

Polling /Public Opinion/Media



Polling & Public Opinion



Topics that will be covered

- What is it?
- How is it used in politics?
- How is it collected?
- What does it mean?
- Is it reliable?



Evaluating Polls and Their Limit on Public Opinion

Evaluating Polls

- On balance, most national and regional polls are fairly reliable. Still, they are far from perfect.
- Potential problems with polls include their inability to measure the intensity, stability, and relevance of the opinions they report.
- Another potential problem is that polls and pollsters are sometimes said to shape the opinions they are supposed to measure.

Limits on the Impact of Public Opinion

- Public opinion is the major, but by no means the only, influence on public policy in this country.
- Much of the American political system is designed to protect minority interests against the excesses of majority views and actions.
- Finally, polls are not elections, nor are they substitutes for elections.

Polls—The Best Measure



Public opinion is best measured by **public opinion polls**, devices that attempt to collect information by asking people questions.

Straw Votes

- A **straw vote** is a method of polling that seeks to read the public's mind simply by asking the same question of a large number of people.
- The straw-vote technique is highly unreliable, however.

Scientific Polling

- Serious efforts to take the public's pulse on a scientific basis date from the 1930s.
- There are now more than 1,000 national and regional polling organizations in this country, with at least 200 of these polling political preferences.

How To Read a Poll



A screenshot of a video player interface. The main content area is black and features the text "Get informed, get involved" in a smaller font above the large "Congress.org" logo. To the right of the logo are three white icons in rounded rectangles: an envelope for "Email", code symbols for "Embed", and three people for "Share". Below the main content is a video control bar with a play button, a progress slider, a timestamp "00:01 03:18", a volume slider, and a full-screen button. At the bottom left of the player, it says "NOW PLAYING" and "How to Read A Political Poll".

How To Evaluate Public Opinion Polls



Public opinion polls are reported on every day, it seems, in newspapers and magazines. A well-done poll can provide valuable information about the public's priorities and viewpoints. A poorly constructed poll may mislead readers. Becoming an informed consumer of public opinion research can help you assess the value and validity of the data you encounter.

- **Who Was Interviewed?**

- **Under What Conditions Were The Interviews Conducted?**

- **When Was the Poll Conducted?**

- **Who Conducted the Poll?**

- **What was the Percentage of Error?**

The Polling Process



Defining the Universe

- The *universe* is a term that means the whole population that the poll aims to measure.

Constructing a Sample

- A **sample** is a representative slice of the total universe. Most professional pollsters draw a **random sample**, also called a probability sample. A **quota sample** is one that is deliberately constructed to reflect several of the major characteristics of a given universe.

Preparing Valid Questions

- The way in which questions are worded is very important. Wording can affect the reliability of any poll.

Interviewing

- Pollsters communicate with the sample respondents using various methods including person-to-person interviews, telephone calls, and mail surveys.

Reporting

- Pollsters use computers to store and manipulate data, which helps them analyze and report the results of the poll.

How To Read The Polls



President Trump Job Approval



[Job Approval on Economy](#) | [Job Approval on Foreign Policy](#) | [Congressional Job Approval](#) | [Direction of the Country](#)

Polling Data					
Poll	Date	Sample	Approve	Disapprove	Spread
RCP Average	9/11 - 9/30	--	40.1	53.9	-13.8
Gallup	9/28 - 9/30	1500 A	38	57	-19
CNN	9/26 - 9/28	1037 A	37	56	-19
Rasmussen Reports	9/26 - 9/28	1500 LV	45	54	-9
FOX News	9/24 - 9/26	1017 RV	42	53	-11
Economist/YouGov	9/24 - 9/26	1254 RV	40	55	-15
Reuters/Ipsos	9/22 - 9/26	3429 A	38	57	-19
Quinnipiac	9/21 - 9/26	1412 RV	36	57	-21
PPP (D)	9/22 - 9/25	865 RV	42	53	-11
CBS News	9/21 - 9/24	1202 A	35	55	-20
ABC News/Wash Post	9/18 - 9/21	RV	42	54	-12
Monmouth	9/15 - 9/19	857 RV	42	48	-6
NBC News/Wall St. Jrnl	9/14 - 9/18	900 A	43	52	-9
Marist	9/11 - 9/13	1009 RV	41	50	-9

All President Trump Job Approval Polling Data

Pres. Obama Historical Poll Numbers



President Obama Job Approval

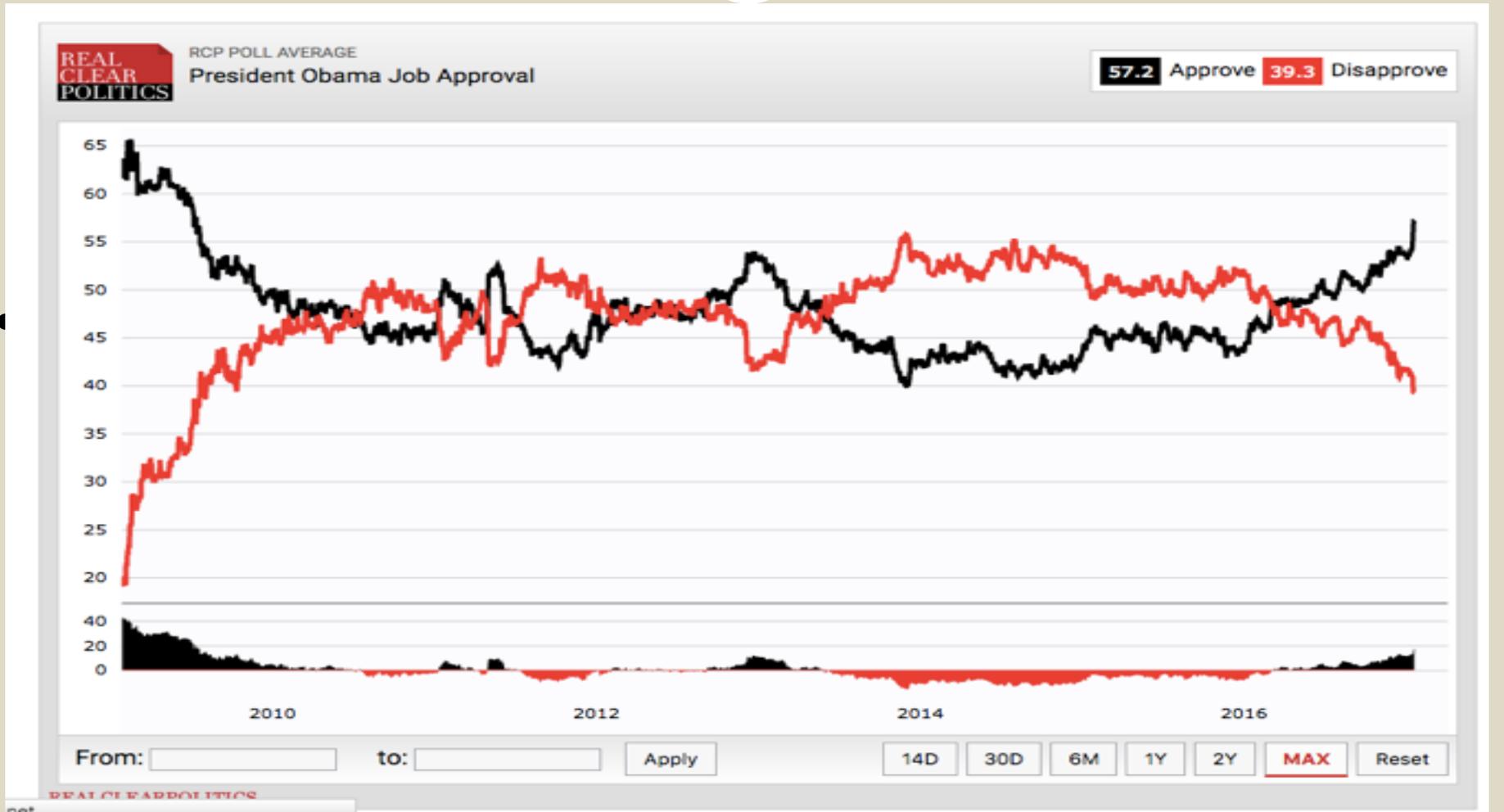


[President Trump Job Approval](#) | [President Bush Job Approval](#)

President Barack Obama Historical Job Approval

	Approve	Disapprove	Spread		Approve	Disapprove	Spread
1st Term	49.6	44.9	+4.7	2nd Term	45.9	49.6	-3.7
2009	56.5	36.3	+20.2	2013	46.4	48.6	-2.2
2010	46.9	47.4	-0.5	2014	42.5	52.9	-10.4
2011	46.5	47.9	-1.4	2015	45.0	50.5	-5.5
2012	48.6	47.3	+1.3	2016	49.8	46.5	+3.3

Pres. Obama Historical Poll Numbers



Past Presidents



Presidential Approval Ratings -- Gallup Historical Statistics and Trends

Gallup Historical Presidential Job Approval Statistics

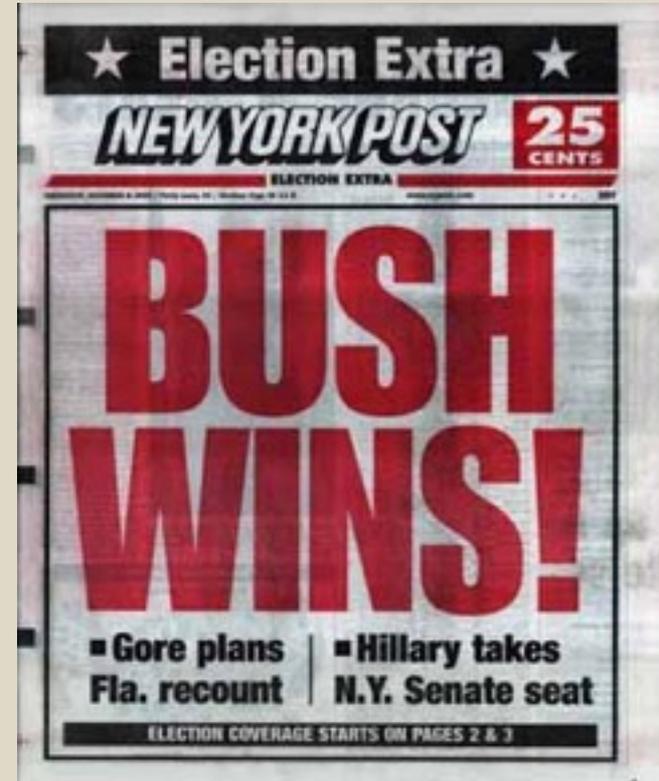
Overall averages

	Dates in office	Average approval rating %
Harry Truman	April 1945-January 1953	45.4
Dwight Eisenhower	January 1953-January 1961	65.0
John Kennedy	January 1961-November 1963	70.1
Lyndon Johnson	November 1963-January 1969	55.1
Richard Nixon	January 1969-August 1974	49.0
Gerald Ford	August 1974-January 1977	47.2
Jimmy Carter	January 1977-January 1981	45.5
Ronald Reagan	January 1981-January 1989	52.8
George H.W. Bush	January 1989-January 1993	60.9
Bill Clinton	January 1993-January 2001	55.1
George W. Bush	January 2001-January 2009	49.4
Barack Obama	January 2009-January 2017	47.9

Exit Polls



When The Polls Get It Wrong



2000 Election Gore v Bush



2016 Election - Clinton vs. Trump



Why 2016 election polls missed their mark



2016 Election Results



Donald J. Trump won [the Electoral College](#) with 304 votes compared to 227 votes for Hillary Clinton. Seven electors voted for someone other than their party's candidate.

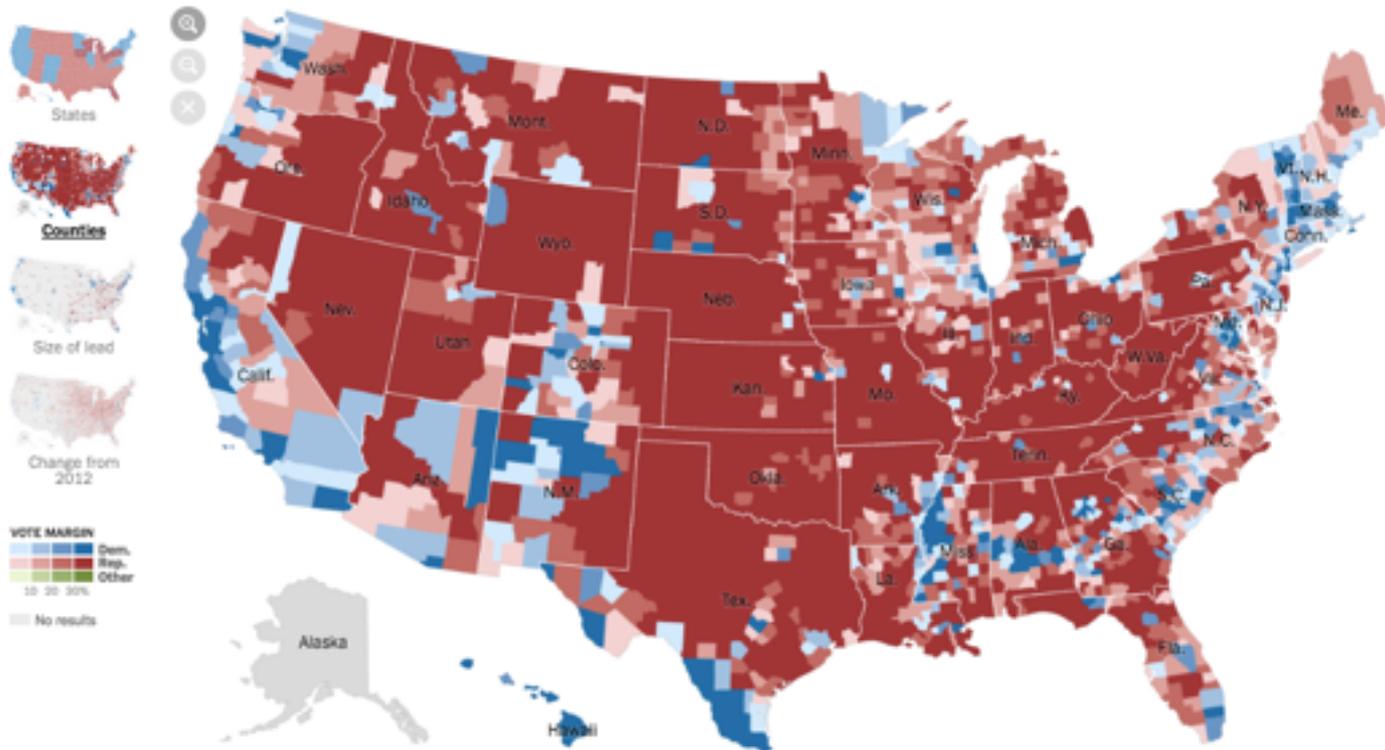
232 Hillary Clinton

306 Donald J. Trump

65,853,625 votes (48.0%)

270 to win

62,985,106 votes (45.9%)



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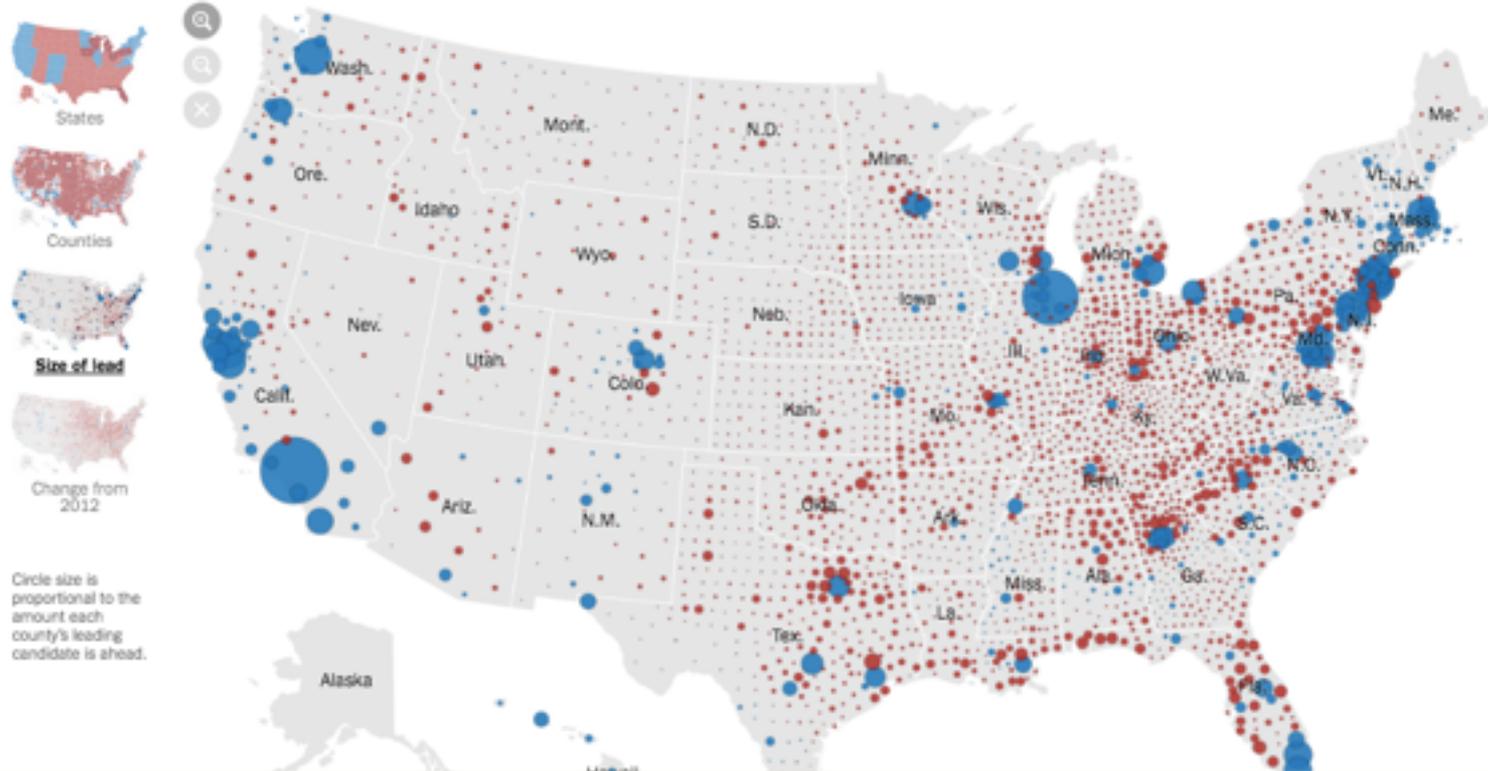
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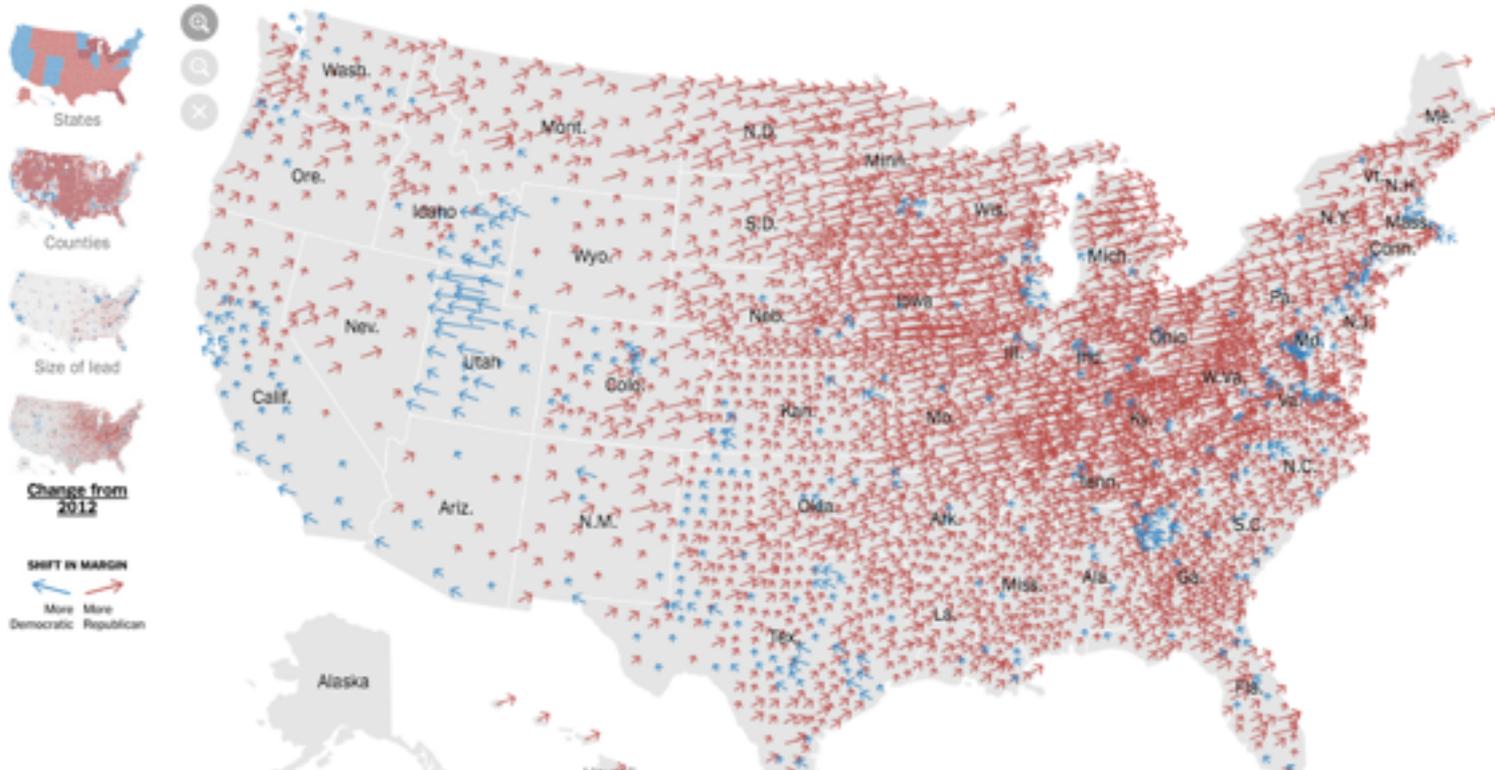
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✓ Donald J. Trump **306**

62,985,106 votes (45.9%)



The Media and Politics

The Public Agenda

- The media play a very large role in shaping the **public agenda**, the societal problems that political leaders and citizens agree need government attention.
- It is not correct that the media tell the people *what* to think; but it is clear that they tell the people what to think *about*.

Electoral Politics

- Today, television allows candidates to appeal directly to the people, without the help of a party organization.
- Candidates regularly try to use media coverage to their advantage.
- Newscasts featuring candidates are usually short, sharply focused **sound bites**—snappy reports that can be aired in 30 to 45 seconds.

The Mass Media



A **medium** is a means of communication; it transmits some kind of information. Four major mass media are particularly important in American politics:

Television

Politics and television have gone hand in hand since the technology first appeared. Today television is the principle source of political information for a majority of Americans.

Newspapers

The first newspapers carried mostly political news. Even with the total number of newspapers declining, they are still the second leading source of political information for most Americans.

Radio

On average, Americans hear 20 hours of radio each week. Radio has been a source of news and entertainment since 1920.

Magazines

Some 12,000 magazines are published in the United States today. Several magazines are devoted to American news and politics.

Roles of the Media



- **Entertainment** – TV, Radio, Newspapers, Magazines, books – this entertainment may have a political function in raising issues or presenting one point of view.
- **Reporting the News** – Any News coverage can take different forms
 - 1) Informing – (who- what- when- where- and how-)
 - 2) Analyzing or Interpreting – what does it mean
 - (a) The Pundits and the Punditocracy – High paid journalists who get together for chats about issues and tell viewers what it all means.
 - (b) The competing experts – focus on conflict not consensus, black and white rather than gray areas of complexity.

Roles of the Media



• **Identifying Problems** – Setting the Agenda – This is the most important role for politics and government

- 1) What the media covers becomes what is important and vice versa
- 2) An elected official cannot ignore the agenda set by the media

• **Political Socialization** – media is strong socializing agent both news and entertainment.

• **Providing a political forum** – people in government must use the media to their advantage if they are to get coverage that will help them succeed.

• **Making Profits** – with a few exceptions (NPR, PBS, BBC, CSPAN) Media outlets are businesses and must make profits by selling advertising or they cannot survive. They must not only make viewers/readers happy, they must make stockholders and advertisers happy. This can lead to media bias.

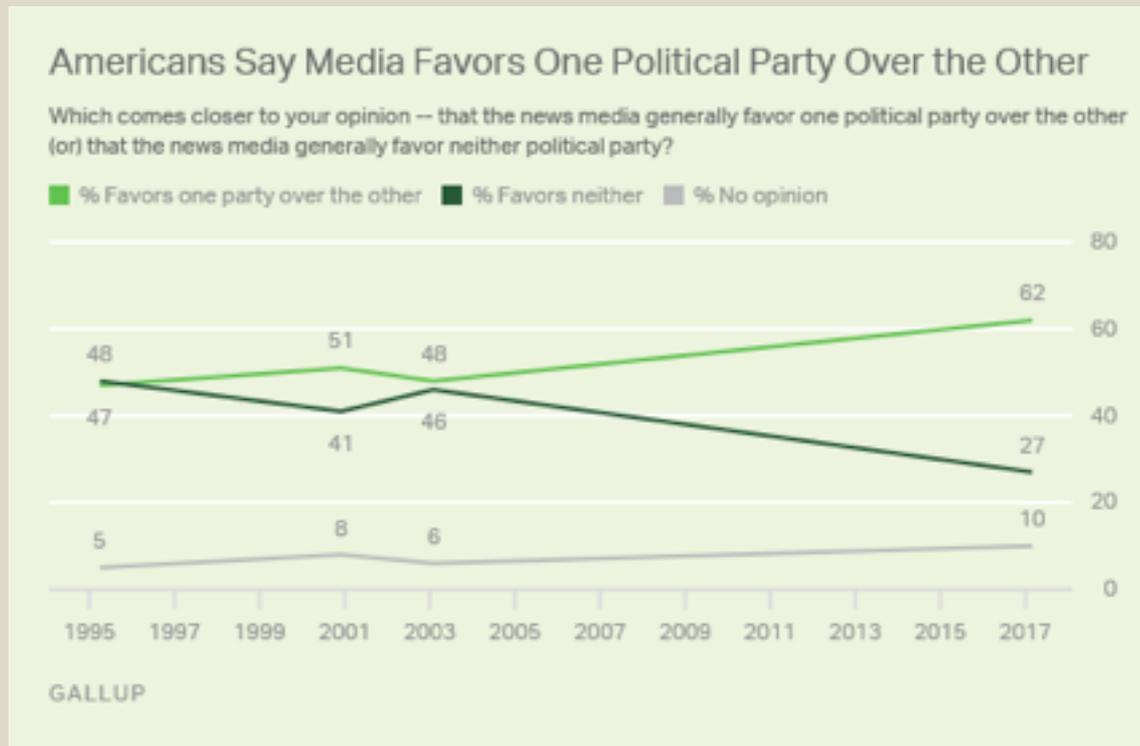
Public View on Media Bias



March 9, 2017

Six in 10 in US See Partisan Bias in News Media

WASHINGTON, D.C. -- In a contentious political landscape, Americans increasingly believe the news media generally favors one political party over the other. Sixty-two percent of U.S. adults say the media has a favorite, up from about 50% in past years. Just 27% now say the media favors neither major party.



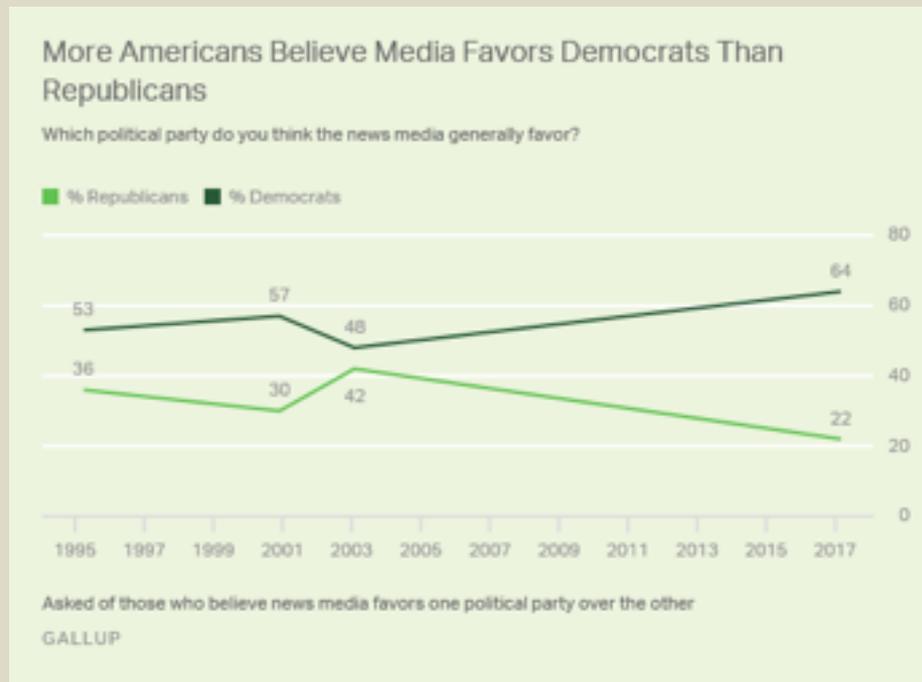
Americans Believe News Media Favors Democrats

March 9, 2017

Six in 10 in US See Partisan Bias in News Media

Gallup asked those who perceive political bias in the news media to say which party the news media favors. Almost two-thirds (64%) of those who believe the media favors a political party say it is the Democratic Party. Only about a third as many (22%) believe the media favors Republicans.

This is not new. Americans who perceive media bias have always said the direction of that bias leaned in favor of the Democrats, although the percentage holding that view has varied. The gap was smaller in 2003 and 1995, but was more similar to today's attitudes in 2000.



How to Detect Bias in the News



At one time or another we all complain about "bias in the news." The fact is, despite the journalistic ideal of "objectivity," every news story is influenced by the attitudes and background of its interviewers, writers, photographers and editors. Not all bias is deliberate. But we can become more aware news readers or viewers by watching for the following journalistic techniques that allow bias to "creep in" to the news:

Bias through selection and omission

Bias through placement

Bias by headline

Bias by photos, captions and camera angles

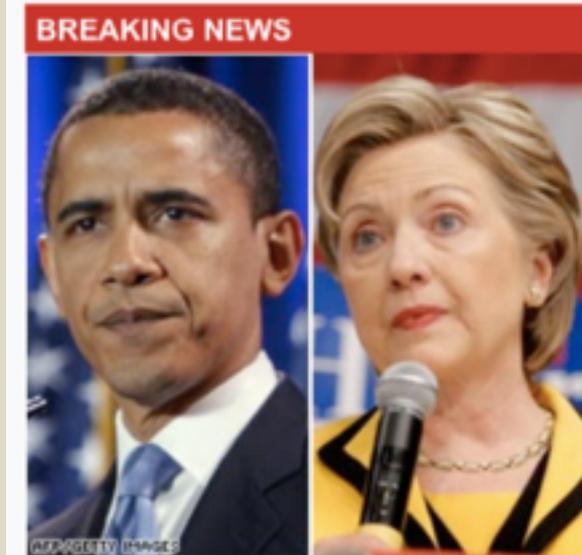
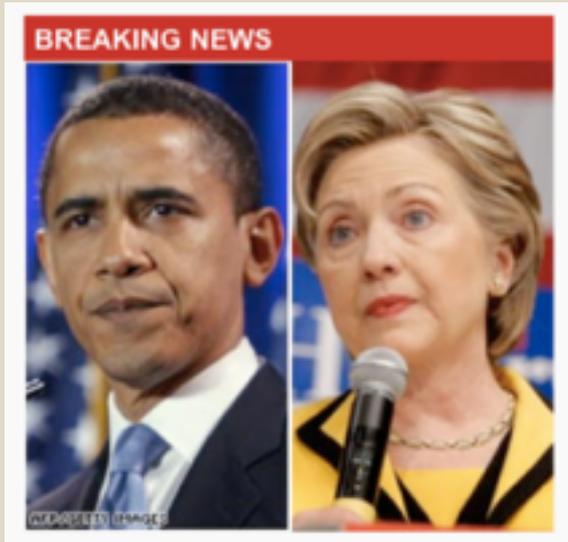
Bias through use of names and titles

Bias through statistics and crowd counts

Bias by source control

Word choice and tone

Bias Through Selection and Omission



updated 2 minutes ago

Presidential candidates' passport files breached



updated 2 minutes ago

Presidential candidates' passport files breached

The passport files of presidential candidates Hillary Clinton, Barack Obama and John McCain have been breached, the State Department said today. The person who improperly accessed Obama's files also viewed McCain's file, spokesman Sean McCormack said. [developing story](#)

Bias Through Selection and Omission



blog comments powered by DISQUS

Ann Romney Wears \$1,690 Oscar de la Renta Dress to Presidential Debate

Celebrity Style October 17, 2012 AT 7:30PM By UsWeekly Staff



Ann Romney and Michelle Obama at Hofstra University October 16, 2012 in Hempstead, New York before the presidential town hall style debate.

Us Weekly has learned new details of Ann Romney and Michelle Obama's hot pink dresses from Tuesday night's presidential debate at Long Island's Hofstra University.

Romney, 63, selected a short-sleeved crimped cotton silk dress by Oscar de la Renta. The Spring 2013 design is not yet available in stores, but retails for \$1,690.

Obama, 48, styled a shift dress and cropped jacket from Michael Kors' 2013 resort collection. The dress retails for \$1,795 and the jacket is \$1,495.

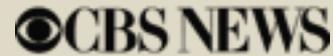
Bias Through Selection and Omission



Bias Through Selection and Omission



Bias By Headline



Rising tension between Trump and Tillerson



Secretary of State doesn't deny he once called his boss a 'moron,' but says he has no plans to resign

October 4 2:45 PM
State Dept denies Tillerson called Trump a "moron"



Trump thunders at '#FakeNews' NBC as Tillerson slams report he called president a 'moron'

Top stories



Tillerson calls Trump 'moron,' and tensions escalate

CNN · 49 mins ago



Tillerson's fury at Trump required an intervention from VP Pence

NBCNews.com · 2 hours ago



Tillerson blasts report of rift with Trump, as president rips 'fake ne...

Fox News · 2 hours ago

Bias By Headline



- **'Your world is on fire': Ted Cruz scares the hell out of a terrified little girl in New Hampshire**
rawstory.com
- **Ted Cruz Scares Little Girl: 'Your World Is on Fire'**
Medialite.com

Iran's 'Happy' dancers sentenced to 91 lashes, jail

FOX News – 9/19/14

CBS News 9/19/14

Iran's "Happy" dancers get a stern warning



TEHRAN, Iran -- A defense lawyer in Iran says six young [Iranian men and women videotaped dancing to Pharrell Williams' 'Happy' and the video's director](#) have been sentenced to suspended jail terms and lashes.

- January 22, 2010
- **U.S. gets 'F' on bio-terror response**
Source: CNN
- **Obama Gets 'F' on Stopping Spread of Weapons of Mass Destruction**
Source: FOXNEWS
- **Amid criticism, Obama to unveil bio-terror plan**
- ***Report gives administration failing grade on prep for biological attacks***
Source: MSNBC

Bias By Photos, Captions and Camera Angles



When interviewed about the incident by HLN Wednesday, Eckel chose to wear a “Trump for President 2016” shirt as he told his story about how he rescued the baby. His bright blue shirt could be seen on the first airing on HLN

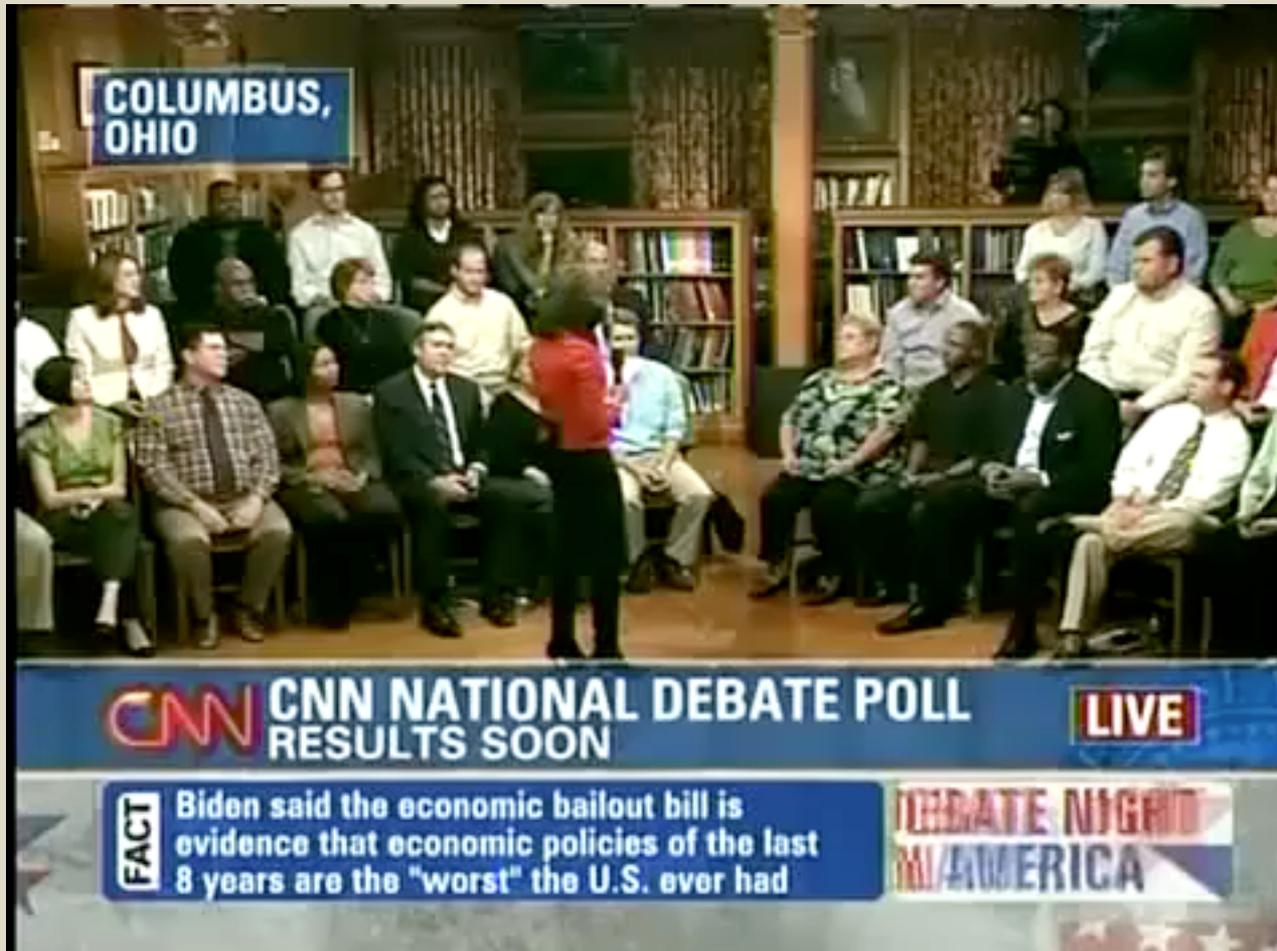
However, as flagged by [The Daily Caller](#), when the interview was re-aired later in the day, HLN chose to blur out the logo, as one might blur out an obscenity.



Bias By Photos, Captions and Camera Angles



Bias Through Statistics and Crowd Counts



Bias Through Statistics and Crowd Counts



Bias By Source Control



Word Choice and Tone



Word Choice and Tone



Social Media and Politics



Sources



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Read one of the articles on the front page and answer all the questions at the bottom of the article. All answers must be **TYPED** and turned in. *No digital files will be accepted.*