



The Media Part I

Those who rule have always had an interest in shaping the perceptions of those they wish to rule. But never in the history of humanity has their toolbox been so full. Advances in technology and psychology have enabled the messages of the rulers to permeate our consciousness to a degree no prior society could have imagined.

James Rozoff



Evolution of Media in the US

- **first newspapers** published in American colonies in 1690
 - weeklies, no reporters, basically printed anything and everything
 - The first editors discovered readers loved it when they criticized the local governor.
 - The governors discovered they could shut down the newspapers.
- Washington despised the press but a free press is a **necessary** component of a democratic society.
 - informs the public
 - provides information needed to choose leaders and influence public policy





Evolution of Media in the US

- **partisan press**: After 1750, general news became accessible, and newspapers showed more and more interest in public affairs. Eventually became strongholds of patriotism and, later, partisan bitterness.
- As party politics developed, so did the parties' relationships with newspapers.
 - most were one-sided
 - printed the party line
 - Until the Civil War, almost all newspapers were partisan. Many received subsidies or patronage from the party's supporters.
- 1848: creation of **Associated Press** (AP) wire service



Evolution of Media in the US

- partisan press gave way to penny press
- **penny press**: focused on scandal
 - made possible by new high speed presses that allowed the cheap printing of tens of thousands of papers a day
 - discovered sensationalism sells papers
 - still partisan
 - **Cleveland vs. Blaine scandals in 1884 election:** Cleveland accused of fathering child out-of-wedlock, Blaine accused of financial wrongdoing and association with minister who made some unfortunate comments about opposition

Cleveland and
running-mate
Hendricks





Evolution of Media in the US

- Publishers began to see that they need not alienate potential readers with highly partisan offerings. Partisanship became relegated to the editorial pages.
- **yellow journalism**: form of newspaper publishing in vogue in late 19th century, featured pictures, comics, color and sensationalized, oversimplified news coverage
 - William Randolph Hearst, Joseph Pulitzer
 - involvement in the declaration of war against Spain
- **magazines**: first major national medium ... aimed at larger national audience of middle-class, educated readers
 - *McClure's*, *Cosmopolitan*, *Munsey's*, later *Collier's* and the *Saturday Evening Post*





Evolution of Media in the US



- **muckrakers**: form of journalism concerned with reforming government and business conduct, investigative journalism in vogue in the early 20th century (muckraker: reference to a character in John Bunyan's *Pilgrim's Progress*)
 - Julius Chambers, Nellie Bly
- **radio**: the first device to allow for mass communication ... used by military in WWI, broadcasting began in Europe and US after the war
- three important characteristics of US radio: **licensing** system, importance of **advertising**, emergence of national radio **networks**
- 1920: Westinghouse Company applied for a commercial radio license ... first broadcast was the election returns of the Harding-Cox presidential race



Evolution of Media in the US

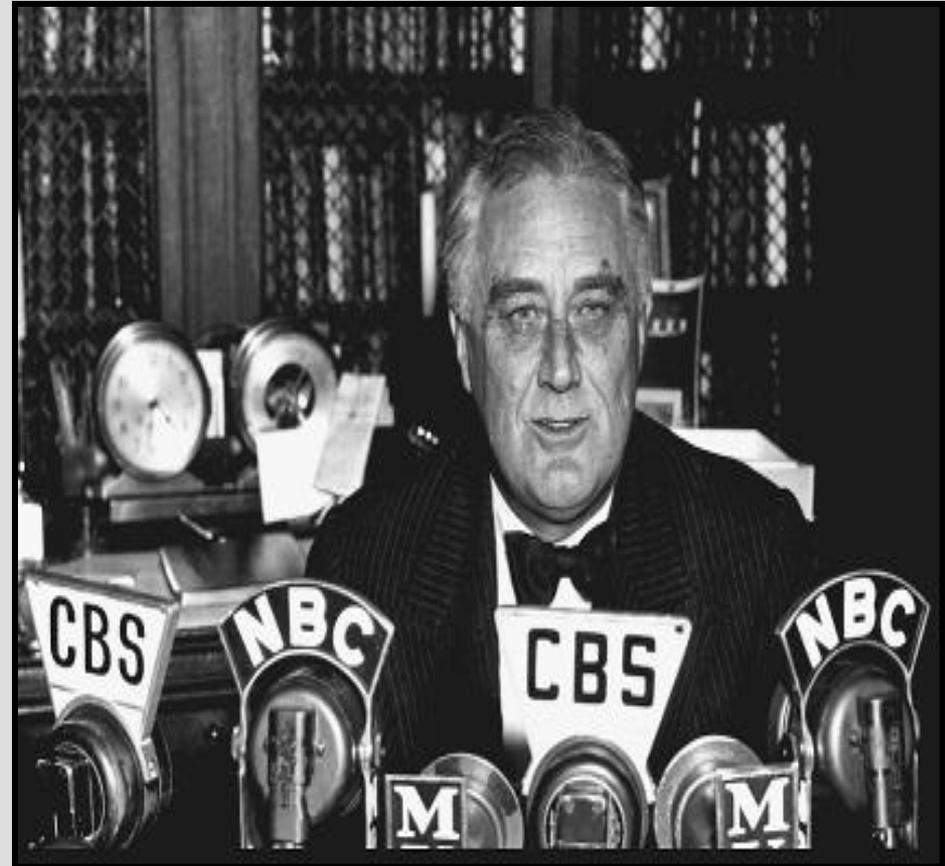
- **National Public Radio**: American privately and publicly funded non-profit membership media organization that has served as a national syndicator to a network of 900 public radio stations since 1970
- **call-in talk shows**: more recent development ... mostly appeal to middle-aged, male conservatives (top five: Rush Limbaugh Show, Morning Edition, Sean Hannity Show, All Things Considered, Delilah)
- Currently, one household in 100 does not have a radio, compared with 4 in 100 without television. 9 out of 10 people listen to the radio every week; 8 out of 10 do so every day.





Evolution of Media in the US

Franklin D. Roosevelt was the first president to recognize the effectiveness of radio to reach the public.





Evolution of Media in the US

- **television:** first public demonstration of television took place at the NY World's Fair in 1939
 - 1948: first televised election results
 - 1949: 6% of Americans owned television set, less than 50% of public had ever seen a television program
 - 1952: 45% of Americans owned television set, first televised presidential campaign advertisements
 - 1959: 90% of Americans owned television set (10 years to go from 6% to 90%)
 - 1960: first televised presidential campaign debate
 - 1979: C-SPAN founded, live round-the-clock coverage of government and politics
 - 1980: CNN begins providing 24-hour news coverage
 - 1992: TV talk shows begin to circumvent news shows





Evolution of Media in the US

- **internet**: remarkable rise in overall use ... new mechanism for communication among citizens, and between citizens and government
 - 1996: official candidate home pages begin to appear on web
 - 2000: explosion of web as a *primary campaign tool* for candidates ... 9% of Americans claimed to receive news from the Internet
 - 2004: **blogs** popular forum for disbursement of political news and commentary
- Major networks and newspapers, US government and foreign sources also offer their news online.





Evolution of Media in the US

- In early 2005, off-the-record comments by CNN chief news executive Eason Jordan were published by a private citizen in an internet blog. Large news organizations then published the comments, ultimately resulting in Jordan's resignation from CNN.
- The lesson: *News organizations can no longer dominate the information that citizens receive.* Is this good or bad for democracy?
- The internet makes wide range of news sources available to citizens while lowering barriers to publication and encouraging development of "home-grown media" and aspiring political reporters.
- The internet is **purposive** ... people choose what to learn about.



Evolution of Media in the US

With the web, citizens now have the opportunity to interact with each other on a wide range of political topics.





Evolution of Media in the US

- Despite the wealth of information available online, there is *no conclusive evidence that citizens are better informed politically* than they were before the rise of internet-based news.
 - don't know where to look for political information
 - don't search wide range of sources but tend to focus narrowly on sites that share their political views
 - not interested in reading "boring" stories about politics
 - information available online is of questionable reliability
- Internet much **less regulated** than other news formats are.
- [History of the Internet](#)





Evolution of Media in the US

More than 250 million unique domain names have been registered.

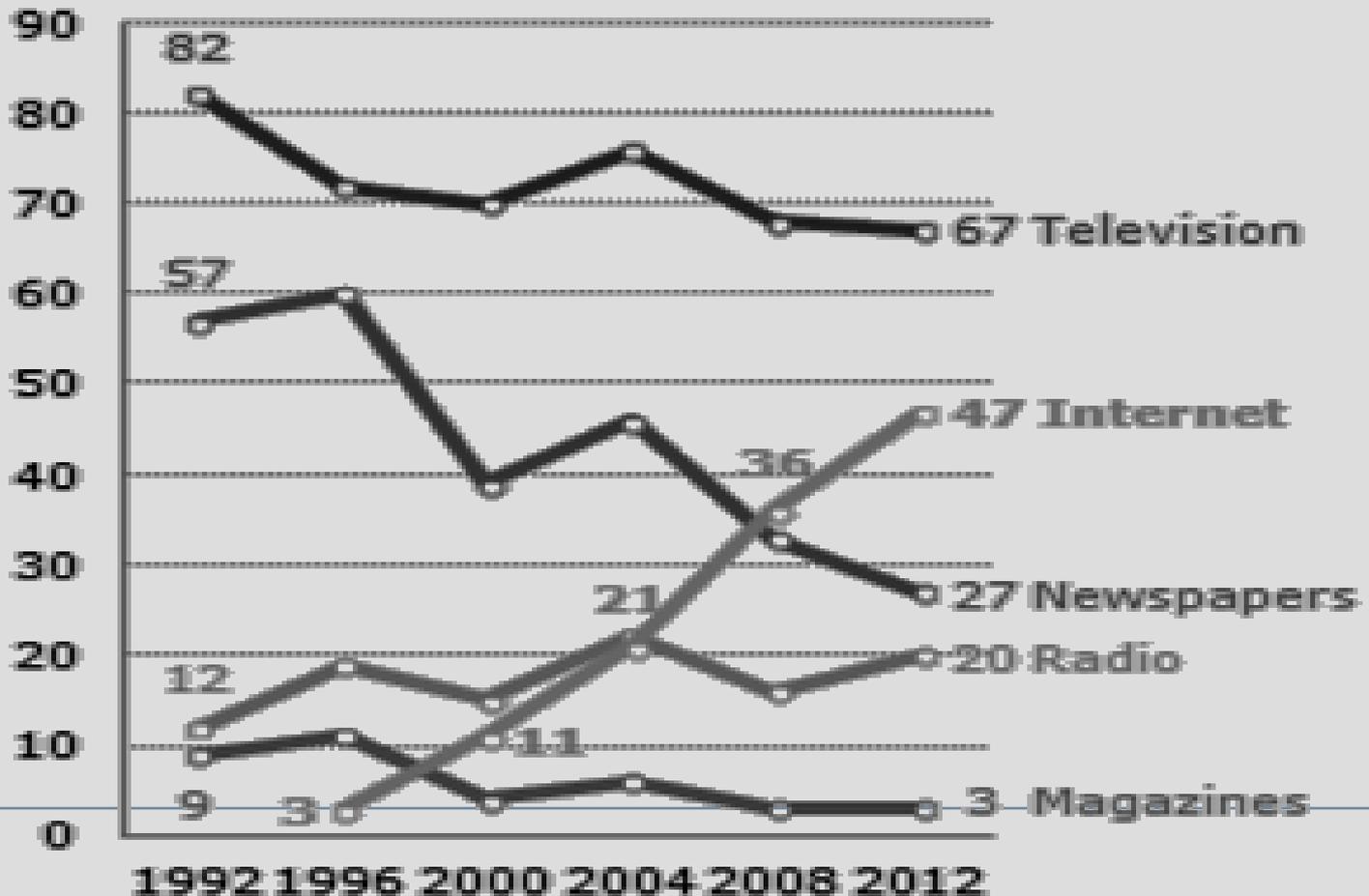
For 25% of Americans, the internet is their primary source of news.





Evolution of Media in the US

Internet Grows as Campaign News Source, 1992-2012





Evolution of Media in the US

- **mass media**
 - forms of communication that are technologically capable of reaching most people and economically affordable to most
 - have existed for less than two centuries
 - a key **linkage** institution between the people and policymakers
 - political power related to **control of information**
 - Rise of “information society” has not brought about an “informed society” as mass media are **superficial** about important policy issues.
- [An American Media Timeline, 1700 to 2013](#)



Evolution of Media in the US

Sociologists refer to the US as a **mediated culture** where media both *reflect* and *create* the culture.

Communities and individuals are bombarded constantly with messages from a multitude of sources. These messages promote not only products, but moods, attitudes and a sense of what is and is not important. Mass media make possible the concept of **celebrity** ... without the ability to reach across thousands of miles, people could not become famous.

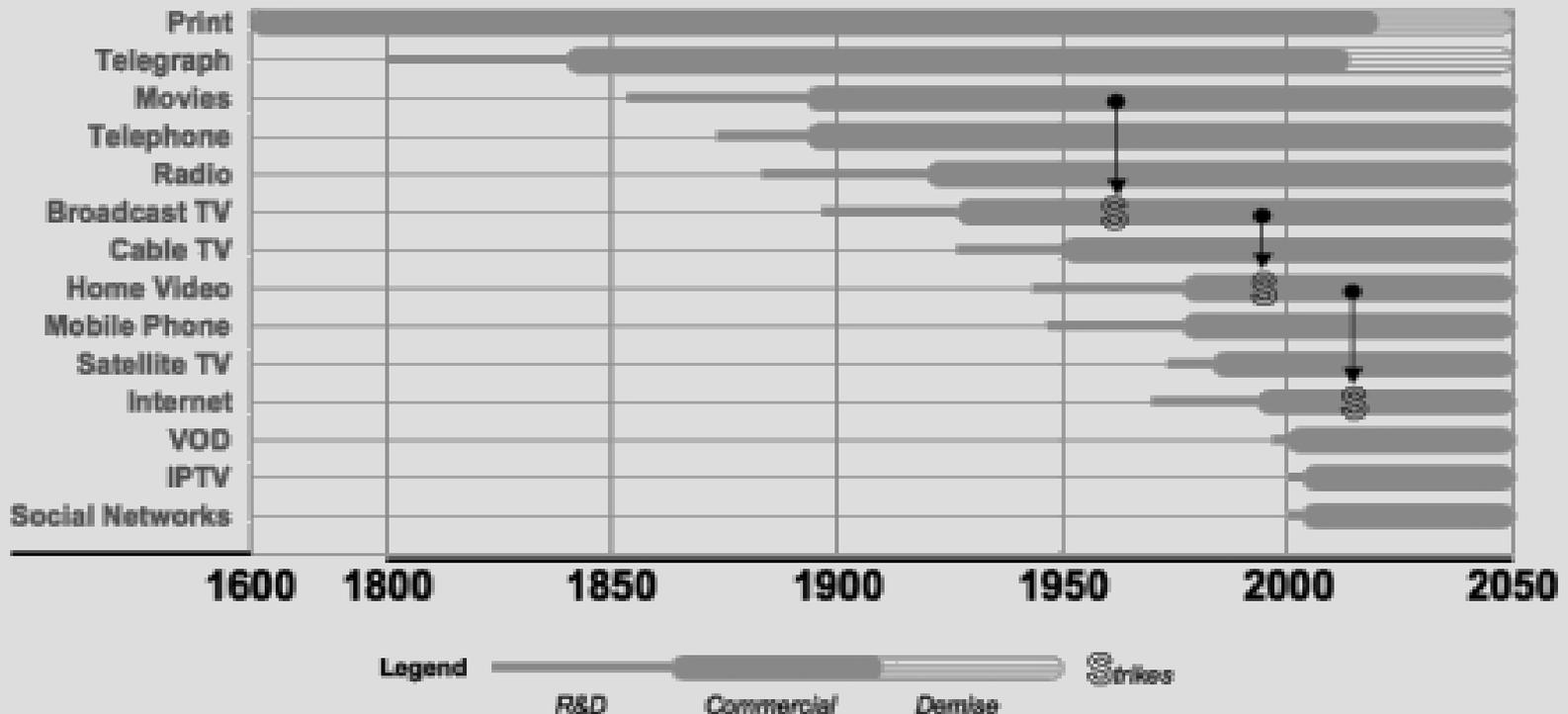
While opinions vary as to the extent and type of influence the mass media wield, everyone agrees that mass media are a permanent part of modern culture.





Evolution of Media in the US

Timeline of Media Technology Adoption



What media source was popular during the founding of the US?
What media sources are the most popular today?
Why do you think print media is in demise?



Contemporary Media

- **newspapers**: decline in number of cities with more than one ... growth of chain ownership, **chains**: massive media conglomerates that account for over four-fifths of nation's daily newspaper circulation (also control broadcast media) ... three rough **categories of newspapers**: national, serious and in-depth ... tend to provide more comprehensive and high-quality information but Americans increasingly **favor television** as a source of news ... Currently, daily newspaper circulation is one copy for every five people. *USA Today* is the nation's top-circulation newspaper.



magazines: increasingly marginal as news source ... number is growing but few focus on government and politics



Contemporary Media

- **radio**: not dominant, but popular ... growth of **talk radio** (satellites transmit one program to hundreds of stations)
- **television**: 99% of all US households have at least one set, average is four ... network system had dominated but declined dramatically due to UHF and cable ... rise of **niche audiences** that tune into news outlets that share their pre-existing views





Contemporary Media



Newspapers

↓ 7%

daily circulation



Cable TV

↑ 8%

combined average viewership
for prime-time news



Network TV

↑ 1%

evening news viewership

↓ 2%

morning news viewership



Local TV

↓ 5%

late night news viewership

↓ 2%

morning and early evening
viewership

annual audience trends, 2016



Contemporary Media

- media overall: fragmentation
- provide the *potential* for citizens to gain access to a variety of information

	<u>2002</u>	<u>2006</u>	<u>2010</u>
Television	66%	69%	67%
Newspapers	33	34	27
Internet	7	15	24
Radio	13	17	14
Magazines	1	2	2

Source: The Pew Research Center's Internet & American Life Project, November 3-24, 2010 Post-Election Tracking Survey. n=2,257 national adults ages 18 and older, including 755 cell phone interviews. Interviews were conducted in English and Spanish. Note: totals may exceed 100% due to multiple responses.

Main Sources of Campaign News, 2002-2010

Main Source of Campaign News by Party

	<u>Republicans</u>	<u>Democrats</u>	<u>Independents</u>
Local news programming	33%	29%	34%
Fox News Channel	47**	15	23^
NBC Network News	10	16*	12
CNN	9	16*	16*
ABC Network News	8	12*	10
CBS Network News	7	12*	9
MSNBC	3	7	5
CNBC	1	3	1



Contemporary Media



The Pervasiveness of Television:

The growth of around-the-clock cable news and information shows is one of the most important developments in recent years. Half of the public are regular viewers of CNN, CNBC, MSNBC or Fox News.



Organization of Mass Media

- **corporate ownership**
 - **Mergers and buyouts** of media and entertainment companies since the 1980s have led to increasing concentration of ownership.
 - By the end of 2006, there were only **8 giant media companies** dominating the US: Disney, AOL-Time Warner, Viacom, General Electric (NBC), News Corp, Yahoo, Microsoft, Google.
 - Influences of **advertisers and owners** have enormous impact on how mainstream media shape itself and society.
-



Organization of Mass Media

- **corporate ownership**
 - Commercially driven, ultra-powerful mass market media are primarily **loyal to sponsors** (advertisers and government) rather than to the public interest.
 - A few companies representing the interests of a minority elite control the public airwaves.
 - Healthy, market-based **competition is absent**, leading to slower innovation and increased prices.



*"We'd love to give unions more coverage...
But these days we really have to watch our overhead."*

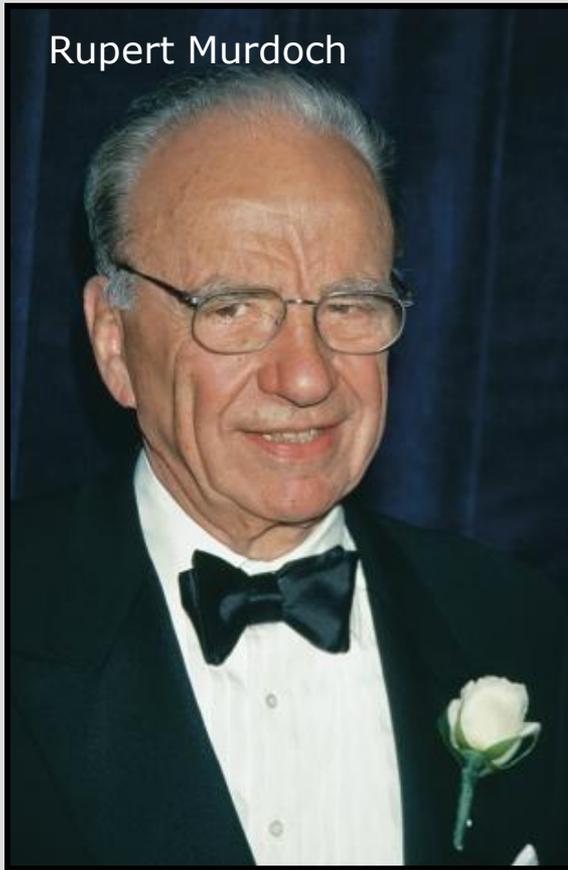


Organization of Mass Media

- **corporate ownership**
 - If companies dominating a media market choose to suppress stories that do not serve their interests, the public suffers since it is not adequately informed of crucial issues that may affect it.
 - **infotainment**: tendency of news networks to sensationalize news
 - **profit motive**: primary purpose is to make profit ... must appeal to audience, attract advertisers, satisfy shareholders
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Organization of Mass Media



Why should we be concerned about the concentration of ownership in the media?



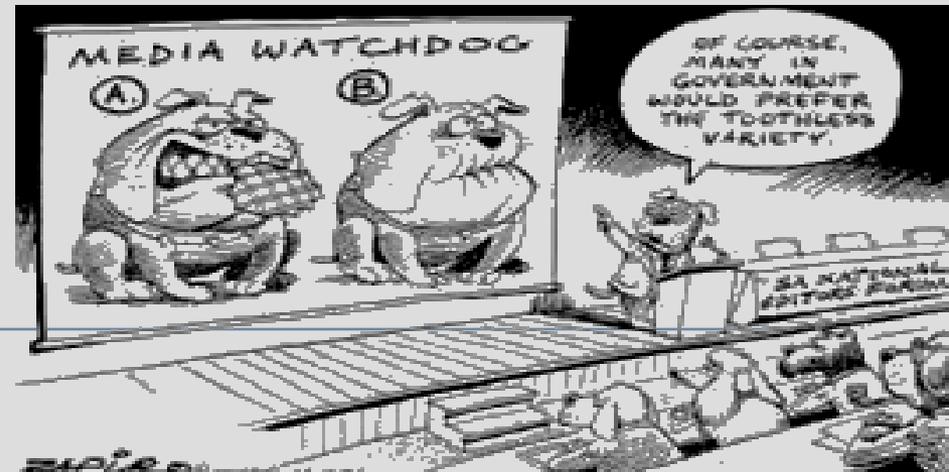
Media's Role in Democracy

- The central idea of democracy is that ordinary citizens should control what their government does.
 - Yet, this requires citizens to have comprehensive, accurate and objective information about politics.
 - Framers believed newspapers and pamphlets were for communication and deliberation.
 - Media often act as...
 - **gatekeeper**: process through which information is filtered for dissemination, whether for publication, broadcasting, the internet or some other mode of communication
 - **scorekeeper**: keep score, report on political trends on state and national levels ... focus on political issues that affect voters and the reputations of political candidates and elected officials ... also often used in reference to elections
-



Media's Role in Democracy: Watchdog

- act as a **watchdog** over government
- Press must be free to report the news as it is, without censorship.
- protected by the First Amendment
- unique protection not found in most other countries
- Still, other factors may limit the willingness and ability of the American media to perform this role.
- The relationship between journalists and politicians is complicated. They need one another, yet they often clash.





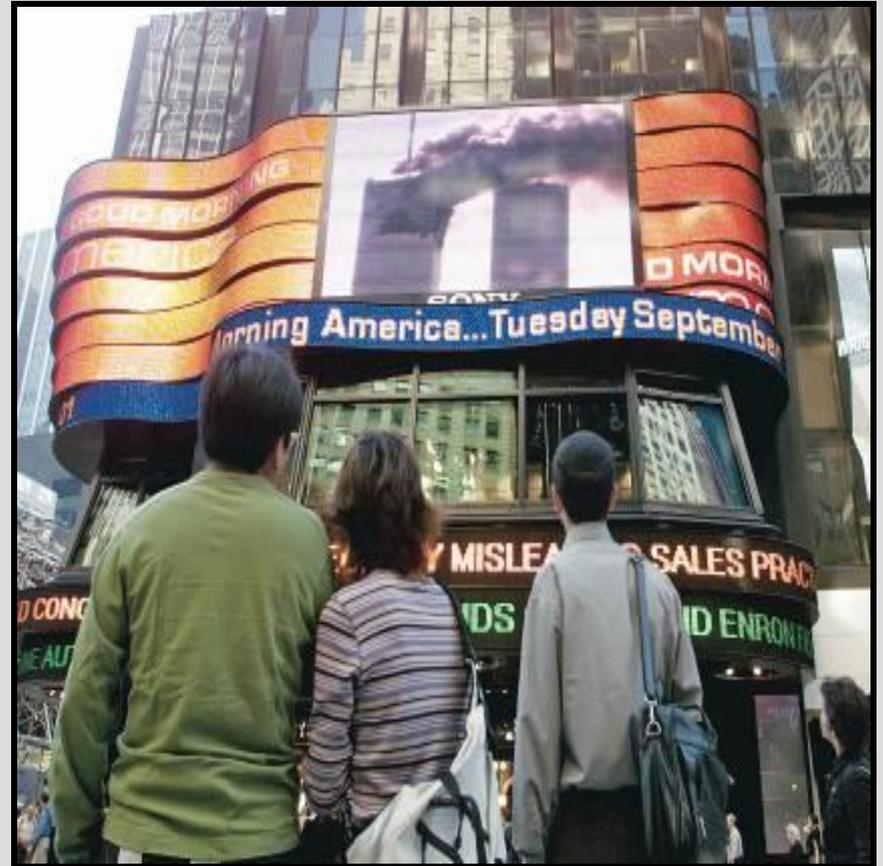
Media's Role in Democracy: Set Public Agenda

- **agenda setting**: process whereby the news media lead the public in assigning importance to various public issues
 - **salience**: the importance of an issue
 - **CNN effect**: purported ability of TV to raise a distant foreign affairs situation to national prominence by broadcasting vivid pictures
- types of agendas
 - **media agenda**: topics covered by media
 - **public agenda**: topics public believes to be important
 - **policy agenda**: issues that decision makers believe are important
- **agenda cutting**: if media chooses not to talk about something, people will be uninformed about the issue



Media's Role in Democracy: Set Public Agenda

Whenever there is a crisis, most people turn first to television for information.





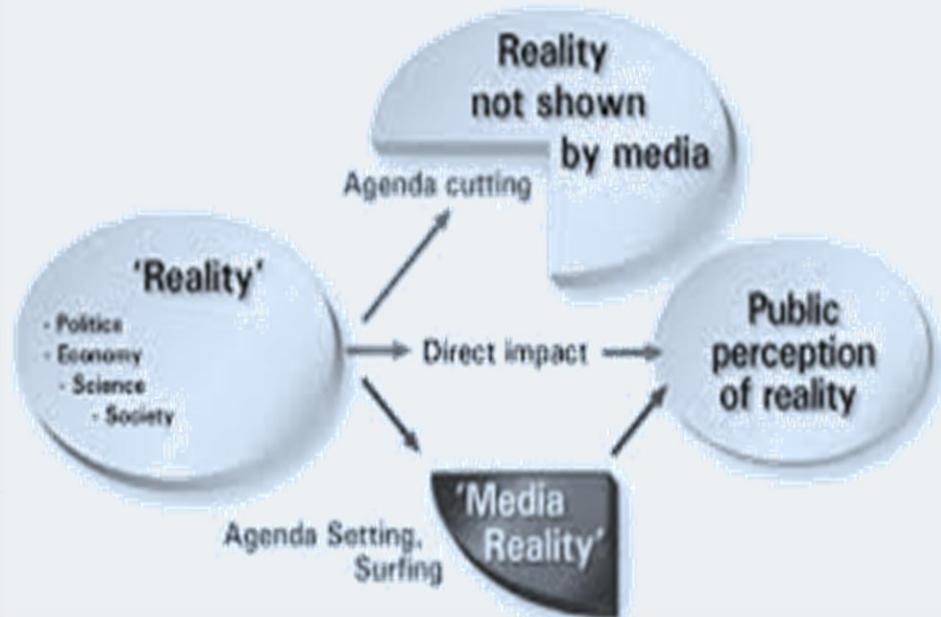
Media's Role in Democracy: Set Public Agenda

- **policy entrepreneurs**: people who invest their political capital in an issue to get it placed high on governmental agenda ... use media to raise awareness of issue
- **media and national security**: Tension exists between the American citizen's need for information and the need for the government to keep secrets to protect national security.
- clarify what **electoral choices** the public has: What do the parties stand for? What do we know about candidates' personal character, knowledge, experience, positions on the issues?
- present a full and enlightening **set of ideas** about public policy to the public: Are current policies working? What are the pros and cons of particular policies? What are the alternatives?
- The media affect which issues and problems people think about, even if the media do not determine what positions people adopt.



Media's Role in Democracy: Free Exchange

- support the **free exchange of ideas, information and opinions**
- transmit information about problems and issues
 - Help voters make their choices.
 - Does media bias cause media coverage to fall short of the ideal?





Media's Role in Democracy: Free Exchange



The media not only provide an arena for politics, they are themselves players in that arena.



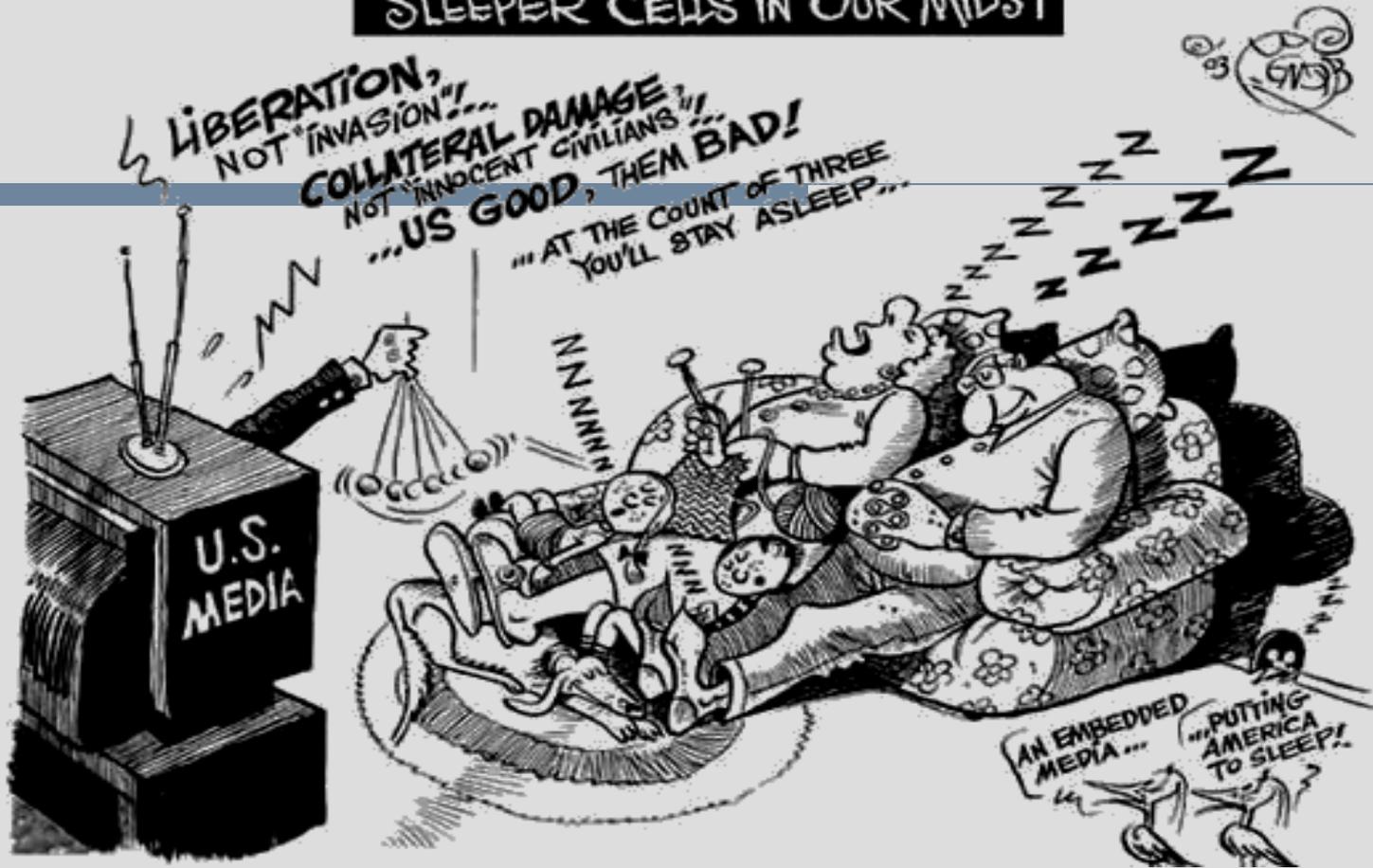
Media's Role in Democracy: Socialization

- The media play a role in **socializing** individuals.
 - not clear how this influences American politics
 - could account for the widespread concern over crime or increasing acceptance of sexual practices once considered unacceptable
- **concerns over portrayal of government and minorities** (particularly African Americans)
 - X-Files and 24: leadership corrupt, good guys always rogue agents
 - stereotyping minorities on TV





SLEEPER CELLS IN OUR MIDST



Continued in
The Media Part II