

- **Announcements**
 - **Contact information:**
 - email: ringler@fss.muni.cz
 - **Office hours:**
 - Mon 3-4pm; Wed 2-3pm (office #4.48)
 - **Index cards:** name, how you want me to call you, major, year you are in, where you are from, something interesting about yourself
- **The plan for today**
 - What is public opinion?
 - Public opinion and theories of democracy
 - How do we study public opinion?
 - If time: anatomy of a research article

Write the answers in your notebook...

- **Q1:** In April 2014 the European Commission passed the Public Affairs directive. What is your opinion on this directive? Do you support or oppose this directive?

What is public opinion

- = Preferences of people toward governmental and policy matters;
 - generally considered as the aggregation of individuals' views.
- Are there any problems with this definition?

Defining key concepts

- **Attitude = opinion** (for the purposes of our class)
 - Attitude extremity
 - Attitude importance
- **Opinion ingredients:**
 - Beliefs
 - Stereotype
 - Values
 - Emotions
 - Prejudice

Theories of democracy

- Classical democratic theory
- Elitist theory
- Pluralist theory
- Participatory democratic theory

Classical democratic theory

- Ancient Greece
- Active participation of all men
- Decisions by consensus
- Does this theory work well for today's democracies? Why? Why not?
 - Today: representative democracy

Democratic elitism

- Citizens only have indirect control
 - Elections – to choose leaders and hold them accountable
- Elites deliberate and make decisions
 - Elites have the expertise

Pluralism

- Elections – only one of important mechanisms
- Interest groups are essential

Participatory democracy

- Citizens are apathetic due to barriers to participation
- Participation makes better citizens
- Citizens should be involved in decision making as much as possible

Theories of democracy and the study of public opinion

- Normative component
- Empirical component

How does one measure public opinion?

- Public opinion surveys
- Experiments
- Interviews
- Focus groups
- Content analysis
- How does the method work? Advantages? Disadvantages?

Public opinion surveys

- How do you conduct a survey?
- What do you need to watch for with regard to public opinion surveys? What can affect the results?
 - Non-sampling error v. sampling error

Non-sampling error

- = all error that is **not** involved with the process of taking a sample
- Question wording effects
- Balanced questions
- Non attitudes
- What does this imply for consumers of the results of public opinion surveys?

Questions wording effect

- Would you say that traffic contributes more or less to air pollution than industry?
- Would you say that industry contributes more or less to air pollution than traffic?

Nonattitudes

- In April 2014 the European Commission passed the Public Affairs directive. What is your opinion on this directive? Do you support or oppose this directive?
- = opinions that are fleeting, not well considered, lacking any meaning for people who hold them
- How to deal with nonattitudes?
 - Screening questions
 - Middle response option

Towards understanding sampling error...

- **Random sample** (or a probability sample)
 - = a sample in which *chance alone* determines which elements of the population make it into the sample.
- Examples of surveys with a non-random sample: call-in survey in a radio, on a website (<http://www.online.mmr.nl>),..
- How to do random sampling?
 - Randomly generate address, phone number, randomly choose from a list, ...
- Sampling error only exists with respect to random samples.
- A good survey always reports the sampling error!

Sampling error

- = the extent to which a sample statistic, by chance, differs from a population parameter
 - = how wrong (probably) our estimate is
- Example:
 - our estimate: 48% of Europeans support the EU
 - Sampling error is 4%
 - The true value is probably somewhere between 46% and 52%

How to prepare for the next class?

- Read the readings assigned for week 3
 - Clawson & Oxley pp. 303-307.
 - Dalton, Russel. 2014. *Citizen Politics, 6th edition*, CQ Press, pp. 255-259.
- Look up definitions in two articles assigned to you (color coded: green, blue, orange, red)
 - Don't read these two articles in full
 - List of articles is in the IS
- Do your own little exploration of the Eurobarometer surveys

Anatomy of an (empirical) academic article

- 1) Introduction
 - What do we study
 - Why? (why it's important)
 - Often brief summary of findings
- 2) Literature review and theory
 - What others have written on this topic – what explanations they propose
 - What is still missing, why existing explanations aren't good enough
 - Propose alternative explanation
 - Derives testable hypotheses from the theory

- 3) Data and methods
 - Introduces data
 - How theoretical concepts are measured
 - Describes how hypotheses will be tested
- 4) Results
 - Presents results of the empirical analysis in detail
- Conclusion/Discussion
 - Summarizes the results
 - Discusses implications for our theoretical understanding of the phenomenon under study
 - Discusses weaknesses of the presented work