

# WAPOR NEWSLETTER

WORLD ASSOCIATION FOR PUBLIC OPINION RESEARCH

First Quarter 2013

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## **Revolutions in the Measurement of World Public Opinion**

Contributed by Michael Elasmr and James Shanahan, Conference Co-Chairs

We are looking forward to seeing you in Boston, on the campus of Boston University, for our upcoming WAPOR conference. We chose the WAPOR conference theme to be “**Revolutions in the Measurement of World Public Opinion**” for three reasons:

1) The city hosting the conference: Boston. Boston has been the center of many revolutions over the years, most notably (and obviously) that which resulted in the independence of the American colonies.

2) The emergence of alternative approaches for capturing public opinion: Since 2010, there has been a series of studies that demonstrate that public opinion can be captured in ways that significantly differ from the established methods that have been traditionally used. Known as “Sentiment Analysis” or “Opinion Mining,” these studies consist of automated content analyses of social media postings found on microblogging sites. What impacts will these types of analyses have on the future of world public opinion measurement?

3) The exponential growth in the expression of opinion by increasingly larger numbers of people around the world: For the first time in the history of human civilization, we are witnessing more people being given the opportunity to express their opinions (as a function of the epic-scale revolutions in Egypt and other countries of North Africa) and more technological tools that allow them to express these opinions (e.g. social networking sites, microblogging sites, smart phones, etc.). How will these newly found freedoms of expression, widely dif-



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

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## Letter from the President



Alejandro Moreno,  
WAPOR President

Dear WAPOR members,

I had the opportunity to attend a joint meeting of the Arab Barometer and the World Values Survey at Qatar University in Doha, on March 18-20. Seeing friends and colleagues who conduct public opinion research in different parts of the world, and learning from their survey findings and professional experiences is a reinforcing experience to our WAPOR goals, not to mention the possibility to strengthen ties of collaboration in common projects and interests.

In these meetings, I tend to pay special attention to the difficulties to conduct and publish public opinion surveys, and try to understand what obstacles—institutional, contextual, or any other type—survey researchers confront in their countries. The anecdotal stories that I hear are quite powerful; and many of them illustrate our records of how surveys are conducted or restricted in different places. The recently released and updated WAPOR document on “The Freedom to Publish Opinion Poll Results” (2012), contributed by our colleague Robert Chung from Hong Kong University, is a useful and systematic guide to the institutional and contextual restrictions to survey research worldwide. I find this report also useful to think about two other features of survey research: quality and safety. The discussions, findings, and exchanges at the meeting in Doha reinforced once again my belief in our constitutional principle that “public opinion is a critical force in shaping and transforming society”. And public opinion research is crucial for that.

Back at home, I received a phone call from a journalist that balanced the optimism I brought with me from the conference. She asked me to name two survey firms in my country that were “solid”. I asked her what exactly she meant by that. “Well,” she said, “don’t you think that your profession has lost all reputation here in Mexico? I am just trying to know which firm, if any, I can recommend for an international study.” She was referring to the fact that public opinion polls in Mexico lost their credibility in last year’s presidential election, when most polling organizations shone for their inaccuracy, for their confusing explanations, and for their reluctance to admit any possible errors. By talking with colleagues from other countries, I see that lack of transparency, malpractices, and other negative aspects of polling are, unfortunately, rather common. Election polls are only a part of a much broader world of survey research, but it is a highly visible and influential part that is observed—and increasingly watched—by a broader public as well. Sound methodologies as well as ethical standards and minimal disclosure are all essential to produce reliable polls.

These contrasting experiences took place as I was getting ready to write this letter, and they directed my attention to our objectives as an organization. We wish to see a vibrant profession of public opinion researchers around the world recording and reporting on people’s views and attitudes on a great variety of topics, and at the same time we wish to see our profession sound and reputable. Our goals at WAPOR include the promotion and defense of the right to conduct and publish public opinion polls, and also the dissemination of scientific, methodological, and ethical principles to do that properly. We generally oppose attempts to restrict polling activities, but we favor the development of polling according to scientific and ethical principles.

*(Letter continued on page 3)*

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(Letter continued from page 3)

As we grow and move forward as an organization, which we have done substantially in the last few years, I wish to thank all our members for their commitment to our principles, to our organization officials, council members, and staff for their valuable contribution to WAPOR's continuous activities, to our editors at IJPOR for improving the quality and presence of this essential channel of dissemination, to our conference organizers, and to our past leaders for their work and example. A special thanks is due to Tom W. Smith, our Past President, not only for taking WAPOR to higher heights, but also for his continuous and generous support to the organization and to me as new President.

I look forward to seeing you at Boston University for our 66<sup>th</sup> annual conference.

Best wishes,  
Alejandro Moreno  
WAPOR President

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***Public Diplomacy, International Broadcasting, and Public Opinion:  
New Media, New Tools, New Challenges***

**A Pre-Conference to the WAPOR Annual Conference  
Tuesday - May 14, 2013  
Boston, Massachusetts**

Over the last decade, mobile and internet usage has skyrocketed; global news channels have moved to the fore; and the events of the Arab Spring, the Green Revolution in Iran, the Global Occupy Movement, as well as many others have brought into question traditional ideas about the relationship between information flows and public opinion formation. These events suggest that a re-examination of the relationship between public diplomacy, international broadcasting, and public opinion is sorely needed. The idea is that, if mutually positive presentation of information occurs among well-intended countries, governments, NGOs, and other members of civil society, then the people of these countries would be less likely to support violent ways for managing any conflicts that might spontaneously emerge among their governments. New technologies and new information flows raise challenges for collecting accurate public opinion data relevant to the practice of international outreach at the same time that they provide new channels for international communication and for data collection about the successes and failures of that communication.

Bringing together academics, data collection experts, and public diplomacy and international broadcasting practitioners, this one-day pre-conference will explore these challenges in detail.

This preconference is designed as a meeting place for academics, polling professionals, and public diplomacy and international broadcasting practitioners to share their perspectives, formulate new ideas, and identify areas where further research is needed. While the preconference will incorporate various speakers and panels, it is designed as a continuing conversation in which all participants are encouraged to openly engage in dialogue and explore potential synergies and future collaborations.

**[See page 6 for more information](#)**

fused information technologies, and enormous volumes of opinion expressions impact the measurement of world public opinion?

We are pleased that the WAPOR program includes several sessions that address, to varying extents, this conference theme. Many other sessions focus on theory and measurement issues and traditional topics of importance to the study of world public opinion including: the environment, news coverage, intergroup relations, polling in the Middle East, issues in democracy, the economy, voting behavior, media credibility, and political participation. We are, of course, very pleased that many countries are represented this year in the WAPOR program.



**A WAPOR Preconference:** This year, we are also holding a WAPOR preconference on May 14 during the daytime. The preconference is titled: “Public Diplomacy, International Broadcasting, and Public Opinion: New Media, New Tools, New Challenges”. We do not have to look very hard to realize that the world around us is filled with many kinds of conflicts. Not surprisingly, many of these occur among distinct countries. What role do public diplomacy and international broadcasting, whether by well-intended governments or non-governmental organizations, play in shaping how individuals living in one country perceive the government and citizens living in another country? What are the processes that shape these perceptions? The preconference brings together academics and professionals in an effort to figure out what we know about these processes and what we still need to know. For more information about the preconference see page 6 and/or point your browser to <http://publicdiplomacywapor.wordpress.com/>.

The preconference is listed as an add-on to your regular conference registration. If you missed this while you were registering, you can find the registration form on the website above. Forms can be emailed or faxed to the WAPOR office per the instructions on the form.



**A conference in Boston:** For those of you who have not visited Boston previously, you will be pleased to know that Boston is a walking city and that the conference is located in the heart of Boston, on the campus of Boston University. Boston is a cosmopolitan city with a wide array of excellent restaurants and historic attractions. The subway in Boston is referred to as the “T”. The “T” crosses above ground in the middle of the Boston University campus. There are restaurants and shops within minutes of walking from campus, including the notable Newbury Street with its fashionable boutiques and many sidewalk eateries. After a day attending conference presentations, a quick hop on the “T” can take you to the Boston waterfront, where the New England Aquarium is located and where you can also find many tourist attractions including harbor boat tours. Adjacent to the waterfront is an area known as the “North End” where you can find many Italian eateries and cafes. If you are either arriving

(Conference continued on page 5)

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(Conference continued from page 4)

is completed, we recommend that you consider spending half a day on a Whale Watching trip. The waters not far from Boston are the feeding grounds for some of the planet's largest whales. The area where the whales feed is protected and is known as the Stellwagen Bank Marine Sanctuary. If you have time for additional sightseeing, we highly recommend a trip to Cape Cod and perhaps even to the Islands of Nantucket and Martha's Vineyard, known as the summer playgrounds of many international celebrities.

In sum, the conference program along with the setting of the conference promise to make the 66<sup>th</sup> annual WAPOR conference a very memorable event!

See you in Boston!\*

Michael G. Elasmr and James Shanahan  
WAPOR Conference Co-Chairs

\*Registration for the conference is being done through AAPOR. If you need any assistance, please contact the WAPOR office at [renae@wapor.org](mailto:renae@wapor.org). You can find more information about registration, the pre-conference, hotel information and ideas for what to do with your free time in Boston at the website:

<http://wapor.unl.edu/66th-annual-conference/>

All photos courtesy of the Greater Boston Convention and Visitor's Bureau

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## 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.*

### 2013

16-19 May 2013  
American Association for Public Opinion  
Research (AAPOR)  
68th Annual Conference  
Boston, MA, USA  
[http://aapor.org/AAPOR\\_Annual\\_Conference.htm](http://aapor.org/AAPOR_Annual_Conference.htm)

17-21 June 2013  
International Communication Association (ICA)  
63rd Annual Conference  
London, UK  
<http://www.icahdq.org/conf/index.asp>

15-19 July 2013  
European Survey Research Association (ESRA)  
5th Conference  
Ljubljana, Slovenia  
<http://www.europeansurveyresearch.org/conference>

3-8 August 2013  
Joint Statistical Meetings  
Montréal, Québec, Canada  
<http://www.amstat.org/meetings/jsm/2013/index.cfm>

10-13 August 2013  
American Sociological Association  
New York, NY, USA  
<http://www.asanet.org/AM2013/am2013.cfm>

22-23 November 2013  
Midwest Association for Public Opinion Research  
(MAPOR)  
Annual Conference  
Chicago, IL, USA  
<http://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!*

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PUBLIC DIPLOMACY, INTERNATIONAL BROADCASTING, AND PUBLIC OPINION:  
NEW MEDIA, NEW TOOLS, NEW CHALLENGES

**A Pre-Conference to the WAPOR Annual Conference**

**Tuesday - May 14, 2013**

**Boston University, Boston, MA**

9:00 – 9:30 Breakfast and Registration

9:30-10:00 Welcome and Introductions

10:00 – 12:00 Session 1: Polling the Nations: The Challenges of International Public Opinion Research

Across the world, the rise of a global, interconnected information systems and the proliferation of internet and mobile technologies have considerable implications for countries at every stage of development and economic, political, and social stability. In this session, experts involved in data collection efforts will discuss the implications of this complex information environment for measuring how public opinion about nation states are formed and changed.

12:00 – 1:00 Lunch

1:00 – 3:00 Session 2: Acting from Knowledge: Polling, Evaluation and Evidence-based Public Diplomacy in Practice

An esteemed panel of public diplomacy and international broadcasting practitioners and researchers will discuss the challenges and opportunities of using public opinion data to inform practice.

3:15 – 5:15 Session 3: Moving the Needle Forward?: Theory and Practice in the New Media Environment.

Drawing upon the perspectives and evidence raised during Session 1 and Session 2, scholars will discuss the current array of theoretical frameworks available to help explicate the relationship between public opinion and public diplomacy and brainstorm about future direction for theoretical and empirical research.

5:15-6:00 Meet and greet

Panelists include:

Yashwant Deshmukh, CVoter Foundation (India)  
Michael G. Elasmir, Boston University  
Colin Irwin, University of Liverpool (UK)  
Gary Langer, ABC News  
Patrick Moynihan, U.S. Department of State  
Phillip Seib, University of Southern California  
Dina Smeltz, Chicago Council on Global Affairs  
Shibley Telhami, University of Maryland, College Park  
Matthew Warshaw, D3 Systems  
Richard Wike, Pew Research Center  
John Zogby, The Zogby Poll

See more at the website:

**<http://publicdiplomacywapor.wordpress.com/>**

**WAPOR 66<sup>th</sup> Annual Conference**  
**Revolutions in the Measurement of World Public Opinion**  
**May 14-16, 2013**  
**Boston University, Photonics Center, 8 St. Mary's Street, Boston, MA 02215**  
**PROGRAM**

**Day 1 (Tuesday, May 14)**

9:00-4:00 WAPOR Council Meeting  
5:00-6:00 Registration Open  
6:00-7:30 Welcome Reception

**Day 2 (Wednesday, May 15)**

8:00-9:00 Coffee and Registration and meet and greet  
9:00-9:30 President's Welcome  
9:35-11:00 Concurrent Sessions A  
    Session 1: Impact of News Coverage  
    Session 2: Intergroup Relations  
    Session 3: Methodology: Measurement  
11:10-12:35 Concurrent Sessions B  
    Session 1: Polling Trends  
    Session 2: Methodology Issues  
    Session 3: Polling in the Middle East  
12:40-1:40 Lunch  
1:45-3:10 Concurrent Sessions C  
    Session 1: Panel: *Rebalancing U.S. Foreign Policy: Perceptions and Implications of the 'Pivot to Asia' among American, Korean, Middle Eastern and Afghan Publics*  
    Session 2: Public Opinion about Social and Environmental Issues  
    Session 3: Methodology Issues in Web Survey Designs and Alternative Modes of Estimating Public Opinion  
    Session 4: Issues in Democracy  
3:20-4:55 Concurrent Sessions D  
    Session 1: Relationship between Public Opinion and Policy-Making  
    Session 2: Traditional Media and Internet Effects on Public Opinion  
    Session 3: Methodology Issues  
    Session 4: Public Opinion about the Economy

**Day 2 (Wednesday, May 15) (continued)**

5:00-5:30 Meet and greet  
5:00-6:30 IJPOR Editorial Board Meeting  
7:00-9:00 WAPOR Dinner

**Day 3 (Thursday, May 16)**

8:00-9:00 Coffee, registration, and meet and greet  
9:00-10:30 WAPOR business meeting  
10:35-12:00 Concurrent Sessions E  
    Session 1: Panel: *Leading Issues in Global and Regional Polling*  
    Session 2: Theoretical Perspectives on the Role of Media in Public Opinion  
    Session 3: Sources of Influence on Public Opinion and Voting Behavior  
    Session 4: Methodology: Response Rate and Non-Response  
12:05-12:35 Meet and greet  
12:40-1:40 Lunch  
1:45-3:10 Concurrent Sessions F  
    Session 1: Social Media Research  
    Session 2: Methodology: Measurement  
    Session 3: Traditional Media and Internet Effects on Public Opinion  
    Session 4: Media Content and Media Credibility  
3:15-4:40 Concurrent Sessions G  
    Session 1: Issues in Democracy  
    Session 2: Intergroup Relations  
    Session 3: Polling Trends  
    Session 4: Sources of Influence on Political Participation and Voting Behavior

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## News and Notes

The World Values Survey Association elected its new Executive Committee in a meeting celebrated in Doha, Qatar, on March 18-20. The new EC includes WAPOR President, Alejandro Moreno. Alejandro has been involved with the World Values Survey since 1990, and he has served as Principal Investigator in Mexico for the 200, 2005 and 2010 waves of the study, and also as Co-Chair of the Scientific Advisory Committee during the last four years.

WVSA Executive Committee (2013-2017):

**President**, Christian Welzel (Germany)  
**Vice-President**, Alejandro Moreno (Mexico)  
**Secretary General**, Bi Puranen (Sweden)  
**Treasurer**, Pippa Norris (Britain)  
**Member at Large**, Christian Haerpfer (Austria)  
**Member at Large**, Eduard Ponarin (Russia)  
**Ex-Officio Member**, Ronald Inglehart (USA)  
**Ex-Officio Member**, Jaime Díez-Medrano (Spain)

See more information about the WVSA at:  
<http://www.worldvaluessurvey.org/>

## Memberships

As you probably know, renewals of WAPOR memberships continue throughout the year. Last month renewal notices were mailed to anyone who was a member in 2012 but had not yet renewed in 2013. If you are not sure of your status, simply go to our website at <http://wapor.unl.edu/amember/member.php>

Once logged in you can see your membership and payment history. Renewing helps us bring you reduced conference fees, keeps you informed of all upcoming WAPOR events and ensures your IJPOR subscription (both paper and online access) remains active.

We are currently updating our online membership platform to increase accuracy. If you experience any problems, please contact us at [renae@wapor.org](mailto:renae@wapor.org).

## Calendar

### 2013

#### **April 23, 2013**

Annual Conference Registration Deadline

#### **May 14, 2013**

WAPOR Pre-Conference (Boston)

See page 3

#### **May 14-16, 2013**

Annual Conference

Boston, MA, USA

<http://wapor.unl.edu/66th-annual-conference/>

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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](mailto:renae@wapor.org) or to Trevor Tompson (Publications Chair) at [tompson-trevor@norc.org](mailto:tompson-trevor@norc.org).

*Let us know your upcoming events.*

*Please note, the deadline date for the  
2nd quarter newsletter is  
June 1, 2013*

The WAPOR Newsletter is published by the  
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