

The role of mass-media in society essay sample

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In the past century the boost of media, with all its main components- television, radio, written press-, has had a deep impact upon human societies. The influence of mass-media can be identified both in ordinary people's day-to-day lives, and at the level of world politics. It is not an exaggeration to say that media has become an institution. One of the most debated issues of the beginning of the 3rd Millennium is whether this institution is not exceeding its " prerogatives".

The initial role of media, through its first form of manifesting, the written press, was clearly that of propagating culture within the masses. This was the result of the influence of the Enlightenment. Gradually, it also undertook the " job" of publicizing information of public interest, or " news" as we call them nowadays. Up to this point the activity of the press is clearly beneficial, playing an essential part in the formation of a mass civic conscience.

When radio and TV were invented, a new function was passed on to the media, that of public entertainment. Normally, if a minimal balance between all the elements presented above had been kept, this wouldn't represent a drawback. But the struggle for rating, that is for an as large as possible hunk of audience, has made the entertainment factor prevalent. As a result in the present radios sound more like broken jukeboxes and most TV channels have become public circuses. The wild promotion of " film stars" and " music stars", of which many are far from representing appropriate role-models for the youth idolizing them, is only surpassed in bad taste by the permanent look-out for the shocking. Mass-media has derailed from its original ideals: instead of elevating its audience, it adapts itself according to the audience. Therefore people are given solely what they instinctually choose- fun. This is <https://assignbuster.com/the-role-of-mass-media-in-society-essay-sample/>

the same as feeding a small child only with chocolate, because this way he won't cry.

But the mass-media policy of choosing the easy way out does not stop here. The initial strong points of media have been either almost completely abandoned (like its cultural dimension), or utterly distorted, as is the case of the distribution of information. There is a visible tendency, both in TV and in gazettes, of selecting mainly negative images for news. When having to select between a horrid murder and a scientific discovery, most television and newspaper editors would go for the first one. Albeit I do not believe that unfortunate events should be censored, I feel that it is unnecessary, and furthermore, damaging for the population, to give them priority.

There are numerous other flaws of mass-media which might be invoked by its detractors, such as the lack of objectivity and predilection towards manipulation. But I feel that subjectivity is a feature as old as humanity, and the responsibility in this issue belongs to the viewer, listener or reader. Each person needs to be able to judge objectively and discern rationally between the points of view presented. On the other hand, however rational and critical one may be, nobody is able to check the sources of each piece of information conveyed by media. Thus media channels should clearly be legally liable for the veridicality of the news launched.

The strong influence of media on its public gives it a huge responsibility. People working in this domain should be permanently conscious of the fact that their opinions and their decisions influence the life-style and way of

thinking of generations. Despite its numerous flaws, mass-media remains a factor of cohesion and collective identity in our modern society.