

TECH1502-17 Community Media Production

Lecture Eighteen: Social Action & Development

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1 Introduction – Community Media Principles

“Community media represents a significant, but largely untapped site of analysis into the dynamics of media culture” (Howley, 2005, p. 4).

“‘Community’, as a way of referring to the totality of the population inhabiting the sovereign territory of the state, sounds increasingly hollow” (Bauman, 2007, p. 2).

Starbucks' Secret Weapon for Global Domination

<https://youtu.be/YT2pNwh3bzw>

2 Why Community Media is Different

“Our epoch is one of determinism, fatalism and the total absence of alternatives” (Bauman & Donskis, 2013, p. 201).

“The inexorable growth of big business throughout the last century and a half has brought great benefits in many respects... But the mostly national corporations of the mid-twentieth century that had at least some sense of connection to and responsibility for their local communities have given way to rootless global entities – private-sector bureaucracies – many of which have lost all sense of community, of perspective” (Hilton, 2015, p. 17).

2.1 Global Standards

“The significance of modern times resides in how technology is shaping the world’s preferences into homogenised commonality – into global standardisation” (Levitt, 1986, p. 48).

2.2 Participatory Democracy

“As one of the few remaining vestiges of participatory democracy, community media demand the active engagement of media intellectuals whose expertise can inform and enhance the vital work of these organisations and help maintain and secure a dynamic resource for cultural production and democratic processes” (Howley, 2005, p. 269).

2.3 Self-Identity and Community Representation

“Whereas corporate radio is increasingly geared to standardisation and niche marketing, tailoring its playlist to the needs of specific consumer categories, community radio preserves a place for diversity, for it can afford to be interest driven rather than consumer driven” (Susan M. Squier in Merril-Squier, 2003, p. 285).

Community Radio Meghna opens 15th station in Bhola

<https://youtu.be/eINCEtNCTOg>

2.4 Alternative View-Points

“Rather than attempt to define alternative media solely by content I propose a theoretical and a methodological framework that incorporates content as one element in an alternative media culture that is equally interested in the processes and relations that form around alternative media production” (Atton, 2002, p. 3).

3 Understanding Social Problems

- Blame & Moralism – the undeserving poor
- Personal accountability – hyper-individualism
- Intervention by government – investment or nudge?

3.1 Social Issues at Face Value

“For the most part, theories of social problems within the realist perspective share the view that social problems are objectively describable phenomena requiring explanation” (John Clarke in May, Page, & Brunson, 2001, p. 6).

“The problem about social problems is that they are, in very important ways, matters of social definition. The naturalistic of realistic perspective treats social problems as though they are given: they are phenomena on whose existence we can all agree. The constructionist perspective insists on the need to take a step back from this view and ask instead: who says this is a social problem – and what sort of social problem do they say it is” (John Clarke in May et al., 2001, p. 6).

3.2 Relationships and Social Bonds

- Changes in Family Life – Post-Nuclear Families
- Aging Population
- Generational Divide

“Most social problems have existed for some time. They have a history to them. A range of government policies have usually already been tried, giving rise to a complex array of bureaucratic and organisational structures” (Stuart Isaacs in Isaacs et al., 2015, p. 7).

“There is a commonplace view that all political and social issues are reducible to questions of resources and money. If this were the case then all we would have to do to alleviate illness or crime would be to find the right economic model to use for the National Health Service (NHS) or the police force” (Stuart Isaacs in Isaacs et al., 2015, p. 7).

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3.3 Economic and Work Factors

- Poverty and Social Exclusion – Grudges or Personal Failings
- The Deserving or Undeserving Poor
- Economic and Political Inequality

“Perceptions, assumptions and normative judgements about the poor have always permeated debates about poverty” (Stuart Isaacs in Isaacs et al., 2015, p. 48).

“Wherever there is a means test there is likely to be a poverty show” (Goffman, 1990, p. 49).

3.4 Health and Wellbeing Factors

- Obesity and Diabetes Crisis
- Mental Health Challenges
- People Don't Migrate for the Good of their Health

“Whereas at one time governments regarded health inequalities as unproblematic and not requiring governmental response, the government now regards them as a social problem, for which it is developing a range of social policies. These policies need to be carefully monitored for their effectiveness, and to ensure that policy changes and a reduction in health inequalities match the government's rhetoric and promises” (Helen Jones in May et al., 2001, p. 161).

3.5 Community Cohesion Factors

- Breakdown of Community Life
- Crime and Perceptions of Crime
- Drugs and Alcohol Abuse

“Concepts of pathology, disorganisation, anomie or deviance run through the main images of problematic communities. These assumptions have a long history... The explanations focus on the different characteristics of the people who live in these areas, characteristics that are thought to be either inherent or the product of circumstance” (Susanne MacGregor in May et al., 2001, p. 189).

Operation Tiger Leaps into Action

<https://youtu.be/9V1AkDPFT2A>

4 Media Reporting Frames

- Bombardment of negativity
- Stereotyping
- Fearfulness

4.1 Impact of Mainstream Media

“On the content level, alternative media can offer ideologies, representations and discourses that vary from those originating in the mainstream media. These differences emanate from the higher level of participation of different social groups and communities and aim to provide ‘air space’ to local cultural manifestations, to ethnic minority groups, to the hot political issues in the neighbourhood or locality” (Jankowski 1994: 3)” (Bailey et al., 2008, pp. 18-20).

“Societal groups that are represented one-sidedly, disadvantages, stigmatised, or even repressed can especially benefit from using the channels of communication opened by alternative media, to strengthen their internal identity, manifest this identity to the outside world, and this enable social change and/or development” (Bailey, Cammaerts, & Carpenter, 2008, p. 14)..

Donald Trump lays out three steps of his immigration policy

https://youtu.be/mk_75FLLEQw

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4.2 Promoting Indignation

- Who is to Blame – the ‘Other’?
- Lack of Control – Open Borders?
- Lack of Personal Responsibility – Skivers?

“Groups and individuals, dissatisfied with conventional press reports on poverty, homelessness, and economic justice, construct alternative discursive spaces through the printed word and in so doing create community among those who, quite literally, live on the margins of society. Conversely, computer-mediated communication represents an opportunity to re-create local community, paradoxically enough, within and through an emerging global information infrastructure” (Howley, 2005, p. 258).

4.3 Representation and Identity

- Representations of Race – Black Lives Matter
- Representations of Sexuality – Gay Pride
- Representations of Gender – Hyper-Feminisation/Masculinity

“In contrast, lesbians and gay men are a self-identifying minority. We are presumed to be straight, and are treated as such, until we recognise that we are not what we have been told. But how are we to understand and deal with that difference? We only have limited direct experience with those who are sufficiently close to the accepted stereotypes to be labelled publicly as queers, faggots, dykes and so on and we all – gay or

straight – have little choice but to accept media stereotypes which we imagine to be typical of all lesbians and gay men” (Liebes & Curran, 1998, p. 91).

5 Progressive or Conservative Responses?

- Owen Jones - Chavs
- Steve Hilton – Being More Human
- Michael Oakshott – Societas/Universitas

5.1 Demonising the Poor

“Owen Jones’ Chavs is worth reading. This acerbic book also includes enough new arguments that it demands a response from conservatives explaining where it goes awry, which it certainly does. Chavs is profoundly wrong – both as sociology and policy. The ‘chav’ phenomenon doesn’t amount to “the demonization of the working class”, and working people’s interests are better advanced through politicians addressing their expressed concerns than through Michael Foot-style socialism.” (Peter Cuthbertson: <http://www.conservativehome.com/thetorydiary/2012/06/peter-cuthbertson-review-chavs-the-demonization-of-the-working-class-by-owen-jones.html>)

5.2 Growth of Big Business

“The inexorable growth of big business throughout the last century and a half has brought great benefits in many respects... But the mostly national corporations of the mid-twentieth century that had at least some sense of connection to and responsibility for their local communities have given way to rootless global entities – private-sector bureaucracies – many of which have lost all sense of community, of perspective” (Hilton, 2015, p. 17).

5.3 Human Conduct

“In On Human Conduct Oakshott applies a critical method that identifies the distinguishing features of two autonomous and irreducible modes of human relationship. He does not focus on actual institutions, but defines them alongside the various occurrences to which they are related. To achieve this result, he constructs ideal characters, which are a composition of elements abstracted from ‘actual goings-on in the world’ (Oakshott, 1975: 109).”

The first of the two modes of political association is enterprise association, or teleocracy. It is a ‘relationship in terms of the pursuit of some common purpose’ (Oakshott, 1975: 114).

The second mode of human association is civil association, or nomocracy (Oakshott, 1975: 121). As distinct from ‘enterprise association’, which is teleologically constituted by the common goal of the associates and by the management of its pursuit, civil association is a relationship identified by the rules subscribed to by agents. These rules do not ask for specific action or outcomes, but only for recognition. It is for this reason that they are ‘moral’ and not instrumental (Oakshott, 1975: 119).

http://www.academia.edu/11782489/Michael_Oakshotts_Political_Philosophy_of_Civil_Association_and_Constructivism_in_International_Relations

6 Alternative Forms of Social Organisation

- Why is our economy so centralised?
- Why is our media so centralised?
- What’s wrong with local democracy?

6.1 Distributionism?

There is no difference between a command economy and a corporate economy... aside from the free market competition between the large corporations. That’s it. Our corporations are like little planned economies, and the only thing that kept them afloat during the ‘90s was the information revolution.

http://www.democraticunderground.com/discuss/duboard.php?az=view_all&address=389x3612209

“According to distributists, property ownership is a fundamental right, and the means of production should be spread as widely as possible, rather than being centralized under the control of the state (state socialism), a few individuals (plutocracy), or corporations (corporatocracy). Distributism, therefore, advocates a society marked by widespread property ownership. Co-operative economist Race Mathews argues that such a system is key to bringing about a just social order.

Distributism has often been described in opposition to both socialism and capitalism, which distributists see as equally flawed and exploitive. Thomas Storck argues: "both socialism and capitalism are products of the European Enlightenment and are thus modernizing and anti-traditional forces. Further, some distributists argue that socialism is the logical conclusion of capitalism as capitalism's concentrated powers eventually capture the state, resulting in a form of socialism. In contrast, distributism seeks to subordinate economic activity to human life as a whole, to our spiritual life, our intellectual life, our family life".

Some have seen it more as an aspiration, which has been successfully realised in the short term by commitment to the principles of subsidiarity and solidarity (these being built into financially independent local cooperatives and small family businesses), though proponents also cite such periods as the Middle Ages as examples of the historical long-term viability of distributism. Particularly influential in the development of distributist theory were Catholic authors G.K. Chesterton and Hilaire Belloc, the Chesterbelloc, two of distributism's earliest and strongest proponents” <https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Distributism>.

Distributism in 100 seconds

https://youtu.be/foxcGp_ECdM

7 Social Development & Sustainability

- Competing approaches to sustainability?
- Equity and fair distribution?
- Balance of planning and open cultures?

7.1 Sustainability Approaches

“Our ability to learn from one another and our progress toward collective development of more sophisticated way of addressing unsustainable practices will be advanced more rapidly if we accept the fact that philosophical differences account for at least some of the diversity in the way that the idea of sustainability is currently deployed” (Paul B. Thompson in Moore, 2016, p. 17).

“Is it time to move ‘beyond sustainability,’ to embrace resilience?” (Paul B. Thmpson in Moore, 2016, p. 25).

“The internal institutional histories of the dominant media have led to a natural resistance on the part of those working for development. How can the poor be helped to help themselves if their voices risk becoming simply represented, some might say distorted, or worse, muffled?” (Su Braden in Downmunt, 1993, p. 151).

7.2 Technology Cultures

- The great disruption?
- Social media cultures?
- Infrastructure development – for what ends?

“Development communication seeks to transform existing living conditions through communication strategies, practices and technologies” (Howley, 2010, p. 181).

7.3 Globalisation vs Localisation

- Responding to the global village?
- Acting locally, thinking globally?
- Immigration without integration?

“Our interdependence is already global, whereas our instruments of collective actions and the expression of our will are still local and stoutly resisting extension, infringement and/or limitation” (Bauman & Donskis, 2013, p. 188).

“Although the homogenising effects of global culture exist, they are absorbed by local political and cultural economies and reappear as heterogeneous dialogues with the original versions. The homogenous and heterogeneous, and the global and the local, find themselves in permanent fields of tensions, a dynamic process that is well captured by the concept of ‘glocalisation’ (Robertson 1995)” (Bailey et al., 2008, p. 123).

Tire Shoes – A Crisis Must-Have

<http://www.odditycentral.com/pics/tire-shoes-a-crisis-must-have.html>

7.4 Urbanisation

- Cities designed for people?
- Gentrification or regeneration for people?
- Sustainable urban investment?

“The Iron rule of never doing anything for people that they can do themselves implies, ultimately, the kind of community of leaders that Cortes suggests here, an organisation in which everyone’s potential is discovered and nurtured and leadership is genuinely collective. He and others in the IAF emphasise active citizen engagement, as opposed to the idea of citizens as clients or consumers who expect to have things done for them or to them” (Putnam, Feldstein, & Cohen, 2003, p. 23).

7.5 Civic Engagement

- Emerging social movements?
- Politics of participation?
- Communities finding a voice?

“If human beings are understood to be instinctively or naturally sociable, they need never practice the skills of sociability. Because community is a given, there is little need to engage in community building. Such individuals would never have to struggle with balancing individual rights and collective obligations; the latter could simply be programmed to rule over the former. Socialisation would be understood as less a process of education and more a problem of finding the right technology of behaviour control” (Alan Wolfe in Etzioni, 1995, p. 138).

“Citizens cannot just retreat to their own communities. They have to cultivate the virtue of solidarity. This means engaging other communities and voluntary institutions to create common ground to deal with common problems” (Etzioni, 1995, p. 8).

The Nuclear Family, Devonport - this may make you laugh and cry at the same time

https://youtu.be/5v-DmKGFM_E

8 Summary

Community media is different because...

“Although the development project should ultimately aim to make itself unnecessary, community media as a driver for social change may not have the ability to foster social change in the absence of the ‘project.’

Development communications (and all of its problems) will replace community media in the absence of broader political change” (Rennie, 2006, p. 146).

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