

Spring 2010

News and Views

The Midwest Association for Public Opinion Research Annual Conference will provide high-quality, well-researched presentations and remain student friendly. President says MAPOR meetings are both professional and like a family reunion. See page 1.

Papers and panels on public opinion research, theory, and methodology are welcome at 2010 MAPOR Conference, chair says. See page 1.

MAPOR's 35th Annual Conference Call for Participation welcomes papers and panels on "Consensus, Contrariness and Compromise in Public Opinion." November 19-20, 2010, Avenue Hotel, Chicago. See page 2.

Students are invited to submit papers to MAPOR Fellows Student Paper Competition. The winner will receive \$200 award, free conference registration and luncheon. See page 3.

2009 Award Winning Student paper uses network analytic methodology to study cross-platform audience behavior. See page 3.

Nominations for MAPOR president-elect and conference co-chair will be accepted through June 15. See page 6.

Consensus, Contrariness and Compromise in Public Opinion

By Ken Blake, MAPOR Conference Chair, Middle Tennessee State University



It has become fashionable to grumble, with a kind of ironic resignation, about the "interesting times" in which we live.

The point of this complaint tends to get lost on pollsters, though. To us, all times are "interesting," and the more so, the better. When conflicts break out, when uncertainty grows, and when stakes rise, opportunities to describe and explain public opinion abound. The times, it appears, will have proved as interesting as always when we gather in Chicago November 19-20 for MAPOR's 35th annual conference. We will arrive flush with data covering the rise, fall, and rise (and fall?) of healthcare reform; the prices and payoffs of Democratic compromise and Republican recalcitrance; the power, real or perceived, that the Tea Party movement wields; the hurly-burly of a Supreme Court nomination and a midterm election, and who knows what else.

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Thirty Five Years of Public Opinion Scholarship at MAPOR

By Weiwu Zhang, MAPOR President, Texas Tech University



MAPOR is 35! Time flies! For the past 35 years, generations of public opinion researchers have religiously congregated in downtown Chicago every weekend before the Thanksgiving holiday presenting latest public opinion research and socializing with old and new friends and colleagues. The strength of MAPOR lies in its people. Unlike other associations such as AEJMC, ICA, or APSA, MAPOR has never had professional staff. It is the volunteer spirit of its

founders, officers and board members that keeps the organization functioning.

MAPOR is a relatively small, but diverse community of college professors, graduate students, government researchers, and practitioners who share interest in the study of public opinion.

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Call for Participation
35th Annual Conference of the
Midwest Association for Public Opinion Research

November 19-20, 2010, Avenue Hotel, Chicago

Conference Theme:
“Consensus, Contrariness, and Compromise in Public Opinion”

The Midwest Association for Public Opinion Research’s 35th annual conference welcomes papers and panels exploring consensus, contrariness and compromise, either in contemporary public opinion itself or in pursuit of the best methods for estimating public opinion. Papers and panels on any other topic related to public opinion research, theory, or methodology are equally welcome. These topics can include transparency, translation, data quality, race, and research across cultures and languages.

Research Papers:

Submissions must be abstracts no longer than two typed, double-spaced pages in MS Word or PDF format. No full-length papers will be reviewed. Please include a cover sheet indicating the name(s), institutional affiliation(s), and e-mail address(es) of all author(s) (not just the contact author). The same author’s name may appear on a maximum of two submissions. To allow for blind review, please remove all personally identifying information from the abstract’s text before submission.

Note to student authors: If all authors are students who will be enrolled in an undergraduate or graduate program at the time of the conference, please indicate that the paper is a student paper. To be considered, a student paper must list the name of a faculty mentor on the abstract’s cover sheet. Additionally, the faculty mentor who is listed must send a separate e-mail of 25 or fewer words endorsing the paper. Student authors also should consider participating in the MAPOR Fellows Student Paper Competition.

Panel Proposals:

Submit a written proposal (up to two double-spaced pages). Proposals should identify the topic, explain its importance, and list the potential panelists and their areas of expertise. Panels related to the conference theme are especially encouraged.

Submission Information:

All abstracts (papers and panels) must be received no later than 5 p.m. CDT on June 30, 2010. Accepted papers that share a theme will be scheduled for presentation during a paper session. Papers with more individualized topics will be scheduled for presentation during a poster session. MAPOR considers both types equally valuable. All submitters will be notified by Aug. 15 of their abstract’s disposition. Please submit abstracts as electronic attachments in MS Word or PDF format via e-mail to abstracts@mapor.org. Alternatively, abstracts may appear in the e-mail’s body. Abstracts may also be sent by regular mail to:

Ken Blake, MAPOR Conference Chair
Box 64, School of Journalism, Middle Tennessee State University
Murfreesboro, TN 37132
Tel: (1) 615-898-2226

MAPOR Fellows Student Paper Competition:
 “Consensus, Contrariness, and Compromise in Public Opinion”

November 19-20, 2010, Avenue Hotel, Chicago
 Annual Conference of the Midwest Association for Public Opinion Research

The Midwest Association for Public Opinion Research invites eligible students to enter the association’s MAPOR Fellows Student Paper Competition. The winning paper will receive an award of \$200, one free conference registration and one free ticket to the Friday MAPOR luncheon. The winning paper also will be accepted for presentation during a session at the May 2011 AAPOR conference in Phoenix, Arizona.

Eligibility:

For the purposes of this competition, a student is someone enrolled in a graduate or undergraduate program at the time of the Conference. A paper authored by more than one person is a student paper only if all parties are students according to the above definition. Students need not be members of MAPOR.

The topic of the paper must conform to the general areas of scholarship that MAPOR addresses, which are (1) public opinion and (2) survey research methodology. The papers need not be quantitative nor must they report data in order to qualify for consideration in this competition.

Procedure:

- 1) Students first need to submit an abstract of their paper, conforming to the 2010 MAPOR Call for Papers (see the call for more information). Deadline for submission is 5 p.m. CDT, June 30, 2010. Students should specify on a page accompanying the abstract that they are students. Send the submission by electronic mail to abstracts@mapor.org.
- 2) Once a student has been informed that his/her paper has been accepted for the 2010 conference, the student will need to submit a full paper electronically to Cecillie Gaziano at cgaziano@prodigy.net, by Friday September 24, 2010, to be eligible for consideration for the 2010 student paper competition. No hard-copy papers will be accepted. All papers must be accompanied by the student’s name, USPS address, phone number, e-mail address, and the name and e-mail address of the student’s faculty sponsor for the paper.

A committee composed of MAPOR Fellows will make the awards. Winners will be announced at MAPOR’s annual conference.

2009 MAPOR Fellows Student Paper Award Winner

A Network Analytic Approach to Understanding Cross-Platform Audience Behavior
 By Thomas B. Ksiazek, Northwestern University

This methodological paper explains and implements a network analytic approach to the study of cross-platform audience behavior. It begins by conceptualizing large-scale patterns of media consumption in network terms, treating media outlets as nodes and the levels of audience duplication among them as relations, or ties. Following that, it explains two common measures of audience duplication, Both Duplication and Primary Duplication, and offers a new measure, Deviation-from-Random Duplication. In doing so, techniques for converting duplication data into network data are discussed. Potential research agendas are offered to illustrate the value in adapting network analysis to the study of audience behavior. Using data from Nielsen’s TV/Internet Convergence Panel, these studies analyze patterns of audience fragmentation and polarization, and identify “media publics,” or audience segments defined by common consumption patterns across platforms.

President's Column, continued from page 1.

It has always embraced new people across the country and around the world; it is also a cradle for innovative new ideas of conceptualizing and measuring public opinion and is open to ideas that are still emerging. Indeed, Midwest is a state of mind, not a location.

MAPOR is arguably the most graduate student-friendly organization. Over the years, it serves as a launching pad for many graduate students who later become leaders in public opinion research. At MAPOR, you will see many graduate students give their first ever presentations. The MAPOR Fellows system has played a crucial role of nurturing generations of public opinion scholars. Our annual MAPOR Fellows Student Paper Competition has attracted numerous promising graduate students who typically receive 3-5 page detailed feedback from the biggest names in the field.

However, simply fostering a friendly environment is not enough. Over the years, faculty members work tirelessly to bring their graduate students and professionals encourage their colleagues to MAPOR. It is through this mentoring process that young public opinion researchers are socialized to the MAPOR culture and mentality and that MAPOR has enjoyed steady growth. To many people, MAPOR remains their valuable long term membership.

I have fond memories of MAPOR conferences over the years, not only lots of wine and dine but also the intellectual stimulation and the evolution of my role. My first conference presentation was at MAPOR, so was my first job interview. My involvement with MAPOR ranges from a graduate student presenter, moderator, faculty presenter, a faculty member who brought my graduate students, discussant, panel organizer, board member, conference co-chair, conference chair to president. I don't feel obligated to come nor do I think MAPOR attendance a service item on my CV because MAPOR seems a family reunion to me. It is both my professional community where I keep up to date on the latest in public opinion and survey research and my personal community of friends and colleagues.

MAPOR board met in Chicago in mid April to plan the annual meeting this year. In addition, given the dramatic increase in the number of papers presented at MAPOR conferences, we talked specifically about how to improve the quality of paper submissions and conference presentations and came up with a set of guidelines for doing so. Let's hope MAPOR will further professionalize itself while at the same time keep our trademark small size and informal friendly interactions.

This year's conference centers on the theme of "Consensus, Contrariness, and Compromise in public opinion." The momentous passage of the healthcare reform bill, the deepening partisan polarization in Washington, the 2010 US Census, the increasing potency of the Tea Party movement, and the run-up to the 2010 midterm elections in the months ahead provide us with plenty of exciting opportunities to investigate the dynamics of public opinion.

I invite you to submit paper and panel proposals, encourage your colleagues to attend MAPOR and encourage your students to participate in the MAPOR Fellows Student Paper Competition. Mark your calendar - November 19-20, 2010.

I look forward to seeing you in Chicago!

Conference Chair's Column continued from page 1.

This year's conference theme, "Consensus, Contrariness and Compromise in Public Opinion," encourages participants to explore these and other data for fresh insights into how conflicts arise and play out in public opinion.

The many possible focuses include looks at how consensus, contrariness and compromise in public opinion interact with opinion climates and political talk, frames and agendas, political preferences and group identity, issue attentiveness and knowledge, and new communication technologies. Additionally, a good deal of conflict exists regarding how best to confront the methodological challenges facing the field of public opinion research. Papers exploring consensus, contrariness and compromise in this arena are welcome, too.

As always, MAPOR encourages papers and panels on any topic related to public opinion research, theory, or methodology, regardless of whether they align with the conference theme. In particular, presentations about transparency, translation, data quality, race, and research across cultures and languages will find eager audiences.

This year's Call for Participation includes two new elements aimed at maintaining the diversity and quality of the scholarship that attendees will encounter. First, each submitter may appear as an author on no more than two submissions. Additionally, each student-authored paper submitted for consideration must identify a faculty mentor, and the mentor must send a separate e-mail – just 25 words or fewer – endorsing the paper.

Consistent with its 35-year history, MAPOR remains a student-friendly conference, and I encourage each student author to enter the MAPOR Fellows Student Papers contest (see the Student Call for Papers). Each paper is thoroughly reviewed by top public opinion scholars, and there are handsome prizes for the winning paper.

Please submit abstracts as electronic attachments in MS Word or PDF format to abstracts@mapor.org no later than 5 p.m. CDT on June 30, 2010. Abstracts may also be sent by regular mail to:

Ken Blake, MAPOR Conference Chair
Box 64, School of Journalism
Middle Tennessee State University
Murfreesboro, TN 37132
Tel: (1) 615-898-2226

One last thing: Please consider making your hotel reservations early, and plan to take advantage of the special MAPOR rate. If you make your reservations through the hotel and use the MAPOR rate, you'll help us meet our room guarantee and help us control the costs of the conference.

I hope to see you at MAPOR in November.

We can guarantee you an "interesting time" in the best sense of the phrase.

MAPOR Executive Board Nominations

Nominations for MAPOR two officers (Vice President/President Elect and Conference Co-Chair) for 2010-2011 will be accepted through June 15, 2010. Nominations should be e-mailed to:

Weiwu Zhang
President - MAPOR
weiwu.zhang@ttu.edu

The Vice President/President Elect assists with the Board's decision making process and assumes office of Vice President at the end of the 2010 conference, serving one year in that capacity. At the end of the 2011 conference, s/he will become President. Timothy Johnson is the current Vice President.

The Conference Co-Chair will assist the Conference Chair in planning MAPOR's 2011 conference, and will serve as the lead organizer for the 2012 conference. The person elected for this position will work with Joe Murphy, who will chair MAPOR's 2011 conference.

2009-2010 MAPOR Executive Board Members:

Weiwu Zhang, President
weiwu.zhang@ttu.edu

Tim Johnson, Vice President, President Elect
tjohnson@srl.uic.edu

Patricia Moy, Past President
pmoy@u.washington.edu

Ken Blake, Conference Chair
kblake@mtsu.edu

Joe Murphy, Conference Co-Chair
jmurphy@rti.org

Sean O. Hogan, Treasurer-Secretary
hogan@rti.org

Matthew Courser, Board member
mcourser@pire.org

Kate Kenski, Board member
kkenski@email.arizona.edu

Lindsay Hoffman, Board member
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Dianne Rucinski, Board member
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