

Media effects

Media



Information is the root of actions and becomes more important in this information age. The importance of information has even doubled, tripled, or even infinite as people in this age understand the necessities to learn about incidences in other part of the world and become more knowledgeable to use appropriate information for their advantages.

As the sense of knowing give reasons and confidence to act towards issues, information, if delivered truthfully, can be the instruments of great deeds. In contrast if the information is manipulated it will lead people to disastrous wrongful acts. Televisions, newspapers, magazines, radios and the internet are public sources of information in which we can find out what happened in the world. The media, therefore, have been trustworthy sources of information, which is now seriously questioned since most of them do not truly inform readers about the truth, but tend to create public opinion that the sources want, driven by their political concerns.

This is true since nowadays, politic, in its nature is capable to influence and control everyone's life and lifestyles, and has always in the spotlight. As society gets wiser, attention on politics has never been this scrutiny. With very powerful people or party played their hands in it, politics has been one of the strongest reasons why the role of media as a trustworthy messenger is questioned. In line with the idea, Lynden Johnson says that " reporters are puppet, they simply respond to the pull of the most powerful strings."

How Powerful Is Media?

Mc Combs and Shaw in their book the Emergence of American Political Issue, state that today's media have the powerful function to organize how the

world looks for us. They might not successfully control our minds, but they are undeniably capable to “direct” our everyday thoughts.

In similar tone, Shanto Iyengar and Donald Kinder in his book *News That Matters*, says that by paying attention to one issue and neglecting others, television is able to decide what American believed to be the most important issue to think about.

For instance, Israel - Palestinian lifetime conflict has been America's most important concerns in 2003, and judging from the nature of the issue (e. g. atrocities, suicidebombing, etc), it is newsworthy, but as the media turn their focus to the Iraq war, Schwarzenegger's governor election and the California Wildfires, the Israel-Palestinian issue is somehow diminished, although the debacle is not even approaching a win-win solution (“Anti Propaganda Watch”).

Framing, Priming and Agenda Setting

Framing is the process of making a “meaning” out of incidents or stories. In the effort of building a line of comprehension between journalists and the readers, the frames are often drawn from. It is said to often chosen unintentionally. As an example, when a journalist is making a story about the high rising rate of poverty in a state, he or she will have to do what is called thematic framing, which means that eventually, a connection will have to be made between the increasing rate of poverty and the state government's policies. While in periodic framing, the routine nature of the story derive journalists to put the blame on individual actors, preventing audience from making a generalization of the stories (Scott London).

Priming is done when a journalist gives an extra weight onto an issue or an opinion, allowing people's mind to have a change in their opinion. This is usually done by giving extra amount of coverage, making an issue salient while others not.

Agenda Setting is even more conspicuous than the two terms we have mentioned before. It is a process of giving a certain theme over incidents that happens in a coverage area. By using materials that are sensitive to society, journalist can properly "put in ideas on people's head". For example, research shows that a single exposure on a violent crime-related news can heightened people's fear of being victimized, which then gave the idea that violent crime is a very important issue (Media Effects).

One of the most attractive issue on priming and agenda setting is the LA Times anti-Israel Propaganda. In the join the boycott website, there are enough reasons to make visitors of the site hate the LA Times. According to the website, the boycott is due the intolerable bias on news coverage relating Israel-Palestinian 'endless' debacle. Furthermore, it shows that LA times has done all of the three forbidden acts of journalism we have addressed before.

In article titled Female Bomber kills 4 at Gaza Border, LA Times showed the humanities of the female self-bomber by discussing about her children and how much she loved them. The picture showed an Israel soldier holding a gun in front of a crowd of Palestinian worker.

In addition, an article titled Two State Solution Sells Palestinians Short at LA Times, the website claims that LA Times has priming the atrocities of Israel

and paying little attention to Israel victims of Palestinian's atrocities. Those are only a few examples of the LA Times bias, displayed by the website (" LA Times anti-Propaganda Watch").

Conclusion

The role of media in our society is unbelievably important. Truthful coverage is always a worthy achievement. Politics does not come in the form of campaigns, elections, and the affairs of big government, but also the press as mind setters of the society.

Paul Light stated that what media does is supplying what is considered to be important, even if they provide good substance and analysis; they have no control upon viewer's choices of what they want to see.

However, the audiences still have absolute control to choose what they want or do not want to value what journalists distinguish as important. Nevertheless, the psychological implications of framing, priming and agenda setting are less significant. The existence of a picture and the atmosphere of the language can be a gentle but powerful way to alter opinions to the preferred direction.

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