

Does the media distort our understanding about world

[Media](#)



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When thinking about this question, we have to ask ourselves firstly what is the role of the media in our world? Media is defined as the means of masscommunication(esp. Television, radio, newspapers, books, magazines, internet) regarded collectively. Its role in society is to inform the public, and keep us informed, about what is happening throughout the world as well as entertain us. It uses many platforms including internet, books, magazines, newspapers, television, when you walk down the street.

It is all around us. It is there to make people think and encourages us to challenge and have an opinion about events and decisions that are happening and being made. But is it also used to keep the public naive, only informing the public about certain events, hypnotising them into buying products they don't need, distorting their understanding of what is happening in the world? Media delivers us with news and information not only from our country, but from around the globe. A main section of our news is political.

The media delivers us information about everything from political parties, elections, MP's, to and decisions made. The famous quote by the CBS news anchor Walter Cronkite paints a picture of what the news networks and corporations are there to do; ' Our job is to only hold up the mirror, to tell the public what is happening. ' But that is only a slim part of what they actually do. Due to media conglomerates it is very easy for a corporations political agenda to be forced on the public, even the world, without knowing.

An example of this is Rupert Murdoch. He is the founder, chairman and CEO of News Corporation, which owns the Fox Network, BSkyB (39. 1), The Times, The Sunday Times, The Sun, The Daily Mail, Vogue, and the list goes on. It <https://assignbuster.com/does-the-media-distort-our-understanding-about-world/>

has influence in countries all over the world including United States, the biggest economy in the world, and the UK. There are many examples throughout its history where it has interfered and persuaded the public to alter the course of politics for the benefit of the corporation or individual. One example is The Sun.

In the 1992 elections in Britain, The Sun's headline 'Kinnock wins today will be the last person to leave Britain please turn out the lights' is one of the most famous headlines in newspaper history. The headline refers to The Sun's campaign leading up to the polling days. The newspaper led a campaign against the Labour party's leader, Neil Kinnock, which then led to the election day headline being that. That year, the conservatives won and the headline the day after was 'It The Sun Wot Won It'. There are many more examples The Sun and other newspapers doing this.

This shows that the media can be used as a powerful political tool to convince the public to vote for a party, for the corporations, individuals and/or governments' benefits. Rupert Murdoch was 13th on Forbes; the most powerful people in the world 2010, above President of France, Nicholas Sarkozy. Is that right? This raises the question of whether media is helping people make informed, wise decisions? Advertisement are a massive chunk of our media today. Every platform for media you look at, whether it be newspapers or television, advertisements will be apart of it.

Due to adverts being the funding for majority of media networks, a lot of the news corporations listen to companies demands. For instance, not writing bad press about the firms that are polluting our world, or implementing child labour on the other side of the globe. If the news agencies did this, then they

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wouldn't have the funds to survive. This is a massive distortion and people are left in the dark about all the terrible actions from companies. An example is the rural tribal lands of East India. Protestors are going head to head with steel giant Arcelor Mittal.

The global company wants to displace the villagers from their ancestral land, and build facilities for coke smelting, and steel production. It will destroy 15 villages and displace many villagers. As for-profit organisations are allowed to buy up media networks, they do so in order to make more profit and can use the media to distort our understanding of what their company is actually doing. For example, in 1995, when Disney was on the brink of collapse and their viewings were decreasing, they purchased the ABC network in the attempt of reviving Disney.

This enabled them to broadcast their shows at peak times, as many times as they liked. They were able to report good press about themselves and able to advertise their products. Majority of advertisements are not good either. It has made societies, more developed countries than developing, materialistic and wanting more and more. Products used to be marketed for their utility and they were expected to last. But due to the companies thinking that after they sold one to someone, they wouldn't need another. So they changed their advertising campaign to needing it.

It changed the 'want' in the 1950s to the 'modern need'. People are trained to desire things, which takes their attention off more important things in life. Pestering power is another ploy they use in order to sell their products. Food, drink, and other products target young children in order to pester their parents into buying the specific products. Nick Davis, a former journalist of <https://assignbuster.com/does-the-media-distort-our-understanding-about-world/>

the year and writer for Guardian, says ' Our media have become mass producers of distortion. ' He gives the example of a group of feral child bullies who had ganged up and attempted to hang a five-year-old from a tree.

The whole of fleet street published this story in one way on another. However what he go on to explain is that the police, from day one, had refused to say that the boy had been hanged from a tree. The one and only quote that the whole story was based on was from the boys adult cousin. He had told the press that the boy had said ' Some boys and girls have put a rope around my neck and tried to tie me to a tree'. Nothing in their says he was hanged. Nick Davis, to try and understand why the press had run this story, commissioned research from specialists at Cardiff University.

They surveyed 2, 000 articles from 5 newspapers (Times, Telegraph, Daily Mail, Guardian and Independent). What they found was out of the articles, only 12% of stories where composed of material researched by reporters, 8% was unknown and the remaining 80% was from second hand sources and provided by news agencies and the public relations industry. - Nick Davis. (2008). Our media have become mass producers of distortion. Available: <http://www.guardian.co.uk/commentisfree/2008/feb/04/comment.pressandpublishing>. Last accessed 8th December 2011.

This research shows that a lot of the articles are in danger of not being accurate because of misinterpretation, lying, or other means. Due to the rise insocial networkingsuch as Facebook and Twitter, ' citizen journalism is on the increase as well'. People talking and reporting the news by sharing links, giving their opinion about events and writing about what is happening, and <https://assignbuster.com/does-the-media-distort-our-understanding-about-world/>

their friends, colleges and fellow bloggers taking it for truth. But due to a lot of these people not having the knowledge about the subject, or not doing research, these information they are sharing is not always accurate and can distort what is really going on. Take wikipedia for example, anyone no matter what their knowledge is on the subject, their intellect, education, they can edit, re-edit, and involve themselves in wikipedias entries. The system is open to abuse and means that a lot of the content on there could be inaccurate and or false. If we can't trust our news or the people who are in charge of informing us, this isn't a democracy, its a society in which we are told only what a few selected people want us to hear and see. In conclusion, I feel that there are a lot of media outlets that do distort what is happening around us, and this is a big problem.

From the news networks being controlled by their for-profit funders, to large companies buying media networks in order to supply the public with a false image of themselves. A large part of the problem though is that a lot people are not taught to think on their own, which makes it easier for the media to do so, or are thinking on their own but not having the knowledge to give relevant information to others. Whether it be the fault of the government, the parents, schools, it needs to change. However, not all media distorts our understanding of what is happening in the world.

There are news corporations that aren't just financed by adverts, which stops the need for the networks to listen to the firms. BBC is solely funded by taxes collected by the government, the tax on your TV, and has been running since 1932. The Guardian is another example. It was owned by the Scott Trust, a charitable foundation in which aimed to ensure the papers editorial

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independence and that it was not taken over by a for-profit organisation. This means that it would not give in to firms demands, and reports the news at a non bias angle.