# 1ac

#### I affirm. Resolved: A just government ought to recognize an unconditional right of workers to strike.

## Framework

Value: justice

Defined by the legal dictionary, a scheme or system of law in which every person receives due from the system, including all rights, both natural and legal.

Value criterion: minimizing structural violence

#### Vote aff to prioritize the slow violence and everyday war against disenfranchised populations. You are conditioned to discount structural violence because it occurs outside of traditional risk frames, which normalizes state-sanctioned violence.

Hunt 18

(Dallas Hunt, PhD Candidate, University of British Columbia, Canada., Chapter 10 “Of course they count, but not right now”: Regulating precarity in Lee Maracle’s Ravensong and Celia’s Song, in Biopolitical Disaster Edited by Jennifer L. Lawrence and Sarah Marie Wiebe, 2018 Routledge, JKS)

“There is a hierarchy to care”: theoretical concerns and applications

In Frames of War (an extension and preoccupation with similar issues she outlines in her text Precarious Life), Judith Butler focuses on the ways in which particular, violent perceptions of everyday life are normalized and propagated as legible or granted “intelligibility” (through numbers, statistics, etc.). According to Butler, Frames of War follows on from Precarious Life ... especially its suggestion that specific lives cannot be apprehended as living. If certain lives do not qualify as lives or are, from the start, not conceivable as lives within certain epistemological frames, then these lives are never lived nor lost in the full sens gye. (2010: 1) For Butler, then, a primary concern is how these intelligibilities allow “a state to wage its wars without instigating a popular revolt” (xvi). Although Butler is writing within the context of the Iraq War and the “War on Terror,” her insights on precarity and modes of state violence exceed their immediate rele- vance. Indeed, as is clear below, the notions of war and settler-colonialism and the biopolitical rationalities they allow are eminently applicable to a local, Canadian context. The frames of war, Butler argues, are not circumscribed to combat zones with the mobilization of weapons. Instead, to Butler, “perceptual weapons” are [is] acting on populations consistently to naturalize violences and enlist citizens to tacitly consent to (and, in some cases, actively participate in) violent forms that authorize dehumanization: “[w]aging war ... begins with the assault on the senses; the senses are the first target of war” (xvi). These perceptual violences resonate with Rob Nixon’s formulation of “slow violence” as well. To Nixon, slow violence is “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” (2011: 3). Further, and “[c]rucially, 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” (4). Conditioning the senses or what is intelligible, then, functions as the way in which state violences are legitimized, as the frames of war dictate the “sensuous parameters of reality itself” (ix). According to Butler, the task at hand is not only to “understand ... these frames, where they come from and what kind of action they perform” (2010: 83), but also to find and articulate “those modes of representation and appearance that allow the claim of life to be made and heard” (81). While Butler is exam- ining conditions of precarity, (in)security, and disposability in the context of “the War on Terror,” and Palestine–Israel, her examination of an imperial/ colonial power exerting force and enacting violence on vulnerable and racialized populations (and in the process producing and reproducing these vulnerable populations) can be fruitfully employed in the Canadian context, though not without some alteration. Although we may not perceive the more mundane, i.e. non-military, violences visited upon Indigenous communities as “war” strictly speaking, Sora Han’s oft-cited phrase that we must think of the United States (and settler-colonial nations more broadly) not “at war” but “as war” is useful here (cited in Simpson 2014: 153, emphasis in original). If we view the biopolitical man- agement of Indigenous populations and Indigenous territories as rationalities rooted in the organizing frame of settler-colonialism, then the states of emer- gency putatively thought to be produced through war are “structural, not eventful” – that is to say, war is the very condition of settler-colonialism and not a by-product of it (154). Indeed, the largest ever domestic deployment of military forces in North America took place within Canada, in the context of the so-called “Oka crisis.” As Audra Simpson writes, the “highest number of troops in the history of Indigenous-settler relations in North America was deployed to Kanehsatà:ke, as this was the most unambiguous form of exceptional relations, that of warfare. There were 2,650 soldiers deployed...” (2014: 152). And, as Roxanne Dunbar-Ortiz and others have noted, Western imperial powers still refer to “enemy territories” abroad as “Indian Country” and to “wanted terrorists” as “Geronimo” (2014: 56). I follow the lineages of these Indigenous theorists who view settler-colonialism as a kind of permanent war, drawing parallels between the so-called everyday violences (displacement, sexual violence) inflicted upon Indigenous peoples in the US and Canada and the death-delivering reaches of empire embodied by the West more globally. Or, to echo Mink, the transformer/shapeshifter narrating the events in Mara- cle’s Celia’s Song: “This is war” (2014: 9). For Butler, there are varying tactics for distributing “precarity” differently, or what she describes as “that politically induced condition in which certain populations suffer from failing social and economic networks of support,” producing a “maximized precariousness for populations ... who often have no other option than to appeal to the very state from which they need protec- tion” (2010: 26). In the depictions provided in her writing, as well as that of Maracle, violence is deployed not only as “an effort to minimize precarious- ness for some and to maximize it for others,” but also as a mode of shaping the perceptions of citizens in order to make such acts legible, and hence, in a sense justifiable (Butler 2010: 54). Ultimately what Butler is advocating for is a new ethico-political orientation, one with the potential to disrupt the violent regimes of the sensible, as well as the ways in which precarity is currently allocated and distributed. Paraphrasing Jacques Rancière, Jeff Derksen also advocates for political movements that disrupt “regimes of the sensible”: “a politics of the aesthetic could ... redistribute and rethink the possibility of the subject (potentially an isolated figure) within the present and within a com- munity to come” (2009: 73). In sum, Butler’s text illustrates the ways in which State-sanctioned (and induced) precarity “perpetuate[s] a way of dividing lives into those that are worth defending, valuing, and grieving when they are lost, and those that are not quite lives” (2010: 42), as well as the resistive practices that might disrupt the naturalization of “differential distribution[s] of pre- carity” (xxv). The remainder of the chapter considers to what extent Mara- cle’s texts offer such a disruption of the mundane frames of settler-colonial war within the context of an exceptional moment (an epidemic), and asks how her work gestures toward the alternatives that might be offered by Indigenous frames.

Observation 1: note the word “just” in the resolution, this means that the side that proves how a government best promotes justice, wins this debate

## Contention 1: pay inequality

#### Uq: Low wages disproportionately affect black and latinx people, rates go even higher due to covid-19

**Kate 20’**

<https://equitablegrowth.org/research-paper/wage-discrimination-and-the-exploitation-of-workers-in-the-u-s-labor-market/?longform=true>

Even in normal times, there are obstacles that restrict and prevent workers from finding well-paying, interesting jobs or moving from one job to the next, including, for example, racial disparities in access to wealth building [as a result of centuries-long discrimination](https://www.nytimes.com/interactive/2019/08/14/magazine/racial-wealth-gap.html?mtrref=undefined&gwh=04C3DEB146B7594AE31613E5F05F6654&gwt=pay&assetType=REGIWALL). Higher wealth makes it easier for some workers to weather the income losses or gaps that can result from switching jobs. Likewise, socially constructed obstacles—such as the fact that women tend to shoulder more household responsibilities than men—further restrict women specifically from moving freely through the labor market.

Workers of color and women—and especially Black women and Latina workers—often experience distinct wage gaps between them and their otherwise-similar White and male counterparts, adding additional hurdles to navigating the labor market. Because [Black women](https://equitablegrowth.org/working-papers/intersectionality-labor-market/) and [Latina workers](https://equitablegrowth.org/the-intersectional-wage-gaps-faced-by-latina-women-in-the-united-states/) sit at the intersection of both racial and gender lines, they face different, intersectional barriers. In fact, full-time, year-round Black women workers face a wage gap so wide that they had to work from January 1, 2019 until [August 13, 2020](https://equitablegrowth.org/five-ways-to-understand-black-womens-equal-pay-day/) to earn the same amount that White men employed full time and year round earned in 2019 alone—an extra 7.5 months. We have not yet reached Latina Equal Pay Day in 2020, indicating an even larger divide between Latinas and White men workers.

The common framework for explaining these racial and gender wage gaps is the human capital model. This says that wages are set by productivity levels, and thus, differences in wages must be explained by differences in productivity, which is shaped by a worker’s educational achievement and skills levels. Accordingly, proponents of the human capital model argue, narrowing the skills gap and encouraging access to higher education will close the wage divides. The human capital model, however, ignores much of the empirical evidence surrounding wage gaps—for instance, the fact that Black women have significantly [increased their rates of college completion](http://www.columbia.edu/~tad61/Race%20Paper%2009232009.pdf) over time, yet they are still paid less than their White male peers. Thanks to the coronavirus recession, the labor market is more complicated than ever to navigate, especially for Black and Latinx workers and women. Not only have they faced higher rates of unemployment and layoffs, but it is also expected that racial, ethnic, and gender wage disparities will only get worse with this downturn. In fact, data are already showing [growing gaps](https://www.washingtonpost.com/road-to-recovery/2020/08/13/recession-is-over-rich-working-class-is-far-recovered/) between the rich and the poor, and between White households and households of color, as a result of the recession.[11](https://equitablegrowth.org/research-paper/wage-discrimination-and-the-exploitation-of-workers-in-the-u-s-labor-market/?longform=true#footnote-11) And, due to current the child care crisis in which schools and child care centers are not reopening fully or at all, and because women tend to shoulder the burden of home, women’s gains in the labor market are likely to be [set back a generation](https://www.washingtonpost.com/us-policy/2020/07/29/childcare-remote-learning-women-employment/). But even without this particular crisis in mind, the trends and obstacles we observe in the labor market are clearly self-reproducing: Less wealth leads to lower wages for otherwise-identical workers because employers can exploit these workers more easily. And lower incomes lead to less wealth for a given savings rate. Given the distinct effects of previous recessions on wealth inequality, the current economic downturn will certainly exacerbate this dynamic—but it will not be unique to this crisis. Policymakers must act now to ensure that these obstacles do not continue to hold back workers of color and women from accessing the jobs and earnings that they deserve, in this and in future recessions.

#### Solvency:

#### Right to strike subverts terrible working conditions and forces change out of business and owners. Unions are an essential part of a successful strike.

<https://www.epi.org/publication/why-unions-are-good-for-workers-especially-in-a-crisis-like-covid-19-12-policies-that-would-boost-worker-rights-safety-and-wages/>

**perez 20’**

There are several policy options for restoring worker power in the United States. First, policymakers can strengthen unions, expand their ability to organize workers, and make it easier for workers to form unions by passing pro-labor policies such as the [Protecting the Right to Organize Act](https://equitablegrowth.org/factsheet-the-pro-act-addresses-income-inequality-by-boosting-the-organizing-power-of-u-s-workers/), which passed in the U.S. House of Representatives but stalled in the U.S. Senate earlier this year.[42](https://equitablegrowth.org/research-paper/wage-discrimination-and-the-exploitation-of-workers-in-the-u-s-labor-market/?longform=true#footnote-42) In boosting worker bargaining power and collective action, [unions limit employers’ ability to exploit workers](https://equitablegrowth.org/working-papers/how-does-market-power-affect-wages-monopsony-and-collective-action-in-an-institutional-context/).[43](https://equitablegrowth.org/research-paper/wage-discrimination-and-the-exploitation-of-workers-in-the-u-s-labor-market/?longform=true#footnote-43) Unions are proven institutions through which workers can negotiate with employers for higher pay and better, safer working conditions.

The right to strike and act collectively remains incredibly important for workers to be able to demand better pay and working conditions or protest unfair treatment. [Research](https://equitablegrowth.org/what-kind-of-labor-organizations-do-u-s-workers-want/) on the types of unions and unionization benefits that the U.S. workforce wants shows how important the ability to organize and bargain collectively is to workers.[44](https://equitablegrowth.org/research-paper/wage-discrimination-and-the-exploitation-of-workers-in-the-u-s-labor-market/?longform=true#footnote-44) Not only does it help workers themselves, but direct contact with strikes and those striking can also lead to higher overall public support for organized labor.

With a union, workers have negotiated additional pay, health and safety measures, paid sick leave, and job preservation. Furthermore, unionized workers have felt more secure speaking out about hazards (Jamieson 2020). Without unions, many workers are forced to work without personal protective equipment or access to paid leave or premium pay. And when nonunion workers have advocated for health and safety protections or wage increases, they have often been retaliated against or even fired for doing so (Paul 2020; Davenport, Bhattarai, and McGregor 2020; Kruzel 2020; Eidelson 2020; Miller 2020). The lack of these basic protections has led to thousands of essential workers becoming infected with the coronavirus, and many are dying as a result (Bhattarai 2020; Kaplan and Kent 2020; Jewett, Bailey, and Renwick 2020).

#### Retail workers in unions reap higher wages even as US organizers suffer setbacks

<https://www.reuters.com/business/retail-workers-unions-reap-higher-wages-even-us-organizers-suffer-setbacks-2021-07-09/>

**rica 21’**

Wally Waugh, 57, a front-end manager at a Stop & Shop supermarket in Oyster Bay, New York, makes over $1,150 a week. He is a union member. Adam Ryan, 33, a salesclerk at a Christiansburg, Virginia, Target, makes $380 to $460 a week. He is not. While the gap in how much they earn arises in part from the very different regions where both live and work, it is also in line with a Reuters analysis of U.S. retail wages, whose findings are previously unreported. After reviewing two decades of retail wages, Reuters found that union workers get paid more on average - and that the gap is widening. Reuters examined a three-year rolling average of data from the U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics (BLS) and found that the weekly pay differential between union and nonunion workers in the U.S. retail sector widened significantly between 2013 and 2019 - from nearly $20 to more than $50. By the end of 2019, a unionized retail worker was taking home an average of about $730 a week, compared with over $670 weekly for a nonunionized worker, the Reuters analysis shows.

#### Impact two folds:

#### Oppression causes physical violence.

Rubenstein, Richard. “Responsibility For Peacemaking In The Context Of Structural Violence.” International Journal on Responsibility. May, 2018. Web. October 13, 2021. <https://commons.lib.jmu.edu/cgi/viewcontent.cgi?article=1019&context=ijr>.

Within these nested systems, Galtung points out, structural violence and direct violence “crossbreed.” Repressive structures generate rebellion, crime, and self-destructive behaviors such as suicide and substance abuse, while rebellious acts incubate repressive institutions and punitive norms. To illustrate how this crossbreeding occurs, the theorist introduces a third element of the conflict triangle, cultural violence, defined as “those aspects of culture ... that can be used to justify or legitimize direct or structural violence.” The cultural products that he considers especially potent in this regard are religion, ideology, language, art, science, and cosmology, although he might also have noted the peculiar importance in today’s world of narrative forms, including the graphic arts (films, videogames, images and stories shared on social media), as well as the subconscious imagery explored by psychoanalysts like Freud, Jung, and Lacan. Like Pierre Bourdieu, who sees “symbolic violence” as authority’s most effective tool, Galtung stresses the extent to which cultural conditioning maintains the oppressive structures that end by provoking and delivering violence: The culture preaches, teaches, admonishes, and dulls us into seeing exploitation and/or repression as normal and natural, or into not seeing them (particularly not exploitation) at all. Then come the eruptions, the efforts to use direct violence to get out of the structural iron cage ... and counter-violence to keep the cage intact. Other commentators, noting that cultural ideas and practices tend to lag behind changes in the system of production, consider deep-rooted socioeconomic shifts the primary causal factor. But the causes can flow in any direction once the triangle – an integrated violent system – has been established. Moreover, Galtung’s theory points to the fact that the generation and crossbreeding of violent conflict can take place in a wide variety of social systems. The family, school, workplace, religious community, nation, and empire – all can become sites and producers of direct, structural, and cultural violence. This is especially likely to happen under certain conditions, which will be described differently, of course, by those challenging the system and those defending it. What are those conditions? And, what sorts of violent system do they produce?

#### 2. structural violence is an impact magnified.

Cambellsville University. “Recognizing And Addressing Structural Violence.” Cambellsville University. June 30, 2017. Web. October 13, 2021. <https://online.campbellsville.edu/social-work/structural-violence/>.

In 2015, 13.5 percent of the U.S. population — around 43 million people — fell below the federal poverty line of $24,250 for a family of four. When broken down into specific populations, it becomes easy to see that some populations have higher poverty rates. Poverty among whites was 9.1 percent during that time, compared to 24.1 percent among African- Americans; African-Americans have a long history of being the victims of structural violence in America. Structural violence usually has at its root, some political or economic structure that disenfranchises a group of people. For example, children in inner cities typically lack access to adequate schools, which limits their access to jobs with good salaries when they get older. This, in turn, limits their access to healthcare, legal protections, political power, safe housing and other important resources. This cycle of poverty perpetuates itself, creating entire communities subject to regular structural violence. Access to resources like education, healthcare and purchasing power are all vital to breaking the cycle of poverty. Individuals without adequate access to healthcare are not only more likely to have shorter life spans, but also to spend a significant portion of their income treating illnesses and other health issues, or simply enduring them and reducing their ability to work and earn money. Without adequate education, access to good jobs and influence within society is limited. An inability to buy necessities like food and shelter leads to worse healthcare outcomes, less money spent on educating the next generation and so forth.