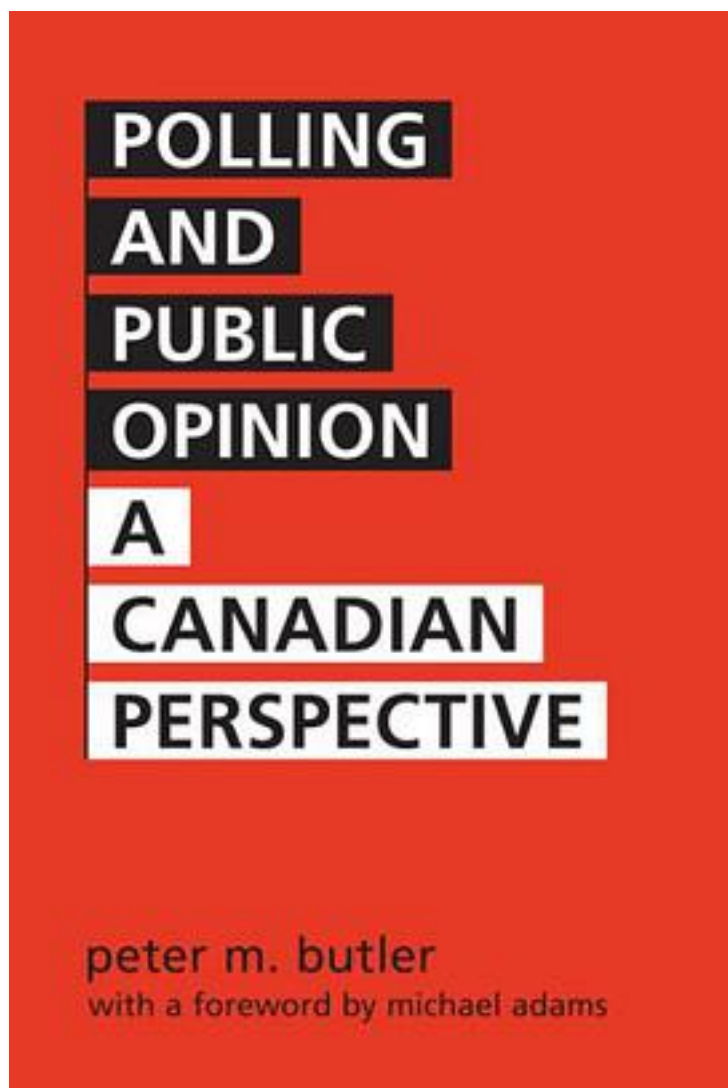


Polling and Public Opinion



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The importance of polling public opinion is widely recognized today. Indeed, it is sometimes argued that in mass societies, polls have also become an important medium for communicating ideas and beliefs, especially since many people have become less involved in community organizations and interest groups that formerly connected them to events and issues. Polling and Public Opinion examines the impact that polls have on the thoughts and behaviour of the public. Peter M. Butler considers the power of public opinion polls as an element of mass persuasion in media stories, advertising, and government policy. Using such controversial issues as free trade, health care, same-sex marriage, and national security, Butler argues that popular opinion on such hot-button topics as these can be guided and changed according to how polls are interpreted for and presented to the public. As well as analyzing the impact of polls on the public, Butler is concerned with demystifying the methods by which opinions are collected, showing that the techniques used to determine public opinion can be just as selective as those by which the results are disseminated. Focusing on many of the vital topics of our time, Polling and Public Opinion is an in-depth look at the rise of one of the most important but least understood methods by which politicians and governments gauge the popular will.

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