

FICHE Cours / Master 2 Sociologie de Communication

Communication& Public Opinion

Passage N°01 :

“There are only three questions of any lasting importance in the study of what has since the 18th century been called public opinion [...]: What is public opinion, or in what form ought the concept of public opinion be recognized? What is its nature, or what characteristics should public opinion possess? What kind of political power does it have, or what kind of power should it be given? [...] It is a testimony to the knottiness of these questions that definitive answers to them seem as elusive today as they were to the contemporaries of Socrates and Protagoras” . (2003, 1)

Passage N°02

“On the most fundamental level, positing public opinion as social construction is an admission that, like almost all concepts and phrases, the meaning of the term is subject to the ever changing forces of culture”.

Passage N°03

“Public opinion must obviously be recognized as having its setting in a society and as being a function of that society in operation. This means, patently, that public opinion gets [its] form from the social framework in which it moves, and from the social processes at play in that framework” .

Passage N°04

“Despite assurances by public opinion researchers that the public’s low levels and uneven social distribution of political knowledge are relatively benign to the functioning of democracy, the mass public is often unable to make up for its inattentiveness. Because of this, the public’s imperfect knowledge of politics has important consequences for the ways that opinion surveys are used in democratic politics. Public opinion polling can elevate the clear wishes of the few above the sometimes uncertain, fragmented, and ambivalent desires of the many. Some see this as a benefit. But when collective opinion fails to represent the voices and interests of all citizens in proportion to their numbers, opinion polling may provide a distorted view of public opinion”.

Passage N°05

Good reporters have a keen sense of who their “average reader” is, and we might think of this reader as a composite of public values and interests. This fictional creature serves as an internal guide to busy reporters, who are in the business of appealing to readers and empathizing with their concerns. [...] Listening to conversations, reading other media, attending public hearings, perusing poll data, and using other opinion evaluation techniques—taken together—enable journalists to create and maintain their image of imagined audience. (1998, 109-110)

Questions : Procédez à la traduction de chaque passage proposé et révélez de quoi s’agit-il ? (Idées dans chaque passage)