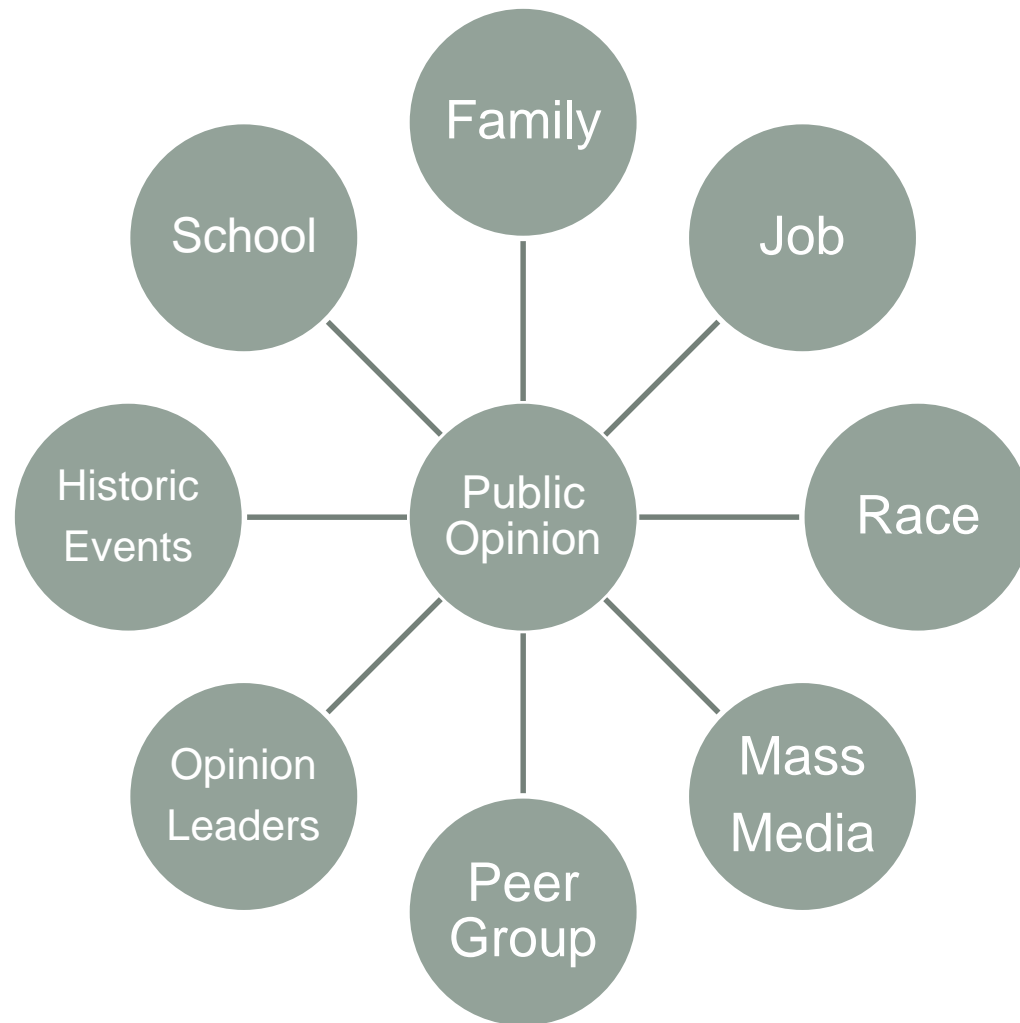


MASS MEDIA AND PUBLIC OPINION

Chapter 8

What is public opinion, and what factors help to shape it?

Factors That Help Shape Public Opinion



How is public opinion
measured or known?

Measuring Public Opinion

Elections	Voting results can sometimes reflect public opinion
Interest Groups	Key way public opinion made know, but difficult to know number of people and strength of views.
Media	Mirror and mold public opinion, but often reflect views of vocal minority
Personal Contacts	Officials gauge views through interactions
Public Opinion Polls	Collect information by asking people questions – best measure of opinion – if they are well-done
Straw Vote/Click Polls	Asks large number of people same question – unreliable because not based on scientific techniques
Scientific Polling	Define the survey universe, construct a sample, prepare valid questions, select and control how poll will be taken, analyze and report findings.

How has the development of different media helped inform the public about politics?

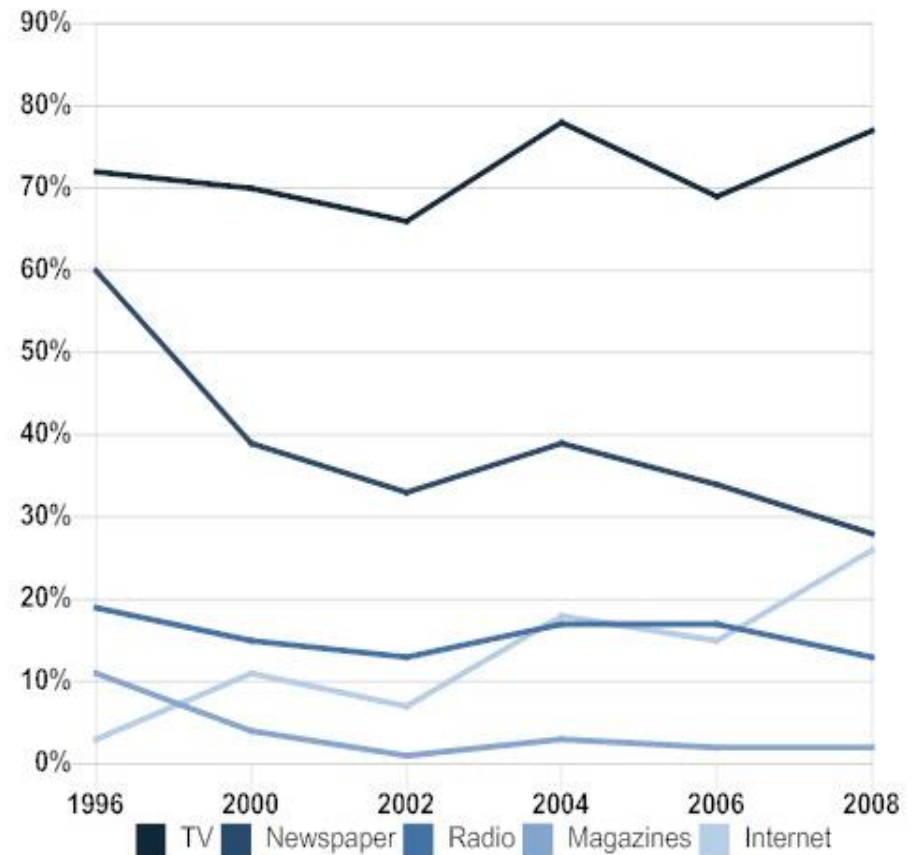
What are the benefits, limits and dangers of the media?

The Role of Mass Media

- A medium is a means of communication
- Five major elements of the mass media are significant in politics
 - TV, Newspapers, Radio, Magazines, Internet
- Their relative importance has changed over time.....
- From 1996-2008 →

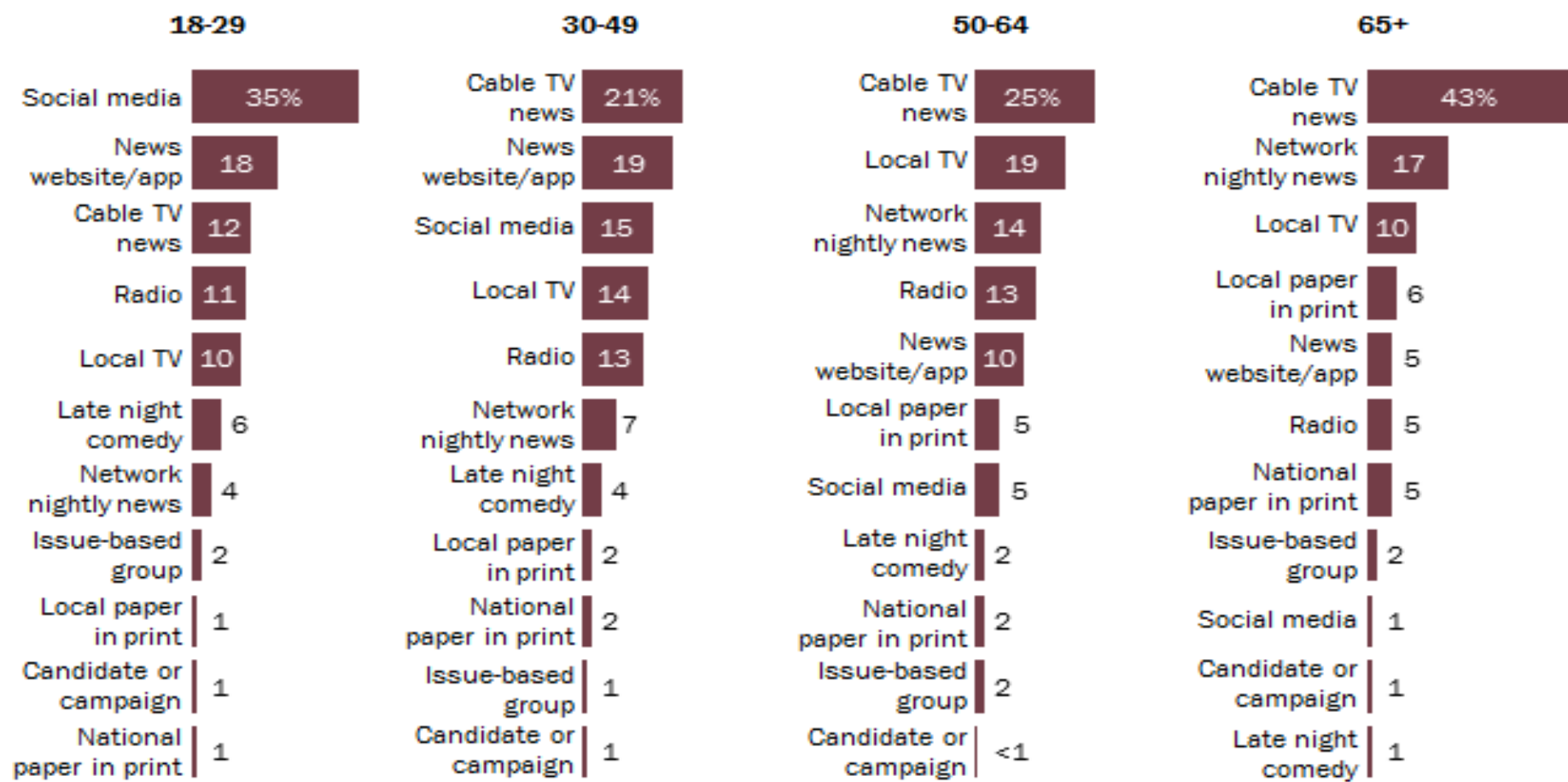
Major sources of election news

Where Americans get most of their news about politics and the election (among all adults, up to two mentions allowed)



About a third of 18- to 29-year-olds name social media as most helpful type of source for learning about the 2016 presidential election

Among those who learned about the 2016 presidential election in the past week, % who say the most helpful type of source is ...



Source: Survey conducted Jan. 12-27, 2016

The Mass Media's Impact on Public Opinion

Benefits

- Informs the public
- Helps to shape the agenda (what gets discussed)
- Informs voters about their choices
- Can provide in-depth coverage (if you look for it, particularly on the internet)
- Allows for more people to actively participate (esp on social media)
- Polls (measures of public opinion) can also shape public opinion

The Mass Media's Impact on Public Opinion

Limits

- Few people pay much attention to the news
- People tend to be selective in choosing political coverage – choose what they already agree with (“echo chamber”)
- Much media content is shallow and unrelated to actual policy topics (instead, we see scandals, personalities, campaign events)
- Election coverage tends to focus on who's winning & polls, even months before election day (“horse-race journalism”)
- Media, esp radio and television, tend to carry only short reports on policy news and politics (“30 second sound bites”)
- Newspapers and television depend on advertising revenue, which can sometimes dictate coverage

Dangers of the Media

- Fake News /Click-bait (\$\$\$ every time it's shared)
 - [Fake news on Facebook/Twitter that spreads](#)
- Partisan (and hyper-partisan) sites that may be sort-of truthful, but present only one side (echo-chamber)
 - Anything not at the center or top of [NewsPrism](#)
 - Major “mainstream” or traditional news sites (CNN, NBC, Washington Post) tend to be more liberal than the public overall
 - FOX News was created to provide a counter-balance.
- It's almost impossible to be “bias-free” in the media

Ways that Media Can Show Bias

- Selection/Omission
 - Would your editor be likely to cover this topic at all?
 - What parts of this might you choose to highlight or ignore?



Ways that Media Can Show Bias

- **Headline**

- How can the title of the story affect readers? What if they only read the headline?

Battle for White House

- As Election Enters Final Week Trump Surges to Down a Few Points
- Polls Show Tight Clinton-Trump Race Nationally and in Key Battlegrounds
- Clinton Allies Target FBI's Comey
- Obama Justice Department Halted FBI Probe of Clinton Foundation
- Investigators Found 650,000 Emails on Anthony Weiner's Laptop
- Clinton Promises to Fight for "Underdogs" During S. Florida Rally
- Trump Accuses Clinton of "Criminal Action," Predicts Victory on Nov. 8

2016 Presidential Race

- Reid: Comey May Have Broken Law
- Wikileaks: Brazile Shared Another Question With Clinton in Advance

Monday, October 31



Clinton Has Herself to Blame for Crumbling Campaign Ed Rogers, Washington Post

James Comey Just Unmasked Himself Howard Fineman, Huffington Post

Time for Elites to Let the Clintons Go Laura Ingraham, LifeZette

No, "Emailgate" Is Not Worse Than Watergate John Dean, New York Times

Clinton Owns It All A.B. Stoddard, RealClearPolitics

The Vengeful World of Donald Trump, and Why It Matters Benjy Sarlin, NBC News

What Trump Represents Isn't Crazy and It's Not Going Away Peter Thiel

Comey's Actions Are Deeply Disturbing Josh Marshall, TalkingPointsMemo

Democrats Don't Care About the Health of Democracy David Harsanyi, The Federalist

Working the Refs Paul Krugman, New York Times

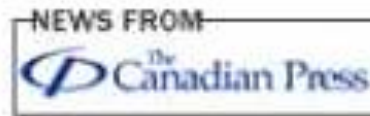
Government Will Never Go Out of Business Roger Stone, RCP Changing Lanes

Tracking Polls: IBD/TIPP: Clinton +1 | LA Times: Trump +4 | ABC/WP: Clinton +1

Ways that Media Can Show Bias



AFP/Getty Images - Tue Aug 30,



Canadian Press - Tue Aug 30, 12:03 PM ET

A young man walks through chest deep flood water after looting a grocery store in New Orleans on Tuesday. (AP/Dave Martin)

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★★★★☆

RELATED

- [Water pours into New Orleans after levee breaks; deaths rise along Gulf Coast](#) Canadian Press - Tue Aug 30 12:00 PM ET

ADD SLIDESHOW TO MY YAHOO! OR RSS READER



Ways that Media Can Show Bias

Every year, guns are used over **80x more often to protect** a life than to take one!*



Click [HERE](#) to take action!



270 Million

APPROX. # OF CIVILIAN
FIREARMS IN AMERICA₃



200,000

TIMES A YEAR WOMEN USE A
GUN TO DEFEND AGAINST
SEXUAL ABUSE₄



3/5

POLLED FELONS SAY THEY
WON'T MESS WITH AN ARMED
VICTIM₅

Ways that Media Can Show Bias

- With your group, watch the clip and discuss how you might report it using these techniques, from both sides of the partisan spectrum. Use this clip as a data source :
<http://www.newsy.com/videos/trump-campaign-launches-nightly-facebook-live-coverage/>
- Selection/Omission
 - What parts of this event might you choose to highlight or ignore in your story?
- Headlines
 - Can you come up with two different headlines for this story?
- Images and captions
 - What different pictures could you show to help spin this story?
- Word Choice and Tone
 - How would you tell this story?
- Sources
 - What additional data would you include in this story? Where might find a study to cite?

Media Analysis Current Event

- Pick a current topic that interests you.
- Find an article about this topic on a hyper-partisan website.
- Find another article on either an opposing hyper-partisan site, or even better, a more neutral site.
- I suggest using [AllSides.com](https://www.allsides.com) or [NewsPrism](https://www.newsprism.com) to help find sites.
- Compare the two articles, discussing the techniques we discussed in class.
- What choices did the writer/editor make to “spin” their article in a partisan way?