President



Karin Zetterberg (Sweden), Robert Worcester (UK), Wolfgang Donsbach (Germany) and Allan McCutcheon (US) enjoy dinner together at the Phoenix Conference

More pictures from Phoenix to come...

Cadenabbia Another Success

The fifth WAPOR Thematic Seminar on Quality Criteria in Survey Research was held in the Villa La Colina in Cadenabbia, Italy on June 24 to 26. The session was co-chaired by Thomas Peteresen (Allensbach Institute) and Michael Traugott (University of Michigan), and there were 25 participants in all, from 11 countries and 5 continents, making it a truly international conference.

The program was organized into five sessions, beginning after the traditional opening reception and comments by Thomas Petersen. Three of the sessions were devoted to survey methodology. They program started with a session on sampling and representativeness, with papers on the problems of the Indian elections (Yashwant Deshmukh), cognitive assessments of data reliability in Polish public opinion about polls (Katarzyna Staszynska and Krzysztof Zagorski), and a proposed new measure of poll accuracy based on pre-election polls in the United States (Michael Traugott).



Maria Francesca Romano (Sant'Anna School of University Study, Italy), Brian Gosschalk (MORI, UK), Yasamin Miller (Cornell University, USA)



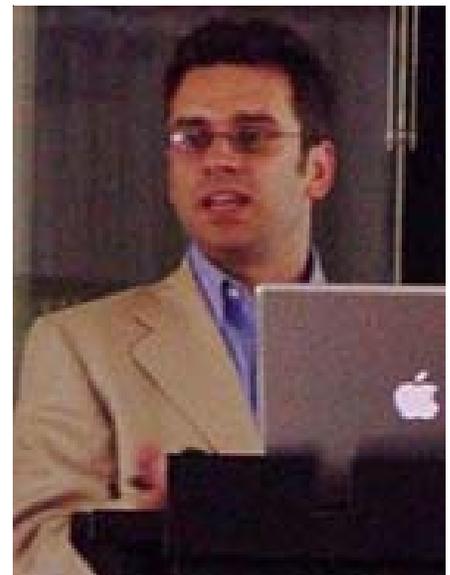
Katarzyna Staszynska (RESCON, Poland), Brian Gosschalk (MORI, UK), Krzysztof Zagorski (CBOS, Poland), Fiona Chew (Syracuse University, USA)

The final substantive session focused on measurement and analysis issues, including a paper on scaling from the Czech Republic (Hynek Jerabek), comparative concept-ualization and operationalization for health information technology use (Fiona Chew), and a reconceptualization of demographic analysis by Hans Zetterberg (Sweden).

In the final plenary session, Michael Traugott gave a brief presentation to organize a discussion of the way that polls are being covered in the United States and how this might affect public perceptions of the industry. The discussion ranged across the comparative similarities and dissimilarities in this pattern of coverage and attitudes, and it is likely to form a central theme for the sixth biennial conference in 2006.

--Mike Traugott, US

The second session focused on comparative survey methodology with a focus on the growth and implications of cell phone use for surveys. One paper focused on mobiles in the United States (Charlotte Steeh) while another did the same for Italy (Mario Callegaro, photo below). Joop Van Holsteyn presented on postal surveys in the Netherlands, and Thomas Roessing analyzed the quality of data on heavily accessed web site survey in German. A third session focused on the role of survey research in a democracy. Marta Lagos presented on the role of the dissemination of poll results in a traditional democracy like Chile, and Murray Goot reviewed the implications of “deliberation” in relation to possibility of less considered opinions in many polls.



Mario Callegaro (UNL Gallup Research Center, USA)

WAPOR REGIONAL CONFERENCE

“Elections, News Media and Public Opinion”

Pamplona, Spain

November 24-26, 2004

The first WAPOR regional conference in Pamplona was held in May 16-18, 1997. It was a successful meeting entitled “Communication and Democracy”, attracted 30 participants from nine countries: Argentina, Hong-Kong, Israel, Japan, Mexico, the Netherlands, the United Kingdom, the United States and Spain.

The second WAPOR regional conference took place in November 21-23, 2000. More than 60 participants came from Argentina, Armenia, Brazil, Chile, Denmark, Egypt, Mexico, the Netherlands, Peru, South Africa, Sweden, the United Kingdom, the United States, Uruguay, Venezuela and Spain.

There are many good reasons to attend the 2004 Pamplona regional conference: (i) despite being a regional conference it has traditionally attracted people from several countries, giving it a truly international perspective (this year we expect to have participants from Greece, Turkey and other new countries, such as Latin America); (ii) 2004 it is a very interesting year in which several elections have taken, or will take place (Spain, the United States, United Kingdom, Canada, all the countries of the European Union, etc.); (iii) taking part in the conference is an excellent occasion to join WAPOR (membership offers a number of benefits for those working in the field of public opinion); (iv) for the potential American participants the timing is good: it is a holiday period (a Thanksgiving dinner is planned in Pamplona).

Pamplona, Spain is the capital of the former kingdom of Navarra, and is easily accessible by plane or train. Participants can reach Pamplona via Madrid, taking one of several daily flights or a comfortable train ride, or Barcelona. Its proximity to San Sebastian, Bilbao (home of the Guggenheim Museum), the Basque Coast, and Biarritz in France, as well as its internationally renowned cuisine, make Pamplona an ideal setting for this conference. Ernest Hemingway was a frequent visitor to Pamplona, because he loved the popular feast in which the bulls run on the streets. In addition, the conference will be subsidized by the regional government, which means lower costs for seminar participants. Please see the following page for the preliminary program and page 13 for your registration form. You can also visit www.wapor.org for more information on everything from the seminar to the accommodations available during your stay in Spain. See the websites below for even more information on Pamplona and Spain!

<http://www.pamplona.net>

<http://spainforvisitors.com/sections/events2.htm>

<http://www.red2000.com/spain/pamplona/>

<http://www.idealspain.com/Pages/Places/Pamplona.htm>

Program Information

Please see our website at
www.wapor.org for program
developments



Seminar Preliminary Program

(depending on the number of attendants and of accepted papers some changes can take place)

The conference venue is the University of Navarra's central building. The comfortable and handsome Aula Magna has been booked for the opening of the event. The sessions will take place in smaller meeting rooms. There will be some sessions for Spanish speaking delegates, but in the opening session there will be simultaneous translation.

Wednesday, November 24th

19,45: Reception offered by the President of the regional government of Navarra (Palacio de Navarra)

20,30: Dinner in the Napardi's 13th century dining room (Napardi is the best known male gastronomic association in Pamplona; members of the association will cook for the conference attendants)

Thursday, November 25th (University of Navarra's central building)

8,30: Accreditation

9,15: Opening of the conference (central building, Aula Magna)

9,30-11,00: Plenary Session

11,00-11,30: Coffee break

11,30-13,00: Session/s

13,30: Lunch ("Faustino"; cafeteria-restaurant in the central building)

15,30-17,00: Session/s

17,00-17,15: Coffee break

17,15-18,45: Session/s

21,00: Thanksgiving dinner

Friday, November 26th (University of Navarra's central building)

9,00-10,30: Session/s

10,30-10,45: Coffee break

10,45-12,15: Session/s

12,45: (potentially: reception in the City Hall offered by the Lady Major)

13,45: Lunch

16,00-17,30: Session/s

17,30-18,00: Coffee break

18,00-18,30: Closing of the conference (central building, Aula Magna)

We are providing room for 24 papers at least. The number could be increased depending on the proposed papers and the judgement of the selection committee. The length of the presentations will be 15 to 20 minutes, depending on the final arrangements.

Saturday, November 27th Excursion (optional)

Report on the State of the IJPOR

There was good news reported at the meeting of the Editorial Board of the International Journal of Public Opinion Research (IJPOR) at the Annual Conference in Phoenix this past May. I was glad to then present the same news to the WAPOR members in attendance at the Annual Meeting regarding the state of the IJPOR. IJPOR's 14th Volume (can it really be 14 years since it started?) provides four chunky issues to the members and other subscribers and over \$27,000 to the WAPOR treasury under the profit sharing arrangement we have with Oxford University Press (OUP), publishers of IJPOR. Further, that OUP's forecast for this year, 2004, to be paid in 2005, is over \$40,000!

Under a new agreement with OUP, we now have some 235 institutional subscribers and another 883 (sic) institutions with online access. This access comes via a consortia deal through OUP from institutions which have chosen to add IJPOR to their list of publications available online. Additionally another 396 academic institutions in developing countries also get access, but don't pay for it, under the developing country scheme we agreed upon with OUP. This agreement was an attempt to get the Journal out to scholars and students living in Eastern Europe (149) and the rest of the world (247) in some 67 countries, making a total of 1,514 institutions in all, compared with just 237 just five years ago. Five years ago a total of just over 800 quarterly issues were sent out; this past year just over 2,000.

The most accessed papers in the 12 months from April 2003 to March 2004 were the Rothman, Lipset, Nevitte article on Enrollment Diversity, with 776 requests for downloading; Dobrzynska, Blais and Nadeau on the 1997 Canadian election (watch for their article on the recent election there which we hope they'll produce shortly!) with 457 requests; and Katz on Lazarsfeld's Map of Media Effects in Issue 3 with 385 downloads. Others in order ranking were Borgers et al (342), Dutwin (323), Scheufle and Moy (320), Jynek & Abek (309), Goyder (305), Tsfati, the Worcester Prize winner for the best article in the year (296) and in 10th place, Scheufele, Nisbet and Brossrd (290). In all, there were 22,973 full article downloads during the year (2003), up from 8,818 the previous year and 3,754 the first year the programme began.

"OUP's forecast for this year, 2004...is over \$40,000."

Finally, and of key interest for those who are still reading (and are therefore duly rewarded), OUP has offered, and the Board quickly agreed to, a 25% Authors' discount on OUP books and journals, and a 20% discount available to all WAPOR Members!

I'm sure I speak for all the Founding Editors, Elisabeth, Marty, and myself, with Wolfgang as Managing Editor originally and key to the success of the Journal, in thanking the Authors first and foremost, the Editorial Board, the Council and all members and other subscribers for making the Journal the success it has become.

Robert M. Worcester

WAPORnet

As a member of WAPOR, you have access to the listserv, which you can use to keep in touch with other WAPOR members. This is a feature of your membership that we urge you to take advantage of. You may have information on upcoming events or on current happenings in public opinion research that you would like to share with the other members. The WAPOR listserv is the easiest and fastest way to do just that!

We have recently switched the listserv over to the University of Nebraska-Lincoln's server and have successfully resolved the issues we were dealing with earlier this year. You should have received an email with the new instructions regarding this. As a reminder, the new listserv address you can use is wapor@unl.edu. You may wish to put this in your address book for ease of use. You must have a current email address and membership on file with the WAPOR office in order to use this feature. Please let us know if you have any questions.

Worcester Prize Commendation
WAPOR Annual Conference
Phoenix, 12 May 2004

I am pleased to announce that the winner of the Worcester Prize for the best article in the International Journal of Public Opinion Research for the year 2003 is awarded to Yarif Tsfati for his article entitled "Media Skepticism and Climate of Opinion Perception". Tsfati, now a lecturer at the Department of Communication at the University of Haifa, Israel, is also a new (2002) PhD at the University of Pennsylvania. He wrote this paper as part of his work at Penn, and was with us in Rome where he presented an earlier version for which he received the Naomi C. Turner prize for the Best Graduate Student Paper. I found it an interesting and useful addition to a relatively under researched and much debated issue, the role of the media in shaping public opinion.

Dr Tsfati used an internet panel of c. 500 respondents to test how the media's reporting of the United States' Presidential horse race in 2000 was noticed, and the influences upon it. In August of 2000, George W. Bush was ahead in most polls by a significant margin, and this was widely reported. In late September, Al Gore had pulled ahead, and this too was widely reported.

It has been argued that people depend on the media for information about what society thinks. But they also are affected by their skepticism about whether or not they can trust the media to tell the truth.

There are some areas one could quibble about regarding Tsfati's paper, e.g., the use of the dreaded decimal point in reporting poll results, a no-no as far as this author is concerned, leading a personal crusade to curb the use of decimal points in poll reporting in the media, and certainly in the International Journal of Public Opinion Research! I don't like using unrepresentative internet self-selecting samples, but this is mitigated somewhat by it being a panel, and can measure changes in the panel's participants, even if this can only be projected with heavy health warnings, usually absent in media reports of such surveys.

Tsfati introduced a number of interesting variables, scales of news credibility, political ideology, political knowledge, news media exposure, political conversation and political involvement were all employed, and used as controlling factors when

running logistic regressions, as were the usual demographics.

Skepticism, as well as gender and political extremity, were significant predictors of answering the media answer to the perceived climate of opinion question. A quarter of the sample were identified as shifting with the media-reported mood of the nation. All the rest except one in twenty-five, 4%, seemingly missed the message that the country's mood had changed. The one in twenty-five got it backwards, thinking that Gore was ahead in August, and Bush in September.

His paper is a classic use of the techniques available to us to undertake such studies. It would be great if this paper's methodology could be used in other contests, in other countries, and brought together in a session at next year's WAPOR conference. We have the 2004 US election coming up in November, the British election next May, and many others during the next 16 months before our next Annual Conference. Any takers?

I am grateful for the contribution of the other editors for their input into the process of shortlisting and judging the articles in the 2003 volume which indeed offered a number of potential Worcester Prize winners, but in the end, the Award and its accompanying check, goes to Yarif Tsfati, an Israeli, who follows his fellow countryman and our colleague Elihu Katz, winner of the Worcester Prize several years ago.

To accept the Worcester Prize for the best article published in IJPOR in 2003 is Kate Kenski of the Annenberg School for Communications at the University of Pennsylvania, representing Dr Tsfati (see below).

--Robert M. Worcester, UK



COME WITH WAPOR TOURS TO THE PLAYGROUND OF THE RICH AND THE BEAUTIFUL

The 2005 WAPOR annual conference
is to be held in Cannes, France

A few years ago, Wolfgang Donsbach, the former president of WAPOR, warned: "If we don't watch out, WAPOR will become a travel agency for academics." This danger was probably never greater than it is today, and it is a thrilling danger indeed. Our latest challenge: The next WAPOR annual conference is to be held from September 15-17 in Cannes, France. It is hard to imagine a more distinguished location for a conference than this city on the Cote d'Azur, with its endless beaches, populated by the rich and the beautiful and many to whom both of these appellations apply, its picturesque town center and the bombastic turn-of-the-century spa architecture. The ships anchored in the bay look like cruise ships but are actually private yachts. Lucky individuals may even find a freshly cemented spot in the sidewalk near the building where the Cannes film festival is held each year, a prime opportunity to leave their own handprint for all eternity next to that of Catherine Deneuve (or at least nearby). In short: Cannes is *grand*.

This is the place where the next WAPOR annual conference is to be held, in a setting that meets WAPOR's customary high standards, but at an affordable price nevertheless. To make this possible, we shall have to do without a hotel with its own private beach and casino in the basement, of which there are certainly plenty in Cannes, but conference participants will have every comfort otherwise.

Oh, and by the way: The 2005 annual conference should also meet WAPOR's high standards when it comes to the conference program. As WAPOR members know, there are few conferences that are so informative, inspiring and, at the same time, cheerful and uncomplicated as the annual conferences and seminars organized by WAPOR. Be sure to look for more detailed information on the Cannes conference in the upcoming WAPOR Newsletter. Perhaps a few readers may already have an idea about the kind of paper they could present to help ensure that the 2005 WAPOR annual conference is not only a great touristic event, but also a first-rate intellectual experience.

<http://www.cannes.fr>



Announcements

2004 Nebraska Symposium on Survey Science

Exposures and Well-Being: Emerging Methodologies in Life-Events Research

October 21-23, 2004

Gallup University Riverfront Campus, Omaha,
Nebraska, USA

Co-sponsors

*The Gallup Research Center of the University of
Nebraska—Lincoln

*The Gallup Organization

Funding generously provided through the Othmer Founda-
tion

*The prospective and retrospective collection of life-events data has
become instrumental toward answering fundamental issues on the
human condition in the behavioral, social, and health sciences.*

—How can we optimize the quality of retrospective reports?

*-- How can panel surveys best accommodate a mix of prospective
and retrospective data collection methods?*

*—What analytic methods best reveal substantive findings in life-
events research?*

*The national and international speakers at this symposium, from
diverse fields including sociology, psychology, psychiatry, econom-
ics, criminology, social work, nursing, demography, and statistics,
will discuss emerging data collection and data quality methods in
the measurement and analysis of life histories on partnering,
parenting, labor, substance use, family violence, crime, and health-
risk behaviors.*

Presenters

Duane Alwin, Pennsylvania State University

Jennifer Bailey, University of Washington

Robert F. Belli, University of Nebraska—Lincoln

Lee Berney, Imperial College London

Wil Dijkstra, Free University Amsterdam

Kristy Martyn, University of Michigan

Edward P. Mulvey, University of Pittsburgh School of
Medicine

Maike Reimer, Max Planck Institute for Human
Development

Linda Carter Sobell, Nova Southeastern University

Frank P. Stafford, University of Michigan

Wander van der Vaart, Free University Amsterdam

Kazuo Yamaguchi, University of Chicago

Mieko Yoshihama, University of Michigan

Registration

PLEASE REGISTER EARLY — SPACE IS LIMITED

Via the web at <http://sram.unl.edu/nebsymp04.asp>
\$125; Student \$50

Registration includes all presentations, materials, refresh-
ment breaks, and lunches. Most hotels include complimen-
tary breakfast and transportation to and from the Gallup
University.

You can find more information regarding travel and
hotels on the website as well!

Calendar

October 21-23, 2004

Omaha, Nebraska, US

2004 Nebraska Symposium on Survey Science

“Exposures and Well-Being: Emerging
Methodologies in Life-Events Research

November 24-26, 2004

Pamplona, Spain

Regional Conference

September 15-17, 2005

Cannes, France

58th Annual Conference

*Please let us know your upcoming events.
Deadline for 3rd quarter newsletter events or
article submission is September 15, 2004.*

The WAPOR Newsletter is published by the
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India 2004: So near yet so far.

By Yashwant Deshmukh

Presented at Cadenabbia, Italy, 2004

When 'The Economist' termed Indian Elections as "the greatest show on earth"; it was not without reason. It was not only a tribute to the fundamental right of freedom called democracy, but also to the exercise which highlighted this right in a country which is home to 1/6th of humanity. It was a mammoth task considering about 5,500 candidates of seven national and 684 regional registered political parties vying for the favors of 675 million voters. There were about 7,000,000 polling stations in 4,145 assembly areas across 543 Parliamentary seats. This was also the first ever and biggest "total electronic election" managed by about five million staffers with the help of more than a million EVMs (electronic voting machines). Add to these 20 official languages, with more than 2,000 dialects, spoken across 28 states and seven union territories. All of this in a demography that has seven major religions and an extremely complex and politically hyperactive caste system comprising more than 3,000 social groups.

This makes India not only the biggest, but also the most heterogeneous and demographically diversified democracy in the world. This in turn also makes it the most difficult democracy to study for psephologists and pollsters. This is why all the pollsters in India, not willing to show and accept their limitations in studying such difficult topic, went widely off the mark in the 2004 elections. But this psephological debacle has opened up more windows for research than ever before. The polls suggested that the ruling NDA might get a lead between 1% to 3% votes over the opposition, which may end up as 50 to 80 seats lead in a house of 543 seats. The actual results confirmed a NDA lead of more than 1% votes but in terms of seats, leave alone the lead, it actually got about 30 seats less than the opposition!! This is what has snowballed into a heated debate on Aim, deliverables & limitations of Election Surveys.

The polls are to understand the changing patterns of party support during the key period when most voters are making their vote decisions; to know, with calculated certainty, the outcome of the election in advance; to assess the impact of campaign events - speeches, advertisements, campaign strategies and especially the Leaders Debate - on political support. To reach this target most opinion polls focus on the most important issue facing eligible voters, Vote intention, Certainty of vote, Party of second choice, Voter resistance and Leadership appraisals. They also track the different aspects of public opinion like topical issues depending on the phase of the election (e.g., justification for election call, momentum assessments, expected/perceived debate performance, minority vs. majority government, strategic voting, and so on). Demographics (age, gender, income, education, employment status, community size, language of interview, region, and province) are compulsory ingredients of such polls. But what matter in Election Survey is Vote & Seats projection. As far as the client is concerned (media & politicians), the most important point is to know, with calculated certainty, the outcome of the election in advance. To reach this target the most important finding of the research is: Vote intention. In fact "vote intention" is the only research-based output that the science of opinion polling can deliver. Scientific Extrapolations of these "intentions" into number of "seats" to be won is a part of stats and political / social science but not of "opinion polling". And this is where we normally go wrong in Indian Election Projections. Things go wrong when this finer line of 'Votes Projections' and 'Seats Projection' is blended under one topic of "opinion poll". This works OK in a presidential form of democracy where study of votes polled in a state or seat works as single universe and directly states the winner. But in parliamentary democracy votes share needs to be translated in seat share. This also works reasonably OK in a two party/two front system, but the moment it becomes a multi-party FPTP system, the direct co-relation between the votes polled and the seats won becomes extinct.

So did we really go horribly wrong in opinion polls? The answer is 'Yes' and 'No'. A typical 'election opinion poll' based on the vote intention can at best provide the leader in vote share, and this "lead margin" is also subject to a "margin of error". That is why in a very close elections

pollsters often call it “too close to call” when the projected “lead margin” falls within the “margin of error”. This is what can be called as the “limitations” of the science of opinion polling. During the run-up to Indian Election 2004, the average NDA Lead by all the pollsters was more or less the same during the different periods ranging from 4% to 6% in January 2004 to 1% to 3% in April 2004. The actual result was a BJP+ lead of about 1%. Thus the margins correctly projected by all the pollsters within the margin of error. The irony of the entire election survey exercise in India 2004 is that it was a success as far as the probable vote share deliverables of the opinion polls is concerned but a big failure as far as the psephological interpretation of that vote share into seat share is concerned.

Then the question is why did the pollsters go so wrong in the seat share calculation? And the answer is that in FPTP system there is no direct relation between vote share and seats. Given the 1% to 2% margins, the pollsters should have called for a close race. It was a three way close race but the problem was that it ‘looked’ close at national level but was one way or the other at the ‘local’ level. Things go wrong when you either have a ‘landslide’ about to happen or in a multi-cornered FPTP contest. India 2004 was both!! In 1999 election, parties retained only 270 MP seats while 267 changed hands, but this year it was worse. Only about 237 could retain the seats and almost about 300 changed hands. This trend was across the party line, including the ruling NDA. The churning of seats was a result of anti-incumbency factor working at the micro-level, i.e. voters were deciding their verdict more on the performance of their local representatives than the central government. Last decade has shown more and more anti incumbent electoral verdicts in India. Till date, a total of 94 assembly elections were held after 1989 (when the “wave” elections gave way to localized elections.) Out of these as many as 73 electoral verdicts were anti incumbent. Only 21 state assembly elections during this period resulted in pro-incumbent verdicts.

The anti-incumbency factor is working at the micro level and even a larger than life PM is not enough to compensate this factor. Though incumbent PM Vajpayee enjoyed unparalleled lead over leader of opposition Sonia Gandhi, he could not translate his supporters to vote for his party. The result: Split Voting phenomenon. People started supporting different parties at the National and the Local level. For example, the national capital of India has given six different verdicts in the last seven years. Each time its more precise and performance based in nature. Now the Congress is performing better at local level and BJP at the macro level. But in 2004 the Congress swept even at the MP level. The reason: anti-incumbency factor against the sitting MPs of the BJP. So, the voting pattern is changing with each election. The electoral verdicts these days in India are a mix of all these issues. The only difference is the intensity of anti-incumbency sentiment among different levels.

Levels / Incumbency at different levels	
1	Against the Sitting MLA
2	Against the Current State Government
3	Against the Sitting Chief Minister of the state
4	Against the Sitting MP
5	Against the Current Central Government
6	Against the Prime Minister

The parties are focusing hard on the level 1 and level 4, and trying to keep level 2 and 5 in check by maintaining the “feel good factor” of development. The pyramid of political performance is now upside down. The issues, which created many elections “sweeps”, have become nuisance. Hence a lot is being done to nullify them in order to make sure that they don’t spoil the equation created very painstakingly in the initial four levels.

Levels	Issues at different levels
1	Pereformance of Sitting MLA/MP
2	Pereformance of Sitting CM/PM
3	Pereformance of current state/central government
4	Performance in maintaining "feel good factor"
5	Performance in nullyfying "feel bad factor"

This electoral transition is going on and seems irreversible. But at the same time Opinion polls in the last decade are also indicating the biggest transformation of public opinion in Indian electoral process. The Opinion polls reveal that the anti incumbency factor has started shifting from the MACRO level to the MICRO level as more and more people are now voting on the local issues rather than the national issues. The result is a very confusing transitional phase, where the voter's priority is being redefined and redesigned.

What does it mean to pollsters? Technically speaking, this also means more troublesome task for all the pollsters as national or regional factors are dominated by very-very local factors and predicting the results (tally of seats) in such a scenario becomes next to impossible with a national random sample. So, what are the lessons to learn from the great Indian Fiasco 2004? My list includes recommendations like scattering the samples across all the seats in state/national election instead of choosing the seats randomly, as in such a heterogeneous demography, the only way to get a truly representative sample is to cover maximum area even it is with the minimum sample size. In one assembly area we have found the minimum adequate sample size to be taken vary from 60 (national) to 180 (state) and 540 (seat) for different level of projections. Weighing at social group and last voting recall is important. In a communally violent area where fear factor is working, adding the silent voter to the underdog contestant helps but this hypotheses remains to be tested again in future. After all these, rather I would say even after all these we should restrict ourselves to vote share projections only. Even if you go for seats: predict both possible ends within the margin of error. This may end up giving ridiculous probable results from the opposite ends, but then it's the only safe way out to explain that the people's perception is mightier than any established science and hypotheses.

And yes, last but not the least; the penalty that the pollsters are paying for getting the results wrong is funny and ironical at the same time. On the funnier side, the political establishment (read all the parties) wants to put a ban on election surveys for publications (not for their strategic use), a move that the Supreme Court of India has dumped time and again. The new government has not yet come out with the intended bill on banning the polls; but ironically they did propose a 10% service tax on all the pollsters in recent union budget (widely seen in media as the 'punishment' by the political establishment). Earlier only market research assignments were supposed to be in this tax net and election surveys were exempted as they were seen as part of social research. The Indian government's use of a tax as "punishment" is extremely intriguing; it practically works as a new twists on efforts to limit polling. On the one hand, it eliminates any distinction between market, and social research. On the other it certainly puts a cost on groups that are probably least able to afford it, and limits both the government's and the citizens access to public opinion data. Lets hope we survive.

Yashwant Deshmukh

WAPOR Regional Conference
"Elections, News Media and Public Opinion"
Pamplona, Spain
November 24-26, 2004

Registration Form

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Email: _____

Registration Fees include welcome reception and dinner, and meals on November 25 & 26

	Price per Person	Number of Persons	Total
WAPOR Member:	225 euros	_____	_____
Non-WAPOR Member*:	315 euros	_____	_____
Student: (undergraduate and graduate enrolled)	165 euros	_____	_____
Non-WAPOR Student*:	215 euros	_____	_____
Total amount**			_____

*Non-member rate includes 2005 membership in WAPOR

**Please note, the fee charge is shown here in Euros but will be charged in US Dollars in accordance with the exchange rate at www.oanda.com for the date we receive your registration form.

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