

POLLING THE PEOPLE 2

bandwagon effect

when one candidate appears to be taking a lead according to pollsters, more people are likely to vote for that person too (vote as everyone else does) or not vote (they'll win anyways OR my favorite isn't winning anyways :[). This is why many local polling stations do not release their results until after voting sites have closed down.

Furthermore, the more people who appear to support a candidate according to pollsters the more support they are usually able to obtain, furthering their campaign even more.

other sources of error and pitfalls

- the way the poll results are used: sometimes poll results are not representative of people; a poll can indicate one candidate in the lead but it could end up being a tie in the end. this is especially true during elections
- the way people vote on a poll and how they decide to vote in a voting site can change.
- **horse race coverage**: when pollsters focus who is in the lead too much and leave alone other factors such as certain sectors of policy. This has led to a number of false predictions and criticism of American pollsters.
- **social desirability bias**: when people say what they think the pollster wants to hear instead of what they actually feel. this can fluctuate based on demographics but overall it constitutes a problem. furthermore, when people are asked the "are you going to vote" or "are you a registered voter" question mentioned earlier, these answers are often false, with a high number of people saying they would vote and only 60% of eligible voters actually voting.
- **Bradley effect**: this was based off a real incident where an African American candidate was winning in polls but came to lose during the real election; this was attributed to the idea that people didn't want to seem racist so they would say that they supported Bradley (the African American candidate) when in reality they had plans on voting for a white person.
- **delayed decisions**: when people say "i don't know" to pollsters, and then decide to act, unbeknownst to pollsters. this was what happened partially with Trump, with people deciding late that they would be voting for Trump.
- **nonresponse bias**: when people who are afraid to speak their opinion do not give their input to pollsters, leaving the data skewed.
- **multiple responses**: sometimes, especially during Internet polling, some automated programs will take data from a certain website or community, and get a certain result that was influenced by the fact that some people voiced their opinions multiple times, making support for a certain issue seem bigger for instances.
- **internet demographics**: internet users tend to be extreme in their beliefs, men, etc. this means that the internet as a universe is not representative of the actual population.
- **shitty biased pollsters / push pollers**: funding from certain candidates/parties, interest groups pressuring pollsters to give a certain result, etc. all can affect how the pollsters

conduct their work. they may say that a all voting blocs support an issue, misrepresent the population, use loaded language in questions, etc.

fx on policy

polls are a direct indicator of what people want from the government or what people are interested in. Therefore, people responsible for creating legislation and regulation often use polls to represent their constituents better. This is especially true in the House where the representatives try to represent their constituents.

fx on presidency

When approval rating based polling indicates high approval ratings, the president may advance their policy agenda as quickly as possible. Otherwise, the president may also attempt to shift public opinion to fit their agenda using the bully pulpit.

fx on court rulings

while in theory the courts are detached from partisan politics, the general attitude of the population is reflected in the courts. when the population leans one way the court soon does lean that way, but overall the court is detached from constituents.

trustworthy test

To help people gauge the trustworthiness of pollsters and ensure representative and good results, there are a number of questions developed by the NCPP that people should ask before accepting data presented by pollsters; here are some of them:

Who conducted the poll? Are they reputable?

Who paid for the polling?

What method did the pollsters use?

How large is their margin of error?

What were the questions, were they consistent, and in what order were they asked (it matters)?

How were the results obtained (i.e. mail or internet)

In what context did the pollsters start and end polling? (i.e. during election ad time, polling may be influenced by the ridiculous amount of campaigning)

What demographics were represented by the sample pool?

How do the results compare with other, reputable results?