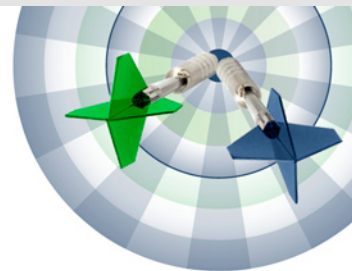


An opinion on polls



If elections are a "trap for bloody idiots," as [Sartre](#) once wrote, opinion polls are the bait that leads them to the trap. The only prediction that could be made with any assurance of accuracy before the Czech elections was that the opinion polls would be wrong. Yet wrong as they were, they played a big role in producing an election outcome that kept nearly the same forces in power. The two largest parties might have lost considerable ground, but the votes they forfeited were absorbed by new parties backed by many of the same business and political interests. The public media should be held accountable for contributing to this outcome. Whether intentionally or not, the system of using opinion polls - with their notorious level of inaccuracy - to eliminate certain small parties from television and radio debates ended up favoring those parties that don't want any real change. Thanks in no small part to the public media, the revolution many voters were hoping for was "drowned in the ballot boxes," as Sartre so eloquently put it.



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