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WAPOR Regional Seminar

V WAPOR Latin America Congress

Contributed by Hernando Rojas, Conference Chair

WAPOR Latin-America's V Annual Congress was held in Bogota, from September 19 to September 21, 2012. With 162 registered participants, 128 paper presentations in 33 academic panels, and 15 countries represented, the conference thrived. The V Congress was hosted by the School of Social Communication and Journalism of Externado de Colombia University and cosponsored by local polling firms Cifras & Conceptos and Deproyectos SAS.

The main theme of the V Congress referred to how different forms of polarization (political, cognitive, emotional, economic and technological) affect community life and democracy in the region. The Edgar Catterberg Award for the best paper was shared by two papers: "Protesting in the Age of Social Media: Information, Opinion Expression and Activism in Online Networks," written by Sebastian Valenzuela and "A dark side of political deliberation? The media and political discussion effects on political interest," written by Mariano Torcal and Gerardo Maldonado. In the Young Researchers in Public Opinion competition, the jury selected Max Stabile's "Democracia Eletrônica para quem? Compreendendo a demanda do portal da Câmara dos Deputados do Brasil," bestowing him with the Marcus Figueiredo Award.

Some distinctive features of the V Congress included live streaming of the different academic sessions; digital video archiving of all presentations; simultaneous translation between English, Portuguese and Spanish, the official languages of the event; and a very active press office, powered by journalism students of Universidad Externado resulting in significant local media coverage of the event and its participants.

Congress Chair, Hernando Rojas, thanks the National Advisory Committee: Cesar Caballero (Cifras & Conceptos) Napoleón Franco (Ipsos Napoleón Franco), Ricardo Gómez (Deproyectos SAS), Carlos Lemoine (Centro Nacional de Consultoría), Jorge Londoño (Invamer Gallup), Jesús Arroyave (Universidad del Norte), Jorge Iván Bonilla (Universidad Eafit), Álvaro Duque (Universidad del Rosario), Margarita Orozco (Universidad Externado de Colombia) and Juan Carlos Rodríguez (Universidad de los Andes); the

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66th Annual Conference
May 14-16, 2013
Boston, MA, USA

Letter from the President

Total survey error (TSE) is the sum of all the myriad ways in which survey measurement can go wrong. As Judith Lessler (1984) noted, it is “the difference between its actual (true) value for the full target population and the value estimated from the survey...”

TSE is traditionally applied to a particular survey, that is all measurement components are considered, but only in reference to a single study. However, survey research often involves comparing two or more studies. The TSE paradigm can be extended to cover more than one study. It is an especially valuable approach for comparative studies for several reasons. First, it can be a blueprint for designing studies. Each component of error can be considered with the object of minimizing comparison error. Second, it can be a guide for evaluating error after the surveys have been conducted. One can go through each component and assess the level and comparability of the error structures. Third, it can extend beyond examining the separate components of error and provides a framework for the combining of the individual error components into their overall sum. Finally, by considering error as an interaction across surveys, it can establish the basis for a statistical model for the handling of error across surveys. TSE in comparative perspective shows how each component is measured in each survey and that across each component there is the potential interaction in the error structures.

The interaction in measurement error across surveys leads to what Weisberg (2005) refers to as “equivalence problems” or “comparability effects” or what is referred to here as “comparison error.” One can think of such comparison error as occurring both for each component and in the aggregate across all components. For example, errors due to mistranslations are a comparison error that is an interaction between the question wording components of each study.

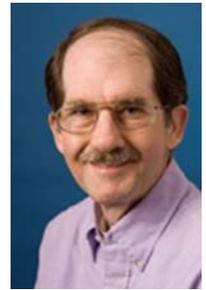
Functional equivalence or measurement comparability is the standard for research using two or more comparative studies. There are two distinct, but related, ways of looking at this goal: 1) from the design and execution perspective and 2) from the measurement-error perspective.

From the design and execution perspective the goal is to have surveys designed with similar features (e.g. target population, content, interviewer training) and carried out to a similar (and hopefully high) level of attainment. That is, they should be designed to do the same thing and those intentions need to be successfully achieved. Similar designs and procedures alone are not enough however to achieve comparability. The level of error is a function both of a survey’s design features and the degree to which the protocols are actually realized. Realization will depend on diligence and supervision in general and specific quality-control procedures in particular. If the “proof of the pudding is in the eating”, the proof of survey data quality is in the execution of the protocols and the confirmation of the quality of the collected data.

From the TSE perspective the goal is to eliminate differences due to error so that all differences across surveys can be interpreted as reflecting variation in the true values and not variation due to measurement differences. Or, in other words, to achieve zero comparison error. The TSE paradigm assists this process by at the same time both breaking error down into all of its components and providing a framework for the integration of all components into a comprehensive whole.

Eliminating all error across surveys is of course theoretically and practically impossible. Some types of error such as sampling variance are unavoidable parts of all sample surveys. Other error such as non-response bias can be minimized, but not reduced to zero. A more realistic alternative would be to reduce all error components to their minimal practical level so that error does not overwhelm true variance.

Another desirable goal would be to make error components comparable across studies. This goal can be promoted by adopting comparable study designs and data-collection protocols. It is also facilitated by the fact that some error components are quite common and similar across studies and countries. For



Tom W. Smith
President

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example, virtually all full-probability surveys under represent men and residents of large cities and while these biases are obviously sources of undesirable error, they are less likely to be sources of comparison error. But often error structures are different. For example, sample frames differ in both their nature and quality across countries and under coverage and other sample-frame errors often will vary across cross-national surveys.

In general, if the study-design features are equivalent and study fulfillment is similar, one might expect component errors to be comparable and by extension TSE to be on a par across surveys. But while this is a plausible assumption that would often be correct, it can not be taken as a given. True variation can interact with measurement error to create comparison error. For example, asking about drinking alcohol is not an especially sensitive topic in most European societies, but would be so in conservative Muslim countries. As a result, social-desirability bias concerning alcohol consumption would likely be much greater in the later than the former.

The aim of equivalence in study design and achievement does not mean that procedures need to be identical. For example, having 100% valid interviews would be the goal of most surveys. This goal would be in general promoted by vetting interviewers hired to do the survey, interviewer training on sampling procedures and research ethics, and the supervision/monitoring of interviewers during data collection. In addition, various case-verification procedures are usually employed. In face-to-face surveys in the US, the common procedure is to randomly recontact a portion of each interviewer's cases and confirm that an interview had taken place. In other countries, especially in developing countries, interviewers are sent out in teams with a supervisor accompanying the cadre of interviewers and confirming their work as it occurs. In Germany the Allensbach Institute has not wanted to record the name and contact information of respondents, so verification interviews were not a possibility. It instead developed special techniques to internally validate interviews. One technique was to have the respondents write out responses to an open-ended question. The handwriting could then be examined to see if the interviewer was filling out fake interviews. Also, new technologies such as computer timestamps, audio-recordings, and GPS readings can be used for validation.

As the above examples attest, validation procedures can vary notably across organizations and surveys. This variation is not problematic to the extent that the same outcome of eliminating faked interviews is achieved. This is also true to other components of surveys. For example, Leslie Kish makes a similar observation about probability samples using different sample frames, but still representing equivalent target populations.

As our constitution notes, WAPOR has among its prime directives the furthering of cross-national survey research and to "promote the knowledge and application of scientific methods in this objective" and using the total-survey-error paradigm in comparative perspective advances those goals.

Adapted from Tom W. Smith, "Refining the Total-Survey-Error Perspective," *International Journal of Public Opinion Research*, 23 (2011), 464-484.



Announcement for the Janet A. Harkness Student Paper Award

The Janet A. Harkness Student Paper Award will be issued annually, starting in 2013, by the World Association for Public Opinion Research (WAPOR) and the American Association for Public Opinion Research (AAPOR) to honor the memory of Dr. Harkness and the inspiration she brought to her students and colleagues.

In particular, WAPOR and AAPOR will consider papers related to the study of multi-national/ multi-cultural/multi-lingual survey research (aka 3M survey research), or to the theory and methods of 3M survey

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International Advisory Committee: Miguel Basáñez (Tufts University), María Braun (MBC Mori), Marita Carballo (Kantar), Gabriela Catterberg (Universidad de Buenos Aires), Marta Lagos (Mori), Alejandro Moreno (Instituto Tecnológico Autónomo de México), Patricia Moy (University of Washington), Carlos Muñiz (Universidad Autónoma de Nuevo León),

Denise Paiva (Universidade Federal de Goiás), Pablo Parás (Data Opinión Pública y Mercados), Airton Rodrigues (Qualidade Pesquisa), Rodolfo Sarsfield (Centro de Investigación y Docencia Económicas), Mitchell Seligson (Vanderbilt University), Helcimara de Souza Telles (Universidade Federal de Minas Gerais), Michael Traugott (University of Michigan) and Ignacio Zuasnabar (Universidad Católica del Uruguay/Mori); and the Externado team for their multiple contributions to the success of the V Latin-American Congress.



Winner of the Edgar Catterberg Award for the best conference paper Sebastian Valenzuela shown here receiving the award from Gabriela Catterberg.



Winners of the Edgar Catterberg Award for the best conference paper Mariano Torcal and Gerardo Maldonado shown here receiving the award from Gabriela Catterberg.

Finally, during WAPOR Latin-America's business meeting, Universidad Diego Portales in Chile was selected as the host for the VI Latin-American Congress next year. Good luck!



At left: The winner of the Marcus Figueiredo Award for Best Young Researcher in Public Opinion paper was Max Stabile shown here receiving the award from Helcimara de Souza Telles.



At left: Hernando Rojas, conference chair, addresses the congress' plenary, with Al Gunther and Guy Golan

Below: Team of the School of Communication and Journalism at Universidad Externado that made the event possible.



WAPOR
COLOMBIA 2012

WAPOR 66th Annual Conference

A joint meeting with the American Association for Public Opinion Research (AAPOR)
Call for Conference Participation

Submission Deadline:
November 12, 2012, 11:59 p.m. EST

The World Association for Public Opinion Research (WAPOR) will hold its 66th annual conference on **May 14-16, 2013 in Boston, Massachusetts, USA**. The conference space will be located on the campus of Boston University.

The theme of this conference is:

Revolutions in the Measurement of World Public Opinion

WAPOR has had a long-standing tradition of accommodating a broad range of topics in its annual conferences. As a result, topics for the 2013 WAPOR conference include, but are not limited to, the following:

- Public opinion theory
- Measurement issues and designs
- Sampling issues and designs
- Response rates and non-response error
- Online surveys
- Cross-national research
- Sentiment analysis and opinion mining
- Emerging tools that enable the capturing of public opinion
- Public opinion and intergroup relations
- The relationship between media exposure and public opinion

Please view the [WAPOR](#) website for full submission details including detailed instructions for submitting your paper for consideration.

Submission Deadline:
November 12, 2012, 11:59 p.m. EST

Paper proposals are due **no later than November 12, 2012**. These should consist of a general description of the paper (purpose and importance justification, research question, method in brief, and results, as applicable). Paper proposals should not exceed 300 words/3000 characters in English. Papers proposals will be subjected to a peer review process. A paper proposal that is accepted as a result of this review process will be assigned to either a panel presentation format or to a poster/interactive session format. **Fully completed papers that follow the APA formatting guidelines will be due on May 1, 2013**.

Deadlines

Paper Submission: **November 12, 2012**
Paper Decisions: **January 31, 2013**
Papers Due: **May 1, 2013**

Contact Information

Conference Co-chairs:
Michael Elasmr (Elasmr@bu.edu)
James Shanahan (Shanhan@bu.edu)

WAPOR Elections Underway

Voting is now open for the two WAPOR offices to be filled in this fall's election. The ballots and corresponding materials are available to members who paid dues to WAPOR for 2012. To access the voting system, please go to: <http://vod.votenet.com/WAPOR> where you will need your WAPOR user name and password. Candidate biographies can be viewed by clicking the document icon to the right of their name. If you have any questions, need your name or password, or have problems voting, please contact Renae at renae@wapor.org.

The term of each position begins January 1, 2013. This year's elections include **Vice President/President-Elect** and **Chair of the Professional Standards Committee**.

The **Vice President/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. The WAPOR Constitution states: "The President shall be responsible for fulfilling the purposes of the Association as its chief representative. S/He shall preside at Council, Executive Council, and the Business Meeting, and serve as the official representative of WAPOR in its relations with other organizations and the public. S/He shall report from time to time to the membership about his or her activities and the activities of the Council and the Executive Council during the year. The Vice President shall act as the President's deputy. S/He shall automatically become President the following term. S/He shall take over the Presidency if the office becomes vacant."

The candidates are **Allan McCutcheon** and **Patricia Moy**.

The **Chair of the Professional Standards Committee** serves a two year term. The WAPOR Constitution states: "The Committee on Professional Standards shall review and adjust – where necessary – the Code of Professional Ethics and Practices and propose amendments from time to time to keep it consistent with contemporary needs and technology and to promote its observance within the profession. For this purpose it shall seek cooperation with other associations in the field."

The candidates are **Anne Niedermann** and **Orlando J. Pérez**.

New Media Relations Chair

Jennifer Agiesta has taken over as chair of the Medial Relations Committee from Alejandro Moreno who in WAPOR's president-elect. Jenn is deputy director of polling for The Associated Press, one of the world's largest news organizations. She has a leading role in all aspects of AP's polling — covering topics ranging from broad political, economic and social issues to the perspectives of pet owners and college students. AP's polls are conducted in the U.S. and internationally, with partners from media, academia and the research world. During election years, Jenn manages the editorial side of AP's exit polling operation, serving on the National Election Pool's Survey Committee and analyzing and reporting results from the exit polls for the newswire. Aside from her contributions to AP's own polling, Jenn works closely with reporters and editors throughout the AP to help them sort through the deluge of survey research released publically, educating them on the uses and misuses of data to improve their reporting.

Jenn's 12-year career spans several fields within survey research. She has been reporting on, conducting and analyzing polls for public consumption for five years, including three years at *The Washington Post*. Before that, she worked with private clients on messaging and communications strategy using both quantitative and qualitative research methods at Belden Russonello & Stewart. Before moving to Washington in 2005, Jenn managed several aspects of exit polls while working at Edison Research and Voter News Service. She is a graduate of Washington and Lee University. Jenn has been active in both WAPOR and AAPOR.

WAPOR Membership Report

By Thomas Roessing, Membership Chair

1. Member Report 2012

As reported during the business meeting at the Annual Conference in Hong Kong, WAPOR has a record number of members in 2012. The overall membership was 567 (2011: 444). For the first time in history WAPOR has over 500 members. 377 members come from A-tier countries, 190 (2011: 118) from B- and C-tier countries.

The importance of the B- and C-tier countries becomes especially obvious with a look at the number of new members of WAPOR. From the overall 240 new members, 131 are from B- and C-tier countries, 109 from A-tier countries. For the first time there are more new members from B- and C-tier than from A-tier countries.

The very good numbers of 2012 are due to the extremely successful conferences of Amsterdam (2011) and Hong Kong (2012). The challenge for WAPOR will be to keep those new members within the organization. All members are encouraged to meet this challenge and encourage the newbies to engage themselves for WAPOR and to attend one of the upcoming conferences. Hopefully the attractive Annual Conference of 2013 in Boston, Massachusetts, U.S.A., will do its part to stabilize WAPOR's membership on a high level.

2. Membership Survey 2012

As announced at the Annual Conference in Amsterdam (2011), WAPOR conducted a survey among its members in spring 2012. Field time was April 23rd to May 15th, 2012. The basic population consisted of 671 current or former members of WAPOR subscribed to the listserv. 231 people clicked the link to the online questionnaire, 196 persons started to answer the questionnaire and 166 questionnaires were completed. The following report includes answers from incomplete questionnaires.

Most of the 170 people who answered the question "How many WAPOR conferences or seminars have you attended?" had attended 1 or 2 conferences. 26 had participated in more than 10 and 39 in none of WAPOR's conferences at all.

167 respondents answered the question on the importance of WAPOR: "How important is being a WAPOR member for your work? Please indicate on the 11-point scale; 0 (zero) means not at all important and 10 means absolutely important." The most checked point on the scale was 8 (n=30), mean 5.78 (std.dev 2.774). Most of those who answered the question find WAPOR to be quite important for their work.

A very important question for the future of WAPOR addressed the engagement of existing members to introduce WAPOR to young researchers and new members: "Have you ever introduced people to WAPOR (e.g. encouraged someone to attend a conference or to join WAPOR)?" Of n=177, 80 people indicated that they did so several times. An additional 40 respondents had introduced people to WAPOR once; 47 admitted having not done so – yet.

Some sociodemographics: Of 159 people who answered the correspondent questions 80 were female, 177 male and 3 refused to answer. Mean age of participating respondents was 49.72 years, with a median of 48.00 (std.dev 13.483). WAPOR seems to be younger than it has a reputation to be.



research, including statistics and statistical techniques used in such research. Paper topics might include: (a) methodological issues in 3M surveys; (b) public opinion in 3M settings; (c) theoretical issues in the formation, quality, or change in 3M public opinion; (d) or substantive findings about 3M public opinion. The competition committee encourages submissions that deal with the topics of the annual conferences, for which the call for papers are posted on both associations' websites in the fall.

Submissions to the Harkness award competition are anticipated to be 15-25 pages in length. A prize of \$750 will be awarded to the winning paper and the author(s) of the paper will be invited to deliver it as a part of either the annual WAPOR conference, AAPOR conference, or in certain years the WAPOR-AAPOR joint conference.

For a winning paper with one author, WAPOR and AAPOR will pay for the author's travel expenses to and from the nearest WAPOR or AAPOR annual conference for that year. However, for a winning submission with multiple authors, WAPOR and AAPOR will pay only for the primary author (or his/her designee, who must be a co-author) to present the paper. Up to two other papers each year may receive an Honorable Mention designation with each receiving a \$100 cash prize (though no travel expenses).

All authors must be current students (graduate or undergraduate) at the time of the submission, or must have received their degree during the preceding calendar year. The research must have been substantially completed while the author was (all authors were) enrolled in a degree program. Preference will be given to papers based on research not presented elsewhere.

A panel of public opinion researchers from WAPOR and AAPOR's membership – drawn from academic, government, and commercial sectors – will judge the papers.

The 2013 Call-for-Submission of papers for the Harkness Award will be issued in the near future.

2012

November 3, 2012

Renewal notices to be sent out via email

November 12, 2012

Deadline to submit paper proposals for Annual Conference (Boston 2013)

November 26, 2012

Deadline for voting:
Vice President/President-Elect
Chair, Professional Standards Committee
See page 6 for more information

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- Do you have an idea for an article in the newsletter?
 - Is there an event happening in your part of the world?
 - Are you interested in organizing a conference?
 - Do you have photos you'd like to contribute?
 - Do you have ideas on how to improve the website or newsletter?

If so, please contact the WAPOR office by sending an email to renae@wapor.org or to Trevor Tompson (Publications Chair) at tompson-trevor@norc.org.

Let us know your upcoming events.

*Please note, the deadline date for the
4th quarter newsletter is
December 15, 2012*

The WAPOR Newsletter is published by the
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