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WAPOR 60th Annual Conference *“Public Opinion and the Challenges of the 21st Century”*

The 60th annual conference of WAPOR was hosted by the WZB (Social Science Research Center Berlin, WZB) and organized by Richard Hilmer (Infratest dimap), Brigitte Geißel and Bernhard Weßels (both WZB). More than 130 participants from around the world attended the plenary sessions and 19 panels comprising more than 50 papers. The conference covered a huge range of topics, including cultural and political identities, European integration, dynamics of public opinion in campaigns and the impact of mass media, public opinion and research in developing countries, international comparison, ethnic and religious conflict, measurements, methodological innovation, and history.

The panels were framed by the initial and opening sessions, a reception with the German Secretary of State Dr. Frank-Walter Steinmeier, hosted by TNS Infratest, a key note speech of Kurt Lang on what survey research can and cannot tell us about public opinion, a panel discussion on the use and misuse of polls in politics and the media, and the traditional Award Dinner of WAPOR.

The topics of the key note speech and the panel discussion of the opening session were similar to many of the recurring issues in the panels. Kurt Lang pointed out that polls are only a particular reflection of public opinion and sometimes insensible to opinion dynamics resulting from discourse. Individualistic approaches cannot reveal these dynamics. However, the panel discussion between representatives of academic research, practitioners, and politicians established that surveys can be a mighty sword in many respects: a means of the correction of

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Letter from the President

Fellow WAPOR Members,

I want to tell you about two wonderful events I have attended in the past three months. Of course, the first was the 60th anniversary WAPOR conference in Berlin in September. Richard Hilmer and his organizing committee did an excellent job of assembling a full program of interesting papers on a wide range of topics. The site of the meetings at the Wissenschaftszentrum Berlin für Sozialforschung (Social Science Research Center Berlin) was ideal for the conference, and our hosts treated us exceptionally well. Beyond the program and the catering between the parallel sessions, there were other special activities including a reception at the German Foreign Ministry and a wonderful award dinner at a restaurant in Potsdamer Platz at which Wolfgang Donsbach of the Dresden University of Technology received the Helen Dinerman Award. You can read about all these events elsewhere in the newsletter.



WAPOR
President
Prof. Mike
Traugott

The program for the conference began with a plenary session organized around an address by Kurt Lang of the University of Washington. His comments, which will be published in the *International Journal of Public Opinion Research*, framed the discussion in the following session on "The Use and Misuse of Polls in Politics and the Media" – and then we were off and running with the rest of the conference after such a great start. For visitors to Berlin, the conference site near Potsdamer Platz also provided easy access to the museums at the Kulturforum and the other great tourist venues in the city.

Just this past week, I attended a dinner in New York sponsored by the Roper Center at the University of Connecticut in honor of our colleague Warren Mitofsky who passed away in the past year. Warren was the chair of their Board of Directors, and the Roper Center has established the Warren J. Mitofsky Memorial Fund to support an annual award in his name in recognition of outstanding research or reporting that uses The Roper Center's public opinion data archives and for the ongoing operations of the center. The first award winner was John Mueller of Ohio State University, and a highlight of the dinner was comments by David Broder, a Pulitzer Prize winning journalist from *The Washington Post*. There were several WAPOR members among more than 200 dinner attendees, including Kathy Frankovic from CBS News, a former WAPOR president and colleague of Warren's.



Mike Traugott and German Secretary of State Dr. Frank-Walter Steinmeier at the opening ceremony of the 60th annual conference in Berlin

The WAPOR Council met across two days just before the Berlin conference, and I want to mention two new initiatives we will be undertaking. The Council has agreed that we should explore the possible arrangements for regional memberships outside of Europe and North America to support the extension and expansion of our outreach activities in areas where it is unlikely that members would attend our annual conferences. For the time being, these will be pursued as experiments, looking at alternative arrangements that best suit the specific

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Israel Regional Seminar Dedicated to the Memory of Seymour Martin Lipset: *Public Opinion, Communication, and Elections*

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. Elections offer an opportunity to explore questions relating to individual and public choice, media effects, political parties, and public opinion dynamics. To explore the intersection between public opinion, communication and elections, a WAPOR regional seminar was held in Jerusalem and Haifa, Israel, in June 2007.

Dedicated to the memory of Seymour Martin Lipset, a pioneering public opinion scholar, former WAPOR President and coeditor of IJPOR, the seminar brought together some forty scholars from 10 countries (Denmark, Germany, India, Israel, Italy, the Netherlands, New Zealand, the Russian Federation, the UK and the US) representing four different continents and diverse disciplinary backgrounds. Panels discussed concepts such as citizens' disenchantment, electoral reform and strategic voting, and theories varying from framing to economic voting. The research presented at the seminar was conducted using methodologies varying from field experiments through content analysis and surveys to a qualitative analysis of election campaigns. This variety serves as a testimony for WAPOR's intellectual diversity and international nature.

The seminar convened at the Hebrew University of Jerusalem, with an address by notable media scholar Elihu Katz (U. of Pennsylvania and Hebrew U). Dedicating his remarks to the



memory of Lipset, Katz discussed the intersection of Lipset and Paul Lazarsfeld's scholarship on cross-cutting contexts and electoral choice, arguing for a critical and nuanced understanding of information selectivity and choice volatility under conditions of abundance. The first day of discussions continued with a panel on performance evaluations and the vote, and a special panel organized by Comparative Study of Electoral Systems (CSES). The day ended with a keynote speech by Larry Bartels (Princeton University), focusing on what he called "the rationalizing voter."

Bartels argued that most of the time, voters adopt their positions on issues and candidates, and only then invent the facts to rationalize decisions they already made. Only once or twice in a lifetime, according to Bartels, does a major event invoke economic-voting-like political thinking among the electorate.

The next two days of discussions took place at the University of Haifa, in an observation gallery overlooking the Mediterranean Sea from atop Mount Carmel. Discussions included panels on the role of information in preference formation; the role of identity and conflict in shaping public opinion; methodological issues in communication and election research and additional topics. Abstracts of the papers presented at the seminar are available online through <http://www.waporisrael2007.com/>.

The proverbial political heat of the region notwithstanding, weather conditions were rather extreme for June in Israel, with temperatures reaching a scorching 110s Fahrenheit (40 Centigrade). The atmosphere at the seminar was terrific nonetheless, and despite the heat, guests braved the climate of opinion, and not only contributed to lively panels, but also learned

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about Israeli history and politics. The seminar included a walking tour of Jerusalem's breathtaking Old City, a political tour of the Israeli separation wall in the Jerusalem area, a visit to the spectacular historic port town of Caesarea, and a walk in Haifa's Bahai gardens.

As organizers, we were delighted to host a truly remarkable group of scholars and to introduce WAPOR to our colleagues and students in Israel. In addition to the lively discussions and intellectual benefits of the seminar, we enjoyed sharing numerous meals, receptions and trips with such a great group of colleagues.

We thank all participants for coming, and look forward to hosting additional WAPOR conferences and seminars in Israel in the future.

Conference Organizers:

Tamir Sheafer (Hebrew University, Jerusalem)
Lilach Nir (Hebrew University, Jerusalem)
Yariv Tsfati (University of Haifa)



WAPOR Elections

The ballots and candidate biographies for this year's election were mailed on the last days of October. All members whose dues were paid for 2007 will receive a ballot. Please read your ballot carefully for voting instructions.

The candidates for Secretary/Treasurer are Robert Chung and Allan McCutcheon.

The candidates for Chair of the Liaison Committee are Marita Carballo and Marc Swyngedouw.

The candidates for Chair of the Publications Committee are Nikolaus Jakob and Nick Moon.

Each of these offices is for a two-year term (2008-2009). Please watch for your ballot in the mail and remember that ballots are due in the WAPOR office by **December 10**. Questions can be emailed to Renae Reis at renae@wapor.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.

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

2009

May 21-25, 2009:

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

July 2009:

21st World Congress of the International Political Science Association (IPSA)
Santiago, Chile.
Consult: www.ipsa.ca

2010

July 11-17, 2010:

17th World Congress of Sociology,
International Sociological Association (ISA)
Goteborg, Sweden
Consult: www.isa-sociology.org

As always, if you have a conference or seminar from an organization you are involved with, please let us know. Send an email to renae@wapor.org to add this information.

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demagogues, weapons in public and factional debates, and sensible detectors of social, political, and cultural change. These arguments were especially supported by Gary Langer from ABC News and Sir Robert Worcester, Ipsos MORI UK. Matthias Machnig, Secretary of State of the German Ministry of Environment and organizer of the 1998 and 2002 federal election campaigns of the Social Democrats in Germany, shed some light on the use of polls in politics. He recommended using polls rather for strategic orientations of parties than as yardsticks for special policies. The panelists left no doubt that independent high quality survey research including careful interpretation is needed in order to avoid misuse. As Matthias Machnig put it: "Polls do not only measure public opinion, they also make public opinion."

A conference success with more than 130 participants, 19 panels and 50+ papers

The relationship between public opinion, media, polls, politics, and policies was addressed in a number of panels by a variety of papers. Several papers dealt with the question of the impact of published survey results on public opinion or, more generally, with the impact of mass media content on public opinion in a range of areas like election campaigns, referenda, European integration and its consequences for politics. The recent research presented at this conference makes it more obvious than ever that mass communication may not only shape the agenda of public opinion but also influence positions on issues. This impression strongly supports the notion of the panel discussion on the use and misuse of polls that survey results have to be handled responsibly. This also falls in line with an argument made by former President of the WZB Jürgen Kocka in his words of welcome at the WZB. Being an historian of 19th and 20th century history, he could not rely on surveys as sources in his own work, but foresees that polls will become valuable sources of historical reconstructions in the future. However, whereas research has produced more and more convincing evidence on the impact of media content on public opinion, the same is not true for the reverse direction. Nevertheless, mass media may be mirror and molder of public opinion at the same time.

In a number of panels, and in the initial session, problems of measuring public opinion became obvious. One of the major challenges for survey research certainly is countries where knowledge about public opinion is of crucial importance

but difficult to achieve while violence, illiteracy, poverty, missing infrastructures, etc. are prevailing. Another challenge lies in the increasing volatility and instability of public attitudes in many advanced democracies that demand better instruments and measurements to gain reliable information. Return rates in traditional survey designs create further challenges that need to be met by innovative approaches.



From the left: Richard Hilmer (Infratest dimap, Conference Chair), Bernhard Weßels (WZB), Jürgen Kocka (former President of the WZB), Michael Traugott, Kurt Lang (keynote speaker), and Bob Worcester



Panel Discussion "The Use and Misuse of Polls in Politics and in the Media." The discussants were (from left to right): Matthias Machnig (German Federal Ministry for the Environment, Nature Conservation and Nuclear Safety), Bob Worcester (Ipsos-MORI), Kathy Frankovic (CBS News), Gary Langer (ABC News), Kurt Lang (University of Washington Emeritus)

Prizes

In long-standing tradition, WAPOR awarded its well-known prizes. The Elizabeth Nelson Prize for the best paper from a developing country went to Ibrahim Saleh (The

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American University in Cairo) for his paper "Sitting in the Shadows of Subsidization in Egypt: Revisiting the Notion of Street Politics." The Naomi C. Turner Prize for the best graduate student paper was awarded to Jörg Matthes (University of Zurich) for his paper "Media Frames and Public Opinion. Testing an Online and Memory-based Model of Framing Effects in a Two-Wave Panel Study."



Wolfgang Donsbach, 2007 winner of the Helen Dinerman Award

Gabriela Catterberg (University of Bologna, Buenos Aires) and Alejandro Moreno (Instituto Tecnológico Autónomo de México) received the Worcester Prize for the best article appearing in the IJPOR in 2006 entitled "The individual bases of political trust: Trends in new and established democracies."

The most prestigious prize of WAPOR, the Helen Dinerman Award, honoring those who have made the greatest contributions to innovative research and to research methodology over an entire career, was awarded to Wolfgang Donsbach from Dresden University, Germany. The citation for this award can be found in this issue of the newsletter on page 7. Congratulations to all of the award recipients this year.

Please visit www.infratest-dimap.de/wapor for more photographs of the conference.

Contributed by

*Bernhard Weßels (WZB)
Brigitte Geissel (WZB)
Richard Hilmer (Infratest dimap)*

Photos Contributed by

*Wolfgang Wichmann
Thomas Petersen*

Bjorn Balstad: Former WAPOR President

Bjorn Balstad, WAPOR's president 1956-1958, died on September 21, 2007 at the age of 91 in his home town of Oslo, Norway. Balstad was a graduate of the London School of Economics following which he founded Norsk Gallup in 1946 and was for decades the most successful of the Scandinavian pollsters. Balstad was the last surviving original member from a meeting chaired by Dr. George H. Gallup of 13 opinion institutes that had met in 1947 in Loxwood Hall in Sussex to form the association of Gallup International, the first international chain of pollsters. A few years later, Balstad presented for free to this group and to WAPOR his effective and economic innovation the "omnibus," which changed much market and opinion research from a handicraft to a factory-type product.



Contributed by Hans Zetterberg (ValueScope AB)

2007 Helen Dinerman Award
Presented to Wolfgang Donsbach
at the 60th Annual Conference in Berlin

In appreciation of his extraordinary achievements in furthering the methodological development, the scholarly level of excellence and the social reputation of public opinion research throughout the world.

Wolfgang Donsbach has gained much respect in various subfields of public opinion research. Among his many merits, his efforts to increase freedom to conduct and publish survey research everywhere in the world deserve special mention. In his term as President of WAPOR 1996/1997, and in the years before and after, he has sought to give voice to public opinion research wherever it was threatened by government regulation or social pressure. His publications on this subject have noticeably affected public deliberations on the issue in several countries.

In the field of method development, Donsbach has made great contributions primarily in investigating the interplay between survey research, the mass media, and the formation of opinion in the population. To be mentioned here are, among other works, his research on the limits of selective perception, on the effects of representative surveys on the people's opinion formation, and his efforts to further the combination of survey research and media content analysis.

Finally, Wolfgang Donsbach has rendered invaluable service to the scientific community in his function as the Managing Editor of the *International Journal of Public Opinion Research* – a position he has held, with only a short interruption, since the foundation of the journal in 1989. It is thanks to him that the IJPOR today not only reaches an exceptionally high scholarly standard, and enjoys a correspondingly high reputation internationally, but also displays a substantive profile that makes it unique among the journals in the field. It is, as was confirmed a few years ago in an analysis of the *Journal of Communication*, the only “classic communication journal” that can be called “truly international.” Wolfgang Donsbach has created, in the IJPOR, a forum in which survey researchers from all over the world can level with each other and share their results, which is an invaluable service to the development of survey research as a scholarly discipline.

Donsbach's scholarly activities are characterized by a typical ethical conception of a scientist's role. He develops his scholarly interests with a passion that characterizes a human being whose convictions rest on firm values. But this engagement does not keep him from applying greatest care and neutrality in research. The ability to engage emotionally in a matter and simultaneously investigate it *sine ira et studio* is not frequently met among scholars (or elsewhere). It is an important quality, for it warrants that research does not degenerate into the production of arguments for pre-conceived opinions, nor lead to arbitrariness in substance.

Wolfgang Donsbach, with apparently untiring energy, commits himself to international exchange in the social sciences. It was not without reason that he, as the first German ever and only the third non-American scholar, became President of the International Communication Association in 2004/2005. The exceedingly international and intercultural perspective, which is among his qualities, also characterizes his most recent project, the 11-volume *International Encyclopedia of Communication*, for which he serves as General Editor.

WAPOR is very pleased to be able to bestow the 2007 Helen Dinerman Award to Wolfgang Donsbach, in gratitude of his services to public opinion research to date, and in expectation of manifold other services to come.

Worcester Prize Commendation for 2006 WAPOR Annual Conference Berlin, 20 September 2007

"The International Journal of Public Opinion Research is entering its 20th year, and of course we miss, revere really, our co-founding editor, Seymour Martin Lipset, who died since we last met. We were fortunate to have such a well known and much cited, as well as much admired, colleague, together with the doyen of European public opinion researchers Professor Elisabeth Noelle-Neumann, to lead the initiative to establish IJPOR nearly two decades ago.

Twenty years is really coming of age, 18 is maturity in many societies, therefore entering our 20th, and recognising its 18th, it is with great pleasure that I am able to announce that the winners of the Worcester Prize for the best article in the International Journal of Public Opinion Research for the year 2006 is Professors Gabriela Catterberg and Alejandro Moreno for their article entitled "The individual bases of political trust: trends in new and established democracies."

Dr. Catterberg is a professor in the Masters Program on Social Methodology at the University of Bologna, in Buenos Aires, and obtained her PhD in political science at the University of Michigan. Dr. Moreno is a professor of political science at the Instituto Tecnológico Autónomo, ITAM,

and head of the department of survey research at the newspaper *Reforma* in Mexico City, and he also obtained his doctorate from the University of Michigan in Ann Arbor.

This year's first-named winner is the first of our second generation of winners, the late Eduardo Catterberg having been the Worcester Prize winner in 1990, in IJPOR's second year. And as last year, a great year, Eduardo took the prize, but as I looked up his prize winning article my eye caught some of the other distinguished authors, among them Gabriel Weimann from Israel; Jacques Durand, France; Michael Adams, Canada; Panayote Dimitras, Greece; Jose Montero, Spain; Mario Bacalhau, Portugal; Hermann Schmitt, Germany; and Norbert Schwarz, also from Germany; my own article on European Attitudes to the European Community, Britain; Frank and Roberta Rusciano from the US; and our board member Tom Smith, also from the US, and many more. But think of it, in its second year, a new international journal, with authors of articles from at least ten countries, not counting co-authors in various countries different from their home countries. Truly international.

Gabriela carries on the family tradition of clear thinking and excellent analysis and

writing, together with Alejandro who has contributed frequently and significantly to past conferences of WAPOR and its regional seminars.

What struck us about the Worcester Prize winners over other excellent contributions published in 2006 was its breadth, covering as it did both the World Values Survey and the European Values Survey, using these extensive databanks to examine one of the most important phenomena worrying politicians and social scientists alike, indeed, corporate executives, professionals such as doctors and lawyers, journalists, scientists, right across the world: trust.

In the abstract, Gabriela and Alejandro highlight their findings: in across national boundaries of more than 50 countries, political trust is positively related to well-being, social capital, democratic attitudes, political interest, and external efficacy, suggesting that trust responds to government performance, but hindered by corruption, permissiveness, political radicalism, and – wait for it – post-materialism.

It is using a database with a suitable methodologically sound and adequately described design and analysis to provide insight into an important political debate that should be more widely dispersed to politicians and other policy makers and administrators.

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Perhaps the most disappointing finding of this analytical examination is that political trust, which they describe as "citizens' confidence in political institutions", has declined in the new democracies during the last two decades, but does not seem to have increased in the established ones either.

In Britain, after the sharp decline in turnout between the Blair landslide of 1997 and the Labour Government's re-election in 2001 from c. 71% voting in Great Britain, to 59% four years later, down 12 points, many politicians and much of the media principally blamed two causes, electorate



Pictured from left:
Gabriela Catterberg, Mike Traugott,
Alejandro Moreno, Robert Worcester

apathy and that polls showing the likelihood of another Labour landslide caused many not to bother to vote. They were ignoring both the measure of constancy in the proportion of people who said they were interested in politics had not varied in more than thirty years, and the fact that such a cause and effect of polls forecasting landslides had not occurred in either 1979, in anticipation of the Thatcher landslide, nor in 1997 in anticipation of Blair's.

Further analysis and calmer reflection over the months that followed identified a more basic cause, lack of trust, and we are better informed than before about how trust is lost, and hopefully gained, with the excellent paper from Catterberg and Moreno.

So, my personal congratulations, and the cheque to go with it!"

Remarks given by:
Sir Robert Worcester, KBE DL
Co-Founding Editor
International Journal of Public Opinion Research
at the award dinner of the 60th annual conference in Berlin

McCutcheon to Help Call the 2008 U.S. Elections

WAPOR General Secretary, Allan McCutcheon, will have a leading role to play in the 2008 elections courtesy of the agency that oversees the U.S. media's exit polling.

Edison Media Research has asked McCutcheon to help direct the exit-polling it conducts for the National Election Pool in the capacity of Senior Statistical Director. McCutcheon will work with the statistics and oversee the operation of models to predict outcomes in the 2008 presidential primaries and the 2008 general election. The NEP is a collaboration by the major U.S. television news organizations, ABC news, CBS news, NBC news, CNN and Fox news, and the Associated Press (AP).

Following WAPOR member Warren Mitofsky's death in 2006, McCutcheon was asked to assume a leadership role for the 2008 elections in partnership with Joe Lenski, Edison Media Research's co-founder and Executive Vice President. They will lead a team that will project the results for the 2008 primaries and the statewide general elections in November, including the presidential, gubernatorial and senatorial races.

**61st ANNUAL CONFERENCE:
“Polls for the Public Good”
New Orleans, Louisiana, USA**

A joint meeting with the American Association for Public Opinion Research
WAPOR: Tuesday, May 13 to Thursday, May 15, 2008
AAPOR: Thursday, May 15 to Sunday, May 18, 2008

CALL FOR PAPERS

The World Association for Public Opinion Research will hold its annual conference May 13-15, 2008 in New Orleans, Louisiana, USA, in conjunction with the annual meeting of the American Association for Public Opinion Research (AAPOR). WAPOR seeks proposals for original research papers to be presented at this conference. We welcome proposals on the conference theme “Polls for the Public Good,” the themes below, as well as other topics that may be of interest to WAPOR members:

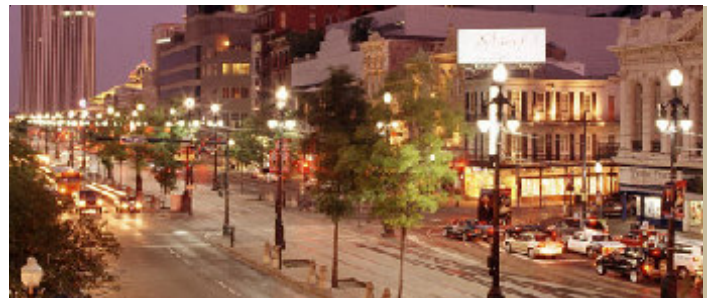
- Polls and policy
- Citizens and government
- Public opinion theory
- Trust in government
- Recent elections around the world
- Research methodology
- Public opinion on social, economic and political issues
- Comparative international research
- Media and public opinion
- Internet surveys
- Survey research in emerging democracies
- Communication research

Individual proposals should include a general, 300-word description of the research paper (research topic, specific research questions or hypotheses, methods and results), as well as full contact information (mailing address, e-mail address and telephone number) for each co-author or participant on a separate sheet. Similarly, panel proposals should include a 300-word description of each presentation as well as full contact information for each panelist.

All proposals should be submitted electronically (Word, WordPerfect, or text document; please, no PDF files). **All submissions must be received by December 1, 2007.** Submitters will be notified of the Conference Committee's decisions the week of December 17, 2007. If your proposal is accepted, we expect the text of the full paper by April 15, 2008.

Please email proposals by December 1, 2007 to the conference chair:

Alejandro Moreno
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Canal Street, New Orleans

A good tradition carries on...
Announcement and first call for papers for
WAPOR Thematical Seminar

“Quality Criteria in Survey Research VII”
Cadenabbia, Lake Como, Italy
July 10-12, 2008



One of Germany's television news channels, n-tv, recently posted the findings of an online survey about who should become the new leader of the Christian Social Union in Bavaria on its Internet site. Two thirds of respondents expressed a preference for Gabriele Pauli, a local politician, whose controversial comments had previously earned her the wrath of both her party and its voters. Ultimately, when the party members cast their ballots to choose a new leader, she received a mere 2.5 percent of the vote. Apparently, it had not occurred to the n-tv editors that the online Internet vote was perhaps not the most accurate reflection of Bavaria's political climate.

The following article appeared a while ago in the *Hamburger Abendblatt*: "Dogs like to bite men best, cats prefer older women and horses young girls. This was discovered by Elif Dahl of the Norwegian physicians association. He investigated animals' biting habits based on 1051 cases at a clinic in Oslo."

A newspaper from a central German province (which we shall not mention by name) asked its readers to fill out and send in the following brief questionnaire: "Question: 'Administrative reform: progress or farce?' Response alternatives: 'yes,' 'no,' 'don't know.'"

For over a decade now, we have been meeting in Cadenabbia to discuss quality criteria in survey research and how to raise awareness of these criteria among the public, the media and clients commissioning surveys. In the meantime, however, the situation appears to be getting worse and worse. In the summer of 2006, when we last met, we decided not to merely gather such indicators, develop criteria and complain about the situation. Instead, we set ourselves the task of trying to intervene more actively in the public sphere. The aim of next summer's seminar is thus to take stock of the situation: what positive developments have there been over the past few years and how can we defend scientific survey research in the face of the flood of unscientific polls that are just getting quickly slapped together and the increasing influence of commercial interests on data quality.

And, of course, we shall once again benefit from the uniquely inspirational atmosphere of Villa la Collina, which has become so popular in the meantime that it was quite difficult to secure a time slot. Therefore, please note: instead of the last week in June, as in previous years, next year's seminar will not take place until mid-July—providing the ideal opportunity to combine business with pleasure by scheduling Cadenabbia at the beginning or end of the summer break.

For this conference, we will be soliciting presentations by invited speakers, but there will also be room for proposed papers, as is always the case in Cadenabbia.

We look forward to receiving your suggestions for papers. All proposals should include the full title of the presentation planned and a 1-2 page abstract detailing the intended content of the paper. The final deadline for submitting proposals is **March 1, 2008**. Please send your proposals by mail or electronically to:

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Call for Papers
WAPOR Regional Conference in India

*“Democracy, Development & Disasters:
The 3Ds of Opinion Research in the Transitional Societies”*
New Delhi, India
February 28-29, 2008

WAPOR is organizing a Regional Conference for the first time in New Delhi, India on 28-29th February 2008. The theme of the conference is “Democracy, Development & Disasters: The 3Ds of Opinion Research in the Transitional Societies” and is being hosted by C-Voter Foundation. We are pleased to invite you to a vibrant conference where a large variety of topics will be discussed. Prominent among these are:

- * Democratization and electoral studies: the role of public opinion research,
- * Public opinion research in developmental studies and governance
- * Disaster mitigation and dimensions of opinion research in relief and rehabilitation

We have selected this theme because Democracy (including Political and Media Research), Development (including Economic and Market Research) and Disasters (including Impact Evaluations and Conflict Research) cover almost the entire spectrum of Public Opinion Research sector in transitional societies. The conference is for two days in New Delhi, followed by an optional two-day group tour of Jaipur (Rajasthan) and Agra (to see the Taj) of one day each.

WAPOR seeks to bring together scholars with a sociological, political science or communications science background who would present original research papers at this conference. Proposals should include a general description of the research paper as well as full contact information (mailing address, e-mail address and telephone number) for each co-author or participant on a separate sheet. The abstract should not exceed two double-spaced pages or 350 words. If you wish to present a paper at the conference, please send an abstract to neha@teamcvoter.com or submit it online at <http://www.waporindia2008.com/registration.htm> by **30th November 2007**.

Further Information on the Conference can be found on the conference website:
www.waporindia2008.com

Contact:
Yashwant Deshmukh
C-Voter Foundation
2nd floor, A-175,
Sector 63,
NCR Noida
Telefax: 00-91-120-4247146
Email: neha@teamcvoter.com

(Letter continued from page 2)

circumstances in a region. Based on an evaluation of these experiments, we will eventually see whether we can move toward a standardized set of arrangements. We expect to initiate these experiments in South America and possibly in India, but we welcome inquiries from other locales as well.

As another new activity, WAPOR is going to be developing standards for the conduct of peace polls in the mold of work being conducted by our member Colin Irwin at the University of Liverpool. We are organizing a committee to work on this in the current year, along the lines that we did for the development of exit poll standards. We will keep you posted on this.

Sincerely,



Michael W. Traugott
President

Calendar

November 30, 2007

Abstract submission deadline
WAPOR Regional Conference
New Delhi, India

December 1, 2007

Abstract submission deadline
WAPOR Annual Conference
New Orleans, Louisiana, USA

December 10, 2007

Election ballots due in the WAPOR office

January 1, 2008

Deadline for 2008 membership dues

February 28-29, 2008

WAPOR Regional Conference
*Democracy, Development & Disasters:
The 3Ds of Opinion Research in the Transi-
tional Societies*
New Delhi, India

March 1, 2008

Abstract submission deadline
WAPOR Thematical Seminar
Cadenabbia, Lake Como, Italy

May 13-15, 2008

WAPOR Annual Conference
Polls for the Public Good
New Orleans, Louisiana, USA

July 10-12, 2008

WAPOR Thematical Seminar
Quality Criteria in Survey Research VII
Villa la Collina
Cadenabbia, Lake Como, Italy

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

If so, please contact the WAPOR office by sending an email to renae@wapor.org or to Thomas Petersen (Publications Chair) at tpetersen@ifd-allensbach.de

Let us know your upcoming events.

*Please note, the deadline date for the
4th quarter newsletter is
December 15, 2007.*

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