
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.

This is a brief note about adding a new data source to the COVID-19 Crisis links you now find below every Editors’ Blog post. It’s more for the record and to refer back to. No big need to read unless you’re interested in evaluating data sources in general. One of the most copious sources of information on the COVID-19 Crisis is Worldometer.info. Many people are referring to it. It has a lot of the information you can find on other sites like the Johns Hopkins data site which has become something like the canonical source for the global epidemic. But it has many more helpful visualizations and Electronics makes taking and storing notes easy, accessible, and searchable, as well. allowing for ease of revising, amending and creating a final product or paper. (McKenzie 2000). Quoted Text: Anything that is taken directly from the source, MUST be in quotation marks and CITED. Paraphrased Text: Add brackets to information you summarize as soon as you: write, type, paste, notes so you won’t forget if it is a direct quote or paraphrased, information when you use it in your final paper. You DO NOT need to put quotation marks around a paraphrase or summary, but you MUST CITE THEM.

Paraphrase: A Note on Sources. For nearly 400 years, the raw material of dictionaries has been the printed and written word. With rare exceptions, living speech finds its way into dictionaries, even slang dictionaries, only if somebody has written it down, a form of hit and miss documentation which few people nowadays would claim to be satisfactory. In an ideal world, there would be a considerable staff of trained people, employed by the state, whose full-time job would be to maintain a running record of the words and expressions they heard around them and to note the kinds of people who used these words. A Note on Sources. 199. of news stories. The speech of ordinary people has been preserved mainly by accident and in very small gobbets.