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Research Paper

# *Publics, Participants & Policy – Examining Community Broadcasting in Austria*

*"Participation is what will save the planet." -Pete Seeger*

## 1) Introduction

Community radio and TV broadcasting in Austria is recognized, legalized and supported by law. Thousands of Austrian citizens devote their time and energy as volunteer participants in 14 radio and 3 television community broadcasting organizations that are regulated and funded by government in a cooperative and collaborative environment. Scholars, advocates and practitioners and regulators in the field of community broadcasting often mention Austria with the most successful community media environments and community broadcasting organizations worldwide. Yet, in numerous other countries of Europe and across the globe, community broadcasting organizations struggle to survive in the face of social, political, and economic challenges. This project examines the Austrian case, exploring the relationships among participants, publics, and policy; with the purpose of gaining understanding of community broadcasting through a mixture of qualitative investigation and quantitative measurement. So what are the priorities of these participants – mostly volunteer producers – who commit their time and effort to this particular endeavor of producing content for community broadcasting channels? Sociological theory suggests that these individuals, in a rational deployment of their social agency, seek utility of their interests, goals, and ideals; some motivated perhaps in reaction to the critical theorists' dominant structural paradigm, some others perhaps simply as a means of self expression or development. Community media theorists suggest that the makeup of community media organizations are a direct reflection of the societies in which they operate (Tacchi, Slater, & Hearn, 2003), and that those societal contexts are exhibited in the motivations of the participants who comprise the community broadcasters. Examining this population of Austrian community broadcasting participants and the

organizations they comprise, several important research questions arise:

*-What philosophies, attributes, and outputs of community broadcasting are most important to volunteer producers / participants in Austria?*

*-Can the results inform community broadcasting policy in Austria, and by extension, the development of policy in the Czech Republic?*

*-How effective are various theoretical models of media systems in describing the community broadcasting phenomenon?*

*-What elements of the research methodology are applicable as an effective tool for examining and comparing other community broadcasting environments?*

Commensurate with its status as a generally little-known media form, the community media sector worldwide is also a relatively under-researched phenomenon. While some quantitative studies have surveyed community media directors, and others have surveyed regulators, listeners and viewers, few research projects have specifically examined community broadcasting producers. Hence, this project deploys a mixed-model of research methodology, with the primary focus on a quantitative examination of community broadcasting participants utilizing an online survey to generate data to quantify the values, priorities, motivations, and demographics of participants in community broadcasting. The results and subsequent conclusions derived from the research and compiled in the research paper hopefully will provide a clear and substantial linkage among the relevant theories underpinning community broadcasting ethos, the motivations and priorities of community broadcasting participants, their relationship to problem of efficacy and sustainability of community broadcasting, and the implications for the role of community broadcasting in a pluralistic democratic society. This project asks questions, explores theories, examines phenomena, builds models, generates data, processes results, answers questions, develops conclusions, suggests applications, and assesses impacts with the aim to provide a basis for similar research of community media structures and philosophies, and perhaps have value as applied research to the stakeholders of community media in the subject countries and beyond. In addition, the results could specifically inform the development of community media in the Czech Republic, which neither legally recognizes nor supports community broadcasting.

## 2. Theoretical Perspectives

**Social Representations Theory**

This project deals with a number of phenomena relating to the activities of individuals and groups in their social context. Among those is the idea of social representation – that collection of values, traditions, expectations, beliefs and practices common to a group or group of groups comprising a community. The Austrian policy guidelines – in similarity to many other media regulations worldwide – stipulate that social representation be an integral component of community broadcasting philosophy and practice. In addition, one of the main points of interest in the construction of a community media matrix in this project is the importance of social (and cultural) representation. Thus, social representation forms a basis for the epistemological approach to this research, and social representations theory a foundation for understanding the actions of participants in the Austrian community broadcasting environment.

Social representations theory sees social phenomena as not simply the domain of the individual's action, or the structure of society, but more intrinsically linked to the primacy of culture, tradition, and values upon the motivations and formations of processes. It visualizes both the individual and society in a dialectical relationship in which he/she is both a product of society, as well as an active participant (Augostinos, Walker & Donaghue 2006). This phenomenon was first named by the French social psychologist Serge Moscovici in his groundbreaking study on the public's view of psychoanalysis. In that study he observed the differing contexts in which communicative action was taken, and the varying results; which offers an interesting parallel to this study of communicative action by Austrian participants in community broadcasting. According to Moscovici, social representation is the description "*of a social object by the community for the purpose of behaving and communicating*" (Moscovici 1963), and that the object becomes reality stemming from the community's belief in it. He argued: "*the subject and object are not regarded as functionally separate. An object is located in a context of activity since it is what it is because it is in part regarded by the person or the group as an extension of their behavior*" (Moscovici 1973).

The text that most directly connects the theory of social representations with my research questions and methodology is when he further elaborates on the subject connecting it with communicative action: "*social representation is a system of values, ideas and practices with a twofold function: first to*

*establish an order which will enable individuals to orient themselves in their material and social world and to master it; and secondly to enable communication"* (Wagner, Duveen, et al. 1999). Moscovici's work spawned a series of following theoretical and empirical works that lead up to and inform this project. Bridging the theoretical divide between functionalism and critical theory, we can locate the theory of social representations as having components of both – deploying action in different pursuits. On the one hand, constructivist theorists argue that social representation is a form of group or community building through the process (Midgley 1978). Others from a conflict theory orientation argue that social representation is a main conduit of activity that forms a part of the public sphere (Bandura 1986). Either way, these theories of social representation form a solid basis from which to build upon the subsequent research questions posed in this project.

Social representations may also be seen to be a critical component of group identities and community development philosophies, which will also be tested in the research methodology of this project. This constructivist approach to relating social representations to community building is grounded in social practices and group dynamics, which are important for understanding the importance of community development in the process of communicative action (Markova 1997). In imagining the process of motivational development among participants in a social endeavor, cooperation and collaboration must follow a preceding mindset – not an individual mindset of group of individual mindsets, but in fact an understanding across minds, which legitimizes the meaning of group action. Community media is often identified in terms of groups with a collective ideal or agenda fueled by their commonality of location, culture, interest, or history; social representations theory carries these motivated groups through to discourse and action. Thus, in the case of community broadcasters, this logical linear progression model (*cultural / historical understanding of meaning > organizational development > discourse > action*) appears to be an appropriate model.


**Terms Associated with Community Media**

Utilizing a mixed-method methodological approach with the primary method a quantitative research survey, a series of terms representing the meanings of the various concepts and phenomena in question are deployed as the variables in this research. Addressing several of the project research questions, these terms will be among those included on the survey instrument asking respondents to quantify the importance of the terms as components of the community broadcasting phenomenon. Thus the various definitions, attributes, typologies, and philosophies related to community media represented by said terms take on a special significance, and are discussed in this section. A descriptive account of these terms is essential to understanding the ethos of community media, and supports the research by

providing the frame from which a visualization of the phenomenon can be constructed. For this project, terms often mentioned as essential components of the body of knowledge about community media are gleaned from international academic, advocacy, and media regulatory texts, operationalization interviews of stakeholders, and documents credited to community media organizations themselves. Also, my personal and professional experience as an advocate, researcher, teacher, practitioner, and expert consultant in the mass media and community media fields informs the definitions and descriptions herein. In addition, and importantly for this research, attributes extracted from the actual policy documents of the Austrian media regulator will be examined and explored for meaning and relevance, then tested for importance in the opinion of participants.

The classic academic debate of qualitative vs. quantitative research methodology is present in the design of this research project, and also factors into the treatment of the theoretical perspective.

In defining the phenomenon and positioning it for examination in this research, community broadcasters can be seen to exhibit a *repertoire of meanings* (Meadows et al 2006) which presumably are constructed by the individual participants and by extension the organizations they populate. While acknowledging the consistency of meaning across boundaries that is assumed by my post-positivist worldview,  the discussion of these concepts in this section supports the research by providing additional context for the meanings of the terms be quantified and statistically analyzed. Some initial qualitative interviews provided additional depth to the understanding of meaning and legitimacy of these terms; and while an interpretivist argument could be made against their universality, for this project they are assumed to be sufficiently understood by the participants and applicable to the methodology. Some important terms that do not meet this minimum threshold of participants' understanding are excluded from the survey, but are components of theoretical approaches discussed later in this chapter.

By no means an all-inclusive list, the terms described below are either directly specified by the Austrian stakeholders, or among the those that constitute a significant portion of community media discourse, and therefore are included in the research methodology to address the research questions, generate results, and hopefully add to said current body of knowledge in the sector.


**Terms extracted from Policy Documents**

Media policy and regulation reflect the overall structure of social systems, constituting an important component of a pluralistic and functional democratic society. The policy makers themselves and the practitioners they regulate are at once also members of their own individual and group social networks, which can influence their goals and actions. Publics are the groups and communities that receive media

from mainstream sources such as commercial and public service outlets, and who also produce media through participation in community media forms. These publics and the social groups that comprise them may have much or little actual connection outside of the media frame, but inside the frame they exhibit a shared understanding of meanings, actors, and processes of media production, delivery, and reception, all managed on behalf of the state by the media regulator. Thus, the specific terms representing the above-mentioned phenomena are embedded in the guidelines regulating the non-commercial community broadcasting sector of Austria. Through the process of consultation with Austrian community media expert stakeholders, the various policy documents were mined for relevant terms. The result was from 5 policy documents 38 terms were considered for inclusion on the survey. This chapter examines theoretical perspectives and definitions for some of these selected terms, and along with other useful terms, integrates them into the various models presented.

Austria Private Radio Law 2001

*-relations to area of distribution*

*-objective*

*-representation of public life*

*-representation of cultural life*

*- representation of economic life*

*- human dignity*

*-fundamental (human) rights*

*-accepted journalistic practices or ethics*

Austria Private Radio Law 2010

*-open access, no advertising, not-for profit*

KOMM Fund for Non-Commercial Broadcasting

*-Diverse and high quality programming*

*-Austrian culture, Austrian and European consciousness*

*-Information and education*

*-Training and education for production and technical skills*

KOMM Policy Guidelines for Funding of Non-Commercial Broadcasting

*- Open access*

- *Freedom of expression*

- *Participation*

- *Non-commercial and no advertisement*

- *Transparency*

- *Independent*

- *Against discrimination and for solidarity*

- *Human dignity*

- *Integration and Cooperation with local society*

- *Representation of Austrian Languages*

- *Civil society including maginalised groups*

- *Fostering European identity*

- *Media literacy & skills*

- *Networking of associations and initiatives*

- *Live coverage of local/regional events*

*-Information*

*-Arts & Culture*

*-Education*

*-Science & Research*

*-Economy*

*-Religion & History*

*-Equality*

*-Generations & Health*

*-Politics*

*-Sport*

**Common Terms not Present in Austria policy guidelines**

The strength of the linkage between citizen media producer and democratic society is often seen as an indicator of the efficacy of media policy, especially in nations where community broadcasting is found. The first of four research questions for this project asks what can we learn about community broadcasting from participants. To accomplish that stated task, it's essential to include common terms usually associated with the community broadcasting ethos as recognized by stakeholders including

practitioners, regulators, legislators researchers and more. While the composition of Austrian community broadcasting guidelines appropriately includes many of these terms, it interestingly excludes several that fit the above description.  If important terms commonly associated with community media are excluded from the policy documents, what does that say about their legitimacy? Following accordingly then, relevant terms important to understanding community media but not included in the policy guidelines are listed below. The inclusion and subsequent exclusion of important terms informs the project research question about community broadcast policy in Austria, so the following descriptions of terms excluded from policy documents add depth of meaning and context to the project, and seeks to inform and to address the research questions.

*-Democratic*
*-Volunteer*
*-Gender balance*
*-Radical*


**Comparative Media Systems Theory**

One method for describing and explaining the community media system in Austria is by comparison with other systems in other countries. The use of comparative methodology in sociology can help us understand phenomena, and also how they relate to other phenomena (Durkheim 1965).  By comparing differing media systems, the similarities and differences enable researchers to get a more unbiased view, leading to a more unbiased understanding. Furthermore, this comparative technique can and does form the basis for normative application of the methodology, providing opportunities for informing and influencing the development of media across traditional socio-political boundaries, and may inform that very process as I propose new community media legislation for the Czech Republic.


The Mediterranean Polarized Pluralist model

Characterized by a strong tradition of ideological expression the mainstream mass media in this model is heavily influenced by political parties and the church, leading to a top-down model of media power resting outside government, and very low professionalism. Community media in the southern tier of Europe is a model of oppositional ideological broadcasters predictably formed as a result of the dysfunctional media environment they inhabit. Poorly regulated and poorly funded, many of the community radio and television stations of Spain, Italy and Greece are dominated by political and

ideological motivations resulting in semi-anarchical organizations producing highly ideological content. In these societies with a tradition of government disfunction and highly charged grassroots political activism often against the ruling institutions, community media tens to reflect that environment, operating with similarly political ideological priorities, organizational structures, and activist programming. As a result, there is likely to be less emphasis on social/cultural representations, community development, and alternative entertainment output. Across the region in this polarized pluralist model, these broadcasters struggle to survive in the face of semi-anarchic organizational structures, ineffective media policies, and dearth of sustainable funding sources.

The North/Central European Democratic Corporatist model

Commonly associated with societies rooted in the traditions of the protestant work ethic of Max Weber (2002), the states including Germany, Austria, the Netherlands, and the Nordic tier all exhibit strong elements of corporatist governance. This successful integration of public and private interests in the media sphere also extends to the community broadcasting sector. Community broadcasting legislation and regulation is seen as generally effective, funding is relatively adequate, and community broadcasters are a recognized part of a functioning public sphere of access and participation.

With highly functional governments, effective policy, access to terrestrial frequencies, and sustainable government funding schemes, most community broadcasters of the corporatist model are well-positioned to flourish and provide a real path for participants to pursue their interests. In this corporatist model generally free from political instability and mobilization, it is assumed that those interests will tend towards social/cultural representations, community development, and alternative forms of information and entertainment.

The North Atlantic Liberal model

This model generally assigned to the Anglo American states of Canada, United States of America, United Kingdom and Ireland, is a grouping with many similarities, beginning with a very well-developed commercial media ethos. In this liberal environment the third sector of community broadcasting has gained a foothold and is indeed growing with respect to it commercial and public service brethren. In Ireland, Canada and the UK, community radio and television enjoy access to frequencies, recognition in law, effective regulation, and some minimal funding opportunities. In the USA, community radios legally operate on high-power and low-power FM frequencies, with very limited government integration or funding support. In the UK and Ireland, community TV mostly resembles its radio counterparts: a mixed model of political, social, cultural and community

components constitute their organizational and programming philosophies. The North Atlantic Liberal model describes environments mostly conducive to the development of effective community broadcasting sectors, marked by legal recognition, access to spectrum, effective policies, and very limited funding. With exceptions, these  community broadcasting participants have opportunities for a minor role in the mass media public sphere.

The Czech Republic

As an adjunct, the Czech Republic because of its shared history with Germany and especially Austria, could be mentioned in both the corporatist and liberal groupings. Despite its almost 50-year term as an authoritarian state, since the advent of democracy in 1989, Czech society resembles its neighboring Austria in the areas of relative social, economic and political stability. However, the Czech Republic has implemented a media system of mainstream broadcasters in the commercial and public service realm that distinctly differs from Austria's corporatist model, and resembles more closely the North Atlantic Liberal model of the United States. That model of liberal media policy including a very strong and broad commercial broadcasting ethos, coupled with a functional public service broadcasting segment was brought by American consultants in the formative days immediately following the Velvet Revolution when the nascent Czech independent media sector was born. The result for community broadcasting was that it was not included as a component of this new media pluralism in the Czech Republic, and despite the semi-corporatist environment similar to its European neighbors, community broadcasting is still not present in Czech terrestrial broadcasting today.

As discussed above, similar to their counterparts in commercial broadcasting, the socio-political environment in which community broadcasters operate can have a profound influence, creating certain predictable forms of the phenomenon depending on the societal model. This resulting ideal type of community media environment and community media organizations are populated by community media participants, who presumably are similarly affected by their socio-political environment. In addition, Hallin & Mancini's models of Western media systems also take into account a number of factors which directly inform the development of media policy and regulation, which as they note, also tends also to be a reflection of the dominant societal paradigm. From this frame of media systems, the project will drill down to the subset community media systems, in search of a relevant basis to understand the ethos of community broadcasting in Austria, and noting that Austria is a prime example of the corporatist model this project examines the Austrian case through its research questions and methodology. The results and conclusions may serve to inform the validity of this comparative media

systems approach as an effective tool for examining community broadcasting, and contribute to the body of overall knowledge about community media.

**Community Broadcasting Matrix of Theoretical Approaches**

Upon hearing the term "community media", people often mistakenly assume that the community and/or the community broadcaster represent a single, clearly-defined group; with the output and organization limited to serving only members of that group. These exclusive groups and their broadcasting organizations do in fact exist in the community broadcasting universe, especially in environments utilizing low-power broadcasting, and also minority communities. The overwhelming majority of community broadcasting however, is populated by and directed towards communities comprised of multiple social groups with varying identities and paradigms. Broadcasters that arise from these *community of communities* reflect the multi-faceted nature of their diverse communities; some by their large coverage areas of entire cities, others simply by their primary commitment to access and diversity. Accordingly, these multi-faceted organizations are not dedicated to a single target group, nor are they committed only to a certain attribute of philosophy; and their model of community broadcasting reflects that variety. or organization would be originated and populated by community groups and participants with the same or similar mixed model constitution as the community they represent. This "ideal type" of media form is known as a "mixed-model" community media organization, combining a variety of attributes and functions under one roof. The mixed model of community broadcasting is the subject of examination by noted community media scholars Nico Carpentier, Rico Lie and Jan Servaes to categorize community broadcasting environments & organizations according to a matrix of theoretical approaches. Their work has enabled subsequent researchers to examine community media in a participatory context, which is especially relevant for this project.

Based on notions of participation and investigations into the process by which individuals associate around themes into groups which become media, Carpentier, Lie and Servaes (2008) have constructed an extremely valuable contribution to the way we understand community broadcasting – its roots, formulations, and motivations. Their positioning of theoretical approaches to community media creates a cross section of frames by which models of the phenomenon can be classified. These models are composed of elements representing the many attributes and philosophies discussed in detail in this project. Here, these various elements are grouped together to create a model describing not just a media organization, but a means by which participants, listeners/viewers, and other stakeholders may aggregate their priorities into a single or mixed model of community media. While some individuals

have but a singular overriding purpose and objective for their motivation to participate in community broadcasting, most stakeholders see a form of social action which aspires to address several important social issues in a mixed model structure. Certainly there are primary motivations that hold greater importance than secondary motivations, and this research methodology will measure those for participants in Austrian community broadcasting, but like Carpentier et al, I expect the results to yield an affinity for those participants, and perhaps the organizations they populate, to reflect this idea of a mixed model of social action priorities. While I do not dispute the accuracy and theoretical value of their original model, they acknowledge the overlap and lack of mutual exclusivity, and I build upon that to argue that the functionality of community media can take a multitude of variations, and combinations of forms, some of which I will propose for examination.

The Carpentier, Lie & Servaes matrix is presented below in its original graphical form, with beginning with frames of "media centered" vs. society centered" and "Essentialist vs. Relationist" forming the matrix rows and columns. While these are interesting topics for discussion, and important to overall understanding of the community broadcasting phenomenon, this project focuses primarily on the construction of the various approaches, not how they are situated in these additional frames.

### Positioning the four theoretical approaches

| | Media centred | Society centred |
|---|---|---|
| **Autonomous identity of CM (Essentialist)** | *Approach I:* Serving the community | *Approach III:* Part of civil society |
| **Identity of CM in relation to other identities (Relationalist)** | *Approach II:* An alternative to mainstream | *Approach IV:* Rhizome |

(Carpentier, et al., 2003a)

**Loeser Matrix**

Building upon the authors' ideas, and incorporating other important elements I have constructed a variant matrix of community broadcasting models that at its core retains versions of the primary

attributes, and incorporates additional elements to create a new mixed model of community media typology. This new form cuts across various approaches to formulate a new, perhaps more *participant centric* model with greater value placed upon what I see are the ways in which participants aggregate values and visualize the typologies of community broadcasting. Hence, the new model will be tested in this research methodology by surveying participants about its relative importance in the context of other attributes, philosophies and elements. Differing from Carpentier, Lie and Servaes' matrix with its four quadrants, this new approach might be better expressed graphically as a Venn diagram, perhaps with overlapping areas contributing to the other's effect and influencing their direction.

There are five primary functions of community broadcasting that I argue represent the most important for constructing a baseline model from which researchers and stakeholders of all stripes can utilize to enhance their understanding of the community broadcasting phenomenon. These five conceptual functions:

***Community Development***

***Alternative to the Mainstream***

***Social/Cultural Representation***

***Political/Ideological Representation***

***Access to audiences***

*A*ll the terms have meanings that vary across social, political and economic spectrums, but in my post-positivist worldview, they can be assembled into a research question and measured quantitatively using survey methodology. Thus, this project will examine the relative importance of these functions as reported by participants, and then offer conclusions about the appropriateness of the newly suggested matrix in the context of Austrian community broadcasting. My intent here is not to duplicate previous models, but to adapt and evolve concepts into new innovative forms. Perhaps if this project is deemed academically and methodologically acceptable, then a follow-up study could address this comparative opportunity. In any case, I value all approaches, as they contribute to the overall understanding of the phenomenon of community broadcasting, and will proceed with this project which I hope will generate results that are methodologically sound, and offer conclusions that effectively address the research questions posed.

# 3. Methods

This project addressed a number of critical concerns when beginning the process of designing and implementing a research methodology. Much care was taken in defining the problem, understanding the variables, and identifying the methods, to a plan for collecting data that fits a logical progression, and finally well-considered tactics for analyzing the results. Attention was also paid to creating a linear progression throughout the project, connecting the theory, questions and methods in a harmonized fashion (Kropivnik 2011), so that the project fulfills its purpose.

The mixed methods of qualitative and quantitative analysis deployed in this study are described and detailed at length; starting with the initial qualitative interviews. This interview function is divided into two phases: first facilitating operationalization of the study, second informing the design and content of the quantitative web survey. The quantitative portion begins with operationalization of the theoretical concepts into a web survey to generate and collect numerical data, followed by the data assembly and organization. Accepted statistical procedures are deployed for analysis of the data and answering the research questions. The quantitative methodology for this research project followed basic and accepted quantitative methods of collecting, processing, displaying and analyzing data. Next, a discussion of inferences of the results positioning the study in relation to the body of knowledge about community media participation, followed by a description of the plan for disseminating the results, and a self-evaluation of the research process completed the dissertation. From the selection of a topic to the delivery of results and conclusions, this chapter describes the research methodology in a semi-narrative fashion through the lens of research design, and seeks to accurately provide the reader with the step-by-step process by which the project is executed. This format is intended to provide an effective means by which the researcher can demonstrate the academic expertise to fulfill the requirements for awarding of a PhD certification. In addition, it is hoped that this detailed account of the methodologies provides a valid working template for replication by future researchers, and a baseline of reliable knowledge for potential as applied research.


Policy Documents

The procedure for document analysis process was to assemble the relevant documents, which was expertly informed by the stakeholder interviews and subsequent email exchanges. These documents and the laws & regulations they mandate, are managed by the media regulator in Austria: the Rundfunk & Telecom Regulierungs - GmbH, and are posted on the bureau's website. Thus, the access to the

documents was facilitated, as was the gleaning relevant concepts and terms through manual coding process. The relevant terms that represent values, priorities, attributes and typologies of community broadcasting law, policy, organizations, participants and audiences are presented in both the earlier chapter, and in the methodology as a representative sample of all possible terminology. In addition, the documents examined are a representative sampling frame of the pertinent policy texts for this project.

Because this project methodology is focused on merely identifying the important terms in the texts as variables, and therefore does not require their measurement, the coding process was somewhat simplified. The coding process utilized a combination of "open" and "selected" coding approaches. As noted in the research design update, subsequent interviews revealed the document "Guidelines for Non-Commercial Broadcasting Fund' that provided a rich source of terms suitable for inclusion in the methodology. In addition, open coding methodology was applied to the documents where appropriate, searching for terms and concepts not expected by the relevant theory and pre-selected methodology. These unexpected variables were then processed as candidates for inclusion on the web survey, as they are indeed attributes of the media law mandate.

### 3.4.2 Sampling

The sample method consisted mainly of a random sample of the general population of community broadcasting participants contacted through organizations' email lists. While by no means an exhaustive census of the real population of community broadcast participants, the email lists are for the purposes of this research considered the best option available to achieve a representative sample with a minimum acceptable level of randomness. The second level of sample deployment was a stratified sampling procedure at the organizational level, combining the logic of simple randomness with the prior knowledge of the subjects. Because the email lists are subsets according to organization, then this provided a stratum that covered a distinct internal variation of the population, creating an additional opportunity for statistical comparison.

### 3.4.3 Web Survey

The research design called for a web survey of participants in Austrian community broadcasting. As discussed previously, the web survey was part of a systematic strategy to insure the response level of participants in the study achieved the minimum threshold for valid statistical analysis. To achieve that goal, the project deployed an outreach effort to enlist cooperation and support from decision makers who then co-promoted the study and partnered with the researcher in executing the email invitation campaign. A web survey was selected for this project because of its advantages over the traditional

mail-based survey instruments, in that a web surveys enabled a greater amount of data to be collected and accessed on a remote and convenient platform with real time quality control, and participants could be easily stimulated to increase response rates.

The research utilized the academic research software program and site EnKlikAnketa (1KA) developed by the Department of Social Informatics and Methodology at the Faculty of Social Science, University of Ljubljana. The respondents accessed in the web survey through the use of a computer or mobile device connected online using a browser to reach the web survey site. The software and site are accessed free of charge and designed by academics for scientific research. The EnKlikAnketa survey tool provides statistical computation of the survey results, allowing for a report that includes sums, averages, and standard deviations in the basic form. Utilizing these basic functions to provide initial results, the project will then consider higher-level multivariate statistical computations.

## 3.4.1 Data Type

The project sought to design the data collection method with the data analysis method in mind. Between those two phases lie the organization and display of the data, which was integrated into the overall design of the quantitative methodology by organizing the data in variables. The variables collected are themselves the product of the mixed-method sequential process which previously connected the theory and research questions through the operationalization of concepts into the basic variable units. Those concepts were first reduced into the values and priorities ostensibly mandated by the subject law and policy documents; also characteristics of individual participants and centering on their expected values, priorities and motivations for participating in Austrian community broadcasting. These dual-sourced variables come together on the web survey for purpose of generating numerical values based on respondents' answers. Variables also include the demographics of the participants, including age, gender, experience, organization, and more supplied by a series of questions in the demographics section of the web survey.

As mentioned, the numerous variables will each be represented by statements to which the respondents can assign a numerical value. That numerical data will represent their values of importance assigned to the statements, each supporting a particular value, priority or motivation for their participation in community broadcasting. Utilizing the Likert scale of 1-5, respondents will have a simple choice - with one and five act as anchors, and the 3 as a safe neutral choice. These numerical values, along with the demographic variables form the raw data set of the quantitative methodology.

# 4. Results & Conclusions

**General Results**

-17 Operationalization interviews with Austrian stakeholders

-38 terms extracted from 5 policy documents

-6 terms from other sources

-Project website in 3 languages http://diss-website.webnode.com/

-Invitation emails from VFRO and broadcast organizations

-Online survey in 3 languages with 16 questions and 119 variables https://www.1ka.si//admin/survey//

-624 responses (382 eligible)

-Representative sample by demographic parameters (excepting youth, alt languages, and 2 organizations)

**RQ#1** *What philosophies, attributes, and outputs of community broadcasting are most important to volunteer producers / participants in Austria?*

**Results**

-Well-educated, highly employed, older demographic

-High priorities: *culture, independence, inclusion, respect of human rights*

-Low priorities: *economics, localism, religion, volunteerism, sport, Austro/Euro identity*

-Strongest agreements: *inclusion, respect human rights, diverse opinions, culture*

-Weakest agreements: *journalistic values, radicalism, gender balance, alternativism*

**Conclusions**

-Actors in a rational pursuit of utility

-Structurally functional system of corporativist society

-Paradoxically borne out of conflict and repression

-Citizens deploying communicative action in the broadcasting form of public sphere

**RQ#2** *Can the results inform community broadcasting policy in Austria, and by extension, the development of policy in the Czech Republic?*

**Results**

-Average of all policy terms = 3.60 (above the Likert midpoint)

-Low scores: *local, economics, journalistic values, sport, health, religion*

-Items not included in policy docs actually scored low: v*olunteer, gender, experimental, impact*

-"*Non-Commercial Funding Guidelines*" terms scored well

**Conclusions**

-Austrian policy is in general alignment with participants' paradigm

-Some attributes high, some low, some not existing

-An endorsement of the democratic value of Austrian corporativist policy development process

**RQ#3** *How effective are various theoretical models of media systems in describing the community broadcasting phenomenon?*

**Results**

Loeser Matrix terms

-*Community Development  4.0*

-*Alternative to the Mainstream  3.5*

-*Social / Cultural  4.1*

-*Political/Ideological  3.7*

-*Access to Audiences  3.9*

**Conclusions**

-Scores seem to reflect priorities expected in Austrian corporativist paradigm suggested by comparative systems theory

-Results also support the new Loeser matrix of 5 theoretical approaches

*RQ#4  What elements of the research methodology are applicable as an effective tool for examining and comparing other community broadcasting environments?*

**Results**

-Weaknesses in methodology - operationalization requirements, quality of sample, language

-Post-positivist approach - meanings seem to be understood

**Conclusions**

-Inherent advantages of researcher and technology have established a model

-Should be adaptable to other environments

-Apparent gap in existing research presents opportunity

# Outcomes

-Worldview and legitimacy of methodology affirmed

-Positioning in body of knowledge

-Informs development of media policy in Czech Republic and beyond

-Facilitates the next steps for applied research

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