



MEDIA BIAS 101

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MEDIA LITERACY COURSE



WHY IS MEDIA BIAS AN IMPORTANT TOPIC?


ITS POTENTIAL **EFFECTS ON SOCIETY**, PARTICULARLY WHEN IT COMES TO THE PEOPLE MAKING **INFORMED DECISIONS** ABOUT ISSUES THAT AFFECT THEM THE MOST





TYPES OF MEDIA BIAS

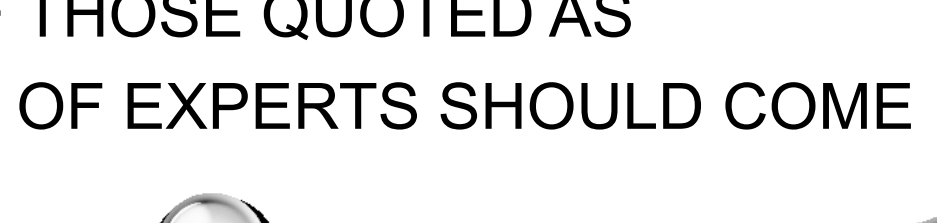
BIAS BY OMISSION

- LEAVING ONE SIDE OUT OF AN ARTICLE, OR A SERIES OF ARTICLES OVER A PERIOD OF TIME
 - IGNORING FACTS THAT DISPROVE/SUPPORT LIBERAL OR CONSERVATIVE CLAIMS
 - SEE IF BOTH CONSERVATIVE AND LIBERAL PERSPECTIVES ARE INCLUDED
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TYPES OF MEDIA BIAS

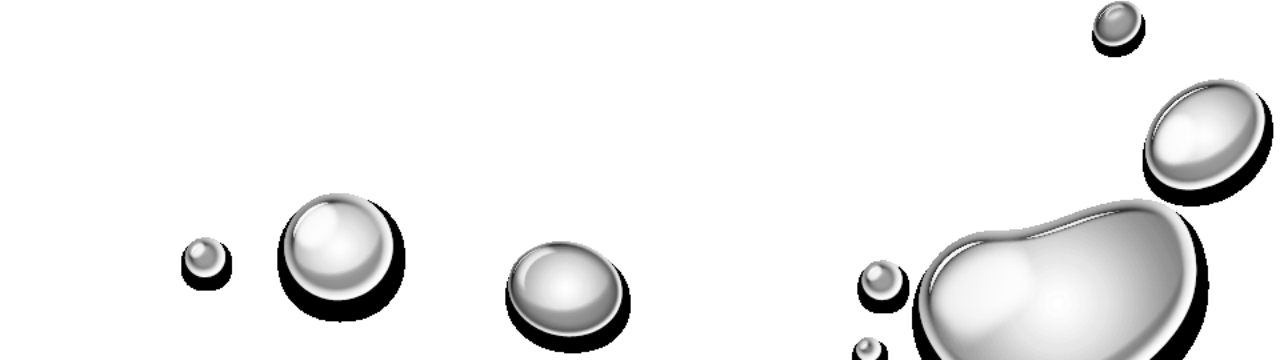
BIAS BY SELECTION OF SOURCES

- INCLUDING MORE SOURCES THAT SUPPORT ONE VIEW OVER ANOTHER
 - ALSO WHEN REPORTERS SAY “*EXPERTS BELIEVE*”, “*OBSERVERS SAY*”, “*MOST PEOPLE BELIEVE*”
 - CHECK POLITICAL PERSPECTIVE OF THOSE QUOTED AS EXPERTS, ALSO AN EQUAL NUMBER OF EXPERTS SHOULD COME FROM BOTH SIDES
- 



TYPES OF MEDIA BIAS

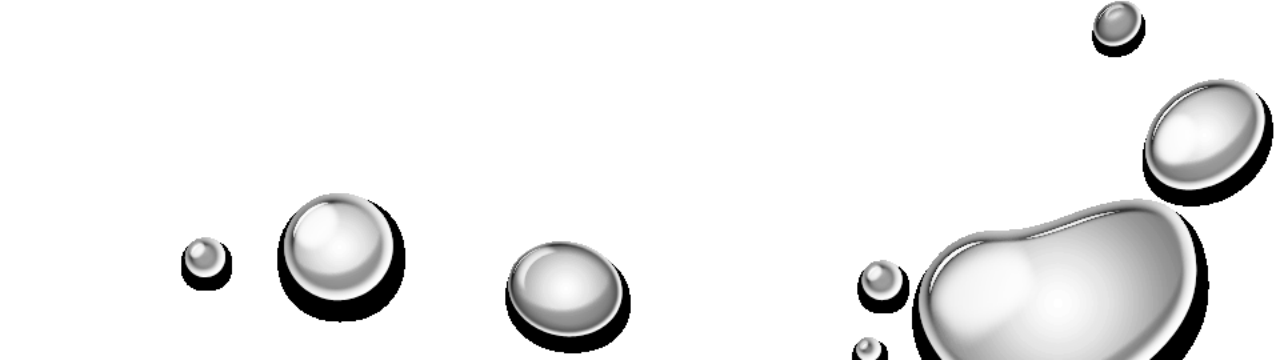
BIAS BY STORY SELECTION

- A PATTERN OF HIGHLIGHTING NEWS STORIES THAT COINCIDE WITH THE AGENDA OF EITHER THE LEFT OR RIGHT, IGNORING STORIES THAT COINCIDE WITH THE OPPOSING VIEW
 - CHECK BOTH CONSERVATIVE AND LIBERAL SIDES OF A SPECIFIC ISSUE
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TYPES OF MEDIA BIAS

BIAS BY PLACEMENT

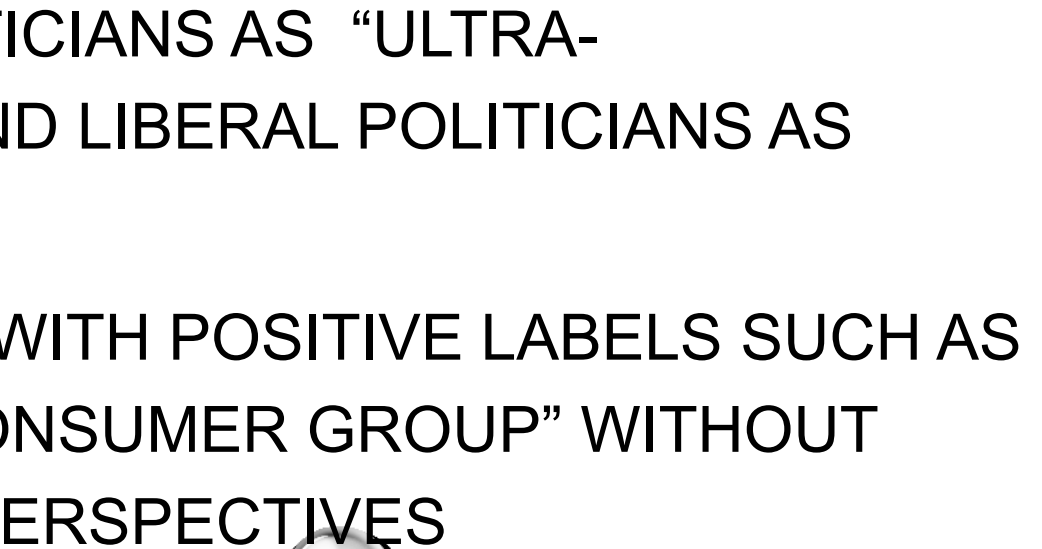
- HOW IMPORTANT THE EDITOR CONSIDERS A SPECIFIC STORY
 - WHERE ON A WEBSITE/NEWSPAPER A STORY OR EVENT IS LOCATED
 - OBSERVE WHERE A MEDIA OUTLET PLACES POLITICAL STORIES
- 



TYPES OF MEDIA BIAS

BIAS BY LABELING


TWO TYPES:

- LABELING CONSERVATIVE POLITICIANS AS “ULTRA-CONSERVATIVE”, “FAR RIGHT” AND LIBERAL POLITICIANS AS “ULTRA-LIBERAL”, “FAR LEFT”
 - DESCRIBING A PERSON/GROUP WITH POSITIVE LABELS SUCH AS “AN EXPERT”, “INDEPENDENT CONSUMER GROUP” WITHOUT MENTIONING THEIR POLITICAL PERSPECTIVES
- 



TYPES OF MEDIA BIAS

BIAS BY SPIN

- ONLY ONE INTERPRETATION OF AN EVENT TO THE EXCLUSION OF THE OTHER
 - IT CAN INCLUDE TONE: A REPORTER'S SUBJECTIVE COMMENTS ABOUT OBJECTIVE FACTS, MAKING ONE SIDE'S IDEOLOGICAL PERSPECTIVE LOOK BETTER THAN THE OTHER
 - OBSERVE WHICH INTERPRETATION OF AN EVENT A NEWS STORY MATCHES (LIBERAL OR CONSERVATIVE)
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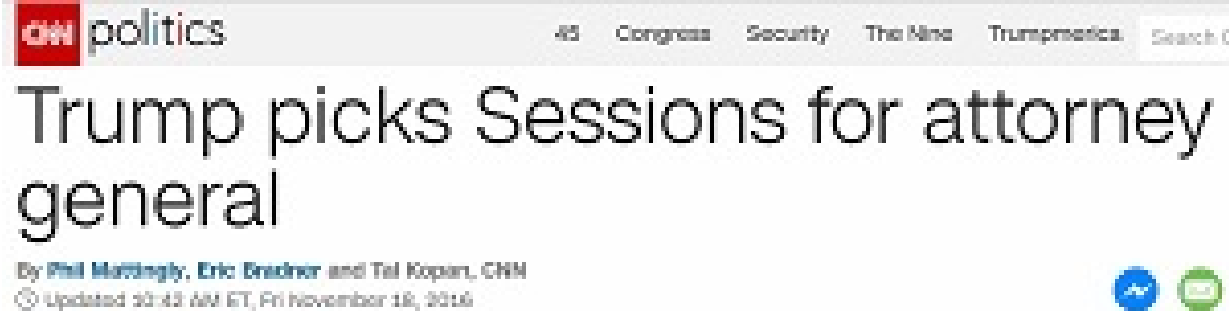
EXAMPLE 1: WHICH BIAS?

THE DAY AFTER PRESIDENT TRUMP WAS INAUGURATED THERE WAS THE LARGEST WOMAN'S PROTEST MARCH IN HISTORY. ON ALMOST ALL LEFT LEANING MEDIA SITES THIS WAS THE LEAD STORY. HOWEVER, ON THE RIGHT BIASED FOX NEWS IT WAS BURIED AT THE BOTTOM OF THE PAGE, WITH MANY SMALLER NEWS ITEMS GETTING MORE ATTENTION THAN THIS STORY.

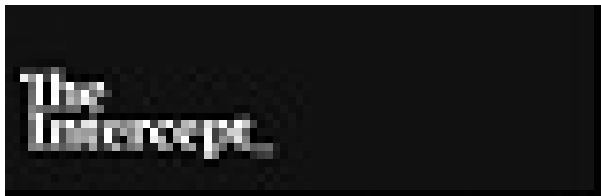
BIAS BY OMISSION



EXAMPLE 2: WHICH BIAS?



The screenshot shows the top portion of a CNN news article. The CNN logo is in the top left, followed by the word 'politics'. A navigation bar contains links for '45', 'Congress', 'Security', 'The Nine', and 'Trumpmedia', along with a search icon. The main headline reads 'Trump picks Sessions for attorney general'. Below the headline, the authors are listed as 'By Phil Mattingly, Eric Lipton and Tal Kopan, CNN'. A timestamp indicates the article was updated at 10:43 AM ET on Friday, November 18, 2016. There are also social media sharing icons for Twitter and Facebook.



CAREER RACIST JEFF SESSIONS IS DONALD TRUMP'S PICK FOR ATTORNEY GENERAL

BIAS BY LABELING

EXAMPLE 3: WHICH BIAS?



BIAS BY
PLACEMENT





CRITICAL QUESTIONS TO ASK TO BALANCE BIAS



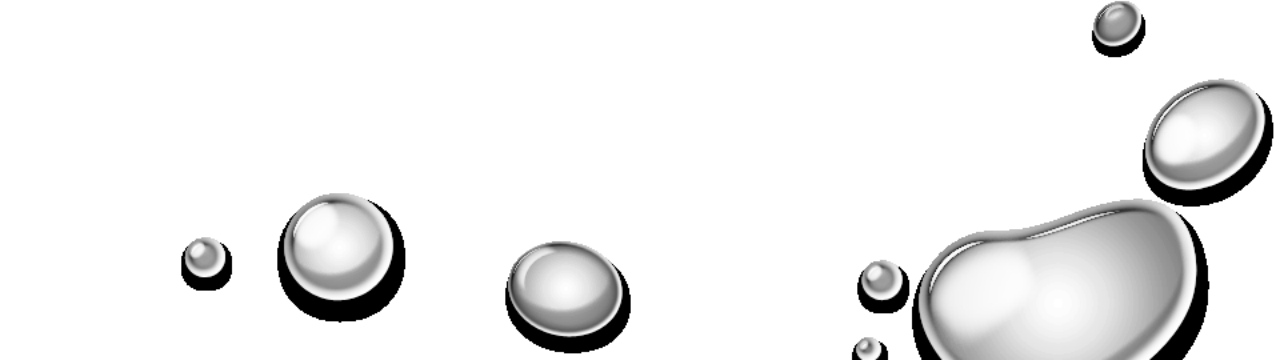


WHO ARE THE SOURCES AND WHAT ARE THEIR PERSPECTIVES?

- UNNAMED SOURCES
 - ONLY WELL-EDUCATED
 - ONLY THOSE WHO SPEAK ENGLISH WELL
 - LIBERAL OR CONSERVATIVES
- 



ARE SIGNIFICANT QUESTIONS LEFT
UNASKED OR UNANSWERED? IS THE
POLITICAL, SOCIAL, ECONOMIC, OR
HISTORICAL CONTEXT MISSING?

- FIRST COVERAGE OF A CRISIS – SOCIAL AND POLITICAL CAUSES ARE SELDOM EXAMINED
 - WHAT WILL BE REMEMBERED IS WHAT WE FIRST SAW OR HEARD
 - USUALLY LATER ON, MANY QUESTIONS AND CRITICISMS ARE RAISED
- 



DO QUOTES SEEM ABRIDGED OR OUT OF CONTEXT?

- THE NEW YORK TIMES ON U.S. CHURCH WORKER, HELD IN CAPTIVITY BY SALVADORAN MILITARY:

“I DON’T THINK I SUFFERED.”


- IN REALITY, SHE SAID (ACCORDING TO NEWSDAY):

“I DON’T THINK I HAVE SUFFERED AS TERRIBLY AS THE THOUSANDS OF SALVADORANS HAVE SUFFERED HERE.”



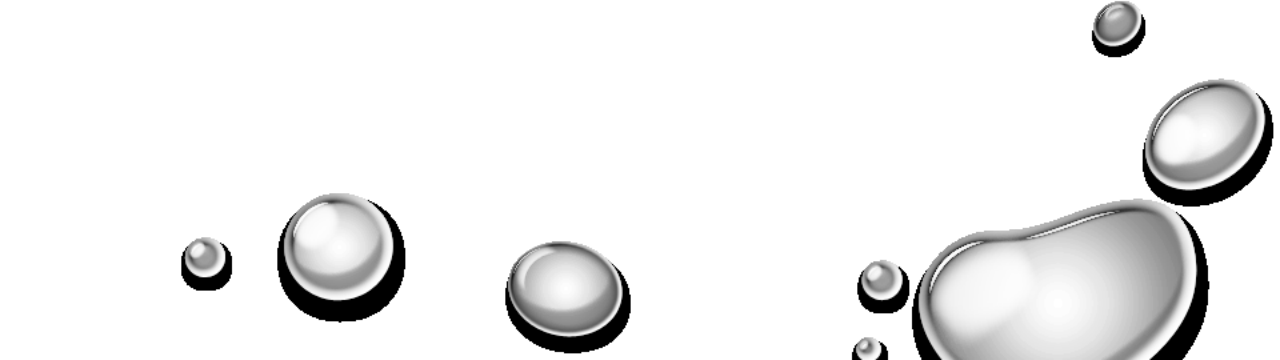


DOES COVERAGE SEEM TO OFFER A PARTIAL OR SELECTIVE HISTORY OF EVENTS?

- PRESIDENTIAL ELECTIONS IN PANAMA: REFERENCES TO RETURNING PANAMA TO “DEMOCRACY”, “LAST ELECTED PRESIDENT”
 - IN REALITY: HE WAS INSTITUTED IN AND REMOVED FROM OFFICE – FRAUDULENT ELECTIONS
- 




ARE EXAGGERATED OR RHETORICAL CLAIMS REPORTED UNCRITICALLY WITHOUT JOURNALISTIC SCRUTINY?

- LOADED WORDS SUCH AS “TERRORIST” VS. “FREEDOM-FIGHTERS”
 - THEY SHOULD ALERT US TO IDEOLOGICAL POINT OF VIEW
 - THE MOST MISUSED WORD IS “DEMOCRACY” – THERE IS A VARIETY OF DEMOCRATIC WAYS
- 




WHAT STORIES OR EVENTS ARE NOT COVERED?

- BRAZIL'S PRESIDENTIAL ELECTIONS WERE NOT COVERED IN US MEDIA
 - COVERED ARE THOSE COUNTRIES IN WHICH THERE ARE AMERICAN TROOPS
 - THIRD WORLD COUNTRIES MAKE THE NEWS ONLY IF THERE ARE COUPS OR EARTHQUAKES
- 



CONCLUSION

- NO ONE CAN FORM OPINIONS FROM STORIES THAT ARE NOT COVERED
 - THEREFORE, ALTERNATIVE SOURCES OF NEWS ARE IMPORTANT
 - BE A CRITICAL READER – READ BETWEEN THE LINES
 - ASKING THE RIGHT QUESTIONS IS THE FIRST STEP TOWARDS MAKING INFORMED DECISIONS
- 



HIGH QUALITY SOURCES

[HTTPS://WWW.ALLSIDES.COM/UNBIASED-BALANCED-NEWS](https://www.allsides.com/unbiased-balanced-news)

[HTTPS://FAIR.ORG/](https://fair.org/)

[HTTPS://MEDIABIASFACHECK.COM/](https://mediabiasfactcheck.com/)

