



# NEWSLETTER

Third Quarter

2002

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## Letter from the President

The Cadenabbia Conference is reported on elsewhere in this newsletter. I have no intention of giving a second perspective, but rather of sharing with you some of my thoughts on the plane home from Italy.

The first was about the series of seminars on Quality held in Cadenabbia. This was the fourth such seminar, which has been driven by Wolfgang Donsbach, and strongly supported by the Institut für Demoskopie Allensbach. Over the years we have had some stimulating, thought-provoking papers, combined with much stimulating discussion and debate. There have been friendly arguments, iconoclastic contributions, and spirited exchanges, all in a framework of goodwill and intellectual curiosity.

My second thought was how fortunate our Association is to have the active participation of what might be termed the living legends of survey research (in another context, Wolfgang referred to them affectionately as “the old buffaloes”). It is a privilege for younger researchers – and indeed the not so young – to be able to mix and discuss freely with Dinerman Award winners such as Elisabeth Noelle-Neumann, Hans Zetterberg, Bob Worcester and Mahar Mangahas. We are the richer for their involvement and their generous contribution to our heritage.

Third, I reflected on just how truly international WAPOR is. Even Cadenabbia, where we aim to have a relatively small number of attendees (25), had delegates from 12 different countries, as far apart as Chile and Egypt, or Canada and the Czech Republic; our Annual Conference typically draws members from around 25-30 countries across the globe. Our multi-culturalism and diversity are real strengths, along with a spirit of tolerance and mutual respect.

Fourth, it occurred to me once again that WAPOR fulfils the all-too-rare function of drawing together people from a wide range of professional backgrounds and disciplines. Journalists, academics, pollsters, government



WAPOR President  
Brian Gosschalk

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UPCOMING ANNUAL CONFERENCE:  
SEPTEMBER 11-13, 2003  
PRAGUE, CZECH REPUBLIC

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# International Conference on Social Science and Social Policy in the 21st Century

*By Nick Moon, UNESCO/ISSC Liaison*

Founded in 1952 by UNESCO, the International Social Science Council (ISSC) is celebrating its 50th anniversary by holding a major conference on the state of the social sciences and their role in national and international social policy making. WAPOR is one of 14 Member Associations of the ISSC and has for some time been represented on the ISSC Executive Committee by Prof. Marita Carballo of Gallup Argentina. Thanks to the efforts of Marita, WAPOR will be represented at the Conference through a Special Session on **“Generating and publishing accurate data on public opinion.”**

The session is intended to look both backwards and forwards on the relationship between the media and survey research firms and how organizations have tried to develop guidelines for the media use of survey research; and on media organizations and survey research in different cultures. There will be four speakers in the session – Tom Smith from NORC in the US, Elena Bashkirova from Romir in Russia, Ijaz Gilani from Pakistan, and Nick Moon from NOP Research in London, who has recently taken over from Marita as WAPOR Council member with responsibility as liaison with the ISSC.

The conference will be held in Vienna, Austria, from 9-11 December 2002. Its overall purpose is to provide an overview of the developments in the social and behavioural sciences over the last fifty years, and to look forward to the future. There will be four Plenary Sessions with invited speakers, three Special Presentations, sixteen Special Sessions, and three individual paper sessions. Presentations will be followed by discussion. Further details can be found at the ISSC Website: <http://www.unesco.org/ngo/issc/>

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## ***Cape Town, South Africa May 7-10, 2003***

**Pack your bags ...** WAPOR is going to sunny South Africa. The regional conference for WAPOR will be held in Cape Town, South Africa from 7 – 10 May 2003. The Conference will be held at the Breakwater Lodge Hotel, right by the world famous V&A Waterfront.

The conference venue, where we all will be staying as well, has a great history to fit right in with the history of its surroundings. The Breakwater Lodge was known as the Breakwater Prison in the 19<sup>th</sup> century. The Breakwater Prison was the first prison to effect racial segregation due to the increase of “white” IDB (Illegal Diamond Buying) offenders. The prison housed most of these offenders. In 1902 another building was built to house white male convicts and thus to effect a structural separation from black convicts. The design of the prison was based on that of Millbank and Pentonville prison in England. In 1926 it became a hostel for black dock workers until 1991 when it was modernised in the Breakwater Lodge Hotel.

The V&A Waterfront was part of the Cape Town dockyard and was restored and turned into beautiful venues for shops, art galleries, museums and some of the world’s best restaurants in the early 1990’s.

Check our website at [www.unl.edu/wapor/conferences.html](http://www.unl.edu/wapor/conferences.html) for updated information.

## **CONSTITUTION UPDATE**

The process of adopting a new Constitution can be long and arduous, whether it is a nation or an organization. The path the WAPOR Constitution must take is no exception. The document has now gone through several revisions. Its adoption will require acceptance not by a majority of those voting, but by a majority of all members on the rolls at the time of submission. That makes the rules for passage quite different from the rules for elections of officers.

That means that the elections should not – and cannot be held concurrently. This fall WAPOR will hold its election for officers – and the referendum on the Constitution will take place next March, after the constitutionally specified deadline for membership renewals. The website will continue to contain the most recent updates.

Please see the changes on the website at:  
[www.unl.edu/wapor/constitution.html](http://www.unl.edu/wapor/constitution.html).

## WAPOR Conference Mexico City, Mexico May 20, 2002

Pictured from left to right:  
Roy Campos, Ulises  
Beltrán, Enrique Alduncin,  
Francisco Abundis (barely  
visible), Alejandro Moreno  
and Miguel Basañez.

For more information on the  
Sixth International WAPOR  
Seminar in Mexico City, take  
a look at the Second Quarter  
2002 Newsletter at  
[www.unl.edu/WAPOR](http://www.unl.edu/WAPOR).

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### Professionalization and Survey-Research Standards

Tom W. Smith  
WAPOR Professional Standards Chair



elements” of professionalization is the adoption of “formal codes of ethics...rules to eliminate the unqualified and unscrupulous, rules to reduce internal competition, and rules to protect clients, and emphasize the service ideal...(Wilensky, 1964, p. 145)” and “codes of ethics may be created both to display concern for the issue [good character] and to provide members with guides to proper performance at work (Freidson, 1994, p. 174).”

Survey research has begun to follow the path of professionalization, but has not completed the journey.<sup>1</sup> In the estimation of Wolfgang Donsbach (1998), survey research falls into the category of “semi-professional.” Among other things, it has been the failure of survey researchers “to define, maintain, and reenforce standards in their area (Donsbach, 1998, p. 23)” that has deterred full professionalization. As Irving Crespi (1998, p. 77) has noted, “In accordance with precedents set by law and custom, developing a code of standards has long been essential to the professionalization of any occupation.” He adds that “One hallmark of professionals is that they do, meet performance standards.” In Donsbach’s estimation (1998, p. 26) the problem is that standards have not been sufficiently internalized nor adequately en-

**...have developed codes of standards, but we lack a high degree of internalization in the process of work socialization. We also lack clear and powerful systems of sanctions against those who do not adhere to these standards. It is the professional organizations’ task to implement these systems and to enforce the rules.**

There are various reasons for the limited adoption and enforcement of standards and the incomplete professionalization. First, the survey research profession is divided between commercial and non-commercial sec-

tors. Coordinating the quite different goals and needs of these sectors has been difficult. There has frequently been a split between these sectors on standards and other matters (Smith, 2002). Moreover, trade associations typically only include for-profit firms. In addition, for quite different reasons both sectors have had particular reasons for failing to vigorously pursue professionalization. The academics have been the most open to professionalization in general and standards in particular since most are already members of two types of well-organized professions (university teachers) and their particular discipline (e.g. statistician, psychologist, sociologist, etc.). But while this socialization has made them open to professionalization and standards, it has also hampered the professionalization of survey research since the academics already are usually, twice-fold professionals and may have only a secondary interest in survey research as a field/profession. The commercial practitioners have seen themselves more as businesspersons and less as professionals and many have seen standards as externally imposed constraints (akin to government regulations) that would interfere with their businesses. Of course it is not inevitable that businesses oppose standards and people in business fields would necessarily resist professionalization. For example, the Society of Automobile Engineers was successful from early on in establishing industry-wide standards and recommended practices (Thompson, 1952). However, this has not transpired within the survey-research industry. Suggested reasons for the limited development of cooperation

within the survey field include a high level of competition (Bradburn, 1992) and that fewer benefits from collaboration and coordination may exist.<sup>2</sup>

Second, survey research is an information field with strong formative roots in both journalism and politics. Some have seen any attempt to regulate the industry (especially by government, but even via self-regulation), as an infringement on their freedom of speech and as undemocratic. They lean more towards unregulated, marketplace-of-ideas approach.

In brief, the incomplete professionalization of survey research has retarded the development of professional standards and their enforcement. Incomplete professionalization in turn has resulted from the fractious inter-sectoral and inter-disciplinary nature of survey research and from the high value placed by practitioners on the ideal of independence and idea that the marketplace would exercise sufficient discipline. Both economic and intellectual laissez-faireism has undermined the adoption of standards.

But in recent years this situation has begun to change. The American Association for Public Opinion Research (AAPOR) in 1998 adopted Standard Definitions (AAPOR, 1998) for the reporting of the final disposition of cases codes and for the calculation of outcome rates (e.g. nonresponse rates). The World Association for Public Opinion Research (WAPOR) has endorsed these standards and the journals of both AAPOR and WAPOR, *Public Opinion Quarterly* and the *International Journal of Public Opinion Research*, require the use of Standard Definition in their articles. Moreover, the use of the nonresponse-related standards is disseminating from these core professional organizations. Some CATI companies have added them to their software and other journals such as the *American Political Science Review* and *Social Science Research* have adopted the AAPOR/WAPOR standards. This advance is also evidenced by the recent updating and expansion of WAPOR's code of professional standards. These developments indicate that survey research is moving closer to full professionalization and suggest that other standards may be established in the coming years.

References and endnotes available online at [www.unl.edu/wapor](http://www.unl.edu/wapor)

Tom Smith



# The 2002 Federal Election: Germany in a Thicket of Numbers

Thomas Petersen

Institut für Demoskopie Allensbach

On Sunday, August 25, there was a premiere event on German television. For the first time, the two candidates with the best prospects of becoming Germany's next chancellor following the upcoming federal election on September 22—the Social Democratic incumbent, Gerhard Schröder, and his challenger, Edmund Stoiber of the Christian Democrats—confronted each other one-on-one in a so-called “TV duel,” fielding questions posed by two prominent German newscasters for about 80 minutes

A televised debate of this sort is highly unusual in Germany, since the chancellor will not be elected directly by the people on Election Day. Rather, the population will elect the German parliament, the Bundestag, which in turn will select the future chancellor. Traditionally, the Germans primarily think along party lines when casting their vote, while individual candidates are of

of strategic significance: the centrist Liberal Party (FDP), the Greens, and—since reunification—the Party of Democratic Socialism (PDS), the leftwing socialist party that succeeded the East German communist party. All of these parties are currently represented in the German parliament. To ensure that all parties are afforded equal treatment, German television had previously broadcast only so-called “heavyweight rounds,” in which the issues were debated by the leaders of all four to six parties represented in parliament. A one-on-one “duel” modelled after the U.S. presidential debates had never been held before August 25 of this year.

Of course, this event was a golden opportunity for research, so we organized a representative telephone quickie poll together with WAPOR's past president, Wolfgang Donsbach. As soon as the debate was over, researchers at the University of Dresden and the

Institute interviewed a representative sample of 400 who had watched the broadcast. Taking the renowned Kurt Lang and Gladys Engel Lang as our example, we measure viewers' immediate impressions before they are influenced by any subsequent media reporting. Since the poll was held rather late in the evening, everything had to be done  
*(continued on p. 6)*



*Pictured from left to right:  
Wolfgang Donsbach  
(Germany), Fiona Chew, Mike  
Stanton, Allan McCutcheon  
(all from the U.S.), and Sabra  
Befani (Italy) speaking  
on the veranda at  
Cadenabbia.*

very quickly, so we all—project heads, research assistants, the head of the Allensbach archives, even the institute’s caretaker—conducted interviews ourselves, following all the rules of the trade, of course.

The atmosphere was charged as we watched the debate. Everyone had their instructions, the addresses and questionnaires were at hand. And then the broadcast was over. We stormed out of the room and headed for the phones. Just as I was going out the door, I turned around again and saw some graphs with findings coming up on the screen: the Forsa Institute, the newscaster declared, had determined the winner of the televised debate. The survey, he beamed, was “not quite representative”—a point he promptly glossed over, announcing instead that Chancellor Schröder had clearly won.

The next day, on tallying the findings of our representative telephone survey, we found that Schröder and Stoiber had essentially made an equally good impression on viewers.

This incident is symptomatic. In no prior election campaign in Germany has survey research been so badly abused as in this one. In terms of news value, everything seems to take a back seat to the elements of speed and surprise. It doesn’t seem to matter whether the published findings are correct or not. Thus, for example, there is hardly any newspaper in Germany today that does not include a “survey of the week” or “poll of the day” on its Web site. Users are invited to respond to ballot questions such as “Who should be chancellor?“, “Does Schröder still have a chance?“, or “Will the floods in Eastern Germany decide the election?“ Below the question, a button blinks, urging users to “vote now.“ Such questions are certainly legitimate as a form of entertainment, but these same newspapers unabashedly publish the results on both their Internet sites and in their print editions as if they were the findings of representative surveys—despite the fact that the information obtained in this manner is, at best, of no nutritional value or, at worst, grossly misleading.

For example, although the findings of hastily conducted daily telephone surveys based on relatively small samples necessarily show strong fluctuations due to the principle of chance, the results are still interpreted, thus furnishing the media with a new headline every day—e.g. yesterday: “The Social Democrats Gain Two

Percent,“ today: “The Social Democrats Lose Two Percent,“ and tomorrow: “The Social Democrats Gain...“ Almost mockingly, the margins of error are occasionally indicated in passing, while they are ignored in the headline.

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Even without the steady stream of frivolously ascertained and at times grossly misinterpreted findings on party strength reported in the media, researchers at the Allensbach Institute would still not have an easy time conducting election research now, in the early days of September 2002, due to a methodological puzzle that has arisen in Germany. In this respect, the Allensbach Institute finds itself completely isolated in public (and under heavy journalistic fire). In some ways, the current situation resembles the position we found ourselves in four years ago. At that time, during the 1998 election campaign, the other well-known survey research institutes all announced shortly before Election Day that the two political camps were locked in a neck-and-neck race. Only the Allensbach Institute predicted a clear victory for the Social Democrats—and was right (Table 1--see insert).

Today, the findings ascertained by all of the polling organizations do not differ dramatically. Yet this ostensible agreement is deceptive. Only a few weeks ago, until late August, the institutes’ findings were almost as wide apart as they were four years ago—and again, it was the Allensbach Institute’s data that diverged substantially from the other institutes’ findings, indicating a much stronger lead for the opposition parties (the Christian Democrats and the Liberals) than the other institutes’ results did. Even now, there still seem to be considerable differences: whereas the Allensbach Institute has registered a highly dynamic trend in favor of the governing parties (the Social Democrats and the Greens) in the past few days and weeks, the results obtained by the other institutes have changed by only a few percentage points (Table 2--see insert).

The only plausible explanation for this puzzle that we can find at present are two fundamental differences in the methods employed by the Allensbach Institute and by the other institutes.

First of all, the Allensbach Institute uses a much more

complicated and comprehensive question model than the other institutes do. Most survey research institutes in Germany ascertain party strength via the so-called “Sunday question,” which reads: “If the next federal election were held this Sunday, which party would you vote for?” In contrast, the Allensbach Institute’s question model allows for the fact that every voter in Germany has two votes: a constituency vote, with which voters directly elect a candidate from their own town or region, and a party vote, which determines the number of seats the various parties have in the Bundestag. The party vote is thus the more important vote of the two. It is the party vote that determines which parties win the election.

As our experiences here at the Allensbach Institute have shown, the findings of surveys that include only the “Sunday question” basically correspond to the actual results for the constituency vote in a federal election. In fact, however, many voters split their vote, casting their constituency vote for a promising direct candidate from one of the two major parties, the CDU/CSU or SPD, while giving their party vote to one of the smaller parties, the Liberals or the Greens. To account for such vote splitting, the Allensbach Institute employs a series of filter questions. Along with the simple “Sunday question,” a follow-up question is posed: “In a federal election, every voter has two votes, a so-called constituency vote and a party vote. Did you know that?” Respondents who say “yes” are then asked: “Are you going to cast your constituency vote and party vote for the same party or for different parties?” Finally, those who plan to vote for “different parties” are asked, “Would you please tell me which party you intend to cast your party vote for?” Furthermore, Allensbach surveys also include a number of questions designed to determine party appeal and the likelihood that respondents will in fact vote, the results of which are then included in our analysis.

The second main difference between Allensbach surveys and those by other German institutes is that the Allensbach Institute is the only survey research organization in Germany that continues to employ the traditional face-to-face survey method, whereas the other institutes all conduct their surveys by telephone. True, the

face-to-face method

is a bit slower and reacts somewhat more gradually than the telephone method in times of rapid opinion change, but in our experience—and according to numerous field experiments completed by the Allensbach Institute—it is ultimately the more precise method for making election forecasts. Realistically, the discrepancy between the Allensbach Institute’s findings and the other institutes’ results must be attributable to these two factors, i.e. to the different interviewing mode and the different question model.

As readers can well imagine, the various survey research institutes, parties and news commentators in Germany are all awaiting the election outcome with bated breath. But nowhere is the suspense greater than at the Allensbach Institute. Although we would certainly feel better in an atmosphere of general agreement that is not possible at present. It is no wonder that Elisabeth Noelle-Neumann developed the spiral of silence theory in Allensbach. Here, you learn the meaning of the word isolation. That is the current state of affairs. Just like a serial novel, all we can do at this point is to discontinue our report and ask: What will happen next? To find out, “tune in” again to next month’s WAPOR newsletter.

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***WAPOR Thematic Seminar***  
***“Public Opinion, Polls and Policies”***  
***June 26-28, 2003***

What started in the summer of 2001 will be continued in the year 2003: The World Association for Public Opinion Research (WAPOR) will hold a thematic seminar. This time we will look at the role and impact of public opinion polls in the political process. In the tradition of the WAPOR Summer Seminar dates have been set for **June 27 & 28, 2003** with a get-together-cocktail party on **Thursday, June 26, 2003**. The workshop will be held in Zurich, Switzerland and will take place in the Hotel Zürichberg. A wonderful place situated high above the everyday bustle of Zurich, surrounded by woodland and meadows, but still very close to the city. The stunning views of city, lake and mountains are enough to put us in the mood and tradition of WAPOR seminars.

Please find the program draft announcing this conference and the call for papers on our website. Further details and registration forms are posted on our website at <http://www.unl.edu/WAPOR/conferences.html>.

## *Quality Criteria for Comparative Survey Research – Designing a Comparability Index*

*Marta Lagos, MORI-Chile*

*It is unreal to think a method can beat a culture in its imprecision.*

Data are being produced quite massively in comparative cross-section studies with different purposes. But what lies behind those numbers? International organizations and multinational corporations use survey data to draw conclusions about attitudes of citizens across cultures and continents, but we have not developed quality criteria to communicate the differences and restrictions on the use of these data.

It may be difficult for users in industrialized countries to understand how research in non-developed countries can be conducted at a much higher level than the average development of the country, but it is naïve to think a method can beat the imperfections of reality (although the last presidential election in the USA has given us all a different perspective of exactness).

One must not approach the subject of survey quality with a self-defeating prophecy — declaring every research strategy a poor one because it is so far away from the ideal. It is much more a glass half full. But it is not simple to estimate the deviation from reality. Very few countries have exact statistics and while survey data then provide the best possible estimates, they are of quality only with full knowledge of the imperfections they contain.

We need to develop methods to measure these imperfections in order to make those improvements that are possible. Just the recognition of the differences can be an important step towards better quality in any country. Together, these differences can form a Comparability Index.

**Addressing comparative subject matters:** In identifying the subject matters that can be addressed in surveys one has first to consider the level of knowledge of the sampled population. Second, one must find a question design that is acceptable to diverse cultures. Third, one must phrase the question in such words that it can be translated to hundreds of different languages. Using simple words with unequivocal meaning leads to less error in translating and easier back translation for quality control.

Wording has to be precise in many languages. Questions in English with words like “fairly,” “somewhat,” and softer formulations get translated into other harder languages with a different meaning, thus obtaining different results. The number of languages in which the survey is carried out is the first variable one should add to any list of quality indicators, as well as the proportion of the population that answers the survey not in their native language.

Scales need careful design: if a scale needs a card it cannot be applied in Africa due to literacy rates. One also has to look at whether a selected scale “forces” cultural trends. The widely used question “Satisfaction with democracy” has a 4-point scale that has been reproduced in all barometers yet the vast majority of other barometer indicators have uneven scaling, reflecting a need to find a middle point. Little or no comparative testing of scaling and its effects in a multicultural context has been done. Information on the effects of scaling is nevertheless widely available in each country where local researchers and pollsters have already chosen a particular scale.

**Sample Design:** Appropriate sample definitions form the basis of the majority of the studies, but they are modified in the light of restrictions placed by individual cultures.

Gender quotas must be enforced in some countries because of cultural difficulties in accessing woman. So the so-declared probabilistic sample turns into a grey semi-quota sample. While men may be more difficult to reach in the industrialized world, women are more difficult to interview in many non-western cultures.

Additional restrictions and modifications to the ideal rule derive from field strategy and accessibility. Well-designed protocols become modified because of reality — producing ad hoc solutions and turning every random sample into a modified random sample. There often must be controls for ethnic, religious, geographical minorities that might have an influence in the country, and who should not be left out of any sample. This trade off between spread and representation is a crucial design aspect of a survey, where researchers often do not report real drawing procedures, and samples become black boxes. The rule of thumb becomes to always choose the known bias and report it, while avoiding the unknown bias.

Comparative survey data from non-developed countries often come from methods that deviate from the ideal type, and not enough indicators tell the analyst what really has been done. Fieldwork indicators should describe the quality of the sample, such as replacement protocol, gender quota, etc.

**General Interviewing techniques protocol:** Standardization of procedures and precision is a modern concept that more traditional cultures tend to resist, and it is difficult for them to change to other practices.



**Recruiting Interviewers:** Interviewers are recruited according to the distribution of the sample, languages and local cultural differences. It is a crucial part of the quality of the survey and necessarily has to be done after drawing the sample.

*An interview is a simple act of interaction between two people, where the researcher has to control the chemistry of the interpersonal relationship and its legitimacy. The person being interviewed has to “trust” the interviewer in order to be able to express authentic opinions, attitudes, behaviors and values. It is the image of the interviewer in front of the interviewee that brings the validity to the data. If that chemistry is not produced, if the person is not legitimate enough, then the answers will not be authentic and will not coincide with real opinions and attitudes that drive behavior, even if all other aspects of the survey are perfectly designed.*

Any strategy that produces legitimacy of the interviewer to the interviewee is valid. The incorrect distribution of interviewers is the most hidden source of non-sample bias in otherwise well conducted (orthodox) research. When surveys are used in other circumstances, their methods need to be adapted to the special circumstances of the place they are being conducted.

**Training Interviewers:** Training of interviewers fills in the cultural gaps between the needed attitudes and the given attitudes.

**The Interview Process:** Privacy is a different concept in a culture of networks and tribes than in the more individualist rational culture. How private can an interview be in Western terms when a woman can only answer in the presence of the husband?

In some cultures, women have no other opinion as the one that they are allowed to express in the presence of the husband. Nor does any member of the family answering (only) surrounded by family members. This can happen with or without direct intervention. In poorer strata, third party indirect interventions by presence or direct interventions by interruptions are common and not controlled. They belong to the life style of the people and should not be considered “incorrect.”

This non-sampling variable of privacy is a difference that must be noted and can be called the “level of privacy of interview.” It should not be coded as a western category like “intervention,” because it is not. It is simply a difference in the level of privacy between cultures. In other words the purpose of the survey method is to collect as neutrally as possible the authentic opinions, attitudes, behaviors and values, not to produce artificial situations that are not existent.

**Timing of interviews:** Timing the interviews for comparative survey research has to account for geography, traditions and religion. Interviews are preferably conducted in so called “normal” periods when no known extraordinary activities are happening. In comparative research this is a major problem because of the diversity of circumstances that can arise in the different countries and continents. Comparable cross-cultural surveys do not need to be simultaneous in order to be comparable. But they need functional simultaneity. Hemispheres, seasons, months, regions, countries and not least, traditions, may determine better the functional equivalence of a “simultaneous” survey. Special political events should also be coded, such as pre or post main elections.

Registering differences in sociodemographic indicators is a further subject that could be coded. Number of years of education for the given levels of the given country, for example, or the year of the last census. The latter is responsible in many cases for changes in time series and is especially important when the shape of the population pyramid is rapidly changing.

**Concluding remarks:** In comparative survey research, at the end of the day, Western culture becomes one more culture to measure. The problem is that methodology has been developed with Western categories that need to be expanded to include all cultures and levels of development of countries. Surveys reflect the complexity of the reality they represent, and with all its imperfections, they in fact are good photographs of that imperfection.

Survey research has gone forward in developing methodology in each individual country. For comparative purposes this process needs the addition of a number of variables that could be called a comparability index, as a quality criteria for researchers.

These passages have been excerpted from a presentation at Cadenabbia IV – the WAPOR Seminar in Survey Research Quality, June 2002.

## *Amico e vino per esser buoni vogliono esser vecchi!*

(Friends are like fine wines, they grow better with age!)

**What do survey researchers talk about when they meet in paradise?** Probably about surveys. This, at least, would seem to be indicated by the conversations of WAPOR members in a place that bears a rather strong resemblance to the Garden of Eden: i.e. Cadenabbia, a picturesque hamlet on Lake Como in Northern Italy. There, at a stately villa complete with a boccia green, surrounded by mountains, palm trees and lustrous flowers, survey researchers from around the world met for the fourth time in late June to talk about “Quality Criteria in Survey Research.” Thirty researchers from a total of 12 countries travelled to Cadenabbia to attend the seminar, which was chaired by Wolfgang Donsbach. For two days, the discussion centered on the question of what makes surveys valuable, what makes them a reliable source of information on the population’s attitudes and opinions. The fact that the seminar was attended by three past presidents of WAPOR, along with the current president and vice president, shows just how much importance WAPOR attaches to this issue.

As was the case with the past three Cadenabbia seminars, the 16 papers presented generally did not deal with abstract quality criteria. Rather, they primarily focused on concrete ways to ensure and improve quality, addressing such topics as the use of indicator questions, the investigation of effects caused by social desirability and, regarding international surveys, the importance of accurately translating not only language, but also the investigative concepts and measurements used. The great variety of approaches and aspects treated by conference participants demonstrated once again that quality cannot be achieved simply by fulfilling a few basic technical requirements.

At the heart of WAPOR’s ongoing effort to clarify the issue of quality, starting with the first Cadenabbia conference in 1996, is the concern that survey research today often does not live up to its great potential and is even losing ground in terms of quality and intellectual brilliance. The skeptical title of Hans Zetterberg’s paper, “Has Sophistication Been Lost or Gained?,” captures the concern shared by all conference participants.

To counter this concern, however, seminar participants pooled their energy in the campaign to maintain quality in survey research. Hence, the mood at the seminar was also quite upbeat. In many respects, this gathering of opinion researchers from four different continents resembled a joyful family reunion, where everyone present was united by their mutual passion for opinion research. The fantastic surroundings, Italian cuisine and jovial boccia matches were just the icing on the cake. No wonder so many participants decided right away to attend the next Cadenabbia conference. When? In late June, 2004.

## ***MY FULBRIGHT STORY***

by Linda Luz Guerrero  
Social Weather Stations (Philippines)

Thanks to the WAPOR/AAPOR network, my three-month *Study Tour in Survey Research Management* under a Fulbright Senior Research Grant was a success.

I observed survey research at the Center for Survey Research and Analysis at the University of Connecticut through Kenneth Dautrich; the Institute for Social Research of the University of Michigan through Michael Traugott; the National Opinion Research Center at the University of Chicago through Tom Smith; the Gallup Organization through Allan McCutcheon (a Fulbright scholar himself); the Survey Research Center of the Institute for Social Science Research of the University of Los Angeles-California through Eve Fielder; and the Rand Corporation in Los Angeles through Julie Brown.

I visited Richard Rockwell at the Roper Center for Public Opinion Research at the University of Connecticut, and Myron Gutmann and Erik Austin of the Inter-University Consortium for Political and Social Research (ICPSR) of the University of Michigan.

*“I now have first hand knowledge that I am not the only one driven and passionate in what I do.”*

research and methodology for staff of my home institute, Social Weather Stations. I even had the opportunity to sit-in several short-term courses at the Survey Research Center Summer Institute in Survey Research Techniques at the University of Michigan through the kindness of Jim Lepkowski.

I had discussions with colleagues in media doing exit and other opinion polls at the Voter News Service (Murray Edelman), CBS News (Sarah Dutton), ABC News (Gary Langer), and LA Times (Jill Darling Richardson). Mark Schulman, the AAPOR President, also gave time to explain how his own survey outfit operates.

Everybody was just so accommodating and kind, even solicitous, to help me make the most out of my Fulbright

award. I now know the faces of the names I just read in the directory of members, the Blue Book and the journals. I now realize that all of us have to work so hard to get money for projects. I now have first hand knowledge that I am not the only one driven and passionate in what I do.

I envy the appreciation given to survey data in America; we have a long way to go in the Philippines.

I had very many questions to ask and I got answers which made me realize how much there is still to know about survey research and how proudly it cuts across various disciplines.

### **Conference Paper Collection**

If you presented a paper at the annual conference, and have not already done so, please send your paper electronically to [Renae\\_Reis@gallup.com](mailto:Renae_Reis@gallup.com). The papers will be published on CD and mailed out to conference participants. We would like to receive them by November 15 if possible. Please send an email to Renae if you have questions.

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## **WAPOR Elections**

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It is time once again for the elections that will select the newest members of the Executive Council beginning in 2003. This year there are three offices to be elected.

Here are the names of the nominees:

The Vice President and President-Elect will serve on the WAPOR Council for a total of six years – two as Vice President, two as President, and two as Past President. This year’s candidates are **Esteban Lopez Escobar** and **Peter Mohler**.

The Chair of the Committee on Professional Standards and a Member-at-Large each serve a two-year term. The Professional Standards Chair candidates are **Thomas Petersen** and **Tom Smith**. The Member-at-Large candidates are **Warren Mitofsky** and **Patricia Moy**.

Ballots will be due in the WAPOR office by November 15 with results to be announced on December 2. Newly elected Executive Council members will take office effective January 1, 2003.

More voting information can be found at:  
[www.unl.edu/wapor/nominations.html](http://www.unl.edu/wapor/nominations.html)

# Letter from the President

*continued from page 1*

researchers, NGO officials and survey researchers from private companies were all present in Cadenabbia – we are truly an inter-disciplinary melting pot.

And fifth, but by no means last, I reflected on how many genuinely nice people participate in WAPOR. Lasting friendships have been built thanks to this fine organisation, and I get a buzz from the opportunities WAPOR provides to meet up with old friends and make new ones. Of all the organisations I have belonged to over the years, I consider WAPOR to be the friendliest.

Long may these characteristics remain the hallmark of WAPOR!

These were just some of my thoughts as the plane headed north over the Alps.

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## Calendar

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December 9-11, 2002  
ISSC Conference, Vienna, Austria

May 7-10, 2003  
Cape Town, South Africa Conference

June 26-28, 2003  
Zurich, Switzerland Seminar

September 11-13, 2003  
Prague, Czech Republic Annual Conference

*Please let us know your upcoming events. Deadline for 4th quarter newsletter event or article submission is December 1st.*

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## ANNOUNCEMENTS

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### MEMBERSHIP DIRECTORY

WAPOR is pleased to announce that its on-line membership directory is working. If you need to locate an old friend or find a contact in a specific country, please visit [www.unl.edu/wapor/membership\\_directory.html](http://www.unl.edu/wapor/membership_directory.html) to find an alphabetical listing of members. Below this you can also find a listing of members by country. Thank you for your patience while we updated all current WAPOR information. If you notice something is incorrect, please let us know as soon as possible, so we can correct the problem.

### WAPORNET

**Have you got something to say?** Would you like to ask fellow WAPOR members a question and get their input on something? Do you want to receive the most up-to-date information from WAPOR? You are invited to use WAPORNET. As a paid member of WAPOR, you have access to our listserv. Simply send your email to [wapornet@listserv.unc.edu](mailto:wapornet@listserv.unc.edu) and your email will be sent to all members who have a current email address. This is the perfect way to announce conferences and activities or make announcements of any other kind.

If you are unsure of your ability to participate in WAPORNET, please send an email to [Renae\\_Reis@gallup.com](mailto:Renae_Reis@gallup.com) and we can check on your email status. You must have a current email address on file with the WAPOR office in order to use this feature.

### UPCOMING ANNUAL CONFERENCES

As you may have noticed on recent correspondence, the 56th Annual conference has been scheduled to be held in Prague September 11-13, 2003. Then May 12-14, 2004 are the dates for our 57th Annual Conference being held in Phoenix, Arizona in the US at the Pointe Hilton Tapatio Cliffs resort. Be sure to put these dates in your calendar!