

NEWSLETTER

Fourth Quarter

2005

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Public Opinion: East Meets West WAPOR Regional Seminar in Hong Kong

Dr. Robert Chung and Kitty Chan
The University of Hong Kong

WAPOR's regional seminar in Hong Kong was designed to be a natural follow-up of the 58th annual conference in Cannes. While the annual conference in September focused on the "search for a new world order", the regional conference in December looked at how "East meets West". In fact, the Hong Kong conference went the extra mile to discuss some North-South global issues related to the World Trade Organization (WTO).

The Hong Kong conference was held from December 8-10, 2005 at the University of Hong Kong, hosted by the Public Opinion Programme of the university (HKUPOP). More than 70 participants from 12 countries participated in the conference, and hosting the conference was indeed a novel challenge and attempt for the HKUPOP team. Approximately 40 presentations were made regarding the development of opinion polling around the world in a cross-cultural context. Topics covered included opinion polling and democratic development in different countries, expression of public opinion beyond opinion polling, the interplay between politics and public opinion, the role of the media and academics in opinion polling, and opinions on national, regional and global issues.

Two plenary sessions were held. WAPOR President Esteban López-Escobar opened the first one, which featured two important keynote presentations: "Developing Codes of Professional Ethics and Practices for Public Opinion Research" by Past President Kathleen Frankovic, and "Who's Afraid of Election Polls?" by Wolfgang Donsbach, Editor of the International Journal of Public Opinion Research (IJPOR) and also a Past President of WAPOR. Both presentations generated lively discussions among the very international audience.

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Annual Conference
Montréal, Québec, Canada
May 16-18, 2006

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Letter from the President

Let me start this letter by sending to all of you my best wishes for the 2006 year. Having said that, I would like to make some comments about the last WAPOR elections, the Hong Kong regional seminar and some future events.

The Executive Council welcomes Robert Chung and Marita Carballo as the newly elected members. Thomas Petersen remains as the chairman of the Publication Committee. Robert Chung, being elected as the WAPOR Secretary-Treasurer, has become a member of the Executive Council, and Marita Carballo will chair the Liaison Committee. With them the Council has an even more international character. I wish to thank Nick Moon for his efficient work in the last years chairing the Liaison Committee, and Allan McCutcheon for his care regarding our finances. Allan will remain as the General Secretary appointed by the Council and this is an excellent guarantee of continuity in the management of WAPOR's financial affairs.

I shall be proposing the name of a member to be the chairman of a new Media Relations Committee. If the Council agrees with my proposal, I will announce who this member is in the very near future. This appointment, in my view, is very coherent with the general understanding that has been made manifest in Cannes, when we agreed to have a more pro-active attitude towards the media, with a clear awareness than a more permanent cooperation with it could be not only helpful for media practitioners and public opinion researchers, but above all for the public.

I think that promoting a culture of public opinion is an attractive challenge for all of us. Our honest contribution to this endeavour could lead to a better willingness on the side of the eventual interviewees, with positive consequences for the quality of surveys and polls in general. I am not implying the culture of public opinion is limited to empirical research, because public opinion is a multifaceted phenomenon that has been and should continue to be the subject of many disciplines. But surveying and polling is an obviously useful, positive and legitimate activity that should not be hampered by legal, social and 'public opinion' obstacles.

The relationship between media practitioners and public opinion researchers should not be of distance or opposition, or a sort of marriage of convenience, but a relation of cooperation in favour of the public. We both adhere to the purpose of serving the public. Let us work together to make sure this purpose remains as a constantly improved aim.

This idea leads me to the Hong Kong regional seminar, efficiently organized by Robert Chung and his collaborators, with other WAPOR members. Ten years ago David Bottomley organized another Hong Kong seminar. It took a long trip to reach Hong Kong but it was worth it. Two former presidents, Kathy Frankovic and Wolfgang Donsbach, were there, and also Patricia Moy whose responsibility in the WAPOR Council relates to conferences and seminars.

The Newsletter offers coverage of the seminar that attracted some 'veteran' WAPOR members (Mahar Mangahas, Linda Guerrero and others) and good number of younger public opinion researchers coming from the Democratic Republic of the Congo, the Philippines, India, Japan, mainland China, Sri Lanka, Taiwan, the United States and so on.

The seminar had a foreword, according quite well to the pro-active media approach I have just mentioned. There was a pre-conference seminar for journalists, in which Evans Witt explained the "20 questions a journalist should ask about poll results" document he has written with Sheldon Gawiser, followed by a press conference to explain the role of WAPOR and the objectives of the Hong Kong conference. Robert Chung had prepared the Chinese translation of this document and also Wolfgang Donsbach's "Who's afraid of opinion polls" and Frits Spangenberg's "The freedom to publish opinion poll results" that were distributed to the audience. I think this useful approach could be reproduced at other WAPOR events.

Montréal is the location of our next general meeting. I look forward to meeting you in this beautiful Canadian city, with its international flavour, and to enjoying your intellectual excellence, the diversity of your interests, as they will be shown in your papers, and also your invaluable friendship.



WAPOR President
Prof. Esteban
López-Escobar

WAPOR/ISSC Conference On International Surveys

by Nick Moon, Gfk NOP Social Research

A grant was received by the World Association for Public Opinion Research (WAPOR) from ISSC to make possible a conference bringing together those involved in conducting or using the main international social surveys. The task of organising the conference fell to me in my role as member of the WAPOR Council with responsibility for liaison with ISSC, and I received vital assistance from Roger Jowell and Tom Smith on the programme side, and from Vasja Vehovar in terms of local organisation. The conference was held in Ljubljana, Slovenia from 9-11 November 2005. There were a total of 44 delegates, from 17 different countries, and Europe, Asia, North America, Africa, and Australasia were all represented among the delegates.

The presentations, and some full papers, are available on-line at <http://ciss.ris.org> courtesy of Tina Ostrez, a student of Vasja's who also provided invaluable administrative help during the conference.

The conference began with a brief introduction to each of the main international social surveys, given by someone involved in either the conduct or the management and analysis of that survey. The surveys covered were:

- The European Social Survey
- The International Social Survey
- The World Values Survey
- Eurobarometer
- Latinobarometer
- Afrobarometer
- Comparative Study of Electoral Systems
- New Europe Barometer
- East Asian Social Survey
- Generations and Gender Program

The main part of the conference began with a keynote speech from Tony Cowling, who

as Chairman of TNS, the largest ad hoc research agency in the world, was ideally placed to offer insight into the changing world of multinational research in general, and social research in particular. He outlined how the trend had been for the biggest research suppliers to be responsible for an increased proportion of the total research business, and outlined some of the key problems to be faced in conducting multi-country studies, particularly those of translation, local cultures, working with multiple modes of data collection, and the maintenance of standards. Based

on the TNS experience, especially with Eurobarometer, he stressed the importance of a central management unit to coordinate



Tony Cowling,
Chairman of TNS

the work done by all the different countries, with the coordination role recognised as quite separate from the researcher role. Finally, Tony stressed the need for innovation and use of electronic reporting to deal with the demands for ever more sophisticated reporting to be available ever more quickly.

In a truncated session on translation issues, caused by a speaker dropping out late on, Janet Harkness then spoke about a study examining the practice of having interviewers translate the questionnaire as they go along, rather than using a script already translated into the appropriate language. This is becoming a more frequent practice, and the full results of the study will be published in January 2006.

The sampling session consisted of three papers. Seppo Laaksonen described the principles behind the strict sampling rules on the ESS, and suggested ways in which they

(Ljubljana continued on page 4)

could be improved, while Eugene Kritski raised, and went some way to answering, the question of how you decide how many, and which, countries need to be included in a survey before you can describe it as one of global opinion. Finally, in an impassioned presentation, Yashwant Deshmukh outlined some of the extraordinary difficulties facing researchers in the multi-cultured and multi-language societies of South Asia, especially those trying to apply the same strict sampling rules described by Seppo Laaksonen.

In the final session on the first day, Juan Diez Nicolas gave an outline of the advantages and disadvantages of each of the different modes that can be used for data collection, then Annie Chikwanha explained the quality control procedures used on Afrobarometer, and made the European delegates very jealous by revealing the remarkably high response rates that Afrobarometer achieves.

Day Two began with a session on response rates. There were two papers on response rates in the European Social Survey. Denisa Fedakova outlined the experience in Eastern Europe, with particular reference to changes between waves 1 and 2, while Rory Fitzgerald covered the whole range of countries and showed how response rates tended to be much lower in the more mature western European democracies than in the new democracies in the east, suggesting similar factors at work as in Afrobarometer. Finally, Tom Smith looked at response on the International Social Survey Program, examining which techniques for maximising response proved to be the most successful.

The pre-lunch session was again a slightly shorter one as a speaker had fallen ill just before the conference, but the extra time available for discussion as a result proved useful. Despite himself being a late replacement for his co-author, Eric Harrison gave an extremely polished description of the at times

painful process that had led to the development of E-SEC, the new European Socio-Economic Classification. Eric gave the theoretical background to the schema, and outlined some of the problems that had to be faced in devising a single frame that could be used in countries with massively different economic and employment structures. Angelika Kofler then described a more purposive classification system, the Euro-Social Styles segmentation model devised by GfK, using demographic, lifestyle and attitudinal variables.

The last two sessions were not thematic, and included a stimulating range of very different papers. Nickolaus Jackob and Thomas Zerback described an on-line survey of specialist journalists that they had recently conducted, outlining the sampling approach and the survey administration. Richard Rose addressed the age-old issue of whether respondents are telling the truth in surveys, by using some of his many surveys in the New Europe to assess whether respondents in the former communist countries were likely to dissemble when asked potentially sensitive questions.

Following some of the same points made by Tony Cowling, Pascal Chelala and Leendert de Voogd described in more detail the work of the central coordination team on Eurobarometer, showing some very impressive on-line tools for monitoring progress in more than 30 countries. In slightly similar vein, Peter Mohler outlined the importance of proper documentation on surveys, especially multi-national ones. He acknowledged that documentation is usually pot off till the last minute, but argued that it needs to be an ongoing process if it is to be reliable.

Finally Jason Vir, another late replacement for a co-author, took the conference away from its concentration on quantitative research into a consideration of international qualitative research, stressing the importance

(Ljubljana continued on page 5)

of working around local cultures rather than following a “one size fits all” approach that risked collecting less useful material and possibly even offending respondents.

Apart from the considerable value of the papers themselves, the conference achieved its main objective of bringing together practitioners in the main social surveys, and groundwork has been laid for future collaborations.

WAPOR/ISSC
Conference on
International
Surveys

The collaborative theme continued at a very enjoyable post-conference dinner at a restaurant specialising in traditional Slovenian food, and attended by half the delegates. Those who took the meat option certainly had their gastro-nomic horizons widened by the bread dumpling, and by the dessert involving apples and cottage cheese!

Finally, on a more personal note, I fulfilled a life-long ambition by seeing a mother bear and two cubs in the wild, courtesy of another of Vasja's students who as well as arranging the bear-watching for us, proved a charming guide to some of Slovenia's lesser-known tourist attractions.



Thomas Zerback (Germany), Nikolaus Jakob (Germany) and Richard Rose (UK)



Prof. Peter Ph. Mohler (Germany) during his presentation “Taking Note: Documentation in Comparative Surveys”



Annie Chikwanha (South Africa)



Above: An audience photo

Left: It wasn't all work!



Dr. Leo Bogart and *Silent Politics*: True Classics

1921-2005

by W. Phillips Davison

WAPOR's tenth president, Leo Bogart, died last October following a distinguished career as a researcher, writer, academician and business executive. His term of office from 1965 to 1966 occurred in a period when public opinion research was rapidly spreading from industrialized nations to many parts of the world. His comprehensive knowledge and wide experience enabled him to actively participate in the process, to which the World Association for Public Opinion Research so significantly contributed. Symbolically, the Association's first regional meeting took place in Dubrovnik in 1965, close to the time he was elected president.

Dr. Bogart's continuing interest in worldwide public opinion research throughout his long career has been emphasized by many of his friends and associates. Helen Crossley, a previous WAPOR president, wrote to some of her former colleagues after his death: "I particularly remember him at the 1996 Hong Kong conference presenting basic research principles to East Asians new to the field." Communicating with people in many nations was possible because he had mastered seven languages, among them French, German, Portuguese and Spanish. (His wife, Agnes Bogart, recalls him rising to the platform and delivering a fluent address in Portuguese to a huge convention in Sao Paulo just hours after an acci-

dent in which his glasses were smashed.)

During a Fulbright research fellowship in Paris, Leo Bogart with a small additional grant from UNESCO conducted a study of North African immigration to France (written in 1952). After receiving a PhD in sociology from the University of Chicago, he directed public opinion research for the Standard Oil Company (New Jersey), marketing research for Revlon, and advertising account research for McCann Erickson, Inc. Then, during many years as Executive Vice President of the Newspaper Advertising Bureau in New York City, he became a leading authority not only on public opinion but also on the mass media, especially newspapers and television. Among his many awards and honors were those from the American Marketing Association, the American Association for Public Opinion Research and the American Society of Newspaper Editors. He and George Gallup were the first persons elected to the Market Research Council's Hall of Fame.

His lifetime achievement was marked in 2004 by the University of Missouri with its honor medal for distinguished service in journalism.

Although heavily identified with the business world during much of his working life, Dr. Bogart will probably be remembered by fu-

ture generations as an educator, researcher and author. He taught at New York University, Columbia University and the Illinois Institute of Technology and wrote an impressive number of books and articles. Among the 24 entries to be found under his name in an Amazon book search on the World Wide Web are: *The Age of Television*; *Silent Politics—Polls and the Awareness of Public Opinion*; *Strategy in Advertising*; *Cool Words, Cold War—A New Look at USIA's Premises for Propaganda* (with Agnes Bogart); *Finding Out—Personal Adventures in Social Research*; and *Over the Edge—How the Pursuit of Youth by Marketers and the Media has Changed American Culture*. This last title was published in 2005!

A few years ago, in an informal and unscientific poll, the surviving past presidents of the American Association for Public Opinion Research (about 20 in number) were asked to make a list of the books they considered most important for the study of public opinion, regardless of publication date. Among the top ten, along with Walter Lippmann's *Public Opinion* and other classics, was Leo Bogart's *Silent Politics*.

To a remarkable extent, Dr. Bogart's interests in American society and in other cultures throughout the world supplemented and reinforced each other. In his last book, *Over the Edge*, which is focused on the United States, he quotes extensively from communications with an English publisher, a German professor of communication, a professor of journalism in France, and a Span-

(Bogart continued on page 7)

ish philosopher, all of whom comment on the increasing informality and (sometimes) crudity of language in their own societies. Perhaps significantly, one of these authorities (Wolfgang Donsbach) is also a former president of WAPOR.

Although he retired from his position as Executive Vice President of the Bureau of Advertising almost twenty years ago, Leo continued to be a force in the world of international communication and public opinion until shortly before his death. In addition to his own research and writing, he contributed to professional journals, was a director and senior consultant for Innovation, an international media consulting firm, and wrote a column for *Presstime*, the magazine of the Newspaper Association of America. But, sometime during the summer of 2005, he contracted babesiosis, a parasitic blood disease transmitted by a deer tick, which proved fatal. He will be missed by friends in many countries.



Dr. Leo Bogart

WAPOR Election Results

Kathleen Frankovic, CBS News (USA)

This year, WAPOR elected three Council members – the Secretary-Treasurer, and the chairs of the Liaison and Publications Committees.

Two of them will be new Council members: Starting January 1, **Robert Chung** (Hong Kong) will assume the office of Secretary-Treasurer and **Marita Carballo** (Argentina) (who served once before) will return to Chair the Liaison Committee. **Thomas Petersen** (Germany) will continue to serve as Chair of the Publications Committee. Each will serve a two-year term.

The current Secretary-Treasurer and Liaison Committee chairs, Allan McCutcheon and Nick Moon, have each served two two-year terms, and have stepped down since the end of 2005. Allan, of course, will continue as WAPOR's General Secretary. During Allan's terms as Secretary-Treasurer, he moved WAPOR from a fairly perilous financial situation to one where it is in good financial health. Nick maintained WAPOR's close tie with the ISSC and other organizations, won two grants for WAPOR from the ISSC and just coordinated the very successful joint WAPOR-ISSC conference in Ljubljana, Slovenia (see page 3 of this issue).

WAPOR has been very lucky to have Allan and Nick serve on Council for the last four years.

As we look ahead, I'd like to thank Mari Harris, Alejandro Moreno and Dietram Scheufele, who agreed to be candidates for WAPOR office, and extend my congratulations to the new Council members.

59th ANNUAL CONFERENCE

Montréal, Québec, Canada

Tuesday, May 16 to Thursday, May 18, 2006



The World Association for Public Opinion Research will hold its annual conference in May 2006 in Montréal, Québec, Canada in connection with the annual meeting of the American Association for Public Opinion Research (AAPOR).

The Conference program will include papers and panels on the following:

Communication research
Research methodology
Media and public opinion
Public opinion on social, economic and political issues

Media and public opinion
Public opinion theory
Comparative international research

There will be specific sessions on:

Public Opinion Research in Africa
The Upcoming Election in Mexico

Research with Aboriginal People in Canada
Research on Science and Technology Issues

Montréal, Québec, Canada is an ideal location for an international conference on public opinion research. While it is the largest French-speaking city in the world after Paris, it is also very cosmopolitan. English is very widely spoken as well. Montréal has a wide variety of excellent restaurants and other cultural attractions, ranging from historic churches and 18th century Old Montréal to McGill University and l'Université de Montréal to the famous Montréal Biodome. Montréal also is known for its après-work nightlife and world-class rafting on the Saint Lawrence River, within sight of the downtown. Montréal is a city with world class— at Canadian prices.

Montréal in May is especially attractive. The snows of winter are long gone and spring is more than in the air: the maple trees have budded, the grass is a vibrant green, the flowers are in bloom and the days are still refreshingly mild.

Montréal has excellent air connections to most world cities and within three hours' drive you can be in Canadian cities such as Québec City and Ottawa or south of the border to U.S. destinations such as Vermont, New Hampshire and Lake Placid, New York.

Travel websites:

<http://www.bonjourquebec.com/anglais>

<http://www.tourisme-montreal.org/>

<http://www.keepexploring.ca/travelcanada/app/index.jsp>



Montréal is a city not to be missed! Above is a photo of the city taken from the Old Port.

Come join WAPOR for the 59th Annual Conference being held May 16-18, 2006.

<http://www.wapor.org> for registration information!

National Representative Report-Kenya

'Taking Risks, Reaping Rewards':

The Steadman Group's Polls on Kenya's 2005 National Constitutional Referendum

by George Waititu, Kenya National Representative

In terms of their methodology, media coverage, and interpretation and use by analysts and others (including those in power and their competitors), opinion polls have become fixtures in established democracies.

In most developing countries, however, such polls are either absent, or, to the extent they are undertaken, have yet to overcome myriad hurdles. Beyond cultural/linguistic diversity, these range from inadequate national census data (necessary to create accurate sampling frames) to poor infrastructure that makes the effort to access all sections of the population either impossible or inordinately expensive.

Other, non-technical, challenges may be even more daunting. One consists of establishing a clientele/market for the results of such surveys, while yet another is resistance from political and economic elites who are often unreceptive to hearing what ordinary citizens know, and desire from those in positions of authority. Indeed, such perceived hostility tends to engender considerable fear among active and would-be pollsters and patrons, where the losses incurred through victimization in various guises may be considerable. Finally, here, the assumption that fellow-ethnics are obliged to favor each other often makes it extremely difficult for most firms to be perceived as operating with total neutrality.

The recent experience of Kenya's Gallup International Association affiliate, The Steadman Group, highlights all of these problems. While examining them requires far greater length than is possible here, the summary that follows offers a glimpse at what polling in a newly emerging democracy may actually entail.

Since 2003, shortly after the country's benchmark transitional elections of December, 2002, when Steadman began conducting quarterly polls,

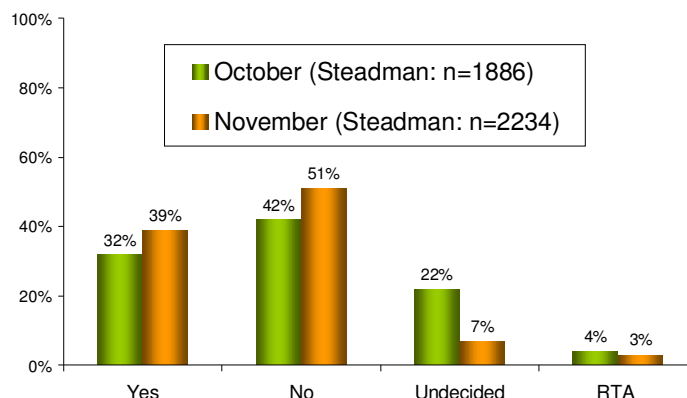
survey questionnaires have included items on critical current issues that are of interest in particular to a local audience. They are aimed at attracting media interest, so that even if financial support for such surveys remains minimal, general familiarity with – and more important, acceptance of – such instruments will increase. Such growing familiarity, Steadman believes, will not only help create a firmer financial foundation for them in the future, but also contribute to the country's evolving democracy.

Towards the end of 2005, a national constitutional review process, aimed at replacing the country's 1963 independence constitution (that had been subjected to significant, self-serving amendment by then-incumbent regime immediately thereafter) was nearing its climax. A draft document had been prepared and was about to be subjected to a straightforward, yes/no vote in a national referendum. At issue were not just specific provisions but also the process by which the actual text of the document had been determined. In brief, an earlier draft produced by a national delegates' conference – which the government had boycotted in its later stages when it became clear its supporters would be unable to bloc the inclusion of provisions that would significantly dilute the powers of the incumbent president – had subsequently been substantially revised to preserve (or even, according to some critics, increase) such powers. And since the main opponents of the proposed draft were dissident elements from within the broad-based coalition that had triumphed in the 2002 election, November 21 referendum was clearly as much about short-term, national power politics as it was about a constitutional blueprint for the foreseeable future. Additional color was added to the contest when the Electoral Commission of Kenya assigned the symbols of "Banana" and "Orange" to the "yes" and "no" positions, respectively, for the sake especially of illiterate voters, that had their own local cultural connotations.

(Kenya continued on page 10)

Given such high stakes - raised still higher when leading government figures declared the referendum to be a “vote of confidence in their performance” and coupled with widespread ignorance about the methodological requisites of survey research, it came as little surprise that Steadman (as had been the case on previous occasions) was subject to bitter attacks when the results of its October poll on this subject were released. Based on a national sample of some 2,000 respondents who attested to being registered voters (a requirement for participating in the referendum, from the total of 2,500 people interviewed) 42 percent were prepared to vote “Orange”, whereas only 32 percent declared their intention to vote “Banana”, with 22 percent still undecided. (Another 4 percent refused to answer the question.) (See graph above.)

Please tell me if you have made up your mind, how do you intend to vote on the referendum?



The most bitter reaction to the poll, however, came not from the pro-government, “Banana” side, but from the “Orange” side. This stemmed not just from the fact that “Orange” rallies seemed to attract larger and more energized crowds, but also from (due, apparently, as much to fears of government retaliation as to doubts about their methodological rigor), the “Orange” supporters clung to them as ‘gospel’, ignoring the (under-publicized) fact that the poll had been limited to urban areas, where anti-government feelings are often much higher than in rural areas, for various reasons. Utilizing mobile phone text-messaging to widely disseminate their supposed “big lead”, supporters of the “Orange” campaign therefore sought to discredit the Steadman poll with its much closer gap between the two positions. In such a contentious atmosphere, even confidential briefings to representatives of both “Banana” and “Orange” campaign teams (that themselves proved challenging to arrange) failed to complete assuage such doubts, especially among the latter, who were convinced Steadman had either been financially compromised, or simply intimidated by the government, into ‘watering down’ the survey’s actual results. For their part, the former simply dismissed the poll as inaccurate, or, more cautiously, insisted that since the draft document had only recently been made available to the public, it was just a matter of time before it would attract sufficient support to achieve ratification.

Throughout this period, Steadman sought to keep its focus on one key objective: to build confidence in the results of its opinion surveys. Largely in reaction to such doubts (as noted, especially, but by no means limited to the “Orange” campaign), it was decided to undertake yet another poll. Indeed, the forthcoming referendum was seen as a rare opportunity to show, once and for all, how sound such survey methods are. For even if polls conducted before national elections (under the current and proposed constitution every five years) can be compared with actual results, with the usual plethora of parties and candidates, results are likely to never be so clear-cut as in such a simple “yes-no” referendum.

Notwithstanding the cost, then, a second survey was undertaken barely a week before the event, and this time, for public credibility rather than for technical requirements, the sample was increased to 3,000. Results were ready on November 16. They clearly confirmed the earlier position, with 53 percent now indicating their intention to reject the draft, with 39 percent supporting it, and only 10 percent still claiming to be undecided.

(Kenya continued on page 11)

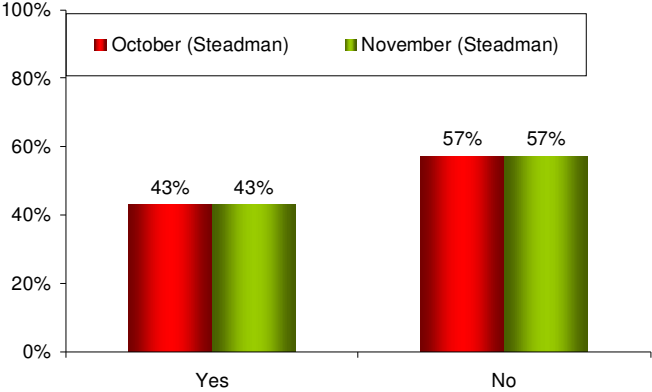
However, due to the highly polarized political climate and the very short period remaining until November 21, it was decided to hold these results until the referendum had actually been held and the Electoral Commission had announced the official results. In reaching this decision, reference was also made to relevant practice in several advanced democracies, where no polls (or at least release of their results) are allowed within certain periods immediately prior to an election.

Yet it was clear that by so doing, Steadman’s credibility was also subject to possible serious damage. This would happen, ironically, if the poll results were largely correct in terms of the actual referendum vote, since doubters could then charge that the firm would not have made them public if they significantly off the mark. To counter such attacks in advance, it was decided to provide Kenya’s main media outlet with a CD containing the results on prior to the referendum itself, but locked by a password that would only be made available after the official results were announced.

When the Electoral Commission did so late on November 22, they revealed that the proposed draft constitution had been rejected by a 57-43 percent margin (see graph at left). The release of Steadman’s

Please tell me if you have made up your mind, how do you intend to vote on the referendum?

Base: Those claiming to have registered, intending to vote on NOV 21st and they were **decisive at the time of polling**



November poll results then followed, showing a 53-39 percent edge for the “Oranges”, with only 10 percent remaining undecided. Given the fact that if the “undecideds” were removed from both its October and November polls the “Orange” margin in each would be the very 14 percent (57-43) in the referendum itself, Steadman’s work was now recognized triumph – and, perhaps remarkably, without any of the previous attacks – as remarkable even in comparison with well-established survey firms in countries where conducting such polls entails far fewer challenges than in a country like Kenya. And beyond the boost this gave to the firm’s credibility, and beyond this particular firm, was that to the very notion of scientific, objective, unbiased survey research itself that seeks to give voice to public far more often than do (infrequent) elections.

Given the governance challenges facing Kenya, especially in the aftermath of referendum that has left the entire process of constitutional review as well as future political alignments in considerable uncertainty, it would be an exaggeration to claim that Steadman’s success regarding these recent polls can, by itself, constitute a solid building-bloc of the country’s fledgling democracy. Nevertheless, the fact that the company chose to stick its neck out when it might have prudently remained on the sidelines to “protect its business interests” among present and potential clients across the political spectrum, constitutes not just a major achievement for Steadman itself, but indeed, for the very notion of professional survey research that can contribute to a more informed and objective public discourse.

Just how national party politics and constitutional reform will continue to unfold in the period remaining before the next (2007) elections and beyond remains to be seen. In the meantime, however, based on the events described above, public life in Kenya is likely to be marked by the increasing frequency and acceptance of such polls. And this, in turn, should encourage leaders to pay closer attention to the concerns of ordinary citizens, a basic requirement for accountable, democratic government.

**Cadenabbia 2006: Serious Discussions in a Serene Setting
Announcement and second call for papers for:**

WAPOR Thematical Seminar

“Quality Criteria in Survey Research VI”

Cadenabbia, Lake Como, Italy

June 29 – July 1, 2006

If we consider how the field of survey research has developed over the past decades, it would seem, at first glance, to be an incredible success story. Never before have there been so many representative surveys being conducted worldwide and there has probably been no other point in time when so much statistical information was being produced via such a great variety of methods as it is today—and never before have so many decisions been made based on survey findings as they are today.

Quality Criteria
in Survey
Research VI
June 29-July1

The annual WAPOR, AAPOR and ESOMAR conferences are also attracting an increasing number of participants from year to year and, likewise, interest in methodological issues also seems to be growing. At the universities, empirical social research is now on a stronger footing than it has ever been in the past—even if there is still a lot of catching up to do.

In a situation like this, where there is already heightened interest in methodological issues in survey research, is there still a need for a fundamental debate on survey quality?

The answer is: yes, such a debate is needed now even more than it was when the first conference on quality criteria was held in Cadenabbia ten years ago. For in the meantime, the continuous expansion of our field also seems to be going hand in hand with decreasing knowledge of the rudiments of survey research and the weakening of even those methodological standards that were taken for granted ten years ago. Allow me to cite a few particularly egregious examples encountered in Germany during the past few years—examples which are probably symptomatic of the situation in many other countries:

- A major management consultancy firm and several leading German media proclaim that they have completed the “largest sociopolitical online survey” of all time. 500,000 respondents were recruited via Internet sites. Although the findings are in part grotesquely distorted despite the use of extensive weighting procedures and at best

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approach the quality of the *Literary Digest* straw polls of 1936, they nevertheless attract a great deal of attention on the part of the media and the German government.

- A major German museum is pleased to learn that awareness of the museum among the population has increased sensationally within only a short period of time. On examining the data, it turns out that the findings derive from an access panel—and that the same persons were interviewed at both points in time. Apparently, quite a few respondents remembered the contents of the first questionnaire the second time around. An investigation based on an independently drawn sample shows no significant increase in the population's awareness of the museum.
- At a panel discussion, a researcher at a major German market research institute that is particularly well respected in the area of quantitative research contends that representative surveys can only be used to obtain superficial information on easily observable factual behavior, such as purchasing frequency. In contrast, the researcher claims, purchasing motives cannot be investigated within the framework of representative surveys, but must instead be ascertained via qualitative studies.
- The leading German automobile association, which is also a politically influential organization, often conducts its own phone-in surveys, using the results to support its political demands. The findings of these surveys are regularly published as the alleged “opinion of the population” in the magazine distributed to its members (circulation: more than 13 million copies).
- A well-known German survey research institute ascertains passenger satisfaction on behalf of a major railroad company. During the telephone interviews, respondents are asked to state how satisfied they are with a variety of services offered by the railroad company on a scale of 1 to 6 (with 1 being the best assessment) and then to say how important each particular service is to them on a scale of 1 to 10 (with 10 being the best assessment). Both assessments must be given one right after another. Respondents who say they cannot assess a particular service (for example, “protection from harrassment at train stations during the day”) based on their own personal experience are informed by interviewers that the responses “undecided” or “don't know” are not permissible and that they should kindly choose a number between 1 and 6 or, respectively, 1 and 10.

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- In the respected newspaper, *Hamburger Abendblatt*, the following item was printed under the headline, "Biting Frequency": "Dogs prefer to bite men, cats prefer older women and horses prefer girls. This was discovered by Elif Dahl of the Norwegian Physicians' Association. He investigated the animals' biting behavior based on 1,051 cases at a clinic in Oslo."

The list of such examples could go on and on. It seems as if Daniel Yankelovich was right when he warned about ten years ago that good survey research was being eclipsed and ultimately endangered by bad survey research. Now more than ever, we must address the question of how we can succeed in distinguishing good surveys from bad ones—and how we can promote public understanding of at least the most rudimentary quality criteria in survey research. We would therefore urge you to take advantage of this opportunity to have an inspiring exchange of ideas on this crucial issue at the historical convention center located on Lake Como, Italy. A registration form will be included in the upcoming issues of the WAPOR Newsletter.

And finally, please remember that the continuing success of the Cadenabbia seminars depends on having a conference program with a highly diverse selection of papers. We thus look forward to receiving all submissions pertaining to the issue of quality criteria in survey research in the broadest sense. Please send your abstracts (1-2 pages) by no later than

March 1, 2006, to:

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The second plenary was a special session on “World Trade Organization from the Perspective of International Public Opinion” in which 10 countries shared and contributed data to the discussion. They included Czech Republic, Congo, Hong Kong, India, Macau, Mexico, Philippines, Russia, Sri Lanka and the USA. Since the WTO’s Sixth Ministerial Conference was scheduled to be held in Hong Kong the week following our own conference, this global survey came out just at the right time to shed light on how people around the world, from developing and developed countries, viewed this global organization. The findings were presented and highlighted by Robert Chung from Hong Kong, Mahar Mangahas from the Philippines, and Pradeep Peiris from Sri Lanka. Discussions were led by two representatives from Oxfam Hong Kong – Kwok-Choi Lum and Madeleine Slavick. A press release was published on the HKUPOP website (<http://hkupop.hku.hk>) a few days after the conference in the middle of the WTO Ministerial Conference.



Group photograph taken at the Wang Gungwu Theatre inside the Graduate House, the University of Hong Kong.



Results of the international WTO surveys conducted by 10 countries were released and discussed during the conference.

Apart from the plenary sessions, another highlight of the conference was a pre-conference seminar for journalists presented by Evans Witt, a co-author of the “20 Questions a Journalist Should Ask About Poll Results”. This seminar was fully sponsored by the National Democratic Institute for International Affairs (NDI) and the American Consulate General in Hong Kong. To make full use of this opportunity, HKUPOP translated the “20 Questions” into Chinese, and dispatched it to all conference participants. We will continue to dispatch it to all journalists in Hong Kong as a free reference guide.

The original intention, and now the main success, of the Hong Kong conference was to bring people together from the East and West, so that we can learn from one another and capitalize on WAPOR’s assets in this part of the world. We were glad to see so many professional pollsters and

researchers flying into Hong Kong from all parts of the world. We were also extremely happy to receive so many papers from all over the world, especially those from Asia, Mainland China and Taiwan, which seldom appear in other conferences. Discussions in our plenary and parallel sessions were most lively, fruitful, global and intellectual. Needless to say, exchanges during meals and other social functions were equally exciting and enjoyable. We hope there will be another conference in Hong Kong in the years to come.



Evans Witt received a souvenir from Robert Chung, the Conference Chairman.

Now that the conference is over, a lot of work remains to be done. Other than translating the keynote speeches and some key WAPOR documents into Chinese, some of which are already done, HKUPOP intends to publish the conference proceedings into a format, which could be widely circulated in this part of the world. For this, we are grateful to our sponsors who have supported our work. They include

Christine Loh, Winston Chu and Anthony Cheung who funded our scholarships and fellowships, our co-organizer Civic Exchange for sponsoring our post-conference publication, co-organizers SynergyNet and Hong Kong Policy Research Institute for helping us in one way or another. Last but not least, we must thank all of the conference participants for traveling all the way to Hong Kong. We hope that you enjoyed your stay in the city.

--Thanks to Robert Chung and Kitty Chan for their organization of this conference.



WAPOR President Esteban López-Escobar (5th from the right) together with an international group of participants after a parallel session.

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.

WAPOR Notes

If you have photos of a past WAPOR conference or seminar and would like to contribute them to the WAPOR archive materials, please send them to Renaе_Reis@gallup.com or by regular mail to WAPOR.

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Calendar

May 16-18, 2006

“Confronting Core Values and Cultural Conflict”

Jointly with AAPOR

Montréal, Québec, Canada

WAPOR 59th Annual Conference

June 29 to July 1, 2006

“Quality Criteria in Survey Research VI”

Lake Como, Cadenabbia, Italy

WAPOR Regional Seminar

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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 Renaе_Reis@gallup.com or to Thomas Petersen (Publications Chair) at tpetersen@ifd-allensbach.de

***Please let us know your upcoming events.
Deadline for 1st quarter newsletter events or
article submission is March 1, 2006***