# State R4 AC

#### I affirm.

#### I’ll provide the definition of objectivity within the case - specifically my 2nd card.

## Framing

#### The value is Striving for Truth – democratic systems rely on deliberation and consensus to operate, knowing the truth is fundamental to informed decision making

#### First, textuality - the text of the resolution is a question of moral actions in a democracy. This means the round has to be about what actions lead to a better democracy, not other arbitrary frameworks, no matter how good they are. Prefer this for a 3 reasons:

#### a) jurisdiction - the judge is bound by the resolution, even if you agree that they are winning that their framework is better, that doesn’t matter if they aren’t winning that it’s better within the context of a democracy.

#### b) ground - the resolution is a fixed point that gives a common ground for debaters to debate on. Allowing any sort of framework that ignores the specific wording of the resolution makes it harder for debaters to prepare well-reasoned responses to common frameworks.

#### c) resolutional burden - The NC has the burden to negate the specific resolution and not just cherry-picked words from it. They have to prove why under the pretenses of an ethical code governed from democracy, that the resolution is bad. If their framework isn’t relevant to democracy, I can concede all their offense and still win the debate because they don’t negate the specific resolution.

#### Thus the criterion is investigative aesthetics.

#### First, the criterion is the best way to achieve truth, because it strives for truth while criticizing the traditional formations of truth - allowing for unbiased formations of it.

**Fuller**, Matthew, **and** Eyal **Weizman**. Investigative Aesthetics. [first edition]. Verso, 2021. e-book. 25 Sept. 20**21**.

**Aesthetic investigations** have a double aim: they **are** at the same time **investigations of the world and enquiries into the means of knowing it**. This means that they seek accountability both for events and for the devices with which we perceive them. They **deal with** the **production of evidence while questioning and interrogating the notion of evidence**, and with it the cultures of knowledge production or truth claims that it relies upon. They **engage in the presentation of facts while being aware of the way each presentation**, indeed each media form, **can distort** the very **facts** they produce. They seek to **establish claims to truth while criticising the institutions of power and knowledge with their monopoly over the mechanisms of truth production**. The media technologies of artificial intelligence, satellite images, social media platforms, smart cities or facial recognition cameras are not neutral; they are products of specific political and historical contexts, with inbuilt biases, opacity, partiality and illegibility and have the potential to enhance discrimination and domination.

#### 2. Here’s the definition - Investigative Aesthetics reformulates objectivity. Objectivity isn’t an idealized scientific truth. Objectivity denotes a process that is achieved through political, scientific, and social investigation of knowledge to arrive at a fully unbiased and objective understanding of that knowledge.

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We are interested in the continued differentiation within and between the lab and the studio, but also in the affinities they engender as they become different to each other – even sometimes weirder than each other. Today there are compelling reasons for science and art to resynthesise and merge the different modes in which each undertakes open-ended experimentation on things and the modes of seeing them. One way into this is via a **re-coordination around the notion of objectivity** suggested by historians of science Lorraine Daston and Peter Galison.4 **In the** often **conventional view** of the term, **objectivity is** taken to be **a form of knowledge that bears no trace of the knower. Rather than this reductive ideal**, Daston and Galison suggest that objectivity could be something worked at through commonly held projects, such as the generation of knowledge about particular problems or phenomena. Objectivity, they argue, is produced in relation to an object, a map, a diagram, an instrument that bears the traces of, and is indeed propelled by, the specific interests of those that develop it. The object in turn is the means to bring their enquiries together in order to understand them. Following this conceptualisation we can propose that the enquiry increases awareness of the object and, at the same time, expands the multiplicity of subjects and subjectivities involved in the investigation. In the development of a particular kind of knowledge through artefacts designed to probe it (perhaps the object might be something such as the diagram of a certain species or the map of a terrain), o**bjectivity becomes a process of work in which knowledge is constituted in and about the objects and tools** – human and non-human – **of investigation**. Whereas, in the nineteenth century, the epistemic virtue of objectivity was understood to be a property of the subject, that of the idealised scientific self, Daston and Galison’s book flips the meaning of the term back towards the object. The scientific object gains value precisely through emerging from the interaction of multiple particular interests. It is in these relations, that an object is founded. The object – evidence, in our context – becomes a joint site of work, one that can extend to providing a field of liaison for self-reflexive artists and scientists, and others, such as those in political struggle, to jointly create. In such creation, **situatedness is the defining feature of the very notion of evidence.** It comes into being and is enhanced through the practices of **interweaving and cross-checking of perspectiv**es **and epistemological frameworks. In the investigative aesthetics** which is the subject of this book, this i**nterweaving is also organisational and political. Rather than being confined to the coherent logic of black-boxed institutions of authority, a constitutive objectivity is based on open processes and new alignments between different sites, organisations and institutions of diverse** natures, standing and **perspectives**

#### Prefer this for 3 reasons

#### the traditional definition of objectivity upholds harmful power structures that discriminate, allow for an aff that can challenge this

#### With recent doubts that objectivity doesn’t exist, it is important to show that through using current technology and consulting many different perspectives, objectivity is possible. But only through a holistic approach and not an idealized truth

#### Overall we all agree the traditional notion of objectivity is bad, forcing the aff to adhere to this traditional definition therefore is going to skew unfair ground to the neg, allow the aff to reformulate for a fair debate

## Contention 1: Upholding Democracy.

#### 1. Currently existing power structures are the ones determining truth, this truth is often post-truth which aims to skew objective truth. Using Investigative Aesthetics we must question these people in power and the truths which they manipulate to formulate a more accurate perception of fact and put power back into the public.

#### 2. Investigative Aesthetics allows the public to be included in the assemblage of truth, this allows for informed democratic decision making.

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Though sharing aspects of the suspicion of the societal pillars of power knowledge, but instead of the relativism and conspiracy of the post-truthers, investigative aesthetics proposes a more vital and risky form of investigative production. Whereas anti-epistemologists indeed do anything but investigate**, investigative aesthetics** most often **seeks to integrate** (but not homogenise) **multiple viewpoints, opening up the circles of investigation**, establishing new alignments between different sites, styles and institutions of diverse types and standings. These include the science laboratory, the artist’s studio, the university, activist organisations, social groups rejecting the status of victim for that of agency and leadership, national and international legal fora (when they can be effectively used), the media, and cultural institutions. This kind of work seeks to create a poly-perspectival assemblage of open epistemic and aesthetic multiplicity**.** As such, the process of investigation might itself **establish a social contract that includes all the participants in this assemblage of truth production** and dissemination that Forensic Architecture calls ‘open verification’.20 **Facts bearing upon public decisions will have to be produced, presented and verified in the public domain**. Sometimes when the fora for such contestation do not exist, when, as is the case now in many places, the communicative situation resembles a civil war as much as a public sphere, the production of facts can catalyse social production. Here, we find communities taking on the means of production: the production of the most precious meta-political condition, that of the reality around them and in which they are formed.

#### 3. Investigative aesthetics builds off of this idea of common grounds - a journalism that opens dialogue first for communities that suffer violence, tests divergent viewpoints, and maintains open avenues for new evidence- this is a prerequisite for democracy.

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Take, for example, simply the **complex**ity of a **distributed human network** of practitioners necessarily **work**ing **together to articulate the logic of the violence inflicted** upon it: the **communities** on the ground **that suffer** such **violence** at first hand **lead and take the initiative, collecting information** by undertaking recordings such as videos and testimonies; then there are **lines of solidarity** that **develop with activists who stand** hand-in-hand **with them**; **then** there are lawyers, scientists and **other investigators**; then publishers, distributors and readers; **and then multiple mainstream** and alternative **media channels** and cultural institutions, in which the accounts are circulated and contested. The list of kinds of entities and of involvements goes on. These polyphonic networks are uneven and asymmetrical, skewed by different privileges and degrees of access creating difficulties that need to be recognised and worked at. Creating the **commons** is hard work, but c**reates a possible foundation for politics, while** itself **being** a form of **political action**. With **each** new **investigation, a new community of praxis is woven from the interaction and mutual testing of divergent viewpoints.** The struggle for **common ground is an essential meta-political condition: a precondition for any political initiative and struggle** to take place. Such a common ground requires invention and needs to be continuously remade, reinforced and fought over. This **common ground mus**t not be fenced off, but must **maintain margins** that are o**pen to new information and** ever-newer **perspective**s, evidence and interpretations that test prior ones. As such it must take the risk of disagreement as an imperative. In this way, it has something to do with the foundational formulations of science as a commons.11 Working within the polyphony of the investigative commons is what sharpens it, renders it able to sense and make sense. But expanding the sense of what constitutes the grounding for adequate knowledge entails further difficulty. This is part of the reason why traditional modes of enquiry have sometimes succumbed to hermeticism, becoming sealed off, only recognising certain techniques or forms of investigation.

## Contention 2 - Discrimination

#### Anti-epistemology and post-truth is welded by ultra-nationalists to promote white supremacy, patriarchy, and colonization. The only means to solve this is the active finding of truth through investigative aesthetics

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The rise of what can be called ***anti-epistemology***, often referred to as ‘post-truth’, **makes** the work of **investigative aesthetics all the more urgent.** In recent incarnations a**nti-epistemology is** the stock-in-trade of **a digitally oriented, racist and ultra-nationalist tendency that has made the** obscuring, blurring and **manipulation of facts their** path to **power.** Investigative aesthetics is partly necessitated by the bluntness with which the rise of reactionary governments and their online volunteer brigades and proxies rule through the distortion of facts and the promulgation of vivid falsehoods. **Investigative aesthetics seeks to challenge established formations of power over** the always complicated **questions of truth. This challenge is urgent because it happens** at the same time **as the rise of political powers** that **aim to replace the** always **conditional concept of truth with** a thrilling sense of **certainty.** Such certainty can come in the form of ideological blinkers, both in the sense of fixed ideas and in that of the bundles of norms and routines that accrete as a subject. But it can also come with a snigger or with bombast as the ‘free’ speech of those who say ‘what everybody knows but are too afraid to say’, an apparently anti-ideological opportunism that lauds itself as the virile opposition to technocrats and weaklings. For such figures of certitude the present condition of multiple interlocking crises – ecological, social, political, technical, economic – is one in which truth has become recalcitrant. Science, for them, is both lauded and admonished. The idea of science is upheld when it can provide a source of uncomplicated facts and attacked when its actual practices describe the necessary conditions of doubt. Individual governments built upon such attitudes may well be phased out, but the methods of aggressive anti-epistemology will survive them. Fact-formation is undermined through means that do not attempt to arrive at truth, but to impart the frisson of rebellion through conformity. **By these means, histories of genocide, structures of white supremacy and patriarchy, and systematisations of state or corporate violence, colonisation and dispossession are naturalised and placed beyond question.**

#### Investigative aesthetics look deeper into the ways culture and politics have been influenced by a history of structural violence and colonization in order to reveal the truth behind incidents of systematic oppression. Built off of the premises of investigative aesthetics, forensic architecture is a real life example of objective journalism that fights against these violences.

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It is in this way that the systemic conditions of a larger political context reveal themselves in incidents. Examples of this can be found in **Forensic Architecture**’sseries of works on police violence entitled ‘The Long Duration of the Split Second’. Each of these **investigates different incidents of police officers shooting innocents** in the US, the UK, Greece, Palestine and Turkey. These shootings are defended under the ‘split-second argument’, where **an officer claims the suspect’s right to life is suspended because an imminent threat is perceived ‘in the heat of the moment’. This defence relies on** the notion of **natural instinct. But this instinct is culturally and politically produced** and can be **traced to a long history of the structural violence o**f colonisation, segregation and domination that dehumanised the colonised and the enslaved and turns them into legitimate prey. There is a huge epistemological, temporal and geographical space to be traversed from the detail of the incident to larger historical contexts. The **investigative work moves between the scales of the local, politically and culturally entrained, to vast geographies and histories. Combining** the **detail** of the incident **with wider forms of understanding requires bringing together different forms of knowledge that can** also **often test each other.** To trace evidentiary threads requires labour and care. Because it starts from an incident, **investigative aesthetics is grounded in experience**, and the perspective it brings to bear is openly partial, embedded, activist or militant, rather than a ‘disinterested’ or neutral view from nowhere. Making sense must also not mean simple conformity to a culture, especially that of a homogeneous mass of variously privileged perspectives which are ormed by their perspectival interpretations. Situated experience is varied and subject to different kinds of access, understanding and interpretation. In such a condition, **aesthetics is** also about developing sensibilities of extremely careful looking and noticing. As such it is also **an ethical position because opening one’s ability to sense is opening oneself to the experience of pain, as opposed to the danger of developing an anaesthesia to political injustice which would in turn remove investigation from the proximate relation to the event that it aims to comprehend and** to **trace.** There are constantly aesthetic, political and ethical choices to be made, for example in determining which incidents should be pursued and how wide to open the investigative angle, just as there are to working out which aesthetic impressions can become evidence, and for what.