

Political Science 146: Mass Media and Public Opinion

Loren Collingwood

University of California

loren.collingwood@ucr.edu

February 19, 2014

Susana Martinez & CPAC

Susana Martinez Will Not Attend CPAC

By **Scott Conroy** - February 13, 2014



Share



25



2



Email



Print



21

Comments



For the second year in a row, the premier annual conservative confab will be without one of the nation's most dynamic and up-and-coming Republican leaders.

New Mexico Gov. Susana Martinez will not attend the Conservative Political Action Conference next month at Maryland's National Harbor resort, a Martinez adviser told RealClearPolitics.



Generic Congressional Ballot

2014 Generic Congressional Vote

2010 Midterm Polls | 2006 Midterm Polls | 2002 Midterm Polls

Polling Data					
Poll	Date	Sample	Republicans	Democrats	Spread
RCP Average	1/12 - 2/9	--	42.0	41.4	Republicans +0.6
McClatchy/Marist	2/4 - 2/9	970 RV	44	46	Democrats +2
Rasmussen Reports	2/3 - 2/9	3500 LV	38	40	Democrats +2
PPP (D)	1/23 - 1/26	845 RV	42	40	Republicans +2
ABC News/Wash Post	1/20 - 1/23	RV	46	45	Republicans +1
FOX News	1/19 - 1/21	1010 RV	43	41	Republicans +2
Quinnipiac	1/15 - 1/19	1933 RV	38	37	Republicans +1
GWU/Battleground	1/12 - 1/16	1000 LV	43	41	Republicans +2

All 2014 Generic Congressional Vote Polling Data

Rise of Partisan News

- Television landscape has changed dramatically in the types and numbers of programs offered to viewers

Rise of Partisan News

- Television landscape has changed dramatically in the types and numbers of programs offered to viewers
- What are the political implications of program variety?

Rise of Partisan News

- Television landscape has changed dramatically in the types and numbers of programs offered to viewers
- What are the political implications of program variety?
 - Does cable news polarize the electorate?

Rise of Partisan News

- Television landscape has changed dramatically in the types and numbers of programs offered to viewers
- What are the political implications of program variety?
 - Does cable news polarize the electorate?
 - Do citizens passively accept what is shown them?

Rise of Partisan News

- Television landscape has changed dramatically in the types and numbers of programs offered to viewers
- What are the political implications of program variety?
 - Does cable news polarize the electorate?
 - Do citizens passively accept what is shown them?
 - Are there multiple political realities, so partisans talk past one another instead of deliberate?

Rise of Partisan News

- Television landscape has changed dramatically in the types and numbers of programs offered to viewers
- What are the political implications of program variety?
 - Does cable news polarize the electorate?
 - Do citizens passively accept what is shown them?
 - Are there multiple political realities, so partisans talk past one another instead of deliberate?
 - Lower aggregate levels of political knowledge?

Rise of Partisan News

- Television landscape has changed dramatically in the types and numbers of programs offered to viewers
- What are the political implications of program variety?
 - Does cable news polarize the electorate?
 - Do citizens passively accept what is shown them?
 - Are there multiple political realities, so partisans talk past one another instead of deliberate?
 - Lower aggregate levels of political knowledge?
- Arceneaux & Johnson argue that viewers are active, not passive. So people can/will scrutinize what they see/hear

Partisan News & Choice

- There is much more partisan news today than in previous decades

Partisan News & Choice

- There is much more partisan news today than in previous decades
- Americans used to get majority of their political information from broadcast news. These networks subscribed to neutral/objective norms of reporting.

Partisan News & Choice

- There is much more partisan news today than in previous decades
- Americans used to get majority of their political information from broadcast news. These networks subscribed to neutral/objective norms of reporting.
 - Balance, fairness to all sides, impartiality. These were the goals

Partisan News & Choice

- There is much more partisan news today than in previous decades
- Americans used to get majority of their political information from broadcast news. These networks subscribed to neutral/objective norms of reporting.
 - Balance, fairness to all sides, impartiality. These were the goals
- But rise of cable created more channels, so people began self-selecting

Partisan News & Choice

- There is much more partisan news today than in previous decades
- Americans used to get majority of their political information from broadcast news. These networks subscribed to neutral/objective norms of reporting.
 - Balance, fairness to all sides, impartiality. These were the goals
- But rise of cable created more channels, so people began self-selecting
- Scholars concerned that rise of partisan news may threaten functioning of democracy because of echo chamber effect

Change in Media Effects Paradigm

- Media Effects: Loosely, the ability of the media to influence public opinion

Change in Media Effects Paradigm

- Media Effects: Loosely, the ability of the media to influence public opinion
- Klapper (1960) argued that mass communication (i.e., television) often does not cause audience effects, rather mass communication serves more as a reinforcing effect

Change in Media Effects Paradigm

- Media Effects: Loosely, the ability of the media to influence public opinion
- Klapper (1960) argued that mass communication (i.e., television) often does not cause audience effects, rather mass communication serves more as a reinforcing effect
- “Minimal Effects” became dominant paradigm

Change in Media Effects Paradigm

- Media Effects: Loosely, the ability of the media to influence public opinion
- Klapper (1960) argued that mass communication (i.e., television) often does not cause audience effects, rather mass communication serves more as a reinforcing effect
- “Minimal Effects” became dominant paradigm
- Media’s key influence is agenda setting: what issues are talked about, and how are those issues “framed” (Iyengar 1991)

Effects of Partisan Media

- Goal of partisan media *is* to persuade. Partisan media does persuade (Feldman 2011) and misinform (Ramsay et al 2010)

Effects of Partisan Media

- Goal of partisan media *is* to persuade. Partisan media does persuade (Feldman 2011) and misinform (Ramsay et al 2010)
- Behavior of partisan media actors may involve yelling and aggression, damaging viewers' trust in news and media (Ladd 2010) and the political system (Mutz and Reeves 2005)

Effects of Partisan Media

- Goal of partisan media *is* to persuade. Partisan media does persuade (Feldman 2011) and misinform (Ramsay et al 2010)
- Behavior of partisan media actors may involve yelling and aggression, damaging viewers' trust in news and media (Ladd 2010) and the political system (Mutz and Reeves 2005)
- But audiences can fight back, as Arceneaux and Johnson argue, audiences are not passive, they are active

Effects of Partisan Media

- Goal of partisan media *is* to persuade. Partisan media does persuade (Feldman 2011) and misinform (Ramsay et al 2010)
- Behavior of partisan media actors may involve yelling and aggression, damaging viewers' trust in news and media (Ladd 2010) and the political system (Mutz and Reeves 2005)
- But audiences can fight back, as Arceneaux and Johnson argue, audiences are not passive, they are active
- With time, viewers learn about quality of products. They learn Fox News is right wing, MSNBC is left wing and CNN is the Clinton News Network (that last one was a joke)

Effects of Partisan Media

- Goal of partisan media *is* to persuade. Partisan media does persuade (Feldman 2011) and misinform (Ramsay et al 2010)
- Behavior of partisan media actors may involve yelling and aggression, damaging viewers' trust in news and media (Ladd 2010) and the political system (Mutz and Reeves 2005)
- But audiences can fight back, as Arceneaux and Johnson argue, audiences are not passive, they are active
- With time, viewers learn about quality of products. They learn Fox News is right wing, MSNBC is left wing and CNN is the Clinton News Network (that last one was a joke)
- Initially, viewers were unaware of Fox News' partisan tilt, but since then, partisanship is a strong predictor of who watches (Morris 2005)

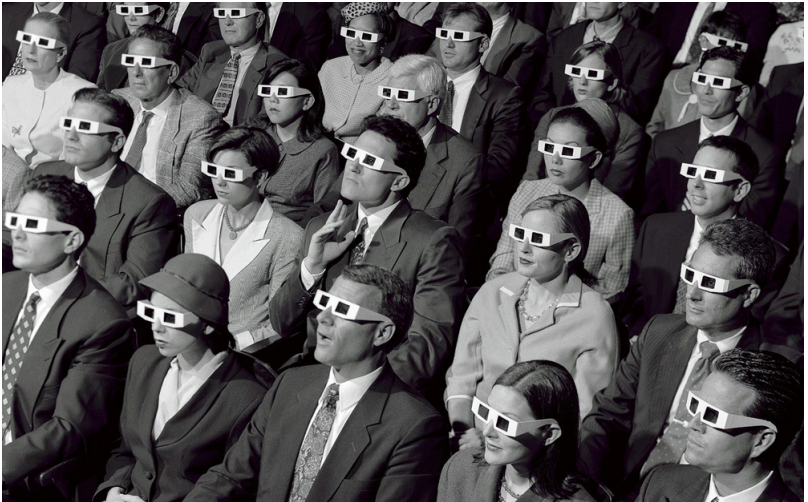
Active Audience Theory

- Active Audience Theory: To understand effects of partisan media requires treating television viewers as *active* participants and *not inert, passive* receivers.

Active Audience Theory



Passive Audience Theory



Active Audience Theory

- Active Audience Theory: To understand effects of partisan media requires treating television viewers as *active* participants and *not inert, passive* receivers.

Active Audience Theory

- Active Audience Theory: To understand effects of partisan media requires treating television viewers as *active* participants and *not inert, passive* receivers.
- People have agency over what they watch, and they exercise this agency when given a choice.

Active Audience Theory

- Active Audience Theory: To understand effects of partisan media requires treating television viewers as *active* participants and *not inert, passive* receivers.
- People have agency over what they watch, and they exercise this agency when given a choice.
- An active audience brings some level of scrutiny to the messages it receives

Active Audience Theory

- Active Audience Theory: To understand effects of partisan media requires treating television viewers as *active* participants and *not inert, passive* receivers.
- People have agency over what they watch, and they exercise this agency when given a choice.
- An active audience brings some level of scrutiny to the messages it receives
 - Like minded news shows reinforce and strengthen preexisting attitudes because people are motivated to maintain those preexisting attitudes

Active Audience Theory

- Active Audience Theory: To understand effects of partisan media requires treating television viewers as *active* participants and *not inert, passive* receivers.
- People have agency over what they watch, and they exercise this agency when given a choice.
- An active audience brings some level of scrutiny to the messages it receives
 - Like minded news shows reinforce and strengthen preexisting attitudes because people are motivated to maintain those preexisting attitudes
 - When people are confronted with oppositional news programs they are inherently more critical/skeptical/dismissive of opposing viewpoints

Active Audience Theory

- Thus, exposure to opposition viewpoints should not lead to attitude moderation. Instead a reinforcement of views occurs.

Active Audience Theory

- Thus, exposure to opposition viewpoints should not lead to attitude moderation. Instead a reinforcement of views occurs.
- An active audience makes purposive viewing decisions

Active Audience Theory

- Thus, exposure to opposition viewpoints should not lead to attitude moderation. Instead a reinforcement of views occurs.
- An active audience makes purposive viewing decisions
- The presence of entertainment options should mute the effects of partisan media coverage; entertainment seeks select out of news coverage
- Dilution: Most individuals choose to watch something other than partisan news coverage, shrinking the size of inadvertent news audience; diluting overall direct impact of the partisan news media
- Partisan news shows have a different effect on news seekers than they do on entertainment seekers. News seekers have more considerations, hence, can reject oppositional news information