### 1AC: Plan

#### We Affirm the Whole Resolution – Resolved: In a democracy, a free press ought to prioritize objectivity over advocacy.

#### Objective Journalism lies in Objectivity of its methodology.

Jones 9 Alex Jones 9-15-2009 "An Argument Why Journalists Should Not Abandon Objectivity" <https://niemanreports.org/articles/an-argument-why-journalists-should-not-abandon-objectivity/> (Alex S. Jones, a 1982 Nieman Fellow, is director of the Joan Shorenstein Center on the Press, Politics and Public Policy at Harvard University.)//Elmer

In their book “The Elements of Journalism: What Newspeople Should Know and the Public Should Expect,” Bill Kovach and Tom Rosenstiel, describe what they call “the lost meaning of objectivity.”… As [they] point out, “In the original concept, in other words, the method is objective, not the journalist.” It was because journalists inevitably arrived with bias that they needed objectivity as a discipline to test that bias against the evidence so as to produce journalism that would be closer to truth. They argue that the quickening of objectivity as the American journalistic standard was born of a desire to have a more scientific way of approaching news. The nation’s faith in science was surging, and the scientific method seemed suited to journalism. Scientists begin their research with assumptions. They have expectations of what will happen, but they don’t know what will happen. They have, in other words, their own opinions and beliefs—their point of view or even bias—about what is likely the truth, and they do their research to test those assumptions. Their objective, scientific inquiry is not one that is without bias, but one in which bias has to stand up to evidence and results. This is the sensible and realistic approach to objectivity that might be termed genuine objectivity. It begins with the assumption that journalists have bias, and that their bias has to be tested and challenged by gathering facts and information that will either support it or knock it down. Often, there is information that does both, and that ambiguity needs to be reported with the same dispassion with which a scientist would report variations in findings that were inconclusive. If the evidence is inconclusive, then that is—by scientific standards—the truth. But journalistic objectivity is an effort to discern a practical truth, not an abstract, perfect truth. Reporters seeking genuine objectivity search out the best truth possible from the evidence that the reporter, in good faith, can find. To discredit objectivity because it is impossible to arrive at perfect truth is akin to dismissing trial by jury because it isn’t perfect in its judgments.

#### Even if objectivity is not perfectly achievable, striving for it is uniquely valuable – this card is fantastic and answers all of their turns.

White 13 Aidan White 1-15-2013 "Journalism’s Era of Change, but Objectivity Still Plays a Critical Role" <https://web.archive.org/web/20130129094105/http://www.ethicaljournalismnetwork.org/2013/journalism%E2%80%99s-era-of-change-but-objectivity-still-plays-a-critical-role/> (Founder of the Ethical Journalism Network)//Elmer

That everyone understands objectivity differently makes it a dangerously fuzzy concept, easy road kill in the rush to new journalistic techniques. We dismiss it at our peril. At heart, objective journalism sets out to establish the facts about a situation, report fairly the range of opinion around it and take a first cut at what arguments are the most reasonable. To keep the presentation rigorous, journalists should have professional reporting and editing skills (be they staff or independent journalists, paid or unpaid). To show their commitment to balance, journalists should keep their personal opinions to themselves. It’s a simple enough concept, distillable to “unbiased journalism,” “trusted reporting” or in the view of some, simply “journalism.” Add to that “customer service.” The news consumer needs faith that there’s somewhere to go quickly for the basic facts that business, politics and personal safety depend on. Is Gadhafi dead? Is the oil well still leaking? How close to the Fukushima reactor can I safely go? It seems a no-brainer that there’s a value to established, reliable voices on the things that matter most — experienced in sorting out contradictions, wary of sloppiness and hoaxes and not pushing a personal objective. Yet attach the word “objective” to the concept, and confusion ensues. To some, objectivity somehow evokes the “legacy” news industry, destined to die with it (a demise as yet unobserved, if accepted by many as an article of faith). These critics see objectivity as a reactive, stenographic form of journalism, so wedded to “balance” that it cannot distinguish between legitimate and lunatic opinion, between scientific truth and trash. Others see objectivity as the calling card of the elite, rooted in a belief that “professionals” can so completely cover a complex story that journalists’ voices are all people need to hear. Still others believe objectivity has never existed at all because perfect objectivity is impossible. Much like a perfect vacuum or a perfect circle, it can be imagined but never really created, so its loss is without cost. Our view is that objectivity, far from a device of old media or the elite, is the key to deeply democratic news media now and in the future. It can reliably serve both traditional journalism and new models, including the most open-sourced processes for gathering and analyzing news. Perfect objectivity is indeed hard to imagine. (We mean it in the sense of presenting all sides of an issue, not of determining a single, objective truth.) The very act of deciding what angles of a story to cover is inherently subjective, notes Gilles Gauthier of Laval University. Where and how to point the camera comes from personal instinct and feelings, not mathematical formulas. Getting “both sides of the story” can leave journalists satisfied they’ve done a good day’s work when even more valid third and fourth sides remain unexplored. Yet we live with a system of courts that is not perfectly just and we accept rides in cars from people who are not perfect drivers. We play by the percentages in everything. And the percentages favoring objective journalism have actually increased in the past couple of decades. For those who believe objective reporting is a worthy concept but a problem in practice, crowdsourcing and social networks now make it more practical than ever. Today’s objective journalism does not have to consist solely of words and images from journalists. Crowdsourcing of information and policy alternatives, through the news media’s own platforms or social networks, can be integral parts of an objective journalistic process. Of course, the crowd must reflect a variety of points of view; crowdsourcing among members of a mob will bring a plethora of voices but not of viewpoints. There is no contradiction between professionals doing their own reporting while also curating the voices of others. This has been the story of the civil war in Syria. International news organizations have sent their own correspondents into Syria and broken their own stories. But the same organizations have crowd sourced a huge amount of day-to-day battlefront coverage, using social networks and direct contacts to obtain details, photos and even live video of street battles. The authentic voice of Syrian individuals reporting from the scene has vastly enriched the picture without endangering the objectivity of the product; the organizations involved have long experience in identifying skilled reporters and detecting fake and outdated footage. Is such crowd sourced reporting ultimately a threat to professional journalists? We think not, because objectivity isn’t so much about controlling the information available as making sure it’s all there. Whether a conflict is on a distant battlefield or in a state legislature, there is no contradiction between the voices of those at the scene and of journalists, detached from the event but close to news consumers, putting the pieces into a whole that will command their audience’s attention. And, of course, sometimes journalists can be on the scene and present the big picture at the same time; examples range from smart foreign correspondents to Homicide Watch D.C. Then there’s a whole additional world of reader reactions. New, professional media like the Huffington Post have invested significant resources in that feedback. The result is an even more objective account of events that now takes in people at the scene, detached and professional observers and the opinions of the readership at large. On breaking stories, journalists carry out another, supremely important role: summarizing the news and the debate at frequent intervals – sometimes minute by minute – for those who cannot follow every turn of the story. Those who see journalists as elite of “gatekeepers” under such circumstances have the picture precisely backward. It is a far more elite perspective to think that the majority of the world’s population has the time or inclination to follow in detail every story that interests them. It is an elite concept that in a future world without “objective journalism,” a person who hears on the way to work that Hamas is firing rockets at Israel will arrive at work, head immediately to his personal, well-curated Twitter feed of conflicting voices and video from Israel and Gaza and distill his own, exquisitely balanced version of events. Most people who arrive at work need to start work. They value fast, concise and reliable news when their time permits. Objective media provide a profoundly democratic source of information, offering the vast majority of the population with limited time and attention an account of the world in a fashion that news consumers have long found quick and reliable. This is a competitive advantage of “legacy” media that helps explains its continued existence at a time of so many challenges. It is no surprise then that, as the Project for Excellence in Journalism has found, so many social media posts links to traditional objective media. Or that breaking news on Twitter tends to be massively retweeted only once it’s confirmed by a traditional news organization; American Journalism Review found the case of Whitney Houston’s death a good example. Social network users, once they learn of a breaking story, massively seek out traditional sources for more information and imagery. What about the claim that covering both sides of the story leads objective journalists to equate truth and nonsense? Clay Shirky of New York University says, “Judgement about legitimate consensus is becoming a critical journalistic skill, one that traditional training and mores don’t prepare most practitioners for.” Craig Newmark fears that a “pretense of objectivity” leads journalists to treat fringe beliefs as significantly as facts in an effort to show the story is reporting all points of view. As Aidan White of the Ethical Journalism Network puts it, “To be ethical journalists, particularly those covering politics, must stop quoting two sides of a story when one side is lying. At the very least they must tell their audience when that side is lying.” In fact, modern newsrooms have been pushing back at this limited view of objectivity for some time. Legions of aggressive, objective journalists do not share Arthur Brisbane’s puzzlement over whether it is possible “to be objective and fair when the reporter is choosing to correct one fact over another.” Objective newsrooms today deal regularly and quite successfully with disputes over facts. Since the vast majority of the world’s scientists believe the globe is heating up, few news stories on the subject devote substantial space to those who deny it. Fact-checking politicians’ statements originated with traditional, objective media, and flourished there long before the current wave of new-media sites doing the same thing on an expanded basis. If a journalist has thoroughly studied a subject and understands it well, the tenets of objectivity do not require a “view from nowhere” that ignores the journalist’s knowledge. On social networks, he can rebut false information with facts. This is the kind of objectivity that Jay Rosen hopefully can be a fan of, and the functioning model for many journalists today. Objectivity also doesn’t mean rejection of human emotion. The slaying of children by a gunman at a school can be fairly referred to as horrific; there is no need for a paragraph saying “on the other hand.” A photographer covering a war or disaster can put his camera aside when he has a chance to save a life. A journalist can be transparent about his biography and experiences, so long as he doesn’t turn them into a political agenda. There is nothing robotic about an objective journalist; reasonable judgments and human ethics and experience need not be suppressed. The attraction of objective journalism is such that Wikipedia, increasingly a destination for breaking news coverage, has adopted a policy of presenting an objective, “neutral point of view.” When a big story happens, Wikipedia readers post thousands of updates. Volunteer editors quickly join the effort, organizing the material. Yet as Brian Keegan discovered, the editors change from one breaking news story to another and few have substantial editing experience. According to Keegan, who conducted research at Northwestern University’s Medill School of Communications: “In all likelihood, readers of these breaking news articles are mostly consuming the work of editors who have never previously worked on this kind of event. In other words, some of the earliest and most widely read information about breaking news events is written by people with fewer journalistic qualifications than Medill freshmen.” Here is a situation where a pillar of new media values objectivity, but professional standards or qualifications could make that goal even more attainable. It should also be noted that the heaviest lifting in Wikipedia’s “coverage” of breaking news is often not being done by its contributors or editors. It is being done by the traditional media, from which much of the information being curated is taken. If Wikipedia’s contributors couldn’t count on these reports being objective to begin with, Wikipedia would have difficulty living up to its “neutral point of view.” Wikipedia’s policy aside, it’s surprising that amid the success of many new media that value objectivity, few generally accepted codes of conduct have emerged. Despite some laudable attempts, the best examples of new journalism have failed to unite around consistent ethics codes to the degree that legacy media have. Work now under way suggests a desire for progress in this direction. But sometimes such efforts are undertaken in the same breath as pronouncing traditional journalism dead or dying, complicating the import of some of its most useful principles. The value objective journalists add goes well beyond getting individual stories right. It goes to the entire texture of information in a society. In some social systems, the news media serve the state; Vladimir Lenin called the press a collective agitator, propagandist and organizer for the Soviet system. Elsewhere, media exist to serve the politics of individual owners, or to foment sensation for the sake of profit. Happily, civilized society has also allowed the rise of voices of reason that can assess a situation from everyone’s viewpoint and lead rational discussion. If the discussion leaders focus on the merits of all sides instead of proclaiming an agenda of their own, the discussion is more successful. This is the core value of objectivity: the creation of a strong, balanced public dialogue that cannot be overwhelmed by government fiat, political slant, specious information, simplistic argument and hate. In Nigeria, Mallam Nasir El-Rufai asks, “What happens when every sense of objectivity is blurred by the murky ink of hatchet writers or clouded by shades of religious and ethnic prisms? What happens when voices without conscience, and loath to accept facts dominate our media and discourse?” The value of objectivity is not simply a debate to hold in seminars and journalism schools. It is a fundamental value of public discourse and collaboration. It will endure precisely as long as people speak out in its defence.

#### Do not conflate Objectivity with Neutrality – the truth doesn’t always lie in the Center.

Gutman 12 David Gutman 10-25-2012 "Objectivity Does Not Mean Neutrality: The Danger of False Equivalency in the Media" <https://www.commondreams.org/views/2012/10/25/objectivity-does-not-mean-neutrality-danger-false-equivalency-media> (Ph.D. Assistant Professor. IMSE.)//Elmer

And yet, too often, they do not. The media, too often, reports what officials say and how they say it, and doesn’t delve into the substance and accuracy of the statements. The truth is objective, a presentation of both sides of an argument is not necessarily objective. When a topic is noisily debated, journalists go to pains to present, with equal space and import, both sides of the topic. Usually this is a good thing. The public should know the arguments from all sides of a contentious issue. But sometimes, and this may sound overly simplistic, but it remains true, there is only one credible side to a debate. The earth is getting warmer, and man-made carbon emissions are causing it. Humans evolved from apes. You cannot cut taxes by 20 percent and close enough loopholes to be revenue neutral without raising taxes on the middle class. Study after reputable study has shown these statements to be true. (Admittedly there have been fewer studies of the last claim because it is so much newer, but every reputable study has found the above statement accurate). Yet we still see news stories in which “experts” from both sides of the argument are called upon and given equal standing to make their case. Paul Krugman, the Nobel-winning economist and unabashedly liberal New York Times op-ed columnist, wrote about this phenomenon in 2000. “If a presidential candidate were to declare that the earth is flat, you would be sure to see a news analysis under the headline ‘Shape of the Planet: Both Sides Have a Point.’ After all, the earth isn't perfectly spherical. That analysis is equally applicable today. The mainstream media (with the exception of nakedly partisan outfits like Fox News and MSNBC) are so desperate to appear unbiased that they go out of their way to point out inconsistencies on both sides of the political spectrum even when it may not be appropriate. This false equivalency, the effort of the news media to remain at the political center of an argument, no matter the merits or truthfulness of either side of the argument, is sometimes labeled as a bias towards objectivity. This is a false and misleading turn of phrase. Journalists should always exhibit a bias towards objectivity. Being objective -- dealing with facts or conditions as perceived without distortion by personal feelings -- is always the goal. The trouble comes when objectivity is confused with neutrality. It is fine to be partial, indeed it is imperative if, after a careful examination of the facts, one concludes that the truth lies on one side of the argument. This is being objective. Examining the facts on their merits and presenting the truth is a journalist’s job. Granted, on many issues there is legitimate debate and disagreement, but this is not always the case, and the media should not treat every issue as if both sides have equally valid points. The truth does not always lie in the center. In fact, it rarely does. A journalist’s job is to report the truth, not to neutrally report what both sides say and stake out a safe position in the middle.

#### Prefer our approach that prioritizes Objectivity but still maintains some level of Advocacy – our parallel but separate approach is better than combination.

Ingram 18 Matthew Ingram 6-14-2018 "Advocates are becoming journalists. Is that a good thing?" <https://www.cjr.org/analysis/advocates-journalism.php> (CJR’s chief digital writer. Previously, he was a senior writer with Fortune magazine. He has written about the intersection between media and technology since the earliest days of the commercial internet. His writing has been published in the Washington Post and the Financial Times as well as by Reuters and Bloomberg.)//Elmer

IT WAS AN IMPRESSIVE DISPLAY OF JOURNALISM: An in-depth look at Amazon’s marketing of a controversial facial recognition software product to US law enforcement. It involved record searches in multiple jurisdictions, along with the collection of other evidence about the campaign and its impact. But this tour-de-force didn’t come from a media organization like The New York Times or The Washington Post—it came from the American Civil Liberties Union. In many ways, the story was a perfect fit for an organization like the ACLU: Matt Cagle, a lawyer for the ACLU in Northern California, noticed online marketing materials posted by Amazon for its software, which listed several law-enforcement organizations as users. So Cagle and his team started a records search, got two other ACLU bureaus involved, and the group’s national editorial team pulled the project together. In all, Cagle says, the project involved more than two dozen lawyers and advocates, as well as legal advisers at the national level, editors, and the ACLU’s communications team, and it took several months to come to fruition—the kind of resources many media companies would find hard to marshall for a single story. As the media landscape continues to fragment and many outlets struggle to afford more ambitious reporting projects, non-governmental organizations and advocacy groups like the ACLU and Human Rights Watch are increasingly taking on the role of reporter—breaking stories and in some cases even helping to change policy. But even those leading the new NGO-as-muckraker efforts acknowledge that they’re no replacement for traditional news organizations. “We can definitely bring some skills to bear on this kind of story, but that’s by no means a substitute for the amazing work that journalists do around the country right now,” says Cagle. “But I think if we can help supplement that work and also do our part to educate the public and advocate for civil liberties, then we are doing something good.” There’s no question that work like that done by Human Rights Watch, Greenpeace, and Amnesty International around issues like immigration, the environment, and totalitarianism can help fill gaps in traditional media coverage—especially in foreign countries, where few media companies have the resources to invest in on-the-ground reporting. But these groups are not fundamentally journalistic in nature. Although they may look and behave like modern media organizations, they are advocacy groups, and have an explicit agenda; they’re looking for impact. That agenda may coincide with the news, and they may use traditional journalistic techniques to advance it, but in most cases the larger goal of this work is in service of some kind of policy change or other action, and not information or the public record per se. “Can some of the losses in international journalism be offset by advocacy groups, to the extent that they can provide coverage from areas not getting attention? Clearly the answer is yes,” says Matthew Powers, a professor of communications at the University of Washington and author of NGOs as Newsmakers: The Changing Landscape of International News. “But at the same time it’s also easy to imagine a world where this causes problems, where journalism could become a platform for advocacy purposes and for fundraising.” The line between advocacy groups and media organizations has been blurring for some time. As the internet enabled the democratization of information production and distribution, and social platforms have given everyone the ability to reach an audience, smart NGOs long ago realized they could use these tools to spread their own message, instead of having to rely on partnerships with traditional media. Journalism professor Dan Gillmor wrote a decade ago about the work the ACLU was doing around Guantanamo Bay, and the reporting Human Rights Watch did on issues such as domestic workers in Saudi Arabia. A number of academics have also written about the increasing overlap between NGOs and journalism. “As traditional journalism companies are firing reporters and editors right and left, the almost-journalist organizations have both the deep pockets and staffing to fill in some of the gaps,” Gillmor wrote. He also encouraged NGOs to concentrate on applying journalistic principles such as fact-checking and transparency. Powers says that most NGOs didn’t get into reporting because they were interested in doing journalism or becoming media companies—they did it in order to improve their standing with governments and other policy groups so their lobbying would be taken seriously. “They started doing it primarily so they could look more legitimate to policy makers,” says Powers. Most well-established advocacy organizations still work with media partners to get their message out, as the ACLU did with its face-recognition story: The group reached out to several writers at prominent outlets such as The New York Times and gave them an embargoed version of the research; stories were published by them and the ACLU simultaneously. But many groups have also become standalone media outlets in their own right, with websites and social-media accounts that are widely followed. The ACLU’s newsroom of editors and reporters produce between 14 and 20 stories a week. The group’s editorial director, Terry Tang—who worked as a senior editor at the Times for two decades before joining the ACLU last year—tells CJR she is hiring journalists and looking to expand the ACLU newsroom into new areas, including a podcast and more video production. “We have the legal expertise and policy expertise for a lot of these kinds of stories—people who have been plowing these fields for a long time and really know those issues,” Tang says. “So when something happens it’s not like they’re just reporting the news, they already understand the issues and so they are able to produce analysis as well. It’s not terribly different than having a very seasoned beat reporter.” Others have also been expanding in similar ways: Greenpeace, which has always been media savvy when it comes to getting coverage of its activities, launched an ambitious effort to do its own reporting in 2015, hiring experienced editors and reporters from the Times and the BBC to add to its existing in-house editorial operation, which is called Unearthed (formerly known as Energy Desk). At the ACLU, Tang says the organization is thinking about how to balance the need for longterm research and coverage with the demand to be on top of the news with something relevant to say, so that it will get picked up by social platforms. In other words, she’s working her way through exactly the same kinds of considerations faced by traditional media outlets. Does the desire to promote a specific viewpoint on an issue or news story ever get in the way of producing this kind of journalistic content? Tang says it doesn’t, and that the editorial group makes a point of sticking to a very traditional, fact-based approach. In the end, she says, it’s a matter of trust—if the organization were to bend the rules, eventually people would stop trusting what it was saying. “I came to work at Human Rights Watch because I was interested in figuring out what it looked like to have a different financial model and a different trust model for achieving the good that accountability journalism achieves,” says communications director Nic Dawes, the former editor-in-chief of South Africa’s Mail & Guardian, who joined HRW in 2016. “The whole model relies on the idea that our information is trustworthy, so we put a huge premium on accuracy. I would say in many ways it exceeds what’s done in most journalism organizations.” Some advocacy groups have blurred traditional journalistic lines. For example, Powers says, Greenpeace’s Unearthed site did a report on climate change in 2015 and used journalists who pretended to be executives from the oil and gas industry and found several academics who were willing to be paid for their pro-industry opinions without saying where the money came from. While the organization argued that the outcome was worth it, the group did face some criticism that the tactic amounted to entrapment. “In fairness to Greenpeace, their argument was they couldn’t have gotten the story any other way and that it was important to do it,” Powers says. “But there’s a definite risk that the advocacy element will outweigh the journalistic aspect. I think in the long run that could actually work to their detriment when it comes to trust.” Damian Kahya, a former BBC reporter who runs Greenpeace’s investigative unit, says the team are all professionally trained journalists and the agency only uses fake identities “where we have a suspicion of wrongdoing, clear public interest, and where we believe the information cannot reasonably be obtained by other means.” Kahya added that Greenpeace’s team is separate from the environmental advocacy part of the organization, and that it adheres to “the highest editing and reporting standards.” Other incursions into journalism are less controversial, but still raise questions. In 2007, an intergovernmental body known as UNAIDS acknowledged that the organization had systematically overstated the spread of AIDS. Critics said the organization misstated the numbers in an attempt to create a sense of urgency around the issue to help with fundraising. And in 2015, a number of NGOs and advocacy groups reported that as many as 75 percent of the women in Liberia had been raped during the civil war in that country, but independent surveys put the number closer to between 10 percent and 20 percent. This kind of behavior can come into play not because NGOs are trying to deliberately mislead people, Powers says, but because they need to raise awareness of an issue for practical reasons—it shows that they are doing their jobs, that the organization is necessary, and it helps with fundraising. If the problem of civil rights or AIDS or sex trafficking isn’t a big one, why donate to a group dedicated to addressing it? Of course, traditional media organizations often get accused of distorting the news in similar ways—of selectively including certain facts or quoting certain individuals—because those facts or views fit a certain worldview. In some cases it’s done in order to generate traffic and advertising revenue, but there can also be ideological elements at work (Fox News, or at least the version of it that exists in primetime, springs to mind). But the lines separating one kind of journalism from another are getting increasingly blurry. Some media organizations have become so dependent on advocacy groups for their reporting and coverage that they run their videos or other content without saying where it came from—in a new book about NGOs and the news, Kate Wright from Edinburgh University looked at a week of news about Africa from UK sources, and found nearly half of those that used material produced by NGOs didn’t identify the source. That’s not good for transparency, and it’s not good for readers who think they are getting an independent view. There’s also a risk that journalistic organizations that become intertwined with NGOs or advocacy groups won’t devote the same kind of scrutiny to those groups as they would otherwise. In the end, the world of journalism and the world as a whole are probably better off now that there are activist organizations that are trying to use the tools of modern media to tell stories. The more sources of information there are, especially from remote or developing nations, the better. In some ways, that’s one of the biggest benefits of a democratized media environment—anyone anywhere can become a news source, and that’s fundamentally a good thing, even if some take advantage of it for their own purposes.

### 1AC: Democracy

#### Advantage 1 is Democracy

#### News has hit a Commercialization Crisis – Corporate interests directly undermine Objective and Truthful reporting.

Omenugha et Al 8, Kate Azuka, and Majority Oji. "News commercialization, ethics and objectivity in journalism practice in Nigeria: strange bedfellows?." Revista Estudos em Comunicação-Communication Studies (2008). (Nnamdi Azikiwe University, Nigeria)//Elmer

What is news commercialization? UNESCO (1980:152) alluded to the commercialization of news when it wrote: The news has become commercial product... important developments in the countryside are pushed aside by unimportant, even trivial news items, concerning urban events and the activities of personalities. Though nearly three decades old, UNESCO's assertion certainly has currency in Nigerian media scene as news items have to be paid for by those who want to be heard. News is no longer about reporting timely occurrences or events, it is now about packaged broadcast or reports sponsored or paid for by interested parties. By this practice individuals, communities, private and public organizations, local governments, state governments and ministries, gain access to the mass media during news time for a prescribed fee. The message they wish to put across is then couched in the formal features of news and passed on to the unsuspecting public as such. Willie Nnorom (1994 cited in Ekwo 1996:63) defined news commercialization as "a phenomenon whereby the electronic media report as news or news analysis a commercial message by an unidentified or unidentifiable sponsor, giving the audience the impression that news is fair, objective and socially responsible". We must say that though this definition seems not to include the newspaper industries, news commercialization do occur there too as scholars have noted (see Oso: 2000). News commercialization operates at two levels in Nigeria: At the institutional level, where charges are `officially' placed for sponsored news programmes. For example, the Delta Broadcasting Service, Warri charges N20, 000 [80 pounds] for religious programme, N36, 000 [144 pounds] for corporate coverage and N25, 000 [100 pounds] for social events. Ogbuoshi (2005) gave the commercial rates of Radio Nigeria Enugu as follows: Commercial news (N47, 000 [188 pounds]), news commentary/political news (N52, 000 [208 pounds]), special news commentary/political (N60, 000 [240 pounds]). This commercialization at the institutional level is thriving because editors, publishers and owners of the broadcast stations/ print media see the organizations, or their investment, as a profit making venture that should yield the required financial return. Increasingly, commercial-oriented news stories are taking the place of hard news reports. Hanson (2005: 140) is right when he notes that: "reporters and editors are supposed to be concerned not with profits but rather with reporting the news as best they can. But that barrier is coming down, and editors are increasingly looking at their newspaper as a product that should appeal to advertisers as well as readers." Writing on the semantics of commercialization of news by broadcast stations in Nigeria, Tom Adaba, a one time Director General of the National Broadcasting Commission (NBC), one of the regulatory bodies in Nigeria, makes a distinction between the "legitimate sales of airtime for paid messages adjacent to or within breaks in the news" and "charging news sources for the privilege of covering and relaying their pre-paid views or messages as news". According to him, in the first case, what the sponsors are buying is "the credibility of the newscast and newscasters to confer status by association on their company's logo, message or product" while in the latter: What the broadcast station is doing is selling cheaply the integrity of its newscast and newscasters by attesting to the "truth" of the claims of the so-called "sponsor".... By also charging and receiving fees by whatever name called, to cover `news' of company annual conference meeting, weddings, funeral, chieftaincy installation, town festivals, workshops and seminars, even events organized by charity organizations, stations are not only prostituting the integrity of news, they are insulting their audience and breaching the National Broadcasting Code (Adaba 2001:110). The NBC code makes explicit that: "commercial in news and public affairs programme shall be clearly identified and presented in a manner that shall make them clearly distinguishable from content". (NBC code) It is this passing off of commercial content as news within the Nigerian news media, the assigning of news quality to the commercial that raises ethical questions and challenges the notion of objectivity in Nigerian news reports.

#### Commercial Interests threaten Democratic Ideals - undermines the principal foundations of ethical journalism.

Asogwa et Al 12, Chika Euphemia, and Ezekiel S. Asemah. "News commercialisation, objective journalism practice and the sustenance of democracy in Nigeria." Higher education of social science 3.2 (2012): 27-34. (Head, Department of Mass Communication, Kogi State University, Anyigba, Kogi State, Nigeria.)//Elmer

NEWS COMMERCIALISATION IS A THREAT TO SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT News is no longer news, as it is only those that have money that are newsworthy. The mass media news is supposed to be an index of socio - political life of the people, but reverse is the case. News commercialisation has made the media to mortgage their consciences and professional ethics, for political patronage and appointments. Through their news, they hail every ruler until his tenure elapses. The media have established themselves as false shade to the truth. The journalist who collects money from his interviewee will definitely write news to favour him. The news in the media is now presented against the background of the ruling class. Thus, when someone who is wealthy has any activity even when he or she does not invite the journalists, they will troop there because of the personality involved. According to Ekwo, in Nwosu and Ekwo (1996, p.61): The social service or public service role of the communication media, especially the electronic media has diminished considerably, paving way to a situation whereby access to the media is guaranteed by how much money one can offer to the media. This practice tagged commercialisation of news as different from advertising in the media, is one of the most recent but, dangerous developments in Nigeria media industry, dating from 1988. Ekwo’s assertion shows that what determines news is how much money one is able to offer to the media. News values, which include timeliness, significance, prominence, proximity, among others, are no longer used as basis for judging the news to be aired to the audiencemembers. This development, which according to Ekwo, in Nwosu and Ekwo (1996) dates back to 1988, has persisted till now, as most journalists even demand for money from their interviewees when they go out to conduct interviews. Thus, it becomes difficult for the poor and illiterate people who are constantly seeking new ways to make government to be aware of their opinions, needs, grievances and most importantly, make themselves communicatively interactive, are denied of their rights because they cannot afford to pay what the rich people pay. The mass media now only promote the interests of those who are wealthy in the society, neglecting those who are poor. This explains why MacBride (1980), cited by Ekwo in Nwosu and Ekw (1996, p.61) posits that “unknown to many perhaps, is the fact that not all the news stories they hear these days from the radio, watch on television and even read from the newspaper and magazines, are or used purely because of their news values”. In journalism, there are traditional criteria for judging certain events, ideas, places and personalities as newsworthy, but today, such journalistic criteria are giving way to a situation whereby important developments are pushed aside by unimportant and even trivial news items concerning urban events and the activities of personalities. Nnorom (1994), cited by Ekwo, in Nwosu and Ekwo (1996) describes news commercialisation as a phenomenon whereby the electronic media report as news or news analysis, a commercial message by an unidentified or unidentifiable sponsor, giving the audience the impression that the news is fair, objective and socially responsible. This unwholesome practice has negative effects on the media and the society at large. The impacts as noted by Asemah (2011, p.34) are: a. it has given birth to a situation whereby news is narrowly defined against the weight of the news source’s pocket. The media, whether print or electronic, now use money as criteria for publishing news; b. another problem is the censorship and gate keeping problem, which news commercialisation constitutes for the editor. The editor is handicapped under the commercialisation policy. It is the duty of the editor to always edit stories, but, under the news commercialisation policy, the editor cannot edit stories according to known standards or principles in journalism. He has to be so meticulous in the process of editing, so that he will not edit the substance and length of the story that has been paid for. Any story that has been paid for is not to be edited because, it has automatically become a sacred cow” that is, subjects or issues that get favour of the media houses. The ability of the editor to judge what is news or not is completely restricted because, money becomes the evaluator and perhaps the editor; c. loss of credibility. The news commercialisation policy has made journalists to lose credibility because, it is now believed that they pay attention to the wealthy people who can pay for news so that they can suppress, twist and falsify the stories; and d. government of some countries may bribe journalists to write favourable news items about its policies and programmes, even when they are inimical to public interest.

#### Prioritizing Objectivity shifts Media Reporting to the Public Interest of Truth and Free Information Flows – that’s vital to any Functioning Democracy.

Asogwa et Al 12, Chika Euphemia, and Ezekiel S. Asemah. "News commercialisation, objective journalism practice and the sustenance of democracy in Nigeria." Higher education of social science 3.2 (2012): 27-34. (Head, Department of Mass Communication, Kogi State University, Anyigba, Kogi State, Nigeria.)//Elmer

OBJECTIVE JOURNALISM BUILDS DEMOCRACY Journalism has a lot to contribute to the development of democracy, not only in Nigeria, but the entire world. Objective journalism entails that the journalist should detach him or herself from whatever stories that are being conveyed to the people. When journalist collects bribe from news sources to twist stories, it will definitely lead to one problem or the other. The press articulates public conscience through focusing attention on issues and concerns of public interest. It sets the public agenda. As a purveyor of public opinion, it expresses public sentiment on any given subject, which is entertained by the best informed, most intelligent and most moral persons in the community. If journalism is to serve humanity, then the press should operate objectively. The press always takes on the form and the correlation of the social and political structures within which it operates. To see the difference between press system in full perspective, then one must look at the social systems in which the press functions. To see the social systems in their true relationship to the press, one has to look at certain beliefs and assumptions, which the society holds; the nature of man, the nature of society and the state, the relation of man to the state and the nature of knowledge and truth. The information role of the media in the democratic process involves creating a platform for public dialogue and ensuring diversity of views, values and perspectives on public affairs. The public sphere theory posits that by generating a plurality of understanding, the media should enable individuals to re-interpret their social experiences and question the assumptions and ideas of the dominant culture… it will give subordinate classes increased access to ideas and arguments opposing ideological representation that legitimate their subordination and enables them to explore more fully, ways of changing the structure of society to their advantage (Curran, 1991, p.103). He further notes that the mass media have a role to play in the democratic process, by creating an arena for free dialogue between and among the people and to ensure that their views are observed and adhered to, which includes helping to create the conditions in which alternate viewpoints and perspectives are brought fully into play. In a way, this is a restatement of the old notion of the mass media acting as a market place of ideas. More than this however, is the social purpose of this role. Mass media diversity and pluralism is not just progressive social engineering, it is for emancipation and empowerment, giving people the right to define their normative vision of the world and their place in it through access to alternative perspective of society (Curran, 1991). The media, both the print and electronic, have a very crucial role to play in every democratic process. Ogor, in NBC (2002, p.74) notes that broadcasting is regarded as the oxygen of democracy. Ogor further notes that it is the responsibility of the broadcast media to help increase the level of general awareness and mobilisation of the population and an active participant in the shaping of democratic values, through education and public enlightenment. According to Ogor, in NBC (2002, p.79): Public broadcasting upholds the principles of true speech and expression, as well as, free access to communication. It enables all criticizes to communicate openly on a level playing field. It also serves the interests of all people, irrespective of religion, political background, belief, culture, race, etc. In its overall programming, broadcasting reflects as comprehensively as possible, the range of existing opinions and free flow of information to the people is a must. Going by Ogor’s assertion, information is crucial to the sustenance of democracy in any given society. Democracy cannot thrive without adequate information and communication. There must be free flow of information about the activities of the government to the populace. The populace must be aware of all the activities of the government, whether at the federal, state or local government level. For democracy to be solidified in any country, there must be press freedom. But, how can the media effectively carry out this role, if they are not objective. Schramm (1963) observes that broadcasting is expected to lay a concrete foundation for the democratic culture of a nation and this democratic culture has to be based on equity, truth, fairness, justice and respect for human rights, access itself, as an actor, as well as, evolve new strategies for growth and enduring democracy. The media should be seen as agents of socialisation and source of unity. This would be done through information dissemination and sharing of ideas, so that individuals become aware of a given situation and are able to participate in the task of nation building. Commenting on the role of information in democratic government, Uche (1999, p.79) argues that democracy entails more than electing the so–called representatives of the people into government. What the government later does with the mandate is even much more important and of higher concern to democracy than mere act of being elected. Uche (1999, p.79) further argues that: The essence of democracy can be gotten from the age-long simple definition of the concept, which is government of the people, by the people and for the people. Democracy represents our popular power, a form of government that is centred on the sovereign authority of the people. For the people to retain their power over democratic governance, there must be an unfettered flow of information from the government, through the pluralistic media.

#### Studies prove Perception of Corporate-Media Ties hurts News Credibility.

Oberiri 16, Apuke Destiny. "Journalists’ perception of news commercialization and its implication on media credibility in Nigeria." World Scientific News 55 (2016): 63-76. (Department of Mass Communication, Faculty of Arts and Social Sciences, Taraba State University)//Elmer

BACKGROUND OF THE STUDY “The mass media ought to play the role of gathering, analyzing and disseminating news and information about people, events and issues in society which could be in form of news, commentaries, editorials, advertorials, news analysis, profiles, columns, cartoons, pictures or magazine feature via mass communication medium such as radio, television news papers, magazine, digital TV, face book, you tube, 2 go and other numerous social media to a heterogeneous audience simultaneously or about the same time” Ogunkwo (1999) in Suntai and Vakkai (2014). But reverse is the case in Nigerian Journalism practice as the issues of news commercialization has prompted the mass media to tilt away from objectivity and balance in reporting. The media be it broadcast or print have lost their credibility as they have slowly negate the social responsibility of journalism to an income generated journalism practice. As Asogwa & Asemah (2012) put it: There is an increasing commercialization of the media in Nigeria, the situation that has brought the integrity of the mass media enterprise to question. The social responsibility theory holds that while the press functions as a free enterprise, as guaranteed by the libertarian theory, it must be responsible to a society in which it operates. Based on this theory, the mass media are able to raise issues of public importance. Our mass media today do not seem to perform this social, duty as issues that set agenda for national development are compromised for “naira and kobo”. This abuse at practice has received the attention of mass communication scholars and other stakeholders who now advocate for a reinvention of our media contents to make the media realize their potentials as tools for national development. Onoja (2009) sees news commercialization as “a situation whereby stations begin to raise revenue by charging fees for news reports they should normally carry free”. This implies that, broadcast stations are meant to package and produce news free rather than commercializing it for profit making and gain. Chioma (2013) sees news commercialization “as a tactful strategy through which the media relegates its responsibility of surveying the society”. Johnson (2001, p. 2), cited in Okigbo (1997) argues that balancing the cost of high quality journalism against corporate profit is one of the significant changes in journalism practice today. By implication broadcast media are meant to serve the public by dishing out news and entertainment rather than selling news and entertainment for profit making. As Kenneth and Odorume (2015) put it, “the broadcast media organizations should exist to serve public interest. However, recent journalism practice in Nigeria seems to be plagued with the malady of news commercialization. What this portends is that only the rich will get their ideas communicated to the public thus relegating the common to the background. Media organizations are undeniably expected to protect the public interest of their audiences.” McManus (2009 Pp. 219 & 220), sees news commercialization as ‘any action intended to boost profit that interferes with a journalist’s or news organization’s best effort to maximize public understanding of those issues and events that shape the community they claim to serve’. Also, Nwodu (2006) in National Open University of Nigeria (nd p.28) describes news commercialization as “the deliberate presentation of sponsored information to unsuspecting media audience who perceive these information as conventional public interest-oriented news”. Against this backdrop news commercialization could be a packaged, produced and disseminated information by a sponsor who pays a media organization. It could also be message/information/idea/thoughts payed for by an unidentified sponsor whose idea is trumpeted via a media organization to a large heterogeneous audience in order to influence or modify their thinking. This act of commercializing news by journalist and media organization, greatly affects the objectivity and balance of reporting as Ekeanyanwu and Obianigwe (2012, p. 517) put it “monetary gifts could pressurize a journalist into doing what the giver wants, and this makes the journalist unable to be objective in his reporting of events and issues involving the people who give such gifts. Thus, the news stories produced are likened be commercial products that have been paid for by the customer which should serve the need to which the product is expected, in favor of the customer” Asogwa & Asemah (2012) say “there are many reasons for which media outfits are established; some ideally set up the media to perform social functions of reflecting society and setting agenda for national discourse; others show more interest on generating income; hence, the media are profit oriented. In Nigeria, the latter may be a strong factor, given that media content is considered a commodity for sale, just like other commodities in a capitalist environment” This implies that a journalist who sells his conscience for money with the justification that it is news commercialization will end up deterring his reportage to suit the buyer of his conscience. “He who pays the piper dictates the tune” comes to play here. News commercialization is therefore liken to a wheel while brown envelop journalism is the spook that enhances the wheel to thrive on. That is why Ekerikevwe (2009), sees brown envelope as the commonest practice in journalism in Nigeria. “It is a situation whereby journalists demand for bribe or other forms of gratification before they cover any events or even publish stories from such events”. The implication of brown , envelope causes huge threat to journalism practice Bello & Adejola (2010) elaborates that this implications ranges from “loss of public trust and confidence, loss of professional integrity and sense of duty and inability to uphold the six cardinal elements or canons of journalism – truth, fairness, objectivity, accuracy, independence and responsibility” In a nutshell, this paper’s stand point on news commercialization is that, news commercialization is a paid, non-personal form of communication by unidentified sponsor who projects his/her ideas, thoughts, intentions through mass media such as print, radio, television and the internet. Therefore, to Idowu (2001 p.4), for news to be useful it has to be credible, for it to be trusted it must measure up to some exacting standard of assessment such as: accuracy (when in doubt leave out), balance (reflect all sides of the story), fairness (impartiality to all parties involved), human angle (people minded), depth (well researched/investigated), presentation (telling the story rightly), and reward (be of social relevance to audience) Against this backdrop, the study seeks to investigate the perception of Taraba state journalist on the influence news commercialization exerts on objectivity and balance in reporting. 2. STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM News commercialization has become a major trend in news treatment globally, and an issue of ethical concern in the mass media. It is a tactful strategy through which the media relegates its responsibility of surveying the society – disseminating information on the event, and people of social interest aside for financial gains (Chioma 2013). Therefore the issue of news commercialization has come to characterize journalism practice in Nigeria. A situation that prompt journalist/media organization to collect money in order to publish. The Nigerian adage “money for hand back for ground” comes to play here. Whereby “no money no reporting”. This practice is like a cankerworm eating deep into journalism practice in Nigeria. The good old fairness, objectivity, balance and truth in journalism has been eroded by selfish greed and profit making motive by various media houses in Nigeria. As Azeez (2009) puts it, news organization in our contemporary capitalist time are established on profit making motive; perhaps, unarguably, less on the motive of serving the interest of the public for which they are institutionalized. This negates public interest therefore projecting the voice of the rich at the expense of the poor or the voice of those who can pay at the expense of those who can’t. 3. AIM AND OBJECTIVE OF THE STUDY The aim of this study is to investigate the perception of Taraba State Journalist on the influence news commercialization exerts on media credibility. The study is anchored on the following objectives. i. To ascertain the perception of Journalist in Jalingo metroplois on News commercialization ii. To examine the extent to which news commercialization influences objectivity, fairness, balance and truth in reporting. iii. To explore the forms of news commercialization that is manifest among Journalists in Jalingo Metropolis. iv. To examine what journalists perceive as reasons responsible for News commercialization. 4. RESEARCH QUESTIONS This study is guided by the following research questions: i. What is the perception of Journalist in Jalingo Metropolis on news commercialization ii. To what extent have news commercialization influence objectivity, fairness, balance and truth in reporting. iii. What are the forms of news commercialization manifest among Journalist in Jalingo Metropolis?. iv. What are the possible reasons for the practice of News Commercialization? 5. EMPIRICAL STUDIES Empirical reviews are researches carried out by other authors related to a particular study. It reveals findings, opinions postulated by other authors who have carried out similar studies, projecting their standpoint and take on a particular issue. Lwanga (2002) carried out a research in Uganda to investigate the level to which commercialization in the face of liberalization and commercialization of media services, has affected Radio Uganda’s programming. He employed qualitative and quantitative methods of investigation; finding reveal that although Radio Uganda still has certain public service principles and values, but programming policy has increasingly been changed by commercial considerations. Which is evident from the present rise of commercialized programmes and a decline in education and development programmes. The study revealed some of the causes of this problem to be limitations of finance and other resources which have jeopardized the roles and character of public service radio programming. Further findings revealed that radios in Uganda are established for profit making rather than serve in interest of the public. The study recommends that license fee be developed as a source of revenue for Radio Uganda., government should inject more funding into public service broadcasting institution to supplement other sources of income, before granting them autonomy, while advertising and sponsoring brings in considerable amount of revenue, it should not take place in such a manner as to that undermines the listener’s interest in Radio programming. The broadcasting council should therefore map out solid policies that will systematically guide Radio Uganda in its programming in the new order. In the same vein, Udomisor & Kenneth (2013) carried out a research to ascertain the impact of News Commercialization on Nigeria Broadcasting Commission Communication policy and reveal that “News commercialization is a practice that has unfortunately come to stay with the Nigeria society as a result of economic and psychological considerations. Public Service Broadcasting (PSB) is supposed to serve the interest of the public. Serve as a purveyor of information through which both the rich and poor can express themselves freely. The media operators should know that by charging money, they are reducing their credibility in the eyes of the public. Instead of them to be controller of news, it is now the advert companies that determine the pace and flow of news, and what constitutes news at any point time” they suggested that If the media houses should regain their glory and rightful place in the minds of the public, the practitioners should be adequately paid. It is only when they are well paid that they can disabuse their mind from sharp practices. Secondly, regular training and re-training should be organized for journalists to enable them continue to keep abreast and perform their basic roles to the society. Thirdly, media owners should not sacrifice public affairs and issue at alter of profit. They should realize that the electromagnetic waves they are using is a public property which they are holding in trust. Fourthly instead of selling news, the stations can think of other sources of revenue like investments if it is private stations and increased funding in the case of government stations. Finally, the relevant regulatory agencies should add more bite to their operations. They should go beyond publishing and re-publishing of codes by ensuring that the media houses are compelled to comply with the ethic of the profession in the interest, unity and development of the country. Papathanassopoulos (2001) in Kenneth & Odorume (2015) analyzed the effects of media commercialization and market expansion in Greek journalism and argues that although journalism appears to be a profession which plays a more active social and political role in Greece, giving the impression that it sets the agenda and represents the ordinary citizen it is heavily influenced by the constraints imposed by the news organizations. The article first discusses to what extent the “professional model” of journalism can be applied to all countries. Second, it provides a brief account of the contemporary media landscape. It then discusses the implications of media commercialization on Greek journalism drawing from original and other research. 6. THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK The theory suitable for this study is the social responsibility theory. The social responsibility theory came as a result of the libertarian theory. The theory came into existence the middle of 20th century. In Okunna’s (1999) word, social responsibility is a modern theory because it was promulgated in the twentieth century. The theory came into limelight because the press abused the freedom given to them, which they enjoyed as a result of the free press. Under every free press objective flow of information ought to be which gives citizens avenue and opportunity to express themselves well as air their viewpoint. But due to sensationalization and yellow journalism this free flow of information was deterred in the libertarian system. Against this backdrop, social responsibility theory rests on the concept of free press acting responsibly. The press, which enjoys a privileged position under the government, is obliged to be responsible. The theory urges media practitioners to ensure representation of all facts not siding or becoming sensational in reportage but being balance and unbiased. This implies that a journalist ought to protect his image by being fair, objective, unbiased, thereby reporting events/occurrences as it happens without icing or decorating it. By so doing, a journalist is mandated to win the trust of his audience through credible and not biased reporting. Oluagbade (2003), cited in Asemah (2011) defines communication ethics, as the basis for conforming to recognized standard; of course, the point of communication ethics is to prevent good men from going bad. Ethics emphasizes- responsibilities of the media in the packaging of their contents. The theory is relevant to the study because it reprimands and cautions journalists not to disregard his duty to the society; he must not ‘yellow journalize’ stories or use the media to cause chaos in the society but engage in truthful journalism rather than journalism full of deceit, lies and subjectivity. 7. METHODOLOGY The qualitative survey research method was employed for this study. Hardy and Bryman (2004) notes “that the survey research design is used for observing the social and behavioral characteristics, attitudes values and beliefs of a large population using only a few people or items considered to be representative of the entire group”. The researchers employed questionnaire as the instrument for data collection. The population of the study comprises of registered journalist under NUJ Jalingo chapter which are about 293 (Source: NUJ Jalingo chapter). Therefore to ascertain the sample size of the study the Taro Yamane’s formula was used thus: N N = 1+ N (e)2 where: N = sample size sought; e = Margin (0.10) 2 N = Population size 293 293 N = 1 + 293(0.10)2 293 N = 3.93 N = 74.5 approximately 75 The purposive sampling method was used to select 75 sample sized respondents. The respondents were purposively selected from the different correspondent’s chapel and Newspaper bureau that are covering Taraba State. The essence of using purposive sampling was because the researchers had some characteristics in mind and such characteristics had to do with on-the-job experience of Journalist in Jalingo Metropolis. Data gathered were presented in pie charts and bar charts. Descriptive analysis was employed for data analysis which comprises the use of frequency counts and simple percentages. 8. DATA PRESENTATION AND ANALYSIS Research Question one: What is the perception of Journalists in Jalingo metropolis on news commercialization? [Table 1 Omitted] Table 1 above sought to find out respondent’s perception on the notion that commercialization of news has been disguised as advertisement. 15 (20%) out of the 75 respondents strongly agreed that news commercialization has been disguised as advertisement, 40 (53.3%) agreed to the same notion, on the contrary 11 (14.7%) strongly disagreed, and 7 (9.3%) disagreed that news commercialization has been disguised as advertisement. Whereas 2 (2.7%) remained undecided. This response implies that most of the respondents believe that news commercialization have been disguised as advertisement. [Table 2 Omitted] Table 2 above seeks to reveal respondents perception of what news commercialization is all about. From the findings, 40 (53.3%) of the respondents see news commercialization as accepting payment for news publication, 20 (26.7%) agreed that news commercialization is generating revenue for stations to enable the management run them on a day to day basis and even beyond. Whereas, 10 (13.3%) respondents out of the 75 opine that news commercialization is soliciting for gratification in order to suppress the truth, while 5 (6.7%) are with the opinion that news commercialization is the deliberate presentation of sponsored information to unsuspecting media audience. This findings proves that majority of the respondents believe that news commercialization is the acceptance of money for news publication. That is a situation whereby a journalist collects bribe (money) before he/she publish any news event. Research Question Two: To what extent have news commercialization influence objectivity, fairness, balance and truth in reporting? [Table 3 Omitted] Table 3 sought to enquire whether news commercialization has any effect on objectivity and balance in reporting. 52 (69.3%) out of 75 of the respondents strongly agreed that news commercialization affects objectivity and balance in reporting, 13 (17.3%) agreed to the same assertion, whereas, 5 (6.7%) strongly disagree that news commercialization affects objectivity and balance in reporting while 5 (6.7%) of the respondents disagreed that news commercialization affects objectivity and balance in reporting. By implication, the findings reveals that most of the respondents are of the opinion that news commercialization affects objectivity and balance in reporting. [Table 4 Omitted] Table 4 above seek to find out the perception of respondents on news commercialization as regards to media trust and credibility. 20 (26.7%) out of 75 of the respondents strongly agreed that news commercialization affects media trust and credibility, 35 (46.7%) agreed that news commercialization affects media trust and credibility. While on the contrary, 10 (13.3%) respondents strongly disagreed to the assertion/notion+-n that news commercialization affects media trust and credibility, and 8 (6.7%) respondents also disagreed while 2 (1.3%) remained undecided. The findings reveal that to a greater extent news commercialization affects the credibility and trust of the media as concurred by most of the respondents. This means that the more a media or journalist engages in news commercialization the more it loses its trust and credibility.

#### Best studies prove declining distrust in news objectivity diminishes Democratic accountability.

Sands 20 John Sands 8-4-2020 "Americans are losing faith in an objective media. A new Gallup/Knight study explores why." <https://knightfoundation.org/articles/americans-are-losing-faith-in-an-objective-media-a-new-gallup-knight-study-explores-why/> (Researcher at the Knights Foundation)//Elmer

Americans have high aspirations for the news media to be a trusted, independent watchdog that holds the powerful to account. But in a new Gallup/Knight study, we’ve found the gap is growing between what Americans expect from the news and what they think they are getting. Perceptions of bias are increasing too, which further erodes the media’s ability to deliver on its promise to our democracy. The landmark poll of 20,000 people found that Americans’ hope for an objective media is all but lost. Instead, they see an increasing partisan slant in the news, and a media eager to push an agenda. As a result, the media’s ability to hold leaders accountable is diminished in the public’s eye. The study also explores the connections between political affiliation and attitudes toward the media, as well the public’s view on diversity in newsrooms and the connection between local news consumption, civic engagement and community attachment. A hallmark of Knight Foundation’s Trust, Media and Democracy initiative, “American Views 2020: Trust, Media and Democracy” is a biennial report based on a poll that took place over last winter. It is one of the most comprehensive surveys of public opinion on the media, and holds important implications for the future of journalism and our democracy. You can read more below, or join a discussion of the findings in partnership with the Paley Center at 2 p.m. Thursday, Aug. 6. Here are 10 findings that stood out to us: 1) 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.

#### Accountability is critical to a functioning democracy – specifically by an Objective Press.

Hamilton and Krosnick 20 [James Hamilton](https://profiles.stanford.edu/james-hamilton) and [Jon Krosnick](https://profiles.stanford.edu/jon-krosnick) 2-27-2020 "Stanford researchers discuss journalism and democracy in lead up to Super Tuesday" <https://news.stanford.edu/2020/02/27/journalism-and-democracy/> (Hamilton also directs the Stanford Journalism Program, is a co-founder of the Stanford Computational Journalism Lab and a senior fellow at the Stanford Institute for Economic Policy Research. Krosnick also directs the Political Psychology Research Group and is a professor, by courtesy, of psychology.)//Elmer

How important is an objective media for a functioning democracy? Hamilton: Objectivity was a commercial product that only evolved in the late 1800s with the high costs of printing presses. Newspapers shifted from partisan to nonpartisan in order to attract larger audiences from both parties and to sell these readers’ attention to advertisers. Fast forward to today’s world of hundreds of cable channels and millions of websites. Each person is better able to find an outlet that reflects their worldview, which can also reinforce their political views and affect their electoral choices. Criticisms of the media can also have political dividends. Historically, attacks by politicians on the credibility of the media have been part of a conscious strategy to weaken the accountability function of reporters. For example, attacks on the media as biased during President Richard Nixon’s administration, especially by Vice President Spiro Agnew, were frequent and virulent. Krosnick: In recent years, we have seen a collapse of the notion that politically relevant facts can be discerned by news professionals, leaving voters uncertain about whether the messages communicated by those professionals can be trusted. President Trump has played a major role in raising doubts about the veracity of information conveyed by major news organizations. Social media has allowed individuals and small organizations to disseminate messages (perhaps accurate, perhaps false) directly to voters, unmediated by major news organizations. And Russia has been accused of disseminating false information via social media, as well. All this means is that voters are forced to identify news sources they trust. And because different news sources are disseminating different messages about the same matters, voters will now end up with more disparate views of reality than was the case decades ago.

#### Democracy solves Nuclear War.

Diamond 19, Larry. Ill winds: Saving democracy from Russian rage, Chinese ambition, and American complacency. Penguin Books, 2019. (professor of Sociology and Political Science at Stanford University, PhD in Sociology)//Elmer

The most obvious response to the ill winds blowing from the world’s autocracies is to help the winds of freedom blowing in the other direction. The democracies of the West cannot save themselves if they do not stand with democrats around the world. This is truer now than ever, for several reasons. We live in a globalized world, one in which models, trends, and ideas cascade across borders. Any wind of change may gather quickly and blow with gale force. People everywhere form ideas about how to govern—or simply about which forms of government and sources of power may be irresistible—based on what they see happening elsewhere. We are now immersed in a fierce global contest of ideas, information, and norms. In the digital age, that contest is moving at lightning speed, shaping how people think about their political systems and the way the world runs. As doubts about and threats to democracy are mounting in the West, this is not a contest that the democracies can afford to lose. Globalization, with its flows of trade and information, raises the stakes for us in another way. Authoritarian and badly governed regimes increasingly pose a direct threat to popular sovereignty and the rule of law in our own democracies. Covert flows of money and influence are subverting and corrupting our democratic processes and institutions. They will not stop just because Americans and others pretend that we have no stake in the future of freedom in the world. If we want to defend the core principles of self-government, transparency, and accountability in our own democracies, we have no choice but to promote them globally. It is not enough to say that dictatorship is bad and that democracy, however flawed, is still better. Popular enthusiasm for a lesser evil cannot be sustained indefinitely. People need the inspiration of a positive vision. Democracy must demonstrate that it is a just and fair political system that advances humane values and the common good. To make our republics more perfect, established democracies must not only adopt reforms to more fully include and empower their own citizens. They must also support people, groups, and institutions struggling to achieve democratic values elsewhere. The best way to counter Russian rage and Chinese ambition is to show that Moscow and Beijing are on the wrong side of history; that people everywhere yearn to be free; and that they can make freedom work to achieve a more just, sustainable, and prosperous society. In our networked age, both idealism and the harder imperatives of global power and security argue for more democracy, not less. For one thing, if we do not worry about the quality of governance in lower-income countries, we will face more and more troubled and failing states. Famine and genocide are the curse of authoritarian states, not democratic ones. Outright state collapse is the ultimate, bitter fruit of tyranny. When countries like Syria, Libya, and Afghanistan descend into civil war; when poor states in Africa cannot generate jobs and improve their citizens’ lives due to rule by corrupt and callous strongmen; when Central American societies are held hostage by brutal gangs and kleptocratic rulers, people flee—and wash up on the shores of the democracies. Europe and the United States cannot withstand the rising pressures of immigration unless they work to support better, more stable and accountable government in troubled countries. The world has simply grown too small, too flat, and too fast to wall off rotten states and pretend they are on some other planet. Hard security interests are at stake. As even the Trump administration’s 2017 National Security Strategy makes clear, the main threats to U.S. national security all stem from authoritarianism, whether in the form of tyrannies from Russia and China to Iran and North Korea or in the guise of antidemocratic terrorist movements such as ISIS.1 By supporting the development of democracy around the world, we can deny these authoritarian adversaries the geopolitical running room they seek. Just as Russia, China, and Iran are trying to undermine democracies to bend other countries to their will, so too can we contain these autocrats’ ambitions by helping other countries build effective, resilient democracies that can withstand the dictators’ malevolence. Of course, democratically elected governments with open societies will not support the American line on every issue. But no free society wants to mortgage its future to another country. The American national interest would best be secured by a pluralistic world of free countries—one in which autocrats can no longer use corruption and coercion to gobble up resources, alliances, and territory. If you look back over our history to see who has posed a threat to the United States and our allies, it has always been authoritarian regimes and empires. As political scientists have long noted, no two democracies have ever gone to war with each other—ever. It is not the democracies of the world that are supporting international terrorism, proliferating weapons of mass destruction, or threatening the territory of their neighbors.

#### Nuke war causes extinction AND outweighs other existential risks

PND 16. internally citing Zbigniew Brzezinski, Council of Foreign Relations and former national security adviser to President Carter, Toon and Robock’s 2012 study on nuclear winter in the Bulletin of Atomic Scientists, Gareth Evans’ International Commission on Nuclear Non-proliferation and Disarmament Report, Congressional EMP studies, studies on nuclear winter by Seth Baum of the Global Catastrophic Risk Institute and Martin Hellman of Stanford University, and U.S. and Russian former Defense Secretaries and former heads of nuclear missile forces, brief submitted to the United Nations General Assembly, Open-Ended Working Group on nuclear risks. A/AC.286/NGO/13. 05-03-2016. <http://www.reachingcriticalwill.org/images/documents/Disarmament-fora/OEWG/2016/Documents/NGO13.pdf> //Re-cut by Elmer

Consequences human survival 12. Even if the 'other' side does NOT launch in response the smoke from 'their' burning cities (incinerated by 'us') will still make 'our' country (and the rest of the world) uninhabitable, potentially inducing global famine lasting up to decades. Toon and Robock note in ‘Self Assured Destruction’, in the Bulletin of Atomic Scientists 68/5, 2012, that: 13. “A nuclear war between Russia and the United States, even after the arsenal reductions planned under New START, could produce a nuclear winter. Hence, an attack by either side could be suicidal, resulting in self assured destruction. Even a 'small' nuclear war between India and Pakistan, with each country detonating 50 Hiroshima-size atom bombs--only about 0.03 percent of the global nuclear arsenal's explosive power--as air bursts in urban areas, could produce so much smoke that temperatures would fall below those of the Little Ice Age of the fourteenth to nineteenth centuries, shortening the growing season around the world and threatening the global food supply. Furthermore, there would be massive ozone depletion, allowing more ultraviolet radiation to reach Earth's surface. Recent studies predict that agricultural production in parts of the United States and China would decline by about **20 percent** for four years, and by 10 percent for a decade.” 14. A conflagration involving USA/NATO forces and those of Russian federation would most likely cause the deaths of most/nearly all/all humans (and severely impact/extinguish other species) as well as destroying the delicate interwoven techno-structure on which latter-day 'civilization' has come to depend. Temperatures would drop to below those of the last ice-age for up to 30 years as a result of the lofting of up to 180 million tonnes of very black soot into the stratosphere where it would remain for decades. 15. Though human ingenuity and resilience shouldn't be underestimated, human survival itself is arguably problematic, to put it mildly, under a 2000+ warhead USA/Russian federation scenario. 16. The Joint Statement on Catastrophic Humanitarian Consequences signed October 2013 by 146 governments mentioned 'Human Survival' no less than 5 times. The most recent (December 2014) one gives it a highly prominent place. Gareth Evans’ ICNND (International Commission on Nuclear Non-proliferation and Disarmament) Report made it clear that it saw the threat posed by nuclear weapons use as one that at least threatens what we now call 'civilization' and that potentially threatens human survival with an immediacy that even climate change does not, though we can see the results of climate change here and now and of course the immediate post-nuclear results for Hiroshima and Nagasaki as well.

### 1AC: Pandemics

#### Advantage 2 is Pandemics:

#### Objective Media Coverage is key to combat Vaccine Disinformation BUT Advocacy creates polarization that hardens misinformation.

Sullivan 21 Margaret Sullivan 3-7-2021 "The media plays a crucial role in battling vaccine misinformation. But here’s what not to do." <https://www.washingtonpost.com/lifestyle/media/vaccine-misinformation-media/2021/03/05/fd01a0ba-7dbd-11eb-a976-c028a4215c78_story.html> (Education: Georgetown University; Northwestern University's Medill School of Journalism)//Elmer

There are all sorts of ways to counter reluctance to get the coronavirus vaccine. There’s leading by example. There’s guilt. And there’s pure charm. Dolly Parton went the latter route last week as she got her first shot, wearing a sparkly blue cold-shoulder dress for her Instagram PSA and crooning “Vaccine” to the tune of her signature “Jolene.” Anthony S. Fauci made an argument both moral and scientific, reflective of his Jesuit education. “Think about your societal obligation,” he told members of the military, about a third of whom reportedly don’t want the vaccine. He added: “Like it or not, you’re propagating this outbreak.” And Boston Marathon director Dave McGillivray chose to inspire, explaining to the Wall Street Journal how he took the logistics expertise he would have deployed for this year’s canceled race and reapplied it to organizing vaccinations in Massachusetts instead. Despite all this high-level persuasion, a big chunk of Americans — about 3 in 10 — remain hesitant, according to a new Pew Research survey. And like Parton, Fauci and McGillivray, the news media has a role to play — not in outright advocacy, but in relentlessly providing accurate, nuanced information and answering questions straightforwardly. “There is a lot to be said for honestly reporting as much context as possible and knowing the terrain into which your sound bites and headlines will play,” said Emily Bell, director of the Tow Center for Digital Journalism at Columbia University. Although Bell is eager to see more people move past their concerns and get the vaccine, she told me she doesn’t believe in downplaying the numbers on negative reactions to shots: “All you are doing is reinforcing the narrative of the ‘wellness bloggers’ that Big Pharma is hiding something.” And what journalists shouldn’t concentrate on, according to one misinformation expert I talked to, is spending too much energy debunking myths. Some of the most popular myths: That tech mogul Bill Gates is secretly implanting microchips in people’s arms. That the vaccine causes the disease. That there are toxic levels of mercury in the doses. That flu shots protect against covid-19, so the newer vaccine is unnecessary. But even though such notions are incorrect and damagingly so, “the media should not be playing Whack-a-Mole by debunking every obscure rumor,” said Claire Wardle, founder of First Draft, a nonprofit that fights online misinformation. “The more you say some outrageous thing is not true — ‘No, Bill Gates is not microchipping you!’ — the more you give people the key words” that will send them down the social media rabbit hole of misinformation, she told me. “You’re giving it oxygen.” Instead, like Bell, she believes it’s all about relentlessly educating the public by answering reasonable questions with as much expertise as can be mustered. Local reporters — who tend to be relatively well-trusted — are especially important in this effort, providing basic information, and pointing readers or viewers to credible public-health sources. Sadly, there are far fewer of these reporters than when the pandemic began. At their best, local news organizations also provide important watchdog coverage, as the Boston Globe did Friday in an investigative report about Massachusetts Gov. Charlie Baker’s (R) administration disastrously pivoting to privatize vaccine distribution, with private entities awarded no-bid contracts “to undertake perhaps one of the state’s most pressing, ambitious initiatives in modern times.” The media’s performance, to date, has been far from perfect. Early on, the overemphasis of allergic reactions — without enough context — set a bad standard. And some experts think the media coverage has been too pessimistic overall. “The public has been offered a lot of misguided fretting over new virus variants, subjected to misleading debates about the inferiority of certain vaccines, and presented with long lists of things vaccinated people still cannot do, while media outlets wonder whether the pandemic will ever end,” sociologist Zeynep Tufekci wrote in the Atlantic. The joy of vax: The people giving the shots are seeing hope, and it’s contagious Still, there’s evidence that some people are changing their minds. The number of those who don’t intend to get the vaccine has come down from about 40 percent a few months ago to about 30 percent now, according to the new Pew numbers. Vaccine coverage still has room for improvement. “What the public needs to hear,” Tufekci wrote, “. . . is that based on existing data, we expect them to work fairly well — but we’ll learn more about precisely how effective they’ll be over time, and that tweaks may make them even better.” Before last year’s election, the reality-based media — to its everlasting credit — got across the idea that election night probably wouldn’t provide the answer to who won the presidency, that it might take weeks to count the vote. The media succeeded by repeating this message over many weeks, basing their accounts on credible experts, and warning about misinformation campaigns. When the pandemic-hampered vote count did indeed take several days, most news consumers were prepared to recognize this as acceptable, and far less likely to buy into the lie that the election had been stolen. Call it a victory, rare enough these days, for good information over bad. Vaccine coverage — with its life-or-death implications — is even more consequential. We need to get it right.

#### Credible News Distribution is key to vaccine adoption – it’s the only way to end Pandemics.

Harmon 21 Gerald Harmon 9-27-2021 "Defeating misinformation is key in ending the pandemic" <https://www.ama-assn.org/about/leadership/defeating-misinformation-key-ending-pandemic> (Gerald E. Harmon, MD, a family medicine specialist having practiced for more than 30 years in coastal South Carolina, became 176th president of the American Medical Association in June 2021. He was first elected to the AMA Board of Trustees in June 2013 and elected board chair in 2018. In addition, Dr. Harmon also served as the secretary of the AMA in 2016.)//Elmer

As we confront yet another major surge in COVID-19 cases and hospitalizations across the country, we are once more fighting a two-pronged war: against the virus and against rampant misinformation. The evidence around vaccination is abundantly clear. Vaccines are by far the best way for your patients to protect themselves and their loved ones from severe complications of COVID-19. But you wouldn’t know it if you were a regular viewer of some popular TV networks, or received your news from agenda-driven websites that traffic in half-truths and outright lies about the virus. Whatever their reasons, the result of this misinformation crusade is doubt, confusion and division at a time when our public response to this pandemic must be unified and resolute. This sobering reality has been made clear by the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention: Roughly 99% of deaths linked to COVID-19 in this wave—and the vast majority of those with severe symptoms that require hospitalization—have come among patients who were not fully vaccinated. The Food and Drug Administration’s recent approval of the Pfizer-BioNTech vaccine against COVID-19 is not only a landmark event in science and medicine; it is an opportunity to set the record straight. Vaccines for COVID-19 are safe. They are effective. And they are our best chance to bring this pandemic to an end. But vaccines alone won’t save us. Now, more than ever before, the public needs honest and clear communication about the importance of vaccines, vaccine science, and the crucial role they have in protecting public health. Obligations of responsible media Entities of public trust in society play an important role as credible sources for information at all times, but particularly during a public health crisis. Given their reach and influence, news organizations carry tremendous responsibility. They must help viewers and readers separate the facts from fiction, and proven treatments from potentially dangerous poisons. As physicians, and in an effort to ease the tremendous pressure on our nation’s health system, the AMA urges the cooperation of media outlets—TV, print and online—to tell the truth about the safety and efficacy of these COVID-19 vaccines, the rigorous research and review process behind them, and to be voices for science and evidence for their audiences. Reporting on unproven and potentially dangerous treatments for this virus, including ivermectin, hydroxychloroquine and other treatments that have not been scientifically validated, confuses the public and puts lives at even greater risk. As fall proceeds, the ongoing tragedy of the COVID-19 pandemic in our country is only intensified by the fact that science has given us the means to bring this dark chapter to a close. Vaccination is our only way out this pandemic—but that exit will remain blocked until the vast majority of those who are eligible to receive the vaccination do so. It is clear that some media outlets and personalities continue to foster hesitancy and resistance to COVID-19 vaccinations by framing the issue solely in terms of infringement upon civil liberties or personal freedom, and those voices that are then amplified through social media and other online channels.

#### Best studies conclude aff – misinformation independently causes disease spread, but “immunization” against “fake news” solves.

Brainard & Hunter ’19 [Julii Brainard – Dr, Senior Research Associate, Norwich Medical School Honorary Research Fellow, Norwich Medical School Member, Epidemiology and Public Health Member, Public Health and Health Services Research, Paul Hunter - Professor in Medicine, Norwich Medical School Member, Water Security Research Centre Member, Epidemiology and Public Health Member, Public Health and Health Services Research, “Misinformation making a disease outbreak worse: outcomes compared for influenza, monkeypox, and norovirus”, 11-12-2019, https://journals.sagepub.com/doi/full/10.1177/0037549719885021]//pranav

No previous studies have integrated information spread with disease spread to the level of sophistication that we have done. Prior models often considered information spread in disease outbreak development, but information awareness was typically equally available to all agents, and benign at worst. Thus, information spread in the models nearly always led to greater protective measures (such as increasing vaccine uptake or decreasing contact rates41–50). Most previous similar disease and awareness spread models had awareness increases that could only happen following physical contact or as a result of global conditions.42,45,48,50–55 Our modeling is unusual because information spread was individual and separated from the physical interactions that could transmit disease. Our model is unique and original in attempting to consider the potentially deleterious role of information sharing with stochastic and individually assigned elements. The need for research such as ours has been recognized before.17,56 More sophisticated information sharing networks than we tried to create could make these models more credible. There exist more sophisticated models on rumor spread that we could possibly replicate for the information spreading process,57–59 and simultaneously merge with existing sophisticated disease spread models. More ambitious models than ours would describe more agents and more complicated movement patterns, such as including flight as a behavior option. Many rumor spreading models have borrowed ideas and methods from epidemiological models,60,61 but not many (if any) previous models have integrated both rumor and disease spread as separate but interacting processes into one unified probabilistic model. This study describes the spread of three viral diseases; misinformation affecting the spread of bacterial diseases could be modeled equally well. The ideas could be applied to non-communicable diseases and health outcomes, but it would be necessary to change the time scale to be much longer to model chronic and lifestyle diseases and how their incidence might change in response to circulating misinformation. A much longer time scale would mean incorporating many other lifestyle factors into the models. Model construction relied heavily on a small number of existing studies about such factors as number of contact rates, social contacts (i.e.., Dunbar numbers), how much bad or good advice can change behavior, and the propensity to believe in misinformation (the finding that on average, British people believe in 38.9% of conspiracy theories that they are exposed to). More reliably estimating any of these and many of the other factors would also increase the credibility of our results. Our threshold for a “worse” outbreak situation was r0 being 40% worse or the number of generations of disease transmission increased from 4 to 7; these thresholds were decided for convenience in this set of demonstration models. Given our definition of stage 2 as an outbreak “made worse by circulating misinformation,” stage 3.1 modeling concluded for all three diseases that a ratio of about 60:40 good:bad advice circulating would reduce the stage 2 conditions to those of stage 1. The models also suggested that “immunizing” about 20% of the population against misinformation was likely to revert stage 2 to stage 1 conditions (for all diseases, stage 3.3). Since these apparent consistencies could be artefacts of shared model design, tests to explore the true consistency of these findings for multiple diseases would be worthwhile. It is possible that more sophisticated, detailed, or larger models or more flexible modeling software62 would facilitate better insights into risk distributions and behavior choices. There is uncertainty in the reliability of these findings because the models are experimental and have not been tested in real world situations. There is a general lack of reliable quantification for how much misinformation spread impacts real life risk-taking behavior with regard to communicable diseases. 5. Conclusions We applied three stages of modeling (1 = no misinformation spread, 2 = misinformation making outbreaks worse, and 3 = strategies to reduce the influence of misinformation). Our modeling approach and design is adaptable to many different types of diseases. Controlling spread of misinformation or susceptibility to it could reduce communicable disease burdens. Our stage 3.1 modeling found that a ratio of about 60:40 good:bad circulating advice reduced stage 2 conditions to those of stage 1 in three types of disease. “Immunizing” about 20% of the population against misinformation (stage 3.3) was likely to revert stage 2 to stage 1 conditions (for all diseases). The feasibility of implementing these types of strategies (“immunization” or changing the proportions of types of advice in circulation) should be explored. The efficacy of implementing such strategies to fight “fake news” needs to be tested in real world settings, with costs and benefits ideally compared with real world disease reduction.

#### Pandemics risk extinction - simulations, empirics, and surging connectivity prove.

Kim 21, Kiseong, et al. "Network Analysis to Identify the Risk of Epidemic Spreading." Applied Sciences 11.7 (2021): 2997. (Department of Bio and Brain Engineering, KAIST; R&D Center)//Re-cut by Elmer

Several epidemics, such as the Black Death and the Spanish flu, have threatened human life throughout history; however, it is unclear if humans will remain safe from the sudden and fast spread of epidemic diseases. Moreover, the transmission characteristics of epidemics remain undiscovered. In this study, we present the results of an epidemic simulation experiment revealing the relationship between epidemic parameters and pandemic risk. To analyze the time-dependent risk and impact of epidemics, we considered two parameters for infectious diseases: the recovery time from infection and the transmission rate of the disease. Based on the epidemic simulation, we identified two important aspects of human safety with regard to the threat of a pandemic. First, humans should be safe if the fatality rate is below 100%. Second, even when the fatality rate is 100%, humans would be safe if the average degree of human social networks is below a threshold value. Nevertheless, certain diseases can potentially infect all nodes in the human social networks, and these diseases cause a pandemic when the average degree is larger than the threshold value. These results indicated that certain infectious diseases lead to human extinction and can be prevented by minimizing human contact. 1. Introduction The emergence of a pandemic is one of the various scenarios frequently discussed as a human extinction event, and it is listed as one of the global catastrophic risks in studies regarding the future [1,2,3]. In particular, several pandemics, such as the Black Death [4,5], Spanish flu [6], and those caused by smallpox [7], severe acute respiratory syndrome (SARS) [8], and Ebola [9], have affected a large population throughout history. The risk of pandemics increases with an increase in population mobility between cities, nations, and continents, thereby threatening humankind [10,11,12]. It is essential to analyze the epidemic spread in society to minimize the damage from epidemic disasters; however, extinctive epidemic spreading experiments have limitations in real-world situations, as they predict stochastic effects on the spread without considering the structure of human society. Network-based approaches have been proposed to overcome these limitations and perform epidemic spreading simulations by considering the network structure of numerous real-world connections [13,14,15]. These methods use various models of epidemic spreading, such as the susceptible–infectious–susceptible (SIS) [16,17,18], susceptible–infectious–recovered (SIR) [19,20,21], and Watts threshold models [22]. While these methods are mathematically convenient, they are epidemiologically unrealistic for various infections because they require exponentially distributed incubation and infectious periods [23,24,25]. Moreover, previous epidemic studies did not perform quantitative assessment of the pandemic risk depending on the network connectivity in individuals and fatality rate of various diseases [26]. In the present study, we applied an SIR epidemic model to a scale-free network with Monte Carlo simulation to identify the quantitative relationship between infectious diseases and human existence. Our fundamental hypothesis states that when the epidemic spreads to all nodes of the network and the fatality rate is 100%, it can increase the pandemic risk. To address this, we initially constructed a scale-free network to simulate a society. Moreover, for the epidemic spreading simulation, an SIR model was applied to the network to describe the immune state of an individual after infection. From the simulation study, we found that the mean degree of a scale-free network was an essential factor in determining whether epidemics threaten humans. This approach provides important insights into epidemic spreading analysis by investigating the relationship between epidemic and scale-free network parameters. Furthermore, it highlights the necessity of determining information flow during an epidemic. 2. Materials and Methods We designed an epidemic simulation process to identify the relationship between pandemic risk and network parameters. This study was performed in four steps (Figure 1): (i) generating a scale-free network model to reflect real-world conditions; (ii) applying an SIR model to the scale-free network for epidemic spreading simulations; (iii) adapting the Monte Carlo method to reflect the stochastic process in the node status of the SIR model; and (iv) iteratively performing simulation for every parameter set and analyzing the results. We have provided the source code and sample results of epidemic simulation in Supplementary Materials. Figure 1. Overview of epidemic simulation process based on the Monte Carlo method. (A) We generated scale-free networks for a fixed population (N = 1,000,000) and various node degrees (k = 2, 5, 7, and 10). (B) Epidemic spreading was simulated by applying a susceptible–infectious–recovered (SIR) model to the scale-free network. We set the epidemic parameters, β and γd. β represents the spreading rate of epidemics, and γd is the reciprocal of γ and reflects the time interval between infection and recovery. Randomly, 0.05% of nodes were initially infected. (C) We adapted the Monte Carlo method to determine the status of the transition from the infection node to immunization node. Repeated simulations were performed until a steady state was achieved. (D) For every parameter set, 10,000 simulations were performed. 2.1. Network Generation Based on a Scale-Free Model We constructed a network model for the epidemic spreading simulation (Figure 1). The nodes and edges of the network represent people in the society and their physical contacts, respectively. We used a scale-free network model, which follows the preferential attachment property observed in numerous real-world networks, such as social networks, physical systems, and economic networks [27,28,29]. In the scale-free network, when a node is added to the network, its likelihood of connecting to existing nodes increases with an increase in the node’s degree. Hub nodes, which lead to fast and vast spreading of epidemics, exist. Two characteristic parameters, including N and k, affect the form of scale-free networks. The parameter N denotes all nodes in the network. In the real world, N indicates the whole population size. The parameter k is the average degree of the network, which determines the degree of the newly attached node for each step during network generation. Following the characteristics of the network model, we generated scale-free networks representing human contacts for epidemic spread. The scale-free network was generated by the Barabasi–Albert graph distribution, in which the network is constructed from a cycle graph with three vertices, followed by the addition of k edges at each construction step [30]. The k edges are randomly attached to the vertex based on the degree distribution of the vertex. After network generation, we investigated the degree distribution properties of the network (Figure 2). The results indicate that the degree distributions have similar tendency for networks with varying number of nodes and edges. This study constructed scale-free networks with the largest number of nodes considering computational complexity (N = 1,000,000). Figure 2. Degree distribution of the scale-free network. We analyzed the degree distribution of the network based on the number of nodes (N) and mean degree (k). 2.2. Epidemic Spreading Based on the SIR Model For the epidemic spreading simulations, we applied an SIR model to the generated scale-free network. The classical SIR model can be expressed by the following nonlinear differential equations [21]: where S, I, and R represent susceptible, infected, and recovered compartments, respectively, in the whole population. S represents people who have not been infected yet but can be infected in future. I represents infected people who can spread the epidemic to susceptible people through physical contact. R denotes people who have recovered or died from the epidemic and who no longer participate in the epidemic spreading process. The sum of the S, I, and R values represents the whole population size N. Epidemics have two parameters in the SIR model, transmission rate (β) and recovery rate (γ), which arise from the basic reproduction number R0 (Figure 1B). The basic reproduction number is the number of infections caused by one infective node [31,32,33]. If the R0 is more than 1, the infection can spread in a population, whereas if R0 is less than 1, the infection cannot spread. We express the basic reproduction number as R0 = β/γ, where β represents the spreading rate of epidemics between infective nodes and adjacent susceptible nodes and γ represents the probability of recovery from infection [34]. We mainly used γd, which is the reciprocal of γ and reflects the time interval between infection and recovery. 2.3. Investigation of Epidemic Status Based on the Monte Carlo Method The epidemic simulation was performed for a time series event by constructing epidemic status matrix (z) to represent the status of the nth node at time step t. For each node, the value of epidemic status matrix at time step t can be 0, 1, or 2, indicating that a node is susceptible, infective, or recovered, respectively. We initially (t = 0) set every value of epidemic status matrix to 0 because all nodes are susceptible before the epidemic spreads. At the initial infection stage, randomly selected 0.05% of nodes were infected. At every time period, we performed immunization and observed the infection stages (Figure 3). At the immunization stage, we identified infective nodes and determined whether these nodes would be recovered in the next time step. To calculate the transition probability of infected and recovered phenomena, the Monte Carlo method was applied [35,36]. When infection and recovery parameters are provided, it is possible to investigate whether a node transitions from an epidemic state to another state. To accomplish this, we compared the method revealing the change in each population in every compartment over time (Figure 4). The final steady state of the epidemic spreading simulation model indicates the total number of casualties of the epidemic who either are dead or have recovered from the disease. Infective nodes at time t (zn [t] = 1) are transformed to recovered nodes at time t + 1 (zn [t + 1] = 2) when 1/γd is larger than a random real number between 0 and 1. We determined whether the neighbor nodes of the infection node would be infected by identifying susceptible nodes adjacent to the infective nodes at time t (zn [t] = 0, with the adjacent infective node) (Figure 5). When β is larger than a random real number between 0 and 1, a susceptible node becomes an infective node at time t + 1 (zn [t + 1] = 1); this scenario represents epidemic spread. For each time step, we recorded the number of susceptible, infective, and recovered nodes during epidemic spread. 2.4. Simulation Parameters We carried out simulation trials for various mean degrees of networks (k = 2, 5, 7, and 10). Each network considered the following epidemic parameters: β ranges from 0.05 to 0.95 and γd ranges from 1 to 10. The Monte Carlo model was repeatedly simulated to observe saturation of the recovery process. Considering that the simulation pipeline contains random processes such as initial infection and Monte Carlo trials, we performed the simulation iteratively until the status of nodes remained unchanged. After simulation, time series data from every simulation were interpolated in the time domain. The fatality rate determines the ratio of deceased and recovered individuals in the final population [37,38,39]. If the fatality rate is below 100%, the recovered population contains both dead and recovered individuals. Such a situation does not always cause a pandemic. In this simulation, we assumed a 100% fatality rate. To accomplish this, we enumerated the recovered nodes as dead for considering the pandemic risk. 3. Results Through our method, we obtained epidemic spreading data with various network and epidemic parameter sets. In the present study, we focused on the case where the epidemic infects all nodes and defined this phenomenon as “extinctive spread”. Diseases causing extinctive spread are potential candidates of high pandemic risk. In the real world, extinctive spreading indicates that the disease will infect every person in the society. From the simulation data, we calculated the extinctive spread score by dividing the total number of simulation trials by the number of extinctive spread cases. Thereafter, we identified that the number of extinctive spread cases is mainly influenced by spreading speed, which is determined by β, γd, and k (Figure 6). The extinctive spread region (brown area in Figure 6) is expanded as the value of mean degree of network (k) is increased, thereby indicating that the area of extinctive spread becomes noticeably wider in a dense network than in a sparse network. Thus, the more contact between people, the higher the risk of epidemics. Moreover, high γd and high β cause extinctive spread across a large region, indicating that the high spreading rate and short time interval between infection and recovery are risk factors of epidemic diseases. In contrast, the infective nodes recover before they transmit the disease to their neighbors in low β and low γd scenarios, thus disconnecting the network and preventing extinctive spread. This occurs because the infective nodes need more time to transmit the disease in low β and high γd scenarios. Therefore, the disease begins to subside due to a lack of new infective nodes. Furthermore, we investigated the range of β and γd for existing epidemics of the common cold [40,41] and fatal diseases, namely, cholera [42,43], Marburg [44,45], Ebola (Congo and Uganda) [46,47,48,49], SARS [50], and MERS [51] (Table 1). We selected diseases with relatively well-known epidemic parameters, such as average duration of infection and basic number of reproductions from previous studies. Transmission rates were calculated using the mean duration of infectious periods and basic reproduction numbers of the epidemics. Different studies reveal multiple values of infectious period and transmission rate for some of these diseases; we considered these values separately [40,41,42,43,46,47,48,49]. For example, the infectious period of a common cold is from 3 to 7 days and that of Ebola is 6.5 days. Next, we placed the possible regions of these epidemics as a disease band for various k values (colored lines in Figure 6). When k > 5, fatal diseases have an opportunity to cause a pandemic. Even when k = 5, diseases such as cholera and Ebola (Congo) can be threatening in regions of low γd and high, thus demonstrating that the knowledge of network parameters of the society and the characteristics of epidemic diseases can aid in quantifying the risk of epidemics. 4. Discussion Many previous studies have made stochastic SIR models to analyze the dynamics or stability of epidemic diseases. They investigated the distribution of susceptible, infected, and removed populations for specific epidemic disease spreading, such as cholera, SARS, Marburg, and MERS, based on mathematical modelling [52,53,54,55]. However, they did not conduct a quantitative assessment of pandemic risk taking into account physical contact between people. To solve this limitation, we performed epidemic spreading simulations by applying an SIR model to scale-free networks with Monte Carlo simulation. In the simulation, we consider various connectivity and disease characteristics on scale-free networks. For each network and epidemic parameter set, the probability of extinctive spread was calculated. The results revealed that certain infectious diseases can lead to extinction. Moreover, even if the disease band extends over the extinctive spread regions, it does not indicate that human extinction results from the disease, as the fatality rate is below 100%; however, in the case of 100% fatality, the disease can cause a human extinction event. The risk of infectious disease is influenced by the network structure. A dense network has a higher risk of spreading infectious disease than a sparse network, as we observed in the extinctive spreading maps. According to our results, when the average degree of human social networks is below the risk threshold, i.e., less than 4 in this study, human society is safe from an extinctive outbreak based on our knowledge regarding the epidemic parameters of the infectious disease. Nevertheless, in other cases, human extinction is possible. For example, if the population is 1,000,000 and there are 4 or more instances of physical contact between people, human extinction events may occur, depending on the fatality rate of the epidemics. Hence, physical contact between people is closely related to an extinction event of infectious diseases. Eventually, from a public health perspective, lowering the average contact level of society is an appropriate way to increase the robustness of strategies against the occurrence of extinction. In the real world, reducing network density can be accomplished by epidemic prevention activity, such as isolation and quarantine treatment. This action prevents epidemic risk to the society, thereby avoiding human extinction. Additional considerations may improve our analysis. First, large population size and various proportions of initial infective nodes were not considered in the experiments. We have confirmed that the result was consistent when the proportion of initial infective nodes was 0.05% of the total population; however, this can vary depending on the distinct proportion of initial infective nodes in a different population. To achieve robust results, we need to perform additional experiments for various parameters; however, we could not address this issue due to computational complexity. Second, we did not consider numerous known epidemic diseases. We calculated the transmission rates of epidemic diseases using the known infectious periods and reproduction numbers of the epidemics from evidence in the literature. In the present study, we only considered five epidemic diseases, since the information on infectious periods and reproduction numbers of diseases was mostly unavailable for other epidemic diseases. Third, this study only considers the SIR model on scale-free networks in epidemic simulation. Since the dynamics of epidemic diseases can be varied in different models or networks, it is important to experiment in various simulation environments to confirm the robustness of the results. Nevertheless, these limitations can be considered in future experiments or using improved computational methods. With these further improvements, our approach can be used as a computational tool to analyze the risk of epidemic diseases. 5. Conclusions In this study, we analyzed the risk of epidemic diseases by creating an epidemic simulation on a scale-free network. Based on the simulation results for various epidemic parameters, we confirmed that certain infectious diseases can lead to extinction and can be prevented by minimizing human contact. We believe that identifying potential candidate diseases that may lead to human extinction is crucial in addressing epidemic prevention activities such as quarantine.