

Richard Nixon Presidential Library
Contested Materials Collection
Folder List

<u>Box Number</u>	<u>Folder Number</u>	<u>Document Date</u>	<u>No Date</u>	<u>Subject</u>	<u>Document Type</u>	<u>Document Description</u>
11	10		<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Campaign	Other Document	Public poll. RE: The approval/disapproval of Nixon's job as president. 1 pg.
11	10		<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Foreign Policy	Other Document	Public Poll. RE: The approval/disapproval of the way Nixon is handling the Vietnam situation. 1 pg.
11	10		<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Foreign Policy	Other Document	Public Poll. RE: Voter opinion on whether the operations in Laos will shorten, lengthen, or won't make any difference in the Vietnam War? 1 pg.
11	10		<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Foreign Policy	Other Document	Public Poll. RE: Whether the American public feels the operations in Laos will shorten, lengthen, or not make any difference in the Vietnam War? 1 pg.

<u>Box Number</u>	<u>Folder Number</u>	<u>Document Date</u>	<u>No Date</u>	<u>Subject</u>	<u>Document Type</u>	<u>Document Description</u>
11	10		<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Foreign Policy	Other Document	Public Poll. RE: Approval/disapproval of President Nixon's policy of incursion into Laos as a means to continue the American troop withdrawal from Vietnam. 1 pg.
11	10	4/1/1971	<input type="checkbox"/>	Campaign	Memo	From Gordon Strachan. RE: Trial Heat and Approve/Disapprove: Registration (Intend to Register) 18-20 Year Old Vote, leaner question. 3 pgs.
11	10	3/23/1971	<input type="checkbox"/>	Campaign	Other Document	Opinion research surveys of January 28 and February 4, 1971. Results centered on the question of whether or not the Americans approve/disapprove of the way Nixon is handling his job as President. 1 pg.
11	10	4/1/1971	<input type="checkbox"/>	Campaign	Memo	From Gordon Strachan to Trial Heat and Approve/Disapprove: Registration (Intend to Register) 18-20 Year Old Vote, Leaner Question. 3 pgs.
11	10		<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Domestic Policy	Other Document	The Public Opinion Polling Industry and American Politics, by Peter H. Rossi. RE: The origins and subsequent development of the modern polling system. 28 pgs.

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11	10		<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Campaign	Memo	RE: "Kennedy Leads Muskie and Humphrey but All Three Trail President Nixon in Latest Test Election." 1 pg.

Presidential Materials Review Board

Review on Contested Documents

Collection: H. R. Haldeman
Box Number: 232

Folder: [Gordon Strachan Misc. Memos 1971]

<u>Document</u>	<u>Disposition</u>	
37	Retain	Open
38	Retain	Open
39	Retain	Open
40	Retain	Open
41	Retain	Open
42	Retain	Open
43	Retain	Open
44	Retain	Open
45	Retain	Open
46	Retain	Open
47	Retain	Open
48	Retain	Open
49	Retain	Open
50	Retain	Open
51	Retain	Open
52	Retain	Open
53	Retain	Open
54	Return	Private/Political Poll Results, 1971.
55	Retain	Open
56	Retain	Open
57	Retain	Open
58	Retain	Open
59	Retain	Open
60	Retain	Open

Presidential Materials Review Board

Review on Contested Documents

Collection: H. R. Haldeman
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61	Return	Private/Political Memo, Strachan to Files, 4/1/71.
62	Retain	Open
63	Retain	Open
64	Retain	Open
65	Retain	Open
66	Retain	Open
67	Retain	Open
68	Retain	Open
69	Return	Private/Political Survey Results, 3/23/71.
70	Return	Private/Political Memo, Strachan for Files, 4/1/71.
71	Return	Private/Political "The Public Opinion Polling Industry and American Politics," Peter H. Rossi, 11/70.
72	Return	Private/Political Memo, "Kennedy Leads Muskie ... "
73	Retain	Open
74	Retain	Open
75	Retain	Open
76	Retain	Open
77	Retain	Open
78	Retain	Open
79	Retain	Open
80	Retain	Open

File - March 6-7 poll

DO YOU APPROVE OR DISAPPROVE OF THE WAY RICHARD NIXON IS HANDLING HIS JOB AS PRESIDENT?

	PERCENTAGE BASE	APPROVE	DISAPPROVE	DON'T KNOW
TOTAL PUBLIC	1058	51	36	13
MEN	508	51	37	12
WOMEN	523	52	34	14
18 - 20 YEARS OF AGE	55	47	41	12
21 - 29 YEARS	225	55	37	8
30 - 49 YEARS	426	52	34	14
50 YEARS AND OVER	350	49	37	14
8TH GRADE OR LESS	106	53	32	15
HIGH SCHOOL INCOMPLETE	142	37	49	14
HIGH SCHOOL GRADUATE	384	55	33	12
SOME COLLEGE	422	56	35	9
UNION FAMILIES	270	47	41	12
NONUNION FAMILIES	788	53	34	13
WHITE	935	56	31	13
NONWHITE	116	22	67	11
PROTESTANT	618	53	33	14
CATHOLIC	254	53	37	10
UNDER \$5,000 INCOME	171	44	42	14
\$5,000 - \$15,000	564	52	35	13
OVER \$15,000	231	56	36	8
NOW REGISTERED	891	51	37	12
WILL REGISTER	122	54	36	10
REGISTERED OR WILL REGISTER	1013	52	36	12
WON'T REGISTER	45	41	33	26
TOTAL REPUBLICAN	338	82	10	6
LEAN REPUBLICAN	126	78	15	7
TOTAL DEMOCRAT	536	35	52	13
LEAN DEMOCRAT	164	36	53	11
INDEPENDENT	121	50	30	20
TOTAL CONSERVATIVE	505	61	26	13
LEAN CONSERVATIVE	240	57	29	14
TOTAL LIBERAL	361	39	54	7
LEAN LIBERAL	156	43	52	5
IN BETWEEN	121	39	34	27
NIXON VOTERS	447	72	18	10
HUMPHREY VOTERS	228	29	63	8
MALLACE VOTERS	39	43	47	10
NONVOTERS	205	47	39	14
EAST	260	49	41	10
MIDWEST	315	46	39	15
SOUTH	312	58	29	13
WEST	171	51	37	12
HEARD/READ ABOUT LAOS	871	52	37	11

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RECEIVED
MARCH 19 1970

DO YOU APPROVE OR DISAPPROVE OF THE WAY NIXON IS HANDLING THE VIETNAM SITUATION?

	PERCENTAGE BASE	APPROVE	DISAPPROVE	DON'T KNOW
TOTAL PUBLIC	1058	41	47	12
MEN	508	44	46	10
WOMEN	523	39	48	13
18 - 20 YEARS OF AGE	55	21	67	12
21 - 29 YEARS	225	39	48	13
30 - 49 YEARS	426	41	47	12
50 YEARS AND OVER	350	45	44	11
8TH GRADE OR LESS	106	40	46	14
HIGH SCHOOL INCOMPLETE	142	28	61	11
HIGH SCHOOL GRADUATE	384	45	43	12
SOME COLLEGE	422	46	45	9
UNION FAMILIES	270	36	49	15
NONUNION FAMILIES	788	43	47	10
WHITE	935	45	43	12
NONWHITE	116	15	72	13
PROTESTANT	618	46	43	11
CATHOLIC	254	36	51	13
UNDER \$5,000 INCOME	171	37	51	12
\$5,000 - \$15,000	564	40	49	11
OVER \$15,000	231	53	41	6
NOW REGISTERED	891	43	46	11
WILL REGISTER	122	31	54	15
REGISTERED OR WILL REGISTER	1013	41	47	12
WON'T REGISTER	45	29	55	16
TOTAL REPUBLICAN	338	66	27	7
LEAN REPUBLICAN	126	59	32	9
TOTAL DEMOCRAT	536	27	59	14
LEAN DEMOCRAT	164	32	60	8
INDEPENDENT	121	48	40	12
TOTAL CONSERVATIVE	505	49	41	10
LEAN CONSERVATIVE	240	43	48	9
TOTAL LIBERAL	361	31	59	10
LEAN LIBERAL	156	36	53	11
IN BETWEEN	121	32	48	20
NIXON VOTERS	447	63	28	9
HUMPHREY VOTERS	228	23	68	9
WALLACE VOTERS	39	39	55	6
NONVOTERS	205	27	58	15
EAST	260	37	50	13
MIDWEST	315	38	50	12
SOUTH	312	47	42	11
WEST	171	38	50	12
HEARD/READ ABOUT LAOS	871	44	47	9

DO YOU THINK THESE OPERATIONS IN LAOS WILL SHORTEN THE VIETNAM WAR,
LENGTHEN THE VIETNAM WAR, OR WON'T IT MAKE ANY DIFFERENCE?

	PERCENTAGE BASE	A. PER CENT ASKED THIS QUESTION				
		1. SHORTEN THE VIETNAM WAR	2. LENGTHEN THE VIETNAM WAR	3. WON'T MAKE ANY DIFFERENCE	4. DON'T KNOW	
		A.	1.	2.	3.	4.
TOTAL PUBLIC	871		34	25	22	19
MEN	447		41	25	24	10
WOMEN	405		27	24	21	28
18 - 20 YEARS OF AGE	34		26	46	22	6
21 - 29 YEARS	193		27	30	26	17
30 - 49 YEARS	360		36	23	23	18
50 YEARS AND OVER	282		37	21	19	23
BTH GRADE OR LESS	74		33	24	19	24
HIGH SCHOOL INCOMPLETE	99		27	28	27	18
HIGH SCHOOL GRADUATE	305		37	21	22	20
SOME COLLEGE	390		35	28	23	14
UNION FAMILIES	227		35	22	25	18
NONUNION FAMILIES	644		34	26	21	19
WHITE	787		35	24	21	20
NONWHITE	77		24	35	34	7
PROTESTANT	512		38	24	20	18
CATHOLIC	209		33	26	24	17
UNDER \$5,000 INCOME	126		32	27	16	25
\$5,000 - \$15,000	471		35	25	23	17
OVER \$15,000	211		39	23	27	11
NOW REGISTERED	757		35	24	22	19
WILL REGISTER	87		31	30	23	16
REGISTERED OR WILL REGISTER	844		35	24	22	19
WON'T REGISTER	27		11	37	26	26
TOTAL REPUBLICAN	291		49	14	17	20
LEAN REPUBLICAN	112		48	17	16	19
TOTAL DEMOCRAT	429		24	30	26	20
LEAN DEMOCRAT	150		26	32	25	17
INDEPENDENT	105		36	23	24	17
TOTAL CONSERVATIVE	435		41	19	23	17
LEAN CONSERVATIVE	205		37	22	26	15
TOTAL LIBERAL	300		30	37	20	13
LEAN LIBERAL	127		30	35	22	13
IN BETWEEN	91		21	21	31	27
NIXON VOTERS	388		50	15	17	18
BUMPHRY VOTERS	191		21	37	23	19
WALLACE VOTERS	35		40	23	17	20
NONVOTERS	148		23	31	28	18
EAST	223		35	29	17	19
MIDWEST	255		31	22	29	18
SOUTH	250		35	24	22	19
WEST	143		35	26	20	19
HEARD/READ ABOUT LAOS	871		34	25	22	19

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DO YOU THINK THESE OPERATIONS IN LAOS WILL SHORTEN THE VIETNAM WAR,
LENGTHEN THE VIETNAM WAR, OR WON'T IT MAKE ANY DIFFERENCE?

	PERCENTAGE BASE	A. PER CENT ASKED THIS QUESTION				
		1. SHORTEN THE VIETNAM WAR	2. LENGTHEN THE VIETNAM WAR	3. WON'T MAKE ANY DIFFERENCE	4. DON'T KNOW	
TOTAL PUBLIC	1058	78	26	19	17	15
MEN	508	84	35	21	20	9
WOMEN	523	73	20	18	15	20
18 - 20 YEARS OF AGE	55	60	16	28	13	3
21 - 29 YEARS	225	83	22	25	21	14
30 - 49 YEARS	426	80	29	18	18	14
50 YEARS AND OVER	350	77	28	16	15	17
8TH GRADE OR LESS	106	69	23	17	13	17
HIGH SCHOOL INCOMPLETE	142	70	19	20	18	12
HIGH SCHOOL GRADUATE	384	79	29	17	17	16
SOME COLLEGE	422	93	32	26	21	13
UNION FAMILIES	270	80	28	17	20	15
NONUNION FAMILIES	788	77	26	20	16	15
WHITE	935	80	28	19	17	16
NONWHITE	116	64	16	23	21	5
PROTESTANT	618	81	30	19	16	15
CATHOLIC	254	75	25	20	18	13
UNDER \$5,000 INCOME	171	71	23	19	11	18
\$5,000 - \$15,000	564	80	28	20	18	14
OVER \$15,000	231	89	35	20	24	10
NOW REGISTERED	891	81	29	19	18	15
WILL REGISTER	122	68	21	20	15	11
REGISTERED OR WILL REGISTER	1013	79	28	19	18	15
WON'T REGISTER	45	55	6	20	14	14
TOTAL REPUBLICAN	338	82	40	12	14	16
LEAN REPUBLICAN	126	86	41	14	14	17
TOTAL DEMOCRAT	536	76	19	23	20	15
LEAN DEMOCRAT	164	89	23	29	22	15
INDEPENDENT	121	84	30	19	20	14
TOTAL CONSERVATIVE	505	83	34	16	19	14
LEAN CONSERVATIVE	240	82	30	18	22	12
TOTAL LIBERAL	361	79	23	30	16	10
LEAN LIBERAL	156	78	23	27	17	10
IN BETWEEN	121	71	15	15	22	19
NIXON VOTERS	447	83	41	13	14	15
RUMPHREY VOTERS	228	79	16	30	18	15
WALLACE VOTERS	39	90	36	20	15	18
NONVOTERS	205	68	16	21	19	12
EAST	260	82	29	24	14	16
MIDWEST	315	76	23	17	22	14
SOUTH	312	77	27	18	17	15
WEST	171	78	28	20	15	15
HEARD/READ ABOUT LAOS	871	100	34	25	22	19

PRESIDENT NIXON HAS SAID THAT THE INCURSION INTO LAOS IS PART OF HIS PLAN TO CONTINUE THE AMERICAN TROOP WITHDRAWAL FROM VIETNAM. DO YOU APPROVE OR DISAPPROVE OF THIS INCURSION INTO LAOS?

	PERCENTAGE BASE	APPROVE	DISAPPROVE	DON'T KNOW
TOTAL PUBLIC	1058	43	38	19
MEN	508	48	38	14
WOMEN	523	37	38	25
18 - 20 YEARS OF AGE	55	33	54	13
21 - 29 YEARS	225	42	42	16
30 - 49 YEARS	426	44	39	17
50 YEARS AND OVER	350	42	34	24
8TH GRADE OR LESS	106	39	32	29
HIGH SCHOOL INCOMPLETE	142	31	45	24
HIGH SCHOOL GRADUATE	384	49	34	17
SOME COLLEGE	422	46	46	8
UNION FAMILIES	270	43	35	22
NONUNION FAMILIES	788	42	40	18
WHITE	935	45	35	20
NONWHITE	116	26	59	15
PROTESTANT	618	45	36	19
CATHOLIC	254	44	36	20
UNDER \$5,000 INCOME	171	35	41	24
\$5,000 - \$15,000	564	45	38	17
OVER \$15,000	231	48	39	13
NOW REGISTERED	891	43	38	19
WILL REGISTER	122	40	41	19
REGISTERED OR WILL REGISTER	1013	43	38	19
WON'T REGISTER	45	35	42	23
TOTAL REPUBLICAN	338	58	23	19
LEAN REPUBLICAN	126	57	28	15
TOTAL DEMOCRAT	526	34	47	19
LEAN DEMOCRAT	164	32	54	14
INDEPENDENT	121	47	32	21
TOTAL CONSERVATIVE	505	49	33	18
LEAN CONSERVATIVE	240	44	37	19
TOTAL LIBERAL	361	40	49	11
LEAN LIBERAL	156	46	45	9
IN BETWEEN	121	36	37	27
NIXON VOTERS	447	55	23	22
HUMPHREY VOTERS	228	29	55	16
WALLACE VOTERS	39	33	49	18
NONVOTERS	205	37	46	17
EAST	260	41	41	18
MIDWEST	315	39	38	23
SOUTH	312	46	36	18
WEST	171	44	41	15
HEARD/READ ABOUT LAOS	871	44	40	16

0006

Gallup

April 1, 1971

MEMORANDUM FOR FILES

FROM: GORDON STRACHAN

SUBJECT: Trial Heat and Approve/Disapprove:
Registration (Intend to Register)
18-20 Year Old Vote
Leaner Question

Registration

Gallup*

- a. In all Trial Heat questions Gallup asks "Are you now registered to vote?"
- b. Gallup does not ask "do you intend to register to vote in either trial heat nor approve/disapprove questions."
- c. Gallup probably has registration information for approve/disapprove but he does not publish it.

Derge

- a. On both Trial Heat and Approve/Disapprove Derge asks: "Are you now registered to vote?"
- b. If the interviewed says no, Derge asks: "Do you intend to register for the 1972 presidential election?"
- c. Derge began asking the registration question in December 1970 (Study #9575)

Harris**

- a. He has always asked a registration question on trial heat questions. We do not know if he asks an intend to register question.
- b. Harris does not ask a registration or intend to register question on any approve/disapprove questions.

18 - 20 YEAR OLD VOTE

Gallup*

Gallup has been including the 18 - 20 year old votes in both trial heat and approve/disapprove questions since January 1, 1971.

Harris**

In approve/disapprove questions Harris has always included 18 - 20 year olds.

Trial Heat questions by Harris have included 18 - 20 year olds since January 1, 1971.

Derge

He has been including 18 - 20 year olds since the December 28 - 30, 1970 study.

Leaners

Gallup

The lead in trial heat question is: To get some idea of the national political situation at this early stage, suppose the Presidential election were being held today. If Richard Nixon were the Republican candidate and if (Edmund Muskie) were the Democratic candidate, which would you like to see win?

If the answer is "don't know," this leaner question is asked: "As of today do you lean more toward Nixon the Republican, or Muskie the Democrat (or toward Wallace, the third party candidate)?"

Derge

The lead in question is: In 1972 there will be another Presidential election. Suppose this election were being held today and the candidates were Richard Nixon and Edmund Muskie, which one would you vote for?

Now suppose the candidates were Richard Nixon, Edmund Muskie, and George Wallace as a third party candidate, which one would you vote for?

If the answer is "don't know", Derge asks "Would you say that you lean more toward Nixon or more toward Muskie, (or more toward Wallace)?"

Harris***

The lead in question is: "If the election for President in 1972 were being held today and you had to decide would you vote for Senator Edmund Muskie for the Democrats, President Richard Nixon for the Republicans, (or Governor George Wallace as an Independent)?"

- * Dr. David Derge, March 31, 1971
- ** Charles W. Colson, March 31, 1971
- *** Harris release, February 1, 1971

COMPARISON OF OPINION RESEARCH CORPORATION SURVEYS OF JANUARY 28 AND FEBRUARY 4, 1971

Do you approve or disapprove of the way Richard Nixon is handling his job as President?

	January 28, 1971			February 4, 1971		
	Approve	Disapprove	Don't Know	Approve	Dis-Approve	Don't Know
TOTAL	59	28	13	48	35	17
Male	60	29	11	52	34	14
Female	58	28	14	45	36	19
AGE						
18-20	53	38	9	45	49	6
21-29	52	39	9	47	37	16
30-49	62	24	14	49	36	15
50+	60	25	15	48	31	21
RACE						
White	61	26	13	51	32	17
Black	31	54	15	24	56	20
Other						
LABOR UNION						
Yes	50	34	16	44	40	16
No	62	27	11	50	33	17
RELIGION						
Protestant	65	22	13	52	30	18
Catholic	52	34	14	44	41	15
Other						
REGION						
East	54	30	16	43	42	15
Midwest	54	34	12	48	35	17
South	67	21	12	53	27	20
West	59	29	12	45	43	12
INCOME						
--5,000	51	31	18	45	33	22
5-15,000	61	27	12	48	35	17
15,000+	67	27	6	53	38	9
PARTY						
Democrat	42	45	13	33	48	19
Republican	82	7	11	78	13	9
Independent	60	28	12	49	32	19
Other						
1968 VOTE						
Nixon	77	13	10	67	18	15
Humphrey	33	51	16	24	59	17
Wallace	51	34	15	54	29	17
Don't Know						
Didn't Vote	48	37	15	45	39	16
IDEOLOGY						
Liberal	49	40	11	40	45	15
Conservative	67	22	11	60	28	12
Other	55	27	18	39	35	26

April 1, 1971

MEMORANDUM FOR FILES

FROM: GORDON STRACHAN

SUBJECT: Trial Heat and Approve/Disapprove:
Registration (Intend to Register)
18-20 Year Old Vote
Leaner Question

RegistrationGallup*

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He has been including 18 - 20 year olds since the December 28 - 30, 1970 study.

Leaners

Gallup

The lead in trial heat question is: To get some idea of the national political situation at this early stage, suppose the Presidential election were being held today. If Richard Nixon were the Republican candidate and if (Edmund Muskie) were the Democratic candidate, which would you like to see win?

If the answer is "don't know," this leaner question is asked: "As of today do you lean more toward Nixon the Republican, or Muskie the Democrat (or toward Wallace, the third party candidate)?

The lead in question is: In 1972 there will be another Presidential election. Suppose this election were being held today and the candidates were Richard Nixon and Edmund Muskie, which one would you vote for?

Now suppose the candidates were Richard Nixon, Edmund Muskie, and George Wallace as a third party candidate, which one would you vote for?

If the answer is "don't know", Derge asks "Would you say that you lean more toward Nixon or more toward Muskie, (or more toward Wallace)?"

Harris***

The lead in question is: "If the election for President in 1972 were being held today and you had to decide would you vote for Senator Edmund Muskie for the Democrats, President Richard Nixon for the Republicans, (or Governor George Wallace as an Independent)?"

- * Dr. David Derge, March 31, 1971
- ** Charles W. Colson, March 31, 1971
- *** Harris release, February 1, 1971

The Public Opinion Polling Industry and American Politics*

Peter H. Rossi

Department of Social Relations
The Johns Hopkins University

November 1970

*The author has benefitted from the advice and information of a number of people. I am particularly indebted to Jack Honomichi, who gave freely of his time and files. I am also grateful to Sidney Hollander, Mervin Field and Leo G. Shapiro for their help.

There is a populist strain in American political thought which accords to public opinion a special place in the formation of public policy. In this view, the ideal government is one in which the will of the people is directly and faithfully reflected in public policy: A public official properly fulfilling his role should not stray too far ahead or too far behind the main currents of popular thinking; and, the laws of the land are best when they express the broadest possible popular consensus.

There are many defects in the populist view, not the least of which is the elusive nature of public opinion. Bryce clearly saw this problem - "The obvious weakness of government by public opinion is the difficulty in ascertaining it".* Without reliable and authoritative means of gauging public opinion, each party to a political dispute can with apparently equal legitimacy invoke the support of public opinion for its stand and threaten the sanction of public wrath as punishment for its mistaken rivals.

For the first hundred and fifty years of the republic elections were the main mode through which public opinion was directly manifested, although newspapers and periodicals purported then, as they do now, to reflect the views of their readers. In-between elections, many public figures carried on extensive correspondence with local notables who relayed what they perceived to be the main opinion trends in their particular locality. Noting that public opinion was only imperfectly

*James Bryce The American Commonwealth, New York: McMillan, 1888.

reflected in election contests and in editorial writings, late nineteenth century populists argued for the widespread use of public referenda as a way of settling how the people felt on specific issues and even more important as a device whereby the populace could express itself very directly on important public issues. By the 1920's many states, especially those in the Far West where populism had been strongest, had adapted their state constitutions to make it easy to put contested issues up for decision by popular referenda.

It is hard to judge whether today we are more less in awe of public opinion than in the nineteenth century. We certainly know more about the contours and balances of public opinion on a wide variety of issues. We also know more about the processes of opinion formation and change. Because of this increased knowledge it is more difficult these days to invoke arbitrarily the authority of public opinion to justify any particular stand. We are also more aware of the imperfections of public opinion: How strangely rigid in some respects and flexible to the point of fragility in other respects. We also know how wrong public opinion may be on occasion and how many mistaken beliefs are held by large portions of the American elector. Yet we are still moved by populist appeals in our political thought. We still expect public policy somehow to reflect at least the main tendencies in popular thought and public officials are still worried whether their stands on issues are within the boundaries of consensus.

We know more about public opinion today because we have developed techniques for "ascertaining it". A minor industry has grown up around the measuring of public opinion, although ironically most of this new

industry is concerned not with political but with marketing opinions. The public opinion industry today amounts to about 200 major firms and possibly an additional 100 minor ones with an annual industry wide gross income of between two hundred and two hundred and fifty millions. It is difficult to estimate how much of the industry income is derived from public opinion polling on political issues: A good guess is that considerably more than four-fifths comes from marketing studies.

The Origins of Modern Polling:

The essential feature of a modern public opinion poll is the use of standardized personal interviews administered to small but representative samples of individuals, the results being projected to estimate the distributions of opinions in the total population. In this form, the public opinion polls have their beginnings in the '1930's when a number of enterprising psychologists and market researchers began to sell the findings of public opinion polls as syndicated services to newspapers and magazines.

In retrospect, public opinion polling appears to be rather natural extension of psychological testing, itself a development fostered by the success of mass testing of Army recruits during World War I. During the 1920's psychologists had developed a variety of tests of human abilities, traits and dispositions. Social psychologists had ventured to measure attitudes although their attempts to do so had rarely carried them outside the classrooms. It was the effort to measure consumer preferences which took the psychologists out of the classroom into the larger community. Indeed, if anything the major impetus to public opinion polling came from the advertising industry's attempts to measure the attractiveness and hopefully the effectiveness of its products.

No single name is more identified with public opinion polling than that of George Gallup. In his career, he exemplifies the trends that came together to start up public opinion polling having been a professor of journalism before becoming director of research of an advertising agency. His founding of the Gallup Poll in 1935 signals the start of the industry as we know it today. Although several other public opinion polling efforts started up around the same time, notably Elmo Roper's Fortune magazine poll, the Gallup poll is the only one which has survived to the present.

The early polls were greeted with considerable skepticism and even some sarcasm on the part of political officials and journalists. After all, it seemed hardly likely that respondents would tell the truth to the women who did the interviewing. Furthermore, the questions put to the samples were manifestly silly. How could a person sum up his stand on complicated issues like the Social Security Act with a simple declaration of support or opposition? But shortly after the polls were started, an excellent opportunity came by to establish their credibility in the eyes of the public and among political figures.

The public opinion polls achieved credence in the eyes of the public and political figures through their successes in forecasting the results of presidential elections. Of course, election forecasting was nothing new: Straw votes and mock ballots had been conducted by newspapers and magazines all during the 1920's and early 1930's, the major survivor being the very extensive, although not very accurate, city and state straw votes run by the New York Daily News. Perhaps the most well known was the national straw vote run by the Literary Digest, a weekly news magazine in the format of TIME and NEWS Week.

The Literary Digest mailed straw ballots to all telephone subscribers in the United States, receiving returns from millions but still only from a portion of all telephone subscribers who in turn over represented the middle and upper classes. Using these returns the magazine correctly predicted the outcomes of the 1924, 1928 and 1932 presidential election. In 1936, however, with the electorate polarized along socioeconomic lines, the Literary Digest incorrectly predicted a landslide victory for Alfred Landon. Gallup and Roper, in contrast, correctly predicted a landslide victory for Franklin D. Roosevelt. The Literary Digest folded within a few months after the presidential election. Whether its demise was due to this failure or to other factors the memory of the magazine lives on mainly in texts on statistical methods as an example of the wages of the sin of biased sampling. A consequence of the 1936 election was to fix Gallup and Roper firmly as authorities in the measurement of public opinion.

Although judged by present day standards the early public opinion polls were crude, nevertheless they did have two considerable advantages over the Literary Digest straw vote and similar efforts. The first advantage was the employment of a rational sampling plan constructed to insure that relatively small samples (around 3,000 persons) were representative of the total American electorate with respect to region, age, sex and socioeconomic status. The second major advantage was the use of personal interviewers who were guided by the sampling plan to choose respondents who in the aggregate were representative of the total electorate. The sampling plans helped to overcome the biases involved in the use of such income related lists as telephone subscribers and the use of interviewers helped to overcome the biases of self selection as well as insuring that persons who were not able to answer paper and pencil questionnaires were reached.

By the end of World War II public opinion polling was well established in the United States. In the period shortly after World War II its use spread to most of the democratic countries of the world. Even the failure of the polls correctly to predict the outcome of the 1948 US presidential election was taken in stride serving more as a spur to technical improvement than leading to any serious reduction in either business or public esteem.

Given the background of populism in American political thought, it can hardly be viewed as accidental that public opinion polling developed first in the United States. Indeed, the rationale for gauging public opinion put forth by the pollsters in the early years was explicitly an appeal to populism.

In any early volume published on public opinion polling, Gallup* wrote that the polls would enable elective representatives to find out quickly and systematically the will of the public and hence the correspondence between legislators' votes and public opinion could be made very close. Indeed, Gallup saw the possibility that in the republic of the future, legislative bodies would be replaced by continuous soundings of public opinion on major issues. The expectation that public opinion polling would play a major role in the formation of public policy led Harry Field to break away from the Gallup organization in the early 1940's to establish the National Opinion Research Center (with the help of the Marshall Field Foundation). Fearing the profit making public opinion polling organizations could only be biased in the conservative direction, Field established NORC as a non-profit university affiliate to insure that

*G. H. Gallup and S. F. Rae The Pulse of Democracy, New York: Simon and Schuster, 1940.

controversial public issues would be studied impartially. It was his hope that periodic NORC polls would clearly establish what the people were "really" thinking so that national and local legislators could use poll results as a guide in voting the will of the people.

It is perfectly clear today that polls will hardly supplant traditional political processes. Like the referendum and the recall, polling has developed into an accessory to politics rather than into a central political device. There are many reasons for the failure of the populist dreams of the early pollsters, but the major reason is that on most substantive issues, public opinion follows public policy rather than having a dynamics of its own. At least in the minds of politicians and professional pollsters the purpose of public opinion polling has shifted from being the guide for political figures to being a device for measuring the effectiveness of political appeals.

Public Opinion Polling Today:

The published public opinion polls are the most visible part of the industry. A large number of newspapers subscribe to the syndicated services of the Gallup's American Institute of Public Opinion Research and the Time-Life, Inc. commissions periodic surveys through Louis Harris and Associates. In addition, a number of regional polls are supported by local newspapers. The Los Angeles Times prints the results of sponsors of the California Poll, conducted by Field Research of San Francisco. Other important regional or local polls include the Texas Poll, conducted by Joseph Belden Associates, the Minnesota Poll, sponsored by the Minneapolis Star Tribune, and the Iowa Poll financed by the Des Moines Register. In addition, occasional poll results on current public issues

are released to newspapers by Sindlinger & Co. Most recently, during the recent (1970) Congressional elections, Daniel Yankelovitch, Inc., conducted a poll for the New York Times of electoral contests in New York State.

The high aspirations Harry Field held for the National Opinion Research Center never materialized. NORC conducted its last study of an election in 1952 and although it has conducted many surveys on matters of current public interest the typical outlet for the results has not been the newspapers but scholarly journals, books and limited circulation reports. The Survey Research Center at the University of Michigan has been studying presidential elections since 1948 and releases its findings in similar ways long after (usually years) the final returns have been counted and the winner has been in office for some time. In short neither of the major university sample survey centers conduct what might be called public opinion polling in the sense of widely reporting findings close to the time the basic data are collected.

Some of the early public opinion polls have gone out of existence as such. Elmo Roper, one of the early pioneers, essentially stopped his syndicated service after the 1948 election. Archibald Crossley brought his public polling to an end around the same time although he did venture forth from retirement to conduct a poll for Nelson Rockefeller in his bid to attain the Republican presidential nomination in 1968.

The published polls, dominated by the work of Gallup and Harris, are but a small part of the political polling taking place in the country. Most of the polls are taken on behalf of candidates and parties and are never released formally to the public. Occasionally, the results of a

private political poll are "leaked" to the newspapers, but the usual private political poll is used by its sponsors for a variety of private political purposes and its results are not widely circulated.

In turn, political polling is but a very small part of the total sample surveying industry. Most of the sample surveys in this country are undertaken for market research purposes and the largest market research firms rarely undertake any political polling.* For the few firms who undertake political polling for publication as syndicated newspapers or magazine features, the activity can be regarded mainly as providing publicity for the firms rather than as serving as a major revenue producing activity. Indeed, this explains why firms like Elmo Roper and Associates found it easy to drop this activity after the 1948 elections.

In short, public opinion polling in the usual meaning of the term which involves release to the public through syndicated newspaper features or through news magazines or television specials is not a very profitable activity. It is a useful publicity generating adjunct to an ongoing market research business but hardly generates enough revenue to keep a national sample survey organization going.

It is unprofitable because the costs of properly conducting public opinion polling are higher than the market for publication of results will bear. When the public opinion polls were started in the 1930's a national

*Indeed the largest market research firm (A. C. Nielsen and Co.) whose gross accounts for more than a third of the total industry income obtains most of its revenues from conducting periodic inventories of products in large national samples of retail stores providing up-to-date information to consumer goods manufacturers on the movements of their products on the last leg of their journeys into consumer homes.

poll consisting of fifteen minute personal interviews with a sample of 3,000 individuals cost well under \$10,000. A properly conducted poll of approximately the same sample size and interview length today would cost around \$100,000. In fact most national surveys properly conducted usually involve longer interviews and smaller samples and cost appreciably more. Most of the major national surveys which are conducted according to the highest survey standards are not concerned with political opinions or what candidate preferences. The largest and probably the most accurate of all sample surveys is the monthly survey of the labor force conducted by the Bureau of the Census in which close to 50,000 households are questioned concerning the employment status of household members. The Current Population Survey, as the survey's official title goes, is the basis for monthly estimates of unemployment, for annual estimates of consumer income and for other inter-censal measurements of population movements. Most of the other properly conducted national surveys are also supported by the government through contracts with or grants to such sample survey organizations as NORC, the Survey Research Center, National Analysts, etc. The appreciably increased costs of public opinion polling today arise out of two factors: First, public opinion polling is a labor intensive activity and the wages of interviewers have more than tripled since the 1930's; secondly, technical advances in the art of questionnaire construction, interviewing and especially sampling have all acted to make public opinion polling more than five times as expensive (corrected for the differences in 1930 and 1970 prices). Commercial firms interested in public acceptance of their particular products might be willing to invest that much in obtaining information which may give them a competitive advantage but there is no comparable market for public opinion polling in the usual sense: Newspaper

editors find that their sales are not much increased by running a column of public opinion poll results that they are willing to pay enough to offset the costs of a properly conducted poll.

A published public opinion poll has to stand up under the scrutiny of technical experts.* Hence published polls have to be conducted according to at least minimal acceptable current standards or else suffer being attacked by opponents on technical grounds. The current practices of the published polls are closer to the minimum acceptable standards than to the best current procedures. The standards employed are sensitive to criticism: Indeed, the major improvements in sampling occurred after the 1948 failure of the polls to predict the victory of Harry S. Truman.

The pressures for high standards in private polling are considerably less. The constraints imposed by possible public criticism are avoided by the unpublished nature of the polls. Hence it is possible to obtain political polls at prices comparable to the 1930 price levels. For example, during the 1964 senatorial campaign in Illinois, NORC estimated that a properly conducted opinion poll in that state would cost one of the candidates approximately \$60,000. He subsequently commissioned a private poll priced at \$6,000. During the past (1970) senatorial campaign in Maryland, one of the candidates obtained a statewide poll for under \$5,000, in contrast to a rockbottom estimate of approximately \$50,000 for a properly conducted one.

*The New York Times recent use of Daniel Yankelovict and Associates during the 1970 campaign illustrates this point very well. Yankelovich used telephone interviews, a technique easily criticized because of the well known bias of telephone usage toward the middle and upper income brackets. The Times felt constrained in presenting its results to counter this argument by stating that personal interviews were harder to obtain than telephone interviews and hence that the apparent bias was being cancelled out.

The private-polling industry manages to maintain lower prices by lowering quality. Most of the private polls conducted on behalf of local and state candidates and party organizations are so shoddy that they border on fraudulence. Sampling methods long regarded as defective are used: Sample sizes are ridiculously small; the questionnaires employed are hastily and poorly constructed; and the interviewers are neither properly trained or supervised. For any purpose more sophisticated than the most gross estimate of popular standing, such private polls are worthless. Thus, if a particular candidate is clearly headed for a landslide victory, these polls will probably reflect that fact. In the more usual case where the fate of a local candidate is more equivocal, the defects of such polls invalidate their use as good estimates of a candidate's standing.

Over the years there has been a tendency for the national parties and candidates to use private polling of a more sophisticated variety and better quality. Academic social scientists have been employed to provide advice and guidance and the men now in the key advisory posts in national campaigns seem to be more aware of the problem of assuring that their research efforts are of better quality.*

*One can make an argument that for many practical political purposes highly sophisticated polling techniques do not yield sufficiently greater amounts and sufficiently better information than the less sophisticated procedures to justify the much greater costs involved. With a limited budget and a limited use projected for polling data, it is undoubtedly wiser to invest only lightly in public opinion polling. However, the counter argument is that it may be better to operate with no information than with grossly incorrect information. For example, polls conducted for Senator Tydings in the recent Maryland senatorial campaign (1970) showed him running far ahead of his opponent, a factor which some observers feel led the Senator to conduct his campaign differently than had he been shown to be trailing.

For this reason, on the national level,* private polling efforts tend to be more sophisticated and technically of higher quality. During the 1968 presidential campaign, the Republicans employed the services of political scientist David R. Derge, of Indiana University, to plan and coordinate a private polling operation largely run through the highly respected Opinion Research Corporation. The Democrats apparently did not have as well coordinated an effort dividing the effort among a number of small firms,** including Joseph A. Napolitan Associates, Olivert A. Quayle and Company and Independent Research Associates of Chapel Hill, N.C. Some of these firms specialize in private political polling and tend to be of low cost and engage in work of corresponding quality.

The Political Functions of Polling:

The published polls are mainly produced as another service to readers or viewers of the media in which they appear. In this sense they are features similar to political columnists and comic strips which the editors provide because they believe their readers or viewers find such materials interesting. The perennial question is raised whether such published results affect the outcome of elections, voters' preferences presumably being altered by knowing that their preferred candidates are either likely to win or to lose. In truth, it must be said that there is little evidence that there

*An excellent summary of the political polling conducted in connection with the 1968 campaign was made by Jack Honomichl, upon which this account draws very heavily (Jack Honomichl "Political Polling 1968" The Analyst Vol. 1, #1, March 1969).

**It should be noted that some of these small firms consist mainly of one or two persons, often operating out of offices in their homes, who act mainly as research designers, subcontracting the field work to interviewing services or other research firms.

are any appreciable effects. Candidates who were shown in some polls to be going down to defeat, e.g. Roosevelt in 1936 and Truman in 1948, were elected. It is rare that winning candidates obtain much greater shares of the final vote than they have been shown to be winning by in pre-election published polls.* Apparently, most voters define the published polls as just one more part of the campaign, not important enough to modify their votes or even their intentions to go to the voting booth.

A much more important question can be raised concerning the effects of the published polls on main actors on the political stage -- public officials, legislators, candidates, financial backers of candidates and others with considerably more than ordinary amounts of interest in the political life of the nation. Polling on particular issues provides these groups with some estimate of how the electorate in general stands on a particular issue. For example, the steady deterioration of popular support for President Johnson's conduct of the Viet Nam war as shown in the published polls of 1966 and 1967 are reputed to be factors both in the stiffening of opposition to the war in the Senate and in the decision of the President not to run again for office in 1968.**

Perhaps the greatest popular attention is paid to published polls on the relative standings of candidates for the Presidency. Starting with polls on potential candidates for each of the major parties, the published polls

*Even repeated interviewing of the same persons has little effect on their eventual voting behavior except to make them more interested in the election and more likely to vote. See Paul F. Lazarsfeld, et. al., The People's Choice, New York.

**Johnson apparently commissioned a number of private polls on popular appraisals of the Viet Nam war. At least newspaper stories at the time referred to Johnson's use of results from unspecified polls as expressing popular support for his actions in the war.

carry out a monitoring up until the day before the election itself. The final Gallup and Harris poll results were published in 1968 the day before the election, reflecting interviews taken the weekend just ended. It is difficult to estimate how much impact the candidate preference polls have upon any part of the political process. It is clear that the public and the politically active are paying attention: How behavior is modified by the appearance of the polls is hard to say.

The more important political functions are being played by the private political polls, those conducted for specific clients and ordinarily not released to the public. One important function of such polls is to provide intelligence to public officials on how their policies are faring in the eyes of the public. The use of private polls in this sense goes back a long way in the short history of public opinion polling. Franklin D. Roosevelt relied heavily on Hadley Cantril's Office of Public Opinion Research at Princeton to conduct a series of polls in the period 1940 through 1942 on American attitudes towards aiding England and France. Roosevelt apparently monitored very carefully the impact of his moves to aid our future allies on public opinion holding up the announcement of additional steps when polling results indicated that the public mood was not favorable.*

*Roosevelt's use of public opinion polling was not very widely known, even among behavioral scientists. Several researchers investigating the relationship between events and changes in public opinion during the immediately pre World War II period noted that public policy was to some degree responsive to public opinion trends and speculated that the correspondence was due to some unknown processes by which political leaders were responsive to such changes. See especially Jerome S. Bruner Mandate from the People.

All during World War II, several government agencies, notably the Office of War Information and the Office of Price Administration, commissioned polls on the state of American civilian morale and on popular reactions to consumer goods shortages. Between 1946 and 1954, the State Department commissioned a large number of polls on foreign policy issues, all conducted by NORC, and financed out of the Secretary of State's discretionary funds.* The NORC polls monitored the popular standing of Secretary of State Dulles and public reactions to major Cold War moves on the part of the United States and the USSR.

From all accounts, President Eisenhower showed very little interest in the kind of intelligence that could be provided by sample surveys. With government agencies prohibited from conducting any political polls after 1954,** political polling to provide intelligence to public officials appeared to have gone into a decline during the Eisenhower years.

The use of private polls for these purposes was started up again under John Kennedy and has continued through the Johnson and Nixon administrations. It is difficult to ascertain just how much private polling was undertaken during this period on behalf of each of the three presidents involved.

*When the existence of such polls was made public in 1964, Congress reacted negatively prohibiting the State Department and other federal agencies from commissioning any polls on political issues, thus bringing to an end the longest series available on foreign policy issues.

**The prohibition against political polling extended only to the borders of the United States. The US Information Agency and other government departments have supported public opinion polling in other countries. Some large part of the impetus for the spread of public opinion polling throughout the non-communist world came from the existence of USIA and later AID funds to be used for this purpose. Indeed, many American firms established foreign subsidiaries or developed close working relationships with foreign firms in order to be able to handle the contracts involved.

During Johnson's presidency, the newspapers gave the impression that the President was kept very much up-to-date on popular feelings about the Viet Nam War. At least President Johnson was reported as carrying about with him poll results showing such support which he liked to show to reporters and columnists.

It is even more difficult to ascertain how such polling is financed. The President does have discretionary funds available to him for which he does not have to account in detail. It is also possible that funds for these purposes are made available through private donors or even donated by a sympathetic pollster as a service to the President. It is also difficult to assess the uses to which such polls are put although one can infer from the fact that the results of such polls do not loom as important in either insiders' accounts of presidential decision making or in the political media that such intelligence is not very important.

Much more important to the American political process are the political polls conducted in connection with electoral contests. As mentioned above the 1968 presidential campaign saw private polls being conducted by both the Democratic and Republic National Committees. The Republicans were apparently more sophisticated in their use of polling, devising a method of obtaining quick soundings of popular responses to candidate Nixon's speeches and other salient events of the campaign. The Democratic Party effort was less focussed and reputedly less useful to the candidate.

How many private political polls are conducted in connection with lesser elections is hard to assess for many firms may be engaged in such activities. Honomichl reported that Market Opinion Research Corporation of Detroit was involved in more than 50 state wide contests, usually on behalf

of Republican contestants. Oliver Quayle and Associates was involved in a similar number of state level contests on behalf of Democratic candidates. Other organizations undoubtedly handled a much larger total, leading to an estimate of several hundred polling efforts conducted on behalf of one or another candidate.

There are apparently several uses to which such polls are put. First of all, in the early stages of an electoral contest, polling results can be used to drive opponents out of the contest. Thus, in the recent Maryland gubernatorial campaign a poll conducted by the incumbent Marvin Mandel showing him to be clearly leading over all other potential Democratic candidates was used to convince Sargent Shriver not to enter the primary campaign.

Secondly polling results can also be used to obtain financial support being tendered to potential supporters as evidence of the soundness of investing in the candidate's political fortunes.

Thirdly, a private poll may be used to influence members of the press corps to treat a candidate more seriously or to otherwise influence the treatment of a candidate. Thus during the 1960 primary campaign in West Virginia, Kennedy staff members "leaked" results of a Louis Harris poll to create a press coverage more favorable to the Kennedy candidacy. This particular maneuver is credited with considerably increasing the saliency of the Kennedy campaign and is reputed to have advanced Kennedy's chances. For good reasons, this use of the private polls is particularly objected to by members of the public opinion profession, especially those who run the published polls. The latter fear that if private polls are used to influence the electorate and media personnel, public regulation of all polling is

more likely to result. There are other reasons for opposition as well: It is usually the case that only parts of such surveys are "leaked", those parts most favorable to the candidacy of the man in question. Furthermore, it is difficult to evaluate the results of a private poll in which the methods and techniques employed are not revealed.

Fourthly, the polls can be used as devices to monitor the effects of a campaign itself. This is probably the most sophisticated use of private political polling and one to which the quality of the usual private political poll is ordinarily inadequate. To detect shifts in voter preferences requires delicate and accurate instruments to which the usual private political poll bears as much resemblance as a baseball bat to a microtome.

The Public Interest in Public Opinion Polling:

The broadest purpose of public opinion polling is to provide accurate estimates of the distribution and central tendencies of popular opinions on matters of public policy. The techniques involved are partly art and partly science. Questionnaire writing and interviewing are arts which can be wielded with great skill and sensitivity or used in a clumsy and insensitive fashion. The scientific aspect of polling derives from the statistical theory of population sampling. Both the artistic and the scientific aspects of public opinion polling can be taught and can be evaluated. It is possible to tell a good public opinion poll, soundly conducted, from a poor one taken by someone who is poorly trained.

Because public opinion polling can affect the outcome of the political process, the public interest is great in knowing what sort of value to place upon the information provided by a public opinion poll. The major

public interest in this sense is in providing at minimum some way of ascertaining the quality of a given poll and at maximum in assuring that some standards of quality are maintained. Furthermore, the public interest is stronger in the case of published public opinion polls and "leaked" private polls than in the case of private polls, especially if the latter are used primarily for intelligence purposes internal to the sponsor and his cadres.

At the present time, it is difficult (and in some cases impossible) to ascertain enough information about how both the published and private polls are conducted in order to make judgements of their quality. The well publicized polling operations conducted by Gallup and Louis Harris are perhaps easiest to learn about, but even in these cases it is difficult to obtain precise information on critical items such as sampling and to obtain copies of questionnaires. The descriptions of sampling techniques obtainable until recently from Louis Harris and Associates were notable mainly for obscuring rather than clarifying procedures actually used. Most published polls do not report the numbers of interviews upon which their results are based so that it is impossible to know whether the percentages, for example, referring to Negroes in a table, are based on interviews with ten people or ten hundred.*

If this is the situation with respect to published polls where there is at least some public pressure to disclose methods and techniques used, then the situation with respect to the private polls must be considerably

*Even when the results are published in the more leisurely form of book length monographs, where the time pressures for publication are less and the space constraints are minimal, Louis Harris often does not reveal the numbers upon which his percentages in tables are based. For example most all of the tables have no case bases in William Brink and Louis Harris Black and White, New York: Simon and Schuster, 1966.

worse. It is not possible to obtain any information on the technical side of private polling operations. The suspicion therefore grows that most such private polls are conducted within inadequately written questionnaires, poorly trained interviewers, and haphazard sampling plans.

Legislation has been introduced (although as yet not acted upon) into Congress to require that public opinion polling organizations deposit with the Library of Congress information on the techniques employed by the organization for polls which are published. A resolution along these lines was also introduced into the California State Legislature in 1968, but failed to come to a vote. The American Association for Public Opinion Research has devised a code of ethics which calls for disclosure of critical items concerning technique and sponsorship but the Code has no method for enforcement and is sufficiently vague in critical respects.

Reacting to these criticisms, the major regularly published polls have formed a new organization. The National Council on Published Polls, whose membership includes many of the regional polls as well as the two major national published polls. Up to this point the National Council appears to be more concerned with heading off regulatory legislations than with setting forth procedures by which the industry could police itself.

Furthermore, most of the suggested codes of ethics, and proposed regulatory legislation, address themselves primarily to the published political polls and not to private polls, where quality is more of an issue.

The arguments pro and con regulatory legislation are not clearly on one or the other side. On the one hand, it is apparent that the public opinion industry is reluctant to police itself through its own professional

associations. It is also clear that there are undoubtedly some public opinion polling organizations which by whatever minimum standards one would apply ought to be drummed out of the profession. On the other hand, regulatory legislation is not a particularly attractive route to take. For example, some fear that regulations might expand from mainly technical to substantive considerations with the end result that some topics may become taboo.

Some form of self-regulation or governmental regulation appears to be just beyond the horizon. The 1972 presidential election will raise the issue anew, if the 1970 congressional elections has not already done so in some states. In the long run the end result will be that the published polls will be pushed to employ higher technical standards.* Raising the standards for published polls may also have the effect of raising questions about the private polls. After all, the same legislator who may vote for requiring the Gallup Poll to disclose its sampling plan may also be moved to ask what sampling plans are to be employed by the private pollster who proposes to work with him in his campaign to become re-elected.

The Proper Place of Political Polling:

The populist rationale for public opinion polling has long ago been sloughed off by both pollsters and political figures. The major reason for discarding the view of public opinion polls as a device for setting public policy was the discovery that the relationship between public policy and currents of public opinion was a very complicated one. First of all, pre-

*It may well be that such a move would force the end of published polls as raising standards undoubtedly would raise costs appreciably and hence price polls out of the reach of the media who now purchase them.

election presidential polls indicated that the greatest part of the electorate was largely unaffected by the campaigns conducted by the candidates. By and large, most of the electorate have made up their minds long before the candidates are nominated. Elections are won and lost by relatively small proportions of the electorate who decide to sit this one out or participate by casting a ballot, as well as small proportions who change their preferences in reaction to the specific issues in a campaign. It turned out that voting was as much an expression of long standing loyalties to political parties as an expression of agreement with particular candidates or party platforms. The populist image of an electorate which is alert to issues and platforms and which calculates its own interests as well as that of the general commonweal was hardly validated in the polling results.

Secondly, opinions on specific issues followed public policy as often as it led public policy. Thus attitudes towards civil rights for Blacks has shifted radically in the American population since World War II with the critical turning point between the 1954 Supreme Court decision outlawing segregation in the public schools. In 1942, NORC interviewers could not find a single white Southerner in their national samples who approved of whites and Blacks sharing the same schools. By 1965, a majority of white Southerners approved of school desegregation.

Similarly during the buildup of our participation of the Viet Nam war, majorities of the samples surveyed disapproved of each succeeding step of involvement before the step was taken and approved of the step after it was taken. It was not until late in 1966 that a trend towards disapproval of the Viet Nam war began to appear in the polls. Even this seeming exception could be interpreted as reactions to the growth of vocal opposition to the war in the Senate.

The currents and trends of public opinion on political issues thus appears to be the resultant of a complex interplay between long standing political divisions within the electorate and the way in which public debate over the issues involved illuminates the connections between those basic divisions and the various points of view on the issues in question. Thus it is predictable which portions of the public are going to be more or less in favor of an issue but the general level of support for particular positions is influenced strongly by the course of public debate over that issue and by the policies that may be adopted by legislatures and political leaders. Thus the last few year's dramatic shift towards more general public support for legalized abortions follows upon the opening up of public debate over the issue and the gradual liberalization of abortion laws in several states. Although Catholics as a group remain more opposed to liberalization than other religious groups, the level of support among Catholics has risen at almost the same rate as it has among other portions of the public.

The flexibility of public opinion in some areas is matched by its rigidity in others. The prestige standings of occupations have not changed appreciably since the first studies conducted in the middle 1920's. American food preferences have remained virtually constant since they were first studied around the same time. Similarly, Americans' regard for the importance of particular public offices, e.g. the Presidency or the governorship or mayoralty of a large city, has remained virtually constant regardless of the currently held opinions concerning the incumbents of those offices. Furthermore, the patterns of constancy and flexibility are not easy to identify in advance: At one point, it was held that opinions on issues related to the primordial concerns of family, kinship and ethnicity would be less flexible than opinions on more remote concerns such as foreign

affairs. But the experiences of the last decade which saw radical shifts on issues such as desegregation, legalization of abortion, and optimum family size have belied this generalization. A useful theory of public opinion formation which is capable of making more or less accurate predictions about future trends has yet to emerge.

The more we learn about public opinion through the polls the less important public opinion appears to be as a primary element in the formation of public policy. This finding has a double-edged implication: On the one hand, we now know that political leaders can influence public opinion by their stands on political issues. This frees public policy formation from the dead hand of the past. On the other hand, it is not entirely clear which new directions will be accepted by the public and which rejected, which raises the uncertainty of policy formation, especially since ultimately the acceptance of public policy by the public through the electoral process is important to policy makers.

Aside from providing readers and viewers with editorial materials through the published polls, the major functions that are played by public opinion polling are similar to those played by market research for individual firms. Candidates use polls to learn more about the "market" for their candidacy and to test out the effectiveness of their campaigns in garnering support from the electorate. The results of public opinion polling can also be used to validate one's claim to a place on the party ticket and to convince potential financial backers that their investment will be worthwhile. Public officials and public agencies use public opinion polls to monitor the effects of their programs and to modify their administrative actions in the light of the "market". Sample surveys have been used to assess the effectiveness of programs such as Head Start, to monitor the

effects of the Neighborhood Youth Corps and to provide data for making decisions on consumer credit through studying the hard goods buying intentions of the public.

Public opinion polling in the sense of political marketing research has come to play an important part in the political process. It is not the role that was envisaged by the early pioneers. Nor is it a role that appears in anyway to be illegitimate: On the contrary, public policy and political candidates may be all the better for having better information on the preferences and opinions of the electorate. The major problem lies in the accessibility of such information and the quality of the information itself.* Public opinion polling, even at the crudest level of competence, is expensive and hence candidates who have more resources at their command can obtain more information than others who cannot afford the services of pollsters. As for quality, pollsters come in many models, sizes and prices. Entirely too much of the political polling is of shoddy construction and of dubious accuracy. Vitally connected with the problem of quality is the difficulty that the consumer has in judging whether or not a set of "facts" are worthy of attention. The public opinion industry has yet to work out ways of policing its own ranks. If it fails to do so, we can expect to find increasing demand from political figures for some sort of public regulation, at least to the point of full disclosure of methods and techniques.

*Members of the public opinion industry are very much concerned with what they term illegitimate uses of polls. For example, many of the better public opinion polling firms require that their clients submit copy to them before releasing results a move to prevent distortions and omissions in public and quasi-public release of information. The practice of "leaking" polling information from private polls to journalists is frowned upon, apparently because such "leaks" are most likely to be subject to distortion and omission. I consider these problems to be a subsidiary one to the general problem of quality control which extends to the presentation of results as well as to the conduct of the polling operations themselves.

At the present time, no useful theory of public opinion formation and change appears to be ready to appear on the scene. As a consequence the field of public opinion appears to be at the level of naturalistic zoology. Many "facts" are being collected out of which a model of public opinion may be constructed. But for the time being, the "facts" are mainly used to provide snapshots of "political markets", paid for by those who apparently find the "facts" useful.

MEMORANDUM

THE WHITE HOUSE
WASHINGTON

Kennedy Leads Muskie and Humphrey But All Three Trail

President Nixon in Latest Test Election

Senator Edward Kennedy of Massachusetts registers the strongest showing of three leading Democratic Presidential candidates in test election against President Richard Nixon according to a recent nation wide contest conducted by Opinion Research Corporation, Princeton, New Jersey.

Senator Kennedy received 38% of the vote in a national trial heat but trails President Nixon by 4 % points. Maine's Senator Muskie received 34% trailing the President by 6 % points. Senator Humphrey tallied 35% of the voters falling 9 percentage points behind the President.

These results were obtained by telephone interviews in a nation-wide sampling of 1019 persons, ages 18 and under. The interviews were conducted during the period of March 1 through March 3.

The question asked in each of the three trial heats was: "in 1972 there will be another Presidential election. If the election were held today and the candidates were Richard Nixon, (name of the Democratic candidate being tested), and George Wallace as a third party candidate which one would you vote for?"

Following are the results of each of the trial heats:

Kennedy versus Nixon

Nixon	42%
Kennedy	38%
Wallace	3%
Undecided	8%

Muskie versus Nixon

Nixon	40%
Muskie	34%
Wallace	16%
Undecided	10%

Humphrey versus Nixon

Nixon	44%
Humphrey	35%
Wallace	14%
Undecided	7%