

PROCEEDINGS OF THE FORTY-NINTH ANNUAL CONFERENCE OF THE AMERICAN ASSOCIATION FOR PUBLIC OPINION RESEARCH

The 1994 annual conference of the American Association for Public Opinion Research (AAPOR) was held May 12–15 at the Sheraton Tara Hotel and Resort in Danvers, Massachusetts. The meeting was held jointly with the annual meeting of the World Association for Public Opinion Research (WAPOR), which began on May 11. Official AAPOR registration was 540, higher than last year's attendance of 498. Joint AAPOR/WAPOR registration was 584, close to the record-high attendance for the 1992 joint conference held in Florida (608).

This year, for the first time, no registration fee was charged for students who had not attended an AAPOR conference before. Altogether, 65 students registered for the AAPOR conference, 46 of whom took advantage of the fee waiver.

The AAPOR conference program consisted of two didactic sessions, two plenary sessions, 36 paper sessions, nine panel-discussion sessions, and one poster session. One hundred fifty papers were presented in the paper sessions, and nine posters were presented in the poster session. Four of the paper sessions and one plenary session were joint AAPOR/WAPOR sessions.

Twenty-two of the 36 paper sessions each consisted of four papers, a chair, and a discussant. Eight sessions consisted of five papers, a chair, and a discussant, and four sessions consisted of three papers, a chair, and a discussant. Because of a dropout at the last minute, there was one session with only two papers, a chair, and a discussant. One session consisting of six papers on diverse topics had a chair, but no discussant.

A job-listing service was part of the conference for the second year in a row. Twenty-nine position vacancies were listed in the job book at the registration desk, and 29 individuals filed their résumés as people seeking survey research positions.

The didactic sessions were very well attended. "Measuring Customer Perceptions of Service Quality: State of the Art, Design and Implementation Strategies" was presented by Susan J. Devlin and John H. Hughes of Bellcore and was attended by 59 people. "Using Focus Groups to Design Surveys" was presented by Robert Cameron

Mitchell of Clark University and Donna Eisenhower of Mathematica Policy Research and was attended by 47 people.

The speakers in Thursday's plenary session, "The Public Debate on Health Care Reform," offered varying perspectives about the prospects for different types of national legislation and the role of public opinion in the political process surrounding reform. The session was moderated by Julie Kosterlitz, who covers national health, welfare, and retirement policy for *National Journal*, a weekly magazine on politics and public policy. The first speaker, Professor Robert J. Blendon of the Harvard University School of Public Health, organized his talk around the seven questions he is asked most often by members of Congress about public opinion on health care reform. Next, Cindy Toth, research director for the Health Insurance Association of America, presented public and proprietary trend data on key aspects of public opinion that support her organization's opposition to President Clinton's reform plan. The final speaker was Arnold Bennett, Media Director for Families USA, a nonprofit organization that is active in Washington in its support of the Clinton plan. Bennett's presentation focused more on personal stories relevant to health care reform and on his perception of the political process affecting the various health care reform bills in Congress.

Friday's joint AAPOR/WAPOR plenary session was organized and moderated by Professor W. Russell Neuman of the Fletcher School at Tufts University. The session was titled "The Coming Information Highway: What Does It Mean for the Media? What Does It Mean for Public Opinion Research?" Walter Bender of the Media Lab at the Massachusetts Institute of Technology presented his ideas about "News in the Future." Scott McDonald of Time Warner described his company's upcoming Orlando market test of a new network of media and shopping services in a talk titled "Time Warner's Vision of the Communications Revolution." The final speaker, Bruce Bond of British Telecom, presented an alternative view of the technologies that will dominate the media industry in the future. His talk, "A Global Perspective," described the way his own company is preparing for the future.

The official program distributed at the conference lists 378 individuals as session participants (authors, chairs, discussants, panelists, and poster presenters), up from 346 last year. A categorization of the 232 people listed as the main authors of papers, as discussants, or as panelists shows 46 percent to be affiliated with academic institutions, 43 percent affiliated with commercial organizations, 10 percent working for the government, and 1 percent with another affiliation. This distribution closely mirrors the distribution of the current membership (40

percent academic, 40 percent commercial, 7 percent government, and 13 percent other).

The AAPOR award for exceptionally distinguished achievement was presented to Professor Howard Schuman of the University of Michigan at Saturday evening's awards banquet. The student paper award was given to Scott L. Althaus of Northwestern University for his paper, "The Conservative Nature of Public Opinion." Students receiving honorable mention in the student paper competition were Robert M. Eisinger of the University of Chicago for "Pollster and Public Relations Advisor: Hadley Cantril and the Birth of Presidential Polling," Michael W. Link of the University of South Carolina for "Public Mood and the Supreme Court: Political Adjustment in Criminal Procedure and Civil Rights Decisions?" and Richard J. Timpone of the State University of New York at Stony Brook for "Demographics, Social Connectedness, and Political Participation." All student award winners presented their papers in sessions at the conference.

A number of people deserve thanks for their hard work in helping to organize this successful conference. Professor James Beniger of the University of Southern California organized the student paper competition and assembled a committee of four others to read the papers and decide on the awards. Robert Lee of Pace University arranged the computer exhibit, which included nine exhibitors this year. Phyllis Endreny assembled the book exhibit and conducted a successful book sale. Nancy Mathiowetz of the Agency for Health Care Policy and Research organized the Fun Run/Walk and the T-shirt sale. Marlene Bednarz, in her first year as the AAPOR secretariat, did an excellent job of organizing the registration desk and handling advance mailings to the membership about the conference. Marlene was very ably assisted in running the registration desk by Catherine Seay-Ostrowski, former AAPOR secretariat, Laura Kalb of Princeton Survey Research Associates, and by the following students from Boston-area universities: Andrew Marble, Ellen Hanetho, Ernest Wright, Jr., Andra Raudseps, and Elizabeth Ridley.

The complex arrangements for hotel rooms, meeting space, meals, and transportation were handled admirably by Karen Goldenberg of the Bureau of Labor Statistics. Audio/visual equipment was coordinated by Dawn Von Thurn of the Bureau of the Census.

A committee of Princeton-area researchers provided invaluable assistance by joining me in an all-day session to read, critique, and organize the abstracts and papers submitted in response to AAPOR's Call for Papers. These committee members are Janice Ballou and Cliff Zukin of the Eagleton Institute of Politics at Rutgers University, Jacob Ludwig and David Moore of the Gallup Organization, and Carolyn

Miller of Princeton Survey Research Associates. Cheryl Donlon and Susan Franz of Princeton Survey Research Associates assisted me in the production of the final program.

For a nominal charge, copies of the conference program can be obtained from the AAPOR secretariat at the Institute for Social Research at the University of Michigan.

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Conference Chair