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On Air With the Community An Exploration of Five Community Radio Stations in the Western Cape

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On Air With the Community

An Exploration of Five Community Radio Stations in the Western Cape

Kelsey Warren

Shifra Jacobson

In partial fulfilment of the requirements for South Africa: Multiculturalism and Human Rights, School for International Training, Study Abroad, a program for World Learning.

Cape Town

Fall 2014

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Abstract

The closing of apartheid in South Africa was brought by new measures for democracy in 1994. Community radio stations were seen as measures for local communication and involvement in giving different communities voices that has formerly been lost. This paper attempts to discover the relevance of community radio stations twenty years after democracy and just how citizens are participating.

The paper begins with a review of history of community radio on different levels around the world through the use of literature. The arguments made centralize around the necessity of specialized community stations, the effect of community engagement, the lack of government interference and struggles with funding, involvement with social media, and finally the passion and drive rooted in the stations. I explored the aspects of community radio by visiting and interviewing members from five different community radio stations in the Western Cape.

This ISP concludes that community radio stations are vital forms of communication in South Africa for enhancing the lives of people through democratic community efforts. If used as an instrument for fostering identity through local stations, there is potential for many people to be informed, educated, and entertained by their own means and participation. However, problems of commercialization, funding, and technological changes occur and create obstacles for the survival of these stations. On a grand scale, community radio can be looked upon as an opportunity for the masses of people coming together at local levels to define their identities and take part in the ever-changing world.

Introduction

Topic Overview

The literal separateness of apartheid caused many people to disperse and be grouped in different areas based on racial classifications. The darker someone's skin color, the more disadvantaged they were considered and the less rights that had. Many people came together and were able to form communities despite the corruption, but many still remained voiceless. Apartheid authorities were determined to establish their government of hierarchies through human rights violations by lies to the nation and the world. During the time, there was a lack of communication to the people of South Africa as well as a misleading ideology to the world about the segregation that was happening. Communities were unaware of their position in the struggle for freedom from the system and did not have the means to rise up and inform the masses about the happenings.

Naturally people wanted to know what was happening and looked to the airwaves to represent specific communities. Before democracy in 1994, different groups of people saw the relevance of radio and were broadcasting illegally. In 1993 and 1994, many licenses for community radio stations were given out and promoted by the new democracy as a means of "sustainable non-discriminatory local development" (*National Community Radio Forum*). For years, communities had no sort of representation and participation opportunities like community radio. CR became a source of hope for the masses, especially in rural communities, because of its accessibility and affordability as a mode of communication.

Community radio was seen as a tool of democratization at the very root, the diverse communities of South Africa. Currently local media is overshadowed by the bigger more funded and commercial efforts. In the radio sector specifically, the airwaves are a limited public resource that can only be reached with certain frequencies due to the topography of the Western Cape. These smaller CRSs struggle to keep up their non-government funded efforts with support from the communities they represent. The desire to stay afloat also means the necessity for money, in which case many CRSs have turned to more commercialized efforts for survival. In result, many stations have lost sight of why they began in the first place, to involve the community in the efforts of informing, educating, and entertaining geographical communities and communities of interest.

By looking at community radio, we can analyze how communities are being represented through historically successful means of communication post democracy.

Through this analysis, it is important to keep in mind factors of growing technology and ways of communication as well as the sense of community South Africans feel they can identify with. If there is to be a lack of representation on a local level, there could be many resulting problems with community dissatisfaction and a lack of identity, which was the lingering problem with apartheid. By avoiding similar feelings of apartheid again, community radio is a necessary instrument of communication for local community involvement and identity in South Africa.

Project Objectives

The objectives of this paper are to understand the current relevance of community radio in South Africa as a means for democracy. My interest in the topic spawns from many of my interests including my desire to know how people can communicate on different structural levels, my understanding of democracy and implementation, and my own tendencies of listening to radio and desiring to learn more about the sector in hopes of potentially being involved one day. I am specifically interested in how different CRSs involve the community like they portray they do.

Paper Structure

In this ISP I will be arguing that community radio is vital as a form of local media to connect and inform different communities through involvement and empowerment. This ISP considers five sections in strengthening this argument. The first section argues the importance of having a community of interest or otherwise specialized content in order for people to have an identity with the station. Identity is the driving force of everything people do, and especially with the history of South Africa can make or break people. Secondly, if the CRSs are involved in the communities they broadcast to then they are executing their duties as uses of community empowerment. By allowing opportunities for the community to engage in the station, and not just on air, allows for true participation. Next, the struggle for funding to keep CRSs alive is a factor in changes to more commercialization but still a separation from governmental control. Without government interference, stations are able to broadcast what they want and have the freedom to operate in a democratic way. Also, social media is now interconnected with CR in ways for listeners to connect with stations via different platforms and visa versa. Many stations understand the relevance of social media but also comparing the authenticity of radio and the negative way social media could affect the content of the broadcasts. Lastly, community radio stations and the people that are members of them,

possess a certain passion and vibrancy bringing a culture of excitement to the airwaves. I believe that the reason why CRSs still exist is because of the composition of members of CRSs made up of drive and passion.

Primary and Secondary Sources

The primary sources I engaged with were personal communications via interviews. I used a plethora of academic and non-academic sources and literature.

Limitations

During this month long ISP period, I was able to complete interviews with five different community radio stations. I was able to tour almost all of the stations, meet staff members and volunteers, and receive different information from each unique station. I was able to travel far and wide, ranging from Rondebosch to Cape Town to Belleville where I was able to travel the footprint of the stations and experience geographic diversity. Many people gave me more than an hour of their time to explain the station as well as their passions. Through these interviews, I was able to have most of my questions answered and even more. The smiles and laughs that were shared created a wonderful experience of community radio culture for me. I felt comfortable at every station and that I was welcomed to ask all the questions I had. For my first interviews, I went into the stations feeling nervous but was relieved immediately by the warming nature of all the people I talked to, which has inspired me to look into a career in radio.

Glossary

- 1) Community Radio (CR)- “Radio station members are independent non-profit CBOs - owned and run by diverse local communities who actively participate in the

development of programming activities, for sustainable non-discriminatory local development.” (*National Community Radio Forum*)

- 2) Commercial Radio- also called private broadcasting for its privately owned corporate media broadcasting on a national and sometimes international level.
- 3) Radio Frequency- the electromagnetic waves that make wireless broadcasting/or communication possible.
- 4) Footprint- the area a station can broadcast to.
- 5) Cape metropole- the greater Cape Town area that carries frequencies to its listeners.
- 6) National Community Radio Forum (NCRF)- “The NCRF is a national, membership-driven association of community radio stations and support service organizations...to build an enabling environment and a coherent sector identity -- ensuring continued healthy growth of community radio in South Africa.” (*National Community Radio Forum*)
- 7) Independent Communications Authority of South Africa (Icasa)- is the regulator for the South African communications, broadcasting and postal services sector. Monitors and gives out licensing for the stations and manages radio frequency spectrum and protects consumers of these services. (*Independent Communications Authority South Africa*)
- 8) Independent Broadcasting Authority (IBA)- “democratize the radio broadcasters, to encourage ownership and to ensure that there was no meddling from the South African government at the time” (“Community Radio in South Arica, 2013). IBA does not exist anymore but was the first form of giving temporary licenses
- 9) UCT- University of Cape Town
- 10) FMR- Fine Music Radio
- 11) VOC- Voice of the Cape

Literature Review

Introduction

Understand the words that you are reading as a form of communication. Print to be precise, and many people use this platform to share thoughts, emotions, anything (usually) that people want. Now think about the power of these written words. How can they be translated in different ways, change people's lives, drive human existence? Print is just one form of media we use, but there is a barrier to reading letters, words and characters. Many people cannot actually read and thus other forms of communication come into play.

Communication means existence for humans, and without it we cannot participate in society. Mass media is thus an important and emerging concept that allows us to access and share information amongst others. Through sound, visuals and reading we allow ourselves to dive into the universe we ultimately create and play a part of.

I am interested in radio communication because of its diversity and accessibility. Like other forms of media, there are many different broadcast stations all over the world catered to totally different people. Radio is also the cheapest form of media, it is easy to access, and you don't have to be literate to understand it. So in the case of high illiteracy, poverty, and accessibility, radio is the best option when it comes to being involved in communication with the world. More specifically community radio stations have particular requirements and goals in mind. Community radio stations are an important part of post democracy South Africa in promoting community engagement and the human right to communicate.

Main Points

From the readings I have done, there are many main points to gather about community radio (CR). I will be discussing the relevance of the title "community" radio, the differences between community radio and other radio stations, rules and guidelines community radio stations (CRSs) must follow, how community stations cater to communities, the challenges stations face and the negatives about them.

Community Involvement

The term "democracy" has been used loosely since the 1994 election and new constitution, and the development of community radio stations had a particular attention in fostering the democracy. Unlike public and commercial broadcasting, community broadcasting has a different responsibility, that of involving the citizens in the station to give them "a voice of the voiceless" (Milan, 2009).

When the constitution was created, the surge of democracy brought about talk of media improvement, and at the front of this talk was the creation of CRSs. Before 1994, wasn't the aim of apartheid to separate people into their own communities, apart from the other communities? Of course the new democracy couldn't fix this separateness quite yet, but instead seeing to the communities to express their opinions and to really implement involvement in the community and in the progression of the 'new' South Africa. The Bill of Rights states that people have the independent and collective freedom to communicate, and together with the benefits of CRSs this human right can be acted upon (van Zyl, 2003).

The damages of apartheid not only broke communities, but also individuals. The sense of the self became meaningless, their voices unspoken or unheard. Post apartheid legislation brought the chance for people to regain what they had lost. Despite the fact that these people are still separated geographically and socially, there is a prospect of selfhood (Narunsky-Laden, 2008). Through different types of media, the sense of self can be developed and reflected through various types of media. Currently, media plays a huge role in many of our lives. We listen to it, watch it, read it and use other verbs to describe it that become terms everyday. Through the platform of media, acting upon the country's desire for democracy was possible.

Media creations are special forms of communication because they allow people to pick and choose what they consume. It begins with the different media platforms and carries on through the different genres and specialized information and entertainment. CRSs are indeed a particular platform, but are the most accessible, most inexpensive, and easiest for more people to understand, and post apartheid communities can finally have a sense of understanding. Many stations were created when interest groups came together and sought a license, that is when the process of the community starts, after the structure and interest have come together and the ideals can start to be implemented (van Zyl, 2003). For example, the Moutse Community Radio station is the only women-run station in the country. The rural women of Moutse persisted to create this station due to the dialogue and debate of these women's voices needing a community radio to reach out to one another, they came to the International Broadcast Association (IBA) with their interests and structure in mind of creating the station (Naughton, 1996).

Through the newfound identities of many communities, the new support of community radio called on the citizens to create the media they consume. Empowerment was

given to communities that might not have had it before the democracy and so there was a “together we can make it” mentality (Milan, 2009). Community radio is just as it sounds; the two terms interconnected, serving each other for the betterment of the people.

Rules and Regulations

Community radios have the opportunities they do because of different legislation that was set up after the decision for democracy in order to have regulations and rules to abide by. In order for CR to succeed accompanied by the ideals of democracy, there were strict regulations for the stations to follow in order to promote success. Different organizations were set up in order to ensure the proper functioning of the rush of new stations being developed. The first organization created was the Independent Broadcast Association (IBA) that granted the stations their licenses to air, accompanied by strict rules to follow (Pillay, 2003). The station is now called the Independent Communications Authority of South Africa (Icasa). Secondly, the Independent Media Diversity Trust (IMDT) allowed media to seek relief with donors and business sectors when it came to the funding. This organization also later became called the Media Development and Diversity Agency (MDDA) that still supports the non-profits but without political party ties and a publically appointed board (Pillay, 2003). The rush of the new broadcasting legislation brought about eighty-two community radio stations to be members of the National Community Radio Forum (NCRF) (Naughton, 2003).

Although these newly developed governing bodies gave community radio stations a chance to exist, there were also limitations to the systems. At the time of the newly forming government, the facilitation of community stations was build by systems that merely made decisions upon what they thought would be useful. But with the oppression of the previous apartheid government, there were still restrictions with the new system as well, “Government and regulator are ‘killing community radio’” (Tacchi, 2003 pp. 2186). For example, when the women of rural Moutse were setting up their community station, they lacked support from the IBA and had to really fight for their right to community radio (Naughton, 1996).

In the end of legislation and station creation, it is important for station management to know the basic human rights that have been denied for a long time (van Zyl, 2003). South Africa has fought a battle for the damages of society, but the systems that allow community radio to exist are essential to the creation of community voices in the first place.

Other Sectors of Radio

Community radio has been around legally for just twenty years now, so where do the long-time big radio players come into the mix? If you come to South Africa and flip on the TV, you might come to realize how much of a giant South African Broadcasting Corporation (SABC) is. From the four different homestays I have experienced, SABC has frequented the TV in almost all of the homes. SABC is such a large media company that they also have public broadcasts. Radio South Africa (RSA) was used during apartheid to broadcast South African news to other countries around the world as well as neighboring African countries (Ugboajah, 1981). RSA assured the politics of apartheid in which the perceptions were obviously favorable to the white South African's broadcasting (Uboajah, 1981). This strategy obviously went against legislation with the lies that were told and the manipulation for the image of South Africa under apartheid.

CRS's ethics don't compare to the propaganda of RSA that was sold for the sake of the country's internal politics (Uboajah, 1981). There is a three tier broadcasting system in South Africa, including the local community radio station, then the commercial sector, and the big brother, SABC's the public broadcaster (van Zyl, 2003). The public sector focuses on nation building and has specific requirements to meet in regards to broadcasting national information (van Zyl, 2003). People have different listening habits like switching between stations for specific programs or they might be only loyal to one station and in these ways people can have an array of tastes and ways of receiving information. In the case of community radio, there is a different obligation to the community but this doesn't make CRSs unprofessional (van Zyl, 2003).

Cater to Community

CRSs are a beautiful way of reaching the people for so many of the reasons I have already mentioned. Another reason to support community radio is that they are regulated but not controlled by the state and offer the freedom to broadcast what the people want (van Zyl, 2003). Many people that I have met in South Africa recognize the word "community" as something they identify with having geographical proximity. Community citizens are able to feel their sense of local culture and local news and embrace their identities.

Eleven national languages, all sorts of colors and shapes, diversity of religion; South Africa is truly multicultural. If the term community means having particular characteristics in

common, then how is it that through this current democratic state, we uphold the multiculturalism happening all around us? There are many different answers, but one solution that allows people to feel a sense of their community, as well as others, is community radio. One of the requirements for CRSs is to have an accessible ‘open-door’ policy where people can access stations and feel that they can really be behind the framework of broadcasts (van Zyl, 2003). If you think about other media platforms, like TV, that kind of accessibility doesn’t exist and the mentality to know that people have the option to really partake in the interests of their communities. Along with the ‘open-door’ policy, there are not many staff members that work for a station and in order to ensure the success of the station, there is care taken in choosing the representatives (Naughton, 1996).

Bush radio is the first community radio station in South Africa and takes on the motherly characteristics of what helps a CRS to run properly. Bush radio uses the term community to refer to the geographical locations for people in Cape Town in the main broadcast areas of Cape Flats and Mitchells Plain (Bosch, 2008). The citizens of these locations are intentionally similar in race and culture, which is represented in the ownership of the music of Bush originating from the townships (Bosch, 2008). When I listen to Bush radio, I naturally compare my radio stations at home. The major difference I notice between them is that Bush has more educational programming. According to van Zyl (2003), there is a high degree of listener loyalty with educational programming. I hear aid and help center phone numbers and information about issues relative to many South Africans and potentially issues also faced by the townships Bush broadcasts to. Listen to Bush radio and you’ll hear topics about “health, gender, children, governance, and democracy” to encourage communal dialogue (Bosch, 2008 pp. 77).

Besides the local news and information that is broadcasted, radio station’s commitment to local culture is also demonstrated through music. Bush radio plays different genres of music to cater to different people, but if you frequent the station, you’ll find the presence of kwaito music. Kwaito is a South African sort of hip-hop that caters mostly to black youth (Bosch, 2008). The music is relevant to black culture in townships and supports black consciousness especially with black youth identity (Bosch, 2008). Not only does playing kwaito music attract black unity in youth, but also brings back the rhythms and repetition of apartheid slogans (Bosh, 2008). Through the use of kwaito music, there is a fusion of old and new culture that helps keep black consciousness alive and has the ability to affect many people from Bush radio.

Post democracy gave the power for communities to be uplifted in more decision-making and for their voices to be heard. Even conservative Afrikaans community radio, Radio Pretoria, gives voice to Afrikaaners that don't accept the 'rainbow nation' (Froneman, 2008). To conclude, all the communities represented in South Africa have the ability to be heard.

Challenges

On the other hand of the many positive aspects of community radio, there are also negatives. In comparison to public and commercial broadcasting, CR doesn't broadcast nearly as widely across the country. You then end up lacking the ability to have a vast audience where individual community programs could be broadcasted to others to include them in the awareness of other communities. CRSs also face skill shortages and inadequate funding, putting the stations under stress to provide for the community with the lack of support compared to commercial and public broadcast sectors (Tacchi, 2003). Since the democracy, the support community radio had received shifted to focus in health and education and informed CRSs that they needed to be more commercially viable (Pillay, 2003).

The first CRS, Bush radio, serves to be an example to others through their involvement in the community and dedication to human activism. The station's use of kwaito music for youth identity and black unity can be contradictive in the derogatory words of the music and Bush's educational programming (Bosch, 2008). CRSs are visibly conscious of the communities they broadcast to, but can sometimes promote certain concepts so strongly that the entirety of the community cannot understand. For example, Bush radio broadcasts to Cape Flats and Mitchel's Plain, where the racial make up is black and colored. Despite the mostly colored staff behind the station, black unity through kwaito music excludes the potential for colored people to understand and tune into the lyrics (Bosch, 2008).

When searching for articles with the key words 'community radio', I was able to gather articles around this topic, but not specifically about community radio stations. Bush radio was the only community radio station that I could find articles about which leaves me with no sort of knowledge about other community stations. This is where I will focus my ISP on asking the community to find answers for myself about other stations. On this note, the voice of citizens that listen to community radio is not present in the articles, which leads me to the difficult notion that the community isn't being represented like they should.

Conclusion

From the articles that I consulted, I was able to see the important facets of topics surrounding community radio. This vital form of communication in South Africa has been validated by the efforts in getting community radio stations started. Post democracy brought the desires for community involvement with information and entertainment the many different identities of South Africa could enjoy. Topics of community involvement, diversity in broadcasters, rules and regulations for CRSs, and challenges and negatives highlight all of the considerations into creating and maintaining CRSs, thus making them important parts of human rights in current South Africa.

Methodology

I collected my information from five community radio stations in the Western Cape area. I found the stations I interviewed online by searching for community radio stations in the Western Cape and choose the ones I did based on the higher number of listeners and the diversity in their target audience and content. I called each of the stations and explained to them what I am doing in Cape Town and that I desired to interview someone from the station in regards to my project about community involvement with CRSs. I was then set up with an interview or was asked to email someone to set up an interview. All of the stations I contacted were very willing to have me come and interview them, except for one. Contacting the stations via telephone was the easiest way to reach them immediately and efficiently to set up an appointment.

I met with people of different positions at each station, but asked the same questions of all of them and allowed them the space to explain what they felt was necessary in regards to my project. By not having very structured interview questions, I was able to receive information that each person thought was important for the station freely, allowing me to engage and listen fully and participate in what each person had to say. The structure I did have was the questions I asked for each interviewee (refer to Appendix B). This allowed me to collect the information to compare and contrast stations based on how they responded to the questions. A benefit of having little structure to my interviewing was that it was more of a natural conversation creating a comfortable space to share and interact freely between the interviewer and the interviewee.

Despite the benefits of my methods, the weaknesses of not very structured questions were evident. After a topic was talked about, there would often be a pause where the interviewee would ask “So what else?” I would then struggle to find another question to ask. I also came into the interviews not knowing exactly what I wanted to get out of them and what my concrete argument was. This was a problem when I was explaining the purpose of my project and interviewing and I didn’t have an exact expectation that I wanted from each person. I think some people were confused in my purpose of interviewing and much clarification was needed. I also don’t have experience with radio, so during the process I learned new terms but was also not able to relate to the material because I haven’t experienced it. All of these weaknesses justified the fact that I am an undergrad student that doesn’t actually have a lot of time to focus on my project.

Interviewees:

Natalie Brandreth- Office administrator at University of Cape Town (UCT) radio. Natalie attended UCT as a student and has been working with the radio for 15 years now. When I called UCT radio, I was set up to speak with her. This was my first interview and so I did not know quite what to expect as far as how open the information would be or what I would even get out of it. It was great to interview a CRS that is campus based and student centric. Interviewing Natalie puts an interesting flare into my research because of the student listenership that sets it apart from the other stations. This justifies the involvement in a different sort of community for my research but also swings my argument because of the fact that it operates in a contrasting way to most CRSs.

Victoria Cawood- Station Manager at Fine Music Radio (FMR). She has been working there for twenty years, where she has been the station manager for ten years. I was also set up to speak with Victoria when I called the station. This station is different from many others in that it is located downtown in the Artscape building and attracts a listenership of classical and jazz music lovers. I choose to interview this station because of its different content compared to the other stations. By interviewing Victoria, I was able to get a sense of history for the station and the listeners that accompany the classical and jazz genres. This sets the listeners apart from all of the other stations I interviewed in order to have a sense of community radio in all communities.

M. Khan, Tasneem Adams and Mishka Daries- M. Khan is the station manager, Tasneem Adams the manager of news and actuality shows and Mishka Daries the program manager. When I arrived at the station, the receptionist had set me up with many different people until she found that Tasneem was free, where I then began a tour with her and met the station manager. I was able to talk with M. Khan for a short while about the manager commentary of the station, something that was a trend at my previous interviews. I then talked to Tasneem for a longer length of time where she told me even more about the station and her position. I was able to get a different lens from many people at the station giving me a better idea of how it operates in different ways and justifying the many different hands it takes. This swings my findings because I was able to have many different perspectives and also that I didn't talk to the station manager for long like I did the stations I interviewed previously. Because of their willingness to give me a good idea of the station, I was able to receive lots of valuable information and encouraged to ask any questions.

Ntsikelelo Gobodo- is the news and program manager for Radio Zibonele and has recently started working there this year but used to work for them nine years ago for five years. I was set up to interview him as well. This station brought a new prospective to my findings because of its distance from the Cape metropole and the listenership that it serves being more rural than the area of Cape Town. I was able to gain this different perspective and compare it to the functioning of the more urban stations in reference to funding and community access. The fact that the station is in a housing area justifies my findings of the importance of accessibility for CRSs and also the role of more rural stations. This interview was a good point of comparison to the other stations and provided me with a different setting of a rural, mostly black listenership CRS.

Sedrick Taljaard- General manager at Tygerberg 104fm. I was also set up to interview him amongst all the other members of the station. Tygerberg being a Christian Afrikaans station brings a whole other dimension to my research in regards to the tactics of the station and the listenership. This station has the biggest listenership of all the CRSs in the Western Cape, which also gave me different results as to the function of the station to support the many listeners. Tygerberg gives a very different sort of commercial feel to the CR sector where they have much power with their listeners but also remain community based, on the benchmark of commercial. The emphasis of Christianity gives very different results as a community of interest station and the types of listeners, programs, and motives the station goes by. This justifies my argument of the importance of a vast community being served and the effects the station has as it remains community based.

Ethical Reflexivity

Throughout the process of my project, I was conscious of the identities I possess as a power dynamic that could affect my research. First of all, being an undergraduate American student conducting research in South Africa, I am aware of the notion that American University students have a safe place studying in South Africa and because of this I often felt comfortable during interviews. I felt that explaining to the participants that I am an American student justified my ability to interview the stations and gave me a kind of credibility.

Secondly, I believe being white holds a power dynamic that was assumed that I knew sufficiently about the subjects involving community radio. In fact, I had only received knowledge from the literature I had read before proceeding to interview. I cracked the

stereotype by telling the participants that I had never actually worked directly with radio and that in America, community radio is not a used term. Also, the radio sector is known to be male dominated, and so I was conscious of understanding this space as a female.

Despite my identities, I tried to create a space during interviews and station visits that did not reflect my status, ethnicity, race, or gender. I purely was there to ask questions as a researcher and to produce work in an academic setting. To ensure the purpose of my visit, I would give each participant the same talk about where I come from, my intent of study, and a bit about my program and what I have been doing in South Africa. This was said as to relieve confusion but also take part in sharing my interests and experiences in South Africa as to avoid the interview being a one sided story.

The code of ethics also requires me to present a consent form where I told the participants about their right to choose anonymity, confidentiality, and privacy, ensuring a copy for them as well as myself to establish these things in my research. Also in preparing to interview, I referred to our “Research Methods and Ethics” class sessions and readings making sure to understand and follow the suggestions and regulations especially as a first time interviewer.

Findings and Analysis

To relate, and not discriminate

Identity is carried through our everyday lives. The ways we live and mold our experiences as human beings drives our passions and interests. In current society, the ways that we are able to connect are vaster than ever with the abilities of technology. Although there are new formats growing with us everyday, the old ways of keeping in touch and staying connected are still around. In order for the new to emerge, the old must die out. In the case of radio, it still exists and has a relevant place for many people currently. Radio is accessible and cheap, providing most people with an opportunity to interact with this form of technology.

With the multifaceted society of South Africa, identities emerge strongly in which people have ways of upholding their identify through different forms of technology (Narunsky-Laden, 2008). Radio gives the opportunity to fulfill some of the most important aspects of our lives by communicating to us news, music and entertainment. South African diversity and democracy has brought along with it an idea of community involvement and identity support system. Community radio allows the South African diversity to survive and thrive through selfhood in comparison to the oppression during apartheid.

Different CRSs have geographical communities or communities of interest unlike commercial stations that don't cater as much to the grassroots nature of community involvement. All of the stations that I interviewed have geographical or community of interest licenses. University of Cape Town (UCT) is broadcasted by students and to students and learners, Fine Music Radio (FMR) plays classical and jazz music, Voice of the Cape (VOC) broadcasts with a Muslim perspective, Zibonele serving communities outside of Cape Town in historically coloured and black areas, and finally Tygerberg radio that broadcasts Christian music mainly in Afrikaans.

When finding which stations to interview, I didn't intentionally look for stations that would diversify my work, but they already offered diversity. Legislation with the National Community Radio Forum (NCRF) allows these stations of interest to be broadcasted through license agreements in order to form as a function of representation for different communities. The communities the local stations represent are thus able to have "a voice for the voiceless" in a way that was not possible twenty years ago (Milan, 2009).

Currently, millennial's are weaning away from such things like radio, where downloading or streaming music and content is ever more accessible, portable and quick. Information can often be retrieved rapidly without having to dedicate much time to gathering what we need. I am victim to the informalities of social media and my quick fix content as well as the music that I listen to that is ready and on demand for me. Radio may seem as though it is dying out and giving way to other forms of communication, but there is a deep significance to the individuality of community radio. If you are a Muslim listener of VOC then it is already set for you that the content you will be receiving will be through a Muslim lens. According to Tasmeen, the news manager at VOC, you don't even have to be Muslim to tune in, the station informs all people of the Muslim perspective (T Adams, pers. comm., 11 Nov.).

Many stations arose because of the need for a voice post democracy South Africa. Community Radio became the solution from the government but not by the government allowing people to create stations of interest, "These [CRSs] are essential expressions of freedom of religion, speech, association, conviction, and conscious. They are non- negotiable foundations for freedom" (Hammond, p.13, 2006). According to Tasmeen, VOC began when "Muslim journalists felt they needed to give Muslims their own voice with their own station" (T Adams, pers. comm., 11 Nov.). There are many other stories like this for CRSs and how they began. The start of UCT radio began in 1976 as a political youth movement broadcasting illegally through telephone exchange (N Brandreth, pers. comm., 6 Nov.). Apartheid during the time of the up and coming radio station at UCT drove the students to vocalize their own movements. Interest groups came together and applied for a license with inspiration from, "dialogue, debate, crisis, then creating community" (van Zyl, p. 10, 2003).

Community radio can be intimate for many listeners because of the connection of listener to station via a mutual understanding of what the listener wants and how CRSs respond. According to the general manager at Tygerberg 104fm, the listeners are loyal because they know what they're tuning into (S Taljaard, pers. comm., 21 Nov.). Community radio can be a helping crutch to many people that seek something familiar or different generating loyal listeners. Tygerberg general manager, Sedrick, shed light on the importance for the stations' existence, "They will be getting the good news, hope, and inspiration because people are suffering out there" (S Taljaard, pers. comm., 21 Nov.). In this manner, Tygerberg is not uncommon in their motives and understanding of the community.

With a community of learners, UCT radio caters to the needs of students, and not only to the outside community of the University, but also the community that has been established within the station. From the moment I stepped foot in the station, I felt the community through the space and the people the come together often. Although Natalie, the office administrator is not a student, she articulated that the station is “A second home for a lot of them. A place that is fun and exciting, especially when you come in for graveyard” (N Brandreth, pers. comm., 6 Nov.). What Natalie had said was no lie, from the hour and a half I was at the station, I witnessed many “student moments” talking about how someone should fix their hair, or that French fries should be called freedom fries. I felt the sense of community here and the dedication that comes with volunteering at the station and being a student. Student Julia has been on air at the station for about three years now and has sense graduated but according to her, “It will take them kicking me out before I leave the station” (Julia, pers. comm., 6 Nov). She has since been contracted to MC with Kfm, a commercial station that would not have been possible without the training she received at UCT.

From all of these stations I learned, that it takes a community, a group of people with a similar interest, to create and facilitate another community. All of the community radio stations I visited had an air of connection that allows them to influence the community ‘out there’ and off air. This is where the lack of government influence becomes handy in allowing theses spaces thus these communities to exist. Another student presenter at UCT, Ivan, told me, “I get to say whatever I want on air... and it’s liberating!” (Ivan, pers. comm., 6 Nov.). Where the station began as a student youth movement, it is still around to allow a similar channel for the students and the community. The idea of community radio was designed to give people a voice on a grassroots, local level, where the ability for such opportunity exists at UCT. Despite Ivan’s own ability to express what he’d like on air, he also said “People can call in and talk about random stuff. It’s a thinking space” (Ivan, pers. comm., 6 Nov.). The formation of the Bill of Rights in 1994 guaranteed CRSs many of their rights with the independence and the collective freedom to communicate (van Zyl, 2003).

There is a similar motive for inspiration at Tygerberg, where the old brand slogan was “We Proclaim Christ” where it is now “We Live Christ” and the goal is to “impact and inspire all people with the salvation of power of Jesus Christ” (S Taljaard, pers. comm., 21 Nov.). This switch in logo allows people to feel as though they are apart of what the broadcasting is promoting and that the station and community are proclaiming Jesus Christ together. Tygerberg is a great example of a community of interest station, broadcasting

mainly in Afrikaans and all Christian content. The station is the biggest in the Cape metropole with more than 400 000 listeners, which in radio terms means they're doing something right. According to the NCRF, the listenership growth is attributed to unique programming to address issues faced by the community (Taunyane, 2007). This right something started like other CRSs, as a vision from someone that saw the potential to communicate a particular desire. The story of Tygerberg began as a vision from the founder when he stood on top of Tygerberg hill overlooking the cape peninsula thinking that with each light he saw representing a family (S Taljaard, pers. comm., 21 Nov.). He applied for a license and was denied many times until licenses were given in 1993, and thus his vision of spreading the power of Jesus Christ was framed with a Christian Afrikaans station. This station is powered by the intersection of religion and the forces that drive secular society in South Africa creating a certain community of people. The loyal listenership, number of listeners, and success of the station shows the importance of having a community of interest station to inform, entertain, and educate all of its listeners through an identity as strong as religion.

In the case of FMR, they serve two distinct groups of the Cape metropole, jazz and classical listeners. According to Victoria Cawood, station manager at FMR, there is quite a cultural difference between the jazz people and the classical people, creating a conflicting tie within the station (V Cawood, pers. comm., 7 Nov.). Victoria is conscious of the divide that this can create and is trying to bridge the gap. With the rise in licenses for community radio stations in 1993 and 1994, there was hope for a better local engagement in communication and a local initiative for change in communities post-apartheid. After establishing the NCRF to grant licenses to CRSs, the importance for other sectors like health and education took the platform of attention of the government. A reoccurring theme seems to be the lack of funding for the arts, in which Victoria understands but denies, "Society needs all of its levels" (V Cawood, pers. comm., 7 Nov.). Community radio is one of these levels, a local media platform that contributes to the mass of society in South Africa, promising focused content and community engagement. Victoria spoke for FMR, but also on behalf of other CRSs by saying, "We must not forget our job, and our job is the community, and FMR is a very specialized community" (V Cawood, pers. comm., 7 Nov.).

A voice for the voiceless

These days it can be easy to lose sight of community, which is solely driven by a sense of a commonality with a group of people, “The most useful definition of community is one that is broad and takes into account social, historical and cultural linkages” (Tacchi, p.2184, 2003). Individualism is evermore present in the new millennium and the way we connect has changed in ways of instant connection and new platforms. With a history like South Africa’s, “The transition to democracy gives a beacon of hope in a world where almost all forms of collective belonging and belief seem to be suspect” (“Documenting Democratization”, p. 226, 2003). With the ties and separation, there was separating of communities but also that of strengthening during apartheid. Having a sense of community drives our very existence and our understandings of identity.

Community radio has provided this beacon of hope, with the courtesy of the NCRF, to allow the local communities to gather and understand their identities. New technologies and ways of communication allow all people a choice to take part in their interests from different levels. “Democratizing media... has been a central issue in post-apartheid South Africa” and has helped form what we know as community radio stations (“Documenting Democratization”, p. 226, 2003). On the terms of democracy, allowing people from the community to participate in CR has allowed an outlet of expression and involvement in the “new South Africa”.

The CRSs I interviewed all had strong understandings of community involvement and some of them more so than another. This often depended on who the community of interest is and what sort of structure, withheld by the NCRF, is in place in allowing the stations to function as they should. I will proceed to highlight the community involvement of each station I interviewed and the impact the community and the station have on each other. I strongly believe, as well as Monareng (2003), the communications manager at NCRF, that this is the future for much local activism and identity and the ways in which CRSs use their power now can determine how people live and communicate in the future, “The prophets of doom said the sector would not live long, but it has stood the test of time like a mature brandy. Community media in the country mushroomed as a result of communities having been thirsty to access the airwaves and express themselves” (p. 4).

First of all, I was astounded to know that many stations are driven by volunteers. With the opportunity for volunteers, stations are truly exercising their democracy and allowing

members of communities to participate. Students, with a few exceptions of staff members, broadcast for UCT radio and in this way dedicate hours of their time to the station. The motives for the students are driven by the opportunity that they have in receiving training and with no prior experience. UCT is a second home for many of the students, a place they can share their thoughts, and a general awareness of development and growth (N Brandreth, pers. comm., 6 Nov.). Ironically, none of the students I spoke with anticipated being on UCT radio, but it just so happened that it worked out for them and has thus changed all of their experiences at UCT.

On the flip side, although FMR caters to a different community than UCT, station manager Victoria says, “The best way to interact with people, are the volunteers. The community is relevant to the content of the programs” (V Cawood, pers. comm., 7 Nov.). If people have an idea for a program, they can come into FMR and look into getting the program on air, in which case training is also provided. Volunteers beat the staff in numbers and can have just as much power as the staff members. They are able to learn and apply different tasks and when they move on to a further position are able to have the multi skills that community radio has given them.

For VOC, having volunteers is a way to get content and stay connected with the Muslim community, but also causes a high turn over rate because of no pay or developing of a particular specialized skill (T Adams, pers. comm., 11 Nov.). At Radio Zibonele, “volunteers are freelancers”, meaning they are given the freedom to create their own content (N Gobodo, pers. comm., 13 Nov.). The location of the station is literally in a housing neighborhood of Khayelitsha, an updated version of the container that used to be the station. Zibonele’s location makes it ideal for community members and volunteers to access, especially when gathering content from the field. Contrastingly, Tygerberg does not have any volunteers, and is run by many staff members. Although Tygerberg has the most listeners in the Cape metropole, their lack of volunteers makes the station more reliant of salary and structured ways of operating.

Secondly, CRSs don’t just function as a source of broadcast and airwaves, but also as a means for projects and events and to take part in the community in other forms. UCT focuses on integrating their student community first, before focusing on the outside community (N Brandreth, pers. comm., 6 Nov.). Although this becomes a very specific community of interest, the content of the station is also specialized in this manner to focus

primarily on the interests and needs of the students, “Community radio should be listening to the needs of the community and attempting to solve them, to give life and hope and also educate whilst entertaining” (Siqoko, p.8, 2002). The station has picked up within the last few years with more young listeners finding frequencies and tuning in. The community of interest for UCT is more specifically tertiary learners but is finding the listenership being more diverse with the content and the type of music played, allowing students of UCT to connect with other students through these similarities. Another way that UCT branches out is that they have some programs where they will go to high schools and teach the learners what radio is about and the path one should go if they want to become a Disc Jockey (DJ). Not only does UCT allow the student volunteers to have a voice, but also the campus community and surrounding area, including organizations and charities, get their airtime for free (N Brandreth, pers. comm., 6 Nov.).

FMR contributes to another facet of community life in Cape Town promoting and supporting cultural art happenings. Also because of their location, the station is located in the building with the ballet and opera and supports and promotes their ventures as well. Contrastingly, Zibonele serves more of a geographical community and according to news and programs manager Ntsikelelo, the station has had a big influence on the community because the topics they touch on are community based and people can identify with them (N Gobodo, pers. comm., 13 Nov.). The topics are diverse and cater to all age groups, where at a station like this it is actually common for people to tune in only during certain programs to catch what they want to hear. Ntsikelelo identified that Zibonele is there to help the community and be a facilitator for people’s problems, “A challenge for South Africa is giving a voice to the people, which community radio does” (N Gobodo, pers. comm., 13 Nov.).

VOC and Tygerberg are the two stations with the most listenership that I interviewed and have proved to have very effective community involvement strategies. These two stations seem to be very aware of the communities they broadcast to and are able to produce content and facilitate community projects because of their awareness, “The greatest achievement of community radio has been to demystify the media and actively participate in the democratization of the country” (Monareng, p.4, 2003). Tygerberg broadcasts to a diverse community ranging from wealthy white Afrikaaners to the Xhosa speakers residing in black townships. These people are able to tune in to the same station despite their differences in status and location, and find a commonality in the power of Jesus Christ (S Taljaard, pers. comm., 21 Nov.). Tygerberg has found ways of reaching out to all their communities and

reasons to do so because, “Broader public participation has seen many of the stations turn around to become more successful ventures” (Msomi, p. 32, 2003). Sedrick, general manager of Tygerberg, went on a six day trip to six different black townships and spoke to the people in churches and community centers in order to engage these listeners. This is just one example of the impact that CRSs have when they are actually engaging their listeners and taking part in their lives pushing the notion of radio and the listeners being separate behind.

VOC also has many opportunities for engaging with the community they serve. The structure of interacting with the community is very uniquely set up. The Muslim Broadcast Committee (MBC) was set up during the time community radio stations were being granted their licenses to ensure there was a voice of the Muslim people on the airwaves (T Adams, pers. comm., 10 Nov.). Currently, under the MBC there is a management board, community forum and women’s group that is involved with the different Muslim radio stations in the Cape metropole. The community forum consists of representatives in different areas of mosques that hold meetings with the community and report back to VOC in order to truly be able gather information from the Muslim community. Tasneem, news and actuality manager, puts interacting with the community this way, “How will we know what’s happening in the communities if we don’t have someone on the ground all the time?” (T Adams, pers. comm., 10 Nov.). This structure of community collaboration has furthered the station toward content that drives many people’s lives in the Muslim community. Other ways of involvement that Tasmeen highlighted were the ethos of the station on air under the guidelines and parameters of Islam, which always comes back to the listeners. There are also different platforms of connecting with the presenters via Facebook, Twitter, the VOC website, and an SMS service. The SMS service allows for people to chat with the presenters while they are presenting and are able to connect through this form of instant technology. VOC also takes on community projects throughout the year, with two big events per year where some funds go to the station and others to running support projects they have for other organizations.

The topography of the Western Cape makes reaching people a difficult task for many stations, especially when trying to target communities of listeners that are spread out. Much of the relocating during apartheid kept communities together or spread them out, where CR becomes a good link for the scattering of people. Many CRSs aren’t able to have a greater listenership because of the poor frequency many stations have. Commercial stations are able to afford and have the right to better frequencies leaving CRSs to survive with what is left. In the case of VOC, they used to share a frequency with another Muslim station, alternating

content. They now are independent from the other station, have five transmitters and four frequencies making their footprint extensive. Many CRSs do not have the advantage to have this many frequencies and can only broadcast to certain areas of the Cape metropole. This is one area where the CR sector shows signs of struggle especially when the airwaves become more and more crowded, this could potentially put the smaller stations off the airwaves.

To strive and struggle to survive through funding

Money is the vain of existence for many local attempts from organizations and companies, which is a necessary component to its growth and functioning. Community radio stations are non-profit and struggle to engage the community as they desire without proper funds. At first in my research I did not anticipate discussing the importance for funding of the CRSs, but as my findings concluded with my interviews, all of the interviewees stressed the kind of funding that can either help or hurt the stations. On the general topic of radio, I will compare the difference between commercial radio and community radio on the sphere of funding and government influence.

Community stations are so essential to South African life because they are owned and run by diverse local communities offering many people the power of information, education, and entertainment in ways each individual is essentially familiar. The differences between community and commercial radio are weighed evenly by the pros and cons of each sector. In the case of community radio, the lack of government influence gives freedom for the station to broadcast to more niche communities. Commercial radio, on the other hand, is able to reach a wider audience on a national level whilst also receiving government support and funding. Ntsikelelo, news and programs manager at Radio Zibonele, notices the importance of CRSs despite the struggles, “Someone who has everything doesn’t do as much as someone that doesn’t” (N Gobodo, pers. comm., 13 Nov.). The very existence of CRSs revolves around this notion that drives community connection and undermines the importance of grassroots media activism.

Many of the interviewees told me about how they are moving from the ideals of completely community based stations, to commercialization. Advertisement space has its place in the schedule and in the case of Zibonele, during peak listener times in the afternoon and evening (N Gobodo, pers. comm., 13 Nov.). UCT has become more regulated by the advertisers in terms of the music and content they can play. Natalie, administrator at UCT, doesn’t want to have to control the type of music played, but she says that she has to for money (N Brandreth, pers. comm., 6 Nov.). It is a give and take situation where stations give some of their independence to sustain themselves. When I walked into the FMR station, the glass walls showed me a view of the nice upholstery and equipment. The station manager at FMR, Victoria, told me they were generous to receive the type of funding to afford such a space and have nice equipment. On the same note, Victoria doesn’t want to lose sight of the fact that they are a community station because they have had to become more commercial to

survive (V Cawood, pers. comm., 7 Nov.). This is the case for many stations now, that they are losing their community essence to become more a business through the means of commercialization.

The quality of the radio stations was pointed out to me when I visited and received tours from the participants. Something everyone made note of was the quality of the equipment used when broadcasting. This was often a show of status for each station, where it was pointed out they were either struggling with the equipment they had or they were fortunate to have the nice equipment. The technology in this case is a status of how the stations are surviving. With equipment that functions well and can further the station, the broadcasts are more clear and easier to produce when technology is kept up to date. At VOC, Tasneem pointed out to me the lower quality of equipment but reassured me that they have a better infrastructure than other stations (T Adams, pers. comm., 10 Nov.). For some stations this structure is what keeps the station going and gaining listenership, but it is also what drives it to be more commercial. Ntsikelelo at Zibonele believes that the community is moving away because of commercialization, but at the same time has been more self-sustaining (N Gobodo, pers. comm., 13 Nov.). Ntsikelelo gave me an example of the commercialization shift where he said community members used to be able to come into the station for something like a lost dog and they would run an announcement immediately. Now, he says, there are scheduled times for announcements and they aren't when people are tuning in (N Gobodo, pers. comm., 13 Nov.). Immediate post-democracy brought hope for the masses, especially with the promise of local media, but has since lost sight of communal effort to join the commercialization.

Rural communities in South Africa were the actual targets of community radio development during the creation of the NCRF and Icasa to keep these communities educated, informed and entertained, but by their own means. The first female rural CRS was created because of the lack of communication, or miscommunication they were experiencing and desired a space for their voices to be heard (Naughton, 1996). The effort to gain the license was difficult and support from Icasa was denied at first. Rural stations gave way to the new democratic map of the country and pushed the powerful tool of SABC broadcasting apartheid ideology aside (“Documenting Democratization”, 2003). “The government is beginning to see CRSs as a future rather than commercial. Free space, not legislated too much, and no red tape” says Ntsikelelo of Radio Zibonele (N Gobodo, pers. comm., 13 Nov.). Zibonele is in a more rural location outside of Cape Town in a black township called Khayelitsha, where

despite the recent commercialization, Ntsikelelo sees hope for the future. On the other hand, Victoria at FMR “Doesn’t see the survival of the urban station getting any better” (V Cawood, pers. comm., 7 Nov.). Despite her twenty years with the station and the survival of CRSs dwindling, she still does not want CRSs to be funded by the state or province because if that were to happen, there could be control over content, changing the complete outlook of stations today (V Cawood, pers. comm., 7 Nov.).

From my findings, it can be seen that there are a few different outlooks on the improvement or diminishment of community radio. Some think the “Government and regulator are killing community radio” while others rely on the support and recognition of these higher powers (Tacchi, p. 2186, 2003). The very source of how stations will stay around or still spring up like they did in 1994 depends on the bodies that grant them licenses. There is still a system of governance with CRSs because they are taking up the airwaves, a limited public resource (Pillay, p.405, 2003). Icasa is described as a “watchful eye” to keep control over the strict rules that are in place, which can often impair the stations from focusing on the importance of the community whilst getting rapped up in the legislation (Pillay, p.406, 2003). I have come to know that community radio functions the way it does because of the independence it has and the passion that comes with this independence. Even though the NCRF does not intervene in the way a governing body for commercial stations would, “Community radio belongs to the people and not to the NCRF” (Monareng, p.4, 2003).

Partners in Crime: social media significance

Most people currently are aware of the role that social media plays in all of our lives. Mediums like Facebook and Twitter and the others in between are used as means of current communication to make things fast, innovative and accessible. These mediums are taking over people's lives in ways that further how we communicate. Radio as a form of communication is able to now assess forms of social media to also engage in other ways of staying connected with the listeners. Audio information is accessible and engaging, but can become tired out with the quick and selective ways of social media, where CRSs are now turning to social media to keep the relevance of the station with the listeners. "Stations have become more innovative and original. Gone are the days when they all tried to mimic the SABC radio stations" with the innovation for many stations including platforms of social media (Msomi, p.32, 2003). Some stations that I interviewed have caught on to the trends of social media more so than others but view the relevance of this part of many people's lives in a similar way.

The stations that I visited all had websites with Facebook and Twitter apps on them and found the relevance of the website and social media to be even more of a way for the listeners to connect as active community partakers. These tools are used as methods for posting events and establishing what might be missed on air. According to the station manager at VOC, "The trend is integrating radio and social media. For example, downloading podcasts" (M Khan, pers. comm., 10 Nov.). Radio is about keeping up with the times every second with up to date news and music, which is the same function of social media. The fact of integrating the two can make a powerful community system promoting the democracy of these methods. VOC was one of the first stations to form a website and use it for the listeners, which they now have many viewers because of the constant update of news and information that stays up to date with all of the volunteers constantly working at this as a motive (M Khan, pers. comm., 10 Nov.).

Despite the use of social media in a positive way by CRS, there are also downfalls to its relevance. At first I did not think about including social media into my project, but with each station I interviewed the topic came about naturally. According to Khan at VOC, the platform for radio has diminished with other social media (M Khan, pers. comm., 10 Nov.). CRSs can be used as a tool for growth or can be beat out with the innovation of social media. Much of the taxing job of working or volunteering for community radio is the constant need to update the listeners which could be easily done if pulling off of social media was feasible.

Radio stations differ though because they can't get something off of social media and broadcast it, there's no responsibility, according to VOC station manager Khan (M Khan, pers. comm., 10 Nov.). Ntsikelelo at Zibonele believes much of the same things, coming from working at the station in past years and romanticizing about its relevant content unaffected by social media, "Internet has made it easy to create stories, but its not as real as it was" (M Khan, pers. comm., 10 Nov.). Occupying space at each station, I noticed the volunteers and staff gathering content from places like YouTube that would soon be on air, the website, or a social media page. With the relaxed nature of these sources, the information could be misleading and thus let the listeners down with inaccurate content, defeating the purpose of the community's trust in the station. Ntsikelelo believes that listenership has dropped at Zinobele recently because the station is selling too much, "You must balance between good programs and getting money" (N Gobodo, pers. comm., 13 Nov.).

The emergence of technology and the way it functions in our lives has brought about a new kind of community engagement, "In the dawning years of the twenty-first century, the great story of communications technology is the growth of computer communications" (Morrisett, p. 26, 2003). Some stations use social media more so than others and for different uses, but all see its relevance currently. According Ntsikelelo he critiques the content of broadcasts today, "Radio used to be real. Real stories, real everything. These days it's Internet. Sitting at home these days, I can tell, that is from the internet" (N Gobodo, pers. comm., 13 Nov.).

Many stations find their growth through social media and others see it as a necessary component, but also a deterioration of what used to be CR. With the future of technology and growth of social media, there isn't a way the stations can skip around their involvement in these platforms, especially when the trend is to integrate radio and social media. This will either be an access point or a hardship for the continued involvement of the community and most importantly survival of the stations. It will be important for members of stations to recognize the relevance and to find ways to apply it.

That 'Special Something'

If you have ever listened to the radio, you know that presenters are performers. They usually have a certain personality, a pizzazz and a trained voice that knows how to capture the listeners. All of the interviews I had, even with non-presenters, the interviewees were infused with passion for the stations they work at and in general, community radio. The listenership varies with some people that will listen to a station no matter what program is on and some that are selective to the programs that they tune into. At VOC, many people tune into the “Question & Answer” and “Real Man” programs and can identify with the presenters and the content (M Daries, pers. comm., 10 Nov.). For many people, listening to the radio can be the highlight of their day, or what they look forward to escape the normal routine of life. Radio is played in work place, shopping areas, taxi’s, on cell phones, at home and wherever else you can imagine. CRSs can especially provide for the communities they know are listening to them, to engage and provide in a way that other forms of media can’t.

Passion and vibrancy arise from CRSs and the presenters that most often naturally have these characteristics. Besides the presenters, the culture around the stations tends to be “a second home” or “a family”, according to UCT radio students (N Brandreth, pers. comm., 6 Nov.). This atmosphere, full of fun and opportunity, keeps students coming back each year and some pursuing careers in radio after studying at UCT. Like other CRSs, the students at UCT do not get paid to spend countless hours in the studio especially while they are also studying and according to TH, a graveyard broadcaster for UCT radio, these factors make someone more committed (TH, pers. comm., 6 Nov.). TH believes that the drive and passion come from the pure desire just to be at the station, to identify with a hobby, a family, and an intriguing culture around community radio. All of the students that give their time to the station told me that they just so happened to randomly get involved with the station with no previous intentions to. Julia articulated her time at UCT as a transformative moment in her life that now has her headed on the path of commercial radio, “I learned how to be myself, but a better version of it” (Julia, pers. comm., 6 Nov.).

FMR station manager, Victoria, fully believes in community radio passion. She thinks that passion brings vibrancy, and this passion is what CRSs should strive for and how they should differ from commercial stations (V Cawood, pers. comm., 7 Nov.). In a community structure, CRSs have been created and have proven the effect they can have, even after only twenty years of operating, on the community. Post democracy, the stations were seen as an important instrument for reconciliation, able to instill communities with voices that they

otherwise could have lost, “The strength in these radio stations lies in the active participation of communities and proper reflection thereof in its structures” (Monareng, p.4, 2003).

Victoria is passionate herself about how wonderful the form of communication is and how it does justice to reaching huge numbers of people (V Cawood, pers. comm., 7 Nov.).

Sometimes the passion that presenters and members of stations have is rather ambiguous because they might not be getting feedback from the community or even knows who is listening to them present. But despite the ambiguity, community radio seems to possess a certain hope for not only themselves as a station and an individual within the station, but also hope for the community. With religious specialized communities like VOC and Tygerberg, there is a certain passion about spreading the word of the religion and those that tune in to accept it. Ironically, both of these stations have more listeners than the others I interviewed currently and both of their futures look optimistic. At Tygerberg, the general manager was passionate about telling me the importance of station spreading the gospel of Jesus Christ and the role that Christianity has on the airwaves. With almost double the listenership of VOC, the role of Tygerberg is important for people in the Cape metropole and the religious passion that presenters promote on air. At VOC, Tasneem told me that the listeners are very vocal via social media and a text service they provide allowing the listeners the space to be passionate and respond to the presenters. Also with many live streams and podcasts now, stations are able to offer people the shows they might have missed or enjoy.

Despite my own desires to be on radio someday, I was made aware by Natalie at UCT, “You have to have that something, the personality for radio” (N Brandreth, pers. comm., 6 Nov.). I completely understand the drive that it takes with the content and personality a presenter needs to make it on air, and especially in the community radio sector. Unfortunately, VOC has a high turn over rate with the volunteers because much of their initial enthusiasm dies out with the hard work and multitasking it takes to run the show. Other types of media can’t allow for the same passion and open door policy that community radio offers. “How exciting are voices...voices, voices, voices” says Ntsikelelo (N Gobodo, pers. comm., 13 Nov.).

Conclusions

This ISP fulfilled the objectives initially outlined through the examination of literature and communication with personal interviews to find the greater meaning behind the study of community radio in South Africa. I set out to study how CRSs involve different communities in the Western Cape in the efforts of post democracy regaining of local empowerment via communication and non-governmental interference. I was not quite sure initially why this topic interested me, but came to find throughout my project why I was passionate about it. I came to terms with understanding my passion for different levels of communication and also how people are able to be involved in different platforms of media on grassroots levels. My libertarian tendencies brought me to favoring the community radio efforts I had barely heard about before the project, inspiring me to learn more. Through my interests I then was able to learn more about different stations and their efforts in the community.

Not knowing too much about local media, my findings were rather unexpected. Getting a diverse array of community stations allowed me to compare and contrast my findings to the literature as well. First, I became aware of the CR sectors importance in having specialized content, something more specific to local communities so people can relate on that level. Using radio as a media for change and encouragement can have a great effect on the communities that are tuning in. Through these community based efforts, anyone can explore their given democracy by participating in the efforts of the stations and creating a holistic experience for the masses. Also, the lack of government influence on CRSs allows for content to be fluid and not confined within the structure of the system. Many people find refuge in this locally run effort in comparison to historical times of apartheid. Although many stations are free to broadcast how they like, there are still set backs in funding and thus progression of stations in this same manner. The lack of funding has been difficult for survival of some stations and can often be the focus of change to more commercialization, straying from the idea of community. Also, with the progression of technology, social media can be seen as a force to reckon with when it comes to stations connecting with the listeners and staying up to times with their efforts and content. A different future is emerging with CR because of the other ways to reach listeners through social media. Lastly, the passion and vibrancy that many people look for outside of their normal day-to-day lives can be heard on the frequencies from community radio stations, giving people hope and adding a flavor of character to their lives, especially with content they can relate to. A combination of all of the

elements that drives community radio today is what keeps it around still twenty years after democracy.

On a broader spectrum, I learned more about the efforts a government can turn towards improving a society that has been dominated by power hunger and corruption. Through the use of local efforts, there is hope for people to gather and connect. The strength of community identity is a part of many South Africans lives and can be facilitated through forms of media, especially with the accessibility of radio. Having opportunities for people to engage with their cultures is a human right that should always be available. There is a bright path to recognizing the impact of giving people a voice and the change in justice that has potential to be seen. From here, if we focus on the efforts of democracy on a local level, we will be able to engage with one another and see the change through the participation of information, education and entertainment. By recognizing these important aspects of our lives we can become better citizens in understanding the world around us and just simply enjoying the things we love. Our future depends on the different ways of communicating and we must recognize the good to be used by different media platforms on local efforts.

Recommendations for Further Study

To understand the diversity of community radio stations in South Africa, I would suggest studying the rural stations to compare them to the way the urban stations are used. In order to have a better understand of all the occupants of the airwaves, I would also suggest studying public and commercial broadcast stations.

If the opportunity presented itself, I also suggest studying one CRS in particular in order to fully understand the working of the station as well as to receive feedback from the community about the station. You could also compare community radio to other local media sources and how the platform is still being used today in comparison to other mediums. For more information about my work and further study please contact me at kelsey_warren@redlands.edu.

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Appendicies

Interview Questions

- Tell me the history of the station.
- What has been your involvement with the station?
- In what ways does the station reach out to the community?
- What are the current demographics of the footprint of listeners?
- What growth do you see for the station?
- How is social media used for the listenership?

SIT Study Abroad

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CONSENT FORM

1. Brief description of the purpose of this study

The purpose of this study is to learn about community radio in Cape Town. I am interested in the way communication is performed and heard on a community level. The information received will be used toward my final Independent Study Project (ISP) paper.

2. Rights Notice

In an endeavor to uphold the ethical standards of all SIT ISP proposals, this study has been reviewed and approved by a Local Review Board or SIT Institutional Review Board. If at any time, you feel that you are at risk or exposed to unreasonable harm, you may terminate and stop the interview. Please take some time to carefully read the statements provided below.

- a. **Privacy** - all information you present in this interview may be recorded and safeguarded. If you do not want the information recorded, you need to let the interviewer know.
- b. **Anonymity** - all names in this study will be kept anonymous unless the participant chooses otherwise.
- c. **Confidentiality** - all names will remain completely confidential and fully protected by the interviewer. By signing below, you give the interviewer full responsibility to uphold this contract and its contents. The interviewer will also sign a copy of this contract and give it to the participant.

Participant's name printed

Participant's signature and date

Interviewer's name printed

Interviewer's signature and date