

Opinion polling: an anecdote

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I was rung by an opinion poller yesterday. I was curious. So I took part. And I asked questions.

The person calling me would not say who had paid for the poll.

The poll was very definitely of marginal seats. My seat is marginal.

I asked how I had been selected. Purely on the basis of my telephone number, I was told.

I commented that the call had been one of very few now received on my landline, that my children never use, or answer.

I asked if all calls were to landlines. I was told they were. That is how they could determine they were reaching the right geographic area.

I asked if they realised that this also meant that their polling was very heavily biased towards those who are older, and so inherently more conservative. They are the people who have landlines now.

I got no response. But if this is normal, and I do not know that, no wonder polling is so unreliable. This poll was pre-selected to deliver a Tory bias.