## League

### NC – Free Press

#### I negate the resolution—Resolved: In a democracy, a free press ought to prioritize objectivity over advocacy.

#### Contention 1 – Subjective journalism sustains democracy and promotes free speech.

#### Advocacy is inevitable. Objectivity is a dangerous illusion that undermines democratic and critical journalism

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“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,**

Gelauff said this **on a primetime TV talk show in the Netherlands**. You can watch a clip here (in Dutch only).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

Read our founding principles, in which we pledge to be explicitly subjective.explicitly renounce it). But at a time when Facebook and Google have devised fake-news

I wrote an essay on the fake-news earnings model: “Truth is whatever people click on” (in Dutch only).earnings models, the White House is inhabited by a pathological bullshitter,

Here’s what I mean by “bullshitter” (in Dutch only).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

Correspondents Maurits Martijn and Tomas Vanheste have written about Vitol: “Nobody’s ever asked a question in Parliament about this Dutch oil giant” (in Dutch only).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 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

Even worse than making your anchors deliver the news standing up, which Gelauff called “an important moment in the history of NOS news” (in Dutch only).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.

Journalism is moral through and through. It begins and ends with ideas of good and evil

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 becoming a mouthpiece for the establishment

I talk in depth about objectivity and being a mouthpiece for the establishment in this interview with Esther van Fennema (in Dutch only).– 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.)

Premier Rutte wrote an open letter “to all Dutch people” effectively calling on immigrants to “act normal or leave" (in Dutch only).

**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.

3. Objectivity threatens democracy

**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.

#### Contention 2 – Journalistic Advocacy breeds social and political change.

#### Media journalism is a vessel that bridges personal and political—it creates critical readers and thinkers who are exposed to diverse sociopolitical perspectives

Ndidi Opara n.d. [Based in Eastside Seattle, Ndidi Opara (she/her) is a community organizer, journalist, and researcher. Her published work spans from research on the American Color-line in Rap Advocacy in the Journal of Student Research to op-ed's on educational inequality through being journalism fellow with StudentVoice. Her political beliefs are radically left, economically anti-capitalist and socially a radical progressive abolitionist.) “The Importance of journalistic advocacy”, Social Policy, Institute for Youth in Policy] RM

Media remains one of the most essential institutions in the United States. And at the same time, the media remains ever-changing. Take the increasingly politicized nature of more non-partisan forms of media such as television and film. This is not to refute the constant commentary on society that film and television pose, but to assert that television and film now push unabashedly political messages. For example, compare the way The Matrix showcases universal messages about truth and society to the way Get Out directly explores neoliberalism and racism.

At the same time, partisan media still plays a massive influence on how people learn about politics. The influence of Fox News and similar right-leaning news outlets remain a prominent force in American politics. During the Trump presidency, Fox News was often criticized for serving as a mouthpiece for the administration. Even the world of celebrities has become more political as celebrities are encouraged to use their large platforms to be political. However, some celebrities like Scarlett Johanssen argue that celebrities shouldn’t have to be political because it’s not their jobs.

This is just to say that there are many examples of how media as an institution has changed. Journalism is no different. The most notable change in journalism is its form: **one cannot deny the shift from print journalism to digital journalism**. But, no matter the form, journalism has mostly remained true to the institution's core values of integrity, public trust, and accountability. Some may argue that these values have been lost over the years, especially with the proliferation of journalism across social media. But notable journalistic publications like the Associated Press continue to uphold these values and standards. Not coincidentally, these publications are also distinctly centrist. Non-centrist publications, like the left-leaning New Yorker and Vox or the right-leaning Breitbart and New York Post, also have large followings, but they are not as objective when it comes to fact-based reporting as organizations like NPR.

Quality journalism, as pioneered by notable, historically significant news organizations like the Associated Press and the New York Times, is an important part of the United States government. **For example, the impact of the landmark Supreme Court New York Times Co. v. United States — the case that allowed the publication to publish the Pentagon Papers without the risk of government censorship during the Vietnam War — is an instance of journalism wielding serious influence on U.S. policy.**

Journalistic advocacy, journalism that takes a politically or socially charged view, is another way journalism is a powerful political tool. **Advocacy journalism rejects the prominent ideal of objectivity in journalism in favor of opinionated rhetoric to push a social agenda**. Political organizations may use advocacy journalism to write letters to the editors of local publications to persuade and mobilize people who read those publications. People also use journalism to write op-ed pieces that focus on combining personal stories with facts to push a political agenda.

**Advocacy journalism can seriously impact legislation, primarily through lobbying local officials and garnering local support for an issue or initiative. As more people are becoming politically involved, more advocates and organizers are turning to journalistic advocacy as a form of advocacy. In short: more advocates are becoming journalists.**

Right-wing journalists like Dennis Campbell argue that this journalism represents a complete disregard for truth post-Watergate. The right views this advocacy as propaganda, while the left views it as the advantageous merge between advocacy groups and media organizations. Mathew Ingram for the Columbia Journalism Review cites the ACLU revealing Amazon’s recent implementation of facial recognition software as an example of the way that advocacy groups have used — and continue to use — journalism to their advantage. People's views on advocacy journalism differ on whether it represents positive or negative deviance from the traditional values of journalism. The right may view the departure from traditional, objective journalism as a sign that journalism is becoming propaganda. The left may view the turn towards opinionated journalism as a new opportunity for advocacy and reform.

On the same political thread, op-eds — commentary rather than strictly fact-based reporting — have become a vessel for bridging the personal to politics. Op-eds have given a voice to the social issues that our nation is currently facing and have done this in a way that fact-based reporting cannot. **This personal element to politics is a new way that journalism can portray traditional journalistic ideals like integrity, public trust, and accountability, but at the expense of objectivity.**

Advocacy journalism must ask itself where facts and opinions meet. It must ask itself what kinds of opinions can be supported with facts, and what a fact means if it is put in an objective light. In turn, Americans must be more critical of the journalism they consume. Advocacy journalism presents a greater debate about the ethics of journalism. Is it good practice to publish stories with the expectation that readers will do the extra analysis of thinking critically about what they read? Can you expect the average reader to do their own fact-checking or understand what is objective and what is not? These are questions that journalistic advocates and journalists generally must consider as journalism continues to change and grow.

#### The press can use a form of advocacy reporting called “movement journalism” to ensure authentic stories are being told in their entirety. Advocacy propels social justice to challenge systemic inequities

Nicole Froio 2021 [Nicole Froio is a writer and researcher currently based in York, United Kingdom. She is working on a PhD on masculinity, sexual violence, and the media. She writes about women's rights, Brazilian politics, books, and many other topics.) "How journalists are challenging ideas of objectivity while empowering their communities," Current, 5-20-2021, https://current.org/2021/05/how-journalists-are-challenging-ideas-of-objectivity-while-empowering-their-communities/] SM

DaLyah Jones didn’t think of herself as a movement journalist when she worked in public radio. But she had a feeling that her newsroom was failing to cover the communities that needed the most attention.

During her time at KUT in Austin, Texas, from 2016 to 2019, Jones said, she often pressed for more coverage of marginalized communities, including Black Austinites who were leaving the city’s historic side for rural and suburban areas. “I was covering everyday stuff, but I would try to push folks,” said Jones, who now works for the Texas Observer.

Yet she felt that her superiors didn’t share her priorities. Jones didn’t understand why she was running into resistance. That changed when she was introduced to a new concept — “movement journalism.”

Movement journalism aligns with goals of social change and liberation from oppression. Its proponents strive to work with underserved communities affected by injustice, particularly those of color.

Because it questions objectivity and other pillars of traditional reporting, movement journalism remains outside of the mainstream. But some journalists in public radio are finding that it can provide a valuable framework for deepening coverage of local issues. Meanwhile, Jones and others have chosen to leave public radio entirely to devote themselves to the principles of movement journalism.

During her time at KUT, Jones learned more about movement journalism when she got a Freedomways fellowship with Press On, a Southern media collective that aims to catalyze change and advance justice through the practice of movement journalism. The Freedomways program supports journalists and storytellers in the South.

Lewis Raven Wallace, co-founder and education program director of Press On, describes movement journalism as an alignment with community grassroots organizing and movements for social justice. For journalists, this means diversifying their sources and scope of reporting to encompass the realities of racial, classed and gendered oppression in society and making their journalism more collaborative and community-centered, rather than extractive.

Wallace said he believes that movement journalism holds promise for what public media could achieve through working with communities that have been left behind by corporate media. Harnessing this promise could be a valuable asset for journalists and communities alike.

“There’s been a lot of conflation with this idea that we are talking about advocacy journalism, or writing that always takes a stance. And I think that reporting always takes a stance,” he said. “Movement journalism is not so much taking a stance on a given issue — it’s about aligning with grassroots community organizing and movements for justice, trying to make things better, and recognizing that there are going to be debates within that. So it’s really about asking, how do we align ourselves and our ethical practices with communities and movements for justice?”

After receiving training in movement journalism, Jones tried to work on her investigative Freedomways project at KUT, focusing on wildfires in the rural community of Bastrop southeast of Austin. But she felt that the station wasn’t hospitable to her exploration of movement journalism.

This felt especially frustrating because of Jones’ background. “I’m a person who comes from a rural background, and I know and understand the importance of not having information, not being able to share it in a very succinct way, as well as what happens to a community when they don’t know much about their own community,” she said.

KUT was then grappling with internal dysfunction and a toxic newsroom culture that journalists of color pressed management to address. Jones said that she became burned out and disillusioned with public media.

Against the background of protests following the murder of George Floyd, Jones shared some of her experiences with racism at KUT in a Twitter thread. At the Texas Observer, she now runs a Google News–funded engagement initiative focused on communities of color across Texas, letting marginalized communities lead the way on what to report. While the Observer doesn’t explicitly endorse movement journalism, Jones said that she feels it’s more accepting of the practice.

The larger problem with public radio journalism, Jones said, is that reporters see themselves as “not a part of our communities.”

“I feel like we get this very hierarchical standpoint within journalism,” she said. “We think we are above the communities we report on and that’s what public radio is to me. … It’s very snobby. And if you don’t feel like the things you’re reporting on will affect you, then that’s coming from a place of privilege, for one. And also, you’re sadly mistaken.”

‘Neutrality is impossible for me’

The term “movement journalism” and the concept was formalized in a 2017 report by Project South, a Southern organization dedicated to cultivating strong social movements in the region. But Project South noted that a tradition of alternative media in the U.S. that seek to advance social movements goes back to at least 1827, when free African Americans in New York founded the newspaper Freedom’s Journal.

Movement journalism also has roots in Hispanic movements for emancipation (the first Hispanic-owned newspaper in the U.S., El Mensagero Luisianés, was established in 1909), Indigenous struggles (The Cherokee Phoenix, the first Indigenous newspaper, debuted a year after Freedom’s Journal) and labor movements in the 1820s (labor journalism gave a platform to unions and people fighting for better working conditions). The work of investigative journalist and anti-lynching activist Ida B. Wells also foreshadowed the development of movement journalism.

More recently, proponents of movement journalism have identified noncommercial radio as a potential seedbed for the practice. In its 2017 report, Project South pointed to low-power FM stations in the South as “a promising platform.” At the time, two Project South board members sat on the board of WRFG, a community radio station in Atlanta. The organization also had a relationship with WMXP, a low-power FM station in Greenville, N.C.

Since 2016, Project South has planned a news outlet for social justice coverage that would syndicate programs to community radio. It has yet to launch that platform, but as a first step, Project South has started working with more than 50 Black-owned noncommercial radio stations in the South. The Black Radio Project gives the stations technical assistance, informational spots and public service announcements, according to Angela Oliver, Project South’s communications coordinator. PSAs have covered topics such as COVID prevention, voting rights and the need for civic engagement beyond elections.

In addition, Project South is working on a database of experts to help producers in the network find diverse sources for stories. It is also organizing events to bring together DJs, artists and activists to strategize about movement building.

“The idea is to create a space for them to be able to strategize and help each other — how can radio help get the message out?” Oliver said. “How can activists provide content to the radio based on whatever work they’re doing at the time?”

While public media may offer a forum for movement journalism to grow, Wallace risked his job in the system to highlight the shortcomings of traditional newsgathering.

Shortly after President Trump’s inauguration, Wallace published a blog post titled “Objectivity is dead, and I’m okay with it.” In the post, Wallace reflected on his position as a white transgender journalist in public media — he was a reporter for Marketplace at the time — and pointed out journalistic objectivity’s failure to address the rise of “alternative facts.”

“Neutrality is impossible for me, and you should admit that it is for you, too,” Wallace wrote. “As a member of a marginalized community (I am transgender), I’ve never had the opportunity to pretend I can be ‘neutral.’ And right now, as norms of government shift toward a ‘post-fact’ framework, I’d argue that any journalist invested in factual reporting can no longer remain neutral.”

At the request of his Marketplace supervisors, who told him he had violated the show’s ethics code, Wallace took down the post. He was suspended for the rest of the week. On Friday of the same week, Wallace reconsidered his decision and told his bosses he would republish it.

“Part of what I wanted to highlight in that blog post was the kind of doublespeak around diversity that happens in public media, where there’s a lot of conversation about wanting more diversity or wanting to include people of color, wanting to include trans people, but a complete ban on advocating for yourself as a trans person or as a person or color,” Wallace said. “… I ended up going public with that story largely for the purpose of highlighting this contradiction.”

He learned the following Monday that he had been fired. Wallace publicly disclosed that he was dismissed for a blog post rejecting journalistic objectivity. He ultimately wrote a book on the myth of objectivity and co-founded Press On.

Public media journalists are in a unique position to do journalism differently from their corporate counterparts but refuse to for fear of seeming partisan, Wallace said.

“There is this idea that public media in particular serves the public and wants to represent a diverse public but refuses to stand up against racism and white supremacy because that might not be considered objective. And not only is that untenable, but it’s also not really in line with the original intent of public media,” he said. “The original intent was grounded in what you might now call a ‘media justice framework,’ of trying to counterbalance corporate monopoly in media and create platforms that would be able to represent folks who are underrepresented because of systemic exclusion.”

In his book The View From Somewhere: Undoing the Myth of Journalistic Objectivity, Wallace challenges traditional approaches to journalism that fail to recognize the context of oppression and racial hatred in the U.S. He argues that the conversation about objectivity cracks open uncomfortable truths about how journalists practice cultural dominance in newsrooms.

“You cannot have a successful career in public media as somebody who publicly takes a stance on racial hostility or publicly takes a stance on patriarchy or abuse, and that is obviously messed up at a moral level,” Wallace said. “But it also creates this just ridiculous conundrum for the efforts in public media to be more representative and to be more driven by the public.”

During the protests that followed the killing of George Floyd, some public media organizations made clear to their employees that they could take a stance on racial injustice on their social media accounts. That may indicate change in some newsrooms, but Wallace also advocates for challenging the very concept of objectivity in journalism.

“To me, the conversation about objectivity is just a wedge conversation that opens all these other issues that are really about cultural white supremacy, and cultural racism, and cultural dominance, and oppression in these spaces,” he said. “But we really can’t have an honest conversation about oppression if we are still attached to the myth that it’s possible to be neutral, so it comes out over and over, every single time.”

While Wallace was working on The View From Somewhere, he met Ramona Martinez, who at the time was working as a producer for the podcast BackStory. During a conversation about journalism, Martinez said something that stuck with Wallace: “Objectivity is the ideology of the status quo.”

Two years later, Martinez started producing Wallace’s podcast about the history of movement journalism, also titled The View From Somewhere. In the first episode, Martinez explained her assertion about objectivity: “… What is considered objective or neutral is really only a matter of social agreement, or the ideological consensus of the majority or the status quo.”

Martinez told Current that her perspective on the myth of neutrality stems in part from her experience as an associate producer at NPR from 2012 to 2016, where she came to see the tradition of journalistic objectivity as an obstacle to news coverage. Much like Wallace, Martinez said, she believes that her colleagues’ investment in neutrality didn’t leave space for honest conversations about race and power.

“Younger journalists are being courageous about speaking up about how race and power are affecting journalistic coverage,” she said. “But I don’t have a lot of faith that the people in power are going to be able to divorce themselves from these ideas, which to them is the foundation of being a good journalist. And movement journalism is a completely different way of perceiving journalism.”

‘This process is never finished’

For some public media reporters and organizations, the alternative lens of movement journalism points to a potential new way forward. These outlets have started to explore ideas within movement journalism and have adopted antiracist stances.

Stations have contacted Wallace’s Press On to learn more about movement journalism and “talk about oppression through an intersectional lens,” he said. A workshop Wallace offers through Press On uses “popular education” techniques that aim to teach participants how individuals’ personal experiences are connected to larger societal problems. Titled “Transforming Journalism: Beyond Diversity,” the workshop contextualizes power dynamics in newsrooms around the history of racism and oppression in the U.S.

KUOW in Seattle is among the stations that have contacted Wallace. The Press On workshop was one of 19 sessions KUOW organized “to better understand how to invite communities into our coverage as content collaborators, challenge notions of traditional journalistic objectivity, identify who is not represented in our coverage, and understand the role media must play in dismantling systemic racism,” said CCO Jennifer Strachan.

All staffers were required to attend the sessions. Strachan estimates that around 80 to 100 participated in the Press On workshop.

“Our speaker series is one component of a vast, multiyear initiative to transform KUOW into an antiracist organization,” Strachan said. “We do believe this work is changing our journalism for the better and also that this process is never finished.”

Strachan said she found that KUOW’s journalism already aligned with many concepts shared in the Press On workshop. “We’ve embraced the concept that journalism has a role to play in amplifying underrepresented voices in our community and challenging narratives that normalize systemic racism,” Strachan said. “This is difficult work, and we’re grappling with how best to change how we work while also maintaining the journalistic standards and ethics that maintain our audience’s trust.”

#### Contention 3 – Advocacy in media can spur fights against public health crises.

#### Our evidence indicates examples of past public health crises in which our media successfully used advocacy, like with tobacco and alcohol control.

Dorfman and Krasnow 2014 [Lori Dorfman: Berkeley Media Studies Group, Berkeley, California 94704; email: [dorfman@bmsg.org](mailto:dorfman@bmsg.org), [daffnerkrasnow@bmsg.org](mailto:daffnerkrasnow@bmsg.org). Ingrid Daffner Krasnow: Public Health Institute, Oakland, California 94607) "Public Health and Media Advocacy," Annual Review of Public Health, 2014, https://www.annualreviews.org/doi/pdf/10.1146/annurev-publhealth-032013-182503] SM

Media advocacy, the strategic use of mass media to support community organizing and advance healthy public policy (39), evolved in the late 1980s as tobacco and alcohol control advocates observed the policy success of public interest and consumer groups working on similar issues (38). Public interest advocates employed an array of strategies and tactics that were more common in political campaigns than in public health efforts (12). Public health efforts, however, had a strong basis in epidemiology. This article describes the result of that evolution: an approach that blends science, politics, and advocacy to advance public health goals. We begin by explaining how media advocacy can bolster public health practitioners’ efforts to advance social justice and work to solve some of our country’s most complex social and political issues. We discuss the foundations of media advocacy, how the theory translates to practical application, and the challenges of evaluating media advocacy campaigns.

#### Dorfman and Krasnow continue:

MEDIA ADVOCACY: A TOOL FOR IMPROVING ENVIRONMENTS AND PROTECTING POPULATIONS As a tool for advancing and supporting community organizing and policy advocacy, media advocacy draws on theories from political science, cognitive linguistics, sociology, and other fields concerned with how public opinion is formed and political behavior is influenced. In particular, agenda-setting and media-framing theories underlie and inform media advocacy practice. Media Advocacy Differs from Other Health Communications Most health communications treat audiences as consumers, targeting them with information so they can reduce their risk for illness or injury. Other communication strategies operate from exchange theories that assume the health problem derives from a lack of information (12). In these approaches, the people with the problem are the audience for top-down messages exhorting healthier behavior. Media advocacy is less about delivering a message and more about raising voices in a democratic process using policy to change systems and conditions. Rather than targeting the people with the health problem, media advocates target policy makers and those who can be mobilized to influence them (40), harnessing the power of the media to apply pressure on decision makers for policy change. Media advocacy’s narrow audience is the policy decision maker—sometimes a single person or a few committee members. The policy action will ultimately affect whole populations, but the target for the actual policy change is narrow. Media advocacy helps people understand the importance and reach of news coverage, the need to participate actively in shaping such coverage, and the methods for doing so effectively. Theoretical Underpinnings of Media Advocacy Media advocacy’s blend of science, politics, and advocacy means that it draws on several theoretical foundations and disciplines, including political science, communications, and cognitive linguistics. Agenda setting and framing have been the core concepts informing media advocacy strategy. Agenda setting. Successful policy advocates pay attention to the news because the news media largely determine what issues we collectively think about, how we think about them, and what kinds of alternatives are considered viable; the news media set the agenda and terms of debate for policy makers and the public (9, 16, 25, 26). The public and policy makers do not consider issues seriously unless they are visible, and they are not visible unless the media have brought them to light. Public health advocates cannot afford to have their issues go unnoticed or to be caught unprepared when the events of the day catapult their issues into public discussion. Media advocacy helps advocates be prepared to create news and react to news on their issues.

#### They conclude:

CONCLUSION Public health’s mission is about improving conditions so that everyone can maintain health and avoid disability and premature death. Changing conditions is an inherently political process that demands decision makers wrestle with competing interests for inevitably limited resources. Media advocacy is one of the few tools public health practitioners have for influencing public debate about those decisions so that health is prioritized. Media advocates use mass media in its most powerful form to foster a democratic process so that residents and others can participate in the decisions that affect the neighborhoods, schools, workplaces, and communities that shape their health. Media advocacy accelerates and amplifies community organizing and policy advocacy, helping public health practitioners, activists, and residents frame their issues so that the landscape of conditions comes into view and public health solutions are illuminated.