

Summary Findings

This study examines 2004 presidential election coverage from June 1 through September 2 on the ABC, CBS, and NBC evening news shows and in Time and Newsweek. In addition, we examine election coverage on the Fox News Channel "Special Report with Brit Hume" from August 1 through September 2.

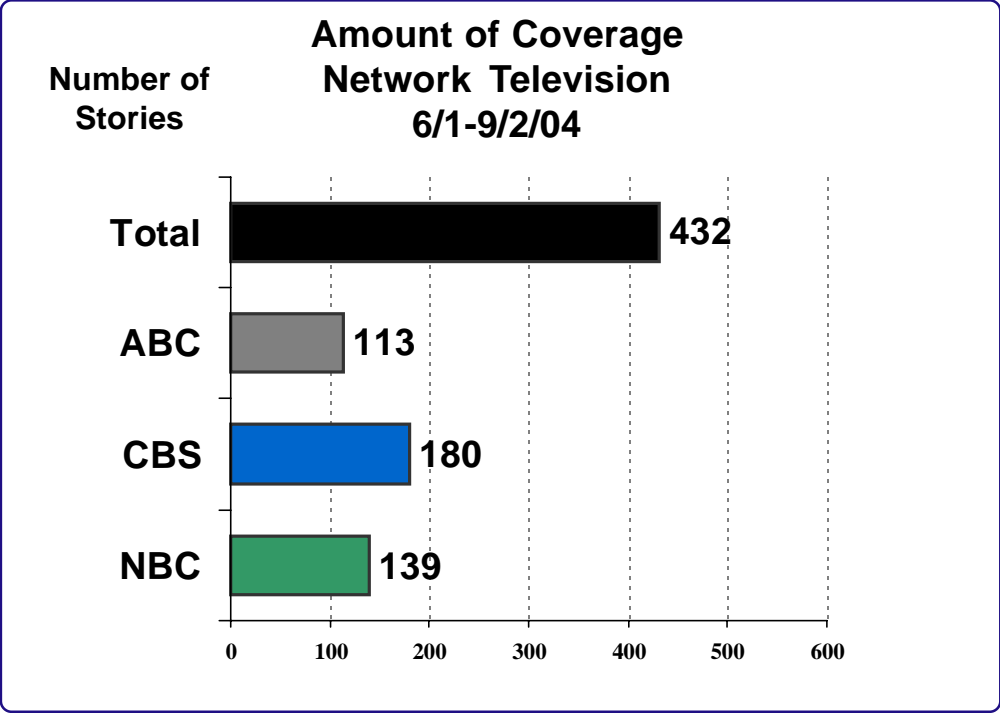
The Networks and News Weeklies

- * Evaluations of John Kerry were positive by a two-to-one margin, while evaluations of George W. Bush were over 60 percent negative.
- * Among non-partisan sources, Kerry's evaluations were almost three-to-one positive; Bush's were over two-to-one negative.
- * Among the networks, the gap between the candidates was largest on NBC; the coverage was most balanced on ABC.
- * Kerry's proportion of good press declined in August, as his but he still fared far better than Bush until the GOP convention.
- * Bush got better press than Kerry only during the GOP convention, which was the only time he received a majority of positive evaluations.
- * Based on our previous studies of primary and general election coverage, Kerry has gotten the best press on network news of any presidential nominee since we began tracking election news in 1988.
- * The coverage has focused more on the candidates' policies and personal characteristics than on the campaign horse race.

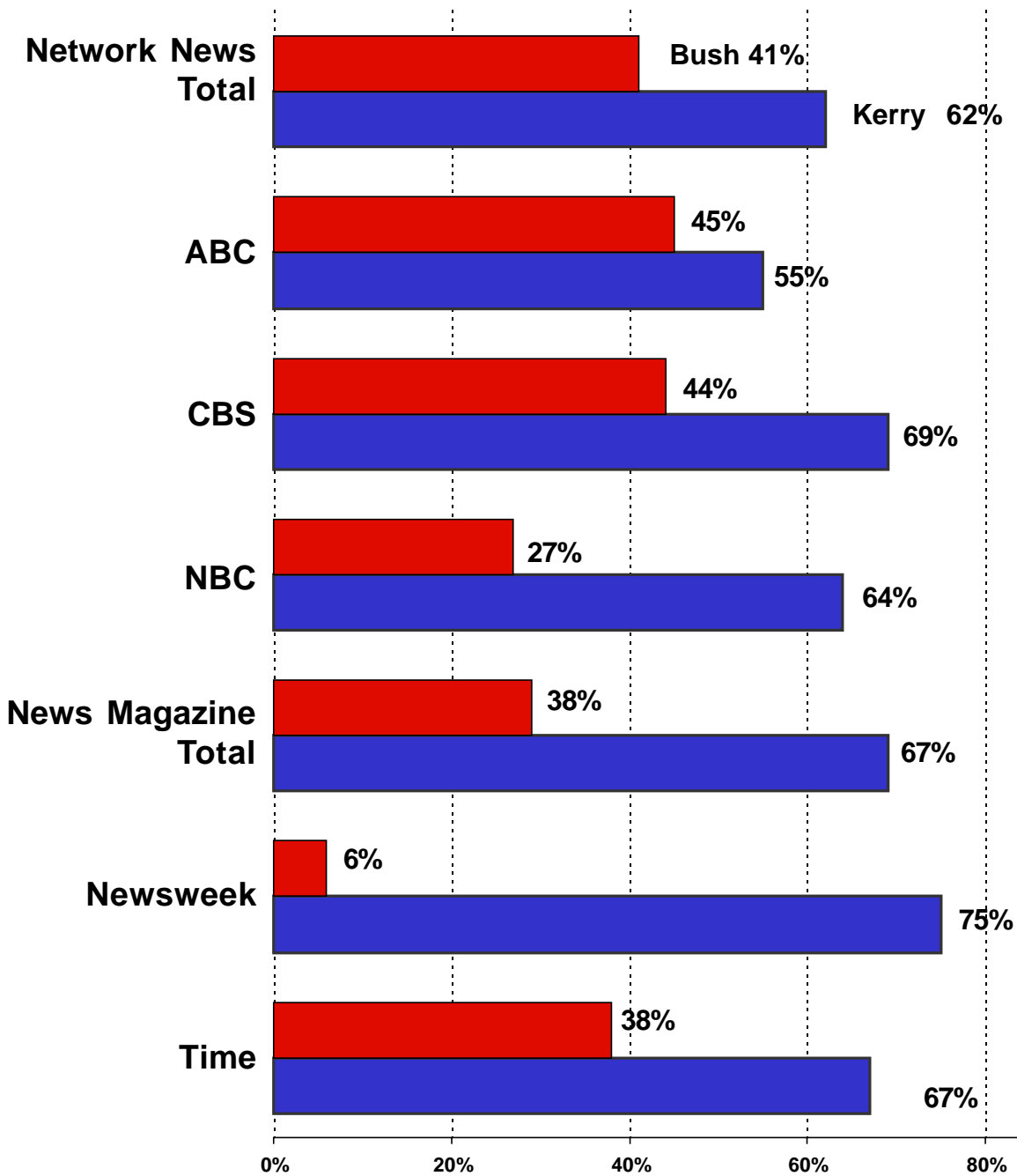
The Fox News Channel Difference

- * Fox News Channel was about as negative towards Bush as the broadcast networks, but Kerry's evaluations were negative by a five-to-one margin.
- * There was little difference in the evaluations of party- and campaign-based partisan sources; but Bush fared over four times as well as Kerry among non-partisan sources.

***Media Coverage of Campaign 2004
June 1 – September 2, 2004***

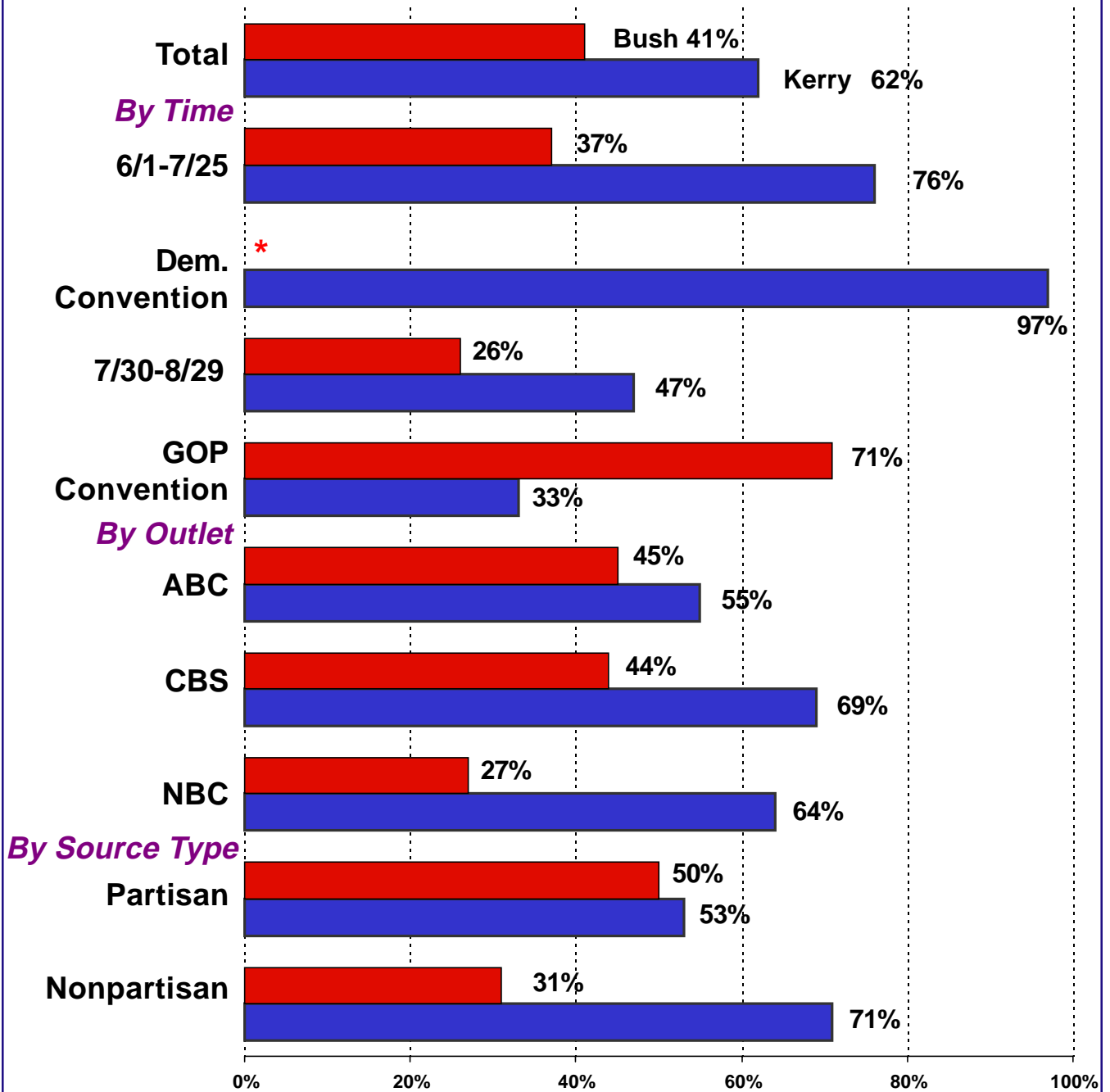


**Percent Positive Evaluations
Network News & News Magazines
(6/1-9/2/04)**



Based on evaluations by sources and reporters on the ABC, CBS, and NBC evening news.

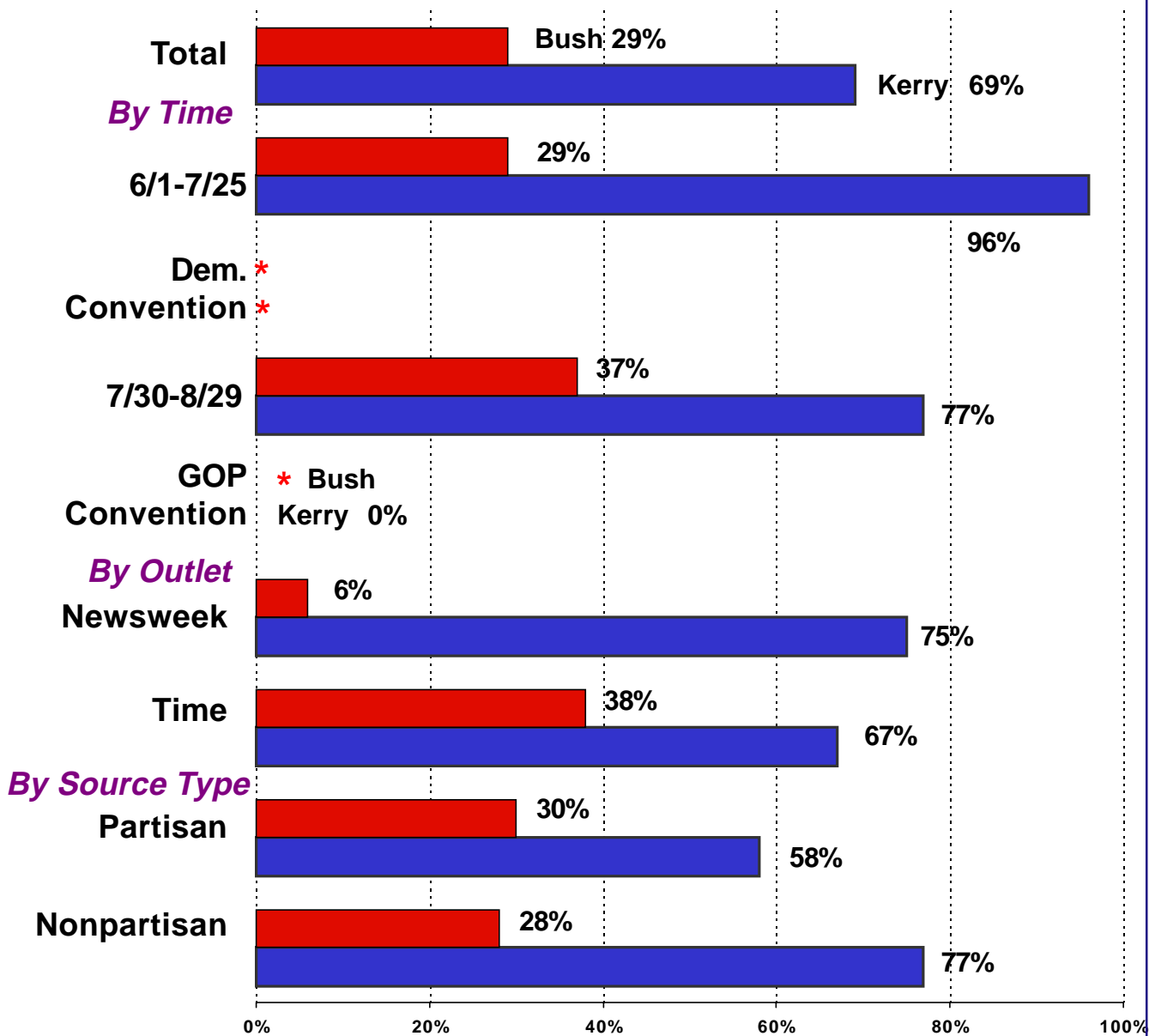
**Percent Positive Evaluations
Network News
(6/1-9/2/04)**



Based on evaluations by sources and reporters on the ABC, CBS, and NBC evening news.

* Fewer than 10 evaluations.

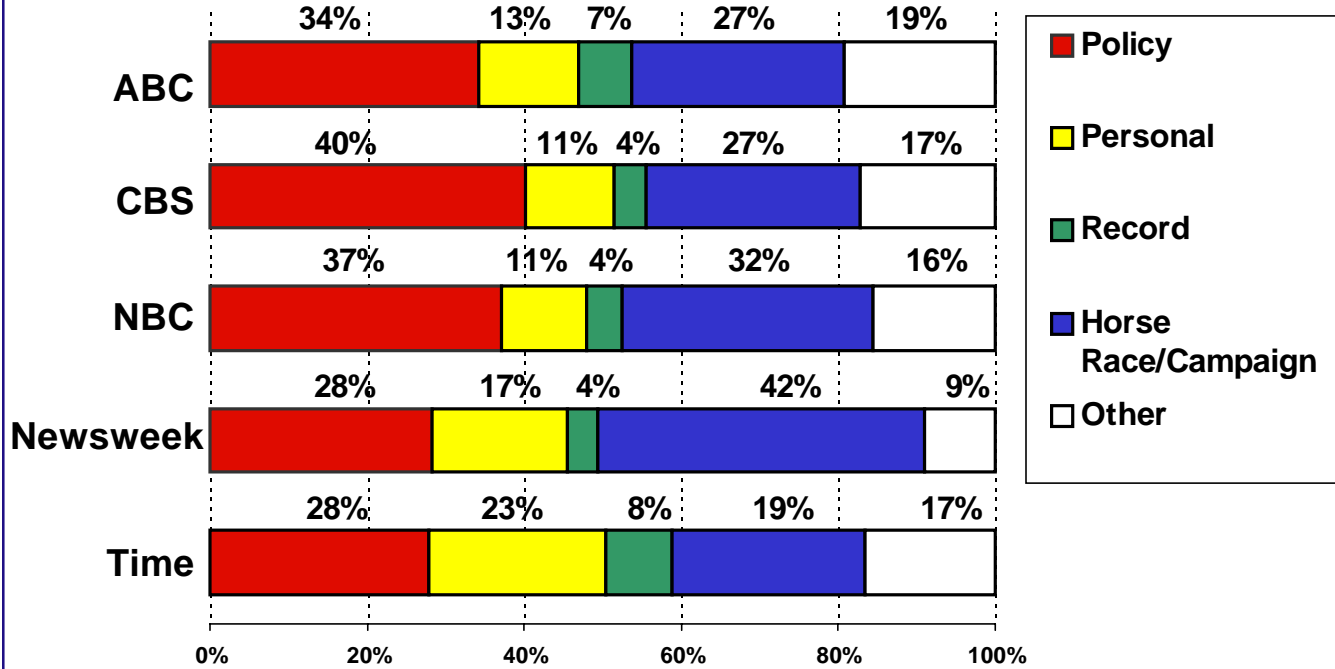
Percent Positive Evaluations News Magazines (6/1-9/2/04)



Based on evaluations by sources and reporters in Newsweek and Time.

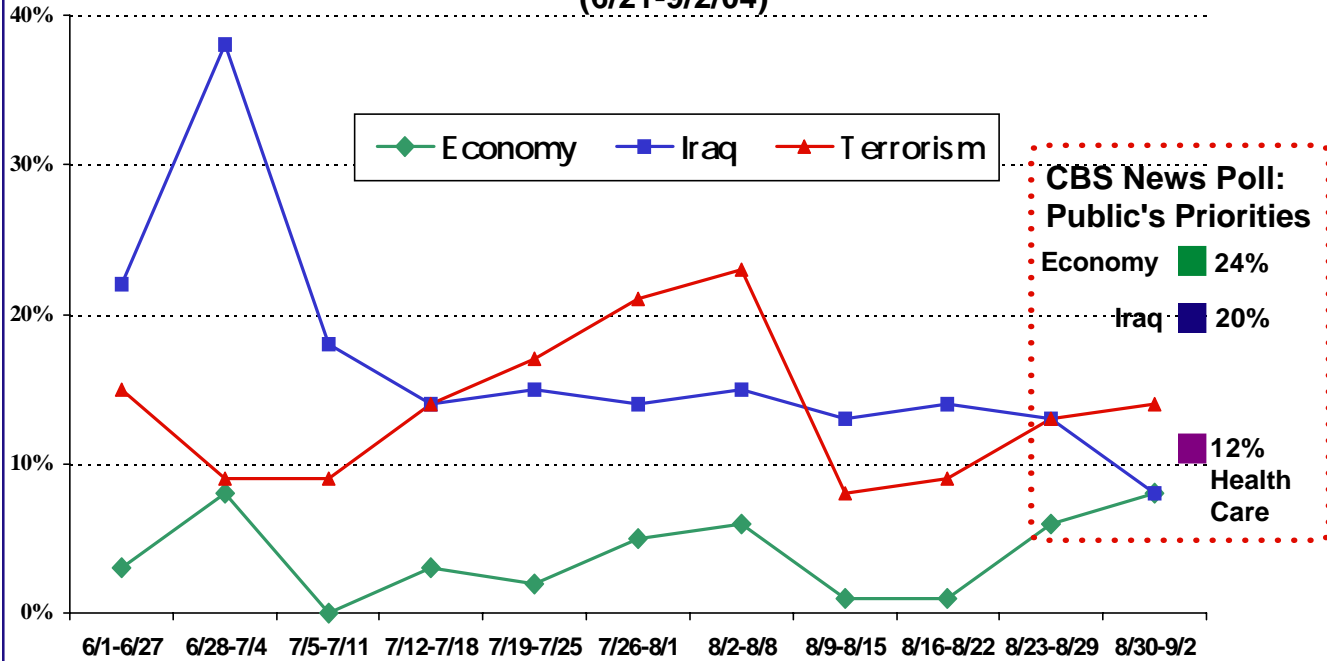
* Fewer than 10 evaluations.

**Focus of Coverage
Percent of Statements
(6/1-9/2/04)**



Based on all statements by sources and reporters on the ABC, CBS, NBC evening news and Fox News.

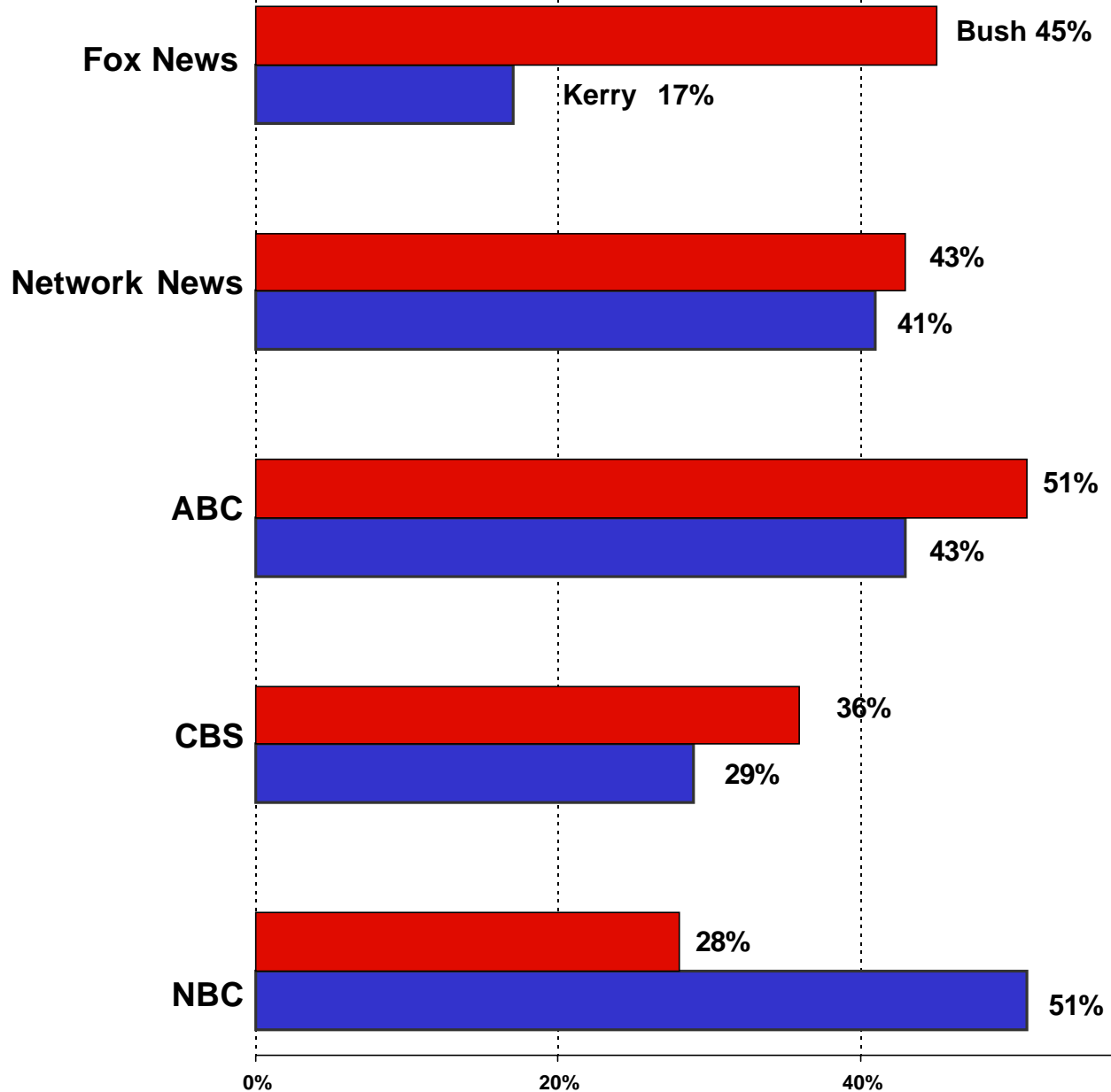
**Percent of Statements
Issues Covered vs. CBS News Poll
Network News
(6/21-9/2/04)**



Percent of statements based on statements about each issue on the ABC, CBS, and NBC evening news.
 Poll results based on CBS News Poll, August 15-18, 2004.

The Fox Difference
August 1 – September 2, 2004

**Percent Positive Evaluations
Network News & Fox News
(8/1-9/2/04)**



Based on evaluations by sources and reporters on the ABC, CBS, NBC evening news and Fox News "Special Report with Brit Hume"..

Percent Positive Evaluations Network News vs. Fox News (8/1-9/2/04)

By Time

**Network News
8/1 to 8/29**
Bush 26%
Kerry 44%

**Fox News
8/1 to 8/29**
39%
21%

**Network News
GOP Convention**
71%
33%

**Fox News
GOP Convention**
58%
2%

By Source Type

**Network News
Partisan**
43%
38%

**Fox News
Partisan**
42%
39%

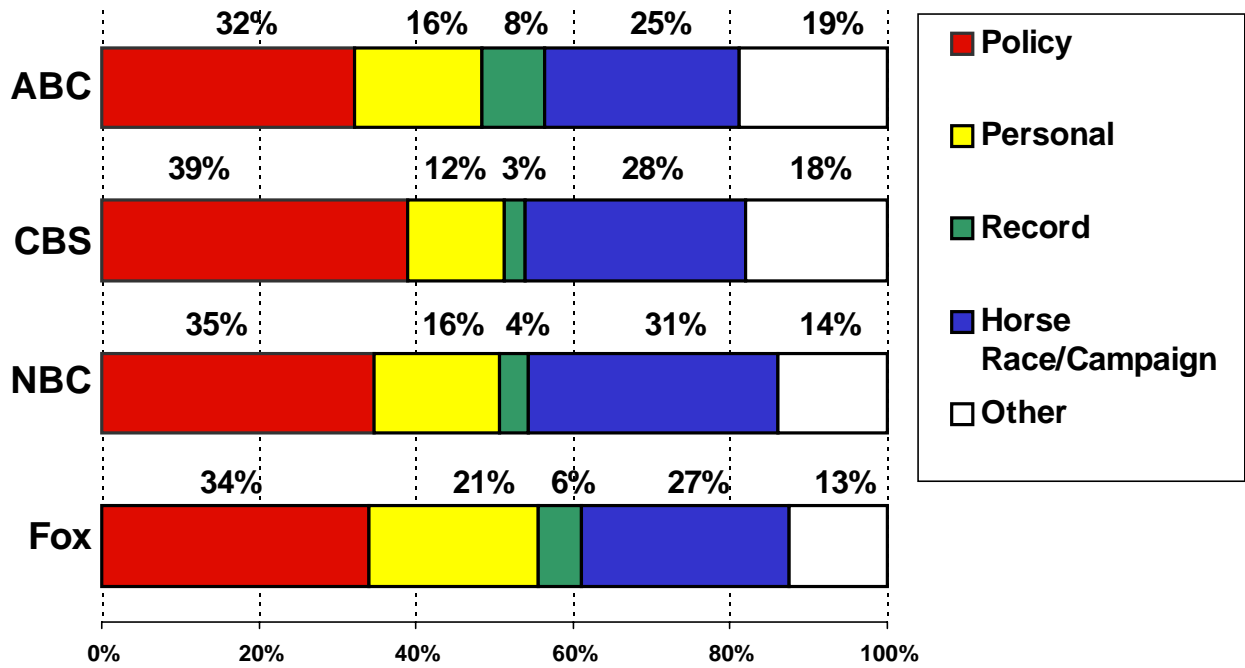
**Network News
Nonpartisan**
43%
45%

**Fox News
Nonpartisan**
51%
11%

0% 20% 40% 60%

Based on evaluations by sources and reporters on the ABC, CBS, NBC evening news and Fox News "Special Report with Brit Hume"..

**Focus of Coverage
Percent of Statements
(8/1-9/2/04)**



Based on all statements by sources and reporters on the ABC, CBS, NBC evening news and Fox News.