Thomas James Dodd

Political Science328

Spring 2013

Day

The Leftist Media

Today more than ever before the television media at large influences how people think, and even more importantly how they vote. The way a story is reported and how the events actually took place can seriously differ depending on how it is framed and presented to the public. When the television reporting is biased it does a huge injustice to the public because they don’t have the real facts and therefore can’t make true accurate decisions come reelection time. People may not see how this is a big deal because they think that news channels are private and can report however they want, when in actuality the need to be fair and right down the middle to insure all views are accurately presented. The best way to do this is to just present facts instead of putting a spin on issues. The mainstream television channel MSNBC is biased towards the left, the way they report stories is unfair to conservatives and needs to change in order to have a more informed citizen.

Accusing a large company like MSNBC of purposely lying to their viewers is something that is not taken lightly, and in most cases no actual lying (at least on purpose) occurs in the reporting of the news. However very often the news can be “spun” to sound like something happened when in fact it didn’t occur quite the way it is reported. For instance instead of saying John fell down by accident, a news outlet can say that John was pushed down. They do this because they know that it sounds more interesting and will attract better ratings. Ratings are the cornerstone of how television channels operate; the more people who watch the more money they will get from advertisements and therefore be more profitable. The cable news channel MSNBC is notorious for doing this, even more so in a way that favors liberals and puts down conservatives. They are highly biased towards liberals because that’s what their demographic is. According to a survey conducted by people-press.org the main demographic for MSNBC are people identifying themselves as “democrats”, “liberals”, and “women”. Whether they are playing what they know their viewers want to see or their viewers are tuning into the ideas they like it all ends up the same, baised. Their slogan after all is “Lean Forward”, progressive thinking of forward is often linked with liberals and against conservatives who are often known for having less than forward ideas on policies. MSNBC also has a record of being Pro-Obama and Anti-Romney in the lead up to the 2012 Presidential Election. The coverage of their campaigns and the comments they made when speaking were very much up to loose interpretation by the outlet. According to mediaite.com that was citing a Pew research study the coverage of Obama and Romney was far different in the lead up to Election Day 2012. Of all of the coverage that Romney got on MSNBC 71% of it was negative, and only 3% was positive. On the other side of the coin of all of Obama’s coverage was the exact opposite. This shows how badly MSNBC wanted Obama to be reelected. MSNBC is one of the major news outlets and according to stateofthemedia.org has the second highest viewer ratings between CNN, Fox, Headline news, and MSNBC. This figure shows how what they say is viewed by many and therefore has a major impact on the public and how they view politics.

The most egregious techniques used by MSNBCa re their one man run segments which report on the news for just a fraction of the time. The rest of the time they spend interjecting a biased opinion into the story which comes off as facts. To the naked eye this appears to be a news reporting the entire time when in actuality it is just one very liberal voice taking the left stance on every issue. This is so bad because it comes across as news but it is really just opinions. Shows like The Rachel Maddow Show, Hardball with Chris Matthews, and The Ed Show with Edward Schultz are hour long segments of borderline propaganda used to vilify the Republican Party and to glorify the Democratic one. These shows are all on at primetime hours in the evening to reach the most viewers. After lots of studying the different shows the only newscaster who can be seen as conservative on MSNBC is Joe Scarborough. Joe is the lead on the show “Morning Joe” which airs every weekday from six to nine in the morning. While it is good they have at least one “red” voice on their network unfortunately it is very early in the morning and not on primetime. One example of this one voice take on every issue instead of actual news reading according to newsbusters.org is during a February 14th 2013 airing of The Rachel Maddow show where she claimed:

“Thanks to you at home for joining us this hour on a day that made history! Today something happened in American politics that has never before happened in the history of our republic. In all of the trials and tribulations we have been through as a nation, through the wars, through the Great Depression, through the time when senators used to beat one another with canes inside the Capitol, in everything we have ever been through as a nation, what happened today has never happened before, not ever! **Not one of the 44 presidents our country has had has**ever**been blocked by a**minority**in the Senate from choosing someone for his cabinet.**But that happened today to President Barack Obama. Republicans in the Senate decided to do something unprecedented to himand to thereby set an entirely new precedent for how the presidency itself is treated in our country, when they said today that even though they could not muster a majority of votes on their side, they would maneuver anyway as a minority to block President Barack Obama from appointing his chosen secretary of defense. This has never happened before, to anyone*,* ever!”

This is a complete Fabrication because during the second Bush administration many times the minority Democrats tried to block cabinet apportionments by way of filibuster, they just happened to go about this in different ways for instance talking for extended periods of time and continually trying to stall a vote . Lies like these by Maddow go far in deceiving the public and hurting the GOP. It isn’t hard to figure out why her views are skewed left; according to the same press-pass.org survey only one percent of her viewers identify themselves as “republicans” and only seven percent identifying as “conservatives”. With numbers like these it wouldn’t make sense from a financial stand point of the corporation to be fair and balanced. On another night Rachel Maddow shows a complete liberal bias as well as the slandering of Joe Buchannan a long time republican contributor. On July 16th Joe came on The Rachel Maddow show and discussed how he was against the Supreme Court appointment of Sonya Sotomayor on the grounds of she was unqualified and a self-proclaimed “affirmative action baby”. The back and forth sparring was good until the next night when Joe was no longer on the show Rachel aired edited clips to make it sound if Joe was against the appointment because Sonya is a woman and a Latina. The clip has Joe quoted as saying “everyone is covered by the fourteenth amendment and the civil rights laws unless you’re a white male”. The part that is left out of the re-airing of the argument is where Pat says he has no problem with a woman or minority being appointed; he just wants only qualified ones.

Another good example of the liberal bias of MSNBC in specific regards to individual shows can be seen in an interview between Martin Beshir and Representative Joe Walsh of Illinois. Walsh stated he was not going to attend a joint session of Congress because he was tired of Obama just giving speeches; he wanted him to take action instead. Beshir blasted the congressman for simply using his free will to not attend the speech and represent his constituents the way he felt was best. A more brazen attempt at being biased towards the left and against the right came in the wake of the Tucson shooting that killed six and seriously injured fourteen others. According once again to newsbusters.org Maddow showed a clip on her hour long show that showed someone questioning former presidential candidate John McCain and said “These assault weapons allow a shooter to fire many rounds without having to reload. These weapons do not belong on our streets.” Maddow’s show then immediately cut to McCain responding with “I can tell you right now you need some straight talk. That assault weapons ban will not pass the Congress of the United States.” The part she edited out McCain was expressing his condolences and sadness for those victims who died in Aurora, Colorado, as well as other tragic shootings.” This kind of news reporting is terrible and journalist if they can even be called that should be condemned for vilifying political figures just because they don’t fit the demographic of the majority of their audiences. In another case of a doctored video of more recent times according to foxnews.com shows the father of a little girl who was a victim of the Sandy Hook mass shooting testifying before the legislation. Martin Beshir a pundit on MSNBC who has his own one hour spot every weekday showed an edited version of the testimony; he then blasted the “gun nut” because he appeared to heckle the grieving father in his time of need. It looked like the protestor interrupted the father while he was giving testimony and yelled “second amendment shall not be infringed.” If you watch the entire clip you can see that the father invited the room to respond by saying

“I ask if there's anybody in this room that can give me one reason or challenge this question: Why anybody in this room needs to have,… one of these assault-style weapons or military weapons or high-capacity clips.....Not one person can answer that question."

He then turned his head around as if he was looking for someone to respond to him and that is when a member of the crowd yelled “second amendment shall not be infringed!” By cutting out the initial question to the room it takes the crowd members response way out of context. Mr. Beshir and MSNBC do this because they have long opposed gun rights and the rights of gun owners. In another similar doctoring event through MSNBC they have been sued for editing the phone call between George Zimmerman and a 911 dispatcher. On the night of February 26th 2012 there was an altercation between two males, one being George Zimmerman the other being Trayvon Martin. While following what looked like a suspicious character Zimmerman said to the dispatcher “This guy looks like he is up to no good. Or he is on drugs or something. It’s raining, and he’s just walking around, looking about.” The dispatcher responded with “Ok, and this guy- is he black, white, or Hispanic?” Zimmerman replied “He looks black.” The edited version that MSNBC went with was “This guy looks like he is up to no good. He looks black.” Clearly the edited version appears as if Mr. Zimmerman is being racist by tying the fact that he look black and that he is being suspicious together. In reality he was just responding to what the dispatcher had asked him in order for the police to better find the pair. Although the last video wasn’t directly political it still leans heavily left because MSNBC is trying to make this a race issue which is widely and historically known for being the go to play in the liberal playbook, when in reality it is a case of self-defense. MSNBC also failed to fully cover the Benghazi situation because it appeared as if Obama and his administration didn’t do enough to stop this. According to Martin Beshir to a pundit for MSNBC; conservatives were “shamelessly exploiting the deaths of Amb. Chris Stevens and three other Americans who were killed in the September 11 terrorist strike on the U.S. consulate in Benghazi, Libya” and “family members of the slain are ‘all’ tired of politicians trying to make hay out of the matter” His reaction came after people became outraged that President Obama hadn’t done enough to protect them and wasn’t giving a full answer to what had happened, including his role. Had this been a Republican he would have been slammed by MSNBC for not being transparent enough.

Some could say that while MSNBC has a liberal agenda that their counterpart Fox News has just as bad of a conservative bias, but this just isn’t the case. On MSNBC during the election cycle the ratio of negative to positive ads for Mitt Romney was 71 to 3, on the other hand the negative to positive ratio for Obama on Fox News was 46 to 6. This shows that even compared to Fox News MSNBC is still much more biased and unfair. In addition according to a study written by a group of professors at The University of Memphis through Google scholar while both media outlets are biased MSNBC is worse. For instance the study showed “Fox seemed to stress border security, whereas MSNBC seemed to emphasize the immigrant experience.” This shows clearly how while Fox might be leaning conservative with their policy solutions at least they are presenting a possible idea. MSNBC on the other hand just try’s to show the tough life for illegal immigrants and play at their viewers that way instead of being factual. Much like with immigration; health care reform was handled differently. The study indicated that Fox “emphasized the legislation of health care policy and MSNBC emphasized the health care system”, or in other words how flawed it is because of the rich and elite not paying for the poor.

In conclusion MSNBC has a history of being biased towards the left, whether it is down playing their mistakes or misleading the public about GOP ideas and quotes they are doing a detriment. If MSNBC was more balanced they would command more respect in the media community and would be able to attract more viewers. The most important thing today regardless of if you’re liberal or conservative is to understand what is actually going on around you. If the media accurately portrays the events people can decide for themselves what to think; however when the fix is in and there is a bias it hurts our country as a whole. Hopefully in the future media will be fairer so everyone can have a clearer view of our great country.

mediaite.com

stateofthemedia.org

newsbusters.org

foxnews.com

pewresearch.org

People-press.org

Bias in Hard News Articles from Fox News and MSNBC: An Empirical Assessment Using the Gramulator Brock Terwilleger, Philip M. McCarthy, and Travis Lamkin