

what we see is not necessarily all that is available to be seen, and neither are we capable of being seen by all the people we want to reach. This dynamic underscores the significance of reflexivity in media practice, in this case, relative to online communities and perceived diversity, power relations, and plurality of voices.

Neoliberalism

Discussing power relations in the media necessarily leads to the consideration of the neoliberal culture of the industry, the backdrop against which this project rests. The

The genre of reality TV is likewise discussed in scholarship as a benchmark for neoliberal values in the television industry. These

voice', when the prevalent manner of organization for all of human life inherently denies a crucial aspect of human beings and their functioning in society.

Alternative Media

Where then is voice valued in the media? The inevitable answer seems to be from media forms that lie outside the mainstream. Alternative media, also called 'participatory', 'citizen', and 'community' media among other terms, relates closely to social change and activism from the 'third sector', as identified by Kidd and Rodriguez. These media forms, '[i]n contrast to the homogenization of content and standardization of programme genres and modes of

'participatory culture' per Jenkins (cited in Howe, 2008: 272) is undeniable. Web 2.0 and 'user-generated content' are likewise iterations of the concept. It first came about in the early 2000s, when start-ups began to employ methods of ideation and design, funding, and overall operation with the help of the internet, specifically, the many people who were online and willing to share knowledge and resources in an open, flexible environment. This made

(Howe, 2008: 14). This brings us back to Silverstone's core of morality – relationships with the other, and Couldry's voice – the capacity to narrate one's own worldview, and have it listened to and acted upon.

Of particular interest is the form of crowdsourcing called *crowd creation* where it is creative work, such as images, writing, film, design, etc., that is generated by the crowd towards specific goals. Of the various types of crowdsourcing, it is the sharing of creativity that necessitates truly explicit interaction and dedication within a community (Howe, 2008). Howe attributes this to the atypical, or sometimes complete lack of, compensation involved in such enterprises. If money is not the inevitable reward, it must be the relationships cultivated with peers and collaborators. Considering crowd creation as a form of alternative media in context may yield a capacity of this model to exist within the neoliberal framework that

This empirical research project seeks to answer the question: How does crowd creation

These two conceptual areas are examined relative to how existing neoliberal power relations are enforced or challenged in the crowd creation process. This conceptual framework is expressed visually by the resulting coding framework utilized in this study, to be discussed further in the succeeding chapter.

At the time of writing, no other research has been published about hR. In this light, the objectives of this project are: (1) To understand how hR conducts its crowd creation process, paying particular attention to unique or noteworthy aspects, practices, and effects; (2) To investigate hitRECORDERS' perceptions of hR, its process, and its output; and (3) To compare and contrast hitRECORDERS' perceptions about the opportunities or limitations on voice with the data drawn from specific output produced by hR through crowd creation, that is, selected episodes of hRoTV (S1).

This section explains the literature-based rationale behind the selected methods for data collection and analysis, also considering the results of a pilot study conducted prior to the research proper. It inculcates the succeeding research design and methods carried out.

Couldry (2010: 130) emphasizes the dy

from the perspective of the researcher without losing focus on the objectives (Fiske 1987; Fairclough, 1995; Chouliaraki & Fairclough, 1999; Gill, 2000; Casey et al, 2008). Discourse analysis asks the question 'how'

During the interviews, respondents were asked to speak openly about their perceptions of and experiences on hR, first generally, and then specifically in the context of the production of hRoTV (S1), with the researcher facilitating discussion through the interview guide (details to follow). They were conducted through online video chat platforms such as Skype and Google Hangouts, with the exception of two. One interview was conducted face to face given the proximity of the interviewer and interviewee's locations, and one was conducted through a combination of email and video recording, as the interviewee did not use any online chat platforms.

Skeggs, Thumim, and Woods (2008) warn that this method creates a tendency for researchers to rely on personal prejudices throughout the interview process, as in forming questions, and selecting the environment in which interviews take place (Berger, 1998;

For interviewee recruitment, a purposive sampling strategy was used in combination with snowball sampling to best address the limits of time and resources on this project. While random sampling is generally considered the fairest strategy that allows any member of the population to be selected (Creswell, 2013), for this project, interviewees must have fulfilled the following criteria to participate: (1) Active membership on hitRECORD over the last 12 months; (2) Having contributed to and/or watched hitRECORD on TV (Season 1); (3) Aged over 18. In addition, selected interviewees were a mixture of men and women of different ages, nationalities and countries of location, fields of work, and backgrounds of involvement in hitRECORD. These measures were to ensure a diversity of interviewees and a range of experiences and opinions. The three initial interviewees, who were recruited for the pilot study through hR with follow-ups on email and social media, were asked to recommend other hitRECORDers for consideration. This process resulted in the ten depth interviews that were

particular ways

episodes for the programme. Another period of ideation is then open for suggestions from the

I want to have my work find a television audience, that is just amazing that I can do that with, especially considering where I am, where I'm located. I'm not in Hollywood. I am not running around some studio. I don't have powers. I don't have connections. I don't, I don't have that stuff. I'm just, I'm just a part of hitRECORD.

This seems to describe artists as aspiring towards visibility to an audience, but not having the resources to do so; whatever resources are needed to gain visibility are therefore made available by hR. But the category of artists itself proves difficult to pin down and necessitates further qualification, even among the small group of respondents in this study.

In general, the group describe their community as diverse on two levels: in terms of artists being physically and culturally from different parts of the world, and in terms of having different specializations as artists, such as visual artists, musicians, film makers, etc. Nonetheless, as a collective, they portray artists as 'regular people', who are 'undiscovered', have 'no resources' (or limited resources) and are 'not Hollywood', presumably referring not just to Hollywood in the US, but conglomerate entertainment studios in general. As such, they express difficulty in making their art and ideas accessible outside limited social circles. hR would be a way to breach the high walls of the mainstream industry – they are given the opportunity to share their self-expression to the audience that hR has access to by being part of hRoTV (S1). However, this diversity has difficulty translating into an inclusivity of voices and ideas on a discursive level. Respondents identify a separation between people who work in the mainstream industry and those who do not, and count themselves as being among the latter. Within that latter cohort of artists however, there is a further division implied but never really identified: the division between people who have access to outlets like hR, and those who do not.

As an online group, hR can only accommodate artists who have access to the internet. True enough, there is a certain generic lifestyle narrated by the respondents that points to available access to technology, and knowledge of how it operates (including frequent references to popular culture and social media), regardless of varying cultural backgrounds. More critical than access, these artists have the time and capability to maintain an active presence in the group. This is because the online community itself operates in a way that necessitates a lot of attention in order to achieve goals. Some interviewees attributed this to the website interface itself not being very user-friendly. But in addition, the level of activity and constant updates, requests, and re-mixes on the site seem to create another barrier, particularly for newcomers. This is especially true during busy periods for the group such as when hRoTV (S1) was in production. Interviewee JH shares:

Descriptions of this selection process as being akin to a lottery, competition, or working a freelance job came up among several interviewees. However, SL continues:

Joe and G, I think have said, 'this is not a democratic process, we're a production company'. Joe said 'if I don't love it, it's not going to go on air if I don't love it'. And that's true, all of that is true. And it makes sense. It's not so much that the model needs to be changed, it's just disingenuous to claim it's strictly collaborative and not a contest.

An analysis of several episodes of hRoTV (S1) affirm the most dominant perceptions of crowd creation that have been discussed: though the creation of this programme is presented as an opportunity for the articulation of voice, voice is really only offered at a limited, almost token extent, at least for this pioneering effort of hRoTV (S1), and is not pursued much more beyond the level of presentation.

The programme is presented from the perspective of a clear and dominant narrator, who also clearly represents perspectives and expectations as dictated by Western neoliberal industry

This study in its limited capacity remains optimistic of the progressive potential of crowd creation, but foresees the difficulties that must be faced in further attempts to pursue a truly transformative, alternative process that gives value to voice within the mainstream industry. Perhaps paying greater attention to the overlap between crowd creation and alternative forms of media and participatory culture existing in localities as discussed in the literature, as opposed to the mainstream Western context, could lead to more promising results.

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A) About you and how you got started with hitRECORD

1.

New or featured requests?

Prefer to contribute your own material/express yourself/browse randomly?

Any criteria that you look for in potential collaborations/projects?

10. How do you find the interaction on the site?

Do you feel comfortable interacting with anyone in the community?

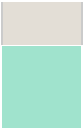
Do you think the community is conducive to "openness" and "collaboration"?

Do you think yours is a typical situation (considering ACTIVE members)?

11. Do you think the community has any particular goals or aims it is trying to achieve (or has already achieved) besides creating art/media projects/productions?

If yes, what might these goals be?

If yes, do you think such goal-setting is deliberate? Please elabo



| ideas, contributing to social change



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