

10.5 Public Opinion and Polling

Government and Politics

Essential question for this unit

- *What is the role of the people in Government?*

Review Voting Trends and Process

- nonvoting - reasons?
- factors that influence voters
 - political efficacy
 - political socialization
 - family #1 agent

What is public opinion?

Public opinion is the sum of all views. It is a collection of the opinions of many different people.

Not many issues capture the attention of all - or even nearly all - Americans.

Ways to measure public opinion

How often have you heard this phrase: “According to a recent survey . . .”? Probably more than you can count, especially in the months leading up to an election.

Polls are one of the most common means of determining people’s attitudes and viewpoints.

Ways to measure public opinion

#8 study guide

- Elections and Public Opinion
 - voice of the people expressed through the ballot box
- Interest groups
 - private organizations that work to shape public policy around certain views and objectives
- The Media
 - Mirrors and Molders of public opinion
- The Voice of the People
 - mail, phone calls, emails

POLLING



Public Opinion Polls

Public opinion is best measured by **public opinion polls - devices that attempt to collect information by asking people questions.**

The most reliable measure of public opinion is scientific polls

How Polls Are Conducted

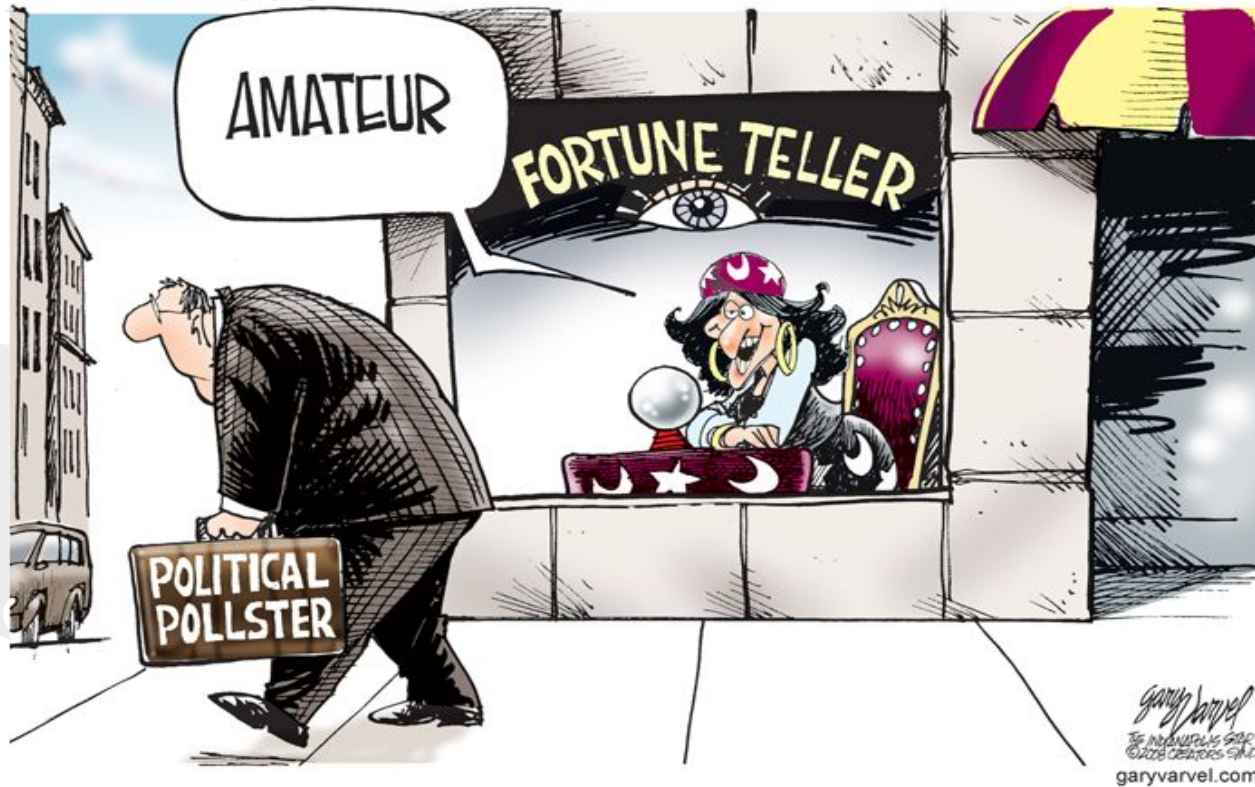
- Sample: a small proportion of people who are chosen in a survey to be representative of the whole
- Random Sampling: the key technique employed by sophisticated survey researchers which operates on the principle that everyone should have an equal probability of being selected for the sample
- Sampling Error: the level of confidence in the findings of a public opinion poll

Public Opinion Polls



- <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=tVpKgMCtukk>
- 3 minutes





Pollsters are compared to fortune tellers in this cartoon, suggesting that polls are less accurate than crystal balls. Is this criticism accurate? Why or why not?

Poll reliability

How good are polls? As a whole the major national polls are fairly reliable.

Still, they are far from perfect. Fortunately, most responsible pollsters readily acknowledge the limits of their polls.

Many of them are involved in continuing efforts to refine every aspect of the polling process.

[Pros/Cons of public opinion polls](#)



THE MEDIA



Poll assignment

<http://www.gallup.com>

<http://www.pewresearch.org/>

<http://www.rasmussenreports.com>

Review/Reflection

- Review public opinion and polling