

Autumn 2010

Leaders in political and policy research to speak at MAPOR

By Weiwu Zhang, MAPOR President, Texas Tech University



The 2010 midterm election is less than five weeks away.

Candidates are running in high gear, so are public opinion researchers. This crucial election is shaping up against the backdrop of the monumental passage of the controversial healthcare reform bill, the general public's anger and frustration with the high unemployment rate, the deepening partisan polarization in Washington, and the increasing potency of the Tea Party movement. On the other hand, the election also provides a host of exciting opportunities to investigate the dynamics of public opinion.

Preparations are underway for the 35th Annual MAPOR Conference – "Consensus, Contrariness, and Compromise" – to be held on November 19 and 20 at Avenue Hotel, Chicago. Conference chair Ken Blake has put together an impressive program. His column has more details on the conference program, but I would like to draw your attention to a couple of events. First, I would encourage you to register for the Friday awards luncheon along with your regular conference registration. During the luncheon MAPOR Fellow Cecillie Gaziano will present the awards to the winner and an honorable mention of the annual MAPOR Fellows Student Paper Competition. We will also announce the newest MAPOR Fellow at this event.

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Take part in the consensus, contrariness, compromise at MAPOR

By Ken Blake, Conference Chairman



Eighty papers await you at MAPOR this year, collectively offering fresh insights into topics including survey methodology, opinion-media linkages, trust, free expression, public opinion on current issues, and political knowledge, talk, and participation. And more. Chicago awaits you, too, with its unique blend of outstanding food, arts, shopping,

history and entertainment. Best of all, good times with friends and colleagues await you. MAPOR's 35th year is shaping up to be a good one. Several papers in this year's lineup confront the key challenges of conducting surveys amid falling response rates and rising proportions of cell-only households.

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The Midwest Association for Public Opinion Research holds its 35th Annual meeting November 19-20 at the Avenue Hotel in Chicago.

Timothy Beebe, of MAYO Clinic discusses advances in methods for conducting health policy research at MAPOR 2010.

Gary Langer former ABC News polling chief provides keynote address at Friday's Luncheon.

Established and emerging researchers from around the U.S. present findings at MAPOR 2010.

Registration is open for MAPOR 2010. Save \$30 if you sign up by November 1 (www.mapor.org).

Discounted room rates available to MAPOR 2010 attendees. Contact the Avenue Hotel by phone at 312-787-2900, or web at www.avenuhotelchicago.com by to make your reservation.

Elections for MAPOR vice president/president elect and conference co-chair are underway. Information is being mailed. Ballots due November 8.

Leading survey researchers to address MAPOR's 35th Annual Conference

The luncheon will also feature our keynote speaker: Gary Langer, founder and president of the Langer Research Associates and former polling director for ABC News. He will share his insights about this year's midterm election. Langer is one of America's widely recognized experts in election polling and analysis of social, political, and economic attitudes and has published widely in the field. During his 20-year career as polling director for ABC News, Mr. Langer has directed more than 700 public opinion polls. He has won two Emmy awards and most recently won the 2010 Policy Impact Award from the American Association for Public Opinion Research (AAPOR) for a series of surveys in Afghanistan and Iraq. He currently serves as a member of the Board Directors of the Roper Center for Public Opinion Research.

In recent years, the Pedagogy Hour has focused on innovative ways of measuring public opinion. To continue that tradition, I invited Dr. Timothy Beebe, Associate Professor of Health Services Research and Vice Chair of the Health Care Policy and Research Division, and Director of the Survey Research Center in the Department of Health Sciences Research, Mayo Clinic, to speak about the intricacies of conducting health surveys in the wake of the momentous passage of the health care reform legislation in March. Dr. Beebe has a sustained record of conducting research in survey methodology. Much of his work has been supported by extramural funds offered by NIH, etc. He has served on numerous NIH and CDC study sections as a survey expert.

This year marks the 35th anniversary of MAPOR. Conference co-chair Joe Murphy will moderate this panel that looks at MAPOR's role in the field of public opinion research. A panel of MAPOR luminaries will share their fond memories of MAPOR and reflect on where MAPOR has been and where it is going.

MAPOR has negotiated with the Avenue Hotel to keep the cost for conference attendees low. Please call Avenue Hotel by October 28 to take advantage of the MAPOR rate of \$179 per night.

Finally, I would like to thank a number of people who have made the running of MAPOR smoother. First, I want to thank Steve Everett for running the successful fund-raising operations on behalf of MAPOR for so many years as our corporate sponsorship coordinator. Without his persuasive skill and tireless effort, we would not have been able to keep our costs down and keep our annual conference accessible to graduate students. We owe him and our sponsors a debt of gratitude for helping MAPOR continue to grow. Steve resigned earlier this year. MAPOR Fellow, Allan McCutcheon, graciously agreed to serve as our new corporate sponsorship coordinator. While Steve's fundraising skills will be greatly missed at MAPOR, I am sure that Allan is a person with his great connections to the industry and his public opinion scholarship we can all depend on to do whatever is necessary to keep MAPOR moving forward.

Thanks go to Sean Hogan, our secretary/treasurer, who has hit the ground running and kept us to task. I also want to thank conference chair Ken Blake for putting together an impressive program and all the other members of the executive board for their work on the conference: Tim Johnson, Patricia Moy, Joe Murphy, Matthew Courser, Lindsay Hoffman, Kate Kenski, and Dianne Rucinski. Last but not least, our new webmaster, Niki Mayo, deserves our appreciation for making MAPOR Web site up to date.

I look forward to seeing you all in Chicago! Please join me for the President's Dinner on Friday.

MAPOR Conference explores consensus, contrariness & compromise in policy, politics & research

They offer information including lessons gleaned from the mail portion of the 2010 Census data collection, advice on phrasing online survey invitations to maximize response rates, and both demographic and attitudinal comparisons of respondents in landline and cell phone samples.

The conference theme, "Consensus, contrariness and compromise," is explored in several papers, including a systematic review of how attitudes toward health care reform were measured, represented and discussed during all of 2009 and the first half of 2010 and an assessment of the potential for deliberation residing in the traditional, combative, and comic styles exhibited by various cable news hosts. Political knowledge and ideology are getting a lot of attention this year, too, with one paper suggesting that Converse's findings about ideological constraint may have stemmed at least partly from the varied phrasing of the questions he used, and several others exploring the roles of ideology, polarization, and other factors as moderators of political knowledge.

A number of issues and questions in international and cross-cultural research are explored, including translation effects, the difficulty of measuring discriminatory attitudes, and cross-national differences in use of, and attitudes toward, foreign news. Features and themes of contemporary public discourse including immigration policy, "tea partiers," voting behavior, and alcohol consumption by college students appear in many papers, too. One group of authors documents an interesting rise in some paranormal beliefs – specifically, beliefs in ghosts, witches and haunted houses – over the past several decades and a stability in other paranormal beliefs, such as those in clairvoyance and reincarnation. If you ask nicely, they might give you a few advance tidbits to share at that Halloween party you're planning to attend.

Friday's luncheon will feature a review of the midterm elections by Gary Langer of The Langer Research Associates and former polling director for ABC News. Consistent with a change introduced last year, this year's pedagogy hour will begin right after the Friday luncheon. Join us there for dessert and a talk by the Mayo Clinic's Timothy Beebe on issues and advances in health survey research methods. There are no poster presentations this year, so plan on spending the entire Friday cocktail hour catching up with friends and making new ones before heading out on the town for the annual president's dinner. For a little reminiscing, and maybe a look forward, be sure to stop by the "MAPOR at 35" panel Saturday afternoon, right before the annual MAPOR meeting.

You can check out all of the paper titles and events for yourself in the preliminary schedule you'll find on the MAPOR webpage (www.MAPOR.org). If you're presenting, watch for information soon about making connections with your session's discussant. Also, MAPOR once again will be recruiting student volunteers willing to help with registration and other tasks in exchange for a registration fee refund.

Please also remember to book your room reservation at The Avenue Crown Plaza Hotel, MAPOR's long-time home on Chicago's Magnificent Mile shopping district. To get the conference room rate of \$179 per night, be sure to call The Avenue at 312-787-2900 no later than Oct. 28 and identify yourself as a member of MAPOR. As for registration, note the deadline for the "early bird" registration rate on the conference registration form included with this newsletter.

I'm looking forward to a wonderful time at this 35th MAPOR conference, and I hope to see you there.

MAPOR 35th Annual Conference: Program Summary

The full Conference Program is on our website www.MAPOR.org

Friday

8:30 am Registration (coffee, tea, bakery & fruit)

Time & Topic	Location
10 am – 11:30 am	
Media frames and contexts	Grand Avenue A
Knowledge and ideology	Grand Avenue B
Increasing survey participation	Grand Avenue C
Consensus and discord	Michigan
11:45 am – 1:15 pm	Luncheon (ticket required)
Message delivered: the voters' voice in 2010	Park Avenue Room
Gary Langer, Langer Research, keynote speaker	
1:30 pm – 3:00 pm	Pedagogy Hour
Issues & advances in health survey research methods	Grand Avenue A
Timothy Beebe, Mayo Clinic, principal discussant	
3:15 pm – 4:45 pm	
Belief gap	Grand Avenue A
Cross cultural public opinion research	Grand Avenue B
Political conversation	Grand Avenue C
Public opinion and contemporary public issues	Michigan
4:45 pm – 6 pm	
Cocktail hour	Michigan & lobby
6:30 pm	
President's Dinner	Reza's, 432 W. Ontario Street

Saturday

8:30 am Registration (coffee, tea, bakery & fruit)

8:30 am – 10 am	
Media content and public opinion	Grand Avenue A
International public opinion research	Grand Avenue B
Knowledge acquisition and levels	Grand Avenue C
Political participation	Michigan
10:15 am – 11:45 am	
Immigration policy	Grand Avenue A
Public attitudes toward science	Grand Avenue B
Media content and public opinion	Grand Avenue C
Media credibility	Michigan

Saturday afternoon

<u>Time & Topic</u>	<u>Location</u>
1:30 pm – 3 pm	
Tolerance and free expression	Grand Avenue A
Public opinion and public health	Grand Avenue B
Novel techniques and tools in public opinion research	Grand Avenue C
Voting behavior	Michigan
3:15 pm – 4:45 pm	
Trust and confidence	Grand Avenue A
Political talk	Grand Avenue B
Media credibility	Grand Avenue C
MAPOR at 35: public opinion theory and research past, present & future	Michigan
5:00 pm – 5:30 pm	
Annual Business Meeting	Grand Avenue C
Key agenda items:	
Election results for President Elect & Conference Co-Chair	
Review of budget & membership	
Dues for 2011-12	
Location for future conferences	
5:30 pm	
Conference adjourns	

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