

Why do they keep getting it wrong?

 By [Chris Brewer](#)

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With all the excitement going on recently, I got to wondering about polls and why they're so wrong.

Well, polls are almost guaranteed to be wrong in much the same way that a great deal of research is wrong — 'because they don't ask the right questions of the right people' is the obvious answer. But it's much more than that.

Let's look at a simple (real) research scenario first.

There was a restaurant in a centre which sold sticky buns, big doughnuts smothered in cream, curry and rice, and bucket loads of chips. They made money.

Then management thought it could do with a makeover and fall more in line with the sleek centre itself – so they decided to ask their customers what they really wanted (yes, I know that sounds dumb because they knew the answer already since they were always busy – often with queues).

I watched two rather large ladies cramming chocolate eclairs into their mouths, drinking coke and, at the same time, completing a research questionnaire.

After they wobbled off I had a chance to look at what they said “they really wanted” and they'd ticked off “health drinks, danish sandwiches, oatmeal and yoghurt”.

Why? Because they didn't want to confirm that they loved chocolate and fizzy, sugary drinks. They were both shy and embarrassed.

The owners, armed with their “new research” redecorated the place and made it into a health bar – which closed down within a year.

Now consider the Brexit and Trump polls – they're both similar except that in these two cases they were more sinister.

Take Trump first.



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The mainstream media were mainly against him from the very beginning, saying basically that if you voted for Trump you'd be a racist, a warmonger, a hater of women and a whole lot of other stuff – so you'd be an absolute cretin to vote for him.

Then social media took up the challenge with openly hostile messages (often quoting wildly inaccurate “facts”) and hate – fuelled arguments being posted. I even saw it in South Africa where at least two people I know said on Facebook words to the effect of: “if you support Trump then let me know so I can unfriend you”.

So a great number of people were actually embarrassed and actually scared of saying they were voting for him. But in the ballot box they did just that.

Trump didn't win the American election – Hillary Clinton and the bullying left-wing media (including social media) actually lost the election. They did Trump's job for him.

Much the same thing happened a few months ago with the Brexit referendum. The people who didn't really know which side to choose became really upset when they read every day that they'd have to be morons to vote “leave”.

You can't really persuade people to join your side if you constantly refer to them as morons, you know.

But ask the fishermen in Grimsby in NE England what they think now that they can fish in waters the EU wouldn't let them enter. Amazing local economy recovery!

And then, the totally flummoxed “stay” camp became so upset that they began demanding “another go!” Well I'm sorry mate, but when the votes have been counted then that's that.

It was the same in America. All the Democrat supporters were crying in the streets and thousands demonstrated around the country screaming they wanted impeachment (when he's not even officially President yet!) Of course we're fairly used to that sort of thing here – but it is kind of a *schadenfreude* experience knowing that other parts of the (first) world are experiencing violence in the streets, I suppose.

Next time there's a poll, put a little wager on the outsider and you'll probably win (as I did with Trump). I hasten to add that I'm not in favour of Trump but I am becoming a little nervous of the mis-use of power in the media – both mainstream and social.

It may well prove to be that the USA, just like SA, has created a kakistocracy.

kakistocracy

PRONUNCIATION:

(kak-i-STOK-ruh-see, kah-ki-)

MEANING:

noun: Government by the least qualified or worst persons.

ETYMOLOGY:

From Greek kakistos (worst), superlative of kakos (bad) + -cracy (rule). Ultimately from the Indo-European root kakka-/kaka- (to defecate), which also gave us poppycock, cacophony, cacology, and cacography. Earliest documented use: 1829.

We'll see...

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