**TECH2503-17 Community Media Production**

**Lecture Sixteen – Community Representation & Civic Participation**

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## 1    Introduction – Independent Media

"Humans are by nature cultural animals: we necessarily inhabit a way of life that is expressed in a culture. But our way of life – whatever it is – is vulnerable in various ways. And we, as participants in that way of life, thereby inherit a vulnerability. Should that way of life break down, that is *our* problem" (Lear, 2006, p. 6).

"The hegemony of dominant media institutions in shaping public opinion, championing neo-liberal economics, cultivating a consumer culture, and fashioning domestic and international communication policy undermine the legitimacy, let alone the viability, of community media initiatives" (Howley, 2005, p. 15).

"Events around the world – terrorist attacks, violent social upheavals, and even natural catastrophes – have left us with an uncanny sense of menace. We seem to be aware of a shared vulnerability that we cannot quite name" (Lear, 2006, p. 7).

### 1.1    Our Democracy is Broken, Debased and Distrusted – But There Are Ways To Fix It

Debased and de-based: that's the condition of our political systems. Corrupted, they no longer fulfil their democratic potential. They have also lost their base: the politically engaged population from which democracy is supposed to grow. The sense of ownership has been eroded to such an extent that, for millions of Americans, Donald Trump appeared to be the best the system had to offer. https://www.theguardian.com/commentisfree/2017/jan/25/democracy-broken-distrusted-trump-brexit-political-system

### 1.2    Want to know how society's doing? Forget GDP – try these alternatives

"Here are the week's leading indicators. The Dow Jones industrial average topped 20,000 points for the first time. British GDP grew 0.6% in the final quarter of 2016. The FTSE 100 and Germany's DAX 30 persisted close to record highs, while US GDP softened slightly. Bored yet? I am. As a former financial journalist, I'm well acquainted with the merry-go-round of indicators that blip in and out of our lives like digital dopamine, telling us how well we're doing. As a human being, I'm increasingly alarmed that these are just irrelevant numbers that have little or no bearing on how well we are really doing." https://www.theguardian.com/commentisfree/2017/jan/27/how-society-doing-gdp-alternatives-grain-prices-inequality

### 1.3    Causes and Consequences

"We must in any case start from acts which are performed, not from hypothetical causes for those acts, and consider their consequences. We must also introduce intelligence, or the observation of consequences *as* consequences, that is, in connection with the acts from which they proceed. Since we must introduce it, it is better to do so knowingly than it is to smuggle it in a way which deserves not only the customs officer – the reader – but ourselves as well. We take then our point of departure from the objective fact that human acts have consequences upon others, that some of these consequences are perceived, and that their perception leads to subsequent effort to control action so as to secure some consequences and avoid others" (Dewey, 2016, p. 66).

## 2    Media Activism for Global Justice

"Protest.Net is a self-defined 'collective of activists who are working together to create our own

media' (Protest.Net, 2005a)" (Anne Marie Todd in Howley, 2010, p. 376).

"Decentralised coordination of protests empowers different groups through a common goal. Protesters work together to convey a sense of collective identity, which is integral to the idea of a movement, and also to mobilise in numerous locations a greater number of activists locally who exhibit solidarity across expansive geographical distances. The challenge is to translate this solidarity into a coherent message" (Anne Marie Todd in Howley, 2010, p. 376).

### 2.1 Protest.Net

"Protest.Net is a collective of activists who are working together to create our own media. By publishing a public record of our political activities on the web we are taking a stand against the established media. We are standing up and showing that serious activism is alive and well at the dawn of the 21st century. Everyday from Kansas to India activists are meeting, organizing, and protesting to demand a better world for all. When the corporate media takes note of our activities it is only to spit upon our struggle. We are accused of being misinformed bleading heart hooligans with nothing better to do than march up and down blocking traffic. Yet the rich get richer, and we are told to be complacent, to wait for our due. They say the environment isn't being destroyed, it's ok to kill millions of Iraqi's with vindictive sanctions, that the billions living in slums just need to work harder, that global domination by a corporate elite is the only way. Activists around the world are fighting for a better world. We can't rely on the media establishment to cover our movements. We will rise up and seize the means of communication!" http://www.protest.net/

### 2.2 Indymedia

"Independent Media Centre (Indymedia) is a network of collectively run online media outlets whose mission is the creation of 'radical, accurate, and passionate' truth" (Anne Marie Todd in Howley, 2010, p. 376).

"The Independent Media Center (also known as Indymedia or IMC) is a global open publishing network of journalist collectives that report on political and social issues. It originated during the Seattle anti-WTO protests worldwide in 1999 and remains closely associated with the global justice movement, which criticizes neo-liberalism and its associated institutions. Indymedia uses democratic media process that allows anybody to contribute."
https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Independent_Media_Center

### 2.3 Independent Media Centre

"The Independent Media Centre is a network of collectively run media outlets for the creation of radical, accurate, and passionate tellings of the truth. We work out of a love and inspiration for people who continue to work for a better world, despite corporate media's distortions and unwillingness to cover the efforts to free humanity.

History: The Independent Media Centre (www.indymedia.org), was established by various independent and alternative media organizations and activists in 1999 for the purpose of providing grassroots coverage of the World Trade Organization (WTO) protests in Seattle. The centre acted as a clearinghouse of information for journalists, and provided up-to-the-minute reports, photos, audio and video footage through its website. Using the collected footage, the Seattle Independent Media Centre (seattle.indymedia.org) produced a series of five documentaries, uplinked every day to satellite and distributed throughout the United States to public access stations.

The centre also produced its own newspaper, distributed throughout Seattle and to other cities via the internet, as well as hundreds of audio segments, transmitted through the web and Studio X, a 24-hour micro and internet radio station based in Seattle. The site, which uses a democratic open-publishing system, logged more than 2 million hits, and was featured on America Online, Yahoo, CNN, BBC Online, and numerous other sites. Through a decentralized and autonomous network, hundreds of media activists setup independent media centres in London, Canada, Mexico City, Prague, Belgium, France, and Italy over the next year. IMCs have since been established on every continent, with more to come." https://www.indymedia.org/or/index.shtml

## 2.4    Independent Media Grassroots Projects

"Independent DIY media projects are spreading around the planet at unprecedented speed. Triggered by discontent with the mainstream media and supported by the widespread availability of media technologies, groups all over the world are creating their own channels of information and distribution in order to bypass the (mainstream) corporate media. The idea behind most of these projects is to create open platforms to which everyone can contribute - not only a small media elite with their particular interests. By eliminating the classic division between professional producers and passive audience, many issues and discussions that were previously suppressed become visible and available.

The media ´platforms´ used are as diverse as the people involved. Independent publications are produced in most regions of the world. One prominent example here in the UK is the weekly news sheet Schnews. Meanwhile, community and pirate radio stations are re-conquering the airwaves, being the only means of distributing information in many parts of the world. Video has become a particularly DIY-friendly technology, with some groups, such as the Brazilian TV Viva, organising open screenings in public places, and others, such as the German AK Kraak, producing regular video news shows. In countries with public access TV, groups such as the New York collective Paper Tiger compile videos as a TV show and screen them via public access slots. Elsewhere, other groups are starting to screen videos over the Internet - watch out, for example, for Pirate TV which is produced by the video collective Undercurrents. The Internet has many more alternative news and info sites to offer, from the grassroots noticeboard a-infos (Alternative News service) to the slightly larger non-governmental-organization (NGO) focused Oneworld online." https://www.indymedia.org.uk/

## 2.5    Democratic – Open Publishing

"Indymedia uses a democratic, open-publishing system, which allows anyone to post to the Indymedia newswires. Indymedia invites comments on their news stories with the goal of promoting public debate. All original content posted to Indymedia is free to reprint and rebroadcast for non-commercial use. In this way, the mission of Indymedia is to empower activists to create media: 'If you want to see more coverage of an issue, post more stories about the issue and encourage other newswire readers to do the same' (Indymedia, 2007)" (Anne Marie Todd in Howley, 2010, p. 377).

"Indymedia offers its services as a way to counteract corporate dominance of media stories and to provide 'safe space' for telling a story of the movement: 'People participating in protests… are unlikely to receive honest consideration in the corporate owned media' (Indymedia, 2007). Indymedia endeavours to 'empower people to become the media' and to 'present honest, accurate, powerful independent reports.' The long-term goal is to 'foster and facilitate the development of as much independent media as possible around the world,' such as the development of independent national/international television networks and newspapers, to ensure public access to independent news reports (Indymedia, 2007)" (Anne Marie Todd in Howley, 2010, p. 377).

**2.6    Indymedia: It's time to move on**

"Launched in 1999 at the dawn of the anti-globalisation movement, the Indymedia publishing model represented a revolutionary step forward in democratic, non-corporate media production. And yet, a decade on, it seems the moment has arrived to ask whether it is still useful and necessary to the social movements that it grew from. Indymedia is the name given to a particular network with a rather uneven global reach, to which many hundreds of local independent media projects, mostly web-based, have been affiliated at one time or another. It is also the name for a particular approach to news media – one that attempts to avoid hierarchal production and hence promote grassroots reports on events.

It seems to me that the moment has arrived to examine the Indymedia model and ask whether it is still useful and necessary to the social movements that it grew from. After all, a lot has changed since 1999, when the first Indymedia site was launched, both in terms of the online environment and the outside world. On the web, we have seen the rise of corporate empires like Facebook and Twitter: monoliths with hundreds of millions of users and an apparent stranglehold on dissemination of information online. Pockets of resistance exist: open source enclaves that don't seek property rights on everything you post and federate with others rather than seeking global dominion. However, these tiny anomalies are few and far between, pushed out to the margins of a web that is increasingly enclosed by multi-million dollar businesses.

The rise of the giants has been propelled by massive investment in developing software. The resulting flexibility and capability of Facebook and friends makes these sites attractive to the user who wants to quickly and easily communicate their ideas and plans to hundreds and even thousands of others. The undoubtedly dirty money that the corporate monsters get through stealth advertising, selling other people's content and from 'no strings attached' venture capital is what makes this constant development possible. Volunteer coders who scrabble to find time for independent projects in between day jobs and political activism simply cannot compete, however ingenious their ideas. The result is that the anti-corporate web is often buggier, clunkier and more out-of-date than its capitalist rivals. Users who are often unaware or don't care about the politics simply opt for the slicker sites." https://ceasefiremagazine.co.uk/indymedia-its-time-move/

**3    Social Movements**

"First, the mass media story of anti-globalisation and the countermeasures of Protest.Net and Indymedia reveal how new modes of resource mobilisation, which change the existing notions of collective action and social movements" (Anne Marie Todd in Howley, 2010, p. 377).

"The new technologies not only ease information dissemination and thus change the ways that social movements increase public awareness of causes, but also enhance the structure of movement activity through a decentralised infrastructure, and thus change the way scholars must evaluate the communication process of social movements" (Anne Marie Todd in Howley, 2010, p. 377).

"Modern movements often utilize technology and the internet to mobilize people globally. Adapting to communication trends is a common theme among successful movements. Research is beginning to explore how advocacy organizations linked to social movements in the U.S. and Canada use social media to facilitate civic engagement and collective action."
https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Social_movement

### 3.1    Political Identity

"Individual human beings may lose their identity in a mob or in a political convention or in a joint-stock corporation or at the polls. But this does not mean that some mysterious collective agency is making decisions, but that some few personas who know what they are about are taking advantage of massed force to conduct the mob their way, boss a political machine, and manage the affairs of corporate business. When the public or state is involved in making social arrangements like passing laws, enforcing a contract, conferring a franchise, it still acts through concrete persons" (Dewey, 2016, p. 71).

"There is no sense in asking how individuals come to be associated. They exist and operate in association. If there is any mystery about the matter, it is the mystery that the universe is the kind of universe it is. Such a mystery could not be explained without going outside the universe. And if one should go to an outside source to account for it, some logician, without an excessive draft upon his ingenuity, would rise to remark that the outsider would have to be connected with the universe in order to account for anything in it. We should still be just where we started, with the fact of connections as a fact to be accepted" (Dewey, 2016, p. 75).

### 3.2    Visible Campaigns

"Internet technologies help to make local campaigns visible in a global (virtual) forum: Events posted on Protest.Net and covered by Indymedia have more of an impact on a global scale; local activists can distribute information, post reports of campaign progress, and issue press releases online. Through the use of new technologies, movement can increase the number of participants, have greater geographic reach and more flexibility, reduce the time for exchanging information, and make possible immediate action. On the other hand, technology also makes the task movement organisers face harder, as standards for communication and information dissemination go up and movement's technological infrastructure must expand to support a large mobilised populace" (Anne Marie Todd in Howley, 2010, p. 377).

### 3.3    Resisting the [Regime] Mainstream

"These first-hand accounts can counteract mainstream media coverage and resist suppression" (Anne Marie Todd in Howley, 2010, p. 377).

"Alternative media need to attract an audience; the antiglobilisation movement must expand its audience beyond the choir" (Anne Marie Todd in Howley, 2010, p. 377).

"Enhanced awareness of the struggle creates solidarity among activists that has sustained the movement's momentum despite mainstream media coverage" (Anne Marie Todd in Howley, 2010, p. 378).

### 3.4    Activist Networks

"The technological infrastructure of the movement has created activist networks that continue to mobilise campaigns and actions" (Anne Marie Todd in Howley, 2010, p. 378).

"The democratisation of media allows citizens to be active in one of many (micro-) spheres relevant to daily life, to organise different forms of deliberation, and to exert their rights to communicate" (Bailey, Cammaerts, & Carpenter, 2008, p. 24).

"Digital tools have the capability of lowering the costs of group-formation, group-joining, and information-sharing to nearly nothing. Social media networks also make it easier for members of such groups to agree upon ideas and courses of action, and dividing the labour accordingly. By lowering the cost of contribution, they make it more likely that individuals will participate in one of the many ways afforded by the technologies themselves" (Faris & Meier, 2013, p. 199).

### 3.5    Activist Techniques

**Worried for American democracy? Study these activist techniques:** Many people across the United States are despondent about the new president – and the threat to democracy his rise could represent. But they shouldn't be. At no time in recorded history have people been more equipped to effectively resist injustice using civil resistance. Today, those seeking knowledge about the theory and practice of civil resistance can find a wealth of information at their fingertips. In virtually any language, one can find training manuals, strategy-building tools, facilitation guides and documentation about successes and mistakes of past nonviolent campaigns. Material is available in many formats, including graphic novels, e-classes, films and documentaries, scholarly books, novels, websites, research monographs, research inventories, and children's books. And of course, the world is full of experienced activists with wisdom to share.
https://www.theguardian.com/commentisfree/2017/feb/01/worried-american-democracy-study-activist-techniques

The International Center on Nonviolent Conflict (ICNC) focuses on how these movements struggle effectively and win. Our mission is educational. We develop and share knowledge and educational resources related to civil resistance with interested recipients throughout the world. This includes citizens and activists, scholars, educators, nongovernmental organizations, media professionals, and members of the policy community. https://www.nonviolent-conflict.org/

### 3.6    Democratic Structuring

"Jo Freeman (1972-73) presents seven 'principles of democratic structuring': (1) the delegation of authority; (2) taking responsibility for the authority; (3) the distribution of authority; (4) the rotation of tasks; (5) the allocation of tasks along rational criteria; (6) the diffusion of information; and (7) equal access to resources (pp. 163-164)" (Atton, 2002, p. 101).

"Training in media advocacy can increase coverage of news events generated by local community members including volunteers" (Holder & Treno, 1997, p. 189).

### 3.7    Germany has a Publicly Funded Agency with a Mission to Strengthen Democracy

"The mission of the *Bundeszentrale für politische Bildung* is to 'strengthen democracy'. While the German constitution and its court provide judgements that protect the democratic process at the highest level, the BpB's job is to build public support for the democratic system from the ground up. To 'anchor' support for democracy in the German population. The mission is pursued through providing information and educational resources to audiences across different age groups via various magazines, books and leaflets as well as through events, videos and digital. The BpB has 200-staff and an annual budget of €42m to achieve this. It's 'subordinate' to the Interior Ministry, which is interesting in terms of independence, and has advisory boards made up of politicians from all parties and of academics." https://joe-mitchell.com/2016/08/15/germany-has-a-publicly-funded-agency-with-a-mission-to-strengthen-democracy-the-uk-needs-one-too/

**How we work: Key Activities:** One of the bpb's key activities is the provision of information on the major issues of our times. Large amounts of information are made available on our website and in a wide variety of print publications. The range of topics includes European integration, participation in politics and in society, issues relating to the economy and the financial markets, migration, and social change, as well as historical issues and democracy in general. Another one of our key activities is the ongoing creation of new projects and the development of new methods to meet the special informational and educational needs of people with different learning abilities and people from different age groups and different walks of life. Weiter... https://www.bpb.de/

**Federal Agency for Civic Education:** In 1997 the objectives for bpb were specified and officially defined in 2001. Its task is now to promote understanding of political issues, strengthen awareness for democracy and willingness to participate in political processes amongst the citizen. Furthermore, a committee of 22 members of the Bundestag is responsible for monitoring the effectiveness and political neutrality of the bpb. Bpb publishes "Informationen zur politischen Bildung" (a magazine published quarterly) and "Aus Politik und Zeitgeschichte" (APuZ), a weekly topical journal of essays and academic articles. Issues of Grundgesetz can be ordered for free by German citizens (currently only in German). Furthermore, it offers extensive material, e.g. books, journals and information material for schools on contemporary topics in politics, history, sociology and economy. A number of congresses, symposia and excursions are organised by bpb either directly for citizens or for experts on selected topics. Furthermore, bpb co-operates with a number of political foundations, associations and organisations committed to civic education.
https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Federal_Agency_for_Civic_Education

## 4 Political Democracy

"Morality arises only because we share a world with others about whom we care. If we shared a world with creatures about whom we cared nothing, we could do whatever we wanted without feeling any moral constraints" (Weinberger, 2002, p. 190).

### 4.1 Community Goals

"In other words, how citizens understand information partly depends on the goals toward which they are moving as a political community, and this can emerge only through deliberation. Central to this process are questions not merely about how we understand the problem from the outset (e.g., Who are the subjects of this problem? What may be the long-term results if the problem is allowed to perseist?), but about the implication of various proposals suggested to alleviate the problem (e.g., What are the value of economic trade-offs in choosing this or that proposal?). For Dewey, answering these questions – that is, arriving at knowledge – implies a kind of collective artistry to social inquiry that draws on the specific experiences of individuals, expert knowledge, facts about the problem in question, and potential risks of action. Hence, he explains that to the extent policy experts 'become a specialised class they are shut off from knowledge of the needs which they are supposed to serve'. Since citizens are uniquely situated to offer knowledge of their own experiences, Dewey argues, their role in the design and implementation of policies is unavoidable in addressing the problem" (Melvin L Rogers in Dewey, 2016, p. 31).

### 4.2 Decisional Processes

"Deliberative democracy refers to the decisional processes that occur under conditions of equality, inclusiveness and transparency, and where communicative process based on reason (the strength of a good argument) are able to transform individual preferences, leading to decisions oriented to the

public good" (Porta & Mattoni, 2013, p. 173).

"The legitimacy of decision making hinges on the extent to which citizens do not feel permanently bound by those decisions in the face of new and different political changes" (Melvin L Rogers in Dewey, 2016, p. 34).

"Democracy, then, entails a kind of openness in which its substantive meaning – that is, what concerns it addresses and what ends it pursues – is always in the process of being determined" (Melvin L Rogers in Dewey, 2016, p. 35).

## 5   Publics

"'The State' draws us imperceptibly into a consideration of the logical relationship of various ideas to one another, and away from facts of human activity. It is better, if possible, to start from the latter and see if we are not led thereby into an idea of something which will turn out to implicate the marks and signs which characterise political behaviour" (Dewey, 2016, p. 63).

### 5.1   Multiple Publics

"Policy approaches that see to uphold the new public interest are important for community broadcasting as they admit the existence of multiple publics – something that has always been a feature of the community media rationale" (Rennie, 2006, p. 173).

"Community activity is but one part of a wider innovation system, but it is a necessary part. Amateur activity, as well as the activity of groups such as Catalyst (based upon stimulating greater social good), provide spaces from which new ideas can emerge. Economic outcomes may flow from some of this activity. The commons argument requires that we look more closely at the relationship of community to the market and to recognise that they are interconnected" (Rennie, 2006, p. 175).

### 5.2   Open Publics

"The public has no formal structure, no leaders, no rites or rules of membership, no objectives, no charter, no dues, but it is undeniably real. And facelessness is a requirement for admission; we think of ourselves as being part of the public precisely when we're appealing to that which we have in common with others" (Weinberger, 2002, p. 98).

### 5.3   Common Resources

"In a commons, the resource is shared according to established use and customs. Therefore, the commons need not be seen as a radically new concept or one that is free from rule" (Rennie, 2006, p. 175).

"The commons argument places the Internet firmly within a framework of rights and social guarantees, long established in Western democracies, using property arrangements to achieve that" (Rennie, 2006, p. 175).

### 5.4 Threat of Multiple Public Spheres

"On the political role of minority media, we argue that multiple public spheres are indeed vital to plural societies, but the proliferation of 'subaltern counter-spheres' does not lead to multiplication of political forces, nor do they in themselves provide the conditions for social inclusion" (Bailey et al., 2008, p. 95).

"The threat to the corporate world is not that the Internet commons seeks to eliminate property and ownership, but that it provides a basis for a revision of how the system of property is managed. It asserts that society has changed and therefore the fundamentals of economic exchange and law must follow suit" (Rennie, 2006, p. 176).

### 5.5 Applied Expertise

"Community media's attempts to influence policy makers can be considered as part of the current mobilisation for communications justice. Specifically, community media activists ground their advocacy interventions in their daily practices of grassroots communication and derive legitimacy as social actors in policy arenas from their 'applied' expertise" (Milan, 2010, p. 308).

"There are too many publics and too much of public concern for our existing resources to cope with. The problem of a democratically organised public is primarily and essentially an intellectual problem, in a degree to which the political affairs of prior ages offer no parallel" (Dewey, 2016, p. 157).

### 5.6 Determined Consequences

"Roughly speaking, tools and implements determine occupations, and occupations determine the consequences of associated activity. In determining consequences they institute publics with different interests, which exact different types of political behaviour to care for them" (Dewey, 2016, p. 92).

"The ramification of the issues before the public is so wide and intricate, the technical matters involved are so specialised, the details are so many and so shifting, that the public cannot for any length of time identify and hold itself. It is not that there is no public, no large body of persons having a common interest in the consequences of social transactions. There is too much public, a public too diffused and scattered and too intricate in composition. And there are too many publics, for conjoint actions which have indirect, serious and enduring consequences are multitudinous beyond comparison, and each one of them crosses the others and generates its own group of persons especially affected with little to hold these different publics together in an integrated whole" (Dewey, 2016, p. 166).

## 6 Public Sphere

"The public's capacity to participate in decision-making processes in an informed and deliberative fashion is severely compromised. Herein lies the great threat to democratic societies by corporate-controlled and commercially sponsored media" (Howley, 2005, p. 18). (Howley, 2005, p. 18).

"To be effective, however, democratic communication demands active and engaged civic participation" (Howley, 2005, p. 19).

### 6.1    Emerging Public Space

"The public sphere that emerges in the eighteenth century is a metaphorical common space" (Etzioni, 1995, p. 190).

"Habermas defines the public sphere as a space open to all comers where participants relate as equals engaging in rational debate apart from the instrumental demands of business and economic survival and free from interference by state authority" (Burrell, 2012, p. 107).

### 6.2    Jürgen Habermas

"The concept of the public sphere, as described by Jürgen Habermas, provides a robust theoretical framework to examine the crucial link between democratic self-governance and communication. Habermas (1993) argues that the public sphere is the foundation for civil society; it is a forum for the citizenry to reach consensus on the issues and policy decisions that affect public life. In Habermas' formulation, the public sphere is a realm, insulated from the deleterious influence of state and commercial interests, in which citizens openly and rationally discuss, debate, and deliberate upon matters of mutual and general concern to a self-governing community. Isolated or 'bracketed' from both state and market forces, this public sphere is the space in which a public comes to understand and define itself, articulate its needs and common concerns, and act in the collective self-interest. In short, it is a space in which a social aggregate become a public" (Howley, 2005, p. 19).

### 6.3    Robust Public Sphere

"According to Habermas, an effective and robust public sphere depends on two conditions: the quality of discursive practices and the quantity of participation within this discourse. The first requirement calls for rational-critical debate based not on the speaker's identity or social standing, but upon the reasoned and logical merits of an argument. The second requirement entails opening up the debate to the widest public possible and encouraging the inclusion of competing opinions and perspectives" (Howley, 2005, p. 19).

"The threat to the public sphere, as Habermas sees it, is the encroachments of the state and commercial interests into this realm. Habermas observes that as the public sphere shrinks, there is a marked increase in political apathy, a relentless pursuit of economic and material self-interests, and a rising tide of cynicism and social alienation" (Howley, 2005, p. 19).

### 6.4    The Battle For The Public Sphere: Trump, Fascism, Democracy, And Civil Society

We tend to think of Nazism as far-removed from our modern lives in the "greatest democracy on earth." We see Nazism in purely historic terms, conjuring images in black and white, and consequently removing it from any fathomable context. As a result, we end up solely thinking of Nazism in its most extreme forms; as though it only manifested in Death Camps. This is ahistorical. And, importantly, it creates a collective amnesia regarding how Nazism came to power, leaving us less equipped to recognize rising fascist tides in the United States in 2016. It's worth remembering that Nazism rose (in part) in Munich's beer halls. Put differently, Nazism's rise was (in part) predicated on its entry into the German public sphere. Don't think that can't happen here. And don't think that nonchalantly allowing fascist ideas into the mainstream public sphere in the US can't open other, currently unimaginable doors in the near future. http://www.huffingtonpost.com/jesse-benn/the-battle-for-the-public_b_12815432.html

### 6.5    Democratic Media Cultures

"The concept of the public sphere has enormous relevance for the ongoing project of building and sustaining a more democratic media culture… As the nature of citizenship changes in an increasingly integrated world, the question of who deliberates has enormous implications… There is relatively scant popular participation in this deliberative process" (Howley, 2005, p. 20).

"Habermas (1992) reworked his concept of the public sphere, recognising not only the existence of multiple public spheres, but also their capacity for challenging hegemonic views" (Bailey et al., 2008, p. 85).

"The public sphere – the realm of newspapers, businesses, voluntary institutions, and the arts (not to mention individuals) – is one realm that lies to a large degree outside the direct control of the state" (Etzioni, 1995, p. 10).

"The public sphere is a central feature of modern society. So much so, that even where it is in fact supressed or manipulated, it has to be faked" (Charles Taylor in Etzioni, 1995, p. 186).

**Report: The Guardian Publishes Fake News From Notorious Internet Troll – Liberal pundits praise fake story denouncing "alt-right"** A notorious Internet troll reportedly convinced The Guardian to publish a fake news story Monday on his journey to becoming a racist member of the "alt-right." Godfrey Elfwich, who jokingly describes Xirself (preferred gender pronoun) as a "Genderqueer Muslim atheist," has gained a large Twitter following for trolling the far-left. In 2015, Elfwich famously made his way onto a BBC radio show and convinced the host that Star Wars was racist because Darth Vader was black. http://www.infowars.com/report-the-guardian-publishes-fake-news-from-notorious-internet-troll/

### 6.6    Media Advocacy

"Media advocacy refers to the strategic use f news media by those seeking to advance a social or public policy initiative. Unlike specifically designed public information campaigns, media advocacy works directly with local news outlets (radio, television, newspapers and magazines) to increase local attention to a specific public health problem and solutions. This is accomplished primarily by providing actual local data in support of news stories or creating news events that reporters and news crews can cover" (Holder & Treno, 1997, p. 190).

"Media advocacy encompasses a range of strategies aimed at reframing public debate of issues" (Holder & Treno, 1997, p. 190).

### 6.7    Sustainable Communication

"Good communication is particularly relevant in order to sustain and practice effective forms of participatory democracy based on the transformation of preferences… Communicative practices are essential in the achievement of satisfactory instances of participatory and deliberative democracy within social movement networks" (Porta & Mattoni, 2013, p. 175).

"Marginal actors in representative democracy, social movements acquire instead more and more relevance in (participatory) conceptions of counter-democracy, as they contribute to the creation of critical public spheres" (Porta & Mattoni, 2013, p. 178).

"Media advocacy, once taught to local people, can take root, become institutionalised, and thereby be sustained after the project funding ceases and professional technical assistance is withdrawn" (Holder & Treno, 1997, p. 192).

"The three phases of media advocacy are: (a) skills development, (b) media advocacy actions and exposure and (c) media results. Skills development occurs through the provision of training and ongoing technical assistance from outside of the community" (Holder & Treno, 1997, p. 192).

"Training and subsequent training of community members in media advocacy techniques and approaches can increase news events and material generated by local community members including volunteers" (Holder & Treno, 1997, p. 198).

## 6.8    Cultivating Values

"Informing citizens of their rights, responsibilities, and options can be the most important first step towards legitimate citizen participation. However, too frequently the emphasis is placed on a one-way flow of information – from officials to citizens – with no channel provided for feedback and no power for negotiation. Under these conditions, particularly when information is provided at a late stage in planning, people have little opportunity to influence the program designed 'for their benefit'. The most frequent tools used for such one-way communication are the news media, pamphlets, posters, and responses to inquires" (Arnstein, 1969, p. 220).

"The best way to keep the public sphere functioning is to encourage what might best be described as principled decentralisation. That is, communities, institutions, and individuals have a responsibility to cultivate a variety of different venues so that alternative voices are expressed. At the same time these venues must maintain open frontiers with one another and with the larger public sphere. In this way pragmatic coalitions can be built around common goals where an overlapping consensus has been established. Without such as commitment decentralisation can only lead to Babel and, ultimately, Balkanisation" (Etzioni, 1995, p. 11).

"What do I mean by a public sphere? I want to describe it as a common space in which the members of society are deemed to meet through a variety of media: print, electronic, and also face-to-face encounters; to discuss matters of common interest; and thus to be able to form a common mind about these" (Charles Taylor in Etzioni, 1995, p. 185).

## 6.9    Cultivating Humanity

Humans' response to reasoned argument and factual information is by no means as straightforwardly rational or empirical as some versions of the "Enlightenment model" of human nature suggest. As psychologist Drew Westen has pointed out in his own research – popularised in The Political Brain – human thought is subject to significant emotional as well as "cognitive" (rational or evidence-based) constraints. Even relatively strong "cognitive" constraints can be overwhelmed by emotional responses when information or argument is perceived as fundamentally threatening. In the case of problems like climate change, this potentially poses a very serious problem, since people's whole identities and lifestyles will often be rooted in institutions and social norms that represent fundamental barriers to change.
http://www.newleftproject.org/index.php/site/article_comments/cultivating_humanity1

## 7    Summary

"How might we recapture, sustain, and employ democracy's radical character in the face of its eclipse? How can the public re-emerge given the technological, economic, bureaucratic, and psychological obstacles that stand in its way" (Melvin L Rogers in Dewey, 2016, p. 42).

**The left is stealing from the right's playbook. Call it the Herbal Tea Party:** Grassroots activists are studying tactics used by the influential Tea Party in an effort to harden Democrats' resistance to Donald Trump [https://www.theguardian.com/world/2017/feb/01/herbal-tea-party-left-wing-trump-resistance](https://www.theguardian.com/world/2017/feb/01/herbal-tea-party-left-wing-trump-resistance)

"The moral is to drop all doctrines of this kind overboard, and stick to facts verifiable ascertained" (Dewey, 2016, p. 61).

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