

Third Quarter

2006

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# Warren Mitofsky:

"A colleague, a teacher and a friend"

Warren Mitofsky, one of the greatest and most innovative survey researchers of recent decades and a longstanding member of the WAPOR family, died on September 1, 2006. The field of survey research owes so much to Mitofsky, who is known as the "father of exit polling." Many WAPOR members have lost a good friend and many will miss his consistently stimulating and astute advice. The following pages are dedicated to some personal memories of Warren. A comprehensive tribute to his achievements will be published in the next issue of the International Journal of Public Opinion Research.

—Thomas Petersen

Kathleen Frankovic **CBS News** WAPOR Past-President

Warren always liked to say that he "rescued me" from academic life. And it's true. Nearly three decades ago, I was an Assistant Professor of Political Science at the University of Vermont, and he hired me to be the Manager of Surveys at CBS News. It was a new position, he said, one where he told me it was important to have someone who might speak the

academic language, and be credible with academia.

But of course Warren never really needed that sort of credibility - he knew more than the vast majority of academics, and he knew that he did. But it was kind and reassuring to a young academic like me, making what she feared was a risky transition to a world she really didn't know much about.

All of you know that Warren had high standards, was unafraid to express them strongly and often, and to put them into practice wherever he could. Sometimes this made him tough to work with, in all kinds of ways. I've been his employee,

(Mitofsky continued on page 4)

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# Letter from the President

Unfortunately I have to start this letter on a sad note, due to Warren Mitofsky's death. As soon as Kathy's e-mail reached me I asked Renae Reis to forward the message to all the members to give you a timely report of this sorrowful event. In Andalucia there is a very popular "sevillana" (a kind of traditional rhythm) with the refrain: "something dies in your soul when a friend passes on". Warren was a part of WAPOR's life and I'm sure all of us will miss him very much in our future meetings, when his voice of authority is no longer heard in our sessions. In this Newsletter, Kathy writes about this friend who made an outstanding contribution to public opinion research. Warren's authority in our field was internationally known and the WAPOR Council will consider how we can pay him a sincere tribute. May he rest in peace.



WAPOR President Prof. Esteban López-Escobar

Warren's death brings to my mind another issue we have discussed in our latest conferences, namely the history of the association, a task that shouldn't be delayed much longer. Helen Crossley has made a generous

shouldn't be delayed much longer. Helen Crossley has made a generous effort in the past to gather the material to write it. But I am sure we need to put some additional effort into this task. In the Montreal conference Bob Worcester suggested the use of an oral history approach, and many of us agreed with him wholeheartedly. For this and other reasons I decided to go to Cadenabbia, to take part in the seminar last June, so nicely organized by Thomas Petersen, Peter Voss and the other German members, along with Mike Traugott. Before I go on, I would like to thank the Allensbach Institute once again for their constant and generous support to WAPOR.

One of those radiant days, in a cozy corner of Villa La Collina, I taped an hour-long conversation with Hans Zetterberg, who was also attending the Cadenabbia meeting. Hans not only provided me with a copy of his book manuscript on how Gallup went international, but also commented many valuable points of the WAPOR past. As soon as we type Hans's talk, we will be able to send it to other former presidents and some older members to encourage them to add more ideas and memories, which will surely prompt some reactive and interactive contributions. Perhaps this snowball method could give us a bigger scope and understanding to put in context the very valuable information we have in the North Carolina University and in Lincoln (Nebraska).

I can imagine how those of us involved in University teaching and research are now fully involved in new tasks in the academic year. Two hours ago I came back to my office after delivering a speech for a Master's Degree Program on Bioethics, organized by the School of Medicine. The topic of my speech was "Public Opinion and Euthanasia." I refused when I was invited a year ago, but when they repeated the invitation I though that I shouldn't miss an opportunity to talk about our field to a different audience, and I accepted.

I just recently traveled to the United States to chair the most recent WAPOR council meeting, convened in Cambridge, Massachussets on October 12th. I am happy that Marita Carballo, who could not attend the Montreal conference, and Alejandro Moreno, our new council member to foster WAPOR-media relations, were able to join us in Cambridge. They bring the council an even more international scope, and their experience and expertise will greatly enrich our future tasks.

I think we should not take for granted that the Cambridge council meeting was the last
(Letter contined on page 3)

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under my chairmanship, because it is not foreseeable that we will have a new meeting before the end of the year. I am very happy Mike Trauggot is going to lead WAPOR in the next two years, and I am sad because Kathy will no longer be on the Executive council. Her energy, enthusiasm and generosity have fuelled WAPOR activities, and particularly she has made the WAPOR council's activities much more efficient, providing, among other things, the basic communication facilities with CBS help. We certainly need to extend our gratitude to CBS.

Let me finish with an additional suggestion, more specifically - but not exclusively directed to those countries where public opinion research is coming of age. WAPOR wants to monitor all over the world the advances and setbacks that facilitate or hamper public opinion research. For this reason I encourage all the members, whatever country they live in, to report in good time to the council about laws, policies or movements whose purposes or effects could constrain our freedom to conduct honest professional research. The same diligence that is used to counteract spurious research should be applied to affirm the right to contribute to general interest by working in what we think is needed, without illegitimate limitations designed to serve specific interests. An increased presence of WAPOR in the international public sphere is not a privilege, but fundamentally a duty and a challenge for us all.

#### **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 from now on.

#### 2006

October 25-27, 2006:

"Latin America 2006: Seizing Opportunities." Rio de Janeiro, Brazil.

Consult: www.esomar.org

#### 2006 continued:

November 27–29, 2006: "Panel Research", Barcelona, Spain. Consult: www.esomar.org

#### 2007

February 6-8, 2007:

"Public Opinion Polls and Decision Making: From Theory to Practice", Cairo, Egypt, Public Opinion Poll Center at IDSC. Contact: Ms. Yomna Gamil, The Cabinet Information Decision Support Center (IDSC), I Magless El-Shaab St., P. O. Box 191, Cairo, Egypt I1582, e-mail: <a href="mailto:conference@pollcenter.idsc.gov.eg">conference@pollcenter.idsc.gov.eg</a>

Consult: www.pollcenter.idsc.gov.eg

May 24-28, 2007:

57th Annual Conference of the International Communication Association (ICA), San Francisco, CA, USA.

Consult: www.icahdq.org

August 9-12, 2007:

Convention of the Association for Education in Journalism and Mass Communication (AEJMC), Washington, DC, USA. Consult: www.aejmc.org/convention/

#### 2008

May 22-26, 2008:

58th Annual Conference of the International Communication Association (ICA), Montreal, Quebec, Canada.

Consult: www.icahdq.org

August 6-9, 2008:

Convention of the Association for Education in Journalism and Mass Communication (AEJMC), Chicago, IL, USA. Consult: www.aejmc.org/convention/

May 21-25, 2009:

59th Annual Conference of the International Communication Association (ICA), Chicago, II, USA. Consult: www.icahdq.org

(Mitofsky continued from page 1)

his colleague, and the person to whom he reported as a consultant and vendor. We've had our share of arguments – many over poll question wordings – and we've had our share of fights, although now I don't remember any blood being shed.

He could be stubborn, and occasionally it would take him a long time to come around to acknowledging that he might have been wrong in the first place.

In recent years, Warren really made "Mitofsky International" an international company. In the last few months, he had been working on the exit poll committee of the World Association for Public Opinion Research, attempting to develop standards for exit polls throughout the world. He was the ideal person for this; he had established exit polling in many countries, including Sri Lanka and Russia. You all know his last exit poll was taken in Mexico, and that, as the New York Times reported this weekend, his poll reflected the actual voting pattern almost exactly.

I received an email this past weekend from Moscow, from Anna and Valdimir Andreenkov, who - like so many of us - called Warren - "a colleague, a teacher and a friend." They also added that he was "a gentleman and honest scientist."

I'd like to quote from that email. Warren, the Russians said so much better than I could, was "the most intelligent, honest and brave person. When a death like this happens, you sometimes tell yourself - maybe it would be better not to know such a person, you would not suffer losing him. But then you reject this thought - it is better to suffer from the loss, but have a chance to meet such a person as Warren."

If you ever spent any time with Warren in any of these countries, you understood that. I was at a conference with Warren in Mexico City a few years ago, sitting in the back of the room, listening to a panel of Mexican pollsters. Despite all his work in Mexico, Warren didn't know Spanish. He had taken Spanish lessons, but Warren admitted that it really didn't take.

This was a conference without any English translators. Every sentence or so, we heard "Mitofsky....something else en espanol ...Mitofsky.... more Espanol...Mitofsky." Warren found it a little disconcerting (after all, he wasn't sure what they were saying), but then he really got into it. The speakers were all respectful. They certainly weren't critical. It had some of the atmosphere of worship. Sort of Warren as "Aztec god."

It is somehow very fitting that, as the Mexican newspapers referred to him this past weekend, he was "El padre de las encuestas de salida."

I will always remember and miss Warren Mitofsky. He was my colleague, my teacher and my friend. And as he said, he truly was my "rescuer."

Kathy Frankovic delivered these words at the funeral for Warren on September 5, 2006

# Warren Mitofsky: Warren in Mexico

#### by Alejandro Moreno

It was early in the mornina, and he was sittina in the back of the auditorium. It had the look of a student who likes to sit in the back of the classroom hoping to be unnoticed, yet feeling in control of the whole room. A translator's voice could be heard in the headphone sets, but he wasn't using one. The sound was not very good to him. Still, he was attentive, and at times intrigued by the sound of a literally familiar word that came out as a playful whale in a sea of nonsense Spanish sentences. "Mitofsky... Mitofsky... Mitofsky." Warren was sitting by Kathy Frankovic, who told me this story as it happened. The rest I imagined. I was exactly on the opposite side of the room, right in front of the panelists who were talking about his work. This was the WAPOR regional seminar in Mexico City, in May 2005. Apparently, Warren could not understand what the Spanish-speaking panelists were saying, but he knew he was their main reference. How does it feel, I wondered, not to understand what is being said and, at the same

time, being perfectly aware that whatever it is, it is about you and your work?

My first personal contact with Warren Mitofsky was a decade earlier, in the fall of 1994. He had just conducted a national exit poll about the Mexican presidential election that year. I was a doctoral student then, and I wrote to him hoping to have access to his exit poll for a paper on voting behavior to be delivered at my first professional conference. A few days later, I received a package with a diskette, documentation, and everything a researcher would need to properly use and archive a valuable dataset like that. I still keep the original documents in the original yellow envelope addressed to me. That was my first encounter with Warren's generosity.

The second one came not long after that, when he made a list of comments to my paper, which I remember to be the harshest, most critical, and most educational that someone had offered me until then.

Many more encounters with his generosity would follow thereafter.

The Mexican polling community and individual researchers and associates that worked closely with him, benefited enormously from Warren's generosity and friendship. I have the feeling that his ideas were transmitted to others with a strong desire to improve the profession as an attachment. The language of polling methodology may still be unfamiliar to most Mexican citizens, but the name Mitofsky is easily recognized, just as Warren himself could hear it in a torrent of indistinguishable foreign language words that morning at the WAPOR meeting in Mexico.

His name evokes respect and confidence, and I hope it remains that way as the polling profession develops further in Mexico. His early departure was deeply felt by his Mexican friends and colleagues, for whom he was a constant reference. How does it feel, I wonder, not to be able to see what will be built on the foundations you laid and, at the same time, being perfectly aware that whatever it is, it is about you and your work?

# Cadenabbia 2006

# Quality Criteria in Survey Research IV: A Bit of Uncertainty and a Solid Plan

For a decade now, WAPOR members have been meeting every two years at one of Italy's most beautiful locations: the exquisite, historical Villa la Collina, where Germany's first Chancellor, Konrad Adenauer, regularly vacationed in the 1950s and 60s. In the time since 1996, when Al Gollin and Wolfgang Donsbach organized the first seminar on quality criteria, the name Cadenabbia has gained a practically legendary reputation within WAPOR, due in no small degree to the atmosphere at the conference site, the weather and the Italian cuisine. Wolfgang Donsbach warned years ago that WAPOR had to be careful not to let this seminar turn into a destination travel site for academics.

It should thus be emphasized that it was not only the magic of Italy that led to the establishment of the Cadenabbia seminars but also a set of serious concerns that shaped the sixth seminar no less than it had the previous five. First, it becomes easier and easier for people to enter the field of survey research—even for those who are not adequately trained in the social sciences. Second, given the growing tendency to subject survey research to the conditions and rules of media reporting, it is becoming increasingly difficult to make the public understand the difference between good and bad survey research and, in so doing, to promote quality in survey research. In a situation where there are no easily recognizable quality criteria, good surveys are endangered by bad ones.

As always, the Cadenabbia seminar turned out to be a very lively and inspiring event, shedding light on various aspects of a topic that has, if anything, become even more complex and urgent over the last decade. Conference participants addressed the issue of quality from a variety of very different perspectives. Kathleen Frankovic, WAPOR's past president, vividly described the mounting public attacks and accusations leveled at political survey research in the United States, whereby the focus of attention is on "the polls" as a whole with practically no differentiation between good polls and bad. Nikolaus Jackob and Thomas Zerback of the University of Mainz, Germany, reported on efforts to

develop quality criteria for online survey research, since this type of survey is rapidly gaining in importance, particularly in academic social research, despite its numerous methodological limitations. These two examples alone demonstrate the wide range of issues that are associated with the topic of quality criteria in survey research.

Despite the diversity of approaches, the closing debate also betrayed a sense of bewilderment, a feeling that was perhaps bound to creep in after a decade of debate on quality criteria had led to no notable progress in the public realm. There was a general consensus among conference participants that much of the effort in recent decades to inform the public about the possibilities and limitations of survey research had possibly been misdirected. Thus, for decades now, WAPOR, AAPOR and other organizations have been trying to persuade media to document the basic information about the surveys they cite: e.g. sample size, type of sample, question wordings and margins of error. Yet, this type of information is only of use to experts and is largely devoid of meaning for the average newspaper reader or television viewer. So, instead of pressuring journalists to provide readers or viewers with information they cannot use, it would perhaps seem better to sensitize journalists to the need to give these criteria greater consideration than they have thus far when choosing the information they report. It is not the reader's job to determine whether the survey findings printed in the newspaper derive from reliable surveys or from useless or even misleading polls. Rather, it is up to editors to ensure that readers can be sure that all of the surveys reported are reliable.

To this end, journalists and other decision-makers need to be provided with basic information on the possibilities, methods and limitations of survey research, ideally in the form of a simple, introductory handbook that is especially tailored to the needs of users who are not specialists in the social sciences. A few conference participants have resolved to present a draft of such a book at the next Cadenabbia conference in 2008. Will they succeed?

# Call for Abstracts

#### **WAPOR Latin American Seminar**

## "Public opinion, social conflict and political order"

#### Colonia de Sacramento, Uruguay, April 12-14, 2007

#### Why a Latin American Regional WAPOR Congress?

First of all, professions linked to public opinion research have grown considerably in our countries. Thus this is an appropriate time to meet here to exchange ideas and experiences.

Second, Latin America has experienced a recent set of events that makes the region a hotbed for public opinion research. A year of strong election activity is ending and important and distinct countries as Chile, Brazil, Mexico, Venezuela, Peru, Colombia and Bolivia have gone through relevant election processes. A new stage is beginning in which most of the countries in the South Cone – Argentina, Paraguay and Uruguay – are approaching decisive election processes. Meanwhile, we find ourselves in an important position in terms of international politics, in general, and inter-American relations, in particular; and great changes have been made regarding the participation of indigenous peoples in the rise of new political movements. The current situation in Latin America adds to this growth in the field as the basis for a regional meeting.

#### Why Colonia de Sacramento?

Located on the Uruguayan seaside, an hour from Buenos Aires, Colonia is a little town of 15,000 inhabitants declared a World Heritage site by UNESCO. It provides a truly fitting setting for a WAPOR regional seminar, which will be held at the Casa de la Cultura, in the midst of a tourist center and very close to a wide range of hotels that fit different styles and budgets.

#### Preliminary Program

The regional seminar will begin the afternoon of April 12<sup>th</sup> with a get-together, and the sessions will be held the following days, the 13<sup>th</sup> and 14<sup>th</sup> of April. Prior to that, on April 11<sup>th</sup> a joint session will be held with SAIMO (in Spanish, Argentine Association of Public Opinion and Market Researchers –www.saimo.org.ar – whose Congress will convene April 10<sup>th</sup> and 11<sup>th</sup>, 2007 in Buenos Aires).

The members of the organizing committee of this regional congress are:

Cesar Aguiar (EQUIPOS MORI Uruguay, <u>caguiar@equiposmori.com.uy</u>)

Maria Braun (EQUIPOS MORI Argentina, <u>mariabraun@equiposmori.com.ar</u>) and

Manuel Mora y Araujo (IPSOS – Mora y Araujo, <u>MMorayAraujo@morayaraujoci.com.ar</u>)

Representatives of major Latin American countries have also committed their collaboration on the organization of this congress: Fabian Echegaray (Brazil), Alfredo Torres (Peru), Francisco Abundis (Mexico), Agustin Canzani (Uruguay), Jaime Duran and Santiago Nieto (Ecuador).

#### Seminar sessions will focus on:

- 1. Polls and elections in democratic societies
- 2. Democracy and political leadership in Latin America
- 3. Local governments
- 4. Gender and politics
- 5. Peace and integration in Latin America
- 6. Methodological advances in public opinion research
- 7. Political campaigns and media

(Dillman continued from page 8)

#### **Proposals**

Proposals should include a general description of the research paper (research topic, specific research questions or hypotheses, methods and results), as well as full contact information (mailing address, email address and telephone number) and affiliation for each co-author or participant. The abstract should not exceed three double-spaced pages or 750 words.

#### **Deadlines**

Deadline for abstracts: November 20<sup>th</sup>, 2006 Deadline for papers: February 28<sup>th</sup>, 2007

#### Contact

Maria Braun maria.braun@fibertel.com.ar

# Call for Abstracts WAPOR Regional Seminar "Public Opinion, Communication, and Elections"

Jerusalem and Haifa, Israel, June 26-29, 2007

Since Lazarsfeld, Berelson and Gaudet published their seminal 1940 Erie study, elections have been a central research topic, connecting political science, sociology, communication, and public opinion research. As Elihu Katz and Yael Warshel note, this is probably because "election studies are good for science". Elections offer us an opportunity to explore, in a heightened context, questions relating to individual and public choice, media effects, political parties, public opinion dynamics and more. Together with possible insights on such processes, election studies offer societies the opportunity to understand specific elections and their results. We love to conduct and read election research, but we still lack a clear understanding of the answers to lingering questions such as what decides an election? What issues will dominate an election campaign? Do campaigns matter? Why do journalists cover elections the way they do? Does this coverage help voters make up their minds? How should pollsters minimize errors in election predictions? Does publication of polls impact public opinion, campaign contributors, opinion leaders or journalists? And do election results actually matter for public policy?

More than 70 countries worldwide are expected to hold national elections in 2007, and many more have held national and local elections in 2006 (including Canada, Israel, Italy, the Palestinian Territories, Mexico and more). The US will be holding a midterm legislative elections in November. All of these offer us the opportunity to advance our understanding of the interaction between public opinion, communication and elections, and as a result, to better prepare for designing election research in the future (with an eye towards the 2008 US presidential elections and the 2009 European elections).

WAPOR seeks to bring together scholars with a historical, sociological, political science or communications science background, using a variety of quantitative and qualitative research methodologies, who will present original research papers at the seminar.

And what better place to hold an elections seminar than in Israel – a politically charged society? In the past 10 years Israelis have gone to the polls five times for national elections. Furthermore, Jerusalem is a focal point for one more polity – the Palestinian National Authority. Indeed, in 2006 Jerusalem was the only city in the world in which two separate national elections were held — Israeli and Palestinian. The seminar will convene 26-29 June 2007, beginning in Jerusalem and ending in Haifa. Seminar participants will have pre-arranged ground transportation from Ben Gurion airport in Tel Aviv to Jerusalem, from

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Jerusalem to Haifa, and from Haifa back to the airport. The seminar is co-sponsored by WAPOR and the Israeli Communication Association.

#### Proposals:

Proposals should include a general description of the research paper (research topic, specific research questions or hypotheses, methods and results), as well as full contact information (mailing address, email address and telephone number) and affiliation for each co-author or participant on a separate sheet. The extended abstract should not exceed three double-spaced pages or 750 words.

#### Deadlines:

Deadline for proposals: January 31, 2007 Deadline for full papers: May 20, 2007

Contact and electronic submission: Yariv Tsfati – ytsfati@com.haifa.ac.il

Tamir Sheafer - <u>msstamir@mscc.huji.ac.il</u> Lilach Nir - Inir@mscc.huji.ac.il

# WAPOR Elections

#### **Ballots Due by November 30**

Ballots have recently been mailed to all WAPOR members in good standing for 2006. The mailing includes a ballot, biographies of the candidates, and mailing envelopes. Please read and follow the instructions on the ballot carefully. You can contact the WAPOR office if you have any questions regarding the voting process. Ballots are due in the WAPOR office by November 30. Ballots can be mailed or faxed.

The term of each position begins January 1, 2007. This year's elections are especially important; one of the elections will be for Vice President and President-Elect, and the other for Chair of the Professional Standards Committee.

The WAPOR Constitution states that 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 between elections. The person elected to this position serves for SIX years.

The candidates for Vice President/President-Elect are **Nick Moon** (UK), **Thomas Petersen** (Germany) and **Frits Spangenberg** (The Netherlands).

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 for Chair of the Professional Standards Committee are **Edith de Leeuw** (The Netherlands), **Richard Hilmer** (Germany) and **Patricia Moy** (USA).

# Remember the voting deadline is November 30!

# 60th Annual Conference

# "Public Opinion and the Challenges of the 21st Century" Berlin, Germany September 19-21, 2006

More infomration on the upcoming 60th Annual Conference being held in Berlin, Germany in 2007, will be posted in the next edition of the newsletter. If you have already submitted a paper proposal, you do not need to resubmit.

Contact Information:
Richard Hilmer
(richard.hilmer@infratest-dimap.de) or
Renae Reis (renae\_reis@gallup.com)

# **WAPORnet**

As a member of WAPOR, you have access to the listserv, which you can use to keep in touch with other WAPOR members. This is a feature of your membership that we urge you to take advantage of. You may have information on upcoming events or on current happenings in public opinion research that you would like to share with the other members. Send your message to wapor@unl.edu to reach current members of WAPOR. Tip: Replying to a message from wapornet results in everyone receiving your reply.

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

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# Calendar

#### November 30, 2006

Election ballots are due

#### April 12-14, 2007

WAPOR Latin American Seminar Public Opinion, Social Conflict and Political Order Colonia de Sacramento, Uruguay

#### June 26-29, 2007

WAPOR Regional Seminar
Public Opinion, Communication
and Elections
Jerusalem and Haifa, Israel

## September 19-21, 2007

WAPOR Annual Conference Public Opinion and the Challenges of the 21st Century Berlin, Germany

- •Do you have an idea for an article in the newsletter?
- •Is there an event happening in your part of the world?
- •Are you intersted 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\_Reis@gallup.com or to Thomas Petersen (Publications Chair) at tpetersen@ifd-allensbach.de

Please let us know your upcoming events.

Deadline for 4th quarter newsletter events or article submission is December 15, 2006