

# The Harvard International Journal of Press/Politics

<http://hij.sagepub.com/>

---

## **The Fox News Factor**

Jonathan S. Morris

*The Harvard International Journal of Press/Politics* 2005 10: 56

DOI: 10.1177/1081180X05279264

The online version of this article can be found at:

<http://hij.sagepub.com/content/10/3/56>

---

Published by:



<http://www.sagepublications.com>

Additional services and information for *The Harvard International Journal of Press/Politics* can be found at:

**Email Alerts:** <http://hij.sagepub.com/cgi/alerts>

**Subscriptions:** <http://hij.sagepub.com/subscriptions>

**Reprints:** <http://www.sagepub.com/journalsReprints.nav>

**Permissions:** <http://www.sagepub.com/journalsPermissions.nav>

**Citations:** <http://hij.sagepub.com/content/10/3/56.refs.html>

>> [Version of Record](#) - Jul 14, 2005

[What is This?](#)

# The Fox News Factor

*Jonathan S. Morris*

---

This article analyzes data from the Pew Research Center's 1998 to 2004 Biennial Media Consumption Surveys to identify demographic and behavioral factors that predict Americans' exposure to cable and broadcast nightly news. While many predictors are significant across sources, much of the evidence indicates the audiences are unique. The network news audience is becoming increasingly older, and the Fox News and CNN audiences are becoming increasingly polarized. Compared to the CNN audience, Fox News watchers are less likely to follow stories that are critical of the Bush administration but more likely to follow entertainment-based news stories. The findings also suggest that Fox News watchers enjoy news that shares their personal views, while the CNN and network news audiences prefer news that has more in-depth interviews with public officials. Finally, evidence suggests that the Fox News watchers were more likely than nonwatchers to underestimate rather than overestimate, the number of American casualties in Iraq.

**Keywords:** *television news; cable news; Fox News; CNN*

---

Television is the most frequently used source of news for Americans (Baum 2003; Bennett 2005; Dautrich and Hartley 1999; Graber 2002; Paletz 2002). The Internet, newsmagazines, radio, and even daily newspapers are secondary to TV, which dominates the social and political landscape in the United States (Putnam 2000). The mass public relies heavily on television as a primary resource in developing attitudes toward political issues and events throughout the country and around the world (Iyengar and Kinder 1987). Television plays a major role in defining American society and popular culture, and its role in American politics is equally important—if not more so.

The landscape of television news has changed dramatically in recent years. Once a dominant mainstay, the traditional nightly network news broadcasts have seen their audience dwindle significantly. Several possible factors have contributed to this erosion, including the contention that American lives have grown

Press/Politics 10(3):56-79

DOI: 10.1177/1081180X05279264

© 2005 by the President and the Fellows of Harvard College

increasingly hectic, leaving little chance to accommodate the 6:30 p.m. time slot for the network news. A more direct factor, however, is that technology and innovation has afforded more efficient and effective methods of getting political news. Specifically, new media, or “new news” sources have emerged that provide news in a fashion that is more convenient and often more entertaining (Davis and Owen 1998). These new media sources encompass a wide array, including Internet (Davis 1999), talk radio (Barker 2002), tabloids (Fox and Van Sickel 2001), and even comedy-based talk shows (Baum 2003, 2005). One of the most significant additions, however, has been cable news.

Once thought to be an ancillary news provider, the cable news industry is now a major player, and the broadcast networks have suffered. As recently as May 1993, 60 percent of the American public reported watching network broadcast news on a regular basis. By April 2004, that number had been almost halved to 34 percent (Pew Research Center Report 2004b), while 38 percent of the public watches cable news networks such as CNN, MSNBC, or Fox News regularly.

When compared to the plummeting ratings of nightly network news, why has the cable news industry, particularly the relatively new Fox News Network, been so much more successful? Also, what demographic and attitudinal factors determine whether an individual will tune into network or one of the cable channels for news? Have the effects of these determinates changed in recent years? Are there unique factors that determine *which* cable station an individual may look to for political news, and are there discernable effects of exposure? Given the growth in the use of cable news in the past decade relative to network news, it is surprising how little empirical research has been conducted on the topic. This study is an effort to understand the political nature of today’s cable and broadcast news audiences and gauge future prospects for each.

## Television News

Early research on television news dismissed network broadcasts as politically and ideologically insignificant (Klapper 1960), creating a “minimal effects” thesis (see Iyengar et al. 1982: 848). The persuasive element of television broadcasts was thought to be ineffective. Instead, television news was thought to reinforce preexisting attitudes and preferences. Analyses from the 1980s and 1990s, however, cast significant doubt on the minimal effects argument (see Bartels 1993; Zaller 1992). Iyengar and Kinder (1987: 4) found that television news has significant agenda-setting power, illustrating that “television news powerfully influences which problems viewers regard as the nation’s most serious.” They also uncovered a psychological “priming” effect in which the issues covered in the broadcast influences what information is most cognitively accessible to judge political issues.

The manner in which a television news story is framed has been found to directly influence mass opinion on a wide range of topics (Gamson 1992; Iyengar 1991; Nelson and Kinder 1996). Even broad attitudes such as tolerance for diverging political attitudes can be significantly influenced by a television news frame (Nelson et al. 1997). Television news stories are typically framed around an episode or a theme (Iyengar 1991). The episodic frame focuses on individual cases, or illustrative examples of a larger phenomenon. The thematic frame, on the other hand, will explicitly discuss larger social and political trends. The manner in which a story is framed can have serious consequences on how viewers evaluate causes and remedies of the issues at hand.

Although framing effects can be associated with any news medium, the nature of televised news differs from print news (or other news that is read, such as the Internet). Televised news has a more significant influence on the public's emotional reactions to politicians, institutions, and the issues they address (Hibbing and Theiss-Morse 1998). Reading the news facilitates more cognitive responses, which are relatively stable and often confirmatory of preexisting attitudes. The drama and imagery of televised news has the greatest potential to stir our emotions—sympathy, envy, empathy, dislike, and even disgust. These emotional impressions can often stay with people for extended periods of time and therefore color impressions of political issues (Graber 2002, 2001).

The dawn of the cable news era has created heightened competition and increased audience fragmentation. Americans have a multitude of news options when watching television, and the coverage from channel to channel has become less homogeneous than traditional network options of the past (Just et al. 1996; West 2001). Subsequently, it is overly ambiguous to examine the American television news audience as a single entity. This analysis looks at demographic, attitudinal, and behavior correlates of exposure to the two major genres of national TV news: broadcast networks and cable news.

### **Broadcast Network News**

Millions of Americans tune into *NBC Nightly News*, *CBS Evening News*, or *ABC World News Tonight* on a daily basis. When compared to other daily national news programs, these half-hour shows still dominate, and the anchors are widely recognized throughout the country as significant social and political actors. However, until the late 1980s and early 1990s, network news programs were one of just a few possibilities for daily national news on television. Now, the TV news landscape has changed dramatically, and today's audience share for network news has dwindled to a fraction of what it was (90 percent in the 1970s; Just et al. 1996).

Much of the former network news audience is now using the Internet and cable television for news that is more convenient, timely, and entertaining (Morris 2002). New media have cut into the audience share for other traditional news

sources as well. The number of Americans who read the daily newspaper regularly dropped 12 percent between 1990 and 2002. Likewise, the weekly newsmagazine audience decreased by 28 percent in that same time period. Nowhere, however, has the audience falloff been as sharp as that of the network news audience, which has decreased by almost 50 percent (Pew Research Center 2004b).

The drop in network news usage has been most pronounced among young Americans. During the early stages of the 2004 presidential primary campaign, only 23 percent of adults younger than thirty said they frequently got information from nightly network news, a 39 percent decrease from 2000 (Pew Research Center 2004a). Older Americans appear to have greater allegiance to nightly network news than the younger cohorts. Thirty-two percent of Americans between thirty and forty-nine years of age regularly consulted traditional network news during the 2004 campaign, and this frequency jumped to 46 percent for Americans older than fifty.

In some respects, it appears as though the major broadcast networks are seeing the writing on the wall and are cutting news budgets to maintain profit margins in an era of heightened competition. This process began in the 1980s as overall dominance of network television began to erode (Auletta 1991). Compared to only a decade ago, networks are less apt to abandon prime-time entertainment programming to cover issues and events of a political nature, even during the campaign. Instead, the networks appear to stick to their traditional "bread and butter," which is nightly news broadcasts, Sunday morning talk shows, and prime-time newsmagazine programs such as *60 Minutes* or *20/20*. In this respect, networks have relegated much of their responsibility of covering political news to the twenty-four-hour cable stations.

### **Cable News**

The first cable news network, CNN, first aired on June 1, 1980 (Bae 1999). The intent was to apply the concept of all-news radio to television (Auletta 2003). Its sister station, CNN Headline News, was created a few years later and provides repetitive updates of the day's "headlines" that could be amended if necessary. While CNN initially garnered little attention from mainstream America, its ratings improved modestly throughout the 1980s. Ratings in the early 1990s increased dramatically, primarily as a result of CNN's pivotal role in covering the Gulf War of 1991. CNN's approach to the war provided coverage that was sophisticated, timely, and unprecedented in its dramatics. The daily twists and turns of a fast-paced war were almost simultaneously transmitted back to the American public in vivid detail, and CNN did not miss a beat.

By no means was CNN ever the dominant news source in American, but it did not take long after the first Gulf War for people to notice that CNN was profiting and that it was the only twenty-four-hour news network on television. By the

mid-1990s, MSNBC and CNBC had joined the fray, closely followed by the Fox News Channel in 1996. At that time, CNN had access to 70 million homes, MSNBC had 22 million, and Fox News 17 million (Auletta 2003). CNN was still the most dominant news channel, but the cable news audience had fragmented.

Like CNN and MSNBC, Fox News intended to offer viewers constant up-to-the-minute news. In 1996, the chairman and CEO of Fox News stated, "We're going to be basically a hard-news network," providing "straight, factual information to the American people so that they can make up their own minds, with less 'spin' and less 'face time' for anchors" (quoted in Auletta 2003). Soon, Fox News began to rival CNN as the preeminent cable news provider in America. Like CNN capitalizing on the dramatics of the first Gulf War, Fox News took advantage of significant political and social events to put themselves on the map. The Clinton-Lewinsky scandal, the 2000 presidential election and Florida recount, the Gary Condit scandal, the attacks of September 11, and the second Gulf War all were covered extensively on Fox News, and its ratings spiked during each event. While other news channels saw their ratings increase during these times as well, Fox News was growing at a rate that exceeded the competition. In 2001, the Fox News Channel began to consistently beat CNN in the ratings, with MSNBC lagging far behind (Collins 2004).

Why did Fox News's ratings soar more so than other news providers during these times of crisis? There are several possible factors. First, Fox News was first to develop more dynamic audio and visual presentations of the news. These innovations include the scrolling "ticker" at the bottom of the TV screen for viewer-friendly headline updates, sound effects to introduce news segments, and dramatic multimedia visuals. Rival CNN and MSNBC were quick to adapt this approach. Before the beginning of the second Gulf War, Jim Rutenberg (2003) of the *New York Times* observed,

Recalling how CNN made its name during the [first] gulf war, each [cable news] channel is trying to distinguish itself and outdo its rivals. . . . As a result, reporters are taking on a hypercharged tone as the cable networks try to persuade viewers ahead of time that they are the ones to watch should war break out. . . . Serving as a backdrop to all this jockeying is the success of the brassy Fox News, now the top cable news outlet in almost every ratings category. Its rapid rise has led CNN and MSNBC to try to match the kinetic Fox production style.

Second, Fox News challenges conventional journalism, and its unique approach resonates with a significant portion of the news audience. The appeal is primarily to Americans right of center (Alterman 2003), who have held the opinion for decades that America's press corps has an affinity for the left. "Fox has brought prominence to a new sort of TV journalism that casts aside traditional notions of objectivity, holds contempt for dissent and eschews the

skepticism of government as mainstream journalism's core" (Rutenberg 2003). Fox instead turns its skeptical eye toward the mainstream media and rival cable news networks (Collins 2004). During the second Gulf War, Fox News gained notoriety for allegedly covering the initial efforts of the Iraqi invasion from a pro-Bush/prowar perspective. Anchors and commentators were given more latitude to editorialize. This approach on Fox became evident after September 11, 2001, when the network adopted a heavy tone of American patriotism to its coverage. Quite often the coverage of the subsequent campaign in Afghanistan contained phrases like "our troops" and "terror goons" (Rutenberg 2003).

Aside from political news, all of the cable news channels have begun reaching for a larger audience by infusing more entertainment-based news, otherwise known as "soft news," into their coverage (Davis and Owen 1998; Fox and Van Sickle 2001). Soft news stories typically are sensationalized human interest stories that lack public policy components and instead focus on crime or disasters that have a dramatic flare (Baum 2003). Matt Baum (2003) makes the following observation about the current cable news environment:

CNN primarily—though, like most news outlets, not exclusively—falls into the category of "hard," rather than "soft" news. Yet, more recent entrants to the "all news" cable market, like MSNBC and Fox, hoping to broaden their audiences, have increasingly emulated soft news programming. And, in order to avoid losing viewers to their competitors, CNN has substantially increased the percentage of its broadcasts devoted to soft-news oriented topics and formats. (p. 179)

This trend was illustrated in early 2005 on CNN's sister station, CNN Headline News. Always touted as a repetitive source for quick news updates on the day's events, Headline News changed its format and introduced entertainment-based prime-time programming, which included "Showbiz Tonight" from 7 to 8 p.m. and "Nancy Grace" from 8 to 9 p.m. "Showbiz Tonight" is a television tabloid show specializing in Hollywood news, and "Nancy Grace" is a justice-themed program that primarily deals with high-profile court cases.

Overall, the differences in use between the various cable and broadcast nightly news are considerable. Using data from the Pew Research Center's 2004 Biennial news consumption study, a principle components analysis is presented in Table 1 (see the appendix for question wording). The analysis was conducted on all variables measuring exposure to broadcast and cable sources. The two significant factors that emerged from the analysis indicate a clear distinction between cable and broadcast news. This provides evidence to support the notion that there is significant variation between cable news usage patterns and that of broadcast audience.

The data from the Pew Research Center also provides the opportunity to evaluate frequency of television news usage and recent changes. Figure 1

**Table 1**

Principle components factor analysis of TV news usages in 2004 (varimax rotation)

TV News Source <sup>a</sup>	Factor 1 (Cable News)	Factor 2 (Broadcast News)
CNN	<b>.72</b>	.17
Fox News	<b>.63</b>	.07
MSNBC	<b>.70</b>	.25
CNBC	<b>.71</b>	.30
C-SPAN	<b>.67</b>	.06
CBS Evening News	.11	<b>.79</b>
ABC World News	.13	<b>.77</b>
NBC Nightly News	.16	<b>.69</b>
Eigenvalue	3.03	1.31
N = 1,451		

Note: Loadings greater than .35 are in bold.

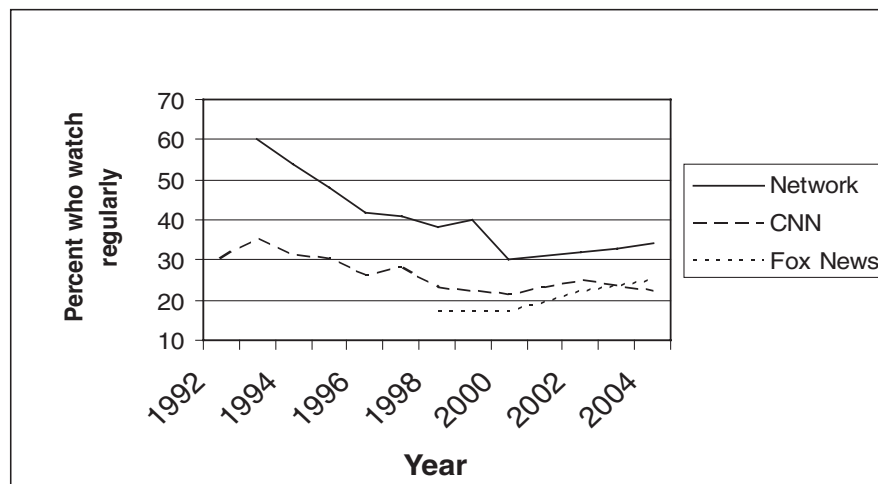
a. News exposure variable: each respondent was asked how often he or she watched each television news source (*never, hardly ever, sometimes, or regularly*).

illustrates these aggregate changes with regard to nightly network news, CNN, and Fox News exposure. The falloff in regular network news usage is considerable, and it is also noteworthy that the CNN audience has declined as well while the Fox News audience has moderately increased. Particularly troubling for CNN is a recent drop in 2002 and 2004 while Fox and the networks gained slightly. Overall, this trend indicates that the audiences of the more established sources (network and CNN) are eroding and Fox News has picked up some of the slack.

## Expectations

Who exactly makes up these cable and broadcast news audiences? What attitudinal and demographic factors play into determining who makes use of a certain new or traditional television news source? Additionally, does exposure to one source versus another significantly influence the type of information an individual receives? Existing literature argues that newer media appeals to certain types of Americans, specifically those who are younger, more affluent, and more critical of traditional outlets (Davis and Owen 1998). It can also be expected that the users of newer media will be less politically engaged than traditional media users (Fox and Van Sickel 2001). Also, because new media like cable news has been found to focus more on entertainment-based news that lacks a focus on public policy (Davis and Owen 1998), it can also be expected that exposure to Fox News and CNN will facilitate more of a tendency to follow stories of this nature. However, as each news channel pursues a unique audience, it seeks to differentiate its coverage from competitors, especially in the all-news cable market





**Figure 1**  
TV News Audience Trends

(Bae 1999). These attempts to differentiate coverage should lead to demographic and attitudinal variations across the two cable news audiences. It can also be expected along the same lines that exposure to these sources may influence the type of information the audience is exposed to.

Recent popular claims of a “liberal media” have been leveled against the anchors and producers of nightly network news (Bozell 2004; Goldberg 2002). Conversely, the Fox News Network has been accused of providing coverage much more friendly to the right (Alterman 2003; Franken 2003). Ever since Fox News played a significant role in the premature prediction of a Bush victory on election night in 2000, the station has come under scrutiny for unfairly covering politics, and similar claims have been leveled against CNN and network news from the other direction (Collins 2004). Thus, it can be expected that Democrats would be more likely to watch CNN and nightly network news than Republicans, who should be more likely to watch Fox News. It can also be expected that this effect of party identification on viewership has strengthened in the past few years, especially as Fox News continued to solidify itself as a legitimate alternative to more established television news sources. While a Pew Research Center Report (2004b) noted this trend, it is expected that the effect will hold even when controlling for other factors.

If there is indeed an ongoing political polarization of the TV news audience, personal motivations may play a role as well. Uses and gratification theory argues that “people feel gratified if the media reinforce what they already know and believe” (Graber 2002: 203). Therefore, it is expected that cable news viewers seek information that coincides with their own personal political views (Bennett 2005).

Finally, based on the above logic, there should be a noticeable difference in the *type* of coverage the audiences are exposed to. Critics have contended that stories that are damaging to President Bush and the Republicans have been underreported on Fox News, while their successes have been overreported (see Alterman 2003; Rutten 2002). If Fox News and its viewers do have an affinity for the right, it can be expected that the audience has less exposure to news stories that they would perceive as unfavorable. Likewise, viewers of CNN and network news should have more exposure to stories that are critical of the right.

## Method

Data from the Pew Research Center offers the opportunity to test the preceding expectations while controlling for several demographic, attitudinal, and behavioral factors. In recent years, the Pew Research Center has conducted "Biennial Media Consumption" surveys every even-numbered year on a national sample. Data from the media consumption studies were accessed for the years 1998, 2000, 2002, and 2004. The benefit of these data is the consistency in the questions from year to year, which allows for the opportunity to look for relationship changes. While the data certainly are not time-series oriented, they do allow for assessment of some general trends, which are discussed.

Several dependent variables are analyzed. The first, exposure to nightly network news, is measured by asking respondents, "How often do you watch the national nightly network news on CBS, ABC or NBC? This is different from local news shows about the area where you live" (*never* = 1, *hardly ever* = 2, *sometimes* = 3, or *regularly* = 4; see appendix for question wording). The second and third dependent variables measure cable news exposure, particularly CNN and Fox News. The survey items for these variables simply ask, "How often do you watch CNN?" and "How often do you watch the Fox News CABLE Channel?" (*never*, *hardly ever*, *sometimes*, or *regularly*). While other cable news exposure items are available, such as MSNBC, CNBC, and C-SPAN, they are not included in this analysis. CNN and Fox News have emerged as the dominant cable news sources in America. The popular alternatives they provide to traditional TV news, as well as each other, is the focus of this analysis. Also, the significance of a coefficient change from one year to the next was tested using a Wald test.

A second set of dependent variables is used to measure exposure to various news stories. Respondents were asked to rate how closely they had followed certain stories (1 = *not at all closely*, 2 = *not too closely*, 3 = *fairly closely*, 4 = *very closely*). The final dependent variable is a knowledge-based question regarding how many American soldiers had died in the Iraqi conflict (1 = correct answer, 0 = incorrect answer). The ordinal and binomial nature of these dependent variables requires a maximum likelihood estimation of the data, as opposed to

ordinary least squares regression (Long 1997). Ordered probit and probit estimation was therefore chosen for the statistical analysis.

## Results

To model the predictors of exposure to Fox News, CNN, and network, the survey data for each year are analyzed separately, and the results are listed in Table 2. Overall, the findings indicate numerous significant predictors of television news usage. There are, however, several trends that merit discussion.

Not surprisingly, several demographic predictors are significant. The effects of these predictors certainly vary across news sources and time. Age has a positive effect on exposure to traditional nightly network news. This relationship between age and cable news usage is much weaker than that of age and nightly network news. When comparing the two cable audiences, the evidence indicates that Fox News has a slightly older audience than CNN, but this difference is marginal. Figure 2 illustrates the predicted effect of age on regular TV news usage based on the 2004 data (all other variables held constant). An increase in age influences the probability that an individual would be a regular user of all three news types, but the effect is clearly strongest on nightly network news usage. Also, the coefficient change from 1998 (.008) to 2004 (.015) indicates the network audience has significantly aged ( $p < .05$ ) in a relatively short period of time.

The other demographic variables point to a few trends. The cable news audience is more racially diverse than network, and income correlates positively with cable news usage, but not network news. Education relates negatively with all three sources in almost every year, but the effect is most strongly related to Fox News usage. Also, the network news audience has become more female since 1998 ( $p < .05$ ), while no such trend exists in the cable news audience.

The effect of party identification (1 = *strong Republican* to 5 = *strong Democrat*) is insignificant for each news source in 1998, and there is little change through 2002, although Fox News does become slightly more Republican. The 2004 data, however, demonstrate a dramatic change and a stark polarization. In contrast to the preceding years, Democrats are more likely than Republicans to watch CNN and network news, and Republicans are much more likely to watch Fox News. It should also be noted that the effect of party identification on viewing habits is stronger for the Fox News audience than CNN or network. Figure 3 graphs the change and illustrates how the average regular Fox News watcher has become increasingly Republican while the opposite happens for CNN and network news viewers. All of these changes from 2002 to 2004 were statistically significant ( $p < .05$ ).

Table 2 also shows that those who frequently vote are more likely to use traditional nightly network news. Voting frequency does not, however, associate as

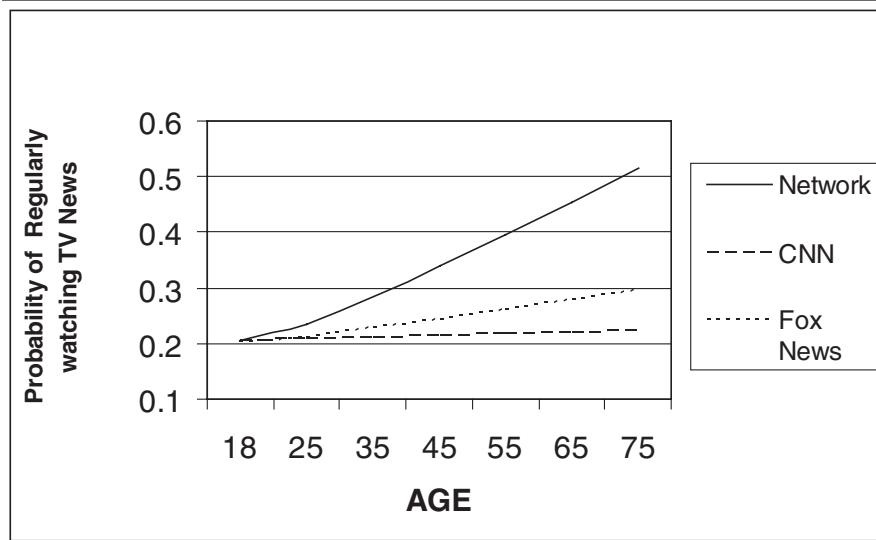
**Table 2**

Ordered probit analysis of network and cable news exposure (1998-2004)

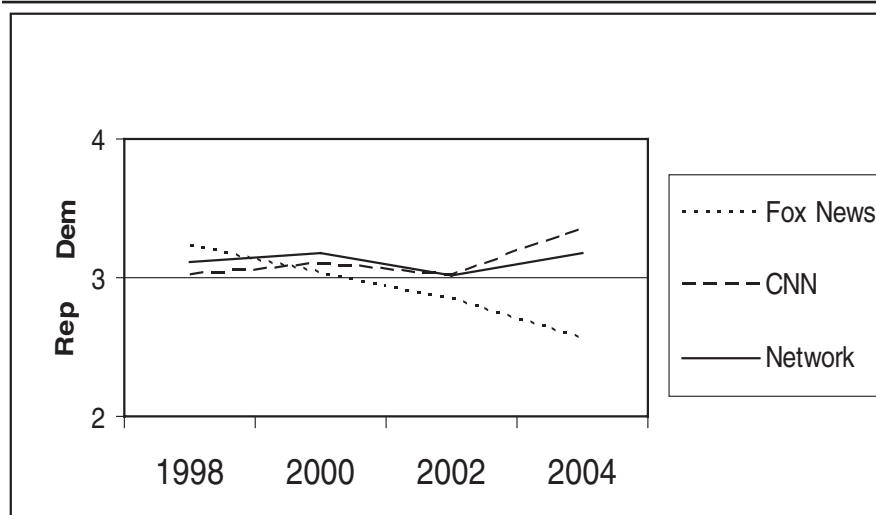
Predictor	1998			2000		
	Network	CNN	Fox News	Network	CNN	Fox News
Age	.008***	.004*	-.000	.012***	-.000	.004**
White	-.198**	-.356***	-.399***	-.167**	-.262***	-.312***
Income	.013	.073***	.001	-.015	.044***	.031**
Education	-.033	.058**	-.033	-.040**	-.001	-.065
Male	.150**	-.189***	-.090	.048	-.085*	-.064**
Party ID	.010	-.012	.006	.013	.011	-.028**
Vote	.065**	.017	.008	.070***	.046**	.042**
Cynicism	-.251***	-.123***	-.115***	-.152***	-.132***	.016
Newspaper	.406***	.349***	.249***	.275***	.331***	.205***
Knowledge	.261***	-.013	-.093*	.038	.124***	-.101***
$\alpha$ 1	-0.133	-0.478	-1.195	-0.370	-0.539	-0.572
$\alpha$ 2	0.400	-0.112	-0.790	0.148	-0.080	-0.120
$\alpha$ 3	1.27	0.929	-0.112	0.916	0.913	0.727
Log-likelihood	-1,413.93	-1,470.33	-1,489.66	-3,199.46	-3,153.87	-3,166.10
$\chi^2$	158.61***	99.35***	50.53***	227.58***	225.19***	96.84***
<i>n</i>	1,149	1,150	1,148	2,419	2,424	2,411
	2002			2004		
	Network	CNN	Fox News	Network	CNN	Fox News
Age	.012***	.003	.003	.015***	.001	.005**
White	-.068	-.155*	-.229**	-.100	-.249***	-.484***
Income	-.018	.032*	.027	-.010	.032*	.032*
Education	-.007	-.011	-.043*	-.042*	-.033	-.070***
Male	-.034	-.190***	-.095	-.132*	.040	-.006
Party ID	.003	-.007	-.036*	.052***	.063***	-.113***
Vote	.109***	.093***	.042	.090***	.049*	.026
Cynicism	-.115***	-.106***	.007	-.198***	-.105***	-.027
Newspaper	.253***	.386***	.248***	.296***	.250***	.081
Knowledge	.071**	.057*	-.049	.058*	.077**	.028
$\alpha$ 1	-0.040	-0.316	-0.447	-0.188	-0.195	-0.999
$\alpha$ 2	0.405	0.033	-0.047	0.347	0.185	-0.656
$\alpha$ 3	1.209	0.896	0.713	1.073	1.145	0.172
Log-likelihood	-1,481.64	-1,402.44	-1,438.99	-1,491.17	-1,506.54	-1,507.00
$\chi^2$	118.29***	99.76***	34.73***	153.95***	72.71***	77.60***
<i>n</i>	1,143	1,089	1,088	1,162	1,156	1,155

\* $p < .10$ . \*\* $p < .05$ . \*\*\* $p < .01$ . Two-tailed test.

closely with cable news usage, although the evidence indicates that CNN users vote with more frequency than the Fox News audience. The relationship was



**Figure 2**  
Age and Viewing Habits



**Figure 3**  
Average Party Identification of Regular Viewers

insignificant for both CNN and Fox News in 1998. Following 1998, however, the relationship between voting and CNN usage strengthened slightly, but no such trend is evident for Fox News.

High cynicism toward the news media relates negatively with exposure to all three television news sources in 1998, although the association is much stronger for traditional network news. Since 1998, the association for all sources has declined, but the evidence suggests that the Fox News audience has the most cynicism toward the mainstream media. This skepticism toward mainstream media is also reflected in the fact that regular newspaper readers are more likely to watch CNN or network news than Fox News. In fact, the data from 2004 indicate that there is no significant association between newspaper usage and exposure to Fox News.

The relationship between political knowledge and TV news usage was quite erratic over the four surveys. These results, however, should be interpreted with caution. The measure of knowledge was an index of the number of political/current events questions correctly answered by the respondent (see the appendix). The knowledge questions were different for each of the surveys, so changes in coefficients from one year to the next should not be overstated. With this fact in mind, comparisons within each year can still be made, and a startling trend does emerge. In each year, Fox News viewers are clearly the least knowledgeable of the three audiences. While these findings do not show that Fox News performs less effectively than other TV news sources in educating viewers about politics and current events, it does point toward the possibility that Fox is most effective in capturing an audience that is more cynical and less knowledgeable and engaged as a whole.

Building on the findings from Table 2, how might an individual's personal preferences influence his or her decision to watch one TV news source versus another? A few items in Pew's 2004 survey offer an opportunity to address this question. Specifically, survey items were included that asked each respondent what style of news he or she preferred. Table 3 replicates the 2004 model presented in Table 5, but with two new predictors included. These variables measure whether a respondent likes or dislikes news that (1) includes in-depth interviews with political leaders and policy makers and (2) shares your (the respondent's) point of view on politics and issues (1 = *dislike it*, 2 = *doesn't matter*, 3 = *like it*). As Table 3 shows, the Fox News audience has different preferences than CNN and network news watchers on both accounts. First, while individuals who like news with in-depth interviews tend to watch network news and CNN with more frequency, no such relationship exists for Fox News. Also, people who like news that shares their own point of view are much more likely to watch Fox News, but no such relationship exists for the CNN or network audience. Again, these findings demonstrate the uniqueness of the Fox News audience.

Another issue to address in this analysis is whether exposure to a given news source is associated with the stories an individual follows. If there is indeed any truth to the claims that network and CNN cater to the left while Fox News caters to the right, there should be evidence that indicates frequent viewers are more

**Table 3**

Ordered probit analysis of TV news exposure by style preference (2004 data)

Predictor	Network	CNN	Fox News
Enjoy news with in-depth interviews	.152***	.151***	.083
Enjoy news that shares your own views	.031	.051	.172***
Age	.015***	.001	.006***
White	-.086	-.267***	-.537***
Income	-.014	.032*	.033*
Education	-.043*	-.043*	-.081***
Male	-.132*	.039	-.001
Party ID	.049**	.060***	-.110***
Vote	.076**	.037	.020
Cynicism	-.188***	-.102***	-.028
Newspaper	.283***	.260***	.067
Knowledge	.039	.063*	.008
$\alpha$ 1	0.131	0.148	-0.525
$\alpha$ 2	0.662	0.532	-0.177
$\alpha$ 3	1.396	1.494	0.667
Log-likelihood	-1,460.99	-1,481.52	-1,479.10
$\chi^2$	154.01***	82.64***	84.06***
<i>n</i>	1,141	1,140	1,139

\* $p < .10$ . \*\* $p < .05$ . \*\*\* $p < .01$ . Two-tailed test.

familiar with stories that are critical of the opposition. An additional expectation was that frequent usage of cable news would lead to greater familiarity with “soft news” stories than network news. The 2004 Pew survey data (conducted in March and April 2004) offers the opportunity to test these expectations. Respondents were asked to rate how closely they followed certain ongoing stories/issues in the news (1 = *not at all closely*, 2 = *not too closely*, 3 = *fairly closely*, 4 = *very closely*). These items included in this analysis are exposure to the September 11 hearings on Capitol Hill, reports of high gas prices, the war in Iraq, the Kobe Bryant sexual assault trial, and the trial of Scott Peterson (accused of killing his pregnant wife). Table 4 lists the results when each of these items were regressed against exposure to Fox News, CNN, and the networks while controlling for several demographic, attitudinal, and behavioral factors. While there were no measures of exposure to stories critical of the left, there were two measures of stories critical to the Bush administration—the congressional investigation on the intelligence failures surrounding the September 11 attacks and reports of high gas prices. Both of these stories were clearly unfriendly to the Bush administration, so it is expected that watchers of CNN and network news would follow these stories more closely than the Fox News audience. Table 4 shows that this is the case.

**Table 4**

Ordered probit analysis of exposure to news stories (2004 data)

Predictor	September 11 Congress Hearings	Reports of High Gas Prices	War in Iraq	Kobe Bryant Trial	Scott Peterson Trial
Watch Fox News	.031	.035	.147***	.125***	.118***
Watch CNN	.107***	.061*	.076**	.039	.057*
Network News Index <sup>a</sup>	.075***	.094***	.091***	.049***	.070***
Age	.003	-.003	.001	-.003	.005**
White	-.354***	-.130	.089	-.436***	-.035
Income	-.022	-.018	-.014	-.015	.013
Education	.017	-.085***	.033	-.031	-.080***
Male	.026	-.133*	.086	-.053	-.472***
Party ID	.027	.006	.008	.006	-.018
Vote	.109***	.045	.165***	.068**	.036
Cynicism	.019	.028	-.002	.027	.011
Newspaper Knowledge	.185**	.164**	.200**	.092	.136*
	.127***	.098***	.213***	.159***	.174***
$\alpha$ 1	0.527	-0.736	0.658	-0.258	0.103
$\alpha$ 2	1.313	-0.014	1.348	0.758	0.977
$\alpha$ 3	2.379	0.858	2.655	1.970	2.177
Log-likelihood	-1,423.12	-1,321.17	-997.47	-1,417.69	-1,399.92
$\chi^2$	182.19***	119.23***	252.09***	131.12***	198.94***
<i>n</i>	1,142	1,138	1,142	1,144	1,139

a. The Pew survey included the network news exposure item (from Tables 2 and 3) on a separate form from the CNN and Fox News items. Thus, casewise deletion prevented the inclusion of all three items as predictors in the same model. However, the Pew survey did contain individual measures of exposure to network news programs on each network separately (ABC, CBS, and NBC), and these items were on the same form as the CNN and Fox News items. The scale for each of the three stations was the same (1 = *never*, 2 = *hardly ever*, 3 = *sometimes*, 4 = *regularly*). These items were combined to create an additive index that ranged from 3 to 12.

\* $p < .10$ . \*\* $p < .05$ . \*\*\* $p < .01$ . Two-tailed test.

The expectation that cable news watchers would be more familiar with soft news stories than viewers of network news was not confirmed. The trials of Scott Peterson and Kobe Bryant fall under this soft news heading. Table 4 demonstrates that use of network news was positively associated with how closely an individual followed both the Scott Peterson and Kobe Bryant trials. Furthermore, there is a stark difference between the two cable networks. Specifically, the Fox News audience followed the two trials much more closely than the CNN audience, even when controlling for other factors. This finding points toward the possibility that Fox News offers its viewers more exposure to soft news than CNN.



**Table 5**

Probit analysis of U.S. casualty count in Iraq (2004 data)

Predictor	Identified Correct Number of U.S. Casualties (1 = Yes, 0 = No)
Watch Fox News	-.029
Watch CNN	.053
Network News Index	.010
Age	.014
White	-.121***
Income	.027
Education	.044
Male	.249***
Party ID	-.037
Vote	.035
Cynicism	.138***
Newspaper	.206**
Constant	-1.418***
Log-likelihood	-731.14
$\chi^2$	95.85
<i>n</i>	1,147

\*\**p* < .05. \*\*\**p* < .01. Two-tailed test.

The war in Iraq was followed closely by all audiences, although the Fox News audience followed with the most intensity (see Table 4). This was, of course, a major news story at the time the survey was administered (spring 2004), so it is not surprising that all audiences followed it. It cannot be confidently stated that coverage of the Iraq War was more damaging to the left or the right, as President Bush was claiming progress while his Democratic critics were pointing out numerous failures. One aspect of the war's coverage, however, that was particularly damaging to the Bush administration was reports of the number of American casualties. While there was no survey item that indicates how closely respondents followed coverage of casualties, there was an item that measured knowledge of the number of casualties at that time. Of the entire sample, 57 percent of respondents knew the correct answer (between five hundred and one thousand soldiers). Twenty-seven percent of the sample underestimated the number (less than five hundred), 9 percent overestimated (one to two thousand or more than two thousand), and 6 percent said they did not know how many casualties had occurred. Based on the discussion above, it can be expected that CNN and network news viewers would be more knowledgeable than Fox News watchers regarding the number of American casualties. However, as Table 5 shows, exposure to neither CNN nor network news was associated with whether a respondent knew the correct number of casualties. Although the

**Table 6**

Probit analysis of U.S. casualty count in Iraq (2004 data)

Predictor	Underestimated the Number of U.S. Casualties (1 = Underestimated, 0 = Overestimated/Did Not Know)			
	Model 1	Model 2	Model 3	Model 4
Watch Fox News	.107**	.103**	.109**	.094*
Watch CNN		.032	.025	.028
Network News Index		-.002	-.026	-.023
Age			.003	.005
White			-.022	-.108
Income			-.001	-.010
Education			.045	.040
Male			.428***	.409***
Party ID				-.056
Vote				-.023
Cynicism				-.069
Constant	.052***	.013	-.280	.239
Log-likelihood	-420.34	-408.64	-323.75	-302.98
$\chi^2$	6.19**	7.20*	19.89**	19.76**
<i>n</i>	639	625	508	478

\* $p < .10$ . \*\* $p < .05$ . \*\*\* $p < .01$ . Two-tailed test.

coefficients are positive for CNN and network, and negative for Fox News, none were even marginally significant (the closest was CNN at  $p = .15$ ).

Table 6 illustrates a more subtle trend. Specifically, the nature of the casualty variable offers the opportunity to examine whether individuals who did not know the correct number of casualties *overestimated* or *underestimated* with their guess. When examining only those respondents who did not correctly guess the number of casualties, Table 6 demonstrates that Fox News viewers were much more likely to *underestimate* the number of casualties than overestimate, and this relationship holds true even when controlling for several demographic and attitudinal variables (see Models 3 and 4 in Table 6). In short, the findings from Tables 5 and 6 demonstrate that even though Fox News watchers were following the Iraq War closely in the news, their knowledge of a critical aspect of it (casualty rate) was suspect.

## Conclusion

An increasing level of competition for a shrinking news audience has created a fierce media market. This competition is most evident on television, the most popular American news source. Battles between cable and broadcast news programs to capture an ever-shrinking slice of the audience pie have led to news

product differentiation (Bae 1999). Gone are the days when the homogeneous network news programs dominated. Today's television news market is more heterogeneous than ever before (West 2001). Thus, the probability that audiences are getting exposed to differing political messages increases. Indeed, this analysis has demonstrated evidence to support this contention. Particularly, the findings suggest that the Fox News audience has a unique composition and gets exposed to different coverage than the CNN and network news watchers.

Recent divisive national events such as the Clinton impeachment, the 2000 presidential election, and the Gulf War have led many scholars and journalists to speculate that the American electorate has become increasingly polarized (Layman 2001; Sterling 2004; White 2003). It has also been noted that elected officials have become more polarized as well (Forgette 2003). The findings from this analysis confirm that the news audiences on cable and broadcast television are following the same trend. And while the Fox News audience is slightly more Republican than the CNN audience is Democrat, it is evident that both audiences are moving away from the middle. If the past few years are any indication, the television news audience will continue to polarize, and the news product from each source may become increasingly unique. Because Fox News's style of covering politics is an indisputable marketing success, future attempts to imitate them could make for interesting television news innovations in the upcoming years. There may also, however, be reason for concern if viewers are increasingly exposed to information that only reinforces their preconceived notions and shirks balanced debate. Such a trend could contribute to further polarization of the public and constrain future attempts at an open dialogue between the left and right in America.

Polarization aside, Robert Putnam (2000) suggests that many Americans are becoming more cynical and less engaged politically. It appears that network news has failed to appeal to Americans with these traits. In this respect, CNN has not performed much better than the networks in the past few years. Fox News, on the other hand, does the best job of attracting Americans with the increasingly common traits of lower political knowledge, higher cynicism, and less political involvement. CNN's audience shares much more in common with traditional broadcast news than Fox News. All of these factors play a role in making Fox News the most highly rated cable news station in America today, with CNN a distant second. Attempts by rival TV news providers to "out-fox Fox News" by appealing to today's polarized and entertainment-hungry cable television audiences have failed thus far. Connie Chung's prime-time talk show on CNN was supposed to compete with Fox's popular *O'Reilly Factor* but was cancelled in less than a year. Joe Scarborough's evening conservative talk show on MSNBC has adopted a very similar tone and style as *O'Reilly* but has yet to get Fox-like ratings.

Although the success of Fox News is something to marvel at from a commercial perspective, this analysis does illustrate cause for concern. Specifically, evidence indicates that the Fox News audience prefers news that shares their own point of view on politics and issues, while CNN and network news watchers do not. The findings go a step further to illustrate that Fox News viewers have less familiarity with issues and events in the news that may be critical of their point of view. The Fox audience paid less attention to the September 11 congressional hearings and reports of higher gas prices than those who watch CNN and network news. Finally, of the people who were unaware of how many U.S. soldiers had died in Iraq (almost half the sample), those who frequently watch Fox News were more likely than nonviewers to underestimate the death toll.

The limitation of survey data analysis is the inability to draw causal connections between variables. Hence, this analysis has not been able to empirically prove that exposure to Fox News, CNN, or network news leads to attitude change. Instead, the focus has been on associations between variables, which is a useful first step. Future research should move into the laboratory, where the causal effects of Fox News's new brand of cable news programming can be examined.

### Acknowledgments

The author would like to thank the Pew Research Center for providing the data. The Pew Research Center bears no responsibility for the analyses or interpretations of the data presented here.

### Appendix

All data in the analysis were taken from the Pew Research Center's Media Consumption Studies conducted in 1998, 2000, 2002, and 2004. The exact question wording for each variable used in this analysis, as well as coding, is listed below. The variable names as listed in Tables 1 through 6 are given in brackets. Unless noted otherwise, question wording was exactly the same for each of the three surveys. Answers of "don't know/refused" were treated as missing data unless otherwise noted.

### Dependent Variables

"Now I'd like to know how often you watch or listen to certain TV and radio programs. For each that I read, tell me if you watch or listen to it regularly (4), sometimes (3), hardly ever (2), or never (1). First, how often do you . . ."

1. "Watch the national nightly network news on CBS, ABC or NBC? This is different from local news shows about the area where you live?" [**Network News**]
2. "Watch Cable News Network (CNN)?" [**CNN**]
3. "Watch the Fox News CABLE Channel?" [**Fox News**]

"Now I will read a list of some stories covered by news organization this past month. As I read each item, tell me if you happened to follow this news story very closely, fairly closely, not too closely, or not at all closely?"

1. The Sept. 11 Commissions hearings on the 2001 terrorist attacks [**September 11 Congress Hearings**]
2. The high price of gasoline these days [**Reports of High Gas Prices**]
3. News about the current situation in Iraq [**War in Iraq**]
4. Basketball star Kobe Bryant being accused of sexual assault [**Kobe Bryant Trial**]
5. The murder of Laci Peterson [**Scott Peterson Trial**]

"Since the start of Military action in Iraq last March, about how many U.S. soldiers have been killed? To the best of your knowledge, has it been under 500, 500 to 1000, 1000 to 2000, or more than 2000? [**Casualty Count in Iraq**]

- 1 = under 500
- 2 = 500 to 1000 (correct)
- 3 = 1000 to 2000
- 4 = more than 2000

### **Independent Variables**

"What is your age?" [**Age**]

"What is your race? Are you white, black, Asian or some other?" [**Race**]

- 1 = white
- 0 = nonwhite

"Last year . . . what was your total family income from all sources, before taxes? Just stop me when I get to the right category." [**Income**]

- 1 = less than \$10,000
- 2 = \$10,000 to under \$20,000
- 3 = \$20,000 to under \$30,000
- 4 = \$30,000 to under \$40,000
- 5 = \$40,000 to under \$50,000
- 6 = \$50,000 to under \$75,000
- 7 = \$75,000 to under \$100,000
- 8 = \$100,000 or more

"What is the last grade or class that you completed in school?" [**Education**]

- 1 = none, or grade 1-8
- 2 = High school incomplete (Grades 9-11)
- 3 = High school graduate (Grade 12 or GED)
- 4 = Business, technical, or vocational school AFTER high school
- 5 = Some college, no 4-year degree
- 6 = College graduate (BS, BA, or other 4 year degree)
- 7 = Post-graduate training or professional schooling after college

**[Gender]** (no question)

- 1 = male
- 0 = female

“In politics today, do you consider yourself a Republican, Democrat or Independent?” **[Party ID]**

- 1 = Republican
- 2 = Independent, leaning Republican
- 3 = Independent, no preference, other
- 4 = Independent, leaning Democrat
- 5 = Democrat

“How often would you say you vote?” **[Vote]**

- 1 = never
- 2 = seldom
- 3 = part of the time
- 4 = nearly always
- 5 = always

“How good of a job does the evening news do in summing up the events of the day . . . an excellent job a good job, only a fair job or a poor job?” **[Cynicism 1998]**

- 1 = excellent
- 2 = good
- 3 = only fair
- 4 = poor

“Now I’m going to read a series of statements about the news. For each statement, please tell me if you completely agree with it, mostly agree with it, mostly disagree with it, or completely disagree with it. . . . People who decide what to put on TV news or in the newspapers are out of touch with people like me.” **[Cynicism 2000 through 2004]**

- 1 = completely disagree
- 2 = disagree
- 3 = mostly agree
- 4 = strongly agree

“Do you happen to read any daily newspaper or newspapers regularly, or not?” **[Newspaper]**

- 1 = yes
- 0 = no

“Now I would like to ask you a few questions about some things that have been in the news. Not everyone will have heard about them.”

- 1. “Who is the speaker of the U.S. House of Representatives?” (1 = correct answer, 0 = incorrect/no answer)

2. "Do you happen to know if high cholesterol is generally regarded as good for your health, or bad for your health?" (1 = correct answer, 0 = incorrect/no answer)
  3. "Do you happen to know if the weather in the United States generally moves from east to west OR west to east?" (1 = correct answer, 0 = incorrect/no answer)
- [Knowledge 1998]** is an additive index of the above three items (0 = *lowest knowledge* to 3 = *highest knowledge*).

"Now I would like to ask you a few questions about some things that have been in the news. Not everyone will have heard about them."

1. "Do you happen to know who Alan Greenspan is?" (1 = correct answer, 0 = incorrect/no answer)
  2. "Do you happen to know if the Federal Reserve Bank has raised or lowered interest rates in recent months, or have interest rates stayed the same?" (1 = correct answer, 0 = incorrect/no answer)
  3. "Do you happen to know at what level the Dow Jones Industrial average is currently trading?" (1 = correct answer, 0 = incorrect/no answer)
- [Knowledge 2000]** is an additive index of the above three items (0 = *lowest knowledge* to 3 = *highest knowledge*).

"Now I would like to ask you a few questions about some things that have been in the news. Not everyone will have heard about them."

1. "Recently, many European countries have adopted a new currency. Do you happen to know the name of this new European money?" (1 = correct answer, 0 = incorrect/no answer)
  2. "Do you happen to know who Yasser Arafat is?" (1 = yes, 0 = incorrect/no answer)
  3. "Do you happen to know when the state of Israel was established?" (1 = correct answer, 0 = incorrect/no answer)
- [Knowledge 2002]** is an additive index of the above three items (0 = *lowest knowledge* to 3 = *highest knowledge*).

"Now I would like to ask you a few questions about some things that have been in the news. Not everyone will have heard about them."

1. Do you happen to know which political party has a majority in the U.S. House of Representatives?" (1 = correct answer, 0 = incorrect/no answer)
  2. "Do you know the name of the terrorist organization that is responsible for the September 11th attacks on the United States?" (1 = yes, 0 = incorrect/no answer)
  3. "In the recent trial involving Martha Stewart, can you recall whether she was found guilty, innocent, or if there was a mistrial?" (1 = correct answer, 0 = incorrect/no answer)
  4. "Since the start of military action in Iraq last March, about how many U.S. soldiers have been killed? To the best of your knowledge, has it been under 500, 500 to 1000, 1000 to 2000, or more than 2000?" (1 = correct answer, 0 = incorrect/no answer)
- [Knowledge 2004]** is an additive index of the above four items (0 = *lowest knowledge* to 4 = *highest knowledge*).

"There are a lot of different ways that the news is presented these days. Do you generally like it or dislike it when a news source [INSERT ITEM], or doesn't it matter to you?"

1. "Has in depth interviews with political leaders and policymakers"
  2. "Shares your point of view on politics and issues"
  - 1 = dislike it
  - 2 = doesn't matter
  - 3 = like it
- 

## References

- Alterman, Eric. 2003. *What Liberal Media? The Truth about BIAS and the News*. New York: Basic Books.
- Auletta, Ken. 1991. *Three Blind Mice: How the TV Networks Lost Their Way*. New York: Random House.
- Auletta, Ken. 2003. "Vox Fox: How Roger Ailes and Fox News Are Changing Cable News." *The New Yorker* (May 26):58.
- Bae, Hyung S. 1999. "Product Differentiation in Cable Programming: The Case in the Cable National All-News Networks." *Journal of Media Economics* 12:265-77.
- Barker, David C. 2002. *Rushed to Judgment: Talk Radio, Persuasion, and American Political Behavior*. New York: Columbia University Press.
- Bartels, Larry M. 1993. "Messages Received: The Political Impact of Media Exposure." *American Political Science Review* 87:267-85.
- Baum, Matthew A. 2003. *Soft News Goes to War: Public Opinion and American Foreign Policy in the New Media Age*. Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press.
- Baum, Matthew A. 2005. "Talking the Vote: Why Presidential Candidates Hit the Talk Show Circuit." *American Journal of Political Science* 49:213-34.
- Bennett, Lance W. 2005. *News: The Politics of Illusion* 6th ed. New York: Longman.
- Bozell, Brent L. 2004. *Weapons of Mass Distortion: The Coming Meltdown of the Liberal Media*. New York: Crown Forum.
- Collins, Scott. 2004. *Crazy Like a FOX: The Inside Story of How Fox News Beat CNN*. New York: Penguin.
- Dautrich, Kenneth, and Thomas H. Hartley. 1999. *How the News Media Fail American Voters: Causes, Consequences, and Remedies*. New York: Columbia University Press.
- Davis, Richard. 1999. *The Web of Politics: The Internet's Impact on the American Political System*. New York: Oxford University Press.
- Davis, Richard, and Diana Owen. 1998. *New Media and American Politics*. New York: Oxford University Press.
- Forgette, Richard G. 2003. *Congress, Parties, and Puzzles: Politics as a Team Sport*. New York: Peter Lang.
- Fox, Richard L., and Robert W. Van Sickel. 2001. *Tabloid Justice: Criminal Justice in an Age of Media Frenzy*. Boulder, CO: Lynn Rienner.
- Franken, Al. 2003. *Lies and the Lying Liars Who Tell Them: A Fair and Balanced Look at the Right*. New York: Dutton.
- Gamson, William A. 1992. *Talking Politics*. New York: Cambridge University Press.
- Goldberg, Bernard. 2002. *Bias: A CBS Insider Exposes How the Media Distort the News*. Washington, D.C.: Regnery.
- Graber, Doris A. 2001. *Processing Politics: Learning from Television in the Internet Age*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press.
- Graber, Doris A. 2002. *Mass Media and American Politics*. 6th ed. Washington, D.C.: Congressional Quarterly Press.



- Hibbing, John R., and Elizabeth Theiss-Morse. 1998. "The Media's Role in Public Negativity toward Congress: Distinguishing Emotional Reactions and Cognitive Evaluations." *American Journal of Political Science* 42:475-98.
- Iyengar, Shanto. 1991. *Is Anyone Responsible?* Chicago: Chicago University Press.
- Iyengar, Shanto, and Donald R. Kinder. 1987. *News That Matters: Television and American Opinion*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press.
- Iyengar, Shanto, Mark D. Peters, and Donald R. Kinder. 1982. "Experimental Demonstrations of the 'Not-so-Minimal' Consequences of Television News Programs." *American Political Science Review* 76:848-58.
- Just, Marion R., Ann N. Crigler, Dean E. Alger, Timothy E. Cook, Montague Kern, and Darrell M. West. 1996. *Crosstalk: Citizens, Candidates, and the Media in a Presidential Campaign*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press.
- Klapper, Joseph T. 1960. *The Effects of Mass Communications*. Glencoe, IL: Free Press.
- Layman, Geoffrey C. 2001. *The Great Divide: Religious and Cultural Conflict in American Party Politics*. New York: Columbia University Press.
- Long, J. Scott. 1997. *Regression Models for Categorical and Limited Dependent Variables*. Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.
- Morris, Jonathan S. 2002. *The New Media and the Dramatization of American Politics*. Doctoral thesis, Department of Political Science, Purdue University, West Lafayette, IN.
- Nelson, Thomas E., Rosalee A. Clawson, and Zoe M. Oxley. 1997. "Media Framing of a Civil Liberties Conflict and Its Effect on Tolerance." *American Political Science Review* 91:567-83.
- Nelson, Thomas E., and Donald R. Kinder. 1996. "Issue Framing and Group Centrism in American Public Opinion." *Journal of Politics* 58:1055-78.
- Paletz, David L. 2002. *The Media and American Politics*. 2nd ed. New York: Longman.
- Pew Research Center for the People and the Press. 2004a. "Cable and Internet Loom Large in Fragmented Political News Universe." Jan. 11. <<http://people-press.org/reports/display.php3?ReportID=200>>.
- Pew Research Center for the People and the Press. 2004b. "News Audiences Increasingly Politicized." June 8. <<http://people-press.org/reports/display.php3?ReportID=215>>.
- Putnam, Robert D. 2000. *Bowling Alone: The Collapse and Revival of American Community*. New York: Simon & Schuster.
- Rutenberg, Jim. 2003. "War or No, News on Cable Already Provides the Drama." *New York Times*, Jan. 15.
- Rutten, Tim. 2002. "Miles from 'Fair and Balanced.'" *Los Angeles Times*, Nov. 1.
- Sterling, John. 2004. *The Great Divide: Retro vs. Metro America*. Sausalito, CA: PoliPoint Press.
- West, Darrell M. 2001. *The Rise and Fall of the Media Establishment*. Boston: St. Martins.
- White, John Kenneth. 2003. *The Values Divide*. Chatham, NJ: Chatham House.
- Zaller, John R. 1992. *The Nature and Origins of Mass Opinion*. New York: Cambridge University Press.

## Biographical Note

Jonathan S. Morris (Ph.D., Purdue University) is an assistant professor in the Department of Political Science at East Carolina University.

Address: Department of Political Science, East Carolina University, A-121 Brewster Hall, Greenville, NC 27858; phone: 252-328-1067; e-mail: [morrisj@mail.ecu.edu](mailto:morrisj@mail.ecu.edu).