

WAPOR NEWSLETTER

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WAPOR COUNTRY REPORT

How is crime affecting public opinion research in Mexico?

Contributed by Alejandro Moreno¹

Most pre-election polls in Mexico are conducted face to face, but pollsters are confronted with an increasingly hostile environment to carry out their work. This environment combines several aspects: an ongoing government war against drugs and territorial control by drug cartels; local authorities on a permanent state of alert and suspicious of any strangers who come to their communities; and, more generally, people's growing hesitance to open their door to someone who asks them to respond to a few questions. How common are these problems and how are they affecting public opinion polling in the country?

For the purpose of preparing this country report I sent out a small, informal questionnaire to several professionals who represent major polling organizations. I asked them how the lack of public safety and organized crime are affecting their research activities, how they evaluate the conditions for conducting face to face interviews, what threatening situations their personnel has experienced in the last few months, and what kind of measures they have implemented to cope with this kind of problems. Within a few hours of sending out an e-mail, I got responses from eleven colleagues who generously answered my open-ended questions and gave me a general assessment of the risks of sending out interviewers and supervisors to conduct fieldwork in person. Before discussing what these professionals reported, let me give a little more context to the crime situation in Mexico.

Crime is perceived as the main problem that the country faces today. A *Reforma* national poll of 1,515 interviews conducted in March 2012 showed that 63 percent of Mexican adults see crime as the main problem in the country. This perception has grown dramatically in the last few years, as shown by the annual average from quarterly polls that started at 39 percent in 2007, the first year of the current administration (see chart on page 7). Since this is an open-ended question too, perceptions of crime include a wide range of responses from robberies and street thefts, to kidnapping, murder, and violence related to drug trafficking and organized crime. Public perceptions on crime may re-

(Mexico continued on page 5)

Table of Contents

| | |
|---------------------------------------|----|
| Crime and Polling in Mexico..... | 1 |
| President's Letter..... | 2 |
| Annual Conference: Hong Kong..... | 3 |
| V Latin American Seminar..... | 7 |
| Regional Seminar: Gdansk, Poland..... | 8 |
| WAPOR Latinoamerica..... | 11 |
| WAPOR News and Deadlines..... | 12 |

65th Annual Conference
June 14-16, 2012
Hong Kong

Letter from the President

As I have noted, "The world may be shrinking, but survey research is expanding. More and more countries are routinely and freely conducting surveys and the volume of cross-national, survey research is increasing (Smith, 2010a)." Cross-national, survey research began in the late 1930s when Gallup and other early pioneers began to establish research institutes around the world (Smith, 2010b). First, explicit cross-national comparisons were not planned. Each country merely asked its own questions and only post-hoc comparisons were made when similar questions happened to be asked across pairs of nations. Second, by the early 1940s planned, multivariate comparative research was underway. By 1948 full comparative studies were being designed and carried out by both academic and commercial organizations. These one-shot studies included collaborations by social scientists such as the How Nations See Each Other Study in nine countries in 1948-49 by William Buchanan and Hadley Cantril, the Civic Culture Study in five nations in 1959-60 by Gabriel Almond and Sidney Verba, and the Pattern of Human Concerns study in 14 countries in 1957-1963 by Cantril. In the commercial sphere the major early cross-national enterprises were Gallup's International Association of Public Opinion Institutes founded in 1947 and International Public Opinion Research Inc., later known as International Research Associates, Inc. (INRA) set up by Elmo Roper's associate, Elmo Wilson, in 1948. Third, cross-national research began to be conducted on a continuing basis in the 1970s starting with the Eurobarometers of the European Community. Other major on-going cross-national collaborations include such global studies as the Comparative Study of Electoral Systems, International Social Survey Program, and World Value Surveys and such regional studies as the East Asian Social Survey, the European Social Survey, and the loosely connected Globalbarometers (the New Democracies/New European Barometers, Latinobarometers, Afrobarometers, Asianbarometer and Arab Barometers). Commercially, a series of merges have created a number of major international firms such as the Gallup Organization, GfK Group, IPSOS, and TNS/Kantar.



Tom W. Smith
President

WAPOR since its founding in 1947 has done much to promote the global expansion of survey research with its annual conferences and regional seminars, its professional journals, and special reports and task forces. This year WAPOR takes several important steps that clearly reflect the globalization of survey research. First, WAPOR is establishing its first regional chapter, LatinoWAPOR. While just being formally organized, the Latin American members of WAPOR have already organized five regional seminars. The latest being the upcoming **Latin American Congress on Public Opinion** in Bogotá, Colombia on September 19-21, 2012. Second, WAPOR is departing from its biennial rotation between meetings with the AAPOR in North America and then in Europe with ESOMAR. Instead WAPOR, is now on a three-year cycle meeting in North America, Europe, and then somewhere else. The first "somewhere else" will be the WAPOR Conference in Hong Kong on June 14-16, 2012. Perhaps no country reflects both the opportunities for and challenges facing survey research better than China. Third, WAPOR is launching a new round of its Freedom to Publish Opinion Polls study. When completed, it will update the last freedom-to-poll report issued in 2003 (<http://wapor.unl.edu/freedom/>) and will document the restrictions that various countries impose on the collection and dissemination of results from surveys, especially those related to pre-election polls. Robert Chung is leading the new study.

Through these and other efforts, WAPOR will continue to pursue the goals stated in its constitution including striving to "promote in each country of the world the right to conduct and publish scientific research on what the people and its groups think and how this thinking is influenced by various factors..." and to "assist and promote the development and publication of public opinion research worldwide..."

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Tom W. Smith". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

(Letter continued from page 2)

References

Smith, Tom W., "The Globalization of Survey Research," in Harkness, Janet; Braun, Michael; Edwards, Brad; Johnson, Timothy; Lyberg, Lars; Mohler, Peter; Pennell, Beth-Ellen and Smith, Tom W., Multinational, Multicultural, and Multiregional Survey Methods. New York: Wiley & Sons, 2010a.

Smith, Tom W., "The Origin and Development of Cross-national Survey Research," Paper presented to the Seminar on the Early Days of Survey Research and Their Importance Today," Vienna, July, 2010b.

Preparing for Hong Kong...

Since the establishment of WAPOR in 1947, this year's annual conference to be held in Hong Kong is the first time ever in 65 years that WAPOR is holding an annual conference



outside Europe and North America. We at the University of Hong Kong are determined to make it a success.

Over 130 papers have been accepted for presentation at the conference. A rough breakdown of the accepted papers shows that 47% comes from Europe and America, 45% comes from Asia, and 8% comes from the rest of the world. The titles of these papers can be found at <http://wapor2012.hkpop.hk/>.

Since a number of feature panels and round table discussions are still being organized, the final number of presentations is expected to reach over 150. Please help to spread the news. The theme of the conference is "The New World of Public Opinion Research", signifying the importance of new methodologies, new technologies, and new paradigms in the study of public opinion in the era of new media and a new way of life in new parts of the world.

The conference will take place on the main campus of the University of Hong Kong (or HKU, as it is familiarly known to students, staff and alumni), which is the oldest tertiary education institution in Hong Kong. For more information about HKU, please check it out at <http://www.hku.hk/>. We are still searching for more economic accommodation in and around the university campus, so please visit <http://wapor2012.hkpop.hk/> from time to time for more information.

One special feature of our WAPOR Hong Kong Conference is that other than HKU hosting this conference, Fudan University (Shanghai) and National Chengchi University (Taipei) will also co-host the conference. Other than contributing to the discussions, these co-hosts will also organize many interesting activities for our conference participants, including visits to their universities in Shanghai and Taipei. On top of that, tours around Hong Kong and its neighbouring city Macau will also be arranged, if you would indicate your interest in your registration form.

(Hong Kong continued on page 4)

(Hong Kong continued from page 3)

Hong Kong is Asia's World City, and you can easily move around yourself. Please click on the site <http://www.discoverhongkong.com/> to see the city before you come. I quote, "You can find tours to meet your every need and interest. Go sightseeing and experience our living culture and heritage. Take a day or night tour, cruise the harbour or visit outlying islands to enjoy nature at its best."

If you enjoy shopping, then "for sheer variety of products and brands in all price ranges, Hong Kong is a unique shopping experience. From glitzy malls to funky street markets, and trendy boutiques to traditional Chinese product stores and themed shopping districts, you can find everything from the latest designer fashions and electronic gadgets to best-value antiques and collectibles."

I myself would recommend a tram tour. I quote again, "During your stay in Hong Kong, there is no better way to experience the city's fascinating local attractions, tantalising tastes and unique heritage than by hopping on a tram. Locally known as 'Ding Ding', the tram has been an essential part of Hong Kong Island's daily life for over a century. Take a trip with our 'Ding Ding' Hong Kong Tram Guide and explore over one hundred culinary and cultural experiences..." and all for only 30 cents US!

Hope to see you in Hong Kong!

Robert Chung,
Conference Chair

Conference and Travel Information

Deadlines:

- Early registration: May 1, 2012
- Final registration (with late fee): June 1, 2012



Please check out the WAPOR website at <http://wapor.unl.edu/>. Inquiries can be directed to the Conference Secretary Winnie Lee at wapor2012@hkupop.hku.hk or the WAPOR Executive Coordinator Renae Reis at renae@wapor.org.

The Hong Kong team has put together an extensive website full of travel information for all visitors. Everything from tourist and visa information, location and hotel information can be found here as well. Both the WAPOR site and the HKU site will have the updated lists of special sessions and the conference schedule and list of accepted papers.

<http://wapor2012.hkpop.hk/en/index.php>

<http://wapor.unl.edu/65th-annual-conference/>

Paper Submission for Prizes

Each year WAPOR considers conference papers that fit certain criteria to be eligible for prizes. The Elizabeth **Nelson Prize** is presented to the best conference paper from a society in transition and the Naomi C. **Turner Prize** honors the best conference paper presented by a student. In order to be considered for the awards, authors are required to submit their papers via email with to the conference organizers by June 1, 2012. Please indicate which prize you would like your paper to be considered for. In any year WAPOR reserves the right to not present these awards. If you have any questions, please contact Renae Reis at renae@wapor.org.

flect the continuous news coverage of the war against drug cartels launched by President Calderón in December 2006. Since then, the media have reported about 50,000 people killed. Images of extreme violence and decapitated bodies have filled the airwaves and print news outlets on a regular basis. The same poll mentioned above showed that 8 percent of respondents said they have been victimized by crime in the last three months, and another 20 percent reported that a family member has been a victim too.

The wave of crime has put many Mexicans on a constant alert, not only spreading fears and changing habits, but in some cases forcing them to change their place of residence and/or their business. Under this context, the polling community had been silently coping with safety issues, taking precautions, and adjusting to changing circumstances. That silence broke dramatically in July 31, 2011, when interviewers from two well-known polling organizations, Parametria and Consulta-Mitofsky, disappeared during the fieldwork of a pre-election poll in the state of Michoacán. Both companies went public immediately and the missing interviewers became a news story during three days before they were set free. WAPOR published a press release on August 3, expressing the Association's solidarity with the Mexican polling companies and pointing out how public opinion research was increasingly complicated in the country, especially in "certain territories controlled by drug cartels". The two companies confirmed that their interviewers had been abducted by people who thought they were members of a competing criminal organization.

It is now a common fear among interviewers to be mistaken as criminals when they arrive in a town to conduct their polling work, either by criminal gangs or by police and local authorities. Some polling organizations opted for telephone interviews to continue their election-related work in Michoacán and in other places. This sounds generally fine in metropolitan areas but the overall population that has a residential phone line is rather limited. Residential telephone coverage (not including mobile phones) ranges from 16 to 72 percent in the lowest and highest of the 32 states; in rural areas phone coverage is even lower. The 2010 census reported that only slightly over 12 of the 28 million households in the country have a phone line. So, a better-safe-than-sorry logic clearly protects interviewers but raises serious concerns about sample coverage and other methodological issues. Reaching a good balance between methodological rigors and avoiding high risks has clearly become a dilemma that is forcing polling organizations to take some measures and, some of the pollsters say, increasing their costs.

How are polling companies coping with this? The colleagues who replied to my questions reported several ways in which crime is affecting their work and what measures they are taking. Since there is not enough space here to discuss all the open-ended responses, let me at least present a quantitative summary. All of them said that they had to modify their sampling points when they become aware that some of them are in high-risk areas. In addition to Michoacán, other states such as Tamaulipas and others along the border with the United States are seen as highly risky, but threats have been reported in many states from different regions, even in those that apparently are not at the center of the drug war. Nine out of ten colleagues also said that their interviewers have experienced threats and harassment by criminal groups. Seven out of ten said that their personnel have been confronted by armed people when conducting their interviews. And about half said that they have been harassed by police or local authorities too, in some cases being deprived of the right to do their work, being temporarily imprisoned, and even experienced the confiscation of their work materials.

One third of the polling professionals who responded to my questionnaire reported that they have experienced the problem of having missing interviewers. The need to keep a continuous communication with interviewers has increased their costs of operation, and also a sense of insecurity. (One of the pollsters said that "we are always afraid that something really bad could happen to our interviewers"). Another third of professionals said that they have decided not to conduct a specific survey and prefer to lose a contract in certain regions for fear of putting their employees at risk. And almost half of the professionals consulted said that they have modified some questions so they do not contribute to an already tense situation among respondents, or in case local authorities check the questions they ask. For example, some have dropped income-related questions from their questionnaires, and

some prefer not to ask questions about government performance on the war on drugs, the police, or the local authorities' efforts to fight crime—not to mention perceptions of how authorities may be colluding with criminals! Some pollsters also report increasing refusal rates, and higher item non-response to various questions, including voting intention.

In general, three out of four colleagues who replied to my questions reported that their fieldwork personnel have confronted either very serious or somewhat serious problems with organized crime during fieldwork. But problems of safety are not limited to facing criminals: in some cases, a group of interviewers may have a very difficult time when passing by a military check point, or when facing an angry local community who may mistake them with drug dealers, or when harassed by local authorities who believe that their polling materials and accreditation is just a disguise for criminal activities. This does not happen every time and everywhere, but it has happened and it may happen again. Polling organizations do not ignore this when sending out their interviewers and supervisors to do a poll. The training of interviewers now includes more aspects than just the science of conducting proper interviews. The polling manuals do not include a “survival guide” as such, but certainly a list of things to do and not to do when facing potential threats, a list that seems to expand after every poll. And while this list expands, the interviewing personnel shrinks, another problem pointed out by some pollsters, who report an increasing number of desertions. People do not want to risk going out to ask questions.

Despite this, and with a presidential election scheduled for July 1st, 2012, various polling organizations are conducting more and more election polls. Just in the first three months of the year more than 30 national face-to-face polls have been published, along with a daily face-to-face tracking poll that I am counting as one, as well as many other state-level polls for local races. This number is expected to increase as Election Day approaches. This does not count private polls for parties, candidates, and other groups, but they are certainly out there too.

When I asked the pollsters how they rate the current conditions in the country for face-to-face polling in a scale of 1 to 10 (1 being completely unfavorable and 10 completely favorable), the average was 6.8. I was surprised that they would not rate the current conditions lower, given their responses in other questions and a series of frightening anecdotes one sometimes hears when chatting with interviewers. In comparison, their retrospective assessment of the situation six years ago (in the previous presidential election) averaged a solid 9.3. So the situation has clearly worsened, but it is not bad in all the country, only in some places and, as one of the pollsters said, only when having bad luck.

Overall, states such as Michoacán and Tamaulipas raise more worries than other places do, as well as certain towns and municipalities throughout Mexico. This country report is a first attempt to illustrate this problem for the WAPOR community after the Association's press release of August 3, 2011, and I hope we can document this more thoroughly in the months to come. Meanwhile, I am grateful to the Mexican pollsters who responded my questionnaire so diligently for their willingness to share their experiences and the measures that they are taking. I feel indebted to them and will make a more systematic report of their open-ended responses in the near future.

CHART

Which is the main problem that the country faces today?

| | Crime % | The economy % |
|------|------------|------------------|
| 2007 | 39 | 24 |
| 2008 | 42 | 27 |
| 2009 | 38 | 39 |
| 2010 | 54 | 23 |
| 2011 | 61 | 18 |
| 2012 | 63 | 16 |

Source: *Reforma* national polls. Percentages are annual averages of 4 quarterly polls of about 1,500 interviews each, except 2011, when the average includes only 3 polls, and 2012, which only shows one poll conducted in March.

(See the following page for more of this article)

¹ I would like to thank several colleagues from the Mexican polling community who contributed to this article with their comments, reports, insights and, especially, with their responses to a small questionnaire on the topic that I sent them by e-mail, in which they shared some of the main problems that their companies or polling units have experienced in regards to crime and the measures they are taking to deal with them: Edmundo Berumen (Berumen y Asociados), Roy Campos y Marcelo Ortega (Consulta-Mitofsky), Ricardo de la Peña (GEA-ISA), Pablo Parás (Data OPM), Efraín Hernández (Arcop) Carlo Varela and Fernando Cano (Varela y Asociados), Paul Valdés (Parametro), María Antonia Mancillas (El Norte), Roberto Gutiérrez (Mural), e Igor Ramírez (Reforma).

V Latin American Congress
Public Opinion, Polarization and Citizenship

September 19 - 21, 2012 - Bogotá, Colombia

Facultad de Comunicación Social - Periodismo
Universidad Externado de Colombia



The World Association for Public Opinion Research (WAPOR) will hold its V Latin American Congress September 19-21, 2012, in Bogotá, Colombia. The theme of this congress emphasizes how different forms of polarization (political, cognitive, affective, economic, technological) affect community life and democracy in the region. Concerns with the polarizing potential of emerging communication technologies, the distancing of political elites, intolerance among citizens, income inequality, technological divides, and how these relate to different citizenship manifestations in the region, are central to public opinion research's contribution to societal integration. Congress sessions will focus on changing public opinion as well as challenges to survey research. We welcome research that deals with the congress theme as well as other longstanding topics of research, including:

- Public Opinion on Social, Political, Economic and Environmental Issues
- Media Effects, Agenda Setting, Framing and Priming
- Deliberation
- Social Influence
- New Media, Citizen Opinion Expression, Fragmented Audiences
- Public Opinion Theory
- Quality control of research processes (ISO standards)
- Web Surveys and Access Panels
- Questionnaire Design, Sampling, Response Rates and Non-Response

The V Latin American Congress seeks to bring together scholars and practitioners with political, communication, psychological, sociological, economic, and survey backgrounds, that would like to present and discuss original research papers. Of course, the roles of methodology and quality control in survey research are of key significance as well.

Deadlines - The deadline to submit an abstract has passed. Notification of conference decision (15 April 2012). Paper submission (15 July 2012). Early bird registration (1 August 2012).

Languages – Spanish and Portuguese will be the official languages of conference. Presentations in English will be accepted for designated bilingual sessions, where simultaneous interpretation will be provided. Proposals and papers may be written in Spanish, Portuguese and English.

Queries - Should be directed to congress chair Hernando Rojas (hrojas@wisc.edu). More information to be announced shortly on the congress website www.waporbogota.org and **Facebook** page.

Regional Seminar in Gdansk: Using Our Economic Imagination

Contributed by Krzysztof Zagorski,
Poland National Representative and
Seminar Chair



The Regional European WAPOR Conference took place this year in Gdansk (Poland) from March 14th to March 16th. Its very timely topic was "Opinions and attitudes in time of economic uncertainty". This time, the list of participants was not very long but very differentiated. We had no passive participants; all of them presented papers. There were more than thirty paper authors and co-authors from various countries such as Belgium, China (both Peoples Republic and Hong Kong), Czech Republic, Finland, France, Georgia, Germany, Lithuania, Poland, Russia, Switzerland, United Kingdom and the USA. The conference was organized by Kozminski University, Warsaw. Krzysztof Zagorski served as the main organizer. The conference was introduced by Patricia Moy, Chair of the WAPOR Conference Committee. The inaugural lecture was given by Professor Andrzej K. Kozminski, the President of Kozminski University. He presented his idea of "economic imagination", an important factor of economic as well as political behavior, especially in times of economic turbulence and uncertainty.

Almost all of the papers discussed various aspects of economic attitudes and different opinions on economic issues as influenced by the most recent economic crisis. However, since the crisis coincided in some countries with already conducted or forthcoming elections, several papers examined the interrelations



between economic issues and support for political leaders or parties. Sir Robert Worcester (pictured at left), Roger Mortimore and Mark Gill from MORI presented a multi-country, dynamic analysis of economic performance and support for national leaders. This both overall and in-depth presentation was well supplemented by a very interesting, though not very optimistic, paper by Alexey Levinson and Svetlana Koroleva from Levada Center in Moscow, who have discussed newly emerging trends in Russian political public discussion and behavior in a time between parliamentary and presidential elections. Kathleen A. Frankovic from CBS News Poll analyzed relations between

economic opinions and political preferences in a time of the American presidential campaign, paying special attention to partisan evaluations of economy. This group of papers included also two presentations by Mikolaj Czesnik, Michal Kotnarowski and Radoslaw Markowski (in different configurations) from Polish Academy of Sciences on ideological and socio-economic divisions of the Polish electorate.

Several papers referred directly to the perceptions of current crisis in particular countries. They were by Jan Cervenka (Public Opinion Research Center, Czech Academy of Sciences), Vladas Gaidys (Lithuanian Social Research Center "Vilmorus"), Mirosława Grabowska (CBOS, Poland) and Blandyna A. Lewinska (PBS-DGA, Poland). In addition, Merab Pahulia (GORBI, Georgia) presented evaluations of economic conditions in several "post-Soviet" countries, including among them such less known countries as Armenia, Azerbaijan, Georgia and Kazakhstan. Since the next WAPOR world conference will soon take place in Hong Kong, a special interest was attracted by the paper on public sentiment in this city, co-authored by Robert Chung, Winnie Lee and Edward Tai (The University of Hong Kong).

(Gdansk continued on page 9)



(Gdansk continued from page 8)

The issues of subjective well-being in present difficult time were discussed by Femke De Keulenaer and Robert Manchin (GALLUP Europe, Belgium) as well as by Diana Augustin and Wolfgang Donsbach (Technical University, Dresden, Germany).

The influences exerted by economic difficulties on etatist (pro-governmental intervention) versus liberal (free market) attitudes were discussed by Heikki Ervasti (University of Turku, Finland), Frederic Gonthier (University of Grenoble, France) as well as Oliver Quiring, Mathias Weber and Stefan Geiss (University of Mainz, Germany).

Three papers, all of them from Kozminski University, concerned various aspects of support for democratic political system in present economic conditions. Gavin Rae compared economic and democratic attitudes in troubled Eastern Europe. Krzysztof Zagorski discussed populist social and economic attitudes and their influence on support for parliamentary democracy in Poland and Katarzyna Staszynska analyzed the relations between democratic attitudes and the attitudes to public opinion research in Poland and Russia. Partly related to these problems was a paper by Peng Lu (Chinese Academy of Social Sciences and New York University in Abu Dhabi) on confidence in political institutions in "BRICS" countries and its independence from current economy.

Finally, the paper by Zbigniew Rau from Kozminski University has to be mentioned because of its very original research topic and methodological approach. The author has reached the conclusion, based on qualitative FGI interviews, that general public understandings of complex economic, social and political concepts are surprisingly close to theoretical understandings of these concepts by philosophers and social thinkers.

The lack of space makes it impossible to mention all of the papers presented at the conference. Those omitted here were equally valuable and interesting as those mentioned above, which were subjectively grouped by their similar topics. The other were perhaps more diversified, but by no means less interesting. The participants have stressed an equally high standard of the whole conference and valuable contributions by all the authors.

The venue and social activities also contributed to the conference's success. Our attractive, comfortable and well equipped hotel was overlooking the Gdansk old town. It was set in a newly rebuilt and specially adapted old warehouse (granary). Welcoming drinks were organized in a form of the "beer seminar" given by a master from the hotel's own mini-brewery. The barrels were ceremonially opened by Robert Chung and Krzysztof Zagorski (pictured above), the organizers of the forthcoming and present WAPOR conferences. Due to the courtesy of the President of the City of Gdansk and the Director of the Historical Gdansk Museum, an official dinner took place in the representative "Royal Hall" of the historical City Hall of Gdansk. The participants highly appreciated both the splendor of the place and the high quality of the food.



The last word of the conference was given to Robert Chung, who cordially invited everybody to the 65th Annual WAPOR Conference in Hong Kong.

WAPOR Notes and News

WAPOR Standards and Guides

WAPOR aims to promote high standards in survey research and to advance survey-research methodology. WAPOR's website includes many important documents that promote those goals. These include WAPOR's [Code of Ethics](#), the WAPOR [Guidelines for Exit Polls](#) the WAPOR/ESOMAR [Guide to Opinion Polls](#), and the WAPOR/AAPOR [Standard Definitions](#) of Final Dispositions of Case Codes and Outcome Rates for Surveys.

In addition, WAPOR has been a member of Technical Committee 245 of the International Organization for Standardization (ISO) which has issued ISO 20252 Market, opinion and social research — Vocabulary and service requirements and ISO 26362 Access panels in market, opinion and social research — Vocabulary and service requirements.

WAPOR's Own Survey

WAPOR is conducting its own survey – among WAPOR's members. The short survey is intended to optimize WAPOR on an empirical basis.

The link to the online-survey will be emailed to WAPOR members at the end of April. The WAPOR council asks all members to take a few minutes to fill out the short questionnaire. The survey is anonymous and, of course, answers are confidential and no individual responses will be identifiable. Results will be presented at the WAPOR annual conference in Hong Kong.

Thank you in advance for your participation.

Thomas Roessing, Membership Chair

Recorded Interviews With a Research Legend: Mark Abrams

Social scientist Mark Abrams (1906-1994) served as **WAPOR president** from 1959-1960. His professional contributions wide-ranging including pioneering new survey methods as well as major surveys in the UK, analyzing Nazi propaganda during World War II and founding Research Services Ltd (RSL). Later in his career he authored numerous books on varying topics such as *The Teenage Consumer* (1959) *People in Their Sixties* (1983). A leader and academic in various institutions, many consider him to be the father of social and market research in Britain.

Recordings of interviews done with Abrams in 1984 have recently been made available online. John Hall, a survey researcher himself for more than 45 years, shares the following on his website:

“With the agreement of the Abrams family, Professor Abrams has released a full transcript of the recordings together with copies of the original tapes. The recordings run to over four hours and the transcript to 102 pages. Accordingly, the transcript has been divided into sections, for each of which there is a corresponding audio file. The full transcript and the separate transcript sections are available from [An interview with Mark Abrams](#). Corresponding audio files have been extracted from the tape recordings and are available from [An interview with Mark Abrams \(audio files\)](#).”

WAPOR Latinoamérica, Headquartered in Buenos Aires

Contributed by Maria Braun



Following a year-long process, the Buenos Aires headquarters of WAPOR Latinoamérica has finally been formally registered before the Argentine authorities as a nonprofit association.

This is no minor issue. Up to now, everything that WAPOR Latinoamérica carried out depended exclusively on the good will and contributions of a group of professionals that has generously contributed to making this project viable. Granted the status of an NGO, we will, hopefully, be able to continue the projects that we have developed so far and tackle others – self-supporting and with greater scope and dimension. It will also enable us to capture members and associates.

WAPOR Latinoamérica fully shares the mission and values of WAPOR. It proposes to promote and help develop research in public opinion in Latin America. Over the years, we have contributed and hope to continue to do so through Latin American congresses. We have also published two issues of the journal *Revista Latinoamericana de Opinión Pública* and expect to publish bi-annually. In the future, we intend to develop an area linked to training and implementation, as well as taking at least some steps toward creating a database of Latin American surveys.

Finally, as Cesar Aguiar said, a special mentor of this project who sadly recently passed away, “Building an informed public opinion in a democratic society largely depends on the quality of the research and the professionals”. WAPOR Latinoamérica is aligned with this vision.

The website for the new chapter can be found here: <http://www.waporlatinoamerica.org/>

Conferences of Other Associations

Note: Previously this feature appeared in the IJPOR, however, due to space constraints in the journal, we will run the calendar in the WAPOR newsletter.

2012

May 17-20, 2012
AAPOR
67th Annual Conference
Orlando, FL, USA
<http://aapor.org/Home.htm>

May 24-28, 2012
International Communication Association (ICA)
62nd Annual Conference
Phoenix, AZ, USA
<http://www.icaheadq.org/conferences/2011/2012%20cfp.pdf>

October 31-November 3, 2012
American Statistical Association
International Conference on Methods for
Surveying and Enumerating Hard-to-Reach
Populations
H2R/2012
New Orleans, LA, USA
<http://www.amstat.org/meetings/h2r/2012>

November 16-17, 2012
Midwest Association for Public Opinion Research
Annual Conference
Chicago, IL, USA
<http://www.mapor.org>

Please let us know about your organization's upcoming event(s). We would be happy to publish them in upcoming issues of the newsletter. Thank you!

Calendar

2012

May 1, 2012

Early bird registration deadline
65th Annual Conference
Hong Kong

June 1, 2012

Paper submission deadline
65th Annual Conference
Hong Kong
(see page 4 for details)

June 1, 2012

Late registration deadline
65th Annual Conference
Hong Kong

July 15, 2012

Paper submission deadline
V Latin American Congress
Bogotá, Colombia

August 1, 2012

Early bird registration deadline
V Latin American Congress
Bogotá, Colombia

-
- 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
2nd quarter newsletter is
July 1, 2012*

GESIS Summer School in Survey Methodology

GESIS - Leibniz Institute for the Social Sciences offers a new research methods training opportunity:

The 1st GESIS Summer School in Survey Methodology.

This event is designed for doctoral students and junior researchers who wish to conduct their own survey or to improve their understanding of the generation and quality of existing survey data. It will take place from August 9 to 25, 2012 at the University of Cologne, Germany.

The programme includes refresher courses, main courses around 10 themes, a stimulating evening as well as a social programme. The main course themes are:

- Questionnaire Design
- Complex Survey Sampling
- Measurement, Interview and Data Quality
- Mail Surveys
- Web Surveys
- Mixed Methods
- Vignette Analysis
- Nonresponse
- Cross-National Comparative Surveys
- Translation and Harmonisation in Cross-National Surveys

Online application has just started, so please go to our [website](#) for further information, a [pdf brochure](#), and access to the [application system](#). Also check out our [facebook page](#)!

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Please contact:

WAPOR Secretariat

UNL Gallup Research Center
University of Nebraska-Lincoln
201 North 13th Street

Lincoln, Nebraska 68588-0242, USA

phone: 001 402 472 7720

fax: 001 402 472 7727

email: renae@wapor.org

Editor: Renae Reis