# Objectivity Aff

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

#### The value is consistency with deliberative democracy, which entails the value criterion being norms of inclusion, political equality, reasonableness, and publicity. Professor of Political Science Iris Marion Young writes in 2000:

Young ’00 - Iris Marion Young (Professor of Political Science, University of Chicago), Inclusion and Democracy. New York: Oxford University Press. (2000). pp. 21-26 AT

The Deliberative Model The model of democracy as a process of aggregating preferences does loosely describe some aspects of democratic process in the world today, and also expresses the way many political actors think about democracy. Not only political scientists and economists, but many journalists, politicians, and citizens, implicitly share the assumptions of this model that ends and values are subjective, non-rational, and exogenous to the political process. Consequently, they believe that democratic politics is nothing other than a competition between private interests and preferences. The operation of liberal democratic politics corresponds to these assumptions. Voting—the expressing of preferences among a list of candidates or referendum choices—is the primary political act. The democratic process consists in various groups putting out their interests and competing for those votes. Such a mass plebiscite process treats citizens as atomized, privately responding to itemized opinion poll questions.12 Even in our imperfect democracies, however, another model of democracy lies in the shadows. Wherever the democratic impulse emerges, many people associate democracy with open discussion and the exchange of views leading to agreed-upon policies. In parliamentary discussions participants often claim that theirs is the most just and reasonable proposal. Most democracies contain other institutions and practices of political discussion and criticism in which participants aim to persuade one another of the rightness of their positions. Contemporary political theorists usually call this alternative model deliberative democracy. A number of important theories of deliberative democracy have appeared in recent years, sparking a renewed interest in the place of reasoning, persuasion, and normative appeals in democratic politics.13 In the deliberative model democracy is a form of practical reason. Participants in the democratic process offer proposals for how best to solve problems or meet legitimate needs, and so on, and they present arguments through which they aim to persuade others to accept their proposals. Democratic process is primarily a discussion of problems, conflicts, and claims of need or interest. Through dialogue others test and challenge these proposals and arguments. Because they have not stood up to dialogic examination, the deliberating public rejects or refines some proposals. Participants arrive at a decision not by determining what preferences have greatest numerical support, but by determining which proposals the collective agrees are supported by the best reasons. This model of democratic processes entails several normative ideals for the relationships and dispositions of deliberating parties, among them inclusion, equality, reasonableness, and publicity. These ideals are all logically related in the deliberative model. *Inclusion*. On this model a democratic decision is normatively legitimate only if all those affected by it are included in the process of discussion and decision-making. This simple formulation opens many questions about the way in which they are affected, and how strongly; it might be absurd to say that everyone affected by decisions in any trivial way ought to be party to them. To limit this question somewhat, we can say that ‘affected’ here means at least that decisions and policies significantly condition a person’s options for action. As an ideal, inclusion embodies a norm of moral respect. Persons (and perhaps other creatures) are being treated as means if they are expected to abide by rules or adjust their actions according to decisions from where determination their voice and interests have been excluded. When coupled with norms of political equality, inclusion allows for maximum expression of interests, opinions, and perspectives relevant to the problems or issues for which a public seeks solutions. *Political equality*. As a normative ideal, democracy means political equality. Not only should all those affected be nominally included in decision-making, but they should be included on equal terms. All ought to have an equal right and effective opportunity to express their interests and concerns.14 All also ought to have equal effective opportunity to question one another, and to respond to and criticize one another’s proposals and arguments. The ideal model of deliberative democracy, that is, promotes free and equal opportunity to speak. This condition cannot be met, however, without a third condition of equality, namely freedom from domination. Participants in an ideal process of deliberative democracy must be equal in the sense that none of them is in a position to coerce or threaten others into accepting certain proposals or outcomes. While I have distinguished the terms ‘inclusion’ and ‘political equality’ in order to specify their normative import, for the rest of this book when I refer to a norm of inclusion I shall understand it to entail the norm of political equality. In real political conflict, when political actors and movements protest exclusion and demand greater inclusion, they invariably appeal to ideals of political equality and do not accept token measures of counting people in. When discussion is inclusive, in this strong sense, it allows the expression of all interests, opinions, and criticism, and when it is free from domination, discussion participants can be confident that the results arise from good reasons rather than from fear or force or false consensus. This confidence can be maintained, however, only when participants have a disposition to be reasonable. *Reasonableness*. In the context of the model of deliberative democracy, I take reasonableness to refer more to a set of dispositions that discussion participants have than to the substance of people’s contributions to debate. Reasonable people often have crazy ideas; what makes them reasonable is their willingness to listen to others who want to explain to them why their ideas are incorrect or inappropriate. People who think they know more or are better than others are sometimes too quick to label the assertions of others as irrational, and thereby try to avoid having to engage with them. Since reasonable people often disagree about what proposals, actions, groundings, and narratives are rational or irrational, judging too quickly is itself often a symptom of unreasonableness. Reasonable people enter discussion to solve collective problems with the aim of reaching agreement. Often they will not reach agreement, of course, and they need to have procedures for reaching decisions and registering dissent in the absence of agreement. Reasonable people understand that dissent often produces insight, and that decisions and agreements should in principle be open to new challenge. While actually reaching consensus is thus not a requirement of deliberative reason, participants in discussion must be aiming to reach agreement to enter the discussion at all. Only if the participants believe that some kind of agreement among them is possible in principle can they in good faith trust one another to listen and aim to persuade one another. Thus reasonable participants in democratic discussion must have an open mind. They cannot come to the discussion of a collective problem with commitments that bind them to the authority of prior norms or unquestionable beliefs.15 Nor can they assert their own interests above all others’ or insist that their initial opinion about what is right or just cannot be subject to revision. To be reasonable is to be willing to change our opinions or preferences because others persuade us that our initial opinions or preferences, as they are relevant to the collective problems under discussion, are incorrect or inappropriate. Being open thus also refers to a disposition to listen to others, treat them with respect, make an effort to understand them by asking questions, and not judge them too quickly. A reasonable respectful process of discussion exhibits deliberative uptake; when some speak, others acknowledge the expression in ways that continue the engagement.16 *Publicity*. The conditions of inclusion, equality, and reasonableness, finally, entail that the interaction among participants in a democratic decision-making process forms a public in which people hold one another accountable.17 A public consists of a plurality of different individual and collective experiences, histories, commitments, ideals, interests, and goals that face one another to discuss collective problems under a common set of procedures. When members of such a public speak to one another, they know they are answerable to that plurality of others; this access that others have to their point of view makes them careful about expressing themselves. This plural public-speaking context requires participants to express themselves in ways accountable to all those plural others. They must try to explain their particular background experiences, interests, or proposals in ways that others can understand, and they must express reasons for their claims in ways that others recognize could be accepted, even if in fact they disagree with the claims and reasons. Even when they address a particular group with a particular history, as is usually the case, they speak with the reflective idea that third parties might be listening.18 For the content of an expression to be public does not entail that it is immediately understood by all, or that the principles to which argument appeals are accepted by all, but only that the expression aims in its form and content to be understandable and acceptable. Deliberative exchange thus entails expressions of puzzlement or disagreement, the posing of questions, and answering them.

### Observation 1

#### The resolution does not require the media to reject all forms of advocacy, just to *prioritize* objectivity. That means that, to win the debate, the Affirmative only has to show that the media should not engage in advocacy *if* it obscures their fundamental commitment to objectivity. In other words, the Affirmative must advocate that the media cannot lie or distort the truth to advance a particular ideological agenda. Advocacy *constrained* by a norm of objectivity is an important part of democratic debate, but bad-faith advocacy that lies or distorts undermines those values.

### Observation 2

#### Dr. Declan Fahy, Associate Professor at Dublin University, defines “objectivity,” in 2017:

Declan Fahy {Declan Fahy is an Associate Professor in the School of Communications who researches the public communication of science, health, environment, and technology. He is the author of The New Celebrity Scientists: Out of the Lab and Into the Limelight (2015). He previously worked as an assistant professor at American University in Washington, D.C. He is currently on the editorial advisory board of Public Understanding of Science, the editorial board of Journal of Science and Popular Culture, and the editorial board of Environmental Communication.}, 17 - ("Objectivity, False Balance, and Advocacy in News Coverage of Climate Change," Oxford Research Encyclopedia of Climate Science, 3-29-2017, https://oxfordre.com/climatescience/oso/viewentry/10.1093$002facrefore$002f9780190228620.001.0001$002facrefore-9780190228620-e-345;jsessionid=4280C743047B48A1CF8AB4CE95E231B7)//marlborough-wr/

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.

### Contention 1: Fake News

#### Fake news undercuts the fabric of democracy by sewing distrust, promoting violence, and distracting people from important issues. The Center for Information Technology & Society at the UC Santa Barbara writes:

Center For Information Technology & Society {University of California Santa Barbara}, No Date - ("The Danger of Fake News in Inflaming or Suppressing Social Conflict," https://www.cits.ucsb.edu/fake-news/danger-social)//marlborough-wr/

Fake news—news articles that are intentionally and verifiably false designed to manipulate people’s perceptions of reality—has been used to influence politics and promote advertising. But it has also become a method to stir up and intensify social conflict. Stories that are untrue and that intentionally mislead readers have caused growing mistrust among American people. In some cases this mistrust results in incivility, protest over imaginary events, or violence. This unravels the fabric of American life, turning neighbor against neighbor. Why would anyone do this? People, organizations, and governments—foreign governments and even our own—use fake news for two different reasons. First, they intensify social conflict to undermine people’s faith in the democratic process and people’s ability to work together [1]. Second, they distract people from important issues so that these issues remain unresolved. This section explores how fake news is used for distraction and intensifying conflict. Pizzagate In one infamous case, a fake news story (and the comments people attached to it) moved one man to shoot up a pizzeria that was linked by bogus statements to human trafficking and a presidential candidate. In the incident nicknamed “Pizzagate," a man with a semi-automatic rifle walked into a regular Washington, DC pizza joint - Comet Ping Pong - and fired shots. Why? He was convinced that the pizzeria contained a hidden pedophilia trafficking ring led by Hillary Clinton and her presidential campaign. Where did he come up with this notion? Alt-right communities first created this piece of fiction, and fake news websites promoted the lie by citing specific locations such Comet Ping Pong. It was then tweeted further by people in the Czech Republic, Cyprus, and Vietnam, as well as many bots, getting the story much additional attention. Fake news - political in nature - influenced a man to fire shots inside this restaurant, nearly killing innocent people. The spread of information that was knowingly false had potentially deadly consequences [2]. People with malicious intent can use fake news to make American national conflicts more intense. Politically motivated fake news came from multiple sources: foreign governments, such as the Russian Internet Research Agency; American political operatives who used illegitimately-acquired Facebook data from the Cambridge Analytica firm to convince social media users how to vote; and from politically motivated groups, such as the alt-right, alt-left, and conspiracy theorists. Despite their different goals, they spread similar fake news stories.

#### Fake news completely undermines deliberative democracy because it prevents people from making informed decisions based in the truth.

### Contention 2: Polarization

#### Advocacy journalism drives partisan polarization. Lawyer Larry Atkins writes in 2014:

Larry Atkins {Journalist, Professor, Lawyer, Author of Skewed: A Critical Thinker's Guide to Media Bias, }, 14 - ("Advocacy Journalism Is Polarizing Our Country," HuffPost, 6-24-2014, https://www.huffpost.com/entry/advocacy-journalism-is-po\_b\_5526745)//marlborough-wr/

Over the past 15 years, as newspaper circulation has declined, more and more people are turning to advocacy journalism via websites, talk radio, cable TV, and blogs to get their news. The problem is that many of these blogs and websites are biased, have an agenda, don't do much fact checking, aren't edited, and aren't held accountable when they get facts wrong. TV networks like [MSNBC](https://www.huffpost.com/news/topic/msnbc) and FOX News and talk radio talk show hosts like Rush Limbaugh and Glenn Beck have a clearly biased agenda. Yet, many people rely on advocacy journalism as their main source of news.  
  
Perhaps most importantly, advocacy journalism is polarizing our country.

A new Pew Research Center for the People & the Press poll indicates that Americans are more polarized politically than ever.

The study states:

"[Republicans](https://www.huffpost.com/news/topic/republican-party) and [Democrats](https://www.huffpost.com/news/topic/democratic-party) are more divided along ideological lines - and partisan antipathy is deeper and more extensive - than at any point in the last two decades. These trends manifest themselves in myriad ways, both in politics and in everyday life. And a new survey of 10,000 adults nationwide finds that these divisions are greatest among those who are the most engaged and active in the political process."

As reported by Andrew Beaujon of Poynter.org on June 10, a newly released survey by the Public Religion Research Institute and Brookings Institute on religion, values, and immigration reform revealed that "people's media choices have a strong effect on their beliefs." The study stated that, "Only 42% of Republicans who most trust Fox News to provide accurate information about politics and current events support a path to citizenship, compared to 60% of Republicans who most trust other news sources."

Advocacy journalists do not set out to inform; they set out to advance an agenda, whether it be conservative or liberal. While FOX News and conservative talk radio show hosts like Rush Limbaugh and Sean Hannity are the worst offenders, liberal television hosts like Al Sharpton and Rachel Maddow also fall into this category. They are all giving their opinion and reporting news with a goal and a biased agenda.  
  
Every semester, I give my journalism students an exercise in which they have to watch and analyze three different news shows. One is a FOX News program, such as Sean Hannity, Bill O'Reilly, or Mike Huckabee; another is an MSNBC program such as Al Sharpton, Rachel Maddow, or Chris Matthews; the third is one of the network news programs on ABC, NBC, or CBS. The point of the assignment is to show the students how bias can affect news coverage. For instance, FOX News' coverage of a tea party rally will attempt to portray happy, flag waving, patriotic people speaking out against their government; the MSNBC coverage will focus on the racist signs and comments from the crowd such as "Obama, go back to Kenya" and showing Obama as a witch doctor with a bone through his nose in order to expose the racist element of the crowd; meanwhile, the national network coverage of ABC, NBC, and CBS tends to be much more objective, balanced, and show elements of both. To my surprise and satisfaction, most of my students prefer the straightforward objective journalism, and many are repulsed by advocacy journalism.

Despite conservatives' claims that the mainstream media is liberally biased, the mainstream media does a much better job of being fair and balanced than FOX News or MSNBC. You'll never hear NBC's Brian Williams call President Bush a moron or President Obama a socialist.  
  
In light of the explosion of media outlets ranging from cable news outlets, talk radio, blogs, and websites, we need to be more savvy news consumers. As I tell my journalism students, it's important to consider the source of the information before we make our judgments. We need to stop elevating advocacy journalists as credible news sources. In some cases, advocacy journalists might be giving their audience accurate facts, however, in many cases, they will slant the facts and present them in a manner that advances their argument or agenda. There's nothing wrong with that. Their shows are like video editorial/op-eds. Such programs have value in rallying their base audience, presenting information and arguments in an entertaining manner, and giving them talking points when arguing with family and friends.  
  
However, if our country is ever to get out of its current polarized rut, our media habits need to change. People need to get their news from a wide range of sources and go beyond their own echo chambers to get various perspectives on the news. They need news that they can rely on.

**Commitment to ideological purity deepens political polarization, especially on the American right wing. Political analyst Ezra Klein writes in 2020:**

Klein ’20 - Ezra Klein, Why We’re Polarized. New York: Avid Reader Press (2020). pp. 235-239 AT

The Fox News effect¶ Crucially, the Democratic Party isn’t just more diverse in terms of its members; it’s also more diverse in its trusted information sources. In 2014, the Pew Research Center conducted a survey measuring trust in different media sources, giving respondents thirty-six different outlets to consider and asking them to rate their trust in each. Respondents who counted as “consistent liberals” trusted a wide variety of media outlets ranging from center-right to left: ABC, Al Jazeera America, the BBC, Bloomberg, CBS, CNN, The Colbert Report, Daily Kos, The Daily Show, the Economist, The Ed Schultz Show, Google News, the Guardian, the Huffington Post, Mother Jones, MSNBC, NBC, the New Yorker, the New York Times, NPR, PBS, Politico, Slate, USA Today, the Wall Street Journal, the Washington Post, and Yahoo!¶ Consistent conservatives did not. Of the thirty-six outlets named, only a handful of deeply ideological sources commanded more trust than distrust among respondents who counted as consistently conservative: Fox News, Breitbart, the Wall Street Journal, the Blaze, the Drudge Report, The Sean Hannity Show, The Glenn Beck Program, and The Rush Limbaugh Show.¶ Pew also asked consistent liberals and conservatives which outlet served as their “main” news source. Here, too, the difference was stark. For the liberals, there was no dominant news source. CNN was the top choice with 15 percent, followed by NPR with 13 percent, MSNBC with 12 percent, and the New York Times with 10 percent. Among consistent conservatives, 47 percent chose Fox News, with the next most popular answer being “local news,” at 11 percent.¶ Two years later, Pew commissioned a similar survey during the 2016 election, measuring where Clinton and Trump voters were getting their news. Among Clinton voters, the most popular choice was CNN, with 18 percent naming it as their main news source, followed by MSNBC, which was the top choice of 9 percent. Among Trump voters, 40 percent named Fox News.10¶ The Pew Findings mirror what other researchers have discovered. In “Partisanship, Propaganda, and Disinformation: Online Media and the 2016 U.S. Presidential Election,” a study of media dynamics in the 2016 election, six Harvard researchers concluded:¶ The leading media on the right and left are rooted in different traditions and journalistic practices. On the conservative side, more attention was paid to pro-Trump, highly partisan media outlets. On the liberal side, by contrast, the center of gravity was made up largely of long-standing media organizations steeped in the traditions and practices of objective journalism.11¶ Political parties exist within informational ecosystems. Those ecosystems create the context in which voters make demands, in which politicians make strategic choices, in which presidential aspirants craft messages. The Democratic Party’s informational ecosystem combines mainstream sources that seek objectivity, liberal sources that push partiality, and even some center-right sources with excellent reputations, like the Economist and the news reporting in the Wall Street Journal. On any given question, liberals trust in sources that pull them left and sources that pull them toward the center, in sources oriented toward escalation and sources oriented toward moderation, in sources that root their identity in a political movement and sources that carefully tend a reputation for being antagonistic toward political movements.¶ There is no similar diversity in the GOP’s trusted informational ecosystem, which is entirely built around conservative news sources, many of them propagandistic. Conservatives protest that the media is liberally biased, so they had no choice but to build their alternative network. In my experience, it’s true that reporters for mainstream outlets are culturally liberal in their personal politics, though more mixed in their economic and foreign policy views. The newsrooms I know are overwhelmingly pro-choice, but they’re also biased toward deficit hawkery and the national security establishment. The dominant ideology, to the extent there is one, tracks Morning Joe, not the Nation. That said, mainstream newsrooms are built around incentives that are different from, and often contrary to, liberalism as a political movement. The New York Times and ABC News fear a liberal reputation—they want to be understood as neutral arbiters of truth—and reporting oppositionally and inconveniently on the Democratic Party is both part of the self-identity and the business model.¶ Perhaps as important, the intermixing of mainstream and left news sources forces an adherence to professional journalistic practices. MSNBC’s reporters and prime-time hosts want to be respected by the Washington Post’s reporters. Slate’s writers want to do work that will get them hired by the New York Times. As such, the business models and reputational ambitions of the mainstream outlets don’t just discipline their work; they also discipline the work of the more liberal outlets that admire them.¶ Conversely, Breitbart, Limbaugh, and the Blaze are operating in a self-contained conservative ecosystem, where part of the appeal is outright hostility to mainstream institutions. Over and over again, you see conservative media working to discredit other forms of media and even other forms of information. Fox News’s tagline, “Fair and Balanced,” is an insinuation that the rest of the media is unfair and biased. Limbaugh goes even further than that. He calls the media, the scientific community, academia, and the government “the four corners of deceit” and tells his listeners:¶ We live in two universes. One universe is a lie. One universe is an entire lie. Everything run, dominated, and controlled by the left here and around the world is a lie. The other universe is where we are, and that’s where reality reigns supreme and we deal with it. And seldom do these two universes ever overlap.12¶ The conservative movement has spent years battling liberal bias in the media and the academia. Some of their complaints had merit. But rather than reform those institutions or build similarly credible competitors, the right has untethered itself from them and built an informational ecosystem premised on purity rather than process. In their essay “How Information Became Ideological,” Grossmann and Hopkins describe the result:¶ Only the Republican Party has actively opposed society’s central information-gathering-and-disseminating institutions—universities and the news media—while Democrats have remained reliant on those institutions to justify policy choices and engage in political debate, considering them both independent arbiters and allies. Although each party’s elites, activists and voters now depend on different sources of knowledge and selectively interpret the messages they receive, the source of this information polarization is the American conservative movement’s decades-long battle against institutions that it has deemed irredeemably liberal.13¶ In an essay for Vox, Dave Roberts calls this “tribal epistemology”—when “information is evaluated based not on conformity to common standards of evidence or correspondence to a common understanding of the world, but on whether it supports the tribe’s values and goals and is vouchsafed by tribal leaders.”14 You can hear it ring clearly when, for instance, Rep. Lamar Smith, a Texas Republican, says it’s “better to get your news directly from the president. In fact, it might be the only way to get the unvarnished truth.”15¶ All of this both predates and contextualizes Trump’s constant refrain of “FAKE NEWS!” Here, too, Trump isn’t a break from recent Republican traditions but a logical extension of them.¶ An interesting question is why the Right didn’t build institutions similar in ethos and practice to the ones they sought to replace, just sta􀐐ed with conservatives. In 2009, Tucker Carlson mounted the stage at the conservative conference CPAC and warned the Right that it needed a strong journalistic culture of its own. “The New York Times is a liberal paper, but it is also … a paper that actually cares about accuracy,” he said. “Conservatives need to build institutions that mirror those institutions.” Riding the hype from that speech, Carlson went on to found the Daily Caller, which has fallen from its initial high ideals and today mixes conservative paranoia with slideshows of hot women,II16 and then to take a prime-time slot on Fox News, where he’s the cable news pundit most skilled at catering to white fear of a browning America.¶ There are examples of strong institutions with conservative cultures in direct competition with the New York Times—the Murdoch-owned Wall Street Journal, for instance—but they exist as exceptions, not as oft-followed models. I don’t have a firm answer as to why, but I suspect it reflects the market available to carve off: because the mainstream media and academia actually aren’t that liberal, because they mostly do put truth-seeking ahead of partisanship, there isn’t that much demand for alternatives. The audience that is sufficiently alienated by mainstream outlets to present a business opportunity is uniformly conservative, and creating a differentiated enough product to appeal to them means creating a product that chooses to cater to conservative identity, rather than a product that routinely confronts it. But the result is that Democrats rely on a diversity of information sources that discipline their flights of fancy, while Republicans rely on a narrower set of media institutions that propel their polarization.¶ There should be a check on this sort of behavior. A party that narrows the sources it listens to is also narrowing the voters it can speak to. And political parties ultimately want to win elections. Lose enough of them, enough times, and even the most stubborn ideologues will accept reform. Democracy, in other words, should push against polarization. But America isn’t a democracy.

#### This polarization undercuts the fundamental principle of deliberative democracy – reasonableness – because it prevents people from listening and engaging in productive discussions with others.

### Contention 3: Discrimination

#### Deprioritizing objectivity opens the floodgates to massive amounts of sexism and racism which systemically exclude marginalized populations from positions of power. Instead of focusing on politicians’ actual political positions, biased media blows up subjective trivialities that prevent female advocates like my teammates and I from being as effective as we should be. Nonprofit Organization *Political Parity* writes:

Political Parity {Political Parity, a program of Swanee Hunt Alternatives, provides a nonpartisan platform, invoking the energies of dedicated leaders, researchers, and funders to change the face of US politics.}, xx - ("Media Coverage of Women Candidates," https://www.politicalparity.org/wp-content/uploads/2017/10/Parity-Research-Women-Media.pdf/)//marlborough-wr/

Seminal work by Kim Fridkin Kahn found that women running for U.S. Senate and for governor in the 1980s received less coverage, and more negative coverage, than male candidates, with greater gender discrepancies among Senate than gubernatorial candidates.2 Using an experiment and prototype articles that mimicked the different coverage patterns she observed, Kahn further found that these patterns had important consequences for voter evaluations.3 Candidates—and especially Senate candidates—whose coverage resembled the “female candidate” pattern of press coverage fared worse with voters in a hypothetical contest than those who received the “male candidate” press coverage. The hypothetical Senate candidate receiving “female” press coverage was seen by voters as less electable, with weaker leadership skills. The good news for women candidates: most recent studies find that amount of coverage has equalized. For example, James Devitt found that male and female candidates for governor in four states in 1998 received the same amount of coverage.4 Dianne Bystrom and her coauthors also find similarity in amount of coverage in mixed-gender U.S. Senate and gubernatorial races between 1998 and 2002.5 In a more recent study, Linda Fowler and Jennifer Lawless, examining women gubernatorial candidates in the 1990s, do not find many direct gender effects on coverage once other factors are controlled.6 But non-sexist coverage remains elusive. One of the most consistent—and persistent—findings to emerge from studies is that women candidates receive more attention to appearance, personality, and family than men.7 For example, Bystrom and her coauthors found, in newspaper coverage of 2002 mixed-gender gubernatorial and senatorial races, that 8% of news stories about female candidates mentioned the candidate’s marital status, compared with only 1% of men’s news stories, and that 6% of women’s news stories in that year mentioned appearance, compared with only 1% of the men’s stories.8 Bystrom and her colleagues also found disparities in the extent to which reporters call attention to the gender of women candidates compared with men candidates. In an extensive analysis of 2006 and 2008 contests, Johanna Dunaway and her coauthors find that male-female gubernatorial races are more likely to focus on personality traits than other contests. Qualitative examples of gendered media coverage abound.9 For example, Carol Moseley-Braun, the only African American woman to ever serve in the U.S. Senate, who sought the 2004 Democratic presidential nomination, was once described by The Chicago Tribune as a “den mother with a cheerleader’s smile.”10 Winning office does not end the effort to obtain fair media coverage; women officeholders, and not just candidates, strive for equitable press coverage. For example, in a study conducted in 1998, David Niven and Jeremy Zilber found that congressional press secretaries felt that the press defined women members of the U.S. House by their gender.11 Press secretaries who worked for women were more likely than those who worked for men to believe that media coverage of their bosses was unfair. Similarly, Susan J. Carroll and Ronnee Schreiber found that reporting on women in Congress focuses largely on collective efforts on behalf of women’s issues.12 This coverage gives the mistaken impression that women members are not actively involved, either individually or collectively, in working on legislation on other issues. In a more recent analysis, Kim L. Fridkin and Patrick J. Kenney compare the local press coverage of male and female senators with the senators’ communications.13 They find that the press is more likely to distort the messages of female than male senators and that women receive less coverage. On a more positive note, they also find that women are more likely than men to be credited for positive policy initiatives and to be described with positive traits. In an extensive study of Hillary Clinton’s television news coverage over the course of her time on the political stage, Shawn J. Parry-Giles shows that the media play an important role in shaping judgments of politicians’ authenticity.14 Journalists serve as “character judges” who scrutinize leaders through gendered notions of authenticity. The study shows that while political women may be lauded for assuming a progressive role, they risk violating traditional notions of womanhood and, as a consequence, jeopardize their portrayal as authentic leaders. Parry-Giles concludes that men in politics continue to be advantaged with the press in terms of judgments of political authenticity. WOMEN PRESIDENTIAL CANDIDATES The race for the presidency garners the most public attention and the most media coverage. As a particularly “masculine” office, the presidency has proven to be a glass ceiling for women candidates.15 Unfortunately, coverage of female presidential candidates has usually reflected and reproduced the cultural idea that the president should be male. In an analysis that stretches from the 1800s to 2008, Erika Falk argues that the press has historically trivialized women’s candidacies and portrayed them in stereotypical ways.16 She argues that “the press portrays women as losers and novelties and not serious candidates” and worries that biased coverage discourages women from running.17 When Elizabeth Dole sought the Republican presidential nomination in 2000, the amount of coverage she received failed to reflect her standings in the polls, disproportionately focused on her lack of funds, and treated her bid as a novelty.18 Dole received less issue coverage than the male candidates, and more attention was paid to her personality and appearance than to those of the other candidates.19 Moreover, a qualitative analysis revealed that she was characterized negatively as “scripted, rehearsed, robotic, controlled”—criticisms that seemed to reflect the gender bias of reporters.20 Regina Lawrence and Melody Rose found that Hillary Clinton received a similar amount of coverage to Barack Obama in 2008, but that her coverage was more negative.21 Falk’s analysis showed that Clinton received more equitable coverage than previous female presidential candidates in some respects, but also found inequities in coverage and the persistence of the traditional patterns of media coverage of female presidential candidates.22 Even public opinion polls showed that many Democrats believed Hillary Clinton was not treated as well by the press as the other candidates.23 The media also dwelled more on whether Clinton would exit the Democratic race, and when she would exit, than is typical of presidential nomination coverage.24 Most notably, media coverage of Hillary Clinton in 2008—and especially cable news coverage—was filled with sexist remarks, from Glenn Beck describing Clinton as a “stereotypical bitch” to Tucker Carlson stating, “When she [Hillary Clinton] comes on television, I involuntarily cross my legs.”25 There were also instances of sexism faced by Clinton on the campaign trail that the media did not regard as newsworthy: Susan J. Carroll observes, “Sexism and sexist remarks by journalists and on-air pundits were treated as acceptable—a normal part of political discourse.”26 Although they are from different parties and brought quite different backgrounds to the 2008 presidential election, both Clinton and Sarah Palin were portrayed in sexist ways and arguably faced the same gender stereotypes.27 Analysis of Palin’s media coverage showed traditional gendered news coverage. Stories about Palin were more likely to mention her gender, appearance, and family status compared with Biden’s.28 And both Palin’s and Clinton’s coverage in blogs and cable news portrayed the women in vulgar and misogynist ways.29 Thus, the harsh treatment women faced in 2008 was a significant departure from what had appeared to be a trend of more equitable treatment of women and men candidates. CONTEMPORARY MEDIA ENVIRONMENT Today’s 24-hour media cycle, instant communication, and polarized political landscape could deter anyone from throwing his or her hat into the ring. Given gender bias in the media, concern about quality of media coverage and level of media scrutiny may weigh on the minds of women more than men. Indeed, Jennifer Lawless and Richard Fox find that dealing with the press is among the campaign activities that discourage women potential candidates more than men from running for office.30 The underrepresentation of women in the news industry itself and decision-making positions therein partially contributes to distorted and biased coverage.31 As one journalist put it, “With so few women in decision-making positions, there still is often no one to raise a red flag when egregious sexism appears in news stories.”32 Women are only about one-quarter of television news directors.33 In an analysis of major TV networks, wire, on-line news sources, and print, the Women’s Media Center found that over 60% of all bylines and on-camera appearances were by men. A new study of Sunday morning political talk shows reveals that the vast majority of guests (67%) are white men; women of color are especially underrepresented.34 To overcome bias, women candidates strategize about gender stereotypes and how best to present themselves to voters and to the press.35 In addition, educating journalists and calling attention to bias is an important strategy for challenging sexism and improving coverage of women candidates.36 A campaign aimed at combating sexism in the media holds promise. Called “Name It. Change It.”, the project monitors press treatment of women candidates and documents sexist coverage.37 Representatives of the media are encouraged to take a pledge to cover candidates fairly and refrain from sexist questions and portrayals. Research conducted by Celinda Lake of Lake Research Partners using an online survey in 2010 indicates that women candidates can combat sexist media treatment if they acknowledge and respond to the mistreatment. Interestingly, Erika Falk argues that Hillary Clinton’s attempts to call out sexism in 2008 were treated with accusations that she was playing the “gender card.”38 The media treated this gender-card playing in a negative light—as a phenomenon that is used to gain an unfair advantage. Thus, women candidates’ responses to sexist treatment can potentially beget further gendered coverage. Recent studies have examined how candidates are using new media. A study of 2012 Twitter use by U.S. House candidates found that women candidates are more likely to have Twitter accounts and more likely to Tweet.39 Women’s presence on Twitter is still affected by their overall presence in politics, however. For example, in a study of Twitter use in 2011, Claudette G. Artwick finds that quotes from men are much more commonly tweeted by reporters than are quotes by women. In fact, the share of quotes by women was smaller than their actual presence in politics.40 While new forms of media provide new ways for women candidates to communicate their messages, the gender dynamics of these new media can be concerning. For example, a national survey revealed that women are more likely than men to experience sexual harassment online, with this experience especially like to occur among young women.41 The organization WAM (Women, Action, and the Media) is partnering with Twitter to combat harassment.42

#### Discrimination destroys the first two principles of the standard – inclusion and political equality – by excluding women from participating in democratic processes.

### Contention 4: Trust in Media

#### False advocacy-based news destroys our trust in public institutions like media. This can lead to catastrophic results in an emergencies like the pandemic or the assault on the Capitol. Associate Professor at Rutgers University Katherine Ognyanova et al writes in 2020:

Ognyanova, K., Lazer, D., Robertson, R. E., & Wilson, C. (2020). Misinformation in action: Fake news exposure is linked to lower trust in media, higher trust in government when your side is in power. Harvard Kennedy School (HKS) Misinformation Review. https://doi.org/10.37016/mr-2020-024

The long-standing problem of political misinformation drew public attention in the aftermath of the 2016 U.S. presidential election. Scholars, journalists, and politicians expressed alarm that the spread of fake news could destabilize political institutions and delegitimize media organizations. Despite those widespread concerns, there is relatively little research exploring the consequences of fake news consumption in the current political environment. Even though its direct electoral impact in 2016 may have been limited (Allcott & Gentzkow, 2017), online misinformation could have other important effects on our society. In this work, fake news is defined as fabricated information that has the format of news content but not the editorial standards and practices of legitimate journalism (Lazer et al, 2018). Consumption of fake news makes people more likely to adopt various political misperceptions (Guess et al., 2020) that can affect their subsequent behavior, including voting decisions (Weeks & Garrett, 2014). This work examines the potential of misinformation exposure to erode public confidence in key social institutions. We find evidence linking exposure to misinformation with trust in mainstream media and the federal government. Attitudes towards those institutions can, in turn, affect how people find and evaluate information; who they believe and how they act during exigent circumstances; as well as how they participate in the political process. Our findings thus emphasize the critical importance of technological, social, and regulatory efforts to curb the spread of fake news. While this study has limitations, it showcases a novel approach to understanding the connection between fake news exposure and public opinion. The combination of longitudinal survey data and browser records provides a practical way to capture the complex interdependencies between individual attitudes and online behavior (see also Guess et al., 2020). Media trust In recent years, mainstream news organizations have experienced a considerable decline in public confidence (Newman, Fletcher, Kalogeropoulos, Levy, & Nielsen, 2018). The consequences of this lack of trust are especially apparent in times of crisis and uncertainty when citizens are most in need of credible sources providing current and reliable information. To the extent that fake news can undermine the public’s confidence in mainstream media, it may not only leave its consumers misinformed, but also make them more vulnerable when disaster strikes. The content of false news stories can influence our confidence in the media. Cynical coverage and tabloid-style focus on scandal can erode citizen trust in news organizations (Hopmann, Shehata, & Stromback, 2015; Ladd, 2012). Those are characteristics typical of many fake news stories as their producers aim to increase audience engagement through sensational and divisive content. Fake news can also discredit the press directly by accusing them of bias, complicity, and incompetence – or indirectly by contradicting a range of claims made by mainstream media. What is more, the very existence of online misinformation resembling a journalistic product can diminish the credibility of legitimate news. Confirming the relevance of those concerns, our study offers evidence that exposure to fake news is associated with a decline in the media trust of respondents.

#### Trust in the media is crucial for deliberative democracy because there is no way for people to engage in political processes without being informed. Thus, the affirmative is the only way to uphold the value and value criterion.