

# Shorenstein Center on Media, Politics and Public Policy

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## Report on Network Sunday Morning Talk Show Content and Ratings, Comparing 1983, 1999, and 2015

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on Media, Politics and Public Policy

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## Executive Summary

We studied the content and Nielsen ratings for interviews on the three network Sunday morning talk shows—*Meet the Press* (henceforth MTP), *Face the Nation* (FTN), and *This Week* (TW). We compared three time periods—1983 (MTP, FTN), 1999 (all three shows), and 2015 (all three shows). In order to insure apples-to-apples comparisons, for over time comparisons, we either restricted our analyses to MTP and FTN or analyzed the data with *and* without TW. For “overall” snapshots we included all three shows (MTP, FTN, TW).

Our goals were fourfold: (1) identify any discernable trends in the topics and types of guests featured on the Sunday talk shows, (2) identify any trends in audience ratings, (3) assess whether and to what extent trends in topics and guests correlate with audience ratings, and (4) assess whether, to what extent, and under what circumstances, the Sunday talk shows influence the subsequent news agenda.

We have seven principal findings, as follows:

- 1. Content.** Politics and process have, over time, increasingly supplanted substantive policy expertise and content, even while the latter types of interview guests and content earn higher ratings.
- 2. Guests.** Interviews with administration officials and substantive policy experts earn the highest audience ratings on average, and feature among the most substantive, policy-oriented content. Yet they are declining as proportions of all interviews.
- 3. Subject Matter.** We find a similar, yet less pronounced, pattern for interview topics, with topics that earn the highest audience ratings not necessarily corresponding to the most frequently appearing, or most substantive, policy-oriented interview topics. However, the correlations between topic prevalence and Nielsen ratings are modest, both overall and broken out by gender.
- 4. Gender Preferences.** Women account for a majority of the audience since 1999, yet featured topics somewhat more closely reflect the preferences of men than of women.
- 5. Guest Demographics.**<sup>1</sup> The vast majority of guests are White men, though there is a noteworthy uptick in African American guests in 2015 relative to 1983 or 1999 and more women appeared in 2015 relative to prior years. Republican guests also substantially outnumber Democratic guests across all three periods.
- 6. Agenda Setting by Members of Congress (1980-2003).** Rhetoric by members of Congress from the Sunday interview programs grew *less* likely from 1980 to 2003 to appear in subsequent network news reports—especially discussions of the economy or budget. The exception is foreign policy, which is *more* likely to be picked up by later news reports.
- 7. Agenda Setting Overall (1983, 1999, 2015).** Looking across *all* guests and episodes from 1983, 1999, and 2015, (1) guests were far more likely to be featured in subsequent news reports in 1999 and 2015, relative to 1983, though much of this is attributable to 28 appearances in 2015 by Donald Trump that generated unprecedented levels of subsequent news coverage, as well as the post-1983 advent of 24-hour cable news channels; (2) Discussions of *substance* are more likely

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<sup>1</sup> Unfortunately, the Nielsen data are too restrictive for us to adequately examine audience preferences by age.

than discussions of *process* to appear in subsequent news reports; and (3) there is some, albeit limited, overlap between the topics that are the top ratings winners and those that attract the most subsequent attention in the news, with healthcare being the most noteworthy instance of such overlap. (Several additional findings are discussed in Section 7, below.)

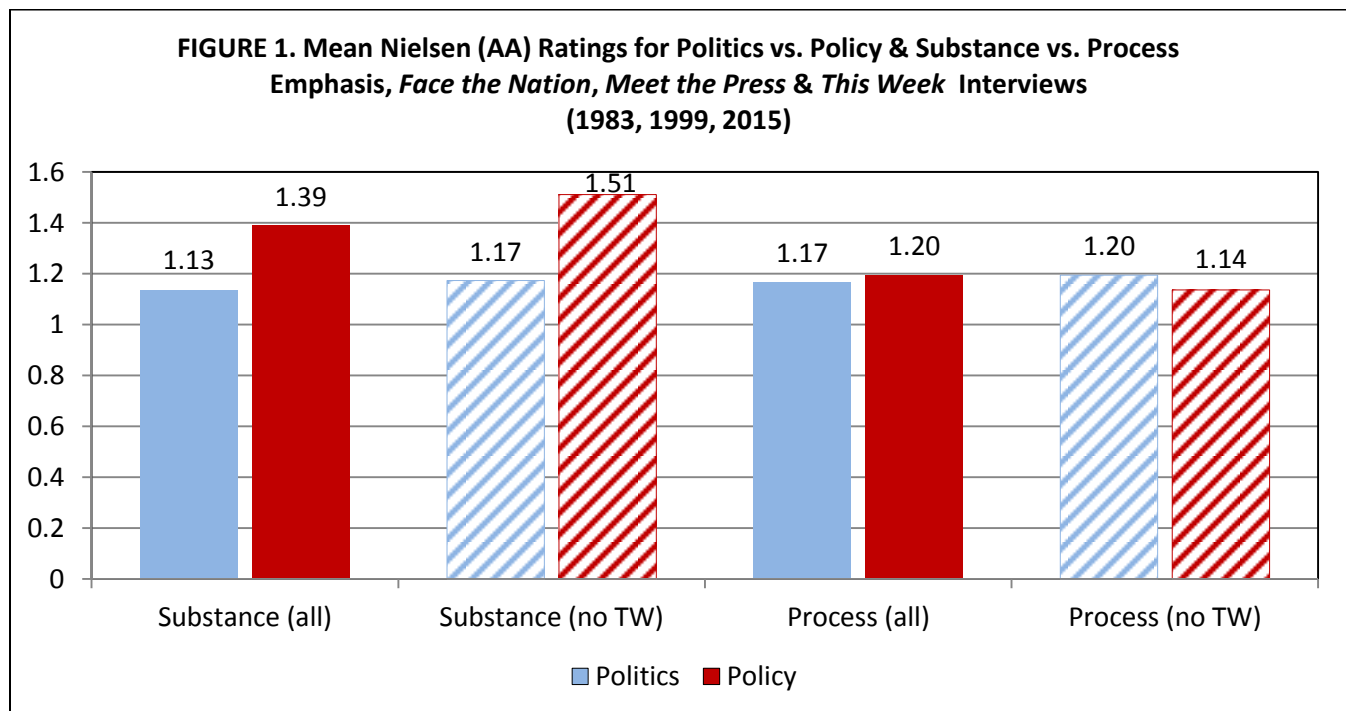
The primary takeaway is that the Sunday morning interview shows potentially could improve their audience ratings by rebalancing their interviews to feature greater proportions of *substantive policy content*, relative to *process-oriented, purely political content*, and those types of interview guests who tend to provide more of the former relative to the latter. They might also benefit, albeit perhaps modestly so, from better matching their most commonly featured topics to those topics that attract the largest audiences, especially women, as well as by diversifying the demographics—race, gender, and even party ID—of guests. Finally, doing so is potentially beneficial not only for audience ratings, but also in terms of agenda setting—that is, earning secondary coverage of interviews in subsequent news reports.

## Program Content

**Politics and process have, over time, increasingly supplanted substantive policy expertise and content, even while the latter types of interview guests and content earn higher ratings.**

Our study included two interview-content scales, one running from *political* to *policy* emphasis on issues (that is, properties of *issues*) and the other running from *substantive* to *process* emphasis (that is, properties of *content*). We recoded the scales into four possible categories of content (that is, at the high and low ends of the two scales, defined as “all or mostly” falling into a given category): (a) substantive/politics oriented, (b) substantive/policy oriented, (c) process/policy oriented, and (d) process/politics oriented. (For some analyses we combined these into a single variable measuring the proportion of substantive, policy-oriented interview content.) See Appendix 3 for examples of interviews that represent each of these four categories and Appendix 1 for the full codebook.<sup>2</sup>

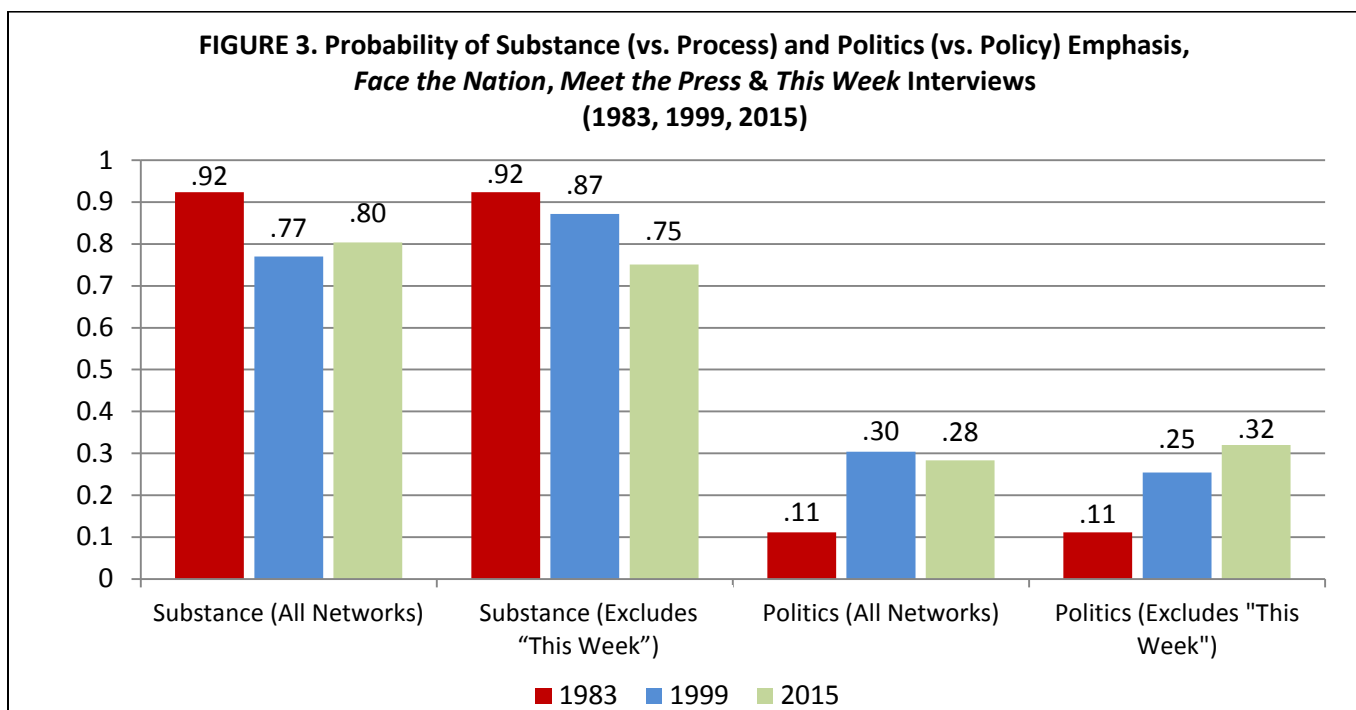
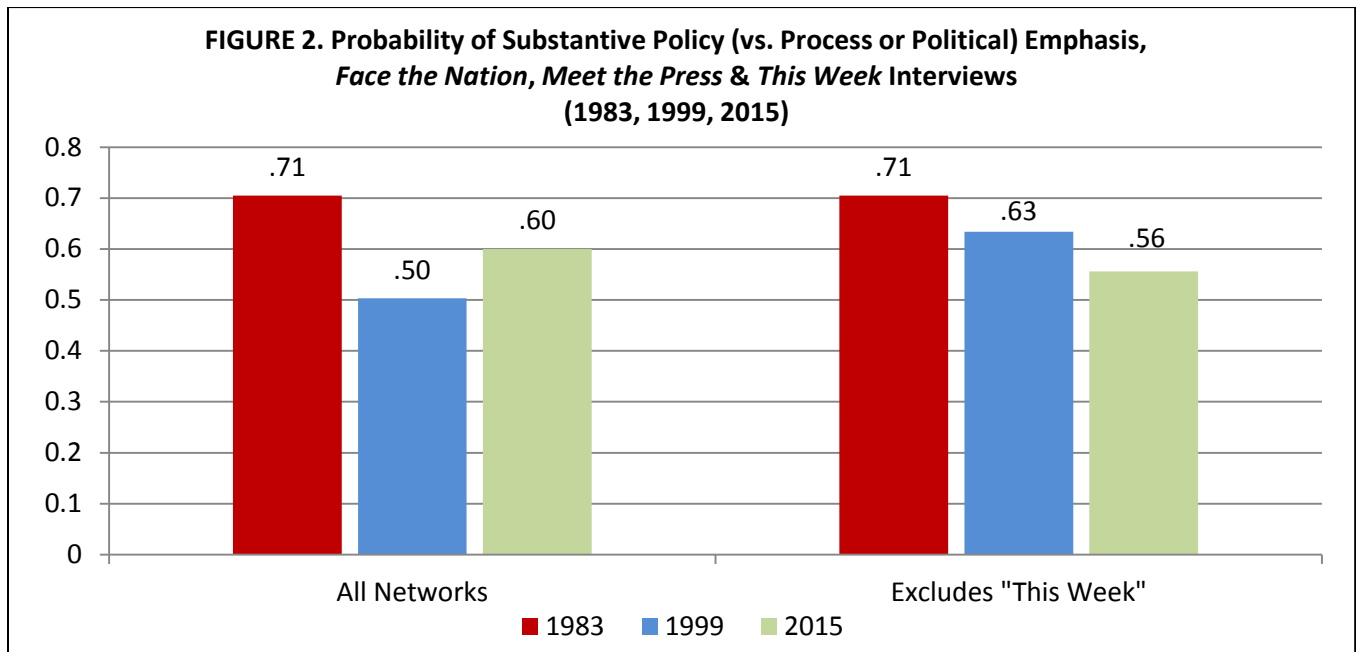
Figure 1, below, presents the proportions of instances where “all or most” of an interview fell into one of these four ends of the scale. The solid bars include all three programs, while the hashed bars exclude TW, for whom we were unable to obtain 1983 ratings data. The results indicate that interviews featuring substantive, policy-oriented content earned the highest Nielsen “average audience” (AA) ratings, while *all* policy-oriented content earned higher AA ratings than politically oriented content. The hashed bars indicate that these gaps are even starker when we focus only on the two programs (MTP and FTN) with ratings data for all three periods.<sup>3</sup>



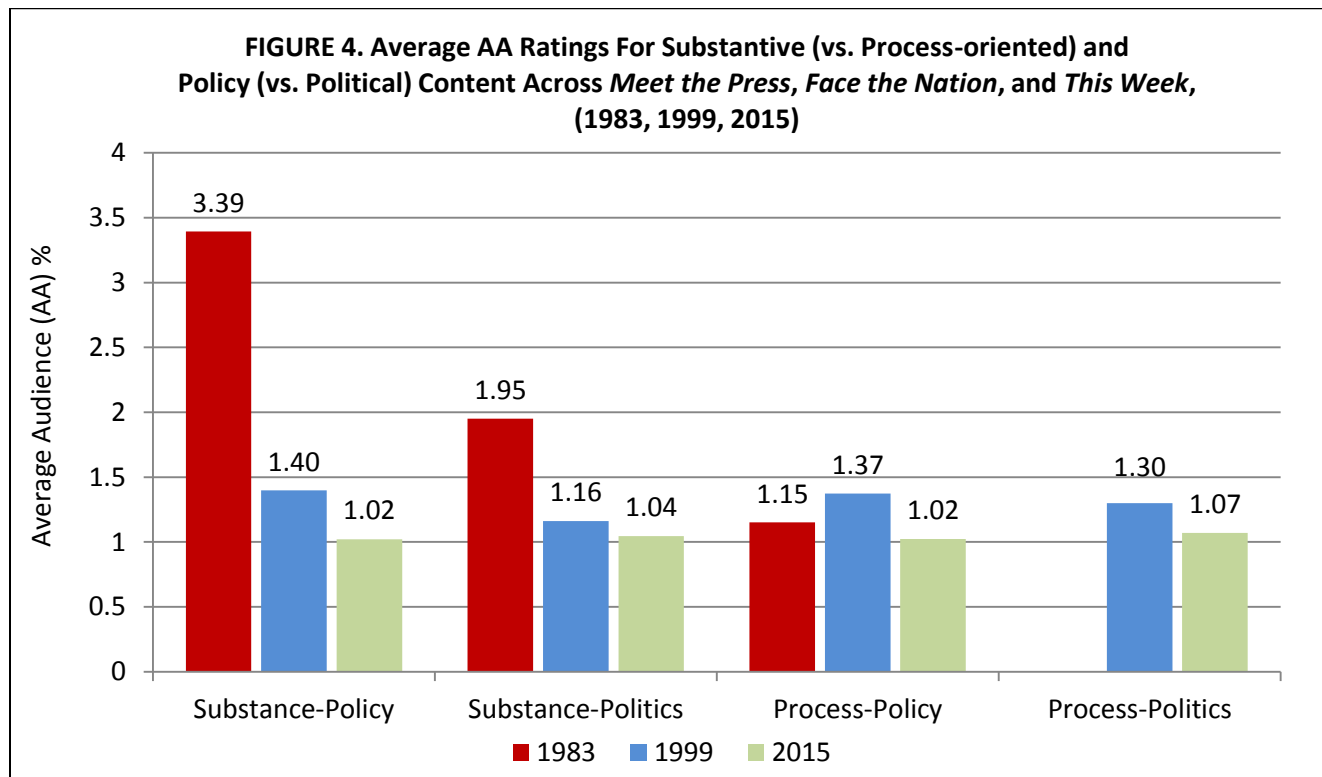
<sup>2</sup> *Politics* focus emphasizes tactics, the horserace or game frame, whereas *policy* issue focus addresses the policy itself, like, say, Medicare or immigration. *Substance* focus emphasizes substantive policy issues and related policies and strategies, whereas *process* focus emphasizes the procedures surrounding an event or scenario and are primarily descriptive. (See Appendix 3 for examples of each category.)

<sup>3</sup> Note that when we break Figure 1 out by gender, we find that while there are some differences, both men and women provided the highest audience ratings for substantive, policy-oriented content, with or without the inclusion of *This Week* for 1999 and 2015.

Despite the apparent ratings dominance of substantive, policy-oriented interviews, Figure 2 combines the above two categories, and indicates that interviews for whom “all or most” of the content features substantive, policy-oriented content accounts for a steadily declining portion of overall interview segments from 1983 to 2015. Figure 3, which breaks out the two variables, shows that this trend is attributable to both declining substance and rising political content, though the latter trend is somewhat stronger (for political [vs. policy] content, a nearly three-fold increase from 11 to 32 percent, and for substantive [vs. process] content, a decline from 92 to 75 percent of interview segments, all excluding TW). This suggests the Sunday morning talk shows could potentially improve their ratings by increasing the ratio of substantive policy content to politics- and process-oriented content.



One caveat to the above patterns emerges in Figure 4 (which, for clarity, includes only the ratings across all three networks). That is, when we break audience ratings for these different dimensions of coverage out by year, we find the largest ratings advantage for substance and policy over process and politics in 1983. In 1999, substantive, policy-oriented coverage continues to earn the highest ratings, but the differences across content types are smaller. In 2015, in contrast, there is hardly any difference at all across the four types of content. We cannot assess from these data whether 2015 is an outlier or represents a change in the prevalent pattern of the previous two periods.



Note: There were no 1983 “process-politics” observations

## Guests

**Interviews with administration officials and substantive policy experts earn the highest audience ratings on average, and feature among the most substantive, policy-oriented content. Yet they are declining as proportions of all interviews.**

Consistent with the above findings, Figure 5 indicates that, excluding TW, interviews featuring *substantive policy experts*, received the highest overall average ratings across nine interview guest categories followed by administration officials (the differences when TW is included are small). (See Appendix 2 for examples of guests and job titles falling into each guest type category.) Also worth noting, when we break the results out by gender, we find that women rate substantive policy experts a bit more highly than men, while men rate administration officials somewhat more highly than women, in both instances with or without TW.

**FIGURE 5. Average Audience (AA) Ratings for Interviews on *Meet the Press*, *This Week*, and *Face the Nation*, by Guest Type/Expertise (1983, 1999, 2015)**

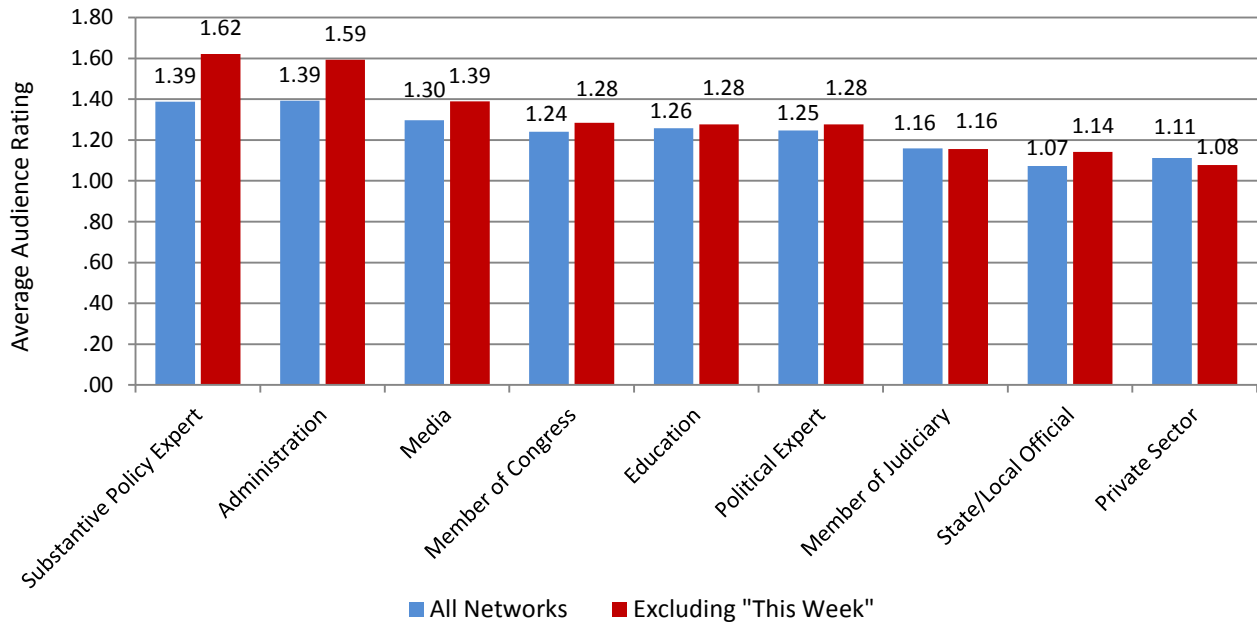
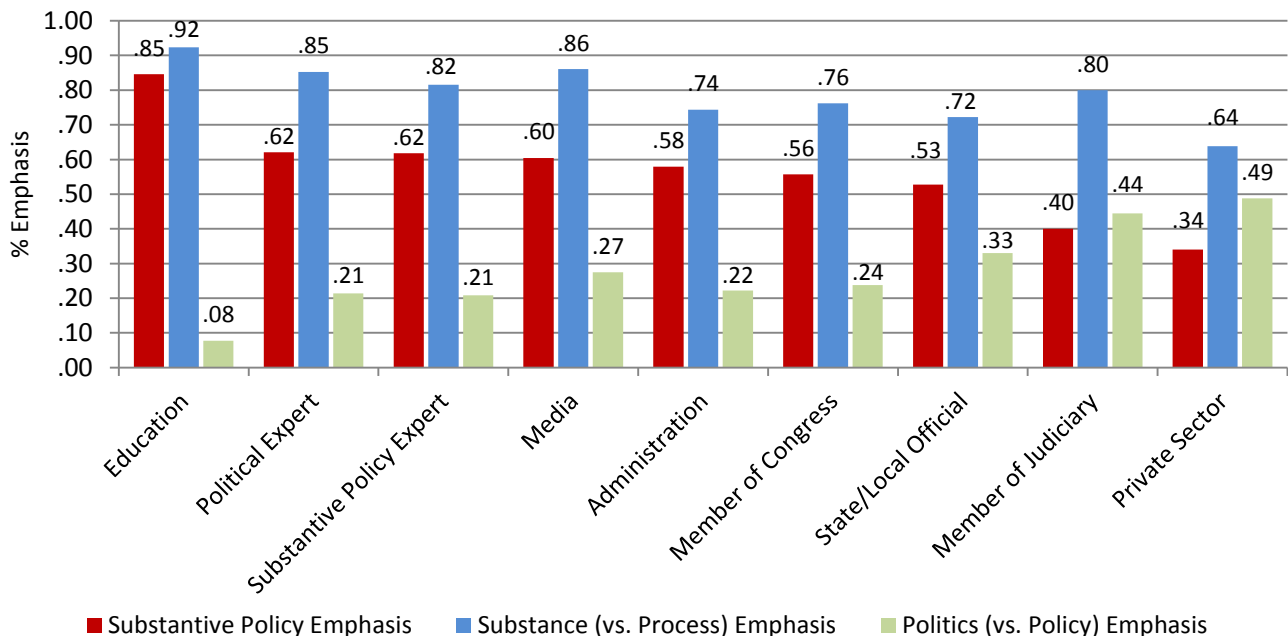


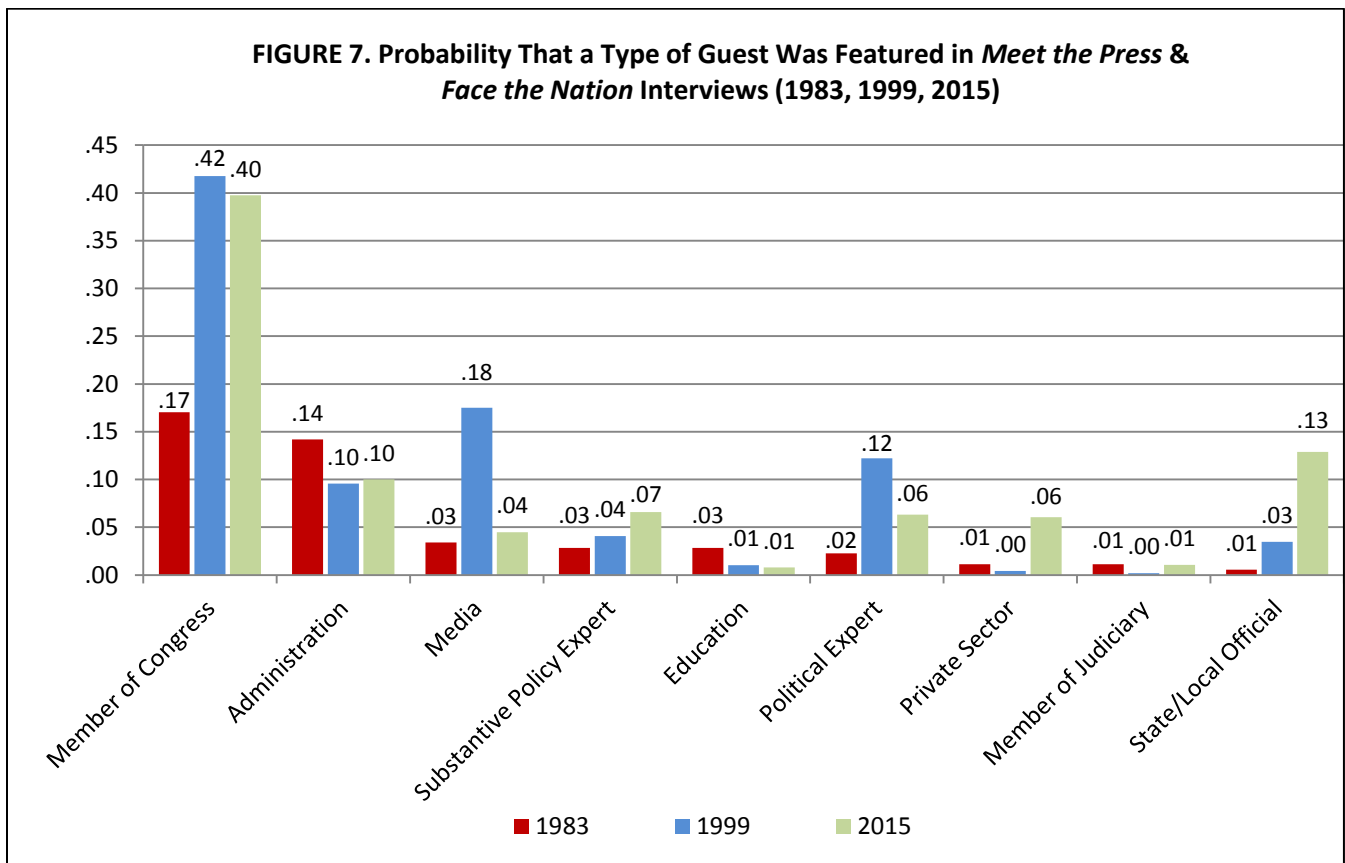
Figure 6 presents the amount of substantive (vs. process, in red) and political (vs. policy, in green) content, as well as the combined substantive-policy content variable (in blue), for each category of interview subject. The results indicate that, perhaps unsurprisingly, interviews with educators (college professors or lecturers) focus substantially more heavily on substance (relative to process) and policy (relative to politics) than interviews featuring other types of guests. The next two highest categories of guests on these metrics (that is, substance relative to process and policy relative to politics) were experts in both substantive policy and politics.

**FIGURE 6. Framing of Interviews on *Meet the Press*, *This Week*, and *Face the Nation*, by Guest Type/Expertise (1983, 1999, 2015)**





The implication is that interviews with substantive policy experts provide the largest “dose” of the type of content (substantive, policy-oriented) to which audiences appear most responsive (measured by Nielsen ratings). Yet, as we previously observed, the prevalence of such interview subjects does not appear to match their apparent ratings success, particularly with regard to the two categories of guests. Moreover, the over-time trend in frequency of different categories of guests, shown in Figure 7, indicates either declines or relatively modest increases in the prevalence of the types of guests who tend to present the most substantive interview content and to earn the highest average ratings (education officials or substantive policy experts). There has been a sharp increase in categories of guests whose interviews tend to be more process or political in orientation, on the one hand, and to receive lower average audience ratings, on the other (members of Congress, state/local officials, private sector).



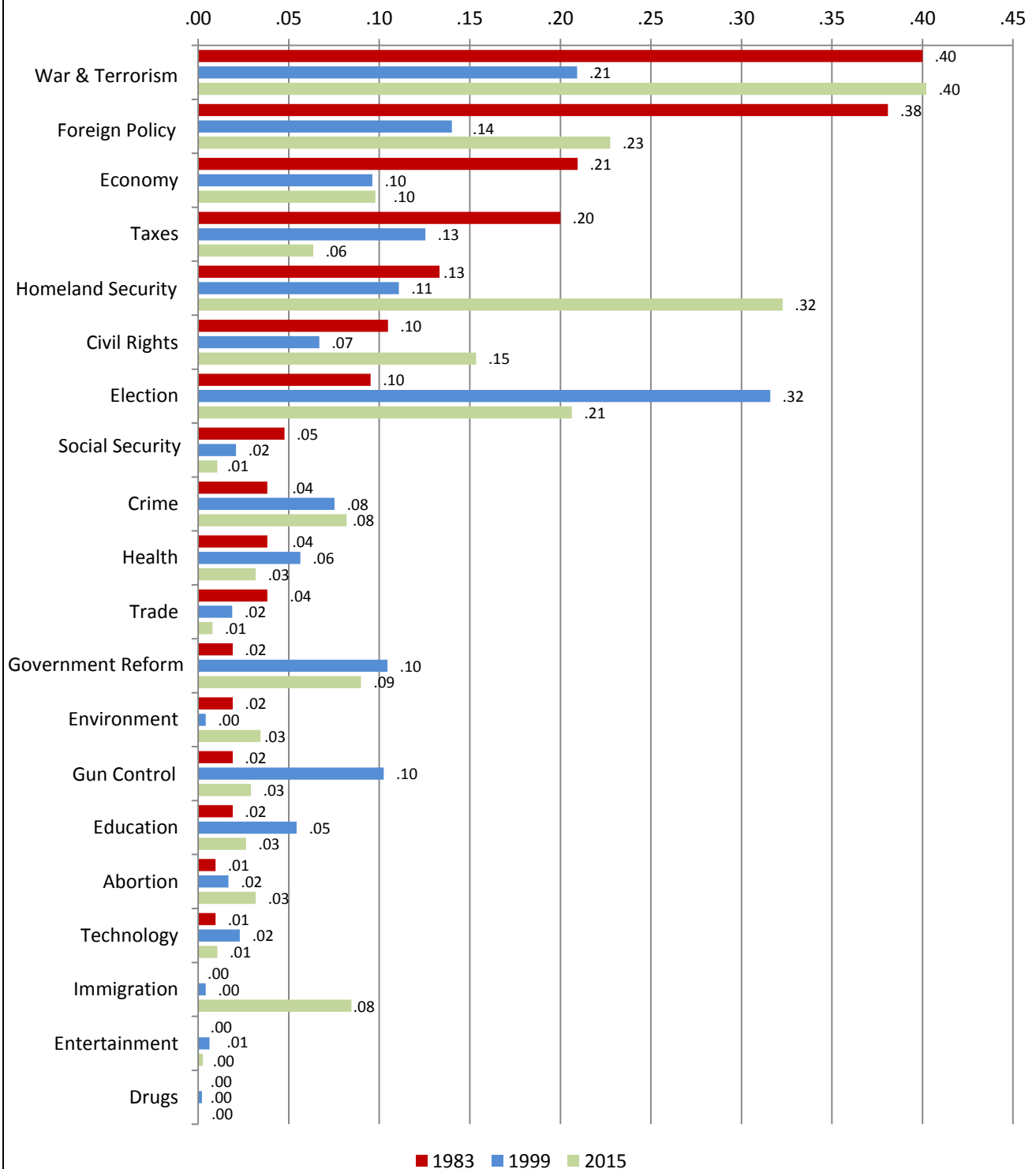
## Topics

**We find a similar, yet less pronounced, pattern for interview topics, with topics that earn the highest audience ratings not necessarily corresponding to the most frequently appearing, or most substantive, policy-oriented interview topics. However, the correlations between topic prevalence and Nielsen ratings are modest.**

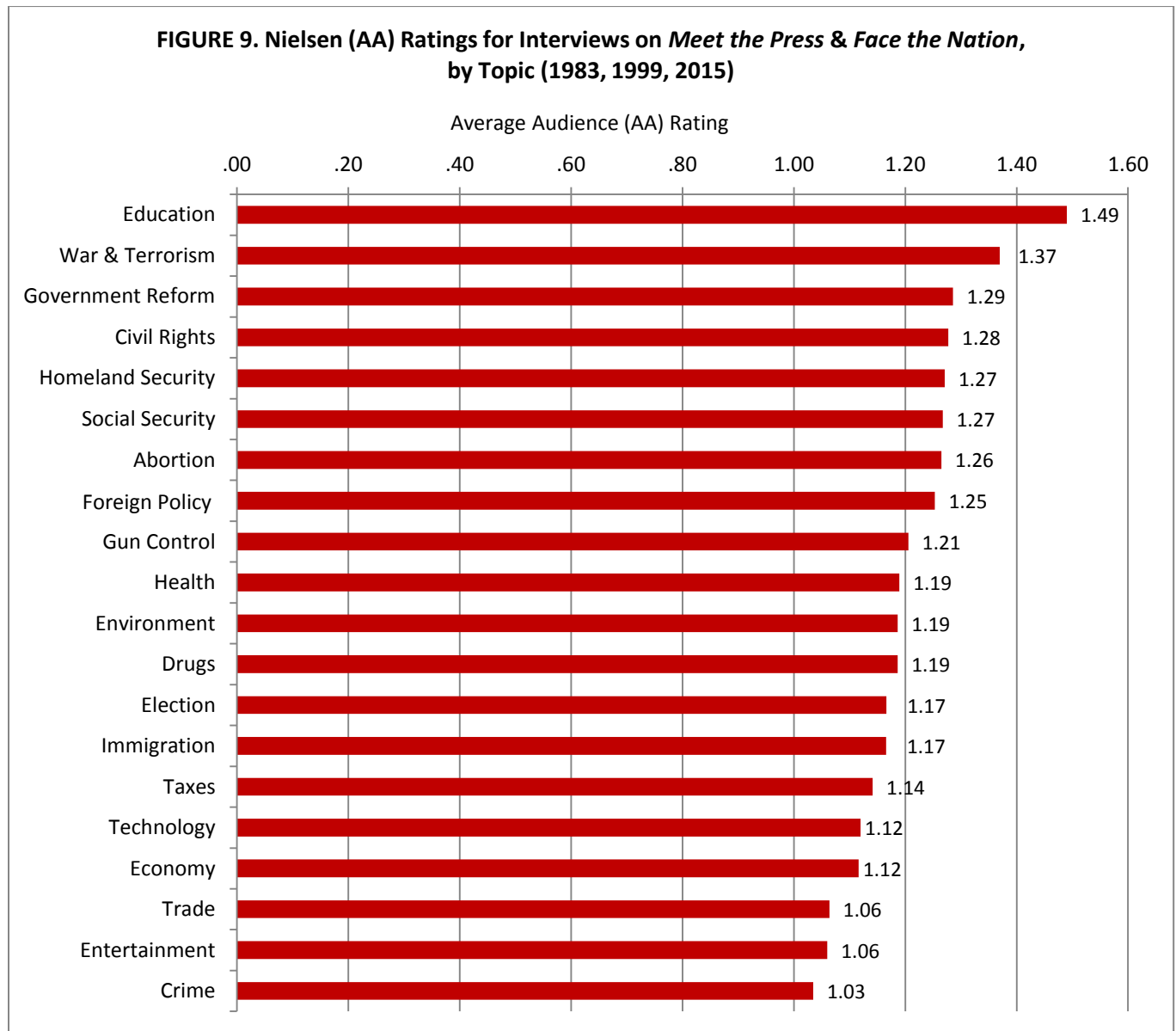
Figure 8 summarizes the frequency with which 20 distinct interview topics appeared across MTP and FTN in 1983, 1999, and 2015. (TW is excluded due to unavailability of 1983 transcripts.) The results indicate that the five most frequent topics in 1983 were war and terrorism, other foreign policy, the economy, taxes, and homeland security. All five topics declined in frequency in 1999, while coverage of the 2000 election, health, government reform, gun control, and technology increased proportionately. In 2015, interviews addressing war and

terrorism unsurprisingly spiked back up, along with the topic of homeland security. However, the economy, taxes, and other foreign policy issues remained far less frequently addressed relative to 1983. Immigration also emerged for the first time in 2015, accounting for about 8 percent of interview topics.

**FIGURE 8. Probability That a Topic Was Featured in *Meet the Press* & *Face the Nation* Interviews (1983, 1999, 2015)**



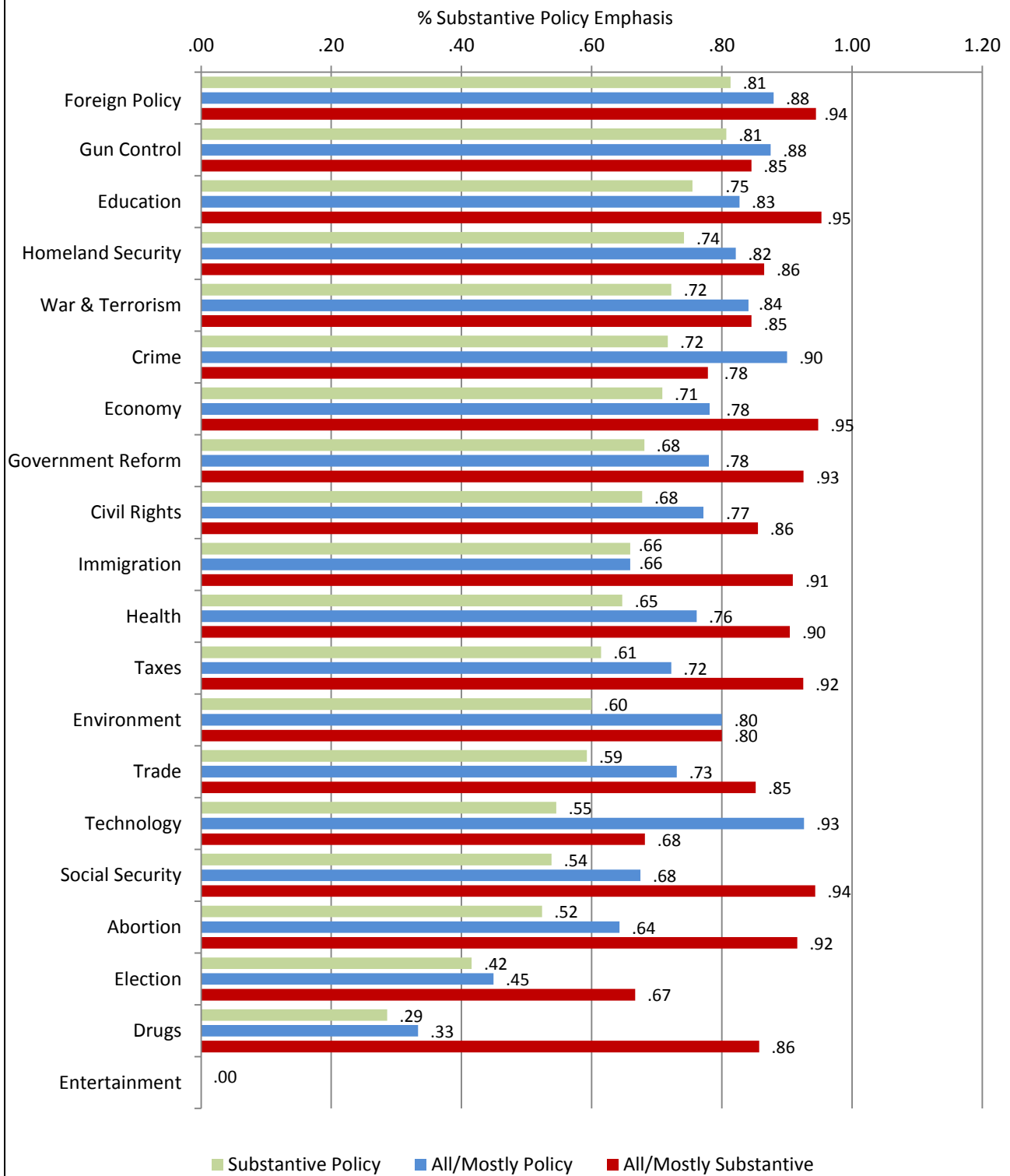
The frequency of topic coverage in interviews appears to track Nielsen’s average audience (AA) ratings, shown in Figure 9, in some instances, but not consistently so. For instance, war and terrorism are in both 1983 and 2015 the most frequent topics in Sunday morning talk show interviews, and also earn the second highest average ratings across the 20 topics we investigated. However, education, which earns the highest overall audience ratings of any topic, is among the least-frequently-addressed interview subjects, accounting for only 2 to 5 percent of interviews across the three time periods. Similarly, government reform is the third-most-highly rated topic, yet accounted for only 9 percent of interview content in 2015, a small decline from 1999.



There is at most a loose relationship between audience ratings and substantive policy emphasis across these issues. As Figure 8 shows, foreign policy—which, per Figure 10, scores highest in substantive, policy-oriented emphasis—has fallen off most dramatically, by 15 percentage points between 1999 and 2015, in coverage volume. Similarly, the third-most substantive, and most-highly-rated topic, education (again, see Figure 10), consistently accounts for a small

fraction of coverage on the Sunday morning talk shows (per Figure 8). On the other hand, homeland security and war/terrorism have spiked in frequency (see Figure 8), as well as having highly substantive content and earning relatively high audience ratings (see Figure 10).

**FIGURE 10. Percent of Substantive Policy-oriented Coverage on *Meet the Press*, *This Week*, and *Face the Nation*, by Topic (1983, 1999, 2015)**



Also worth noting in Figure 10, when we break down the “substantive, policy-oriented emphasis” variable into its two elements, we find that the highest-scoring topics are those that score similarly-highly across both dimensions (substance over process and policy over politics). As we move toward the lower end of the scale, however, we find that while, in most instances, the substance score remains high, politics increasingly dominates policy discourse. The sole exception is technology, which earns the highest overall policy-emphasis score, but a far-below-average substance-emphasis score. The implication is that while typical interviews contain substantial substantive content, they tend to emphasize politics over policy, despite the fact that, as shown in Figure 1, policy discourse tends to attract superior audience ratings. Indeed, ratings for policy-oriented content statistically significantly ( $p < .01$ ) outstrip ratings for political content by, on average, 1.370 to 1.115.

## Gender Preferences

**Women account for a majority of the audience since 1999, yet featured topics more closely reflect the preferences of men than of women. The overall correlations between topics and ratings are fairly low for both genders.**

In 1983, men accounted for 57 percent of the network Sunday morning talk show audience, compared to 43 percent women; in both 1999 and 2015, they accounted for 48 percent, compared to 52 percent women. Figures 11 and 12a-13a present the average ratings across all 20 topics, excluding TW, separated by men and women, while Figures 12b-13b include TW. Comparing these patterns with those shown in Figure 8, which presents the probabilities that each topic was covered in an interview during each time period, and excludes TW, we find that across all three time periods, program topics more closely reflect the preferences of men than of women.

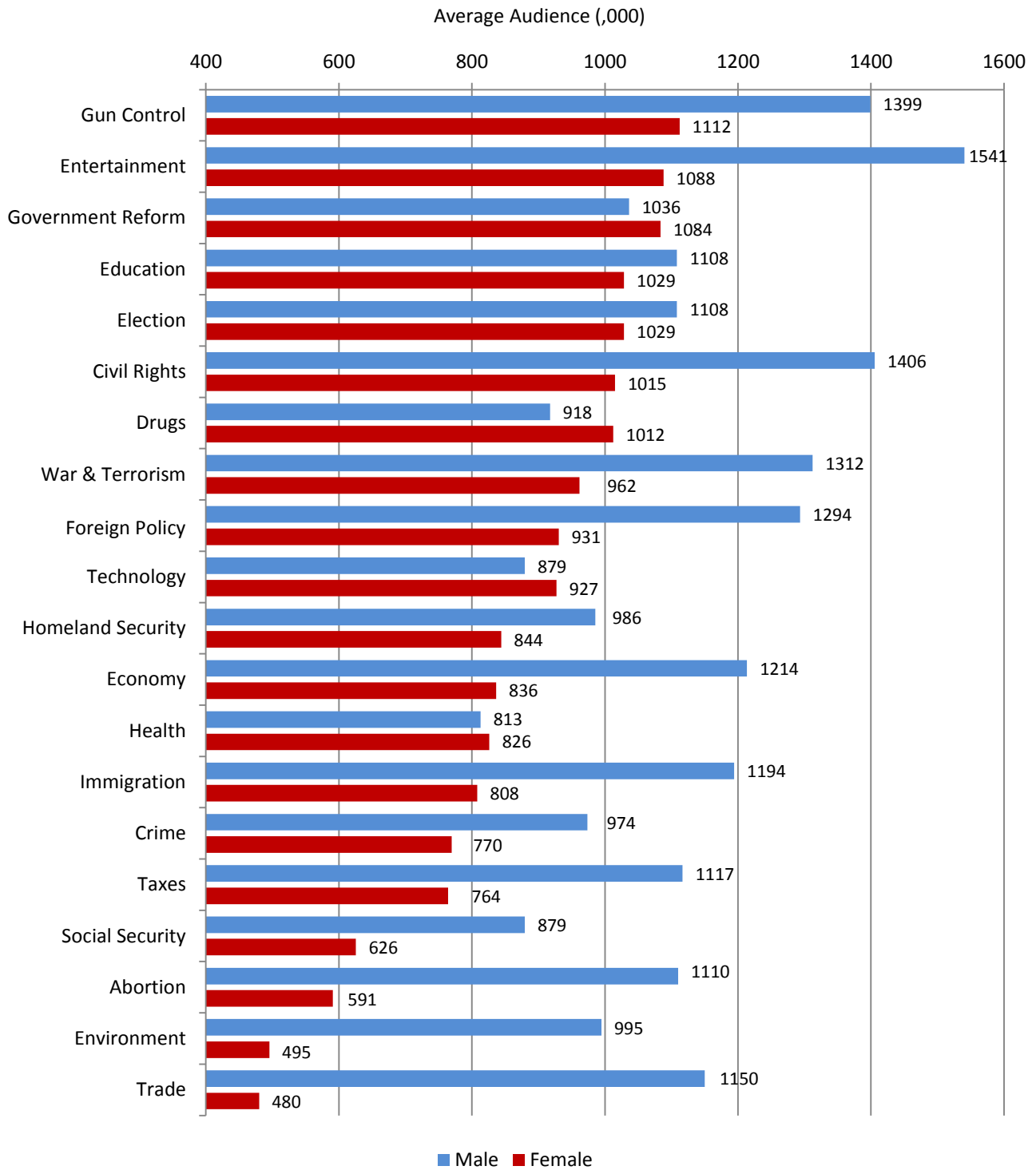
We assess the relative emphasis on the Sunday talk shows on issues appealing to men vs. women two different ways. The first entails separately determining which topics earn the highest ratings among men and women (per Figures 11a-13a, excluding TW for an “apples-to-apples” comparison) and comparing these against the most frequently appearing topics (per Figure 8). Doing so indicates that of the five most highly rated topics among men, two were among the top five most frequent topics on the Sunday morning shows in 1983, while *none* were among the top five most frequent topics in 1999 or 2015. For women, the corresponding number is *zero* across all three years. In other words, the topics featured on the Sunday programs more closely matched the preferences of men than women in 1983, but did not match the preferences of either gender in 1999 or 2015.

If we expand our search to the top 10 topical issues, both in terms of ratings and probability of being featured, the figures for men in 1983 are 4 out of 10 “top 10” topics appearing on both lists (ratings and appearances), compared with 2 for women. In both 1999 and 2015, the corresponding figures are 2 for men and 1 for women. So, while in an absolute sense the probability of matching the preferences of audience members declines over time, the 2-to-1 relative advantage in topic matching for men persists. In short, the Sunday shows are roughly twice as likely to include among their 10 most-featured topics in a given year an issue that ranks among the top 10 most-preferred topics—per Nielsen ratings<sup>4</sup>—among men, relative to women.

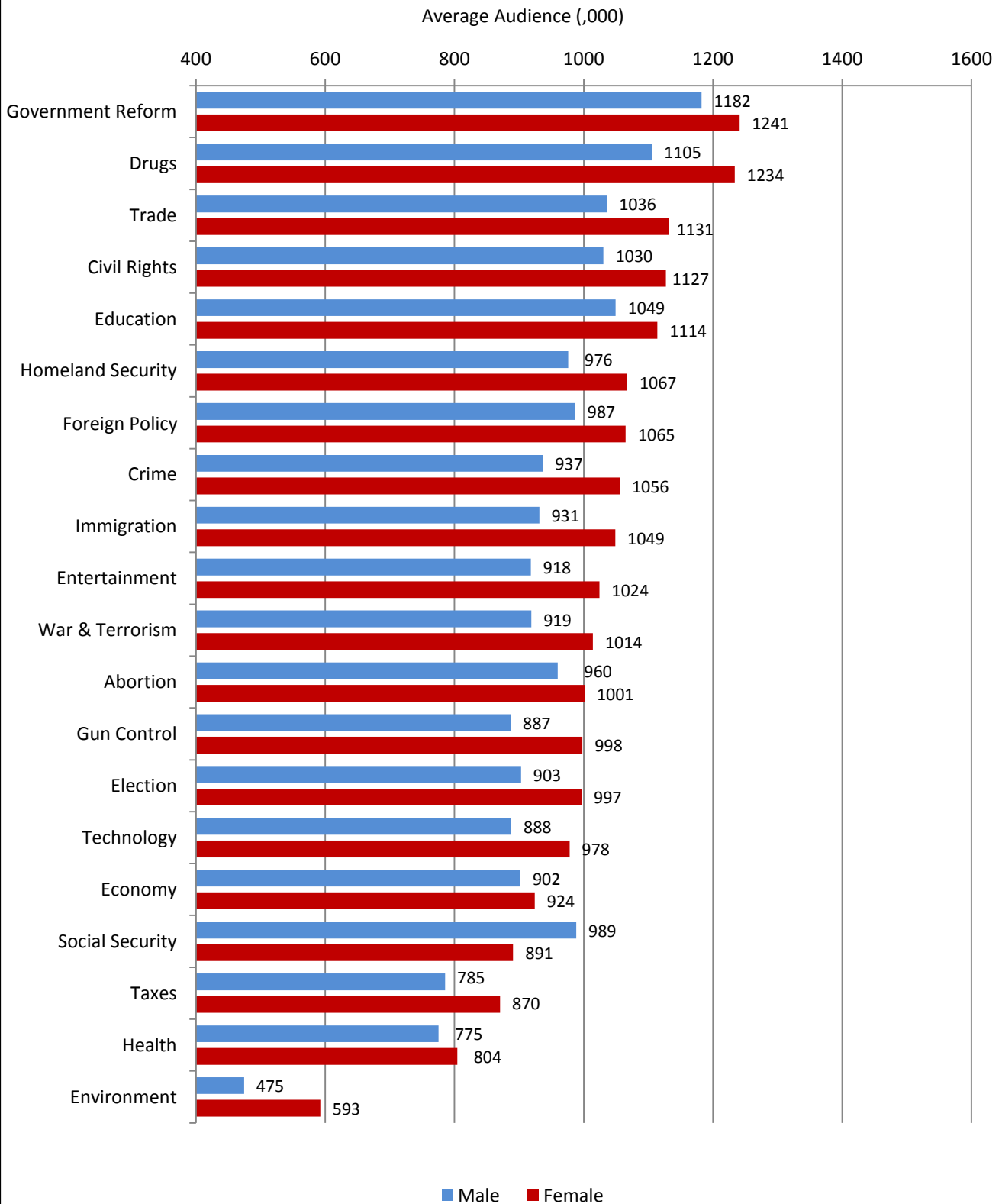
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<sup>4</sup> Due to limitations in data availability, for this and several subsequent analyses we employ Nielsen’s reported audience size rather than *ratings*.

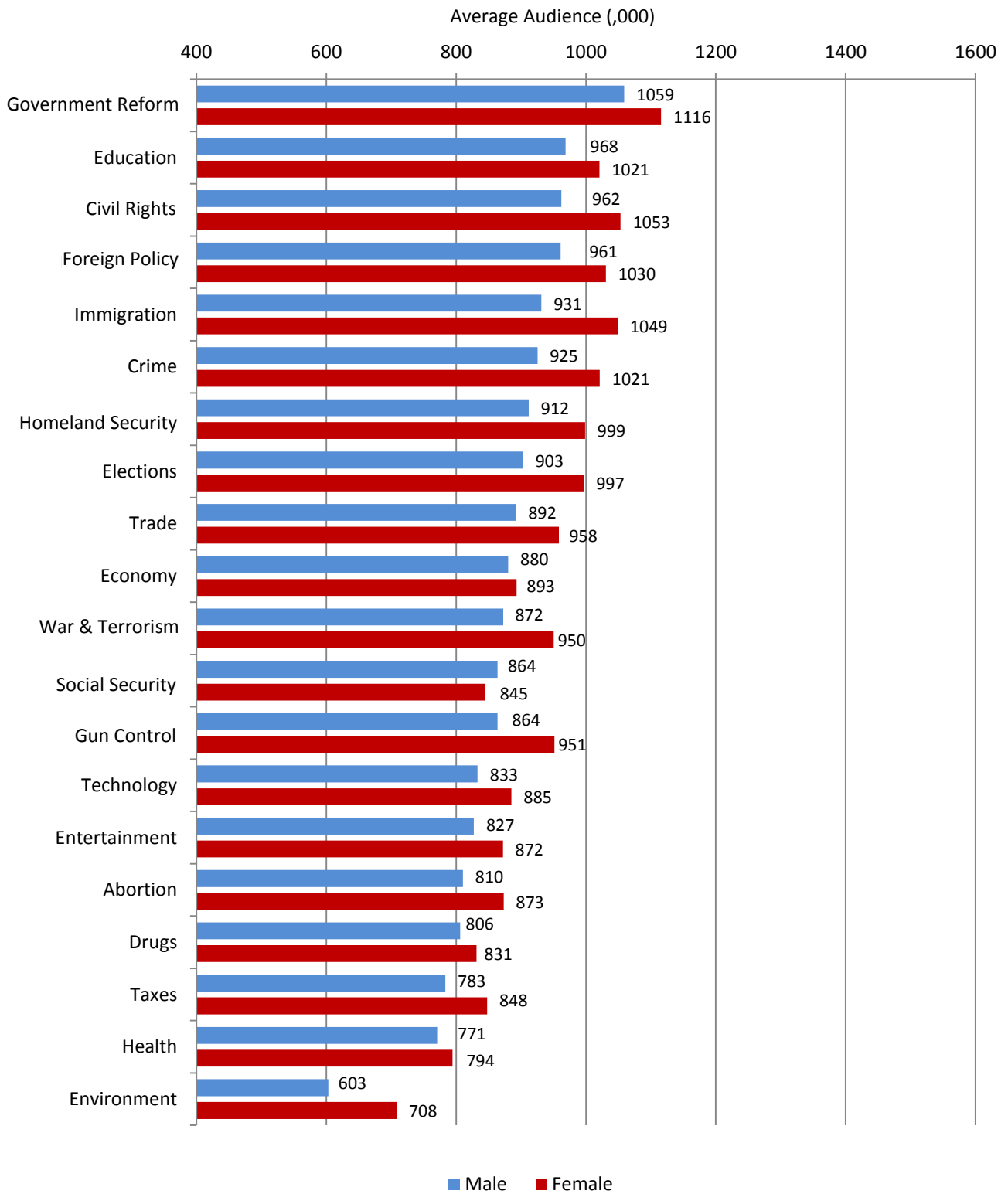
**FIGURE 11. Average Audience Size (,000) for Interviews on *Meet the Press* & *Face the Nation*, by Gender and Topic (1983)**



**FIGURE 12A. Average Audience Size (,000) for Interviews on Meet the Press & Face the Nation, by Gender and Topic (1999)**

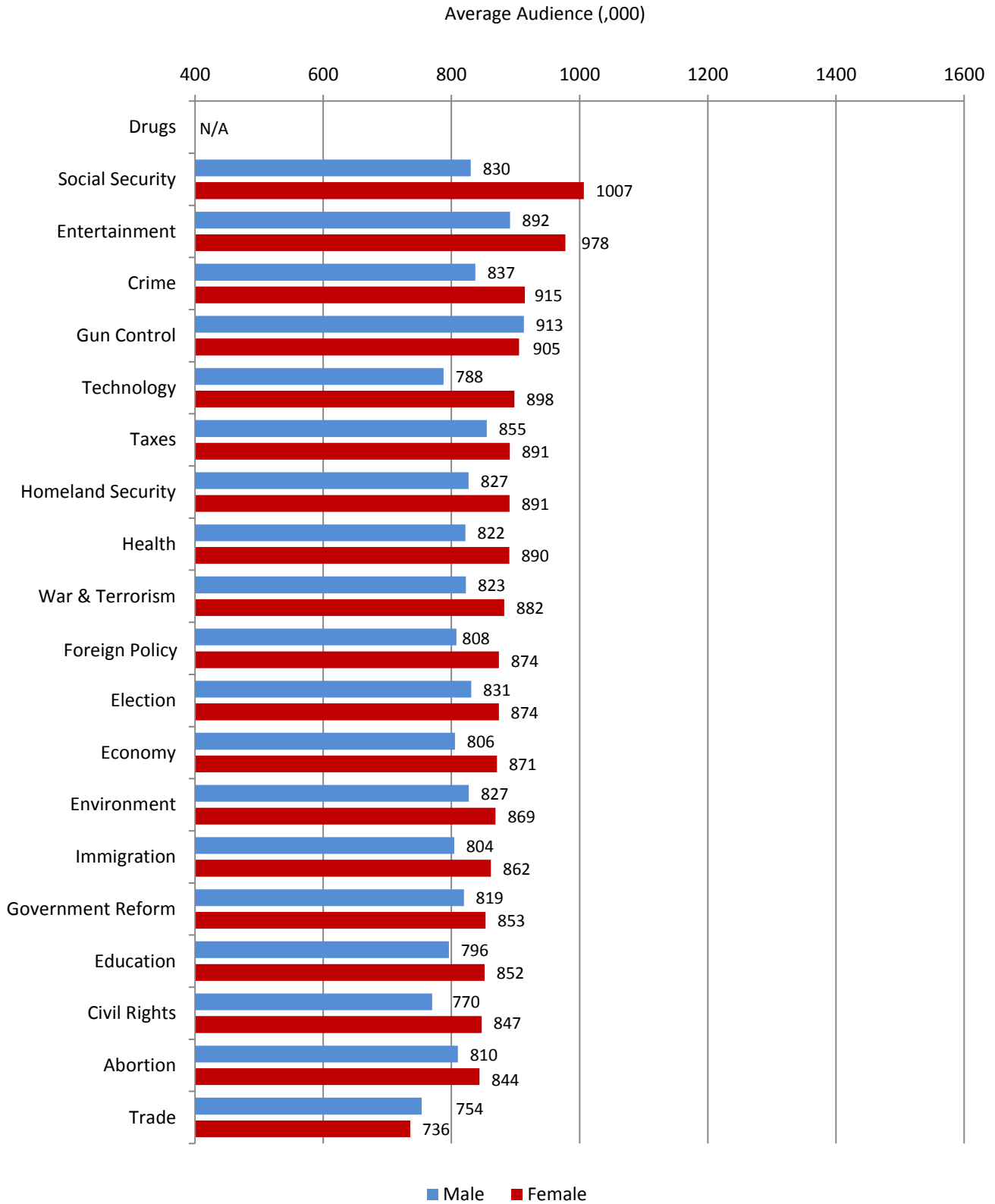


**FIGURE 12B. Average Audience Size (,000) for Interviews on *Meet the Press*, *This Week* & *Face the Nation*, by Gender and Topic (1999)**



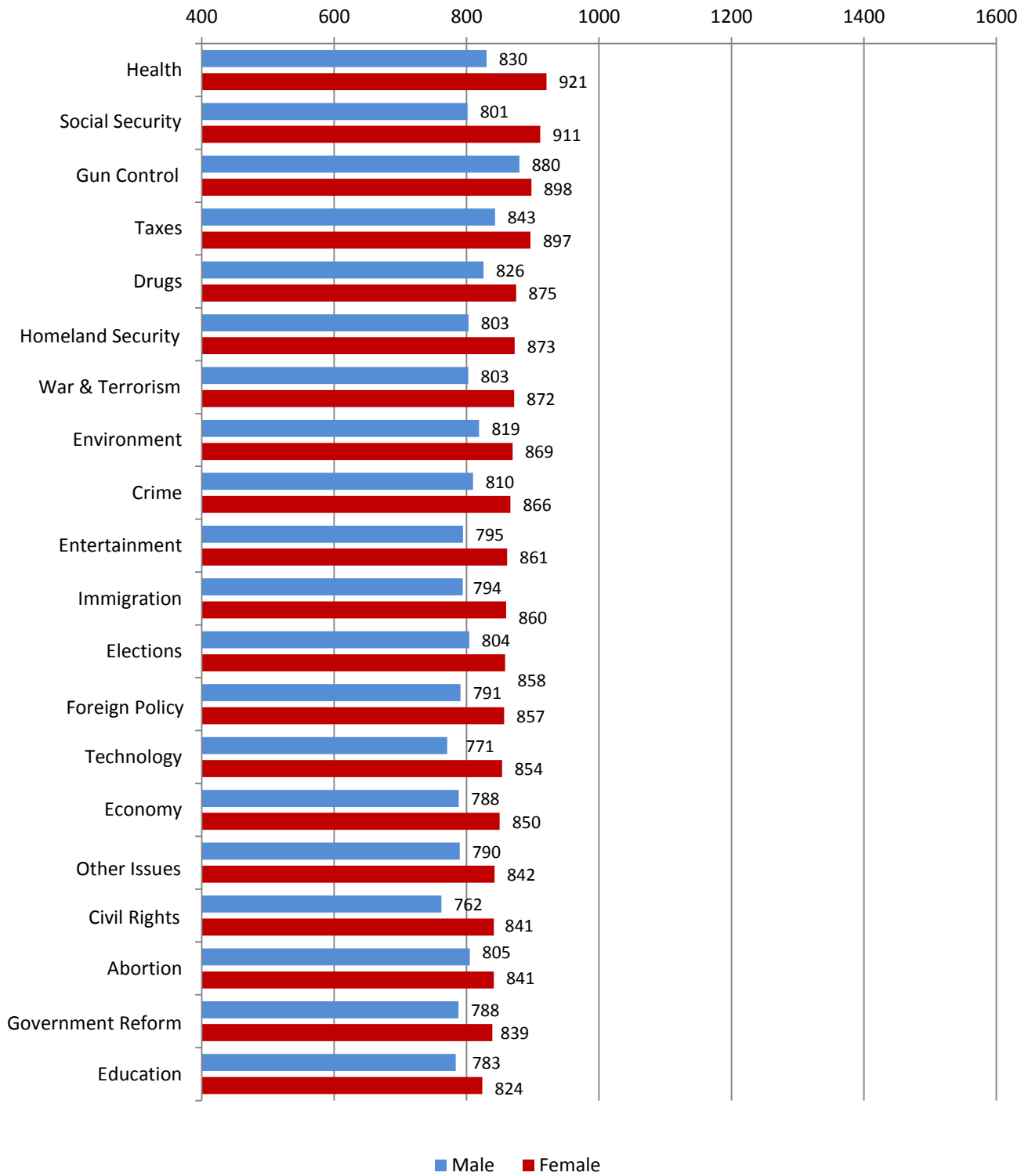


**FIGURE 13A. Average Audience Size (,000) for Interviews on Meet the Press & Face the Nation, by Gender and Topic (2015)**



**FIGURE 13B. Average Audience Size (,000) for Interviews on Meet the Press, This Week & Face the Nation, by Gender and Topic (2015)**

Average Audience (,000)



It is admittedly difficult to clearly discern these patterns solely from the graphics. Hence, we turn to a second comparison strategy. That is, we can also calculate the correlations between audience ratings for men and women, on the one hand, and each individual interview topic, on the other. From this, we can then calculate the overall average correlation and compare across genders for all topics combined. This approach yields generally tepid correlations across the board, yet relatively stronger ones for men than for women.

In 1983, the average correlation between ratings and topics was about twice as strong for men as for women (~.08 vs. .04). In 1999 the relative gap remained substantial, though the overall correlations were quite small (~.02 vs. .01). By 2015 the correlations had fallen to near-zero for both men and women (.008 vs. .005). In other words, in 2015 there was essentially no relationship between featured topics and those most preferred (per ratings) by men or women.

Also worth noting, reviewing Figures 11-13 reveals that both the gaps between men and women and the ratings variations from most- to least-highly rated topics narrow considerably from 1983 to 1999 to 2015. Gender gaps remain in 2015, but they are considerably less stark than in 1983.

The implications of this review of ratings by gender are threefold: (1) the Sunday morning talk shows potentially could improve their ratings by more closely aligning their content to the preferences of their audiences, (2) one aspect of #1 entails better matching topics to the preferences of women, relative to men, and (3) to some extent these implications are offset by an over-time decline in the gender gap and ratings variance across topics.

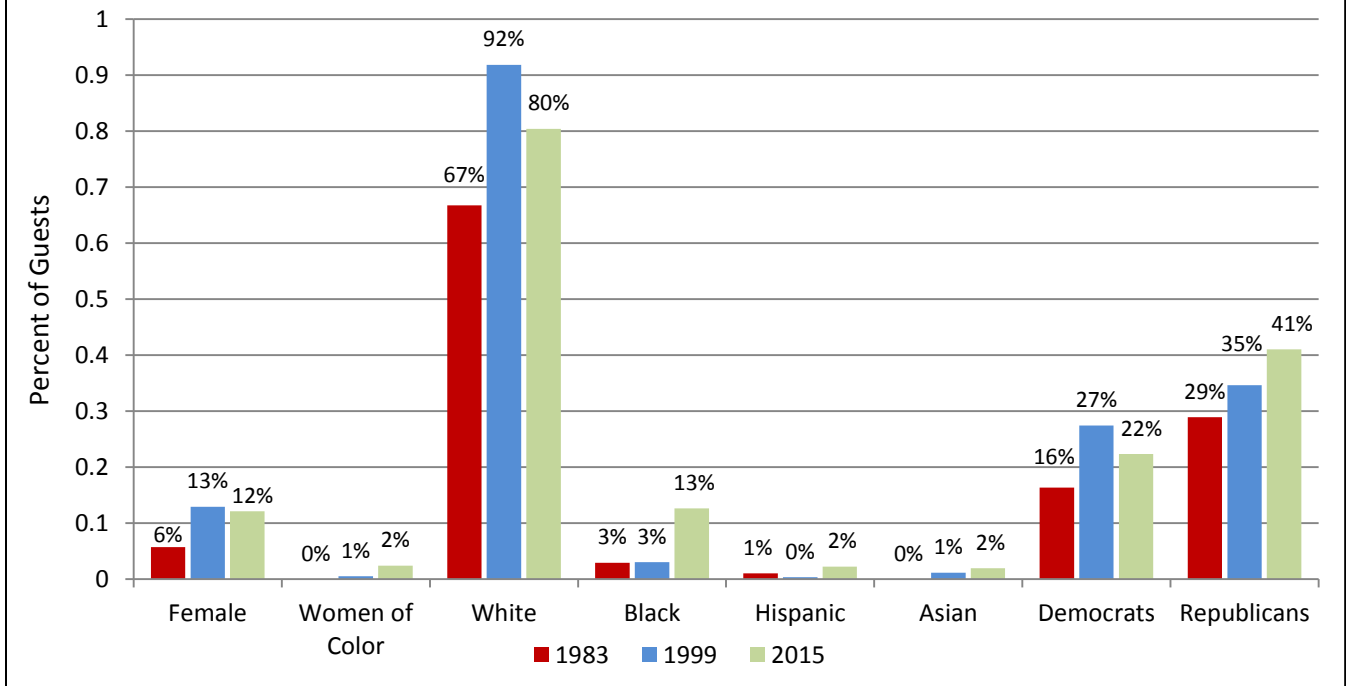
## Guest Demographics

**The Sunday morning programs overwhelmingly feature White men, though there is a noteworthy uptick in African American guests in 2015 relative to 1983 or 1999. Republicans substantially outnumber Democrats across all three periods, which span the Reagan, Clinton, and Obama administrations, as well as periods of unified and divided government.**

Several clear patterns and trends emerge in the data, summarized in Figure 15, with relatively little variation across the three programs. However, it is important to first point out that on the race/ethnicity dimension there are a larger number of unidentifiable guests in 1983 than in the other years (due to transcript formats). We therefore emphasize the trend from 1999 to 2015 on that dimension. The results show an overwhelming majority of White, male guests, though the percentage declined somewhat from 1999 to 2015, while the percentage of female guests roughly doubled from 1983 to 1999, with 2015 remaining about the same as 1999. There was a noteworthy uptick in the number of African American guests in 2015 relative to 1999 (and likely also 1983, though we cannot be certain due to the larger number of “unknown” observations). There has been relatively little change in the percentages of Asians, Hispanics, or, more broadly, women of color. All have increased slightly, though the percentages remain quite small.

Finally, and somewhat surprisingly, it appears that Republicans are considerably more likely than Democrats to appear on the Sunday morning shows across all three years we investigated (nearly twice as likely in 1983 and 2015, and about 25 percent more likely in 1999). It is worth noting that these data span a Republican and two Democratic administrations, as well as taking place during divided and unified control of Congress. So it is unclear why this would be the case in general.

**FIGURE 14. Guest Demographics for *Meet the Press*, *Face the Nation*, and *This Week* (1983, 1999, 2015)**



## Agenda Setting

We explored the extent to which the Sunday morning interview shows succeeded in influencing the news agenda in the subsequent week. We did so using two data sets. The first was created for an entirely different analysis, focused on periods surrounding U.S. uses of military force between 1980 and 2003. The dataset includes *all* rhetoric by members of Congress (MCs) appearing on the three network Sunday morning talk shows during 61-day windows surrounding the initiation of 32 major U.S. uses of force (from 30 days prior to 30 days after initiation). There are over 9,300 distinct MC statements in the dataset. The second is based on the same data as that analyzed thus far in this report. We begin with the former results, and then turn to the latter.<sup>5</sup>

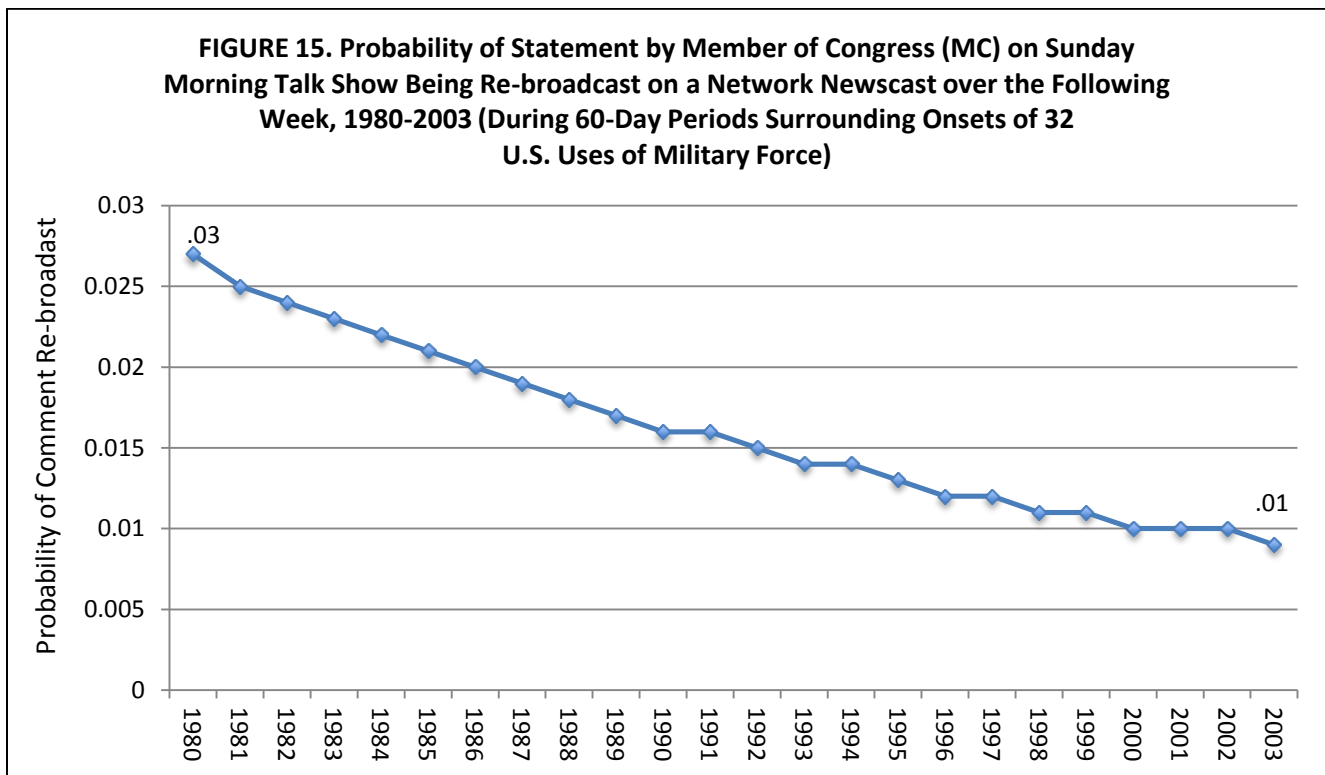
### Agenda Setting by Members of Congress (1980-2003)

**Rhetoric by members of Congress (MCs) from the Sunday interview programs grew *less* likely from 1980 to 2003 to appear in subsequent network news reports—especially discussions of the economy or budget. However, foreign policy discussions grew *more* likely over time to be picked up by later news reports.**

Figure 15 shows that there was a relatively modest (yet statistically significant) downward trend in the overall probability that a comment by an MC on a Sunday morning network talk show would be re-broadcast on the network news over the subsequent week. The probability

<sup>5</sup> All results presented in this section are based on OLS or logit regressions, with, in the latter case, log likelihood coefficients transformed into probabilities.

declined from about 3 percent in 1980 to about 1 percent in 2003.<sup>6</sup> This means that in 1983, a typical comment by an MC—that is, an exact quote—had about a 3 percent chance of being picked up by an evening newscast over the following week. By 2003 that probability had fallen to 1 percent.

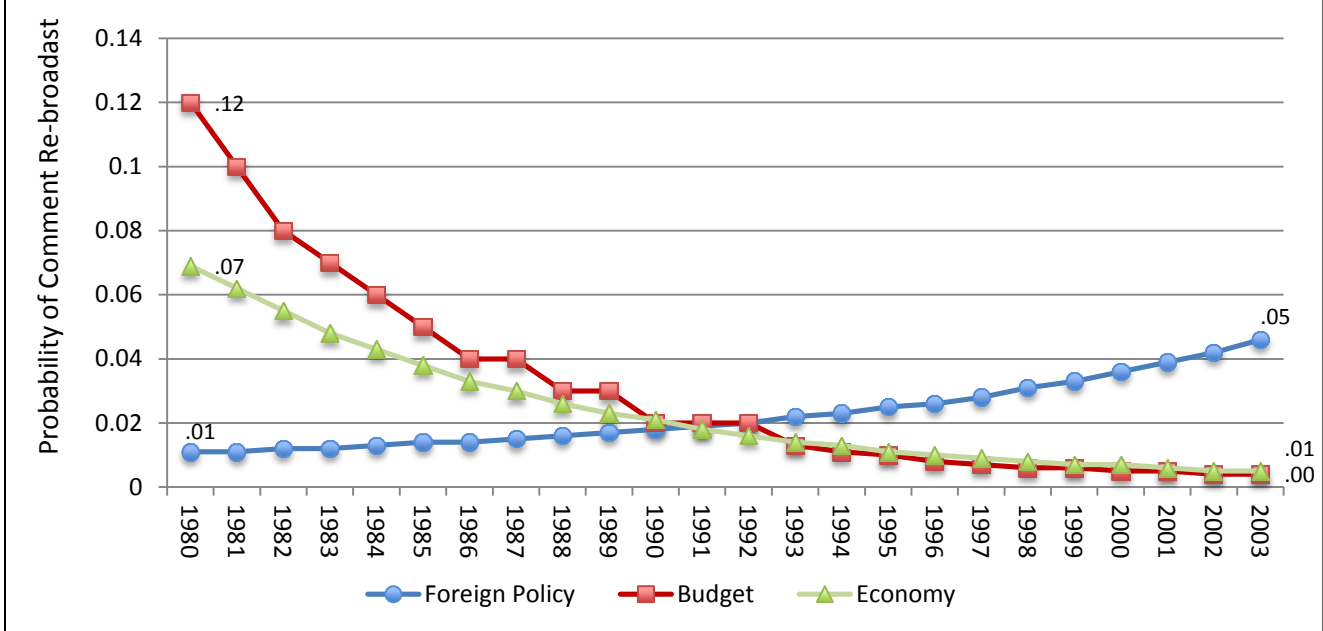


We also explored trends across a series of interview topics, including the economy, trade, the federal budget, other domestic policy, foreign policy, scandals, or personal character. Of these seven issue areas, we only found meaningful trends for three: the budget, economy, and foreign policy (see Figure 16). Between 1980 and 2003, the probability of MC rhetoric focused on the federal budget appearing in subsequent news broadcasts declined from 12 percent to essentially zero. The corresponding change for the economy was a decline from 7 to 1 percent, while for foreign policy-oriented rhetoric, the probability of an MC comment being rebroadcast on the news *increased* from about 1 to about 5 percent.

The implication of these patterns is that the agenda setting power of the Sunday morning talk shows has declined to a relatively small, but statistically significant, extent. However, this is not necessarily the case for all issue areas. It is particularly acute for discussions of the federal budget and, to a lesser extent, the economy. It has actually moved in the opposing direction for foreign policy, with such rhetoric more likely to be featured in subsequent news broadcasts in 2003, relative to 1980. This suggests that the Sunday morning talk shows, at least through the early 2000s, remained somewhat adept at influencing, or at least contributing to, the news agenda in foreign policy.

<sup>6</sup> Probabilities and changes in probabilities are smaller in the continuous, 1980-2003 models because they only measure whether an exact quotation from a Sunday morning talk show appears in the subsequent week’s nightly newscasts of one of the “big three” broadcast networks. This is a more restrictive criterion than we employed in the other analyses.

**FIGURE 16. Trend in Probability of Statement by Member of Congress (MC) on the Economy, Budget, or Foreign Policy during Sunday Morning Talk Show Being Re-broadcast on a Network Newscast over the Following Week, 1980-2003 (During 60-Day Periods Surrounding Onsets of 32 U.S. Uses of Military Force)**



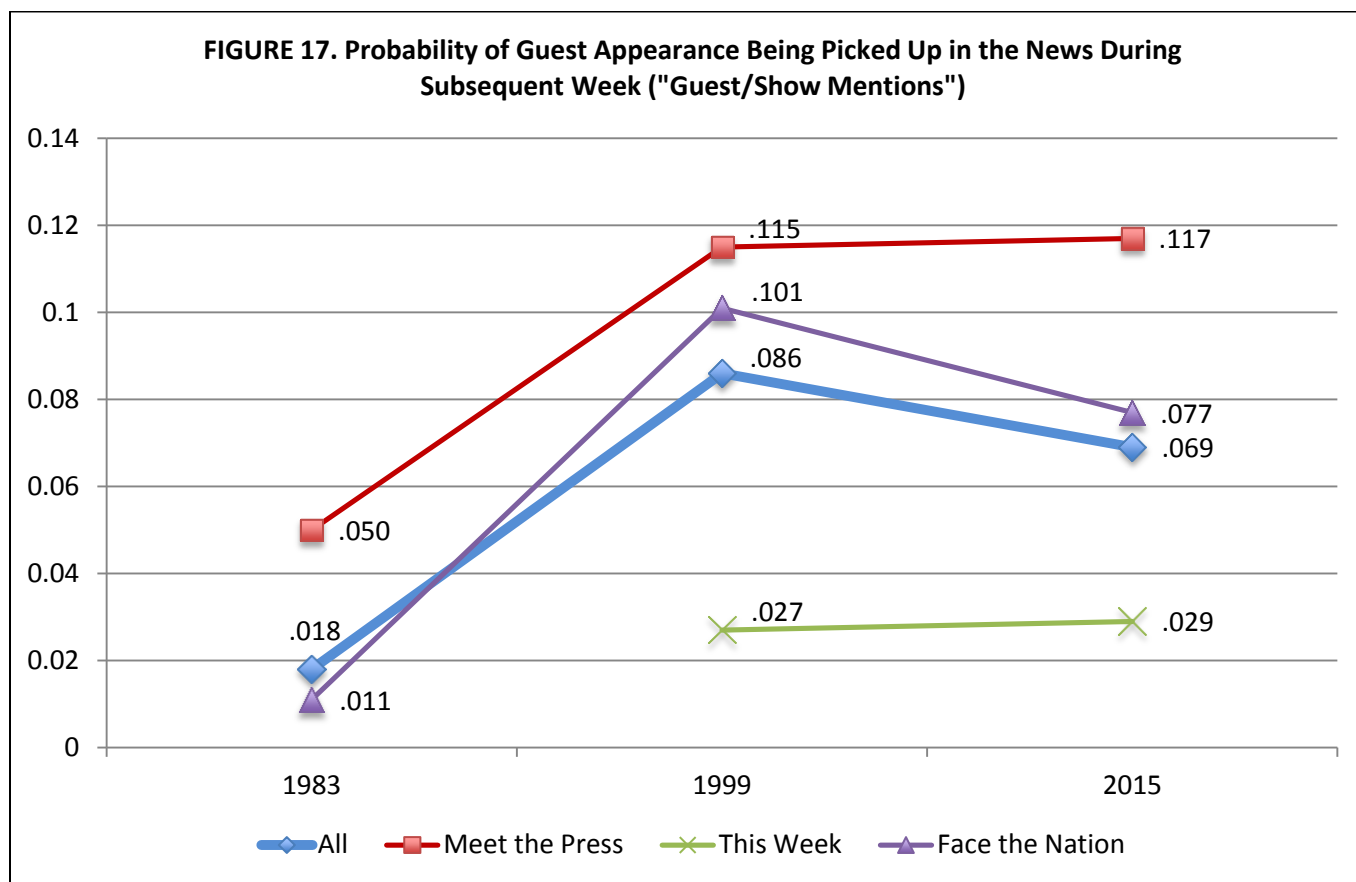
## Agenda Setting Overall (1983, 1999, 2015)

Here we have six findings:

1. Looking across *all* interviews in 1983, 1999, and 2015, guests were far more likely to be featured in subsequent news reports in 1999 and 2015, relative to 1983, though much of this is attributable to 28 appearances in 2015 by Donald Trump and the post-1983 proliferation of 24-hour cable news channels;
2. Discussions of *substance* are more likely than discussions of *process* to appear in subsequent news reports;
3. There is some, albeit limited, overlap between the topics that are the top ratings winners and those that attract the most subsequent attention in the news, with healthcare being the most noteworthy topic with such overlap;
4. Black and Hispanic guests were more likely to be picked up in subsequent news reports (defined as mentions of a guest appearing in combination with the name of the show), as were both Democrats and Republicans, relative to non-partisans or Independents. Republicans were a bit more likely than Democrats to be featured in subsequent news reports;
5. Guests who earned higher Nielsen ratings were more likely to be featured in subsequent news reports (again, mentioned in tandem with the show); and
6. Guests from the media and the administration were featured statistically significantly less frequently than other types of guests in subsequent news reports, as were guests whose interviews focused on process over substance and policy over politics.

For this analysis, we measured agenda setting in two ways. The first simply tallies the number of mentions of a given guest in the subsequent week’s news reports for nine top national networks and newspapers (ABC, CBS, NBC, Fox, CNN, MSNBC, *The New York Times*, *The Washington Post*, and *USA Today*) (Henceforth “guest mentions”). The second looks at the likelihood that a guest featured on a Sunday morning talk show was mentioned in the subsequent week’s news reports within 60 words (plus or minus) of mention of the Sunday program on which the guest appeared (henceforth “guest/show mentions”).<sup>7</sup>

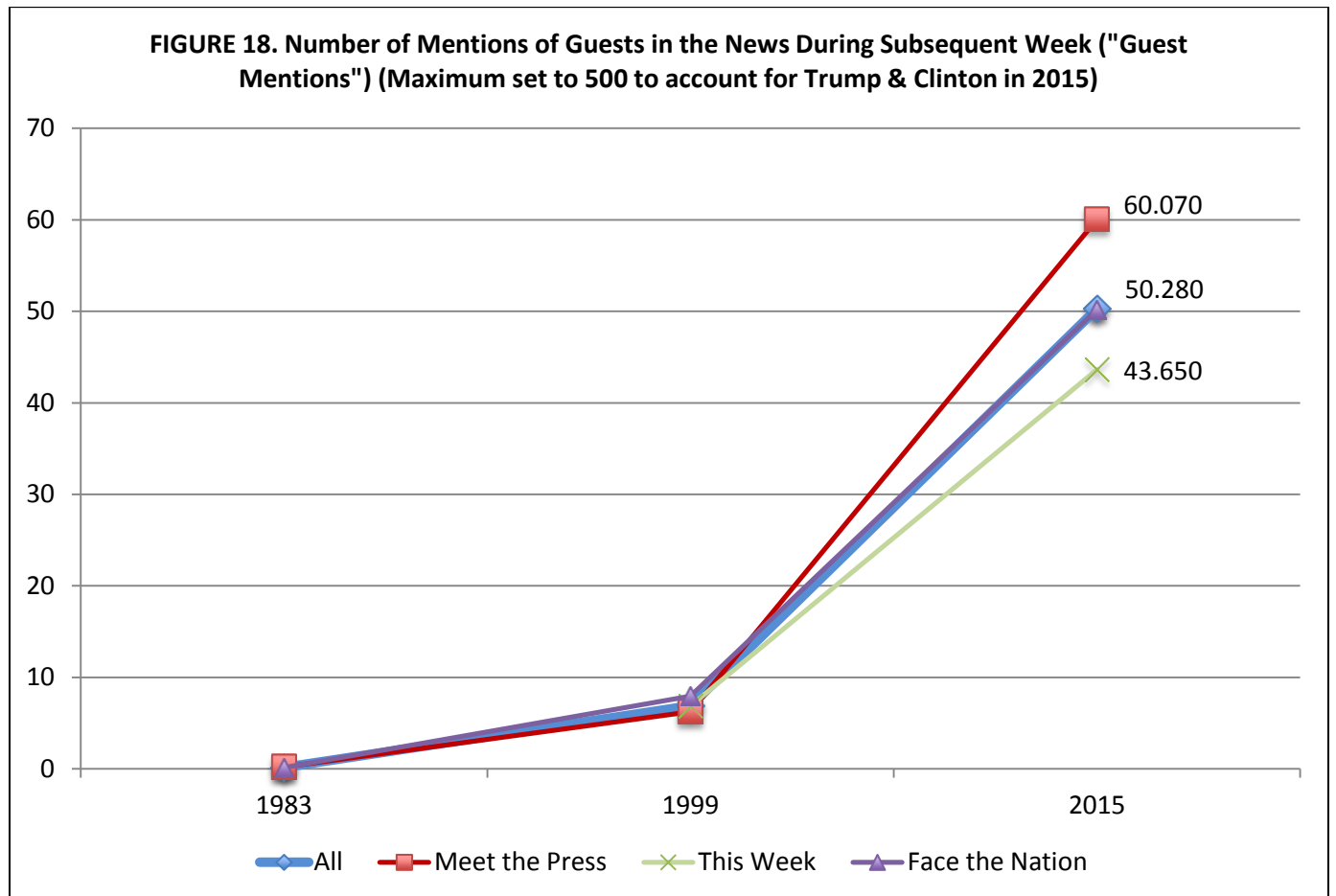
Figure 17 presents the overall probability of a guest/show mention. Note that overall (the thick blue line), the probability increased from 1.8 percent in 1983 to 8.6 percent in 1999, but then fell back a bit to 6.9 percent in 2015. Each of the three Sunday shows (shown separately in the thinner lines) followed similar patterns, with the exception that for *This Week*, the probability increased slightly from 1999 to 2015 (from .027 to .029). One key factor accounting for the spike after 1983 is the advent of cable news, which presumably inflates the 1999 and 2015 results, relative to 1983. That said, the slight downward shift from 1999 to 2015 “could” suggest a modest decline in the agenda setting power of the three network talk shows.



Interestingly, if we focus only on guest mentions (see Figure 18), the pattern looks quite different: a small uptick from 1983 to 1999, followed by a large spike in 2015 (from less than 10 mentions on average to over 50 on average (overall)). Though there appear to be a variety of factors at play, one important contributing factor is the many (28 in total) 2015 Sunday morning

<sup>7</sup> The total number of such mentions varied from 0-12. But only about 1 percent of news reports had more than one such mention. Consequently, we focused on the probability of at least one mention, rather than the raw number.

talk show appearances by Donald Trump. The overall average number of mentions of Donald Trump in the news in the week following a Sunday talk show interview is 813. Excluding only Donald Trump's 2015 appearances, the overall average falls to 17 such mentions. Due to the extreme skew in the data caused by Donald Trump's prominence in the news in 2015, we capped the overall guest mentions variable at 500 mentions.



Of course, this crude measure is almost certainly endogenous to the prominence of the interview subject in the news at the time of the interview. Presumably the Sunday shows sought interview guests for the same reasons that subsequent news reports featured such guests: for whatever reason, they were newsworthy at that time. This is why our *guest/show mentions* indicator accounts for the specific mention of the guest *in tandem with* the show on which they appeared (that is, within plus-or-minus 60 words).

In terms of guest demographics, and as shown in Figure 19, we found statistically significant increases in the probability of being featured in the news for African American (+6.7 percentage points) and Hispanic (+11.9 points) guests (relative to other ethnicities), as well as for Democratic (+4.5 points) and Republican (+5.1 points) guests (relative to Independents or non-partisans). We also found that guests that earned higher Nielsen ratings were also more likely to be featured in the news (by 2.8 mentions, when increasing from one standard deviation below to one standard deviation above the mean audience rating).



**FIGURE 19. Statistically Significant Effects of Nielsen Ratings and Different Guest Demographic Characteristics on Probability of a "Guest/Show Mention," 1983-2015 (All Shows)**

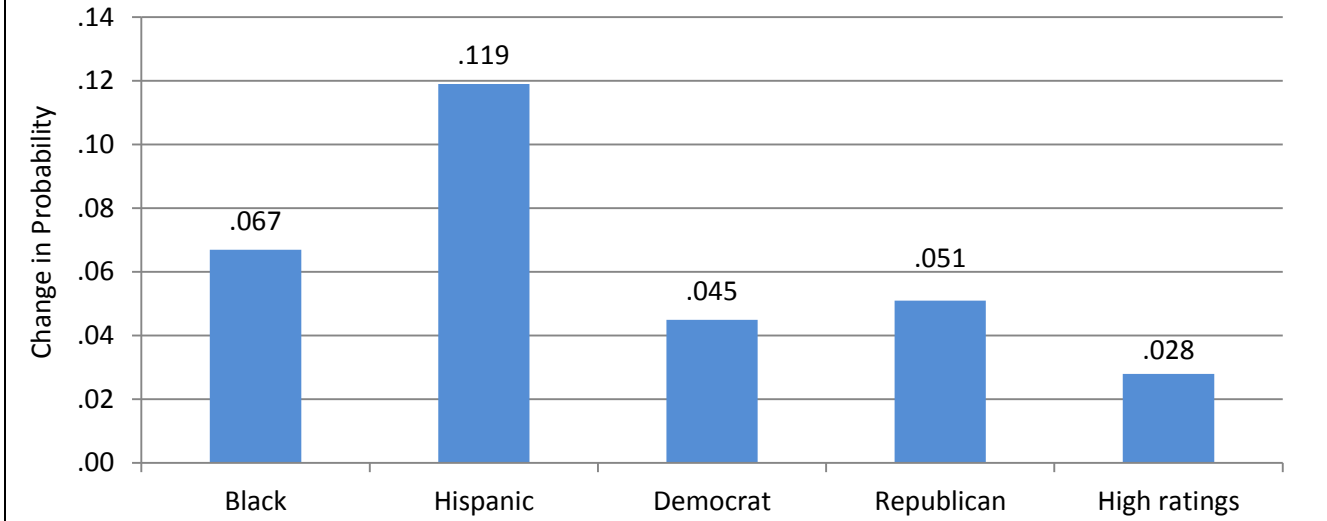
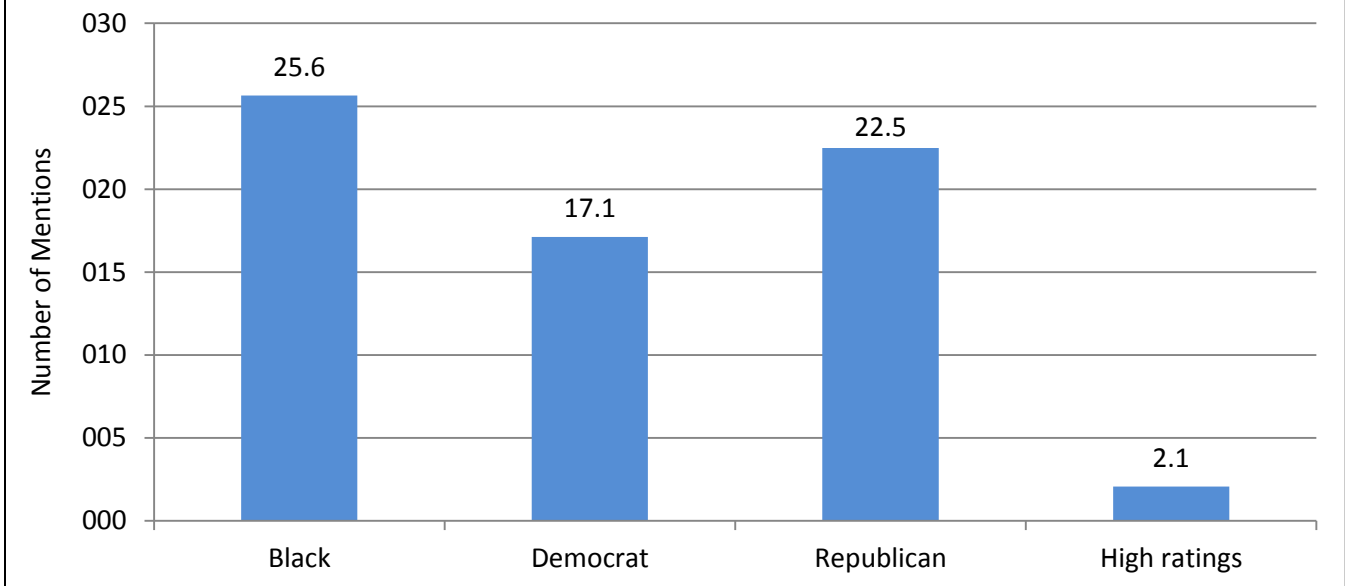


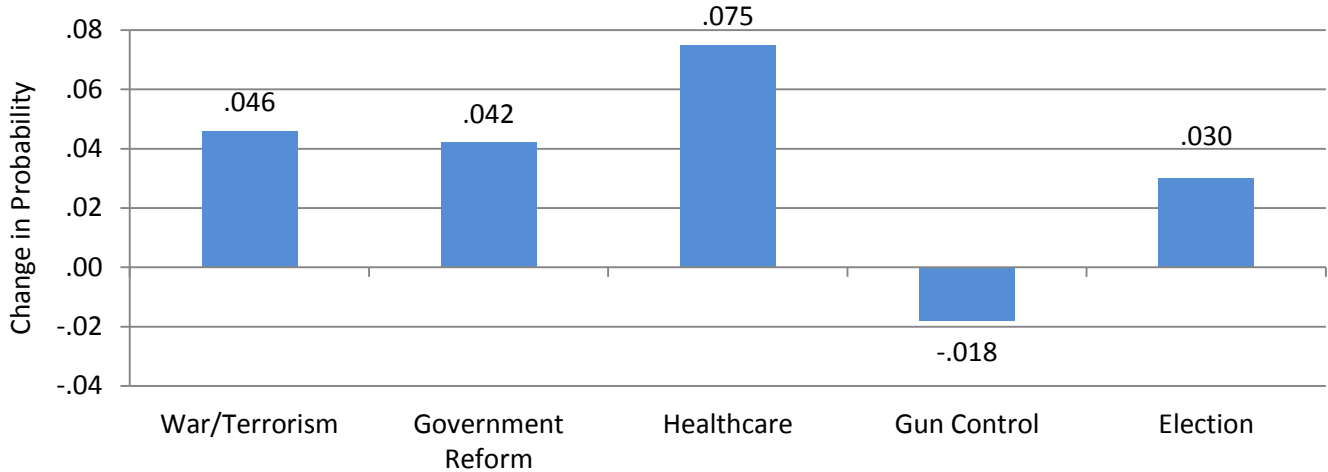
Figure 20 focuses on the total number of guest mentions. Here we found statistically significant increases for guests who are African American (+25.6 mentions), Democrats (+17.1 mentions), and Republicans (22.5 mentions), as well as for guests that earned high (one standard deviation above the mean), compared to low (one standard deviation below the mean), ratings (+2.1 mentions).

**FIGURE 20. Statistically Significant Effects of Nielsen Ratings and Different Guest Demographic Characteristics on Number of "Guest Mentions," 1983-2015 (All Shows)**



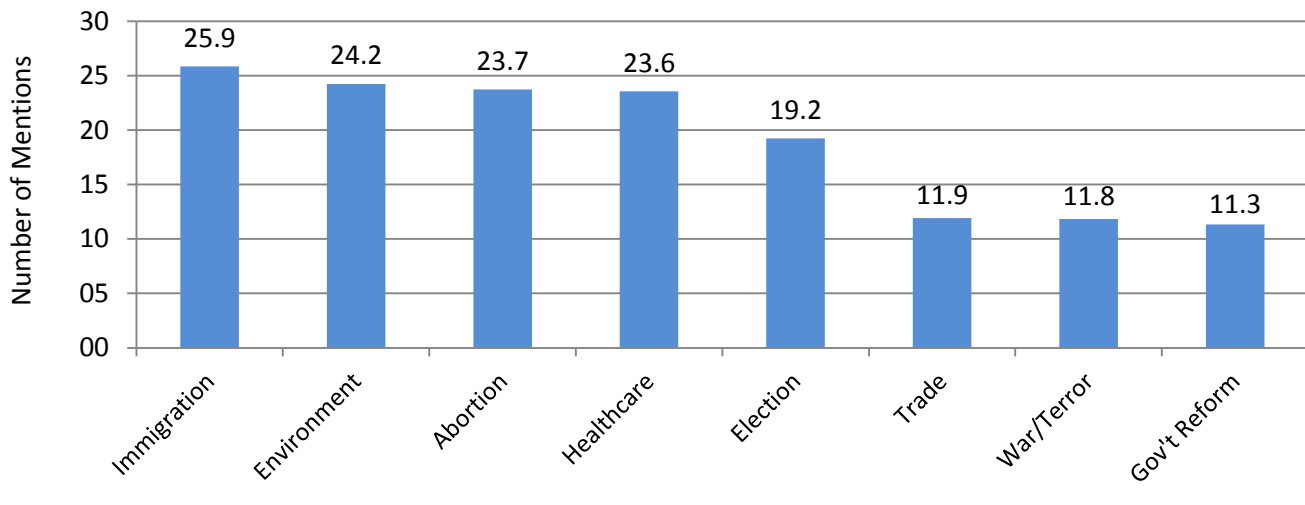
Turning to program topics, as shown in Figure 21, we found statistically significant increases in the probability of a guest/show mention when the topic of the interview was war/terrorism (+4.6 percentage points), government reform (+4.2 points), healthcare (+7.5 points), or elections (+3 points). The sole statistically significant exception was gun control, which is associated with a corresponding decline of 1.8 percentage points.

**FIGURE 21. Statistically Significant Effects of Different Episode Topics on Probability of a "Guest/Show Mention," 1983-2015 (All Shows)**

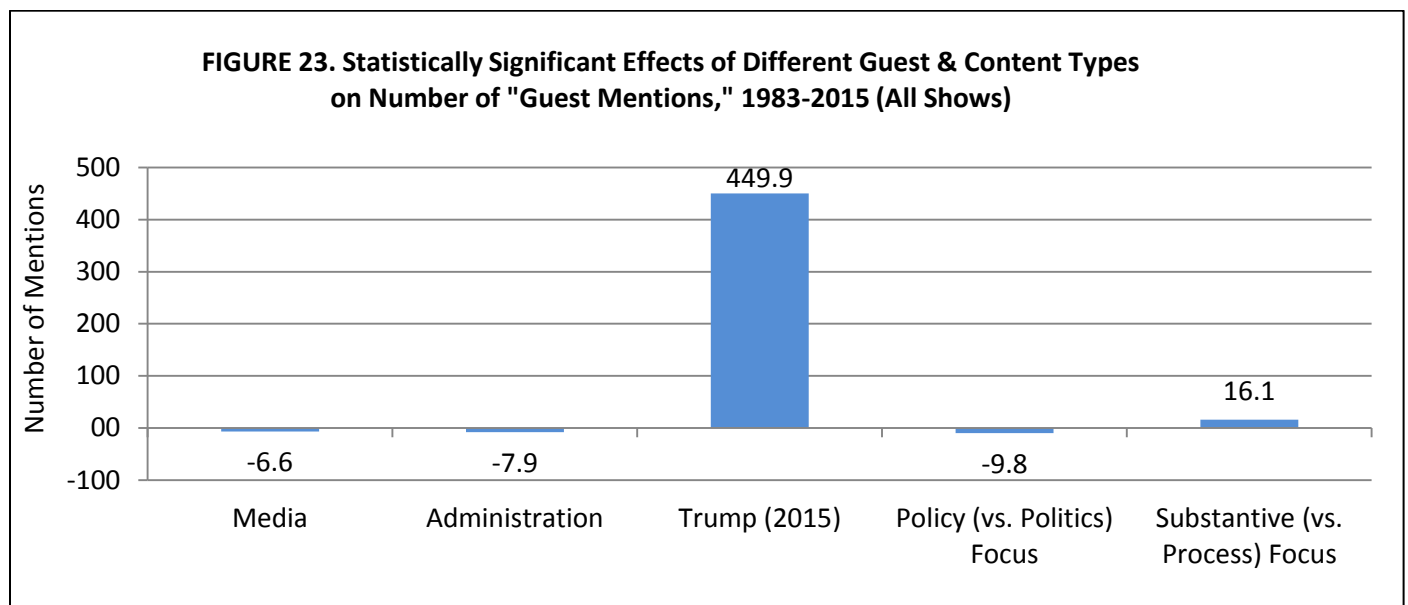


When we broaden our focus to *all* guest mentions (Figure 22), a broader list of topics becomes associated with statistically significant increases in guest mentions in the news: war/terrorism (+11.8 mentions), the environment (+24.2 mentions), government reform (+11.3 mentions), healthcare (+23.6 mentions), immigration (+25.9 mentions), trade (+11.9 mentions), abortion (+23.7 mentions), and elections (+19.2 mentions). Interestingly, the largest agenda setting effects appear to accrue to interviews focused on immigration, the environment, abortion, and healthcare. Of these four topics, only one (healthcare) appears on the prior list, focused on the probability of a guest/show mention. This suggests that perhaps the Sunday morning talk shows had a disproportionate effect on agenda setting when the topic was healthcare, while general newsworthiness may have, at least to a relatively greater extent, driven Sunday morning interviews and broader news coverage for the other issues. Also worth noting, of the four above topics, two—war/terrorism and government reform—are among the top three ratings winners for the Sunday talk shows (the third such topical ratings winner was education).

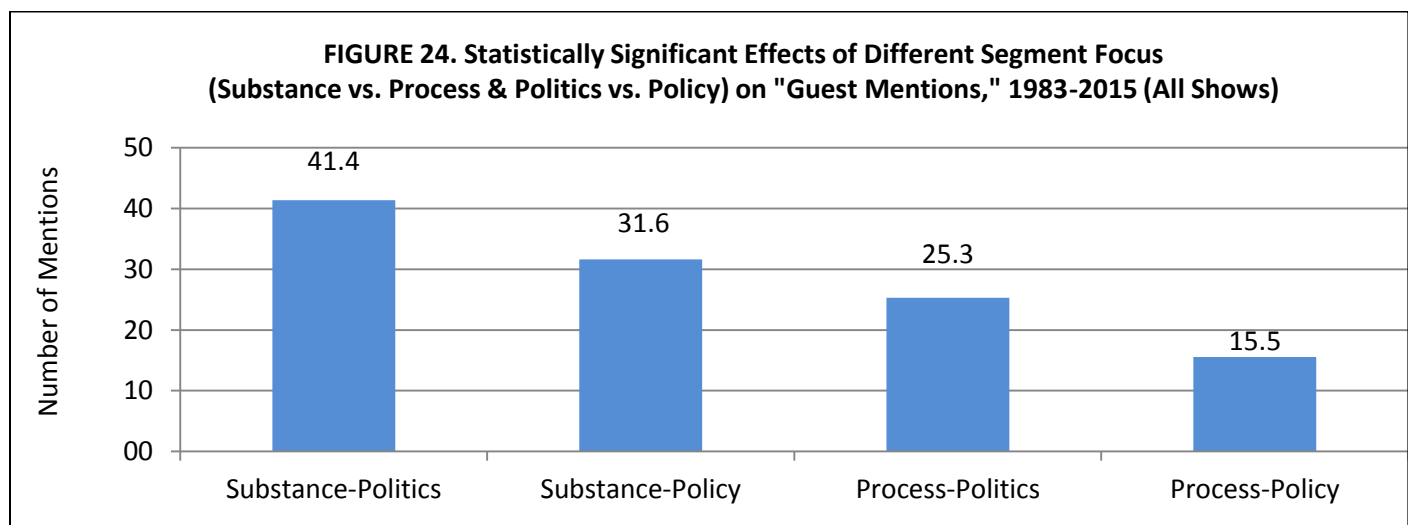
**FIGURE 22. Statistically Significant Effects of Different Episode Topics on Number of "Guest Mentions," 1983-2015 (All Shows)**



Our final agenda setting investigation explored the different types of guests and content of Sunday morning interviews. In both cases, we found no statistically significant effects on the probability of a guest/show mention. However, as shown in Figure 23, we did find significant effects on the number of guest mentions in the news, with *drops* in the number of mentions for interviews with representatives from the media (-6.6 mentions) or the administration (-7.9 mentions), and, as previously noted, a very large increase when the guest was Donald Trump in 2015 (+450 mentions). Recall that members of the media are relatively infrequently featured on the Sunday shows, while administration officials are among the most oft-featured guests. Finally, we found that interviews focused on the content of public policy earned nearly 10 fewer guest mentions than interviews focused on politics, while interviews with a substantive focus earned 16.1 more guest mentions than interviews that focused on the process surrounding a given issue or topic.



Per Figure 24, the highest increase in guest mentions in the news is associated with interviews focused on substance and politics, followed by substance and policy, while the lowest ratings were reserved for process-oriented discussions of public policy issues.



This last finding appears to at least partially reinforce our earlier discussion of the ratings

benefits associated with emphasizing substance over process, though the ratings and agenda setting patterns appear to move in opposing directions with respect to the policy-vs.-politics tradeoff.

## Conclusion

This study is limited in that we were only able to fully analyze data from three of the past 34 years. Moreover, the continuous data we utilized terminated in 2003, thereby missing entirely important recent trends in news coverage of politics, such as the emergence of social media. We were also unable to obtain data for one of the three network programs in 1983.

Despite these limitations, several clear, and arguably somewhat surprising, patterns emerged. Perhaps most noteworthy is that substantive coverage of politics and public policy issues, rather than coverage of the process of policymaking or the politics surrounding it, consistently appears to earn the highest ratings for the Sunday shows, as well as, for the most part, being most likely to influence the subsequent week's news agenda. Indeed, the Sunday morning talk shows have not lost their capacity to influence the news agenda. While, in some areas of domestic policy such influence did appear to recede somewhat in the 1980-2003 period, when we focus only on direct quotations from members of Congress, it actually increased in foreign policy. Our comparison of 1983, 1999, and 2015, in turn, suggests that these programs' agenda setting influence has survived the emergence of social media and countless other alternative news sources.

That said, our findings also suggest some areas of concern. For instance, the overwhelming dominance of Donald Trump in driving these shows' agenda setting influence in 2015—well before Trump emerged as a likely winner of the Republican primary campaign—seems disproportionate to the candidates' position in the race. Indeed, as has been suggested elsewhere by media critics, the possibility arises that the well-documented saturation coverage of Trump may have contributed to his victory in the primaries. If so, this would make the media, including the Sunday talk shows, an actor, rather than merely an observer, in the political process.

The demographics of Sunday talk show guests also arguably limit their influence over the news agenda, including the disproportionate appearances of Republicans and White male guests, as well as their somewhat greater focus on issues preferred by men over women.

We believe the takeaway from this research is that the Sunday talk shows retain the capacity to influence the public and news agendas and can, to at least some extent, enhance their influence by placing greater emphasis on topics of policy or political substance over process, as well as by featuring relatively more guests with substantive policy expertise, and, finally, by offering greater ideological,<sup>8</sup> racial, and gender diversity among guests.

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<sup>8</sup> Note that the issue of ideological skew toward Republicans could, to some extent, be an artifact of the years included in the study. In both 1999 and 2015 a Democratic president faced a unified Republican Congress. Since members of Congress are among the most frequent guests on the Sunday shows, and since research has shown that representatives of the majority party are more newsworthy, one would expect to see more Republican than Democratic members of Congress featured on the Sunday shows during these years. In 1983 the Democrats controlled the House and Republicans controlled the Senate and White House. The prediction here is thus more ambiguous, though one would expect House Democrats to be more newsworthy in 1983 than in 1999 or 2015, all else equal. We nonetheless see in 1983 nearly twice as high a likelihood that a guest will be Republican than Democratic, an almost identical proportionate gap as in 2015 (see Figure 14). This suggests that newsworthiness alone may not fully account for the observed imbalance.

## **Acknowledgments**

I am grateful Minxiao Sui for her tremendously valuable assistance with this research, without which it could not have been completed. I also wish to thank Daniella Raz and Tess Wise for their research assistance. Additionally, I thank Johanna Dunaway for her helpful thoughts and suggestions along the way, as well as for helping open doors at Nielsen, and, lastly, for introducing me to Mingxiao!

## Appendix 1: Codebook

Notes:

(1) All questions are single-option unless specified. Please rely primarily on the transcript to draw the following information. For all missing values, please leave the form empty.

(2) The unit for coding is each segment. So please use “word count” to make sure each transcript corresponds to the segments for each episode. For example, in terms of a 8,000 words long transcript for ABC on 20150101, if the spreadsheet includes 4 segments for ABC on 20150101, then the first 2,000 words correspond to the first segment, the second 2,000 words for second segment, and the last 2,000 words for the last segment. If an interview of a guest lasts across more than one segment, please assign it to the segment for which the most words of this interview goes.

1. Who are the guests included in this episode (divided by segments/interviews)? **(Guests' Names)**

Enter the name of each guest, under variables "Guest1" "Guest2" "Guest3" "Guest4" and so on  
Ensure to include the names of all guests, until "GuestX";

[Variable Type: String]

2. What is the job title for each guest? **(Guests' Job Titles)**

Enter the job title for each guest included in the news episode, under variables "GJob1" "GJob2" "GJob3" "GJob4" and so on;

Ensure to include the job titles for all guests, until "GJobN";

Ensure that the job title corresponds to guest name.

[Variable Type: String]

3. What is the status for each guest? **(Guests' Status)**

Enter under variables "1Status" "2Status" "3Status" "4Status" and so on;

Ensure the status corresponds to all guests' names, until “NStatus”.

1= administration

2= member of congress

3= member of judiciary

4= substantive policy expert

5= political expert

6= private sector

7= state or local official

999= Other (other status that doesn't fall into any of the above)

[And any other category you happen to observe appearing a non-trivial number of times; for these categories, enter TEXT consistently]

[Variable Type: Numeric & String]

4. What is the gender of each guest? **(Guests' Gender)**

Enter under variables "1Gender" "2Gender" "3Gender" "4Gender" and so on;

Ensure the gender corresponds to all guests' names, until “NGender”.

1= Male

2= Female

3= Unknown

[Variable Type: Numeric]

5. What is the partisanship of each guest? (**Guests' PID**)

Enter under variables "1PID" "2PID" "3PID" "4PID" and so on;

Ensure the gender corresponds to all guests' names, until "NPID".

1= Democrat

2= Republican

3= Independent

4= Unknown

[Variable Type: Numeric]

6. What is the race of each guest? (**Guests' Race**)

Enter under variables "1Race" "2Race" "3Race" "4Race" and so on;

Ensure the gender corresponds to all guests' names, until "NRace".

1= White/Caucasian

2= Hispanic/Latino

3= Black/African American

4= Asian

*If the other races, please specify with text.*

999= Unknown

[Variable Type: Numeric]

7. What are the primary issues covered ***in the interview for each guest/segment?*** (**Issues Covered**) [***Multiple Choices, enter all that apply***]

Enter any of the following numbers under variable "Issues:"

1= Economy (e.g., Federal Reserve; Jobs; Unemployment)

2= Civil Rights (e.g., Affirmative Action; Disabled Rights; Gay Rights; Privacy)

3= War & Peace (e.g., Terrorism; Afghanistan; Arab Spring; Iranian Nukes; Iraq; Israel & Palestine; North Korea; Syria; WMD)

4= Foreign Policy (e.g., American Exceptionalism; United Nations)

5= Environment (e.g., Animal Rights; Global Warming)

6= Homeland Security (e.g., ISIS; Armed Forces Personnel; Nuclear Energy & Weapons; SDI Missile Defense; Veterans)

7= Government Reform (e.g., Campaign Finance; Supreme Court; Term Limits)

8= Education (e.g., College Tuition; No Child Left Behind; School Prayer; Vouchers)

9= Crime (e.g., Death Penalty; Three Strikes; Criminal Justice)

10= Drugs (e.g., Drug War)

11= Health Care (e.g., Entitlement Reform; ObamaCare; Tort Reform; Vaccinations)

12= Tax Reform (e.g., Flat Tax & FairTax)

13= Immigration (e.g., Illegal Immigrants; Mexican Border)

14= Technology (e.g., Internet)

15= Free Trade (e.g., China; Globalization; NAFTA)

16= Social Security (e.g., Privatization)

17= Gun Control (e.g., Second Amendment)

18= Abortion

19= Other (issues that don't fall into any of the above)

[Variable Type: Numeric]

8. Are the primary political issues covered ***in the interview for each guest/segment*** politics, policy or the others? (**Politics, Policy**)

Enter the appropriate numeric under the variable "Politics:"

1= Politics issues only (i.e. horserace, game);

2= Policy issues only (i.e. Medicare, immigration);

3= Both, but primarily Politics (at least 60% of the interview talks about Politics issues)

4= Both, but primarily Policy (at least 60% of the interview talks about Policy issues)

5= Both, about equal

999= Other (any issues that don't fall into the above five)

[Variable Type: Numeric]

9. Does ***the interview for each guest/segment*** talk about substantive perspectives, the process, or any others? (**Substance, Process**)

Enter the appropriate numeric under the variable "Substance:"

1= Substance focus only (i.e. talking about substantive policy issues, related policies and strategies)

2= Process focus only (i.e. talking about the procedure of an event or a scenario; more descriptive, without mentioning substantive issues or strategies)

3= Both, but primarily Substance (at least 60% of the interview is Substance focus)

4= Both, but primarily Process (at least 60% of the interview is Process focus)

5= Both, about equal

999= Other (any other focuses that don't fall into the above five)

[Variable Type: Numeric]

10. Regarding ***the interview for each guest/segment***, what is the total number of word counts for it? (**Word Count**)

Enter the approximate word counts *for each interview* under the variable "Word."

[Variable Type: Numeric]

11. If there is more than one guest appearing in sequence, please specify whether the guest is first, second, or third. If the same guest appears twice in the same interview (may be rare), make sure to indicate his interview twice in different rows.

Enter the appropriate numeric under the variable "Order:"

1= First

2= Second

3= Third

4= Fourth

[Variable Type: Numeric]

(Note: ***code the sequence of guests in terms of each interview/segment***. Enter the same numeric for multiple guests if they parallel in the same interview. Aggregate at the program level later)

12. Where is each guest from? (**Region**)



Enter the nation or region of each guest, under variables "1Region" "2 Region" "3 Region" "4Region" and so on

Ensure to include the specific nations (if available) or regions of all guests, until " XRegion";  
[Variable Type: String]

**Agenda Setting Variables (Mentions of Show and Guests in Subsequent Week's News Appearing on: ABC News, CBS News, NBC News, MSNBC, CNN, FOX, *New York Times*, *Washington Post*, *USA Today*.)**

**num\_clips\_Sunday (= "showguestclipmentions")** is the number of times that the name of the guest was mentioned near the words "Clip from [SHOW]"

**num\_mentions\_sunday\_show (= "showguestmentions")** is the number of times that the Sunday show was mentioned (minus num\_clips\_sunday, to avoid double counting)...*(within plus or minus 60 words of guest name.)*

**num\_mentions\_in\_cw (= "guestmentions"):** (number of mentions in coverage window) The number of times the guest got mentioned in shows during the next week (i.e., during the coverage window)

**shows\_guest\_is\_mentioned\_in:** A list of the shows in which the guest was mentioned

## Appendix 2: Examples of Guest Categories

### Guest Categories and Examples

#### 1 = Administration

White House Chief of Staff (i.e. Denis McDonough)  
Member of National Transportation Safety Board (i.e. Robert Sumwalt)  
Police Commissioner (i.e. Ray Kelly)  
Vice President (i.e. George H. W. Bush)  
Lebanese Minister for Foreign Affairs (i.e. Elle Salem)  
Ambassador (i.e. Jeane J. Kirkpatrick)  
Deputy Secretary of State (i.e. Kenneth Dam)  
Prime Minister of India (i.e. Indira Gandhi)  
Secretary of Transportation (i.e. Elizabeth Dole)

#### 2 = Member of Congress

Senator (i.e., Bernie Sanders, Rick Santorum, Roy Blunt, Jim Webb)  
Congressman (i.e. Michael McCaul)  
House Majority Leader, representative (i.e. Kevin McCarthy)  
Representative (i.e. Jan Schakowsky)  
Republican Chairman of the Senate (i.e. Bob Corker)

#### 3 = Member of judiciary

U.S. Attorney General (i.e. Loretta Lynch)  
Supreme Court (i.e. Jim Obergefell, Stephen Breyer)  
Attorney General (i.e. Charles Graddick)  
American constitutional lawyer (i.e. Phyllis Schlafly)  
Chairman Judiciary Committee (i.e. Henry Hyde)  
Judge (i.e. Kenneth Starr)  
Alabama probate court judge (i.e. Steven Reed)

#### 4 = Substantive policy expert

Expert at Council on Foreign Relations (i.e. Meghan O'Sullivan)  
Chairman of the House Intelligence Committee (i.e. Devin Nunes)  
Homeland Security Secretary (i.e. Jeh Johnson)  
Secretary of Defense (i.e. Robert Gates)  
Senior VP for Foreign and Defense Policy Studies at the American Enterprise Institute (i.e. Danielle Pletka)  
Expert at Center for Democracy and Technology (i.e. Nuala O'Connor)  
National Security Advisor (i.e. Robert McFarlane, Samuel "Sandy" Berger)  
Former National Security Advisor (i.e. Zbigniew Brzezinski)  
Former counterterrorism coordinator (i.e. John Cohen)  
Former director of the National Counterterrorism Center for presidents Bush and Obama (i.e. Michael Leiter)  
Counterterror specialist (i.e. Dick Clarke)  
Policy expert (i.e. Meghan O'Sullivan)  
National security expert (i.e. Michael Leiter)  
Assistant Secretary of Defense for International Security Policy (i.e. Richard Perle)

### **5 = Political expert**

Former Governor (i.e. Mike Huckabee)  
Former RNC chairman, former governor of Mississippi (i.e. Haley Barbour)  
Permanent Observer of Palestine to the United Nations (i.e. Ryad Mansour)  
Political Consultant (i.e. David Keene, Robert Squier)  
Political advisor (i.e. Osama El-Baz)  
General Chairman Gore 2000 (i.e. Tony Coelho)  
Politician (i.e. Henry Hyde, Gary Bauer)  
Democratic/Republican strategist (i.e. James Carville, Mary Matalin)  
Political theorist (i.e. Bill Bennett)  
Political activist (i.e. Alan Keyes)  
Former Vice President (i.e. Dan Quayle)

### **6 = Private sector**

Presidential Candidate/Businessman (i.e. Donald Trump)  
Publishing Executive (i.e. Steve Forbes)  
Head of Continental Airlines (i.e. Gordon Bethune)  
Attorney (i.e. Michael Cadell, Gerry Spence)  
Microsoft Chief Operating Officer, Executive Vice President (i.e. Bob Herbold)  
CEO America Online (i.e. Steve Case)  
CEO Amazon.com (i.e. Jeff Bezos)

### **7 = State or local official**

Governor (i.e. Martin O'Malley, Bobby Jindal, Chris Christie)  
Mayor (i.e. Joe Riley)  
Commissioner of Philadelphia Police Department (i.e. Charles Ramsey, Bill de Blasio, Edward Koch)  
Deputy Commissioner of Intelligence for the New York City Police Department (i.e. John Miller)

## Appendix 3: Examples of Substance-Process and Politics-Policy Variables

As discussed in the main text and codebook, we categorized Sunday Morning Shows' interviews into four strands, by the properties of issues (policy versus politics) and content (substance versus process). Below are some short examples drawn from interviews that fall into each of four categories; the full interviews are available on request.

### Substantive/Policy Oriented

*1) This Week, 20151004, interview with Trump on the issue of mass shooting and gun control, which centers on whether gun control/laws would help reduce mass shooting, so primarily substantive discussion of a policy issue.*

STEPHANOPOULOS: So no new laws, no new gun laws?

TRUMP: Well, the gun laws have nothing to do with this. This isn't guns. This is about really mental illness. And I feel very strongly about it. And, again, politically correct, oh, we're going to solve the problem, there will be no problem, et cetera, et cetera. You're always going to have difficulties, no matter how tight you run it. Even if you had great education having to do with mental illness, you educate the community, it's -- still, you're going to have people that slip through the cracks. And these people are more than slipping through the cracks. These people want to slip through the cracks. So you're going to have problems. It's unfortunate.

*2) This Week, 20151220, interview with Bernie Sanders on the issue of war and homeland security, which centers on the rationale why Sanders doesn't agree with the no-fly zone, so primarily a substantive discussion of a policy issue.*

STEPHANOPOULOS: OK. Final question on the issue of regime change. Big difference. You said last night between you and Secretary Clinton, at least in the past, but where are you different going forward?

You're both ruling out ground troops. You're both talking about building coalitions.

Where's the difference going forward?

SANDERS: I do not agree with the no-fly zone in Syria. I think it'll get sucked us up -- get us sucked into some serious of problems in the area. I think absolutely that there has to be a strong international coalition. This is what I believe.

King Abdullah of Jordan has made this point. Of all that's going on is for the soul of Islam, what he believes, what I believe is the Muslim troops themselves, Muslim countries have got to come together on the ground to take on ISIS. What I also believe is that wealthy countries like Qatar, which per capita is the wealthiest country on Earth spend the \$200 billion for the World Cup which they're hosting in 2022, you know what, they're going to have to start investing in helping us to destroy ISIS.

### Substantive/Politics Oriented

*1) Face The Nation, 20150816, interview with John Kasich on the topic of partisan differences between R and D, which is coded as politics issue; and the conversation is mostly about strategies for dealing with partisan divide, so primarily substantive.*

DICKERSON: Well, you might change it to get the agreement of Democrats you would have to work with. But let me ask you question on immigration.

KASICH: Well, but not all Democrats -- not all Democrats now would say that our answer is taxes.

What Democrats would say is respect a lot of the social programs. We don't have to get rid of them. We need to innovate them and reform them. There's lots of grounds on which to agree with some members of the Democratic Party. You're not going to get them all. But you're going to get some. That's what Reagan did when he got -- when he was elected president. He worked with Phil Gramm and got some Democrats. I would do the same thing. I know how to do it. I have done it before.

*2) Meet The Press, 20150419, interview with Terry McAuliffe about Hillary's race for presidency – a politics issue; and the interview is mostly about how Hillary can build a better personal image, so primarily substantive (over 60%) though some involves a description of what happened (process).*

CHUCK TODD: But as you know, presidential campaigns sometimes are about personal connections, are about honest and trustworthiness and things like that. A poll in Virginia, a poll, by the way, that has a good approval rating for you, a majority of Virginians who approve of you, but another majority of Virginians did not think Hillary Clinton was honest and trustworthy. What does she have to do to close that gap?

TERRY MCAULIFFE: Well, talk to the voters. That's why, actually, you know, I'm one of the few to actually talk about the roll out. I thought it was spectacular, having been involved in the '08 campaign.

CHUCK TODD: You didn't think it was too scripted?

TERRY MCAULIFFE: She got in the van. She drove out. She actually sat with, which is what I did when I ran for governor. I visited every community college, first candidate as governor in Virginia. She went to a community college. She took notes. You learn. I mean, that's what the best part about running for office is, Chuck.

You get to travel and meet folks. I went into firehouses. I spent an hour in a coal mine, talking to coal miners. Your policies evolve, because you're talking to folks whose lives are impacted every single day. And she went out. There's time for the big rallies and all of that. I thought it was great. I want her to continue to do that, meet with the voters, talk to them. Because they've got the answers. They are living financial distress every day.

## **Process/Policy Oriented**

*1) This Week, 20150531, interview with Richard Clark on the issue of law enforcement – a policy issue; and the interview was more about the recent changes of PATRIOT Act and other related laws, which is coded as process-oriented*

STEPHANOPOULOS: ... Richard, thanks for joining us this morning. We just heard that warning from President Obama. But you actually served on President Obama's panel that reviewed the NSA surveillance program, essentially concluded that it wasn't necessary.

So is the president being a bit alarmist here? What's really at stake?

RICHARD CLARK, COUNTERTERRORISM EXPERT: No. What the president is saying is he's willing to give up this telephony metadata program, where every call to and from information is recorded and kept by the government. He's willing to give that up because we found it did little or no value, had little or no value.

But if the bill expires altogether, the PATRIOT Act expires altogether, there are other investigative tools -- the lone wolf authority, for example; the roving wiretap authority -- that will go away as well. And that's probably going to happen tonight --

STEPHANOPOULOS: And how serious would that be?

CLARK: Well, it depends on how long it goes on. What I think will happen tonight is the law will expire and then later in the week the USA Freedom Act, which is essentially the same as the

PATRIOT Act with the exception of the telephony metadata program, that act will pass and most of the authorities will be restored.  
So we're likely to be faced with only a few days where the FBI won't have a handful of tools that, frankly, they don't often use.

*2) Meet The Press, 20150531, interview with Nuala O'Connor regarding the updates on Patriot Act, which involves the process of an issue*

CHUCK TODD: Democracy and Technology. So what else expires tonight besides the ability of the government to compel these Telecom companies?

NUALA O'CONNOR: So it's really limited provisions of the Patriot Act, it's not the whole law. And they're not calling for the end to N.S.A.'s, you know, involvement in our lives entirely. But we want to see a really limited government that really only knows about people who are under suspicion.

What happens right now, under section 215, is all of the telephone calls, all of what's called the metadata, but it's really your phone call records, who you called, when you called, how long you talked for, every call in and out of America and within the United States--

CHUCK TODD: And it's all available.

NUALA O'CONNOR: Just not only that, what goes to the N.S.A. for their records.

### **Process/Politics Oriented**

*1) Face The Nation, 20151227, interview with Bernie Sanders about politics, which primarily involves process (more than 60%) despite certain substantive discussion*

DICKERSON: All right. OK.

Let's switch to politics here. I was talking to a Democratic strategist who said that, in looking at your campaign, he said that you needed to attack Hillary Clinton as least as much as Senator Obama did in 2008. You said you won't do that.

Is that going to be something that gets in your way in your ability to get the nomination if you don't attack in that way?

SANDERS: You mean do I have to wage horrible attacks against Hillary Clinton? I'm not going to do that.

But what I will do is contrast our ideas and my record with Hillary Clinton. That's what elections are about. And that's what people want to hear. I voted against the war in Iraq. Hillary Clinton voted for it. We have different views on foreign policy.

I do not believe in a situation in Syria no-fly zone, which I think can get us into a real quagmire. I believe in a coalition led by Muslim troops on the ground with the support of the major powers on Earth. I do not want to see the United States getting involved in perpetual warfare in the Middle East.

I helped lead the effort when I was in the House against the deregulation of Wall Street. I believe that Wall Street's greed and illegal behavior has been a disaster for this country, not only back in 2008, but it remains.

You have got to break up these large financial institutions, reestablish Glass-Steagall. Those are differences of opinion that need to be debated.

*2) Face The Nation, 20151025, interview with Donald Trump about politics, which is almost all about process*

DICKERSON: So, he says you're a demonizer.

TRUMP: Well, look, I'm trying to say it like it is.

His campaign is in disarray. He paid one person \$1.3 million. And he's languishing way, way back in the PAC. But his campaign is a total disaster. He's paid people far too much. Now he's cutting everybody's salaries.

And as a businessman, if he can cut salaries 40 and 50 percent, why didn't he do it when he started? Why is he doing it now? Why did he hire them in the first place for so much? That means they would have worked for a lot less money.

But his campaign is in disarray. His whole thing is a mess. But he paid one person, as I understand it -- now, maybe that's incorrect -- but paid over a million dollars for one person. And it's OK, maybe, after everything's done, they get great a incentive, but he's doing very poorly. You don't pay that kind of money. So, he's got some problems.