

The mass media in a democratic society: keeping a promise



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There are a number of disturbing trends that this chapter talks about that are important to when discussing this chapter. The entire chapter discusses the fact that the media has created situations that might be described by the average person as unethical because they manipulate the news so it can be entertaining. According to the authors those people who are involved in political campaigns depend on the media to create information that is manipulated in their favor. The media in turn will manipulate information to create a forerunner in order to get picked as a White House Correspondent later if their candidate wins. This seems to be a very destructive way of doing journalism but our society has created this type of situation because of their need for entertainment.

It seems that politicians have learned that they can get the most information out about their campaigns by going to the media and by using popular culture as one venue. They are appearing on late night talk shows and comedy programs like Saturday Night Live to let the average person get to know them in a different light. This is in their mind a way to get the popular vote when it comes down to the election. The media in turn reports the news not in a pure sense but in a way that people will enjoy. It seems to be more important to get consumers to look at a candidates popularity than it is to look at the issues that the support (158).

Another disturbing issue is that though most Americans know that politics is a matter of popularity rather than the candidates knowledge they react to how the media portrays an individual. This chapter blatantly reminds us that most people get their information from television and radio ads rather than going for the facts (161). What is disturbing is that many of the ads they

watch are " attack" ads that candidates use to discredit their opponents and <https://assignbuster.com/the-mass-media-in-a-democratic-society-keeping-a-promise/>

most people take this information at face value. Although some voters can discern the difference between what is real and what is not most do not care. It does not seem practical to me that journalists are covering the political ads to look for news (162) but this is what the authors tell us in this chapter. The authors also suggest that the media should hold politicians publically responsible for what they say in their ads but this seems that it would only happen in a perfect world. In addition, on page 163 the authors suggest many altruistic ideas of how to "control" the media which in a perfect world might work. However, today the media seems to have no interest in curbing what they say or do because part of getting candidates seen is to make them popular through the media. This means they do whatever it takes to get to their end.

Another disturbing aspect of this chapter was what they said on terrorism. The fact that terrorism has a "symbiotic relationship with the media" (168) was disturbing because it lets us know that by the time we see something in the news about a terrorist attack it has already been shown around the world by other news media.

The effect of this chapter was very apparent in the presidential campaign that we have just witnessed. President Obama took extra steps to use the Internet and social media to get his points across and to let the American people see him as a person first. He seemed to want people to get to know his family as well as himself and to allow them to have a voice in what he was going to do next if only through their ability to comment on his website.

It seems to me that the media does not have any real ethics when it comes to politics because they have to report the news in a way that the public will listen. Today, most people want to be entertained in politics rather than

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getting the facts. This seems to be apparent when you listen to people at coffee houses or in other venues when there is a campaign going on.