

Media bias and how it affects us media essay



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The media affects our daily lives in numerous ways – from television to radio to print. Sometimes these media avenues persuade our opinions on certain issues – such as abortion, homosexuality, racism, and political. Numerous times throughout history the media has downplayed bias, which simply means prejudiced (“biased”). Media bias dates back to the early days of the newspaper and continues to this present day (Media Bias US 5). There are many examples throughout history showing biased media. Benjamin Franklin wrote a great example of early media bias in 1728 when he wrote an article in favor of printing paper money. Franklin did not specify he would be one of the beneficiaries, in terms of business, in printing the money (Media Bias US 5). Sometimes such bias pushed the political leaders of the time to limit the freedom of press, as did Abraham Lincoln when he ordered many newspapers, in favor of the South during the American Civil War era, to shutdown operation (Media Bias US 5). There are countless times in history where the media has been bias towards one particular point of view.

Many people in America today are not even aware the media is manipulating their

way of thinking, although statistics state Americans realize the media is biased (Media

Bias Basics 21-23). Some media bias has proven to be good, such as the mixing of racial

characters in movies. The downside to this, however, was parts of the South would not

show the racially mixed programs on television, as they believed in being separate and

wanted to keep their agenda pushed through the media (Media Bias US 6).

Most media

bias is wrong and puts misguided thoughts and ideas into the minds of unknowing

Americans. A good instance of this type of biased occurred when CBS aired falsified

documents degrading both the character and the military service of George W. Bush

(Media Bias US 3). Dan Rather eventually had to step down as anchor of CBS news for

the story, as much of the public agreed that the news story and reporter swayed towards

the liberal side.

A poll taken in 2001 shows those in the media are four times as likely to identify

with being “ liberal” as compared to “ conservative” (Media Bias Basics 11).

This same

report also showed members of the media were seven times more likely to identify with

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being a Democrat as opposed to being a Republican (Media Bias Basics 11, 12). This is

a staggering statistics when a 2001 Gallop Poll found only 18 percent of the American

people identify with being liberal, as opposed to 41 percent identify with being

conservative (Media Bias Basics 15). While most may agree the media is bias to some

extent, the media, for the most part, slants to the left when dealing with issues. While

some may believe this is good, there are also consequences and repercussions to

believing everything shown on television, radio, and in print.

There are many different types of bias in the media. From racial to corporate, to

bias appealing to the senses – such issues persuade our views on issues and we are

bombard daily by them (Media Bias 1). A good example of media entertaining these

different types of media bias are there have been many missing people reported by the

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media, predominantly white women; this has led some to speculate the news media

shows more favor towards white girls who are attractive, as opposed to men and nonOsborne

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white women by the media (Missing 1-3). While there are many other examples to media

bias in these particular avenues, the topic the media spends the most time on is

government and the political system.

Very few, if any, media outlets existing today are striving to give the American

people a balanced report on the news. A report done by the Project for Excellence in

Journalism has published a report of the news media networks, of those reported only

Fox News Channel reported positive (38%) about the same as they did negative or neutral

(39%) on the war in Iraq (Annual Report 8). Much of the left accuses Fox News of

containing a conservative point of view with many liberals not agreeing with the

programming on Fox News – no matter if it is true or not (Media Bias News Networks 1).

Other media outlets fair poorly with conservatives too, with conservatives rating CNN

and CBS amongst the worst in reporting the news (Media Bias News Networks 1). It is

therefore not surprising the media outlet one political party despises, the other enjoys; as

such, the majority of conservatives think highly of Fox News, with liberals thinking

highly of CNN and PBS (Media Bias News Networks 2). Moreover, it is not surprising

conservatives and liberals said the news anchors they found most entertaining were on

the news networks they favored most (Media Bias News Networks 2).

There are many different areas and topics for the media to cover; how the media

covers those topics is solely up to them. Their mistakes these media outlets make in

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journalism, by using the power of persuasion, make it evident in the way people from

various groups vote and feel about certain topics. While some may argue certain media

outlets are better than others are, the argument of biased media will always be an issue.

Since the founding of America there has always been media bias - good and bad - it has

always helped shape the way Americans look at politics and the way the people vote.