
**A Note about Sources**

*N.B.* For readers who’d like to read more, or who are undertaking their own research, here is a select bibliography of my sources for this piece. As with all the bibliographies for *New Yorker* essays that I post on my Harvard faculty website, this brief discussion mentions a good number of works consulted but it’s neither an exhaustive inventory of my sources nor a survey of the scholarship in a given field. Instead, I’ve listed works I found most useful or especially provocative. I have generally only included manuscripts, journal and magazine articles, and books; I haven’t listed interviews here at all; I’ve generally not included things like newspapers, advertisements, patents, legislation, and policy statements; and I’ve left out citations from specialized bodies of literature in fields like medicine and law. A last caveat: these brief bibliographies are all frozen in time: I do not update them, and they therefore don’t include anything written on these subjects after the date on which my essay was published.


By 1972, when the errors and abuses of polling were widely covered in the press and Congress debated the Truth in Polling Act, many pollsters had begun to distance themselves from disreputable polls. After that date, there exist many calls for the reform or regulation of polling written by pollsters or former pollsters. An early example is Charles W. Roll, Jr. and Albert H. Cantril, *Polls: Their Use and Misuse in Politics* (New York: Basic Books, 1972). The current prevalence of polling watchdogs and polling aggregators (including Mark Blumenthal’s Pollster.com, Nate Silver’s FiveThirtyEight, and Real Clear Politics) is in this distinguished tradition. So are the recent efforts of the American Association for Public Opinion Research to promote transparency.


Compelling discussions of and arguments in favor of public opinion surveys include: Sidney Verba, “The Citizen as Respondent: Sample Surveys and American Democracy, Presidential Address, American Political Science Association, 1995,” *American Political
Technical discussions of the measurement of public opinion lie outside the scope of this short bibliography but an important discussion of the problem of non-response is a set of papers delivered in 1999 and published as Robert M. Groves et al., ed., *Survey Nonresponse* (New York: John Wiley & Sons, Inc., 2002). For a more recent and very useful account, see Adam J. Berinsky, “Representative Sampling and Survey Non-Response,” in *Oxford Handbook of American Public Opinion and the Media*, 332-347.