How Do Media Influence Your Beliefs?

Media plays a very significant role in human society over hundreds of years, and there are many kinds of media, such as television, broadcast, newspaper, magazine, Internet and cellphone. All the medias are used to spread or receive information. It can influence minds, thoughts and beliefs of people by giving them different information. People are likely to believe the things were shown up on the TV news or newspaper, because these news seem real and authoritative all the time, seldom people would doubt the information from these two medias. Therefore, there is always someone want to use the power of media to maintain one’s benefit.

In most countries, the social medias are controlled by the government or by the most powerful corporations. In China, all the social medias are controlled by the government; there is a administration here called SARFT(The State Administration of Radio Film and Television), which is in charge of managing the social media, but their work is just cutting any sensitive part of the movies and ban the foreign TV shows. so, mostly people can not watch a whole original movie in cinema of China, and a whole TV show also cannot be seen on a big Chinese video website like Youku, and Sohu. If the media of entertainment is strict like that, not to mention the serious media about news. To maintain the reputation and rule of the government, any bad news that might be a threat will be filtered out before it comes on TV, Internet, newspaper or any media. There was an magnitude 8 earthquake happened in Whenchuan, Sichuan province, 2008; It cause 87,150 people killed and missing as the BBC news reported. After the earthquake, the government was questioned about the quality of the school building, because all the school buildings were collapsed easily in that earthquake,and thousands of children died in it. The government tried to made people believe that the earthquake was just too strong, the building just couldn’t hold it, but that is not true, Japanese school building can stand still after a magnitude 9 earthquake. Besides the building problem, the donations were also used without detail information, and the national social media have never mentioned about it. Many Chinese who don’t surf the foreign websites a lot still don’t know anything about it. Things like this are just too many in China, there are still many beliefs of people are mislead by the media which is being controlled. Even in the USA, which country is known as its liberty, they have this kind of problem either. In September, 2011, there was a campaign called “Occupy the Wall Street” in New York city, its aim was to protest the monopoly of Wall street, and the high rate of unemployment in America. However, according to Beijing Youth Newspaper said on October 14, 2011, on the first week of the campaign, several major media companies didn’t report any information about it. Although the campaign happened in all over the America a few weeks later, the media reported very little about it, but reported massive information about the demonstrations in middle-east and north Africa. It seems that the American media were trying to change focus of people from the Wall street campaign to the problems of overseas. But, what was their purpose? According to Ashley Lutz’s essay on a website called Business Insider said, 90% of the media in America is controlled by 6 corporations. Coincidentally, most of these 6 corporations are from Wall Street, and the campaign influenced their business. That’s why the “Occupy the Wall Street” campaign was reported so little on the major media.

Since the Internet and cellphone have been popularized, they become the biggest social media in today, and they can influence people’s thought or belief easier than ever. In 2014, the number of active cellphones would reach 7.3 billion. What a shocking number! This information is from an announcement made by the International Telecommunications Union. People love posting things to Internet nowadays, and they also love to receive information from it, but it is hard to find if the information is true or false, because everyone can spread their thought to the public through their cellphone any time they want. Imagine that, if one just make up a fake news by some pictures and some formal words, and then post it in Facebook, then millions of people repost it, that’s really hard to not believe in that news. In fact, it did happen in our life more than a million times. Before the New Year’s Day last year, there was a “news” being reposted million times on Wechat and Weibo, it was about the terrorists ISIS will operate a assault in Shenzhen, what makes the “news” so true is the pictures from the post, in the pictures, there were hundreds of police car and armored car are going on patrol on the street, and thousands of armed policemen with the cars. This fake news made people live in fear on that days, and many New Year’s Day parties and concert were canceled. No one knows why that person made this fake news up, maybe he or she just want to make a prank or make a riot.

Objectively thinking, social media is not 100% right, we shouldn’t believe things from one single resource but to check the other resources to make sure it is true, the world is always more complicated than people think.