# Framework

#### Resisting oppression is a prerequisite to any conception of justice due to moral exclusion

Winter and Leighton 99 [Deborah DuNann Winter, Psychologist that specializes in Social Psych, Counseling Psych, Historical and Contemporary Issues, Peace Psychology. Dana C. Leighton, PhD graduate student in the Psychology Department at the University of Arkansas. Knowledgable in the fields of social psychology, peace psychology, and justice and intergroup responses to transgressions of justice] “Peace, conflict, and violence: Peace psychology in the 21st century.” Pg 4-5

Finally, to recognize the operation of structural violence forces us to ask questions about how and why we tolerate it, questions which often have painful answers for the privileged e lite who unconsciously support it. A final question of this section is how and why we allow ourselves to be so oblivious to structural violence. Susan Opotow offers an intriguing set of answers, in her article Social Injustice. She argues that our normal perceptual cognitive processes divide people into in-groups and out-groups. Those outside our group lie outside our scope of justice, injustice that would be instantaneously confronted if it occurred to someone we love or know is barely noticed if it occurs to strangers or those who are invisible or irrelevant. We do not seem to be able to open our minds and our hearts to everyone, so we draw conceptual lines between those who are in and out of our moral circle. Those who fall outside are morally excluded, and become either invisible, or demeaned in some way so that we do not have to acknowledge the injustice they suffer. Moral exclusion is a human failing, but Opotow argues convincingly that it is an outcome of everyday social cognition. To reduce its nefarious effects, we must be vigilant in noticing and listening to the oppressed, invisible, outsiders. Inclusionary thinking can be fostered by relationships, communication, and appreciation of diversity. Like Opotow, all the authors in this section point out that structural violence is not inevitable if we become aware of its operation, and build systematic ways to mitigate its effects. Learning about structural violence may be discouraging, overwhelming, or maddening, but these papers encourage us to step beyond guilt and anger, and begin to think about how to reduce structural violence. All the authors in this section note that the same structures (such as global communication and normal social cognition) which feed structural violence, can also be used to empower citizens to reduce it. In the long run, reducing structural violence by reclaiming neighborhoods, demanding social justice and living wages, providing prenatal care, [and] alleviating sexism, and celebrating local cultures, will be our most surefooted path to building lasting peace.

#### Disregarding foreseeable harm reifies structures of domination

**McCluskey 12** – JSD @ Columbia, Professor of Law @ SUNY-Buffalo

(Martha, “How the "Unintended Consequences" Story Promotes Unjust Intent and Impact,” Berkeley La Raza, doi: dx.doi.org/doi:10.15779/Z381664)

By similarly making structures of inequality appear beyond the reach of law reform, the "unintended consequences" message helps update and reinforce the narrowing of protections against intentional racial harm.

Justice is centrally a question of whose interests and whose harms should count, in what context and in what form and to whom. Power is centrally about being able to act without having to take harm to others into account. This power to gain by harming others is strongest when it operates through systems and structures that make disregarding that harm appear routine, rational, and beneficial or at least acceptable or perhaps inevitable. By portraying law's unequal harms as the "side effects" of systems and structures with unquestionable "main effects," the "unintended consequences" story helps affirm the resulting harm even as it seems to offer sympathy and technical assistance. In considering solutions to the financial market problems, the policy puzzle is not that struggling homeowners' interests are overwhelmingly complex or uncertain. Instead, the bigger problem is that overwhelmingly powerful interests and ideologies are actively resisting systemic changes that would make those interests count. The failure to criminally prosecute or otherwise severely penalize high-level financial industry fraud is not primarily the result of uncertainty about the harmful effects of that fraudulent behavior, but because the political and justice systems are skewed to protect the gains and unaccountability of wealthy executives despite the clear harms to hosts of others. The unequal effects of the prevailing policy response to the crisis are foreseeable and obvious, not accidental or surprising. It would not take advanced knowledge of economics to readily predict that modest-income homeowners would tend to be far worse off than bank executives by a policy approach that failed to provide substantial mortgage forgiveness and foreclosure protections for modest-income homeowners but instead provided massive subsidized credit and other protections for Wall Street. Many policy actions likely to alleviate the unequal harm of the crisis similarly are impeded not because consumer advocates, low-income homeowners, or racial justice advocates hesitate to risk major changes in existing systems, or are divided about the technical design of alternative programs or more effective mechanisms for enforcing laws against fraud and racial discrimination. Instead, the problem is that these voices pressing for effective change are often excluded, drowned out or distorted in Congress and in federal agencies such as the Treasury Department and the Federal Reserve, or in the media, in the mainstream economics profession, and to a large extent in legal scholarship about financial markets. More generally, those diverse voices from the bottom have been largely absent or marginalized in the dominant theoretical framework that constructs widespread and severe inequality as unforeseeable and largely inevitable, or even beneficial. Moreover, justice requires careful attention to both harmful intent and to complex harmful effects. But the concept of "unintended consequences" inverts justice by suggesting that the best way to care for those at the bottom is to not care to make law more attentive to the bottom. "Unintended consequences" arguments promote a simplistic moral message in the guise of sophisticated intellectual critique-the message that those who lack power should not seek it because the desire for more power is what hurts most. Further, like Ayn Rand's overt philosophy of selfishness, that message promotes the theme that those who have power to ignore their harmful effects on others need not-indeed should not-be induced by law to care about this harm, because this caring is what is harmful. One right-wing think tank has recently made this moral message more explicit with an economic values campaign suggesting that the intentional pursuit of economic equality is a problem of the immoral envy of those whose economic success proves they are more deserving.169 Legal scholars and advocates who intend to put intellectual rigor and justice ahead of service to financial elites should reject stories of "unintended consequences" and instead scrutinize the power and laws that have so effectively achieved the intention of making devastating losses to so many of us seem natural, inevitable, and beneficial.

#### Thus, the standard is minimizing structural violence.

# Decommercialization CP

#### Plan Text: Free presses in democracies ought to decommercialize media through the steps outlined in the Pickard card

#### Status quo media has been irredeemably co-opted by capitalism – the only way to solve for misinformation and rampant media coverage inequality is through the decommercialization of the media as a method to deconstruct capitalist systems of power

**Pickard 20** Pickard, Victor. “We Need a Media System That Serves People's Needs, Not Corporations'.” *Jacobin*, 27 Jan. 2020, [https://www.jacobinmag.com/2020/01/corporate-media-system-democracy. //](https://www.jacobinmag.com/2020/01/corporate-media-system-democracy.%20//) FC

The past decade has witnessed the rapid decline of the newspaper industry in the United States. Revenue and readership have dropped precipitously, halving the nation’s newspaper employees. Actual journalism is vanishing, misinformation is proliferating, and our public media system — ideally a safety net for when the market fails to support the press — remains utterly impoverished compared to its global counterparts. From the collapse of its advertising-dependent business model to the dominance of platform monopolies like Facebook and Google, the commercial news media system faces a structural crisis.

Commercial journalism never fulfilled all of society’s democratic needs, but now it’s abundantly clear that the market can’t support the bare minimum levels of news media — especially local, international, and investigative reporting — that democracy requires. Any path toward reinventing journalism must acknowledge that the [market is its destructor](https://www.researchgate.net/publication/329782131_The_Violence_of_the_Market), not savior. Commercialism lies at the heart of this crisis; removing it could be transformative.

If we acknowledge that no entrepreneurial solution lies just around the bend — if we stop grasping for a technological fix or a market panacea — we can look more aggressively for non-market alternatives. In doing so, we can dare to imagine a new public media system for the digital age, one that privileges democracy over profits. A journalism that seeks out silences in society and ruthlessly confronts those in power. An information system that maintains laser-like focus on climate change, hyper-inequality, mass incarceration, and other social emergencies. A media system that treats workers as [more than an afterthought](https://www.jacobinmag.com/2019/03/no-longer-newsworthy-review-working-class-media).

US history offers fleeting glimpses of an alternative system — experiments such as labor outlets, community-owned newspapers, media cooperatives, and, once upon a time, [a thriving radical press](http://inthesetimes.com/article/20650/Appeal-to-Reason-In-These-Times-Socialist-Newspaper-Left). Even mainstream commercial news occasionally has provided investigative reporting that exposes corruption, changes policy, and benefits all of society. But these moments have been the exception. The history of US media is largely a history of misrepresentation, exclusion, excessive commercialism, and systemic market failure.

However, it didn’t — and doesn’t — have to be this way. Another media system is possible — one that’s democratically governed and accessible to all.

Infrastructures of Democracy

We learn in school that self-governance requires an informed society sustained by a free press. Yet we rarely reflect on the infrastructures and policies necessary to maintain such a system.

The loss of effective journalism and rampant misinformation are structural problems that require structural solutions. More to the point, they’re collective action problems that require policy interventions.

Salvaging a nonprofit model from the ashes of market-driven jour­nalism goes far beyond resuscitating a golden age that never existed or preserving a status quo steeped in inequality and discrimi­nation. Guided by an ethical commitment to ensuring that all members of society can access information and create their own media, a public system can provide a strong base for further democratization. De-commercialization is an essential first step.

The late sociologist Erik Olin Wright [gave us](https://www.jacobinmag.com/2015/12/erik-olin-wright-real-utopias-anticapitalism-democracy/) a useful schematic to help think through the possibilities for de-commercializing jour­nalism and creating a truly public system. Wright proposed four general models for building alternatives to capitalism, each based on a different logic of resist­ance: smashing, taming, escaping, or eroding. After assessing these four approaches, Wright suggested that simultaneously eroding and taming capitalist relationships over time offered the best strategy for change — pushing to reform the existing system in ways that improve people’s everyday lives (taming), while also erecting alternative structures that gradually replace commercial models (eroding).

We can apply this strategic vision to our media system, with five general approaches:

Establishing “public options” (i.e., noncommercial/nonprofit, supported by public subsidies), such as well-funded public media institutions and municipal broadband networks.

Breaking up/preventing media monopolies and oligopolies to en­courage diversity and to curtail profit-maximizing behavior.

Regulating news outlets through public interest protections and public ser­vice obligations such as ascertainment of society’s information needs.

Enabling worker control by unionizing newsrooms and facilitating media cooperatives.

Fostering community ownership, oversight, and governance of newsrooms, and mandating accountability to diverse constituencies.

While we should pursue these approaches simultaneously, the most surefire way to tame and erode commercial media is to create a truly publicly owned system.

Creating a New Public Media System

In the US, proposing massive public investments in news media usually elicits two immediate objections. One is the concern that a publicly subsidized system would create a mouthpiece for the state. The other is cost.

Regarding the first, real-world examples suggest that media subsidies aren’t a slippery slope toward authoritarianism. Democratic nations around the globe heavily subsidize media while enjoying democratic benefits that put the US to shame. Public media and stronger democracies [often go together](https://www.ebu.ch/publications/mis/loginonly/psm/democracy--psm).

Nonetheless, any public media system must erect a firewall to separate it from government and other powerful influences. Although government would play a key administrative role in establishing and protecting this system, it should be publicly operated, independent, and democratic in determining what specific kinds of media content and news outlets are supported. Political autonomy must be tethered to economic independence with adequate funding and resources — otherwise we’d simply reenact past errors and recreate another weak public system susceptible to political and economic capture.

On the question of cost, we must first remind ourselves that a viable press system isn’t a luxury — it’s a necessity. Similar to a classic “merit good,” journalism isn’t a “want,” but a “need.” To support this social necessity, [rough estimates](https://www.goodreads.com/book/show/6520399-the-death-and-life-of-american-journalism) suggest we need an annual budget of around $30 billion.

That may seem large, but relative to the problem — and compared to the outlays for recent tax cuts and military expenditures — it’s actually a modest proposal. This is especially true considering the enormous costs to society if we continue without a functioning press system.

Ideally, we would have a guaranteed annual budget that would come directly from the US Treasury, but a second op­tion would be a large trust fund supported by multiple rev­enue streams. Since this funding shouldn’t become a political football subject to the congressional appropriations pro­cess, it could be sustained by already-existing subsidies and mandated levies on communication oligopolies.

While individuals could contribute, a trust of this scope would require large funders. Possible sources might include levees on electronics and devices, tax vouchers, repurposing international broadcasting subsidies, proceeds from spectrum sales, and [taxing platform monopolies](https://www.thenation.com/article/archive/break-facebooks-power-and-renew-journalism/) such as Facebook and Google.

Permanent support for a well-funded national public media ser­vice could help guarantee universal access to quality news. This “public op­tion” for journalism can address commercial media’s endemic problems, which render our information systems vulnerable to structural crisis and elite capture.

What Would a Truly Public Media System Look Like?

The fight for an independent public media system doesn’t end with funding. Once we’ve created the material conditions for this new system, we must ensure it remains truly democratic, owned and controlled by journalists and representative members of the public and operated in a bottom-up, transparent fashion in constant dia­logue with community members. In short, these newsrooms must reflect the diverse audiences they serve.

We might envision this project in layers: the funding layer (how will this public media system be financially sustained?); the govern­ance layer (how will resource allocations and other key decisions be made democratically?); the ascertainment layer (how will information needs be determined?); the infrastructure layer (how can we ensure distribution of and access to information, including universal broadband service and algorithms that privilege public media in search and in news feeds?); and the engagement layer (how can we ensure that local communities are involved in making their own news and contributing their stories?).

While administrators could distribute resources via centralized hubs at the federal, state, and regional levels, local media bureaus that represent the communities where they reside should make key governance decisions. Federal and state-level commissions could calculate how resources should be deployed to target news deserts, meet spe­cial communication needs, and focus on addressing gaps in news coverage, especially around inequality, global warming, elections, and other specific social needs and problems. This system would require a public media consortium comprised of policy experts, scholars, technologists, journalists, and public advocates that specialize in work relevant to each of these layers, while always reporting to and engaging local communities.

Free from the economic imperative of appealing to wealthy owners, investors, advertisers, and high-income audiences, media outlets could abandon various forms of redlining to include entire classes and communities previously neglected. They might focus less on clickbait and fluffy news and more on coverage devoted to the poor and to working-class issues. Instead of folding labor news into the business sections of newspapers, we might see permanent beats with teams of dedicated labor journalists covering everything from workers’ everyday lives to picket lines and the plight of unions.

This kind of journalism could lay bare the social costs of policy failure and the structural roots of inequality. Taking a page from what is now called “solutions journalism,” it could devote unwavering attention to combatting social injustice.

#### Current media views the working class as passive objects in a project of erasure and disempowerment. They’ve propped up a white, conservative caricature of the working class as a placebo to stall action against capitalism

**Savage 19** Savage, Luke. “The Real Working Class Is Invisible to the Media.” *Jacobin*, 29 Mar. 2019, [https://www.jacobinmag.com/2019/03/no-longer-newsworthy-review-working-class-media. //](https://www.jacobinmag.com/2019/03/no-longer-newsworthy-review-working-class-media.%20//) FC

Central to this story is the decline of labor reporting, once a mainstay of major dailies. Today, by contrast, as Martin puts it: “A conference gathering of labor/workforce beat reporters from the country’s leading newspapers could fit into a single booth at an Applebee’s.” Of the country’s top twenty-five newspapers, he notes, a majority no longer covers the workplace/labor beat on a full-time basis, and the landscape for such reporting appears to be even bleaker on television (one 2013 survey cited by Martin, for example, reveals that only 0.3 percent of network TV news in the years 2008, 2009, and 2011 covered labor issues).

Much of the book is concerned with accounting for this decline, which, for the author, is both the result of conscious political effort and a myopic shift in the business model embraced by major newspapers. The former argument is fairly non-controversial, though illustrated in great detail via (among other things) a careful examination of the rhetoric around workers and labor used by various presidents, and the news media’s increasingly pro-corporate framing of jobs and economic issues. As to how a changing business model has served to disempower and erase the American working class, Martin posits that a shift in the 1960s and 1970s towards an advertising model aimed at an upscale middle-class readership is the primary culprit. With the rise of television, the newspaper industry grew ever more consolidated and concerned with addressing and reflecting the interests and lifestyles of a predominantly middle-class audience. In Martin’s words:

[In] this new vision of how a newspaper should serve its community, the newspapers and their corporate owners only wanted the right kind of readers, those who were ‘well-to-do’, ‘affluent moderns’, ‘influentials’, and people with plenty of ‘effective buying power’ and ‘giant-sized household incomes’. Nearly every newspaper began publicizing their readership as if they were the children of Garrison Keillor’s fictional Lake Wobegon: all above average.

As a consequence, he argues, the entire language of the news media began to shift: the labor beat gave way to lifestyle and consumer-oriented content; workers became “employees,” engaged not in collective action but in the individualized aspirational culture encouraged by neoliberal capitalism — no longer participating in economic affairs as active subjects but instead “hailed” (in the author’s words) as “passive objects” in a system of private enterprise directed by entrepreneurs and CEOs.

The erasure and disempowerment of workers as a class contributed to another significant development in the American media landscape explored in Martin’s narrative, namely the rise of populist conservative outlets able to capture the market niche vacated by major newspapers by trading in faux anti-elitism and cultural politics. This is not, he stresses, to be mistaken for actual representation of the working class, which is considerably more diverse (in both the ideological and demographic senses) than implied by the white, male, conservative caricature usually invoked by the right-wing media.

#### Capitalism is inherently tied to patterns of exploitation and oppression—breeds violent infighting to cement control

Mentan 16 (Tatah, Theodore Lentz scholar of Peace and Security Studies and Professor of Political Science, “Neoliberalism and Imperialism: Dissecting the Dynamics of Global Oppression,” Published by African Books Collective, pp. 186-188, <https://muse.jhu.edu/book/47794>, JLin)

Why Contemporary Capitalism needs Oppressive Exploitation Capitalism is a system based on exploitation. For Marxists, this has a precise scientific meaning. Capitalists take for themselves the monetary values created by or belonging to other people — usually workers, but also small farmers and, to varying degrees, small shop owners and nominally independent trades people. 187 This value is what their capital consists of. But exploitation does not exhaust the harmful effects that capitalism has on the rest of the world. Capitalist society also invents many forms of oppression, as well as perpetuating many inherited from earlier forms of social organization. Oppression is the systematic imposition of inferior conditions of life on particular groups of people. Members of an oppressed group may be discriminated against economically, socially and/or politically. Sometimes oppression has an economic impact; in some way, it increases the capitalists’ ability to exploit. An obvious example is discrimination against women or against a national or racial minority. The victims of such discrimination often receive lower wages than other workers, so this oppression adds directly to capitalists’ profits. Capitalists gain a slightly more indirect economic benefit from militarism and war. Two world wars in the 20th century occurred primarily because the capitalists of the major imperialist countries were competing for colonies and semi-colonies, to monopolize the profits from them. Today capitalists are risking making the planet uninhabitable for much of the human race because behaving differently might reduce their profits. Political motives Capitalism also maintains oppressions in which profits are at most a very secondary consideration. The economic benefits that capitalists seek from war and militarism are less significant than their political role. The military forces maintained by imperialist countries like Australia are an ever present threat to the peoples of the underdeveloped countries: “Step too far out of line, don’t do as you’re told, and you’ll have a fight on your hands (in which we hold all the weapons).” These forces are also the ultimate guarantee of capitalists’ power in their own country: that is, they are intended for use against their own working people if they get too far “out of line.” Capitalists have to maintain a variety of oppressions because they are a very small minority in any society. If the exploited majority were to act together to put an end to exploitation, they could very easily overcome the capitalists. For this reason, the capitalists have a very strong vested interest in preventing the exploited majority from getting used to the idea of working together—on almost anything. Oppression has a political function for capitalism if it sets one section of the exploited against another section. Male union members who think that a woman’s “real” place is at home won’t build a strong union. Parents who are concerned about their children going to school with immigrant children won’t be raising demands on the government to provide better education for everyone. People who think that a neighboring country’s religion is dangerous to them won’t resist their own government’s militarism. 188 Theoretical Exploration Accounts of neoliberal state intervention tend to see the political sphere as a separate moment of the capital relation. But, in reality, neoliberalism is an everchanging political expression of class rule which mirrors the struggles occurring within the wider reorganization of the social relations of capitalist production. Set against the backdrop of the general crisis of capitalism, neoliberalism is made up of highly contradictory political and ideological projects aimed at ensuring the continued expansion of capital accumulation, especially in light of the tensions involved in the broader dialectic between national and transnational restructuring, that is, the tensions between deeper economic integration and increased levels of competition (exploitation). Moreover, these new political forms of class domination are not determined by a particular instance, such as the market or the global economy; but shape, and are in turn shaped by, class struggles associated with economic restructuring. Consider these examples of alleged exploitation.

# Silencing DA

#### Media has weaponized the notion of objectivity as a play for profit that re-entrenches cycles of violence

**Friday 16** Friday, Aaden. “The Dangerous Myth of Media Objectivity.” *Medium*, The Establishment, 29 Sept. 2016, [https://medium.com/the-establishment/the-dangerous-myth-of-media-objectivity-b2c5af92bf58. //](https://medium.com/the-establishment/the-dangerous-myth-of-media-objectivity-b2c5af92bf58.%20//) FC

In August, Jennifer Pozner [wrote](http://www.theestablishment.co/2016/08/11/the-medias-role-in-trumps-assassination-threat-against-hillary/) about the role media has played in earning Donald Trump the Republican nomination for president. “Each time news outlets . . . quoted his every information-light rant without providing factual corrections, they granted his candidacy increased legitimacy,” she wrote. “His rise to political power would not have been possible without access to this institutionally-approved megaphone.”

Worse still, that media megaphone has enabled Trump to perpetuate harmful ideas and even spur abusive actions. Trump rallies over the course of this election cycle have been synonymous with physical[abuse](http://www.cnn.com/videos/politics/2016/03/12/donald-trump-rallies-violence-protests-mashup-lv.cnn/video/playlists/protests-at-trump-rallies/) against, primarily, people of color. For example, in Kentucky, a young black[woman](http://www.slate.com/blogs/the_slatest/2016/03/02/video_black_woman_shoved_by_trump_crowd_members_in_louisville.html) was shoved repeatedly after being forced to leave after protesting. In North Carolina, a black protester was punched in the face by a white supporter who later[said](http://www.insideedition.com/headlines/15177-trump-supporter-who-punched-protester-next-time-we-might-have-to-kill-him) it was because he thought the protester “might be with a terrorist organization.”

According to a [new report](https://www.documentcloud.org/documents/3110202-SPECIAL-STATUS-REPORT-v5-9-16-16.html) from California State University–San Bernardino’s Center for the Study of Hate and Extremism, hate crimes against Muslims in the United States have risen to their highest level since the aftermath of 9/11, and political rhetoric may have played a role.

As Pozner pointed out, it’s not difficult to discern why the media has chosen to cover Trump so prolifically, and without sufficiently framing the danger of his rhetoric: Trump stories translate to views, clicks, and cold hard cash. This money-grab motive further complicates any notions of respectable objectivity. In the case of both Trump and Yiannopoulos, those in power — news producers, TV pundits, print publishers, and online editorial boards — have simply chosen profit over people, while justifying their ethical breach under the guise of objectivity.

The people who have never been, and will likely never be, personally harmed by the words or actions of these controversial figures are granted the privilege to provide them with whatever platform they see fit. And in choosing that platform, these privileged few have consistently favored commercial interests over moral ones.

It’s also worth noting that this isn’t just a matter of providing a platform in the first place, but of how the coverage itself is handled. Presidential candidates are important to cover — when they defy expectations and break from years of tradition, this only adds to their newsworthiness. But the lack of critical coverage, combined with overexposure, is a clear breach of ethics. In too many cases, the media has covered Trump’s racist, xenophobic, Islamophobic, and sexist comments without sufficiently calling them out as such; in presenting them “neutrally,” they have also leant them credence. Similarly, in the Yiannopoulos interview, Out published statements like, “Nobody should be playing the victim. Nobody should be doing this grievance, oppression bullshit malarkey,” without remarking on the dangers of such speech.

This kind of coverage is, quite frankly, irresponsible and dangerous.

When providing a platform for views that are provably untrue, racist or bigoted, or some combination thereof, media representatives consistently argue that appearances are not endorsements and both sides of the debate should be presented. Ryan Thomas [wrote](https://theconversation.com/could-donald-trump-change-journalism-for-the-better-57856) that objectivity in journalism “is a much misunderstood concept and is too often [uncritically mythologized](http://jou.sagepub.com/content/13/4/435.short) as central to American journalistic practice.” As journalist [Brent Cunningham](http://www.cjr.org/author/brent-cunningham-1/)[wrote](http://www.cjr.org/feature/rethinking_objectivity.php), “Objectivity excuses lazy reporting.”

As we’ve seen all too often this year alone, when hateful lies are presented uncritically under the auspices of neutrality, “we fail to push the story toward a[n] deeper understanding of what is true and what is false.” This notion of balance that media figures stubbornly cling to has had a literal effect on our brains, and has increased violence against the most vulnerable in our society.

We are never supposed to take outrageous figures like Yiannopoulos or Trump, and the offensive positions they hold, seriously. When a professional abuser is uncritically profiled in a magazine, or a president of a hate-group is presented as an opposing expert in a reported piece, it perpetuates a cycle of violence on our psyches and our bodies and maintains the status-quo of discrimination, inequity, and inequality.

#### The idea of “objectivity” in media has been warped to fit the needs of the patriarchal white supremacy -- striving for it silences traditionally marginalized groups

**Headlee 21** Headlee, Celeste. “Seeking Objectivity in Journalism Is Getting in the Way of Speaking Truth.” *Current*, Current, 7 Sept. 2021, https://current.org/2021/09/seeking-objectivity-in-journalism-is-getting-in-the-way-of-speaking-truth/. // FC

The [American Press Institute created a guide](https://www.americanpressinstitute.org/journalism-essentials/bias-objectivity/lost-meaning-objectivity/) to the basics of journalism that says the initial intent was not to deny bias, but to work around it. In other words, the word “objective” was never meant to describe the journalist, but the process. The guide states, “Objectivity called for journalists to develop a consistent method of testing information — a transparent approach to evidence — precisely so that personal and cultural biases would not undermine the accuracy of their work. … The method is objective, not the journalist. The key was in the discipline of the craft, not the aim.”

That may have been the intent, but in practice, “objectivity” became a value judgment, a determination with vague parameters that news directors would make, declaring this reporter objective and this one biased.

When I first started in this industry, I remember questioning why I was not allowed to volunteer with a nonpartisan organization whose goal was to register voters, regardless of party affiliation. “It’s not really about being objective,” I was told, “but the appearance of objectivity.” The organization may be nonpartisan, in other words, but our listeners would assume it had a liberal bent, and perception is, after all, reality.

Regardless of how you may feel about the pursuit of objectivity and the original intent, it has been used for decades as a method for silencing the voices of women and people of color. As [Mary Retta wrote](https://www.bitchmedia.org/article/the-new-york-times-journalistic-objectivity-harms-black-people) in June of 2020: “Our current standard of journalistic objectivity is so entrenched in the values of white supremacy that any reporting that falls outside that lens is automatically considered biased.”

The issue has been hotly contested for some time now, something Nicolo Froio [wrote about in Current](https://current.org/2021/05/how-journalists-are-challenging-ideas-of-objectivity-while-empowering-their-communities/?wallit_nosession=1) earlier this year. After years of debate and protest from journalists of color, many newsroom leaders are beginning to come around on the issue. Perhaps we are reaching the point that [David Weinberger](https://www.kmworld.com/Articles/Column/David-Weinberger/Transparency-the-new-objectivity-55785.aspx)described, when “transparency is the new objectivity.”

But as policies and practices surrounding objectivity evolve, it’s crucial to remember the results of the Poynter study: Regardless of their opinions on objectivity, nearly all journalists surveyed believe that their most important duty is to tell the truth.

When you engage in discussion about this issue with your staff or co-workers, never forget that we all have this in common: an obligation to tell the truth. You may not agree with someone’s opinions on objectivity, you may believe they’re misguided, but they probably believe their method serves the truth. Just as you do.

Discussing this issue is healthy and encouraged, but one way to avoid the kind of recriminations that are common when objectivity is questioned is to constantly remind yourself that truth is the common ground. If they are arguing passionately to remove “objectivity” from a mission statement, it’s probably because that word has prevented them from telling the truth in the past. If truth is our mission, we must remove the obstacles that prevent us from discovering it and relaying it to our audiences. Objectivity is one of those obstacles. Let’s remove it.

# Case