

民調二十問 —— 新聞工作者的基本責任  
**20 Questions a Journalist Should Ask About Poll Results**

誰會害怕選舉民意調查？

**Who's Afraid of Election Polls?**

民調發放自由全球報告

**The Freedom to Publish Opinion Poll Results**

中文翻譯資料冊

**Chinese Translation Notes**

翻譯機構：香港大學民意研究計劃

**Public Opinion Programme  
The University of Hong Kong**

本資料冊旨在說明「民調二十問——新聞工作者的基本責任」、「誰會害怕選舉民意調查？」和「民調發放自由全球報告」中譯本的原文出處。有關文件在2005年12月8至10日期間，免費派發予出席由世界民意研究學會（WAPOR）與香港大學民意研究計劃（HKUPOP）聯合主辦的「民意東西方國際會議」的參加者。

香港大學民意研究計劃主任鍾庭耀

This booklet gives all the publication information of the original documents which was translated into Chinese and freely dispatched to participants at the International Conference on "Public Opinion: East Meets West" co-organized by the World Association for Public Opinion Research (WAPOR) and the Public Opinion Programme at the University of Hong Kong (HKUPOP) between December 8 and 10, 2005. The three documents are "20 Questions a Journalist Should Ask About Poll Results", "Who's Afraid of Election Polls?" and "The Freedom to Publish Opinion Poll Results".

Robert T.Y. Chung, Director of HKUPOP

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**“20 Questions a Journalist Should Ask About Poll Results”**

**The Constitution of WAPOR can be downloaded from WAPOR's home page at <http://www.unl.edu/wapor/constitution.html>. The President's welcome message is as follows:**

Dear Colleague:

Welcome to the website of the World Association for Public Opinion Research!

WAPOR was founded in 1947 by a group of experts and scholars interested in promoting and improving public opinion research all over the world. Since then, WAPOR members have effectively worked with this aim in mind.

In accordance with the most recent version of WAPOR Constitution (April 15, 2003), its purposes are:

- To promote in each country of the world the right to conduct and publish scientific research on what the people and its groups think and how this thinking is influenced by various factors
- To promote the knowledge and application of scientific methods in this objective
- To assist and promote the development and publication of public opinion research worldwide, and
- To promote international cooperation and exchange among academic and commercial researchers, journalists and political actors, as well as between the representatives of the different scientific disciplines

Nearly 500 experts and scholars belonging to almost 60 countries are committed to these goals, working in close contact with other associations and agencies such as AAPOR (American Association for Public Opinion Research), the World Association of Research Professionals ESOMAR, and other international and regional associations, as well as the United Nations Educational, Scientific, and Cultural Organization (UNESCO), other United Nations agencies, and private international organizations.

In order to fulfil its tasks, WAPOR organizes an annual international conference; in Europe (uneven years) and in America (even years), overlapping with the international conferences held by ESOMAR and AAPOR. In doing so WAPOR provides to their members an extraordinary opportunity to be in touch with virtually everybody interested in public opinion and market research all over the world. You

will find timely information regarding those activities here on our website.

Besides Europe and the US, WAPOR promotes several focused or specialized seminars on different continents every year, offering very valuable opportunities for people interested in the field in various geographic areas. WAPOR also cooperates in meetings, seminars and conferences organized by other organizations and agencies providing specialized speakers to cover specific issues.

As WAPOR President, let me encourage you to join, or remain a member of WAPOR, by highlighting some of the reasons why WAPOR is such an important and unique organization. WAPOR members not only enjoy a reduction in fees when attending conferences or seminars; they also receive the International Journal of Public Opinion Research, the WAPOR Newsletter, the WAPOR directory and other useful information through the WAPOR list-serv. The International Journal of Public Opinion Research, quarterly published in association with Oxford University Press, is now in its seventeenth volume, and has become an internationally highly authorized source of knowledge in our field. Incidentally, the numbers of papers submitted to the Journal has increased substantially in the last years. New benefits are being considered and we will inform about them in this web page and through other means.

Recently WAPOR has approved a new dues system, very beneficial to potential new members, especially for those coming from developing countries. In the Membership section of this web page you can find information related with annual membership dues and the process to join the association if you are not yet a member. The members of the Council are very open to and thankful for comments and suggestions. Please don't hesitate to contact us whenever you like. Our 59th annual conference will take place in Montréal, Québec, Canada, May 16-18, 2006. It would be great to see you in Montréal!

Thank you for your interest in WAPOR. Looking forward to meeting you soon!

Best wishes,

Esteban López-Escobar  
WAPOR President  
University of Navarra  
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The original version of "20 Questions a Journalist Should Ask About Poll Results" can be downloaded from the home page of the National Council on Public Polls (NCPP) at <http://www.ncpp.org/>. NCPP's description of itself is as follows:

The National Council on Public Polls (NCPP) is an association of polling organizations established in 1969. Its mission is to set the highest professional standards for public opinion pollsters, and to advance the understanding, among politicians, the media and general public, of how polls are conducted and how to interpret poll results. Since its inception, NCPP has sponsored seminars, workshops and press conferences in Washington and New York to promote better understanding and reporting of public opinion polls.

For more information, contact: [info@ncpp.org](mailto:info@ncpp.org).

Regarding the copyright of "20 Questions a Journalist Should Ask About Poll Results", NCPP's description is as follows:

This is a copyrighted publication of the National Council on Public Polls in keeping with its mission to help educate journalists on the use of public opinion polls.

The National Council on Public Polls hereby grants the right to duplicate this work in whole, but not in part, for any noncommercial purpose provided that any copy include all of the information on this page.

Sheldon R. Gawiser, Ph.D. is Director, Elections, NBC News. G. Evans Witt is CEO, Princeton Survey Research Associates International. They were cofounders of the Associated Press/NBC News Poll.

For any additional information on any aspect of polling or a specific poll, please call NCPP at 845.575.5050.

The price for a single printed copy is \$2.95. For educational discounts and multiple copies contact NCPP. This document can be downloaded without charge from the NCPP website: [www.ncpp.org](http://www.ncpp.org).

For more information, contact us at [info@ncpp.org](mailto:info@ncpp.org).

「誰會害怕選舉民意調查？」

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**“Who’s Afraid of Election Polls”**



# Who's Afraid of Election Polls?

Normative and Empirical Arguments for  
the Freedom of Pre-Election Surveys

By  
Prof. Wolfgang Donsbach,  
University of Dresden, Germany\*

\* This text is based on a statement by the author to the Austrian  
Parliament on behalf of ESOMAR, February 2001

The Foundation for Information is an independent organisation registered in Amsterdam. It was formed in 1996 by ESOMAR. The Foundation operates on a worldwide scale. It takes action to protect the rights of individuals and commercial enterprises to obtain and make use of information without any unfair or unnecessary restrictions.

ESOMAR's mission is to promote the use of opinion and market research for improving decision making in business and society worldwide. Founded in 1948, ESOMAR unites 4000 members in 100 countries, both users and providers of opinion and marketing research. ESOMAR stands for the highest possible standards – both professionally and technically. The ICC/ESOMAR International Code of Marketing and Social Research Practice has been adopted by all ESOMAR members, by the International Chamber of Commerce and by over 97 national and international market and opinion research associations world-wide.

Founded in 1947, the World Association for Public Opinion Research – WAPOR aims to further the use of scientific survey research in national and international affairs. WAPOR is officially recognised as a member of the International Social Science Council (ISSC) and thus supported by UNESCO. There are over 500 members in more than 60 countries.

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## INTRODUCTION

*"Everyone has the right to freedom of opinion and expression; this right includes freedom to hold opinions without interference and to seek, receive and impart information and ideas through any media and regardless of frontiers."*

*Article 19, the Universal Declaration of Human Rights.*

Despite the fundamental right expressed in this article, debates are held at regular intervals about the collection, analysis and dissemination of information with respect to voting behaviour. In a number of cases, these discussions tend to focus on the possible presumed negative effects of opinion polls on the outcome of elections and as a consequence, attempts are made to introduce bans or tighter restrictions on the conduct or publication of opinion polls. But what about the real effects? What are the arguments for the freedom of pre-election polling?

In this publication, Professor Wolfgang Donsbach provides a state-of-the-art evaluation of pre-election surveys. This thorough analysis helps to clarify what influence polls might have upon the voting process and summarises the empirical findings regarding possible influences.

Safeguarding the right to conduct and publish the results of public opinion polls is a key attention area for the 'Foundation for Information'. The study of Professor Donsbach, in our view, serves the purpose to create a better understanding of the need for freedom to conduct opinion and market research.

We trust that the report will also contribute to the promotion of pre-election surveys in accordance with the highest professionally accepted standards of quality and performance as specified in the Guide to Opinion Polls published by ESOMAR and WAPOR.

**Dr. George Vassiliou**

*Chairman, The Foundation for Information*

## FOREWORD FROM ESOMAR

Since the inception of polling, various hypotheses and theories have been put forward regarding the possible effects that published election polls may have on voting and voter behaviour.

The most well-known the 'Bandwagon Effect' suggests that the published results of polls encourage the (undecided) voter to vote for the party leading the polls.

Other theories postulate the opposite; that voters may be influenced towards 'facilitating' or 'preventative' tactical voting; or that poll results lead to 'defeatist' or apathetic voting behaviour.

Because of the importance of the outcome of elections and the value of true democracy, heated controversy rages about who benefits from publication of poll results – the stronger, the weaker, other parties? There are also sometimes legal arguments, some of which are spurious, for and against the publication of polls, as well as those based on the inherent theory of democracy.

However, what about empirical evidence? Should policy makers, political parties, the press be afraid of election polls? Or can the, often and unfounded, antagonistic debates be qualified as 'much ado about nothing'?

In its role as one of the guardians of free speech the Foundation for Information monitors the rights to collect, process, use and publish information obtained in accordance with professionally accepted standards. A key part of this duty is to publish material that will continue to advance the cause of legitimate data collection in all its forms and the right of individuals and other entities to free speech.

This report by Professor Wolfgang Donsbach on the real effects of pre-election surveys and polls provides excellent empirical data. Moreover, it significantly contributes, in our view, to the attempts of ESOMAR and WAPOR to continue to advocate the freedom to conduct opinion and market research to the benefit of society.

**John Kelly**  
*President, ESOMAR*

## **FOREWORD FROM WAPOR**

Along with ESOMAR, WAPOR strongly supports any initiative which helps ensure that public opinion polls are conducted to the highest professional standards, WAPOR members, who come from more than 60 countries and all continents, have committed themselves to a Code of Professional Ethics and Practices. In this Code, members recognise their responsibilities in conducting public opinion surveys towards not only their sponsors and respondents, but also to the wider public.

The war against censorship of opinion polls, which many had thought was won, is having to open up on new frontiers across the globe – from Fiji to Portugal, from Cyprus to Ireland, and doubtless elsewhere. The issue of freedom of information, long recognised by the Universal Declaration of Human Rights and Europe's Human Rights Convention, has still to be positively established and entrenched. This is despite the unequivocal recommendation of the Council of Europe back in 1985 that polling institutes should follow existing Codes and that further restrictions on public opinion polls were both unnecessary and undesirable.

This timely publication, based on detailed research by the eminent Professor Wolfgang Donsbach, examines the evidence on whether poll findings induce potential voters to vote in a particular way. It explores both the "bandwagon" and "boomerang" effects, the source of much debate on the part of politicians and pundits in the run-up to elections.

WAPOR welcomes this important publication and hopes that the excellent work of the Foundation for Information and of Professor Donsbach will lead to a more informed public debate on the vital issues it explores.

**Brian Gosschalk**  
*President, WAPOR*

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**Publication information of the original**

**“The Freedom to Publish Opinion Poll Results”**

# The Freedom to Publish Opinion Poll Results

Report on a Worldwide Update

By  
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The Foundation for Information is an independent organisation registered in Amsterdam. It was formed in 1996 by ESOMAR. The Foundation operates on a world-wide scale. It takes action to protect the rights of individuals and commercial enterprises to obtain and make use of information without any unfair or unnecessary restrictions.

ESOMAR's mission is to promote the use of opinion and market research for improving decision making in business and society worldwide. Founded in 1948, ESOMAR unites 4000 members in 100 countries, both users and providers of opinion and marketing research. ESOMAR stands for the highest possible standards – both professionally and technically. The ICC/ESOMAR International Code of Marketing and Social Research Practice has been adopted by all ESOMAR members, by the International Chamber of Commerce and by over 100 national and international market and opinion research associations world-wide.

Founded in 1947, the World Association for Public Opinion Research – WAPOR aims to further the use of scientific survey research in national and international affairs. WAPOR is officially recognised as a member of the International Social Science Council (ISSC) and is supported by UNESCO. There are over 500 members in more than 60 countries.

We acknowledge with thanks the generous contribution of the ISSC/UNESCO grant No 023-16/SRP received by WAPOR to support the research which is reported in this publication.

Appreciation is also extended to Gallup International which ensured that invaluable input was included from opinion poll specialists worldwide.

In addition, we were happy to work with WAN (the World Association of Newspapers) whose members were also invited to participate in the study.

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## **PREFACE**

**This is the fourth study conducted by ESOMAR and WAPOR under the auspices of the Foundation for Information worldwide on the Freedom to Publish Opinion Polls.**

**Opinion polls have become an essential and vital part of the functioning of democracy around the world. They play an ever more important role in the formulation of policies, and provide a reliable measure of the attitudes towards governments and other political players, including political parties.**

**The principal task of the Foundation for Information is to safeguard the right of all citizens to be properly informed through professionally conducted opinion polls. The importance of these periodical studies of conditions on the freedom to publish opinion polls around the world lies in the fact that they help to safeguard this essential freedom and contribute towards an increasing pressure for the abolition of any restrictive practices wherever they exist.**

**This year's study clearly shows that despite the progress achieved until now, there are still countries and areas where much more can be done. We sincerely hope that our next survey will report further progress for the good of democracy.**

**Dr. George Vassiliou  
Chairman, The Foundation for Information**

## FOREWORD FROM ESOMAR

Opinion polls are commissioned by the media but equally important are the opinion surveys conducted on behalf of political parties to help shape legislation, to monitor the public response towards policies and to take appropriate action. Yet despite their value, there is a tendency for politicians to propose restrictions on the publication of opinion polls by the media - particularly in the run-up to major political elections.

Various hypotheses have been put forward regarding the possible effects that published election polls may have on voting and voter behaviour.

Endorsed by ESOMAR and WAPOR, the Foundation for Information published a review in 2001 of the legal, democratic and political significance of election polls by Professor Wolfgang Donsbach of the University of Dresden, Germany. This review also assessed the empirical evidence contributing to clarify the debate:

*"The conclusion is that any effects are difficult to prove and in any case are minimal. Opinion polls do provide a form of "interpretative assistance" which helps undecided voters make up their mind. But the media are full of such interpretative aids, including interviews and commentaries, and in this perspective, election polls are a relatively neutral and rational interpretative aid."*

The right to conduct and publish polls freely is part of the modern democratic process which allows citizens to make themselves heard. This right is upheld by Article 10 of the European Convention for the Protection of Human Rights and Fundamental Freedoms which states:

*"Everyone has the right to freedom of expression. This right shall include freedom to hold opinions and to receive and impart information and ideas without interference by public authority and regardless of frontiers."*

ESOMAR, the world association of research professionals, has always actively fostered the professional ethical standards of the industry. All ESOMAR members are asked to undersign that they will apply the ICC/ESOMAR Code of Conduct and the ESOMAR/WAPOR Code on Conducting Public Opinion Polls as a prerequisite for being accepted as members.

We hope that the publication of this report will contribute to the debate and help alert and inform political leadership, the media and the public about the need to safeguard and further strengthen the right to free information.

Fredrik Nauckhoff  
President

## FOREWORD FROM WAPOR

The mission of WAPOR, the World Association for Public Opinion Research, is to promote in each country of the world the right to conduct and publish scientific research on what people and groups think. Public opinion is a critical force in shaping and transforming society, and in the 20th century social science has developed a tool that can objectively measure that public opinion - most of the time with remarkable accuracy. Public opinion polls - properly conducted and disseminated - give both politicians and public a tool to measure public opinion. They are a way of letting the public's voice be heard.

One would assume that any political system that claims to be a democracy would welcome this technique. However, reality appears to be different. Restrictions on opinion polls are not just characteristic of undemocratic political systems. Media blackouts before elections are perhaps the most visible restriction. Legislators invent many reasons to put a burden on public opinion research, be it a (misunderstood) concern for the protection of personal data, or a preservation of the "dignity of the election process." No one ever has questioned the "dignity" of the many interest-driven claims that politicians make about what the public thinks and wants during election times. It seems as if free public opinion research is a challenge to the monopoly of others - including the press - to define public opinion.

National and international professional associations like ESOMAR and WAPOR are on the alert. With this survey of the state of opinion polling worldwide, the fourth in a series that began in 1984, we now know better what our status is. In 2003, 30 countries - nearly half of those surveyed - have some kind of restriction on the publication of polls. And this may be just the tip of the iceberg. We have no evidence for many countries and these blind spots are precisely where the political situation makes such restrictions even more likely.

The report also reveals that freedom of research is only one problem of the polling business. We also hear complaints from some countries about the quality of the polls that are conducted or the way that the results are reported or both. Freedom and quality are closely linked. The better we do our job, the more we can separate the wheat from the chaff, the more will we be able to defend our rights, or fight for them where they are not yet granted. Thus, in addition to investigating the freedom to conduct and publish opinion polls we also should continuously monitor the situation regarding survey quality. This is - among other things - the paramount role of professional associations as ours.

The banning and/or undue obstruction of public opinion research violates too many rights. Restrictions on polls prohibit the best possible study of what from the earliest times of democracy was perceived as a core phenomenon of a liberal society - public opinion.

And those restrictions also violate the pollsters' right to conduct research, the right of the press to publish opinion poll results, the people's right to information, and last but not least, the public's right to let its voice be heard.

Kathleen A. Frankovic  
President, WAPOR

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