A Failed Success: A Community Television Case Study
of the Contradictory Nature of Participation and Deliberation°

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This article uses a case study approach to examine the coexistence of deliberative and participatory goals in community media. It analyzes a popular weekly community television (CTV) program on an Israeli kibbutz and its demise based on a series of in-depth interviews with kibbutz audience members and kibbutz CTV production crew members. Our findings suggest that there is an inherent conflict between deliberative and participatory goals. We recommend that community leaders take a more active role in supporting community media and suggest that hiring professionals from neighboring communities could make it easier for CTV to produce deliberative content. We rely on previous research to re-emphasize the importance of broad community participation in community media production.

Introduction

This paper will focus on the success of a widely viewed weekly community television (CTV) program in an Israeli kibbutz in the late 1990s and early 2000s, and its surprising cancellation at what seemed to be the peak of its success. Social capital theory and deliberation theory will be used to examine the institutional and individual factors that contribute to the success or failure of community media in order to advance our understanding of how media can contribute to social cohesion and democratic governance, and to consider whether these two goals are complementary or mutually exclusive. Practical lessons applicable to other community media endeavors will be drawn with the aim of preserving their capacity to serve simultaneously as deliberative and participatory arenas for community members.

Literature Review

The Tension Between Participation and Deliberation

Our analysis rests on the idea that broad direct political participation and effective political deliberation are two central dimensions to the exercise of democracy. While deliberation is a ponderous

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Date submitted: 2009–04–26

activity frequently removed from actual political outputs, other direct forms of participation are mostly directed at immediate political change.

Some visions of democracy argue that effective deliberation is the key to democratic governance. According to this ideal, in a liberal democracy, the central way for a public to assert its power over the state (and by extension over any other centralized political authority) is by engaging in rational-critical debate on contemporary issues, in venues where individuals interact as equals while setting aside each other's social status (Habermas, 1962/1991). Thus, "Deliberation is debate and discussion aimed at producing reasonable, well-informed opinions in which participants are willing to revise preferences in light of discussion, new information, and claims made by fellow participants" (Chambers, 2003, p. 309). Underlying this definition is the recognition that deliberation begins from a state of disagreement, of managed conflict, that leads individuals to change their attitudes upon exposure to fellow citizens' divergent views. For John Dewey, deliberation constitutes democracy: "A democracy is more than a form of government; it is primarily a mode of associated living, of conjoint communicated experience" (1916/1966, p.87).

Another vision argues that "conversation is not the heart of democracy" (Schudson, 1997). There are many democratic activities that demand direct participation and do not necessarily require deliberation. Political education, mobilization, demonstration, public debate, campaigning, and nuts and bolts organization are among those activities. Sometimes talk must be circumscribed in order to allow forceful (though not violent) expression of political will. Injecting deliberation in those cases might be counter-productive (for example, when demonstrating) (Walzer, 1999). In this case study, direct participation is interpreted as first, participation in the production of media, and second, participation in other communal domains (e.g., celebrations, communal work) as the result of exposure to community media content that provides knowledge regarding communal participation opportunities.

Some view most forms of participation as compatible with deliberation, in other words—conditions amenable to one are amenable to the other as well. For example, Benjamin Barber (1998) describes civil society as a place where "democratic citizens are active, responsible, engaged members of groups and communities that, while having different values and conflicting interests, are devoted to arbitrating those differences by exploring common ground, doing public work, and pursuing common relations" (p. 37).

However, it seems that a growing body of empirical evidence—both historical and contemporary—maintains that there is an inherent tension between achieving effective deliberation and ensuring broad direct participation because, while participation is often the result of like-minded individuals acting in unison, deliberation is by definition the product of individuals interacting across lines of difference. Mutz finds that those who have more discussions with people they disagree with tend to be more tolerant but to participate less in political arenas: "People entrenched in politically heterogeneous social networks retreat from political activity to avoid putting their social relationships at risk" (2006, p. 123). On the other hand, those who experience more agreement in their inter-personal networks are more likely to participate politically because living in an environment where many agree with you makes it a less risky proposition to publicly declare one's political identity (e.g., by demonstrating). However, in a homogenous inter-

personal network people will, of course, deliberate less. Thus, deliberation is an uncomfortable activity in which individuals are required to expose their opinions to the public scrutiny of citizens with divergent views (Schudson, 1997). While deliberation is predicated on reason, most other forms of political participation require other values such as "passion, commitment, solidarity and courage" (Walzer, 1999, p. 59).

A survey of the American political landscape from colonial to modern times finds little evidence for an inclusive public sphere that enables deliberation and participation simultaneously. When participation flourishes (in the mid-19th century) it does so in a partisan manner egged on by a partisan press and mass parties. When the press loses its partisan sheen and parties scale down their grass-roots operations (beginning in the early 20th century), political deliberation does become somewhat more common but participation declines (Schudson, 1993). Habermas (1962/1991) recognized that the bourgeois public sphere was a fleeting fragile construction, quickly overrun by commercial imperatives. His critics (e.g., Fraser, 1990) note that even that fleeting phenomenon was much more exclusionary than he let on in terms of gender and class. Clearly, mass deliberation does not appear spontaneously. Special institutions must be conceived to help it flourish even periodically, for example, in the form of a quadrennial "deliberation day" when many citizens might be motivated to inform themselves and then deliberate in a group setting (Ackerman & Fishkin, 2005). A different approach is to craft broad citizen groups that act together with other formal organizations to bring political change, for example by taking an active role in rebuilding schools (Boyte, 1993, pp. 352–353). Community media when designed correctly can serve as one in a constellation of inclusive deliberative institutions that allow continuous and occasional participation of many members of a community while producing content that attracts further participation and deliberation outside the mediated sphere. On the basis of social capital theory, we suggest that direct participation and deliberation rest on different types of social ties and that a delicate balance must be maintained between the two.

Social Capital

Social capital is "the ability of actors to secure benefits by virtue of membership in social networks or other social structures" (Portes, 1998, p. 6). At a basic level, social capital is the resources produced by "membership in a group" (Bourdieu, 1986/1997, p. 51). Social capital can be used by individuals but it "inheres in the structure of relations between actors and among actors" (Coleman, 1988, p. S98). A distinction can be made between strong ties that closely bond homogenous individuals in networks of kinship and friendship and weak ties that connect individuals in more tenuous networks of acquaintance that bridge differences (Granovetter, 1973; see Putnam, 2000, on bridging and bonding).

Portes (1998) distinguishes between social capital and its consequences, a distinction that is not always preserved in some media studies (e.g., Hooghe, 2002; Shah, McLeod & Yoon, 2001) that collapse one of its consequences, direct political participation, into social capital itself. Preserving this distinction is crucial for our study, which examines the relationship between two of the consequences of social capital—direct participation and deliberation.

Putnam (2000) along with many others assumes that the consequences of social capital are dominantly and uniformly positive. However, if we adopt the notion that social capital is based on both strong/bonding ties and weak/bridging ties, we can argue that a mediated experience could have both positive and negative consequences on social capital preserving one type of ties while eroding another (Williams, 2006). How could social capital have negative consequences? When social networks are dense, social capital is indeed abundant but individual freedoms can be restricted (Portes, 1998, pp. 15–18). In the context of community media, participation in the production of content that celebrates common communal activities can be based on strong ties and even reinforce them. On the other hand, participation in the production of deliberative content where colliding points of view meet could be based on weak ties among disagreeing individuals and could help maintain such ties between the community media producers and audience members who watch the deliberative content (even if they do not themselves participate in producing it). Given the possible constricting consequences of strong ties and the importance of weak ones, it can be argued that CTV should contain a mix of deliberative and participatory content and production patterns.

Participation, Deliberation and Community Media

We now turn to a review of the existing literature dealing with the capacity of community media to support local communities. Community media organizations can be defined "as community-governed, not-for-profit associations. They provide access to production and distribution . . . but also allow for participation in the running of the organization and the development of technologies" (Rennie, 2007, p. 31). This definition explicitly excludes for-profit media that have a local focus.

Some of the research dealing with community media seems to be based on the assumption that it serves by definition disenfranchised communities that are challenging a dominant order. For example, Lewis (2008) argues that "community media are widely used for the expression of marginalized or disadvantaged groups who define themselves by gender, age, sexual preference or geographical isolation . . . but in the contemporary European context the question is mainly concerned with minority ethnic groups" (p. 27). According to this conceptualization, community media is a communal organ that will empower the disadvantaged community to contest the "mainstream public sphere" (Forde, Foxwell & Meadows, 2003), but less as an arena for internal deliberation within the community itself. The related notion of "alternative media" also assumes that these institutions' main contribution is in giving non-elite communities of interest—e.g., workers, sexual minorities, trade unions, protest groups—a public voice (Atton, 2002).

Existing work on community media suggests that it can make a significant contribution to the social capital of a community "by publicizing local events, engaging in community 'gossip,' using local people as presenters, and projecting an approachable and accessible front to the community and listeners" (Meadows, Forde, Ewart & Foxwell, 2007, p. 2). Audiences appreciate the role community media plays in reflecting their own unique culture as embodied in music and other cultural forms as well as acquainting them with the diverse cultural landscape at their doorstep. Thus, community media can provide the necessary knowledge for participation in community activity. It can even be a vehicle for effecting small-scale social change at the local level (King & Mele, 1999, p. 620).

Moreover, the accessible front between the media institution and the community surrounding it lowers barriers to collaborative participation in media creation resulting in the media organization itself becoming a site for participation. It enables people to occasionally or continuously collaborate in the shared production of a communal good and that experience produces an increased belief in their own political efficacy within a community framework (King & Mele, 1999; Higgins, 1999).

In other words, there is evidence that the content produced by community media affirms a mediated sense of the existence of a community; exposure to it would attract additional communal participation that would strengthen ties within the community. In addition, the production process involved in community media creation is effective in promoting social ties, especially strong ones, in a community with the potential to counter the mainstream media establishment.

Most literature on community or alternative media claims that the important deliberative contest is the one conducted on the national stage by unified communities (bonded by strong ties) against the mainstream public sphere. However, it has been shown that alternative media forms can be hijacked by movements characterized by strong ties that promote an intolerant worldview (Downing, 1984, p. 8).

We would therefore suggest that a complementary view would focus more on cases where the community is not necessarily disadvantaged or homogenous, where there is a recognized communal need to put "the house in order," deliberate internally among individuals connected by weak ties, and empower the community as a unified collective. Thus, community media could enable public deliberation by constituting a public sphere both at the production and the consumption stage.

Community Television in Israel

In the late 1970s, a few television initiatives attempted to temper the centralized top-down nature of Israeli television (Shinar, 1985; Peled, 1979). In 1986, the Knesset enabled legal cable television. As a result, opportunities appeared for the transmission of some local content. Later, the cable operators were compelled to participate in financing some local broadcasts (Ben Shlomo, 1993; Avraham, 1997; Shimoni, 1999; Schejter, 1999). Since the 1980s, provisions have been made for government financing of training and production of community programming by "public institutions" (Ministry of Communication, n.d.) but the budget allotted was not considerable. In 2008, government financing of community programming amounted to less than a million U.S. dollars (Ministry of Communication, 2008). Community television has not become a dominant component of the Israeli media landscape.

Television in the Kibbutz

The kibbutz is a community originally based on socialist ideals of equality: "from each according to his ability to each according to his needs" (Barzel, 1984). The kibbutzim were at the vanguard of the Zionist project. They embodied many of the virtues (e.g., ideological commitment to non-exploitative labor, frugality) extolled by the Zionist movement.

The communal aspects of kibbutz life took place in various sites, including the dining room, the workplace, in children's dormitories, in communal showers, and in shared festivities. The improved economic conditions in Israel resulted within the kibbutz in the introduction of basic amenities to members' homes; this led to the elimination of communal showers, communal television viewing and decreased use of the dining hall. Later, children's dormitories were closed and children moved into the family unit. In the late 1980s, the kibbutzim entered a protracted period of economic crisis (Pevin, 2003). The response to this crisis, in the period studied, involved privatization of many aspects of kibbutz life, and growth in external employment (Rosolio, 1999).

Television first entered the kibbutz in the 1970s slightly later than in the general public (Tamir, 1993). The kibbutzim accepted television reluctantly without prior planning. Many feared that television would cause members to stay in their rooms and isolate them from one another (Shinar, 1985). Central communication infrastructures were introduced during the 1980s in many kibbutzim to allow the installation of telephones in members' apartments. This infrastructure facilitated the introduction of community television.

This development was also received with mixed feelings (Levitan, 1985). Many leading kibbutz members were reluctant to use CTV as a communication tool (Lanir, 1985), and feared that the production of CTV would create a powerful elite making decisions for an alienated majority. Nevertheless, some believed that television could be used to encourage participation in communal life by using it in a decentralized manner, since information would flow reciprocally among leadership and ordinary members. They hoped that such use might help the kibbutz movement cope with the growing alienation members felt toward the movement's institutions. (Bar-Meir, 1994; Levy, 1984) The hope was that the new medium would be both participatory and deliberative. However, shortly after the introduction of CTV in the kibbutz, Tamir, who headed this endeavor in his kibbutz, realized that it was difficult to air critical programming:

> We live in the same circles . . . if you criticize a kibbutz member excessively, by mistake or intentionally, the next morning you meet him in the dining room. You can't escape it. That, in fact, imposes a certain self censorship. (Tamir, 1985, p. 47)

In this study, we ask whether the deliberative goals demanding criticism and participatory goals demanding harmonious relations can co-exist in the same communication system.

Case Choice

This study focuses on a weekly program produced in a kibbutz. Nowadays, most kibbutzim have much more in common with ordinary small-scale communities in Israel and around the world than with their socialist roots.

> The most obvious change is the emergence of a society marked by social stratification, material differences and ownership. . . . Privatization and socioeconomic hierarchies have all but replaced communal/collective/cooperative living arrangements that were the hallmark of kibbutzim 50 years ago. (Richman, 2004, p. 132)

Our findings, therefore, might have some validity for other small communities existing in a capitalist world.

Moreover, while any case study necessarily involves dealing with unique socioeconomic aspects, during the 1990s and early 2000s Israel had similar experiences to other developed economies. As capitalism has superseded other forms of economic interaction and neo-liberalism has been embraced (Swirski, 2005, and Shafir & Peled, 2002, for Israel; Harvey, 2005, in general), many communities have had to contend with withering solidarity, shrinking social services, and growing individualization and inequality. The community studied here had to cope with centrifugal forces tearing communities apart all over the world. Finally, the kibbutz analyzed is situated in the center of Israel, largely sheltered from the violent aspects of the Israeli-Palestinian conflict, so Israel's unique geopolitical context is less relevant in this case.

The kibbutz was chosen because a stable group of its members managed to continuously produce a weekly community television magazine with a significant audience. In addition, the first author lives nearby and was familiar with many of the people involved in the CTV program and its development. The author visited the CTV facility with a group of students during a broadcast, an experience that stimulated him to engage in research. At the time of the study, the medium-size kibbutz had approximately 280 members. It subsisted on agriculture, industry, tourism, and a significant number of white-collar workers employed outside the kibbutz.

Like many other kibbutzim, it started a CTV endeavor in the early 1990s. The program was initiated by a core of trained enthusiasts with the tacit agreement of the kibbutz community and the leadership. Early positive reaction to programs resulted in the leadership agreeing to finance the project. A mix of content was transmitted through the internal network, including a weekly program produced by a local team for local consumption. This is the program this study focuses on. The program was broadcast live and included interviews, enabling viewers to ask questions and respond by phone during an interview, or even to enter the CTV studio to respond. Short reports, prepared in advance, were also part of the program.

Unlike the CTV efforts of many other kibbutzim, this weekly program persisted till 2004. It was cancelled after the program head resigned and no internal replacement was found. After the cancellation, the kibbutz network had no original community programming.

Method

The main set of interviews was conducted a year before the program's final installment was broadcast. A week before interviews started, the producer agreed to include an announcement urging kibbutz members to participate in the study if contacted. Interviewees were selected systematically from the kibbutz phonebook. In all, 91 members were approached. When an interviewee did not respond, the next member on the list was contacted. Sixty-eight members could not be reached, could not find time or directly refused. Twenty-three interviews were held at the interviewees' kibbutz homes; in three cases, the interviewee's partner was present and also interviewed. Five participants were current or former CTV

production crew members. Interviewees ranged in age from 16 to 73 with a mean of 41. Kibbutz tenure ranged from three to 52 years with a mean of 29.5. More than half worked in the kibbutz. Six interviewees held an official position in the kibbutz (see Appendix A). Interviews were conducted in 2003 by a team of students over a two-week period, using guidelines developed by one of the authors. The interview included seven different domains (Appendix B). In each domain, interviewers had a set of questions. They were allowed to exercise judgment and use specific questions to suit the flow of the interview. The interviewers were free to probe further, based on the interviewees' responses. Interviews were recorded and fully transcribed. In 2007, after analysis of the interviews had started, one of the authors conducted more interviews with two former senior editors (Interviewees A & B). This was done to test the validity of the initial findings. Altogether, 28 kibbutz members were interviewed.

The data was analyzed in stages. Two interviews were chosen randomly and analyzed separately to identify key themes emerging from social capital and public sphere theory. The authors discussed the key themes identified in an attempt to develop major coding themes for analyzing the remaining data. Nine key themes were developed and used to code eight additional interviews, resulting in a final list of eight codes (See Appendix C for a list of coding themes). Of these, five main themes were central to our analysis. Two themes focused on interviewee discourse that identified participation-inducing components of the program for the interviewees as audiences either through the provision of communal information (Code 3) or through the creation of communal pride (Code 4). Two additional themes identified moments in which the interviewees discussed occasional participation of the audience in the project through audience feedback (Code 6) as well as more sustained involvement in the production process (Code 5). Code 2 dealt with discourse that touched on the extent to which the program served as a deliberative arena. In keeping with the iterative nature of qualitative research (Glaser & Strauss, 1967), reading the interview transcripts led us to modify our original theoretical approach, and highlighted the potential contradiction between deliberative and participatory communication (Mutz, 2006). The two authors conducted independent analyses of eight additional interviews that were found to be in agreement. One author coded all other interviews. The five above-mentioned themes proved to be central to our theoretical investigation of the tension between participation and deliberation in a CTV project.

The analysis proceeded reductively. First, passages dealing with the main themes were identified, and grouped together. They were grouped according to theme. Sub-themes to be used in identifying key quotes were then developed.

Findings

We focus first on CTV as an informative tool and subsequently as a communal tool because these were identified by the participants as central characteristics of the project. We argue that the two characteristics are symbiotically related and hence it makes sense to consider them one after another. The third theme considers deliberation. Since the kibbutz project lacked this component, we will start by describing how the project operated and then consider functions it did not fulfill. These three themes together illustrate our argument that there is an inherent tension between participation and deliberation, as embodied in the CTV project. The community input theme is considered last because it was less

prominent in the data and because, while important, it is less directly related to our argument regarding the tension between deliberation and participation.

CTV as an Informative Tool

Among interviewees not active in production there was consensus that the program served as a source of information (Interviewee 15: "It's simply an informative tool"). According to Interviewee 1, this was reflected in the program's structure: "There is always . . . some information at the beginning of the broadcast, and at the end there's a section that invites to all sorts of events that will take place in the coming week." Interviewee 7 characterized the information as "institutional" announcements provided by kibbutz officials without any critical information. About half the participants raised similar arguments.

However, not everybody was critical of this institutional tendency. Interviewee 14 noted that "there is no substitute for a local program, for being updated about what's happening in the kibbutz." This was especially true for one respondent (Interviewee 5) and his wife, who worked outside the kibbutz and therefore found the program to be an essential source of information on local events. Interviewee 21 believed that television promoted coverage of subjects that lent themselves to visual depiction: "Always children being born, Jewish holidays or if a new building is being built, or if they've completed something new."

CTV as a Communal Tool

Some interviewees found that the many changes the kibbutz had undergone, including various privatization measures, created a functional space for community television as a bonding mechanism in a community that had lost cohesion. Many interviewees suggested that the CTV program was partially compensating for the weakened communal bonds. Interviewee 21 explained: "Today . . . the kibbutz . . . has undergone very big changes that have caused people to almost never meet . . . the program fills a growing space where people receive information about what's happening, see other people." Interviewee 2 added "it somehow manages to make it [life in the kibbutz] communal after all . . . it enables people to get acquainted and contributes to the feeling of togetherness." Interviewee 23 noted that the program "connects between groups in the kibbutz and also between different ages."

One question in the study asked respondents whether the broadcasts weakened or strengthened community pride. Several participants argued that it strengthened pride. Interestingly, they did not focus on the effect the show's content had but on the very fact that the kibbutz had a weekly broadcast while other kibbutzim did not have one. Interviewee 22 argued that "it's the regularity of the broadcast that creates pride." Some interviewees did not believe CTV strengthened community cohesion. One argued that "we in kibbutz [name] are proud also without the program" (Interviewee 14).

The informational and communal roles of the CTV program seemed to complement each other in the minds of the kibbutz members. Members felt that CTV provided information about events they might have missed, kept them in touch with the community, made them proud of it, and enabled them to participate in future activities.

CTV as a (non) Deliberative Forum

Many interviews revolved around the existence of debate on the program or lack of it. Almost all the interviewees had something substantive to say about the topic.

Most interviewees agreed that the program did not serve as a forum for debate: "There is nothing especially contentious or provocative, no things like that" (Interviewee 3). Some believed that both program producers and the audience avoided debate. One participant argued that "people don't want to touch the painful and problematic points" (Interviewee 13). Another interviewee (16a) called the program "vegetarian." In the minds of the interviewees, there seems to be a latent tension between the medium's ability to bring people together in harmony and its capacity to get them to engage in debates about issues they disagree on.

For debate to take place, substantive topics (such as housing problems the community faced during the period the interviews took place) would have had to be treated. Interviewee 18 felt the program tended to deal with superficial topics. He did not recall any conflict on air. Interviewee 5 complained:

> Everything is just information, but there is no criticism, no issues are discussed and that's missing. If something 'hot' was happening in the kibbutz, they won't bring it. They'll prefer to bring some holiday [celebration] or hold some quiz instead, and that's a shame.

Similarly, another interviewee suggested that the program "doesn't lead to serious conversations that are debated in the dining room all week" (Interviewee 20).

Another component that can serve as a basis for deliberation is criticism. However, many interviewees noted that the program was unfailingly positive. As one interviewee noted: "Sometimes I miss [conflict]. Less birds, love, peace and nature, and a bit more treatment of social issues" (Interviewee 1). Another interviewee, an anchor on the program but not actively involved in the production process, argued that the program mostly covered positive events (other interviewees mentioned kibbutz holidays, outings, etc.) and avoided clashes. She noted that the interaction between her and the kibbutz leadership is a festive and friendly occasion, not an opportunity for debate: "When there are interviews with the kibbutz secretary . . . I dress up, I arrive and I feel good, I'm having fun, the kibbutz secretary is taking his afternoon nap, he showers and appears, and that's what it sounds like" (Interviewee 10).

CTV's capacity to engender debate is predicated on the notion that there are very few content limits. One question probed this issue by asking interviewees about censorship. A small majority of the interviewees denied censorship existed. However, five claimed it did exist to a certain extent. Another five argued that the program's producers avoided dangerous topics and that this amounted to self-censorship. Interviewee 1 was most explicit: "There is nothing to censor, it is self-censored, this positive thinking doesn't enable us to touch painful places."

Four interviewees drew analogies with commercial media content to illustrate that the programming was not critical. More generally, Interviewee 7 (as well as Interviewee 16a) suggested that the program was not a professional journalistic product committed to 'delivering the truth.'

According to some participants, the program had included investigative journalism in the past. Two referred to B, the first executive producer, who led the program a few years before. They contrasted the critical nature under his leadership to the current one, noting that he dealt head-on with issues that bothered the community. "I think that B's broadcasts indeed led to the pavements and from the pavements to proposals for change. It really reached the kibbutz assembly" (Interviewee 1).

 A second interviewee (11), who had been active in the past in the production team, recalled that under B the program included a report on illegal expansion of houses, a topic that was so explosive that the secretary of the kibbutz told him that it would have been better if they had not produced such a story.

The interviewees suggested several reasons for the lack of criticism on the program. Some connected it to the producers' fear that, in such a small community, critical reports would produce unbearable social tensions.

> They [the producers] make sure that subjects defined as sensitive are not raised, not
> treated because they don't want to hurt people . . . because as it is we are very closed
> and small and that's why it's very difficult to raise subjects like that. (Interviewee 6)

B, the producer, raised a similar argument. Others (Interviewee 2) connected it to the personal preferences of B, the program's editor at the time. This argument expresses the audience's passivity: They did not view the program as an opportunity for participation, but as the product of a small production team. Another group (e.g., Interviewee 7) tied the light nature of the program to its time slot—Friday afternoon—which in Israel in general and in kibbutzim in particular is a time of transition from profane daily activities into quieter, almost sacred Sabbath relaxation characterized by fewer external intrusions. This group argued that the knowledge that children were watching the program prevented the production team from engaging contentious topics.[1]

Another latent reason for avoiding deliberation-inducing topics emerged: About half the interviewees suggested that the focus on informative reports about positive communal events was incompatible with the creation of deliberative content. This became clear from numerous passages in which interviewees shifted directly from a discussion of communal events to the lack of deliberative conflict. Interviewee 2 argued that the program "does not deal too much with subjects in disagreement. most subjects treated are consensual." Interviewee 5 added: "There are a lot of smiles, fun and holidays and it won't reflect the conflicts on 'hot' problems of the kibbutz."

Interviewee B, one of the first executive producers, recalled:

Once we brought up the issue of the failed industrial project with lots of investments abroad. We brought both persons responsible for the project, and we said there is no other way for

the kibbutz to clarify these things. . . . We opened with questions. They both agreed, they had no problem, but we had a very unpleasant feeling, we felt we went where we wanted to in this confrontation, namely find out the truth, but we felt that it was somehow inappropriate.

Here the tension between deliberative content clashed with the reality of a cohesive community in which many strong, social ties bind people together whether they like it or not, resulting in the sacrifice of deliberative interaction for the sake of communal unity.

CTV and Community Input

Finally, we wanted to gauge the extent to which the audience felt actively involved in the program's creation, and did not feel like passive viewers. To this end, the final part of the analysis focuses on the level of knowledge respondents had about the program's inner workings as well as any evidence that audience members contributed ideas to it. Involvement might include initiation of topics, feedback provision, participation as interviewees, or active contribution to reports (Tamir, 1985).

Interviews suggest that, despite its communal goals, the program was not open to broader community involvement in the creative process. Most interviewees had very little accurate information about how the production team worked, suggesting that the program was remote from most members' lives.

The majority of the interviewees were not involved even sporadically in the production of the program. Throughout its existence, the program was initiated and produced by a core group of enthusiasts, some with professional training and practice in either video production or journalism. As a result, the broader community had no idea about budgetary issues, very little knowledge of any ethical guidelines according to which the team operated, and were mostly vague about the decision-making process surrounding programming.

Thus, Interviewee 6 explained he did not know how the product was produced because he was not "on the team." One participant (16a) suggested something that was implied by the general ignorance expressed by other interviewees, namely that decision-making was centralized, in the hands of the senior editor. Very little information about those processes would seep through to the community. This does not mean that all interviewees felt emotionally distant from the program. On the contrary, some felt quite possessive about it: "I feel like it's mine even though I'm not a partner to it physically" (Interviewee 21).

On the whole, it seems that many members took a passive viewing stance vis-à-vis the program. Participants in our sample did not mention any attempt by the producers to reach out and invite participation. The interview data suggests that the program was perceived as being created by a clearly defined group of individuals for the community, but not by the community.

Discussion and Conclusion

Tension Between Participatory and Deliberative Content

The interviews suggest that there is an inherent conflict between participation and deliberation not only in inter-personal communication (Mutz, 2006), but also in community media. Producing deliberative content (such as an investigative report on kibbutz finances) created social tensions that the CTV volunteers, as members in a small, dense community with an overlapping network of ties, could not bear. Producing content that reflects community life and potentially induces further direct participation, content that celebrates uncontroversial aspects of kibbutz life, easily consumed most of the airtime, for two reasons. First, people enjoy seeing themselves and their family and friends on TV—hence, the producers were responding to authentic audience demand. Second, producing uncontroversial content did not carry a social price for the CTV team. This case study suggests that designing a CTV effort that reinforces strong ties by featuring communal activities is easy, while producing deliberative content that might expand the stock of weak ties in the community is more difficult; doing both simultaneously is even harder. CTV production crew members testified to the difficulty of producing deliberative content in a project disposed to produce content tending to promote direct and uncritical participation in community activities. These findings lend this inherent conflict between deliberative and participatory content representational validity (Jamieson & Cappella, 1996) by showing that audience members can intuitively identify this contradiction in the media they consume.

Mass Media in Communal Clothing?

Also implied by the interviewees are the traditional reciprocal positions the program and its audience had taken; the former produced by a clearly demarcated group of dedicated "community professionals," the latter consuming (or not) this content in a mostly passive manner. This CTV effort was not open to broad community participation. Other studies (Meadows et al., 2007; King & Mele, 1999; Higgins, 1999) have indicated that continuous participation by a broad segment of the community in the production of community media is the central means for it to flourish. In this study, the interface between the community media project and the community was stunted. The project was not organized in a way that allowed the broader community to easily participate in media production. Most viewers were happy the program existed and were probably sorry it was discontinued, yet were unwilling to make any effort to maintain its existence because that had never been expected of them. They did not conceive themselves as having an active role in shaping the CTV project. They did know how to create content or whom to approach with suggestions. In general, community members lacked the technical knowledge needed to produce content and the organizational knowledge required to maintain the project when the "community professionals" had had enough.

The establishment acted in a similar manner. As long as volunteers performed the work admirably, the establishment was supportive, but when crisis occurred, it did not go out of its way to seek a replacement for the producer because it had been conditioned by the program's early success.

Furthermore, had the program taken a more deliberative approach, maybe it would have been a greater loss for the community when it disappeared. Deliberative content may have made at least a significant minority care enough about the program to take steps to save it.

Boasts of the high ratings the show enjoyed were revealing and, paradoxically, a harbinger of its failure. CTV production crew members were using mass media criteria to measure community media. While exposure is a central criterion of success for commercial mass media, the degree to which a community intermingles with its own media is the main criterion of success for community media. At its best, CTV allows the harmonious blending of deliberation and participation at the communal level that is so often elusive in democratic societies. It can reinforce both strong and weak ties in a community for community media producers and consumers alike, thus achieving fuller participation, "a process where each individual member of a decision-making body has equal power to determine the outcome of decisions" (Pateman cited in Carpentier & DeCleen, 2009, p. 2). The project we analyzed lacked both deliberative elements and opportunities for active participation in the production of the program. Hence, it did not occupy a crucial position as the enabler of full participation. It provided only a "minimalist" mode of participation (Carpentier & DeCleen, 2009, p. 5) and was disbanded by a community that rightly did not see it as essential for its well-being.

Applied Solutions

Leadership support. One way to salvage a media endeavor in a small community is by leadership providing monetary and social backing to the program while committing to non-interference. We are essentially echoing Coleman's (1988) argument that during periods of decline in social capital the state must step in to provide resources needed to maintain services the community requires, and applying it to the realm of community media. Interviewee A, a former producer, suggested that, had some significant wages been offered for coordinating the program instead of partial remuneration while most work was carried out by volunteers, it would have been easier to find substitutes.

Setting up a CTV network. Hiring outside parties less sensitive to internal criticism to collaborate with local amateurs could be a complementary step. Individuals from the outside—for instance, video professionals from neighboring kibbutzim—would be less constrained by strong internal ties kibbutz members have, while still possessing enough weak ties to help produce relevant deliberative and participatory content. Outside participants would be able to criticize without risking ostracism by fellow members who might be their supervisors at work or parents of their children's friends. Positive experience with such external hiring might then be expanded into a more extensive CTV exchange network developing between neighboring communities and help each community's CTV endeavors to enjoy the twin, albeit sometimes contradictory, blessings of weak and strong ties. Such a network would also have the additional benefit of keeping sister communities in touch and better able to cope with common ecological, economic and other regional challenges. The network could allow the various kibbutz efforts to realize economies of scale by sharing equipment, thus reducing production costs.

Enhanced community participation in media production. Finally, more thought should be invested in involving many more individuals in community television production. First, this can be

achieved by producing programs that invite regular input from audiences while being aired and by inviting the audience to become producers (Meadows et al., 2007, chap. 7). Second, providing applied lessons in video production and allowing less regimented use of video facilities (King & Mele, 1999) would lower barriers to participation and produce diverse deliberative content less tied to "professional" production modes. Ensuring broader participation in media production could also resolve the tension between participation and deliberation by spreading the risk inherent in creating deliberative content among broader segments of the community.

An especially promising segment of the audience that might be more easily invited to become critical producers is teenagers and young adults. Interviewee B suggested that a concerted effort could be made to attract younger individuals who have the time and might be more free to produce more deliberative content. This solution is also predicated on the notion that younger members are less connected to the core social networks of the community, yet still invested in community life. They would therefore feel less wary of producing content criticizing the kibbutz status quo. In a similar vein, Liebes (1992) found that high-school students were willing to criticize their school in stories intended for radio or television broadcast. This approach could constitute a media literacy project of sorts that would benefit both the young participants and the community.

In a sense, we suggest setting up a public broadcasting model on a very small scale (as leadership will provide public funds without intervening in daily decisions) with core individuals, perhaps only one, hired from the outside. This effort will have to involve young age groups and others who would help produce content, on an occasional or continuous basis, that will enable critical debate. These suggestions are relevant to kibbutz CTV and many other communities endeavoring to harness media technologies to preserve their structural (participatory) and intellectual (deliberative) integrity.

Note:
[1] It is no coincidence that Friday afternoon and early evening national TV channels are dominated by Jewish heritage, cooking and lightweight talk shows, a genre to which the kibbutz program also belonged.

Appendix A: Interviewee Sample

ID	Years in the kibbutz	Video Production crew? (Y/N)	Official position in the kibbutz? (past or present)	Age	Working outside the kibbutz	Working within the kibbutz	Gender
1	20			43	+		Female
2	3			26		+	Female
2A	26			30		+	Male
3	24		+	24	+		Female
4	16	+		16		+	Male
5	11			36		+	Female
6	37			37		+	Female
7	17			43	+		Female
8	52			73		+	Female
9	29			54		+	Male
10	37	+	+	37	+		Female
11	41			41	+		Female
12	22			22		+	Male
13	47	+		47	+		Female
14	30			30	+		Male
15	42		+	61		+	Female
16	40		+	60	+		Female
16A	40			61		+	Male
17	19			19		+	Female
18	28			28	+		Female
19	15			42		+	Female
20	4			30		+	Female
21	52			52		+	Female
22	34		+	52	+		Male
23	15			38		+	Female
23A	46		+	46		+	Male
A	28	+		48	+		Female
B	51	+	+	55		+	Male
Total		5	7		11	17	

Appendix B: Interview Topics

A.   Personal data and background of interviewee

B.   Video broadcasts perceived as reflecting the kibbutz

C.   Contribution of video broadcasts to society and community

D.   Influence of video broadcasts on change in the community

E.   Community television as a "watchdog of democracy"

F.   Who is the actual audience of the CTV program and what does this mean for the community?

G.   Special questions for the CTV team

Appendix C: List of Coding Themes

1.   CTV dealing with personal issues

2.   CTV dealing (or not) with conflict

3.   CTV providing basic information about people and events

4.   CTV empowering the community and creating communal pride

5.   Viewers' involvement in the CTV production process

6.   Feedback channels between audience and production team

7.   References to CTV medium characteristics

8.   References to specific individuals active in the CTV process
        Another theme centering on professional and public visions of CTV overlapped with
        theme 5 and was therefore merged into it.

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