

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

I provide the following definitions to clarify today's debate:

<https://en-academic.com/dic.nsf/enwiki/754798>

Advocacy - Advocacy journalism is a genre of journalism that "intentionally" and "transparently" adopts a non-objective viewpoint, usually for some social or political purpose. Because it is intended to be factual, it [and] is

distinguished from propaganda. It is also distinct from instances of media bias and failures of

objectivity in media outlets, which attempt to be—or which present themselves as—objective or neutral.

Traditionally, advocacy and criticism are restricted to editorial and **op-ed** pages, which are clearly distinguished in the publication and in the organization's internal structure. News reports are intended to be objective and unbiased. In contrast, advocacy journalists have an opinion about the story they are writing. For example, that political corruption should be punished, that more environmentally friendly practices should be adopted by consumers, or that a government policy will be harmful to business interests and should not be adopted. This may be evident in small ways, such as tone or facial expression, or large ways, such as the selection of facts and opinions presented. Some advocacy journalists reject that the traditional ideal of objectivity is possible in practice, either generally, or due to the presence of corporate sponsors in advertising. Some feel

that the public interest is better served by a diversity of media outlets with a variety of transparent points of view, or that **advocacy**

journalism serves a similar role to muckrakers or whistleblowers.

The value is Justice, as weighing the prioritization of objectivity vs advocacy in a democracy demands we have an end goal specific to democracy

Cr: Habermas' theory of deliberative democracy

Habermas 89

, Jürgen (German (1962) English Translation 1989). *The Structural Transformation of the Public Sphere: An Inquiry into a Category of Bourgeois Society*. Thomas Burger. Cambridge Massachusetts: The MIT Press. pp. 52. ISBN 978-0-262-58108-0.

Habermas argues that **free deliberation within the public sphere is an essential dimension in a modern democracy.** Habermas writes, “[p]olitics acquires its

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

Prefer this framing because:

- 1. Only the negative fw answers the question of the resolution in regards to the moral obligation of the press in a democracy - that is to fuel discourse & engagement in the public sphere.**
- 2. The media's moral obligation transcends just ‘finding the truth and facts’ - it is to advance social justice and to investigate injustice, using existing and new facts and the presumption that the status quo is not the full picture/entire story to continuously contribute knowledge to the public sphere**
- 3. Reject responses that say harmful ideas are more likely in the public sphere - the mindless consumption of objective media never allows the delib nec. to have social progress and is endlessly regressive - advocacy in the public sphere forces out harmful outcomes and ideas as it increases the quality of political conversations**

4. Pref SV arguments before util because urgent bodies ought to be prioritized first - we should not disregard struggle on the path of escaping extinction

There are 2 unique reasons on case in which we reject affirming:

1) The definition of objectivity is controlled through the lens of whiteness and eliteness

Wijnberg 17

As Rob Wijnberg writes in 2017, (Rob Wijnberg; founding editor of the correspondent, philosophy major at the University of Amsterdam,

2013 Journalist of the Year in the Netherlands. "Why objective journalism is a misleading and dangerous illusion"

<https://thecorrespondent.com/6138/why-objective-journalism-is-a-misleading-and-dangerous-illusion/157316940-eb6c348e> 7 October 2017) // ELog

"It's very easy for an editorial team to appear to be taking a position. And that's exactly what I don't want. We don't ever want to do that. We don't want to take a position on the news. We want the viewers to take a position on the news." Those are the words of Marcel Gelauff, head of the Dutch public broadcasting company NOS's news department. Objectivity, the tenet being expressed here, may be the most poorly understood, tenacious, dangerous illusion journalism has ever believed in. Misunderstood, because it's confused with independence and impartiality. Tenacious, because it seems easy and it's cheap. Dangerous, because it's the biggest lie you can tell the public. And an illusion, because it doesn't exist. The origins of the ideal Journalistic objectivity, like many Western articles of faith, began as a late 19th-century ideal with very different aims than we attach to it today. Originally, journalism was nothing more than a megaphone for the powerful: the king dictated, and the reporters wrote it down. Newspapers were filled with pronouncements from on high: declarations of war, changes in navigation routes, calls to prayer, that kind of thing. The Enlightenment and the rise of modern science eventually ushered in the idea of journalism as a critical counterpower: it should act as a watchdog, not a messenger. This conviction was rooted in a new ideal known as objectivity, which was linked to independence. We, the press, would decide what to report on. And we'd only do so once we'd made sure it was true. Now, more than a century later, we've gained a fully professionalized PR and information industry and lost every modern illusion about Truth with a capital T, and objectivity has come to mean precisely the opposite. What gets reported, we believe, shouldn't be determined by the press but by "what's happening in the world." The media's job is merely to "report the news." In Gelauff's words, we shouldn't take a position. "We'll figure it out" has become "You figure it out." Readers familiar with my news philosophy will already know what I think of objectivity. (De Correspondent's founding principles explicitly renounce it). But at a time when Facebook and Google have devised fake-news earnings models, the White House is inhabited by a pathological bullshitter, and his counterparts are popping up in political races all across Europe, it's worth saying again: the ideal of journalistic objectivity is an outright threat to democracy. Here's why. 1. There's no such thing as objectivity Marcel Gelauff says he doesn't want his editorial team to take a position

on the news. Let me be the first to say that, alas, it's a vain hope. **Describing the world with no**

idea of what's good or bad, relevant or trivial, true or false **is literally**

impossible. Behind every report, every feature, every news item, **lies a**

worldview rooted in assumptions ontological (what's real?), epistemological (what's true?),

methodological (how do we find out?), and moral (why does it matter?). Or, to put it in Gelauffian terms, all news comes from a position. Why doesn't the evening newscast ever lead with crop circles made by UFOs? Because the editorial department takes the position that UFOs don't exist. Why doesn't the news ever lead with a delayed train between St. Petersburg and Novosibirsk? Because the editors take the position that a late Russian train doesn't matter here. Why does the news never open with the biggest, most powerful Dutch company in the world, the oil and gas trader Vitol? Because the editors take the position that Vitol isn't doing anything wrong. The reverse is true too: why does the news open with a Trump tweet, a bombing in Syria, a domestic policy proposal, chaos at a national transportation hub? Because the editors take the position that statements by a US president, wars in the Middle East, our own leaders' plans, and travel snafus in our own country matter. And why does the

news always call bombings by ISIS “terrorist attacks” and those by Western governments “bombardments”? Because the editors take the position that that’s what they are. Why does

the news always frame[s] the growth of the economy as something positive and not as a disaster for the climate, the environment, or the corals in the ocean? **Because the editors take the**

position that economic growth is good. So when an editor claims not to take a position on the news, he or she is making the most basic misrepresentation possible. And it’s also the worst instruction you can give your editorial team. 2. Objectivity is a poor ideal So there’s no such thing as objectivity. But even if there were, journalists would need to steer clear of it. That’s because

the word “objectivity” is usually understood in terms of its moral dimension. **Journalists are expected to**

suspend moral judgment. They’re not supposed to say what they think. **Yet** this has never been an amoral

business. On the contrary, **journalism is moral through and through. It’s**

about what we as a society consider important, or should.

All journalism, then, begins and ends with ideas about good

and evil. The planet getting hotter isn’t news because it’s fact. The planet getting hotter is news because that’s a bad thing. **If** you

order **journalists to check their moral judgments at the door,** one of two

things will happen. Either they’ll have no clue what to report on and go home without a story, or **they’ll** figure it out in the only way

possible: by letting others decide. In practice, that means **becom[e]ing a mouthpiece for** the establishment –

the people with the power to decide what’s important,

trivial, good, or bad. (Or, like the Dutch premier, to define what’s “normal” and what isn’t.) **Objective**

journalism, defined as not taking a position or having an opinion, has become precisely the opposite of what it was originally

intended to be. Today, it **equates to unquestioningly repeating the opinions**

of the powerful. By leaving the position-taking to the public, we reduce our task as journalists to issuing press releases on

behalf of elites. In short, we fail to fulfill our most basic duty. That brings us to the third and most urgent problem with objectivity. News is one of the most important sources of information in a democratic society. Today more than ever, it determines what we know, understand, and think about the world. It influences our voting behavior and how we see other people, cultures, and countries. To a large degree, it even shapes our

image of ourselves. **Our view of the world is increasingly fueled by**

half-truths, whole fairytales, **and bald-faced lies** issuing from the uppermost ranks of global politics,

amplified by the loudest yellers in domestic politics, and **spread across millions of phones,**

laptops, and TVs in milliseconds. Today it’s more crucial

than ever that journalism stand for something. We must **commit to the values**

that are essential to a democratic society: to a check on

power, to the pursuit of truth, to providing context and

perspective. When the president of the United States fabricates the

number of attendees at his inauguration and then **lashes out at every media organization that presents the evidence to show he's lying, it's not enough to report "Trump accuses media despite ample counterevidence,"** as the NOS news did. Or to broadcast some even-handed variant that leaves the public in the lurch:

"So-and-so reports X number of people, Trump says there were Y. And now over to Philip with the weather." Instead, **you need to clearly announce that one of the world's most powerful politicians is demonstrably lying yet again.** The New York Times did a better job of this, with its story "With False Claims, Trump Attacks Media" And you'd better figure out why. The Washington Post provided an excellent explanation of why Trump ordered his press chief to peddle lies. Meanwhile, you should be keeping track The award-winning website

Politifact.com keeps an eye on all Trump's campaign promises, of his actions and not just his words. Otherwise, **"not taking a position" means being not only a mouthpiece for power but a conduit for lies.** If demagogues loathe political correctness, journalistic correctness is their best friend. And democracy's no match for that.

[Terminal impact - white domination leads to endless structural violence]

2) This leads to racially skewed coverage that is actively harmful to marginalized communities and creates a bourgeois public sphere

Lowery 20

As Wesley Lowery writes in 2020, (Wesley Lowery; Journalist specializing in law enforcement and justice with a B.S. in Journalism from Ohio University. "A Reckoning Over Objectivity, Led by Black Journalists" <https://www.nytimes.com/2020/06/23/opinion/objectivity-black-journalists-coronavirus.html> 23 June 2020) // ELog

Since American **journalism's pivot** many decades ago from an openly partisan press **to** a model of professed **objectivity**, the mainstream has **allowed** what it considers **objective truth to be decided** almost exclusively **by white reporters** and their mostly white bosses. And those selective truths have been calibrated to avoid offending the sensibilities of white readers. On opinion pages, the contours of acceptable public debate have largely been determined through the gaze of white editors. **The views and inclinations of whiteness**

are accepted as the objective neutral. When black and brown reporters and editors challenge those conventions, it's not uncommon for them to be pushed out, reprimanded or robbed of new opportunities. The journalist Alex S. Jones, who served as a longtime director of Harvard's Shorenstein Center on Media, Politics and Public Policy, **wrote** in "Losing the News," his 2009 book, "I define journalistic objectivity as a genuine effort to be an honest broker when it comes to news." To him, "That means playing it straight without favoring one side when the facts are in dispute, regardless of your own views and preferences." But objectivity, Mr. Jones wrote, "also means not trying to create the illusion of fairness by letting advocates pretend in your journalism that there is a debate about the facts when the weight of truth is clear." He critiqued "he-said/she-said reporting, which just pits one voice against another," as "the discredited face of objectivity. But that is not authentic objectivity." It's striking to read objectivity defined that way — not because it's objectionable, but rather

because it barely resembles the way the concept is commonly discussed in newsrooms today. **Conversations about**

objectivity, rather than happening in a virtuous vacuum, habitually **focus on predicting whether a given sentence, opening paragraph or entire article will appear objective to a theoretical reader**, who is invariably

assumed to be white. This creates the very illusion of fairness that Mr. Jones, and others, specifically warn against. Instead of telling hard truths in this polarized environment, America's newsrooms too often deprive their readers of plainly stated facts that could expose reporters to accusations of partiality or imbalance. For years, I've been among a chorus of mainstream journalists who have called for our industry to abandon the appearance of objectivity as the aspirational journalistic standard, and for reporters instead to focus on being fair and telling the truth, as best as one can, based on the given context and available facts. It's not a novel argument. Scores of journalists across generations, from gonzo reporters like Hunter S. Thompson to more traditional voices like Bill Kovach and Tom Rosenstiel, have advocated this very approach. Mr. Kovach and Mr. Rosenstiel lay it out in detail in their classic text "The Elements of Journalism." Those of us advancing this argument know that a fairness-and-truth focus will have different, healthy interpretations. We also know that neutral "objective journalism" is constructed atop a pyramid of subjective decision-making: which stories to cover, how intensely to cover those stories, which sources to seek out and include, which pieces

of information are highlighted and which are downplayed. No journalistic process is objective. And no individual journalist is objective, because no human being is. And so, instead of promising our readers that we will never, on any platform, betray a single personal bias — submitting ourselves to a life sentence of public thoughtlessness — a better pledge would be an assurance that we will devote ourselves to accuracy, that we will diligently seek out the perspectives of those with whom we personally may be inclined to disagree and that we will be just as sure to ask hard questions of those with whom we're inclined to agree. The best of our profession already does this. But we need to be honest about the gulf that lies between the best and the bulk. It's possible to build journalism self-aware enough to bridge that gap. But it will take moral clarity, which will require both editors and reporters to stop doing things like reflexively hiding behind euphemisms that obfuscate the truth, simply because we've always done it that way. Deference to precedent is a poor excuse for continuing to make decisions that potentially let powerful bad actors off the

hook and harm the public we serve. Neutral **objectivity** trips over itself to **find ways to avoid telling the truth.** Neutral objectivity insists **we use clunky euphemisms like "officer-involved shooting."** Moral clarity, and a faithful adherence to grammar and syntax, would demand we use words that most precisely mean the thing we're trying to communicate: "the police shot someone." In coverage of policing, adherents to

the neutral **objectivity** model **create journalism so deferential to the police that entire articles are rendered meaningless.** True fairness would, in fact, go as far as requiring that editors seriously consider not publishing any significant account of a police shooting until the staff has tracked down the perspective — the "side" — of the person the police had shot. That way beat reporters aren't left simply rewriting a law enforcement news release. Moral clarity would insist that politicians who traffic in racist stereotypes and tropes — however cleverly — be labeled such with clear language and unburied evidence. Racism, as we know, is not about what lies in the depths of a human's heart. It is about word and deed. And a more aggressive commitment to truth from the press would empower our industry to finally admit that. The failures of neutral objective

journalism across several beats in the news media are countless. And **these shortcomings have real consequences for** the readers we are sworn to serve — particularly **black readers**, who we know are more likely to have interactions with the criminal justice system (whose leaders we court), more likely to be the targets of white supremacists (whom we commonly indulge) and more likely to have lives made more difficult by racist politicians and implicitly racist policies that we repeatedly refuse to call out. Black journalists are speaking out because one of the nation's major political parties and the current presidential administration are providing refuge to white supremacist rhetoric and policies, and our industry's gatekeepers are preoccupied with seeming

balanced, even ordering up glossy profiles of complicit actors. All the while, **black and brown lives** and

livelihoods **remain imperiled.** Ideally, the group of journalists given the power to decide what and whom to give a platform in this moment would both understand this era's gravity and reflect the diversity of the country. Unfortunately, too often that is not the case. Perhaps the most recent controversy to erupt because of such thoughtlessness and lack of inclusion was provided by The New York Times Opinion section, when it published an essay by Senator Tom Cotton, a Republican from Arkansas, calling for, among other things, an "overwhelming show of force" by the American military in order to quell civil unrest at protests that, while at times violent, have largely been made up of peaceful demonstrations. A method of moral clarity would have required that leadership think very hard before providing the section's deeply influential platform to any elected official — allowing him or her to opine, without the buffer of a reporter's follow-up questions, using inflammatory rhetoric. It would require, at the very least, that such an article not contain several overstatements and unsubstantiated assertions. "We find the publication of this essay to be an irresponsible choice," the NewsGuild of New York, a union that represents many Times

employees, said in a statement. “Its lack of context, inadequate vetting by editorial management, spread of misinformation, and the timing of its call to arms gravely undermine the work we do every day.” Let’s take a moment to be honest about what actually happened in this case: An op-ed page accepted an essay from a firebrand senator. It published that column without adequate line or conceptual editing. Then it got called out for it, leading to the resignation of one man in top leadership and the reassignment of another. It was a rare case of accountability, yet it remains to be seen if the changes at The Times will include aggressively tackling a culture that leaves its own staff members so internally powerless that they have to battle their own publication in public. Despite the suggestions of an increasingly hysterical set of pundits, this fallout was not an attack on the very concept of public debate. It’s the story of a group of Times employees concluding that a specific piece of content and the process by which it was published was beneath the standards they are asked themselves to uphold — then having the audacity to say so. The journalists — the black journalists — who pushed back most forcefully on the Cotton Op-Ed essay were not calling for an end to public discourse or the censorship of opinions they dislike. They were responding to the particularly poor handling of a particularly outlandish case during a particularly sensitive moment. The turmoil at The Times and the simultaneous eruptions inside other newsrooms across the country are the predictable results of the mainstream media’s labored refusal to racially integrate. It’s been more than 50 years since the first black journalists appeared in mainstream American newsrooms. For all of that time, black journalists have made meager demands: Please hire some more of us. Please pay us the way you do our colleagues. Please allow us to ascend to leadership roles. Please consider our opinions about how accurate and fair coverage

of all communities, especially our own, can be achieved. Collectively, **the industry has responded** to generations of black journalists **with indifference at best and open hostility at** its frequent **worst. Black journalists** are hired and told — sometimes explicitly — that we can thrive only if we

don’t dare to be our full selves. Frequently, when we speak out about coverage that is inaccurate or otherwise lacking, we **are driven from newsrooms — which results in fewer** experienced **black candidates** in the room when it comes time to hire **for senior editorships. That**, in turn, **results in coverage that continues to miss the mark, which leaves** the now dwindling ranks of **black journalists** both **ostracized and fighting to speak** out. Similarly negative experiences have been shared by Hispanic, Asian, Native, immigrant (both

documented and undocumented), Muslim, gay and lesbian, transgender and gender-nonconforming journalists, too. What’s different now, in this moment, is that the editors no longer hold a monopoly on publishing power. Individual reporters now have followings of our own on social media platforms, granting us the ability to speak directly to the public. It is, then, no coincidence that after decades of pleading with management, black journalists are now making demands on Twitter. If recent years have taught black journalists anything, it’s that public embarrassment appears to make our bosses better hear us. But humility and attentiveness don’t have to be isolated to crises. Instead of consistently attempting to censor the crucial personnel of color on their own staffs — who consistently deliver the best of their journalism — the leaders of America’s newsrooms could consider truly listening to them. As I stood on that street corner in Roxbury as a cub reporter all those years ago, the man I’d approached told me that years earlier a family member had been wrongfully arrested. He said the paper printed his relative’s full criminal history, as well as a mug shot from an unrelated incident. There had been no follow-up when his loved one was later cleared of the crime. I told him that I understood why he was still upset and that it did sound pretty messed up, before tucking my notebook into my back pocket and turning to leave. “Hey, kid! What was it you wanted to know about?” he asked. “The stabbing?” For years, he’d waited for the chance to tell off a Globe reporter. And now that he had, and had been heard, he wanted to help me tell the story, and get it right.

And the unique reason to negate:

1) Opinionated journalism allows for local discourses that make material change in communities - this is the foundation of deliberative democracy and is key to legitimate representation

Steinberg 20

As Abigail Steinberg writes in 2020, (Abigail Steinberg, Intern for the Office of the Speaker in the Illinois House of Representatives with degrees from the University of Wisconsin in Journalism and Mass Communications and Political Science. "IN OPINIONATED TIMES, WHAT IS THE FUTURE OF OPINION JOURNALISM?" <https://ethics.journalism.wisc.edu/2020/12/17/in-opinionated-times-what-is-the-future-of-opinion-journalism/> 17 December 2020) // ELog

In the spring of 2019, former members of the Association of Opinion Journalists reunited in Madison, Wisconsin. The group, which merged in 2016 with the American Society of News Editors (now the News Leaders Association), was once 600 members strong. Before its membership dwindled to fewer than 200 members and it could no longer sustain itself as a separate non-profit organization, AOJ was the only professional organization dedicated to editorial advocacy and holding the highest professional standards of fairness, accuracy, intellectual integrity and service to the public interest. This reunion of members produced the Madison Resolution, a promise to continue to promote editorial writing and ensure editorial and opinion writing continues to play a "vital role in journalism, in civic life and in our democracy." Indeed, opinion journalism fulfills

many functions in American journalism and democracy. Though research on opinion journalism is limited, scholars have suggested that

opinion journalists help to evaluate, contextualize and explain the news in ways traditional news reporters may not have the capacity to do. **Without opinion journalism, people lose a resource that helps them make sense of what is happening in the world,** their country and their community. **In local news, the opinion section of a newspaper was once a vibrant crossroads of debate, discussion, and community engagement.** It was a place where opinion journalists could explore important topics and readers could engage with opinion

journalists and each other. **Now,** as newspapers decrease their editorial staff and output, their capacity to provide **such dialogue is limited. Instead comes less localized content** — letters by public officials and advocacy groups or syndicated opinions on national politics, for example. **Local communities lose a mediated forum to debate,** discuss and understand the civic issues that matter to them most.

Some turn to the cacophony of social media to try to understand the news of the day. **With our media environment in flux, what will it take to make good on the Madison Resolution? The death of the Association of Opinion Journalists is emblematic of a greater trend in journalism. According to Pew Research Center, newsroom employment at U.S. newspapers decreased by about 50 percent since 2008 and the trend continues as the news industry grapples with economic strains caused by the COVID-19 pandemic. As newsroom staffs shrink,**

opinion journalists are often quick to go, leaving a significant gap in the pages — in print and online — of local newspapers. This change comes at a time of increasing mistrust and hostility toward news media and, "a cacophony of opinion, bias and vitriol, and corrosive partisanship," as outlined in the

Madison Resolution. David Haynes, former opinion writer and current Ideas Lab editor at the Milwaukee Journal Sentinel, attributes some of this change to media fragmentation and social media. "Social media and media fragmentation have changed the game for all journalists, whether they write opinions or not," Haynes says. "Fragmentation means legacy media like newspapers have somewhat less influence than in the past — there are simply a lot of places you can go for information." And yet, it may not feel like there is a shortage of opinion in America's current media landscape, according to Sewell Chan, the editorial page editor of the Los Angeles Times. "In our hyperpolarized time, it seems sometimes as though there are too many opinions," Chan says. "But in fact, there is not enough thoughtful opinion writing — opinion writing that takes into account the complexity and ambiguity of all human affairs; that is empathetic toward people who disagree, and that truly adds insight and

perspective. **We need [this] high-quality opinion journalism more than ever.**" The **high-quality opinion journalism** Chan describes **can** advocate and eventually **lead to tangible change in** the

communities for which it is written. Fred Fiske, past president of the Association of Opinion Journalists and the former editorial page editor of the Post-Standard in Syracuse, New York, said their opinion journalism on the rights of people with disabilities helped lead to mainstreaming special education students in Syracuse schools. "It's not like we reformed the government or anything," Fiske says. "But I like to

think we made a difference.” Fiske says that when a newspaper has an active editorial section, it leads to vibrant civic life within a community.

These observations are supported by **empirical evidence show[ing] that when local newspapers decline, people consume more nationalized journalism, are less informed about their local government and become more polarized.**

Declining trust in journalism means that clearly labeling opinion content has also become more important. Research by the Duke Reporters’ Lab found readers are often confused about what content is hard news versus what content is opinion. Though opinion journalists often use conventional reporting techniques in their work, they are paid to opine — knowing the distinction between the two could increase trust in newspapers and help with the survival of local opinion journalism. Colleen Nelson, the national opinion editor for McClatchy and editorial page editor for the Kansas City Star, also emphasizes the importance of speed and relevance. Though her content separates news from opinion she challenges her opinion writers to mimic conventions of hard reporting. She wants her opinion journalists to be faster and keep up with the speed of the news cycle to give their readers the content they want when they want it. “The old-fashioned way of doing opinion journalism was that something happened, the newsrooms reports on it, the opinion journalists sit around and think deep thoughts for a couple of days, and eventually come out with their opinion,” Nelson says. “That doesn’t work in the current news cycle. We’ve asked folks to move more quickly ... it’s okay to break news in an editorial or a column.” Jessie Opoien, the opinion editor of The Capital Times, also noted the importance of moving quickly — of staying ahead of the game and being proactive and thoughtful about what readers are looking for. To break news using opinion journalism, and to create good opinion journalism more generally, original reporting is essential. Though Nelson’s opinion writers do often rely on reporting from the newsroom, it is not enough to repeat the news that has already been reported and tack an opinion on to the end. Nelson wants her writers to have a strong opinion, but also to tell readers something that they don’t already know. Opoien echoes this sentiment. “It’s a valuable service to not lose sight of the things that made you a solid journalist when you were reporting,” she says. Another valuable method of revitalizing opinion journalism is localizing a newspaper’s opinion content. At McClatchy papers, Nelson’s opinion teams have focused on endorsing candidates for local office. They conduct interviews with the candidates, do original reporting on them and additional research. She’s found readers specifically subscribe so they can read those endorsements because they contain information readers cannot find anywhere else. The Milwaukee Journal Sentinel localizes their content as well but goes a step further by blending their opinion content with solutions journalism in their Ideas Lab. Originally, the goal with the Ideas Lab was to publish solutions journalism, as solutions-oriented stories see more engagement. Haynes says news organizations must publish content that serves their various communities or they will not survive. In an election year in the middle of a pandemic, people have a lot to say, so the Ideas Lab continues to be a hybrid section of solutions and opinion journalism, with the opinion clearly labeled. “Our goal with the opinion section was always to provide a place where people could convene and consider the issues of the day,” Haynes says. “We still do that now with this hybrid approach.” Fiske says he would focus on novel funding mechanisms in order to ensure the future of opinion journalism. He proposes setting up foundations whose proceeds would hire

editorial writers and set them up to work in local communities. **“Once again [communities] can have a narrative of advocacy about daily life in their city,”**

Fiske said. “Get them an endowed editorial chair at each newspaper — that’s my idea, but no one’s jumped on it.” Though the approach of the

McClatchy papers, The Cap Times, and other newspapers across the country differ, **the goal of opinion journalists stays [to] the same,** Opoien says. “There’s a responsibility **to serve the community or at least offer a space where those community conversations can happen,** and in a way that is more structured and civil,” she says. This type of opinion

journalism — journalism that serves the community, shows empathy for the readers **and** respect for those who may disagree — **is**

invaluable for readers in **a democratic society.** Funding, resources and the effects of social media and media fragmentation persist and are likely to continue to change the media landscape, including the roles and responsibilities of opinion journalists. Still, through innovation and localization, many are optimistic about what’s to come. “Opinion journalism can have a positive future if we make clear its value to communities and relentlessly focus on getting the facts right,” Chan says

I strongly urge a neg ballot and am now on to my opponent’s case.

