

## Letter from the President

**A**n important part of the role of President is to juggle the balls which come at you from all directions. I'd like to share with you some of the issues that I have been dealing with over the past few weeks – in parallel with the British General Election - which have certainly kept me occupied:

- Our annual conference in Rome is being organised by a strong and capable committee, led by Connie de Boer. I have been discussing the programme with Connie and the logistical issues with RenaeReis. We are making excellent progress and already have a record number of proposals (85!); the conference looks set to be a very successful event.
- Talking of Renae, in her new(ish) role as Office Manager, I keep up-to-date by means of an activity/progress report every two weeks on developments at the Secretariat. With the active help of Allan McCutcheon, our Treasurer who is also based in Lincoln, good progress is being made by Renae in addressing some of the past problems experienced at the Secretariat.
- I have submitted a joint statement with the President of ESOMAR to the Government of Cyprus seeking clarification of proposals for new regulations on opinion polls in Cyprus. One element of these new regulations that causes particular concern to WAPOR and ESOMAR is that completed questionnaires should be submitted to a committee of MPs, together with the methodology and sampling details, before any results are published (!). Naturally enough, we treat this as a very serious matter.
- The International Journal for Public Opinion Research (IJPOR) is a fine publication, thanks largely to the additional efforts of four distinguished past Presidents of WAPOR: Elisabeth Noelle Neumann, Martin Lipset, Bob Worcester and Wolfgang Donsbach. I am dealing with its publisher, Oxford University Press, on budgets for this year and next. I was delighted to learn that OUP made a profit in 2000 of \$36,000 on the Journal, half of which goes to WAPOR.
- Kathy Frankovic, our Vice-President, organised a meeting at the AAPOR conference in Montreal to follow-up on the Council meeting held in London in March. Kathy and I keep in close contact over Council issues, and I am sure she will make an excellent President.
- I have been liaising with Marta Lagos on the WAPOR panel session she organised at the recent joint conference with ESOMAR, which took place in Mexico - thank you for doing this, Marta.
- WAPOR's new-look website has been developed and agreed upon and is about to go "live". It is a considerable improvement on our existing website; a big thank you to all



WAPOR President  
 Brian Gosschalk

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# WAPOR thematic seminar on media effects research: “Big Ideas and Small Coefficients”

By Thomas Petersen

“Everything is more complicated.” This was the recurrent theme of the WAPOR conference on “Survey Research and Media Content Analysis,” which was held from June 21-23 in Hamburg, Germany. For one and a half days, participants from eight different countries discussed how mass media effects can be measured via the combination of these two methods, along with the logical and methodological problems entailed. Thus, for example, Jens Wolling of the University of Ilmenau in

*For one and a half days, participants from eight different countries discussed how mass media effects can be measured via the combination of these two methods, along with the logical and methodological problems entailed.*

Germany and Patrick Roessler of the University of Erfurt, also in Germany, described the computational steps involved when attempting to ascertain the media consumption behavior of individual respondents within the framework of a combination of content analyses and survey data and to determine what kinds of media content reached or, respectively, did not reach each individual respondent surveyed.

The continuing uncertainty in the field of media effects research even today and the great need for more basic research are illustrated by the fact that the three most positively received and lauded papers at the Hamburg conference all dealt with approaches that had failed—either entirely or in part—to ascertain the structure of mass media effects.

Peter Selb of the University of Zurich described a computational model he had employed in hopes of determining how opinion formation in the population is effected by the accumulation of a number of media messages. Selb’s innovative approach included a new factor not found in earlier effects models: i.e. the degree to which recall of a previously perceived media message fades over time. After convincing conference partici-

pants of both his theoretical model and methodological approach, Selb commented: “I cannot deny how disappointed I was when it turned out that this new, arduously developed factor showed practically no effect.” Hans Zetterberg remarked admiringly that he would not forget Selb’s paper. The contrast between big ideas and small coefficients was irrelevant.

The papers by Claes de Vreese and Holli A. Semetko of the Netherlands and by Ulises Beltran of Mexico also presented “non-findings” that fascinated the audience nevertheless. In their study concerning the Danish plebiscite on introducing the euro, de Vreese and Semetko examined the extent to which negatively biased media coverage fostered political cynicism among the population. Ultimately, however, they discovered that media coverage on the euro was extraordinarily positive and that the population would not allow itself to be influenced by this tenor. Far from cynicism or resignation, a large share of the population took part in the referendum.

Finally, Ulises Beltran focused on an extremely intensive advertising campaign launched by one of the candidates in the 2000 Mexican presidential race: although the entire country was flooded with ads, the campaign apparently had no effect at all. Detailed analyses of the situation suggest that overly intensive advertising campaigns can lead to a saturation effect. The population simply got sick and tired of the campaign, resulting in a negative connection between exposure to the advertising campaign and approval of the candidate in question.

No matter how intense the discussions were or how engrossing the arguments advanced, the Hamburg conference will nevertheless contribute to WAPOR’s irritating reputation of being an agency that primarily organizes educational junkets: coffee and cake on the “White House’s” occasionally sunny terrace with its southern exposure, long discussions over a lot of German beer until deep in the almost continuously light summer night, a boat tour through the canals and lake at the heart of the city also convinced those who were attending a WAPOR conference for the first time. So, in closing, it should be mentioned that as of June 26, we can now welcome eight conference participants as new WAPOR members: two from Germany, likewise two from the Netherlands and the United States, one member from Indonesia and one from Estonia. Welcome to the club!



From left to right: Melanie Schneider (Germany), Tatiana Beltran (Mexico), Dixie Evatt (USA), Ulises Beltran (Mexico), Jochen Hansen (Germany), Marlies Klijn (The Netherlands).



Raivo Palmaru (Estonia), Hynek Jerabek (Czech Republic), Marlies Klijn [with the back to the camera] (The Netherlands), Jeffrey Karp (The Netherlands), Edmund Lauf (The Netherlands).



Presenting: Ulises Beltran (Mexico), Thomas Petersen (Germany), Yanti Sugarda (Indonesia).



Jochen Hansen (Germany), Hynek Jerabek (Czech Republic), Britta Sommer (Germany).

# Joint WAPOR/ESOMAR Statement on Public Opinion Polls in Cyprus

ESOMAR and WAPOR have signed a joint statement addressed to the Chairman of the Parliamentary Committee in Cyprus expressing concern about a proposal put forward by the Government which could affect the confidentiality of responses. In essence, it has been proposed that that completed questionnaires should be submitted to a committee of MPs, together with the methodology and sampling details, before any results are published.

The following is a summary of our joint statement:

“ESOMAR and WAPOR support any initiative which ensures that public opinion polls and market and social research projects are conducted to the highest professional standards. This is in the interest of buyers and suppliers of research and in protecting the public welfare.

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...Research depends on confidence of respondents that their responses will not be passed on in any form which allows them to be personally identified, without first asking their permission. Respondents should also be informed to whom the information will be supplied and the purposes for which it will be used.

The right to conduct and publish polls freely is part of the modern democratic process which allows citizens to make themselves heard. This right is upheld by Article 10 of the European Convention for the Protection of Human Rights and Fundamental Freedoms which states:

*“Everyone has the right to freedom of expression. This right shall include freedom to hold opinions and to receive and impart information and ideas without interference by public authority and regardless of frontiers.”*

Without public confidence that responses will indeed be held confidential, unbiased public opinion polls will not be possible.

ESOMAR and WAPOR would therefore like clarification about the proposal that questionnaires be submitted to a government body in Cyprus.

There are no serious scientific studies establishing that poll findings can induce potential voters to vote in a particular way.”

This is clearly a worrying issue. I will keep you informed of future developments and any response we receive from the Cypriot Government.

Brian Gosschalk

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## New Look and Functionality to [www.wapor.org](http://www.wapor.org)

The WAPOR webpage has a new look! Still located at [www.wapor.org](http://www.wapor.org) (for a limited time you will be forwarded to [www.unl.edu/wapor](http://www.unl.edu/wapor), until some server issues are resolved), our new web page look is intended to add new functionality and navigating convenience for the visitor. In the weeks and months ahead, we hope WAPOR members will notify us of upcoming conferences and symposia we can post on our webpage, and give us feedback on the types of information that will be of greatest value to the membership and the profession.

If you have ideas regarding additional types of information we might include on the WAPOR webpage, please communicate these to the webmaster (Andy Peytchev, e-mail: [andrey@unlserve.unl.edu](mailto:andrey@unlserve.unl.edu)). We are especially interested in ideas about how the webpage can be made more effective in serving the current membership and profession, as well as in helping WAPOR recruit new members.

Dr. Allan McCutcheon

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# Elections in Peru

By Alfredo Torres

A few days before the elections, a New York Times heading declared “*Don’t try to predict. This is Peru.*” Quite an accurate analysis. The nineties had seen a fair share of surprises and on this occasion there were also startling results but pollsters discovered them in time.

This year’s elections were called for to fill the power vacuum left by Fujimori’s downfall, the main contenders were center right’s Lourdes Flores, centrist Alejandro Toledo and center left’s Alan García.

The campaign started with Toledo as the favorite followed at a distance by Flores and García and five (other) candidates. Early on, they placed themselves in second and third position respectively, leaving behind other contenders. As it seemed the country was heading for a second round between Toledo and Flores, the two frontrunners started attacking one another without criticizing García, whose followers’ votes they may have needed later on. García took advantage of this and he grabbed second place shortly before the first electoral round. Once Flores reacted, it was too late.

García’s surprising entry into the second round forced Toledo to change his campaign strategy. Up to that moment, he had based it on his fight for democracy and offers to create jobs. Toledo and his allies decided to recall García’s disastrous 1985-1990 government (two million percent hyperinflation, terrorism, corruption). The campaign started with a clear lead for Toledo (55% against 45%). García, an extraordinary communicator, accepted his government’s failure but assured he had learned from his mistakes, whilst making a number of populist offers to different social groups in a very persuasive language. Toledo, who already suffered the erosion of two year’s campaigning, was being criticized for his many contradictions and some aspects of his personal life. The month of May saw the beginning of a campaign for the null vote, given the candidates’ apparent lack of qualification. The “none” candidate

suddenly became very popular. Surveys continued to show Toledo comfortably ahead, but a series of qualitative studies showed that García might have stronger support than the one showed by opinion polls, which would suggest the existence of a hidden vote favoring him.

To verify the hidden vote hypothesis, APOYO held a survey with two parallel samples. One of them consisted of a traditional poll. The other one recreated the secret voting booth conditions. The results confirmed the hypothesis. In the survey, Toledo led by a ten percent margin. In the recreation, the margin was only four points. Shortly after, other pollsters confirmed the finding. What was happening was that a number of voters who accepted that García’s government had been a failure, were willing to vote for him due to his populist offers, but nonetheless were not confessing their voting intention to pollsters declaring they would invalidate their vote. Most of these voters belong to the same poverty stricken groups who once backed Fujimori for his assistentialist policies.

The news of the short distance between the two candidates caused quite an impact, especially to the middle and higher classes, many of which intended to vote null due to the lack of confidence that Toledo and García generated. The result of this finding was that many of those who were going to invalidate their vote found themselves forced to vote for whom they considered second to worse. APOYO’s last survey, disclosed on election eve (53.2% against 46.8%) showed that García’s advance had stopped. The election results confirmed this finding.

Apart from the political consequences of leading Peru away from a corrupt regime, these elections have had the virtue of making survey polls reliable once again in the citizen’s eyes since they had had a disappointing performance in the exit poll that ended in Fujimori’s third election last year. This time however, the previous surveys with the recreation technique as well as the exit polls and quick count were very near the official results. (see below)

## Peru’s Second Round Presidential Elections:

	Vote intention May 25th	Vote intention June 2nd	Exit Poll June 3rd, 4 pm	Quick count June 3rd, 7 pm	Official results June 13th
Toledo	52	53.2	53.4	52.6	53.1
García	48	46.8	46.6	47.4	46.9

Source: *Apoyo Opinión y Mercado*

# Recent and Future Developments in WAPOR

By Kathy Frankovic, CBS News

In May, the American Association for Public Opinion Research (AAPOR) ventured outside U.S. boundaries to meet in Montreal, Canada. Many members of the WAPOR Executive Council joined them to continue discussions about WAPOR's future. Since WAPOR President Brian Gosschalk was in the midst of the British election campaign, Vice President Kathy Frankovic chaired the Council meeting. All of the U.S. Council members were in attendance, and so were Council members from Mexico, Germany, and the Netherlands.

One goal - increasing membership - was addressed not just in the meeting itself, but with a display in the AAPOR exhibit area. The display, by Renae Reis, was accompanied by membership applications, sample issues of IJPOR, and highlighted the



Display at the AAPOR Conference

coming Rome Conference. At the Council meeting, Allan McCutcheon took on the charge of organizing a Membership Committee, which should be formed and active in time for the Rome meeting. The WAPOR website will have a new look too.

There are several conferences in various stages of planning. The Hamburg meeting, organized by Thomas Petersen, followed closely on AAPOR (see the article on p.2). After the 2002 joint AAPOR/WAPOR conference in Florida, expect a seminar in Mexico. Cadenabbia III will take place on June 27-29, 2002.

Another decision that looks to the future was the authorization of a review of the WAPOR Constitution and the WAPOR Code of Ethics to insure they reflect current realities of international research. We also hope to set up better mechanisms for monitoring threats to survey research, a subject for further discussion in Rome.

But the WAPOR Council also took the opportunity to look to the past as well. The WAPOR Archive at the University of North Carolina is being updated with the records of Past President Miguel Basanez. Helen Crossley, who has been WAPOR Historian since the establishment of the archive, will continue to serve in that role.

Expect more on all these subjects at the September Council and WAPOR business meetings in Rome.

Dr. Kathleen Frankovic  
CBS News

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## Letter from the President

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the team members involved in this re-design.

- Krzysztof Zagórski and I are discussing a possible regional conference in Warsaw in November, in partnership with the Ebert Foundation.
- I am working to get a better understanding of our endowment funding, an issue on which Fred Turner is our expert; this is an important area (finance always is).

So: lots of activity in the midst of a General Election in Britain.

I look forward to seeing as many of you as possible in Rome in September. It is a fabulous city, and the conference has a strong programme of speakers. It will be an ideal opportunity to renew old acquaintances and make new friends with shared interests. Ciao!

Brian Gosschalk

P.S. As you probably know, the polls performed reasonably well in the British elections, with the exit polls giving very accurate predictions.

WAPOR Annual Conference  
 Boscolo Grand Hotel Palace  
 Rome, Italy  
 September 20-22, 2001  
**Registration**

Please return to:  
 WAPOR Secretariat  
 UNL Gallup Research Center  
 200 N Eleventh Street  
 Lincoln, NE 68588-0241  
 USA  
 Fax: 001 (402) 458-2038

**Thereby register for the WAPOR Annual Conference.**

Name: .....

Organization/Institute: .....

Address: .....

Country: .....

Telephone: ..... Fax: ..... E-mail: .....

	Price per person	Number of persons	Total
Conference fee for WAPOR members	\$ 100	.....	\$.....
Conference fee for non-members	\$ 200	.....	\$.....
Conference fee for student WAPOR members	\$ 50	.....	\$.....
Conference fee for student non-members	\$ 90	.....	\$.....
Total			\$.....

**Conference registration fee includes: conference program including paper abstracts and copies of the participating papers on CD. Registration for non-members also includes a one-year membership to WAPOR.**

Hotel and meal reservations can be made by completing the accompanying hotel registration form and faxing it to Giorgia Fantini, Boscolo Tours Travel Agency, +39.049.828.7716. Room reservations will be accepted upon availability of rooms. In the event that the Boscolo Grand Hotel Palaces is unavailable, Boscolo Tours will assist you in finding other rooms in Rome. They are also able to help you with car rentals or other travel needs.

Method of payment (A processing charge of \$5.00 will be added for credit card payments):

Mastercard: \_\_\_\_\_ EXP: \_\_\_\_\_ Signature \_\_\_\_\_

VISA: \_\_\_\_\_ EXP: \_\_\_\_\_ Signature \_\_\_\_\_

Check enclosed in USD (**no** Eurocheques please!)

Please check our website at [www.wapor.org](http://www.wapor.org) for further details.

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## Membership Update

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As of July 9, 2001, WAPOR's membership numbers are up to 340. This means that according to memberships from 2000, we are still missing renewals from approximately 136 members. Never fear, July 27<sup>th</sup> will be the final mailing for 2001 dues notices so you can be sure to renew for 2001! If you haven't renewed yet for 2001, you'll find a friendly notice in your mailbox in the next couple of weeks.

On an extremely positive note, according to the database we have 32 new members in the organization since the beginning of the year. Some of the members are rejoining us after previous membership, others have either signed up on their own or as part of their registration at either the Hamburg or Rome conferences. Either way, we are happy to have them all as colleagues. New members, their organizations and home countries are as follows (listed chronologically according to the date they joined):

Dr. Scott L. Althaus, University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign, USA

Dr. Kimberly A. Downing, University of Cincinnati, USA

Prof. Oscar Alberto Bottinelli, Factum, URUGUAY

Mr. Klime Babunski, Pro Media, REPUBLIC OF MACEDONIA

Prof. Kwasi Ansu-Kyeremeh, University of Ghana, GHANA

Jose Vicente Del Barco, Millward Brown Alef, SPAIN

St. Fanaras, Metron Analysis, GREECE

Mr. J. Richard Stevens, University of Texas, USA

Prof. Dr. Carlos Huneus, CERC, CHILE

Mr. Charles F. Rund, Charlton Research Company, USA

Ms. Jinghua Zou, CBS News, USA

Mr. Benoit Gauthier, Circum Network, CANADA

Prof. Ekiji Ryuen, Teikyo University, JAPAN

Mr. Alden M. Castañeda, ABS-CBS Broadcasting Corp., PHILIPPINES

Dr. Jeffrey A. Karp, University of Amsterdam (ASCoR), NETHERLANDS

Ms. Nancy Sosnik, USA

Mr. Nicolas Checa, Medley Global Advisors, USA

Mr. Kevin Chappell, Dept. of Foreign Affairs and International Trade, CANADA

Ms. Florann A. Arts, University of Amsterdam (ASCoR), NETHERLANDS

Mr. Olaf Werder, University of Florida, USA

Dr. Cindy T. Christen, Iowa State University, USA

Dr. Andrew F. Hayes, Ohio State University, USA

Mr. Peter Selb, University of Zurich, SWITZERLAND

Dr. Margaret C. Kenski, Arizona Opinion, USA

Mr. Christopher Karadjov, University of Florida, USA

Mr. Markus Prior, Stanford University, USA

Ms. Melanie Schneider, TNS EMNID, GERMANY

Dr. Edmund Lauf, University of Amsterdam (ASCoR), NETHERLANDS

Ms. Yanti Sugarda, Polling Center, INDONESIA

Ms. Christine O'Brien, University of Michigan, USA

Mrs. Susanne Petersen, Psychologische Praxis Petersen, GERMANY

Ms. Carina Zehnder-Jensen, University of Zurich, SWITZERLAND

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## Calendar

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Rome, Italy, September 20-22, 2001

Title: "Media and Public Opinion in Democracies"

### Deadlines:

Deadline for conference registration is Sept. 1, 2001 (see p. 7).

### Conference Chair information:

Dr Connie de Boer

Associate Professor

The Amsterdam School of Communications Research

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## Upcoming Events

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**November 1-3, 2001**

**5th Annual Nebraska Symposium on Survey Research focusing on "The Science of Election Polling"**

Co-Sponsored by the University of Nebraska-Lincoln Gallup Research Center and The Gallup Poll

To be held at The Gallup Organization,

901 F Street, NW, Washington, DC

### For further information call:

Dr. Allan McCutcheon at 402-458-2035 or email at [amccutcheon1@unl.edu](mailto:amccutcheon1@unl.edu) or [www.unl.edu/unl-grc/](http://www.unl.edu/unl-grc/)

*Please let us know your upcoming events. Deadline for 3rd quarter newsletter event submissions is September 15th.*

The WAPOR Newsletter is published by the World Association for Public Opinion Research

Editorial contributions are welcomed.

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