EXPANDING NONPROFIT GOVERNANCE RESEARCH
LINKING ACTOR-NETWORK THEORY WITH THE DOMINANT COALITION PERSPECTIVE

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Avery Edenfield
Fredrik O. Andersson
University of Wisconsin-Milwaukee
Background

• Call for new/broader/alternative perspectives on nonprofit governance (Cornforth, Renz, Ostrower, Stone among others)

• Dominant Coalition Perspective (Renz & Andersson)
  • Board and governance is not the same thing
  • Who really governs?
  • Strong focus on power and politicking
  • How can we understand the formation, change and influence of dominant coalitions
  • Role of social network/capital theory and research

• Our study focuses on one critical governance event: The firing of a founder
Riverwest Public House Cooperative
Riverwest Public House Cooperative

- A Cooperative: Owned and controlled by the people who use it
- Closely regulated through Wisconsin state law
- Two tier structure:
  - Member-owners
  - Elected Board of Directors and Workers Collective
- Board: elected by members to govern the business
- Workers Collective: decentralized collective of employees
Actor-network Theory

- Allows us to analyze the formation and dissolution of network
- Used to examine a broad ecosystem of communication
- Does not draw lines between humans and nonhumans
- Supports a broader examination of actors—both big and small—and is useful for analyzing and understanding the networks that support an organization
Actants: Human & Nonhuman

- Can include a multitude of “actors” or “actants”
- Human and nonhumans alike are accounted for in a network
- Nonhumans:
  - Documents
  - Signage
  - Electronic communication (email, SMS)
  - Organization documents like mission statements and bylaws
  - Weather patterns
  - Narratives or oral histories
Network

- Networks are formed through acts of enrollment and translation
- Little actors become big actors by translating the interests of other actors
- Enrollment occurs through exchanges of power, money, commodities, obedience, etc.
FIRING OF A FOUNDER
Networks: Founders
Networks: Dissolution/Remaking

Bylaws

Founder

Incident Report

Social Media Policy

Employee Handbook

Experienced Bartender

Accountant

Finance Committee

Inventory Specialist

Specialist

Incident Report

Founder

Manifesto

Founder

Founder
THANK YOU!
Sources

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- ------. "Using Texts to Manage Continuity and Change in an Activity Center."

Images