

Institutionalization and Legitimation of Informatics based Community Journalism: A Case Study from India

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Motivation

❑ Traditional Mainstream Journalism

- ❑ Tightly guarded by ‘gatekeepers’, they hold authority of which news, in what shape and in how much quantity should be presented to the reader (Domingo et al., 2008)

- ❑ a ‘market/client’ to serve

- ❑ Contemporary critics question press’ progression towards arrogance and its faith in objectivity (Massey & Haas, 2002)

❑ Dissatisfaction with mainstream journalism and easy availability of technology leading to Community Journalism

- ❑ ‘J’ of vested interest to ‘J’ of concern

Motivation

- ❑ Issues
 - ❑ Institutional (regulations etc.) and technological problems
 - ❑ Philosophical and practical challenges (Lewis, Kaufhold & Losorsa, 2010)
- ❑ Legitimizing a novel idea is very critical, especially when it involves both technology and practices (Boxenbaum, 2008)
- ❑ Do institutional forces have a role to play in the movement of these initiatives towards unsustainability?

Research Question

- ❑ What institutional work goes into the creation of the institution of Community Journalism?
- ❑ Legitimization strategies used by Community Journalism organizations
- ❑ What policies by diverse stakeholders can help sustenance of Community Journalism organizations?

Literature Review – Institutional Theory

- ❑ Institutions – a social structure that gives organizations/individuals lives orientation, yet at the same time controls or constrains them
- ❑ Institutional work
 - ❑ Creating, maintaining, destroying institutions (Lawrence & Suddaby, 2009)
- ❑ Creation
 - ❑ Vesting, defining, advocacy
 - ❑ Constructing identities, changing normative associations, constructing networks
 - ❑ Mimicry, theorizing educating
- ❑ Legitimation
 - ❑ Enhances stability and comprehensibility of organizational activities (Suchman, 1995)
 - ❑ Continuous construct
- ❑ Strategic responses enacted by organizations
 - ❑ Acquiescence, compromise, avoidance, defiance, manipulation

Research Methodology

- ❑ Exploratory study
- ❑ Case study
 - ❑ Is useful when boundaries of the phenomenon are not clearly evident at the outset of the research (Benbasat, Goldstein & Mead, 1987)
 - ❑ Particularly appropriate for exploratory studies for discovering relevant constructs in areas where theory building is at the formative stages
 - ❑ Will help in understanding the phenomenon by understanding multiple levels: individual, society, institutions etc.
 - ❑ Examines the phenomenon in its natural setting, employing multiple methods of data collection, to gather information from one or a few entities
 - ❑ The effect of institutions can be “directly” observed by looking at micro interactions that organizational life entails with the environment

Case History: CGNet Swara

- ❑ Severe communication problem in marginalized regions of India
 - ❑ Lack of local language media publications
 - ❑ Are not seen as potential clients of traditional/mainstream publications
 - ❑ Leading to alignment of locals with insurgent groups
- ❑ CGNet Swara
 - ❑ Started in 2004 as online listserv (Internet based news portal) – very restricted access – Shubhranshu Chaudhary – BBC Correspondent
 - ❑ ‘Swara’ launched in February 2010 – mobile phone based solution
- ❑ Data Collection
 - ❑ Primary and Secondary
 - ❑ A few rounds of interview with the founder and various case studies on the same and other Community Journalism projects

Discussion

- ❑ Institutional Work: Creation
 - ❑ Instances of advocacy and educating
 - ❑ Changing or formulating normative associations
 - ❑ Parallel institution creation
- ❑ Legitimation
 - ❑ Coercive/Regulative – acquiescence – ICTs helping in compliance; avoidance – ‘moderators’
 - ❑ Normative – acquiescence – rigorous authentication process; developing credibility
 - ❑ Mimetic/Cognitive – not too high

Implications

- Time and other resources investment in R&D
- Understanding of the development of parallel institutions and their legitimation

Future Work

- Theoretical sampling for the cross-case analysis for increased reliability and validity of results

Policy Recommendations

- ❑ International development organizations
 - ❑ Bridge for innovation exchange as cost of innovation is high
- ❑ Government
 - ❑ Regular assessment of policies;
 - ❑ Restriction on means only when ends are harmful
- ❑ Solution Providers
 - ❑ More research on voice than on high-end smart phone applications – can be a part of their CSR policy

Thanks
