# Resolved: In a democracy, a free press ought to prioritize objectivity over advocacy.

# AFF

#### I affirm the resolution: In a democracy, a free press ought to prioritize objectivity over advocacy.

**My value is morality for two reasons**

1. The resolution’s use of the word “ought” implies a moral question.
2. Morality allows us to perceive what is inherently good or bad. It’s the value upon which we can conceptualize all other values, thus it must be prioritized.

**My criterion is maximizing expected wellbeing**

**Util considers the entire community affected including individuals harmed-It’s not just aggregate good**

**Deni Elliott, 2007[Ethicist and Ethics Scholar], "Getting Mill Right," [**Department of Journalism and Media Studies University of South Florida St. Petersburg]**Journal of Mass Media Ethics, 22(2&3), 100–112,** [**https://pages.uoregon.edu/tbivins/stratcomweb/readings/Getting\_Mill\_Right\_(Elliott)%20copy.pdf**](https://pages.uoregon.edu/tbivins/stratcomweb/readings/Getting_Mill_Right_(Elliott)%20copy.pdf) **MS**

Many people think that the bumper sticker for John Stuart Mill’s utilitarianism reads, ‘‘Do the greatest good for the greatest number.’’ However, they would be wrong. Utilitarianism, at least as espoused by this 19th century British philosopher and his acknowledged, but rarely recognized collaborator, Harriet Taylor-Mill, does not teach us to add up the people potentially helped by an action and subtract from that number the people potentially harmed, with the presumably ‘‘ethical’’ choice of having the majority win. Rather, **Mill’s utilitarianism requires the far more difficult analysis of determining which action is most likely to produce the aggregate good**—**the overall good for the community as a whole, or for all of the people who can be identified as being affected by a particular action**. In addition, through an application of the principles of justice, required prior to the use of any utilitarian calculus, Mill employs special protection for individuals who might otherwise be sacrificed for the good of the whole. In contrast to the simplistic reasoning sometimes offered—it is okay if an individual is hurt by the publication of a story or picture, as the journalist can argue that many more citizens might benefit from having the knowledge or seeing the picture—**Mill requires calculating what is truly good for the whole community**. If causing harm is justified at all, it is justified on the basis that causing harm in those particular types of cases is good for the community, **including the individual harmed**. Sometimes it is better for individuals to be harmed, sometimes not. **But the ability to distinguish between those instances involves more than mere computation.** It requires the agent doing the analysis—even if that agent is the person potentially harmed—to make the determination with dispassionate objectivity. The decision maker must be truly impartial with regard to his or her own interests and the interests of all others involved.

### Contention 1- Misinformation

**Mistrust in Mainstream Media is at an all-time high, citizens want objectivity**

**Sands 20** [Sands, John. "Americans Are Losing Faith In An Objective Media. A New Gallup/Knight Study Explores Why.". Knight Foundation, 2022, https://knightfoundation.org/articles/americans-are-losing-faith-in-an-objective-media-a-new-gallup-knight-study-explores-why/. Accessed 20 Mar 2022.] **Americans see increasing bias in the news media**: One of the primary reasons Americans don’t think the media works for them is because of the bias they perceive in coverage. Many feel the media’s traditional roles, such as holding leaders accountable**,** is compromised by bias, with nearly 7 in 10 Americans (68%) who say they see too much bias in the reporting of news that is supposed to be objective as “a major problem,” up from 65% in the 2017 Knight/Gallup study. They see it in their own news sources (57%), and more than 6 in 10 are concerned about bias in the news other people are getting, the survey finds. Some 7 in 10 Americans worry that owners of media companies are influencing coverage. 2) Americans think the media is pushing an agenda. Eight in 10 Americans say that when they suspect an inaccuracy in a story, they worry it was intentional —because the reporter was misrepresenting the facts (52%) or making them up (28%). Only 18% say they think the inaccuracies were innocent mistakes. And when it comes to news sources they distrust, nearly three-quarters of Americans (or 74%) say those outlets are trying to persuade people to adopt a certain opinion. 3) Distrust in the media cuts along partisan lines: Views on the media vary widely by party, though overall, Americans view the media more negatively than positively. The breakdown: Nearly 7 in 10 Republicans (67%) have a very or somewhat unfavorable opinion of the news media, versus 1 in 5 Democrats (20%) and about half of independents (48%). 4) A majority of Americans say the media are under political attack – but are divided by party on whether it’s warranted: While people from all political persuasions agree that the media is being politically attacked, 66% of Democrats say those attacks are not justified, while 58% of Republicans say they are. 5) Opinions on the media also vary widely by age. Young Americans, for example, tend to have more negative views on the media. One in 5 American adults under 30 (20%) say they have a “very” or “somewhat” favorable opinion of the news media, versus almost half of those aged 65 and older (43%). 6) Americans blame the media for political divisions, but they also see the potential for the media to heal these divides. Forty-seven percent of Americans say the media bears “a great deal” of blame for political division in this country, and 36% say they bear “a moderate amount.” At the same time, 8 in 10 Americans believe the media can bring people together and heal the nation’s political divides

**Mistrust in Media leads to an increase in consumption of Alternative news**

**Kim Andersen, 11-10-2021, "Alternative News Orientation and Trust in Mainstream Media: A Longitudinal Audience Perspective," Taylor & Francis, https://www.tandfonline.com/doi/full/10.1080/21670811.2021.1986412**

The emergence of online alternative news sites has enabled people to easily access viewpoints corresponding to their social and political identities and challenging mainstream media coverage. Taking an audience perspective and relying on a large four-wave panel survey from Sweden, this study examines orientation towards alternative news, paying specific attention to the potential reinforcing relationship with trust in mainstream media. Results show that increasing orientation towards alternative news is related to decreasing trust in mainstream media, and vice versa. In addition, the study highlights how alternative news orientation supplements rather than replaces consumption of traditional news. These findings provide valuable insights on the alternative news users and the dynamics of their media consumption, informing the debate on the role played by alternative news media in society. In recent years, a growing number of alternative news sites have emerged online, positioning themselves as correctives to mainstream media (Holt, Figenschou, and Frischlich [2019](https://www.tandfonline.com/doi/full/10.1080/21670811.2021.1986412); Figenschou and Ihlebaek [2019](https://www.tandfonline.com/doi/full/10.1080/21670811.2021.1986412)). Based on strong ideological profiles representing anti-system and anti-elite attitudes, some alternative news media provide content that stands in opposition to the content found in mainstream news media (Holt [2018](https://www.tandfonline.com/doi/full/10.1080/21670811.2021.1986412)), often with an aim of social or political reform (Downing [2001](https://www.tandfonline.com/doi/full/10.1080/21670811.2021.1986412)). Prominent examples include Breitbart in the United States and The Canary in the United Kingdom, but many more alternative news outlets exist around the world. The societal and democratic implications of this development are profound. On the one hand, alternative news sites present a potential challenge to society, as information found here may be biased or even false. As a consequence, alternative news media may exacerbate political polarization, but also foster misinformation and conspiracy theories (Mourão and Robertson [2019](https://www.tandfonline.com/doi/full/10.1080/21670811.2021.1986412)). On the other hand, alternative news media also create a more diverse media environment, where dominant narratives can be critically challenged and thoroughly deliberated. As such, these information sources enable people to nurse special interests and connect with like-minded people—something highlighted as important by, for example, the pluralism theory of democracy (Baker [2002](https://www.tandfonline.com/doi/full/10.1080/21670811.2021.1986412)). To better understand the role played by alternative news media in society, however, we lack knowledge about the underlying mechanisms influencing the usage of these information sources. With notable exceptions (Leung and Lee [2014](https://www.tandfonline.com/doi/full/10.1080/21670811.2021.1986412); Thorbjørnsrud and Figenschou [2020](https://www.tandfonline.com/doi/full/10.1080/21670811.2021.1986412)), the users of alternative news media have not received much attention in the literature. This is a seemingly paradox, as these media users are likely to be some of the most active and engaged audiences (Downing 2003). Therefore, this study takes an audience perspective and examines orientation towards alternative news media, paying specific attention to the potential reinforcing relationship with distrust in mainstream news media. As media distrust is likely to be both a key reason for using alternative news but also a potential outcome of such consumption, we assume that the relationship indeed is reinforcing over time. Media trust has recently declined in many countries (Hanitzsch, van Dalen, and Steindl [2018](https://www.tandfonline.com/doi/full/10.1080/21670811.2021.1986412)). With the emergence of many new alternative news sites online, people with low trust in mainstream media have more opportunities than previously for finding information that gives a different picture of reality and fits their worldview and social identity better than the one found in mainstream media. In addition, a central part of alternative news media is their criticism of mainstream media for deficient news coverage (Cushion 2021; Cushion, McDowell-Naylor, and Thomas 2021; Figenschou and Ihlebaek [2019](https://www.tandfonline.com/doi/full/10.1080/21670811.2021.1986412); Holt, Figenschou, and Frischlich [2019](https://www.tandfonline.com/doi/full/10.1080/21670811.2021.1986412); Ladd [2012](https://www.tandfonline.com/doi/full/10.1080/21670811.2021.1986412)), which may further fuel mistrust in mainstream media among alternative news users. Previous studies have confirmed the relationship between distrust in mainstream media and the use of alternative news (Fletcher and Park [2017](https://www.tandfonline.com/doi/full/10.1080/21670811.2021.1986412); Tsfati [2010](https://www.tandfonline.com/doi/full/10.1080/21670811.2021.1986412); Tsfati and Cappella [2003](https://www.tandfonline.com/doi/full/10.1080/21670811.2021.1986412); Tsfati and Peri [2006](https://www.tandfonline.com/doi/full/10.1080/21670811.2021.1986412)). These studies have been limited by cross-sectional data, however, making it difficult to draw firm causal conclusions and examine the potential of an over-time reinforcement. To examine the underlying reasons for alternative news consumption, this study, therefore, examines the relationship between people’s orientation towards alternative news and their trust in mainstream media over time, enabling us to examine their dynamic development longitudinally. In addition, the study examines how consumption of traditional news are linked to alternative news orientation. Empirically, the study is based on a four-wave panel survey with a large sample of the Swedish population conducted in 2018–2020 enabling longitudinal analysis. With an increasing number of online alternative news sites and polarizing attitudes on media trust, Sweden provides a good case for testing the dynamics at stake. Over the past decades, the media environment has transformed from a low-choice to a high-choice media environment, as the amount of available information has accelerated (Van Aelst et al. [2017](https://www.tandfonline.com/doi/full/10.1080/21670811.2021.1986412)). Lately, this development has been driven in particular by digital inventions like personal computers, the Internet, smartphones, and social media. As media choice has expanded, people’s preferences have come to play an increasingly important role in their media consumption (Napoli [2011](https://www.tandfonline.com/doi/full/10.1080/21670811.2021.1986412); Prior [2007](https://www.tandfonline.com/doi/full/10.1080/21670811.2021.1986412)). As a consequence, media use has become more individualized and fragmented (Van Aelst et al. [2017](https://www.tandfonline.com/doi/full/10.1080/21670811.2021.1986412)). One example illustrating this development is that people’s political interest has become an increasingly important driver for their news consumption (Strömbäck, Djerf-Pierre, and Shehata [2013](https://www.tandfonline.com/doi/full/10.1080/21670811.2021.1986412)). While people with a high interest in politics can seek out news constantly, people with a low interest likewise have ample opportunities for finding other content and avoiding news (Skovsgaard and Andersen [2020](https://www.tandfonline.com/doi/full/10.1080/21670811.2021.1986412)). For those still consuming news, selective exposure to politically like-minded content has likewise become easier (Iyengar and Hahn [2009](https://www.tandfonline.com/doi/full/10.1080/21670811.2021.1986412); Stroud [2008](https://www.tandfonline.com/doi/full/10.1080/21670811.2021.1986412)). As part of this high-choice media environment, an increasing number of alternative news sites have emerged online. Such alternative news sites usually have strong ideological profiles, representing anti-system and anti-elite attitudes (Holt [2018](https://www.tandfonline.com/doi/full/10.1080/21670811.2021.1986412)), and provide coverage that stands in opposition to that of mainstream media, providing a platform for viewpoints usually ignored (Atton [2007](https://www.tandfonline.com/doi/full/10.1080/21670811.2021.1986412); Haas [2004](https://www.tandfonline.com/doi/full/10.1080/21670811.2021.1986412)). Especially right-wing alternative news media have been very prominent. Alternative news media thereby illustrate how the boundaries of journalism are fading, challenging journalists’ monopoly as a trustworthy source of information (Lewis [2012](https://www.tandfonline.com/doi/full/10.1080/21670811.2021.1986412)). As part of their profile, alternative media also attack mainstream media for being untrustworthy (Cushion [2021](https://www.tandfonline.com/doi/full/10.1080/21670811.2021.1986412); Cushion, McDowell-Naylor, and Thomas [2021](https://www.tandfonline.com/doi/full/10.1080/21670811.2021.1986412); Figenschou and Ihlebaek [2019](https://www.tandfonline.com/doi/full/10.1080/21670811.2021.1986412); Holt, Figenschou, and Frischlich [2019](https://www.tandfonline.com/doi/full/10.1080/21670811.2021.1986412); Ladd [2012](https://www.tandfonline.com/doi/full/10.1080/21670811.2021.1986412)), criticizing them for being biased, being distanced from the people, excluding important voices, and instead acting as an uncritical platform for those in power (Figenschou and Ihlebaek [2019](https://www.tandfonline.com/doi/full/10.1080/21670811.2021.1986412)). From a historical perspective, alternative news media have been closely linked to social movements. Thus, alternative news media often thrive well in times of social and political turmoil (Downing [2001](https://www.tandfonline.com/doi/full/10.1080/21670811.2021.1986412)). Alternative media can therefore, in a broad sense, be defined as “media devoted to providing representations of issues and events which oppose those offered in mainstream media and to advocate social and political reform” (Haas [2004](https://www.tandfonline.com/doi/full/10.1080/21670811.2021.1986412), 115). As such, alternative news media is nothing new, and they have existed for a long time (Downing [2001](https://www.tandfonline.com/doi/full/10.1080/21670811.2021.1986412)). But with the technological developments described above they have expanded in numbers, as it has become easier for producers to establish and run alternative news media, also for non-journalists, and easier for the audience to access them. This development is further supported by social media, where alternative news media can easily distribute their content. Previous studies have also highlighted that alternative news media take up a large proportion of shared news on social media (Sandberg and Ihlebaek [2019](https://www.tandfonline.com/doi/full/10.1080/21670811.2021.1986412); Thorbjørnsrud and Figenschou [2020](https://www.tandfonline.com/doi/full/10.1080/21670811.2021.1986412)). With algorithms catering for people’s preferences (Thorson et al. [2021](https://www.tandfonline.com/doi/full/10.1080/21670811.2021.1986412)), social media platforms further stress the importance of understanding the underlying drivers of people’s alternative news consumption.

**Alternative news replicates and disseminates misinformation**

**Michael Hameleers, Anna Brosius, Claes H De Vreeseuniversity Of Amsterdam, Amsterdam, The Netherlandscorresponding Author, 2-11-2022, "Whom to trust? Media exposure patterns of citizens with perceptions of misinformation and disinformation related to the news media," SAGE Journals, https://journals.sagepub.com/doi/full/10.1177/02673231211072667**

If citizens do not trust the mainstream media, they have plenty of alternative media options at their disposal. Alternative media, in contrast to mainstream media as we defined them, are typically published online, but not by a bigger media company. Most importantly, alternative media sources offer content, opinions, and interpretations of events that are not as present in mainstream media (Haas, 2004; Harcup, 2005). Of course, not all media can be clearly categorized into either group and routines of mainstream and alternative journalists can overlap considerably (Harcup, 2005). Previous research shows that citizens who are more skeptical of the news media’s credibility tend to seek alternative media sources more (Haas, 2004; Harcup, 2005), possibly in search of more reliable information. In reversed causal order, exposure to alternative, non-legacy outlets may increase perceptions of misinformation and disinformation as such outlets often delegitimize mainstream media (Egelhofer and Lecheler, 2019). Indeed, content analyses show that non-journalistic news coverage, such as Tweets, blogs, or alternative news sources, often contain attacks on the legacy media (e.g. Craft et al., 2016; Figenschou and Ihlebæk, 2019). We therefore focus on the relationship between consuming news from non-journalistic online outlets that offer an alternative to mainstream coverage and perceptions of misinformation and disinformation. We focus on political news as this category is associated most with the alternative or anti-establishment perspectives that are emphasized in alternative news outlets, which oftentimes express hyper-partisan or ideologically extreme viewpoints (see e.g. Heft et al., 2019). Causal order notwithstanding, we hypothesize that citizens with higher levels of perceived misinformation and disinformation are more likely to expose themselves to alternative online news sources (H3). Perceived misinformation and disinformation may not influence media choices in identical ways. We expect that perceptions of disinformation correspond to a stronger tendency to approach alternative media outlets than perceptions of misinformation, as disinformation implies deliberately misleading news consumers. We therefore hypothesize that the tendency to (a) avoid mainstream media and (b) approach alternative media is stronger for those with stronger perceptions of disinformation than misinformation (H4).

**Misinformation is an existential impact.**

**Lin, 19**—senior research scholar for cyber policy and security at the Center for International Security and Cooperation and Hank J. Holland Fellow in Cyber Policy and Security at the Hoover Institution, both at Stanford University (Herbert, “The existential threat from cyber-enabled information warfare,” Bulletin of the Atomic Scientists, 75:4, 187-196, dml)

Corruption of the information ecosystem is not just a multiplier of two long-acknowledged existential threats to the future of humanity – climate change and nuclear weapons. Cyberenabled information warfare has also become an existential threat in its own right, its increased use posing the possibility of a global information dystopia, in which the pillars of modern democratic self-government – logic, truth, and reality – are shattered, and anti-Enlightenment values undermine civilization as we know it around the world. The misuse of social media in the information ecosystem has also made rational responses to the threat of climate change more difficult for national governments to reach, as companies and groups with financial and ideological interest in creating the appearance of doubt sow misinformation about consensus scientific view. That is, cyber-enabled information warfare is a threat multiplier in the climate change arena, just as it is in the nuclear policy area. Founded in 1945, the Bulletin first focused on the existential threat from nuclear war. The atomic scientists of the Manhattan Project did not believe that the miniature suns let loose on Hiroshima and Nagasaki in themselves posed an existential threat to human existence. (In the project’s early days, some of its physicists raised the possibility that the detonation of an atomic bomb might indeed incinerate the earth’s atmosphere. This concern was taken seriously only in the sense that they performed a variety of calculations that indicated such an outcome was impossible for all practical purposes. See Horgan 2015 for an authoritative account in an interview with Hans Bethe.) However, most of the Manhattan Project’s scientists recognized that atomic bombings of Hiroshima and Nagasaki were omens of a future in which nuclear weapons, used on a large scale, could indeed threaten human existence, and even used on a smaller scale could threaten modern human civilization. After sporadically reporting on climate change for decades, in 2007 the Bulletin formally expanded its concept of existential threat to include climate change and nuclear war. (Ironically, the possibility of significant global cooling as the result of nuclear war was first raised in the scientific literature in the early 1980’s. See, for example, NRC (1985)) Where large-scale nuclear war threatens to snuff out hundreds of millions of lives in a matter of hours, climate change threatens to alter the planetary ecosystem. Here the effects are more subtle and less easily noticed because they are cumulative over decades. There is no single cataclysmic event in the offing, and yet myriad smaller regional disasters will result in more intense and more frequent forest fires, heat waves, and storms; vastly increased coastal flooding and rising sea levels; loss of arable land; severe shortages of food and water; and mass migrations and relocations. Nuclear war and climate change threaten the physical infrastructure of human civilization as well as the underlying geochemical processes and the ecology of the planet. Because most people depend on both physical infrastructure and our global ecology for food, energy, and other necessities of existence, nuclear war and climate change put the lives of the great mass of humanity at risk. Because nuclear war and climate change threaten massive changes in cultural identity and the loss of historical resources, our civilization and our legacy are at stake, too. In those ways, both nuclear war and climate change pose existential threats to humanity. But these are not the only such threats to civilization as we know it. The infrastructure for human civilization is undeniably tangible (that is, physical, chemical, and biological), but it is increasingly virtual as well, and the virtual aspects of that infrastructure – the information ecosystem (or, equivalently, environment) – in many ways has become central and often critical to the way people now live all over the world. As Balkin (2012) describes, “it is not an exaggeration to say that modern states are informational states: states that recognize and solve problems of governance by collecting, analyzing, and distributing information.” Consider that nations require good information to allocate benefits and social services to the populace; to administer mechanisms for public safety (e.g. law enforcement, court systems, fire-fighting); to provide for national security; to gather revenue to support national expenditures; and to engage with other nations in ways that support national interests. 3 Cyber-enabled information warfare is distinct from cyber warfare; the former targets human minds, whereas the latter targets computer and communications systems 188 H. LIN . Businesses and nonprofit entities in turn are also highly dependent on information. They use it to develop products and services for customers and clients; to understand markets and audiences for their products and services; to inform customers and clients about their products and services; to comply with laws and regulations applicable to their products and services; and to maintain their accounting and finances. Construction and manufacturing projects entail the coordination of dozens, hundreds, or thousands of parties – all of whom must have a justifiable confidence in the information they are sharing and relying upon. Contextualized, reliable, trustworthy information is as important to the thinking of human beings as clean air is to human breathing. Human beings depend on good information for making informed decisions about political candidates standing in elections; to know as consumers which specific products and services will best serve their needs; for managing their finances; in making health-related decisions about themselves and their loved ones; in learning to perform their jobs more effectively or efficiently; and in truly countless other ways. Nations also engage extensively in information production. They provide education for young people; support scientific research that undergirds economic growth and prosperity; and collect, curate, and disseminate largescale statistical data that influence decisions at every level of society. Imagine what life would be like if citizens could not count on the validity and trustworthiness of the information underlying any of these activities. In some cases, the result would be no more than minor annoyance. In others, however, the result could be life-threatening. Nations could be crippled, as they could and likely would make bad or at least sub-optimal decisions about war and peace, the economy, law enforcement, housing, food production, energy, and the many other important matters for which governments have some responsibility

**Contention 2- Solvency**

**Definitionally objective news rejects fake news**

**Kovach and Rosenstiel., 1** (Bill Kovach and Tom Rosenstiel., Bill Kovach, a 1989 Nieman Fellow, was curator of the Nieman Foundation from 1989 to 2000. He is the co-author of “The Elements of Journalism.”, Tom Rosenstiel is executive director of the American Press Institute and co-author of “The Elements of Journalism.”, 6-15-2001, accessed on 2-19-2022, Nieman Reports, "The Essence of Journalism Is a Discipline of Verification | Nieman Reports", https://niemanreports.org/articles/the-essence-of-journalism-is-a-discipline-of-verification/)

“In the end, the discipline of verification is what separates journalism from entertainment, propaganda, fiction, or art…. Journalism alone is focused first on getting what happened down right…. **Perhaps because the discipline of verification is so personal and so haphazardly communicated, it is also part of one of the great confusions of journalism— the concept of objectivity. The original meaning of this idea is now thoroughly misunderstood, and by and large lost. When the concept originally evolved, it was not meant to imply that journalists were free of bias.** Quite the contrary…. **Objectivity called for journalists to develop** a consistent method of testing information**—a transparent approach to evidence—precisely so** that personal and cultural **biases would not undermine the accuracy of their work**…. In the original concept, in other words, the method is objective, not the journalist. The key was in the discipline of the craft, not the aim. The point has some important implications**.** One is **that the impartial voice employed by** manynews **organizations, that familiar, supposedly neutral style of newswriting, is not a fundamental principle of journalism.** Rather, it is an often helpful device news organizations use to highlight that they are trying to produce something obtained by objective methods. **The second implication is that this neutral voice, without** a discipline of **verification, creates a veneer covering something hollow. Journalists who select sources to express what is really their own point of view, and then use the neutral voice to make it seem objective, are engaged in a form of deception. This damages the credibility of the whole profession by making it seem unprincipled, dishonest, and biased.** This is an important caution in an age when the standards of the press are so in doubt…. A more conscious discipline of verification is the best antidote to the old journalism of verification being overrun by a new journalism of assertion, and it would provide citizens with a basis for relying on journalistic accounts. **1.Never add anything that was not there. 2.Never deceive the audience. 3.Be transparent about your methods and motives. 4.Rely on your own original reporting.** 5.Exercise humility. …we began to see a core set of concepts that form the foundation of the discipline of verification…. The willingness of the journalist to be transparent about what he or she has done is at the heart of establishing that the journalist is concerned with the truth…. Too much journalism fails to say anything about methods, motives, and sources.”

### Transparency

**Objectivity does not entail representing both sides of the issue, it transparently communicates facts.**

**Fahy 17**, Declan. [Dublin City University, School of Communications] “Objectivity, False Balance, and Advocacy in News Coverage of Climate Change.” **Oxford Research Encyclopedia of Climate Science**, 29 Mar. 2017, https://oxfordre.com/climatescience/climatescience/oso/viewentry/10.1093$002facrefore$002f9780190228620.001.0001$002facrefore-9780190228620-e-345.

Objectivity and advocacy have been contentious topics within environmental journalism since the specialism was formed in the 1960s. Objectivity is a broad term, but has been commonly interpreted to mean the reporting of news in an impartial and unbiased way by finding and verifying facts, reporting facts accurately, separating facts from values, and giving two sides of an issue equal attention to make news reports balanced. Advocacy journalism, by contrast, presents news from a distinct point of view, a perspective that often aligns with a specific political ideology. It does not separate facts from values and is less concerned with presenting reports that are conventionally balanced**. Environmental reporters have found it difficult to categorize their work as either objective or advocacy journalism, because studies show that many of them are sympathetic to environmental values** even as they strive to be rigorously professional in their reporting. Journalists have struggled historically to apply the notion of balance to the reporting of climate change science, because even though the overwhelming majority of the world’s experts agree that human-driven climate change is real and will have major future impacts, a minority of scientists dispute this consensus. Reporters aimed to be fair by giving both viewpoints equal attention, a practice scholars have labeled false balance. The reporting of climate change has changed over time, especially as the topic moved from the scientific domain to encompass also the political, social, legal, and economic realms. **Objectivity and advocacy remain important guiding concepts for environmental journalism today, but they have been reconfigured** in the digital era that has transformed climate change news. **Objectivity in climate reporting can be viewed as going beyond the need to present both sides of an issue to the application in reports of a journalist’s trained judgment**, where reporters use their training and knowledge to interpret evidence on a climate-related topic. **Objectivity can also be viewed as a transparent method for finding, verifying, and communicating facts.** Objectivity can also be seen as the synthesis and curation of multiple points of view. In a pluralistic media ecosystem, there are now multiple forms of advocacy journalism that present climate coverage from various points of view—various forms of climate coverage with a worldview. **False balance had declined dramatically over time in mainstream reportorial sources**, but it remains a pitfall for reporters to avoid in coverage of two climate change topics: the presentation of the many potential future impacts or risks and the coverage of different policy responses in a climate-challenged society.

#### Link: The pursuit of objectivity stands still regardless of the consistency of information or subjective thought set aside from the material.

Arnold **Baise** **19**, "The objective–subjective dichotomy and its use in describing probability," Taylor & Francis, https://www.tandfonline.com/doi/full/10.1080/03080188.2019.1705559

In recent years there have been several uses of the term ‘objective’ to describe a form of Bayesian analysis. For example, the nature of the prior probability one should use has been emphasized by Berger ([2006](https://www.tandfonline.com/doi/full/10.1080/03080188.2019.1705559), 387), who writes that ‘the most familiar element of the objective Bayesian school is the use of objective prior distributions, designed to be minimally informative in some sense.’ Another example is that of Williamson ([2010](https://www.tandfonline.com/doi/full/10.1080/03080188.2019.1705559), 1), who gives a number of criteria that qualify his approach as a ‘version of objective Bayesianism,’ namely ‘the view that an agent’s degrees of belief should be probabilities, should respect constraints imposed by empirical evidence, but should otherwise equivocate between basic propositions.’ But without a definition of the word ‘objective’ being given, it is not clear why the approaches of these authors deserve that description. In the metaphysical dichotomy used in section 2 to characterize the dual nature of probability, ‘subjective’ refers to a state of knowledge, and the question then arises as to how one acquires this knowledge. This gives rise to another (epistemological) dichotomy: one acquires knowledge either objectively or subjectively. Subjective knowledge (or, more correctly, subjective belief) is generally described as being partial or biased or prejudiced, or based on arbitrary assumptions or personal feelings; objective knowledge is then inferred by contrast, as impartial or unbiased or not prejudiced, and so on. Whenever possible, however, one should define a concept by what it is rather than by what it is not, but one will be hard-pressed to find such a definition of objectivity. One writer on objectivity (Gaukroger [2012](https://www.tandfonline.com/doi/full/10.1080/03080188.2019.1705559), 3) declines to define it, since ‘many difficulties are generated in the search for a definition, because ‘objectivity’ can be understood in different ways.’ For a positive analysis of objectivity, consider the work of novelist-philosopher Ayn Rand, whose philosophy relies strongly on this concept ([1990](https://www.tandfonline.com/doi/full/10.1080/03080188.2019.1705559), 18): Objectivity is both a metaphysical and an epistemological concept. It pertains to the relationship of consciousness to existence. Metaphysically, it is the recognition of the fact that reality exists independent of any perceiver’s consciousness. Epistemologically, it is the recognition of the fact that a perceiver’s (man’s) consciousness must acquire knowledge of reality by certain means (reason) in accordance with certain rules (logic). In addition, she defined ‘reason’ as ‘the faculty that identifies and integrates the material provided by man’s senses’ (Peikoff [1991](https://www.tandfonline.com/doi/full/10.1080/03080188.2019.1705559), 152), and stressed that the exercise of reason is volitional and not automatic. So her description of epistemological objectivity can be rephrased as a formal definition (Baise [2017](https://www.tandfonline.com/doi/full/10.1080/03080188.2019.1705559), 231): Objectivity is a method of thought by means of which one acquires knowledge of reality by the volitional use of reason in accordance with the rules of logic. Having defined objectivity in this way, it is not unreasonable to violate the rule given above by defining ‘subjective’ as ‘not objective,’ that is, by what it is not, since objectivity involves a specific way of thinking, whereas it is subjectivity that ‘can be understood in different ways.’ In short, if one’s method of thought is not objective then it is subjective; the two methods can be thought of as dividing the metaphysically subjective class of probability theories into two mutually exclusive and exhaustive subclasses, namely epistemologically objective and epistemologically subjective. One can see now the problem with the interpretation of objectivity by writers such as Keynes, Jeffreys and Jaynes, in which a unique probability is supposedly obtainable from given prior information, although how one does it is not made clear. Objectivity, however, is properly understood as a method of thought, in which reason and logic are used to reach a conclusion. So two individuals, given the same information, can both be objective yet assign different prior probabilities for an event or a hypothesis by making rationally and logically justified different assumptions. Jaynes was a leading developer of methods for estimating prior probabilities, and he used, for example, maximum entropy calculations and also transformation groups, but he acknowledged ([1983](https://www.tandfonline.com/doi/full/10.1080/03080188.2019.1705559), 129) that these procedures ‘are not necessarily applicable to all problems, and so it remains an open question whether other approaches may be as good or better.’ But they surely qualify as objective probability assignments. As an example of the importance of the assignment of Bayesian prior probabilities, consider a widely-used area of artificial intelligence (AI), namely Bayesian networks. Probability was little used in AI prior to the 1980s, but that changed with the development of Bayesian networks, which are now the standard for handling reasoning with uncertainty. For example, one important development of this approach is the creation of expert systems, such as those used in aiding medical diagnosis. Briefly, a Bayesian network is represented graphically by a set of nodes joined by links. Nodes represent variables of interest, and the links generally represent causal relationships between the variables of any two nodes. A simple example of a two-node network is a root node consisting of a variable V representing a virus that is (or is not) present in a patient, and a non-root node consisting of a variable T that indicates whether a test for the virus is positive or negative. Bayes’s theorem is used to relate the two nodes by calculating, for example, the probability that the virus is present given that the test is positive. A Bayesian network can consist of hundreds of nodes, and whenever new information is obtained the whole network of probabilities can be updated using Bayes’s theorem. For an introductory discussion of such networks, see Neapolitan and Jiang ([2016](https://www.tandfonline.com/doi/full/10.1080/03080188.2019.1705559)). The important point here is that for every root node one needs to assign a prior probability in order to use Bayes’s theorem initially, so the process of choosing priors is important in network construction. It is often claimed that the problem with Bayesian calculations is that the choice of a prior is subjective. As shown above, however, prior probabilities can be objective provided one understands what is meant by that term. Since objectivity as a method of thought is volitional and not automatic, any probability analysis may not be consistently objective, but the means of achieving objectivity is clear, namely by rational and logical analysis rather than by subjective introspection.

#### Internal Link: Transparency builds media trust.

David B. **Grinberg**, 4-2-20**18,** "Media Relations 101: Why Transparency Always Triumphs," Medium, <https://dbgrinberg.medium.com/media-relations-101-why-transparency-triumphs-2e9f720d2bfd> SS

Being transparent builds public trust and safeguards the brand image… If you’re a veteran communicator like me, you already know that mastering media relations is akin to a circus trapeze performer swinging hundreds of feet above ground without a net. On one hand, you’re being pulled by your company’s executive leaders who want to micromanage the message by endless and unmitigated nitpicking. On the other hand, you’re being pulled by the news media to release requested information ASAP — regardless of what internal hoops you must jump through to get it. But one factor to always keep in mind is that being transparent is tantamount to successful media relations. Here’s why: Fostering transparency involves being honest, open and forthcoming with the media. This builds respect and goodwill in the short term, as well as a strong bond of trust over the long run. Don’t forget that withholding key information from the media, or letting it out piecemeal, is never a good idea and only gives legs to a damaging story. The result of trying to trample transparency is being compelled to respond to the drip-drip-drip debacle of multi-day negative news coverage — and then likely taking the blame for it, even if such a stupid strategy was mandated by the C-Suite. No communications professional wants to be forced into “damage control” mode. This only hurts the organization’s brand image and leads to a loss of accountability and public trust via bad press. That’s one reason why you should always strive to be truthful and transparent with journalists. Transparency means going the extra mile in maximizing information dissemination to the media while minimizing spin control over a story. That’s why the third rule of mastering media relations is being transparent. The initial two rules, addressed here in recent articles, are: 1) Forging mutually beneficial media relationships, and 2) Always being accessible to reporters. Empowering Communicators Meaningful transparency will only succeed if and when communicators are empowered from the top-down by corporate leadership. In today’s fast evolving mobile, digital and virtual Information Age, your job as a PR person requires seamless access to all necessary and relevant information (to the extent possible). And beyond access, you must also have advance approval to share certain kinds of information in certain kinds of situations. This is also known as situational media relations. It’s necessary to not only keep pace with the breakneck speed of today’s 24/7 breaking news cycle, but to stay one step ahead by exercising sound judgment and being prepared for the worst. When a damaging social media story goes viral, there’s simply no time to waste in containing the blaze before it bursts into a conflagration. Lack of transparency is anathema to effective media relations. Every minute lost in a crisis communications situation is another minute in which hundreds or thousands of people potentially consume negative news and pass it on via a multiplier effect. Hence, every second really does count. That’s also why PR practitioners need more access to internal data and information to effectively do their jobs. Therefore, talk to your boss about difficult media situations that might arise and agree on a response before the proverbial “shit hits the fan” and flies in your face. If information is being withheld by the “powers that be” for bureaucratic reasons then PR pros need to ask them why, because the company will be held accountable by the media — not to mention the board of directors, shareholders and consumers. Executive leaders should brief the communications team on the specific reasons for rejecting media requests, as aggressive reporters will demand answers. Thus, a prepared response or statement might be needed. Communications teams need to formulate effective internal approaches to break down entrenched bureaucratic walls that prevent information from flowing freely when news breaks. Remember: transparency always triumphs.

**Transparency, positivism and objectivity are all good**

**Jones** 0**4** – (August 2004, Branwen Gruffydd, PhD in Development Studies from the University of Sussex, Senior Lecturer in International Political Economy at Goldsmiths University of London, “From Eurocentrism to Epistemological Internationalism: power, knowledge and objectivity in International Relations,” Paper presented at Theorising Ontology, Annual Conference of the International Association for Critical Realism, University of Cambridge, http://www.csog.group.cam.ac.uk/iacr/papers/Jones.pdf)

**The ‘common-sense’ view** pervading recent discussions of epistemology, ontology and methodology **in IR asserts that objectivity implies value-free neutrality**. **However, *objective social inquiry has an inherent tendency to be critical***, in various senses. To the extent that objective knowledge provides a better and more adequate account of reality than other ideas, such knowledge is inherently critical (implicitly or explicitly) of those ideas. 30 In other words critical social inquiry does not (or not only) manifest its ‘criticalness’ through self-claimed labels of being critical or siding with the oppressed, but through the substantive critique of prevailing ideas. **Objective social knowledge constitutes a specific form of criticism: *explanatory critique***. The critique **of dominant ideas or ideologies** is **elaborated through providing a more adequate explanation of aspects of the world**, **and in so doing *exposing what is wrong with the dominant ideology***. This may also entail revealing the social conditions which give rise to ideologies, thus exposing the necessary and causal relation between particular social relations and particular ideological conceptions.