

MARAPR Pragmatic Objectivity 1AC

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

The value for today's debate is morality, defined as a set of principles to determine right from wrong and good from bad.

Morality is the highest value for the round because using "justice" when the word is already represented in the resolution would be to use circular reasoning. Instead, we pursue just outcomes because they are the right outcomes, therefore the pursuit of justice ultimately serves morality.

Our standard through which we uphold morality is minimizing material harm to marginalized people, and the role of the judge is to vote for the debater who best actively confronts oppression. To clarify, through a policy lens this means solutions ought to center marginalized voices rather than impact-justify passive benefit to them.

Framing

Prioritize slow violence in the everyday, specifically in the context of how we tell stories in the press---outweighs on topic specificity and subsumes traditional impact framing through threat multiplication

Nixon '11 (Rob, Rachel Carson Professor of English, University of Wisconsin-Madison, Slow Violence and the Environmentalism of the Poor, pgs. 2-3) //recutAHS

Three primary concerns animate this book, chief among them my conviction that we urgently need to rethink-politically, imaginatively, and theoretically-what I call "slow violence." By **slow violence** I mean a violence that **occurs gradually** and out of sight, a violence of **delayed destruction** that is **dispersed across time and space**, an attritional violence that is typically not viewed as violence at all. **Violence is customarily conceived as** an event or action that is **immediate** in time, explosive **and spectacular** in space, and as erupting into instant sensational visibility. **We need**, I believe, **to engage** a different kind of **violence**, a violence **that is** neither spectacular nor instantaneous, but rather **incremental** and accretive, its calamitous repercussions playing out across a range of temporal scales. In so doing, **we also need to engage** the **representational, narrative**, and strategic **challenges** posed by the **relative invisibility of slow violence**. Climate change, the thawing cryosphere, toxic drift, biomagnification, deforestation, the radioactive aftermaths of wars, acidifying oceans, and a host of other slowly unfolding environmental catastrophes present formidable representational obstacles that can hinder our efforts to mobilize and act decisively. The long dyings-the staggered and staggeringly discounted casualties, both human and ecological that result from war's toxic aftermaths or climate change-are underrepresented in strategic planning as well as in human memory. Had Summers advocated invading Africa with weapons of mass destruction, his proposal would have fallen under conventional definitions of violence and been perceived as a military or even an imperial invasion. Advocating invading countries with mass forms of slow-motion toxicity, however, requires rethinking our accepted assumptions of violence to include slow violence. **Such a rethinking requires that we complicate conventional assumptions about violence as** a highly visible act that is **newsworthy** because it is **event focused, time bound, and body bound**. We need to account for how the temporal dispersion of slow violence affects the way we perceive and respond to a variety of social afflictions-from domestic abuse to posttraumatic stress and, in particular, environmental calamities: **A major challenge is** representational: **how to devise arresting stories**, images, and symbols **adequate to the** pervasive but elusive **violence of delayed effects**. Crucially, **slow violence is** often not just attritional but also **exponential, operating as a major threat multiplier; it can fuel long-term, proliferating conflicts** in situations **where the conditions for sustaining life become** increasingly but **gradually degraded**.

Advantage

The current model of journalistic objectivity in democracies reinforces an elite power structure and is rooted in antiblackness---perpetuates wealthy white male supremacy and undermines reporting practices

Robinson and Culver 19 Robinson S, Culver KB. When White reporters cover race: News media, objectivity and community (dis)trust. *Journalism*. 2019;20(3):375-391. doi:[10.1177/1464884916663599](https://doi.org/10.1177/1464884916663599) //AHS

What has served the press well in terms of establishing itself as an authority to tell societal stories – **objectivity**, accountability, evidence – has not benefited communities of color. In fact, these standards have been used as crutches **for the status quo**, according to scholars who study race and media. These scholars **have demonstrated a narrative of ignorance, stereotyping, racist framing, and other problems in the** mainstream, ‘objective’ **press, which ignored key topics and people in coverage of** reparations, affirmative action, and other **racial issues** (Mastin et al., 2005; Shah and Thornton, 2004; Squires, 2007, 2009). **Journalists** have tended to **highlight extreme positives and negatives for African-Americans and subject them to binaries such as hero** (athlete) **and villain** (criminal), **rather than investigate more complex causes of systematic bias**. Shah and Thornton (2004) found that in their comparisons of press reports on riots, White reporters failed to reproduce facts of institutional racism and did not evenly cover White and Black participation. Mindich, studying **the** historical origins of **objectivity**, pointed out how the **norm** was **used to exclude anyone not Caucasian** for years, **tied** as the concept was **to notions of ‘civility’, literacy, and property**. To be rational, civilized, and ‘objective’, one had to be credentialed, named, and educated. For generations, this kind of officialdom has generally meant a reportorial Rolodex that has more White people than others. **These elite sources become the ‘primary definers’ for society, and their perspectives create a uni-dimensional social world that is hostile to ‘others’** (Hall et al., 1978/2013). When **counter-cultures and civic unrest** have challenged the status quo, reporters have tended to portray subversives as ‘other’ **and privileged official authorities** (Gitlin, 2003; Reese, 1990). **To do otherwise would go against the very identity of the Fourth Estate** – an essential bulwark of the American system of government that developed as **a power structure made for White, wealthy males** (Powell, 2012). In other words, **objectivity** and other hegemonic practices have **reified** a system of **White supremacy** for a White community **that** traditional Western **reporters are** not only a part of, but **reporting for and within**. Solutions to this have not been obvious. American journalists tend to be White, well-educated, and upper-middle class (Serrin, 1992). Court (1990) made a series of recommendations such as not relying on the traditional photo ops and developing a commitment to ethnic communities.

This legitimizes and perpetuates antiblack violence--- pragmatic objectivity is the only check

Watson 21 Collette Watson, March 8, 2021, Free Press.

<https://www.freepress.net/our-response/advocacy-organizing/stories-field/how-media-system-fuels-anti-black-racism>

Against the backdrop of Media 2070's exploration of **the media system's historical harm of Black lives**, Devich-Cyril laid out the stark reality of how that damage has come to a head today: "This past year **has been astonishing**. A lot of studies have been done about the **overrepresentation** of Black people as **'super-predators' or 'super-athletes'**. The result is the same: an explicit belief that we are easier to kill with impunity. That we can take pain better, and we don't need the same level of health care. **"These are narratives that directly lead to death. "This isn't** a question of microaggressions, this isn't **about implicit bias, this is about coverage of the issues of the day: the economy, COVID, police violence, elections. All of it explicitly condones the killing of Black people.**

"There's a lot of journalists absolutely struggling to be fair, working within a biased system. But this is not about individuals. "This is about a narrative system that's composed of infrastructure, institutions, policies, people and protocols. We're talking about a narrative system that is quite murderous. "And as outlets have struggled for resources, investigative journalism has waned and punditry has risen. We've seen the emergence since the '80s of a right-wing echo system, and what it's echoing is that Black life doesn't matter." **Torres laid out a**

compelling throughline of anti-Black harm, from the earliest U.S. media outlets to today's multimedia landscape: "Our media system is the same as any other system in this country: It wasn't created to help Black folks, it was created to harm Black folks. **From the first continuous newspaper to the present day, the media system has worked to uphold a white-racial hierarchy.** "Its goal has always been to create a myth of Black inferiority. **Narratives are** a political tool that have been **weaponized to harm Black and Indigenous folks and other people of color.** "We have a narrative that Black folks are a danger to this country, and that narrative has carried on for centuries because we mainly have **white media owners.** And now we see it in the **algorithms and how online platforms use these narratives to shape conflict in order to synthesize traffic. "Fortunately** throughout the history of [our] country, there have been **Black folks who [have fought] these narratives.** From the first Black newspaper, Freedom's Journal in 1827 New York, to Ida B. Wells and today's Black newspapers.

"When one of the first race commissions was formed to examine what happened in the 1919 Chicago race riot, that report talked about how white-dominated newspapers helped to incite violence that resulted in many more Black folks being harmed. "And so we go to today, we have all these right-wing networks and we have hate groups organizing online, but also we have so-called progressive media outlets as well, MSNBC or CNN, for example, where they cover race as a spectator sport. They do the same thing as social-media companies: use conflict to get more viewers. **"But you also see a lot of activists use mass media to try to keep their communities informed, and they may not see themselves as journalists but they are performing acts of journalism. And more Black journalists spoke up last year than any other time in recent history, leading major newsrooms to reckon with their histories of racism."** Connecting the past to the present When we talk about anti-Black oppression, most people visualize black-and-white photos of enslaved people and civil-rights marches. Dominant media culture gives the sense that these fights took place many centuries ago, in a time completely disconnected and removed from the present age. When he was asked in 2018 about reparations for slavery, then-Sen. Majority Leader Mitch McConnell voiced a belief that many white people hold when it comes to historical harm of Black communities: "I don't think reparations for something that happened 150 years ago for whom none of us currently living are responsible is a good idea." The reality is that today's media narratives still broadly display the artifacts of that time, and use those ideas to entrench cultural beliefs that have shaped laws, policies, court decisions and so much more. Devich-Cyril reflects: "Growing up in Brooklyn in the 1980s, I remember how Trump was part of amplifying this media misrepresentation of Black youth that led to the conviction of five Black kids [the Central Park Five]. He put out a full-page newspaper ad calling for their deaths, and he could do that — because he was rich, he was white and he was a man. "I remember the language of that time: 'Crack baby. AIDS patient. Super-predator. Welfare mom.' And how all of these portrayals became part of this official story with books like The Bell Curve and others that told the story of our inferiority. "This is the '80s and the '90s. Not the '50s, the '30s and the '20s ... not the 1800s. This is just a few years ago, within my lifetime. And it's happening today."

Devich-Cyril noted that the corporate media system is not the only media system. **Much of Torres' work as a historian has involved unearthing the work of courageous freedom fighters who have used media and narrative in the fight for Black liberation.** But these fights have had to take place **against the backdrop of a highly profitable media machine that enriches white media owners while extracting Black labor and cashing in on the amplification of white supremacy.** Black truth tellers have risked their lives to inform our communities and challenge harmful narratives. **And their work is central to the larger fight for Black lives.** Devich-Cyril discussed being raised by a mother who was a member of the Black Panther movement, and how their own **activism evolved to center on the pursuit of media justice:** "It was because of my mother that I began to

understand that the media hasn't just played a primary role in structuring these narratives, but it has also historically provided the infrastructure for Black enslavement and surveillance. "In his book [News for All the People], Joe reveals with great clarity how early newspapers were used to catch enslaved Black people. But also, in the 1950s and '60s, AT&T colluded with the police and the FBI to surveil Black activists. "AT&T continues to collaborate with the NSA today. AT&T provides direct backbone access to raw data including emails, web-browsing history, social media and other unencrypted online activity. We know the NSA uses the web of AT&T hubs for a surveillance operation codenamed Fairview. "We know this: It's been written about in reputable outlets

and AT&T has admitted to it. "So, the question is not whether this media system is racist. My mother taught me that. **But she also taught me that democratizing culture is a**

liberation strategy. It's a tool to our freedom and a parallel freedom structure. **"To transform the material conditions of our lives, we also have to transform the cultural conditions."**

The conversation rounded out with a discussion of what brings these two longtime activists hope, even amid such challenging times. Torres mentioned the newsroom reckonings that continue to unfold nationally from The Los Angeles Times to The Kansas City Star, The Philadelphia Inquirer and beyond: "What makes me hopeful is the reckonings that are happening today. The coronavirus laid bare for journalists to see that many media don't cover those issues of structural racism. That gives me hope that we can create the change." And Devich-Cyril uplifted the hope that is inherent in the Media 2070 vision: "We need some truth, we need some reconciliation. We also need some reparations. We can reclaim the infrastructure of our culture because that will reclaim the infrastructure of our dignity, of our freedom, and of our lives and I believe that that's what this whole thing is all about."

And reject objectivity as the passive relay of information, only an active obligation solves

Robinson and Culver 2 Robinson S, Culver KB. When White reporters cover race: News media, objectivity and community (dis)trust. *Journalism*. 2019;20(3):375-391. doi:[10.1177/1464884916663599](https://doi.org/10.1177/1464884916663599) //AHS

As cultural actors, **news workers should reject objectivity framed as the disinterested and passive relay of information from official sources** to an audience of subscribers. **They best fulfill their pivotal role in democracy by instead embracing objectivity as an obligation to interpret important issues for and represent the voices of the entirety of their communities.** They can do this **by employing**, as Ward suggests, **deliberative methods that emphasize evidence**, coherence with **existing expertise, contextual framing of ideas, and inclusion of varying perspectives**. Maras demonstrates how **this conceptualization does** not stray far from objectivity's fundamental premise. He notes how practitioners across time periods have approached **a more active practice that relies less on he-said/she-said structures and more on analysis and interpretation**. But what can this look like in practice? We wanted to explore new ways of approaching ethical production practices through a case study, thinking about active objectivity in light of reality.

Plan

Thus we affirm, in a democracy a free press ought to prioritize objectivity over advocacy

We'll implement pragmatic objectivity

Robinson and Culver 3 Robinson S, Culver KB. When White reporters cover race: News media, objectivity and community (dis)trust. *Journalism*. 2019;20(3):375-391. doi:[10.1177/1464884916663599](https://doi.org/10.1177/1464884916663599) //AHS

This essay calls upon Ward's (2010) pragmatic conceptualization of journalistic professionalism and objectivity. **Rather than journalists serving as passive conduits between sources and audience, this pragmatic objectivity calls for journalism that is 'an active, interpretive cultural activity'** (Ward, 2010: 146). This is **not a move toward 'opinionated' journalism but instead focused on evidence, coherence with expertise and knowledge, and inclusion of diverse perspectives. Rejecting an objectivity that falsely equates diverging sides of an issue or privileges elite sources,** interpretive reporting argues that journalists make sense of communities along with the people who inhabit them. At its core, **this approach privileges citizens as the recipient of media loyalty and emphasizes community trust** building as an essential part of news gathering. We apply this framework to a rich dataset of 39 in-depth interviews, three focus groups, and more than 1000 news texts. We wanted to understand the following: How do White reporters conceptualize their roles in covering issues that have racial components, and how do they meet what they see as their obligations? It is important to document the intentions of journalists as those motivations relate to their routines. **Furthermore, we understand from past scholarship that centuries of representation of communities of color in the American press have** brought cynicism from 'others' who have **been rendered one-dimensional, stereotyped, marginalized, or shut out** from mainstream journalism. **So we ask, what do community leaders and activists** involved in race relations – those who are often quoted about these issues – **and citizens** affected in this case view as **the major obligations of journalists who cover** issues involving **race**? This essay also explores how the exercise of objectivity and other professional tenets butt up against ethics of fairness to and inclusion of all citizens. So we considered a third research question: What ethical tensions emerge in these differing conceptualizations? If covering race in a way that builds trust and defies stereotyping creates commercial, cultural, and organizational difficulties, we need to reconcile journalists' training with their responsibilities to covering communities of color inclusively. This essay makes a statement about the clashing of ethics and explores a middle ground for reporters in historically White-dominated communities caught between long-time norms and the demands of an increasingly diverse society. We use this analysis of ethical tensions to put forward an ethical framework that journalists might adopt for issues of race specifically. We articulate key principles in response to our final research question: What should the ethical prescription be when traditional principles of journalism such as objectivity clash with what the community needs for trust building? **We argue for an active approach to objectivity that employs an interpretive framework and a full embrace of the professional mandate to be loyal to all citizens, first and foremost. This essay argues that more passive exercise of journalistic tenets – such as deferring to officials in search of verification – can no longer be ethically justified. In this ethical prescription, we note that intentionally building community trust would better fulfill the fundamental mission of the press, especially around issues of race. As the nation attempts to move forward from an increasing number of racially charged events, we must find common ground between news workers and the growing numbers of minorities in communities such that everyone feels represented in America's journalism.**

The aff empirically creates a mindset shift in community relations and the way media talks about race and is the only ethical starting point for a free press

Robinson and Culver 4 Robinson S, Culver KB. When White reporters cover race: News media, objectivity and community (dis)trust. *Journalism*. 2019;20(3):375-391. doi:[10.1177/1464884916663599](https://doi.org/10.1177/1464884916663599) //AHS

Embedded here is a clear differential: **journalists focus primarily on negative constructions of ethics, the things news workers should refrain from doing**. For instance, the journalists emphasize that they are duty-bound not to treat sources differently and to relay information from source to audience without injecting perspective. **The people of color, however, employed a positive construction: journalists are duty-bound to build trust in communities of color and should adopt active practices that ensure inclusion of all voices**. The journalists' 'I'm here if you want to come to me' differs sharply from the community leaders' desire that they 'come engage with us', with the latter more clearly focused on trying to bridge an inherent power differential and the former stymied by the realities of flagging resources, deadline pressures, and entrenched practices. **These ethical tensions manifested in two of the publications that made intentional efforts to embrace a more pragmatic, positive approach to objectivity – the Capital Times and Madison Magazine**. The editor of the Capital Times focused his column on issues of race in Madison, facilitated grants for a series of conversations on race, co-hosted local forums and workshops, and created a website called Together Apart devoted to issues involving race. **This required a significant reworking of traditional mindsets internally**. 'I basically suspended an awful lot of my own multi-decade views', said the editor. **Madison Magazine's editor described conducting content analyses and surveys to convince staff that including more people of color was an ethical obligation. The paradigm shift did not come easily**. The reporters tasked with conducting 'better' stories around race suggested the logistics of doing so dogged their efforts, as did that 'fear of doing wrong and inhibiting any progress'. The Capital Times found 'a different kind of distrust than I am used to' – a distrust about motivations and level of investment, more than a worry about being misquoted. Furthermore, their efforts were widely criticized by journalists at other organizations, who described the efforts as 'advocacy' and 'paternalistic', and suspected their motives as 'self-adulation', exploiting marginalized citizens for commercial purposes. It is not the job of journalists to host conversations about race, said one of these reporters. One freelancer who practiced 'active objectivity' suggested her biggest obstacle was convincing editors to run her pieces. **Despite these tensions, a paradigm change was emerging within these organizations as of 2015, and their coverage reflected more in-depth stories about the struggles of students of color in schools, for example, and smaller brights about community center events – 'To try to give people a voice**. Not the officials. Real people's voice', said one of their reporters tasked with changing coverage. In spring 2015, one freelance reporter who had just moved back to Madison and was working for the Guardian took it upon herself to be consistently present during protests that rocked the city following a shooting of a Black teenager by a White police officer. **Her articles, steeped in 'an active objectivity', lifted the shooting coverage out of the episodic model being followed by other reporters to understand what happened at a systemic level: So much that gets written about race I think ends up being really divisive. And I think what I was trying to do was to ... look at some of the deeper issues without making it personal**. I'm not accusing an individual of being a racist. But I'm saying clearly there's a structural problem. A few months later, in August 2015, three men – an African-American politician and business man and two White communication professionals – founded a provocative website called Madison365 aimed at using 'excellent journalism **to start conversations, find real and lasting solutions, build community, invite action and encourage emerging leaders** in Greater Madison's communities of color, and to foster dialog between members of diverse communities', according to its website.⁴ Their first stories had titles such as 'Things I do for White people' (Daniels, 2015) and 'The Harsh Truth: The White Wing Media' (Madison365 staff, 2015). In interviews, the founders expressed frustration with mainstream news organizations and advocated a new 'authentic' kind of reporting. Said one of the founders, Some of the conversations we're having are going to make people feel uncomfortable ... because these are conversations that they're not used to having. That's how we change things. We are trying to let people have an authentic voice of what their lives are. The founder explained how their editor, a White man who hailed from rural Wisconsin, 'has more trust ... than a lot of people of color have in their own community'. This trust is generated, he said, through Listening. But also not coming in with the White guilt, right? But at the same time saying, I get that I don't know what I don't know. Showing up in the communities. Not just at times where there's something bad going on ... Build those relationships at all times. The approach seemed to be working. Their site was garnering 240,000 unique visitors by the end of January 2016. **For the editor of Madison Magazine, this mindset reflected an ethical obligation to the community at large, as opposed to just her magazine's audience: When you are a traditional reporter, you cannot be biased, but you also do not build trust and you do not build relationships**. Yes, you should need objectivity [but] you should learn when to use it and when not to use it. This editor of Madison Magazine – and the editor who followed her – began making 'active objectivity' a commitment, as in stories headlined 'Madison mothers react to shooting: 'To us, he was a child'' (Ginsberg, 2015b) about the shooting of a Black teen and 'Active disruption: A Q&A with Brandi Grayson' (Ginsberg, 2015a) about the leader of a coalition called Young, Gifted & Black. For the Capital Times, the editor described the intention to facilitate progress ... in a way that keeps these issues in front of people, allows people who are so inclined to understand them fully, understand what options are out there, more fully, and to be provocative in thinking about these issues. To this end, the editor invited a group of six local African-Americans to participate in kitchen-table style conversation, covering education, the criminal justice system, and the economy. The journalists sat outside of the circle and said nothing, but videotaped it and put the entire conversation online (Murphy, 2014). **These articulations of ethics recall essentially normative understandings of the ideal function of what journalism has always been: reporters listening, building relationships in all communities, being self-aware of their own positionality, embracing nuance so citizens can govern society in all of its complexity**.

We control the internal link to effective advocacy and critique---means the aff solves better independently

Peuchaud 2 Peuchaud SR. Objectivity, advocacy, and critical pedagogy in the race, gender, and media classroom: Individual, interpersonal, and structural tensions and recommendations. *Journalism*. 2021;22(2):519-536. doi:[10.1177/1464884918779943](https://doi.org/10.1177/1464884918779943) //AHS

In other words, this instructor acknowledges the reformist bias of the course, but believes **raising student consciousness** (Freire, 1970) of their own hidden biases (Patterson and Donsbagh, 1996) **could prompt a more robust objectivity that would build trust with diverse communities, resulting in fairer, more accurate coverage** (Robinson and Culver, 2016). The appropriate role of advocacy in race, gender, and media courses caused internal tension for many of the instructors. There was a clear consensus these courses exist to teach students to 'identify the problem, offer conceptual ways to think about it, and find solutions', as one participant said. **This presumption that a social problem exists, and the insistence that solutions are necessary, aligns neatly with the purpose of critical pedagogy** as articulated by Freire (1970) **and the tradition of advocacy journalism** (Clark, 2013). Similarly, a more activist approach in the journalism classroom highlights problems in the mediated environment, and offers solutions. One instructor took this a step further, insisting that advocating for social change is not only inevitable, but desirable in a race, gender, and media course: I would chide anybody who doesn't have a clear advocacy component to the course. Without it, there is no sense of hope, no way to respond to these problems, no solutions. One instructor invoked the tradition of interpretive journalism, which has allowed more scope for individual journalists' perspectives (Johnston and Graham, 2012; McNair, 2000), when he argued, 'my role in the classroom is more like an editorial or feature writer. I'm more concerned with fairness, disruption, polemics'. **This point was underscored by another instructor who said, if you're going to tell a story, and it's going to be quote unquote 'truthful', you have to have context, voices of people who are not just in authority.** It's a process to get a full story, or ad, or campaign. **This echoes Giroux's (2017) criticism that traditional objectivity can fail to recognize 'the factors behind the fact', leading to misleading narratives about marginalized peoples.** It also recalls Durham's (1998) class-conscious emphasis on the perspectives of those who are impacted by the event or issue. Nonetheless, some of the participants were loath to identify as activist or advocates in the classroom because they had spent some portion of their careers as journalists pursuing traditional objectivity and found being more activist in the classroom disorienting (Deuze, 2005). This cognitive dissonance between their two professional roles is an example of the sort of simultaneously discomforting and empowering tension hooks (1994) anticipated as part of engaged pedagogy. **The most promising strategy for reconciling the individual-level tension between advocacy and traditional objectivity in journalistic practice was to conceptualize professionalism as prioritizing inclusiveness,** as Robinson and Culver (2016) recommend. One participant articulated the rationale of this strategy: Respect for diversity is one of the key tenets of the Society of Professional Journalists and all of the prominent style guides contain similar precepts and ideas about what are the best practices related to 'Others'