International Students' Perceptions of Source Credibility for the U.S. Media and International Outlets

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Abstract

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Source credibility has generated some interest in the media and communication field, but primarily focusing on domestic sources. To advance our understanding of source credibility on a global scale, this study, guided by media credibility and international mobility, explored how international students in the United States perceived international news coverage in U.S. media and in their home-country media outlets. Specifically, it examined two dimensions of credibility: believability and community affiliation. Three focus group discussions were conducted between January 30 and February 5, 2015 on the Ohio University campus. Thematic analysis of data from 32 participants found that source credibility was not the only motivation for them to seek U.S. media outlets. International students in this study showed that believability and community affiliation are of concern based on international news coverage from U.S. media and media outlets in their home countries. Further analysis is detailed in the results and discussion chapters.
Dedication

To my parents
Acknowledgments

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Chapter 1: Introduction

Media scholars and practitioners take media credibility seriously. A collection of academic research in more than 60 years has demonstrated the significance of media credibility to the media industry in terms of the communication process and its effects (Flanagin & Metzger, 2000; Hovland & Weiss, 1951; Johnson & Kaye, 2000; Rimmer & Weaver, 1987; Wanta & Hu, 1994). Media credibility is believed to be related to increasing viewership, readership, and usership (Tao & Bates, 2009; Rimmer & Weaver, 1987). The importance of media credibility deserves more emphasis from either academic or industrial work for maintaining the reputation of media outlets.

Scope and Rationale

This thesis has developed out of the inquiry about how media credibility is perceived internationally. Believability and community affiliation are two dimensions of indexes for measuring media credibility. They have been developed and applied consistently in the studies with subjects from the United States (Kiousis, 2001; Meyer, 1988; Wanta & Hu, 1994). How would other nationalities perceive these two media credibility indexes, especially when they assess news from different countries? This thesis aims to explore this question by focusing on how international students in the United States perceive international news coverage from U.S. media outlets and outlets from their home country regarding credibility factors, such as believability and community affiliation.

Reasons for taking international students into account in this thesis are twofold. One is because both the university in-takes and contribution of international students to the academic communities in the United States have steadily increased. The number of
international students has been increasing since 2001. Meanwhile, the United States benefits from the contributions and services of international students in the economy, technology, academics, and communications (Open Doors, 2014). These factors have made international students appreciated and valued members of the U.S. society. International students play the role of “important anchors” in building global connectivity and communication between the United States and their home countries (Ruiz, 2014).

The other reason is that international students represent a population movement in the process of globalization. They need media and communication to restructure the social space and reconfigure ideologies after their physical change in localities (Brittain, 2002). International students are also actors of globalization (Anker, 2010). They need media and communication to expand, intensify, and accelerate this process. During the interactive process, how would international students perceive source credibility from different countries? The answer to this question would add an international aspect to media credibility studies.

Study Design

In order to explore how international students in the United States perceive credibility of international news coverage from U.S. media outlets and outlets from their home countries, this thesis employs focus group method, aiming to seek insight into international students’ perceptions of media credibility. The focus group was used because of its advantage in gathering people’s thoughts, perceptions and feelings (Krueger & Casey, 2000). This is an appropriate method because it allows participants to
articulate opinion toward media credibility in their own words rather than simply choosing given answers in a survey.

Three focus groups were conducted between January 30 and February 5, 2015 on the Ohio University campus in the United States. Participants were international students enrolled at Ohio University. Potential participants were screened based on their nationalities and English language proficiency, regardless of age, gender, major, and other demographic variables.
Chapter 2: Media Credibility

What is Media Credibility?

Credibility is simply defined as the quality or power that inspires belief, according to the Merriam-Webster dictionary. In media and communication studies, credibility is often defined from receivers’ perspective and refers to “the degree to which an individual judges his or her perceptions to be a valid reflection of reality” (Newhagen & Nass, 1989, p.278). Simply put, media credibility is subject to how receivers evaluate the information they get from certain media outlets. Specifically, news credibility is the degree to which receivers perceive news information as “a plausible reflection of the events” (Newhagen & Nass, 1989, p.278). If news consumers perceive the information to be matching the events according to their knowledge, then they would assign high credibility to the news. Therefore, news credibility relies much on receivers’ perceptions (Berlo, et al., 1969; Chartprasert, 1993; Elareshi & Gunter, 2012). This perspective of news credibility calls for researchers to pay attention to information receivers’ attributes. This is why this thesis takes the population of international students in the United States as study subjects to investigate how they assess international news coverage from U.S. media outlets and media outlets from their home countries regarding credibility factors.

However, this discussion of receivers’ perspective of credibility does not necessarily mean that news credibility is solely determined by its recipients. Information source’s attributes (Berlo, et al., 1969; Hovland & Weiss, 1951; Gaziano & McGrath, 1986; McCroskey, 1966; Whitehead, 1968), news content (Chartprasert, 1993; Cronkhite & Liska, 1976; Slater & Rouner, 1996), and media channels by which the news is
delivered (Kiousis, 2001; Rimmers & Weaver, 1987; Schweiger, 2000; Shen, Lu, Guo & Zhou, 2011) all contribute to perceived media credibility. Thus, media credibility becomes a far more complex concept than it appears in the dictionary. A thorough and comprehensive examination of each factor may sound inspiring and promising, but too ambitious for this thesis. Yet possible interactions among those factors cannot be ignored. Therefore, in order to concentrate on the inquiry of the interest while also avoiding the influence of other factors, the thesis focuses on international students’ perceptions of media source credibility regarding international news coverage.

**Why Media Credibility Matters?**

Credibility is important for media and communication because it gives “weight,” which can “enhance the value of information in a message” (Yoon, Choong Hyun, & Min-Sun, 1998, p.155). Once the “weight” is perceived by receivers, it will increase their attention, respect, acceptance, and selection (Berlo et al., 1969; Schweiger, 2000). Credibility for that reason helps media to attract more audiences, readers, listeners, and users (Tao & Bates, 2009). In addition to affecting the reputation and revenue of media organizations, to a broader sense, media credibility is also positively related to a nation’s ability “to inform the public, to monitor leaders and to govern” (Gaziano, 1988, p. 267). As mass communication researchers have demonstrated, sources with perceived high credibility exert greater influences in the effect of communication (Hovland & Weiss, 1951). Thus, in order to maximize communication effects, either locally or globally, media practitioners should prioritize the perceived credibility.
Media Credibility Studies

A considerable amount of research has devoted to the study of credibility, ranging from developing standardized measurements (Berlo et al., 1969; Hilligoss & Rich, 2008; Hovland & Weiss, 1951; Gaziano & McGrath, 1986; Kohring & Matthes, 2007; McCroskey, 1966; Meyer, 1988; Whitehead, 1968) to correlating media credibility with other variables, such as medium channel’s attributes (Flanagin & Metzger, 2000; Kiousis, 2001; Mehrabi, Ali & Hassan, 2013; Rimmers & Weaver, 1987), presenters’ characteristics (Berlo et al., 1969; Hovland & Weiss, 1951; Whitehead, 1968), the message itself (Chartprasert, 1993; Slater & Rouner, 1996), media use (Johnson & Kaye, 1998, 2000; Kiousis, 2001; Rimmer & Weaver, 1985; Wanta & Hu, 1994; Westley & Severin, 1964), and perceived press freedom (Johnson & Fahmy, 2008; Kiousis, 2001; Wanta & Hu, 1994). Despite the different perspectives of examining media credibility, research is usually divided into two dimensions: source credibility (Berlo et al., 1969; Gaziano & McGrath, 1986; Hovland & Weiss, 1951; Kohring & Matthes, 2007; Metzger, Flanagin, Eyal, Lemus, & McCann, 2003; Tuppen, 1974; Whitehead, 1968) and medium channel credibility (Johnson & Kaye, 1998, 2000; Kiousis, 2001; Rimmer & Weaver, 1987; Schweiger, 2000; Shen et al., 2011). Although they are to some extent intertwined (Kiousis, 2001), it is suggested that scholars examine the two dimensions separately because such study is targeted and may be nuanced. To avoid building research on a one-sided theoretical foundation, this thesis draws on literature from both academic perspectives but then focuses on media source credibility.
**Source credibility.** Source credibility is defined as “the image an audience holds of a source” (Chartprasert, 1993, p.151). It examines how communicators' characteristics influence receivers' perception of the messages. Communicators are often broken down into three dimensions, including individuals, groups, and organizations (Kiousis, 2001). These three divisions or sources have loose boundaries among receivers. For example, viewers tend to take an anchor of a TV news program as an individual communicator and consider much of his or her personal attributes when perceiving the credibility of the message delivered by this anchor. But an individual writer for a newspaper is more likely to be perceived as a representative of an organization, which means readers judge the credibility of information provided by this writer based on the newspaper he or she works for (Kiousis, 2001, p.385; Newhagen & Nass, 1989, p.278). To avoid such vagueness and ambiguity in the concept, this thesis sees communicators as media outlets, either from the United States or from international students’ home countries.

Hovland and colleagues (1951, 1953, 1965) pioneered the study of source credibility through a series of experiments and surveys from the perspective of persuasion (Hovland, Lumsdaine, & Sheffield, 1965; Hovland & Weiss, 1951; Kelman & Hovland, 1953). Through surveys and experiments, Hovland and his colleagues determined that expertise and trustworthiness were two indexes of source credibility.

Regardless of Hovland and associates’ (1951) contributions, other researchers such as Berlo, Lemert, and Mertz (1969), criticized the concept of source credibility developed by Hovland and his associates’ (1951) for being “too simplistic and static” (Kiousis, 2001, p.383) as they explored other factors that could indicate source
credibility. Berlo, Lemert, and Mertz’s (1969) study proposed three relatively independent dimensions for evaluating source credibility, namely safety, qualification, and dynamism. They emphasized that their evaluations were from the perspectives of receivers’ perceptions rather than the static internal attributes of sources (p.576). From this point of view, Berlo, Lemert, and Mertz concluded that safety and qualification are more general than Hovland and colleagues’ (1951) concepts of trustworthiness and expertise.

Using factor analysis, McCroskey (1966) reported two main factors measuring source credibility, namely authoritativeness and character. These two factors correspond with Berlo and colleagues’ (1969) competence and trustworthiness, or qualification and safety (McCroskey & Teven, 1999). Dynamism was excluded by McCroskey (1969), indicating the instability of this concept. However, McCroskey and Teven (1999) supported Berlo, Lemert, and Mertz’s (1969) findings, arguing that credibility is a three-dimensional rather than unidimensional concept.

Whitehead (1968) realized that factor analysis used in the previous studies to determine credibility measurements has two main problems. One is the impossibility of including all the relevant scales. The other is that too many scales may cause subjects’ fatigue so that their credibility ratings might be influenced (p. 225). In the recognition of these limitations, Whitehead (1968) used 65 bipolar semantic differential scales to develop and verify new and the previously identified dimensions of source credibility. He concluded that in addition to trustworthiness and dynamism (Hovland & Weiss, 1951;
Berlo et al., 1969), competence and objectivity were also two factors for evaluating source credibility.

In addition to these early studies, which employed an experimental approach to examine source credibility measurements, there were other important studies on media credibility such as the large-scale survey by Gaziano and McGrath (1986). This national credibility survey was sponsored by the American Society of Newspaper Editors and the Associated Press Managing Editors Association and used a number of operational definitions to measure the complexity of media credibility. Gaziano and McGrath proposed 12 items to develop the measurements of the concept of media credibility, such as: being fair, being biased, telling the whole story, being accurate, invading people’s privacy, watching after readers’ interests, being concerned about the community’s well-being, separating fact and opinion, can be trusted, being concerned about the public interest or being concerned about making profits, being factual or opinionated, and having well-trained reporters. These indexes have been used as well as scrutinized by several researchers (Kiousis, 2001; Meyer, 1988; Wanta & Hu, 1994).

Among these, Meyer (1988) criticized Gaziano and McGrath’s (1986) conclusions for the lack of theoretical grounding and justification. Most importantly, Meyer (1988) argued that credibility is not a unidimensional construct as was reported by Gaziano and McGrath (1986). After retesting the credibility scales yielded from Gaziano and McGrath’s research report, Meyer (1988) posed two dimensions of factors for measuring news credibility: believability and community affiliation. The believability factor was represented by the indexes of “fair, unbiased, tells the whole story, accurate,
and can be trusted” (Meyer, 1988, p.574). As to the community affiliation factor, the indexes included “concerned about the community’s well-being, watches out after your interests, patriotic, and concerned mainly about the public interest” (Meyer, 1988, p.571). These two dimensions inspired following researchers to examine the concept of credibility beyond the initial concern of believability.

Wanta and Hu (1994) employed these two dimensions of indexes to examine the perceived news credibility of respondents. Their path analysis demonstrated that the two indexes have a causal relationship with reliance on media which promotes media exposure. Moreover, the causal relationship was applied for both television and newspapers.

To apply these two dimensions of indexes, namely believability and community affiliation, to other media channels such as online news, Kiousis (2001) chose several constantly-used scales under the two dimensions to indicate credibility. The scales chosen comprised of factors like factual, concerned about the public interest rather than motivated by money, concerned for the community, and can be trusted. Kiousis found that believability and community affiliation can be applied across different media channels, such as television, newspaper, and online news.

At first sight, source credibility has different measurements. However, these measurements with different names represent two basic dimensions as Meyer (1988) initially proposed, namely believability and community affiliation. They are compatible with trustworthiness, expertise, safety, qualification, competence, objectivity,
authoritateness, dynamism, and character (Berlo et al., 1969; Hovland & Weiss, 1951; McCroskey, 1966; Westerman, 2014; Whitehead, 1968).

One concern about these measurements is that they were first determined by researchers, not information receivers. Although some researchers let the subjects choose the scales to represent credibility from a pool of options (King et al., 1985; Whitehead, 1968), there were still little insight into why subjects choose some options instead of others.

In the domain of media source credibility, some researchers have explored the influence of message attributes on the perceptions of source credibility (Chartprasert, 1993; Slater & Rouner, 1996). Rouner and Slater (1996) showed that message quality, which was measured by “well written” and “interesting” can directly influence perceptions of media credibility in terms of expertise. Similarly, Chartprasert (1993) specifically examined the influence of writing style, concluding that readers tend to assign more credibility to the sources of bureaucratic writing style rather than those of simple style with regard to expertise. In addition to a message’s internal attributes, different message content or topics also has the potential to yield different perceptions of source credibility (Ashley, Poepsel & Willis, 2010; Gaziano & McGrath, 1986).

Compared to developing a set of scales for measuring source credibility, this thesis is more concerned about how international students would assess international news coverage from U.S. media outlets and media outlets from their home countries on the matters pertaining to credibility factors. Therefore, this thesis draws upon a combination of examined factors to indicate perceived source credibility according to the
previous studies (Berlo et al., 1969; Gaziano & McGrath, 1986; Hovland & Weiss, 1951; Yoon et al., 1998; Kiousis, 2001; Kohring & Matthes, 2007; Meyer, 1988; Wanta & Hu, 1994), namely being fair, trying to tell the whole story, being accurate, considering the interests of receivers, reflecting the community’s well-being, and projecting public interests. These factors also represent the believability and community affiliation dimensions of the construct which have been employed by researchers in the domain (Kiousis, 2001; Meyer, 1988; Wanta & Hu, 1994).

**Medium credibility.** Medium credibility is concerned about the channels through which the message is disseminated rather than the message senders or the message itself (Kiousis, 2001). Some researchers in this domain tend to examine the credibility within one medium (Chung, Nam & Stefanone, 2012; Kang, 2011; Meyer, 1988; Sundar, 1998; Westerman, Spence & Van Der Heide, 2012, 2014). Others have the interest in comparing the credibility among different media channels (Flanagin & Metzger, 2000; Johnson & Kaye, 1998; Kiousis, 2001; Mehrabi et al., 2013; Newhagen & Nass, 1989; Rimmers & Weaver, 1987; Schweiger, 2000; Zhang, Zhou & Shen, 2014).

**Medium credibility within one channel.** Some studies on medium channel credibility focus on if and how the attributes of one medium channel influence audiences’ perceived credibility of that medium. Studies that are focused on new media tend to follow this approach (Kang, 2011; Westerman et al., 2012, 2014). With the adoption and popularity of the Internet, the use of Web-based new media as information sources, especially via social media, has been increasing (Westerman et al., 2012). Researchers have begun to pay more attention to the credibility of new media (Kang, 2011; Mechrabi
et al., 2010; Westerman et al., 2012, 2014). The necessity of scrutinizing the credibility of new media lies in different processes of information producing and dissemination compared to traditional media. Because of the user-generated content process, new media lack gatekeepers who take the responsibility of information checking (Kang, 2011; Mehrabi et al., 2013; Westerman et al., 2012, 2014). As a result, the credibility of new media is believed to be negatively related to easily-found errors in the information (Mehrabi et al., 2013).

However, some media researchers argue that the credibility criteria for measuring new media credibility should be different from those for traditional media due to the “technological affordance” (Chung et al., 2012, p.182) of the new media. As a result, Westerman, Spence and Van Der Heide (2012, 2014) have paid special attention and effort to examine the influence of “system-generated cues” (Westerman et al., 2014, p.174) of social media on perceived credibility. System-generated cues are functions embedded in social media networks such as the recency of posting, the number of followers, and the ratio of followers to follows. According to Westerman and his associates (2014), the recency of updates does not have a direct correlation with credibility, but it is positively related to the cognitive elaboration which, in turn, has a positive relationship with credibility. In another study, Westerman and his associates (2012) found that both too many and too few followers are negatively related to perceived credibility on the factors of competence and trustworthiness. The ratio between the number of followers and the number of people one follows influences perceived credibility in terms of competence.
Also, in the approach of medium credibility within one channel, some studies attempt to develop a set of measurements for new media such as blogs. Kang (2011) has used focus groups and a survey to develop and validate a 14-item measure of blog credibility. Among those measurements, fairness and accuracy are two scales which are applied in traditional media as well. The rest of the measurements have been developed specifically for blogs, including bloggers and blog contents. For instance, being passionate, reliable, and transparent, or knowledgeable and influential in the specific field of blog topics are credibility measurements for bloggers. As to blog contents, the measurements include being consistent and being able to timely deliver authentic, insightful, and informative contents.

Medium credibility across media channels. Research on comparing credibility across different media channels seems to be an open-ended question with no consistent and persuasive answer, no matter if the comparison is among traditional media channels or if the comparison focuses on the difference between traditional and new media channels. This inconsistent situation first reached one of its peaks around 1960 when Roper polling organization surveyed media’s relative believability and got different results each time (Gaziano & McGrath, 1986; Wetley & Weaver, 1964). In the 1980s, four major national survey projects on media credibility were sponsored by four institutions, namely American Society of Newspaper Editors (ASNE), Times Mirror, the Gannett Center for Media Studies, and the Los Angeles Times (ASNE, 1985; Gaziano, 1988; Gaziano & McGrath, 1986; Rimmer & Weaver, 1985; Robinson & Kohut, 2001). These projects also yielded varying results. By scrutinizing more research on the
comparison of news credibility across media channels, possible reasons for these inconsistent findings can be unfolded (Gaziano, 1988; Gaziano & McGrath, 1986; Johnson & Kaye, 1998; Payne & Dozier, 2013; Rimmer & Weaver, 1985; Robinson & Kohut, 2001; Westly & Severin, 1964).

*Geographic differences.* Different geographic locations may account for inconsistent results in medium channel credibility studies. For example, Kiousis (2001) conducted a study, ranking the perceived credibility of different types of media in the United States, concluding that the newspaper was perceived as the most credible medium, followed by the web and television. Schweiger’s (2000) study in Germany came to a similar conclusion: Germans rated newspapers as the most credible medium. But the credibility ascribed to the web and television in Germany was just opposite to that in the United States. When Zhang, Zhou and Shen (2014) carried out a series of surveys in 10 cities in China, they found that Chinese people viewed television as the most credible medium. Newspapers and websites followed. These findings were not in accordance with the findings of the other two previously mentioned studies. The results from the above research seem to be able to only demonstrate the disparity of the perceived media credibility in different countries. However, when analyzing them closely, we might consider social systems, economic situations, technology’s diffusion and other factors as possible explanations. The tangibly geographic differences might influence the invisibly ideological difference in information receivers as well as the information providers.

*Familiarity with a medium over time.* Researchers on medium channel credibility may obtain different results in different time periods. In a longitudinal extension of a
study a decade ago, Payne and Dozier (2013) replicated the previous study in terms of the theoretical position and methodological approach. The results showed that even though the average credibility ratings of an online-version newspaper were still lower than its hardcopy version, the difference was no longer statistically significant. Considering the popularity and familiarity of online news outlets in 2000 and 2010, the results met the expectation that greater familiarity improves the credibility of online-version newspapers.

*Demographic variables.* As an independent variable, demographic factors have demonstrated their influence on perceived media credibility (Berlo et al., 1969; Gaziano, 1988; Johnson & Kaye, 1998; Lee, 2010; Rieh & Danielson, 2007; Wetley & Weverin, 1964; Zhan et al., 2013). Take political views as an example. Studies have found that media trust is positively predicted by trust in government and negatively predicted by people who lean towards conservatism and Republican world view (Lee, 2010). People who do not have strong political preference tend to give more credibility to media. Other studies have also found that attitudes regarding media, education, religion, and income can be related to perceived media credibility (Gaziano, 1988; Golan & Baker, 2012; Johnson & Kaye, 1998; Moody, 2011; Zhan et al., 2013).

Demographic variables are not new in the investigation of media credibility. Back in 1964, Westly and Severin specifically examined respondents’ demographic attributes to explicate the different results pertaining to the relationship between media reliance, media use, and medium channel credibility. The list covered almost all the aspects of respondents’ demographic attributes, such as occupation, education, social class, social or vertical mobility, horizontal mobility, age, gender, affiliation, and political attitudes. This
perspective of “the properties of the audience” has gradually grown as an alternative approach to studying media credibility (Moody, 2011). In fact, this approach echoes the construct of credibility which is defined through the lens of a receiver’s perception (Berlo et al., 1969). As Berlo and his associates (1969) reminded fellow media credibility researchers to “test the stability and generalizability of the construct across sources, contexts, respondents, and cultures” (p.576), the thesis specifically will look at international students, a group of people who share commonalities as well as dissimilarities.

Studies on comparing credibility across media channels do not yield consistent results because of the reasons listed above. Some researchers argue that rather than comparing media credibility across media channels, taking media credibility as a whole issue might be more meaningful (Kiousis, 2001; Payne & Dozier, 2013). Flanagin and Metzger (2000) found that respondents rated the perceived credibility of Internet information similar to that obtained from television, radio, and magazine. However, credibility ratings among types of information varied across media channels. Medium itself is not the whole message on which people could fully depend to assess news credibility. Studies on medium credibility usually use source credibility as a dependable variable and medium or medium attributes as an independent variable (Flanagin & Metzger, 2000; Kiousis, 2001; Schweiger, 2000; Johnson & Kaye, 1998, 2000; Newhagen & Nass, 1989; Zhang, et al., 2014). This is self-explanatory evidence of the interactive relationship between medium credibility and source credibility. In other words, medium credibility cannot be separated from source credibility, because it is hard
to tell whether information receivers consider the medium by which a message is
delivered or the source who delivers a message when they assess the credibility of that
message. In addition, people may have particular scales for measuring credibility of a
certain medium due to its own attributes (Kang, 2011; Mehrabi, 2013; Westerman, et al.,
2012, 2014). It might not be reasonable to use the same scales to measure credibility
across different media channels. However, previous studies have validated several
credibility scales which could be consistently applied to different media channels such as
fairness, accuracy, concerns about a community’s well-being, and etc. (Johnson & Kaye,
1998; Kiousis, 2001; Mehbrabi et al., 2013; Sundar, 1998). The possibility for the
existence of such credibility scales lies in the similarity of “the factor structures
underlying receivers’ perceptions” of the news across different media channels (Chung et
al., 2012, p. 173). Therefore, studying media credibility as a whole rather than comparing
the credibility across media channels is recommended as well as validated (Chung et al.,
Chapter 3: International Mobility

According to the report from the Department of Home Security (Foreman & Monger, 2014), international students constitute a major proportion of nonimmigrants to the United States. Nonimmigrants are defined as foreign nationals who are granted temporary authorities to stay in the United States (Foreman & Monger, 2014). Globally, international students represent a population movement called international migration. As was reported by the Department of Economic and Social Affairs of the United Nations, the number of international migrants reached 232 million in 2013, which surpassed that in 1990 by over 77 million or 50% (International Migration Report, 2013). This number of over 200 million people who are currently migrating can convince us that we are living in a globalized world.

International Migration

Migration is not a new concept. Generally speaking, migration refers to an activity in which people choose to leave their places of birth and settle in a new place either temporarily or permanently (Adams & Kirova, 2007, p.2). Historically, human beings have migrated. For example, there are peoples who migrate constantly, such as Nomads. Migration has two types: internal and international migration. The concept of the nation-state is integral to understand the distinction between these two categories. The nation-state is “the unit that represents the establishment of a nation, under the territorial control of a given state” (Brittain, 2002, p.12). That is, the nation-state can be broken down into two parts. The nation is one’s country of origin. The state is one’s country of borders (Brittain, 2002). Usually, when a new settlement place and the place of birth are
the same state, the conceptual nation is consistent with the concrete state. Such movement is internal migration. For example, if an individual were born in Athens, Ohio of the United States and relocated to Pasadena, California of the United States, this individual’s migration would be internal migration. However, if a new settlement place and the place of birth are different states, the conceptual nation is inconsistent with the concrete state. In that case, the movement belongs to international migration. For instance, if an individual were born in Athens, Ohio of the United States and relocated to Athens of Greek, this individual’s migration would be international migration.

International Migration and Globalization

International migration represents “the human face” of globalization (Suárez-Orozco & Carolyn, 2007, p.58) because human beings are physically moving from one country to others, connecting those countries together. Globalization has many definitions based on different foci. For example, Cato Institution and World Bank unanimously defined globalization as a growing integration of economics (Ervin & Smith, 2008, pp.2-3). The International Monetary Fund (IMF) expanded the scope of globalization to include “the movement of people (labor) and knowledge (technology)” as well as “broader cultural, political and environmental dimensions” (p.3). Combined, globalization refers to “all those processes by which the peoples of the world are incorporated into a single society, global society” (Cohen & Kennedy, 2000, p.24, cited from Albrow, 1990, p.9). During this process, the time and space are “shrink[ing]” while the interconnections and interdependences are “thicken[ing]” (Ervin & Smith, 2008, p.4). In order to “thicken” the interaction in a globalization context, transnational actors, such
as international migrants are in demand (Cohen & Kennedy, 2000, p.33). Therefore, international migrants do not merely embody the phenomenon of globalization, but also act on the process, building the relation between their places of birth and their places of settlement (p.202).

**Actions of International Migrants**

As was stated above, international migrants play a role in both the birthplaces and the receiving nation-state in the process of globalization. International migrants usually interact with individuals in the nation-state of origin by way of travel, communication, and sending money or goods (Anker, 2010). In a receiving nation-state, international migrants have the task of integrating the traditions and cultural practices of their nation-state of origin with the cultural practices of the receiving nation-state. “Cultural traditions” (Halualani, 2008, p.4) which international migrants bring with them from the nation-state of origin to a new place, include cultural and social ideas, customs, and practices. These cultural traditions will not easily disappear or alter just with the change of the geographic boundaries, because they exist as long as international migrants preserve and practice them. However, crossing or overlapping territory boundaries do bring “modern development” (p.4) to international migrants, meaning that the migrants have to face new cultural and social ideas and practice from the new settlement places. Therefore, how to incorporate “cultural traditions” with “modern development” is a task that international migrants have to undertake.
International Migration and Media/Communication

In the process of globalization, information, communication, and media technologies are “the high-octane fuel” (Suárez-Orozco & Sattin, 2007, p.60), because it expands, intensifies, and accelerates people’s interconnections and interdependences. For international migrants, these communication and media technologies have influences on their decision-making prior the migration takes place as well as their reconfiguration of the nation-states after moving to a foreign country either for a temporary or permanent living there.

According to Brittain (2002), the media might help the international migrants to restructure of the social space after their physical change in localities. For international migrants, the media influence their reconfiguration of the nation-states through three ways. The first way is through North-South media, referring to the information flow from the immigrant receiving countries to sending countries. The information and messages that are disseminated via these media reflect a “culture imperialism” (p.30) image from the receiving countries. The second is through South-North media, denoting the media products from the migrants’ sending countries to the worldwide. The target audiences of these media are a group of migrants who are culturally-related but loosely-residing abroad. The last way is through ethnic media in the receiving countries, which are established by ethnic and immigrant groups. These media are aimed to provide the migrants of the same origins with the information that is instrumental for them to reside in a foreign country, to maintain connections with the countries of origin, or to contact with co-nationals in other countries.
Since the information distributors, the target audiences and the content vary among those three forms of media, international migrants may experience different influences in terms of rebuilding their social space in the migration receiving countries. It could also be articulated to that the use of media influences international migrants’ attitudes and perceptions towards different aspects of the receiving countries, including media credibility.

One example is given by a study on media credibility which is rated by African and U.S. students. Pratt (1982) demonstrated that U.S. students who have been exposed to foreign media tend to rate lower credibility to international news in the U.S. media (p. 587). It is because that exposure to information about foreign countries, either through personal contacts or media, increases “favorable opinion” about the foreign countries and people there as well as increases “the level of criticism of one’s own people and institutions” (p. 582). Accordingly, those who have more exposure to U.S. media tend to assign more credibility to the international news from U.S. media (p. 587). Given that international students constitute a proportion of international migrants and the influences of three forms of media act on international migrants, the thesis would like to explore how international students in the United States perceive the media outlets from the United States and their home countries on the credibility factors.

**Research Questions**

The thesis is intended to explore how international students assess international news coverage from both U.S. media outlets and media outlets from their home countries on issues of credibility. The following research questions are proposed:
RQ1-a: What motivates international students to tune in to media outlets based in the United States?

RQ1-b: What motivates international students to tune in to media outlets based in their home countries?

RQ2: How do international students in the United States perceive international news coverage from U.S. media outlets and outlets from their home countries on the matters of credibility factors? Such as being fair, being accurate, trying to tell the whole story, considering the interest of the news receivers, reflecting the community’s well-being, and projecting public interest.
Chapter 4: Research Procedure and Methodology

Method

This thesis is concerned with how international students view international news coverage in terms of some standardized credibility factors. Focus groups are used to qualitatively investigate the perceptions of media credibility among international students in the United States. The focus group interview has an advantage in gathering people’s thoughts and feelings (Krueger & Casey, 2000, p.5). As a result, focus groups are more suitable for this research for the purpose of knowing what international students think and feel about international news coverage from both U.S. media outlets and outlets from their home countries, especially pertaining to some select credibility factors.

In addition, focus group interviews encourage interaction between participants. Interaction can elicit insights, which are less possible to access without in-depth probing from participants (Liamputong, 2011, p.31). The interaction helps participants to ponder and reflect their experience and thoughts as it relates to international news and current affairs. Based on the above considerations, this thesis utilized focus group interviews to carry out the study.

The researcher recruited and conducted the focus group sessions on the Ohio University campus from January 9 to February 5, 2015. To maintain consistency across focus group sessions, the researcher employed semi-structured questions at each session (See Appendix 2) and was adhered to by a trained moderator. The discussion questions as well as pre-screening questionnaire (See Appendix 1) were pre-tested on international students attending the same university (N = 4) and in a mini group (N = 2). Feedback
from these pre-tests was used to modify the discussion questions and pre-screening questions, which were administered to the three focus groups.

Participants were asked about their preference and motivation of using particular media outlets in their home countries and in the United States (e.g., the media outlets to obtain news, the types of news to seek, and the frequency to use the media outlets for news), and judgment as well as perceptions of international news coverage from U.S. media outlets and outlets from their home countries. The central focus was on credibility on the following factors: being fair, trying to tell the whole story, being accurate, considering the interest of the news receivers, reflecting the community’s well-being, and projecting public interest.

**Participants**

A total of 32 (N = 32) participants took part in three different focus group sessions, with two sessions composed of 10 participants and the third one with 12 participants. The size of each group allowed ample time for participants to fully express their opinion. The size of the focus groups was appropriate for the research design and practical considerations of this study (Liamputtong, 2011).

All participants in this study were international students enrolled at Ohio University in the United States. The researcher recruited participants through personal connections, international students associations, and recruitment advertising posts in hard copy and online. Potential participants were screened based on their attentiveness to news and their verbal English proficiency. Other demographic characteristics such as nationality, gender, age, and field of study did not influence the screening of participants.
However, in order to realize the interaction between participants during the focus group discussion, the nationalities or cultural backgrounds were taken into consideration when arranging the composition of each group. For example, 3 Arabian female participants were grouped or set up to all attend in one session. Their similar social and cultural backgrounds and shared lived experiences related to the topic made them feel understood and willing to discuss their own opinions.

For all three focus groups, there were 15 (47%) male and 17 (53%) female participants. Two participants were under 20 years old, 24 were aged between 20 and 29, and 6 were 30 years of age or older. Participants came from three continents, representing 12 countries. Fourteen participants were Chinese. There were three participants each from Ghana and Oman. Meanwhile, Indonesia, Iraq, and Vietnam had each two participants. Bangladesh, India, Laos, Nigeria, Pakistan, and Turkey had one participant. Fourteen participants had resided in the United States for less than 12 months. Ten participants had resided in the United States between 13 and 24 months. Four participants had resided in the United States for 25 to 36 months. Two participants had resided in the United States for 37 to 48 months. Two participants had resided in the United States for 49 to 60 months. One participant had resided in the United States for more than 60 months. Participants came from 18 different fields of study, including African Studies, Biology, Business, Civil Engineering, Communication and Development Studies, Computer Science, Education Administration, Educational Studies, Electrical Engineering, Environmental Engineering, Financial Economics, Hospital Administration,
Journalism, Mathematics, MBA, Sports Administration, Mechanical Engineering, Media Arts and Studies, and Studio Art.

Based on participants’ self-report questionnaire, 28 participants still used media outlets from their home countries after they came to the United States. Half of the participants started to use media outlets from the United States when they moved to the United States. Eleven participants used media outlets from either the United States or other countries (e.g. Britain or Russia) before they came to the United States. Concerning the types of news in terms of regional categories that participants usually seek when they are at home, 23 said they accessed news about their home countries; two paid attention to the news about the United States; and 21 followed international news. While they are in the United States, 16 participants still followed news about their home countries; 14 paid attention to the news about the United States; and 19 followed international news. In addition, 12 participants reported that they followed news based on the topical categories when they were in their home countries and 9 participants said that they followed news based on the topical categories when they were in the United States. The topical categories range from politics, economy, technology, science, sports, entertainment, security, terrorism, humanitarian missions, social movement, job hunting, and weather. Compared to the frequency of using media outlets when the participants reside in their home countries, five participants frequently used media outlets to follow news when they are in the United States; 20 use media outlets to follow news quite frequently; and seven participants use them less frequently.
Method of Analyzing Data

Thematic analysis is a method used in qualitative research in order to identify and analyze patterns or themes of the data (Clarke & Braun, 2013). It is utilized here as a suitable method of analysis because of its “theoretical independence” (Clarke & Braun, 2013, p.120), meaning that the process of identifying themes and patterns does not require adherence to any one particular theoretical framework. In addition, as a “basic” (Clarke & Braun, 2013, p.120) method used in qualitative research, thematic analysis of the focus groups works efficiently with a variety of research questions, such as participants’ experiences and perceptions. It can also be used for analyzing different types of data, including transcripts of focus group interviews.

In order to utilize thematic analysis, the researcher first immersed herself in the transcribed data, repeatedly, and read the transcripts and coded them. Using a cut-and-paste technique (Krueger & Casey, 2000; Stewart, Shamdasani & Rook, 2007), the researcher grouped the data based on the initial codes concerning discussion questions, such as being fair, trying to tell the whole story, being accurate, considering the interest of the news receivers, reflecting the community’s well-being, and projecting public interest. Then data extracts were generated. These steps were applied first within each focus group session data, then to the responses for each discussion question across all three focus group sessions. During this process, similar responses were compiled and grouped, leaving unique ones for further analysis. Then, the researcher reviewed the data from the coded perspectives (Clarke & Braun, 2013, p.121) in order to identify themes that emerged. Furthermore, thought-provoking and relevant data were also identified.
Then the researcher reviewed and double checked the themes to ensure that they were interpreted consistently with the data and coded extracts.

In addition to conducting a thematic analysis of the focus group data, the researcher further paid special attention to the interaction within each focus group. Liamputtong, (2011) argued that some researchers often neglected analyzing the interaction among participants within a focus group. However, sometimes the group influences a participant’s response because of the group setting, group dynamics, or basic interactions between participants. For example, because a participant is a member of the research group at hand, he/she may say something based on the group’s dynamics that he/she would not have said if he/she were in a different setting or alone. The impact of the interaction and group dynamic thus plays an important role for participants within a focus group context to generate data themes or patterns. Therefore, analyzing the interaction of a group is important for researchers to understand and seek those themes (Liamputtong, 2011, p.175). Based on Liamputtong’s (2011) recommendation, the researcher scrutinized three aspects of the interaction among participants, as listed below:

What: What motivation for seeking media outlets or credibility factor produced agreement?

What motivation for seeking media outlets or credibility factor seemed to evoke conflict?

Who: Whose interests did participants represent when they approached questions?

Who were easy to form alliance among group members?

How: How did group members respond to similar or different ideas of others?
How did the group resolve disagreements if there was any? (p. 176)

By examining the above three aspects of the interaction among participants, the researcher obtained the insights beyond the content of the focus group data. In addition, reporting the interaction—whether it be agreeing or conflicting—is a way to help the researcher to represent participants’ perspectives and interpret their views more accurately and validly.

Procedure

Based on the feedback of the pre-tests, some ambiguous wording and concepts were clarified so that the questions would be clearly understandable by international students. A copy of the finalized discussion questions was provided to a moderator in advance of the three focus group sessions. The moderator was a female U.S. college student majoring in journalism and was trained by the researcher before the focus group discussions. The moderator did not influence participants in this study to frankly discuss their perceptions and experiences because of her identity as a U.S. citizen. Instead, her Standard English pronunciation and journalism background made the communication easier across all international students from various backgrounds.

In each focus group session, participants were asked by the researcher to fill out a pre-screening questionnaire and were given a name card with name code, such as M1 for a male participant, F1 for a female participant. The participants were asked to write down their name codes on the pre-screening questionnaire. During the discussion, the participants were asked to say their codes aloud each time they answered a question in order to help with the transcription process. The participants were addressed by name
codes instead of their real names to ensure their anonymity and confidentiality during the transcription process and data analysis. Then, the researcher began with a briefing before the discussion. The briefing included a word of appreciation to the participants, introductions of the study and the focus groups moderator, addressing matters that participants may need to be mindful of during the discussion, and some concepts used in the discussion, such as media outlets or new media outlets. The moderator conducted all three focus group sessions in a conference room, and the sessions were digitized on audio recorders. The focus group sessions lasted between 85 and 100 minutes. An online software Transcribe was used to fully transcribe all focus group sessions from the audio files. Transcribing process followed the instructions of Liamputtong (2011), including using simplified Jeffersonian transcribing conventions. The transcripts were used for the subsequent analysis.

**Operational Definitions**

**Media credibility.** The thesis is concerned with how international students assess international news coverage from U.S. media outlets and outlets from their home countries on the matters pertaining to some select credibility factors. It draws upon a combination of some standardized source credibility factors which represent believability and community affiliation dimensions according to previous studies (Berlo et al., 1969; Gaziano & McGrath, 1986; Kiousis, 2001; Kohring & Matthes, 2007; Meyer, 1988; Wanta & Hu, 1994; Whitehead, 1968; Yoon et al., 1998). Factors of being fair, telling the whole story, and being accurate constitute believability and factors of considering the
interests of the receivers, reflecting a community’s well-being, and projecting public interests represent community affiliation.

**Media outlets.** In the focus group discussion, “media outlets” is understood including both traditional and new media. Traditional news media outlets mean television, radio, newspaper, and magazine, for example, CNN, NPR, New York Times, and TIME. New media outlets refer to stand-alone online news outlet, such as huffingtonpost.com, of an offline outlet, such as nytimes.com, and social media, such as Twitter, Facebook, and Instagram.

**Types of news.** Previous studies have shown the relationship between the news topics (Gaziano & McGrath, 1986) or information types (Flanagin & Metzger, 2000) and perceived credibility. Used here is Gaziano and McGrath’s (1986) definition, which evaluates news topics as local issues of interest to the community, election coverage, natural disasters, crime, entertainment news, a president, health and medical news, business news, the economy, the government in Washington DC, religious news, the arms race, the abortion issue, and international affairs or events of interest/magnitude. Flanagin and Metzger (2000, pp.522-539) categorizes information into four types: news or current events information (e.g. political events, public interest items, or current affairs, either locally or elsewhere), entertainment information (e.g. entertainment programming, games, hobbies, or gossip), reference or factual information (e.g. address, phone numbers, maps, dictionaries or encyclopedias, or interesting facts such as sports
trivia or quotations), and commercial or product information (e.g. descriptions, prices, or ratings of products or general information about a company).

However, types of news do not influence source credibility by themselves (Ashley et al., 2010; Cronkhite & Liska, 1976; Kohring & Matthes, 2007). News is produced by other factors such as sources, cultural and geographic considerations. Then these factors may shape source credibility. In order to focus on source credibility and minimize the influence of news types, news is regionally and topically categorized in this thesis.

The regional categories include international news, news about international students’ home countries, and news about the United States. International news is story that focuses exclusively on the country/ies except for international students’ home countries and the United States, or international stories that mention their home countries or the United States, (e.g. news stories about searching for the missing Malaysian airline MH370, which disappeared in 2014), or stories from an international location (such as an annual meeting of the World Economic Forum held in Davos, Switzerland). News about one’s home country is story that exclusively focuses on their home countries, but also include stories that are domestic-based but which mention a foreign country (for example, news about Ebola outbreak in Sierra Leone in 2014, for a student from that country is considered here as home country’s news even though it might mention international medical assistance, because for that student from Sierra Leone, news about Ebola outbreak in Sierra Leone is home-based). Similar definition is applied to news about the United States or U.S. news: news stories that exclusively focus on the United States and domestic-based news for the United States, but which mention other
country/ies (such as the immigration policy of the United States that affects people from other countries). As to the topical categories, they refer to politics, economy, technology, science, sports, entertainment, security, terrorism, humanitarian missions, social movement, job hunting, and weather.

Focus group discussion specifically centers primarily on international news for two reasons. First, the subjects are international students. In order to involve the subjects in the focus group exercise to the largest extent, international news is the central news category. Second, compared to the news about the U.S. and the international students’ home countries, international news has less of an emotional element, which might influence international students’ perceptions of news source credibility.
Chapter 5: Results

Data from the focus groups provided insight into the participants’ motivations and perceptions of international news coverage from media outlets from the United States and in their home countries on some select credibility factors. The first section of the results chapter presents four themes that arose from the data analysis with regard to the first set of research questions about the motivations for international students to seek media outlets from the United States or in their home countries. The second section draws from the focus group data pivoting on two themes to answer the second research question concerning the international students’ perceptions of international news coverage from U.S. media outlets and outlets from their home countries on matters pertaining to some credibility factors. The two themes are pertinent to the two dimensions of media credibility—believability and community affiliation.

Motivations for International Students to Tune in to Media Outlets

Drawing from a set of exploratory questions, the researcher asked focus group participants (international students at Ohio University) to share their motivations for tuning in to media outlets in the United States and outlets in their home countries. One of the researcher’s attempts was to see if media credibility could be one motivation. Based on focus group data, media outlets’ reputation and news quality were the closest motivation toward media credibility. Other motivations included making connectivity and communication, seeking information, and making use of technological attributes. Although slightly diverse in degree, these motivations were applicable to both U.S. media outlets and outlets from participants’ home countries.
Media outlets’ reputation and news quality. Some participants in this study took media outlets’ reputation and the quality of their news product as motivations to tune in to media outlets. They also said that the reputation of a media outlet could embody its credibility. Only one participant from China gave high and positive regards to media outlet in her home country in terms of “high-quality” coverage and event review (F4, FG3). Other participants’ comments related to reputation and quality only explained the motivation for tuning in to U.S. media outlets. One FG2 participant admitted that she preferred U.S. media outlets because of their highly-rated credibility.

The credibility and reliability of the U.S. news media outlets are well known of the world. Whenever I want to hear any news about international community as well as the U.S. … , I always tune in to some big major media outlets in [the] U.S. (F4, FG2)

Other participants gave more concrete reasons. One FG1 participant said that U.S. media outlets “[took] the citation very seriously” (F5, FG1), which attracted her attention. Another FG2 participant who liked the long-history New York Times was fond of its writing style. As was stated by these three participants, the long-established reputation and high-quality news coverage swayed their choices of U.S. media outlets. One participant chose the ABC network television when she wanted to watch President Obama’s national address in the United States, simply because it was “a big channel” (F7, FG1) and she knew it when she was in her home country. Therefore, reputation and quality could explicitly and implicitly motivate the participants in this study to choose certain media outlets over others.

Connectivity and communication. Throughout the discussion, using media outlets for maintaining connectivity and communication was in ample evidence,
especially in the case related to participants’ home countries. Many participants sought media outlets from the United States and outlets in their home countries to learn news about their home countries. Several participants used U.S. media outlets for the news happening around them. Furthermore, many participants pointed out that they liked to communicate with family and friends at home and friends in the United States about current events reported by both countries.

Many participants expressed their dependence on and concerns about their home countries, their families, relatives, and friends who were living there. This home-country bond drove them to seek international news about their home countries to make them feel more connected while living abroad. Participants who came from a turbulent or unstable country, such as Iraq, Ghana, or Bangladesh took this connection seriously. The following are excerpts from focus groups discussions with participants from these countries:

For me, the most important thing is my family and all my relatives and everybody's there. Everybody knows what's happening in Iraq. That's why now I'm very worried. (F2, FG1)

The reason I like to pay attention to events going on back home is because I still feel a very strong connection, even though I'm a lot of thousands of miles away from home. Eh. Most … my family … is still in Ghana-where I come from. So events that take place there would somehow affect ME because then they affect them badly. So I like to pay attention to what's going on back home. (M3, FG2)

I come from Bangladesh. It's a South Asian country and it's going [through] to a huge political unrest. And a lot of people have been murdered, you know, burned alive. And I wanna keep myself update to that. Sometimes I'm so scared, because my family live there. (F1, FG3)

These three excerpts illustrate these participants’ needs to be kept up to date on events happening in their home countries. Sometimes participants had to resort to media
outlets from their home countries to access news concerning their home countries
because they could not find international news in U.S. media outlets. Even if they could,
the news about their home countries was mostly negative content or framed in a negative
way, such as bombing, violence, or controversial issues. As one participant from Pakistan
stated:

I think I need a little more substantial amount of news about my own country,
which I do not find in media outlets [here]. It’s not that, they’re supposed to [be]
reporting about Pakistan all the time, it’s just, I think I would, I could (know) a lot
more information of stuff going on back home. Also, I think primarily the best
media ha[ve] a more of a universal sort of outlook on Pakistan. Even if you read
10 newspapers, you pretty much … get the same kind of news about what’s going
on in Pakistan, especially about the sort of news they focus on…. What you
WOULD hear in West media outlets would be some bomb going out somewhere.
(M5, FG2)

Another participant from the same focus group lent her support on this point. She
felt “that the U.S. media outlets portrayed other developing countries news … in a
negative spotlight” (F4, FG2). As a result, “[to] have more comprehensive reports” (F5,
FG3) about participants’ home countries is a main motivation to seek home-country
media outlets.

However, other times, some participants would follow U.S. media outlets for
news coverage about their home countries, because they found that this coverage gave the
audience in the United States a negative impression about their home countries. Two
participants from China explained their motivation as follows:

Sometimes I use New York Times to read news [about] China, because it's …
kinds of sometimes negative/.. towards China. So, that's the reason why I wanna
read … this kind of news to see how they … ma[k]e their arguments. (F3, FG2)

I found one thing interesting … that they <referring to Bloomberg Business
Weekly> love to cover something about China and they always try to be how to
say, NEUTRAL about Chinese stuff, but actually they are not. That's one thing I found interesting. So I love to read the articles about China. (F2, FG2)

Focus group participants in this sense still saw the need to learn what’s happening in their home countries as one of the major motivations. By the same token, in order to be connected with the United States, some participants preferred the U.S. media outlets, as a way to fit in the local culture. Some participants from FG3 chose CNN, Fox News, New York Times, or local newspapers, such as the Post and Athens Messenger, to learn what’s going on in the United States and around them.

In addition to building connectivity with the United States and home countries, participants also used media outlets as channels to communicate with families and friends. Some of these participants viewed media outlets as a source, which provided topics for them to “(gossip)” with families and friends at home (F1, FG2). Others communicated with friends at home or in the United States directly via social media.

Participants from China brought up Weibo (a Chinese-version Twitter) and WeChat (a chatting app where people can share their thoughts and pictures), as tools for them and their friends at home to keep in touch and exchange opinion. As to social media that were used to communicate with friends in the United States, Instagram was mentioned. These examples imply that participants are motivated to choose media outlets because of the need to communicate with family and friends. Whether they prefer U.S. media outlets or outlets from their home countries depends upon with whom they wish to communicate.

**Information seeking.** Participants indicated a motivation to seek information and messages. Many participants tuned to either U.S. media outlets or outlets from either their
home countries to find information based on their interests or hobbies, job or career prospects, and assignments or courses. For example, as sports fans, some participants were orientated by sports news, no matter the news was from U.S. media outlets or outlets from their respective home countries. Similarly, another participant who “love[d]… anything related to technology and finance and business” (F2, FG2) was fond of Bloomberg. In this case, it is the specialty rather than the origin of the media outlets that attracted participants with certain interests.

In other situations when participants had a more precise goal about the information that they needed, their choice of media outlets would have more confined conditions, such as the source. For example, participants who needed job information in their home countries would follow home-country media outlets. Correspondingly, participants who needed information relevant to the United States at a regional or national level for the purposes of completing an assignment or task, they had no choice but to turn to U.S. media outlets. In terms of the motivation to seek information, when participants did not have a specific goal, they paid attention to content or topics of information rather than information providers.

**Technological attributes.** This motivation was widely discussed and agreed upon for both U.S. media outlets and outlets from participants’ home countries. However, some participants spontaneously limited the discussion of this motivation within new
media, especially social media, including *Facebook, Instagram*, and news apps on mobile devices.

In general, participants liked the easy access and convenience offered by technology. An FG3 participant said that it was the easy accessibility that enabled him to pick up mobile phone every morning and knew what was trending. In addition, many participants enjoyed the timely updating of news with alerts and other functions. One participant said that the media outlet he liked got “updated every five minutes or ten minutes” (M2, FG2). This speed niche made all kinds of news apps standing out to motivate participants to use them.

Unlike the advocates of technology in new media, there was one voice calling for using them “with cautions” (M1, FG3). Other participants actually echoed that sentiment when they discussed some questions about credibility, which will be reported in the second section of this chapter.

Results show that motivations that made participants tune in to media outlets from the United States and their home countries included media outlets’ reputation and news quality, maintaining connectivity and communication, seeking information, and using technology attributes. One distinction was made in terms of well-known reputation between U.S. media outlets and outlets in participants’ home countries.

**Perceptions of International News Coverage on Credibility Factors**

During the focus group discussions, the moderator asked a list of questions concerning media credibility factors, including believability (i.e., being fair, trying to tell the whole story, and being accurate) and community affiliation (i.e., considering the
interest of the news receivers, reflecting the community’s well-being, and projecting public interest). Data showed how participants perceived international news coverage from the U.S. media outlets and outlets from their respective home countries in terms of believability in three themes clearly. However, with regard to the perceptions of community affiliation, participants’ comments did not yield clear themes due to different stances they took. Furthermore, participants perceived stark difference between new media outlets and traditional media outlets on the question of accuracy.

In this section, results are reported in four parts: assessments of believability, assessments of community affiliation, new media and traditional media, and perceived credibility factors.

**Assessments of believability.** Data analysis of the focus groups about all the three questions pertaining to believability yielded three thematic discussions: problems of believability, causes of the problems, and solutions to the problems. Each of these discussions had substantial deliberation.

**Problems of believability.** Participants listed problems for each factor of believability: being fair, trying to tell the whole story, and being accurate. Although different from each other, sometimes these measurements were labeled with the same problem. For example, some participants said that missing information might account for inaccurate coverage, and some participants also illustrated that missing information was a way of not telling a whole story. Participants did not have clear dividing lines that differentiated problems for each factor. However, participants found these problems in
the international news coverage from both U.S. media outlets and outlets from
participants’ home countries.

Problems of fairness. Basically, most of the participants said international news
coverage was not fair, in both U.S. media outlets and in their home countries’ media
outlets. In addition to the shared problems of only covering several countries and from
certain perspectives, the other two problems were discussed merely in the participants’
respective home country. One problem was that international news was barely covered by
media outlets, especially by television. Participants from Oman, India, and Pakistan
expressed this concern. Another problem was that international news was usually the
result of translation from international news agencies, such as AP, Reuters, and AFP. One
FG1 participant from Laos pointed out that international news in media outlets in his
country was extracted from Xinhua agency from China and AP. Another FG1 participant
from Vietnam said most of the international news coverage in her home country was
translated from international and particularly from U.S. news sources. The same problem
was also discussed in FG2. Moreover, one FG2 participant illustrated that this problem
was more often seen in print media.

Much of the news that published in magazines and newspapers, print media
comes from press like AFP, AP, Reuters. … They sort of, just stick news together
and publish [it as] a piece of news. I don't really think they REALLY you know,
alter it in any way. … Whatever Reuters is saying in Germany or Japan, is pretty
much what the news in Pakistan too. (M5, FG2)

According to the participants, the problem with translated news from other
Western sources could also breed into other problems of only covering several countries
and certain content. As was intensely discussed in FG1, several participants noted that
international news covered only several countries or regions which were the so-called “big countries” (F6), hot-spot regions, or closely allied countries. As a result, other countries were perceived to be neglected. Moreover, one FG1 participant from India pointed out that this problem existed in U.S. media outlets as well.

If I see the New York Times, and if I see the front page of the New York Times, it's usually like Afghanistan, Iraq, and China. But then the rest of the countries are completely neglected. (F6, FG1)

As was shown in the above excerpt, the FG1 participant thought that only giving coverage to several countries was a sign of unfairness. Additionally, many participants in all three focus groups found the content that was reported in international news from media outlets from both the United States and home countries to be unfair. One participant from Nigeria pointed out an interesting contrast in the coverage of international news from Western world and her home country. She found that media outlets from Western countries delineated negative side of Africa, while media outlets from her home country always reported positive news about the West.

The international world has not really been FAIR with kind of news they portray about Africa, especially from the West. They are very (wake) to show disasters, … conflicts, … the negatives. And you BARELY see them talk about the strength, or their achievements of these African nations. But from my own country, it's funny, because [even] from Africa, they try to glorify the West. You see them giving news about the triumphs of … maybe the new drugs getting developed, you know stuff like that… it's funny how both of them are not (even). (F5, FG3)

As she said, reporting only certain content was not fair. From the same token, other participants reported that they often found different, if not totally opposite, perspectives in the coverage of the same international news event from the United States or the West and their home countries. One participant from Bangladesh gave an example
of the 911 news coverage. She learned that *Taliban* was once an ally of the United States against Russia in Afghanistan from media outlets in her home country, which was a “counter perspective” of what U.S. media outlets covered (F1, FG3). One FG1 participant from Oman also gave an example of different coverage of Palestinian issue from *Al-Jazeera* and *CNN* by using different titles to illustrate the same clip of video.

Based on what has been discussed so far, participants found problems of fairness in four areas: lack of coverage, translated coverage, coverage of several countries, and coverage from certain perspectives. While some participants designated the first two problems to media outlets from their home countries, the latter two problems were seen in both U.S. media outlets and outlets from their respective home countries.

*Problems of trying to tell the whole story.* Focus group data revealed three problems concerning news media outlets’ telling the whole story. One problem was lack of international news coverage. In that case, it was hard for participants as “audience or the laymen [to] have a way to find out whether they're covering it completely or not” (F6, FG1). According to participants, this problem was often found in media outlets from their home countries.

Another problem was telling a one-sided story. One FG1 participant gave an example of a report about the territorial dispute between Vietnam and China. The two countries showed some video clips to tell their side of the story. Telling one-sided story was a main concern for focus group participants when they approached the question of telling the whole story. In fact, some participants pointed out this problem earlier when they discussed why they stopped using some media outlets from the United States. As
one participant from Oman and one from Vietnam in one focus group discussed, one-sided news coverage discredits a media outlet and pushes away its audiences. Moreover, one-sided news coverage was an easily-resonated topic among participants, which made participants like F4 in FG2 withdraw her view that U.S. media outlets were “well known” for their “credibility and reliability.”

The third problem, as some participants reported, was that they found media outlets to pretend to tell the whole story. In reference to the territorial dispute between China and Vietnam, participants from Vietnam followed the relevant news coverage from a U.S. media outlet and found that its news program invited some authoritative sources such as a historian or geologist from Southeast Asia. Superficially, these experts would provide comprehensive information and background pertaining to the issue. In fact, these experts only provided “authoritative” information (F6, FG1) that were implicitly inclined to the United States. As to the two parties involved, another participant from Vietnam gave an instance in which media outlets from the two countries had each other’s source to support their own point of view.

I can tell you that the Vietnamese media pretends to be fair. They report us a cause, positive things from the … Vietnamese side. But they tried to be fair by quoting some Chinese people, saying good things about Vietnam side. Now they have actually … two sources, [one] from Vietnam, one from China, (actually) saying the same thing. And no one can verify if Chinese people actually say that or not, got it? And then I looked at Chinese Xinhua news agency, I found the same thing happening. The Chinese media [were] covering the same thing, but with the positive side to China. (F4, FG2)

Evidence from the discussion data showed three problems of trying to tell the whole story, namely lacking coverage, telling one-sided stories, and pretending to tell the
whole story. A majority of participants reported that either telling one side of a story or pretending to tell the whole story were problems in media outlets across many countries.

**Problems of accuracy.** Some participants viewed missing information as a way to report inaccurate information. This problem could be seen in media outlets from the United States and outlets in participants’ home countries.

One FG2 participant from Pakistan recalled an example that the U.S. media outlets did not give any coverage on the involvement of the United States in the accident of Jordanian fighter jet which was bombed down by ISIS. As one participant of the same focus group explained, the news story with hidden facts decreased the degree of accuracy, because it raised news recipients’ doubt of the intent of the news providers.

One participant from China gave an example of reporting a violent terrorism event in Xinjiang, China, in 2014. In covering that event, U.S. media or Western media outlets used half of a picture in which Chinese army used tanks to clean the blood, which was left on the street, leaving the impression that Chinese government used tanks to get rid of the innocent people. The example showed how missing information might deliver inaccurate news message.

**Causes of the problems.** Data analysis revealed problems of believability and gave an insight of why participants developed such a perception. Two classifications of causes emerged according to the scope of the problems that the reason could explain. The first classification attributed the lack of believability to power and authority in political and economic circles. The second classification included ideology, audience
expectations, and other constraints such as time pressure, source access, and freedom of reporting.

*The first classification.* Based on the discussion data, the power in the first classification referred to those who had political or economic interests with the media outlets, ranging from governments, to conglomerates, corporations, and advertising companies. Therefore, political control and economic orientation were two possibilities to explain problems of believability.

For some participants, media were used as “propaganda machinery” (M1, FG3), serving the interests of government. One FG2 participant presented *Al-Jazeera* and *Russia Today* as examples of state-owned media outlets. The ownership directed these media outlets to “only focus on what they want to show or to get” (M5, FG2) in alliance with government interests. As one FG1 participant explained, political power would influence international news coverage.

> I think if you are doing any international news that is close or bound with your own country, … that news outlet only speak politically biased, … which means it would say that words politically beneficial with the country it is stand from. (F7, FG1)

As a result, media outlets were perceived to be compromising fairness and not telling the whole story due to government interference. Some participants noted that the neutral story or soft news had a better chance of being fair and accurate than political or hard news stories because they had less interests and control from the political power.

Other participants who were aware of the industrialized structure in media explained the power from an economic perspective. One participant from Ghana pointed out that in the so-called “globalized world, everything is BUSINESS” (M1, FG3). When
economic interest became the primary concern in news media, a news story had to be framed to be “sellable” or “marketable” (M1, FG3).

Into this globalized society, where everything centered on economic interest, you have to go with the bandwagon, which is … framing your issues, selling the market, packaging them the way that they are sellable. That's the only way. And your ideas of fairness, subjectivity, objectivity would become secondly matter. So you go with the demands of the market. (M1, FG3)

This “economic interest” drove the “stakeholders” (M2, FG1) to step in news producing process. As a result, media professionals “became further [apart] from real freedom of reporting things” (F4, FG3) so that whether to be fair, to tell the whole story or to be accurate in covering international news was beyond their control. One participant from Ghana explained “the layers of the power that are playing in producing the news” in detail.

Media ownership, you know, where people that own the media would have their own biases. And you talk about journalists own biases <referring to F4> also to come to play <F4 agreeing>; advertising biases would come to play. … And that sense, the journalists would have, would always have to look for the controversial news. (M5, FG3)

Based on the three focus groups, those in power engaged in the process of producing news due to either political or economic interests. This gave rise to the emergence of believability problems, including lack of fairness, not telling the whole story, and some inaccuracy.

*The second classification.* The second classification presented ideology, audience expectations, and other constraints.

- Ideology. Some participants attributed ideology as the cause of international news being unfair. One participant from Ghana gave an example of the
coverage of Ebola outbreak. He thought this kind of unconscious reports generated stereotypes.

When Ebola broke out, most of the headlines was you know, Africa, suggesting Africa is a single country, you know. That drives into this stereotype of Africa as a continent. And journalists don't take time to research into the continent well [to] understand that Africa is not just a single country, but it is a continent [that is] made up of 54 nations. (M5, FG3)

Another participant from China added her thoughts on this matter.

I think if we just think American didn't frame the story well, [it] might be because of the difference of the ideology. It doesn't mean that American, or for example, the reporter from CNN deliberately want[s] to ruin the image of China or Chinese people. It's just because they have different opinion on the same thing. They focus on different parts. (F4, FG3)

This participant continued to list different ideologies between U.S. citizens and Chinese. For example, U.S. citizens are individualistic, while Chinese put community first. To her, stories that were reported from different perspectives because of incompatible ideologies should be understandable. Another Chinese participant gave an example of U.S. media outlets covering the movement in Hong Kong in 2014. She found the news coverage to be “consistent with what American’s value of world” (F7, FG1), which was perceived as unfair or not telling the whole story from the perspective of the Chinese people who may had another philosophical background. Another participant from Bangladesh did not blame the U.S. media outlets in not telling the whole story in that case because they did not know the other side of the story.

I don't blame the journalists of the U.S. media for not being able to cover everything, but there are some framing and stuff that they just do with, innately. … I don't think they have the idea that there can be possible counter-framing of the story, they just think this is how the world is. … This is the world Americans want to see. The other side of the story, the Americans don't need to see. (F1, FG3)
Audience expectations. In addition to expressing ideology, concerns about audience expectations also accounted for unfairness and not telling the whole story in international news coverage. One FG2 participant said that different media “present the news to their audience … in different angles, in different perspectives” (M4, FG2). While in FG3, one participant said,

I see media as an industry and news is the product. And when you, try to sell a product, you look at the target group, and … you think what the target group wants to buy and what they need to buy. So when we, you know, cover a news [story], we pick those news, which will attract my audience, which may make them watch my TV channel or browse my web-page, my Website. … We talk about global media and global journalism, but our audiences, they are not yet ready to buy global news. We … as audiences, as readers, are still very localized. We want to know things that matter to us, that affect us. That's why our news media also make news, frame news [in] the way their audiences would want to know it. (F1, FG3)

Another FG3 participant from Ghana described this fitting-audience as marketing to certain people, “which inevitably left out certain parts of a news story” (M1).

Constraints. Some participants stated that they understood that media outlets were not able to “totally cover every international news that is happening in the world” (F7, FG1) or to “reach the absolute accuracy” (F2, FG2), given that in reality they had to face many constraints when they covered international news. Some participants made a list of the constraints, including the amount of news coverage, source access, time pressure, financial cost, life risk, freedom of reporting, and peer competition. Individually or in a combined manner, these constraints could affect a news story in terms of whether it could be covered in an accurate and complete way.
One FG2 participant from Pakistan hypothesized a case in which a journalist was sent to Jamaica where the outlet he/she worked for did not have a bureau there and there were no sources that he/she could contact. In that situation, it was not easy for this journalist to report, not to mention reporting accurately and thoroughly. Another FG2 participant listed situations which were beyond journalists control with regard to sourcing.

This is something that we cannot actually control, … because some people … don't want to talk-the sources-they don't want to talk. Sometimes, the sources say that “this is off the record, you can't just publish it in your media,” something like that. (F5, FG2)

Time pressure which came from competition in the media industry might direct the attention of media outlets to be the first to provide news rather than getting the facts right, according to one participant from India.

By mentioning the case that journalists from *Al-Jazeera* had been jailed by Egyptian government throughout 2014, one participant from Oman argued that freedom for journalists to access information and approach to as many facets of the facts as possible would be ideal, but “power sometimes prevent them from doing their job[s]” (M2, FG2).

*Solutions to the problems.* Data showed how participants viewed problems concerning believability and what solutions they would suggest to solve these problems. In all three focus group discussions, participants said that it was unavoidable and understandable for media outlets from the United States and their home countries to be unfair, to not tell the whole story, or to engage in inaccurate international news coverage. There were two reasons for exonerating media outlets from the blame. One was the
impossibility to reach “the absolute fairness” (M2, FG1), or to “cover everything” (F1, FG3), given that some elements which were discussed in the last section could not be controlled by media outlets. Moreover, some participants perceived fairness and accuracy as a subjective matter, depending on who gave the report and who received it. The following excerpts could represent the perceptions from most participants.

In my own philosophy, it's like no one knows 100% truth of everything and everyone has their own judgment. (M6, FG3)

I feel like this question asking about how fair the international news is not a really fair question, because I think it's kind of hard to say what kind of news is fair, or what kind of news is objective, what kind of news is without bias, because as long as someone's writing the news, … there will be bias, there will be some, personal opinion on that. (F4, FG3)

Whether it's fair or not, … that's too subjective to me. They have their own agenda. They could be … fair to some people, [and] might be unfair to some people. (M2, FG1)

As to the solutions to improve the believability in international news coverage, participants recommended that media outlets should focus on truth in order to get close to fairness and the whole story. Other suggested solutions included verifying information, being transparent about the verification process, relating international news stories with local experiences, and getting updated.

The next section will move on to the result of community affiliation.

Assessments of community affiliation. Unlike the assessments of believability, community affiliation did not generate any clear and convincing theme. Participants discussed this issue while taking shoes of community of their own, community of target recipients, community directly related to a news event, or community that would be
potentially influenced by a news event. Some comments were sometimes conflicting and incompatible with each other.

In terms of caring about news consumers’ interest, one participant from Oman said that media outlets from Western countries considered the interest of news consumers in the case of covering terrorism.

In order to meet audiences or readers’ need and interest, media outlets would cover [the news] in way to relate it with Islam. … They focused on him being Muslim rather than like an extremist or whatever, because people are interested in this idea of this religion that wants to destroy everyone, just kill[ing] everyone. (F2, FG7)

On the contrary, some participants did not think that media outlets from their home countries cared about the interest of news consumers because international news coverage in their home countries was primarily translated from other news agencies or sources. Changes were seldom made to cater to the interest of local news consumers.

As to whether international news reflected the community’s well-being, the comments varied due to participants’ stances and experiences. One participant from Indonesia shared an example that international news coverage from U.S. media outlets helped her country to restore and rebuild from the damage resulted from the devastating earthquake and resulting tsunami almost 10 years ago. Her community’s well-being was reflected by the international news coverage. Other participants also gave examples in which a community’s well-being was taken seriously, such as U.S. and other to-be-affected communities in the case of Ebola outbreak. As was discussed in FG2, U.S. media coverage of Ebola outbreak helped people out of the event to be “well-prepared to
face the Ebola” and to “prevent … the spreading of the Ebola to other areas of the world” (F4, FG2).

However, other participants did not see that the Ebola coverage from U.S. media outlets reflected African community’s well-being. As some participants stated, international media would not actually be “interested in the communities involved” unless the event happening there affected “their personal gains or personal benefits” (M2, FG1). In Ebola case, the well-being of the directly affected communities did not receive enough attention worldwide until a health worker from Texas died after working in the affected area in Africa, because the scale of the event became so influential that people in the United States and other countries started to feel threatened (M5, FG2). Moreover, some African participants raised a concern of the backfire that the international news coverage brought to the directly affected communities. Though the coverage at an international level brought a lot attention, it inevitably caused damage these communities. One Ghanaian participant elaborated on this point in detail:

How many of us can actually connect how many countries it affected? Right? But it sounded like the whole continent was on fire, literally, you know. That's sort of the alarmist through that international media put on this. … In terms of whether they project the interest of the well-being of the people who have been affected, to some extent, yes; but to another extent, they were doing a lot more harm because people began to get the impression that you know, AFRICA is on fire. I mean, Africa is made up of fifty, fifty-three countries/, fifty-four now/. (M3, FG2)

Another participant from Africa also expressed such concern in another focus group session. Through the concentrated coverage, the African continent and its people were first stereotyped by the impression that Ebola was a deadly disease that Africans got, then related to other aspects of life, such as proof filing when they needed medical
care (M5, FG3). In this sense, it was hard for participants to say that the coverage from international media outlets reflected the well-being of the involved community.

Participants valued public interest which was projected by a media outlet when they decided whether to follow that media outlet. However, they stated that public interest sometimes compromised to political or economic interest. As one Vietnamese participant pointed out, media were defined as “the propaganda tools, the mouthpiece of the Communist Party” (F4, FG2) in her home country. Therefore, she believed media outlets at home cared for the government interest rather than public interest. One Omani participant from the same group agreed with her, saying that media outlets had to consider the government interest, otherwise they could be banned.

Data on community affiliation did not reveal clear themes as they did on believability. However, they gave insight into how participants perceived this credibility dimension based on their stances.

**New media and traditional media.** According to the self-reported questionnaire, participants did not vary much in terms of using traditional or new media when they lived in the United States and in their home countries. Six participants used only traditional media when they were in their home countries and that number was five when they were in the United States; nine versus 11 participants used only new media; and 17 versus 15 participants used both traditional and new media, respectively. Throughout the discussion, participants did not particularly divide traditional and new media outlets except when they approached the question about accuracy. One participant pointed out
that she used social media a lot but did not believe all the information from them, because she was aware of the accuracy problem in social media.

So I think the accuracy in that site is not good because [of] the nature of social networking sites-everybody just post stuff, maybe not verified at all. … I don't really care about the accuracy of that kind of social media. (F3, FG2)

Some participants had this notion that it was difficult to totally believe in new media. Another participant noted that social media, such as Facebook, were a basic tool for obtaining information. However, because of the advanced technology, the information disseminated on social media had more chances to be inaccurate. Therefore, he would not take the news from social media seriously. In contrast, other participants perceived accuracy in new media outlets and traditional media outlets in a different way. One participant said that if the message from a traditional media outlet was inconsistent with what he learned from Facebook, he would discredit the traditional media outlet. In a follow-up question to elaborate on the reasoning, he said that it was the source that determined which media outlet he perceived as more credible.

If it is from a trust source [...] For example, I subscribe to an Egyptian photographer, a journalist photographer. He sometimes post[s] a story, a short story of what he's working in/. If it is a big event and he's reporting something that is totally inconsistent [with] what the mainstream media [are] reporting, I would tend to believe him, because he was there. And the mainstream media, I mean, it took a long time for the story from the field to get to the news field and get it out there. Like I said earlier that the reporter send[s] to somebody, somebody screen[s] it, somebody post[s] it or publish[es] it, so that layers of, of screening … that's when power and other economic, financial, and political interests could play a part in filtering some of the information. (M1, FG1)

Source credibility was not determined simply due to medium channels, but based on the process of making news. Compiling and analyzing the data relevant to medium channels offered a general idea about how participants assessed medium channel
credibility. While some participants used new media with caution because of some inaccurate and unverifiable information, other participants enjoyed the information that a trustworthy source delivered in new media.

**Perceived credibility factors.** Data revealed seven factors that participants used to perceive media source credibility. This thesis termed them as perceived credibility factors and categorized them into three clusters, namely the established factors, the establishing factors, and the unestablished factors. These factors were categorized according to whether media outlets could directly control them to improve their credibility.

**The established factors.** The established factors referred to the attributes of a media outlet, especially those that were passed down from the past, such as prestige and capacity.

Participants in this study valued prestige and reputation of media outlets. They would like to choose “prestigious” (F4, FG2) media outlets and put credibility on them. Some participants noted that among all kinds of news providers, they preferred “established media” (F5, FG2), especially those who had history with a good record. They would pay attention to the history of an organization because they believed that prestige and reputation were derived from the history in which the organization “made good things …, people believe in them” (F5, FG1). This established factor had an impact on perceived credibility. It also indicated that whether media outlets were capable of what they were doing.
For some participants, whether a media outlet had capacity to obtain and report the truth was important for them to assess this outlet’s credibility. One FG1 participant gave her reason for believing a media outlet with capacity.

I will believe in a channel that I think that has enough capacity to reveal the truth. … They have the authority, they have the power to do that. (F5, FG1)

A participant of another focus group echoed her opinion and further the discussion about what this capacity included.

Say, if you have more men, more resources, … you can investigate the news yourself other than reporting the news from the interviews [which were conducted by] others, [or] from citing … reports from other media, because you have more men, you have more resources and you can dig the true facts of the news. (M2, FG2)

In addition to the authority and human resources, financial situation of a media outlet also represented its capacity. As one participant pointed out, media outlets should realize financial independence in order to report news more professionally and with fewer limitations.

Prestige out of good-record history and capacity represented by authority, human resources, and financial independence, are two established factors for participants to perceive media credibility. They are established not because they are unchangeable or impossible to be changed, but because media outlets inherit these attributes from the past which they are unable to go back and make any change then.
The establishing factors. The establishing factors included strategies and solutions to produce credible news, like having willingness to be credible, making news investigations, getting all sides involved, and paying attention to cultures.

Willingness. Willingness referred to the positive attitude that a media outlet had to do investigate and present information in a credible way. This factor was not intensively mentioned by participants’ discussion data. However, considering its impact on media outlets’ conducts, the researcher included it as a factor for perceiving credibility.

Among a list of factors that one FG2 participant used to evaluate the credibility of a media outlet, “willingness to pursue accuracy” (F4) was brought up. Willingness mattered for credibility because this attitude directed which way a media outlet would choose to carry out its work. As another participant added after he explained how important capacity was for media credibility, capacity of a media outlet would be of no effect or significance if a media organization was not willing to devote itself into the journey of pursuing the truth. Therefore, willingness to be credible was reported here as an establishing factor.

Investigation. Investigation was taken as a very crucial process for a media outlet to obtain credible news information in terms of the depth and comprehensiveness.

Throughout the discussion, some participants regarded BBC highly and saw it as a good example of a credible source. One reason was that they said that BBC did a good job in investigating a news event. The following excerpts from discussion data expressed these participants’ preference of BBC.

What I mean is that it's like somebody is looking at a house: if I look at the house, I'm looking at the front of the house, I would say “Okay, it has the door; it has one
window; it's white.” Somebody is looking at the side would say “it's yellow; it's actually … triangle; it's not square.” And what I'm trying to say is that I think the media outlet that I like which is **BBC**, it's trying to show those angles as much as possible. (M2, FG1)

Whatever I read … **BBC** stories, I think they are pretty in depth. And as he <referring to M2, FG1> said, they kind of take the whole, like they basically present both views on the story and they are not biased and I think that's why I feel like they are pretty reliable. (F6, FG1)

And **BBC** news, it covered everything, kind of. But there's, I know there's, it's hard to cover everything because you have limited space in the news and also there's limited source for you to get the news, but as long as … you … can access from every people, so you have to do that. (M2, FG2)

These Participants gave their credit to **BBC** not because it was flawless in reporting international news, but because it tried to present in-depth and comprehensive reports which were enabled by thorough investigations. For some participants, in-depth coverage was an indicator of credibility. As one FG1 participant stated what affected her assessment of credibility of a news story would be “how in-depth” (F6, FG1) that story was, because an in-depth news story “answer[ed] the question why something happen[ed] from beginning to end” (F1, FG2). Compared to simply informing phenomenon, some participants opined that a credible report should be able to find out causes and even solutions. This was made possible by investigation.

Furthermore, investigation made revealing many facets of an event possible. This was a basis for telling a whole story as much as possible. Otherwise, news reporters might not even know there would be other sides of the story. One participant made this point when she tried to figure out why U.S. media outlets covered international news in a one-sided way.
In addition, investigation would enhance the accuracy in reporting. One Lao participant provided an example of BBC in covering an airplane crash which caused many deaths of high-ranking officials of his country. According to this participant, unlike other media outlets which rushed to report the number and identity of the casualties, BBC did not report the information that it had not investigated. It turned out that one of the reported dead officials by other media outlets had not board on that plane. This example showed that BBC was relatively accurate in its news reporting, which attracted this participants. More importantly, it disclosed that reporting without investigation would increase chances to be inaccurate and to lose trust from audiences.

Good examples of BBC which were provided by participants demonstrated the importance of investigation, which was a key to in-depth, comprehensive, and relatively accurate international news coverage.

*Presenting all sides.* In addition to fully and heartedly engaging in the investigation of a news event, some participants discussed that telling a story by giving all the involved sides a chance to voice out and by presenting as many sides as possible of a story was also a crucial way for a media outlet to maintain balanced and credible. Three participants from one focus group shared their views on this point as follows:

WHAT I WOULD THINK would increase the credibility of media outlets is showing all sides of the story. (M2, FG1)

I think what really affects my believability or credibility of a news story would be … whether they are basically giving both sides of the story, both angles of the story. (F6, FG1)

If both sides want to make their news to be balanced opinions, we should invite like historians from both sides to express their opinions, to invite politicians from both side in one program to argue, or … to express their opinions to say their
knowledge of what the picture is, what the fact should be. So that, I mean, all of the audience from each side could get a BALANCED opinions. (F6, FG1)

Discussion on presenting all sides of a story in this focus group went along with other participants in another focus group. They advocated having “multiple sources” (F4, FG2), covering more than “one side” of the story, interviewing more than “one person” (F5, FG2). Meanwhile, some participants specifically emphasized the necessity of showing positive aspect of a story which was largely ignored, even intentionally avoided by international news coverage. Some participants stated that showing the “positive, happy, innovative stories” (M2, FG1), and the development of often-neglected areas or countries (F6, FG1) did not necessarily increase the perceived credibility, but it could send a positive signal to audiences that this media outlet was trying to be fair. By doing so, it would benefit the media outlet itself by attracting viewers or readers. Also, it helped the viewers or readers to be open-minded, to reduce stereotyping, and ultimately to benefit from the information.

Paying attention to cultures. According to some participants, when a media outlet tried to engage the cultural perspective into international news coverage, both the audiences and the media outlet itself could benefit.

For audiences, a news report that involved cultural elements would help them “create an understanding at a global level” and “connect with people culturally” (F6, FG1). Then this would help them reduce stereotyping that they held toward other ethnic people. Such open-minded audiences would have more ability and objectivity to judge media credibility.
For media outlets, paying attention to cultures was a reminder for them to get out of their boxes of ideology in reporting international news. This would decrease the chances in which media outlets reported an unfair news story because they framed it based on what they thought it should be rather than what it was. Furthermore, by keeping cultures in mind, media outlets became aware of and respectful to the cultural difference so that they would not abuse freedom to report. Participants admitted that media outlets needed freedom to report. Otherwise, they were unable to do their job, not to mention to offer credible news stories. However, as some participants stated, freedom of reporting was not “unlimited” (M4, FG2). It had to be “bonded” (M2, FG2). Culture should be one of its bonds. An unfair or one-sided story could be produced if cultural factors were not taken into account when covering international news. Unexpected and damaging consequences could be caused by this kind of coverage as well.

Factors that media outlets could exercise to improve their credibility were categorized as establishing factors, including having willingness to be credible, conducting news investigations, presenting all sides involved, and paying attention to cultures.

*The unestablished factors.* Personal perceptions and experiences were categorized into this group, because they were random and beyond the control of media outlets.

Several participants perceived credibility as a personal judgment, relying on personal experiences, knowledge, philosophy, and interest, meaning that media
credibility was determined by individuals’ preference. This idea was mainly discussed in FG3, as is shown in the following excerpts from two FG3 participants’ discussions:

I guess it's the point of view, individual has already ha[d] … the philosophy they believe in to shape the belief of the news they are receiving. (M6, FG3)

I think, a lot of it depends on my own personal knowledge or idea of that event or at least of that region. … So I think personal knowledge or personal interest have a lot to do with understanding and believing that news you are listening to or reading about. (F1, FG3)

Overall, based on discussion data, participants used seven factors to perceive credibility, namely having a good reputation, possessing capacity of financial independence and human resources, having willingness to be credible, conducting news investigations, presenting all sides of a story, paying attention to cultures, and resorting to personal perceptions and experiences.
Chapter 6: Discussion

The purpose of this study was to explore how international students in the United States perceive international news coverage from U.S. media outlets and media outlets from their home countries on factors concerning source credibility. Three focus group discussions were conducted between January 30 and February 5, 2015 on the Ohio University campus. Thematic analysis was used to analyze the transcript data, guided by media credibility and the framework of international mobility. Results showed that source credibility was not the only motivation for international students to seek U.S. media outlets. The other three motivational factors established during this research that motivated participants in this sample to seek both the U.S. media outlets and their home country media are seeking information, making connectivity and communication, as well as using technological attributes.

International students indicated that international news coverage from U.S. media outlets and outlets from their respective home countries had problems in terms of believability (i.e., being fair, trying to tell the whole story, and being accurate) and community affiliation (i.e., considering the interest of the news receivers, reflecting the community’s well-being, and projecting public interest). International students listed major indicators of how they assessed a media outlet’s credibility in addition to their personal perceptions and experiences, including whether it has a good reputation, whether it possesses capacity of financial independence and human resources, whether it has willingness to produce credible news content, if it conducts news investigations, if it presents all sides of a story, and if it pays attention to cultures. They also delineated their
perceptions of doubt and reservations about the accuracy of new media content. Here is a summary of the key findings:

**Summary of the Key Findings**

- Some international students in this study used U.S. media outlets and outlets from their home countries because they were motivated by the need to have connectivity and communication, to find information, and to make use of technological attributes.

- Some international students in this study said that they tuned in to media outlets from the United States because of media organizations’ reputation and news quality.

- On the question of fairness, some international students in this study said that U.S. media outlets and outlets from their home countries were sometimes unfair because the international coverage only focused on several countries and certain perspectives and content.

- On the question of fairness, some international students in this study said that this was of concern to them because their home countries’ outlets either hardly covered international news or the little coverage was predominantly lifted from external sources.

- Some international students in this study stated that providing one-sided stories and pretending to cover everything were two problems they saw with trying to tell the whole story in both U.S. media outlets and outlets from their home countries.
On the question of trying to tell the whole story, some international students interviewed here said that this was of concern to them because outlets in their home countries either hardly covered international news or the little coverage was predominantly translated from external sources.

Some international students in this study stated that U.S. media outlets and outlets from their home countries sometimes might report international news stories inaccurately due to lack of details.

Some international students interviewed here stated that the credibility of sources was suspect on the question of believability because of elites and state actors in power.

Some international students in this study stated that ideology and audience expectations accounted for the perceptions of unfairness and not telling the whole story.

Some international students in this study opined that constraints, including the amount of news coverage, source access, time pressure, financial cost, life risk, freedom of reporting, and peer competition, could explain problems with accuracy and trying to tell the whole story.

Some international students interviewed here recommended that solutions to problems of believability should be to offer a voice for the voiceless, verify facts, be transparent about the investigation process, cover as many sides as possible of a story, and give updated.
Some participants in all three focus groups singled out new media’s content that was unreliable and unverifiable on the question of accuracy.

Based on results, it could be surmised that media credibility is one of the motivations for international students in this sample to tune in to media outlets in an unfamiliar environment. From the perspective of source credibility, perceptions of international news coverage in terms of lack of believability sometimes is the very reason which some participants resort to community affiliation. Factors which participants listed to perceive source credibility include a media outlet’s having a good reputation, possessing capacity of financial independence and human resources, having willingness to be credible, conducting news investigations, presenting all sides of a story, and paying attention to cultures. Some participants in this study also include the factor of personal perceptions and experiences. Thus, the argument here is that media credibility should be assessed within a context by considering diverse factors, such as news source attributes, news producing process, news content, and news recipients’ experiences, rather than being assessed from one perspective, which is information types or medium channels.

**Media Credibility: One of the Motivations to Use Media Outlets**

This study found that a media outlet’s reputation and its news quality could embody credibility for international students in the United States. Although Westley and Severin (1964) argue that credibility and prestige are different things for different people, this study, in line with other media credibility studies (Berlo et al., 1969; Elareshi & Gunter, 2012; Hovland & Weiss, 1951; McCroskey, 1966; Slater & Rouner, 1996), has taken reputation or prestige and quality as indicators of source credibility. Moreover, this
study found that credibility factors such as reputation and quality motivated international students in the United States to tune in to U.S. media outlets. This finding adds evidence to the notion that credibility helps media outlets to increase audiences, readers, listeners, and users (Elareshi & Gunter, 2012; Schweiger, 2000; Tao & Bates, 2009). This function of media credibility works in situations where international students actively seek information as well as in situations where some obligations such as a class assignment require them to seek U.S. media outlets.

However, credibility was not mentioned as a strong motivation that led international students to media outlets in their home countries. Other motivations to use media outlets from their home countries include to remain connected and to communicate or to seek information, which all play a more crucial role for international students in the United States. This is consistent with earlier conclusions pertaining to the integration of “cultural traditions” and “modern development” (Halualani, 2008, p.4). In this study, these multiple use of media outlets help international students in the United States to integrate cultural traditions of their respective birthplaces and to keep up to date with the ongoing developments back home. As a result, both U.S. media outlets and outlets from their countries play important role in the life of international students in the United States.

**Source Credibility**

As stated earlier, the study explored how international students perceive source credibility factors in terms of international news coverage from U.S. media outlets and outlets from their home countries. Participants in this study perceived media credibility as
a complex and multidimensional concept. Many participants could not delineate whether a media outlet was credible simply because of one or two factors. Instead, they perceived credibility of a media outlet based on their own experience, judgment, and other factors such as producing investigative stories and giving a platform to the underprivileged voices. Some participants sought media outlets because of their reputation, but sometimes criticized their unfair coverage. Participants designated several different problems of credibility to U.S. media outlets and outlets from their respective home countries.

Participants in this study did not give credit to U.S. media outlets after more exposure to their news due to locality change. Based on the self-report data, there were two participants who followed U.S. news when they were in their home countries, whereas 14 participants sought U.S. news when they were in the United States. The increase in exposure to information about the United States does not yield more favorable judgment of U.S. media outlets. One possible reason is that participants in this study have other channels to obtain information besides media outlets, such as interpersonal sources/communication. Due to the change of residence, participants have more access to communicate with U.S. citizens and citizens from other countries, which enables them to have alternative news sources and direct interaction and background knowledge to the information they need. When people who are exposed to more sources versus those exposed to fewer sources rate the same media outlet, the people with more sources would rate that media outlet less credible than those with fewer sources (Xu, 2012; Zhang, et al., 2014). Therefore, more information sources might make it hard for participants to simply give credibility to U.S. media outlets because of the alternative exposure.
Data show that international students perceived believability consistently for both U.S. media outlets and outlets from their home countries, but they did not assess community affiliation in the same way. This could be because participants in this study who came from different backgrounds had different concerns so that the measurements of community affiliation might mean something different for them.

Data revealed that negative perceptions of believability in international news coverage sometimes is due to media outlets’ consideration of audience expectations. Data also revealed that positive perceptions of community affiliation sometimes is due to media outlets’ consideration of audience expectations. These findings suggest that believability and community affiliation were incompatible in this study. This finding is inconsistent with Meyer’s (1988) study which showed that the respondents rated the newspapers similarly on the two dimensions. Back then during the newspaper era, Meyer concluded that being credible and lovable at the same time was possible. The finding of this study does not lend support to that point of view because this is a technology era. Two theoretical reasons might also explain this inconsistency. One is whether the target audiences of a media outlet and the real audiences are the same population. The other is the content or topic of the news event which is discussed. In Meyer’s study, the respondents who were asked to rate credibility of the newspaper in terms of these two dimensions came from the home base of the newspaper. Moreover, the case provided to the respondents was a local affair. It is under this setting that Meyer obtained the evidence to come to that conclusion.
In this study, the participants came from a variety of countries and assessed different kinds of media outlets based on their own experiences. One typical example is when an Omani participant shared her perception of the coverage of Muslim terrorists from the U.S.-led media outlets. She thought that emphasizing the Muslim identity of a terrorist was not fair but it catered to the interest of the audiences because the U.S. or other Western audiences were presented with the idea that Islam a violent religion. In this instance, she was not the target audience of those programs which portrayed terrorists as Muslims. For her, being unfair was in accordance with caring about audiences’ interests. Suppose a U.S. audience watched this program; it is possible that the audience may find nothing wrong with the coverage. For such an audience, fairness goes in line with the interests of audiences. Therefore, one interpretation would be how similar or closely-related the news recipient is with the news provider. For example, hypothetically when a U.S. citizen reads a news story on Ebola from *USA Today*, which is published in the U.S., the reader is more likely to believe the content and thus the community affiliation. However, hypothetically when a Nigerian reads the same story, chances are that the Nigerian would judge the two factors in different ways with different perceptions. As previous studies have demonstrated, different news content has the likelihood to generate different credibility (Ashley et al., 2010). So far, the findings indicate that perceptions on the two credibility factors yield different outcomes when the news recipient has less common interest with the outlet. So, this study contests Meyer’s (1988) study by examining the two credibility factors in a cross-cultural situation, raising new theoretical propositions that need further exploration.
Perceived Credibility Factors

Perceived credibility factors in this study include having a good reputation, possessing capacity of financial independence and human resources, having willingness to be credible, conducting news investigations, presenting all sides of a story, paying attention to cultures, and resorting to personal perceptions and experiences. Some of these factors are consistent with credibility measurements, such as trustworthiness, authoritativeness, competence, and goodwill (Berlo et al., 1969; Hovland & Weiss, 1951; McCroskey, 1966; McCroskey & Teven, 1999; Westerman et al., 2014; Whitehead, 1968). These perceived credibility measurements are valued by participants from different countries. Since it is a globalizing world, information is no longer disseminated and exchanged within certain closed areas. Globally, people can perceive credibility based on the message that is delivered and how it is delivered. Therefore, international news coverage should account for cultural and geographical conditions around the world.

In addition, this study highlights the importance of personal preferences, motivations and experience of news consumers. This supports previous studies, which reiterated that credibility relies on an individual’s perception (Berlo, et al., 1969; Chartprasert, 1993; Elareshi & Gunter, 2012; Kiousis, 2001; Rieh & Danielson, 2007). To be perceived as credible, media organizations and their news products should tap into people’s experiences and expectations, meaning that they should contextualize international events and give all perspectives for all people regardless of the “otherness.” Therefore, the findings here should be taken as hints given by news consumers to guide news providers to be credible.
Medium Credibility

Participants in this study singled out new media’s content as unreliable and unverifiable when they discussed accuracy as a credibility factor. In this case, participants were referring to social media such as blogs and microblogs. Some participants claimed that with technology, it was easy to deliver unverifiable and inaccurate information, such as pictures and narratives, which discredited new media they were exposed to. Moreover, credibility of new media is undermined because of different news producing and disseminating processes from traditional media. According to previous studies, information in traditional media tends to be accurate than in new media because of the layers of gatekeepers (Kang, 2011; Mehrabi et al., 2013; Westerman et al., 2012, 2014).

Some participants used social media most of the time, admittedly, but they did not put any trust on them. This finding supports previous studies which show that system- or computer-generated cues of new media (i.e., recency of posting, the number of followers, and the ratio of followers to follows) could motivate participants to use new media, but not necessarily to trust them (Westerman et al., 2012, 2014). However, other participants who often use certain media outlets and expressed their preference for these media outlets would regard them more credible. This echoes previous studies, demonstrating that people tend to assign greater credibility to media outlets to which they prefer to pay attention and resort for information seeking (Kang, 2011; Wanta & Hu, 1994; Westley & Severin, 1964).
Implications and Limitations

Data from the study imply that media outlets covering international news should conduct thorough news investigation, place news information in context, avoid one-sided story, present voices for the voiceless, consider human interest stories, among other expectations to be perceived as credible. Media credibility should be examined within the broader journalistic contexts, taking account of source, medium, message, cultural and geographical conditions.

The study, like some previous research, show that source credibility—believability and community affiliation—can be applied across media channels. This study, however, is unique because it also demonstrates that believability and community affiliation are two factors that news consumers from several countries (in this sample) can relate to. Meanwhile, media industry has its own operational and logistical challenges across countries, yet people have some universal expectations toward media as a whole. Being credible is one of these expectations.

One of the limitations of this study is the characteristic of the sample. On the one hand, participants in this study come from different countries with diverse backgrounds, which leads to sporadic opinion on credibility factor of community affiliation. On the other hand, the sample was not diverse enough to represent many parts of the world. Participants were recruited only from Ohio University. Respondents were from the Asian, African, and Middle-Eastern regions. Consequently, there were no participants from Europe, South America and Australia. Future studies could recruit participants from these regions to gain insight into their perceptions of source credibility.
This study raises new theoretical propositions which need further investigation. The findings indicate that perceptions on believability and community affiliation, the two credibility factors, yield different outcomes when the news recipient has less common interest with the outlet. Future research could examine this proposition to explore situations where media outlets could be credible on both factors simultaneously.
Chapter 7: Conclusion

This study gave insight into how international students in the United States perceive media credibility on the questions of believability and community affiliation based on international news coverage from U.S. media outlets and outlets from their home countries. Guided by the frameworks of media credibility and international mobility, the analysis was based on focus group interviews from 32 participants, representing 12 countries. The findings indicate that media credibility should be examined as a whole within domestic and/or well as international contexts rather than be separated only by either source or medium channel.

Some international students suggest that they may need media to help them integrate traditions and ideologies ‘from home’ and in the United States. How would international students view the credibility of media outlets from the two sides? Overall, we learn from international students in this sample that U.S. media outlets and outlets from their respective home countries did not meet their expectations on every credibility factor. International students agreed on some common factors for media outlets to be credible such as having a good reputation, possessing capacity of financial independence and human resources, having willingness to produce credible news content, conducting news investigations, presenting all sides of a story, and paying attention to cultures.

Participants in this study do not represent people from all countries in the world or other professionals who migrate to the United States or elsewhere. However, regardless of who the media—both on the United States and abroad—target, the subjects of this thesis are news consumers who hail from countries that are being featured in these
international news events and to them, these are not merely international news stories being presented to or targeting “other” audiences. Therefore, their opinions matter to our understanding of perceived source credibility. While participants in this study stated that they are aware of the difficulties in the media industry, they still have expectations for media outlets to achieve credibility by following general professional norms, such as accuracy in reporting and delivering in-depth investigative stories that account for cultural and geographical contexts.
References


Appendix A: Pre-screening Questions

Thank you for agreeing to participate in this research!

These are just a few introductory questions seeking to establish your knowledge and use of any type of media since you came to the United States. Thereafter, you will join other participants to answer additional questions in this focus group exercise. This focus group exercise is about your perceptions of media in your home country compared to what you are exposed to here in the United States on the issue of credibility.

Please write your answers right below each one of the following brief questions. Thank you!

1. How old are you?

______________________________________________________________________

2. What country do you come from?

______________________________________________________________________

3. How long have you been in the United States?

______________________________________________________________________

4. What is your major?

______________________________________________________________________

5. When you are at your home country, where do you usually get most of your news? (Please write down the NAMES of the specific media outlets, including social media outlets)

______________________________________________________________________

6. When you are at your home country, what kind of news do you seek from the media outlets that you named in Question 5 above? Such as international news, news about the United States, and news about your home country.

______________________________________________________________________

7. When you are at your home country, how often do you use the media outlets you named in Question 5?

______________________________________________________________________

8. When you are in the United States, where do you usually get most of your news? (Please write down the NAMES of the specific media outlets, including social media outlets )

______________________________________________________________________
9. When you are in the United States, what kind of news do you get from the media outlets that you named in Question 8 above? Such as international news, news about the United States, and news about your home country.

10. When you are in the United States, how often do you use media outlets you named in Question 8?
Appendix B: Focus Group Questions

Thank you all for joining this focus group to answer some questions about your perceptions of media in your home country compared to what you are exposed to here in the United States on the issue of credibility.

We encourage everyone to speak up and fully participate. We also want you to be mindful of the time so that we give as many of you as enough time to each question to the best of your knowledge, experience, assessment, and attitudes.

Please wait for your turn as one of your colleagues is speaking. I would like to hear only one voice at a time. Please do not whisper to each other during the focus group. Feel free to openly discuss your own perceptions and attitudes publicly even though your opinion may differ from previous speakers. Have an open mind and please do not put each down or disrupt the meeting even when you strongly disagree with a previous speaker. Simply express your view as passionate as you wish for as long as you are not directly arguing with your fellow participant.

Most importantly, if you have not understood the question, please ask me to repeat it to you. I may ask a follow up question but I cannot paraphrase the initial question. Please answer the questions according to your preferences and experiences when you are studying and living in the United States.

A few words for clarifying the concepts we use in this focus group exercise:

Media outlets include both traditional and new media. By traditional news media outlet, we mean television, radio, newspaper, and magazine, for example, CNN, NPR, New York Times, and Time.

And by new media outlet, we refer to stand-alone online news outlet, such as huffingtonpost.com, of an offline outlet, such as nytimes.com, and social media, such as Twitter, Facebook, and Instagram.

Once again, we appreciate your participation in this anonymous research exercise. Here we go with the first question:

1. In just a few seconds, can you please share with us any news you learned recently from a media outlet… and please NAME THE OUTLET?

2. For those of you who use any news media outlet from your home country, what motivates you to tune in to that news outlet?

3. For those of you who use any media outlet from the United States, what motivates you to tune in to that news outlet?
Now, we would like you to think about the coverage of international news from both the U.S. media outlets and the media outlets from your home country to answer the following questions.

4. How fair is the coverage of international news in the media outlets you are most familiar with?

5. Would you say the media outlets you are most familiar with, try to tell the whole story when they cover international news? (Please give some examples.)

6. In your opinion, how accurate is the coverage of international news from the media outlets you are most familiar with? ([FOLLOW-UP] --- Why is that?)

7. In your opinion, does the coverage of international news from the media outlets you are most familiar with consider the interest of the news receivers?

8. In your opinion, in what ways does international news coverage from the media outlets you are most familiar with reflect the community’s well-being?

9. Would you say the media outlets that you are most familiar with do a good job in projecting public interest when they cover international news?

10. Do you have any additional comments about international news coverage from either the U.S. media outlets or the media outlets from your home country?