

# Unrepresentative Information: The Case of Newspaper Reporting on Campaign Finance

[Get access >](#)

, ,

*Public Opinion Quarterly*, Volume 69, Issue 2, Summer 2005, Pages 213–231,

<https://doi.org/10.1093/poq/nfi022>

**Published:** 01 January 2005

## Abstract

This article examines evidence of sampling or statistical bias in newspaper reporting on campaign finance. We compile all stories from the five largest circulation newspapers in the United States that mention a dollar amount for campaign expenditures, contributions, or receipts from 1996 to 2000. We compare these figures to those recorded by the Federal Election Commission (FEC). The average figures reported in newspapers exceed the figures from the FEC by as much as eightfold. Press reports also focus excessively on corporate contributions and soft money, rather than on the more common types of donors—individual—and types of contributions—hard money. We further find that these biases are reflected in public perceptions of money in elections. Survey respondents overstate the amount of money raised and the share from different groups by roughly the amount found in newspapers, and better-educated people (those most likely to read newspapers) showed the greatest discrepancy between their beliefs and the facts.

© The Author 2005. Published by Oxford University Press on behalf of the American Association for Public Opinion Research. All rights reserved. For permissions, please e-mail: [journals.permissions@oupjournals.org](mailto:journals.permissions@oupjournals.org).

**Issue Section:** [Articles](#)

**American Association for Public Opinion  
Research members**



[Sign in through society site >](#)

## Personal account

- Sign in with email/username & password
- Get email alerts
- Save searches
- Purchase content
- Activate your purchase/trial code

[Sign in >](#)

[Register](#)

## Institutional access

[Sign in through your institution >](#)

[Sign in with a library card](#)

[Sign in with  
username/password](#)

[Recommend to your librarian](#)

## Institutional account management

[Sign in as administrator](#)

## Purchase

[Subscription prices and ordering for this journal](#)

[Purchasing options for books and journals across Oxford Academic](#)

## Short-term Access

To purchase short-term access, please sign in to your personal account above.

Don't already have a personal account? [Register](#)

Unrepresentative Information: The Case of Newspaper Reporting on Campaign Finance - 24  
Hours access

EUR €38.00

GBP £33.00

USD \$41.00

## Rental

Oxford University Press uses cookies to enhance your experience on our website. By selecting 'accept' you are agreeing to our use of cookies. You can change your cookie settings at any time. More information can be found in our [Cookie Policy](#).

Oxford University Press uses cookies to enhance your experience on our website. By selecting 'accept' you are agreeing to our use of cookies. You can change your cookie settings at any time. More information can be found in our [Cookie Policy](#).