

Bakers media and democracy essays example

[Business](#), [Marketing](#)



In recent years, the American public have been increasingly inundated with media that is owned and operated by businesses with the express purpose of increasing profits, rather than the purpose of providing the average citizen with information and news. In *Market, Media, and Democracy*, Baker postulates that there is a purpose for journalism in the context of a democratic society, and that American journalism has, by and large, lost the ability to serve that purpose. Baker suggests that there has been a movement in media and journalism that promotes the idea of giving the people “ what they want” in terms of media, rather than giving them true journalistic expression, and that the desire to increase ratings and build profits has promoted deregulation in the sphere of media.

One of the primary tenets of the book *Media, Markets and Democracy* is the idea that democracy relies on journalism to function properly. This is because without journalism, there can be no objectivity in the public sphere; Baker suggests that media products are unique products, in that they are influenced by two very different sources (Baker). First, media sources must “ sell” their media to audiences; second, the media sources must also “ sell” their audiences-- and thus, advertising space-- to advertisers. Having to pay for media operations by creating advertising revenue lends itself to pandering to special interests, according to Baker (Baker).

Perhaps one of the most important statements that Baker makes regarding the media in democracy is the unusual nature of the relationship between people and the media they consume. According to Baker, usually when people consume a product or service, it is something they are already familiar with, and something that already falls in line with their preferences.

However, when considering media, people are often consuming media as a way to inform their preferences, and to educate themselves on preferences that they have not formed yet; in this way, it is somewhat risky for advertisers to participate in supporting media outlets if they cannot be sure that the media source will conform to their target demographics (Baker). Baker notes that there are no watchdog groups for the media giants in the United States of America (Baker). However, the journalistic profession would greatly benefit from the oversight that would occur if there were watchdog groups for journalists. Because journalism requires a sense of freedom from market forces and from monetary pressures, it is important that there are groups that enforce objectivity in journalism. There are no watchdog groups in the United States today; instead, special interests own and run the different media outlets, a fact that is a clear violation of the interests of the profession of journalism. Baker writes, “ the watchdog role may be the democratic function least likely to require or benefit from government support. It is arguably best guaranteed by a sense of professionalism that exists among journalists, whose motivations and consequent behavior are only partially determined by the market” (Baker 197). By creating these watchdog groups, Baker postulates, the effects of advertising powers on the media outlets and media sources could potentially be offset, as all media outlets would be subjected to similar structural requirements.

As it is, media in the United States is in a state of monopolistic competition (Baker). This means that sometimes, media sources provide different opportunities and options to consumers, but most often there exists a few sources that satisfy each consumer enough; the field is then narrowed as

people consume the more desirable news source over its competitors. Baker notes, however, that in a democratic government, it is better for more media outlets to be present, and the more independent that those media outlets can be, the better it will be for the American-- or any democratic government-- as a whole.

The main premise of Baker's *Media, Markets and Democracy* is that, although there are common assumptions that freedom of the press is thought to require resistance to government interventions in the media realm. Baker's book uses the theory of capitalist markets and monopolistic consumption of goods and services to undermine the theory that the traditional resistance to governmental intervention in the media sphere is a negative thing.

The interaction of media, the market, and democracy is the subject of many different papers and a number of different discussions in academia.

However, it is generally accepted in academic circles that influence by outside powers on the media is negative for media and freedom of the press as a whole; Baker postulates that this is not necessarily the case. There are many different theories on the subject, and the market media model certainly addresses many issues that other models do not address.

Works cited

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