

Are community radios democratically organized? An analysis of Vancouver Co-operative Radio

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Abstract

Community radio is believed to have the potential to advance participatory communication, and therefore to promote social democracy. This research asks whether community radios are democratically organized in the realization of their mandate to promote wider community democratization. Through the case study of Vancouver Co-operative Radio, how community radios organized themselves and what challenges for democratic organizations in practice are discussed.

Keywords: Community Radio; Cooperatives; Organizational Democracy; Vancouver Co-op Radio

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Table of Contents

Approval	ii
Ethics Statement	iii
Abstract	iv
Acknowledgements	v
Table of Contents	vi
List of Tables	vii
List of Acronyms	viii
Chapter 1. Introduction	1
Chapter 2. Literature Review	3
2.1. Community Radio Studies	3
2.1.1. What's community?	3
2.1.2. What's community radio?	4
2.1.3. Community radio in Canada	5
2.2. Organizations and Democracy	7
2.2.1. Cooperatives and organizational democracy	7
2.2.2. Community radio and participatory democracy	10
Chapter 3. To Analyse Community Radio in Practice	12
3.1. Community Radio Stations in Practice	12
3.2. The Collectivist-democratic Organization Model as the Framework of this Study	14
3.3. Co-op Radio as the Case in this Study	17
3.4. Methodology	19
3.4.1. Method and research procedures	19
3.4.2. The study population and data analysis	20
Chapter 4. Are Community Radios Democratically Organized? The case study of Vancouver Co-op Radio	21
4.1. Vancouver Co-op Radio as a Cooperative Organization	21
4.1.1. Democratic organizational features of Co-op Radio	23
4.1.2. Democratic practices of Co-op Radio membership	26
4.1.3. Conclusion	33
4.2. What are the Challenges for Democratically Organized Cooperative Organizations?	34
4.2.1. Collective authority—the organizational challenge	35
4.2.2. Community building—the intangible challenge	36
4.2.3. Fund raising—the material challenge	37
4.2.4. Discussion	39
Chapter 5. Conclusion	41
References	43

List of Tables

Table 1 Comparisons of Two Ideal Types of Organization by Rothschild-Whitt (1979) .. 16

Table 2 Cooperative as a specific organizational form in the evaluation of democracy ..22

List of Acronyms

CRTC	Canadian Radio-television and Telecommunications Commission
ICA	International Co-operative Alliance
Co-op Radio	Vancouver Co-operative Radio
AGM	Annual General Meeting

Chapter 1.

Introduction

In saying that “men live in community in virtue of the things they have in common; and communication is the way in which they come to possess things in common”, Dewey (1915) stresses the correlation communication has with people in communities. The word “communion” has its etymological origin of the meaning of participation and sharing. Community radio is believed to have the potential to realize participatory communication to the utmost, and therefore promote social democracy to a substantial extent. It is arguably the “great communicative equalizer bringing the power and potential of media production and participation to more people and their communities” (Foxwell-Norton, 2012).

Harold Innis posited that community formation should be rooted in the oral tradition and public discourse in which “people [are] struggling to articulate views, to outer their inner thoughts” (Carey, 1999). The significance of deliberation and expression which could counterbalance the discourse of authority and market get stressed. As Brecht (1979) noted, “radio could be the most wonderful public communication system imaginable, a gigantic system of channels...if it were capable not only of transmitting but of receiving, of making the listener not only hear but also speak, not of isolating him but of connecting him...[radio] alone can organize the great discussion between industry and consumers about the standardization of objects of daily use, the debates over the rise in the price of bread, the disputes in local government”.

According to the CRTC Broadcasting Regulatory Policy (CRTC 2010-499), community radio guarantees local broadcasting service through community ownership, permits and facilitates communication among members of the community by fostering diversity in the broadcasting of opinions, spoken word content and musical programming; participates in the stimulation of socio-economic endeavours and in the cultural enrichment of communities; and reflects the diversity of the communities served. Since community radio has a mandate to support democracy in Canada, then how community radios are organized in order to realize this expectation becomes a meaningful question.

According to Barnard (1938), formal organization is the cooperation among people that is conscious, deliberate, purposeful. Blau and Scott (1962) believed that the distinctiveness of organizations is their clear purpose for a clear goal. The participants of organizations are “conscious” and “deliberate”, and the structure of relations can be “deliberately constructed and reconstructed.” It is “the combination of relatively high goal specificity and relatively high formalization that distinguishes organizations from other types of collectivities” (Scott, & Davis, 2015). Thinking on this basis, cooperatives, which are “autonomous associations of persons united voluntarily to meet their common economic, social, and cultural needs and aspirations through a jointly owned and democratically controlled enterprise, valuing self-help, self-responsibility, democracy, equality, equity and solidarity” (ICA) are held as the high standard of democratic organizing.

In order to examine whether cooperative community radios are organized in a democratic way so as to sustain their social value and their relevance given the rise of mass media competition, the framework of collectivist-democratic organization model raised by Joyce Rothschild-Whitt (1979) is used to evaluate their organizational performance through the eight dimensions of authority, rules, social control, social relations, recruitment and advancement, incentive structure, social stratification and differentiation. Vancouver Co-op Radio is the case of this study for its dual characteristics in terms of its cooperative mandate in democratic formation and structure and its social value in community building. Whether cooperative radio stations are democratically organized is believed to reflect how democratic organizations structure themselves nowadays.

Democracy is always a broad and deep question for researching and discussing. The evaluation of whether community radios are organized ideally as democratic organizations, and the confronting challenges discovered through the evaluation convey the idea of how far democracy could reach in the workplace and a broader organizational scope, and how much communication could do in promoting democracy.

Chapter 2.

Literature Review

2.1. Community Radio Studies

Scholars have long observed broadcasting's ability to summon dispersed individuals into a listening or viewing public, or national community of sorts (Scannell, 1996). As Fanon (1967) said, "a community will evolve only when a people control their own communications". The significant role community radios play in terms of the construction of community has been discussed at length by scholars.

2.1.1. What's community?

What's the definition of community? According to Rheingold (2000), whether we think about community in terms of geography, ethnicity, language, shared interests, or virtual connection, community is still a very slippery word.

In the previous century, Tönnies (1963) made a distinction between community and society. He stated that whereas "community" is defined by the presence of close and concrete human ties and by a collective identity, the prevalent feature of "society" is the absence of identifying group relations (Martin-Barbero, 1993). Morris and Morten (1998) then exemplified Tönnies' distinction by using two concepts: "communion" and "association." Community thus refers to the "notion of a big family", while society "represents a colder, unattached and more fragmented way of living devoid of cooperation and social cohesion. Instead of a sense of neighborliness, people are isolated". While Amit (2002) argued that the conceptualizations of community refer predominantly to geography and ethnicity as structuring notions of the collective identity or the group relations, Cohen (1989) pleaded for a "shift away from the structure of community toward a symbolic construction of community and in order to do so, takes culture, rather than structure as point of departure". As Silverstone (1999) stated, communities always have been symbolic as well as material, since membership in them to some extent must be imagined.

We can see that although the definition of community is diverse, community is not a rigid word restrained from testing and developing. Community is not a dehumanized machine imposed on people from the outside; on the contrary, community members can always derive identities from their living experience and their construction of the community (Carpentier, Lie, & Servaes, 2007). While the core characteristics of community is its comparatively self-organized and self-constructed features, there are also segregations and boundaries inside and between diverse communities. Therefore, how to encourage people to get more involved in communities and create the shared sense of participation is crucial for both community studies and organization studies today.

2.1.2. What's community radio?

As Gray-Felder (2001) said, radio, by nature, gives us the ability to “hear” content, context, passion and pain. Even in the fierce competition with satellite TV and overwhelming Internet, “radio remains the most pervasive medium with the greatest potential for participatory communication strategies due to its low cost and accessibility to illiterate populations, particularly in rural areas” (Bosch 2009: 74).

When it comes to community radio, scholars have made various definitions stressing different values. According to Browne (2012), among different definitions, there appears to be consensus that community radio exists to serve different types of radio programming and viewpoints which don't exist in other media context, and another consensus focuses on its effectiveness on direct participation by the community in various forms. Herman Gray (n.d.. quoted in Fairchild, 2001) gave two primary determinants of a community radio station: "1) the community focused nature of their programming, and 2) the use of volunteers from the local community to fill the personnel needs of the organization". These two determinants, focusing on the participant structure and the value of community radio, form the core discussion of this study.

In terms of the value of community radio, it's a prevailing view that radio has been the most desirable tool for participatory communication and democratic development. Raymond Williams (1973) used the phrase “knowable community” to illustrate the complex and dynamic process of the articulation of a community. In the context of community radio, to create such knowable community involves key words

such as “local”, “participation” and “empowerment”. In a conceptual way, community radio not only establishes a community public sphere thus preserving local culture and validating and empowering local community cultures, reconceptualising journalism as an independent, community-centred activity based on a strong producer-audience relationship in terms of citizenship and democracy (Forde, Meadows & Foxwell 2002; Meadows et al 2007; Forde et al 2009; Forde & Meadows, 2012), but it also distinguishes itself by its commitment to community participation at all levels, enabling people to live their lives in different ways through the empowering potential of symbolic representation (Foxwell-Norton, 2012; Carpentier, Lie, & Servaes, 2007). In a practical way, as John Hochheimer (1993) suggested, community radio raises profound questions regarding issues of praxis that complicate and confound the effort to create a locally oriented, participatory medium.

In terms of the participants of community radio, to think about which actors actively engage in the construction of community is a rather practical issue. Browne (2012) answered this question by bringing forward three categories of constituents of community radio as participants, audiences, and staff and volunteers: participants are those who involved in content production, audiences reflect the composition and preferences of listeners; staff and volunteers feature relationships between and among volunteers and paid staff. These three groups of people actively make up a community radio station. Here, we consider programmers of the community radio as the core participants since they engage “in more systematic consideration, reconsideration and discussion of the term’s meaning for all interested parties, as well as of the expectations that it evokes” concerning the characteristics of community radio (Browne, 2012). After all, the selection of programmers is also an inevitable strategy for community radio stations to meet the expectation of the community it serves (Van Vuuren, 2006).

2.1.3. Community radio in Canada

While scholarship on community media in the Global South often focuses on their roles in development and social change (Conrad, 2013), scholarship on community media in the United States, Canada and the United Kingdom often focus on community media’s alternative identity to that of commercial media (Ali, 2012). Among scholarship on community radio in the North America, lots of studies focus on the difference of policy and structure of community radio between America and Canada. Smith and Brigham

(1992) did research on native radio broadcasting systems in the United State and Canada. Fairchild (2001) studied community radio in terms of public culture and examined the media access and equity in North America. Fraser and Estrada (2001) offered detailed description in their book “Community radio handbook” about different features of community radio in North America. As Dunaway (1998) once concluded, “North American stations founded on a philosophy of open access, amateurism, and direct service are today retooling themselves to serve larger audiences by beefing up their marketing skills and staff”.

Community radio in Canada share these northern roots, originating from the efforts of various First Nation's communications societies (Fairchild, 2001). As Roth and Valaskakis (1989) noted, “without deliberately intending to do so, aboriginal broadcasters have served to strengthen the national cultural fabric and have contributed to both the democratization of the broadcasting system, and to the distinctiveness of a Canadian society rooted in cultural diversity” (Roth & Valaskakis, 1989). According to the 2015 “report of the standing senate committee on transport and communications” (CRFC 2015) of Canada: “the principal governing instrument for broadcasting in Canada is the Broadcasting Act, whose last major revision was in 1991; the Broadcasting Act states that the Canadian broadcasting system has a private component, a public component and a community component. They are all equal and they are all part and parcel of reaching the various and numerous objectives of the act”. Furthermore, the Canadian Radio-Television and Telecommunications Commission’s 2010 regulatory mandate for campus and community radio specifies that community radio “permits and facilitates communication among members of the community by fostering diversity in the broadcasting of opinions, spoken word content and musical programming; participates in the stimulation of socio-economic endeavours and in the cultural enrichment of communities; and reflects the diversity of the communities served. Local programming is produced, in part, by volunteers” (CRTC 2010-499). The broadcasting policy and regulations in Canada guarantee that community radio, as an independent medium, share the equal freedom and capability with others in the media landscape, and confirm the merit of community radio in promoting community participation and democracy.

2.2. Organizations and Democracy

For Jane Addams, the cooperative workplace is the model of cooperative community where social solidarity and democracy are created (Winkelman, 2013). Among different forms of organizations, it's widely believed that cooperatives, the specific form of enterprise have the potential to lead to a more egalitarian society, produce greater autonomy, and generate greater levels of political awareness and participation (ICA). There is a common understanding that media and communication systems play an important part in the working of democracy, and that this role should also guide the work of media organizations and the public policies to some extent in a mutually effective way (Karppinen, 2013). To what extent does a cooperative organization promote democracy, and more specifically, what organizational feature would be equipped for a cooperative media in order to promote democracy? Literature on the above questions is reviewed in the following section.

2.2.1. Cooperatives and organizational democracy

According to Scott (2003), most analysts have conceived of organizations as “social structures created by individuals to support the collaborative pursuit of specified goals”. In the view of this conception, all organizations face up to a number of common problems: all must specify their objectives; all must encourage participants to contribute energy; all must control and coordinate staff contributions; resources must be garnered from the environment and products or services dispensed; participants must be selected, trained, and replaced (Scott, 2003).

A reviewing of organization theory (OT) sheds light on both aspects of the organizational phenomenon—the Weberian aspect of people pursuing their interests in cooperation, and the reverse side of power-seeking—the Marxian and Freudian aspect of people pursuing their interests in conflict with each other (Pusic, 1998). Whether there is cooperation or conflict inside of organizations, workplace dynamic are always at the center of research. Moreover, as democracy is profoundly ingrained in political and social culture, some have concluded that the adoption of democratic values and practices in the workplace and in organizations has become politically, and even morally, inevitable (Collins, 1997).

As Harrison and Freeman (2004) noted, democracy means that members of an organization or society participate in processes of organizing, governance, and goal setting. In a broad sense, “any action, structure, or process that increases the power of a broader group of people to influence the decisions and activities of an organization can be considered a move toward democracy” (Harrison & Freeman, 2004). Democracy in organizations not only increases the commitment of members and efficiency of management, but also creates a participatory environment and egalitarian culture. Whether the organizational democracy can profoundly enhance the overall performance of organizations in an operative or economic way determines how organizations implement organizational democracy. According to Kerr (2004), the general defining characteristics of democratic process are accountability to the governed, equal right of participation, free exchange of information, and representation of the governed. He then discussed that in the organizational context, accountability is rare or nonexistent, participation and exchange of information is controlled by the management, representation is incidental or nonexistent. The efficacy of organizational democracy is limited and the ideal of democracy is difficult to instill. However, different organization forms have different potentiality and potency in enhancing organizational democracy. Scott (1992) described structures as indicators of an organization's capacity to perform specific types of commission, and Meyer and Rowan (1991) asserted that institutionally prescribed structures convey the message that an organization “is acting on collectively valued purposes in a proper and adequate manner.” Cooperatives, originated from the belief that the “share in the profits” and “democratic right to have a say” in business (Gupta, 2014) have the capability to bring organizational democracy to fruition.

The International Cooperative Alliance (ICA) defines a cooperative as “an autonomous association of persons united voluntarily to meet their common economic, social, and cultural needs and aspirations through a jointly owned and democratically controlled enterprise.” It echoes the Durkheimian perspective that the groups formed by people are fundamentally moral in character and the community is constituted as an integrated whole rather than simply added up by its individual parts (Durkheim, 2014). It’s different from the capitalist business logic that profits are gained through hierarchical competition. It also speaks to a society’s shared understanding of fairness and justice for individuals act not only to advance their well-being, but to improve outcomes for everyone in the system (Geertz, 1963). As Suchman (1995) argued, “cultural definitions

determine how the organization is built, how it is run, and, simultaneously, how it is understood and evaluated". And cooperatives could be described as organizations with deep egalitarian and democratic culture. As Gupta (2014) noted, "cooperatives have the ability to successfully inject its values of democracy, equality, self-responsibility and solidarity into its organizational form and operation".

Cooperatives distinguish themselves from capitalist enterprises in various aspects. For example, the residual returns and residual rights of control in terms of ownership are closely linked in cooperatives and equally distributed among members. As a worker-owned co-operative is a business owned and democratically managed by its workers, this kind of co-operative distinguishes itself from the capitalist business model as it privileges the sovereignty of labour and represents a purer and more 'participatively' democratic form of co-operation (Nolan, Massebiaux, & Gorman, 2013). The "one-member, one-vote" principle empowers members with the authority to make decisions, and if democracy is defined as "broadly equal access to the necessary means to participate meaningfully in decisions about things that affect their lives" (Wright, 2013), the decision-making process of cooperatives makes it promote democracy in a profound and extensive way.

However, as Kerr (2004) said, the democratic process in organizations is different from that in politics because democracy in organizations is employed to further the ends of the organization, not to insure representation of members' interests or the perceived legitimacy of decisions. This argument states a practical contradiction concerning participation in cooperatives: if the ends of cooperatives is to promote social participation and democracy on the premise of its economic sustainability, to what extent should it structure in a corresponding democratic way to secure the balance of its inner structure and its outer performance in the whole society. Above all, the democratic processes in the organizational setting are perpetually aiming at improving organizational performance (Harrison & Freeman, 2004). As for a cooperative radio station, the cultural calling adds to the contradiction and brings more challenges to the realization of organizational democracy.

2.2.2. Community radio and participatory democracy

Looking at scholarship which constructively discussed the relationship between media and democracy, there are a number of renowned works debating the role of media concerning democracy from a variety of theoretical perspectives (e.g. Baker, 2002; Christians et al, 2009; Curran, 2011; Keane, 1991). Among various perspectives, there are representative, participatory, direct, and deliberative models of democracy that have become part of the common parlance in both media and communication studies (Karppinen, 2013).

According to Pateman (2012), unlike deliberative democracy highlighting the power of individuals in defending their moral and political arguments which may not sufficient enough for democracy, participatory democracy provides a much wider scope. When tracing the cornerstone of participatory democracy theories, the work of Rousseau, John Stuart Mill and G. D. H. Cole should be reviewed as the basis (Pateman, 1970). While both Rousseau (1968) and Mill (1910) placed specific emphasis on political participation stressing political equality and government management in society; Cole, by saying “the object of social organization is not merely material efficiency, but also essentially the fullest self-expression of all the members” and we must “call forth the people's full participation in the common direction in the affairs of the community” (Cole, 1920), revealed the significance of organizations in terms of promoting self-expression and participation. Similar to Cole's conviction in “full participation” of communities, Dewey ([1927] 1954) presumed that democracy is “the idea of community life itself” and participatory model of democracy can practically promote the capacities of both individuals and collectives to the utmost. Nevertheless, the complication of large organizations and the concomitant bureaucratization of society divulged the struggle of creating a fully participatory democratic society (Weber, 1946; Michels, 1964).

Large-scale organizations, when organized bureaucratically and hierarchically, have the tendency to manipulate public values into the obedience to authority since they have the capability to control the means of discourse and resources (Whipple, 2005). As Whipple (2005) concluded, “the communication distortions and manipulations that potentially arise as a result of these large-scale organizations clearly problematize the widespread distribution of critical thoughtfulness by which citizens arrive at their values

and attitudes through active participation". Therefore, "identifying and sustaining commons and securing access to communicative resources are more important focuses for information policy concerned with democracy than assuring that there are eight rather than three broadcast networks or that no two networks are under common ownership" (Benkler, 1999: 563). Community radios, in this sense, offer people the access to participate in communicative agencies.

Community radio has been widely acknowledged as democratic media, as Fairclough (2001) noted, "the most amorphous yet omnipresent ideal which defines community radio" is its capability to facilitate participation among local populations. However, Salter (1980) argued that community radio, the always "very complex organization comprised of volunteers, professionals, and a variety of often competing constituencies, are defined by a series of internal conflicts over the definition of the central mission of the organization". Although from the perspective of media studies, community radios win the reputation of public engagement and democratic participation, as independent organizations, community radio have been less studied in terms of inner organizational structures and participation. Are community radios organized on the basis of encouraging inner participations and co-determination, does community radio build up inner community for participants? To study community radio within the perspective of organizational theory enables a more profound investigation into its democracy myth.

Chapter 3.

To Analyse Community Radio in Practice

Although community radio is widely believed to have the power to promote democracy, it has to face very practical struggles for survival in the real world. As Cammaerts (2009) pointed out, community media tends to be excluded from the debate among the communication industry and on public service broadcasting systems for its relative independence from both the state and the market. With the success of new internet-based media technologies enabling more communicative participation, the techno-optimistic discourses in terms of internet and its participatory potentiality are diminishing the attention on 'old' participatory media like community radio (Carpentier & Scifo, 2010). However, the organizational feature of community radio should be taken into account for its ability to realize democracy.

3.1. Community Radio Stations in Practice

In general, broadcast radio is divided into three groups: commercial, public, and community (Sussman, 2005). Normally, commercial radio stations are owned by a business and operated with the for-profit model, while public radio stations operate with governmental grants and sponsorships from local enterprises (Sussman, 2005). Community radio stations, which often set up with voluntary models, distinguish themselves from the mainstream commercial and public radio. As Kelliher (2003) said, the focus of community radio "isn't about how far your signal reaches but how near". It's believed that by protecting the right of community members to deliberate and communicate and by making media more accessible to non-professionals from different positions and backgrounds, community radio achieves the democratization of communication (Fisher & Harms, 1982; Alegre & O'Siochru, 2005; Cammaerts & Carpentier, 2007; Mueller et al., 2007; Movius, 2008; Dakroury et al., 2009; Carpentier & Scifo, 2010). While the commercial broadcasters have the authority "to hire and fire, to determine income and to coerce workers to act in ways deemed important by the management" (Hochheimer, 1993), community radio is quite different in their voluntary structures.

Hein (1988) demonstrated that a station should exist as a community resource for the people in the community in order to secure meaningful participation by members of the community. Therefore, the management of the station must constantly seek to serve its constituency (Hochheimer, 1993). In community radio, the constituency is made up of the people who make the station function. The programmers who belong to varied communities are also the people who tightly bind together the communities through diverse programs. Community radio stations are more like the self-sufficient entity which different roles of participants are intertwined. However, those who can be heard must have the capability of empowering them with access. As Hochheimer (1993) argued, “should the station be the conduit for all who come before the microphones? Or does the station exercise some form of gatekeeping?” To what degree does the station encourage its community members to become programmers for making their own content? Even if community radio embraces all individuals who are eager to deliberate through microphones, the problem of managing participants becomes an everlasting challenge. How to mediate among programmers and between generations when it comes to evaluating content and deciding on time slots?

Consistent with the “community sector” aiming at pursuing social participation mission, the most ideal management of community radio should comprise a democratic organizational structure. However, as Jakubowicz (1990) warned, the difficulties of attempting to establish and maintain democratically-based organizational structure is a practical challenge for community radio in attaining the democratization goal. The fact that alternative work organizations are as yet isolated examples of collectivism in an otherwise capitalist-bureaucratic context (Rothschild-Whitt, 1979) sets a standard for community radio stations. Also, whether community radio stations strive toward building up a cooperative community inside of the station itself is essential for its operation, since money and other resources are rather limited to hold participants together (Hochheimer, 1993). The motivations for participants are often the freedom to express and the fulfillment of conveying information communities need. But the participation system based on volunteer policy makes the management of stations difficult.

Community stations generally adopt an egalitarian structure by minimizing social stratification and power hierarchy within the organization (Hochheimer, 1993). However, this egalitarian structure needs to be examined for the democratically-constituted radio organization. What’s the power structure inside of community radio? Who can make

decisions and give orders? Do community radios encourage inner participation by their contributors concerning management issue to the same extent as they encourage broader community participation in the society?

3.2. The Collectivist-democratic Organization Model as the Framework of this Study

Max Weber (1968b) delineated four types of social action: traditional, effectual, instrumentally rational, and value rational. According to him, a value-rational orientation to social action is marked by a “belief in the value for its own sake...independent of its prospects of success”. The first three forms of social action correspond respectively to three types of authority which imply a particular type of organization to implement its aims, but the value-rational authority seems to be the missing one. Community radio can be valued as value-rationally motivated organizations since they have the clear-cut ethics of advancing participation and democracy as reviewed before. Therefore, what forms of authority and the corresponding mode of organization in terms of community radio stations that attribute to the value-rational action becomes the framework of this study.

We take the definition of organization stated by Scott (2003) as

“collectivities oriented to the pursuit of relatively specific goals. They are ‘purposeful’ in the sense that the activities and interactions of participants are coordinated to achieve specified goals. Goals are specific to the extent that they are explicit, are clearly defined, and provide unambiguous criteria for selecting among alternative activities”.

Furthermore, given that the bureaucratic and hierarchical authority and organizational mode are employed by big commercial media organizations for their success in market share and revenues gain, community radio stations should be evaluated according to the collectivist-democratic organizational mode compared to the bureaucratic mode ones. Whether community radio stations are deliberately organized to seek their specific social goals, and whether the organizational structure in community radio stations fits its explicit objective of encouraging community participation and promoting democracy are the main questions of this study.

The model of collectivist-democratic organization proposed by Joyce Rothschild-Whitt (1979) as shown in Table 1 will be leveraged to assess the organizational structure of community radio stations. The model is meaningful and valuable for several reasons. Firstly, it offers a framework for evaluating the object of study in terms of democracy. There are so many models and measurements on democracy, so it's helpful for this research to approach the question of democracy in an explicit manner. Secondly, the model is established on the basis of the comparison between collectivist organizations and traditional bureaucratic organizations. By applying this model, the structural features of community radio in contrast with other media forms will be evidently displayed. Thirdly, the model proposed by Joyce Rothschild-Whitt is divided into eight dimensions: authority, rules, social control, social relations, recruitment and advancement, incentive structure, social stratification and differentiation in order to evaluate the collectivist organizations. Each of the dimension is relevant and valid in this research.

According to Joyce Rothschild-Whitt (1979), authority is the most vital issue for organizations. One of the standards for a democratically-constituted organization is whether responsibility and decision-making are diffused rather than centralized (Skogerbo, 1988). Rules and regulations are stipulated to a minimum level and often in an ad hoc manner in democratic organizations (Rothschild-Whitt, 1979). Social control is the display of authoritative power, since the authority is dispersed and rules are few, control in community stations is supposed to be maintained primarily by personalized and moralistic appeals for the good of everyone (Hochheimer, 1993). Social relations should be fostered as the sense of an inner community as the relations to be wholistic, personal, and of value in themselves (Rothschild-Whitt, 1979). It's speculated that there are definitely strong communities inside of different community radio stations, is that true in community radio stations? Recruitment and advancement in democratic organizations appear to be benefit from friendship and the attributes that make for the best recruits are commitment to the organization's goals, political values and ability to work under pressure (Rothschild-Whitt, 1979). Established on the voluntary basis, are recruitment and advancement worth considering for community radio? The incentive structure in democratic organizations must be primarily value fulfilment, since the work is often "a labour of love" and probably no salary. The incentives for radio participants are trusted as the beliefs of community-ship and social justice, however, is that enough for motivating participants in the non-profit organizations? The social stratification in

Table 1 Comparisons of Two Ideal Types of Organization by Rothschild-Whitt (1979)

Image removed due to copyright.

collectivist organizations is eliminated through egalitarianism by indicating that all participants are a fraternity of peers (Rothschild-Whitt, 1979). So, is social stratification still an important factor in a grassroots-constructed community radio station? The differentiation is said to be minimized in the collectivist organizations. Since most participants in community radio stations are volunteers with no salary, work roles are quite intertwined and holistic as general. Do radio stations work “to eliminate the division

of labor that separates intellectual workers from manual workers, administrative tasks from performance tasks” (Rothschild-Whitt, 1979)?

Moreover, when community radio stations implement specific business models, do the business models contribute to its democratic organizational construction?

3.3. Co-op Radio as the Case in this Study

Attention all Co-op Radio listeners: Do not adjust your sets. Vancouver Co-operative Radio, 102.7 on your FM dial, will be going off the air temporarily - I repeat, temporarily - for three hours, from 1 to 4 p.m., on Thursday.

There is no need for alarm. Adjustments are being made to the station's Mount Seymour transmitter, that's all. Once they're made, CFRO, Vancouver's only cooperative radio station, will come in more clearly on car radios, on Vancouver Island and in Washington State.

So don't panic. The little station that could still can and will.

----Apr 29, 1987, The Vancouver Sun

Vancouver Co-operative Radio, first broadcasted on April 15, 1975, has been on air for 42 years. From a 231-shareholders cooperative which received its first license from CRTC in 1974 to today's representative community radio station which broadcasts 24 hours 7 days by 300 volunteer programmers, despite the frequency has been changed from 102.7FM to 100.5FM, Co-op Radio still can and will.

Co-op Radio is “a non-commercial, co-operatively-owned, listener-supported, community radio station” which “strives to provide a space for under-represented and marginalized communities. It aims to increase community participation by encouraging examination of the social and political concerns of the geographic and cultural communities of BC and beyond” (Co-op Radio, 2017). As stated on its website, the mission of Co-op Radio is to “produce creative and engaging programming for communities whose voices are underrepresented in the mainstream media” with the vision that “a cooperative society rooted in social justice values where media operate in the interests of people and where creativity flourishes”.

Valuing “participatory”, “co-operative”, “social justice”, “independent” and “community-based” principles, Co-op Radio embraces all the characteristics that make community radio unique from other mainstream commercial media in terms of its

appreciation on participation and social justice. Specifically, in putting participation as the first stated value, it asserted that “we value and solicit the input of members and the community. we work to reduce barriers to ensure accessibility and full participation of all the communities we serve. we value the knowledge and skills that community members bring to the station. we support skill-sharing through learning, sharing and teaching in order to encourage growth within the station and throughout the broader community” (Co-op Radio, 2017).

According to the Canadian Co-operative Policy, co-operatives share three common characteristics in areas of ownership, governance and distribution of profits:

Ownership: A co-operative is a business jointly owned by its members who use its products or services. In some cases, co-operatives can have members who do not use its services or products (e.g. support members, investor members).

Governance: Co-operatives are democratically controlled businesses with the governing principle “one-member, one-vote”. This right is exercised at the co-operative’s annual general meeting (AGM), where members can vote directly for the board of directors. This democratic governance structure is reinforced by the co-operative’s by-laws and the legislation under which the co-operative is incorporated (provincial, territorial or federal).

Distribution of Profits: Any surplus of a co-operative is owned by the member-owners who can decide how to distribute the profits at the AGM...

As a mandate organization in which the democratic governance structure is enforced, Co-op Radio is regarded as an ideal case for democratic organizational study.

With a designated cooperative structure which helps to foster “a healthy, sustainable environment within the organization”, and a specific mission to “produce creative and engaging programming for communities whose voices are underrepresented in the mainstream media” (Co-op Radio, 2017), Co-op Radio is therefore studied as a miniature of how community radio organized nowadays and whether they are organized democratically.

3.4. Methodology

3.4.1. Method and research procedures

The purpose of this research is to study how community radios are organized as independent organizations and examine the organizational structure of cooperative community radio from a democratic perspective. The leading question is whether cooperative community radios organize themselves as collectivist-democratic organizations in accordance with its value and mandate.

Therefore, this is a qualitative study for its purpose. Documentary research, observations and the semi-structured face-to-face interviews were used as the methods of this research. Documentary research is important for it offers more historical information concerning the development of community radio. The observation method is important for it enables the investigator to delve into the radio station's environment and witness the communication of participants and the operation of the station. Interviews are especially valuable for it makes the research meaningful in a practical and in-depth way, so the interview procedure is stressed in this study.

For the interview procedure, the collection, coding, and analysis of data was blended throughout the study (Glaser & Strauss, 1967), so that the investigator could get more information and a better understanding from the data.

All the procedures of recruitment, consent, interview and data analysis took one and a half months.

In the recruitment procedure, convenience sampling was used to recruit active and engaged practitioners of community radios in Vancouver. The investigator went to the local community radio stations Co-op Radio and gave out flyers for interviewing staff working there.

In the consent procedure, potential participants were asked politely for consent for interviews. They could make an immediate decision on whether to accept interviews or not, or they could also contact the investigator later. Participants would need to sign the consent form before participating the research. In the interview procedure, interviews which were around 45 minutes were applied individually. Questions were centered on

the organizational formation and interpersonal communication of the community radio. Unstructured questions such as “what has it been like to be a practitioner at this community radio?” were asked. It was anticipated that the interviewees would talk about profound topics throughout the interview. The interviews were informal and open-ended, and carried out in a conversational style. Follow-up interviews could be conducted if needed. Notes and audio-recordings were made for data collection during interviews.

In the data analysis procedure, thematic analysis and discourse analysis were used. Transcripts of the recordings were produced and analyzed by the investigator, any summary, interview content, or direct quotations from the interviews, that were made available through academic publication or other academic outlets would be anonymized so that participants cannot be identified, and care was taken to ensure that other information in the interviews that could identify the participants would not be revealed.

3.4.2. The study population and data analysis

Since the topic of this study is are community radios democratically organized, and the case is the Vancouver Co-operative Radio, so the study population are the current practitioners including programmers, staff and volunteers in Co-op Radio who are over 19-years-old with all genders, races, ethnicities, nationalities, skin colors, etc. Informal and intermittent practitioners in the radio station and practitioners who have been worked less than one year were excluded. For the purpose of thematic and discourse analysis of the data in this qualitative study, 15 interviewees were recruited for the interview procedure which includes 45 minutes individually interview and possibly follow-up interviews.

In order to analyze the 15 valid samples, the qualitative research software-Nvivo was used to organize data. Thematic analysis and discourse analysis were applied to analyze samples in order to find out is there any common understanding among practitioners concerning the organizational mechanism and inner relationship of the community radio. Using the transcripts of interviews, the goal is to find certain patterns and then conclude themes. The analysis procedure was finished by the end of July and the result of analysis is presented in the final capstone thesis as one chapter.

Chapter 4.

Are Community Radios Democratically Organized? The case study of Vancouver Co-op Radio

In clarifying the ideal model of collectivist-democratic organization, Joyce Rothschild-Whitt (1979) set up eight dimensions of authority, rules, social control, social relations, recruitment and advancement, incentive structure, social stratification and differentiation so as to “delineate the form of authority and the corresponding mode of organization that follows from value-rational premise”. Following her model, the framework in this study is modified in order to analyze cooperatives as a specific organizational form. The study considers whether the eight dimensions of collectivist-democratic organization model would apply to cooperative organizational form and how Vancouver Co-op Radio sustains the democratic practices are examined in the first part. The examination of Co-op Radio using this framework reveals the challenges faced by the organization. How to understand the challenges and struggles for Co-op Radio, and how these challenges manifest the problems in reality will be discussed in this chapter.

4.1. Vancouver Co-op Radio as a Cooperative Organization

In Joyce Rothschild-Whitt's (1979) collectivist-democratic organization framework, the comparisons are between bureaucratic organizations and collectivist-democratic organizations. For cooperative community radio stations, the framework of the eight dimensions should be modified as shown in Table 2.

For cooperatives, authority comes from members, and membership is the basis of its democratic structure. This membership structure ensures that the organization is established and managed with the collective authority rather than a hierarchical one. The collective authority confirms a bottom-up social control and an egalitarian manner of social stratification in cooperatives the same as stated in the collectivist-democratic organization framework. However, since members are empowered to make decisions on issues such as rules, recruitment and differentiation, and members are responsible for creating the organizational environment and culture of social relations and incentives, different cooperatives practice democracy to different extent. For instance, the

Table 2 Cooperative as a specific organizational form in the evaluation of democracy

Dimensions	Bureaucratic Organization	Collectivist-Democratic Organization	Cooperative
Authority	Authority resides in individuals; Hierarchical	Authority resides in the collectivity; Collective	Membership
Rules	Formalization of fixed and universalistic rules	Primacy of ad hoc, individuated decisions	Legal constitutions and ad hoc
Social Control	Direct supervision and rules; Top-down	Personalistic or moralistic appeals; Bottom-up	Bottom-up
Social Relations	Impersonality and professional	Communal and personal	Professional and/or personal
Recruitment and Advancement	Specialized training Career achievement	Informal No career	Specialized or informal
Incentive Structure	Remunerative	Primary solidarity Secondary material	Moral and material
Social Stratification	Prestige and inequality	Egalitarian	Egalitarian
Differentiation	Maximal division of labor; Maximal specialization of jobs	Minimal division of labor; Generalization of jobs	Maximal or minimal

dimension of rules in democratic organizations stated by Rothschild-Whitt as ad hoc could be fixed and universalistic in a cooperative as long as members choose to manage the organizations in that way; recruitment and advancement are not necessarily processed in an informal and personal way; and division of labor can be either specialized or generalized depending on the nature and the goal of the cooperatives. Social relations in cooperatives can be impersonal as well as personal and communal, incentive structure can be morally motivated as well as materialistic driven.

Dimensions such as authority, social control and social stratification speak to whether a cooperative is organized as a democratic organization, and dimensions such as rules, social relations, recruitment and advancement, incentive structure and differentiation speak to whether members of the cooperative sustain democratic practices through their participation in the radio. In this study of Vancouver Co-op Radio, in addition to studying the cooperative structure in Co-op Radio which empowers members to make decisions as one manifestation of its organizational democracy, I also consider whether Co-op Radio's members sustain the practices of democracy.

4.1.1. Democratic organizational features of Co-op Radio

Authority

As with all cooperatives, in Co-op Radio, there is no “manager” or president who can make decisions by his or her own. The authority is established in a collective way. The “Members” are the owners of the station, each of them has a say in the station and can vote and make important decisions together at the Annual General Meeting. The “Board of Directors” which consists of nine elected members, governs all the activities of the station including hiring staff and promoting committees’ decision. Except for the four paid-staff who take charge of member services, programming administration, technical services and financial administration respectively and manage the station collectively, all other participants are equally positioned in the station with no pay. The “Committees” which consist of programmers, members and staff is the backbone of decision-making in the station's operating areas of programming, training, fundraising, finance, technical, HR and governance. From this structure, we can see that the board of directors runs the station, they give authority to the day-to-day running to the staff, and the staff direct people working in the station. Each of the members of the station has the right and power to vote for the board of directors and other resolutions on the Annual General Meeting. Besides, the committees take charge of making operating decisions in the station.

In accordance with the argument in Rothschild-Whitt’s (1979) model that “decisions become authoritative in collectivist organizations to the extent that they derive from a process in which all members have the right to full and equal participation”, the authoritative structure of Co-op Radio which empowers members of the station in collective decision-making is viewed as one manifestation of Co-op Radio as a democratic organization. Moreover, this authoritative structure in Co-op Radio is actually complying with the Co-operatives policy in Canada that “co-operatives are democratically controlled businesses with the governing principle ‘one-member, one-vote’. And this right to full and equal participation is exercised at the co-operative’s annual general meeting (AGM), where members can vote directly for the board of directors” (Government of Canada, 2017). For a cooperative organization, it’s its obligation not preference to organize in a democratic way.

In general, the democratic process of decision-making positively presupposes the participation and commitment of the members (Varman, & Chakrabarti, 2004). It presupposes that members comprehend the collective structure and share the responsibility of managing the organization. However, this decision-making process is sometimes more in form than practice.

According to several interviewees, in the 2016 Annual General Meeting of Co-op Radio, the attendance was less than the quorum of 40, and one interviewee was asked to show up in the meeting only to meet the required quorum. Interviewees explained the reason why they didn't attend the meeting as the lack of time, the lack of interest and the conviction of others' participation. Just as Swidler (1979) said, the challenge for collective actions involves "regulating the intensity of members' involvement". If members of a collectivist democratic organization don't exert their right in decision-making and management, the authoritative process is just a token. And this is regarded as one of the challenges for cooperative organizations in practicing democracy in practice.

Social Control

Perrow (1976) listed three types of social control mechanisms in bureaucracies including direct supervision, standardized rules, and selection for homogeneity; for him, the alternative organizations refrain from first and second level controls, but accept third-level controls applying the selection of personnel for homogeneity, through which social control could be achieved by selecting "fit" people for top managerial positions. Since in cooperative organizations, there is generally no bureaucratic central authority or formalized set of rules employed as tools for social control, the top-down supervision and hierarchical management don't fit in the mechanism of cooperative organizations. Even the selection for homogeneity is not typically used in cooperative organizations because of the nonexistence of centralized authority.

Instead, as Rothschild-Whitt (1979) said, collectivist-democratic organizations rely on "personalistic and moralistic appeals to provide the primary means of control", and therefore "personal and moral appeals are the chief means of social control, and the group select members who share their basic values and world view". It echoes with her

postulation that collective-democratic organizations are primarily motivated by a shared moral goal.

Unlike other media organizations implementing social control through the censorship in terms of the connotation and inclination of speech and statement and the command of workers on what can be said and what can't be said, Co-op Radio, in accordance with valuing the freedom in producing programs independently, realizes social control in a minimal way.

“One of the things I like a great deal about Co-op Radio on our show particular is that we don't pretend to take an objective stance on anything.”

This is a typical answer from interviewees when being asked whether they feel any constraint or restriction regarding expressing their ideas. Interviewees also responded to the questions related to the selection for homogeneity. In Co-op Radio, everyone has the same opportunity to take part in the station, whether to be a volunteer or a programmer. There is no unspoken convention in selecting participants regarding their political attitude or self-interest. However, as one interviewee said, you can be a programmer and start a new program as long as you have a good idea and you have a collective works as a team, however, it needs commitment. Participants should be consistent with the values of the station around participation, cooperative, social justice, independence and community, and the commitment to the station and communities in the long run. That reflects what Rothschild-Whitt (1979) said about the moral appeals as the chief means of social control in collectivist-democratic organizations.

Social Stratification

According to Rothschild-Whitt (1979), in contrast to bureaucratic organizations in which hierarchical arrangement of offices implies an isomorphic distribution of social and material privilege and prestige, “egalitarianism is a central feature of the collectivist-democratic organization. Large differences in social prestige or privilege, even where they are commensurate with level of skill or authority in bureaucracy, would violate this sense of equity”. Since social-economic prestige generally determines one's status and position in work, and the prestige is considered as the basis of authority in organizations, collectivist organizations make efforts to diminish this kind of hierarchical structure which

causes inequality. Cooperatives also share this feature of egalitarianism in their operations and management.

For media organizations, the division of work, which is reflected through different positions, rests with the possession of capital in a Bourdieusian sense and contributes to the hierarchy structure in organizations. Typically, there are explicit superior-subordinate structure in media organizations. For example, in radio stations, the producer is superior to the DJ and technicians. He not only controls the content and form of a program, but also supervises other staff. He basically doesn't need to cope with trivial issues such technical malfunction. His prestige comes from his competent working achievements as well as his social privilege such as reputation and social relations.

In Co-op Radio, all participants share equal status. According to the feedback of interviewees concerning status relations among staff and programmers, nearly all interviewees agreed that there was no hierarchical structure in the station. All staff and volunteers were working together to provide programs for community members and listeners. When being asked that who was the main actor in the station, interviewees negated the question and said there was no one main actor, everyone worked together as a collaboration with equal importance. The physical structure of the workplace, for example, also guarantees that the station is an open space for each individual to take advantage of, for instance, the three studios are used by every programmer with no fixed owner. Just as said, Co-op Radio does try in various ways to indicate that all participants are working in "a fraternity of peers" (Rothschild-Whitt, 1979).

4.1.2. Democratic practices of Co-op Radio membership

Rules

In illustrating the model of collectivist-democratic organization, Rothschild-Whitt (1979) saw the substantially reduction of rules in collectivist organization as a challenge to bureaucratic organizations which are bound by formally established, written system of rules and regulations. It goes without saying that it's impossible for an organization to run without rules, and for cooperatives, members can make decisions on whether the rules are detailed and fixed or not. In place of fixed rules which act as the code of conduct for the sake of administration in organizations, operations and decisions in democratic organizations tend to be conducted in an impromptu manner; whenever

specific cases arise, specific rules are accordingly made. The rules and regulations are made for solving dispute and conflict. Moreover, according to Rothschild-Whitt (1979), organizational operations and decisions are based on consistently applied values and substantive ethic.

In media organizations, the rules and regulations generally play the role of gatekeeper concerning media products. The requirements on the forms and content of programs, on the responsibility and position of programmers and on the standard procedure of producing programs are supposed to clearly stated in the formal papers, and the assessment of both programs and programmers are primary referring to these rules. Yet for programmers in Co-op Radio, they enjoy the free air of producing programs without overelaborate formalities and rules. As interviewees shared:

“We all have full control of how we produce our shows.”

“The station doesn’t really mandate anything.”

Most programmers gave similar answers as above agreeing that they are independent and self-determined concerning their own programs, and that’s one of the important features of Co-op Radio that attract them to participate in. And another frequent appeared answer in responses to questions concerning rules and regulations is “in theory”, which suggests that even though there are some written rules made by the station, these rules are rarely used by the station as a force on programmers. For example, “each programmer at Co-op Radio is required to contribute two hours of non-programming-related volunteer time to the co-op every month” (Co-op Radio, 2017), but in practice the choice of the extra two-hour volunteer work is made by programmers and there’s no punishment for the disobedient ones. All in all, these gestures of Co-op Radio reflect the station’s effort in offering programmers and participants a comparatively independent and unconstrained working environment in which participants can work beyond rule-bound formalities.

Social Relations

According to Rothschild-Whitt (1979), social relations in collectivist-democratic organizations are not based on positions, roles and other instrumental factors which are rigid and impersonal; rather, relationships are to be holistic, affective, and of value in

collectivist-democratic organizations. In contrary to the firm hierarchic relations in bureaucratic organizations which make social relations developed in an official business way, relations in collectivist-democratic organizations are developed on the basis of the sense of community and family. As for cooperative organizations, social relations could be role-based, segmental and instrumental as well as holistic, personal, and of value in themselves. The social relations in the cooperative is created by its members in a combined effort.

In media organizations, social relations are developed and maintained widely on the basis of positions and teamwork. Since the work arrangement of media organizations is elaborately divided into different teams and groups, the people in the same group are usually closer because they are working together as a cohesive one. In a broader group such as a department, relations among people are evolved in an official and formal way. Social relations are valued as a work promotion of efficiency and quality. In Co-op Radio which produces engaging programming for and by social communities, the sense of community recognized by Rothschild-Whitt (1979) should be valued noticeably in order to reflect its mission and values. So, is there a community built up by Co-op Radio inside of the station?

"Of course. I think they've built their own community, but it's a community for the community...It's a pretty close community and we stay connected with each other. And if you go to a rally or an event, it's always guaranteed that you recognize someone, always."

"I wish it had more... It's hard because the positive what I mention before that each show has its own community, but then it's also because each show has its own community so they maybe are not necessarily seeking community within the organization. Sometimes you got involved because it's a non-profit or a cultural group or a music group or whatever or a political action group, because you want to be in community with people like that and you want to have people who are doing similar things to you as you were doing. But when you are already doing that within that sort of community that your show is serving and you don't have as much need or desire maybe for having that sense of community and belonging in the bigger organization."

The answers of this question as presented above represent different thoughts of programmers at Co-op Radio on whether there is an inner community of the radio station. Most interviewees affirmed their close relationships with programmers from adjacent slots or colleagues who they have been worked together with, but in a broader scope, people in the station are not familiar with each other. As a cooperative community

radio station, Co-op Radio sets the goal to establish a rather communal and personal relations among members and staff. Yet in the practice, it's not guaranteed in the organizational performance itself. Whether it's because of the diversity and independence of programs or the voluntary structure concerning station participation, the lack of construction of community is a challenge for Co-op Radio and cooperative organizations.

Recruitment and Advancement

The logic of recruitment and advancement in collectivist-democratic organizations is significantly different from that in bureaucratic organizations. In terms of recruitment, there is normally no formal interview procedure for recruitment in collectivist organizations, since staff are generally recruited not based on “specialized training or certification, nor on any universalistic standard of competence” (Rothschild-Whitt, 1979), there is no such scene as the mass are competing fiercely for one position through demanding interviews.

As Rothschild-Whitt (1979) noted, the selection criteria in collectivist organizations “are well suited to their needs for multitalented and committed personnel who can serve a variety of administrative and task-oriented functions and who are capable of co-managing the organization in cooperation with others”, personality that promotes collaborative work and the ability of self-determination which is in consistence with collectivist organizational structure are appreciated (Torbert, 1973). Since the criteria are more about social-political values and personality traits, staff and participants are generally recruited in a more personal manner through introduction or invitation.

In terms of advancement, since democratic organizations aim at minimizing hierarchy and authority, positions are arranged in an equal way in order to maintain an egalitarian working relation. There is no explicit advancement for staff or participants since there is no dramatic gap between different positions in the organizations. Moreover, the work in democratic organizations even cannot be named as a career since most workers are part-time staff and volunteers, they have other formal jobs or careers outside of the collective, the collective is not where they climb the social or

economic ladder. So, advancement in a rather bureaucratic sense is not fit in the collectivist-democratic environment.

Not all cooperatives follow the lines of recruitment and advancement in a casual and informal way. The recruitment and advancement are part of the strategic formulation of the cooperative, and the membership can adjust the form of recruitment and advancement according to the need of the collective. If the cooperative is a professional worker organization, it's reasonable for the organization to ask for professional members with specialized training and formal certification. Moreover, in the field of media, competitions are all the time intense both in recruitment and advancement. The threshold of entering media organizations is high, it demands not only qualified certification, but also professional working experience. After becoming a staff in media organizations, the personal advancement requires not only personal devotion to work, but also personal effort concerning the management of interpersonal relations. It's never an easy way for participants in media organizations to strive for a better personal development.

In Co-op Radio, one can easily become a DJ with no related working experience or professional knowledge. As long as one has the enthusiasm for broadcasting on behalf of diverse communities, the station will train him/her to be a qualified DJ. Among the fifteen interviewees of this research, it's an interesting fact that the majority of them originally took part in the station as guest speakers or substitutes introduced by their friends of the same community. And then they became interested in radio and participated in the station as members, took trainings and joined in existing programs or started their new programs. The other interesting fact it's that participants in Co-op Radio always have combined roles in themselves. Some interviewees are programmers/technicians, some are programmers/training personnel, some are programmers/staff. The intertwined positions for participants in Co-op Radio reflect the flexible working environment and the closely related and united work divisions in collectivist-democratic organizations. This model of recruitment and advancement ensures that the personnel in the organizations are task-oriented and multitalented, and they are committed and responsible at the same time.

Incentive Structure

What motivates people to join in a collectivist-democratic organization? According to Clark and Wilson (1961), collectivist-democratic organizations rely primarily on purposive incentives (value fulfillment), secondarily on solidary incentives, and only thirdly on material incentives. In this way, it tends to generate a high level of moral commitment of participants inside of the organization (Etzioni, 1961). Kanter (1972) also mentioned this kind of specific structural mechanisms as a way to produce and sustain participants' organizational commitment. As Rothschild-Whitt (1979) further noted, "work in collectives is construed as a labor of love, and members may pay themselves very low salaries and may expect each other to continue to work during months when the organization is too poor to afford their salaries".

What motivates people to join in a cooperative? Cooperative organizations significantly offer participants an working environment in which they have the maximum control of their work. For members of cooperatives, they are the director of their work, they can achieve their goals and ideals in their own ways with the combined effort of others. Therefore, "the work is purposeful to them". Since the cooperative is a business model, the incentive in cooperatives cannot get rid of benefit in a material sense, especially in a media organization. Borrowing Clark and Wilson's (1961) three level of incentives, while the purposive incentives and solidary incentives are believed to reflect certain ideologies, beliefs and values of media practitioners, the material incentive is one attraction for participants in the booming media industry.

When being asked why you come to Co-op Radio, some interviewees answered that rather than doing radios for listeners, they were doing it more for themselves, they enjoyed expressing themselves and being whoever they are. The incentive for participants of Co-op Radio is more about their voices being heard, and the access to all the equipment.

Material incentives also manifest themselves in another way. Since only four staff are paid and all participants understand the voluntary nature of their work in Co-op Radio, material incentives don't matter much at a personal level. Rather, it's more about the purposive motivation for fulfilling the value of community building and promoting participation, and the solidarity motivation for integrating and unifying communities. However, at the station level, there is a tendency to combine purposive incentives with

material incentives. Because of the non-commercial fundamental, Co-op Radio gets funds from memberships and grants in order to maintain its operation. The station holds two member drives a year in which programmers appeal for support and donations from listeners. Besides the member drives, each program has a designated amount of funds to be raised, and the fundraising achievement of each program is calculated and displayed on the bulletin board in the station. During the interviewing phase, most of the interviewees on the one hand expressed their understanding of their responsibility in raising funds, saying that the station needs money for offering voices to more marginalized communities, but on the other hand, some of them expressed their sense of pressure concerning the task of raising certain amount of funds. Since the top fundraisers are praised at the AGM and favored by the staff and board of directors, they are closer to the center group of authority in the station, and this phenomenon breaks the equal relations among all members in the station.

Moreover, as Rothschild-Whitt (1979) warned, we should not be overly idealistic concerning participation in alternative organizations for there exists a coalescence of material and ideal interests. For some participants, even when they deny their material concern, they are seeking material incentives at the same time which could do harm to the democratic atmosphere in the organization.

Differentiation

According to Rothschild-Whitt (1979), to minimize differentiation in collectivist organizations is to eliminate the division of labour that segregates administrative tasks from performance tasks. The ideal distribution of labour should be achieved through the equal competence of the members in the collective, which means "work roles are purposefully kept as general and as possible". Therefore, in ensuring that everyone manages and everyone works, the collectivist mode of organizations alters the social relations of production and discards the unequal working relationship among staff in bureaucratic organizations. However, to minimize the differentiation needs specific procedures to make sure that members are equally acknowledged and equipped with the same competence in their work. So, it often takes time for a collectivist organization to employ internal education in order to foster a merger capability of its members. As

Rothschild-Whitt (1979) noted, “the creation of an equitable distribution of labor and holistic work roles is an essential feature of the collectivist organization”.

In cooperatives, the division of labor could follow a separated or combined manner, and the jobs and functions could be specialized or generalized. For cooperatives specialized in demanding careers, the division of labor is explicit and detailed, and the workers should be experts on the job. Jobs in media organizations are generally regarded as specialist-oriented. Participants need professional knowledge; the segmentation and division of work are necessary for the management and development of organizations. The trend in media organizations nowadays in terms of the division of work is that the task for personnel becomes more detailed and specific, and the one who has meticulous skills such as camera shooting is the one who gains more respect and autonomy.

In Co-op Radio, participants, especially programmers get trained in a comprehensive way soon after they take part in the station, so that participants here are commonly capable of taking several tasks and positions at the same time. Concerning the training session for programmers, it takes time and energy for the station to train potential programmers, but the training covers not only the on-air skills and pre-production skills, it also covers policy training and fundraising and community engagement training, so after the training session, participants in Co-op Radio are capable to do programs by themselves with clearly acknowledged obligation and duty. Lots of interviewees reflected on the results of trainings concerning their working performance, and one interviewee pointed out that the station training represented the educational function of Co-op Radio for the society. So, except for four staff who have specific duty, other participants in Co-op Radio have similar competence and capability in terms of the work in station. The equal competence of members in democratic organizations challenges the conventional instrumentation of specialized division of labor and creates a more integrated, multifaceted working environment.

4.1.3. Conclusion

For Rothschild-Whitt (1979), “democratic control is the foremost characteristic of collectivist organization”, thus, “collectivist-democratic organization would transform the social relations to production”. Through the analysis of eight dimensions in collectivist

organizations compared with bureaucracy, Rothschild-Whitt (1979) conceived that if the parameters of organizational field can be defined, the possibilities of organizational reality can be further illustrated.

Among the eight dimensions, the dimension of authority, which is regarded as the central feature of any mode of organization in the Weberian tradition; and the dimension of differentiation, which reveals the divisions of labour that is the key to social relations of production in the Marxian tradition with the other six dimensions jointly construct and define the whole framework of the collectivist-democratic organization model. However, since this ideal model is framed on the basis of approaching the polar opposites of bureaucracy so as to emphasize the qualitatively different principles and values between bureaucracy and collectivism and therefore offers a contribution to organizational theory, the model predominantly focuses on the comparison between bureaucracy and collectivism but neglects further classification and clarification under the two modes of organizations.

For instance, Co-op Radio is a cooperative organization, it's originally up to some of the standards regarding authority, social control, social stratification and other dimensions listed in the model to a large extent, however it cannot be concluded as a collectivist-democratic organization because it also raises various problems concerning its organizational structure and operation. From this perspective, the model can be used as a primary guidance which distinguishes different features of bureaucracy and collectivism, but it needs more explicit classifications and exclusive elaborations under the collectivism type of organizations.

All in all, Co-op Radio is a comparatively democratic organization in accordance with the collectivist-democratic organization model. Nevertheless, its struggles and challenges are rather vital impediments worth being reviewed.

4.2. What are the Challenges for Democratically Organized Cooperative Organizations?

As Farrington and Bebbington (1993) proposed, a “deep” participatory process engages participants in all stages of a given activity; more than that, it's still a “narrow” participation if it only involves minor particular groups, and it's still a “shallow”

participation if people are involved but with no power in it. From this perspective, can community radio still be regarded as a place for social justice and democratic participation?

4.2.1. Collective authority—the organizational challenge

The most fundamental thing that distinguishes a democratic organization from others is how authority is distributed among the members. It's believed that in democratic organizations, the decision-making power should be decentralized so that each member has the power to take part in processes of governance and management. However, the decentralization of authority only takes effect as long as members do participate in this process and have a genuine opportunity to affect the resolutions.

In Co-op Radio, the cooperative modality ensures that authority is equally shared by its members abiding by the governing principle of “one-member, one-vote”. The station is obliged to hold the annual general meeting where members can vote directly for the board of directors—the governor of the station and other important issues. In the latest 2016 Co-op Radio Annual General Meeting, according to its official report, the meeting was planned to begin at 1:00pm sharp on the station notice, however it officially called to order at 2:39pm with 42 members in attendance, because there were less than 40 people for quorum. Some attendants were even asked to show up as a favor so that the meeting could start. The fact is that there were 902 members including 250 programmers of Co-op Radio in 2016, however, only 42 members attended the yearly annual general meeting in which a new board of directors was elected. It exposes that the ideal of equally-distributed authority among members in the station is rather inefficient and invalid in truth. As a matter of fact, all the issues and resolutions which are supposed to be discussed in the annual general meeting in a democratic way are eventually decided by a small number of attendants. Additionally, the new board of directors, the governor of the station, is not acknowledged by the majority of its members. Decisions regarding the management of the station are in fact made by a small group of people, and the potency of the board is actually weak. If members don't exercise their legal power as protected by the co-operative law, to what extent does the democratic structure turn into a democratic implementation? How to understand the value of cooperative organizations in promoting participation and democracy?

As Batstone (1979) argued, “the whole nature of organizational arrangement is political not merely in terms of the differential distribution of authority, but also and more importantly in terms of the permeation of rules, roles and procedures by [a] particular set of values, goals and priorities. Unless these are changed, the possibility for democratic practice is inevitably limited”. When the “one-member, one-vote” rule of decision-making is applied in collectivist organizations, it’s firmly believed that members would be encouraged by this positive policy and then actively participate in the process. The problem is that there is no clarification on whether participation in the organization’s decision-making procedure is the responsibility of each member for the overall management of the organization or simply a choice of self-interest. If members don’t understand their rights and duties concerning their relationship to the organization, all democratic procedures are only tokenistic. The challenge for democratic organizations with egalitarian authority structures is to make it such that the intensity of members’ involvement and participation is regulated and ensured (Swidler, 1979).

4.2.2. Community building—the intangible challenge

As Rothschild-Whitt (1979) stressed, in terms of social relations, “collectivist organizations... strive toward the ideal of community”, and the search for community can even cause goal displacement in organizations. For Co-op Radio, a “community-owned alternative media” which “values open and respectful dialogue and seek to build bridges of co-operation among the diverse communities”, “believes in fostering a healthy, sustainable environment within the organization” and “supports skill-sharing through learning, sharing and teaching in order to encourage growth within the station and throughout the broader community” (Co-op Radio, 2017), there is supposed to be a strongly constructed community inside of the station that holds staff, programmers and volunteers together with shared value and belief. However, from the responses of the participants in the station, the inner community of the station is not well developed.

Many reasons can be brought up to explain why it’s hard to build up an inner community for Co-op Radio. As interviewees said, one reason is that the station serves so many communities out in the society that each program simply represents a specific community and the programmers solely get more involved in that community. So, the eagerness of searching for and integrating into one community can be satisfied by the program itself. Also, since the station can only offer limited support concerning money

and other resources, programmers become so independent and autonomous and build up their own collectives and teams to work with. Moreover, since the position of programming is open to everyone, the personnel in the station are far from being homogeneous. Although they may share some values and moral beliefs, their approaches and styles may vary considerably. Above all, people in the station have limited chance to meet and work together because of their self-ruling responsibility and unrelated social connections. Even though there are leading value and mission in the station, this kind of commonness doesn't easily transform to a sense of community.

Therefore, the challenge for the construction of democratic organizations is more complex. It asks for more than a shared value or common belief, it asks for personal commitment and collective incentives. For every organization, the sense of community and collaboration is indeed essential. However, since individuals have different self-interests and preferences, to establish a democratic organization through community building will fail when people have independent aspirations and divided labors.

4.2.3. Fund raising—the material challenge

All organizations need capital to maintain the operation, democratic organizations are not the exceptions. As Rothschild-Whitt (1979) noted, democratic organizations often aim at being economically independent and self-sustaining, but without stable resources of support from government or other established organizations, they can hardly manage to function. And this act of searching for financial support from others is regarded as “a constraint on the achievement of their collectivist principles”. However, the financial issue is a challenge for every democratic organization throughout its development.

Since Co-op Radio is a non-commercial radio station, the revenue mainly comes from government grants and membership donations. In 2016, nearly half of the revenue came from the Community Radio Fund Canada, the rest came from other government grants, memberships and donations. Because of the cooperative nature, the station comes up with various approaches to promote fundraising. Among these approaches, the Member Drive is the most representative one that even becomes the culture of the station. There are two member drives a year in Co-op Radio for raising funds from listeners and members. From 2016, the length of one Member Drive was shortened from 17 days to 10 days in order to “make it easier to sustain the energy and excitement

needed to attract members, encourage renewals, and improve fundraising while at the same time not tiring out programmers, staff, and our listeners with the efforts required to do so” (Co-op Radio AGM Report, 2016). In the 2017 Spring Member Drive, each studio had a flyer on the wall that reminded programmers to pitch and teach them how to do that. There was a white board displayed on the entrance hall showing how much funds had been raised so far. Besides, every programmer was asked to call their show supporters regarding to their membership and donations. The 10-day member drive was bustling and swarming.

As stated in the fundraising section of the 2016 Co-op Radio AGM report:

“I know that asking for money is uncomfortable for many, but it is necessary and can be done in many ways that suit the listening community of each show. This is demonstrated by the 18 shows who made or exceeded their fundraising requirement during the most recent fiscal year, and the 58 shows who increased their fundraising success between the 2014 and 2015 calendar years by between 1 to 12%...Our top fundraising shows this past fiscal year are...”.

The fundraising achievements are becoming a standard of program assessment in the station. Whether programmers get inspired to raise funds for the station, they are urged to do so. Money becomes an unspoken measurement for the performance of both participants and their work. The predominant mission of “produce creative and engaging programming for communities whose voices are underrepresented in the mainstream media” (Co-op Radio, 2017) is somehow evaluated through the calculation of membership and donations. After all, without money, there will be no radio or programming.

Through the culture of fundraising in the non-commercial community radio station, the very challenge for democratic organizations concerning financial issue is reflected. It’s the contradiction between material versus moral values, as well as the reality versus ideal. As Rothschild-Whitt (1979) stated, democratic organizations just like all organizations, “are subject to external pressures”. All the challenges that Co-op Radio has can be traced back to its social origins.

4.2.4. Discussion

As Hochheimer (1993) stated, the intention of establishing a democratically-constituted radio prevails all the time, but the pressures to maintain gains and to ensure continued access for and to all who want or need it are also evident. While commercial media make great fortunes in the cultural industry, community radios are still on the edge of surviving in the media landscape. The non-profit, community-oriented and self-sustaining characteristics which are valued in social democracy bring challenges to community radio in the thriving neoliberal market place.

While “neoliberalism” was originally defined as “the priority of the price mechanism, the free enterprise, the system of competition and a strong and impartial state” (Mirowski, & Plehwe, 2009), more recently, neoliberalism has come to indicate a market fundamentalism that embodies laissez-faire principles (Kallman, & Clark, 2016). In this context, one of the most fundamental pressures community radio face comes from the neoliberal logic of operation and functioning. When community radios develop a culture of fundraising, social relations and incentive structures begin to change accordingly. Gaining funds and donations influence the egalitarian working environment in community radio, and become a standard for the assessment of programs and programmers which potentially contains a hierarchy structure. While community radio keeps themselves away from big capital in order to maintain organizational independence and exclusiveness, the mechanisms they use for self-sustaining and getting financial support distort the realization of democracy.

Scholars always argue that the measurement of success in democratic organizations is different from that in commercial and hierarchical organizations. Since the goal of democratic organizations is always related to a moral and ethical achievement. However, as Kerr (2004) discussed, “the role of democratic process in the economic organization is to produce economic value”, and Harrison and Freeman (2004) further noted that while lots of risks and pitfalls are associated with democratic processes, the economic payoffs are far from certain. The discouragement for organizations in applying a democratic organizational structure is the uncertainty of economic benefits, just as the fairly practical issue for community radio is how to get enough financial support in order to keep on its task in sustaining democracy.

As a media organization, the power of community radio in promoting democracy is rather limited. However, as a matter of fact, the very existence of community radio represents the possibility in organizational democracy. Through their democratic organizational mechanism, they use diverse approaches to realize their social mission and value. As one organization in the third sector that is composed of “organizations that are self-governing, do not distribute profit, are primarily private and nongovernmental in basic structure, and are meaningfully voluntary, thus likely to engage constituents on the basis of shared interest” (Kallman and Clark, 2016), the development of the third sector as a whole represents the power for justice and democracy. Although community radio is confronted with challenges from market and industrial peers, just as Carpentier and Scifo (2010) argued, “as individual organizations, they remain fragile and vulnerable, but as a sector, characterized by diversity and elusiveness, they are now an established global reality”. In believing in social justice and democracy, community radio can and will promote democracy through organizational formation and will always make its contribution to democracy.

Chapter 5.

Conclusion

Are community radios democratically organized? While the mass media develops in an unprecedented speed and scale, and the cultural industry becomes more diverse and competitive, community radio is marginalized for its disadvantages in technological equipment, organizational scale, alternative content and minority interests. Although community radio stations are not able to catch up with the trend of digitalization and industrialization for its lack of resources and support, they are still hold the faith in democracy and justice.

Through the evaluation of the organizational structure of Co-op Radio according to the model of collectivist-democratic organization brought forward by Joyce Rothschild-Whitt (1979) with the eight dimensions of authority, rules, social control, social relations, recruitment and advancement, incentive structure, social stratification and differentiation, this study recognized democratic organizational features and uncovered struggles in terms of cooperative authority, community building and fund raising. These struggles are believed to be the critical challenges for all democratic organizations.

Whether community radios are in competition with mainstream and commercial media in the cultural industry is not the point. The point is that the cultural industry and the neoliberalism market logic do influence the organization of community radio for its realization of democracy. The culture of fundraising, the individualism in collective decision-making process, the standard of program assessment, the incentives on the basis of membership and donations—all of these things give us a clue on how organizational formation and structure are shaped and influenced by the socio-economic environment. At the same time, the function and significance, and the goal and value community radio seeks are never hollow or trivial, and the very existence of community radio is believed to be the exhibition of democracy in an organizational way. All media organizations in the media landscape claim that they work toward the advancement of participation and democracy, but community radios build democracy into their way of organizing. Especially on the level of content production and community involvement, participation is broadly encouraged by community radio stations.

All entities are performing in a certain structure, and the logic of the structure defines the boundaries and limits the scope. As Stuart Hall (1989) noted, “there is no way the planning, implementation and operation of communication systems can proceed without understanding their linkage to positions and structures of power”. However, all entities are in the movement as well. How the radio station organizes itself shapes the actual practice of democracy at a community level, and it also reflects how democracy works in a social level. Although the realization of democracy is full of compromises and difficulties, community radio stations have the ability to promote democracy, and will always organize themselves in the pursuit of democracy.

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