
The Freedom to Publish Opinion Poll Results

A Worldwide Update of 2012

By

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PREFACE

This is the fifth worldwide study on the freedom to publish opinion polls, conducted by the World Association for Public Opinion Research (WAPOR) and executed by the Public Opinion Programme at The University of Hong Kong (HKUPOP).

As stated in the constitution of WAPOR, “Public opinion is a critical force in shaping and transforming society. Properly conducted and disseminated survey research provides the public with a tool to measure opinions and attitudes in order to allow its voices to be heard.” In light of this, WAPOR promotes in each country of the world the right to conduct and publish polls. This worldwide study is an important effort of WAPOR along this direction.

Ten years after the last survey was conducted in 2002, WAPOR decided to conduct another round of survey and to release the results at its 65th annual conference held in Hong Kong in June 2012, which was the first time that WAPOR held an annual conference outside Europe and North America. We at HKUPOP were honored to be assigned this task, and were glad to see a record number of 85 different countries or regions participated in this study, as compared to 49 in 1984, 57 in 1992, 78 in 1996 and 66 in 2002.

As the world evolves, the task of safeguarding the freedom to publish opinion polls will remain as important as the development of code of ethics and professional standards. We in Hong Kong and Asia are proud to be part of this important process.

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FOREWORD FROM WAPOR

As our constitution states, WAPOR seeks to “a) 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, b) promote the knowledge and application of scientific methods in this objective, c) assist and promote the development and publication of public opinion research worldwide, d) 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.” To further these goals WAPOR has carried out cross-national studies of the freedom to publish poll results in 1984, 1992, 1996, 2002, and now in 2012. While more and more countries are conducting surveys in general and pre-election and exit polls in particular, major governmental impediments remain common. For example in 2012, 46% of countries had blackout periods during which pre-election poll results could not be published, and between 2002 and 2012 there was no overall improvement in the freedom to publish pre-election polls. Also, major limitations exist on conducting exit polls and restrictions on the content of public-opinion polls occur in many countries. So WAPOR needs to both continue to monitor the situation and to strive to expand the rights to conduct surveys and freely disseminate their results.

Tom W. Smith
President, WAPOR

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1. INTRODUCTION

1.1 Background and Objectives

The freedom to conduct and publish opinion surveys has always been of deep concern to WAPOR as the leading international organization of public opinion research. The first study on the freedom to publish opinion poll was conducted by WAPOR in 1984. Then, in 1992, 1996 and 2002, WAPOR in cooperation with ESOMAR (originally called the European Society for Opinion and Market Research, now called the World Association for Social, Opinion, and Market Research) sponsored updates of this study to review the situation. In 2012, WAPOR authorized the Public Opinion Programme at The University of Hong Kong (HKUPOP) to conduct another update of the study and the preliminary results were released at the WAPOR 65th annual conference held in June 2012 in Hong Kong.

As in previous studies, the main themes of the 2012 update study were:

- Poll embargo prior to elections,
- Restrictions for conducting and publishing exit polls,
- Awareness and conformity to codes or guidelines,
- Evaluation of overall poll quality and problems of conducting polls.

1.2 Procedure

The main themes of the study were covered in a self-administered online questionnaire (see Appendix 1). The questionnaire, which was based on those used in previous studies, asked respondents to provide mainly factual information, supplemented by personal opinions.

The first three studies conducted in 1984, 1992 and 1996 were carried out by mail surveys, while in 2002 the project team comprising WAPOR and ESOMAR representatives decided to make use of the Internet and posted the self-administered questionnaire on a website for data collection. For this 2012 survey, the project team at HKUPOP again adopted the online survey mode. Invitation email messages with a link to the online survey site, and unique passwords were sent to chosen country/region representatives of WAPOR in early April 2012. Then, in order to encourage participation from more countries, invitations with a link to the same online survey site but without any password were sent to other WAPOR members from the non-responding countries in late April. Then, in early May, the project team extended the invitation network to cover heads of journalism and social sciences departments in universities in non-responding countries, as well as relevant email contacts located in the websites of the International Federation of Journalists (IFJ), United Nations Office for Partnerships, Dansk Journalistforbund, Pacific Media Centre, National Union of Journalists, and United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO). Meanwhile, news of the survey was also posted on social network websites including Facebook, Twitter and LinkedIn.

As a result of these efforts, by mid-June 2012 shortly before the commencement of the WAPOR 65th annual conference, 131 target respondents from a record number of 85 different

countries/regions responded to this 2012 survey, as compared to 49 in 1984, 57 in 1992, 78 in 1996, and 66 in 2002. Among these countries/regions, 61 are covered in both the 2002 and 2012 surveys, while 33 are covered in all five surveys (see Appendix 2 and 3).

All information collected from the respondents was checked and consolidated for each country/region. Follow-up email messages were sent to respondents of the same country/region in case the information (rather than opinion) they provided was inconsistent, and all opinion answers collected were consolidated into one return per country/region for counting purpose. The 85 countries/regions covered in the 2012 study are:

Africa (4):	Egypt, Kenya, Nigeria*, South Africa*
Asia (27):	Bangladesh*, Bhutan, Burma, Cambodia, China, Hong Kong, India*, Indonesia*, Israel*, Japan*, Jordan, Kazakhstan*, Kuwait, Macau, Malaysia*, Maldives, Nepal*, Pakistan*, Palestinian Territories, Philippines*, Qatar, Singapore, South Korea*, Sri Lanka, Taiwan*, Thailand*, United Arab Emirates*
Europe (35):	Austria*, Azerbaijan, Belgium*, Bosnia and Herzegovina*, Bulgaria*, Croatia*, Cyprus*, Czech Republic*, Denmark*, Estonia*, Finland*, France*, Germany*, Greece*, Iceland*, Italy*, Latvia*, Lithuania, Luxembourg*, Macedonia*, the Netherlands*, Norway*, Poland*, Portugal*, Romania*, Russia*, Serbia, Slovakia*, Slovenia*, Spain*, Sweden*, Switzerland*, Turkey*, Ukraine*, United Kingdom*
North America (8):	Canada*, Costa Rica*, Dominican Republic, El Salvador, Honduras*, Mexico*, Trinidad and Tobago, United States*
South America (8):	Argentina*, Brazil*, Chile, Colombia*, Ecuador, Peru*, Uruguay*, Venezuela*
Oceania (3):	Australia*, Fiji, New Zealand*

* Countries/regions which participated in the previous survey of 2002.

2. SURVEY FINDINGS

The key findings of the survey are summarized in this section, while Appendix 4 tabulates the consolidated responses to key questions by individual countries/regions, and Appendix 5 lists the open comments and unstructured information provided by respondents from individual countries/regions with minimal editing.

2.1 Poll Restrictions

2.1.1 *Black-out Period for Pre-election Polls*

In the 2012 study, among the 85 countries/regions covered, 2 did not disclose information on the restrictions on the publication of pre-election opinion polls in their countries. A total of 38 out of 83 (46%) countries/regions answering this question reported the existence of a blackout period for pre-election opinion polls, during which polling results may not be released to the public, 45 countries/regions (54%) reported no restriction.

In 2002, 30 of the 66 (46%) countries/regions covered reported having embargoes on the publication of findings from political polls before an election and 36 countries/regions (54%) reported no embargo.

A total of 61 countries/regions are covered in both the 2002 and the 2012 surveys. In 11 of these 61 countries/regions, restrictions have been liberalized or even lifted. The restrictions stayed unchanged in 10, were stable in not having an embargo in 26. In 13 countries/regions the black-out period increased, while 1 country did not report the length of the black-out period in 2012. Situations in another 22 countries/regions cannot be compared because they were not covered in 2002.

The following tables show the countries/regions with an embargo in 2012 and, where possible, compared to 2002.

Table 1: Embargo period prior to elections in 2012 compared to 2002

Country/region Total (N=38)#	Number of days reported in 2002	Number of days reported in 2012	Change
Argentina	1	15	+14
Bhutan*	--	2	--
Bosnia and Herzegovina	0	1	+1
Brazil	0	2	+2
Burma*	--	3	--
Canada	2	3	+1
Colombia	1	7	+6
Costa Rica	2	7	+5
Croatia	1	1	0
Cyprus	7	7	0
Czech Republic	7	3	-4
Ecuador*	--	15	--
El Salvador*	--	1	--
Greece	15	15	0

Honduras	0	45	+45
Italy	15	15	0
Jordan*	--	--	--
Kuwait*	--	3	--
Luxembourg	30	--	--
Macau*	--	15	--
Macedonia	5	5	0
Mexico	7	3	-4
Norway	0	1	+1
Peru	7	7	0
Poland	1	1	0
Portugal	1	1	0
Romania	2	7	+5
Russia	0	5	+5
Serbia*	--	2	--
Singapore*	--	1	--
South Korea	23	21	-2
Spain	5	5	0
Sri Lanka*	--	7	--
Taiwan	0	10	+10
Turkey	7	7	0
Ukraine	0	15	+15
Uruguay	7	2	-5
Venezuela	2	7	+5

* Not included in 2002

Chile and Qatar did not report whether there is any embargo, while Jordan and Luxemburg reported an embargo, but did not specify its length.

Table 2: Countries/regions with no embargo in 2012 compared to 2002

Country/region Total (N=45)#	Embargo in number of days reported in 2002	Embargo in number of days reported in 2012	Change
Australia	0	0	0
Austria	0	0	0
Azerbaijan*	--	0	--
Bangladesh	0	0	0
Belgium	0	0	0
Bulgaria	7	0	-7
Cambodia*	--	0	--
China*	--	0	--
Denmark	0	0	0
Dominican Republic*	--	0	--
Egypt*	--	0	--
Estonia	0	0	0
Fiji*	--	0	--
Finland	0	0	0
France	1	0	-1
Germany	0	0	0
Hong Kong*	--	0	--
Iceland	0	0	0
India	0	0	0
Indonesia	0	0	0
Israel	1	0	-1
Japan	0	0	0
Kazakhstan	0	0	0

Kenya*	--	0	--
Latvia	0	0	0
Lithuania*	--	0	--
Malaysia	0	0	0
Maldives	--	0	--
Nepal	1	0	-1
The Netherlands	0	0	0
New Zealand	0	0	0
Nigeria	0	0	0
Pakistan	0	0	0
Palestinian Territories*	--	0	--
Philippines	0	0	0
Slovakia	14	0	-14
Slovenia	7	0	-7
South Africa	0	0	0
Sweden	0	0	0
Switzerland	10	0	-10
Thailand	0	0	0
Trinidad and Tobago*	--	0	--
United Kingdom	0	0	0
United Arab Emirates	0	0	0
United States	0	0	0

* Not included in 2002

Chile and Qatar did not report whether there is any embargo.

Table 3: Changes in embargo periods prior to elections in 61 countries/regions covered both in 2002 and 2012

13 countries/regions increased embargo	10 countries/regions no change in embargo period	11 countries/regions reduced embargo	26 countries/regions with no embargo in both 2002 and 2012
Argentina	Croatia	Bulgaria	Australia
Bosnia and Herzegovina	Cyprus	Czech Republic	Austria
Brazil	Greece	France	Bangladesh
Canada	Italy	Israel	Belgium
Colombia	Macedonia	Mexico	Denmark
Costa Rica	Peru	Nepal	Estonia
Honduras	Poland	Slovakia	Finland
Norway	Portugal	Slovenia	Germany
Romania	Spain	South Korea	Iceland
Russia	Turkey	Switzerland	India
Taiwan		Uruguay	Indonesia
Ukraine			Japan
Venezuela			Kazakhstan
			Latvia
			Malaysia
			The Netherlands
			New Zealand
			Nigeria
			Pakistan
			Philippines
			South Africa
			Sweden
			Thailand

			United Arab Emirates
			United Kingdom
			United States

Luxemburg reported embargo but did not specify its length.

2.1.2 Who Enforces the Restrictions?

Among the 38 countries/regions that have an embargo on publishing poll results before an election, a large majority of them reported that the main enforcers are government agencies or election administration offices (87%) followed by independent agencies (5%) and broadcast/press regulatory agencies (3%).

Table 4: [Q1c] [Only for countries/regions with black-out period (answered “yes” in Q1a), sub-sample base=38] Who enforces the poll restrictions or blackout period?

	Frequency	Percentage (Sub-sample base=38)
Government agency / election administration office	33	87%
Independent agency	2	5%
Broadcast/press regulatory agency	1	3%
Others	2	5%
Total	38	100%

2.1.3 Future Development of Poll Restrictions

When asked if they were anticipating any change on pre-election opinion poll restrictions within the next 3 to 5 years, the majority, 62 (74%) countries/regions said they expected no change. Representatives from 3 (4%) countries/regions expected “bans on publication to be imposed”, 4 (5%) expected “longer periods of ban”, 3 (4%) expected “shorter periods of ban” and 4 (5%) expected “bans on publication to be abolished”. Representatives from 8 (10%) other countries/regions replied “don’t know”.

Table 5: [Q2] Within the next 3-5 years, do you expect any change in your country/region in the rules regarding the periods before elections in which pre-election opinion poll findings can be published?

	Frequency	Percentage (Base=84)
Expect no change	62	74%
Expect bans on publication to be imposed	3	4%
Expect longer periods of ban on publication	4	5%
Expect shorter periods of ban on publication	3	4%
Expect bans on publication to be abolished	4	5%
Don’t know	8	10%
Total	84	100%
<i>Missing</i>	<i>1</i>	

2.1.4 Information to be Published with Poll Results

Concerning the information that must be published as required by *law*, “persons or agency that commissioned the opinion poll” topped the list, as reported by 30 of the 85 countries/region covered (35% of total sample), followed by “geographical coverage” and “dates of interview”, with each reported by 21 countries/regions (25%). Respectively 20, 18, 17, 16 and 13 countries/regions reported that they are required by the law to disclose the “margin of error”, “question wording”, “characteristics of the sample”, “mode of interview” and “response rate”.

As regards the information required to be published according to some *codes or self-regulations*, “geographical coverage” and “dates of interview” are the most frequent requirements, with each reported by 49 among the 85 countries/regions (58%), followed by “characteristics of the sample” and “mode of interview”, with each reported by 47 countries/regions (55%). “Margin of error” and “question wording” are each reported by 42 countries/regions (49%), another 40 (47%) reported that “persons or agency that commissioned the opinion poll” must be disclosed, while “response rate” again comes last with only 32 (38%) countries/regions reporting.

Table 6: [Q3]For the publication of public opinion polls in your country/region, which of the following must be disclosed, either because it is requested by law or because of self-regulation of the media or polling industry? (Please distinguish between actual legal restrictions and limitations agreed or recommended on a voluntary basis. Please choose as many items as appropriate, multiple answers allowed for each item.)

Total sample = 85 (Multiple response allowed)	Legal		Code/self-regulation		Don't know / No restrictions	
	Frequency	% of total sample	Frequency	% of total sample	Frequency	% of total sample
Persons or agency that commissioned the opinion poll	30	35%	40	47%	23	27%
Geographical coverage	21	25%	49	58%	19	22%
Dates of interview	21	25%	49	58%	20	24%
Margin of error	20	24%	42	49%	28	33%
Question wording	18	21%	42	49%	29	34%
Characteristics of the sample	17	20%	47	55%	24	28%
Mode of interview	16	19%	47	55%	25	29%
Response rate	13	15%	32	38%	41	48%

2.2 Exit Polls

2.2.1 Restrictions for Conducting Exit Polls

Among the 82 countries/regions that responded to this question, 7 (9%) reported that exit polls cannot be conducted at all, 12 (15%) reported that they cannot be conducted both inside the polling station and outside near to the polling station, 23 (28%) reported that they cannot be conducted inside the polling station, 6 (7%) reported that they cannot be conducted outside and close to the polling station, 7 (9%) reported no restriction but exit polls have never been conducted, while 24 (29%) reported no restriction and some exit polls have been conducted to date. Another 3 countries/regions did not respond to this question.

Table 7: [Q4a] In your country/region, are there legal restrictions on the conduct of exit polls? (Please choose as many answers as appropriate)

Restrictions on exit polls	Frequency	Percentage (Base=82)
They cannot be conducted at all	7	9%
They cannot be conducted both inside the polling station and outside near to the polling station	12	15%
They cannot be conducted inside the polling station	23	28%
They cannot be conducted outside close to the polling station	6	7%
No restriction but exit polls have not been conducted to date	7	9%
No restriction and some exit polls have been conducted to date	24	29%
Don't know	3	4%
Total	82	100%
<i>Missing</i>	3	

When we further break down the results by broad regions, 3 countries/regions in Asia, 1 in North America, 2 in South America and 1 in Oceania reported that “exit polls are completely banned”. On the other hand, 6 countries/regions in Asia, 3 in Europe, 1 each in North America and South America, and 1 in Oceania reported that “exit polls cannot be conducted both inside the polling station and outside close to the polling station”. Another 1 in Africa, 2 in Asia, 16 in Europe, 1 in North America, 2 in South America and 1 in Oceania reported that “exit poll cannot be conducted inside the polling station”, whereas 4 in Asia and 2 in North America reported that “exit polls cannot be conducted outside close to the polling station”. As for the distribution of countries/regions without restriction, 1 country/region in Africa, 4 in Asia and 2 in Europe reported that there has not been any exit poll conducted to date, whereas 2 in Africa, 6 in Asia, 12 in Europe, 2 in North America and 2 in South America reported that “some exit polls have been conducted to date”.

Table 8: Summary of legal restriction on the conduct of exit polls by country/region

Countries/ regions	Cannot be conducted at all	Cannot be conducted both inside and outside close to the polling station	Cannot be conducted inside the polling station	Cannot be conducted outside close to the polling station	No restriction but exit polls have not been conducted to date	No restriction and some exit polls have been conducted to date	Don't know	Miss- ing
Africa (N=4)	0	0	1	0	1	2	0	0
Asia (N=27)	3	6	2	4	4	6	1	1
Europe (N=35)	0	3	16	0	2	12	2	0
North America (N=8)	1	1	1	2	0	2	0	1
South America (N=8)	2	1	2	0	0	2	0	1
Oceania (N=3)	1	1	1	0	0	0	0	0
Total (N=85)	7	12	23	6	7	24	3	3

2.2.2 Restrictions for Publishing Exit Polls

Concerning the legal restrictions on the publication of exit polls, among the 75 countries/regions which reported that exit polls can be conducted, plus 3 countries/regions which did not report whether exit polls can be conducted, 5 (6%) said they “cannot be published by the media”, 38 (49%) reported that “exit polls cannot be published before all polls in the country/region close”, 11 (14%) reported that they “cannot be published before all polls in the polling area close”, while 30 (38%) reported “no restriction” at all. As for professional restriction or self-regulation, 5 (6%) said they “cannot be published by the media”, 13 (17%) reported that “exit polls cannot be published before all polls in the country/region close”, 6 (8%) said they “cannot be published before all polls in the polling area close”, whereas 55 (71%) said there was “no restriction” at all.

Table 9: [Q4b] [Exclude countries/regions where exit polls cannot be conducted at all, sub-sample base=78] Are there legal restrictions or self-regulations on the publication of exit polls by the media? (Please choose as many items as appropriate, multiple answers allowed for each item)

Total sub-sample base=78 (Multiple response allowed)	Legal		Code/self-regulation	
	Frequency	% of sub-sample	Frequency	% of sub-sample
Restrictions on publication of exit polls by the media				
Exit polls cannot be published by the media	5	6%	5	6%
Exit polls cannot be published before all polls in the country/region close	38	49%	13	17%
Exit polls cannot be published before all polls in the polling area close	11	14%	6	8%
No restriction	30	38%	55	71%
Don't Know	7	9%	7	9%

Overlap analysis of the two categories shows among these 78 countries/regions reported to allow exit polls but apparently with restrictions, 1 (1%) reported that there are both legal and professional restrictions such that “exit polls cannot be published by the media”, 8 (10%) reported either, and 69 (88%) have none. Another 4 (5%) reported to have both legal and professional restrictions whereby “exit polls cannot be published before all polls in the country/region close”, 43 (55%) have either one kind of such restriction, and 31 (40%) have no restriction in this aspect. As for “exit polls published before all polls in the polling area close”, 2 (3%) reported both legal and professional restrictions, 13 (17%) have either one, and 63 (81%) have none.

Table 10: [Exclude countries/regions where exit polls cannot be conducted at all, sub-sample base=78] Overlap analysis of legal and professional restrictions on exit polls

Total sub-sample base=78 (Multiple response allowed)	Both Legal and Code/self-regulation		Either Legal or Code/self-regulation		Neither Legal nor Code/self-regulation	
	Frequency	% of sub-sample	Frequency	% of sub-sample	Frequency	% of sub-sample
Restrictions on publication of exit polls by the media	1	1%	8	10%	69	88%
Exit polls cannot be published by the media	1	1%	8	10%	69	88%
Exit polls cannot be published before all polls in the country/region close	4	5%	43	55%	31	40%
Exit polls cannot be published before all polls in the polling area close	2	3%	13	17%	63	81%

2.3 Other Restrictions

2.3.1 Restrictions on Polling Subjects

Among the 85 countries/regions covered, 12 (14%) reported that there are specific questions or subjects that cannot be published or can only be published with a time delay. These countries include Chile, China, Egypt, El Salvador, Fiji, Jordan, Kuwait, Luxembourg, Nepal, Qatar, Singapore, and United Arab Emirates.

Table 11: [Q5a] In your country/region, are there specific questions or subjects in public opinion surveys that cannot be published or that can only be published with a time delay?

	Frequency	Percentage (Base=85)
Yes, restriction exists (see below)	12	14%
No restriction	65	76%
Don't know	8	9%
Total	85	100%

	Countries/regions
Yes, restriction exists	Chile, China, Egypt, El Salvador, Fiji, Jordan, Kuwait, Luxembourg, Nepal, Qatar, Singapore, United Arab Emirates

No restriction	Argentina, Australia, Austria, Azerbaijan, Bangladesh, Belgium, Bhutan, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Brazil, Bulgaria, Burma, Cambodia, Canada, Colombia, Costa Rica, Croatia, Cyprus, Czech. Republic, Denmark, Dominican Republic, Estonia, Finland, France, Germany, Greece, Honduras, Hong Kong, Iceland, India, Italy, Japan, Kazakhstan, Kenya, Latvia, Lithuania, Macau, Macedonia, Malaysia, Maldives, Mexico, The Netherlands, New Zealand, Norway, Pakistan, Palestinian Territories, Peru, Philippines, Poland, Portugal, Romania, Russia, Serbia, Slovenia, S. Africa, S. Korea, Sri Lanka, Sweden, Taiwan, Trinidad and Tobago, Turkey, United Kingdom, Uruguay, United States, Venezuela
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2.3.2 Types of Restrictions

Among the 12 countries/regions reported to have restrictions on subjects of opinion polls published, 7 reported **legal** restrictions on surveying or publishing polls on specific “persons”, like royalty, political leaders, and so on, 3 reported **code/self-regulation** in this regard. On the other hand, 6 reported no restriction of any sort. Likewise, 7 reported **legal** restrictions on surveying or publishing polls on “religious or ethnic issues”, 3 reported **code/self-regulation**, 1 reported no restriction. Meanwhile, respectively 5, 4, 3, 3, 3 and 2 countries/regions reported **legal** restrictions on surveying or publishing polls on “private matters (sex/health/psychological problems, etc)”, “foreign policy or defense”, “armed conflicts within the country/region”, “major political issues (social, economic, etc)”, “values or lifestyle”, and “voting intentions between elections”. The corresponding numbers for **code/self-regulation** and no restriction on these subjects are 2, 1, 2, 0, 1, 0 and 3, 3, 1, 5, 4, 4.

Table 12: [Q5b] [Only for countries/regions where restrictions exist on publication of specific questions or subjects in public opinion surveys (answered “Yes, restriction exists” in Q5a), sub-sample base=12] On what type of subjects are there restrictions on surveying or publication of public opinion poll results? (Please choose as many items as appropriate, multiple answers allowed for each item.)

Total sub-sample=12 (Multiple response allowed)	Legal		Code/self-regulation		No restriction		Don't know	
	Frequency	% of sub-sample	Frequency	% of sub-sample	Frequency	% of sub-sample	Frequency	% of sub-sample
Questions on specific persons (royalty, political leaders)	7	58%	3	25%	0	0%	3	25%
Questions on religious or ethnic questions	7	58%	3	25%	1	8%	2	17%
Questions on private matters (sex/health/psychological problems etc)	5	42%	2	17%	3	25%	3	25%
Questions on foreign policy or defense	4	33%	1	8%	3	25%	4	33%
Questions on armed conflicts within the country/region	3	25%	2	17%	1	8%	6	50%

Questions on major political issues (social, economic, etc)	3	25%	0	0%	5	42%	4	33%
Questions on values or lifestyle	3	25%	1	8%	4	33%	5	42%
Voting intentions between elections	2	18%	0	0%	4	36%	5	45%

2.3.3 Reasons for Poll Restrictions

Among the 12 countries/regions that reported certain restrictions exist on survey topics, 7 (78%) reported that the main reason given for such restrictions is “national security”. “The right of privacy” comes next, as reported by 4 countries/regions, while another 3 reported “protecting the democratic process” as the main reason.

Table 13: [Q5c] [Only for countries/regions where restrictions exist on publication of specific questions or subjects in public opinion surveys (answered “Yes, restriction exists” in Q5a), sub-sample base=12] What are the main reasons given for restrictions on polling regarding some specific topics?

Reasons for poll restrictions	Frequency	% of total response (Base=16)	% of sub-sample (Base=9)
National security	7	44%	78%
The right of privacy	4	25%	44%
Protecting the democratic process	3	19%	33%
Others	2	13%	22%
Total	16	100%	
<i>Missing</i>	3		

2.4 Codes and Practices

Since responses to the following sections are more opinion based rather than matters of fact, all replies gathered have been consolidated into one return per country/region for counting purpose.

2.4.1 Awareness and Use of Codes

Concerning respondents’ awareness of the different codes and guidelines for the conducting and publication of public opinion polls, survey results show that among consolidated opinion collected from the 85 countries/regions covered, 64 (75%) consolidated returns were aware of the WAPOR Code of Ethics, while 62 (74%, excluding one missing case) were aware of the ESOMAR/WAPOR International Code of Practice for the Publication of Public Opinion Poll Results, and 52 (62%, excluding one missing case) were aware of the WAPOR Guidelines for Exit Polls and Election Forecasts.

Table 14:

[Q6a] Are you aware of the existence of the ESOMAR/WAPOR International Code of Practice for the Publication of Public Opinion Poll Results?

[Q6b] Are you aware of the existence of the WAPOR Guidelines for Exit Polls and Election Forecasts?

[Q6c] Are you aware of the existence of the WAPOR Code of Ethics?

	Yes		No	
	Frequency	Percentage	Frequency	Percentage
WAPOR Code of Ethics (N=85)	64	75%	21	25%
ESOMAR/WAPOR International Code of Practice for the Publication of Public Opinion Poll Results (N=84)	62	74%	22	26%
WAPOR Guidelines for Exit Polls and Election Forecasts (N=84)	52	62%	32	38%

As for whether or not the respondents had actually read any of the codes or guidelines mentioned before, 25 (29%) consolidated returns reported full reading, 40 reported partial reading, and 20 (24%) reportedly did not read any.

Table 15: [Q6d] Have you ever read any of the codes or guidelines mentioned?

	Frequency	Percentage (Base=85)
Yes, entirely	25	29%
Yes, partially	40	47%
No	20	24%
Total	85	100%

2.4.2 *Conformity to Codes and Guidelines*

Among the 85 consolidated returns from the countries/regions surveyed, 38 (45%) considered that public opinion polls in their countries/regions generally conform to the codes and guidelines mentioned before, 27 (32%) considered only a few polls conform, while 3 (4%) considered no poll in their countries/regions conforms.

Table 16: [Q6e] In your opinion, do public opinion polls in your country/region conform to these codes and guidelines?

	Frequency	Percentage (Base=85)
Yes, generally	38	45%
No, but a few polls conform at least fairly well	27	32%
No poll conforms	3	4%
Don't know	17	20%
Total	85	100%

Instead of or in addition to the ESOMAR/WAPOR codes and guidelines mentioned, 15 (19%, excluding 5 missing cases) of the countries/regions reported that public opinion polls in their

countries/regions conform to other national or international codes. Another 3 (4%) reported a few polls conform to other codes, 32 (40%) reported that there is no other code in their countries/regions.

Table 17: [Q6f] In your opinion, do public opinion polls in your country/region conform to other codes, national or international instead or in addition to these codes and guidelines?

	Frequency	Percentage (Base=80)
Yes	15	19%
No, but a few polls conform to other codes	3	4%
No other code	32	40%
Don't know	30	38%
Total	80	100%
Missing	5	

2.4.3 Modes of Administration

As for the mode of administration, 38 countries/regions (45%) among the 84 responded to this question reported that the public opinion polls are conducted “mostly in person”, 31 (37%) reported “mostly by telephone” while 8 (10%) reported “mostly online”.

Table 18: [Q7] What is the main mode of administration used in your country/region to conduct public opinion polls?

	Frequency	Percentage (Base=84)
Mostly in person	38	45%
Mostly by telephone	31	37%
Mostly online	8	10%
Don't know	7	8%
Total	84	100%
Missing	1	

2.4.4 Government Use of Polls

Concerning the use of public opinion polls on policy making, 44 (52%) among the 84 countries/regions which responded to this question reported that their governments generally conduct public opinion polls on policy making issues, 16 (19%) reported rarely, while 23 (27%) were not aware of such a practice by their government.

Table 19: [Q8a] To your knowledge, does the government in your country/region conduct public opinion polls on policy making issues?

	Frequency	Percentage (Base=84)
Yes, generally	44	52%
Yes, but rarely	16	19%
No, not to my knowledge	23	27%
Don't know	1	1%
Total	84	100%
Missing	1	

2.4.5 Access to Poll Results

Among the consolidated returns from 60 countries/regions with governments conducting opinion polls on public policies, representing countries/regions with frequent poll activities, 29 (48%) reported that academics and the general public can easily access public opinion polls published in their countries, 23 (38%) reported that “access was difficult”, while 6 (10%) reported no access at all.

Table 20: [Q8b] [Only for countries/regions with frequent poll activities (answered “yes” in Q8a), sub-sample base=60] Is there a way that academics or the general public may have access to the results of public opinion polls published in your country/region?

	Frequency	Percentage (Sub-sample base=60)
Yes, and access is easy	29	48%
Yes, but access is difficult	23	38%
No, not to my knowledge	6	10%
Don't know	2	3%
Total	60	100%

2.5 Quality of Polls

2.5.1 General Quality

Also among consolidated returns from 60 countries/regions with frequent poll activities, 11 (18%) rated the general methodological quality of the public opinion polls published in their countries/regions as “high”, 26 (43%) rated them “fair”, 13 (22%) opted for “neither high nor low”, while 7 (12%) and 3 (5%) rated them “rather low” and “low” respectively.

Table 21: [Q9a] [Only for countries/regions with frequent poll activities (answered “yes” in Q8a), sub-sample base=60] How would you rate the general methodological quality of the public opinion polls published in your country/region?

	Frequency	Percentage (Sub-sample base=60)
High general quality level	11	18%
Fair general quality level	26	43%
Neither high nor low	13	22%
Rather low general quality level	7	12%
Low general quality level	3	5%
Total	60	100%

2.5.2 Publication of Unprofessional or Unscientific Polls

When it comes to the publication of unprofessional or unscientific poll findings, 14 (24%) among the 59 valid consolidated returns from countries/regions with frequent poll activities considered it a “serious” problem. Another 33 (56%) considered it a “moderate” problem, while 11 (19%) found it “not much of a problem”.

Table 22: [Q9b] [Only for countries/regions with frequent poll activities (answered “yes” in Q8a), sub-sample base=60] In your opinion, how much of a problem is the publication of unprofessional or unscientific poll findings in your country/region? (for example, TV studio audience polls, phone-in polls, street polls, website polls)?

	Frequency	Percentage (Sub-sample base=59)
Serious problem	14	24%
Moderate Problem	33	56%
Not much of a problem	11	19%
Don't know	1	2%
Total	59	100%
<i>Missing</i>	<i>1</i>	

2.5.3 Major Problems in Conducting Polls

As for the major problems identified by the 58 valid consolidated returns from countries/regions with frequent poll activities, 39 (67%) reported “unsatisfactory samples”, 33 (57%) reported “unsatisfactory reporting of poll finding”, 32 (55%) reported “unsatisfactory questionnaires”, 25 (43%) reported “unsatisfactory data collection”, and 14 (24%) reported “unsatisfactory weighting and tabulation”. In-depth analysis shows that only 6 (10%) reported no problem, 9 (16%) reported just 1 problem, 13 (22%) reported 2, 14 (24%) reported 3, 8 (14%) reported 4, 6 (10%) reported 5, while 2 (3%) reported 6, all figures may include “other problems”.

Table 23: [Q9c] [Only for countries/regions with frequent poll activities (answered “yes” in Q8a), sub-sample base=60] Which of the following factors do you consider as major problems in the conduct of public opinion polls in your country/region? (Multiple answers allowed)

Major problems	Frequency	% of total response (Base = 157)	% of sub-sample (Base=58)
Unsatisfactory samples	39	25%	67%
Unsatisfactory reporting of poll finding	33	21%	57%
Unsatisfactory questionnaires	32	20%	55%
Unsatisfactory data collection	25	16%	43%
Unsatisfactory weighting and tabulation	14	9%	24%
Others	8	5%	14%
None of the above	6	4%	10%
Total	157	100%	
<i>Missing</i>	<i>2</i>		

No. of problems	Frequency	% of sub-sample (Base=58)
None	6	10%
1	9	16%
2	13	22%
3	14	24%
4	8	14%
5	6	10%
6	2	3%
Total	58	100%
<i>Missing</i>	<i>2</i>	

2.5.4 Journalistic Handling of Polls

Finally, the survey asked representatives from countries/regions with frequent poll activities to rate the general quality of journalistic handling of poll findings in their countries/regions. Among the 58 valid consolidated returns, 3 (5%) considered their quality “high”, 15 (26%) considered it “fair”, 15 (26%) opted for “neither high nor low”, 19 (33%) considered it “rather low”, 6 (10%) considered it “low”.

Table 24: [Q9d] [Only for countries/regions with frequent poll activities (answered “yes” in Q8a), sub-sample base=60] How would you rate the general quality level of journalistic handling of public opinion poll findings in your country/region’s mass media:

	Frequency	Percentage (Sub-sample base=58)
High general quality level	3	5%
Fair general quality level	15	26%
Neither high nor low	15	26%
Rather low general quality level	19	33%
Low general quality level	6	10%
Total	58	100%
<i>Missing</i>	2	

Appendix 1

Questionnaire

WORLD ASSOCIATION FOR PUBLIC OPINION RESEARCH SURVEY ON FREEDOM TO PUBLISH OPINION POLL RESULTS 2012

Welcome to the questionnaire of the Survey on Freedom to Publish Opinion Poll Results. It will only take you 5 to 10 minutes to complete the survey. Thank you for participating.

Introduction

Today opinion polls are conducted in nearly all democratic countries/regions, and the results of these surveys are used to help shape and fine-tune the policies that are proposed to the public. Despite polls' recognized value to policy makers and the public, in some countries/regions there are restrictions on the publication of opinion polls by the media, especially near major political elections. We would like to ask you some questions about the situation in your country/region. We will treat your answers in total confidentiality, and no individual responses will be identifiable. This is the 5th worldwide survey conducted by WAPOR after 1984, 1992, 1996 and 2002.

Country/region _____
(A drop down menu in our web page for respondent to choose "Country/region".)

The first few questions pertain to polls conducted around elections, i.e. pre-election and exit polls.

1a. In your country/region, is there a *blackout* period for pre-election opinion polls, during which polling results may not be released to the public?

- Yes
No **[SKIP to Question 2]**

1b. How many days, prior to an election, is the publication of polls banned (a "blackout period", if there are different periods for different elections, please refer to the election with the longest blackout period and specify the election)?

Days _____
For what election(s) _____

1c. Who enforces the poll restrictions or blackout period?

- A= Government agency / election administration office
B= Broadcast/press regulatory agency
C= Independent agency
D= Others

2. Within the next 3-5 years, do you expect any change in your country/region in the rules regarding the periods before elections in which pre-election opinion poll findings can be published?

- Expect no change
- Expect longer periods of ban on publication
- Expect shorter periods of ban on publication
- Expect bans on publication to be abolished
- Expect bans on publication to be imposed
- Don't know

Could you please explain why? _____

3. For the publication of public opinion polls in your country/region, which of the following must be disclosed, either because it is requested by law or because of self-regulation of the media or polling industry? (Please distinguish between actual legal restrictions and limitations agreed or recommended on a voluntary basis. Please choose as many items as appropriate, multiple answers allowed for each item.)

	Legal	Code/self regulation
Persons or agency that commissioned the opinion poll	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Geographical coverage	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Characteristics of the sample	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Margin of error	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Response rate	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Mode of interview (telephone, in person, via computer)	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Dates of interviewing	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Question wording	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

4a. In your country/region, are there legal restrictions on the conduct of exit polls? (Please choose as many answers as appropriate)

- Exit polls cannot be conducted at all
- [SKIP to question 4c]**
- They cannot be conducted inside the polling station
- They cannot be conducted outside close to the polling station
- No restriction but exit polls have not been conducted to date
- No restriction and some exit polls have been conducted to date
- Don't know

4b. Are there legal restrictions or self-regulations on the publication of exit polls by the media?
 (Please choose as many items as appropriate, multiple answers allowed for each item)

	Legal	Code/self regulation
Exit polls cannot be published before all polls in the country/region close	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Exit polls cannot be published before all polls in the polling area close	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Exit polls cannot be published by the media	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
No restriction	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Don't know	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

4c. Is there anything about legal restrictions or self-regulations on exit polls in your country/region that you would like to share with the WAPOR and its members?

Let's now turn to other types of public opinion polls

5a. In your country/region, are there specific questions or subjects in public opinion surveys that cannot be published or that can only be published with a time delay?

- Yes, restriction exists
- No restriction **[SKIP to Question 6]**
- Don't know **[SKIP to Question 6]**

5b. On what type of subjects are there restrictions on surveying or publication of public opinion poll results? (Please choose as many items as appropriate, multiple answers allowed for each item.)

	Legal	Code/self regulation	No re- striction	Don't know
Questions on foreign policy or defense	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Questions on armed conflicts within the country/region	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Questions on specific persons (royalty, political leaders)	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Voting intentions between elections	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Questions on major political issues (social, economic, etc)	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Questions on religious or ethnic questions	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Questions on private matters (sex/health/psychological problems, etc)	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Questions on values or lifestyle	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Other topics (please specify)_____	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

5c. What are the main reasons given for restrictions on polling regarding some specific topics?

- The right of privacy
- Protecting the democratic process
- National security
- Others (please specify)_____

Now a few questions about general practices in your country/region

6a. Are you aware of the existence of the ESOMAR/WAPOR International Code of Practice for the Publication of Public Opinion Poll Results?

- Yes
- No

6b. Are you aware of the existence of the WAPOR Guidelines for Exit Polls and Election Forecasts?

- Yes
- No

6c. Are you aware of the existence of the WAPOR Code of Ethics?

- Yes
- No

6d. Have you ever read any of the codes or guidelines mentioned?

- Yes, entirely
- Yes, partially
- No

6e. In your opinion, do public opinion polls in your country/region conform to these codes and guidelines?

- Yes, generally
- No, but a few polls conform at least fairly well
- No poll conforms
- Don't know

6f. In your opinion, do public opinion polls in your country/region conform to other codes, national or international instead or in addition to these codes and guidelines?

- Yes, generally, these codes are: _____
- No, but a few polls conform to these other codes: _____
- No other code
- Don't know

7. What is the main mode of administration used in your country/region to conduct public opinion polls?

- Mostly by telephone
- Mostly in person
- Mostly by mail
- Mostly online
- Don't know

8a. To your knowledge, does the government in your country/region conduct public opinion polls on policy making issues?

- Yes, generally
- Yes, but rarely
- No, not to my knowledge **[SKIP to Question 10]**
- Don't know **[SKIP to Question 10]**

8b. Is there a way that academics or the general public may have access to the results of public opinion polls published in your country/region?

- Yes, and access is easy
- Yes, but access is difficult
- No, not to my knowledge
- Don't know

9a. How would you rate the general methodological quality of the public opinion polls published in your country/region?

- High general quality level
- Fair general quality level
- Neither high nor low
- Rather low general quality level
- Low general quality level
- Don't know

9b. In your opinion, how much of a problem is the publication of unprofessional or unscientific poll findings in your country/region? (for example, TV studio audience polls, phone-in polls, street polls, website polls)?

- Serious problem
- Moderate problem
- Not much of a problem
- Don't know

9c. Which of the following factors do you consider as major problems in the conduct of public opinion polls in your country/region? (Multiple answers allowed)

- 1 Unsatisfactory samples
- 2 Unsatisfactory questionnaires
- 3 Unsatisfactory data collection
- 4 Unsatisfactory weighting and tabulation
- 5 Unsatisfactory reporting of poll findings
- 6 Others: Please specify _____
- None of the above
- Don't know

9d. How would you rate the general quality level of journalistic handling of public opinion polls findings in your country/region's mass media:

- High general quality level
- Fair general quality level
- Neither high nor low
- Rather low general quality level
- Low general quality level
- Don't know

10. Is there anything about public opinion research (e.g. new legislation, recent incident that impacts the industry, new methodology, new trends, etc.) in your country/region that you would like to share with the WAPOR and its members?

Thank you for participating. The result of this survey will be released in the WAPOR 2012 Annual Conference in Hong Kong.

Appendix 2

Participating countries/regions in 2012

Africa (4) :
Egypt , Kenya, Nigeria, South Africa
Asia (27) :
Bangladesh, Bhutan, Burma, Cambodia, China, Hong Kong, India, Indonesia, Israel, Japan, Jordan, Kazakhstan, Kuwait, Macau, Malaysia, Maldives, Nepal, Pakistan, Palestinian Territories, Philippines, Qatar, Singapore, South Korea, Sri Lanka, Taiwan, Thailand, United Arab Emirates
Europe (35) :
Austria, Azerbaijan, Belgium, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Bulgaria, Croatia, Cyprus, Czech Republic, Denmark, Estonia, Finland, France, Germany, Greece, Iceland, Italy, Latvia, Lithuania, Luxembourg, Macedonia, the Netherlands, Norway, Poland, Portugal, Romania, Russia, Serbia, Slovakia, Slovenia, Spain, Sweden, Switzerland, Turkey, Ukraine, United Kingdom
North America (8) :
Canada, Costa Rica, Dominican Republic, El Salvador, Honduras, Mexico, Trinidad and Tobago, United States
South America (8) :
Argentina, Brazil, Chile, Colombia, Ecuador, Peru, Uruguay, Venezuela
Oceania (3) :
Australia, Fiji, New Zealand

Appendix 3

Participating countries/regions in all five surveys

	2012	2002	1996	1992	1984	Last 2 waves [*]	All 5 waves
Africa							
Egypt	•			•			
Kenya	•		•	•			
Nigeria	•	•	•	•		•	
South Africa	•	•	•	•	•	•	•
Tanzania			•	•			
Asia							
Bangladesh	•	•				•	
Bahrain			•	•	•		
Bhutan	•						
Burma	•						
Cambodia	•						
China	•		•	•			
Hong Kong	•		•	•	•		
India	•	•	•	•	•	•	•
Indonesia	•	•	•		•	•	
Iran			•	•	•		
Iraq			•	•	•		
Israel	•	•	•	•	•	•	•
Japan	•	•	•	•	•	•	•
Jordan	•						
Kazakhstan	•	•	•			•	
Kuwait	•		•	•	•		
Lebanon			•		•		
Macau	•						
Malaysia	•	•	•			•	
Maldives	•						
Muscat/Oman			•	•	•		
Nepal	•	•				•	
North Korea			•				
Pakistan	•	•	•			•	
Palestinian Territories	•						
Philippines	•	•	•			•	
Qatar	•						
Saudi Arabia			•	•	•		
Singapore	•		•				

	2012	2002	1996	1992	1984	Last 2 waves*	All 5 waves
Republic of Korea (South Korea)	•	•	•	•	•	•	•
Sri Lanka	•		•		•		
Taiwan	•	•	•	•	•	•	•
Thailand	•	•	•	•		•	
United Arab Emirates	•	•	•	•	•	•	•
Europe							
Albania			•				
Armenia			•				
Austria	•	•	•	•	•	•	•
Azerbaijan	•						
Belgium	•	•	•	•	•	•	•
Belarus			•				
Bosnia-Herzegovina	•	•				•	
Bulgaria	•	•	•			•	
Croatia	•	•	•	•		•	
Cyprus	•	•	•	•	•	•	•
Czech. Rep.	•	•		•		•	
Denmark	•	•	•	•	•	•	•
Estonia	•	•	•	•		•	
Finland	•	•	•	•	•	•	•
France	•	•	•	•	•	•	•
Georgia		•					
Germany	•	•	•	•	•	•	•
Greece	•	•	•	•	•	•	•
Hungary			•	•			
Iceland	•	•	•			•	
Ireland		•	•	•			
Italy	•	•	•	•	•	•	•
Latvia	•	•	•			•	
Lithuania	•		•	•			
Luxembourg	•	•	•	•	•	•	•
Malta			•		•		
Macedonia	•	•	•			•	
The Netherlands	•	•	•	•	•	•	•
Norway	•	•	•	•	•	•	•
Poland	•	•	•	•	•	•	•
Portugal	•	•	•	•	•	•	•
Romania	•	•				•	
Russia	•	•	•	•		•	
Serbia	•						
Slovakia	•	•				•	

	2012	2002	1996	1992	1984	Last 2 waves*	All 5 waves
Slovenia	•	•	•			•	
Spain	•	•	•	•	•	•	•
Sweden	•	•	•	•	•	•	•
Switzerland	•	•	•	•	•	•	•
Turkey	•	•	•	•	•	•	•
Ukraine	•	•	•			•	
United Kingdom	•	•	•	•	•	•	•
North America							
Canada	•	•	•	•	•	•	•
Costa Rica	•	•			•	•	
Dominican Republic	•						
El Salvador	•						
Honduras	•	•				•	
Mexico	•	•	•	•		•	
Trinidad and Tobago	•						
United States	•	•	•	•	•	•	•
South America							
Argentina	•	•	•	•	•	•	•
Bolivia		•	•		•		
Brazil	•	•	•	•	•	•	•
Chile	•		•	•	•		
Colombia	•	•	•	•	•	•	•
Ecuador	•						
Guatemala				•			
Panama		•					
Peru	•	•	•			•	
Puerto Rico		•	•		•		
Uruguay	•	•	•		•	•	
Venezuela	•	•	•	•	•	•	•
Oceania							
Australia	•	•	•	•		•	
Fiji	•		•				
New Zealand	•	•	•	•	•	•	•
Total number of countries/regions	85	66	78	57	49	61	33

* Please note that “Last 2 waves” means countries/regions participated in both 2012 and 2002.

Appendix 4

Tabulation of consolidated responses to key questions by individual countries/regions

Country	Blackout period for pre-election opinion polls	Days (prior to an election) of polls banned	Legal restrictions on the conduct of exit polls						
			Completely banned	Banned inside the polling station	Banned outside close to polling station	No restriction – no exit polls conducted to date	No restriction – some exit polls conducted today	Don't know	Non-response
Argentina	Yes	15		✓	✓				
Australia	No	--		✓					
Austria	No	--		✓					
Azerbaijan	No	--					✓		
Bangladesh	No	--			✓				
Belgium	No	--		✓					
Bhutan	Yes	2		✓					
Bosnia and Herzegovina	Yes	1					✓		
Brazil	Yes	2							✓
Bulgaria	No	--					✓		
Burma	Yes	3			✓				
Cambodia	No	--				✓			
Canada	Yes	3			✓				
Chile	Non-response	--	✓						
China	No	--	✓						
Colombia	Yes	7	✓						
Costa Rica	Yes	7		✓	✓				
Croatia	Yes	1		✓					
Cyprus	Yes	7		✓					
Czech Republic	Yes	3		✓					
Denmark	No	--					✓		

Country	Blackout period for pre-election opinion polls	Days (prior to an election) of polls banned	Legal restrictions on the conduct of exit polls						
			Completely banned	Banned inside the polling station	Banned outside close to polling station	No restriction – no exit polls conducted to date	No restriction – some exit polls conducted today	Don't know	Non-response
Dominican Republic	No	--	✓						
Ecuador	Yes	15					✓		
Egypt	No	--				✓			
El Salvador	Yes	1					✓		
Estonia	No	--					✓		
Fiji	No	--		✓	✓				
Finland	No	--				✓			
France	No	--						✓	
Germany	No	--					✓		
Greece	Yes	15					✓		
Honduras	Yes	45		✓					
Hong Kong	No	--		✓					
Iceland	No	--				✓			
India	No	--			✓				
Indonesia	No	--					✓		
Israel	No	--					✓		
Italy	Yes	15		✓					
Japan	No	--					✓		
Jordan	Yes	Non-response	✓						
Kazakhstan	No	--						✓	
Kenya	No	--					✓		
Kuwait	Yes	3					✓		
Latvia	No	--		✓					
Lithuania	No	--					✓		
Luxembourg	Yes	Non-response		✓	✓				

Country	Blackout period for pre-election opinion polls	Days (prior to an election) of polls banned	Legal restrictions on the conduct of exit polls						
			Completely banned	Banned inside the polling station	Banned outside close to polling station	No restriction – no exit polls conducted to date	No restriction – some exit polls conducted today	Don't know	Non-response
Macau	Yes	15		✓	✓				
Macedonia	Yes	5					✓		
Malaysia	No	--		✓	✓				
Maldives	No	--				✓			
Mexico	Yes	3					✓		
Nepal	No	--				✓			
Netherlands	No	--		✓					
New Zealand	No	--	✓						
Nigeria	No	--					✓		
Norway	Yes	1		✓	✓				
Pakistan	No	--					✓		
Palestinian Territories	No	--					✓		
Peru	Yes	7		✓					
Philippines	No	--		✓	✓				
Poland	Yes	1		✓					
Portugal	Yes	1		✓					
Qatar	Non-response	--							✓
Romania	Yes	7		✓					
Russia	Yes	5					✓		
Serbia	Yes	2		✓	✓				
Singapore	Yes	1	✓						
Slovakia	No	--		✓					
Slovenia	No	--		✓					
South Africa	No	--		✓					
South Korea	Yes	21		✓	✓				

Country	Blackout period for pre-election opinion polls	Days (prior to an election) of polls banned	Legal restrictions on the conduct of exit polls						
			Completely banned	Banned inside the polling station	Banned outside close to polling station	No restriction – no exit polls conducted to date	No restriction – some exit polls conducted today	Don't know	Non-response
Spain	Yes	5		✓					
Sri Lanka	Yes	7			✓				
Sweden	No	--					✓		
Switzerland	No	--						✓	
Taiwan	Yes	10		✓	✓				
Thailand	No	--		✓	✓				
Trinidad and Tobago	No	--							✓
Turkey	Yes	7		✓					
UK	No	--					✓		
Ukraine	Yes	15		✓					
United Arab Emirates	No	--				✓			
Uruguay	Yes	2					✓		
USA	No	--			✓				
Venezuela	Yes	7		✓					

Appendix 5

Open comments and unstructured information from individual countries/regions

Listed below are the additional information and comments provided by various respondents, with minimal editing in order to give a more complete but not necessarily consistent picture of the situation in each country/region.

Africa

Kenya: Pending legislation known as opinion polls bill whose warped rationale is that publication of opinion polls prior to our 2007 elections greatly contributed to post election violence, i.e. the public having been exposed to polls were unable to accept results of a burgled election. Secondly opinion polls are perceived by the political class to be critical in influencing the voting intention. The political class in Kenya so hates pollsters for telling the public the truth, that they vilify and attack them in public rallies, they trivialize poll results that don't suit them and their interests and they constantly try and infuse negative propaganda surrounding opinion polls. E.g. they ask Kenyans, "How can a poll with a sample on only 2400 respondents truly reflect the views of all adult Kenyans? It is impossible!!" All in all it takes GUTS to be a pollster in Kenya.

South Africa: There is a high degree of ignorance about what constitutes a good quality poll. A number of organizations will publish suspect polls - i.e. conduct interviews only in metropolitan areas only and then present it as if it were representative of the country/region as a whole. The journalists are not always trained adequately to pick this up. Provisions that relate to "blackout" periods before the vote or the coverage of opinion polls is still problematic in some occasions. Similarly, general legal provisions such as the law of defamation is still facing a dilemma of implementation in some cases as a result of cultural sensitivities.

Asia

Bhutan: We have civil service rules and regulations which restrict civil servants from sharing critical opinions about government policies.

Burma: Some organizations are doing these kinds of polls other than elections.

Cambodia: [The surveys] are not conducted in Cambodia.

China: The context in China, political and social, is quite different from other countries/regions, especially western countries/regions. So I feel the issue of public opinion poll and its publication cannot be divided from specific political system, actually it is a part of the whole "machine". Another point is that we should say the public opinion poll, its industry as well as its academic research is developing fast in China nowadays. For example, there are more and more CATI centers in China, and more and more online survey results are published on media. But there are no clear laws/codes to guide the whole industry and publication. We don't have a common sense about professionalism. It is a problem closely related with the political system and media regulation. The situation in China is always more complicated than what we can imagine. But we should say it is still on the way towards to advancement.

Hong Kong: In 2000, there was a "Polling Incident" (also called "Robert Chung Incident") whereby the academic freedom to run public opinion polls was curtailed. In 2008, there was another controversy over the use of partisan exit polls for election day engineering conducted by

pro-establishment organizations under the banner of "academic research". To overcome these problems, Hong Kong should adopt some professional standards or codes of ethics for opinion polling.

We, the HongKongers are facing deteriorating freedom in many aspects of our life. We need independent organizations to put pressure on the Chinese government.

Media only reports those polls favourable to the government or their own agenda. Mainland China is intervening the results and academic freedom of certain public opinion research.

India: Prediction of seats is generally off the mark. This makes all discussions generally meaningless. There are a number of regional players beside two main national players and that makes seat prediction and who will form the Government a lot more difficult. In spite of all this, there are sponsors and the need for surveys is felt strongly, to look at the trends.

Indonesia: Working committee in parliament suggests restriction in public opinion and quick counts publication, media and survey institutions are only allowed before and during campaign period.

Japan: There are too many companies which conduct public opinion poll with different methods and techniques. In the wake of such a situation, the diversity of findings of public opinion poll is increasing.

Kuwait: They need more legislation and more academic method.

Malaysia: There are polls that are privately conducted for government agencies and these are not revealed to the public. There are opinion polls that are conducted also by government agencies but the results take a long time for the results to be known of.

Maldives: Limited efforts to collect public opinion.

Nepal: Public opinion polls should follow code of conduct and norms.

Singapore: Opinion polls may be conducted, but conduct of survey and release of results are highly restrictive. These are due to legal restrictions. A climate of fear still exists in Singapore, and respondents may self-censor and over-interpret questions, leading to responses that conform with popular expectations of official positions. This may mask actual opinions. Opinion polls on elections are generally not allowed to be published during elections. This reduces the information available to voters to make informed decisions.

Sri Lanka: Doing an opinion poll in itself is a challenge in these areas.

Europe

Belgium: For academic surveys and under strict rules, researchers may make use of random samples from the national registers. For mail surveys, Total Design Method may be used but letters and questionnaires are sent by the personnel of National Register. For face-to-face surveys, the researchers receive the sample under strict conditions. One should delete the cases completely after explicit refusal (e.g. by letter or spontaneous phone call), but in case of refusal at the door, one can insist and go back another time. This is conditional refusal conversion. The rules are created by National Privacy Commission in cooperation with academics.

Denmark: In Denmark there are not only exit polls right after the elections are over, but also during the day when people go to the polls.

Finland: In Finland, the situation of public opinion research has remained stable during the last

decades. There are two or three major companies whose main area is market research, and they use their methods for public opinion polls also. There are no significant changes in sight in the near future. The whole society in Finland is stable and well-structured, and this is also true regarding the polling industry.

Italy: The Italian polling industry is populated by many small operators who probably do not possess sufficient methodological skills for performing a scientific poll.

Phone interviewing faces an increasingly serious challenge (in terms of sample representativeness) in the fact that a very high proportion of Italian households no longer have landlines and may be reached only via mobile phones, for which there exists no directory. In typical voting intention polls, up to half of all respondents do not express a substantial choice (i.e., they state they will not vote or are undecided), and percentages referred to parties are calculated only on a subset of respondents. Variations in party strength of fractions of a percentage point are commented upon as if they were significant, whereas they may correspond to shifts of 2-3 respondents in an overall sample of 1000 units and 500 actual respondents). In general journalists are not very competent vis-à-vis the technical features of sample surveys. Many media outlets have continued to carry out non-scientific “polls” that are called polls even if they do not reflect the official legal definition.

Except for the 15-day pre-election ban on publishing political-electoral polls, the other features of legal regulations enjoy virtually no public awareness or debate, and the enforcement framework is relatively weak. Also, many of the documentation criteria are vague, and even a well-intentioned pollster will encounter difficulties in describing them adequately.

Over the last decade, published pre-election polls have grown in number, but have been based on progressively smaller sample sizes and have supplied increasingly less exhaustive methodological information.

Norway: In Norway Election Day polling since 1993 is done by means of telephone surveys, either a panel re-interviewed on Election Night, or an Election Night only survey. This method has proven quite successful, and would have been the preferred method even without restrictions.

Romania: The trend is to impose a strong regulation to conduct polls. The polling market is relatively new (around 20 years). It was necessary a period for accumulation, to let this domain to develop itself, but now it's the right moment to control it by proper regulation according to the ESOMAR / WAPOR Code and ISO 20252.

Russia: More and more polls conducted by Internet sites among their Internet audience are published without any reference that the sample is not national probability sample at all, and media discuss the results of these polls for ages and never look at the nature of these "polls".

United Kingdom: Polls in the UK are about 50% online and 50% telephone.

North America

Canada: WAPOR should look seriously at the new methodologies that are used like IVR and panel opt-in polls. They may influence the vote and we do not know much about how these polls are carried.

Dominican Republic: Any person or organization can publish a study without any adherence to quality control.

Honduras: Electoral tribunal requires inscription of those who conduct public opinion polls. However, media, advertising agencies and consultant achieve inscription, not just polling firms.

Oceania

Australia: There has been one high profile case that has led to a member of our professional personal membership body AMSRS resigning before complaints against him were heard. This fellow was operating in the fringes using polls to generate news related promotion for himself and not participating in mainstream polling activity. Other than this case, there are no issues for us.

Fiji: Public Opinion poll should be considered in my country/region.

New Zealand: On-line panels are the main source of polling data. This use of on-line panels is a trend I expect to continue, and this will produce different biases to traditional telephone polls.

South America

Brazil: I think that we need to improve the quality of the press in general, which is dominated by interest groups are not always transparent.

Chile: Polls are used for political purposes, its scientific value is of no concern. Scientific community of peers is non-existent in Chile. In Chile there are no exit poll since 1993. The one performed failed to anticipate correctly the result of the national election.

Peru: The electoral authority has tried to impose and enforce some rigid methodological standards to electoral polls. They have a rigid interpretation of the technical aspects of the polling process which denotes a lack of field experience of the official in charge of making those remarks. The problem is that some of those technical remarks have implied fines or restrictions to the work of some polling firms.

Uruguay: Survey problems face to face for the existence of unsafe areas, reducing the use of telephone (and its replacement by cell phone), age and education bias in the use of web survey.

Venezuela: Phone surveys are becoming standard. Some parties do not trust new methodologies. Political polarization may affect views on survey reports.