

# Media Bias: Pretty Much All Of Journalism Now Leans Left, Study Shows

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Media Bias: Ask journalists, and they'll likely tell you they play things right down the middle. They strive to be "fair." They're "centrists." Sorry, not true. The profound leftward ideological bias of the Big Media is the main reason why America now seems saturated with "fake news." Journalists, besotted with their own ideology, are no longer able to recognize their own bias.

Despite journalists' denials, it's now pretty much a fact that journalism is one of the most left-wing of all professions. But until recently, that wasn't thought to be true of financial journalists — who have a reputation for being the most right-leaning and free-market-oriented among mainstream journalists.

If that was ever true, it sure isn't today, a new study suggests.

Researchers from Arizona State University and Texas A&M University questioned 462 financial journalists around the country. They followed up with 18 additional interviews. The journalists worked for the Wall Street Journal, the New York Times, Washington Post, Associated Press, and a number of other newspapers.

What they found surprised them. Even the supposedly hard-nosed financial reporters were overwhelmingly liberal. Of the 462 people surveyed, 17.63% called themselves "very liberal," while 40.84% described themselves as "somewhat liberal." When you add it up, 58.47% admit to being left of center. Along with that, another 37.12% claim to be "moderate."

What about the mythic "conservative" financial journalist? In fact, a mere 0.46% of financial journalists called themselves "very conservative," while just 3.94% said they were "somewhat conservative." That's a whopping 4.4% of the total that lean right-of-center.

That's a ratio of 13 "liberals" for every one "conservative." Whatever happened to ideological diversity? Please remember this as you watch the business news or read a financial story in the paper. You might want to take its message with a grain of salt. That's especially true if the piece seems unduly harsh on the free-market system and its many proven benefits. Or if it lauds socialism as an "answer" to society's ills.

This is an enormous problem for the media — perhaps bigger than they realize. A Rasmussen Reports survey in late October found that 45% of all likely voters in the midterm elections believed "that when most reporters write about a congressional race, they are trying to help the Democratic candidate."

Just 11% said the media would try to help the Republican. And only 35% said they thought reporters simply try to report the news in an unbiased way.

Rasmussen notes that this "helps explain why Democratic voters are much bigger fans of election news coverage" than others. They see it as favorable to their own beliefs.

Even so, that doesn't keep people from seeing the harsh reality of bias.

A post-election survey of 1,000 voters by McLaughlin & Associates found that "a forceful plurality (48%) of respondents believe the media coverage is unfair and biased" against President Trump. Even 16% of Democrats agreed.

It used to be thought that, sure, the cultural beat writers, book reviewers and Op-Ed writers all shared a common intellectual bent and thus were more likely to be left-leaning than other reporters. But these recent studies show that's not true. The taint of bias now infects all of journalism, not just the cultural and opinion spinners.

It wasn't always this way. A long-term study of reporters' leanings and attitudes, "The American Journalist in the Digital Age," shows that the drift toward liberalism has been going on for years within journalism. In 1971, Republicans made up 25.7% of all journalists. Democrats were 35.5%, and independents were 32.5%. Some 6.3% of responses were "other."

By 2014, the year of the last survey, the share of journalists identifying as Republican had shrunk to 7.1%, an 18.6 percentage point drop. From having near-parity with the journalist Republicans in the 1970s, Democrats today outnumber Republicans today by four to one.

Meanwhile, the share of journalists calling themselves "independent" has surged to 50.2%. In case you think the growing body of Independents qualifies as "the center," think again.

Repeated surveys show that independents are usually left-of-center on social issues, but centrist on fiscal issues and many issues of governance. So you should really characterize them as "moderate left."

Bad news for journalists, and bad news for journalism. Because as Americans continue down their path of growing mistrust of the mainstream media, they will start looking for alternatives.

Will they find new, more trustworthy sources of news? Or will they just turn it off entirely? Either one isn't good for journalists, or good for America.

It's time the journalistic mainstream addresses this problem. Smug denial is no longer an option. It starts with owners, publishers and editors demanding fairness in their reporting and weeding out obvious bias. While they're at it, they should elevate the idea of unbiased news coverage to a goal, even if it's not attainable.