TECH2503-17 Community Media Production

Lecture Two: What is Community Media Development?

https://www.theguardian.com/voluntary-sector-network/community-action-blog/2011/dec/08/facebook-social-media-community-development

http://digitalcommonwealth.co.uk/2013/11/13/what-is-a-community-media-cafe-how-to-get-involved/

https://cmsw.wordpress.com/2009/04/05/the-multiple-faces-of-media-literacy/

Introduction – Community Media Development:

1   Challenges of Community Development:
"Mainstream environmental discourses have failed to halt advancing global environmental degradation. Even more, these same discourses have failed to halt advancing global social degradation" (Moore, 2016, p. 4).

"From my perspective, I would call this a travesty: 'Bankers gone wild'. A spreadsheet vision of creating investments that spread the risk, with total disregard for community culture which, prior to this, was well protected by zoning" https://www.theguardian.com/cities/2016/oct/05/building-way-to-hell-readers-tales-gentrification-around-world

"In many cities sustainability has become a banner that diverse groups have found congenial for rare moments of coop-erative politics" (Thompson, 2016, p. 26).

1.1   Social Change
"This chapter seeks to understand the use of community media for development purposes, in particular the assumption that the establishment of community media will lead to positive social change… It looks at the promotion of community as a legitimate partner for government and development agencies, and of media and technology as empowering tools for local communities" (Rennie, 2006, p. 134).

1.2   Indicators of Renewal
"Cultural projects often end up piggybacking on other projects for education or urban renewal as culture is less easy to quantify. There are substantial methodological problems in developing indicators for culture. Although some do work on indicators based upon social justice, cultural institutions and funders are increasingly turning to other, more measur-able factors, in order to justify their investment. The criteria by which projects are assessed can therefore shape what community media gets made and by whom. Only by measuring the complex, long-term outcomes of community media projects can we understand their use – but this is a difficult task" (Rennie, 2006, p. 138).

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

Braunstone 'Street Life' 1986 a taste of things to come?
https://youtu.be/YImXPshrh3Y

Questions
* What role can community media play in advancing the decline of social wellbeing?
* What are the stories of development that need to be told?
* Who gets to present the stories of development and it's consequences?

2   Pragmatic Approaches:
"Our view toward history is somewhere in between – we share a sense that the path of history is uncertain and we will influence it, but not necessarily in the manner we intend" (Moore, 2016, p. 4).

2.1 Determinism
"We imagine that the technological choices that we will make in the future are somehow already determined – already decided by a logic that lurks within the things themselves – water power must replace human muscle power, steam engines must come after water power, internal combustion engines follow steam, hybrid electric follows gasoline, and so forth" (Moore, 2016, p. 8).

"Andrew Feenberg has held that technological determinism amounts to the inability to imagine that our tools and our lives might be different than they now are" (Moore, 2016, p. 6).

2.2 Dewey/Rorty/Pierce
"By heterogeneity I mean that in decision-making, or determining a course of action, many minds are better than one. A frequently used term to describe such conditions is *diversity*. The logic employed here is not, however, an overly optimistic assessment of the intellectual capacity of regular citizens. Dewey, for one, recognised that successful states must be constituted of 'a plurality of social groupings, good, bad and indifferent" (Moore, 2016, p. 5).

"Rorty holds that pragmatism is constituted of three attitudes: first, pragmatists share a 'simple anti-essentialism' towards categories like truth and knowledge… Second, they find 'no epistemological difference between truth about what ought to be and truth about what is.' This is why constructing collaborative stories about the future is preferred… [rather than] making technoscientific claims about what happened in the past. And third, 'there are no constraints on inquiry save conversational ones.' This is to say that there are no sacred texts, no authorities that cannot be transgressed because we have constructed them all ourselves – we only have ourselves to blame" (Moore, 2016, p. 10).

"Science cannot tell us what to do. In the end there is only we citizens who can interpret the findings of the sciences a d propose what action to take" (Moore, 2016, p. 8).

"In philosophical terms, pragmatism states that practicality precedes dogma, even though pragmatism is itself a dogma. As Peirce puts it, in several places 'pragmatism is the doctrine that every conception is a conception of conceivable practical effects'" https://www.fas.org/sgp/eprint/peirce.pdf

"Pragmatism is the proposal that the value and meaning of any concept is the set of its possible effects (Lecture VI, page 231 (page 50 herein)). If a concept has no possible effects, then it has no value and no meaning. If two concepts have the same set of possible effects, then the two concepts are the same. Pragmatism is utilitarianism with long-range goals (Lecture VI, page 224 (page 49 herein))" https://www.fas.org/sgp/eprint/peirce.pdf

2.3 Pragmatic Stories
"Arguing in favour of heterogeneity is to recognise that we each approach situations from a particular vantage point and with a particular set of interests. Accepting the value, if not rightness, of diverse perspectives will provide insight about the nature of reality, and increase the likelihood of taking actions deemed successful by all. Heterogeneity is, of course, a foundation for democracy" (Moore, 2016, p. 5).

"The user of *context-dependent knowledge* in social affairs is far more likely to be successful than the use of rule-bound or *context-independent knowledge* borrowed from elsewhere" (Moore, 2016, p. 10).

"Making sense of the actions we are about to take is more important than being right about actions taken in the past by others. Sustainable development requires stories to make new habits attractive" (Moore, 2016, p. 10).

"One of the reasons to advance a pragmatic orientation to sustainability is that pragmatists have always worked from a social epistemology that emphasises a functional approach to meaning, a community of inquirers, and the performativity of communicative practice" (Thompson, 2016, p. 26).

3 Paradigms
"When the impasse rises to the level of competing literatures and worldviews, there is reason to talk of essentially contested concepts" (Thompson, 2016, p. 18).

3.1   Observations & Predictions

"Kuhn's analysis… was also intended to illustrate the way in which working scientists fit observations and predictions into formulae that preserved conceptual commitments to a pre-existing conceptual scheme. Paradigms influence perceptual habits" (Thompson, 2016, p. 19).

3.2   Ways of Thinking

"An individual's commitment to paradigmatic ways of thinking may reflect widely held and seldom-examined postulates or assumptions. Such shared cognitive commitments support communication and collaboration within a community of practice, but individuals may accept the truth of shared assumptions and the validity of their further implications with little evidence beyond the fact that doing so facilitates their research activity" (Thompson, 2016, p. 19).

3.3   Looking at the Horizon

"The Ptolemaic astronomer looks out on the horizon at the end of the day and sees the Sun going down (orbiting around the Earth), while the Copernican astronomer sees the horizon moving up as the Earth rotates in relation to the fixed point of the Sun" (Thompson, 2016, p. 19).

4   Resource Sufficiency

"Stated succinctly, one paradigm follows on the definition of sustainable development formulated by the World Commission on Environment and Development (WCEDI) in 1987: 'sustainable development meets the needs of the present without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their needs'" (Thompson, 2016, p. 17).

4.1   Resilience

"The alternative paradigm is the one being called into being by those who advocate resilience" (Thompson, 2016, p. 17).

"At least in these quarters, sustainability [is] being threatened less by constraints on economic growth than by the way that economic and political institutions create incentives to farmers to ignore their obvious dependence on the systems that reproduce a biological and social order conductive to farming" (Thompson, 2016, p. 18).

Community Mobilisation

"Despite this, community media initiated by development agencies can be immensely important for those involved. It gives individuals and communities the ability to express themselves, which in turn can have direct consequences in the political arena. But the claim to stimulating broader social change and overcoming scarcity through community mobilisations requires complex examination, taking into account the micro and the macro" (Rennie, 2006, p. 146).

Transforming lives in Nepal - BBC Media Action
https://youtu.be/Plaafy_8f2g

4.2   Distributive Justice

"From the point of view of many development agencies, though, conventional television is of course anti-developmental. It is top-down and non-consultative. Where is the dialogical, participatory process, the joint appraisal of needs, problems and solutions, the long-term sustainability? How is such a project assessed? How can the cost of TV programme production be evaluated alongside the use of longer-term participatory processes? At the same time television is recognised but some agencies and individuals involved in development communities to be an extraordinary instrument for social mobilisation and unity, which can multiply efforts in the development field and contribute to the establishment of an appropriate system for social information" (Su Braden in Downmunt, 1993, p. 150).

"Distributive justice, [is] complicated not only by the inequality existing between people in greater or lesser industrial countries today, but also in terms of the sufficiency of resources for generations to come" (Thompson, 2016, p. 24).

4.3   Systems Perspectives

"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).

4.4   Resourcing

"More generally, an approach based on GDP is inherently tied to an accounting mentality. A practice or process will be sustainable to the extent that the resources needed to carry it out are foreseeable available" (Thompson, 2016, p. 21).

"Contemporary discourses that connect community media to neighbourhood development and social regeneration therefore often arise in the absence of adequate policy and funding arrangements" (Rennie, 2006, p. 152).

5   Accounting Approach

"It is crucial to see that these debates take place within the accounting approach… They are debates about what to count and how to count it. They do not challenge the basic idea that meeting the needs of the present (without compromising future generations' ability to meet their own needs) is primarily a problem of resource sufficiency" (Thompson, 2016, p. 21).

"The assumption is that 'connecting' with communities will bring forth new approaches to improving local conditions" (Rennie, 2006, p. 153).

"The point [is] to illustrate how the feedback relationships that were governing stock and flow relationships were themselves unstable. The system model had a structural flaw" (Thompson, 2016, p. 22).

"While it might not be clear when this would happen, it [is] the overall structure of the system that [is] at the root of humanities predicament. The system itself [is] unsustainable" (Thompson, 2016, p. 22).

"The point [is] to identify structural features that affect the overall system functioning" (Thompson, 2016, p. 22).

"Engineered systems must be robust: they must resist both internal and external sources of failure" (Thompson, 2016, p. 22).

"Very few mechanically engineered systems [are] designed to be adaptive, to respond to changes in their environing conditions with modifications in system design and that maintain overall functionality. Yet system designs that include human operators within the system boundaries can have this feature, and on adaptive learning capacity is increasingly being seen as a desirable feature of computerised control systems. A system that is highly robust, resilient, and adaptive can maintain its functional integrity" (Thompson, 2016, p. 23).

"In making this shift, one can articulate features of the system that are intrinsically valuable to the system's integrity and ability to function, but that may be less apparent when one is viewing the object or practice strictly in terms of its instrumental value and producing certain goods" (Thompson, 2016, p. 23).

6   Self-Help

"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).

"Yet it is far from clear that we want to think of all these types of activity as making our society more sustainable" (Thompson, 2016, p. 21).

"People who share a commitment to this overall understanding of sustainability as such may nevertheless disagree about which stocks really matter: is it economic activity, or is it biodiversity? What they agree on is that the complex systems models that are used to calculate stocks and flows are tools for getting a better grip on how much of the key stock (however they conceptualise that) will be available" (Thompson, 2016, p. 21).

7   Initiatives

"By asserting the importance of place in terms of development – a continuing focus on local projects – development will work to build coalitions between places through communities' use of communication technology. Seeing community media and development projects in terms of globalisation is important in order to see beyond the immediate

groups and to account for networks and transnational communities. It takes community media out of its immediate broadcast reach and, in this way, acknowledges the role it plays in influencing and maintaining social movements across the globe elevating 'local knowledges into different constellations of knowledge and power through enabling networks" (Rennie, 2006, p. 155).

http://www.unesco.org/new/en/communication-and-information/media-development/community-media/

https://www.academia.edu/23367105/Can_community_media_initiatives_address_the_needs_of_the_at-risk_youth

8 Policy Approaches

"What is at stake is the way in which communities are packaged and treated within policy approaches that seek to overcome scarcity" (Rennie, 2006, p. 156).

"There is, then, a drive for communities to take responsibility for their own development, to cease relying on government for direction and solutions. If communities are to survive economic and social crises, the popular argument is that they can best do so by becoming empowered, by building their existing capacity and by using the skills they have to make their own futures. Broad-based community participation is seen to facilitate this process, drawing extensively on the resource created by rural traditions of volunteerism and self-sufficiency" (Simpson, Wood, & Daws, 2003, p. 278).

Somalia in high speed internet 'culture shock'
http://www.bbc.co.uk/news/world-africa-26973587

8.1 Demonstrations of Policy Effectiveness - Australian Community Internet Café

"In this case, the establishment of the Internet café had substantial unforeseen impacts on the existing social infrastructure. Some of these were beneficial – for example, training conducted through the public access point brought together groups who had previously had little contact. This was an effective way of strengthening inclusive cross-community networks" (Simpson et al., 2003, p. 282).

"Within two years, however, the café had closed its doors. It left behind a community struggling to come to terms with what many perceived as their own failure to sustain a project that could have had long-term benefits for their community. On the contrary, the next section of this paper proposes that the community capacity model adopted in this instance was flawed. We suggest that the project failed to reach its potential because it was underresourced; focused on short-term objectives at the expense of sustainability and long-term impacts; and assumed community and individual resources of time, energy and money to be constantly renewable when in practice they are finite and limited" (Simpson et al., 2003, p. 280).

"It depleted some existing social groups" (Simpson et al., 2003, p. 282).

"As one participant commented, 'after twelve months they pulled the plug . . . and then they leave it to the community . . . They don't look at the aftermath to see whether it's sustainable'" (Simpson et al., 2003, p. 282).

"But does the reality of sustainable development through capacity building, community empowerment and community decision-making live up to the rhetoric? Are communities building capacity and creating positive futures through such processes?" (Simpson et al., 2003, p. 278).

"For individuals and communities already over-stretched by the socioeconomic realities of living in rural Australia, the question arises as to whether the time, expertise and financial demands that accompany 'community ownership' of an initiative are manageable, or even possible" (Simpson et al., 2003, p. 278).

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

"The establishment of a new initiative in a community therefore requires careful consideration of the social impacts that may result – both short term and long term – and the influence that the new project may have on existing social networks. Each new initiative demands a share of already limited stocks of time and energy, and so the community's

social infrastructure shifts as individuals are forced to make difficult choices about where to direct their energies" (Simpson et al., 2003, p. 281).

9 Justice or System Integrity?

"The ability of [a] city to deliver the goods and services that are the subject of distributive justice will depend on maintaining the integrity of its systematic operations" (Thompson, 2016, p. 25).

"A sound understanding of the social networks that exist in a community and the complex ways in which they interact can only be developed through a willingness to engage with the community. Community consultation and participation is a significant contributor to the success of a community development initiative because it is through this means that the project can be shaped to meet the actual needs of people in the community, rather than being imposed upon them as a solution determined by outsiders" (Simpson et al., 2003, p. 282).

"Where processes for effective communication and inclusive participation are inadequate, or community consultation is deficient or under-resourced, a real sense of alienation can develop in a community" (Simpson et al., 2003, p. 283).

"The nature of the community's participation was regulated by the government's agenda for the project, rather than by the community's own needs, and individuals outside the immediate steering committee consequently felt isolated from decision-making and ownership of the project" (Simpson et al., 2003, p. 283).

"Community capacity can be depleted rather than fostered, as the community holds itself responsible for failure" (Simpson et al., 2003, p. 284).

10 Summary

"Sustainability problems are wicked problems in the sense that there is often no definitive definition of what the problem is" (Thompson, 2016, p. 25).

"Thus, the emphasis of this article is not upon the benefits and/or disadvantages of rural Internet cafés per se, but rather uses the example of this particular initiative to raise questions and challenge assumptions that underpin current rhetoric about capacity building, community empowerment and community decision-making" (Simpson et al., 2003, p. 279).

10.1 Secularisation

"Our collective scepticism toward the abstract doctrines of technological and economic determinism can be translated into a proposition which holds that ecological and social degradation is neither caused, nor cured by, technology and/or the market alone. If we are to construct a sustainable world it will be by assessing, on a case by case basis, how particular technologies and particular markets might contribute to the outcomes we desire. This is to say that we must secularise them by recognising that technologies and markets are tools made by us, not laws that we have discovered" (Moore, 2016, p. 7).

10.2 Shifting Perspectives

"The ability to shift from a resource sufficiency take on sustainability, with its emphasis on distributive justice, to a systems perspective, with its emphasis on the robustness, resilience, and adaptation of the system itself may prove helpful to a planner or citizen attempting to negotiate the multiple strands of wickedness" (Thompson, 2016, p. 25).

"Is it time to move 'beyond sustainability,' to embrace resilience?... Yet a total shift to the resilience paradigm might well obscure the imperatives of distributive justice, as one drives to preserve systems that may be failing to serve segments of the populace in a structural manner... What is needed now is the ability to glimpse both paradigms, to place resource sufficiency and functional integrity into dialogue with one another" (Thompson, 2016, p. 25).

10.3 Future Challenges

"The challenge for government is how to enable processes of capacity building, participation and community ownership without creating unreasonable pressures on the time, personal energy and finances of residents of rural communities" (Simpson et al., 2003, p. 284).

"Limits exist to how far communities can be stretched. Attempts to establish new initiatives without meaningful consultation, participation and consideration of the impact on existing projects or community organizations are likely to lead to failure. When this pattern of failure and self-blame is repeated, the pressure on the community may cause erosion of the structures holding the community together" (Simpson et al., 2003, p. 284).

11 References:

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