

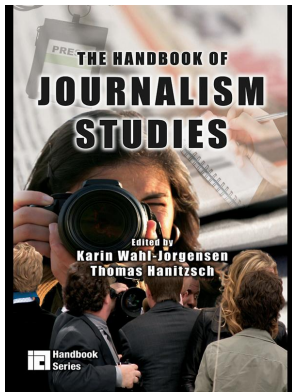
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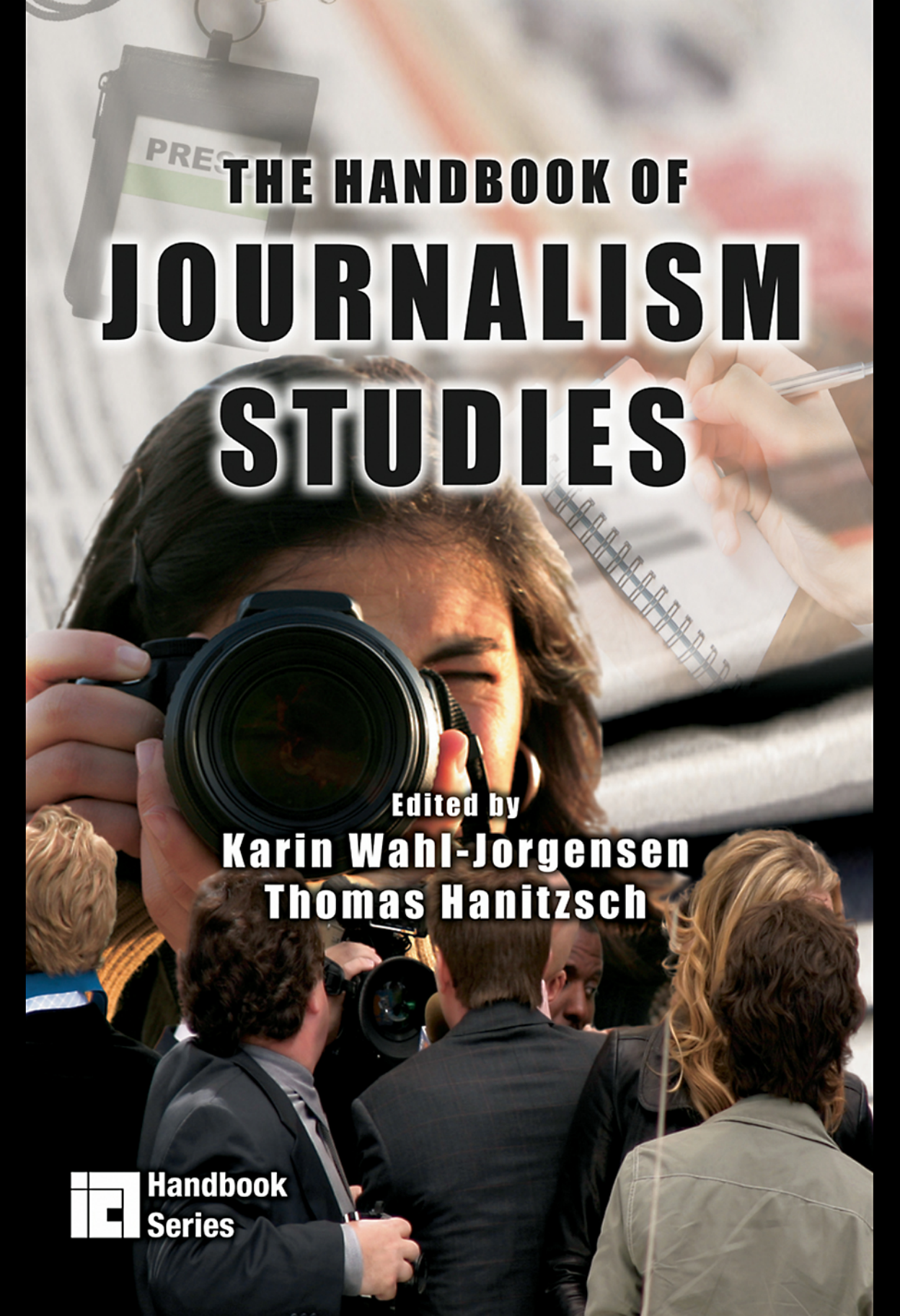
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Thomas Hanitzsch**

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26

Advocacy Journalism in a Global Context

Silvio Waisbord

INTRODUCTION

This chapter reviews historical and contemporary advocacy journalism in a global context, and identifies future directions for research. The intention is not to offer a comprehensive survey, a rather ambitious scope given the diversity of journalistic practices worldwide, but rather to review conceptual definitions and historical developments to locate advocacy journalism as a specific form of journalistic practice.

According to Morris Janowitz (1975), advocacy journalism assigns journalists the role of active interpreters and participants who “speak on behalf” of certain groups, typically those groups who are denied “powerful spokesmen” (p. 619) in the media. Journalists are representatives for specific interests, and are motivated by the desire to redress power imbalances in society. They are guided by a “reformist impulse” to promote perspectives that are typically under or misrepresented in the media. Advocacy journalism is the opposite of the “gatekeeper” model, the notion of professional journalism guided by the ideals of objectivity and public service (also see Emery, 1972; Johnstone, Slawski, & Bowman, 1972–1973).

Here I present the argument that contemporary advocacy journalism is not limited to Janowitz’s concept of the “advocate-journalist.” Another form is the civic model of advocacy journalism. It refers to organized groups that use the news media to influence reporting, and ultimately, affect public policies. It belongs to forms of political mobilization that “seek to increase the power of people and groups and to make institutions more responsive to human needs.” It attempts “to enlarge the range of choices that people have by increasing their power to define problems and solutions and participate in the broader social and policy arena” (Wallack, Dorfman, Jernigan, & Themba, 1993, p. 28). Through advocacy journalism, civic organizations aim to raise awareness, generate public debate, influence public opinion and key decision makers, and promote policy and programmatic changes around specific issues.

This chapter explores similarities and differences between the “journalist” and the “civic” model of advocacy journalism, and discusses their significance for journalism and democracy.

ADVOCACY JOURNALISM IN HISTORICAL PERSPECTIVE

Ever since someone decided to launch a publication to disseminate personal views, the “journalist” model of advocacy has been historically an integral part of the press. One could argue that until the ascendancy of ideals of objectivity and “professional reporting,” journalism was largely “advocacy journalism,” a propaganda tool for political organizations, a platform for press entrepreneurs with political ambitions, a path for political activism for reporters. This kind of reporting is what Max Weber described in his *Politics as Vocation*, when he observed that journalism “remains under all circumstances one of the most important avenues of professional political activity” (in Gerth & Mills, 1946, p. 98). Weber’s statement remains as applicable to journalism around the globe as it was in early twentieth-century Germany. It is the kind of journalism that Janowitz and other defenders of the “professional” model of reporting criticize for undermining the prospects for the press to serve “the public interest” in a democracy.

Advocacy journalism evolved through different paths on both sides of the Atlantic. Reasons are found in the different evolution of press systems and journalistic ideals. In established European democracies, advocacy journalism traditionally found room in newspapers and publications that openly embraced partisan positions particularly in pluralist and corporatist media systems (Hallin & Mancini, 2004). Its evolution has been inseparable from the communication history of political parties. Because parties have historically held noticeable influence on the press, partisan viewpoints were often inseparable from news reporting. Editorial standings impregnated news coverage and the overall treatment of information. The structural linkages between parties and the press coupled with the existence of strong partisan identities in society at large underpinned the affirmation of journalistic identity strongly tied to partisan views. Across European democracies, journalists typically approached news reporting as a way to get politically involved, and to promote viewpoints generally associated with political parties.

In recent decades, the ascendancy of market forces in media systems coupled with the weakening of partisan identities has weakened the historical grip of parties on political communication. Although this process has happened across the region with different intensity and at different pace, political parties do not wield the same media power they once had. Studies, however, have found that the notion of advocacy remains a desirable journalistic ideal among European journalists (Patterson & Donsbach, 1996; Köcher, 1986). Notwithstanding the gradual loosening of party-media connections, the notion of the “journalist as advocate” continues to capture the professional imagination of journalism (Hallin & Mancini, 2004).

In the United States, the historical trajectory of advocacy journalism has been quite different. Between the mid-1800s and 1920s, the gradual demise of the partisan press and the concomitant rise of the commercial press set different conditions for advocacy journalism. The adoption of objectivity as the normative ideal of professional reporting displaced advocacy journalism to the margins of the press system. Unlike in European democracies, advocacy journalism was not strongly linked to organized parties. This was a byproduct of the perennial communication weakness of the two dominant political parties, and the untrammelled power of the market. Instead, advocacy journalism has been historically associated with nineteenth-century movements that promoted women’s voting, abolitionism, and workers’ rights (Ostertag, 2006), and turn-of-the-century muckrakers who criticized political corruption and business practices. They unabashedly fused facts and politics, and championed the idea of the journalist as social advocate. Advocacy journalism remained marginal throughout the twentieth century as mainstream media organizations embraced the notion of objectivity, and neither major political party maintained organic relations with large media organizations. The most influential newspapers largely restricted advo-

cacy journalism to editorials and op-ed pages. Alternative publications remained the flag-carriers of advocacy journalism such as the publications of anti-war, feminist, gay, environmental, and ethnic rights movements, particularly during the 1960s and 1970s. They broadly expressed the political views of a disparate array of social movements, opinion groups and activists-turned-publishers.

Advocacy journalism historically found a more receptive environment in Western Europe than in the United States. In the latter, the adoption of the ideal of objectivity as the preeminent journalistic norm functioned as a bulwark against alternative views including the notion of “journalists as advocates.” Even today, a professional imaginary strongly attached to notions of objectivity and political detachment (Schudson, 2001) continues to be the reference point to assess the merits of advocacy journalism. In Western Europe, instead, the lack of consensus around journalistic norms coupled with the stronger grip that political parties historically had on national political communication offered propitious conditions for advocacy journalism.

Because advocacy journalism historically has had a different presence in the mainstream press in the United States and Western Europe, questions about the desirability of advocacy journalism for public life and democratic rule received different answers. While advocacy journalism has found supporters among European publishers and journalists, it has been vigorously criticized by the mainstream US press. In the United States, publishers and journalists’ associations have remained strongly opposed to any alternatives to the ideal of objectivity and political detachment. In the early 1970s, for example, debates in newsrooms and academia about journalistic norms showed the reluctance of editors and academics to admit advocacy journalism into the newsroom. Leftist analysts argued that objectivity is not feasible when political-economic interests influence news coverage, questioned its appropriateness to produce comprehensive and critical news reports of powerful interests, and considered it as a mere discursive justification for professional legitimacy (Bagdikian, 1973). They considered that the norm of “objectivity” effectively functioned as a subterfuge for advocacy for *status quo* policies and ideologies. In contrast, scholars and practitioners who championed objectivity firmly believed that the latter was the best alternative to fend off advocacy journalism. For them, the latter was undistinguishable from propaganda, which they identified as contradictory with the essential values of the democratic press such as fairness and truth-telling. Furthermore, they found advocacy journalism problematic in a context of agitated politics and growing political distrust during the Vietnam war and Watergate scandal. Janowitz (1975) argued that advocacy journalism fueled distrust of authority and undermined the professional status of journalism. Similar arguments were expressed during the recent controversy about civic journalism. While its defenders called journalists to act as facilitators of community dialogue, critics considered that civic journalism mistakenly assigned journalists the role of community advocates (McDevitt, 2003; Ryan, 2001).

Despite the opposition by defenders of the canon of US journalism, advocacy journalism has recently found a home in the mainstream media, as expressed in the strident conservative views of Fox News, the outspoken partisan positions of cable news anchors and commentators, and the editorializing of news content in some tabloids. Journalists and news organizations with right-wing sympathies, rather than progressive reporters as Janowitz and other press scholars feared in the 1970s, have sneaked advocacy journalism into the corporate press. Unlike the advocacy journalism practiced by the alternative press, advocate-journalists are ubiquitous in news organizations that do not challenge basic premises of the current political-economic system, but unequivocally champion some of its central ideological underpinnings. In summary, advocacy journalism remains visible in mainstream news organizations with clear right-wing editorial sympathies, as well as in progressive publications that continue the tradition of alternative and radical news.

ADVOCACY JOURNALISM IN THE GLOBAL SOUTH

Outside the West, the trajectory of advocacy journalism broadly resembles the European more than the US experience. In countries with weak democratic history, the notion that the press should champion specific political standpoints has been widespread. In some cases, advocacy journalism expressed the views of official parties, much along the lines of classic big party machines in Western democracies. In other cases, advocacy journalism reflected the views of individual publishers and journalists allied with specific governments and other political interests.

Reasons for the persistence of the “journalist” model of advocacy journalism are found in the political economy of the press. As long as governments and politicians continue to wield substantial power on press economies, news organizations are likely to act as vehicles for promoting their political interests. This basic arrangement remains largely unchanged even when globalization and market forces have refashioned media systems in the past decades. Government and personal funds are still the lifeblood of media finances in many countries across the globe. Access to government monies, party coffers, and individual fortunes are crucial to maintain news organizations running. Often, the weakness of market and public funding concedes tremendous power to government officials, politicians, and large business to affect news coverage. In such situations, it is unthinkable that journalism is anything *but* advocacy journalism. Buffering mechanisms that could temper the influence of editorial politics on newsrooms are weak, if not completely absent. The need to maintain a wall between “the church” and “the state” in newsrooms is simply impracticable when publishers conceive news organizations as instruments for promoting politics and are economically dependent on political favors.

The fact that governments and political financiers continue to wield power in press finances coupled with the inclination of governments to bulldoze any signs of press independence continues to favor advocacy journalism. As understood in the tradition of the Anglo-American press, a cornerstone of the ideal of professional journalism is that considerations such as newsworthiness, fairness, audience interest, and public service should trump personal politics. Professional ideals do not eliminate, but rather, restrain personal sympathies; they are the safeguard against the intrusion of “the personal” into news. Pure professional considerations should determine the news value of information, news-gathering methods, news frames, the selection of sources, and so on. In the global South, however, observing such principles in actual practice has been generally difficult. The combined pressures of publishers and owners who conceive news organizations as “house organs” and political and business interests shaping content through subtle and open mechanisms frequently cut off the oxygen of professionalism.

Despite signs of increased professionalization, a disjuncture between ideals and practice persists. As long as basic political-economic conditions are missing, keeping reporting above the political fray is not feasible. Back in the heyday of authoritarian and totalitarian rule, news organizations and reporters had to follow the official party line or stand in the opposition and suffer persecution. Keeping reporting and politics at a safe distance was elusive when expectations dictated that newsrooms had to dance to the official tune. Norms to standardize professional practice were unnecessary when control was imposed “from above” through direct ownership, official censorship, and blunt repression.

The collapse of military dictatorships and one-party regimes opened opportunities to re-define journalistic norms. The recent literature on journalistic norms shows that professional identities and roles are in transition in Asia, Africa, and the Americas (Donsbach & Klett, 1993; Gross, 2003; Hanitzsch, 2005; Hasty, 2005; Hughes, 2006; Nyamnjoh, 2005; Pan & Chan, 2003; Ramaprasad, 2001; Ramaprasad & Hamdy, 2006; Rampal, 1996; Richstad, 2000; Sakr, 2006). Consensus on journalism norms is still lacking. Neither objectivity nor partisanism holds a tight

grip. Just as objectivity remains a troubling and contested norm, old-fashioned advocacy journalism is constrained by editorial politics (Mano, 2005; Mwesige, 2004; Waisbord, 2000). Reporters remain skeptical about the applicability of objectivity as well as the notion of “journalists as social mobilizers.” More than impartial reporters of reality or passionate political advocates, journalists often perform balancing acts between personal politics and newsroom *Realpolitik*, clutching to professional principles and observing editorial expectations. When the norm of impartiality does not command strong allegiances among journalists nor is expected enforced in daily practice, advocacy journalism has fewer restrictions.

THE GLOBAL RISE OF CIVIC ADVOCACY JOURNALISM

Neither in the North nor in the global South is contemporary advocacy journalism limited to the “journalist” model. The recent growth of the “civic” model of advocacy journalism has been significant. Unlike the “journalist” model which expresses the political interests of journalists, the “civic” model represents advocacy efforts by civic groups that promote social change. Through advocacy journalism, groups that traditionally have had limited access to the news media aim to raise awareness and provide information, and affect public opinion and policy debates. Civic advocacy journalism is driven by the notion that the news media should be a tool of social change. Because the press contributes to both raising awareness among the public and setting policy priorities and agendas, civic actors aim to shape news coverage. They approach journalism as another mobilization strategy to affect the definition of “public problems” (Gusfield, 1981; Hilgartner & Bosk, 1988). Civic advocacy is the product of a growing consciousness among civic groups about the importance of the media in the construction of public problems, and the need to approach the press as a tactical ally.

Civic advocacy journalism is associated with the recent professionalization of media tactics of social movements and interest groups. Until recently, it has been limited to liberal democracies in the North where assorted social movements and interest groups have consciously tried to affect news coverage on health issues (Morgen, 2002; Wallack et al., 1993), tobacco control (Petruschuk, 2001), environmental policies (Vliegenthart, Oegema, & Klandermans, 2005), and policies against domestic violence (Berns, 2005). Lately, similar movements have also gained strength across the global South. From environmental to land rights movements, there is no shortage of organizations that have utilized advocacy journalism to promote their goals.

How to explain this phenomenon? Civic advocacy journalism reflects remarkable changes in the overall political and media environment in vast regions in the global South. First, the collapse of military authoritarianism and one-party regimes has paved the way for the intensification of civic mobilization in political contexts with, at best, weak traditions of democratic rule. In new democracies, the crisis of modern political ideologies has given way to the emergence of civic movements whose demands and identities fall outside traditional political divisions. Social mobilization around health, the environment, domestic violence, immigration, global poverty, and children’s rights hardly fit in conventional ideological and partisan packages. Old dividing lines that characterized national politics and articulated identities are insufficient to capture multiple concerns that articulate civic mobilization. Distinctions between conservatives and liberals, capital and labor, or urban and rural interests that have historically defined the basis for political mobilization and identity, do not capture the multiplicity of issues that spark civic actions.

Second, the move to democracy brought new conditions for journalistic practice. Doubtlessly, conditions vary among news organizations, and from country to country. From the pressures of business and government to statelessness (Waisbord, 2007a), journalists continue to

face numerous obstacles. News organizations, particularly if critical of dominant political and economic powers, face enormous obstacles. The end of formal state censorship and the climate of repression, however, facilitated a gradual opening to different perspectives in news reporting, including civic organizations that had been disregarded or actively suppressed. The combination of new forms of public mobilization coupled with the improvement of the conditions for journalism have ushered a context that is more conducive for civic organizations to shape news coverage.

Recent media changes have also facilitated civic advocacy journalism. Because media economics and systems are different across countries, this process has happened at a different pace. The expansion of cable and satellite radio and television, the consolidation of specialized sections (e.g., science, health, food, environment, education) in both print and broadcast news; the popularity of news and talk-shows, the growth of “niche” publications, and the emergence of endless news sites on the Internet have contributed to the multiplication of media offerings. In turn, the increase in the volume of news has opened new opportunities for civic advocacy.

These changes resulted from the combination of legal changes, technological innovations, and economic calculations. First, the combination of privatization, deregulation, and technological changes has enlarged the number of news outlets. In most of the global South, the news media landscape is considerably different in countries where governments had historically controlled news mainly through direct media ownership or direct censorship. Today’s media systems are dotted with a variety of commercial, religious, semi-public, and community radio and television stations with a diversity of agendas and interests. Second, a wide variety of innovations in information technologies have also contributed to the multiplication of media offerings as represented by cable and satellite television stations and Internet Web sites. New information technologies offer novel avenues for advocacy and social activism (Bennett, 2003). Third, the process of news segmentation has resulted in the opening of “niche” news directed to specific audiences. Although profit-seeking, rather than a commitment to social justice, has been driving this process forward, it has opened opportunities for civic advocacy journalism by creating platforms for news coverage on issues related to social justice.

These processes have mixed consequences for media democratization. On the one hand, the unbridled power of business interests and the absence of strong countervailing forces raise concerns about whether recent changes are leveling opportunities for public expression or, instead, are tilting the balance further in favor of the powerful. On the other hand, the multiplication of news outlets, particularly in countries with a long tradition of government media monopolies and manipulation of news content, offer justifiable reasons for moderate optimism. Today’s media landscape may not be a “brave new world” of unrestricted speech and equal opportunities, but it is important to recognize the innovations brought about by the explosion of news platforms, particularly in countries where “the news” had been, basically, government propaganda through public and privately-owned media. What matters for advocacy journalism is that a wide set of transformations in media systems have made it possible for civic movements to influence news content, and reach different publics.

THE PRACTICE OF CIVIC ADVOCACY JOURNALISM

Two questions need to be considered to examine civic advocacy journalism. One set of questions are related to how civic organizations aim to affect news coverage. Another set of questions deal with the impact of such efforts in expanding the range of voices and opinions reported. This section delves into the first issue; the next section examines the impact of civic advocacy.

Civic organizations are often in a disadvantageous position for “getting in the news.” Because

they are not official sources, they have neither newsmaking clout nor easy access to newsrooms. Unlike government sources, they lack “definitional power” (Schlesinger & Tumber, 1994). Because they are not well-heeled businesses, they lack the resources to hire public relations firms to secure favorable and continuous news coverage. Because many organizations are concerned with social issues that either are not covered regularly or have only been recently included in news beats, they often find it difficult to make news. Because they often challenge powerful political and economic actors, they are likely to confront timid newsrooms, and at times, outright opposition.

The predicament of civic organizations as both “news sources” and “news subjects” has long been a concern among social movements promoting social change. Whether the media are allies or obstacles for social movements has been a perennial point of debate. Protest movements traditionally either interacted cautiously or simply refuse to engage with mainstream news organizations. Asymmetrical power relations and the political agenda of the corporate media explain why news coverage typically offers a warped view of oppositional movements. Such concerns have not disappeared (Carroll & Ratner, 1999; Downing, 2005; Smith, 2001). In fact, they have inspired the explosion of alternative news and the ongoing democratic media movement (Hackett 2000) to develop alternatives to corporate news. Such decisions follow a tradition of oppositional movements who, facing silence or prejudice from mainstream news, prioritized strengthening their own means of expression for advocacy. They embrace the notion that the alternative press has a preeminent role through voicing concerns, debating ideas, building identity, and mobilizing publics.

In the context of this tradition, civic advocacy journalism signals a different sensibility among organizations engaged in social change. It reflects the realization that media publicity is central to advance political causes in an age of “mediated” politics. It expresses the decision to approach the mainstream media as a potential “strategic ally” in the struggle to promote changes, and the realization that communication strategies need to integrate conventional news biases. Unlike oppositional movements that radically question the prevailing order, civic advocacy groups pragmatically engage with the mainstream media, mainly, because they value the reach and influence of the media to affect specific actors (e.g., decision makers, funders) and society at large (Cullinan, 2003). Instead of focusing exclusively on their own media, they work through a variety of news outlets. Rather than opposing the mainstream media, they deal with them in their own terms.

At a time when public relations are responsible for producing a substantial portion of daily news, civic organizations have adopted public relations principles in the service of social change (Bennett & Lawrence, 1995). They hold news conferences, issue press releases particularly around established “news hooks,” stage “media events” featuring political and entertainment celebrities, take advantage of standard “news events” (e.g., accidents, official announcements, natural disasters) and “media panics,” and line up experts to provide assessments and news facts. The media repertoire of civic advocacy journalism is not limited to standard public relations practices. Straddling the traditions of news management orthodoxy and radical politics, it combines news management with savvy street theater. From protest movements, it borrows rallies, sit-ins, parades, and other forms of public theater (e.g., dramatic representations, music shows) to attract media coverage. Some social movements, most notably AIDS and environmental groups (Anderson, 1997; Smith, 2000), have incorporated street theater into sophisticated forms of media management. This includes the orchestration of stunts and dramatic visuals intended to disrupt or hijack official events such as G8 summits and meetings of international financial organizations. Such actions are examples of communication jujitsu as they use media attention focused on official events for their own purposes. These media strategies are often identified with the activities

of Greenpeace (Dale, 1996) and ACT UP (Gould, 2002; Gross, 2001) that have influenced, respectively, the advocacy repertoire of environmental movements opposing whale-hunting, nuclear plants, and deforestation (Anderson 2003), and the Treatment Action Campaign and the Sexual Rights Campaign in South Africa (Msimang, 2003).

While aiming to promote social changes, civic advocacy journalism strictly adheres to standard reporting practices and codes. Rather than pushing to revolutionize journalism, it follows conventional news routines and norms to raise media attention. The “institutionalization” of media advocacy (Gillett, 2003) among mobilized publics reflects the acceptance of established news-gathering routines and news conventions such as dramatic, conflict-driven, sensationalist, event-centered, and celebrity news. Such characteristics of media coverage have increasingly become widespread in newsrooms across the South (Natarajan & Hao, 2003; Ryfe, 2006; Tomaselli, 1996). Because “what is news” seems to be increasingly similar despite political, economic and cultural differences, strategies are similar across the globe. Civic advocacy journalism hardly represents a breakthrough in newsmaking; it is rather a conservative approach with a dash of creativity to news management that capitalizes on the biases of contemporary journalism to further social justice goals.

BRINGING NEW VOICES IN

What is the impact of civic advocacy journalism on news coverage? Although it regularly observes conventional news-gathering and production routines, civic advocacy journalism contributes to widening news coverage by spotlighting issues and featuring voices that are typically ignored in the mainstream media. In doing so, it makes positive contributions to democratic debate. It neither aims to overthrow the current news order nor opt out to set up independent media. Instead, it introduces important innovations by bringing the voices of actors who are typically excluded or misrepresented, challenging powerful sources, and offering alternative news frames (Benford & Snow, 2000).

Consider the case of health news and HIV/AIDS reporting. Across the global South, Ministries of Health and other government agencies typically have the upper hand in news management through making information available, promoting policies and initiatives, and so on. As it has been observed in news reporting of HIV/AIDS in the North, particularly in earlier phases of the epidemic (Colby & Cook, 1991; Lupton, 1994; Peterson, 1998), the news media in the South also largely relies on government information for health reporting. When official sources wield unmatched power in setting news agendas and content, government positions on specific health and other social issues are extremely important for news coverage. Because public agencies are often the “primary definers” of news narratives, they set the news frames in ways that determine, for example, whether health issues are presented as matters of public health, moral breakdown, protection of human rights, or national security. This explains why when government officials are divided on a given subject, reporters can tap into sources with different positions, and thus, produce news featuring different views. News coverage of tobacco control in several countries shows that differences inside governments facilitated critical coverage of tobacco consumption and manufacturers (Durrant, Wakefield, McLeod, Clegg-Smith, & Chapman 2003; Pertschuk, 2001). In contrast, when officials close ranks around a certain issue, then, it becomes exceedingly difficult for reporters to find sources willing to provide different testimonies.

As the strength of local groups promoting or opposing specific causes and policies varies from country to country so, too, the content of advocacy journalism. When publics mobilize around specific issues, such as HIV/AIDS or reproductive rights, it is more likely that the news

media can tap into alternative sources of information. In contrast, weak local mobilization reduces the chances for civic advocacy to bring in other voices. Around the world, activists' groups have achieved important goals through advocacy journalism. The mobilization of people living with HIV/AIDS across countries is perhaps one of the best illustrations of this process. It has forced the news media to pay serious attention to a broad set of issues including government policies, treatment costs, and prevention programs. This has been particularly noticeable in countries where governments lacked adequate policies to provide preventive and care services, or simply, suppressed information. HIV/AIDS activists have offered counter opinions to governments that denied the existence of HIV in Malawi, South Africa, and Zimbabwe (Robins, 2004; Stein, 2002; Traquina, 2004). Also, HIV/AIDS activism has put pressure on news organizations to scrutinize the functioning of government programs in South Africa (Butler, 2005). In Uganda, criticism of government management of anti-retroviral drugs has contributed to raising media attention about the distribution of expired drugs for treatment (Diop, 2000). In many countries, activist groups have also contributed to shifting public discourse about disease and health by framing key issues (e.g., access to treatment, anti-discrimination actions, biomedical research) as a matter of human rights (Schoepf, 2004). By using the language of international human rights, they have made significant inroads in a matter of social justice that had been dominated by medical and business discourses.

Likewise, grassroots movements have helped to put women's health in the media agenda across the globe. Without their efforts to reach out to journalists, it is difficult to imagine that the media would have put the spotlight on issues such as reproductive health and female genital cutting in countries where such issues are politically sensitive and women largely disempowered. Women's movements have offered alternatives to medical and individualistic frames used by governments and health experts. News reports have featured reproductive health organizations and feminist activists who criticize official views on abortion and family planning and HIV prevention methods (Brookman-Amissah & Moyo, 2004). By emphasizing environmental factors and gender inequalities, breast cancer groups have politicized issues that had remained limited to the "apolitical" sphere of medical expertise and framed in terms of individual responsibility (Kolker, 2004). Women's groups have also contributed to reframing news coverage of domestic battering that prioritized individualistic narratives (Silveirinha, 2007). Reframing issues and news has also been a key concern for movements working on gender-based violence. Rights-based discourse is central to their efforts to raise awareness about different forms of violence against women and girls (e.g., female genital mutilation, custodial rape, "dowry deaths," early marriage).

WHERE CIVIC AND JOURNALIST ADVOCACY MEET

The global ascendancy of civic advocacy journalism throws into sharp relief questions about professional norms and identity, and the position of journalism vis-à-vis movements promoting social justice. How do journalists balance personal commitment with newsroom constraints? Do reporters refrain from infusing stories with personal positions? If not, how do they put personal politics in everyday reporting? What discursive frames are used to negotiate personal and organizational politics? How do journalists deal with the "whats" and the "whys" of social justice? How do they negotiate with governments and advocacy groups the selection of news frames for different stories?

These questions need to be addressed by placing both journalist and civic advocacy within specific contexts of journalistic practice. In countries where the ideal of objectivity remains prevalent, responses may fall into established, normative arguments about the role of journalism in

society. Those who defend objectivity frown upon advocacy reporting, no matter its goals or whether it is initiated by journalists or sources. Maintaining journalistic fairness and integrity should be a priority, regardless of the motivations and identities of sources and news subjects. A different set of arguments and reactions is expected in countries where neither objectivity nor other principles associated with the professional norms of journalism are prevalent. As mentioned previously, the transition and consolidation of democratic rule has not ushered in a consensus on professional ideals in most of the global South. Rather than a consensus around one set of hegemonic norms, journalistic norms are the subject of debate in new democracies and transitional regimes.

In those contexts, it is not surprising that journalists and civic organizations actively collaborate in advocacy journalism. Across the South, a myriad of journalists' organizations actively try to increase the volume of reporting and widening news perspectives on social issues. In contrast to traditional institutions that bring together publishers and/or journalists that are interested in promoting "press issues" (e.g., freedom of expression, protection of reporters, press laws), this new breed of advocacy organizations are primarily interested in promoting news coverage of issues related to social change. Examples include African journalists who promote HIV/AIDS issues, such as Nigeria's Journalists Against AIDS and Tanzania's AGAAT (Falobi & Banigbetan, 2000), and women's rights, including Kenya-based FEMNET, Media Women's Associations in Tanzania, Uganda and other East African countries, and South Africa's Gender and Media Network. Others aim to stir up interest in a variety of social and political issues such as Nairobi-based MESH, and the Media Institute of Southern Africa. In Latin America, journalists have formed associations to promote reporting of children's issues (e.g., Brazil-based *Agência Notícias de Direitos da Infância*), women's issues (e.g., Mexico's *Comunicación e Información de la Mujer*), environment (e.g., *Red de Comunicación Ambiental de América Latina y el Caribe*) and social issues in general (Argentina's *Red de Periodismo Social*, Ecuador's *Agencia Latinoamericana de Información*). These organizations feed information to newsrooms, provide logistical support to facilitate coverage, bring journalists together through virtual networks, form alliances with news organizations, organize training workshops, produce articles and series for publication, and so on.

Aside from editorial politics, advocates-journalists frequently confront the disinterest of their news organizations. They have meager resources and space for their work. Also, they often clash against editors who are reluctant to publish "depressing" and "soft" stories that are "not relevant to audiences," show interest only in sensationalistic coverage of social issues, and fail to ensure minimal resources to gather information (PANOS, 2007). Amidst the litany of justifications for limited news space and resources and pressures not to antagonize governments and sponsors, practicing advocacy journalism is extremely difficult. Journalists' advocacy networks aim to persuade editors to provide room for social issues, and present alternative news frames. Here it is important to mention the transnational dimensions of these networks. They often collaborate with regional and global institutions working on similar social issues, and partner with colleagues in other countries. They tap into a vast array of global organizations, including both experts' and activists' groups, that devote considerable resources and time to influence local news through sponsoring training programs, journalism grants, and awards.

SUGGESTIONS FOR FURTHER RESEARCH

Because the historical trajectory of journalism varies across countries, universal generalizations about advocacy journalism can easily fall into flat-footed abstractions. The dearth of comparative

studies makes it difficult to draw broad conclusions. The danger of reducing journalism to unique local processes, however, should be equally avoided. Dissolving all explanations into “localisms” is rather unhelpful for sound concept building. With this goal in mind, and from the evidence presented in this chapter, I advance three propositions for further exploration.

First, we can identify a set of conditions that favor advocacy journalism. Despite substantial historical differences across press systems, contemporary advocacy journalism requires similar conditions: the absence of a consensus around journalistic norms and ideals, and media-savvy civic organizations. When these conditions prevail, it is more likely that journalists would openly act as advocates for specific causes, and that mobilized publics use mainstream media to influence news agenda and public opinion, and achieve policy goals. Both reporters and sources act as advocates, and at times, closely collaborate. Different scenarios are found when neither of these conditions exists. In countries where journalists are constrained by the ideals of objectivity, fairness, and other “God-terms” of modern journalism (Zelizer, 2004), and organized groups mobilize to advocate for media coverage and policies, then, advocacy journalism is more likely to be civic advocacy journalism. When journalists are not held by norms of impartiality, and collective action around specific social causes is weak or non-existent, then, advocacy journalism is likely to be associated with advocate-journalists.

Second, the fact that civic movements in the global South use similar media advocacy strategies suggests the increasing use of similar journalistic criteria in the definition of news across the world. While important differences remain across press systems and journalistic cultures, journalists share similar definitions of “what is news.” Although work in newsrooms that may not necessarily expect journalists to balance sources, properly document facts, and observe other principles that are often identified with the conventions of modern Anglo-American journalism, similarities about “who, what, when, and why is news” are perceptible around the globe. In this sense, the global emergence of the ideal of “professional” journalism seems to be tied to the adoption of certain rules-of-thumb to determine newsworthiness. A growing homogeneity about “what is newsworthy” across newsrooms worldwide explains why global and local organizations use a common set of “source strategies” worldwide to practice advocacy journalism. The cases of Greenpeace and ACT UP are perhaps some of the best-known cases of advocacy groups that mix street theater and public relations to get in the news in distant corners of the globe. Anti-tobacco groups in Japan use media strategies that are not substantially different from their counterparts in the United States and Europe (Hajime, 2003). In the Ukraine, the media strategies of women’s groups in support of family planning and abortion policies are similar to the one used by similar movements elsewhere (Bishop, Kovtun, Okromeshko, Karpilovskaya, & Suprun, 2001). The mobilization strategies of anti-vaccination groups in the United Kingdom and Nigeria reflected different forms of political participation and decision making, but they appealed to news media with a similar appetite for sensationalist news and dramatic images (Petts & Niemeyer, 2004; Waisbord, 2007b). In summary, global civic advocacy increasingly relies on a common set of newsmaking strategies because similar criteria are used to determine news, a phenomenon that, perhaps as a result of globalization, deserves further attention.

Third, the cases of advocacy journalism presented in this chapter raise questions about the linkages between global and local advocacy. Much has been recently discussed in the literature on collective action and social movements about the vitality of global forms of civic action (della Porta, 2006; Keck & Sikkink, 1998). On these issues, it is important to highlight aspects that are directly relevant to advocacy journalism and the uses of communication and the media in global social change. Does global advocacy effectively shape news coverage when it dovetails with local actions, considering journalism’s preference for local news hooks? What happens when global advocacy clashes with the interests of national and local governments, the preeminent definers

of daily news? How global advocacy movements effectively support local advocacy needs to be understood by analyzing local reporting practices. One could approach this subject by studying how transnational networks affect governments, civic movements, and news organizations which, in turn, set the boundaries for what and how is reported. Another possibility is to review the trajectory of specific issues in national and local public spheres to determine how local and global forces have contributed to focusing attention and framing issues. Because both journalism and civic movements are subjected to the influence of globalizing forces, advocacy journalism is at crossroads of the global and the local. In this sense, it offers an opportunity to explore how media and politics interact at both global and local levels.

Engaging with questions about the professional identity of journalists and the impact of global efforts on local news is important not only to understand contemporary advocacy journalism and its contributions to social justice, but also to inform current theoretical debates in the field of journalism studies. Comparative research on advocacy journalism can shed light on journalistic practice and norms in a globalized world.

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