**I affirm resolved: In a democracy, a free press ought to prioritize objectivity over advocacy.**

**I provide the following definitions to clarify today’s debate:**

**Objectivity:**

**Ward 11**, Stephen J.A. “Rethinking Journalism Ethics, Objectivity in the Age of Social Media.” *Center for Journalism Ethics*, 31 Aug. 2011, <https://ethics.journalism.wisc.edu/2011/08/31/rethinking-journalism-ethics-objectivity-in-the-age-of-social-media/>. For starters, I think we should address this problem by doing two things: First, we should redefine, not abandon, objectivity as one of the principles that define responsible journalism. Second, we should develop ethical guidelines for specific forms of new media — guidelines that are consistent with general principles such as truth-telling.The traditional notion of journalistic objectivity, developed in the early 1900s, **defined objectivity as** a story that reported **“just the facts”** and eliminated all interpretation or opinion by the journalist. This notion of objectivity **needs to be abandoned. It** is an outdated idea that **sees everything in black and white: A story is either** factual — and **only factual — or** it is **subjective opinion.** We are given a choice between strict objectivity and un-rigorous subjectivity. **This is a false dilemma. Objectivity is not about perfect neutrality or the elimination of interpretation.** Objectivity **[but] refers to** aperson’s willingness to **[the] use [of] objective methods to test interpretations for bias or inaccuracies.** Objectivity as a method is compatible with journalism that interprets and takes perspectives. Every day, **scientists adopt the objective stance when they use methods to test their hypotheses** about phenomena. **The same stance is available for journalists.** Why is the redefinition of objectivity necessary? **Traditional objectivity as “just the facts” is a false model of how journalists do their work.** Journalism is interpretive through and through. It provides little guidance for many forms of journalism, such as point-of-view journalism. In addition, adherence to traditional objectivity can retard curriculum reform. The fear that teaching perspectival journalism entails teaching a “journalism without standards” is unfounded. Perspectival journalism can be more or less supported by the facts, well-argued, and respectful of counter views.The ideal of objectivity should not be abandoned because it supports important journalistic attitudes such as a “disinterestedness” that follows the facts where they lead.

**Therefore the value for today’s round is: Political Legitimacy**

**Fabienne 17** Peter, Fabienne, "Political Legitimacy", *The Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy* (Summer 2017 Edition), Edward N. Zalta (ed.), URL = <https://plato.stanford.edu/archives/sum2017/entries/legitimacy/>.

**The stability and functioning of any kind of political regime** including democratic or representative ones—**relies on** the combination of **the capacity of** rulers and **government** officials **to use** coercion and the development of **political legitimacy.** Political legitimacy can be described as **[which is] people’s recognition and acceptance** of the validity of the rules **of their entire political system** and the decisions of their rulers.Accordingly, two things can be expected from political systems that have a considerable level of political legitimacy. First, these **political systems will be more resilient** to survive periods of crisis, **and,** second, rulers and **authorities** will **enjoy a fundamental condition needed to formulate and implement policies in an effective manner** (i.e., they will be able to make decisions and commit resources without needing to obtain approval from the ruled and without resorting to coercion for every decision). **The issue of political legitimacy can therefore be considered to be of utmost importance in politics and political analysis.**

**Thus, the criterion is: Habermas’ theory of Deliberative Democracy**

[**Habermas 89**, Jürgen](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/J%C3%BCrgen_Habermas) (German (1962) English Translation 1989). [*The Structural Transformation of the Public Sphere: An Inquiry into a Category of Bourgeois Society*](https://archive.org/details/structuraltransf00habe). Thomas Burger. Cambridge Massachusetts: The MIT Press. pp. [52](https://archive.org/details/structuraltransf00habe/page/n34). [ISBN](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/ISBN_(identifier)) [978-0-262-58108-0](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Special:BookSources/978-0-262-58108-0).

Habermas argues that free deliberation within the public sphere is an essential dimension in a modern democracy. Habermas writes, **“[p]olitics acquires its legitimating force from the discursive structure that can fulfill its function only because citizens expect its results to have a reasonable quality.” Thus, the discursive power of public debate is the most important variable for a democracy.** This concept of linking the health of a democracy to the health of the discourse is essential to modern political theory. Nancy Frazier writes, “Habermas’s idea of the public sphere is indispensable to critical social theory and to democratic political practice.” Moreover, the standards set forth for the actions of a government is how well it protects its citizen’s freedom of discourse.**The “public sphere” is** generally conceived as **the social space in which** different opinions are expressed, **problems of general concern are discussed, and collective solutions are developed communicatively.** Thus, the public sphere is the central arena for societal communication

**Deliberative democracy is epistemologically the source of moral obligation in a democracy, because a free press is critical to the success of said democracy**

**Childs et al. 19**, David, et al. “The Importance of Freedom of the Press in a Democracy.” *Democracy and Me*, 17 Mar. 2019, https://www.democracyandme.org/the-importance-of-freedom-of-the-press-in-a-democracy/.

Lawyer and free press advocate Trevor Timm states that **“an independent press is** one of **the essential pillar**s **of a democracy.”** He also goes on to say that the First Amendment and its protection of the press **[and] “has always been the bulwark against** secret government,againstauthoritarianism andagainst **tyranny. The** concept of a **free press [is]** was intentionally and deliberately written into the First Amendment of the U.S. Constitution **to preserve freedom of the people.** The amendment was of grave importance in the eighteenth century during its inception, and is just as important now. The press **[and] is** often **thought of as a “fourth branch of government” because it** also **helps balance power** in the government. **Without that fourth branch, the concept of a democratic system of government starts to** weaken andafter a while the democracywould **crumble.**

**Advocacy works to prioritize profit over meaningful engagement with democracy, contradicting the moral obligation of the press**

**Livingstone 94**, S., and Lunt, P. (1994) The mass media, democracy and the public sphere. In Talk

on Television: Audience participation and public debate (9-35). London: Routledge.

**Mass culture** has earned its rather dubious name precisely by achieving **increase[s] sales by** adapting to the need for relaxation and **entertain[ing]**menton the part of **consumer strata with relatively little education,** rather than through the guidance of an enlarged public toward the appreciation of a culture undamaged in its substance. The market may be **transforming the media into an unrepresentative, non participatory system,** a system **made up of major, centralized monopolies, which together offer a narrower and more uniform** ideological and cultural **range of meanings** (Curran, 1991).

**Avocational society creates pseudo political involvement that illegitimates democracy, justifying endless authorial abuse**

**Livingstone 94 2**, S., and Lunt, P. (1994) The mass media, democracy and the public sphere. In Talk

on Television: Audience participation and public debate (9-35). London: Routledge.

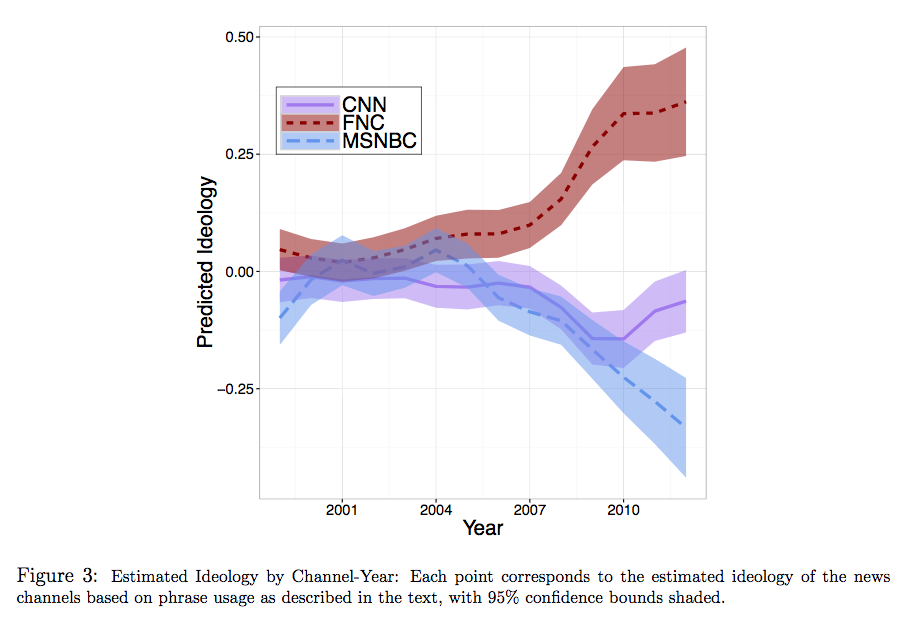
The starting point we have chosen for our discussion of the media as a public sphere of political communication is the work of Habermas (1984; 1989) on **the bourgeois public sphere**. Influenced by critical theory, Habermas sees **[or] the media** as **creat[es] a society of private and fragmented individuals** for whom it is difficult to form the public rational-critical opinion which could oppose established power. He attacks the media for provid[es]ing a pseudo-public sphere **which distracts the laity from political action, being a sphere of** public **relations and passive spectatorship rather than genuine public debate.** However, Habermas’s position (1987b) contains within it an ideal of public communication: if unfettered by institutional control, this ideal public communication might generate the critical consensus which he considers necessary for public participation in democratic political processes. Can the media potentially provide sites for public participation, expert accountability, integration of expert and lay knowledge and the provision of ideal communicative situations? The mass media play a crucial role in the modern political process, for even in elite forms of democracy, the polity requires some mediated communication with the populace to gain consent. Nonetheless, a critical perspective on **the mass media** in general and on audience access and participation programmes in particular has long existed, suggesting that such **programmes are a trick to capture a passive, mass audience through the illusion of influence and involvement.** Lazarsfeld and Merton (1948) argued that the media have a narcotizing function on their audience, **undermining the practice of democracy: ‘modern media may encourage citizens to know more, even to be more opinionated, but to do less about public affairs’** (Tuchman, 1988:604). Similarly, commenting on media debates, Habermas claims that ‘**critical debate arranged in this manner certainly** fulfills important social-psychological functions, especially that of a tranquilizing **substitute[s] for action**’ (Habermas, 1989:164). Lang and Lang (1983:21) claim that ‘the mass public is still condemned to a bystander role...privy to, but not part of, the give- and-take through which parties with conflicting interests hammer out an acceptable policy’. The ever-increasing importance of opinion polls in elections suggests to some one way in which ‘the media discourage[s] political participation and meaningful social change’ (Tuchman, 1988:604), **providing a ‘managed show’** (Thompson, 1990) **of public participation without any accompanying influence, role or power.** Elliot (1986) argues that we face ‘a continuation of the shift away frominvolving people in society as political citizens of nation states towards involving them as consumption units in a corporate world’ (Elliot, 1986:106).He argues that **we have moved from a culture-debating to a culture-consuming public.** Habermas (1989) argues that the public sphere exists now only as a promise. Party politics and the manipulation of the mass media have resulted in ‘a refeudalization ' of the public sphere, where representation and appearances outweigh debate’ (Holub, 1991:6) and where the rational–critical public is transformed into a mass, **manipulated by persuasive authority.**

**Prefer this framing because:**

1. **Only the affirmative framework can legitimately answer the question of the press’s moral obligation in a democracy**
2. **Individuals rely on the free press to form their opinion - only the affirmative framework holds the free press accountable to their position in the public sphere.**
3. **It is the prerequisite to societal change - only with political legitimacy can governments make material change**

**Contention 1: Advocacy allows the press to appeal to confirmation bias, resulting in a dangerously uninformed and non-deliberative public sphere**

**Matthews 17**, Dylan. “A Stunning New Study Shows That Fox News Is More Powerful than We Ever Imagined.” *Vox*, Vox, 8 Sept. 2017, https://www.vox.com/policy-and-politics/2017/9/8/16263710/fox-news-presidential-vote-study.

Fox News is, by far, America’s [dominant TV news channel](http://variety.com/2017/tv/news/cable-news-ratings-cnn-fox-news-msnbc-q2-1202479416/); in the second quarter of 2017, Fox posted 2.35 million total viewers in primetime versus 1.64 million for MSNBC and 1.06 million for CNN. Given that Fox was founded by a [longtime Republican Party operative](https://www.vox.com/2017/5/19/15657788/roger-ailes-donald-trump) and has almost exclusively hired conservative commentators, talk radio hosts, and the like to host its shows, it would stand to reason that its dominance on basic cable could influence how Americans vote, perhaps even tipping elections.M[edia bias](https://web.stanford.edu/~gentzkow/research/biasmeas.pdf) has found that **media outlets’ political stances are demand-driven:** that is, **they take** the **positions** they do **because they want to gain** readers/listeners/**viewers.** A [new study](https://web.stanford.edu/~ayurukog/cable_news.pdf) in the [American Economic Review](https://www.aeaweb.org/articles?id=10.1257/aer.20160812) (the discipline’s flagship journal), with an intriguing and persuasive methodology, finds exactly that. Emory University political scientist Gregory Martin and Stanford economist Ali Yurukoglu estimate that **watching Fox News directly causes a substantial rightward shift in viewers’** attitudes,which translates into a significantly greater willingness to vote for Republican candidates. They estimate that **if Fox News hadn't existed,** the Republican presidential candidate’s share of the two-party vote would have been 3.59 points lower in 2004 and 6.34 points lower in 2008. For context, that would've made John Kerry the 2004 popular vote winner, and turned **Barack Obama's 2008 victory [would have been]** into **a landslide where he got 60 percent of the** two-party **vote.** "There is a non-trivial amount of uncertainty" about those estimates, Yurukoglu cautions. "I personally don't think it's totally implausible, but it is higher than I would have guessed prior to the research." And even if the effect were half as large as estimated, that’d still mean that **Fox News is having a very real, sizable effect on elections.** How Fox News transformed America Martin and Yurukoglu integrated a vast array of data — on Fox's channel position and viewership, individual/zip code/county level presidential voting behavior, and transcripts of cable news shows to showcase their ideology — into an extensive model that they can then use to estimate how effective Fox (and CNN and MSNBC) is at persuading viewers to vote its way. Below, for instance, is how the estimated ideological stance of each channel changed over time; a lower score means more liberal, and a higher score means more conservative. You can see Fox News growing more conservative and MSNBC starting its move to the left with Keith Olbermann, Rachel Maddow, and others in the late 2000s: The effects of CNN and MSNBC on centrist voters are mostly negligible; MSNBC, in 2000 and 2004, modestly increased odds of voting Republican, before it turned left in time for 2008. But Fox News [and] increases Republican voting odds for centrists[and] for Democratic viewers, and even, in 2004 and 2008, for Republicans already strongly inclined to vote that way. Watching three minutes more of Fox News per week in 2008 would have made the typical Democratic or centrist voter 1 percentage point likelier to vote Republican that year. “Fox is substantially better at influencing Democrats than MSNBC is at influencing Republicans," the authors find. While most Fox viewers are Republican, a sizable minority aren't, and they're particularly suggestible to the channel's influence.In 2000, they estimate that 58 percent of Fox viewers who were initially Democrats changed to supporting the Republican candidate by the end of the election cycle; in 2004, the persuasion rate was 27 percent, and 28 percent in 2008. MSNBC, by contrast, only persuaded 8 percent of initial Republicans to vote Democratic in the 2008 cycle. These are big effects, with major societal implications. The authors find that the Fox News effect translates into a 0.46 percentage point boost to the GOP vote share in the 2000 presidential race, a 3.59-point boost in 2004, and a 6.34-point boost in 2008; the boost increases as the channel's viewership grew. This effect alone is large enough, they argue, to **[and] explain[s]** all **the polarization in the US public's political views from 2000 to 2008.** What's more, they find that Fox isn't setting its ideology where it ought to to maximize its viewership. It's much more conservative than is optimal from that perspective. But it's pretty close to the slant that would maximize its persuasive power: that would result in the largest rightward movement among viewers. CNN, by contrast, matched its political stances pretty closely to the viewer-maximizing point, showing less interest in operating as a political agent. This is a “partial equilibrium” estimate: The estimates of Fox News’s effect are relative to a counterfactual where it disappears and only CNN and MSNBC remain. The authors are implicitly assuming another similarly conservative channel wouldn’t have emerged. “As a result, many (not most, but a substantial number) of former FNC viewers substitute into a relatively much less conservative option,” Martin explains. “In reality, you might imagine that a new conservative channel might have entered to replace FNC, or MSNBC or CNN might have moved right to capture the former FNC audience had FNC exited for some reason.” But the result also jibes with existing research on the importance of Fox News. [Studies looking](http://www.sciencedirect.com/science/article/pii/S0047272715000523) at the [initial rollout of Fox News in the 1990s](http://onlinelibrary.wiley.com/doi/10.1111/ajps.12171/abstract) found similar effects: There was increased support for GOP positions on controversial issues in places where Fox News was introduced, and increased GOP vote share too. "Our estimates imply that Fox News convinced 3 to 28 percent of its viewers to vote Republican, depending on the audience measure," economists Stefano DellaVigna (Berkeley) and Ethan Kaplan (Maryland) found in a [seminal 2007 paper](https://eml.berkeley.edu/~sdellavi/wp/FoxVoteQJEAug07.pdf). But, as political scientist Matt Grossmann (Michigan State) and David Hopkins (Boston College) have [noted](https://www.washingtonpost.com/news/monkey-cage/wp/2016/09/09/how-the-conservative-media-is-taking-over-the-republican-party/?utm_term=.4995cd6b45ee), these studies likely underestimated the effects of Fox, because they only looked at the 1996 to 2000 rollout of the channel, when it was much less watched. It would stand to reason that these effects would grow as the channel became more popular and more conservative. That’s what makes the latest study so important. It builds on the prior research, confirms it, and shows how Fox’s increased popularity over the 2000s amplified its effects. The coolest thing about this research is the methodology. It’s really hard to estimate the effects of media outlets on individuals’ behavior, as media consumption is a two-way street. Yes, media can change peoples’ opinions and behavior, but people also choose to consume particular media because it aligns with their opinions and affirms stuff they’re doing already. And prior [economic research on media bias](https://web.stanford.edu/~gentzkow/research/biasmeas.pdf) has found that media outlets’ political stances are demand-driven: that is, they take the positions they do because they want to gain readers/listeners/viewers. In this interpretation, Fox News might just be producing segments [depicting food stamp recipients as lazy lobster-eating surfers](http://insider.foxnews.com/2014/03/13/welfare-surfers-saga-continues-lobster-eating-food-stamps-recipient-refuses-hannitys-help) because their audience already hates food stamps and welfare programs and wants something with which to agree. Confirmation bias is a hell of a drug. So figuring out that a given media outlet is changing viewers’ minds, rather than merely reflecting their viewpoints back to them, is tricky. But Martin and Yurukoglu figured out an ingenious way around that problem: channel ordering. It turns out that more people watch Fox News when it has a lower channel number. Fox News’s average channel number is around 38 to 41 (depending on which of Martin and Yurukoglu’s samples you're looking at) and lowering the channel number to 19 to 23 or thereabouts causes viewers to watch 2.5 more minutes per week of Fox News, on average. In practice, that could translate into no effect on most people and a bigger effect (like, an hour more viewing per week) among a minority of cable subscribers — 2.5 minutes is just the overall figure. What’s more, it doesn't appear that cable or satellite TV providers make channel position decisions based on local politics; they don't lower Fox News' channel number in conservative towns or countries or raise it in liberal cities. So people in areas where Fox News has a low channel number watch more of the channel for reasons that are basically random, and unrelated to the viewer’s personal politics. That makes channel positioning a bit like a randomized experiment: Some people are randomly provoked to watch more Fox News than others, enabling researchers to see what effect watching Fox had on them. Especially combined with the prior, also rigorous research looking at Fox’s initial rollout, Martin and Yurukoglu’s paper provides powerful evidence that Fox News is a critically important actor in American politics. It’s doing more than serving a market need; it’s actively reshaping American public opinion.

**Subpoint a) Mass misinformation by avocational news was rampant during the pandemic**

**Obeidallah 21** Obeidallah, Dean. “Opinion: Fox News' Alarming Vaccine Disinformation Is a Danger to America.” *CNN*, Cable News Network, 20 July 2021, https://www.cnn.com/2021/07/18/opinions/vaccine-disniformation-fox-news-obeidallah/index.html.

“Do you think we could’ve eradicated polio or defeated the measles if you had Fox News night after night warning people about these vaccine issues that are just bunk?” CNN’s Jim Acosta asked [Saturday](https://www.cnn.com/2021/07/17/us/fauci-polio-coronavirus-false-information/index.html) of Dr. Anthony Fauci, President Joe Biden’s chief medical adviser. Fauci [response’s](https://www.cnn.com/2021/07/17/us/fauci-polio-coronavirus-false-information/index.html) was jaw-dropping:“If we had had the [same] pushback for vaccines the way we’re seeing on certain mediaI don’t thinkit would have been [im]possible at all to not only eradicate smallpox, we probably would still have smallpox and we probably would still have polio in this country.” The nation’s premier infectious disease specialist added, “If we had the kind of false information that’s being spread now,if we had that back decades ago, I would be certain that we’d still have polio in this country.” There’s no dispute that **Fox News has been delivering to its** audience, of which [almost 60%](https://www.washingtonpost.com/business/fox-news-is-holding-more-cards-than-trump-realizes/2020/12/02/67323ba2-349e-11eb-9699-00d311f13d2d_story.html) is in the **high-risk over-65 age group, dangerously** [**misleading**](https://www.cnn.com/videos/media/2021/07/14/fox-news-newsmax-vaccine-misinformation-newday-vpx.cnn/video/playlists/coronavirus/) **information about the Covid vaccine** and its rollout by the Biden administration. A report [released](https://www.mediamatters.org/fox-news/fox-has-undermined-vaccination-efforts-nearly-60-all-vaccination-segments-2-week-period) Friday by the liberal media watchdog group Media Matters documents that the majority of vaccine-related segments that Fox News aired over the past two weeks “repeatedly fearmongered about and downplayed the need for continued vaccination campaigns.” Specifically, Media Matters found the between June 28 through July 11, “Fox News aired 129 segments about coronavirus vaccines.Of those, **57% [of coronavirus segments] included claims that** either **undermined** or downplayed **immunization efforts.** Among Media Matters’ findings: “**Forty-five percent** of segments **included claims [of]** suggesting that the vaccination drive is **coer[sion]**cive **or** that it represents **government overreach.”** Just one instance of the many cited came from **Tucker Carlson**’sJuly 8th show where he[**lied**](https://www.mediamatters.org/fox-news/no-more-freedom-you-fox-news-panics-over-bidens-proposed-outreach-unvaccinated-people) **that** if you don’t take the vaccine, **“you’ll wind up on a government list.” Taking it even further, rabid Trump supporter [and] Jeanine Pirro** irresponsibly[**declared**](https://www.mediamatters.org/jeanine-pirro/foxs-jeanine-pirro-claims-door-door-vaccine-outreach-about-confiscating-guns)on her July 12 show that **the goal of** Biden administration’s **door to door vaccine outreach was** ultimately **“about confiscating your gun.”** Even worse, Media Matters notes, “Thirty-seven percent of segments included claims suggesting that vaccines are unnecessary or dangerous.” Just one example cited was Fox News host Laura Ingraham, who on her show last week [touted](https://www.mediamatters.org/fox-news/laura-ingraham-promotes-natural-immunity-over-covid-vaccine) “natural immunity” over the Covid vaccine.

## **This misinformation directly affected public opinion**

## **Branswell 22**Branswell, Helen. “How Many People Died Believing Vaccine Misinformation?” *Columbia Missourian*, The Washington Post, 24 Feb. 2022, https://www.columbiamissourian.com/opinion/guest\_commentaries/how-many-people-died-believing-vaccine-misinformation/article\_ed179192-9571-11ec-b289-77c0ac138b21.html.

## The vaccines, offered to the U.S. population, have proved to be 90% effective [and] against infection. Ready within a year of the outbreak, they have proved to be safe. And they are widely available and free. There is no parallel in modern times. Yet, some people chose to believe otherwise.In a just-published nationwide survey of **18,782 people across all 50 states and the District of Columbia**, the Covid States Project **[were] asked about** four **vaccine misinformation claims**, asking respondents whether they were “true” or “false” or if a respondent was “not sure.” **Five percent said they thought** that **vaccines contained microchips; 7% said** vaccines used **aborted fetal cells; 8% said the vaccines could alter human DNA; and 10% were concerned [about]** that vaccines could cause **infertility.** Forty-six percent were uncertain about the veracity of at least one of the four false statements. The survey shows how **misinformation about vaccines** continues to **erode[s] confidence in them.** What kind of message is sent when Fox News host Tucker Carlson compares coronavirus vaccine mandates to medical experiments conducted by Nazi Germany and Imperial Japan, as he did Jan. 21? Or Mr. Carlson’s many previous broadcasts raising questions in a haphazard way andrelying on dubious sources? The new survey found that people who believe vaccine misinformation, or express uncertainty about it, tend to register higher degrees of trust in Fox News than those who reject the false vaccine claims. It also identified other groups of people who are more inclined to believe the misinformation. Young parents stood out as vulnerable to false claims.Misinformation about vaccines has a direct correlation with whether people get immunized. The survey showed that among those who did not believe any of the false statements, 80% said they were already vaccinated. In the group that thought multiple false statements were true, 60% were hesitant to get the shot. According to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, about 1 in 5 eligible Americans have yet to get their first vaccine dose. Millions of people remain unvaccinated. They were 14 times more likely than the vaccinated to die of COVID, as of December, the latest month for which data is available. How many of the 551,168 COVID deaths in the United States since Jan. 1, 2021, could have been averted with vaccines? Too many.

**This lack of meaningful public sphere deliberation and exchanging of ideas disproportionately affects those misinformed**

**Freedland 22**, Lisa. “Fact Brief: Are More Republicans Dying of Covid-19 than Democrats?: Repustar.” *New Tools to Help You Check the Facts in the News*, Jan. 2022, https://repustar.com/fact-briefs/are-more-republicans-dying-of-covid-19-than-democrats.

According to NPR, **counties where more than 60% of residents voted** for **Republican** presidential candidate Donald Trump in the 2020 election **have nearly triple the death rate** of counties whose majority voted for Biden. Counties that voted for Trump at an even higher rate experienced an even higher death toll. **This** difference **is attributable to the partisan disparity in vaccination rates.** Counties that heavily voted for Trump are far less vaccinated than those where most voted for Biden. Recent polls indicate that one's political party is the strongest predictor of whether they are vaccinated, with unvaccinated persons being three times as likely to lean Republican than Democrat. Misinformation is likely to blame for this. A Kaiser report found that **Republicans are "much more likely" to believe COVID-19 misinformation, with** authors identifying **a correlation to consuming conservative media.**

# Subpoint b) Misinformation about election fraud has justified conservative policy makers to pass voter suppression bills, undermining the representation of the people in a democracy

**Rutenberg et al. 20**, Jim, et al. “Trump's Fraud Claims Died in Court, but the Myth of Stolen Elections Lives On.” *The New York Times*, The New York Times, 26 Dec. 2020, https://www.nytimes.com/2020/12/26/us/politics/republicans-voter-fraud.html.

President **Trump’s baseless and desperate claims of a stolen election** [are]over the last seven weeks — the most aggressive promotion of “voter fraud” in American history — failed to get any traction in courts across seven states, or come anywhere close to reversing the loss he suffered to Joseph R. Biden Jr. But the effort has led to at least one unexpected and profoundly different result: A thorough debunking of the sorts of [voter fraud claims](https://www.nytimes.com/2021/10/11/us/fulton-county-election-workers-fired.html) that **[have] Republicans** have used [these claims] to **roll[ing] back voting rights** for the better part of the young century. In making their case in real courts and the court of public opinion, Mr. Trump and his allies have trotted out a series of tropes and canards similar to those Republicans have pushed to justifylaws that in many cases made voting [disproportionately](https://www.nytimes.com/2015/07/29/magazine/voting-rights-act-dream-undone.html) [harder](https://www.nytimes.com/2017/05/15/us/politics/voter-id-laws-supreme-court-north-carolina.html) for Blacks and Hispanics, who largely support Democrats. Their allegations that thousands of people “double voted” by assuming other identities at polling booths echoed those that have previously been cited as a reason to **impos[ing] strict new voter identification laws.** Yet there are no signs that those defeats in the courts will change the trajectory of the ongoing efforts to restrict voting that have been [core to](https://www.nytimes.com/2020/09/30/magazine/trump-voter-fraud.html) conservative politics since the disputed 2000 election, which coincided with heightened party concerns that demographic shifts would favor Democrats in the popular vote. **The false notions have lived on in** Mr. Trump’s Twitter and Facebook feeds; on **the television programming of Fox News, Newsmax and One America News Network;** and in statehouse hearings where Republican leaders have contemplated more restrictive voting laws based on the rejected allegations. In Georgia, Republican legislators have already discussed toughening the state’s rules on [voting by mail](https://www.nbcnews.com/politics/donald-trump/georgia-republicans-vow-legislation-limit-mail-voting-despite-no-evidence-n1250431) and on [voter identification](https://www.savannahnow.com/story/news/politics/elections/2020/11/25/georgia-lawmakers-seek-special-session-for-voter-id-changes-before-senate-runoffs/43196219/). In Pennsylvania, Republican lawmakers are considering reversing moves that had made it easier to vote absentee, and their counterparts in Wisconsin are similarly considering tighter restrictions for mail voting, as well as for [early voting](https://www.reuters.com/article/us-usa-election-voting-rules-insight/as-trump-pushes-baseless-fraud-claims-republicans-pledge-tougher-voting-rules-idUSKBN28V1DN?edition-redirect=ca).

**And barriers to voting disproportionately impact the already marginalized**

**ACLU 21** American Civil Liberties Union. “ACLU News and Commentary.” American Civil Liberties Union, 8 Aug. 2021, www.aclu.org/news/civil-liberties/block-the-vote-voter-suppression-in-2020.

Voting should be as easy and accessible as possible, and in many cases it is. But in recent years, **more than 400 anti-voter bills have been introduced in 48 states.** These bills **erect[ing] unnecessary barriers for people to** register to **vote,** vote by mail, or vote in person. **The result is a severely compromised democracy that doesn’t reflect the will of the people.** Our democracy works best when all eligible voters can participate and have their voices heard.Suppression efforts range from the seemingly unobstructive, like strict voter ID laws and cuts to early voting, to mass purges of voter rolls and systemic disenfranchisement. **These measures disproportionately impact people of color, students, the elderly, and people with disabilities.** And long before election cycles even begin, legislators redraw district lines that determine the weight of your vote.

**[With advocacy, the free press is no longer a check on the government, but a powerful tool in the government’s arsenal of domination.]**

**Underview**

1. **Arguments like ‘objectivity doesn’t exist’ are nonsensical, because the free press has to report factual events that do actually happen as honestly as they can - refer to aff’s def.**
2. **Prefer truth over tech arguments when addressing the media’s moral obligation. Going for generic DA’s ignores philosophical substance, and they must have a clear link to moral obligation.**
3. **CP’s don’t link because the aff does not have advocacy. Moral obligation ≠ policy.**
4. **Pref SV framing before existential risks because 1) they are low probability 2) justifies ignoring marginalized groups 3) prioritization means the neg still links, no unique reason they escape**

# Subpoint c) Misinformation illegitimately sways public opinion to justify military conflict, undermining the social contract

**Berlinski et al. 21** Berlinski,Doyle,Guess,Levy,Lyons,Montgomery,Nyhan,Reifler, Nicolas, Margaret,Andrew, Gabrielle, Benjamin, Jacob, Brendan, Jason. “The Effects of Unsubstantiated Claims of Voter Fraud on Confidence in Elections.” Cambridge, 28 June 2021, www.cambridge.org/core/services/aop-cambridge-core/content/view/9B4CE6DF2F573955071948B9F649DF7A/S205226302100018Xa.pdf/the-effects-of-unsubstantiated-claims-of-voter-fraud-on-confidence-in-elections.pdf.

“**Claims of voter fraud** like this **are not uncommon, especially outside the USA.** In early February 2021, **the Myanmar military justified its coup against the civilian government by alleging voter fraud in the most recent election** (Goodman 2021). In other cases, elites have made unsubstantiated claims of voter fraud in order to cast doubt on unfavorable or potentially damaging electoral results. For instance, Jair Bolsonaro, the president of Brazil, expressed fears of voter fraud during his pres- idential campaign in 2018 to pre-emptively cast doubt on an unfavorable electoral outcome (Savarese 2018). Prabowo Subianto, a presidential candidate who lost the 2019 Indonesian election, used this tactic even more aggressively, claiming that he had been the victim of voter fraud and refusing to concede (Paddock 2019).