

Chapter 16 – The Problem with Media Bias

A. Public Perceptions of Media Bias

1. Majority of US public believes mass media has liberal bias. Ex. 70% believe media wanted Obama to win (*Pew*, p555)
2. 40% of journalists self-report to be on the left. And, journalists twice as likely to lean left than general pop. (*Pew*, p555)
3. So-called “mainstream media” – ABC, CBS, NBC, CNN, MSNBC, *New York Times*, *Washington Post*, *Los Angeles Times*, *Chicago Tribune*, *USA Today* + many other newspapers that pick up the same articles. Fox News considered outsider, and *Wall Street Journal* favors free market so not included among liberal “mainstream media.”
4. Only 29% of Americans feel mainstream media gets facts straight (*Pew*, p556)
5. 63% feel news stories are often inaccurate (*Pew*, p556)
6. Over 17-year period:
 - a. belief that news organizations are *highly professional*, decline 72% to 49% (*Pew*, 2005, p556)
 - b. belief that news agencies are *moral*, decline 54% to 39% (*Pew*, 2005, p556)
 - c. belief that news organizations *cover up errors*, rose 13% to 67% (*Pew*, 2005, p556)
 - d. belief that news organizations are politically biased rose 45% to 59% (*Pew*, 2005, p556)
7. Increase in bias perception is paired with significant decrease in newspaper circulation (*LA Times*, *NY Times*, many others, see bottom of p556). However, *WSJ* has not experienced any decline in readership.
8. Liberal bias offset by *some* alternative sources: *Washington Times*, *National Review*, *Weekly Standard*, *First Things*, *Townhall*, *World* (*World* from evangelical viewpoint). But alternatives do not equal the influence of “mainstream.”

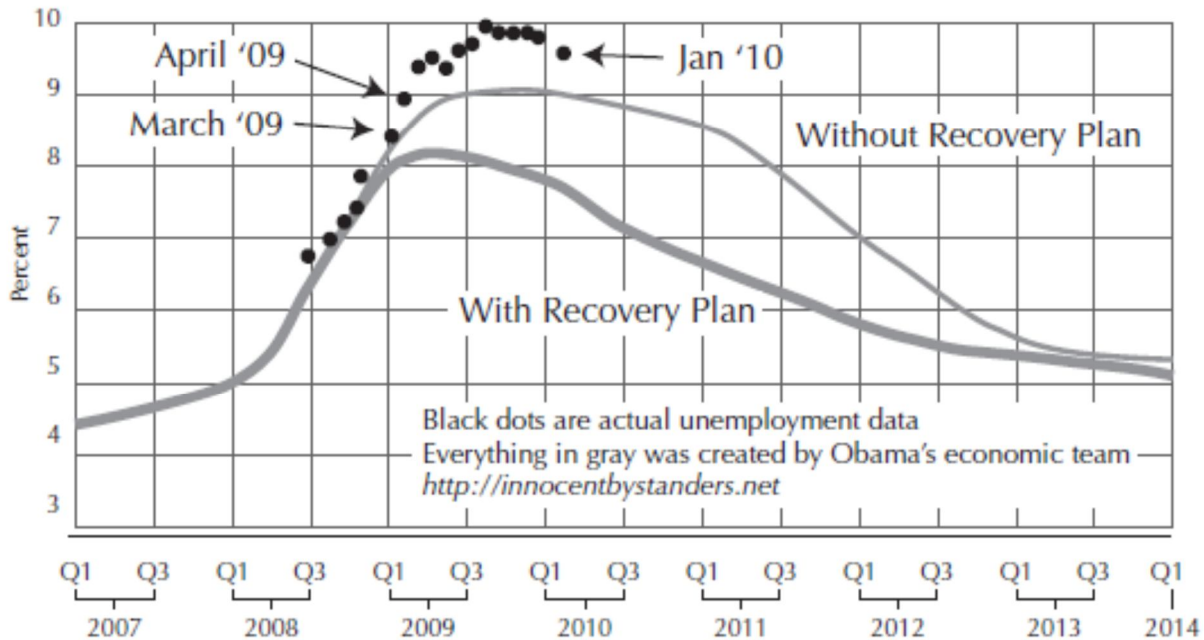
B. Surveys of Journalists

1. 30 year trend, journalists personally vote Democrat more often than Republican and that bias shows in reporting.
 - a. According to even liberal *NY Times* columnist Nicholas Kristof: Twice as many favorable Obama vs. McCain news stories; Obama coverage 65% positive vs. McCain 31%; reporters disproportionately vote Democratic (*Slate.com* polled staff – 55 voted Obama, 1 voted McCain). p557
 - b. 2007, Bill Dedman of MSNBC reported: of 143 journalists who made political contributions 125 gave to Democrats & liberal causes. 16 gave to Republicans. Two gave to both parties (data from Federal Election Commission).
 - c. Editor for the *Seattle Times*: “most of the people who go into this business [journalism] tend to vote Democratic, at least in national elections...social service and activism is a primary driver for many journalists.” p558.
 - d. 2004, then-New York Times public editor Dan Okrent asked question, “Is the New York Times a liberal newspaper?” His answer: “Of course it is...” p558 for full quote.
 - e. Books available on bias in the media: *Bias: A CBS Insider Exposes How the Media Distort the News*, B. Goldberg; *Give Me a Break: How I Exposed Hucksters, Cheats, and Scam Artists and Became the Scourge of the Liberal Media*, J. Stossell; *Slander: Liberal Lies about the American Right*, A. Coulter.
2. Biased selection of material to favor liberal causes: 2008-9 economic crisis blamed on “market failure” or “deregulation,” but the following gov’t policies that were the actual causes were not mentioned.
 - a. Barney Frank, Mass. congressman propped up *Fannie Mae* and *Freddie Mac* that guaranteed loans for people that had not ability to pay.
 - (1) no mention of Democrats blocking attempted reform of *Fannie Mae* and *Freddie Mac* by Republicans
 - (2) no mention of repeated warnings in *WSJ* that lack of reform would cause national financial crisis
 - b. Government requirements, imposed by Congress, that banks make a certain percentage of their loans to people whose financial ability would not allow them to qualify for loans!
 - (1) R. Reiland, assoc. prof economics, Robert Morris Univ traced mortg crisis to this pply, see p559 extended quote.
 - c. Irresponsible policy of *Federal Reserve Board* during Bush admin.- Kept interest rates so low (as low as 4.25%) that encouraged borrowing beyond what would be financially responsible.
 - (1) Led to excessive amount of credit on market and drove up house prices (the bubble).
 - d. Few aware of the causes listed under point 2. Largely ignored by mainstream media in reporting on ’08-9 fin. crisis
3. Repeated and prolonged attention to conservative wrongdoing, but minimizing or ignoring wrongdoing by liberals
 - a. “anger” at Republican rallies is often reported on, but “anger” at Democratic rallies is rarely reported on.
 - b. Reporting positively on family values of Barak Obama vs. negatively on even slight misstatements by Sarah Palin
 - c. Virtually no reporting on corrupt Louisiana Congressman William Jefferson (see p560 if you don’t know who he is)
 - d. Only recently did media give attention to Charles Rangel’s tax evasion problems (chairman of the House Ways & Means Committee which sets tax policy for the U.S.)

4. Reporting unfounded liberal claims without fact-checking
 - a. Supposed support of James Earl Ray's actions & slavery by R. Limbaugh. Reported when seeking to purchase St Louis Rams
 - (1) CNN's Rich Sanchez reported on-air Limbaugh once supported slavery. Retracted on Twitter ("my bad," p561)
 - (2) Bryan Burwell, *St. Louis Post-Dispatch*, reported Limbaugh said slavery had merit. Later retracted by paper
 - (3) snopes.com—Ray quote cannot be verified, reportedly said 4/23/98, but no reference to supposed quote prior '05
 - (4) Limbaugh refuted all claims in the *WSJ*, no quotes ever verified (did not exist), yet many stories never retracted
 - (5) Damage - Limbaugh was asked to leave the group seeking to purchase St. Louis Rams.
 - (6) Compare to no coverage of Keith Olbermann's (NBC NFL's Pregame Show) rabid leftist comments (hypocrisy noted by *WSJ*, see quote p562).
 - b. ObamaCare – reported as "\$81 billion savings" (CBS, *Washington Post*).
 - c. CBS news anchor Dan Rather falsely reported preferential treatment & poor performance re. Bush's '72-3 Air National Guard service. Repeatedly reported, though documents not found to be authentic. Later retracted.
 - (1) Producer Mary Mapes was fired
 - (2) Dan Rather took/forced early retirement & sued CBS for its handling (dismissed by NY state appeals court)
 - (3) Type font used in falsified memos not designed until many years after '73
 - (4) Word spacing not capable on any typewriter available at the time ('72-3), but is the default on modern computerized word processing.
 - (5) After the above two findings, CBS continued to report this story for two additional weeks
5. Reporting on War
 - a. Wildly exaggerated numbers of civilian casualties claimed by enemies to the U.S. simply reported
 - b. Context of civ. casualties ignored: hiding weaponry, missile launchers, using as a base - schools, homes, mosques
 - c. Reports of US troop causing destruction to Iraqi heritage (museums, Babylon, etc.) found to be untrue.
 - (1) *WSJ* editorial reported a 2008 trip composed of Western Archeologists found little or no post-Saddam damage
 - (2) Emeilio Marrero's memoir (eyewitness account) reports that US Marines conscientiously protected Babylon site.
 - (3) National Museum in Iraq is currently open with majority of treasures on display
 - (4) Under Saddam's regime few museum treasures allowed to be displayed, now more than ever they can be seen
 - (5) Vindication of US troops as an alternative view or as an investigation has essentially been ignored by media
6. Global warming – despite widespread disagreement as expressed in responsible articles, books, and petitions signed by hundreds of competent scientists, mainstream media simply reports global warming as proven fact.
7. Media bias in favor of Barak Obama - Unquestioned support of a US presidential candidate &, later, president
 - a. Obama started political career with admitted, unrepentant terrorist bomber Bill Ayers (virtually no coverage)
 - b. Tony Rezko, convicted felon, provided much of the money behind Obama's early political career (little coverage despite reports of kickbacks to Obama intern & personal financial gains by Obama from relationship with Rezko)
 - c. Obama's connection to ACORN (as community organizer & lawyer), an organization with a long record of political corruption, never investigated. see *WSJ* extended quote for reporting on election fraud and rigged elections, p.567
 - d. Huge campaign contributions received from Fannie Mae, 2nd largest of any US Senator, never investigated
 - e. Obama targeted Fox News, tried to blackball from White House coverage. No media outrage (compare Nixon's "enemies list" coverage).
 - f. Economic statistics ignored – unemployment from 6.7% at Obama's election to 10.2% in Oct. '09. Taking into account discouraged workers, forced part-time workers, the effective unemployment rate as of June '09, 20%
 - g. Lack of stimulus of the costly stimulus plan passed with no Republican votes. projected vs. actual success below:

Figure 16.1

UNEMPLOYMENT RATE WITH AND WITHOUT THE RECOVERY PLAN



h. Actual unemployment data, month by month, after passage of stimulus plan: Feb 2009, 8.2%; March 09, 8.6%; April 09, 8.9%; May 09, 9.4%; June 09, 9.5%; July 09, 9.4%; Aug 09, 9.7%; Sept 09, 9.8%; Oct 09, 10.1%; Nov 09, 10.0%; Dec 09, 10.0%; Jan 10, 9.7%

i. Despite the above information, there has been little-to-no mainstream media outrage or investigative coverage.

8. Health Care Reform

- a. No simplified charts showing actual costs
- b. No outrage over secret congressional committee meetings where amendments added, Republicans locked out.
- c. No outrage on bills brought to House or Senate floor for votes before even being read

C. What happens to a nation when its watchdogs are silent?

1. First Amendment – intended to maintain accountability of gov't to the people.
2. When the intention of the First Amendment is not maintained, the people of a nation do not have adequate info. for wise decisions. The nation will soon be lead astray by its leaders (see Isa. 56:10 for biblical example).
His watchmen are blind; they are all without knowledge; *they are all silent dogs; they cannot bark*, dreaming, lying down, loving to slumber (Isa. 56:10).

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