

Polls and Their Effect on the Public

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Introduction-Research Question

- Why were the Presidential election polls so far off in the 2016 election?
- To what extent did polls affect a voter's desire to go and vote in battleground states in the 2016 election?

Why Does This Matter?

- Effective polling is important for election cycles.
 - It helps campaigns know where they are standing in the election and also how much work they need to do to catch up or stay in the lead
 - If polls are inaccurate it could affect the public's opinion

Methods & Case Selections

- Comparison of the 2016 presidential election to the 2008
 - Looking at battleground states where elections are usually closer, and where Trump won in 2016
 - Wisconsin, Michigan, & Pennsylvania
 - Compare voter turnout, split between democrat and republican voters, and polling leading up to the election

Literature on the Topic Already

- Leonardo Bursztyn's work in 2018 showed polls have an impact on voter turnout
 - If a poll is showing a close race it will energize a base to go and voter for their candidate
- Courtney Kennedy in *Public Opinion Quarterly* in Spring of 2018 mentions "Shy Trump Hypothesis"
 - People polled who were voting for Trump were too embarrassed to disclose their vote

Discussion of Data & Findings

- 2016: Wisconsin
 - 2,787,820 Voters between democrats and republicans
 - 46.5% D
 - 47.2% R
- 2008: Wisconsin
 - 2,928,655 Voters
 - 56.3% D
 - 42.4% R

Discussion of Data & Findings cont.

- 2016: Michigan
 - 4,548,382 Voters between democrats and republicans
 - 47% D
 - 47.3% R
- 2008: Michigan
 - 4,912,085 Voters
 - 57.4% D
 - 40.9% R

Discussion of Data & Findings cont.

- 2016: Pennsylvania
 - 5,897,174 Voters between democrats and republicans
 - 47.5% D
 - 48.2% R
- 2008: Pennsylvania
 - 5,778,812 Voters
 - 54.7% D
 - 44.3% R

Analysis

- 2016 showed a decrease in voter turnout that affected the democrats negatively
 - The difference between the two elections that aligns with previously stated ideas is the polling numbers
 - 2008 showed a close race in the polls.
 - Obama lead anywhere from 1-15 points
 - In 2016 polling and news sites kept repeating that Clinton had a drastic lead over Trump

Conclusion

- Bursztyn's idea of polling affecting election turnout seems to be proven with the 2016 presidential election compared to past US presidential elections
- With a drop in 2 of the 3 states examined in 2016, the Democrats lost their edge over Republicans that they had in 2008
 - Michigan saw an increase in voter turnout, and with it an increase in Republican voters

Sources

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