

Americans' Trust in Media Takes Sharp Dip

Gallup's analysis said this year's precipitous drop is possibly attributable to the belief of Republicans that the "mainstream media" are "hyperfocused" on every allegedly controversial statement made by Republican nominee Donald Trump, while they have devoted very little attention to the multiple controversies involving Hillary Clinton. (You think?)



Written by [Steve Byas](#) on September 15, 2016

Another possibility considered was the rise of more opinion-driven media, including blogs. A cursory examination of the headlines found on Yahoo News and AOL, for example, will demonstrate that both are heavily tilted against Republicans.

During a 2011 appearance on MSNBC's *Rachel Maddow Show*, Senator Rand Paul spent much of his time fending off insinuations of racism among members of the Tea Party. While Fox News is clearly more hospitable to Republicans, they demonstrate a definite bias against certain viewpoints found more among paleo-conservatives, such as a non-interventionist foreign policy.

Early in its coverage of the 2016 presidential campaign, Fox News even forgot to include Senator Paul in their presidential poll, despite the fact that Paul was registering above other candidates who were mentioned in the survey. And, of course, Sen. Paul's father, Ron Paul, was treated even worse during his 2012 bid for the White House.

Usually, the method used by the media is more subtle. For the most part, the media slants its coverage by determining what to cover — leaving the viewer unaware of many issues and viewpoints that are not covered. For example, viewers will never hear a serious discussion on any of the networks as to why the United States should leave the United Nations, or why multilateral trade agreements threaten American national sovereignty. Their idea of a balanced report is whether the government should spend this or that amount of money on a program — not whether we should spend any money at all.

Sometimes, however, the mainstream media is openly one-sided. Who can forget the interjection by CNN's Candy Crowley during the 2012 presidential debate between President Barack Obama and former Massachusetts Governor Mitt Romney? On October 16, 2012, the nation witnessed the spectacle of a supposedly unbiased moderator taking Obama's side against his Republican challenger.

After the attack on the American compound in Benghazi, Libya, President Obama and several members of his administration, including Secretary of State Hillary Clinton, insisted on describing the attack as *not* a premeditated terrorist attack, but rather a spontaneous uprising in protest of an anti-Muslim video. At the time, Obama was enjoying the narrative that he had turned the tide against Islamic terrorism after the killing of Osama bin Laden. He did not want an attack of terrorism to shatter that belief among the American people, less than a month before a tightly-contested presidential election.

Romney is widely credited with "winning" the first debate, and had momentum. He was on the attack in the debate, pointing out that Obama and his administration were late to call the attacks terrorism. Suddenly, Crowley interjected herself into the debate, supporting Obama's claim that he had called the attacks an act of terrorism very soon after the tragic events. Following Crowley's statement, Romney was noticeably shaken.

It was almost as if a football official had tackled a player five yards short of the goal line, saving the game for one of the teams.

In February of 2013, Frank Fahrenkopf, the co-chair of the Commission on Presidential Debates, said Crowley was simply wrong in her assertion that Obama had called the attacks an act of terror. Of course, by that time, Obama had been sworn in for a second presidential term.

Is it any wonder that Republicans do not trust the media?



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