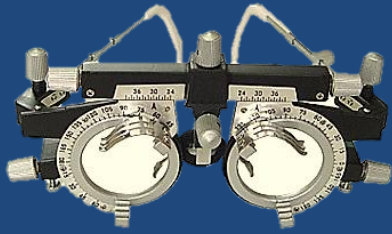


## Checking Your Lenses



Bias, Balance, Fairness & You

## When Voters Are Misinformed

Since January 2009 have your Federal income taxes:



- A) Gone Down
- B) Stayed the Same
- C) Gone up

86%

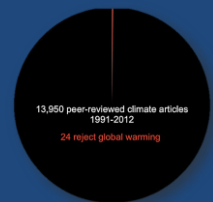
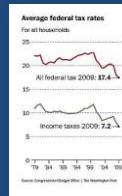
## Voters on Climate Change

Do you think that MOST SCIENTISTS believe that:

- A) Climate change is occurring
- B) Views are evenly divided
- C) Climate change is not occurring

45%

## Misinformation and the 2010 Election



[www.worldpublicopinlon.org](http://www.worldpublicopinlon.org) / University of Maryland Study

## Misinformation and the Election

“Do most scientists think that climate change is not occurring?”

(percent who agree with this statement)

People who rarely watch Fox News... 30%

Watch Fox once a week... 45%

Watch Fox almost every day... 60%

## Misinformation and the Electorate



Audience Bias

Media Bias, Audience Bias or Cognitive Dissonance?



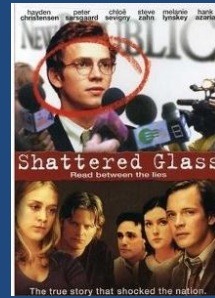
Cognitive Dissonance

## Three Questions Today:



- How do we know if a news report is fair?
- How do we know if a news outlet is biased?
- What's the difference between news media bias and audience bias?

## Shattered Glass Viewings: Available on Blackboard, on Netflix, and online.



## News Media Bias An Optical Problem? Or A Real Problem?



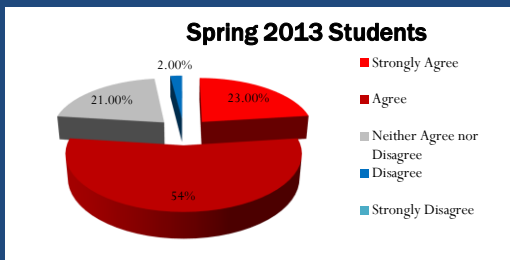
## What the Public Sees



- 74% say news organizations tend to favor one side in dealing with political and social issues
- 50% believe the media has a liberal slant
- 22% believe the media has a conservative slant

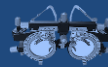
The Pew Research Center for the People & the Press  
~2009 survey  
Press Accuracy Rating Falls Two Decades Low

## What's Students See *"Most news outlets exhibit bias"*

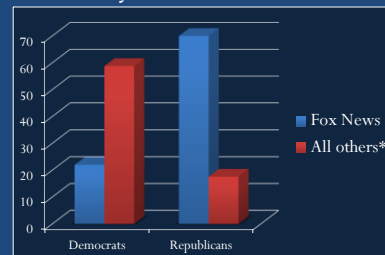


Source:  
S2013 Reality Check Survey  
999 respondents

## Different Lenses Same Reality



Who do you trust?



\* All others: PBS, NBC, MSNBC, CBS, CNN, ABC

## Knows it When He Sees It



“Now, it is common knowledge that the mainstream media from the major television networks to the country's most influential newspapers are biased against the GOP.”  
- Sean Hannity, FOX News

## Knows it When She Sees It

"Hosts on Fox raise money on the air for Republican candidates, they endorse them explicitly, they use their Fox News profile to headline fundraisers ... They can do that because there's no rule against that at Fox. They run as a political operation, we're not."

– Rachel Maddow, MSNBC

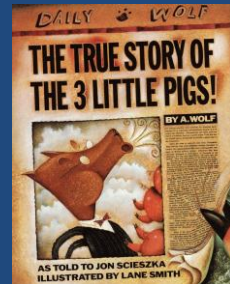


### What's the Difference Between Fairness and Balance?

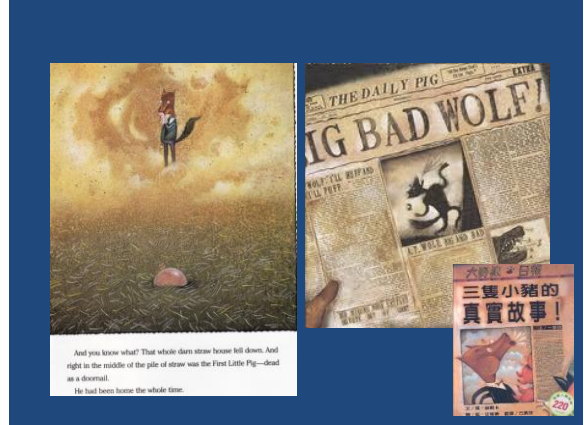
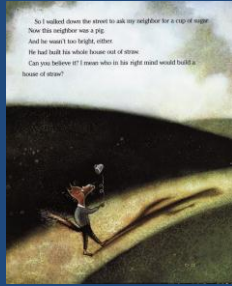
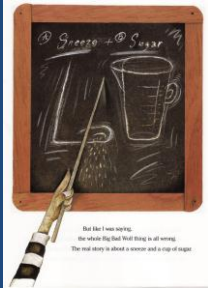
### You Know The Story...



### In This News Story What is Missing?



“It all started with a cup of sugar and a sneeze.”  
 -Alexander T. Wolf



## Key Definitions

**Main Entry:** **'balance** ㄉㄛˋ

**Pronunciation:** \ˈbɑ-lən(t)s\

**Function:** *noun*

**Eymology:** Middle English, from Anglo-French, from Vulgar Latin \**bilancia*, from Late Latin *bilanc-*, *bilanx* having two scalepans, from Latin *bi-* + *lanc-*, *lanx* plate

**Date:** 13th century

**Balance: Equality between the totals of the two (or more) sides of the account. Balance is more technical; a quantitative measurement.**

## What Is Balance?

**The New York Times**

March 4, 2013

**Texans Rebut Gov. Rick Perry on Expansion of Medicaid**

By MARY FERNANDEZ

AUSTIN, Tex. — Hundreds of activists and uninsured Texans plan to rally at the state capitol on Tuesday to oppose the pressure their state's Obama's Mr. Perry expanding low-income socializing insurance.

Perry made his decision official in July, he wrote of standing "with the governor."

In recent Republic Chris Christie would no number expansion.

“If you have a chance to provide that coverage and improve health care, then in the long run, you’re going to have a healthier, more productive state,” said Dr. Roland A. Goertz, the chief executive of the Waco Family Health Center, which treats thousands of Medicaid and uninsured patients annually.

“It would be irresponsible to add more Texans and dump more taxpayer dollars into a broken and unsustainable system that already consumes a quarter of our budget, making it harder to pay for other things like public safety and education,” Ms. Nashed said.


## Can Balance Be the Opposite of Fairness?

**Should Holocaust Deniers Get Equal Space?**

## Can Balance Be the Opposite of Fairness?

**The Massacres in Bosnia**

## Key Definitions

Main Entry: **fair**   
 Pronunciation: \ˈfɛr\  
 Function: *adjective*  
 Etymology: Middle English *fager*, *fair*, from Old English *fæger*; akin to Old High German *fagar* beautiful  
 Date: before 12th century

**Fairness: Marked by impartiality and honesty. Free from self-interest, prejudice, or favoritism. Being fair to the evidence.**

## Finding Fairness:

- Fair play
- Fair language
- Fair presentation

## Fair play:

- Obvious effort to include relevant perspectives
- People, Organizations get to respond to negative charges

## Fair Play?

### Hurricane Katrina and the "Two-Photo Controversy"



Associated Press AP - Tue Aug 30, 11:31 AM ET

A young man walks through chest-deep flood water after getting a grocery store in New Orleans on Tuesday, Aug. 30, 2005. Flood waters continue to rise in New Orleans after Hurricane Katrina did extensive damage when it

RECOMMEND THIS PHOTO - Recommended Photo  
 Recommended Rating: 4.5 (138 votes)  
 ☆☆☆☆

AFP 3:47 AM ET

Two residents wade through chest-deep water after getting bread and soda from a local grocery store after Hurricane Katrina came through the area in New Orleans, Louisiana. (AFP/Getty Images/Chris Graythen)

RECOMMEND THIS PHOTO - Recommended Photo  
 Recommended Rating: 4.5 (113 votes)  
 ☆☆☆☆

RELATED

- Katrina's Effects, at a Glance AP - Tue Aug 30, 1:26 PM ET
- Hurricanes & Tropical Storms

## More Language Landmarks

- "Right-to-Life" vs. "Anti-Abortion"
- "Pro-Choice" vs. "Pro-Abortion"
- "Ruthless" vs. "Tough"
- "Admitted" vs. "Said"
- "Gay Marriage" vs. "Marriage Equality"

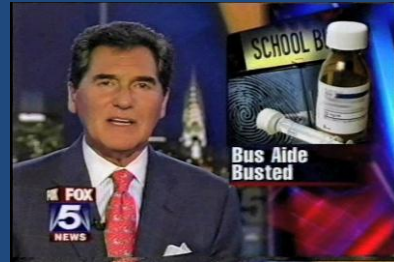
## Fair Presentation:

- Avoids prejudicial photos
- Presents photos and other visuals that are appropriate to the report

## Fair Presentation:



## Fair, Unfair, or Biased?



### School Bus Aide Busted Dealing Methadone




## Balance, Fairness and Bias



### Is this what college women really do on Spring Break?

## What is Bias?

Main Entry: **'bias**   
 Pronunciation: \ˈbi-əs\  
 Function: *noun*  
 Etymology: Middle French *biais*  
 Date: 1530

**Bias: A predisposition that distorts your ability to fairly weigh the evidence and prevents you from reaching a fair or accurate judgment.**

## How to Spot Bias

- Look for evidence of a pattern of unfairness over time
- Compare a variety of news outlets especially to search for a bias by omission
- Take note of the self-interest of those alleging bias

## The News Literacy Definition:

**Bias:**  
a pattern of unfairness

## Bias is a *Pattern*



## Common Flaws in “Bias” Claims

- **“The news media is biased” is an over-generalization.**
- **Opinion Journalism on the “Opinions” page or tab or in one time-slot of a broadcast doesn’t necessarily prove there’s slant in entire news product.**

## Opinion or Bias?

How Obama torched our standing in the Arab world

By Liz Peck / Published September 20, 2012 / FoxNews.com



Mitt Romney is right

By Dick Morris / Published September 18, 2012 / FoxNews.com

## News Judgment or Bias?

Is heavy news coverage of same-sex marriage legislation evidence of bias?



## News Judgment or Bias?



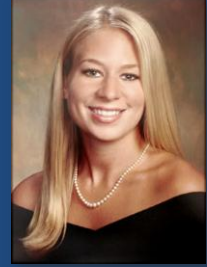
© Solent News & Photo Agency

# Bias or Something Else?



“Why Aren’t More Women Dying In Chicago?”

# News Judgment or Racism?



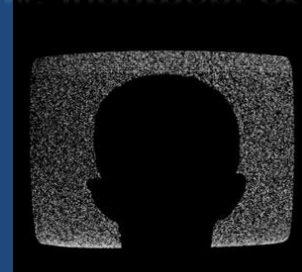
LaToya Figueroa and Natalee Holloway: Differences in Coverage

# Bias or “Scoop” Fever?



Dan Rather and George Bush

# News Judgment or Bias?



Choosing not to cover a story is not de facto proof of bias

# Bias in the News



A Pattern of Unfairness?

# Obama’s War Against Fox News



“What I think is fair to say about Fox – and certainly it’s the way we view it – is that it really is more a wing of the Republican Party.” said Anita Dunn, White House communications director, on CNN.

“It’s astounding the White House cannot distinguish between news and opinion programming,” Clemente said. “It seems self-serving on their part.”

As for Dunn’s complaint about Fox News’ coverage of the Obama campaign, a study by the Pew Research Center showed that 40 percent of Fox News stories on Obama in the last six weeks of the campaign were negative. Similarly, 40 percent of Fox News’ stories on Obama’s Republican opponent, Sen. John McCain, were negative.



## Responses to Cognitive Dissonance Source Misattribution

When they do remember sources, people may selectively attribute comforting information to a more respectable source .

## Is Individual Objectivity Realistic? Is Organizational Objectivity More Realistic?



Journalists submit to the discipline of **V**erification, a newsroom system of aggressive peer review and a code of ethics that defines **I**ndependence, and demands transparency-based **A**ccountability.

## Conclusions

Are there examples of unfair news stories?

*Absolutely*

Is unfairness an automatic sign of bias?

*No*

Can a news outlet exhibit bias?

*Yes, but it's easier to allege than to prove*

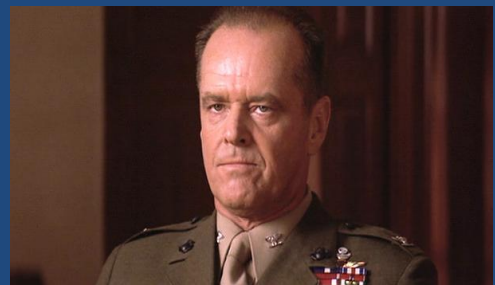
Is the *perception* of bias as dangerous as bias itself?

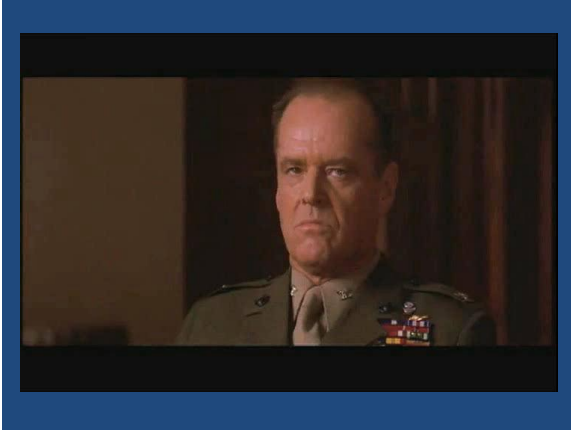
*Yes*

## Bias in Them, Us and You



## You (Really) Want The Truth?





## Bias or Blunder?



### Today's Key Lessons :

- ✓ Bias is a Pattern. Not an event.
- ✓ Your Mind May Not Be Open, After All.

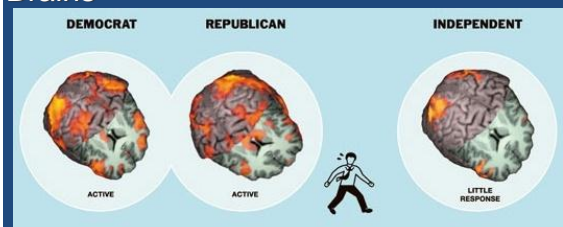


hus endeth the Lesson

## News Judgment or Bias?



### Cognitive Dissonance: Democratic Brains vs. Republican Brains

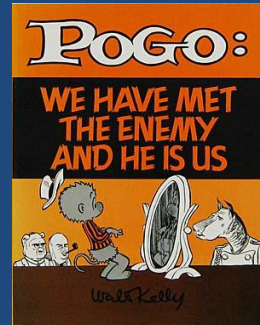


Magnetic Resonance Imaging  
"This is Your Brain on Politics"

## The Theory of Cognitive Dissonance

Brain.wmv

## What About Our Own Biases?



## Facing Facts May Require You To Resist Human Nature



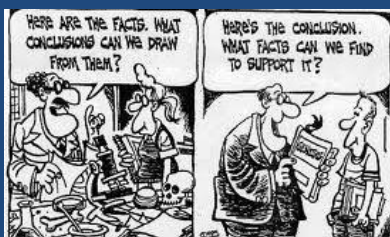
## Responses to Cognitive Dissonance

### Selective Distortion & Retention

People tend to distort (or forget) incoming information if it does not match their point of view.

## Responses to Cognitive Dissonance Confirmation Bias

We tend to pursue information that only reflects our point of view.



## Responses to Cognitive Dissonance

 <p>Obama's 2012 Budget Offers More Gimmicks, Not Reform</p> <p>Published on March 9, 2013 by Brian Stiel</p> <p><small>Missed: In the 2012 budget proposal, President Obama uses lofty rhetoric about fiscal realities and hard choices—and proceeds to give the green light to get more spending, yet higher taxes, and skyrocketing debt. His budget fails to reform uncontrollable entitlements, is overly broad on non-defense discretionary spending, and is loaded with gimmicks and budgetary loopholes. Any responsible budget must now rise in spending and deficits. Heritage Foundation budgetary expert Brian Stiel says here the realities of the President's new budget.</small></p>	 <p>Obama's 2012 Budget Offers More Gimmicks, Not Reform</p> <p>Published on March 9, 2013 by Brian Stiel</p> <p><small>Missed: In the 2012 budget proposal, President Obama uses lofty rhetoric about fiscal realities and hard choices—and proceeds to give the green light to get more spending, yet higher taxes, and skyrocketing debt. His budget fails to reform uncontrollable entitlements, is overly broad on non-defense discretionary spending, and is loaded with gimmicks and budgetary loopholes. Any responsible budget must now rise in spending and deficits. Heritage Foundation budgetary expert Brian Stiel says here the realities of the President's new budget.</small></p>	 <p>Obama's 2012 Budget Offers More Gimmicks, Not Reform</p> <p>Published on March 9, 2013 by Brian Stiel</p> <p><small>Missed: In the 2012 budget proposal, President Obama uses lofty rhetoric about fiscal realities and hard choices—and proceeds to give the green light to get more spending, yet higher taxes, and skyrocketing debt. His budget fails to reform uncontrollable entitlements, is overly broad on non-defense discretionary spending, and is loaded with gimmicks and budgetary loopholes. Any responsible budget must now rise in spending and deficits. Heritage Foundation budgetary expert Brian Stiel says here the realities of the President's new budget.</small></p>
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## Responses to Cognitive Dissonance: Peer Influence on Perception



Our perceptions of things like size or distance can be impaired by group pressure.

## News Bias vs. Audience Bias



The War In Lebanon, 1982

Does Being More Informed Guarantee That You Will Be a Less-Biased News Consumer?

## "Hostile Media Effect"



The War In Lebanon, 1982

- A belief among partisans that news reports are painting them in the worst possible light.

- People who are deeply involved in one side of an issue or another are quicker to spot and remember aspects of a news story that are negative.
- The best-informed partisans are the most likely to see bias.

## SALON

### Targeted killings: OK if Obama does it?

Salon exclusive: Study finds "liberals" more likely to favor targeted killings once they know it's Obama's policy



## Fair Language:

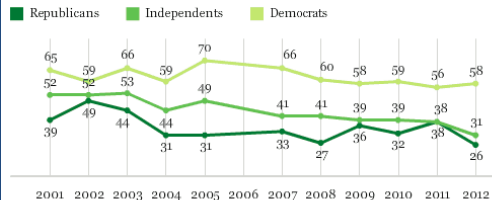
Avoids loaded words

## "Hostile Media Effect"

Trust in Mass Media, by Party

% Great deal/Fair amount of trust

Gallup trend, 2001-2012



GALLUP

**COLUMBIA JOURNALISM REVIEW**  
**Rise Above, CNBC's move into advocacy**  
 Corporate America's house organ starts an anti-political political campaign



**Do 15% of Ohio Republicans think Romney killed bin Laden? Probably not.** *The Washington Post*  
 Posted by Dylan Matthews on September 10, 2012 at 9:32 am

Public Policy Polling

More Responsible for Bin Laden Death?	Party			
	Base	Democrat	Republican	Independent/Other
Barack Obama	63%	86%	38%	64%
Mitt Romney	6%	1%	15%	1%
Not sure	31%	13%	47%	36%




**Fair language?**  
**Los Angeles Times**  
 White House eases path to residency for some illegal immigrants

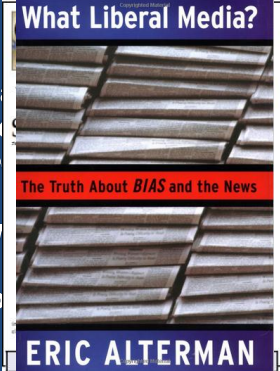



**Obama Begins Amnesty Push**

**Yeah, Yeah... But What About Bias?**

**What Liberal Media?**


During Obama's office, have  
 "...positive outweighed negative" -- 42 percent  
 percent to were neutral  
 (a major research organization)



**ERIC ALTERMAN**

**No Doubts**

*"Conservatives argue that the national news media are biased for liberals and Democrats. Liberals argue the opposite. You could write a book about it. It's a difficult argument to have because neither side is willing to accept the other's evidence."*



– Eric Alterman

**News Judgment or Bias?**

**New York Allows Same-Sex Marriage, Becoming Largest State to Pass Law**




**Is story choice evidence of bias?**

## “Hostile Media Effect”

### Are News Organizations Being Fair to the Current Administration?

Coverage is "Fair"	Reagan		Bush Sr.		Clinton		Bush		Obama
Total	7/85	1/88	8/89	11/90	2/93	2/98	2/01	11/05	8/09
Total	78	66	82	72	72	49	65	50	62
Republicans	72	54	77	65	81	66	58	25	73
Democrats	81	76	86	78	67	34	73	68	54
Independents	79	64	86	75	73	54	70	55	67
R-D Gap	-9	-22	-9	-13	+14	+32	-15	-43	+19

For each administration, highest and lowest "fair" percentages shown. Survey conducted Aug. 13-16 among 1,002 adults. QN2.

Pew Research Center, 2009  
Press Accuracy Rating Hits Two Decade Low

The stronger the emotion,  
The more likely bias will be charged:



- Politics
- Race and Gender
- Social Issues
- Religion

## Is Balance the Same as Fairness?

guardian.co.uk

Democrats roll out climate change big guns, Republicans remain immune

Climate hearing appears to fail to sway Republicans before Thursday's vote on curbing Obama's green ambitions



Should Climate Change Doubters Get Equal Space?

## Cognitive Dissonance According to Jon Stewart



92



- <http://www.thedailyshow.com/watch/tue-may-8-2012/bad-credit>

93

## Opinion or Bias?

OP-ED COLUMNIST

Can Hillary Cry Her Way Back to the White House?

By MAUREEN DOWD




OP-ED COLUMNIST

Caribou Barbie is one nutty puppy.


## Cognitive Dissonance: Democratic Brains vs. Republican Brains

**DEMOCRAT**




ACTIVE

**REPUBLICAN**




ACTIVE

**INDEPENDENT**



LITTLE RESPONSE



Magnetic Resonance Imaging  
"This is Your Brain on Politics"

## Fair Play

**AP Associated Press**

### Delaware mom denies trying to sell baby

Philadelphia man for \$15,000 denied the allegations Wednesday and said she loves her newborn son and wants to be with him.

Police have charged Wismer and Gavaghan with dealing in children and conspiracy. They were arrested Friday after detectives said they confirmed the two were involved in the sale and purchase of the newborn, and the baby was placed in foster care.

On Wednesday, emergency responders asked a judge to order Wismer to go to a trip to Disney.

Wismer, 33, said Gavaghan, 54, is a friend who offered to help when she found herself pregnant, in a difficult home situation, and unwilling to get an abortion. She also says she didn't want to give her baby up for adoption because she would never see him again.

"I was just waiting for a miracle," she said, adding that she gratefully accepted Gavaghan's offer to help. "I was so positive about what I was doing."

Wismer said the charges stem from confusion on the part of her grandmother, who had alerted authorities that her granddaughter wanted to sell her baby to a homosexual couple. A statement of probable cause said that a tipster advised authorities that Wismer was trying to sell the child because she did not want it and sought money for a trip to Disney World.

## Glasstrailer.wmv

## Balance, Fairness and Bias



Is this what college women really do on Spring Break?

## The Birther Movement Now:

% who say Barack Obama was born outside the United States  
Washington Post & Post-ABC polls

	April 2011	April 2010	Change in pts.
All adults	10%	20%	-10
Democrats	7	15	-8
Independents	12	18	-6
Republicans	14	31	-17
Liberal Democrats	3	11	-8
Conservative Reps.	16	35	-19

Wash. Post Poll

Getting the facts straight...

St. Petersburg Times

# PolitiFact.com

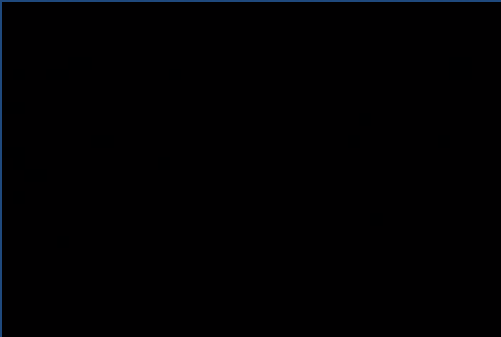
2009 Pulitzer Prize winner



## FACTCHECK.ORG

A PROJECT OF THE ANNENBERG PUBLIC POLICY CENTER

## Jon Stewart vs. Bill O'Reilly



## Hillary Clinton and the New York Times

The New York Times Politics

### Media Charged With Sexism in Clinton Coverage

Senator Hillary Rodham Clinton is interviewed on her campaign plane in March.

By NICHOLE L. DELVE and JULE BODEN

Published: June 15, 2008

Angered by what they consider sexist news coverage of Senator Hillary Rodham Clinton's bid for the Democratic presidential

TWITTER SIGN IN TO SHARE OR SAVE THIS

## Hillary Clinton and the New York Times

### THE PUBLIC EDITOR Pantsuits and the Presidency

By CLARK HOYT  
Published: June 22, 2008

SOME supporters of Hillary Clinton believe that sexism colored news coverage of her presidential campaign. The Times reported in a front-page article on June 19 that many are innocuous hiccups of cable news ne

I asked my assistant, Michael McElroy, to run a database search for some key words that might indicate sexism in The Times — “shrill,” “strident,” “pantsuit” and “giggle,” among them.



Clark Hoyt

Peggy Aulizio of South Dartmouth, Mass. review of your own stories and columns think so too. And I think a fair reading of Times did a reasonably good job in its ne Dowd's columns about Clinton's campai with language painting her as a 50-foot suffocating embrace, a conniving film n

## News Judgment or Bias?



### Maryland governor to sign same-sex marriage into law on Thursday

(Reuters) - Maryland's governor plans to sign a bill making same-sex marriage legal later this week, his office said on Monday, while opponents were making plans to challenge the new law at the ballot box.

Choosing a story to cover is not de-facto proof of bias.



## Fair play?

### 3 in Chicago Face Charges of Terrorism in Protests

By IDALMY CARRERA and STEVEN YACCINO  
Published: May 19, 2012



Provocateurs Entrap Patsies as NATO War Council Plans Mass Murder

Kurt Nimmo  
Infowars.com  
May 19, 2012





## Fair Presentation:



## Is Balance the Same as Fairness?



Climate Change Could Make Everest Unclimbable, Says Sherpa



Should Climate Change Doubtters Get Equal Space?

## What Is Balance?

Discord Fills Washington on Possible Libya Intervention

"He keeps reminding us that the best revolutions are completely organic," the senior official said, quoting the president.



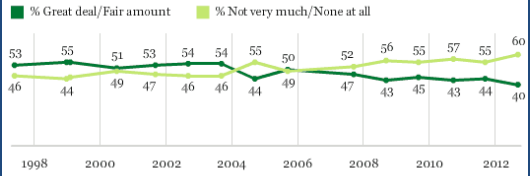
At the same time, there are persistent voices — in Congress and even inside the administration — arguing that Mr. Obama is moving too slowly. They contend that there is too much concern about perceptions, and that the White House is too squeamish because of Iraq.

Furthermore, they say a military caught up in two difficult wars has exaggerated the risks of imposing a no-fly zone over Libya, the tactic discussed most often.

## What the Public Believes

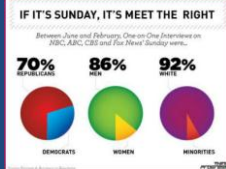
In general, how much trust and confidence do you have in the mass media -- such as newspapers, TV, and radio -- when it comes to reporting the news fully, accurately, and fairly -- a great deal, a fair amount, not very much, or none at all?

Gallup trend since 1997



GALLUP

## Fairness, Balance & Bias



Checking Your Lenses