

POLI210: Political Science Research Methods

Lecture 8.2: Are polls broken?

Olivier Bergeron-Boutin

2021

Polling and democracy

Berinsky (2017): “in effect polls have become public opinion.”

A short history of polling

First issue of *Public Opinion Quarterly*:

- “an essay...explaining how George Gallup’s quota-controlled survey of a few thousand triumphed over the *Literary Digest*’s straw poll of millions in correctly predicting the election outcome [of 1936].” Hillygus (2011) ## Potential explanations for 2016

Hypotheses (Kennedy et al. 2018)

- Nonresponse bias and deficient weighting
- Late deciders
- Misspecified likely voter models
- The “shy” Trump voters

References i

- Berinsky, Adam J. 2017. "Measuring Public Opinion with Surveys." *Annual Review of Political Science* 20: 309–29.
- Hillygus, D. Sunshine. 2011. "The Evolution of Election Polling in the United States." *Public Opinion Quarterly* 75 (5): 962–81.
<https://doi.org/10.1093/poq/nfr054>.
- Kennedy, Courtney, Mark Blumenthal, Scott Clement, Joshua D. Clinton, Claire Durand, Charles Franklin, Kyley McGeeney, et al. 2018. "An Evaluation of the 2016 Election Polls in the United States." *Public Opinion Quarterly* 82 (1): 1–33. <https://doi.org/10.1093/poq/nfx047>.