

*Background and  
Overview*

# WRITING A SUCCESSFUL ABSTRACT FOR THE 2025 WAPOR CONFERENCE – PRACTICAL GUIDANCE

# INTRODUCTION TO WAPOR

**Overview:** The World Association for Public Opinion Research (WAPOR) is a leading international organization dedicated to promoting the understanding and practice of public opinion research worldwide.

**Mission:** WAPOR aims to foster global communication among researchers, support the development and dissemination of best practices, and uphold the highest standards in public opinion research.

**History:** Established in 1947, WAPOR has been instrumental in advancing the field of public opinion research for over seven decades. Since 2010, WAPOR also has regional chapters.

# MEMBERSHIP BACKGROUND

**Diverse Professional Groups:** WAPOR's membership comprises individuals from various sectors, including universities, research institutes, government agencies, non-governmental organizations (NGOs), and commercial polling firms.

**Global Reach:** With approximately 900 members from 112 countries, WAPOR represents a truly international community of public opinion researchers.

**Experience Levels:** The organization includes both seasoned professionals with decades of experience and early-career researchers, fostering a rich environment for mentorship and knowledge exchange. Student membership is open for under- and post-graduate students.

**Inclusivity:** WAPOR promotes inclusivity and diversity, striving for balanced gender and regional representation within its membership and leadership roles.

# ABOUT THE WAPOR ANNUAL CONFERENCE

**Purpose:** The WAPOR Annual Conference serves as a premier global event for public opinion and survey research, providing a platform for researchers, practitioners, and policymakers to share insights and advancements in the field.

**2025 Conference:** The 78th Annual WAPOR Conference is scheduled for May 12-15, 2025, in St. Louis, Missouri, USA. This event will be held in conjunction with the 80th Annual AAPOR Conference, offering attendees a unique opportunity to engage with a broader community of public opinion researchers.

**Venue:** The conference will take place at the historic St. Louis Union Station Hotel, providing a central and accessible location for participants.



WAPOR 2022 Conference in Dubai, UAE

# WHO ATTENDS?

**Academics:** Researchers and scholars from universities and academic institutions specializing in public opinion, political science, sociology, psychology, and related fields.

**Practitioners:** Professionals from commercial research firms, government agencies, NGOs, and media organizations engaged in public opinion research and survey methodologies.

**Consumers of Opinion Polls:** Individuals and organizations that utilize public opinion data for decision-making, policy development, and strategic planning.

**Media Representatives:** Journalists and media analysts who use public opinion data to inform and interpret news and trends for the public.

**International Organizations:** Participants from international bodies such as the United Nations, World Bank, and OECD, who rely on survey data to inform policy and development initiatives globally.

**National Statistical Offices (NSOs):** Representatives from NSOs who utilize public opinion data for national reporting, policy analysis, and to enhance official statistics.



**WAPOR 2023 Conference in Salzburg, Austria**

# UNIQUE FEATURES OF THE WAPOR CONFERENCE

**Interdisciplinary Focus:** The conference uniquely integrates topics from public opinion, survey methods, political science, communications, market research, and related fields, fostering interdisciplinary dialogue.

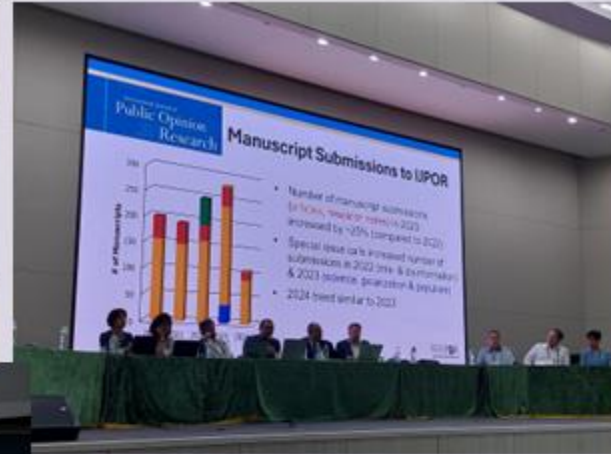
**Diverse Participation:** The event features a balanced mix of practitioners and academics from disciplines such as political science, sociology, psychology, public health, statistics, marketing, communications studies, and public opinion research.

**Presentation Customs:** Alongside with formal papers, WAPOR encourages the use of slide presentations, video- and audio-materials, images, facilitating more dynamic and engaging sessions. Attendees are known for their active participation and constructive feedback.

**Overlap with Other Conferences:** WAPOR shares common interests with organizations like AAPOR, ESOMAR, ESRA, IPSA, ICA, and APSA, but distinguishes itself through its global perspective and emphasis on public opinion research.

**Networking Opportunities:** The conference provides an excellent platform for meeting potential collaborators, mentors, and peers from various countries and disciplines, enhancing professional networks.





WAPOR 2024 Conference in Seoul, South Korea

# TYPES OF SUBMISSIONS ACCEPTED

**Research Papers:** Oral presentations of original research findings, allowing for in-depth discussion and feedback. Depending on the number of papers in the session, typically, between 12 and 18 minutes is assigned per presentation.

**Pre-organized Panels:** Sessions organized around a specific theme, comprising multiple presentations that offer diverse perspectives on a topic (5-6 presentations per session).

**Posters:** Visual displays summarizing research projects, facilitating interactive discussions and networking opportunities. Posters are to be advertised throughout the whole conference duration and presented during a single posters session.

# LOGISTICS AND DEADLINES

**Abstract Submission Deadline:** Proposals for the 2025 conference should be submitted electronically by December 20, 2024.

**Decision:** Notifications or acceptance (or rejection) will be sent out by the WVSA Secretariat by January 31, 2025.

**Registration:** all conference participants (including presenters, chairs, attendees) need to register; registration opens in mid-February 2025.

**Conference Dates:** May 12-15, 2025.

**Venue:** St. Louis Union Station, Missouri, USA.

**Registration Details:** Information on registration fees, accommodation options, and travel logistics will be provided on the WAPOR website in January. Non-member registration rates include WAPOR membership in 2025.

# REVIEW PROCESS

**Rigorous Evaluation:** All submissions to the WAPOR Annual Conference undergo a thorough review process to ensure high-quality and relevant presentations that advance the field of public opinion research.

**Double-Blind Review:** WAPOR employs a double-blind review system, meaning both the reviewers and authors remain anonymous to each other. This practice helps eliminate potential biases, ensuring that submissions are evaluated fairly based solely on their content, methodology, and contribution.

**Three Reviewers per Paper:** Each submission is reviewed by three independent experts, allowing for a balanced and comprehensive assessment. Reviewers are selected based on their expertise in the relevant subject areas, ensuring that each paper is evaluated by knowledgeable professionals in the field.

# RULES REGARDING CO-AUTHORS, MEMBERSHIP, AND PRESENTERS

**Co-authors:** Submissions can include multiple co-authors; however, the presenting author must be clearly identified.

**Membership:** Presenters and all conference attendees are required to be WAPOR members in good standing.

**Conference Registration:** Registration is required for all presenters and participating co-authors, attendees. Non-attending co-authors do not need to register, of course.

**Presenters:** Each individual is limited to presenting one paper to maximize participation. In case of multiple submissions, further papers need to be presented by co-author(s). Alternatively, a second paper can be submitted as a poster. Exception is made for invited speakers in key-note panels and pre-organized sessions, who can submit and present a second abstract.

# CONFERENCE PAPER AWARDS

**Elizabeth H. Nelson Prize:** Founded in 1995, this prize is presented to the best paper written and presented at the annual conference by one or more persons from a society in transition (World Bank Tiers C and D). The award includes a \$1,500 prize.

**Naomi C. Turner Prize:** Also established in 1995, this prize honours the best paper written and presented at the annual conference by a student(s). The recipient(s) receive \$1,000.

**Janet A. Harkness Student Paper Award:** Founded in 2013, this award is given in memory of Dr. Janet A. Harkness for contributions to cross-cultural survey methodology. It is open to current students and recent graduates who present a paper at the WAPOR annual conference. The award includes \$750 and a conference registration fee waiver.

**Alexis de Tocqueville Award:** Established in 2022, this award is given annually for the best paper concerned with democracy and public opinion, whether in a consolidated or emerging democracy. The award includes a \$500 prize.

# SUGGESTIONS FOR SUCCESSFUL SUBMISSIONS

# OVERALL

Goal is to clearly communicate:

- What you plan to do
- Why it is relevant
- How you will do it

Be succinct

- Clear sentences
- Omit needless words



# KEY ELEMENTS:

1. Purpose/Objective
2. Context/Background
3. Methodology/Approach
4. Data (If relevant)
5. Analysis
6. Main Findings (or anticipated findings)
7. Conclusions/Implications

# 1. PURPOSE/OBJECTIVE

Succinct description of the overall purpose or objective of your paper or proposal

- Give the reviewer a roadmap of the rest of what you plan to talk about
- Reviewer should understand, based on the first sentence or two, what your paper will contribute to the conference

## 2. CONTEXT/BACKGROUND

Explain how your work fits into some broader picture or topic

- What this picture or topic is
- Why we should care
- How your proposal fits into this

If you are building on previous research, explain what is is

If your paper is related to some important or interesting topic, explain what it is and why it is important

If you are discussing a specific case, give sufficient background to help a reviewer understand what it is, how it is *similar or different* from others, and why it is relevant

### 3. METHODOLOGY (IF APPROPRIATE)

If you are creating or collecting data of some sort, describe the methods you are using:

- Experiments (describe design, groups)
- Coding or classification (explain approach)
- Attitude scales (discuss if created)
  
- Survey Data Collection
  - Single country or multiple
  - Cross sectional or repeated cross-sectional
  - Longitudinal/recontact/etc.

## 4. DATA (IF RELEVANT)

Describe the data you are collecting in sufficient detail for a reviewer to evaluate.

If pre-existing data, explain source (i.e. World Values Surveys, ISSP, etc.)

If original survey data, explain (at a minimum)

Target population or populations

Dates or time frames if relevant

Mode (Face-to-Face, Telephone, Web, etc.)

Sampling approaches (Probability or not, etc.)

Describe constructs (questions), measures, scales, items, etc.

Describe variables used in model as relevant

## 5. ANALYSIS

**Explain briefly the methods you will use in your paper**

- *We will replicate Dahl's model and test its relevance in a non-democratic context*
- *We will create a scale to measure (such and such) and describe differences across ....*
- *We compare response rates, incompletes, and unweighted achieved samples across demographic benchmarks.*
- *We will analyze missing data in terms of break-off and item-nonresponse across the experimental conditions. We then look at the linguistic and content characteristics of the open answers, such as number of words and topics. Finally, we compare respondents' survey evaluations in terms of interest, difficulty, satisfaction, and sensitivity.*
- *We first conduct descriptive analyses of the evolution of various measures over time. We then continue with multilevel predictive analyses that take into account changes over time and national and regional differences that may influence relationships and individual perceptions of democracy.*

# 6. & 7. FINDINGS AND IMPLICATIONS

**Findings (or anticipated findings):** Briefly explain, if not evident, what you expect to find or have found

**Implications:** Discuss the implications of your findings.

- Implications for public policy
- Implications for public opinion theory
- Implications for methodology

# MISCELLANEOUS

## Citations

- If relevant, include
  - Key is to help reviewer see that this is following a literature or tradition
  - For space purposes, can omit full citation (but welcome if room)
- **Grammar/Spelling/Formatting**
  - Please check grammar and spelling
  - Use formatting to help reviewer quickly read
  - Paragraphs are helpful to separate key points



# ADVANCED TIPS

# UNDERSTANDING COMMITTEE DELIBERATIONS

Conference committees tend to focus on three things:

- Quality of papers (based on abstract)
- *Previous tips should help convince committee of the quality of your paper*
- Fit with conference theme
- *Easiest to accept papers that clearly fit in conference theme*
- Ability to form successful panels of related papers
- *Look for suggested topics and frame papers to suggest connections with other likely submissions*

# 2025 CONFERENCE

*Read text carefully*

*Look for ways to frame papers*

*Use language of text to suggest connections where relevant*



## ***WAPOR 78th Annual Conference***

The 78th Annual WAPOR Conference will take place on May 12-15, 2025, in conjunction with the [80th Annual AAPOR Conference](#), in St. Louis, Missouri, USA. This joint event is a leading forum for discussing advancements in public opinion and survey research, providing an opportunity for networking, learning about the latest research trends, and engaging with diverse experts from across the globe. The venue for the conjoined AAPOR and WAPOR conferences is the [St. Louis Union Station](#). The call for papers for the WAPOR conference opens on October 1, 2024, encouraging submissions on a variety of topics related to public opinion and survey research. The 2025 conference will be conducted in person. The event will be led by the WAPOR Conference Chair Prof. Wolfgang Aschauer (Paris-Lodron University of Salzburg, Austria).

## ***Conference Theme***

***The Evolving Landscape of Election Polls: Challenges, Biases, and Innovations in a Polarized World***

In 2024, nearly half of the world's population is voting in national elections in an era of rising global tensions. Many countries are facing economic threats fueled by geopolitical turmoil as well as military conflicts including the Ukraine war and the war in the Middle East. Economic, social and political turbulence is central to voter dissatisfaction, as seen in elections in all parts of the world, where ruling parties lose support, with polarization and populism is gaining ground. These developments clearly indicate that democracy and the freedoms to conduct and publish opinion polls are threatened. As political landscapes shift, pre-election polls gain more and

# EXAMPLES OF POSSIBLE TOPICS AND FRAMING

...However, these polls are not always neutral, as they *may influence voter behavior*, leading to phenomena such as the “*bandwagon effect*” ....or the “*boomerang effect*”. Additionally, *polling methods such as telephone interviews and online surveys, are having mixed results in predicting election outcomes. Declining response rates and ... sample demographics* have been identified as key issues. *Social-desirability bias.....*, further complicates predictions.

*Alternative approaches* which gain importance due to new technological possibilities of data collection, like monitoring *social networks*,... offer potential solutions. However... *Online platforms are susceptible to false data from bots, trolls, and misinformation campaigns*, making it difficult to distinguish genuine opinions. Moreover, ....[users of ] *social networks may not represent the broader population.*

We might assume that these levels of bias are even more pronounced in *illiberal political regimes*. Research has demonstrated that in such contexts, voters often *misreport their political preferences to pollsters*, fearing that their answers may be traced back to them by the regime. The *misreporting is especially prevalent when surveys are conducted immediately before elections,....*

# LISTED TOPICS I:

- Levels of bias affecting the accuracy of traditional polling methods
- Social Networks and alternative polling methods using Computational Social Science
- The impact of Electoral Cycles and Political Campaigns on Polling
- Polling as a Tool for Manipulation
- Fears of Repercussions and Misreporting (especially in illiberal regimes)
- The Complexity of Polling in high-, middle- and low-income countries

# LISTED TOPICS II:

- Freedom to conduct and publish public opinion research
- Public opinion and conflict resolution
- Political behavior, participation, and culture in survey research
- Studies on political polarization and current risks of democracy (e.g. the surge of the far right, authoritarianism, value changes pointing to a conservative backlash)
- Geopolitical tensions and the rise of defense and security

# LISTED TOPICS III:

- Methodological challenges and improvements in the areas of sampling, survey design, survey response and non-response as well as measurement errors
- Panel studies, longitudinal surveys and established survey programs nationally monitoring public opinion
- Comparative research as well as international and global survey projects
- Cross-cultural concerns in data collection and measurement issues
- Data archiving for the advancement of humanity
- News, media, journalism, and public opinion
- Artificial Intelligence (AI) challenges in public opinion research and survey methods
- Big data, sentiment analysis and machine learning
- Alternative methods to measure public opinion

# PRE-ORGANIZED PANELS AND POSTERS

## **Pre-Organized Panels:**

- Makes panel formation easier for committee
- Committees can suggest or add papers
- Potentially especially beneficial for regionally related papers

## **Posters:**

- Sometimes the best fit for visual or interactive presentations
- Posters can be good place for papers that don't quite fit on a panel (Hint: be willing to present a poster)
- Student papers often an especially good fit



# SPECIAL TIPS FOR DIFFERENT POPULATIONS

- Student and Early Career Researchers
- Commercial Researchers
- Academic Researchers

# ACADEMIC RESEARCHERS

- WAPOR Does NOT require a full paper for presentation
- Slides are common
- Generally considered more “friendly” and less adversarial than many academic conferences
- Excellent venue for finding international collaborators
- Mix of academics (who focus deeply on focused topics) and practitioners (collect data but minimal time for deep analysis) can be great cross-fertilization

# STUDENTS AND EARLY CAREER RESEARCHERS

- Paper doesn't need to be written
- An abstract is a proposal of what you will present
- Full papers can be eligible for prizes
- Submitting posters can be an excellent way to begin presenting at conferences

# COMMERCIAL RESEARCHERS

- Topics should be of broad interest
  - Case studies of less interest unless lessons learned are strong and clear
- Be specific about data collection details
- Avoid sales-pitch type language
- Case Studies: Tend to be of less interest



# STAY TUNED.....

We will have a webinar on how to design a conference presentation in the spring!!!

We will cover best practices!!!

Pre-conference tips on how to make the most of your experience!!

**QUESTIONS?**