

# 2016 Election: Polling Analysis

What Other Pollsters Got Wrong  
What to Look For Next

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February 16, 2017



Opinion Research on  
Elections and Public Policy

**Campaigns  
& Elections**

**Probolsky Research**  
3990 Westerly Place Suite 185  
Newport Beach CA 92660

Newport Beach (949) 855-6400  
San Francisco (415) 870-8150  
Washington DC (202) 559-0270

# Alternative Fact: Polls got it wrong!

National polls criticized following 2016 election for missing mark.

*The Atlantic*

## What Went Wrong With the 2016 Polls?

| NOV 9, 2016 |



## 4 Possible Reasons The Polls Got It So Wrong This Year

November 14, 2016 · 2:28 PM ET

**POLITICO**

## How did everyone get it so wrong?

Polls and predictive models failed to predict Trump's strength.

By **KENNETH P. VOGEL** and **ALEX ISENSTADT** | 11/09/16 12:15 AM EST | Updated 11/09/16 01:59 AM EST



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# The numbers tell a different story.



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# National Polls: Better than historical average

Final Real Clear Politics average missed mark by just 1.2 percent.



**Final Results:      Clinton +2.1**

RCP Average:      Clinton +3.3

Bloomberg:      Clinton +3

Reuters/Ipsos:      Clinton +3

Rasmussen:      Clinton +2



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# 5 Keys to Accurate Polling

Not all polls are created equal.



1. Use the **voter file**, when available.
2. Don't put cap on **mobile phones**.
3. Adopt **multi-lingual** methodology.
4. Pollster: **Diverse research** background
5. Willingness to use qualitative, alternative methods for close elections

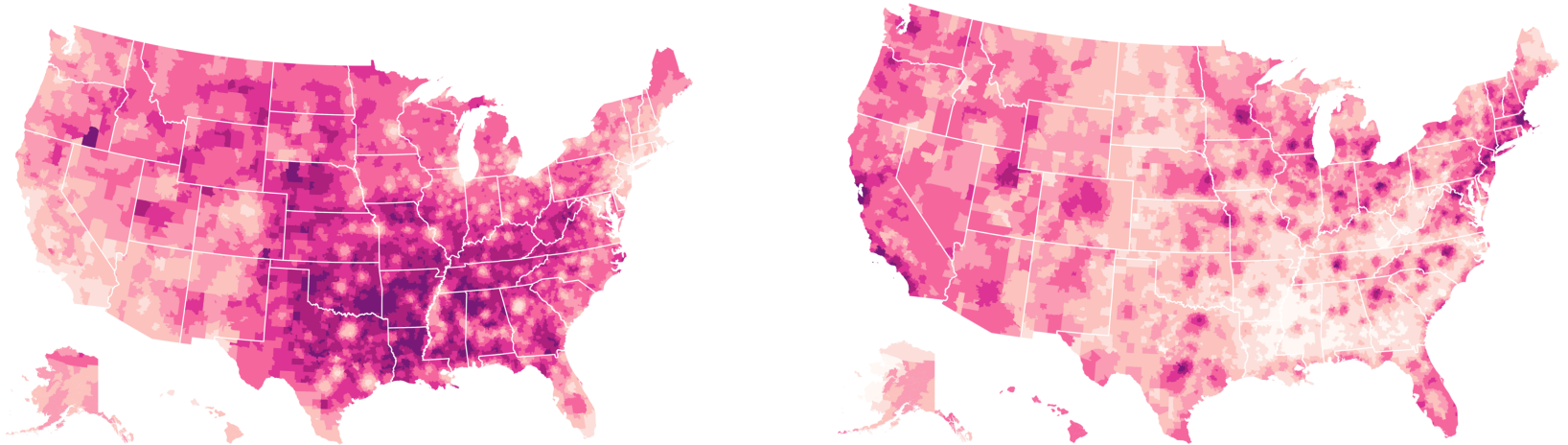


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# NY Times: Duck Dynasty vs. Modern Family

Increase in cultural divide based on rural and urban communities



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# Why Polls Missed: Small, Systematic Error

Nate Silver: Polls underestimated Trump in red states, Clinton in blue.

“...if Clinton had done only 2 percentage points better across the board, she would have received 307 electoral votes and the polls would have “called” 49 of 50 states correctly.”

--Nate Silver, [FiveThirtyEight.com](http://FiveThirtyEight.com)



 **FiveThirtyEight**

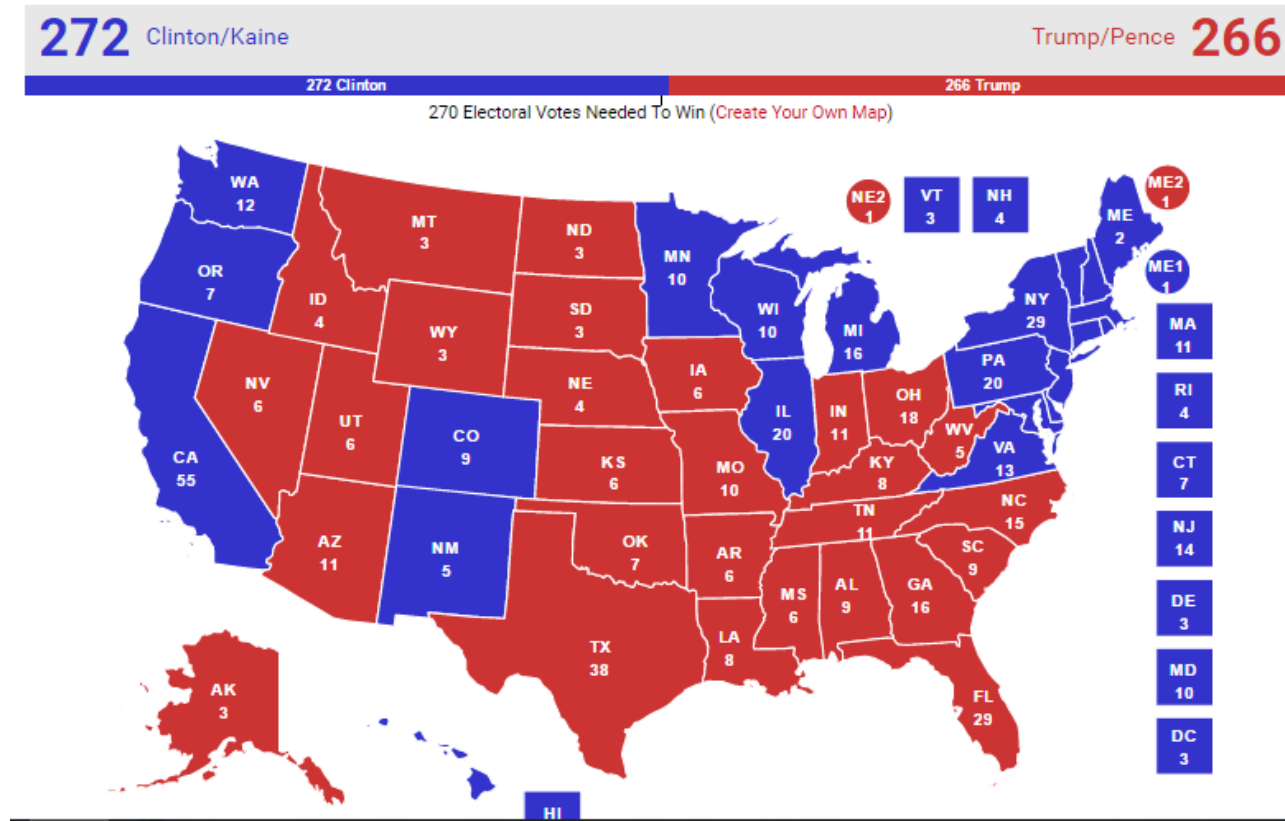


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# Final RCP Map Missed in 4 States

## Nevada, Pennsylvania, Michigan and Wisconsin



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# Why Polls Missed: The Margin of Error

Nevada, Pennsylvania within the margin of error.



## Nevada

Final Results: Clinton +2.4  
RCP Average: Trump +0.8

## Pennsylvania

Final Results: Trump +0.7  
RCP Average: Clinton +1.9

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Emerson: Clinton +1  
Gravis: Clinton +2  
Remington: Trump +1  
8 News NOW: Tie  
CNN/ORC: Trump +6

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Trafalgar Group: Trump +1  
Morning Call: Clinton +4  
Harper: Tie  
Gravis: Clinton +2  
Susquehanna: Clinton +2



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# Why Polls Missed: Late Deciding Voters

Voters in swing states that decided in the last week broke strongly for Trump.



## Late Deciding Voters

Wisconsin:	59-30
Florida:	55-38
Pennsylvania:	54-37
Michigan:	50-39



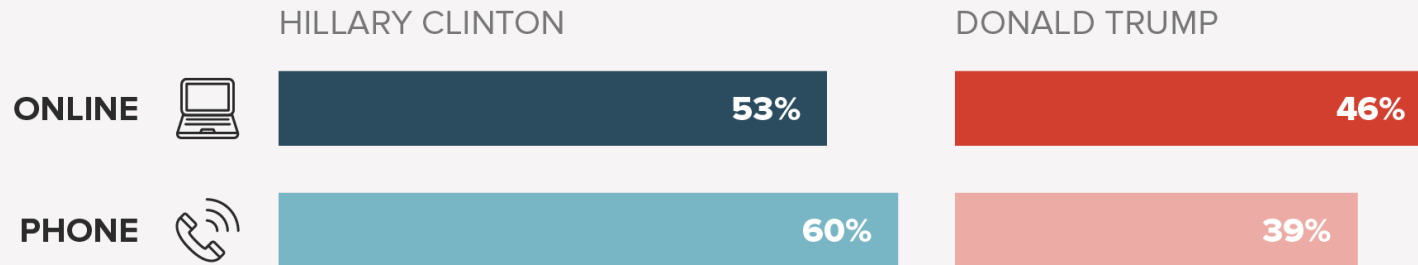
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# Why Polls Missed: Shy Trumpers

Morning Consult found “shy” Trumpers, but downplayed significance.

## Voters With College Degrees Are More Likely to Support Trump Online vs. Phone



MORNING CONSULT + POLITICO



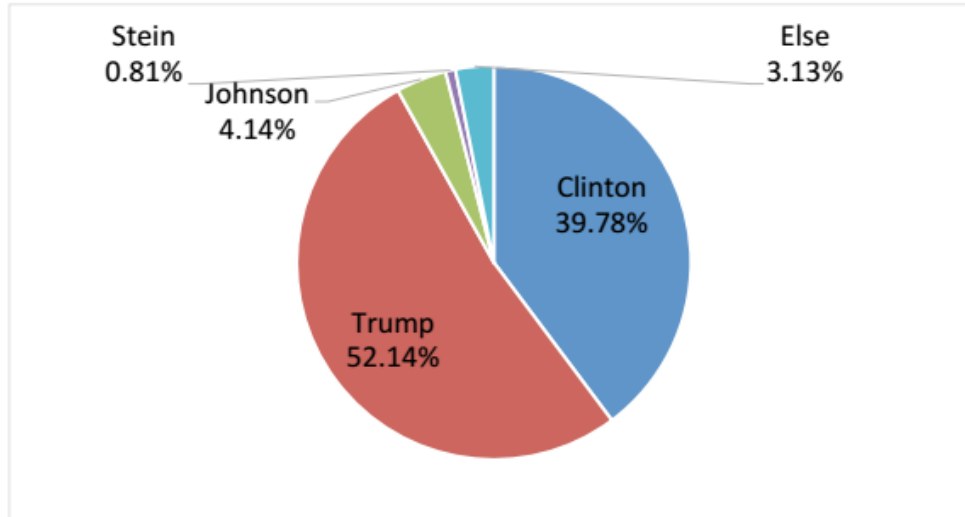
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# Michigan: One Firm Got It Right

Trafalgar Group used robo-poll, asked for “your neighbor’s vote.”

## Secondary Ballot Test Which candidate do you think most of your neighbors are voting for?



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# Why Polls Missed: Rust Belt Democrats

Mahoning County shows clear shift in rural, white Democrats from Obama to Trump.



**Bloomberg**

“Trump ... appealed to some people who were once Democrats or descended from New Deal Democratic families.

In Rust Belt strongholds like Mahoning County, Ohio, these voters would explain that Trump alone seemed to register their complaints in a political world that was otherwise deaf to their concerns.”



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# In-Depth: Polling Errors in Wisconsin

Wisconsin polls missed on turnout model, under-representing Trump voters.



Wisconsin polls consistently underestimated turnout among Trump's core demographics.

- Men
- Republicans
- 45-64



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# Wisconsin: A Tale of Two GOP Candidates

Trump, Romney finished with 1.4 million votes, but in very different ways.

County	'16 Turnout	'12 Turnout	%	Trump	Romney	Diff.
Milwaukee County	441,053	492,576	-10.5%	126,069	154,924	-19%
Dane County	309,354	304,181	1.7%	71,275	83,644	-15%
Waukesha County	237,593	243,856	-2.6%	142,543	162,798	-12%
Brown County	129,011	128,928	0.1%	67,210	64,836	4%
Racine County	94,302	103,364	-8.8%	46,681	49,347	-5%

Source: WEC Canvass Reporting System



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# Thank You.

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