

- I. Public opinion and government
 - A. Smaller role preferred for public opinion in democratic government (elites are more knowledgeable and less passionate than the masses)
 - 1. Plato: allegory of the cave
 - 2. Edmund Burke: trustee model
 - 3. Alexander Hamilton: masses are hasty and passionate
 - 4. Alexis de Tocqueville: majority will intimidate minorities
 - 5. Walter Lippmann: elite propaganda can mislead masses
 - B. Larger role preferred (masses are just as capable – or even better – than elites)
 - 1. Aristotle: pooled judgment of the many is better than that of the few
 - 2. Madison: enduring majorities are the best approximation of common good because of bargaining & compromise
 - 3. Jefferson and Jackson: the common man is equal to social elites
 - 4. George Gallup: collective wisdom of everyday citizens is superior to that of elites
 - 5. Robert Dahl: group compromise yields the best approximation of the common good
 - 6. V.O. Key, Jr.: the electorate will use rational judgment if given clear and differing choices by parties and candidates

- II. Public opinion defined
 - A. Public
 - 1. Mass public:
 - a. In normal times, largely inattentive to politics and government
 - b. In crisis times, much more attentive
 - 2. Attentive/issue publics
 - B. Opinion
 - 1. Attitude: internal, underlying, latent, unobserved but enduring predispositions or preferences
 - 2. Opinion: verbal expression of an attitude about an issue not subject to scientific resolution
 - 3. Belief: verbal expression of an attitude about an issue that is potentially subject to scientific resolution

- III. The evolution of the public opinion poll
 - A. Straw polls
 - 1. Definition: unreliable measurement of opinions based on **convenience samples**
 - 2. Examples
 - a. *Harrisburg Pennsylvanian*
 - b. *Chicago Record*
 - c. *Literary Digest* – used sample-selection lists that were marginally representative (and hence correctly predicted the winners) in 1916-1932 but very unrepresentative by 1936 (when it predicted that Landon would defeat FDR)
 - (1) Telephone directories
 - (2) Automobile registration lists
 - (3) Magazine subscription lists
 - d. TV call-in polls
 - e. Ballots in newspapers, magazines, or on web sites
 - B. Push polls: surveys intended to **change** rather than to **measure** opinions
 - C. Scientific polls
 - 1. Definition: valid and reliable measurement of opinions based on **representative samples** (drawn randomly)

2. Examples: http://people.uncw.edu/lowery/pls302/Survey_Data_Web_Sites/index.htm
- a. Commercial
 - (1) Pioneers: inaccurate quota sampling until 1948, but accurate random sampling since
 - (a) Elmo Roper
 - (b) George Gallup
 - (c) Archibald Crossley
 - (2) Independents: mainly (random-digit-dialing) **RDD telephone polls** today
 - (a) Louis Harris
 - (b) Daniel Yankelovich
 - (c) Peter Hart
 - (d) Lance Tarrance
 - (3) Media: both pre-election RDD polls and election-day **exit polls**
 - (a) ABC News/*Washington Post*
 - (b) CBS News/*New York Times*
 - (c) NBC News/*Wall Street Journal*
 - (d) Fox News
 - (e) *Los Angeles Times*
 - (f) *USA Today*/CNN/Gallup
 - (g) Associated Press/Ipsos
 - (h) Newspaper Association of America: <http://www.naa.org/>
 - (i) Pew Research Center for the People and the Press
 - b. Academic: both RDD and **face-to-face personal interview polls**
 - (1) Eagleton Institute of Rutgers University
 - (2) Franklin and Marshall University
 - (3) Marist College
 - (4) Quinnipiac University
 - (5) University of Chicago: NORC GSS
 - (6) University of Michigan: SRC/CPS NES

IV. The modern opinion poll and its consequences

- A. Traditional methods for expressing and measuring public opinion
 1. Letters to the editor
 2. Personal contacts
 3. Leaders of interest groups
 4. Direct action incidents
- B. Changes caused by modern polling methods
 1. Role of group leaders has declined
 2. Role of intense minorities can remain important
 3. Agenda setting by pollers has increased
 4. Role of paid consultants has increased
- C. Consequences:
 1. Ginsberg: domestication of public opinion
 2. Erikson/Tedin: counter argument

V. Sources of information on public opinion:

VI. Linkage models between public opinion and public policies

- A. Rational-activist: civic culture model
- B. Political parties: brokerage model
- C. Interest groups: pluralist model
- D. Instructed delegate model
- E. Sharing model: basic values