

Inquiry, Risk, and Impartiality: Lessons from the Kerner Commission

[Kareem Khalifa](#), Professor of Philosophy, UCLA

Abstract: According to the argument from inductive risk, scientists' evidential thresholds should rise or fall according to the costs of error. This is often thought to contravene "impartiality," the idea that moral, social, and political values play no legitimate role in the internal stages of science. We argue that this argument only undermines an imprecise conception of impartiality. When impartiality is regimented, the argument from inductive risk faces new challenges. We illustrate these points with examples from the Kerner Commission, a group assembled in 1967 to address the widespread urban unrest at the time. (in collaboration with [Jared Millson](#), Rhodes College)