Radio in Small Nations

Production, Programmes, Audiences

Edited by

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General Editors' Foreword

Let us start with the obvious question. What is the definition of a small nation? The honest answer of course is that there are many approaches to such definitions, ranging from the more obvious measures of population and geographic scale to more subtle measures such as Gross National Product or Miroslav Hroch's notion of 'subjection to a ruling nation for such a long period that the relation of subjection took on a structural character for both parties' (cited in Hjort and Petrie, 2007: 6).

This series' conceptual framework is much closer to the last of these definitions and, in some ways, chooses to take the idea further in the way that it leaves open the opportunity for volumes on different forms of media and culture to adopt subtly different approaches. In Mette Hjort and Duncan Petrie's collection, *The Cinema of Small Nations*, the authors illuminate a similar debate of their own by citing a section in David Bordwell and Kristin Thompson's definitive *Film History: An Introduction* entitled 'Smaller producing countries'. This included work on the cinemas of Mexico, India, Colombia, New Zealand, Australia and Canada (2007: 3). Here is not the place to debate the validity of this specific list, but it illustrates the problem as well as the useful and interesting challenge of considering the concept of small nationhood in different ways.

Fundamentally, the series is most interested in the nation as a key site of power and, in turn, how artists and policy makers negotiate the question of power in different kinds of national contexts. Therefore, if Hroch's definition above is slightly too rigid for this purpose it nevertheless indicates the general terrain on which this series operates. It attempts to give contributors the opportunity to write about national contexts within which particular art forms have had to negotiate significant questions of power relations with close neighbours at key points in recent history.

The form that such 'negotiations' have taken obviously varies. For example, very close to home, here in the United Kingdom, the issue of language has been a powerful factor in the relationship between Wales and England in particular. The same is true to a greater or lesser extent within other European countries such as Spain and Belgium.

By contrast, in the context of 'First Nations', which we have taken the decision to include in this series, language is frequently just one dimension of a long history of much broader struggles characterized most pressingly by various forms of material inequalities and fundamental disputes over land and ownership.

At this point it is very important to state that this series is not concerned solely with the disadvantages of small national contexts. If anything the balance is somewhat in the other direction, though there is no question that many contributions will analyse the challenges of the kinds of power relationships outlined above. However, one of the first inspirations for the editors' involvement both in the series and in the study of small nations in general was the idea of the advantages of small national contexts, particularly for certain kinds of creative endeavour. Hjort and Petrie quote Olaffson from a work that was one of the first to make a significant intervention in this direction: 'the citizen of a small state has a better possibility to influence decision making than a citizen in a large state' (2007: 7). For the socially and politically engaged artist or cultural thinker this offers the most potent of opportunities and is one of the key reasons why the contributions to this series have the potential to offer such important insights.

At the time of writing, the volume of academic work on the media and culture of small nations is relatively slight. We have already mentioned Hjort and Petrie's collection on cinema, and the bibliographies of all the collections in this series will attest to a number of outstanding smaller-scale insights in different disciplines. The aim of the Small Nations and Global Media series is to bring some of that work together in a single recognizable source that hopes to make a significant contribution not only to debates specifically on creative endeavour and small nations, but by extension to the relationship between the idea of the 'national' and the media and culture that is produced in different kinds of national contexts.

Steve Blandford
and Gill Allard

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About the Contributors

Rosemary Day is the director of the Radio Research Centre based in Mary Immaculate College, University of Limerick where she is a senior lecturer and head of the department of media and communication studies. She has published extensively on community radio in Ireland.

Ken Garner is senior lecturer in media and journalism at Glasgow Caledonian University, and associate editor of *The Radio Journal: International Studies in Broadcast and Audio Media*, a journal for which he was founding editor in 2003. From 1997–2002 he was radio critic of the *Sunday Express*.

Richard J. Hand is professor of theatre and media drama at the University of Glamorgan. He is the author of *Terror on the Air! Horror Radio in America, 1931–52* (Jefferson, NC: McFarland, 2006) and the co-author, with Mary Traynor, of *The Radio Drama Handbook* (New York: Continuum, 2011). In addition to radio studies, his research interests include adaptation/translation studies and horror studies.

Steve Johnson joined the University of Glamorgan as community radio tutor in 2001, following a successful career in commercial radio. Steve was heavily involved in the launch of GTFM Radio, the first community radio station in Wales, and has taken an active role in supporting the development of community radio in Wales ever since.

Julie Kissick is senior lecturer in media, communications and journalism at the University of Glamorgan. A Sony award-winning journalist, Julie was ITV's first female producer of the weekly football programme *Soccer Sunday*. She has held broadcast management roles both at ITV and the BBC. Her research interests include the narrative of cancer; how compliance has influenced output at the BBC and the impact of social media on 'traditional' broadcasting.

Henry G. Loeser is a teaching member of the faculty of social studies – Department of Media Studies and Journalism in Brno, Czech

Republic. In 2008, he founded the Media Innovation Centre at Masaryk University, establishing the new university broadcast operations. Since 2003, he has been founder and director of Radio Expert, an NGO that is active in community media projects worldwide.

Philip Mitchell is based at the University of Glamorgan's Cardiff School of Creative and Cultural Industries, where he is one of the heads of academic programmes. He also teaches and researches in the school's division of media, culture and journalism. His current research interests focus on journalism, broadcasting and film in Western Europe and in Wales.

Martin LoMonaco is professor of communication and media arts at Neumann University in suburban Philadelphia. He was co-founder of the *Journal of Radio Studies* (now the *Journal of Radio and Audio Media*) along with Frank Chorba, and served as that journal's managing editor for five years.

Brian Pauling is a principal lecturer at the New Zealand Broadcasting School. He founded the New Zealand Broadcasting School at Christchurch Polytechnic Institute of Technology in 1983 and was the first head of school. He has had a fifty-year career in broadcasting, publishing and tertiary education.

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James Stewart is a senior lecturer in broadcast journalism at the University of Glamorgan. Over the last thirty years he has worked in BBC Radio, as a member of staff and a freelance, on news, current affairs and documentaries. He was a trainer and manager of overseas training for the BBC World Service, involved in the delivery and management of projects in central and Eastern Europe during the 1990s.

Ioana Suciu graduated from the School of Journalism and Communication at the University of Queensland in 2009, with a

Master of Communication and also completed a Graduate Diploma of Education. She is teaching in a remote indigenous community.

Mary Traynor began her career in BBC Radio and established the radio department in the University of Glamorgan, where she is currently head of learning and teaching at the School of Creative and Cultural Industries. Mary's current research is focusing on radio drama and radio for development.

Kitty van Vuuren is a lecturer at the School of Journalism and Communication at the University of Queensland. She has worked as a radio producer, broadcast journalist, volunteer coordinator and training consultant with independent and non-profit media organizations. She has published widely on local and community media and was a member of the editorial board of *Media International Australia*.

Radio in Small Nations:
An Introduction

Richard J. Hand and Mary Traynor

After its inauguration during the early years of the twentieth century, radio and a new concept called 'broadcasting' enjoyed phenomenal popularity with a direct impact on culture and society. Particularly from the 1920s onwards, with the establishment of official broadcasting companies and stations, the impact of radio on politics as well as national, regional and community identities would be incalculable. However, the twentieth century was an epoch of rapidly advancing technologies, and by the latter half of the century there were regular predictions about the demise of radio, especially in relation to television and the internet. All the same, despite increasing competition from other media, radio continues to thrive. Radio has survived the onset by constantly evolving, adapting to new technologies and audience trends. The range of radio services is greater than it has ever been and the means of accessing radio continues to expand. The traditional image of the family passively huddling round a single radio has been replaced by one of dynamism and responsiveness: radio is constantly available, controllable and participatory, wherever you are, via car radio, mobile phone, internet and portable music player.

Radio has played and continues to play a key role in nurturing or denying – even destroying – people's sense of collective identity. Collective identity is often perceived as synonymous with national identity but the multiple origins and motivations of the term 'nation' mean that its precise meaning is ambiguous. Nation status can refer to land mass, population, cultural viability or colonial past. Throughout history, it has variously been democratically agreed, bestowed or imposed by colonial powers. Typically, we now understand nation as a location, an ethnicity or language; a community of interest or a community of place. Since its inception, radio has been used as a means of both defining and reinforcing national identity. The state-driven public service radio systems of the past imposed the colonial power of 'great' nations. More recently, local and particularly community radio have played an

increasingly important role in representing emerging and 'small' nations: those covering smaller geographical areas or ethnic/language groups which had previously been ignored.

The chapters in this volume combine to provide an historical and contemporary overview of radio in small nations. A number of representative small nations are in this volume: some grappling with new postcolonial identities, others still operating as repressive regimes; some struggling to find a new common purpose in the post-industrial age, others unifying previously ignored ethnic or language groups. While all chapters specifically address the relationship between radio and the small nation in question, each chapter has a slightly different emphasis. As a whole, the collection strives to present diverse voices and diverse themes held together by passionate and scrupulous research.

In the opening essay – 'In search of access, localness and sustainability: radio in post-devolutionary Wales' – Steve Johnson and Philip Mitchell use Wales as a case study to demonstrate the role of radio in the construction of the identity of a small nation. Their detailed account uses the creation of the Welsh Assembly Government in the 1990s as a background to explore three models of radio: public service broadcasting from the 1920s to the present day; independent local commercial radio and, especially, community radio. As well as clearly articulating the history and current context of radio in Wales, Johnson and Mitchell suggest future directions through which the medium might realize its full potential in 'enhancing cultural identity, promoting community regeneration and developing a well-informed civil society'.

Similarly, Rosemary Day's 'Voice of a nation: the development of radio and Ireland' provides an edifying account of the place of radio in Irish culture in a period of some ninety years. For Day, Irish radio continues to be 'the voice of the nation'. Beginning with the establishment and hegemony of public service radio in the form of RTÉ, Day explains how this was challenged, first by pirate radio stations of the 1970s and 1980s; the establishment of Irish-language stations in the 1970s and the 1990s, and also by commercial and community radio in the late 1980s and 1990s which worked to a local and regional agenda. Radio in Ireland remains a hugely popular medium and although digital radio itself has been slow to develop, other digital technologies have permitted contemporary audio to flourish in diverse forms and Ireland evidently remains a nation of listeners.

We remain in the British Isles with Ken Garner's 'We don't talk any more: the strange case of Scottish broadcasting devolution policy and radio silence'. Garner uses a keen sense of radio history and Scottish history to explore the current condition of Scottish radio broadcasting. With a detailed use and understanding of the Scottish political context and legislation surrounding broadcasting, Garner gives us a picture of a small-nation broadcasting culture that increasingly finds itself in crisis with its future prospects decidedly in the balance. At the same time, Garner's well-articulated insights provide a tentative glimpse of what might be a positive way forward for radio in Scotland.

Radio has a long legacy in Wales, Ireland and Scotland and the situation is similar on the other side of the world. Brian Pauling's 'New Zealand – a radio paradise?' reveals the important place of radio in New Zealand culture. This small nation adopted radio technology in the pioneering era of the early 1920s and the medium flourished immediately. For Pauling, New Zealand has developed a 'remarkable radio ecology' which can be characterized as nothing short of a continuing 'love affair' with radio. Pauling reveals the complex character of radio in New Zealand, carefully describing how it has evolved through diverse political and legislative changes.

In 'Radio as an expression of nation and sub-nation in Laos', Mary Traynor looks at Laos, explaining how radio has functioned as the voice of official nationalism, promoting loyalty to the Lao state under successive political regimes while, at the same time, 'it has ignored the linguistic, historical and territorial boundaries which have traditionally characterized the Lao nation'. As Traynor explains, government influence over the media in Laos has meant that in recent times democracy of ownership has been encouraged and yet free speech has been restricted. In addition, media globalization has also had a paradoxical impact in Laos: while radio has become able to represent new sub-nationalisms which cross traditional state borders, the international media has undermined Lao radio's attempts to articulate both official and alternative national identities. As Traynor explains, radio in Laos is at a critical point with the recent introduction of more liberal policies which may, or may not, lead to a truer reflection of the complex Lao nation.

Ioana Suciu and Kitty van Vuuren's 'Training for life: the contribution of radio training to indigenous education and well-being in Australia' reveals how Australian community radio has flourished since the 1970s with immense success and importance within indigenous

communities. Suciu and van Vuuren explore indigenous broadcasting training, making use of first-hand testimony from people involved in this process. Suciu and van Vuuren conclude by arguing that community broadcasting training could be located more centrally in the Australian school curricula and, in doing so, it would produce enormous benefits for individuals and their communities.

Martin LoMonaco's essay 'CHOU Arabic radio in Montreal: finding unity in diversity' looks at a fascinating contemporary case study. CHOU is Canada's only Arabic-language radio station and LoMonaco's detailed account looks at the development and practice of the station and the implications this may have for radio as a whole. As LoMonaco emphasizes, CHOU is an interesting example of how 'an ethnic radio station can have an agenda that does not separate its audience from the country in which it is located, but actually serves to acculturate new residents into their adopted culture'. In addition, CHOU is a living demonstration of a station that can create unity out of diversity, using a programming philosophy driven by principles of inclusion and commonality.

The United States of America is hardly a 'small nation' and yet as a land of remarkably diverse groups and cultures it is perhaps a country that comprises many 'small nations'. As a case in point, Jacob J. Podber's essay 'Regional radio and community: John Lair and the *Renfro Valley Barn Dance*' looks at a fascinating phenomenon in popular culture: southern, country and 'hillbilly' music shows in US radio broadcasting of the 1930s onwards. The driving force behind the success of the genre, particularly the *Renfro Valley Barn Dance*, was the radio personality John Lair, who entertained his audience with stories and, most importantly, with the music he collected and shared. Using archival materials from the Berea College Appalachian Music Archives, Podber reveals how Lair succeeded in creating 'a listening environment on his programmes that took his audiences "back home"'. Interestingly, Lair's devoted listeners included southerners who had migrated to other parts of the US as well as regional fan bases but he also succeeded in developing audiences interested in country and barn dance music for its own sake.

In 'Community radio for the Czech Republic – who cares?', Henry G. Loeser argues that community broadcast media is increasing around the world, especially in Western Europe. In a post-Communist democracy such as the Czech Republic, the principles of independent broadcast media have been embraced. This has principally been

in the form of government-funded public service broadcasting and advertising-supported commercial broadcasters. Loeser argues that the Czech Republic would have much to gain from developing the form of community radio sector that has so benefited other nations across the world but is realistic in outlining the difficulties in making this happen.

In 'Radio in the Republic of Moldova: the struggle for public service broadcasting', James Stewart also looks at a post-Communist nation. The former Soviet Republic of Moldova is a small nation which has 'failed to establish itself as a united, democratic state since independence in 1991'. Radio provides powerful evidence of this struggle. As Stewart reveals, in 2004 the staff on the Radio Antena C station in Chisinau successfully went on hunger strike in defence of their station, which was threatened with closure by the authorities. Despite international concern and scrutiny (not least as Moldova hopes to join the EU), Radio Antena C has continued to be under threat and it is a case study that, as Stewart writes, 'reveals how serious an issue the struggle for public-service media has been in some post-Communist countries'. In addition, although corporations such as the BBC have been active in advising Moldova about radio provision and technology, progress has been depressingly slow in the attempt to 'establish a credible and sustainable public service and to survive with limited resources in an always-uncertain political climate'.

The final essay in the collection, Julie Kissick and Mary Traynor's 'Radio in Wales: the practitioner speaks', looks directly at practice, using some enlightening first-hand testimony from practitioners in the contemporary Welsh context. As Kissick and Traynor argue, the 'media landscape in Wales is increasingly crowded' with global and commercial expansion creating an environment of unprecedented competition and technological development. The essay looks at three radio stations: Wales's English-language public service station, BBC Radio Wales, which began in 1978; Wales's first commercial radio, Swansea Sound, which began in 1974, and the community radio station, Voice Radio, which began in 2006. The examples chosen have extremely diverse motives, funding and distribution. The essay elucidates the stations' approach to key issues such as programming, distribution, sustainability and the impact and implications of technological advances.

In Search of Access, Localness and Sustainability: Radio in Post-devolutionary Wales

Steve Johnson and Philip Mitchell

INTRODUCTION: THREE MODELS OF RADIO

Wales provides an intriguing case study of radio's role, both actual and potential, in the construction of the identity of a small nation, not least because it has the highest levels of radio listening in the UK (Ofcom, 2011f: 23). Choices available along the radio dial in Wales offer not only exposure to two distinct languages but also to several different tiers of broadcasting, illustrating varying conceptions of 'nationhood': listeners here may choose between transmissions from the overarching nation state (the United Kingdom) and others which target either their immediate Welsh locality, or that locality's surrounding regional area, or Wales's entire population of 3 million, addressed as a single, discrete nation.

The connections between the smaller-scale localities and the larger entities which they collectively comprise should, ideally, be made audible on the airwaves of these various tiers, thus helping to fulfil the media's role in 'the building of collective solidarity and understanding inside Wales' (Williams, 1997: 6). This process depends partly on the extent to which Welsh citizens are able to attain genuine access: access not only to a diverse choice of broadcast content but also to participation in decisions about the media's structure and operation, as well as the potential for an active contribution to the creation of the broadcast content. In addition, it will depend on the extent to which a genuine 'localness' is achieved, with regard not only to the content but also to the ownership of the radio stations in question. Thirdly, it will depend on the sustainability of the various tiers, with regard to their funding and financial footing as well as in relation to their long-term credibility and relevance amongst their target communities.

The achievability of these goals is conditioned by a set of constraints that provide the context within which radio in Wales operates. In addition to the all-pervasive constraints of finance and funding, these relate partly to the political context. Wales is an example of a 'stateless' nation which has acquired a significant level of devolved policy-making powers, as a result of the late 1990s creation of the National Assembly for Wales (NAfW) and the 2004 advent of the Welsh Assembly Government (WAG). Broadcasting, however, is not among the set of areas for which the WAG has responsibility, so direct policymaking is retained by the central UK Government. Although the 2011 referendum on the extension of law-making powers enhanced WAG's degree of independence, broadcasting remains an area which is outside its direct remit.

Wales's physical characteristics are also significant. For a relatively small nation its geography is complex in broadcasting terms, including as it does substantial areas of intermittently high land where analogue radio and television reception is difficult. Consequently, investment in additional transmission arrangements has been required, with a resultant disproportionately high number of the UK's transmitters (Andrews, 2006: 193; Williams, 2008: 97). Access to broadband, mobile and digital radio coverage is also problematic away from urban areas, a significant issue in view of Wales's relatively high rural population. In addition, the long border with England produces a transmission overlap affecting 40 per cent of the Welsh population (Ofcom, 2008: 15) and in some areas broadcasts from London-based radio channels can be heard more easily than BBC Radio Wales or Radio Cymru, a reminder of how Wales is relatively far more 'porous', with regard to broadcasting, than either Ireland or Scotland (Talfan Davies, 1999: 17).

Further, socio-cultural constraints might also be briefly cited. Compared to the rest of the UK, for instance, Wales has relatively high levels of deprivation and financial exclusion, with income and expenditure well below the UK average (Ofcom, 2008: 14; Welsh Government, 2011). Parallel to this is what is often referred to as Wales's 'information deficit' (Wyn Jones et al., 2000; Audience Council Wales, 2011), largely a consequence of the frequently lamented lack of a fully fledged national press (in contrast to Scotland, for example). This, in turn, places a particular onus on broadcasting, including radio, to construct and disseminate national and local identity (Williams, 2008: 94). Hence the depth of the concerns expressed by the National Assembly for Wales in regard to the nation's failure to have 'kept pace' with England's development of

radio and the 'suspicion that Wales has been low on the priority list of entrepreneurs and regulators in the broadcasting industry'.[1]

Notwithstanding such constraints, Wales's high overall levels of radio listening highlight the rich potential of the medium. Radio broadcasting in Wales has eventually come to consist of three main sectors or models of radio: the public service broadcasting model (PSB), the commercial/independent model and the community/access model. The three are distinguishable in terms of ethos, funding, ownership, content, public access and diversity. The PSB model, the only one in existence in Wales for the first fifty years of its broadcasting history, is traditionally seen as an approach with certain key tenets: universal availability and equality of access; a financial reliance on public sponsorship; diversity and responsiveness to different audiences; public accountability, and a conception of news as a public good rather than a private commodity (see, for example, Iosifidis, 2010; Lewis and Booth, 1989: 51–70). Within a mixed broadcasting system, PSB co-exists with the privately owned radio sector. Such a sector has been in place in Wales, with several false starts, since the 1970s, in the form of a varying number of commercial radio stations. Dependent, above all, on advertising revenue for its financial viability, this model of radio is often seen as challenging the perceived paternalism or cultural elitism of PSB's approach, as well as its cost-effectiveness (see Dunaway, 1998: 92).

The third model, now usually designated as the community radio sector, is the most recently and tentatively established in Wales, and is commonly seen as one which prioritizes social gain over profit, and which focuses – for both its audience and, crucially, for its volunteer participants – on localized urban and rural communities.

In scrutinizing these issues of access, localness and sustainability, this chapter explores the extent to which radio in Wales is able to contribute to the construction of an independent cultural viability and thereby fulfil a key indicator of genuine 'small nationhood'. It argues that a mixed radio broadcasting ecology, in which each of the three models co-exist and complement each other, is essential but, moreover, that it would be beneficial to the Welsh nation for a firm commitment to be made to nurturing the community radio tier.

PUBLIC SERVICE RADIO BROADCASTING IN WALES

In the case of Wales, traditional PSB tenets have been accompanied by countervailing tensions, in that on the one hand BBC Radio has been

seen as needing to protect the unity of the British nation, while also empowering a sense of small nationhood and of national regions on the other. A brief summary of the BBC's contribution to radio in Wales from the 1920s to the present day will illuminate the ways in which these countervailing objectives have competed.

Following on from its first broadcasts in 1923, the initial stage of the BBC's output in Wales succeeded in being conspicuously local in that 'everything Cardiff transmitted was unique to Cardiff' (Davies, 1994: 6). This was soon followed, however, by a gradual incorporation of the output into a regional and UK-wide broadcasting network which left little scope for Wales-based decision-making on programming policy and development. Within just a few years technological progress had made it possible for simultaneous broadcasting across different regions, constituting an early forerunner of present-day networking. Thus, in the case of Wales, it was decided that programming originated in London would take up two whole evenings a week (Scannel and Cardiff, 1991: 306–7). Parallel to this, steps were taken to ensure that the broadcast output was as stylistically similar as possible to other areas of the UK, with a minimizing of any distinguishing features of accent, diction or mode of address. Such developments gave rise to Saunders Lewis's famous comment that 'the BBC administers Wales as a conquered province' (Lucas, 1981: 52). In addition, the BBC's original focus on the 'local' was replaced by a 'regional' emphasis, within which Wales's visibility was weakened by being part of 'the western region' together with the English south-west (Briggs, 1965: 321), and it was not until 1936 that a separate 'Welsh region' was recognized and established.

From that point on, further progress in establishing a sense of genuine cultural independence on the airwaves around Wales, one consonant with PSB tenets, would increasingly be the result of determined lobbying. Such campaigning for genuine Wales-based and Wales-oriented broadcasting became closely linked to parallel campaigns for Welsh-language output (which had found scant support from the BBC hierarchy during the first couple of decades of radio). Such concerns were given renewed vigour by the creation in 1947 of the Welsh Regional Advisory Committee (WRAC) and a further boost by the 1951 report of the Beveridge Committee on Broadcasting, which lambasted the BBC for its London-centric approach and called for a renewed commitment to PSB principles via a 'democratization of broadcasting' and a 'public representation service' which would foreground regional voices and

concerns (Crisell, 1997: 76). The Beveridge Report triggered the conversion of the WRAC into the Broadcasting Council for Wales (BCW), which acquired a more comprehensive remit for radio partly in recognition of the growth in radio listening, with 82 per cent of Welsh households owning a radio licence by 1952 (Davies, 1994: 160–71).

The following decade, in the wake of the Pilkington Report, steps were taken to begin the process of converting the BBC's regional radio network into a local one. This led several Welsh localities, Swansea chief amongst them, to lobby for inclusion in the new local network. However, the 1972 Sound Broadcasting Act ruled out the situating of any local BBC stations inside Wales (or any other 'national regions'), hence BBC Wales's enduring Wales-wide remit, and hence also the opportunity which would open up for the commercial radio sector at the local level. A third report, from the Crawford Committee in 1973, addressed the lack of Welsh-language radio broadcasting which had been flagged up by the BCW, paving the way for the splitting of the single BBC service and the creation in the late 1970s of BBC Radio Wales (originally on medium wave only) and Radio Cymru (using FM on VHF). Although both then went through a transitional period in which their broadcasts were transmitted as opt-outs from the BBC's UK-wide Radio 4 and 2, respectively, they both gradually established a more autonomous identity, with the result that by the mid-1990s Radio Cymru, for example, had increased its output to eighteen hours a day.

By this time both channels were facing competition within Wales from the newly established commercial local radio stations. Moreover, both were subject to criticism from listeners, politicians and pressure groups, in the case of BBC Wales for being 'too closely identified with the south Wales valleys', and in the case of Radio Cymru for a lack of appeal to younger listeners and what was perceived by some as an 'over-Anglicization' (Ellis, 2000: 194), namely the use of songs, sound bites and place-names in English. Radio Wales reacted to such pressures by taking steps to target listeners beyond its 'valleys heartland' (Barlow, 2006: 144) by covering cultural, sporting and political activities in other areas of the country. Radio Cymru's mid-1990s relaunch aimed to increase the proportion of younger listeners, from a wider variety of backgrounds, by means of a more populist programming approach based on 'longer programmes, which are personality-led, generally live and linked by the presenters rather than continuity announcers' (Ellis, 2000: 191), although this drive for younger listeners was seen by some as at odds with any

attempts to de-anglicize the station's output. Continued expressions of concern from groups such as Cylch yr Iaith (the Language Circle) led to the publication of guidelines on the use of Welsh by Radio Cymru presenters (Davies, 1999; Ellis, 2000: 192–4).

The present-day situation of BBC Radio Wales and Radio Cymru is in some respects a healthy one. The two stations have the highest reach of any in Wales, for example (Rajar, 2011). Moreover, BBC Radio spend per head is higher in Wales than in most of the UK (Ofcom, 2011f), although prominent amongst the challenges currently facing the PSB radio sector in Wales is that of ensuring a sustainable financial footing in a climate of significant budgetary limitations (see Williams, 2008: 96) while also ensuring a balance in programming between music and more expensive types of speech-based output. It should also be borne in mind, of course, that although the BBC's overall radio audience in Wales is particularly high, with the 62 per cent share being above the BBC's UK average of 55 per cent (Ofcom, 2011f: 5), the most listened-to stations in Wales are the London-based BBC Radios 1 and 2. An additional challenge relates to access, notwithstanding the potentially central future role of DAB. Radio Wales's VHF coverage is still limited to 62 per cent of the population of Wales, as opposed to 95 per cent for Radio Cymru (Ofcom, 2008: 38), hence the commitment in the BBC's latest annual review to 'work with partners and stakeholders across the radio industry to extend the availability . . . and to ensure that these vital national services are available to all' (BBC Cymru Wales, 2011: 18).[2] Further, associated challenges relate to the harnessing of the interactive potential of new media and social media so as to reflect the evolving political reality, in the wake of the 2011 referendum, in ways which fully represent Welsh communities at both national and local level.

COMMERCIAL LOCAL RADIO IN WALES

The arrival of the first privately owned radio stations in Wales, and with it the first competition for the BBC, triggered considerable optimism, not only on the part of the policymakers but also from local authorities and community groups. This new tier of broadcasting would, it was hoped, not only be profitable but would also aspire to a genuine representativeness of the areas in which it was to be located. In Wales, an additional expectation was that Welsh-language broadcasting might be given renewed impetus (Evans, 2001). The reasons for this initial optimism,

and also for its eventual frustration, provide an important insight into present-day concerns about the sector's sustainability.

The Sound Broadcasting Act of 1972 broadened the remit of the television regulator, the Independent Television Authority, so as to encompass radio as well, leading to the body's re-designation as the Independent Broadcasting Authority (IBA). One of the IBA's initial tasks was to establish the first wave of privately owned stations across the UK. The initial regulatory approach was firm and strongly encouraging of localness, with a prohibition on cross-ownership of stations and a requirement on each licence area to have a Listeners' Advisory Committee (see Barlow, 2007: 26). In addition, all programming schedules were required to be submitted to the IBA for pre-approval, all station owners were expected to be local and, moreover, encouragement was given to newspapers from the locality to take up a 15 per cent stake in the station (Carter, 1998: 8). Perhaps partly because of such tight regulatory constraints, initial progress was slow. Wales's first commercial radio station, Swansea Sound, began operating in 1974 but it would not be until the start of the next decade that the second, Cardiff Broadcasting Company (CBC), was established, with a very strong community orientation, followed by Gwent Broadcasting in 1983. CBC arrived as part of a new set of stations established under the fresh impetus brought by the 1980s Conservative government which 'had been attracted by the idea of widening audience choice, and by the provision of an economic incentive to potential owners and advertisers' (Crisell, 1997: 186). This would herald the start of a steadily more distanced and liberalized regulatory approach (Carter, 1998: 9–10). Even so, some optimism remained in that 'many different consortia, in different parts of the country, claimed to be able to convert the sort of political promise of local radio as announced in White Papers and echoed by the IBA into concrete broadcasting terms in their own areas' (Wright, 1980: 13). The financial reality proved otherwise, however, and by the mid-1980s both CBC and Gwent Broadcasting had collapsed. Nonetheless, the drive towards deregulation eventually fostered a steady and significant increase in what became known as the Independent Local Radio (ILR) sector, although it had come to be dominated by 'half a dozen or so major ownership groupings' (Carter, 1998: 16). This trend has also been closely reflected in the case of Wales, where the majority of ILR services have been owned and operated beyond its borders (thus questioning their true 'localness') and by companies with other media and corporate interests (questioning their genuine 'independence'). Moreover, present-day commercial revenues for

the privately owned radio sector in Wales are amongst the lowest any-where in the UK (Ofcom, 2011f: 25).

The current local commercial radio tier in Wales is summarized in figure 1, which shows how the stations tend to be clustered in line with constraints of geography and population density, and in table 1, which indicates the current concentration of ownership, with eleven of the

Location of local commercial radio stations in Wales, 2011

Heart 96.3

Heart 103.4

Heart Cymru

Radio Ceredigion

Radio Hafren

Radio Carmarthenshire

Radio Pembrokeshire

Scarlet FM   The Wave

Swansea Sound   Bridge FM
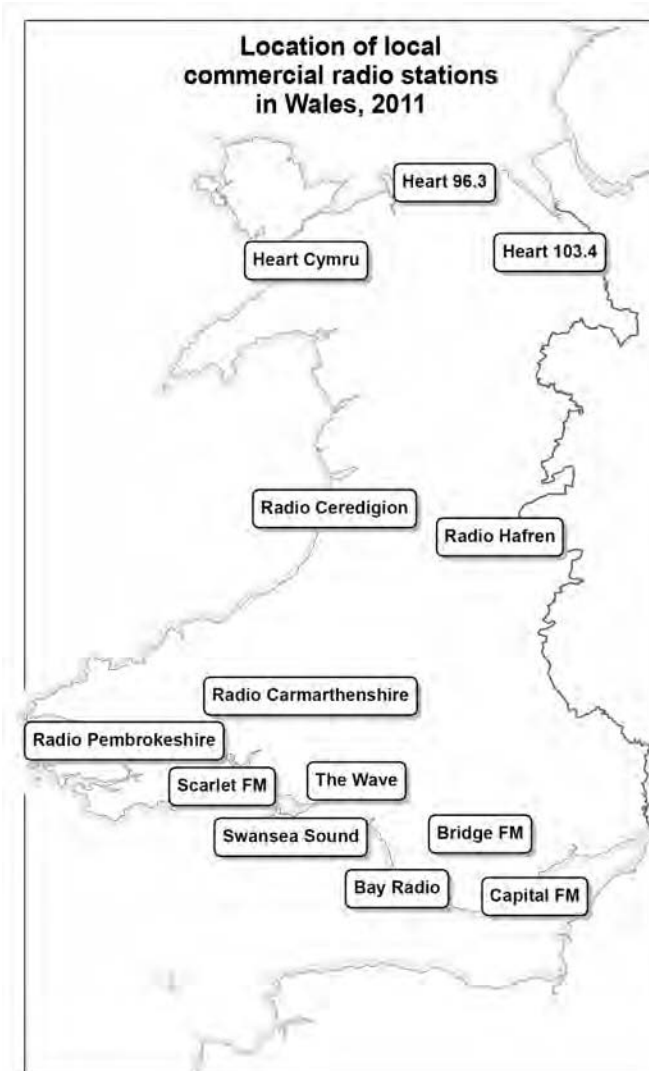
Bay Radio   Capital FM

FIGURE 1   Location of local commercial radio stations in Wales, 2011

TABLE 1   Ownership of local commercial radio stations in Wales, 2011

Owner	Head office	Local commercial radio stations owned in Wales
Global Radio	London	Capital FM (Cardiff and Newport) Heart (three stations in north Wales)
Town and Country Broadcasting	Cardiff	Bay Radio (Swansea area) Bridge FM (Bridgend & Vale of Glamorgan) Radio Carmarthenshire Radio Ceredigion Radio Pembrokeshire Scarlet FM (Llanelli area)
UTV plc	Belfast	Swansea Sound (Swansea area) The Wave (Swansea area)
Wrights Radio Relay	Newtown	Radio Hafren (Newtown area)

stations distributed amongst just four owners. It is also worth noting that one of the difficulties with the 'localness' concept is the considerable variation in size between designated catchment areas. For example, Radio Ceredigion, on the west coast, has a potential listenership population of 60,000, whereas that of Capital FM in the south-east is almost 1 million, yet both are categorized as 'local' stations.

Although this table concentrates specifically on stations holding local licences, it should be pointed out that Town and Country Broadcasting also owns a regional radio station in south Wales in the form of Nation Radio. A further station, Real Radio, which was originally regional in focus and which now enjoys a Wales-wide reach, is owned by GMG Radio Holdings (part of the Guardian Media group), with a head office in Manchester.

One key instance of the effect of remote ownership is the increasing prominence of the networking of the same programmes across different regions of Wales and of the wider UK. One Cardiff-based station provides an illustration of the consequences of this in the form of Red Dragon FM, which was taken over in 2010 by the London-based Capital Radio company and added to its network of city stations. The resultant Capital FM South Wales station is required by Ofcom to broadcast a minimum of seven hours a day of locally originated output.[3] Capital FM discharges this obligation by means of a four-hour breakfast show and a three-hour drive-time show presented from Cardiff by Welsh presenters. As was noted, however, by one Cardiff-based journalist (Mahoney, 2011):

> Between breakfast and drive time is where the problems start, with
> shows playing different tracks for each area [of the Capital net-
> work], held together with either the most bland, cover-all asides
> to suit everyone or bespoke jingles and pre-recorded links . . . one
> of the latter made reference to the weather in Wales. 'Avoiding the
> snow we're having today,' he said. 'It's nasty, right.' Unfortunately,
> the snow had cleared locally by then.

What ensues in large parts of the schedule, in other words, is a rather
false or manufactured sense of locality.[4] As a possible pointer to the con-
sequences of such developments with regard to local listeners, the fig-
ures for the first two quarters of this newly de-localized station showed
a reach drop of 15 per cent in addition to a 20 per cent drop in listening
hours (Plunkett, 2011b). It is perhaps worth emphasizing that 'localness'
is flagged up by Ofcom (as it had been by the previous regulator, the
Radio Authority) as a key exponent of the public interest obligation
which all commercial stations in theory inherit upon being licensed,
in exchange for access to the radio spectrum (which is designated as an
intrinsically scarce resource). The reality in terms of ownership is that
only one of the commercial stations, Radio Hafren, is owned exclusively
within its own catchment area and most are subject to controlling inter-
ests located outside Wales.

There are additional concerns which call into question the depth of
the 'public interest' credibility of Wales's commercial stations. Prominent
among these is the broadcast content itself, in particular the balance
between information, discussion and analysis, on the one hand, and
music-based programming on the other, with the latter predomi-
nating. Regarding news provision, for example, few local journalists
are employed by the Welsh commercial stations (none at all in some
cases, the stations concerned receiving their local news via a network
arrangement from other stations or via other forms of outsourcing).
Local news tends to focus on traffic accidents, crime and so on rather
than on local authorities or political debate (see Hargreaves and Thomas,
2002), perhaps an illustration of Talfan Davies's observation that
'broadcasting deals well with the concrete and the human, less well with
the abstract' (1999: 18). The fact that a lower proportion of listeners
in Wales than elsewhere in the UK identify the radio as a priority for
obtaining local news (Thomas, 2006: 55) may not be unrelated to these
limitations.

An additional issue is that of Welsh-language use. Although the initial commercial phase in Wales saw a significant amount of Welsh-language programming on CBC and Swansea Sound (Independent Broadcasting Authority, 1981: 41, 47–8), concerns have emerged in the period since then regarding the extent to which the stations have developed a genuine commitment to extending their listeners' exposure to Welsh, especially during peak-time hours. A related, more general concern is that opportunities for active community involvement in either language – via phone-ins, debates and studio discussions – are far scarcer than was originally envisaged for this tier and compare poorly with Radio Wales and Radio Cymru.

Parallel to such concerns are others in connection with the economic viability of such stations. The case of Valleys Radio, which after thirteen years was forced to close in April 2009 through chronic lack of revenue, provides a salutary reminder of the difficulties of sustainability, the valleys station having twice failed in its request to Ofcom to be co-located in the studio of Swansea Sound (also owned, as Valleys Radio was, by Ulster Television) to save costs.[5] Such cases prompt a consideration of the third tier, the community sector, wherein there are comparable problems of financial stability.

COMMUNITY RADIO IN WALES

The existence of what we now accept as 'community', 'public' or 'access' radio in the UK is to some extent a result of the 1970s and 1980s political developments summarized above. There would appear to be linked themes between the battle for local radio provision and arguments for community media operations. The Pilkington Report (1962), which had established the context for these debates, strongly encouraged 'community participation', for example (Lewis and Booth, 1989: 94). The arrival of the Local Radio Association in 1964 and the BBC local radio trials of 1967–9 had also laid early groundwork for locally orientated content. Moreover, the Annan Report (1977) argued the case for programmes which catered 'for all tastes and interests and a sense of national identity and community' (ibid.: 8). The awarding of a licence to the Cardiff Broadcasting Company (see above) was recognized by the IBA and others as being in line with the Annan Committee's proposals for local broadcasting. CBC was a fascinating amalgam of community-orientated activists and radio professionals. This radio 'social experiment'

was not successful, culminating in a buy-out and a move to a more fully commercial status (ibid.: 108–14). The partnership was, however, a first for British radio and a substantial nod in the direction of community-orientated programming.

Wales was also involved from the very beginning of licensed community radio in the UK. Pontypridd's GTFM, in south Wales, was chosen as one of just fifteen UK groups to take part in the initial Access Radio pilot project in 2002. GTFM had been established in 1999 by the Glyntaff Tenants & Residents Association (GTRA) in Pontypridd, as a community project working with local radio enthusiasts. The project illustrated Dunaway's contention (1998: 89) that 'volunteer staff does not constitute cheap labour, but an extension of the listening community itself'. The station worked in close association with the nearby University of Glamorgan, which provided the weekday evening output from its studios. In 1999 and 2001 its students had worked with local school pupils and other volunteers on Restricted Service Licence broadcasts under the station name 'Fusion', winning two BBC Radio 1 awards for excellence. For the purposes of the project the university dropped the 'Fusion' brand and moved fully into partnership with the GTRA to launch GTFM 106.9. Following full evaluation of the Access Radio experiment and consequent new broadcasting legislation, Ofcom began licensing the re-titled 'community radio' across the UK and GTFM became the first such station in Wales. GTFM was to be followed over the next few years by other community radio stations in north and south Wales, as summarized in figure 2 and table 2.

This Welsh community radio sector shares a similar financial uncertainty to that of its counterparts elsewhere in the UK, being in fairly constant fear of closure and, in the words of Professor Anthony Everitt (cited by Buckley, 2009), 'hobbled by its poverty'. Ofcom's Community Radio Annual Report 2009/10 confirmed that 'almost 50% of stations that returned a financial annual report were in deficit' (Ofcom, 2010c: 1.18). Further evidence of the impact of the current economic environment on the workings of the community radio sector is demonstrated by Ofcom's award of community radio fund grants for 2010/11 Round 2. There were fifteen successful grants to fund specific posts, of which only two did not feature the words 'commercial', 'fundraiser', 'business' or 'sustainability' (Community Media Association, 2011).

Current governmental policies with regard to the sustainability of community radio are limited in their effectiveness. The UK Government
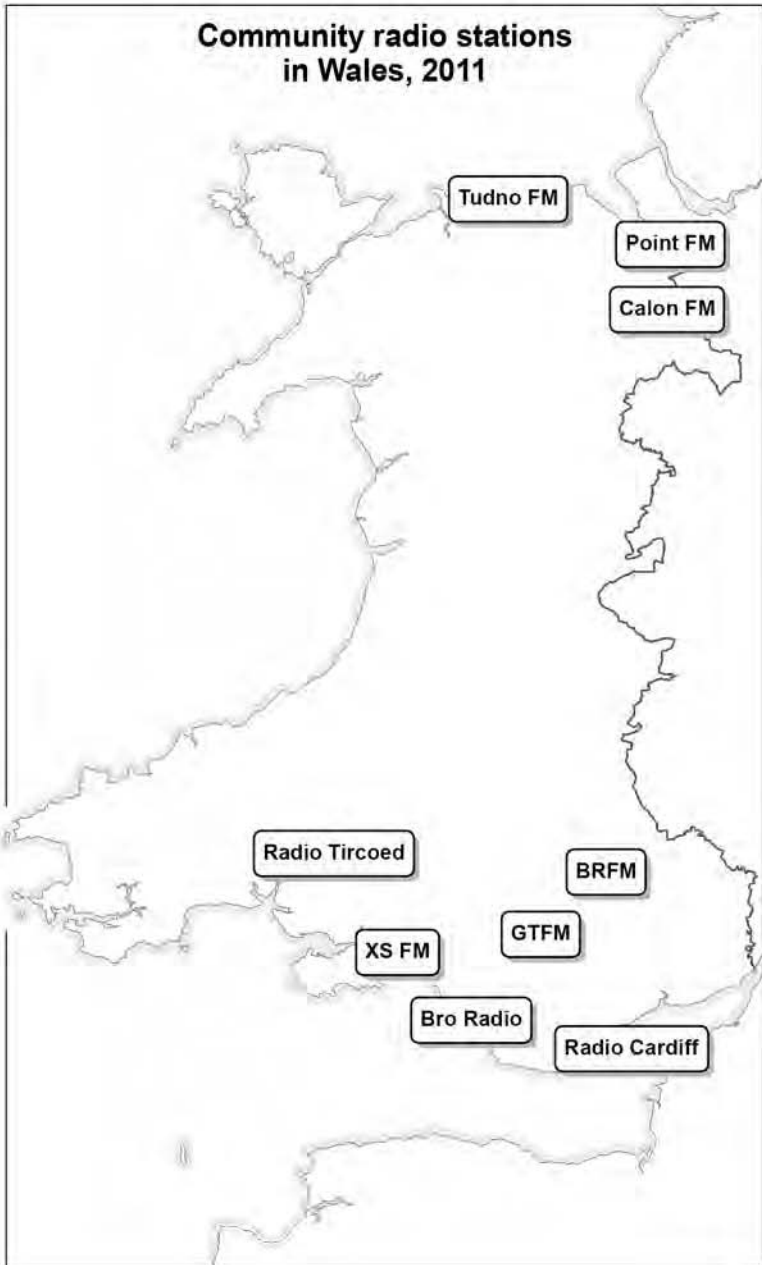
FIGURE 2   Community radio stations in Wales, 2011, showing
concentration in the south and north-east

TABLE 2   Welsh community radio projects awarded licences by Ofcom

Community station	Location	On-air date	Target audience
BRFM	Brynmawr, Blaenau Gwent	October 2007	Geographic: town/rural
Bro Radio	Barry, Vale of Glamorgan	March 2009	Geographic: town/rural
Calon FM	Wrexham	March 2008	Geographic: town/rural
GTFM Pontypridd	Pontypridd	January 2006	Geographic: town/rural
Point FM	Rhyl	March 2010	Geographic: town/rural
Radio Cardiff	Cardiff	October 2007	Black and ethnic minorities
Radio Tircoed	Tircoed Forest, Swansea	December 2008	Geographic: town/rural
Tudno FM	Llandudno	July 2008	Geographic: town/rural
XSFM (previously Afan FM)	Port Talbot	April 2007	Young people (11–25)

provides support via the Ofcom Community Radio Fund whereas the Welsh Government has a smaller fund for community radio operations in the principality. An annual amount of approximately £500,000 is available for distribution from the Ofcom fund. To put this figure in context, as of May 2011 there were 210 licence holders (as opposed to the fifteen participants who took part in the initial pilot project). There are also concerns surrounding the likelihood of achieving a positive decision. The latest award for which figures are available (2010/11 Round 2) indicates that just fifteen grants were awarded out of a total of sixty-four submitted, thus forty-nine out of sixty-four applicants were not awarded a grant (Community Media Association, 2011). By way of further context, Everitt's extremely positive evaluation of the original Access Radio pilot (2003a and 2003b) had urged that the UK Government 'establish a community radio fund to provide £30,000 per annum for every licensed station' (2003a: 9). By 2011 he had not altered his mind, arguing that 'without something approaching that level of resource most stations will be financially unstable' (Everitt, 2011). That sum would currently equate to more than £6 million.

The Community Media Association (CMA) initiated a petition demanding additional government investment in the Community Radio Fund in August 2009, praising the vital role of community radio

in 'creating a diverse media landscape, serving disadvantaged and minority communities and adding different voices that may not otherwise be heard' (HM Government, 2009). The *Guardian* newspaper picked up on the campaign, quoting Lord Puttnam as assuring those in the sector that they had 'the weight of public support and technological history' on their side (Buckley, 2009). A widely quoted comparison was that made by Karl Hartland (station manager of the Cambridge-based 209 Radio) who stated that 'the money available today through the Community Radio Fund, to help support the operating costs of more than 150 community radio stations [is] less than the annual salary of a BBC Radio 1 breakfast DJ' (ibid.).

The case of Point FM in Rhyl, north Wales, illustrates the constraints community radio operates under. Rhyl has three of the most deprived wards in Wales (Welsh Government, 2011: 14). The station manager, Harold Martin, is a former lecturer in economics and was also the managing director of the commercial station, Marcher FM. He urges the extension of education and training opportunities within the sector, advocating uniform standard entry levels for 'vocational courses that are academically relevant for all volunteers covering essential elements in operating small social enterprises'. He cites the population of Wales as being 'less than that of greater Birmingham with an entire budget about the same', and argues that Welsh community media operators are especially constrained. His belief is that community radio stations should be self-sustaining and be allowed to generate income from a variety of sources 'to include education and training' (Martin, 2009). Martin's grasp of economics and knowledge of radio programming has been utilized fully in recent times as he has battled to keep Point FM on air. Rhyl falls within the broadcast area for Heart North Wales. The Heart stations hold 'local' radio licences. With a combined available audience for the area of Rhyl of less than 150,000, Point is not allowed to compete with Heart for advertising revenues as this prohibits the 'inclusion of any remunerated advertising and sponsorship' in the licence service (Ofcom, 2010d: 2.13). Point has not benefited from a particularly close relationship with its local council nor managed to acquire premises in the part of Rhyl which is eligible for grant funding. Nonetheless, in March 2011 the radio station celebrated its first year on air without any commercial or grant funding.

Changes in ownership, boardroom reshuffles and corporate rebranding, long associated with the commercial radio tier, are becoming

apparent in the community sector. In 2010, Afan FM was rebranded as
'XS FM'. Afan had been known for the provision of alternative music
and support for local talent. Citing the regional Nation Radio as a major
commercial competitor, XS FM made the decision to change the style
of the output while retaining a similar age demographic. XS FM defines
itself as a 'commercial station with a community remit'.[6] The station
management justifies this position by stating bluntly that 'the general
community radio model is unsustainable' and that they must focus on
a future based on generating 50 per cent of revenue via on-air income
and 50 per cent from off-air activity. They argue that community radio
operations do not need to overtly deliver social gain targets via on-air
broadcasts, and that such outcomes are equally achievable and valid via
off-air activities such as training and community engagement (XS FM,
2011).

Two final examples illustrate the role of online-only community
radio. Cleddau Community Media, based in Pembroke Dock, has made
a conscious decision not to apply for licences as a part of the current
bidding process. This decision has been based on limitations on their
ability to achieve future sustainability due to time-constrained sources
of grant funding (mostly ending in 2013), an inability for its potential
listeners to receive DAB output, an absence of commercial advertisers
locally (its target population is approximately 92,000) and restrictions
on its ability to sell advertising. For the time being, it looks likely to
remain broadcasting on an online basis only. Locally, Tindle Newspapers
launched the *Pembroke and Pembroke Dock Observer* in July 2011. Station
manager Marc Tierney advocates a loosening of the current regulations
on advertising revenue: 'if anyone can set up a newspaper and go after
advertising, why can't community radio do the same?' (Tierney, 2011).

The Treherbert-based Rhondda Radio (formerly Radio Cwmni)
also broadcasts purely online. The station evolved from the Rhondda
Cynon Taf Community Radio Project which ran from 2007 to 2009.
The project, funded by the Wales Co-operative Centre's 'communities@
one' project, consisted of two, twenty-eight-day Restricted Service
Licences taking place at three locations along the spine of the Rhondda
Valleys in Penywaun (Dapper FM), Treherbert (Radio Cwmni) and
Penrhys (Rhys Radio). GTFM (at the base of the valleys) provided a
sustaining service for all three stations including local news bulletins.
Aside from Rhondda Radio, Dapper solely broadcasts online and Rhys
Radio is not currently operational. In that fashion, stations could share

some of the costs of staffing and programming as a means of developing a more durable model of sustainability. Networking could certainly be of benefit to the Welsh community radio sector as a means of sharing resources and training materials, as well as creating a forum for debate. One such initiative is currently being developed as the result of a partnership between the University of Glamorgan and the Digital Network Business division of the Welsh Government. This particular model encourages liaison between the various stations and builds relevant links with educational institutions. Useful benefits might include sharing costs in establishing listener figures for advertisers and maximizing the potential of citizen journalism in Wales. In a response by community radio in Wales to the 2008 NAfW Broadcasting Committee it was pointed out that the Welsh community radio stations could 'potentially reach around 675,000 people – almost a quarter of the Welsh population'. The lack of a resource to encourage such collaboration within Wales was bemoaned, with the Community Radio Forum of Ireland cited as a good example of how much more effective stations could be 'when they had formal links between them' (NAfW, 2008).

An audience of nearly 700,000 should attract advertisers, and the idea of community radio stations working together to provide strength in numbers and a stronger voice for the sector appeals. The individual stations recognize and represent the interests and tastes of their particular target audience communities. Such independence is, of course, essential. That does not, however, prevent collaborative activities such as the sharing of programming ideas, problem solving, comparing training materials and day-to-day operational communications. A shared platform would appear to offer great collaborative opportunities for the Welsh community radio sector.

CONCLUSION

Considered in its full historical context, the story of radio's development in Wales is a rich and diverse one, with significant achievements in the establishment of its various tiers, however precarious the financial reality is in parts of each of these. The core strength of the Welsh radio sector lies precisely in its diversity, in the way in which the PSB strand inhabits a mixed system alongside commercial activity and grassroots community access programmes, with a degree of complementarity in the three tiers' different strengths. It is clear, for example, that news journalism is

a core strength of PSB in Wales and is consistently perceived as such by listeners (Audience Council Wales, 2011: 11). Equally, the constraints felt by the local commercial sector should not hide the fact that there have been some notable successes regarding audience share and penetration of target population, such as Radio Pembrokeshire. Community radio, meanwhile, constitutes, for all its frailty, a demonstration of active citizenship, and the importance of its training function should not be overlooked, in particular given that the early emphasis on training in the local commercial sector (see Davies, 1991: 111) has become dissipated. It is worth recalling the work of South African community-radio activist Zane Ibrahim, who describes community radio as being '90% community and 10% radio' (2004: 41), while also stressing that it needs to modify its approach to achieve sustainability. He praises the medium for its association with training activity but stresses the need for it to be seen as 'a place to make a career' (ibid.). Ibrahim cites the case of the African station Breeze FM which manages to combine commercial targets with an objective to deliver PSB output for its community. This example may provide a pointer as to where 'commerciality' meets 'community' and 'sustainability' intertwines with ethical 'viability' for the community radio stations of Wales and the UK.

The peculiarities of the relationship between Welsh broadcasting and the wider UK role of the BBC mean that the strengths of PSB are unable to operate at local level in Wales. Moreover, constraints on the local commercial sector produce a similar set of limitations in terms of outcomes, in which 'local' radio risks becoming 'deterritorialized' (Fairchild, 1999: 549). In this specific context, a strong case can be made that the nurturing of the third tier, the community radio sector, is particularly crucial in view of its potential contribution to a participatory and informed citizenry, and that the sustainability of this sector needs to become a specified political, regulatory and cultural priority.

Certain future initiatives may be dependent on the wider political context, specifically on whether there is any further devolution of powers to Wales in a manner which would include broadcasting (see Andrews, 2006: 191; Williams, 2008: 110). Several measures might nevertheless be flagged up as possible priorities. With regard to Welsh-language developments, there have been renewed calls recently for a second Welsh-language PSB station (see Audience Council Wales, 2011: 3) and such a step might well be an appropriate way of developing the BBC's dominant position in Wales. Parallel to this, three measures might be

earmarked for fostering the expansion and long-term sustainability of community radio across Wales. One step might involve drawing inspiration from the original phase of the expansion of the equivalent sector in US broadcasting, which made significant and effective use of listener sponsorship (see Dunaway, 1998: 102, who argues that this might constitute a viable 'third 'way' in both Europe and the US). Secondly, as Sen advocates in the case of Indian community radio (2005: 328), much could potentially be gained from expanding the range of collaborations between community radio teams and the higher education sector, including ensuring that community radio is part of the curriculum and pedagogy (the initial phase of GTFM in south Wales is a case in point). Lastly, there is a broader need for raising expectations of the potential of both community radio and local commercial radio. This may involve closer liaison between the Welsh Government and the regulator, as well as with local authorities, relevant trade unions and community education centres to assist in the creation of independent programme-making organizations which could provide both second- and third-tier stations with genuinely 'local', speech-based material. Such steps may eventually help radio in Wales realize its full potential in enhancing cultural identity, promoting community regeneration and developing a well-informed civil society.

Notes

1. The NAfW specifically complains (2002: 60) that there is a lack of 'satisfactory local radio coverage' in 'much of Mid Wales' and that 'the number and range of stations and formats in other areas is more limited than is ideal'.

2. It is anticipated that further new multiplexes should improve DAB coverage, especially for BBC Radio Wales and Radio Cymru. This will help address current levels of concern about limited access in some areas (Audience Council Wales, 2011: 3, 5 and 15–16).

3. This requirement is for weekdays only and is lighter at the weekends (for some stations there is no weekend requirement at all). Across all Welsh local commercial stations the weekday 'local' requirement varies between four and ten hours, with 6.9 hours being the average. The average weekend requirement is just three hours.

4. A contrasting view on networking from within the industry is provided by Richard Eyre, former chairman of GCap Media: 'If you stop paying 20 presenters £40,000 each to broadcast at 10 am and instead hire one

good guy to broadcast across every station, you could save as much as
£600,000. As a representing shareholder, that's the kind of saving you
can't afford to turn your back on in favour of an unquantifiable instinct
about the power of localness' (Crawley-Boevey, 2009: 22).

5. Ofcom has now in fact relaxed its regulations on the co-location of
stations, although this change came too late to prevent Valley Radio's
demise.

6. *Nptbroadcasting: Working towards Our Future*, in-house publication (cited
with permission).

Voice of a Nation: The Development of Radio and Ireland

Rosemary Day

> Our enterprise today marks the beginning not only of the
> New Year, but of a new era – an era in which our nation will take
> its place amongst the other nations of the world. A nation which
> has never been made by Act of Parliament. A nation is made from
> the inside itself, it is made, first of all by its language, if it has one;
> by its music, songs, games and customs.
>
> *Opening address by Douglas Hyde, provided in Pine, 2002: 187–8*

These were the opening words of the address delivered on air on 1 January 1926 at the launch of Ireland's first radio service, the state owned 2RN (this became Radio Éireann in 1937 and Radio Teilifís Éireann (RTÉ) in 1960). The speech describes the aspirations of a young state to nationhood. It makes claims to an ancient, unique heritage and expresses the desire to gain international recognition and status. It presages many of the issues surrounding the role of radio in shaping identity in Ireland over the next century, some of which are explored in this chapter as the story of the development of radio in the small nation of Ireland is briefly recounted. The issues discussed include the use of the public service station as an Ideological State Apparatus (ISA) to unite a country divided by civil war; the forging of a generation in the 1970s and 1980s that rejected the vision and values of the founding fathers of the state through their engagement with pirate radio; the maintenance of a strong sense of place through the establishment of licensed, local, commercial radio in the late 1980s and early 1990s, and the recognition of a fragmented population and audience with the development of new services in the early years of the twenty-first century. The development of Irish-language radio and of community radio in Ireland are of huge importance in tracing the history of Irish radio and in any discussion of radio's role in constructing Irish identities. Unfortunately, neither are

discussed here due to lack of space and because both are described else-where (Day, 2007 and 2009; Delap, 2007; Watson, 2003).

There is a tendency to view Ireland as having a fairly homogenous, Catholic, rural culture with strong links to a Celtic and mystical past; however, this was no more the case in 1922 than it is today in the aftermath of the Celtic Tiger. Emerging from a very bitter civil war, with the fear of losing the northern counties and even of the return of direct British rule from Westminster, the politicians of the new free-state parliament or Dáil were anxious to create a state that was separate and significantly different from that of its previous colonial master. Initially, it was proposed that the station should be independently financed and run by a conglomerate of business interests (Farrell, 1991: 5; Gorham, 1967: 10–16; Horgan, 2001: 15; Savage, 1996: 2–3). However, a political corruption scandal that rocked the new Dáil and the fear that the main investors might transpire to be British, leading to continued British influence in the fledgling state, led the founding fathers of the state to set up a station under the control of the Postmaster General (Farrell, 1991: 3; Gorham, 1967: 10–15).

The potential of radio as a way of connecting all parts of the country with the capital, or centre, was quickly grasped. Indeed, it was deemed that radio was far too important to be left in private hands (Gorham, 1967: 12). Radio was seen as a way of projecting the image of a new Ireland to its citizens and beyond. The new 'free state' was reeling from the impact of a bitter civil war and from the exclusion of the six coun-ties that became Northern Ireland in 1925. Yet the government recog-nized that its citizens came from different backgrounds and faiths and it was hoped that this new identity would help heal old wounds, unify neighbours and enable all citizens to move forward together. A new identity that was not English, but would probably be English-speaking, needed to be imagined and then forged. As a result, the content of pro-gramming could not be too contentious or controversial. Irish could not be the only, or even the main language, on the air and a middle-of-the-road, middle-class, urban set of tastes and values were established as the norm. The Irish music that was played was not usually the 'real' trad-itional music played in rural Ireland but a parlour version that was per-haps deemed to be more pleasing and less uncouth. Indeed, traditional Irish music was not expected to be popular and was only allotted fifteen minutes per day in the early years. When the station finally conducted audience research in 1953, it was a shock to discover that this proved to

be their most popular programme (ibid.: 230). While they subsequently increased the amount of air time given to it, they continued to attempt to 'civilize' the country by retaining an emphasis on parlour music, light opera and classical music. The greatest expenditure on music and musicians over the entire course of Radio Éireann's history has been on classical music, including the foundation and maintenance of two orchestras and a choir (Pine, 2005).

Early programming was entirely scripted and was delivered in an accent and tone that was urban, if not urbane, and that carried the cultural mores of the public service and the middle class. Some efforts were made to expand the service to provide an Irish-language channel (Delap, 2007: 12–13; Gorham, 1967: 150) and to reach a global audience with a short-wave overseas service (Gorham, 1967: 150–2) but these efforts came to nought, mainly due to lack of resources. Some outreach initiatives did succeed with the establishment of a short-lived second studio in Cork in the early days (ibid.: 47), a community radio initiative in the 1980s (McCarthy and Manning, 1982: 35–9), local radio again for Cork in the 1970s, and today RTÉ has local studios in all cities around the country. An early experiment with a travelling recording unit in the 1950s produced excellent programmes preserving much of the native tradition in music and song and popularizing this around the country (Gorham, 1967: 183). RTÉ's web archive provides an excellent, if brief, overview of the development of the service enhanced by some fascinating clips from its programming over the years.[1]

Programming was rather stilted as the scripting of all programme content continued up until the 1950s (Horgan, 2001: 72) and this prevented the development of current affairs, political debates and spontaneous, lively talk programming. Radio Éireann was slow to develop a second channel and continued to try to talk to everyone in the entire country at the same time and in the same manner, a policy that was abandoned by most other European broadcasters after the Second World War. However, the reach of radio and the extension of its schedule ensured that it retained a high level of listenership loyalty, particularly during the day-time hours, with Gorham claiming that it had a daily listenership figure of 85 per cent in the 1950s (1967: 229). The removal of a ban on 'crooning' or close mic singing that was popular in America, and the introduction of new types of programming, for example the native soap opera, *The Kennedys of Castleross* in 1955, provided a lighter approach, more relevant to the lived experience of people in the 1960s. However,

Radio Éireann was expected to be all things to all listeners and its pro-
gramming was consequently safe and conservative. This did not change
much until Radio Éireann was faced with real competition from its own
new television service in 1961 and from pirate radio in the 1970s.

Despite its monopoly of the airwaves in legislation, it would be
foolish to believe that the national state broadcaster was ever the only
radio station listened to in Ireland. Even before 2RN came on air, early
radio enthusiasts were tuning in to the BBC and to European stations
(Clarke, 1986: 14). This trend continued and Irish radio listeners tuned
in to stations from all over Europe and so were addressed by many voices,
traditions and cultures. Ireland herself was changing from the 1950s
onwards. The country underwent rapid modernization and urbaniza-
tion. Free education was extended to secondary-school level and these
changes combined to lead younger people in particular to question the
principles and perspectives of the founding fathers of the state and of
the Catholic Church (Brown, 2004: 280–1). Influenced by global events
such as the student revolutions of 1968, the Vietnam War, rock music,
emigration and by globalization generally, young people actively sought
life-styles, values and attitudes that were no longer insular and trad-
itional (ibid.: 311). This happened in almost every aspect of their lives
but found a particular outlet in music. In Ireland, as in most of Europe,
access to this music was restricted, as state broadcasters did not tend to
play 'hits' or to promote radical music. The desire to listen to the music
of their generation and the need to connect to that generation through
the music of their time ensured the success of pirate radio.

Some of this generation took to the airwaves themselves. Irishman
Ronan O'Raghilly is credited with being one of the earliest and
most successful music radio pirates in Europe as he established Radio
Caroline on a ship off the coast of Essex in 1964 (Mulryan, 1988: 15;
Ó Glaisne, 1982: 21). He had plenty of brothers on shore back at home.
It is estimated that by 1983 sixty pirate radio stations were broadcasting
in Dublin alone (Doolan, 1983). Mulryan (1988), in the only published
account of Irish pirate radio, lists nearly 500 pirate radio stations by
name in an appendix to his book. However, this was compiled through
personal recollections and it is likely that the number was far higher.
Mulryan explains that there was a limited amount of pirate or hobby
radio in Ireland up to the late 1960s, political or radical radio was almost
unknown and most activity was by young males interested in playing
their own choice of music. This changed with the success of Radio

Caroline and others internationally and the 1970s saw the prolifera-
tion of pirate music radio stations, especially in the cities. Some of these
lasted quite a while and are still fondly remembered today, such as Radio
Dublin, ARD and Big D in Dublin or Radio Luimní, RLO and Big L
in Limerick. However, the majority only lasted a few weeks or months
and then closed. Sometimes this was because the boys' parents put a
stop to the activity in their garden sheds and attics; sometimes it was
due to internal rows, and the consequent splits often led to two new
pirate radio stations being formed. It was rarely due to the threat of
being closed down by the authorities. While the police did regularly raid
pirate radio stations in the 1970s and early 1980s in Ireland, they lacked
any real teeth. Mulryan quotes the case of Radio Melinda (Mulryan,
1988: 24–6) where those arrested by the Irish police were given a paltry
fine the equivalent of only €2.40 each. The legislation covering illegal
transmission dating from 1926 (Irish Statute Book, 1926) only allowed
for this amount to be levied and soon showed how easy it would be for
anyone who wanted to set up a radio station to do so.

So many followed suit that RTÉ became worried at the loss of
both listeners and advertising revenue. They tried, without much
success, to get pirate radio stations closed down but these kept popping
up. Eventually, RTÉ decided to found its own national youth-music
channel in the hope of dominating the market (Barbrook, 1992: 209).
2FM was established in 1978 and came on air in 1979 with the slogan
'Comminatcha!' It was expected that this would run all pirates off the
airwaves as it was broadcasting nationally on the state's transmitters, it
was well funded and resourced, and it recruited the most popular pirate
DJs of the time, many of whom are still on air today. However, the new
public service pop music station did not do as well as expected, particu-
larly in the capital city where it continued to lose out to the competi-
tion of pirates. Horgan notes that 2FM's early capture of over half of the
national audience aged between fifteen and twenty equally illustrates
their failure to capture the other half, despite their superior resources
(2001: 125). This audience share fell rather than grew over the years,
and teenagers and 'anoraks' continued to broadcast around the country.

More significantly, a small number of highly professional, slick-
sounding and extremely popular pirate radio stations run as commer-
cial businesses took centre stage in Dublin in the late 1970s and early
1980s. The most successful of these 'Super pirates' (Mulryan, 1988: 71)
were Radio Nova, Sunshine Radio and Q102, all in Dublin. Sunshine

and Nova quickly carved up the youth market between them. They employed DJs and broadcast a full and regular schedule that they advertised in the press. They paid for professional, American jingles and they played the top hits of the day, almost non-stop. They spent a large proportion of their budgets on promotions and offered cash and other prizes such as 'The Cruise, the Cash or the Castle', gaining huge audiences in the process. The presentation styles and accents used on air borrowed heavily from American models and were instantly popular with a young audience that was bored and alienated by RTÉ's stilted approach to broadcasting, an approach described by one DJ as being 'like a priest running a disco' (ibid.: 76).

Operating on two different sides of the capital city, the super pirates were highly and professionally organized as commercial business enterprises. They collected sizeable revenues and even paid taxes on their employees' wages to successive governments that refused to license them. This worried RTÉ, who found that their advertising revenue was severely affected as listeners tuned into the super pirates rather than to 2FM or to Radio One. RTÉ pushed for the pirates to be dealt with. At the same time, many businessmen saw the opportunity to make money and began to put pressure on politicians to legislate for an independent, commercial sector in radio and television. Many of these politicians themselves were anxious to end RTÉ's monopoly of the airwaves. There was considerable resentment and disappointment in Fianna Fáil (Ireland's largest political party for most of the twentieth century), in particular at the type of treatment and cover that they received in news and current affairs programmes on RTÉ. It was felt that an alternative news service might provide greater opportunities for politicians and businessmen alike (Horgan, 2001: 155). One promotional campaign run by Radio Nova in the early 1980s attracted such a response that it caused the telephone exchange in Dublin to crash. This angered many but alerted others to the huge popularity of the pirates. Politicians saw the potential to reach voters and went on air on pirate stations regularly, despite their illegal nature. Businessmen lobbied for regulation so that they could establish profitable enterprises under licence and be protected from the open competition that raged between pirate operators. The state broadcaster, RTÉ, wanted the situation regularized so that it could address its own financial problems and plan for the future (ibid.: 126.) The combination of these three powerful groups – politicians, businessmen and RTÉ – meant that the grassroots demands of young

listeners who regularly marched to support 'their' pirate radio stations led to a series of bills being introduced in attempts to legislate for an independent broadcasting sector (Pine and Thomas, 1986).

Radio stations from overseas, such as Luxembourg and Caroline, and, later, pirate radio from 'down the road' helped young Irish people in the 1970s and 1980s to see themselves as part of an international generation of young people. A *Weltanschauung* that was modern and progressive was, at least partially, created through the music and rebellion of pirate radio. Ireland in the 1970s was emerging from extreme economic underdevelopment, poverty and the control of the Catholic Church. Young people were benefitting from the introduction of free secondary-school level education, and pirate radio provided the opportunity to break off the shackles of traditional, rural, boring Ireland. Pirate radio offered the chance to embrace American music and culture, to enjoy British pop and rock music, and to look outwards and forwards rather than stew in postcolonial resentment and inertia. Some rebelled by taking to the airwaves themselves (Mulryan, 1988) but the vast majority rebelled just through the act of listening.

Young people were passionate about their music and their stations and marched to protest at police raids and closures and to demand licensing. However, businessmen, politicians and RTÉ each had strong reasons to push for a change in broadcasting legislation, as outlined above. The economic recession of the time led to a number of coalition and short-lived governments, each with a different approach to broadcasting (Pine and Thomas, 1986). The smallest political party, Labour, wanted to see RTÉ take on responsibility for a huge number of small local, community-based opt-out services; Fine Gael (the second largest party) and Fianna Fáil both favoured a new independent sector but differed on how this was to be achieved. Eventually, the Fianna Fáil minister for communications, Ray Burke, published two bills (Horgan, 2001: 151) and when these were passed into law (Irish Statute Book, 1988) they effectively put an end to most pirate activity as all illegal broadcasters were granted the right to apply for licences on condition that they were off the air entirely by December 1988. The carrot of a licence proved strong enough and the airwaves reverted exclusively to RTÉ until the first new local commercial radio stations came on air in mid-1989.

The 1988 Broadcasting Act (Irish Statute Book, 1988) established an independent broadcasting sector under the control of a regulatory authority which has undergone a number of name-changes, from the

Independent Radio and Television Commission (IRTC) in 1988, to the Broadcasting Commission of Ireland (BCI) in 2002, to the Broadcasting Authority of Ireland (BAI) in 2009. This body has the responsibility of licensing and regulating the sector. Initially, it established one national radio station, Century Radio, and twenty-one local commercial stations based more or less on the county divisions of Ireland, with two stations in Dublin. Century Radio failed in 1991 and was replaced in 1997 with Radio Ireland which later relaunched, rebranded as Today FM. The majority of the locally based, commercially driven stations have proven to be highly successful in gaining audience share and therefore advertising revenue. There were rumours in late 1988 of a secret price list for licences but this was largely dismissed as 'sour grapes' on the part of those who were not granted commercial radio licences. It subsequently emerged, however, that Minister Burke had in fact taken money and used his influence to favour Century Radio (Barbrook, 1992: 220; Horgan, 2001: 153). It would seem that the establishment of independent commercial radio in Ireland was marred by political corruption just as the state broadcaster had been in 1924 (Farrell, 1991: 5–6; Savage, 1996: 3).

The standard and success of independent, commercial stations in terms of quality broadcasting and revenue differ around the country. There are currently six licensed stations in Dublin providing for a variety of musical tastes and genres. Around the rest of the country, the local commercial stations that target county-bounded audiences in rural Ireland are more homogenous in terms of programming and they hold a remarkable audience share today. As early as 1992, Kelly reported that local radio held 25 per cent of the market share (1992: 80). This had increased to 53 per cent in 2011 in contrast to a fall in market share for RTÉ's stations, with Radio One achieving 25 per cent and 2FM only 12 per cent in that year (JNRL, 2011).

The division of the country by county is an old one and it is reinforced in a meaningful and competitive, almost tribal way, through the highly successful, nationalist sporting organization of the Gaelic Athletic Association. This is built on to good effect by local radio stations (Boyle, 1992) in order to construct communal identity and listener loyalty. In 1989, eighteen of the twenty-one new stations chose to incorporate in their own names the names of the counties they were serving. Highland Radio in Donegal and Capital Radio in Dublin (later 104FM) also referred to locality in their titles, leaving only 98Fm in

Dublin as the exception. The awareness of place was strongly represented in the establishment of the first commercial local radio stations in Ireland and it continues to be of importance even with the development of internationally owned chains of stations.

In general, these county-based stations provide an easy listening mix of middle-of-the-road music and syndicated news with magazine and chat shows dealing with local affairs and providing a local perspective on national news items. They are contractually obliged to ensure that 20 per cent of their schedule provides news and current affairs programming. Most of them follow the same schedule outline with a morning chat/magazine show and lighter requests and music shows throughout the day. Some stations break away from the formula and provide programming that is unique to their stations and directly relevant to their listeners, for example the long-running and highly popular nightly traditional music shows on Clare FM. This makes commercial sense as stations need to attract listeners that they can sell to advertisers. These local radio stations work hard and succeed in building a relationship with their listeners through the use of phone-ins, texts, e-mails and social networking. It is clear from the high listenership figures enjoyed by local radio enjoys (JNRL, 2011) that Irish people want to know about what is going on around them and that they like to hear from and about people in their own locality.

The BAI has a policy of preventing the creation of monopolies in the media through cross-ownership of radio and press. However, a number of the local commercial radio stations licensed in 1988 are now part of chains owned by Communicorp, Scottish Radio Holdings, UTV and Thomas Crosbie Holdings. This has led to a certain homogeneity of sound, but the schedules, formats, approach and even the accents have been similar across local radio stations in Ireland since their foundation. As noted by Kleinstuber (1992: 149–51), this is the case in other countries, and it cannot be attributed to group ownership alone.

The first independent regional station licensed by the regulatory authority in Ireland was BEAT FM in 2003. This is both region- and generation-orientated, being geared towards the youth market in southeast Ireland (fifteen to thirty-four years of age). A local commercial station in Waterford, WLR, recognized the difficulty of trying to keep the entire population entertained and engaged and they identified the economic potential of attracting young listeners in the region. This highly successful, music-driven station currently holds 35 per cent of

market share in its region (JNRL, 2011) and has led the way for oth-
ers to apply for regional licences. As of 2011, there are six licensed
regional, quasi-national and multi-city stations on air in Ireland. Three
are similar to BEAT, as they cover large areas of the country and play
music hits to teenagers and young adults. Spin South West, a member
of the Communicorp family of stations, broadcasts to the south-west of
Ireland; iRadio 101–104 broadcasts to the north-west, and iRadio 105–
107 covers the north-east. 4FM is an attempt to replicate their success
with an older generation. Established in 2009, it broadcasts in the four
largest cities and plays 'golden oldies' for those in their forties and fifties,
trying to cash in on the phenomenon of musical memory and genera-
tional bonding so well described by Susan Douglas (2004: 219–55). By
2011, they had only achieved a 3 per cent market share (JNRL, 2011)
but they rebranded in May of that year as Classic Hits 4FM and this
figure may improve over time (O'Mahony, 2011). The newest quasi-
national independent radio station, Spirit FM, was launched in 2011
and is a Christian-faith driven radio station. Perhaps the biggest success
and surprise in the development of regional stations was the expansion
of a news and current affairs station based in Dublin, Newstalk, to cover
most of the country. This quasi-national station, with a market share of
8 per cent, challenges that of the official, national, independent, com-
mercial station, Today FM, with its market share of 13 per cent, and even
RTÉ's national channels of Radio One with 25 per cent and 2FM with
12 per cent (JNRL, 2011).

Demands for an Irish-language station by civil-rights activists
led to the establishment of RTÉ's second radio channel, Raidió na
Gaeltachta, in 1972. This initially functioned as a type of local radio
based in each of the three Irish-speaking areas. However, it grew and has
expanded to become a national service today (Delap, 2007; Ó Glaisne,
1982; Watson, 2003). A community radio station, Raidió na Life was
licensed in 1993 to cater for Irish speakers in the Greater Dublin area
(Day, 2006; Ó Drisceoil, 2007), and an internet radio station, *Raidió
RíRá* was recently started to attract teenagers. The provision of radio
services for Irish speakers is part of a linguistic, constitutional and
ideological story that merits discussion but cannot be covered here due
to lack of space. Likewise, the interesting story of small-scale, volunteer-
run, not-for-profit community radio stations cannot be covered in
a chapter of this size but has been discussed elsewhere (Day, 2007
and 2009).

The year 1999 saw the launch of RTÉ's fourth national channel, Lyric FM, a classical music station. RTÉ had operated a classical music service, 3 FM, on the same frequencies as Raidió na Gaeltachta but this had to end when the Irish-language station extended its service. It is not clear where the demand for such a station came from but it is consistent with the history and long-term aims of the state's public broadcaster. As a public service broadcaster providing programming for the edification and 'civilization' of the nation, RTÉ and a succession of government ministers with responsibility for broadcasting considered the provision of classical music to be an important part of its work (Gorham, 1967: 82, 117, 201). As an organization funded by a combination of licence fees and commercial fundraising, RTÉ Lyric needs to sell advertising. It targets wealthy, older listeners, the so-called 'AB1s' of the advertising world. This niche market does not provide large numbers of listeners and the station has only achieved 3 per cent of market share (JNRL, 2011). It is hard to see the success of the station in raising revenue or in converting members of the general public into fans of classical music, but it provides a service of relatively highbrow, niche-marketed programming as expected of a public service broadcaster today. It does this primarily from decentralized studios in Ireland's third largest city of Limerick and it complements the services provided by RTÉ's other three national FM channels.

The growth of FM stations providing a range of formats, contents and ownership structures – state, public service and independent, commercial and community – has led to diversity in the radioscape of Ireland. There is no doubt that radio is flourishing in Ireland today with 85 per cent of the population claiming to listen to a radio station on a daily basis (JNRL, 2011). The arrival of internet radio has seen a number of small, independent operations take to the air and these do not require licensing, but the industry itself is divided on the question of whether or not the future is in fact digital.

Digital radio, long hailed internationally and eagerly awaited by manufacturers as the future of audio broadcasting, has been slow to establish itself in Ireland. Early expectations that DAB might become the world standard for transmission were not realized as different countries adopted DRM, DRM+ and DAB+ (Jauert et al., 2010: 108–9). RTÉ invested heavily in the expectation of a digital roll out in the 1990s but commercial radio stations decided, after initial deliberation, to wait until the market internationally had determined the shutdown of FM.

Shaw attributes this to the government's lack of support for any single technical platform and to the very local nature of Irish independent radio (ibid.: 112). DAB can cover the entire country and provide several services to the nation but local, commercial and community radio stations want to reach their local audiences and FM already provides the opportunity to do this cheaply and effectively (ibid.: 112–13). RTÉ undertook its own trials with digital radio in 2007 and set up eleven channels (ibid.: 113), mainly in the Dublin area. This has since been expanded to the larger cities and seven channels remain, offering different music genres, a quality speech archive type channel and an interesting experiment in radio for young children. However, the take-up is very disappointing, sales of digital radios are low and neither listeners nor commercial broadcasters have followed RTÉ's lead (ibid.).

Irish listeners are embracing different, digitally facilitated ways of engaging with audio. Apart from the undocumented rise in personal broadcasts over the internet, where listeners attempt to become broadcasters, people are increasingly taking charge of their own listening by downloading and listening in non-linear ways (Shaw, 2010: 215–33). Podcasting is reviving forms of radio considered in danger of extinction up until recently – talk-based programmes that require concentrated listening are downloaded and played through headphones at the listener's discretion. RTÉ's documentary department in particular is showing how technological developments can bring a new lease of life and a fresh audience to old programmes and programming formats. Its website (*www.rte.ie/doconone*) provides a rich insight into Irish life, experience and identity through its archive.

Ireland has seen huge changes over the last ninety years in terms of political autonomy, economic growth, urbanization, education and cultural outlook. Recording, reporting and reflecting those changes, Irish radio has been the voice of the nation. A single voice at first, with the establishment of a strong, public service radio, RTÉ, this was challenged by young, often rebellious voices in the pirate radio stations of the 1970s and 1980s. The radio service was strengthened by the addition of a number of vibrant, local and regional voices with the arrival of commercial and community radio in the late 1980s and 1990s and by the establishment of Irish-language stations in 1972 and 1993. Further diversification more recently enables provision for specific tastes, generations and demographics as the BAI and RTÉ continue to expand and develop the audio services that they offer to the small nation of Ireland.

With a daily listenership of 85 per cent to Irish radio stations (JNRL, 2011) it is clear that Irish radio is and will continue to be the voice of a nation.

Notes
1. Visit *www.rte.ie/la.*

We Don't Talk Any More: The Strange Case of Scottish Broadcasting Devolution Policy and Radio Silence

Ken Garner

Busy is not the word for it. At first glance, the record of the Scottish Government regarding broadcasting would appear to suggest that radio in Scotland has been experiencing a high-velocity onslaught of policy initiatives and proposals for legislative change in the four years since the Scottish National Party (SNP) – which campaigns for eventual full independence for the country from the UK – first formed a minority administration in the Scottish Parliament at Holyrood in Edinburgh in 2007. A full Scottish Broadcasting Commission was established, has reported, and the SNP Scottish Government already issued two annual progress reports back, as recommended by the commission, on how it is implementing its recommendations. The Scottish Government thereafter also convened a special conference, 'Where now for Scottish broadcasting?', and a further major research study of public attitudes towards broadcasting in Scotland as part of its response. Then the SNP minister for culture and external affairs, Fiona Hyslop MSP, asked the chair of the commission to form the Scottish Digital Network Panel of broadcasting experts to explore how to realize one of the commission's main recommendations, and this panel too has now reported its findings. The Holyrood administration also responded formally to more than a dozen UK-wide consultations by the UK Government, the communications regulator Ofcom, or BBC reviews, regarding broadcasting since 2009, including the previous UK Labour government's proposals for Digital Britain, and service reviews by the BBC Trust – the corporation's governing body – of three of its broadcast services available in Scotland.

The pace has if anything intensified since the SNP returned to power in the Scottish parliamentary election of May 2011 with a historic first absolute majority of Members of the Scottish Parliament (MSPs) at

Holyrood. In its first month in office alone, the new Scottish Government produced and submitted a paper to the Liberal Democrat–Conservative coalition UK Government in Westminster, detailing five areas where further powers could be devolved to Scotland, all of these in broadcasting, for consideration for inclusion in the Scotland Bill (then being considered by the House of Commons), which had been designed to implement a series of previously agreed adjustments to the detail of what powers exactly can and should be devolved to Holyrood. At the same time the SNP administration responded to the UK Government's Department of Media Culture and Sport (DCMS)'s communications review, reiterating several of its points directed at the Scotland Bill (Scottish Government, 2011b). Then they took a break. At the time of writing, both Edinburgh and Westminster parliaments are in recess (summer 2011). It is safe to assume that this blizzard of initiatives, consultations, responses and papers on broadcasting will resume in Scotland with new force in the new parliamentary session.

There are just two problems with this paper mountain of evidence of broadcasting policy in action in a small nation. First, the Scottish Parliament and Government have virtually no powers at all to legislate on broadcasting because it is a reserved matter: reserved, that is, for the UK Government in Westminster to rule on. And, more importantly for our purposes, hardly any of that four years' storm of discussion and debate on broadcasting in Scotland has been about radio. Almost all of it has been about television.

It is true that the Scottish Broadcasting Commission was set up to 'define a strategic way forward for television production and broadcasting in Scotland' (Scottish Government, 2007), but in the light of the fact that it also set out to 'take account of the economic, cultural and democratic importance of broadcasting to a modern, outward looking Scotland and its creative industries' (Scottish Broadcasting Commission, 2008: 14; see also Schlesinger, 2009) and that SNP First Minister Alex Salmond's speech announcing its establishment in August 2007 spoke of the 'interconnectedness' of 'theatre, radio, TV and film' (Salmond, 2007), it is somewhat disappointing to find that radio occupies a little over a thousand words and just two pages of its 25,000-word, sixty-four-page final report, *Platform for Success*. There is no discussion of radio at all in its two concluding chapters: on 'Broadcasting and the creative economy', despite cited data indicating that radio contributes to the sector; and 'Delivering the future', on training and skills development. Just

two of its twenty final recommendations relate to radio. The dominant current players in Scottish radio, and the medium itself, are fleetingly mentioned, and then only in order to be censured: BBC Radio Scotland received 'strong criticism' in evidence; 'competitive pressures on commercial radio', it is declared, 'have reduced the strength and distinctiveness of any public service content'; and the commission's declared 'ambition' for radio is for it 'to complement other forms of audiovisual content by capitalising on its particular strengths' (Scottish Broadcasting Commission, 2008: 29–30). When the Scottish Government itself came to contribute to the debate it had initiated, in its 'national conversation' paper *Opportunities for Broadcasting*, it merely repeated the commission's findings, giving radio fewer than 300 words in a 9,000-word outpouring (Scottish Government, 2009a).

This general sidelining of Scottish radio in favour of the commission's channelling its main recommendation, the proposed creation of a new public service digital television network for Scotland, did not go unnoticed. Senior executives in both BBC Radio Scotland – the national/regional BBC radio station for Scotland – and the commercial radio sector responded to the commission, commenting on this puzzling treatment of sound broadcasting (Zycinski, 2011; Bryce, 2011). Partly as a result of some of these responses, an additional question on 'the importance of having another national speech based radio station in addition to BBC Radio Scotland' was included in the Scottish Government's repeated survey of public attitudes to broadcasting in Scotland carried out in 2009 (Scottish Government Social Research, 2010: 31–3). But neither this proposition, nor the formal responses from commercial radio organizations to *Platform for Success* – submitted to the Scottish Digital Network Panel in 2010, set up to explore how the proposed digital television network for the country could best be funded – evidently had any influence on the final report of that panel (Scottish Digital Network Panel, 2011a). Relevant data submitted were ignored, alternative ideas for increasing public service content on existing TV and radio stations dismissed and the only explicit mention of commercial radio was critical: 'Local commercial radio has lost much of its substance and distinctiveness of content' (Scottish Digital Network Panel, 2011b). At a governmental level, television has continued to dominate public discussion and policy: television accounted for four of the five areas of broadcasting regulation the Scottish Government argued unsuccessfully in June 2011 could be devolved to Holyrood. The fifth called for the

Scottish Parliament 'to have the ability to intervene in local cross-media mergers that affect Scotland' (Scottish Government, 2011a).

The strengths of the Scottish Digital Network TV proposal and ideas over its funding and the effectiveness of the SNP government's political strategy in concentrating on digital television in its campaign to have powers over broadcasting devolved to Holyrood are questions to be debated elsewhere. What is of relevance here is what all of this says about radio in Scotland. A number of possible interpretations, few of them flattering to either the medium or the would-be policymakers, could be made of the fact that radio is largely being ignored in this policy debate; yet when it is mentioned, it is in a generally patronizing or critical manner, especially of the established networks and stations, whether BBC or commercial. The discussion seems to regard the present state of Scottish radio as politically moribund, but whether as a result of perceived success or failure, however defined, is unclear. Any reading of the history of Scottish radio could find evidence of both, but for most of the last forty years a dispassionate observer would surely find more to celebrate than bemoan.

The Scottish radio market as most Scots now experience it when tuning in on FM and AM – as a choice between UK-wide networks from London, Scottish national radio services from the BBC and local commercial or community stations – dates essentially to the 1970s, the decade when both local commercial radio began in Scottish cities and the BBC launched Radio Scotland as a fully separate national network. Previously, the country had experienced most of the first fifty years of wireless sound broadcasting essentially via variations on a single, regional opt-out national radio station. The pioneering first four years of radio in Scotland, from 1923 to 1927, in which the BBC founded city stations in Glasgow, Edinburgh, Dundee and Aberdeen, each with their own frequency and programming, was quickly subsumed within the centralizing, London-based agenda of the newly publicly owned corporation in the late 1920s, driven by its forceful first director-general, Scotsman John Reith, leading to a shared Scottish regional programme service alongside a (then) single, UK-wide, national programme service (Scannell and Cardiff, 1991: 304–32; McDowell, 1992: 14–41; Sweeney, 2008: 89–93). After suspension during the Second World War, regional programming for Scotland resumed transmission in the mid-1940s, alongside the new Light and Third Programmes, but now as the retitled Scottish Home Service, providing a wide range of its own programmes,

mostly in the evenings, by opting out of the main home service sched-
ule coming from London (McDowell, 1992: 54–61). With the broad
reorganization in 1967 of the Home, Light and Third Programmes into
Radios 2, 3 and 4, and the addition of the new UK pop service Radio
1, the Scottish Home Service became Radio 4 Scotland (ibid.: 200–8).

   When Radio Clyde came on air in Glasgow at Hogmanay 1973
as Scotland's first commercial radio station, following the Conservative
government's Sound Broadcasting Act of 1972 which allowed commer-
cial radio in the UK for the first time, it was an overnight hit. Along with
the city-based similarly advertising-funded stations which followed it on
air over the next six years – Radio Forth (Edinburgh), Tay (Dundee),
Northsound (Aberdeen) and West Sound (Ayr) – it rapidly came to
dominate radio listening in its area (Baron, 1975: 117–36; Street, 2002:
117–29). The pirate Radio Scotland proved that there was an appetite
for commercial pop radio in Scotland's cities during its brief life broad-
casting from the ship *Comet* from 1965 to 1967: when it closed down
almost 2 million people signed a petition to save it (McDowell, 1992:
179–81; Hogg, 1993: 55–8; Beacom, 2007). BBC Scotland meanwhile
had decided to opt out of the BBC's own, non-commercial, local radio
experiments in the late 1960s, preferring to concentrate on developing
its national service. With the exception therefore of Radio Highland in
Inverness, launched in 1976 as a bilingual service in English and Gaelic,
and the two-man 'community' BBC opt-out stations in the Orkney
and Shetland isles opened in 1977, Scotland never had BBC local sta-
tions (McDowell, 1992: 188–90; Cormack, 2008: 217–18). Frequency
reallocations made it possible for the BBC to launch Radio Scotland
as a wholly independent national network in late 1978, dropping the
Radio 4 content, and trying to combine popular music with speech to
counter the commercial stations' success. It was a self-confessed disaster,
offending the establishment with its daytime middle-of-the-road light
entertainment, yet failing to attract a mass popular audience with it. The
struggle to create a coherent Radio Scotland identity, balancing speech
and music, scheduling many kinds of programming and trying to meet
the desires of different Scottish audiences has been the story of the sta-
tion ever since (Hetherington, 1992: 71–6; McDowell, 1992: 258–63).

   The fact that by the time an industry-wide radio audience measure-
ment system was agreed and introduced in 1992, BBC Radio Scotland
was found to be reaching just under 1 million adults per week, about
a quarter of the Scottish adult population – a position it has held,

excepting a bit of a slump around the turn of the millennium, ever since – is consequently little short of a triumph of resilience, creative production and scheduling effort (Rajar/RSL, 1993). Today, only one station, Radio 2, reaches more people in Scotland than BBC Radio Scotland (BBC Trust, 2011c: 32). The corporation can also be proud of expanding Radio Highland first into the wholly Gaelic-language Radio Nan Eilann (1979, from Stornoway); then, in 1985, and retitled Radio Nan Gaidheal, as a network for the Highlands and Islands region; and latterly rolled out on FM to most of the rest of Scotland in 1996 (Cormack, 2008: 218, 222). These are all the more impressive achievements given that through the 1980s and 1990s the local commercial stations remained the almost unchallenged market leaders in mass radio listening, throughout Scotland's urban central belt and the east-coast cities and counties that remain home to over 75 per cent of the country's population (General Register Office for Scotland, 2011). In 1999, for example, commercial radio accounted for 64.7 per cent of all listening in Glasgow, and 53.1 per cent in Edinburgh (*UK Radio Guide & Directory*, 1999: 22). The local stations were nearly always number one in their area in reach, with BBC Radio 1 or 2 second or third (although Radio 2 sometimes came top in Dundee), and BBC Radio Scotland fourth at best (Garner, 2008: 170–2). The expansion of commercial radio under the deregulatory phase ushered in by The Radio Authority from 1991 to 2003 – which licensed national commercial stations for the first time, new regional FM stations in Scotland's central belt and several smaller commercial stations across the country, while expanding choice – did not fundamentally alter this market share-out in Scotland between the BBC and the commercial sector (Ofcom, 2002). In an almost exact inversion of the split across the UK as a whole, in Scotland, commercial radio still attracts more than half of all radio listening (54 per cent; UK: 43 per cent), and the BBC less than half (45 per cent; UK: 54 per cent) (Ofcom, 2010a; Rajar, 2011).

Most of that success for the commercial sector continues to be owed to the local stations today. Listening to local commercial radio accounts for 40 per cent of all radio listening in Scotland, 'a higher share for this sector than in any other UK nation' (Ofcom, 2011e: 25). Radio Borders reaches an astonishing 57 per cent of adults in its area; Moray Firth Radio (Inverness), 54 per cent; West Sound 49 per cent, and Northsound 1 FM, 42 per cent (Rajar, 2011). All four of these stations, along with Radios Clyde, Forth and Tay, originally Scottish-owned, are

now operated by Bauer Media Scotland, a division of the family-held German publishing and broadcasting group which bought them from EMAP in 2007 (see Garner, 2008: 168–72). The only other radio stations of any type anywhere in the UK that reach more than 40 per cent of their potential listeners are stations on islands, such as BBC Radio Guernsey and Manx Radio (Rajar, 2011). It is hardly surprising that although Scots listen to slightly fewer hours of radio a week on average than others in the UK, Scotland generates the largest radio advertising revenue per head of any of the UK nations, and listeners seem content with what they are being offered: a full 100 per cent of respondents to Ofcom in Glasgow in 2011 declared themselves 'satisfied' with their available choice of radio stations (Ofcom, 2011e).

A somewhat different picture of listening attitudes in Scotland emerges from two other recent studies, which, unlike the regular annual polling or quarterly diary-completion surveys carried out respectively by Ofcom and Rajar, have not measured audiences by distinct local transmission areas and populations. Rather, a single national, representative sample of the country's population was surveyed, or focus groups and interviews conducted with listeners selected according to certain criteria; each asked slightly different questions. The Scottish Government's *Public Attitudes Towards Broadcasting in Scotland 2009*, commissioned to follow up on audience perceptions since the Scottish Broadcasting Commission's final report the previous year, was mainly, as before, concerned with television and news coverage, but in its six pages on 'Radio broadcasting', it could not have painted a more different picture of Scots' feelings about radio than Rajar and Ofcom. Its national sample inevitably deflated dramatically the reach for the individual city-based commercial stations – there is no national Scottish commercial FM station – and argued therefore that the 'most popular [commercial] station claims a lower proportion of listeners than the more popular BBC stations'. The executive summary was particularly downbeat:

> Overall satisfaction with radio programmes in Scotland appears to be lukewarm, with considerable scope for improvement. The majority of respondents are ambivalent, with only around one in ten 'very satisfied' with the various aspects of radio programmes asked about. However, no more than 11 per cent are dissatisfied with any of the aspects. Importantly, BBC Radio Scotland listeners are much more satisfied with the portrayal of Scotland on the radio

compared to the sample as a whole. (Scottish Government Social Research, 2010: 3)

Asking a cross section of a whole country's population if they are 'satisfied' with the way radio programmes 'represent' their homeland in various ways – do they avoid stereotyping? Do they include everyone? Do they reflect Scottish arts? – is clearly not the same as asking a sample in a city if they are satisfied 'with the choice of radio stations available in your area' (Ofcom, 2010a: 92). The results in detail, however, seem neither extremely expressed nor controversial enough to justify the disappointed tone. Only on the measure of whether radio programmes 'inform and teach you about Scotland' was the mean score actually below 50 per cent. Given that on every measure except one a clear majority of respondents either did not know what to answer or were 'neither/nor', an equally valid conclusion to be drawn would be that most Scots do not turn on the radio primarily in order to receive a fully satisfactory representation of their whole country. But that clearly does matter to that minority (21 per cent) who the survey found were BBC Radio Scotland listeners. In particular, they were 80 per cent satisfied that the radio programmes that they could think of 'inform and teach you about Scotland' (Scottish Government Social Research, 2010: 31). They were also 'marginally' more positive about the importance of any additional, new national Scottish speech radio station than other respondents. Finding out what support there might be for such a service was one of the key objectives of this survey. They got a result, of a kind. It only matters at all to 26 per cent of respondents. No one talks about this idea any more.

Its general findings about BBC Radio Scotland listeners, however, as seemingly more aware of radio's national role, were echoed in unpublished qualitative research conducted in 2009 by BBC Scotland into listener perceptions of the station, as part of its preparation for the 'service review' by BBC Trust – the corporation's governing body – of its 'radio services in the devolved nations' in 2010, published in autumn 2011. Other data suggests that BBC Radio Scotland's listeners are predominantly socio-economic group ABC1 (64 per cent), male (around 60 per cent) and older: 49 per cent are over fifty-five years old, 34 per cent between thirty-five and fifty-four years and just 17 per cent aged sixteen to thirty-four (Scottish Government Social Research, 2010: 30). So the BBC study staged focus groups in four cities, made

up of ABC1s aged forty to sixty who listened to the station. There was one immediate surprising finding from this mature demographic: the participants felt that the station sounded old, and that it took itself too seriously (Smith, 2011). 'They felt we were probably five years behind the pace in reflecting contemporary Scotland, we didn't have enough strong personalities on air, and some of our presenters were, frankly, past their sell-by date' (Zycinski, 2011). As a result, several newer, younger, more relaxed presenters were brought in. But the study showed other strong indicators of appreciation. Listeners wanted to listen to it as a family, were keen to see it continue and also thought it was good value for money – its annual budget is £22.8 million, and Radio Nan Gaidheal's budget is £3.8 million (Smith, 2011; BBC Trust, 2010a; BBC Trust 2010b). Participants also appeared to have an astute understanding of the challenges that the station faced as the only national station and with a public service remit, and therefore obliged to provide something for everyone. Strong political coverage was regarded as essential, as were various forms of culturally specific programming – bagpipe music, for example – though they might not listen to it themselves (Zycinski, 2011; Smith, 2011). Nevertheless, the majority preferences were still for entertainment and sport, justifying Zycinski's strategy, since he became head of radio in 2005, of inching the station closer to 'speech in the daytime, music in the evening' (Zycinski, 2011). This policy has been endorsed by the recently concluded BBC Trust Service Review of its national radio stations outside England, which welcomed management's plans to 'introduce a more coherent, simplified schedule, organized into time zones'. The review also underscored the fact that the station's service licence requires it to be 'speech-led', including 'extensive sports coverage', but also requires it to 'support Scottish music, culture and arts' (BBC Trust, 2011a), by stipulating that 'Safeguards should be put in place to ensure [it] continues to play distinctive music', acknowledging their commissioned research, which showed that 'eighty-one per cent of Radio Scotland listeners felt it was important that the station played music that was made in Scotland'. The service licence will therefore 'be amended to emphasize the importance of offering a distinctive music proposition' (BBC Trust, 2011c: 13–15). In doing so, the Trust clearly rejected the representations of the Radio Centre, the body for commercial radio in the UK, which had suggested the national/regional stations should not play popular music in order to assert their 'distinctiveness' from commercial radio. Instead, the BBC Trust clearly

believes that there could and should be distinctiveness in the broadcast of popular music in and from Scotland (a proposition that Ofcom rejects for non-BBC radio, see below). It would also be self-destructive for Radio Scotland wholly to abandon populism: more than half its listeners also listen to commercial radio (Scottish Government Social Research, 2010: 30).

Scottish listeners' quest for music, entertainment, sport and local news is evidently still driving the majority of them to the commercial stations that offer mostly this, despite recent programming and regulatory changes which have audibly altered their output. Most shocking for local ears since 2010 have been the different voices during the day. Some of them are not even Scottish. When you tune in to some of the Scottish central-belt UK-branded stations at any time other than breakfast or weekday drive-time, what you might hear now is an English presenter, hosting a show that is coming from outside Scotland. In the face of declining advertising revenues that have left half of all commercial stations losing money (Radio Centre, 2010), Ofcom first relaxed its local content requirements to ten hours per day in 2008, and then in June 2010 relaxed them further. If stations committed to an 'enhanced' news service of providing local news bulletins throughout the day – which all Scottish stations have always provided anyway – then they could apply to reduce their minimum locally produced hours to just seven hours a day (Ofcom, 2011g). From 2008, Scottish listeners became used to evening and overnight shows on the branded networks being presented by English voices from the networks' production centres in London or Manchester, and from 2010 this spread to daytime.

What is perhaps more surprising, given the locally voiced local radio success in Scotland since the 1970s, born out of general historic listener dissatisfaction with the London-based national BBC services, is that this reversionary trend towards English voices across the dial does not seem in itself to have damaged listening figures. In fact, the evidence so far counter-intuitively suggests the opposite. Real Radio Scotland suffered a loss of listeners from June 2010 to June 2011, but is the one UK regional network to have retained locally presented shows throughout the day in Scotland. Smooth Radio Glasgow has gone all-networked from outside Scotland except at breakfast and drive-time, and its audience has actually gone up a fraction. Most startling of all has been the successful launch of Capital FM at the start of 2011. A huge and unmissable marketing campaign was unleashed across central Scotland for the reformatting of

Global Radio's Galaxy-FM station under its Capital FM brand – the station's fifth format change and fourth name change since launching as Beat FM in 1999 – with a very tight, current hits pop-dance sound, but with only weekday breakfast and drive-time and weekend mornings being produced at its studios in Glasgow, all other shows coming from the network centre in London. Within six months it had boosted the former Galaxy listenership by 18 per cent to 467,000, although, perhaps as a consequence of its high-rotation, heavy hit-repetition format, by June 2011 the average time listeners spent tuned in had fallen to what Galaxy had been achieving previously (Rajar, 2011). In a further sign of its desire to focus relentlessly on the youth pop-dance market, Capital FM Scotland has applied to Ofcom to change its agreed format, narrowing its defined musical style and target audience from 'new rock and dance music for Central Scotland for listeners below 39' to 'a rhythmic-based music-led service for 15–29 year-olds' and reducing its commitment to 'specialist music programmes' from thirty hours to just twelve hours a week (Ofcom, 2011c).

    These are not the only stations at it. The general deregulatory trend over the specification of the music to be played on British commercial radio stations, now reduced to a one-page format requirement by Ofcom, has encouraged further loosening of their commitments to Scottish music of any kind by all major stations in Scotland in recent years. The few remaining stations in 2007 that still promised that their music mix should 'be spiced with Scottish pop or rock' or 'include a sprinkling of Scottish hits' (Garner, 2008: 176) have abandoned these undertakings. Now all their formats prefer the generally accepted, UK-wide bland formulation offering 'a locally-oriented' music and information station (Ofcom, 2011b). But this development, which seems potentially to offer a commitment to local musical content, is an illusion of the deregulatory era. Ofcom has one policy for localness and local content (Ofcom, 2011g) and one policy for music formats (Ofcom, 2011a), and neither has anything to do with the other. 'Localness' is defined primarily by news. The only mention of non-speech 'local content' in 2,000 words of detailed guidance is the brief example given of 'airplay for local musicians'. Formats, meanwhile, are defined solely by broad popular music genres, 'localness' here having only ever been defined in terms of broadcasting 'what's on' content, which has been removed anyway. Whether a music format is appropriate to an area or not, therefore, does not appear to be deemed a regulatory matter.

It would be wrong, however, to see this regulatory flight from musical stipulations and the reduction in local voices on some stations outside the broader market and corporate context. Real Radio Scotland's notable fall in listening figures since summer 2010, for example, cannot be explained without reference to the departure of two of its most popular daytime DJs; the recent resurgence of its strongest local rivals, the Bauer FM stations Clyde 1 and Forth One, and the uncertainty over its future given that the new chief executive of its owners, Guardian Media Group, has 'refused to rule out' a sale of its entire radio business (Davoudi and Fenton, 2011), with the group locally being on the verge of agreeing to a Scottish management buyout of its Paisley 96.3 Rock Radio licence (Plunkett, 2011a).

Clyde 1 in particular has overall held its own against the assault on the younger part of its target audience by Capital FM – its share of total listening has hardly been affected at all (Rajar, 2011) – partly perhaps because of its success in winning back the older twenty-nine to forty-year-olds with the addition at drive-time of one of those nationally known top DJs who left Real Radio, Robin Galloway, and other presenter line-up changes. Under Graham Bryce, new managing director of Bauer Media Scotland since 2009, Clyde 1 has been put through a whole-team brand-definition exercise, confirming its identity as being defined by its place – Glasgow – and this led to the aggressive on-air creation and promotion of its own and sponsored live music events in the city. It is also significant for this 'local' brand that the Bauer stations, notwithstanding their being owned outside the UK, are now the only remaining major commercial stations in Scotland broadcasting twenty-four hours a day, seven days a week, from within Scotland (with the sole historic exception of still taking the syndicated weekly UK commercial radio chart show, currently known as the *Vodafone Freebees Big Top 40*, at Sunday teatime). They share overnight and some weekend shows across Scotland – including Krystle's Sony award-winning *Friday Night Floorfillers* dance music show from Edinburgh, and indie-music DJ Jim Gellatly's showcase for new Scottish bands *In: Demand Uncut* on Sunday evenings from Glasgow – but all daytime FM shows come from each station's own city studios. The group's five major separate AM services, meanwhile – Clyde 2, Forth 2, Tay AM, Northsound 2 and West Sound (Ayr) – have been fully networked, with breakfast and drive-time shows only produced locally, and the rest of the network's schedule filled by sharing the best of its shows by veteran much-loved presenters from

Glasgow, Edinburgh and Dundee. The core oldies music catalogue that defines its sound has been expanded, and the Scottish AM network is consequently now the second-biggest station in Bauer's Scottish portfolio, with the fifth largest audience of any Scottish station (Rajar, 2011; Bryce, 2011; Williamson, 2011).

Sports shows, essentially about Scottish football, remain central to popular radio programming, uniting the Bauer stations, Real Radio and BBC Radio Scotland. Both Clyde 1 and Real Radio now feature head-to-head competing daily two-hour sports talk and phone-in shows from 6 p.m., the Clyde show building on its successful *Superscoreboard* Saturday afternoon programme, which has been on air since the station's earliest days (O'Donnell, 2002). BBC Radio Scotland's Saturday football commentary show *Sportsound* remains the second-most-listened-to radio show in the country, after the BBC Radio 1 Sunday teatime chart show (Garner, 2008). Radio Scotland has in recent years, however, given up its exclusive in-stadium national commentary rights with the Scottish Premier League, and each station, BBC and commercial, has now opted to buy various packages of rights to a number of live matches, live updates or goal 'flashes' only from the league (Zycinski, 2011). But it is only the BBC in Scotland that occasionally covers other nationally popular participation sports on radio, such as rugby, golf, shinty and curling. The BBC has also since the 1990s cornered the market in outrageous original radio comedy about football, with *Off the Ball*, presented by Stuart Cosgrove and Tam Coyle before the Saturday kick-offs (Haynes and Boyle, 2008: 261–2).

Comedy and drama generally, despite being the two most expensive forms of radio to produce, have also experienced a minor resurrection on BBC Radio Scotland in the past decade, with a regular weekly half-hour original comedy slot, and, since 2006, a dozen new radio dramas a year (eight produced in-house at the BBC, four by independent companies), commissioned exclusively for occasional weekdays-at-2 p.m. week-long seasons on Radio Scotland (Zycinski, 2011). Comedy remains popular, especially with male listeners, and drama with female audiences, if to a lesser extent, but these kinds of programming are seen as touchstones of commitment to the national creative industries, both by listeners, as revealed in the 2009 qualitative study (Smith, 2011), and by policy-makers – First Minister Alex Salmond MSP himself appealed specifically for more locally broadcast, Scottish-produced radio drama in his speech establishing the Scottish Broadcasting Commission (Salmond, 2007).

Other recent programming innovations at Radio Scotland include a regular slot for the nightly half-hour Scottish political news programme, *Scotland at Ten* (hence the title), and, since 2010, two small-hours programmes, which together mean that in 2011 for the first time BBC Radio Scotland is a twenty-four-hour station, no longer reverting to BBC Radio 5 Live from London as an overnight sustaining service. Young Glaswegian DJ Ravi Sagoo hosts *All Night Long*, a four-hour music show from half-past midnight, Monday to Friday, interrupted by a one-hour documentary and specials archive/repeat hour at 3 a.m. (at weekends there is an automated sequence of Scottish comedy repeats, or local music performances). At 5.30 a.m., *Morning Briefing* is a new half-hour rolling news and business programme linking to *Good Morning Scotland* at 6 a.m. These new slots became economically possible as a consequence of structural cost-savings made with the move to BBC Scotland's new purpose-built headquarters on the River Clyde in Glasgow at Pacific Quay in 2006 – when the station, for example, abandoned on-air presentation and continuity – but which took time to show through in the network's budget. But their good sense was only underscored by the technical embarrassment previously of the station being simply unable to broadcast emergency weather updates through the night, when the extreme snowfalls of 2010 left thousands of Scots stranded and snowed in on the nation's roads and motorways overnight in the first week of December. 'At least now we do have the flexibility to respond to such unexpected events', says Zycinski (2011).

But as we've discovered, little of these positive developments – the predominance in popularity of commercial radio in Scotland, despite the financial pressures on production, and greater deregulation encouraging the further encroachment on air of English voices, or the incremental creative attempts of BBC Radio Scotland to meet the demanding and varied aspirations of its national audience – seem to be visible to the authors of broadcasting policy debates, papers and responses; instead they debate changes in areas where the country has no legislative power. By contrast, there are two important but minority areas of Scottish radio, so statistically modest as not even to figure in any official, national audience measurement system, which are now attracting real and distinctive policy action in Scotland, not mere discussion: Gaelic and community radio.

Both benefit from there being an undeniable conflict over who is genuinely politically responsible for them, Westminster or Holyrood.

Gaelic is a devolved cultural and language issue, but Gaelic broadcast-ing is not – or not at first, anyway. Legislation over communities, their infrastructure, transport and support, is devolved to Scotland, but com-munity broadcasting is not. The reason why Gaelic has come to wider critical attention as regards radio is in fact nothing to do with the success of BBC Radio Nan Gaidheal, but with the knock-on consequences of development of the Gaelic digital television channel, BBC Alba. This television channel, a partnership between the BBC and MG Alba, the body set up to ensure that television in Gaelic is available in Scotland and now uniquely funded by the Scottish Parliament (Cormack, 2008; Schlesinger, 2009), was launched in September 2008, but originally only on satellite. Initial reluctance by the BBC to make it more widely avail-able led to protest and a review by the BBC Trust in 2010, which concluded that it should be put on Freeview, the digital terrestrial TV platform – but to do so would require the removal of all the BBC's radio stations to make room during the evening hours when BBC Alba broadcasts. It concluded that on balance doing so would attract more net viewers (up to 60,000) and viewing time (119,000 hours) to BBC Alba than the amount of listeners and listening hours that would be lost by the radio stations – all available anyway on a combination of FM, AM, DAB and online (BBC Trust, 2010a; BBC Trust, 2010b). From 8 June 2011 most of the radio stations were removed from Freeview – in the end the digital-only 1 Xtra, 5 Live and 6 Music were able to be kept – and BBC Alba was added: and the protests began in earnest. Members of the Scottish Parliament of various parties protested on behalf of their constituents, critical stories appeared in the press, and individual listen-ers protested to the BBC. To some, the broader public establishment of a Gaelic TV service at the expense of an existing additional platform for popular BBC radio stations is a controversial move, with an added political dimension for some in the fact that the move to Freeview was supported strongly by the Scottish Government, Scottish Parliament and the BBC Executive. This is not added proof that broadcasters can never win by taking something away from listeners, but it does perhaps high-light once again the gap that can open up between the aspirations of the Scottish political, cultural and broadcasting establishment for the nation as a whole, and the feelings of a vocal minority that popular or mass-listening tastes are sometimes not valued by the elite.

One positive finding that was rather overlooked in this storm in a teacup was what the BBC Trust review process revealed in passing

about the very good standing of BBC Radio Nan Gaidheal. Amongst Gaelic speakers, in 2009 Radio Nan Gaidheal had the highest approval rating of any radio or television service broadcasting any programmes in Gaelic (BBC/MG ALBA Partnership, 2009: 23) and reached more Gaelic speakers than either BBC Alba or BBC2 (ibid.: 12). It is not yet known for certain what effect BBC Alba's now being more widely available via Freeview has or will have on these measures, partly because no one in the Scottish islands, the home of Gaelic, is on the BARB TV-audience measurement panel (Chalmers, 2011), but early claims suggest new non-Gaelic-speaking viewers across Scotland could have boosted the channel's audience by up to 100,000 in just its first three months on Freeview (Urquhart, 2011). Harder to measure would be the impact of the small but growing number of hours of Gaelic now broadcast on an increasing number of the other kind of minority broadcasting outlet gaining political attention in Scotland, some of it even funded by MG Alba and, therefore, ultimately, the Scottish Parliament: community radio.

The rapid development of small-scale and community radio has arguably been the media expansion of the past twenty years of most benefit for the public good in Scotland (Garner, 2008). In 1992, there was the BBC, the big commercial stations and nothing else. Moray Firth Radio in Inverness was the most northerly commercial station, and there were no non-BBC stations at all north and west of Glasgow, from the Firth of Clyde to Cape Wrath. Today, of thirty-nine commercial radio station licences in Scotland, twenty (51 per cent) are owned independently and locally (Ofcom, 2010a: 80; Radio Centre, 2010). By contrast, the major commercial groups own 60 per cent of station licences in Northern Ireland, and 65 per cent in Wales (Ofcom, 2010a). There are also eighteen community stations broadcasting in Scotland, meaning Scotland has the second most community stations per head of any nation in the UK, at 3.5 per million people, compared to 7.3 per million in Northern Ireland, 3.0 per million people in Wales and 3.3 per million people in England. If you adjust this figure to recognize that out of Scotland's commercial stations, eight of the small-scale licence holders operate at least partly within a community-radio ethos – by offering membership of the controlling community organization to the public, for example, or having most programmes presented by unpaid volunteer members (Ofcom, 2010e) – then it rises to five community-ethos radio stations per 1 million people. Add together the commercial

and community stations, and thirty-eight out of forty-seven licences, 80 per cent of non-BBC radio stations, are owned and controlled independently in Scotland. There are now non-BBC radio stations owned locally broadcasting on Shetland, Orkney, the Isle of Lewis and the Isle of Skye; at Oban, Fort William, Pitlochry and Peterhead; in the port of Leith and the British army garrison in Edinburgh; and no less than four community stations are on air in Glasgow: Awaz FM, Insight Radio, Sunny Govan and Celtic Music Radio.

The first of about a dozen small-scale commercial stations, some with a community focus, were licensed and came on air under the Radio Authority's remit in the first phase of the expansionary years from 1992 to 2003. Since radio regulation was integrated into the new regulator Ofcom, and the approval of specifically community radio licensing in the Communications Act 2003 and Community Radio Order 2004, there have been two licensing rounds, leading to the eighteen current stations operating in Scotland. A third round opened for further applications from Scotland late in 2011.

Just some of the achievements of the community or small-scale stations include Awaz FM in Glasgow receiving a Queen's Award for voluntary service; SHMU winning lottery funding for its support and employability training for people living in Aberdeen's seven regeneration areas; Cuillin FM on Skye increasing its Gaelic programming, and Heartland FM of Pitlochry stepping in to take on the Perth station licence when the original owner was not able to launch it. Both the small-scale commercial and community stations like community radio everywhere, are, however, challenged by finding the average of £10–25,000 a year they need to run the stations, under regulations that prevent the community licensees from meeting more than half of those costs from advertising sales. An umbrella campaigning organization, the Scottish Community Broadcasting Network (SCBN), was set up in 2007 to represent and support community radio projects. Then the Scottish Broadcasting Commission was established, and the tentative beginning of a policy lobbying debate has already gone much further than many in the SCBN could have imagined just four years previously.

Apart from its criticism of BBC Radio Scotland and its urging of the BBC to review the network's funding – a hardly unexpected and oft-heard plea from the Scottish establishment – the commission's only other recommendation on radio, having received substantial representations from the community and small-scale radio sector, was to urge that

'regulation and support for community radio should be reviewed by Ofcom in Scotland' (Scottish Broadcasting Commission, 2008: 31). The controversy there lies in the last two words. Although Ofcom was set up with a Scottish office and an advisory committee for Scotland, its role in Scotland is seen as being primarily to 'transmit Scottish perspectives on policy issues to London' (Schlesinger, 2008: 44), not to implement them. Ofcom responded late in 2008 to the Scottish Government's invitation for them to support *Platform for Success* by pointing out, among other things, that the Communications Act of 2003 required that only holders of community licences could have access to the Community Radio Fund. But the Scottish Government returned to this theme in its response to the UK consultation on the licensing requirements for community radio the following year, repeating that small-scale stations with a clear community character that hold commercial licences could not obtain support from Ofcom's Community Radio Fund. They suggested more strongly that 'decisions on community radio licenses for Scotland could be taken by Ofcom in Scotland' (Scottish Government, 2009b). A year later, they said it all over again, only louder:

> The Scottish Government welcomes the energetic and vital contribution that these stations make to Scottish community life. However six years since the launch of community radio, the Scottish Government has become increasingly aware of the challenges faced by this emerging sector. Therefore, the Scottish Government believes there should be ongoing monitoring and support for community radio. In particular it believes that Ofcom in Scotland should be granted greater capacity to do this, as recommended by the Scottish Broadcasting Commission. (Scottish Government, 2010)

You cannot but wonder if Ofcom was starting to pay attention. On 17 March 2011, Ofcom Scotland held its first 'Community Radio Licensees' Workshop' in Glasgow, with practical presentations on policy, funding, licensing and election coverage codes, the whole day well attended by experts and activists, including the chairman of the SCBN, Charles Fletcher, and, for the first time, policy advisors from the Scottish Government's Culture and External Affairs Office. Less than a week later Charles Fletcher had a meeting with the minister for culture and external affairs, Fiona Hyslop MSP. 'She made it clear to me

the Scottish Government was very keen to help develop and promote community radio, as an example of vital social enterprise', says Fletcher (2011). The following month, First Minister Alex Salmond launched the Scottish National Party's manifesto for the Scottish parliamentary election of May 2011, which included a new commitment from his party: 'We will also encourage the expansion of community radio in Scotland' (Scottish National Party, 2011: 26). During the election the SCBN organized a first for community radio in Scotland, *The Leaders*, a networked radio show putting community members' questions to all the main party leaders. Culture and external affairs policy advisors are now working with SCBN and its member stations to explore ways the Scottish Government could work to deliver on their manifesto commitment to support the sector. Everyone agrees a Scottish community radio fund might be a good idea, along the lines of the additional fund the Welsh Assembly Government set up for community stations there, but equally there is recognition that currently few funds are available (Welsh Assembly Government, 2010). For their part, some SCBN stations are now working on developing a realistic community radio audience and engagement measurement system, partly to enable themselves to market the sector collectively to advertisers – who now include the Scottish Parliament and Scottish Government themselves.

This recent ushering of Scottish community radio to the centre of the political stage, unnoticed by the policy debate over the devolution of powers over broadcasting, is illustrative of a number of gaps relative to radio opening up as a direct result of this very debate: conceptually, legislatively and politically. First, in the devolution-of-broadcasting discourse, the word 'broadcasting' itself is being conceptually redefined to mean television only. Radio is almost entirely absent from the discussion of the desirability of future broadcasting devolution in Scottish policy papers, audience surveys, government 'conversation' proposals and academic studies, yet they all have the word 'broadcasting' in their titles. On the rare occasions when it does make a fleeting appearance, radio is clearly summoned only in order to be censured. To suggest this criticism is somewhat partial would be an understatement. Commercial radio is reprimanded for 'reduced' public service content, but the fact that most of these public service obligations were removed by the Westminster government, not the stations themselves, almost twenty years ago, is not mentioned; nor is the inconvenient fact that most Scottish commercial radio stations still choose to broadcast more local news bulletins than

legislation requires them to (Radio Centre, 2010: 3). Every broadcast-devolution document has a chapter on 'news', but Scottish commercial radio news is never mentioned. The familiar tone of disappointment in BBC Radio Scotland – from Scotland's political, literary, artistic and musical elites – that it fails to be the station that they would each wish for themselves, is also a constant. It is true that the station often fails to satisfy these demanding expert audiences, but the uncertainty, insecurity and lack of confidence it exudes at this level is hardly surprising. Radio Scotland is torn between pleasing the establishment and entertaining that actual majority of its middle-brow audience who desire a lighter touch, while not admitting that in so doing it has to do what it is officially not supposed to, and that is compete with commercial radio, in sport, chat, comedy and pop music. This means it only disappoints the elite even more. Broadcasting in the devolution-policy debate means television, and only television, because to those with speaking parts in this drama, radio – and certainly mass-market radio – is clearly something else.

What radio actually is in the minds of the most political actors in our play is at the same time revealed by the fact that despite the headline demand for the legislative power to create a new digital television network, the only specific undertaking by the Scottish Government in this arena has come about through mere lobbying, and in the Cinderella area of community radio to boot. For want of a better word, this is radio seen as narrowcasting. What's more, this manifesto commitment is not tabled under the heading of 'broadcasting', but as a policy for 'communities' (Scottish National Party, 2011: 26, 33). Given that there is no real prospect anytime soon of actual broadcasting devolution, this could be just canny realpolitik, getting what you can where you can. But it serves again effectively only to narrow the legislative scope of the term 'broadcasting' and categorize radio as a lesser form, playing out in a smaller space, for more humble patrons.

In what this redefinition implies about the perceived value of the radio audience to the Scottish establishment, there is above all politically a long-term danger in this direction. In the short term it is clear that an alliance of sectoral and elite self-interest with a desire for national self-representation has driven the campaign for devolution of broadcasting powers to some effect, shaping and changing the terms of the UK debate, so that already more TV network production has come BBC Scotland's way, and Ofcom's Scotland office and its advisory committee

openly discuss the previously unthinkable idea of a new Scottish TV channel. But by only offering one show in town, our actors are at the same time potentially detaching themselves from a notable part of their mass audience. By wholly ignoring or only criticizing the most popular manifestation of radio in Scotland, commercial radio, the Scottish establishment is sending a message that what radio means to the majority is somehow not really 'broadcasting' at all, and instead 'broadcasting' now is just that stuff the establishment decides is good for the rest of us and what we should have. Politicians live or die by populism, however, and are unlikely to ask their constituents to vote for something that does not speak to them. It is not too late to rescue this relationship, to bridge this policy gap over Scottish radio, between elite expectations of broadcasting's purpose in Scottish society and mass popular tastes. After all, all Scots like to hear a joke, a song, a match or race. All that is needed is the kind of show, encounter or forum that makes people listen to each other. You could call it a conversation. That is something that radio is rather good at staging.

New Zealand – A Radio Paradise?

Brian Pauling

> Radio is a great medium, much more a thinking medium than
> the visual media of television and film. With radio the action
> actually goes on in your mind. Some people say they prefer radio
> to television because the pictures are better.
> *Dennis Dutton, founder of Arts and Letters Daily and former board*
> *member of Radio New Zealand (*NZine*, 1998)*

Globally, radio is the most prolific mass medium. At one end, it provides substantial profits for media conglomerates operating large networks; at the other, it provides a voice for the powerless, the oppressed and the marginalized. New Zealand exemplifies this in its radio landscape.

New Zealand is a small country, both geographically and in terms of population. As a country colonized by Great Britain, its European tradition is strong. However, the indigenous people, Maori, are in renaissance and their growing population and influence is felt in all walks of life. The country is long (1,800 km), narrow (at its narrowest 2 km, at its widest just 450 km) and mountainous (many peaks in excess of 3,000 m). One third of the country's 4.2 million inhabitants live in or close to its largest northern city (Auckland). This geography has created difficulties for the development of electronic media and is perhaps one explanation of the unique media ecology that exists, the radio part of which is discussed in this chapter.

New Zealand was an early adopter of radio technology. Political interests and social pressures have seen considerable variation in its radio system over the years. Indeed, the extent and frequency of legislative changes to the broadcasting ecology are among the most extensive in the Western world (Debrett, 2005). This has been aided by the country's political structure – a unicameral legislature, a short

three-year election cycle and no strongly embedded constitutional documents.

ORIGINS OF RADIO IN NEW ZEALAND

New Zealand stations began transmitting in the early 1920s and by 1925 there was at least one service in all major population centres. Radio Dunedin (4XD) began transmission in 1920 and is the longest continuously broadcasting radio station in the Commonwealth. In 1926, the state began a process that would lead to politics and politicians dominating radio for more than sixty years. That year, the government established the Radio Broadcasting Company (RBC) to provide a national broadcasting service. Its revenue came from a licensing fee paid annually by every owner of a radio receiver. The state controlled both the allocation of transmission frequencies and licensed the right to receive.

STATE CONTROL

However, the peculiar shape of radio broadcasting in New Zealand was forged in the 1930s. In 1932, the RBC was replaced by a direct government agency, the New Zealand Broadcasting Board, and in 1935, with the election of a socialist government, broadcasting became a state department, the New Zealand Broadcasting Service (NZBS). It remained so for the next twenty-five years. Interestingly, because of socialist 'distrust' of private media, New Zealand was the first country to provide regular live broadcasting of parliament. Further, the state 'love affair' with broadcasting also led to another unique outcome, the creation of the world's first state-owned commercial radio organization. In 1937, the NZBS was split into two divisions, non-commercial and a popular state-run commercial radio division. The combination of advertising revenue and annual receiver licence fees made broadcasting a significant income generator for the government (Pauling, 1994).

POST-WAR CHANGE

A change of government in 1960 saw the first of many attempts to reduce the role of government in broadcasting. Given responsibility for

the development of a television service, the NZBS was changed from a state department to a public corporation (NZBC). The only significant change in radio was the development of a country-wide news service, launched some forty years after regular broadcasting began (Gregory, 1985).

However, changes in social taste were not being reflected in radio, and there was strong resistance from the bureaucrats in charge of broadcasting to the popular music of the 1960s and to other 'foreign' influences. This led to the launch in 1967 of a pirate radio ship broadcasting from international waters. The success of the pirate, Radio Hauraki, in capturing the younger radio audience began a process of change that eventually led to the licensing of private radio stations and a gradual reduction of state influence and control (Blackburn, 1974).

Change was not without resistance, however. During the 1970s there was a rash of legislation impacting on broadcasting structures, as first one government (of one persuasion) and then another (of a different persuasion) tried to maintain control of the airwaves. Gradually, however, state influence and control over broadcasting waned (Pauling, 1994). The number of private radio broadcasters rose steadily, from three in 1972 to nine by 1976, and twenty-two by 1984 (ibid.).

MODERN RADIO

In 1988, a new Labour government elected on a mandate of left-wing policies perversely introduced a raft of radical right-wing policies which ushered in a period of major change for New Zealand's economic, cultural and political landscape. New Zealand's broadcasting structure was completely deregulated. Principal desires behind the changes were increased competition and consumer choice and the separation of commercial broadcasting from non-commercial broadcasting. Norris (2004: 4–5) identified the deregulation package as having three main components:

1. Opening up the airwaves to competition. Any broadcaster willing to pay the market price for a licence could enter the industry.
2. The state broadcasting corporation was split into two separate entities, Television New Zealand Ltd (TVNZ), and Radio New Zealand Ltd (RNZ) and run as commercial businesses, with profits as the primary objective.

3.   The two social objectives of broadcasting, the 'public service objec-
     tives', were to be separated from commercial objectives. They were:
     a.   To reflect and develop the New Zealand identity and culture;
     b.   To ensure that the people of New Zealand have access to tele-
          vision and radio broadcasting services offering a range of pro-
          grammes which will cater in a balanced way for varied interests
          of different sections of the community.

The social objectives were to be met through a system of publicly
funded grants to be administered through a broadcasting commission, a
new way of distributing the income from the licence fee.

   As a result of this legislation there was a dramatic increase in the
number of radio stations, up from 69 in 1988 to 164 in 1993, to nearly
300 by 1999 (Shanahan and Duignan, 2005: 18). At the beginning of the
second decade of the twenty-first century, New Zealand's unique and
intense relationship with radio is reflected in a number of facts, not the
least of which is the large number of radio stations servicing a relatively
small population. Radio New Zealand chief executive Peter Cavanagh
says that New Zealand has 'the most cluttered and diversified radio mar-
ket in the world' (Anyan, 2008). Arguably, New Zealand has more radio
stations per head of population than any other nation (Story and Brown,
1999). In the mid-1990s, Shanahan and Duignan (2005: 19) calculated
that there was a radio station for every 12,000 New Zealanders; by 2004
that had changed to one station for every 5,250 Kiwis. As an indicator
of New Zealand's current radio-saturated market, there are forty-one
stations in the Auckland metropolitan area (population 1.3 million).
This compares with London (thirty-six stations) and New York (forty-
three stations), both cities with nine times Auckland's population. The
time spent listening to radio and the consequent amount of revenue
generated is world leading. Over many years the radio share of the
total national advertising spend has averaged 12 per cent. The figures
in recession-prone 2011 show radio dropping to 11.3 per cent. Radio's
advertising has dropped around 2 per cent since 2001, but this com-
pares more than favourably with newspapers (10 per cent drop) and TV
(4 per cent drop) (Monk, 2011).

   In 1996, the government completed the deregulation process by
selling its commercial radio stations to a consortium of overseas broad-
casters, leaving the non-commercial broadcaster, Radio New Zealand, as
the only radio network under state ownership.

THE STRUCTURE OF COMMERCIAL
RADIO IN NEW ZEALAND

A free-market system which places few constraints on commercial behaviours makes it easy for mergers, takeovers, acquisitions, openings and closings to occur. Profit expectations fuel growth and this usually favours the development of conglomerates (Mason et al., 1992). The initial plethora of new and independent commercial radio stations gradually consolidated and by 2011 commercial radio in New Zealand was dominated by two major companies, the Radio Network and MediaWorks, both controlled by overseas interests. Those two groupings controlled fourteen national networks, all originating from New Zealand's largest city, Auckland, and three localized networks. The localized networks offer the same format nationwide but because of local origination are able to provide a range of local content. There are over 320 individual licensed commercial radio stations or radio 'frequencies'. Overall the two networks 'account for 80% of all radio stations' (Moore, 2010) and claim to have 85 per cent of the listening audience (TRB, 2011). The remaining commercial stations tend to be providers of local services. There is a somewhat 'intense mirroring' (Shanahan, 2000) between the two major players. Formats are similar and they tend to match each other in the market.

The measures taken by the New Zealand Government in the 1980s and 1990s, in many ways, have created a market experiment the results of which are open to interpretation (Kelsey, 1997). Most media owners of print and broadcasting companies appear pleased with the circumstances and fiercely defend the system. In their eyes, commercial radio in New Zealand is strong and successful. However, others, including many academics, journalists and 'cultural nationalists', are less pleased. They see the power of commercial media, the decline of public media and the laissez-faire market-focused politics that has dominated New Zealand for thirty years as a threat to 'public space'. They lobby for more regulation to provide, among other things, more local cultural expression, better news and current affairs and a return to at least a modicum of Reithian traditions of requiring broadcasting to have broader social responsibilities than most other forms of business. Rosenberg (2008) argues that in 'New Zealand the need for changes in the ownership, regulation, and commercialization of our media is exceptional. Change is long overdue.'

NON-COMMERCIAL RADIO

One debate about public broadcasting is concerned about whether there is a mandate for public broadcasters to deliver on social and cultural objectives or whether they should be confined to compensating for 'market failure' (Norris, 2004: 4).

The dominating voices in New Zealand politics at the time argued that it was the latter; broadcasting needed to be a system which first and foremost met market objectives and its contribution to culture was by doing just that (Easton, 1997).

In 1988, the Treasury argued (NZ Treasury, 1985: 44) that it was unnecessary for the government to operate publicly owned and operated stations. Rather, the Treasury suggested that they could buy non-commercial programmes for transmission by commercial broadcasting.

However, there was a sufficient 'rump' within the ruling Labour Party anxious about social responsibility (Chapman Report, 1986). A Broadcasting Commission was established, the purpose of which was to take care of the 'social objectives' of broadcasting. But the Broadcasting Commission's remit actually created a redefinition of what public broadcasting was to become. Public broadcasting was no longer considered in terms of quality or excellence or art or culture (ibid.); it became 'local content', a broad phrase referring to any New Zealand-made programmes (Norris, 2004: 7).

Early in the life of the Broadcasting Commission its name was changed to New Zealand On Air (NZ On Air), a name that more readily reflects the local content remit. This structure was both radical and unique. Nothing else like NZ On Air existed in the world at the time. The Broadcasting Act established NZ On Air's key requirements as:

- to reflect and develop New Zealand identity and culture;
- to promote programmes about New Zealand and New Zealand interests;
- to promote Maori language and culture;
- to ensure a range of broadcasts is available to provide for the interests of women, children, the disabled and minorities, including ethnic minorities (in 2001, the list was extended to include youth [fourteen to twenty-one] and spirituality/ethics).

In the early years, NZ On Air gained its funding from the licence fee and it used this funding to carry out the following:

- support local content on commercial television;
- directly fund public radio and a range of other radio stations (see below);
- subsidize the cost of transmission to remote areas;
- provide funding for broadcast archiving;
- promote New Zealand music on the airwaves.

Thus, New Zealand taxpayers began supporting a range of new radio initiatives aimed at giving a public voice to people whose messages would not otherwise be heard because of the failure of a commercially dominated radio landscape to provide other than commercially viable radio programming

PUBLIC RADIO

RNZ is New Zealand's public radio broadcaster funded through NZ On Air. RNZ has three principal services: National Radio, a news and information-focused programme with a strong commitment to New Zealand culture; Concert FM, focusing on classical music, and RNZ International, a short-wave service, broadcasting to the Pacific Islands. Many of the forms of broadcasting that have direct audience appeal to ethnic and other minority interests can be found within RNZ. RNZ has a wide and eclectic audience made up of the opinion leaders and decision makers within the community who are open to hearing about difference and diversity. In the period since deregulation, RNZ has at times faced political pressure with calls for its downsizing, removal of key roles such as news to the private sector and even threat of sale (Zanker and Pauling, 2005). In 2011, the right-of-centre national-led government appointed as chair of the RNZ board a proponent of a form of commercial 'sponsorship' for RNZ.

THE URGE TO NETWORK

Many public broadcasters are mandated to provide regional services in recognition of cultural and sometimes language differences within countries. Radio New Zealand began as a collection of stand-alone

regional stations. Networking in the 1970s provided for the centralizing of most programmes in Wellington but regular regional breakouts were provided. These were gradually constrained by funding restrictions and completely abolished by 1990. Local commercial broadcasting also used to use geography as its defining character. Local radio focused on even smaller pockets of population – cities and even suburbs. This form of radio used to be dominant in commercial broadcasting until the 1990s. Every town and city had at least one local commercial radio station. These have been lost to the efficiencies of networking. The signals have not been lost, nor the local advertising but the programme originates from a network headquarters usually located in a major city.

COMMUNITY BROADCASTING

This is a confusing term, a 'catch–all' phrase to explain the activities of literally thousands of broadcasting stations around the world. Many of these stations carry sometimes quite substantial minority ethnic, cultural and language programmes. New Zealand's unique form of community broadcasting is Access Radio. The emphasis is on providing resources and training for community groups and individuals to make their own programmes for broadcast. They are encouraged to conceive, create, produce and present their programmes with any 'outside' help limited to basic radio skills training and access to the technical resources. Minority ethnic programmes tend to dominate the schedule.

New Zealand has twelve community access stations. Each station is a reflection of its community. Population density, range and diversity vary between these stations' communities, from the pastoral backdrop of the rural Wairarapa to the large city 'melting pot' of Auckland's multi-cultural ecology.

By 1990, whether by design, coincidence or synchronicity, three things came together at the same time. As mentioned above, Section 36c of the Broadcasting Act 1989 requires NZ On Air to ensure that a range of broadcasts is available to provide for the interests of women, youth, children, minorities, persons with disabilities, and the diverse religious and ethical beliefs of New Zealanders. NZ On Air quickly determined that radio was a most effective and efficient mode to deliver these out-comes. At the same time, community groups looking to develop a radio presence saw substantial government funding possibilities in helping NZ On Air meet its Section 36c mandate. Finally, in the year that the Act

was promulgated, a ministerial directive was issued requiring NZ On Air to undertake specific funding commitments, including the funding of access radio. The directive states that 'it is part of the general policy of Government in relation to broadcasting . . . that access radio services should be available for a broad range of non-profit community groups' (Hunt, 1989). Combining the requirements of the Act with the ministerial directive, NZ On Air developed a policy of meeting many of its 36c legislative requirements through funding access radio. Since 1989, access radio broadcasters in New Zealand have, understandably, tailored their programming to meet Section 36c criteria so as to be eligible for NZ On Air funding. Consequently, community access radio in New Zealand enjoys a level of state funding and support that would be the envy of community radio in most other jurisdictions.

The current funding conditions provide up to $200,000 a year to each station on a ratio of 60:40. Stations are expected to provide 40 per cent of their operating expenses. They do this by charging air-time fees, fundraising, sponsorship and limited advertising, all of which is permitted under the terms of the licences. Broadly speaking, access broadcasting is at its 'purest' when individuals or groups classified by Section 36c criteria are assisted to make programmes for broadcast about their issues to their respective communities (Pauling, 2002: 30). Programmes by, for and about Section 36c-defined groups are the ones that currently attract strongest support from NZ On Air.

CAMPUS OR STUDENT RADIO

Radio stations have featured in university campus life for many years. Some of the earliest radio broadcasting occurred on campuses in the US. New Zealand's first public broadcast signal came from Otago University in 1921 (Downes and Harcourt, 1976). Campus-based radio is often supported by the local student association and programming is aimed at the immediate interests of students, reporting and participating in student campus activities. The earliest student radio in New Zealand was Radio Bosom, launched, in the first instance illegally, by students at Auckland University in 1969 (in deference to cultural changes it changed its name to Radio 95bFM in 1989). It focused on the immediate campus, broadcasting its programme on speakers strategically placed at social gathering spots around the university (Huntington, 2000). For a number of the following years the station applied to and was permitted by the state

to broadcast for short-term periods focusing around significant student events such as graduation, festivals and other on-campus activities. Over the next twenty years broadcast stations were established on six New Zealand university campuses, providing student services with a focus on music that appealed to youth. While maintaining their independence, they come together for some commercial and programme purposes as an alternative national radio network, Bnet. The stations are also given to providing a range of alternative news, current affairs and opinion pieces of a form and nature fomented in the cauldron of whatever radical student politics was/is dominant at the time. Most of these stations receive a small amount of financial support from NZ On Air from a fund designed to support New Zealand music on radio.

MAORI RADIO

Indigenous Maori have a tribal (iwi)-based culture. The Treaty of Waitangi (*www.treatyofwaitangi.net.nz/index.html)* is New Zealand's founding constitutional document and it recognizes the unique role of Maori as 'first settlers' and their rights in partnership with Pakeha (European in origin) New Zealanders. In a response to Maori claims of a share of ownership of the broadcast spectrum, frequencies were made available for the establishment of a network of individual iwi radio stations. Twenty-one local iwi stations were set up throughout New Zealand between 1989 and 1994. Their licences stipulate that the frequencies must be used for the purpose of promoting Maori language and culture, and used to broadcast to a primarily Maori audience.

Iwi stations were initially established with funding from NZ On Air but pressure for further control over their broadcasting resources led to the establishment in 1995 of Te Mangai Paho (TMP), a funding agency for Maori broadcasting. As well as funding the iwi stations, TMP also funds Maori news services and a national Maori television channel. Each station receives $320,000 funding per year for basic operational costs. In 2006, TMP made it mandatory for iwi stations to transmit a minimum of eight hours of Maori-language (Te Reo) programming daily between the hours of 6 a.m. and midnight to receive funding (TMP, 2011).

All iwi stations stream their signals over the web and are also connected on a high-speed wide area network called Punga.net which enables new broadcast technologies and distribution options. Stations can share individual programmes with the network and participate in

collaborative live broadcasts. Podcasting (RSS) capabilities allow stations to publish audio for the public to subscribe to.

OTHER ETHNIC AND MINORITY STATIONS

Other specifically mandated stations include 531PI, a full-time Pacific Island service broadcasting in Auckland; Samoan Capital Radio, a similar but part-time service in Wellington, and Niu FM, a recently established networked station originating in Auckland but transmitting to a growing number of cities and regions. Public broadcaster National Radio also contributes a small amount of ethnic programming, mainly for Pacific Island audiences. These stations all receive state-funding support, whether through NZ On Air or other government agencies. A small radio station in the central North Island operates a 'radio reading service' specifically aimed at the print-disabled, supported by an annual grant from NZ On Air.

A significant proportion of minority radio broadcasting in New Zealand is carried out by stations that are not mandated by the state and operate either as fully commercial broadcasters or by sponsorship and donor support from sympathetic followers. Major contributors in this category are APNA Radio and Radio Tarana, both broadcasting to the Indian community; Radio Samoa in Auckland, and Radio Chinese, broadcasting in Auckland in both Mandarin and Cantonese. Noteworthy is the fact that Radio Tarana is among the top ten Auckland radio stations, drawing an audience share of 4.7 per cent (Radio Tarana, 2011), ahead of a number of the city's commercial networks. This is a clear reflection of New Zealand's growing cultural diversity as a result of liberal immigration policies since the 1980s. Also in this category are four radio networks operated by the Christian broadcasting organization, Rhema Broadcasting Group (Rhema, 2011).

GUARD BAND

New Zealand also has a large number of informal radio stations operating in what is commonly called the 'Guard Band'. This is a small area of the radio spectrum set aside to protect the 'bleeding' of one use of the spectrum with another (e.g. radio broadcasting and taxis or civil aviation). Within this narrow band it is possible to broadcast a low-powered service if a frequency is available locally. Stations in the

Guard Band can quickly get a General Users Radio Licence (GURL) so long as they meet technical regulations. It has been dubbed the 'wild-west of radio broadcasting' where 'disputes between broadcasters over frequency interference have little recourse to the law and are largely debated through discussion on a single online group forum' (Simpson, 2011). The signal must not exceed 0.5 watts and must not interfere with other spectrum users. These stations cover a wide range of activity from someone operating a local commercial radio broadcast service through to schools, religious groups and individual hobbyists broadcasting for their own entertainment or providing a service to a special community. They tend to come and go and many are on air for a short time and a specific purpose. Hundreds of such stations have been created. It is estimated that there could be up to 200 such services operating at any one time (ibid.).

CONCLUSION

This overview describes the nature of radio in New Zealand. It demonstrates how a combination of right-wing laissez-faire politics in the 1980s, ameliorated by a residual 'Reithian' conscience – perhaps a remnant of many years of previous state-controlled broadcasting – produced a quite remarkable radio ecology, one that is probably unique. But it cannot completely explain New Zealand's love affair with radio. After all, other nations have experienced forms of deregulation in broadcasting (US), and the Reithian tradition is still strong in the UK and, to a lesser extent, in Australia and Canada. But none come near the ratio of radio outlets to population that New Zealand has, nor do they attract the same level of commercial revenue or audience. Time spent listening to radio in the UK (Ofcom, 2011h) and the US (Phillips, 2011) is declining, while in New Zealand it is increasing (Admedia, 2011).

One reason for this could be because of the way television has developed. New Zealand was one of the last Western nations to pro-vide a television service. National television coverage was not achieved until 1962. This gave radio extra time to claim the loyalty of the baby-boomer generation before television could influence them. Further, even when a full television service was established, it did not enter the radio-essential morning market until 1997. This provided another thirty years of morning radio free from other broadcast competition.

Another reason could be the way in which commercial radio has held on to its audience by targeted segmentation. An overwhelming number of New Zealanders choose to listen to commercial radio. This was also the case when radio was state controlled. But there has been a considerable shift in the nature of commercial radio since deregulation. Prior to deregulation, commercial radio was a 'full service' product in the sense that it acknowledged all stakeholders, the diverse interests of the audience both geographically (localism) and demographically (age), the advertisers and the state (in the case of the state this meant being free from controversy, subscribing to policies of balance, fairness and accuracy, and being conservative in its programming).

Now, the principal stakeholder is the shareholder. Indeed 'the major positive impact of deregulation on the business of radio was just that – radio became a business, not just a recreational pastime' (Shanahan, 2000). This led, first, to a plethora of new stations and an increase in formats giving listeners more choice, and, latterly, to contraction as consolidation gradually led to the dominance of two major players. The use of market segmentation where networks target specific audience groupings free from the trappings and the responsibilities of 'full service' provision provides a greater range of choice than prior to deregulation. However, there has been a 'tendency to normalisation of products and maintenance of the status quo' (Shanahan and Duignan, 2005: 42) which has seen segmentation cluster around the tastes of the audience of choice – the 19- to 46-year-old shopper – rejecting localism for the economic benefits of networking (mainly from Auckland) and 'lack of innovation, risk-taking or development of further brands' (ibid.) to cater for a wider demography. Niche markets are not considered of value by commercial broadcasters. Despite this the audience has stayed; indeed, grown. This suggests that the commercial broadcasters 'read' the audience very well and what segmentation that exists meets the majority's wants, if not their needs. One feature of New Zealand networked commercial radio in the twenty-first century is that it is far less balanced, less fair and appeals much more to audience prejudice and bias than would have been permitted prior to deregulation. The language is more risqué, opinions more strident and race and gender stereotypes abound (BSA, 2010).

As for the remainder, most (the exceptions being the aforementioned religious stations and large minority-language stations) rely on the favour of the state to exist in their current form. All in one form or

another receive sustenance from government funding, and broadcasting continues to be the plaything of politicians. While television is the focus in 2011, with state-funding cuts to the last vestige of public television, TVNZ7, ensuring its demise, and preparations for the possible privatization of state commercial broadcaster Television New Zealand openly being made, radio will not escape. Using the need to fund the recovery from 2011's disastrous earthquake in Christchurch as an excuse for severe cuts to public services, there are indications that Radio New Zealand may be required to supplement reduced state funding by pursuing commercial or sponsorship alternatives (Newton, 2011; Watkins and Small, 2011). And NZ On Air is increasing its scrutiny of the activity of community radio stations seeking efficiencies that will increase the delivery of Section 36c programmes at no extra costs (Pauling, 2010).

As for the 'cowboys' of the Guard Band, they rely on the largesse of the state in providing spectrum for their broadcasts. Having already made millions of dollars from the sale of frequencies, how long will it be before there is a government 'review' of Guard Band spectrum to seek the possibility of a greater commercial gain? History suggests not long.

Radio as an Expression of Nation and Sub-nation in Laos

Mary Traynor

Laos has had a particularly turbulent recent history. Since the late nineteenth century, its territorial borders have been defined and redefined at the whim of successive outside forces, its national identity contrived and manipulated to suit the dominant power of the moment. The articulations of nation status have, for the most part, been inaccessible and irrelevant to the inhabitants of Laos, who have been far more concerned with the day-to-day battle to survive. If, as David Morley and Kevin Robins argue, communication networks provide 'the crucial, and permeable, boundaries of our age' (1997: 1), to what extent is radio an effective means of defining and communicating the nation status of Laos? Since radio was first introduced in Laos in 1939, it has mirrored the country's tumultuous narrative, exploited by dominant and dissenting groups as a voice of colonialism and revolution. More recently, increasing democratization and globalization of media have handed the power of radio to diaspora groups, creating opportunities for those previously excluded from decision-making to contribute to debates on what it means to be 'Lao'. This chapter examines radio's role in the often contradictory attempts to impose a national identity on the inhabitants of Laos. It considers to what extent radio has contributed to the emergence of alternative national representations. It discusses the contemporary economic, political and cultural landscape and reflects on the opportunities and challenges it presents to radio as a manifestation of national identity.

In his influential book *Imagined Communities: Reflections on the Origins and Spread of Nationalism* (1983, revised 2006), Benedict Anderson considers the contradictions inherent in attempts to define the 'nation'. Is it a geographical area, an ideological concept, a community of interest, language, race or ethnicity? The term 'nation' has been used interchangeably with 'country' and 'state'. However, Anderson argues that

nation and nationhood are not confined by physical or ideological bor-
ders but are 'cultural artefacts': objects that are historically rooted yet
dynamic and fluid, constantly interrogated and subject to re-articulation.
He describes the nation as an 'imagined' community, its members feel-
ing a 'deep, horizontal comradeship'; a bonding identity (Anderson,
2006: 4–7). In this sense, while geographical borders define a 'country'
and physical and political borders form a 'state', the result will not be
a nation unless the inhabitants of that territory feel a sense of connec-
tion. This is not to say that the nation necessarily emerges organically
at grassroots level. Historically, national identity is most often defined
and imposed by the state; the state and nation inseparable within the
nation state. While state governments would, no doubt, prefer this form
of what Anderson (ibid.: 159) calls 'official' nationalism to prevail, in
reality national identity defies containment. '"Sub" nationalisms' (ibid.:
3) emerge, crossing physical and ideological borders, reducing national
identity to a fluid miasma. The interplay between the 'official' and 'sub'-
nation in Laos is particularly fascinating: the supremacy of the former
constantly challenged and, at times, usurped by the latter.

Defining Laos as a nation or even as a country is fraught with con-
tradictions. Geographers Randi Jerndal and Jonathan Rigg (1998: 814–
15) draw on the work of Wolters, Tooker and Taillard to outline the
traditional south-east Asian notion of territorial power. In pre-colonial
times, space was abundant and so was not perceived to be a useful deter-
minant of power; human capital was deemed much more significant.
The relative power of principalities was imagined in a similar way to
cosmology, with less significant settlements revolving around a central,
royal, conurbation; rather like moons relating to planets, planets to a sun
and so on. The structure was concentric, hierarchical and physically bor-
derless, the significance of each principality's relationship to the centre
determined by descent or marriage. Taillard describes this structure as
a 'galax' (cited in ibid.: 814). Power struggles focused on strengthening
principalities within the galax with human captives, rather than accu-
mulating land, an approach that must have seemed incongruous to the
earliest colonial settlers.

> When Europeans first witnessed warfare in the region they were
> surprised at the modest casualties that ensued. People, it seems,
> were far too valuable a resource to be wasted in great numbers on
> the battlefield. Further, wars were waged not to take lands but to

capture populations and in many instances enemy towns would only be occupied for as long as it took to round up the human booty and march them back home. (ibid.: 815)

As a consequence of this kind of resettlement, the population of modern-day Laos is extremely ethnically diverse. The landmass is no bigger than the United Kingdom, but its 6.5 million inhabitants can be subdivided into as many as 150 different linguistic groups (Rehbein, 2007: 4). Nevertheless, the single official language of state and mass communication is Lao, which is the first language of only half of the population (UNHCR, 2007). The geographical area known as Laos is generally acknowledged to have been invented in the late nineteenth century, a construct of the French colonialists. However, the people of Laos were linked through the galax to the kingdom of Siam (later to become Thailand). In order to protect its claim on the territory of Laos from Siam, the French united Laos with Cambodia and Vietnam to form Indochina (Jerndal and Rigg, 1998: 816). A leading authority on Lao identity, Søren Ivarsson, has researched how this geographical construct was accompanied by a campaign to identify and propagate a distinct Lao national identity, one that effectively ignored the diverse ethnic make-up of Laos to prioritize a historical, cultural and racial distinction between Lao and Thai people (1999: 65).

It is interesting that these early attempts at an articulation of Lao nationality coincided with the birth of radio in Laos. The French administration ran a multi-pronged campaign called the Lao Renovation Movement to disseminate this distinct Lao nationalism in order to 'awaken among Lao a national spirit and progressively realize the moral unity of the country' (Pierrantoni, cited in Ivarsson, 1999: 64). Though there is little archive material relating to the early days of radio, Ivarsson (2011) reasons that radio, along with print media, played a crucial role in the renovation movement. However, these earliest colonial mass-communication strategies were elitist, targeted at French-educated Lao city dwellers (Ivarsson, 1998: 64–6). Radio was, for most, an irrelevance and it seems reasonable to assume that the vast majority of the population was completely oblivious to the national identity the French were defining on their behalf. Dy Sisombath, now the deputy director general of the Mass Media Department of the Ministry of Information and Culture in Laos, lived through the early days of radio in Laos. In an interview with the author, he recalled that, even following independence

from France in 1953, radio continued to propagate this form of official nationalism (Sisombath, 2009).

State radio, bolstered by investment from France and the US, remained the mouthpiece of Laos's official national identity until the Lao People's Revolutionary Party (LPRP) took control in 1975. Fascinatingly, over the same period, radio was simultaneously the voice of the emerging revolutionary sub-nationalism. The revolutionary movement began during the Second World War and gained increasing power by collaborating with the Viet Minh in Vietnam (Church, 1999). There is some evidence that the revolutionaries used radio, probably broadcasting from Vietnam, periodically to undermine the French administration and stake their claim on Laos.[1] Following independence from France, the revolutionaries gained momentum, recruiting from disenfranchised ethnic groups who had been all but ignored in the Lao Renovation Movement. The revolutionaries, united under the title 'Pathet Lao' (Lao Nation), gained a strong foothold in the north of Laos, close to the Vietnam border. Though this sub-national group was assuredly 'Lao', its communist ideology transcended territorial borders. The comradeship between Laos, Vietnam, China and the USSR that developed at this time suggests an alternative national identity, one that resonates in the political landscape of contemporary Laos. This alternative Lao nationalism, bolstered by support from the Communist allies, found a voice through Radio Pathet Lao, which was established in an intriguing cave complex in Vieng Xai. The sophisticated underground city of Vieng Xai housed up to 25,000 people in its heyday. It had a hospital, school and theatre and became the secret nerve centre of the Pathet Lao during the Vietnam War. The radio cave at Vieng Xai was supplemented by a system of portable communication units. Buaso Mingkhamdeng, deputy head of the Department of Media of Information and Culture, Xieng Khouang province, described how the units, complete with loudspeakers, were used to relay information to the Pathet Lao fighters (Mingkhamdeng, 2009). Radio Pathet Lao at the Vieng Xai caves and its mobile network clearly had an important communications function during the Vietnam War, as well as nurturing the Pathet Lao ideology among the revolutionaries. However, it is unlikely to have had a great impact on the wider population. It appears that the colonial policy of targeting the elite, rather than mass audiences, persisted. According to radio technology expert Manosij Gua (2005: 35), broadcasts were in French, as well as Lao, mirroring those of the

state radio. In discussions with the author, Mr Thong of Khoun district, Laos, described the abject poverty suffered by the majority of Lao during the Vietnam War. Most were struggling to stay alive and radio was an irrelevant luxury (Thong, 2011). On balance, it can be assumed that that the prevalence of unfamiliar languages on air, as well as a general lack of access to radio, compromised Radio Pathet Lao's ability to unify the wider population within the emerging alternative revolutionary sub-nationalism.

Nevertheless, the sophisticated use of radio during the Vietnam War is unparalleled and engrossing. As we have seen, it was simultaneously the voice of colonial nationalism, military communications and the emerging Pathet Lao sub-nationalism. Due to US intervention, it also became the voice of covert propaganda and of a further sub-nationalist group. Laos was neutral during the Vietnam War but the links between the Pathet Lao and the Viet Minh proved its undoing. Jerndall and Rigg (1998: 811) argue that the US felt justified in its devastating bombardment of Laos because it considered it to be part of North Vietnam. Along with more conventional artillery, radio was a vital weapon in the US armoury. Nick Grace, managing editor of *ClandestineRadio.com*, a portal dedicated to the study of clandestine and subversive radio, has researched how the US used radio in the Vietnam War. He claims that the US Central Intelligence Agency (CIA) operated 'black and grey' propaganda radio stations in Vietnam, designed to disorientate the enemy (Grace, 1998). Lawrence Soley provides a useful definition: 'Grey stations are attributed to indigenous dissident groups but are in fact sponsored by outside governments and their intelligence agencies . . . black stations are similarly sponsored but masquerade as those of the enemy' (Soley, cited in Hendy, 2000: 200–1). One example was a 'black' version of the North Vietnamese station, Radio Hanoi, which attempted to undermine confidence in the communist effort. According to historian Jane Hamilton-Merritt, somewhat confusingly, during the same period, the American actress Jane Fonda broadcast messages of support for North Vietnam communists on the real Radio Hanoi (1993: 298). While Laos's neutral status prevented overt US military activity, the CIA was extremely active, operating a 'black' station called Radio Khana Pathet Lao, which mimicked the real Radio Pathet Lao to undermine the revolutionary movement (*ClandestineRadio.com*, 2011). These radio propaganda activities were bolstered by a vigorous leaflet campaign encouraging Pathet Lao fighters to return to join the

Royal Lao Army. The leaflets show defecting Pathet Lao soldiers, happily receiving a gift of a radio (Friedman, 2004).

The CIA also trained ethnic groups, particularly the Hmong, to fight as mercenaries against the Pathet Lao in an episode which has become known as the 'Secret War'. The CIA established a base for this training activity in Long Cheng, which at its height in the late 1960s was home to 40,000 Hmong soldiers and refugees and was the second largest city in Laos. 'Grey' radio played a vital role at Long Cheng. The CIA trained Hmong people as radio presenters, to broadcast messages and entertainment programming encouraging the Hmong to unite against the Pathet Lao (Yang, 2005). At that time, Yialy Lorvangchong worked as a field reporter for Radio Pathet Lao, operating in extremely hazardous conditions and relaying information by field telephone or letter to the radio headquarters in the Vieng Xai caves. He remembers the conflicting messages from the Long Cheng transmitter, which was by far the most powerful in Laos (Lorvangchong, 2011). Unlike Radio Pathet Lao, radio at Long Cheng played a vital role in building a sense of shared identity among the wider community – in this case, the many Hmong refugees who congregated there. Yang (2005) describes the observations of Mao Vang Lee, who worked as a radio reporter at Long Cheng remembers: 'A total modification of the Hmong society where the city of Long Cheng, refugee camp of the Secret War, became the first urban center and the heart of all Hmong of Laos before 1975' (Lee, cited in Yang, 2005). The strong identity that was established was useful to the US in the hostilities against the Pathet Lao but continues to have important contemporary resonances. According to Yang (ibid.), Lee attributes the vibrant post-war sub-nationalist radio of the Hmong Lao diaspora to the radio activities which began at Long Cheng.

Radio Pathet Lao also survived the shifting political landscape; government literature proudly identifies the mass-communications systems which were established in Vieng Xai as the origins of the current state radio network, Lao National Radio (LNR).[2] Following the establishment of the Lao Peoples' Democratic Republic (Lao PDR) at the end of the Vietnam War in 1975, Radio Pathet Lao, which originated as a voice of sub-nationalism, emerged triumphant as the voice of official nationalism. The new government's priority was to build a unified nation state. Anderson (2006: 113–14) points out that postcolonial states frequently perpetuate aspects of colonial nationalism, and the notion of LNR as disseminator of official nationalism adopted by the Lao PDR

Government somewhat ironically replicates the French colonial mass-communications model. Nouhak Phoumsavanh, a founding member of the new government, unequivocally outlines the relationship between state and broadcaster:

> The Party and state have always realized and attached importance to the propagation of information as a sharp means of the Party, an instrument in the struggle for lobbying, presenting the political line and policies and defending the Party line. The mass media at all times are involved in the Party strategy and tactics. (Phoumsavanh, cited in UNESCO, 2011)

Despite the strong relationship between nation state and broad-caster, LNR has never had a monopoly over the airwaves. Short-wave broadcasts from Voice of America, BBC World Service and Radio France International continued to challenge the communist national perspective. Sub-nationalisms, too, persisted over this period, and the nation state has been contested consistently from within and outside Laos. Following the Vietnam War, there was a mass exodus of members of the Hmong Lao ethnic group who had collaborated with the US against the Pathet Lao. The lucky ones settled in the US. Many others were lost in 're-education' or were detained in refugee camps in Thailand. One sub-nationalist group which emerged with support from the Hmong Lao diaspora is the Lao People's National Liberation Front (LPNLF). During the 1990s, the LPNLF operated a resistance radio station, keeping one step ahead of the authorities by using a mobile transmitter in remote mountainous areas. The station is no longer on air and the fate of the broadcasters is unknown (Hamilton-Merritt, 2011). More recently, internet radio from the Hmong Lao diaspora in the US nurtures the concept of an alternative Lao nationalism; one that is steeped in nostalgia for the pre-communist era. One example is Hmong Lao Radio, which broadcast on short wave for a time and more recently via the internet, to keep up the pressure for political reform in Laos:

> The mission of the Hmong Lao Radio is to provide the most reliable news and educational promotion program from the United States to reach at least 80% of the 12 million around the world, bypassing most state-run news agency, to nurturing and shaping

the Hmong community to heal the wounds resulting from the Vietnam War, which include oppression, discrimination, inequality, injustice, human rights violation, family separation and lost [*sic*]. (Hmong Lao Radio, 2011)

However, it is a need for socio-economic development, rather than pressure from sub-nationalist groups, that is driving political reform in Laos. Laos is classified by the United Nations as one of the world's 'least developed countries' (UNOHRLLS, 2011) and the government has introduced a host of policies which seek to embrace globalization and modernization, while simultaneously perpetuating the patriarchal and authoritarian official nationalism. The introduction of new legislation surrounding media in 2008 is a case in point. The new 'media law' removes the government monopoly on media ownership, paving the way for international, private and community media in Laos. However, media content is still subject to strict control, its current affairs agenda issued by the government news agency, Khaosan Pathet Lao (KPL). While new radio sectors offer the possibility of an alternative to the official nationalism to be heard, within this rather contradictory environment, to what extent can radio be a disseminator of official nationalism and an expression of sub-nationalism?

Perhaps the most fundamental indicator is the extent to which the inhabitants of Laos can access radio, both in terms of opportunities to listen and to influence radio output. As David Hendy (2000: 197) points out, radio tends to have the greatest impact in the developing world because it overcomes the barrier of illiteracy, it does not depend on mains electricity and it is economical to consume. In common with many developing countries, radio is the most widely available media in Lao homes and over 80 per cent of the population can access it (UNDP, 2009: 26). However, the LNR network's broadcast range is limited, particularly in mountainous areas. For example, in Xieng Khouang, less than half the population can receive the LNR provincial station (Mingkhamdeng, 2009). The government has an ambitious local radio development programme in place. This, in addition to a strategy to increase community radio in remote, rural areas is gradually improving radio reception. As mains electricity and technology become more widespread, the greatest challenge to radio access comes from competing media. The United Nations Development Programme's most recent statistics relating to media access, from 2005, indicate that around

50 per cent of the population has access to TV (UNDP, 2009: 29). In reality, it is likely that the number is actually much greater because an increasing number of poor, rural villages have at least one TV, which is watched by all villagers due to the communal nature of everyday life.

If radio is to compete with TV, it is crucial that its distinctive qualities are exploited to the full. One such quality is that, of all the traditional mass media, radio offers the best opportunities for participation. Community radio in particular makes a feature of this and generally offers an opportunity for sub-nationalisms to be better represented through radio. The country's first community station, Khoun Community Radio for Development (Khoun Radio), was established in 2008 as a project of the Lao Government and the UNDP. Community radio is widely understood to be an independent 'voice' which originates either at a local level or from a minority group, but Khoun Radio is articulated as a vehicle for widening participation in civil society (UNDP, 2011: 5). In a democratic society, these functions are not necessarily contradictory. However, in Laos, civil society is mainly concentrated in a number of government-run groups, such as the Lao Women's Union. In this case, there is a danger that community radio will merely reinforce, rather than challenge, the official nationalism. It is significant that Khoun Radio was established in Xieng Khouang province, the home of resistance radio in the 1990s and an area of ethnic unrest. The government acknowledges that official nationalism particularly needs to be reinforced in this area and Khoun Radio has a role in this (Sisombath, 2009). Clearly, community radio's ability to overtly challenge official nationalism in Laos is inhibited by its constitution, which aligns it firmly with government. Nevertheless, Khoun Radio is an exciting initiative which offers genuine opportunities for grassroots participation, and programming that reflects the needs and interests of the listening community. In time, it could contribute more to the democratization of civil society, creating subtle opportunities for marginalized groups to take part in the national debate.

If radio is to provide opportunities to engage in this debate, then it must be linguistically accessible. Kaysone Phomivane, the first Prime Minister of the Lao PDR, identified linguistic unity as one of the four determinants of nationhood. He acknowledged that this would present a barrier for ethnic minorities, but argued that national unity would be enhanced by improving language skills (Phomivane, cited in Pholsena, 2006: 171). Consequently, LNR prioritizes the Lao language, though

it does provide a small amount of ethnic-language programming, as do several short-wave stations from outside Laos. The emerging community radio sector has a particular focus on representing ethnic minorities, and pays more attention to linguistic diversity. Nevertheless, minority-language radio remains underdeveloped, dispersed and uncoordinated within Laos. In such an ethnically and linguistically diverse country, prioritizing a single language clearly restricts radio's impact as disseminator of official nationalism and representative of sub-nationalism. However, outside Laos, vibrant minority-language radio is thriving on Hmong Lao internet radio stations. The flourishing Hmong Lao diaspora in the US, founded by the Hmong broadcasters exiled from Long Cheng, reaches out through radio to Hmong in Laos, in Hmong and English (Yang, 2005). A sense of national unity that transcends territorial and even linguistic boundaries is clearly expressed by internet stations such as Hmong Lao Radio. However, it is difficult to establish the extent to which the Hmong Lao within Laos itself feel this connection. Internet usage in Laos is low, at only 7.5 per cent (Internet World Statistics, 2009), and access is confined mainly to urban areas which are often some distance from Hmong villages, so engagement with Hmong Lao internet radio is probably limited.

The legislation surrounding media content is similarly challenging to the credibility of LNR as purveyor of official nationalism and to community radio as the voice of emerging sub-national groups. LNR in particular is inextricably linked to government. According to 'Reporters without Borders' (RSF), an international organization that campaigns for press freedom, government information is not challenged by the media. 'The press is still under the control of the sole party . . . It is forbidden to criticize "friendly countries" Burma and "big brothers" Vietnam and China. Journalists practise self censorship because they know what will not be published' (RSF, 2006). The new media law is not yet widely available, either in Lao or English, but according to the unofficial translation of new media law made available to the author, free reporting is encouraged where it is in the 'national interests'. However, there is clearly a conflict of interest in reporting issues that are critical of the government, such as corruption involving a government minister. While the relaxation of media ownership is beginning to create a more diverse radio spectrum, the control over content, particularly news, restricts the extent to which new stations can be an alternative to LNR. Khoun Radio acts as a relay for LNR news, and Lao's first private

commercial station is required to adhere to the KPL news agenda. The government appears to value these new stations as an opportunity to enhance the dissemination of information, rather than as a means of encouraging alternative views (Sisombath, 2009). However, the subtle input of the UNDP in Khoun Radio is significant. Its interventions are focused on providing opportunities for freedom of speech at every level of society. Self-censorship currently inhibits the extent to which this is achieved and it is difficult to see how this could improve under the current single-party political regime. As Servaes and Arnst point out, 'unless policymaking and the social process are themselves participatory, it is unlikely that the result will be a democratic pattern of communication' (cited in McPhail, 2009: 31).

While the government attempts to control home-produced media content, it cannot maintain exclusive control over the information its citizens receive. As a landlocked country, Laos is particularly susceptible to media from neighbouring countries. Media from Vietnam, Thailand and China is prevalent but due to the similarity between the Lao and Thai languages, Thai media is particularly popular. Increasingly, LNR lacks authority as the voice of official nationalism. Young people interviewed by the author in the capital, Vientiane, prefer the commercial, Westernized sound of Thai radio. The Thai influence is even greater through Thai TV, which is more popular than any Lao-produced media (UNDP, 2006: 118). Fascinatingly, it would seem that a new nationalism is forming around the shared experience of Thai media and culture, one that crosses territorial borders, echoing back to pre-colonial times when Laos was subsumed within the galax of the kingdom of Siam.

Whereas Laos and Thailand could be said to share a nationality bonded by language and history, other international media influences are more culturally homogenizing. One example is Lao Star TV, part of the pan-Asia Star network, which contains a mix of Asian (including Lao) and Western programmes. It could be argued that the shared consumption of Star TV across Asia constitutes a vast national construct which clearly undermines official nationalisms. While the influence of Thai and pan-Asian media clearly creates competition for LNR as an expression of official nationalism, crucially it also threatens much more fragile sub-nationalisms that are attempting to find expression through community radio.

In this competitive media environment it is vital for Lao-produced radio to be attractive to listeners. LNR's broadcast range is similar to

that of the BBC in the UK, but the level of staffing and the quality of facilities to achieve high production standards bear no comparison. While LNR, commercial and community radio can theoretically generate income from advertising and sponsorship, the opportunities to do so are limited by the poor socio-economic conditions. However, Laos's economy is improving and it now has a GDP growth rate of more than 7 per cent, which places it amongst the highest performing 'least developed countries' in Asia and the Pacific (UNDP Lao PDR, 2008: 12). In an improved economic environment, radio, as a powerful advertising medium, will have more opportunity to generate commercial income. While this could lead to improved levels of staffing and equipment, it will not necessarily enhance radio as an expression of nationalism. Commercially funded radio is often bland and generic, targeted at maximizing listenership among groups with disposable income. This is at odds with LNR's commitment to uniting the Lao people under an official nationalism. It is also at odds with community radio, which prioritizes minority groups that tend to be the poorest and, as such, economically irrelevant and unattractive to potential advertisers. Commercially funded radio undermines expressions of national identity both at an official and sub-national level. It aligns listeners not with each other, or with the state, but with consumerism.

In conclusion, a sense of belonging and 'horizontal comradeship' (Anderson, 2006: 4–7) are fundamental to national identity, and throughout its history, radio has played a role in nurturing that sense of belonging. As the voice of official nationalism, radio has promoted loyalty to the Lao state under successive political regimes. Simultaneously, it has ignored the linguistic, historical and territorial boundaries that have traditionally characterized the Lao nation, to represent affiliations, or sub-nationalisms, which transcend those limits. In contemporary Laos, radio's impact as an expression of official and sub-nationalism has been largely determined by legislation and increasing globalization. Legislation surrounding media is contradictory, simultaneously encouraging democracy of ownership and restricting free speech. Outside Laos, radio frequently demonstrates its capacity to facilitate a horizontal, two-way flow of communication. However, the extent to which this has been realized in Laos has been limited by government influence over the media. Globalization of media, too, has created a paradox. On one hand, it has presented opportunities for radio to represent new sub-nationalisms which cross traditional state borders. On the other, international media

has engulfed Laos, undermining Lao radio's attempts to articulate both official and alternative national identities. Radio in Laos is at a critical point. The media law has finally ended the government monopoly on radio ownership. It remains to be seen whether this liberalization will extend to a decentralization of media content. Only then can radio in Laos begin to fulfil its potential to become a true reflection of the diverse and complex Lao nation.

Notes
1. For instance, the *Christian Science Monitor* reported in 1949 that radio broadcasts in Lao from Vietnam were questioning the authority of the French Indochinese Federation (*Christian Science Monitor*, 29 July 1949).
2. For example, see Laos Cultural Profile (2011), prepared by the Lao PDR Ministry of Information and Culture.

Training for Life: The Contribution of Radio Training to Indigenous Education and Well-being in Australia

Ioana Suciu and Kitty van Vuuren

Australian indigenous radio stations have been successfully broadcasting for nearly forty years and are proven pathways for indigenous people towards employment, enterprise and the maintenance of languages and culture (Molnar and Meadows, 2001: 16). The sector offers a first-level service for indigenous audiences and it is the only service that is embedded in local indigenous community structures, broadcasts in local languages on local topics and events, contributes to local disaster planning and keeps local audiences in touch with mainstream media content (Meadows and Molnar, 2002: 12; Forde et al., 2002). In this way it serves as a bridge between mainstream and indigenous cultures.

What has rarely been acknowledged, however, is the contribution of community broadcasting to improving education outcomes, especially literacy and numeracy skills. There have been some anecdotal reports (for example, Meadows et al., 2007: 61; van Vuuren, 2008: 166), but the role of broadcasting in improving literacy has not received purposeful scholarly attention. This chapter presents the results of semi-structured in-depth interviews with six broadcasting educators who provide Vocational Education and Training (VET) and in-school radio training to indigenous students from remote communities. Their experiences offer valuable insights into the benefits of aligning school curricula with indigenous community broadcasting organizations. Their experiences suggest a 'radio-focused curriculum' can effectively raise literacy levels and contribute to students' personal development, employment opportunities and community well-being more generally.

Past research consistently demonstrates that indigenous Australians fare worse than their non-indigenous peers on all levels of education and employment (Helme, 2007) and this gap widens for indigenous

communities in remote or very remote locations (Steering Committee for the Review of Government Service Provision [SCRGSP], 2009: 16). About a quarter of Australia's 500,000 indigenous people live in the nation's remote or very remote regions (total Australian population is 22 million). Low literacy levels among indigenous adults are associated with unemployment, poverty, poor health and crime (Masters, 2009: 60–1). To address indigenous well-being, Australian state and federal governments have identified a number of priority areas for actions that will lead to improvements in welfare, including literacy and other areas of education (SCRGSP, 2009: 23).

To Johnston, literacy is 'an intensely political concern' of parents, communities, governments and nations (2010). As well as personal outcomes, literacy enables full participation in wider society and is a significant contributor to the national economy. Literacy connects the individual to community and develops a person's sense of self. To Johnston, literacy's communicative function 'both represents and constitutes power', in that it provides individuals and communities with the resources that help to 'constitute how we see and organize the world around us'. Drawing on Derrida's performativity theory, with its focus on the relationship between speech, act and identity, she asserts that

> How we talk about ourselves, write about ourselves, how we are talked about and are cited by others, iterates and comes to be what we are. Words and images written about us, drawn of us, construct ideas of identity, community and belonging (or not-belonging) . . . Shifting the idea of community into this larger idea of nation, words spoken and written help to constitute what that nation is. (Ibid.)

This is especially pertinent to indigenous oral cultures, where lack of access to a means to diffuse indigenous meanings, ideas and culture in native languages could lead to cultural extinction. It was precisely this need for recognition of indigenous perspectives that gave rise to the popularity of community broadcasting in the early 1970s. Australian indigenous community broadcasting emerged in response to a growing dissatisfaction with the misrepresentation and invisibility of indigenous affairs in mainstream media. The first Aboriginal programmes were aired on Adelaide community radio 5UV, in 1972. Since then, the sector has grown rapidly and there are now more than 120 Remote Indigenous

Broadcasting Services (RIBS), twenty-five indigenous community radio licences in regional and urban centres and sixty indigenous broadcasting groups at mainstream (non-indigenous) community radio stations (Australian Indigenous Communication Association, 2008). The participatory nature and community perspective of radio broadcasting fits well with indigenous communities' cultural requirements and forms of expression (Molnar, 1995: 171). The lasting popularity of community radio broadcasting and its role in indigenous training suggests that there are opportunities to more closely align the education sector with community broadcasting in ways that could benefit indigenous students and communities.

Current Australian education policy aims to incorporate recognition of local languages and culture into indigenous education curricula and hopes to achieve this by forging stronger relationships with local communities. In the state of Queensland, for example, the Department of Education and Training (DET) acknowledges the importance of establishing strong relationships with parents and the community and recommends alignment of the school curriculum with services delivered by other organizations such as sporting bodies (DET, 2009: 7–8, 47). Such grassroots orientation recognizes the need for sensitivity to cultural difference and aims to preserve and empower indigenous identity by embedding local culture and knowledge into school curricula. According to Nakata (2003: 9), 'the positive results of this agenda . . . have been the acceptance of cultural sensitivity as an issue in the classrooms and the importance of cultural relevance and local context in the development of alternate curriculum'. It also represents a step forward on the part of many indigenous communities towards control of their children's education (Harris, 1990). However, in indigenous education, the efforts of schools to be culturally sensitive and incorporate indigenous perspectives and languages have to a large extent been unsuccessful (Harris, 1990; Nakata, 2003; Rose, 2000). Writing about 'two-way schooling', Harris acknowledges that the bilingual model raises a dilemma for indigenous education:

> Aborigines in remote communities want their children to learn the three R's [reading, writing and arithmetic] and to grow up Aboriginal. But if these children succeed in the western school system, this is likely to be at a cost to their Aboriginal culture. (Harris, 1990: 1)

Some indigenous leaders raised concerns over the suitability of a 'vernacular curriculum' that did little to prepare indigenous people to succeed in mainstream society. To Japangardi Poulson, 'school should teach English and the job of looking after Aboriginal culture is best left to the families' (1988: 68).

TRAINING IN INDIGENOUS COMMUNITY BROADCASTING

In many ways the functions assigned to community broadcasting are comparable to those associated with literacy education. Community broadcasting offers a site for local symbolic expression that not only empowers individuals, but helps to strengthen a collective sense of belonging (Dagron, 2001: 34; Forde et al., 2002: 56–7; Howley, 2005: 35). It provides opportunities for local community agencies to create and sustain beneficial partnerships and create strong social networks (Rennie, 2006; Rodriguez, 2001; van Vuuren, 2006). Broadcasting training in the indigenous and community media sector can thus be considered essential to personal and community development and, by extension, to national development. Particularly for young people, the results of media training – both knowledge of and skilling in the production process, as well as the media content itself – are significant contributors to social cohesion and civic engagement both within and outside the immediate community (Goodman, 2003: 105–7). However, community radio-based training is largely conceived as a 'de facto training ground for mainstream media' (Forde et al., 2003: 87) and training curricula emphasize practical broadcasting skills with little explicit recognition of their broader contribution to educational or community development.

The Community Broadcasting Association of Australia (CBAA), the sector's peak representative body, is a Registered Training Organisation (RTO) and coordinates accredited training available to community radio stations across Australia. Accredited training is modelled on the VET broadcasting training packages and complies with national industry standards (National Training Project, 2010). Training modules range from industry knowledge, safety and security procedures to on-air presentation and technical operations. All modules emphasize technical production and broadcasting content, as well as management and leadership skills. Training is aimed at improving the broadcasting quality and organizational development of the community radio sector. Indigenous

RTOs, for example Triple A Training, in Brisbane, offer similar pack-
ages with identical structures (see *www.989fm.com.au*). About one-third
of Australia's 350 community radio stations offer structured broadcasting
training (Forde et al., 2003). Some community radio stations offer radio
training to schools (ibid.) and some high schools offer radio broadcasting
as a vocational subject that contributes towards a nationally recognized
VET qualification (National Centre for Vocational Education Research,
2005). The aim of school-based radio training, however, differs from that
of training radio volunteers. Radio volunteer training emphasizes skills
acquisition so that a radio station will be managed more efficiently and
to make content sound more appealing to audiences. The curriculum is
structured to provide pathways towards employment in the media indus-
tries. School-based radio training, which is often directed at 'disengaged'
youth, acts as a vehicle to motivate students to stay at school, improve
their literacy skills and complete their secondary education (Bennett and
Edwards, 2001: 19). Research from the US indicates that media training
helps low-income or ethnic students to cope with the school system and
to develop connections with their community and society more gener-
ally (Goldfarb, 2002: 72; Chavez and Soep, 2005: 431). The interview
data presented below indicates that this broader function of radio training
is an important element of indigenous broadcasting training.

   Interviews were gathered during 2008 from six trainers and teachers
from RTOs in Brisbane, Sydney and Adelaide who use broadcasting in
their indigenous educational practices. Interview questions focused on
the preparation and content of the curriculum, as well as the outcomes
of the training. The number of participants reflects the limited size of
the indigenous radio training sector. There are six nationally accred-
ited training organizations that deliver training to community radio sta-
tions and other interested groups, and of these there are four that have
training programmes specifically designed for indigenous communities,
including Batchelor College in Darwin (Lamshed, 2010: 18). For this
study, trainers were recruited from the four largest and most diverse
organizations that operate in this sector. Five of the participants train
youth in school-based settings; the remaining participant trains trainers.
For the purpose of anonymity, the trainers have been given fictitious
names and their specific locations and organizations are not revealed.

   The national VET system requires both indigenous-owned and main-
stream RTOs to cover specific modules and areas of radio broadcasting.
The VET system is flexible enough to tailor the delivery of the training

to suit the needs of trainees; each type of RTO can take a distinct path to realize the completion of the training package. Jim, who teaches indigenous youth from remote communities at an urban high school, describes how the radio training introduces students to personally relevant issues:

> Two years ago students did a 'Tobacco in the Indigenous communities' project, a health thing. And we got them to record some community announcements about tobacco use, health and financial issues and then we recorded a CD.
>
> Training is embedded in tasks that tackle some of the political, social and cultural issues facing indigenous people. This complements the ability to produce radio content with a specific understanding of how the medium can be used as a community service: It is about doing a project that is useful for yourself and the community and learning the skills while you are doing it.

Although individuals trained in the mainstream community media sector are more likely 'to be sensitive in regard to Australia's multicultural and Indigenous population' (Forde et al., 2002: 62), this is not emphasized in the radio training programmes. Mainstream RTOs are more concerned with providing necessary vocational skills for the successful technical operation of community radio stations. Rachel, who coordinates an urban school-based radio training programme for indigenous youth, explains:

> What we teach them is more about how you do it . . . How to press the buttons and how to use the equipment rather than the content of what you are actually saying. We try to leave it up to them . . . We don't really set parameters aside from 'it has to engage with your audience, it has to uphold the discrimination law', etc.

By contrast, for indigenous-owned RTOs, their broader purpose offers an educational pathway for indigenous students that may otherwise be unavailable to them:

> We are virtually a 'black TAFE' [college of Technical and Further Education] and it's self-paced. Unlike white TAFEs . . . we are much more flexible about our teaching. For example, the expectation we have of students to come in: they can come in and assist

each other and then get up and make a cup of tea . . . It is family oriented. We will often buy lunch for the students who come for the block training, and then we'll take them out in the evening to places they like to go . . . And there is a very real need for us to be here, because too many of our people can't go to TAFE or universities. (Bob, a trainer in an indigenous-owned RTO)

For most trainers, raising levels of English literacy for individuals came up as a primary outcome of radio training and for some it was the most important outcome. To Jim, radio proved to be an appropriate medium to teach English literacy, especially for students from remote communities where English is not their first language and rarely used in everyday life. He describes how an interest in English is stimulated by the youths' interest in music:

To have some of these young ones sitting in a studio and they're playing a song and then they grab the cover of the album and read it and try to work out the words . . . It really impresses upon them how important it is to read and write. Outside of that they had no indication, no meaning to read and write. They don't get newspapers on a daily basis, they don't get mail. They don't need to know their address for anything: 'I'll just tell you that it's down there past the Mango tree' . . . So really it makes a bit of an impact on the ability to read and write.

For Steve, manager of an urban residential programme for remote indigenous youth, the interest generated in the English language was an unexpected outcome of the radio training:

What had happened is that kids listened to a lot of radio in their lives and they knew that predominantly people who spoke on the radio spoke in English. So from the very first day, they automatically just used English. We never told them to, they just did it. Some of the kids, prior to that would have had very few opportunities to use English, or would not have actively, voluntarily used English for an extensive period of time. In the classroom, when you ask kids a question often the most response you get would be 'yes,' 'no', 'don't know', 'maybe'. But these kids, right from the very beginning, started using English in a very extended way and started

using it quite naturally, and [were] very happy to do so . . . That was extraordinary. The English outcomes from an educational perspective just grew exponentially.

While previous research shows that indigenous community broadcasting has a significant cultural role in preserving native languages (Forde et al., 2001), the interviews here suggest that radio training offers a relevant and exciting platform for the acquisition and performance of English literacy skills. For indigenous youths inducted into the formal urban school system the need to use English is more widespread. In all the interviews a main outcome of radio training is its ability to engage indigenous youth with the formal education system. Steve recalls that, prior to the commencement of the programme, school attendance was low, but radio broadcasting training dramatically raised attendance levels: 'It wasn't just that secondary-aged kids started re-engaging actively in education, but it rippled right through the community because – obviously this stuff is not rocket science – it meant that the community became much more supportive of the school.' All the trainers believed improved attendance was directly related to the content of radio programmes, which make Western concepts relevant for indigenous students in remote communities. It gives purpose and meaning to an otherwise alien education system that imposes a curriculum that has little connection to the community's everyday lived experiences. Benefits are not only evident for literacy, but also for other topics in the curriculum that are embedded in radio training programmes:

> In terms of math, kids had to prepare time sheets, to outline every minute of the programme. So, for instance, Western time is not a big concept in their lives, because of the cultural programme, so what radio training did was to give relevance or background to Western concepts. And if you look at other aspects such as science, then kids learnt about nano-technology, basic electronics, etc. . . . So taking the creative approach, you can use radio as a vehicle for kids to learn all aspects of the curriculum. (Steve)

Two trainers raised the possibility of using radio training to engage not only the students, but the entire community with the formal education system. David, a trainer at an indigenous-owned and operated RTO, sees this as a desirable holistic outcome:

> One that is not just improving the educational outcomes of the
> students, but it also provides a reason for that child's parents to be
> involved in that child's education. It is unlikely that the kid will
> come back home from school and say 'hi Dad, we had great day, we
> did a math class.' It is more likely they would say 'we had a great day
> today, we went on the radio' . . . And that engages the parents and
> an element of pride . . . is engendered in the family.

The experience of indigenous radio trainers suggests a hybridity in the
construction of indigenous identity, whereby indigenous people would
feel confident enough to step outside the confines of their communi-
ties and 'live in both worlds' (Bob). In other words, community radio's
bridging function not only offers a platform to diffuse indigenous cul-
ture and values to the broader community, or to retransmit national
news and information into indigenous communities (Forde et al., 2001;
Meadows et al., 2009), but it also makes possible the transmission of
national policy, in this case education policy, to and by local communi-
ties. From this perspective, community radio functions to create a cul-
tural and social alloy where traditional content, native languages and
indigenous ways of telling stories come together with English, Western
technology and Western culture.

In addition to enhancing English-language skills, broadcasting train-
ing is also considered important in raising indigenous youths' confi-
dence and self-esteem and in preparing them for leadership roles. In all
interviews the radio training programme was identified as a means of
bringing shy students out of their shell:

> You can see the self-esteem, the self-confidence, the pride: they
> can walk around and look anybody in the eye with a microphone
> and ask questions about a particular issue. That is something they
> couldn't do at the start of the programme. So that prepares them,
> equips them with the ability to be able to sit down for a job
> interview to communicate and have a dialogue with anybody in
> authority or otherwise. (Bob)

This process, whereby youth find an outlet through which they can not
only speak up, but are able to do so in a fashion that enhances both their
cultural identity and their English literacy, is directly linked to leadership
capacity building, which informs the training philosophy adopted by the

Central Australian Aboriginal Media Association, in Alice Springs, as part of the process towards self-determination. According to Brooke, a training manager at a non-indigenous RTO that works with indigenous communities:

> There have been some amazing Indigenous people working in all those organizations but you very often see that they call for white people as well, for management . . . They are wanting to move to a situation where they have people with qualification, both as broadcasters and as trainers, so that they could be doing that, rather than calling white people to do the job.

For all trainers, students' ability to find paid employment was a direct benefit of the training. Rachel explained that accredited radio training programmes show remote indigenous youth 'that there is more out there for them than just working at McDonalds'. These options are not necessarily in broadcasting:

> We were in one of the [remote] communities about two weeks ago. We met two of our students from three years ago . . . One has got a baby, she's almost eighteen. She has a full-time job in the health care centre. Another one, same age, she's got a full-time job in the school. All these kids said that 'if it wasn't for the training where we could develop our self-confidence, our self-esteem, we would never have had a job'. (Bob)

Boughton (1998: 10) reports that many indigenous students choose education programmes that will prepare them to work with their own people in their own communities, rather than seek better-paid employment in cities and towns where they would experience geographical and cultural isolation. To Steve, the idea that students will seek jobs in Sydney or Melbourne 'is ludicrous, because they are never going to move far from their cultural connection'. Despite the promise of better-paid jobs at other locations, Bob suggests that indigenous people do not have a real option of stepping out of their communities, because outside lurks social exclusion:

> They step outside of the confines and the security of their own culture, environment, community and they are inviting in the

> racism, the probing police who are asking questions . . . So there
> is a lot of our mob that don't want anything to do with that. So
> they'd rather stay at home and talk their language in an environ-
> ment that their parents and grandparents all grew up in and they
> own it. They own it. It is their country. That is not the case if they
> come here [the city], they own nothing.

These comments illustrate that community is not constituted out of
market-based relations; where and with whom people choose to live
and their sense of belonging is not simply a function of 'rational' eco-
nomic choices. Nevertheless, there are few employment opportunities
in remote Aboriginal communities, but if indigenous people choose
vocational training to prepare them for work with their people, then
radio broadcasting is one of a limited number of feasible employment
options:

> Each community has a [RIBS] system, so employment in the radio
> and music industry is a viable option for these kids. And yes, it is
> always going to be limited, but it is a much more viable option than
> hospitality or hairdressing. You know these things are never going
> to happen. And often when people talk about VET to indigenous
> people in remote areas they promote things that are just never
> going to happen. Health is possible, education is possible, radio is
> possible, music is possible and art is possible. (Steve)

Many RIBS services, however, lack sufficient staff with the skills to effec-
tively operate the equipment (Meadows, 1992; Meadows and Molnar,
2002) and this is a direct result of lack of salaries for full-time employees:

> The biggest problem is that there is no wages to be paid for the
> [radio station] coordinator. They are on the CDEP [Community
> Development Employment Projects] scheme – work for the dole
> – but that takes care of only two days. So, with nobody being paid
> for a full-time capacity, nobody has got the responsibility and that
> really limits the opportunities in those communities. (Bob)

Recommendations to create an award wage for RIBS operators and
offer a career path for indigenous broadcasters have been made previ-
ously (Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Commission, 1999; Hartley

et al., 2000). The role of remote indigenous broadcasting in providing an essential first-level service and its role in the nation's disaster management plans (Goudie, 2009), together with the educational function discussed here, suggests that indigenous broadcasting should be understood as a service, rather than as a business, and there is a strong case to be made for RIBS to be staffed under similar schemes available to national public broadcasters (the ABC and SBS).

The contributions of broadcasting training to individual empowerment and development can all be considered as forms of cultural and social capital. These 'soft skills' (Kilpatrick, 2003: 11) illustrate the role that VET has beyond the provision of workplace education and training and its significant role in providing resources for community members to promote social cohesion and the capacity to work together. Steve explained how a training programme rippled through a remote indigenous community of around 350 people and facilitated coordination and cooperation among a range of agencies, including health services, retail, the local school and technical college:

> You'd think that everyone knows what's going on and everybody is working together and cooperatively. Often that is not the case, particularly with government agencies . . . With the radio station that we first set up, we made sure that the programme was inclusive of every agency within the community. So when we worked with the kids we sent them to TAFE so that they could see it and make a report . . . They went to the clinics and made sure that the radio programmes they put on were inclusive of every agency within the community. So it didn't belong to the school, it was a very community-based thing. That brought a whole pile of agencies together and people actually started to work together and people learnt a lot more about what other people did . . . I'm not saying that the radio was the only reason that all of these things changed, but it was a fantastic way of developing the spirit of community and providing a vehicle, a medium for all agencies in the community to cohort . . . There is no doubt that a well-run, successful, inclusive broadcasting programme run through school could have quite a large capacity for community building.

However, according to Bob, not all schools are convinced of the benefits of embedding radio training in their curriculum:

> Most of them [the schools] don't want to. We've worked with four.
> One has done it. That is also one of the challenges of dealing
> with schools and associating with their ways. That dominant, white
> patronizing manner that they have is bullshit. But if we can't get
> them [students] during school hours, we'll go and get them after
> school hours . . . We are making sure that the barriers that we're
> presented with, we'll work against them.

Bob's and Steve's comments suggest that positive training outcomes can
be limited where training takes place in a social and organizational vac-
uum and there is no commitment on the part of local agencies to coop-
erate. To Steve, the possibilities offered by radio training and community
radio's contributions to literacy and community well-being should be
given greater priority in the formal school system:

> In order for it to be successful in the long term, you need an
> organizational commitment to it . . . it needs to be systematic. In
> order for that to happen you need a system in the organization to
> understand the importance of it. But at this stage, there is very little
> understanding in the educational sector as to what radio broadcast-
> ing can do and its importance to indigenous communities.

CONCLUSION

This chapter drew attention to indigenous community radio's ability to
generate an interest among indigenous youths in Western educational
concerns. The trainers interviewed for this study identified industry-
specific vocational skills as an obvious direct result of the trainees' par-
ticipation in the training programmes. More importantly, the trainers
reported that radio training provides a unique opportunity to encour-
age disengaged youths to participate in the formal school system in
both urban and remote locations. Radio offers the vehicle through
which education becomes relevant: it gives concrete reasons for youths
to improve their use of English and complete their formal education.
Raising literacy levels in remote communities surfaced as one of the
most important contributions of the radio training programmes. These
outcomes, together with nurturing leadership and providing viable
and diverse employment pathways, offer benefits for the community as
a whole.

Kilpatrick et al. (2003: 243) assert that education has the capacity to enhance coordination amongst a community's various agencies and engenders a general feeling of self-confidence in communities. For indigenous communities, however, mainstream education can often result in the opposite. This has long been recognized by various Australian education departments and there are policies in place to encourage partnerships between schools and other organizations. Despite the limitations of this study – the limited number of interviews and the absence of the views from parents and education and training departments – the anecdotes presented here emphasize the importance of embedding education curricula and training programmes in community structures. Radio provides a unique opportunity to facilitate this process and thus contribute to a community's development and well-being. By its very nature, community radio brings together people and organizations to broadcast their news, views and interests to the wider community (van Vuuren, 2001, 2002). This study also indicated that in spite of the educational possibilities offered by community broadcasting, few schools appear to be open to the kinds of training discussed here. The trainers' comments indicated that the value of radio training is not sufficiently recognized in education policies, yet the sector has much to offer to improve indigenous well-being, and anecdotal evidence suggests that this is also the case for other disadvantaged communities (van Vuuren, 2008: 166). Further studies are required to explore and compare the alignment of community radio training with education programmes in remote, regional and urban communities and in non-indigenous as well as indigenous settings. The evidence presented here suggests that there is a case to be made for finding ways to locate community broadcasting training more centrally in school curricula around the nation, and that this benefits both individuals and communities.

CHOU Arabic Radio in Montreal: Finding Unity in Diversity

Martin LoMonaco

INTRODUCTION

CHOU is an Arabic-language radio station serving Montreal, Canada. Its philosophy of programming is a model of providing diverse programming to an audience that, when viewed from the perspective of non-Arabic speakers, appears to be monolithic. Its programming is regulated by the Canadian Government and reflects the liberal nature of Canadian society. This chapter explores the unique problems of broadcasting to ethnic and linguistic minority audiences, the unique regulations of Canadian broadcasting and a description of CHOU as a radio station uniquely positioned to seek unity in its diverse audience.

BROADCASTING TO ETHNIC AND LANGUAGE COMMUNITIES

Research has demonstrated that to the majority population in a given area, the minority populations of people who are members of 'other' racial or language groups are often reduced to stereotypes and seen in terms of broad generalizations. For example, in the mind of white, English-speaking North Americans, so-called African-Americans, or black people, are actually an amalgam of many different ethnicities and their concomitant values. To exemplify it as simply as possible: those from former British colonies in the West Indies, such as Jamaicans, are different in their attitudes from native-born Americans who traced their heritage back to plantation culture; both of these groups are different from the black people of Haiti. Put quite simply, there is diversity within this 'sub-culture'; although they share certain attributes, they are significantly different in their outlook, values and expectations.

In broadcasting, these stereotypes and generalizations are exacerbated, not only in the images of these minority populations, but also in the programming targeted towards them. This often is due to cost considerations and appeals to the lowest common denominator. The easy availability of programming from large countries often leads to a preponderance of programming from the largest sub-groups of these minorities. For example, Spanish-language programming in North America is dominated by Mexican productions; in the Arab-speaking world, Egyptian programming has a wide distribution.

Looking at these smaller groups within a larger sub-group, I adopted the use of the more politically correct term 'micro-cultures' to refer to smaller groups of people within a larger societal context. In a 1998 paper delivered to the Broadcast Education Association, I examined the Spanish-language market in American television. There, I discussed that content was dominated by Mexican programming, much to the dismay of Spanish-language speakers from Puerto Rico, Cuba, the Dominican Republic and other Spanish-speaking countries. Again, there was a great deal of diversity within what was perceived monolithically and stereotypically by the English-language, Anglo-population of North America (LoMonaco, 1998). Curiously, as early as 1985, O'Guinn, Faber and Meyer in studying Spanish-language broadcasting reported that:

> researchers have found communication and media variables . . . form a major dimension in determining an immigrant's level of acculturation . . . Additionally, level of acculturation has been found to influence consumption patterns as well as reactions to advertising appeals and product attributes. (1985: 63)

One needs to ask, therefore, if different micro-cultures have different needs in their path toward acculturation, should there not be differentiated programming to serve those needs?

This need to look at micro-cultures differentially was echoed in research by Julie Posetti of the University of Canberra. She reported that programming aimed at Muslim women on the Australian Broadcasting Corporation's public affairs programmes was rife with negative stereotypes. She suggests that journalists need to develop 'a concerted effort to go beyond stereotypical representations in the portrayal of Muslim women and to reflect the great diversity of culture, opinion

and belief that exist within Muslim communities' (Posetti, 2008: 173). Mhlanga reports that programmes from the South African Broadcasting Corporation (SABC) caused tensions to arise in relation to radio station XK FM. These tensions surrounded the SABC's refusal to accept the Khwe and the !Xû as two separate ethnic groups (Mhlanga, 2009). It is apparent that the issue of dealing with minority communities – that is, micro-cultures – is an issue worldwide.

In an earlier study, presented in 1996, I looked at the range of diversity in America's broadcast culture. I was disappointed to learn that little diversity really existed. There were select foreign-language programmes in a few large cities, and a significant amount of programming aimed at African-American and Latino audiences, but there was very little in the way of programming for other ethnic and linguistic minorities, although the nature of the American immigrant population was shifting with significant numbers of people coming from South Asia, the Balkans and Eastern Europe (LoMonaco, 1996).

It is this context that brought me to the present study. There are an increasing number of immigrants to the United States and Canada from the Middle East. There are two primary reasons for this immigration: hostilities in the region, including the Iraq war; political unrest, and a marginalization of Christians in the region caused by the growth of Islam, particularly radical Islam. These immigrants are generally referred to as Arabs, since their native language is Arabic.

When most Westerners think of Arabs, they think of Muslims, maybe terrorists, sometimes Bedouins and generally the Middle East. As Narmeen El-Farra writes in the *Journal of Media Psychology*:

> The word Arabs is used to describe an individual from the Middle East. Despite the fact that these individuals are from different countries, with diverse cultures, beliefs and a variety of religions, they are characterized by one term, 'Arabs'. The word Arabs reduces individuals and countries to a distinct target, open to stereotypes and bias.
>
>   The Western media has often projected individuals of Arab descent in a negative manner. Currently, Arabs are seen as terrorists and murderers due to how the media presents them. Newspapers use key words such as extremists, terrorists and fanatics to describe Arabs. (1996)

It is quite surprising to a majority of people that Arabs, or Arabic speakers, can be Christians and have a diversity of cultures, and that the country with the largest Muslim population is Indonesia, whose native language is not Arabic, but Indonesian, a dialect of Malay.

Canada, as a liberal society, has welcomed immigrants from the Middle East as well as the rest of the world. Canada's population at the last official census was approximately 31,240,000 (Statistics Canada, 2006a). Of these, the majority trace their ethnic origin to Canada's original settlers, people from the British Isles and France. In recent years, however, the Canadian population has grown to have residents from more than 200 ethnic groups. The 2006 census showed that eleven ethnic groups surpassed the 1 million population mark. These included, among others, Italians, Germans, Chinese, Ukrainians and Dutch. Canada counts 'visible' minorities: those persons who are non-Caucasian in race or non-white in colour. The group accounts for 16.2 per cent of the population, with south Asians (Indians, Pakistanis, etc.) as the largest visible minority group. They are followed in numbers by Chinese. Other significant visual minorities include Latin Americans (6 per cent of the visible minority population) and Arabs (5.2 per cent of the visible minority population). Of course, not all Arabic speakers are visual minorities: for example, the Lebanese are culturally diverse, yet they speak Arabic (Statistics Canada, 2008).

The welcoming attitude of Canada is not only expressed culturally, but also through its broadcasting policies. This may be due to the fact that Canada is a small country and culturally has had to face the media hegemony of the United States, its large neighbour to the south. The next section discusses the development of broadcasting policy in Canada.

BACKGROUND TO CANADIAN RADIO

Radio in Canada has had an interesting history. It has developed three parallel systems: two state-sponsored public service networks, one in English and one in French; a collection of commercial stations, and a generally non-commercial system of community radio stations. The development of these three systems, however, was not linear as in some countries. Canadians take great pride in the fact that Canadian station XWA, the Marconi station in Montreal, transmitted its first broadcast in May 1920 (Vipond, 1996: 3) pre-dating the start of broadcasting by

KDKA in Pittsburgh (US) by six months. Being next to the United States where radio developed as a commercial venture early on, and yet as a member of the British Commonwealth where the BBC provided another model, Canada was able to take a middle ground. Meanwhile, community radio developed in Quebec as a way to give voice to indigenous peoples and francophone communities.

Regulation of broadcasting began in 1905 when the power to grant licences was given to the Ministry of Marine and Fisheries. Although from a twenty-first-century perspective it may seem strange that the radio regulatory body was housed in this government agency, when one remembers that the primary, initial use of radio was for ship-to-shore and other maritime communication, that decision makes perfect sense. In 1913, the initial Wireless Act was replaced by the Radio Wireless Act, which reasserted the government's authority to regulate radio (Emery, 1969: 45).

Its proximity to the United States has always proven to be an issue for Canadian broadcasting. Because of the need for frequencies to serve its large landmass, Canada had to negotiate with the United States to assure that its population was adequately served by radio. As Mary Vipond writes in her history of early Canadian broadcasting:

> The issues were difficult because many different interests had to be satisfied, because incorrect frequency assignments could cause objectionable interference, because changing technology required constant adjustments and because frequency allocation was not only a national but an international question, involving [the radio] branch [of the Ministry of Marine and Fisheries] officials in a close but not always harmonious relationship with their counterparts in the United States. (1996: 150)

The proximity to the United States posed another problem for Canada, that of cultural sovereignty. With 90 per cent of its population living within 160 km of the American border, and with radio and television systems using the same frequencies and technical standards, Canadians have easy access to a wide variety of American broadcast programming. During the first decade of Canadian broadcasting, it was not uncommon for Canadian stations not only to broadcast American programmes, but to be actually physically connected to American radio networks (ibid.: 75–7).

It was this issue more than any other that led to the formation of the Aird Commission in 1929. Headed by Lord John Aird, head of the Canadian Bank of Commerce, the Commission was given the charge of finding a way to ensure that Canadian culture would be part of broadcasting in the country. After studying the broadcasting systems in Britain, Germany, France, Belgium, Holland, Ireland and the United States, it was determined that parliament should establish a crown corporation to provide broadcasting services to the country as well as regulate broadcasting in Canada. Created in 1932, this corporation was originally called the Canadian Radio Broadcasting Commission. In 1936, its name was changed to the Canadian Broadcasting Corporation (CBC). Initially it provided programmes on its own CBC stations as well as on commercial stations throughout the country. At this time the CBC carried commercials. The somewhat awkward situation of providing programmes as well as regulating stations it did not own was changed in 1958 when the Board of Broadcast Governors (BBG) was established to regulate broadcasting. In 1968, the BBG was renamed the Canadian Radio Television Commission (CRTC) (Emery, 1969: 47–53, 599) and in 1976 it was renamed the Canadian Radio-television and Telecommunications Commission (CRTC, 2009).

In 1985, the CRTC established its first broadcasting policy on the linguistic and cultural diversity of Canada. This policy reflected the cultural diversity of Canada and was established to encourage the development of broadcasting services to reflect this plurality. By 1988, when the Canadian House of Commons Standing Committee on Communications and Culture issued its report, *A Broadcasting Policy for Canada*, radio broadcasting was composed of four sectors: the national CBC networks (in both English and French); provincial CBC radio services; private, commercial radio stations, and community radio stations. This report addressed the services to cultural minorities. The parliamentary committee recognized that these stations served the dual purpose of teaching new immigrants about Canada and providing 'second-generation' members of ethnic groups the venue to preserve their language and culture. In addition, the committee recognized that these stations had the potential 'to link ethno-cultural communities across Canada and encourage cultural exchange' (House of Commons, 1988: 302).

As discussed above, a challenge for Canadian broadcasters had been to overcome the imbalance that this small (population-wise) country

faces in light of the media hegemony of its larger neighbour, the United States. To address this, Canada had developed strict Canadian content rules in 1970. A problem for ethnic broadcasters, however, was the lack of third-language, Canadian content. The CRTC, after a series of hearings across the country, agreed that this regulation be amended for ethnic radio stations (CRTC, 1985a, 1985b).

Canada adopted a new Broadcasting Act in 1991. The new act explicitly states that the 'Canadian broadcasting system should reflect the . . . multicultural and multiracial nature of Canadian Society'. As a result of this law, the ethnic programming rules were amended again in 1999. The CRTC designed the ethnic programming policies 'to increase the flexibility for ethnic stations, to reduce regulation . . . and to respond to the evolution within ethnic groups and in Canadian society at large'. In addition, the policy encouraged broadcasting services (radio, television and cable) in areas that did not have ethnic stations to distribute distant ethnic audio to ethnic groups in their service areas (CRTC, 1999). This could be accomplished by taking feeds from out-of-market stations, networks or via satellite.

Frequency Modulation (FM) provided an additional means of communication. The bandwidth of an FM signal allows for an additional audio signal to be carried on the sideband. This sideband signal, referred to as SMCO in Canada, developed alongside FM, and in densely populated metropolitan areas, where there was a paucity of available frequencies for new radio stations, it was 'used to deliver background music to stores, *minority-language programming*, readings for the blind, Teletext, and other services' (House of Commons, 1988: 236; author's emphasis).

By 1983, due to the growing interest in SCMO services, the CTRC invited public comments on the use of SMCO (and the analogous television service use of the Vertical Blanking Interval). The commission's report, issued in 1984 as a result of its inquiry and public hearings, concluded that it would adopt a two-phase regulatory approach. In phase one, it would not issue separate licences for broadcasters on the subcarrier; however, those providing the programming would have to submit an application to the CRTC for approval prior to their use. In addition, at that time there were no limits imposed on the types of services that would be provided. Support for the SCMO services could come from advertising or subscription fees, and stations were required to keep separate accounting records for the SCMO operations.

The commission further required all SCMO broadcasters to file reports by 31 December 1986 describing their experience and assessing their progress in fulfilling the CRTC's objectives (CRTC, 1984).

As a result of the input it received, the CRTC issued another public notice in 1988. Between 1984 and 1988 the role of the CRTC had been changed following the passage of new regulations. As a consequence of the new rules, CRTC began to place more emphasis on its role as supervisor of the broadcasting system. Consequently, the CRTC decided that it would lessen its regulatory role towards SCMO. As such, it determined that it should not limit the types of SCMO services. It reiterated that funding could come from advertising or subscriptions and that separate financial records should be kept. The commission emphasized that if a station utilized its sub-carrier for a SCMO service, it should not interfere either technically or financially with its primary programming on the main carrier. The new regulations also required that ethnic stations 'serve a range of ethnic groups in a variety of languages' (CRTC, 1988). This requirement recognized the limited availability of frequencies in Canada's metropolitan areas; however, some constituents argued that in metropolitan areas with large single-language ethnic communities, stations be allowed to broadcast in one language so that programming resources could be developed using that economy of scale, and that the stations could be wholly integrated into the community. While recognizing that point, the CRTC maintained that its objective would be the provision of service to smaller as well as larger communities, while striking the balance between service to a number of ethnic groups and development of high-quality programming to the groups that are served (ibid.).

It can be said, then, that Canada has a well-developed set of policies to serve both communities of interest as well as ethnic communities. To summarize the environment for radio serving communities in Canada:

- stations can be commercial or non-commercial;
- stations can broadcast on a main carrier, or in the case of FM on a sub-carrier;
- stations can be AM-FM combinations;
- Canada broadcast regulations have an open and welcoming policy toward cultural and linguistic minorities.

It is into this environment that CHOU entered in 1996.

CHOU HISTORY

With a growing number of native speakers of Arabic emigrating to the United States and Canada, I was curious to learn how they consumed the media. Through my involvement with a church that served the Arabic-speaking Christian community in metropolitan Philadelphia, I learned that many watch Arabic-language TV via satellite, and that there are some Arabic-language newspapers. A search of the internet showed that across North America, there are a few Arabic-language radio programmes, but there are only a few full-time Arabic-language radio stations; these are mostly internet-based. One exception is CHOU, a phonetic spelling of the Arabic word for 'what', an AM station broadcasting to metropolitan Montreal.

CHOU was started by Antoine (Tony) Karam, an immigrant to Canada from Lebanon. Of all Arabic-language countries, Lebanon leads in the number of emigrants who have settled in Canada, and a significant number of these emigrants settled in metropolitan Montreal. (If one counts all Middle Eastern countries, Lebanon is in third place behind Pakistan and Iran; Statistics Canada, 2006a). There are some important reasons for this. The area we now call Lebanon was part of Syria. It was turned over to the French Mandate established by the League of Nations after the First World War and the break-up of the Ottoman Empire (Hourani, 1991: 315–21). Schoolchildren were taught French, along with Arabic. Since Britain was given control of nearby Iraq and Palestine, English was also taught. This continued after the establishment of a Lebanese state in 1943. Most Lebanese are educated in three languages, with French being the preferred second language after their native Arabic. Thus, it is understandable that immigrants would resettle in another francophone area. Immigrants from other French colonies and protectorates in the Middle East and northern Africa – notably Algeria and Morocco – also settled in Quebec. Lebanon saw a major exodus of population during its civil war, which lasted from 1975 to 1990 and claimed approximately 200,000 lives (Tristam, 2010).

Karam immigrated to Montreal in 1988. He told me:

> Since the first week [in Montreal] I was astonished at the [large] demographic of people who spoke Arabic living in Montreal and disappointed that these people were not served by the vast majority of media. I came from a background in radio and founded two

radio stations in Lebanon. I decided to work to realize a dream that was mine at the beginning, but later it turned out to be a dream I shared with hundreds of thousands of people in my community. (2010)

Since there were no available frequencies in the Montreal metropolitan area, the new station Radio Moyen-Orient du Canada was granted a licence to broadcast on an FM sub-carrier of CISM-FM, the student-run station of the University of Montreal (89.3 MHz) in December 1996. In 2000, the station began streaming on the internet. Earlier, on 19 January 1996, CHEF, an AM station in Granby, about 60 km east of Montreal, ceased operations due to financial problems. The CRTC formally revoked its licence on 28 February. Radio Moyen-Orient eventually applied to use the vacated frequency, albeit with less power. The CRTC approved the application on 15 March 2006. CHOU began testing its transmitter located in the St Laurent neighbourhood off Autoroute 13, near the corner of Pitfield and Bois Franc (Hauser, 2007).

Formal broadcasting began on 18 January 2007 (Dulmage, 2008). In 2008, the CRTC granted permission for the station to increase its power from 1,000 watts to 2,000 watts so that reception would be improved in downtown Montreal and the South Shore suburbs (CRTC, 2008).

PROGRAMMING

Considering the fractious nature of relations between various groups in the Middle East (Sunnis vs. Shiites, Muslim vs. Christians, etc.), one would expect that finding a balance in programming for a Middle Eastern audience would be difficult. CHOU avoids this difficulty by avoiding political programming. According to Tony Karam: 'Since the first day we have adopted a neutral policy, avoiding issues that cause tension, be it political or religious and insisted on a programme that offers support to our audience to help them better settle into their new country.' He continued, 'however, we have always adopted a pluralistic line using the values of democracy and giving voice to all ideas in a framework of respect for different ideas'. He contrasted this approach with that of the media in many of the countries of origin of his listeners which are partisan and do not offer diversity of ideas (2010).

This philosophy was re-emphasized and expanded upon by programme host Samia Aouad who told me that her programme deals with

issues that immigrants face in their new country as well as family issues. She said, for example, that the issues facing a woman who is getting a divorce are the same whether she is a Christian or a Muslim, whether she is from Morocco or Syria (Aouad, 2010).

This philosophy has led CHOU to develop a dynamic programming philosophy. The programming over the years has changed with the needs of the audience as well as the advertisers, most of whom are listeners to the station. It was described by Karam as 'lively and interactive' (2010). A look at the programming schedule on CHOU's website shows that most programmes offer the opportunity for listeners to call in. The programmes range from current affairs to amusements like birthdays and horoscopes, to cooking shows and music. Canadian stations, whether ethnic or not, must adhere to the CRTC's Canadian content regulations. Specifically, the commission maintains the following Canadian content requirements for ethnic radio stations:

- At least 7 per cent of musical selections aired each broadcast week during ethnic programming periods must be Canadian.
- At least 35 per cent of musical selections from category 2 (general music) and at least 10 per cent of musical selections from category 3 (traditional and special interest music) aired each broadcast week during non-ethnic programming periods must be Canadian. Such selections must be scheduled in a reasonable manner throughout the broadcast day. (CRTC, 1999)

In a discussion with two DJs at the station, Elais Fattal and Marc Samia, both fully supported the Canadian content regulations. They said that the inclusion of Canadian artists strengthened the programming of the station and made it more accessible to its audience (2010). Another way in which the station is made more accessible is its use of the various dialects of Arabic. Since Arabic is spoken across a wide geographic area, it should come as no surprise that dialects developed. There are four main dialects of Arabic: Lebanese, Syrian, Egyptian and Maghrebi (spoken in Tunisia, Algeria and Morocco). CHOU presents programmes in each of these dialects and presents popular music from each of these diverse areas (Wikimedia Foundation, 2010).

One might be surprised by the fact that on an Arabic-language radio station there is a programme in Armenian. A small historical/cultural note may be necessary here. Tradition says that Christianity

came to Armenia in the first century CE. In 301 CE, Armenia was the first country to adopt Christianity as its official religion. In the early part of the twentieth century, when Armenians faced persecution in their homeland at the hands of the Ottoman Turks, many emigrated to Lebanon, where Christianity was tolerated (Cross and Livingstone, 1983). Today Armenians are a vibrant minority in Lebanon where they continue to speak Armenian and have cultural and religious centres. The Armenians in Lebanon feel that they built the country. One elderly woman was quoted by the BBC:

> 'There was nothing but desert here. We lived in tents as we built our own village,' she says. Her wrinkled face lights up with pride as she adds that 70 years on, she still does not speak a word of Arabic.
> 'What do I need Arabic for?' she smirks dismissively. 'If they want to talk to me, they should learn Armenian.' (Antelava, 2009)

Armenian, then, is an important part of the programming on this Arabic-language station founded by a Lebanese.

CHOU'S AUDIENCE

The audience for CHOU is purportedly vast. In metropolitan Montreal, there are 400,000 citizens from the Middle East and northern Africa as well as Armenia (Karam, 2010). This number may be accurate, although it seems inflated. Statistics Canada reports that there are only about 100,000 residents in metropolitan Montreal who have Arabic as their mother tongue. The number of native speakers of Armenian is negligible, at about 14,000, although other sources place the number closer to 50,000. It does not reflect the ratings the station gets in this metropolitan area of 3,426,000. CHOU does not show any significant audience in available data from BBM, the Canadian ratings service (BBM Canada, 2010).

CHOU'S FUTURE

When asked what the future holds for CHOU, Karam told me that the station is planning an expansion. He wishes to expand into other Canadian metropolitan areas and possibly into the United States. This is notable for a station that started, literally, in Karam's garage and continues to broadcast from the basement of his home in Montreal.

CONCLUSIONS

There are some lessons that can be learned from studying CHOU: first, one should realize that just because a station broadcasts in Arabic, it need not have an agenda that is radical or even Muslim. Arabic is a language of a wide variety of people. Secondly, CHOU provides an interesting example of how an ethnic radio station can have an agenda that does not separate its audience from the country in which it is located, but actually serves to acculturate new residents to their adopted culture. This had been a role of ethnic media in the United States for many years; however, since the trend of celebrating diversity was instituted in the 1970s, there has been a movement in the United States to programme stations in a way that reinforces differences, rather than bringing people together. It is possible that the Canadian cultural milieu is significantly different and engenders an approach that is not possible in the United States. Thirdly, within a single station, through a programming philosophy of inclusion and commonality, unity can be created out of diversity.

Regional Radio and Community: John Lair and the *Renfro Valley Barn Dance*

Jacob J. Podber

INTRODUCTION

This article examines how radio personality John Lair attracted and maintained a listening audience interested in southern, country, barn dance and 'hillbilly' music. By examining the correspondences between Lair and his audiences, I found that a community of radio listeners was formed from many different regions of the country. Many were southerners, although some had migrated north or west. Other fans simply loved country music. Lair's talent was his ability to create a listening environment on his programmes that took his audiences 'back home'. Sometimes this was done simply with his voice, stories and 'down home' charm, but mostly it was accomplished with the southern music that Lair collected from and shared with his audiences. By examining the 'listener mail' in the John Lair Papers at Berea College Appalachian Music Archives, I have uncovered listeners' thoughts regarding the programming on *Renfro Valley Barn Dance* and the *Renfro Valley Gatherin'* and how early radio audiences chose their programmes and the impact the medium had on their lives.

RADIO, APPALACHIA AND THE SOUTH

For the past several years I have travelled around Appalachia and the south conducting research on how radio's arrival affected this region of the country. From its inception, radio appeared to reaffirm a sense of belonging to a national community for the residents of this area. As Michele Hilmes (1997: 1) observes, 'radio seemed in its early days

to lend itself to association with ideas of nation, of national identity, to the heart and mind of America'. With its arrival, especially in the 1930s with high-powered clear channel radio stations that broadcast from the 'big city', listeners in the most isolated regions of the country felt, as Susan Smulyan (1994) observed, a feeling of connectedness with the rest of the world. By listening to newscasts on the radio, they learned how others coped with the Great Depression, and they shared the pain, losses and victories of the Second World War with other listeners around the country. Daily soap operas allowed radio listeners to learn 'of critical values, of themselves, and of their fellow citizens. The premise of all soaps was the commonness of the American experience' (MacDonald, 1979: 239). However, the one genre that almost every participant I interviewed mentioned listening to was the variety show, featuring country, traditional, 'hillbilly' and gospel music, which was among the most popular regularly scheduled programmes on early radio.

The strong identification with these radio programmes was so very important to the many southern Appalachian residents who shared their stories with me. Most recalled listening to national shows such as *Grand Ole Opry*, but many I spoke to also listened to regional shows like *Wheeling Jamboree*, *Renfro Valley Barn Dance* and the *Renfro Valley Gatherin'*. While conducting research for this article at Berea College Appalachian Music Archives, I became interested in examining the John Lair Papers, specifically the 'listener mail', since I have always thought it extremely important to include the voices of 'regular' listeners when researching radio. Listeners' thoughts regarding the programming on *Renfro Valley Barn Dance* and the *Renfro Valley Gatherin'* help elaborate the human diary that I have been working on by illuminating how early radio audiences chose their programmes and the impact the medium had on their lives. These letters also revealed how important radio personalities like John Lair were to attracting and maintaining a listening audience interested in southern, country, barn dance and 'hillbilly' music. These correspondences between Lair and his audience created a community of radio listeners from many regions of the country, many of whom had left the south but were attracted to Lair's country-boy radio persona. Unlike many other early radio programmes that connected the listener to the nation in its broadest sense, John Lair and the *Renfro Valley Barn Dance* transported them 'back home'.

THE JOHN LAIR PAPERS

John Lair's aptitude for early radio programming can be contrasted with the approach taken by others involved in this nascent medium. One of the first documents I examined in the Berea Archives was a file concerning the University of Kentucky-WHAS Louisville 'Radio Listening Centers'. The University of Kentucky, in association with WHAS radio in Louisville, set up radio listening posts for the people of the mountains of Kentucky. The plan was inaugurated during the first six months of 1933, and radio listening centres were established around the region. The university supplied the centres with radio sets and instructed the operators of the centres to tune daily to educational programmes. Community members were encouraged to come to the centres and listen on a daily basis. These listening stations were placed in farm homes in the community, in post offices, country stores and the like. Some of the titles of the programmes were *Engineering on the Farm*, *History of Public Education in Kentucky*, *Poultry Talks*, *What Farm Folks are Asking?*, *Living Kentucky Writers* and *Tips from the Cow Tester* (Radio Programs, 1933: 1). In addition there were classical music programmes. These listening centres were especially important when radio first came to rural areas, since many of the residents of the region were often too poor to buy radio sets. As one person I interviewed said:

> You know times was hard. Everybody worked hard at that time. I don't remember anybody back then who had a radio where we lived. I enjoyed it, yes I would have liked to have a radio, it's just we couldn't get it. Mom and Dad was lucky to have stuff on the table, there were nine children. (Reinhart, 2001)

Having listening centres was a great boon to the residents of the area. However, those running these listening centres were instructed to make sure the radios were tuned to educational programming – which apparently created some tension. In 1936, Elmer G. Sulzer, director of radio for the University of Kentucky, sent a letter to Frank McVey, president of the University of Kentucky:

> Our experience as regards fan mail is common with that of commercial stations – that is, the fan mail does not represent in any sense the true criterion as to the worth of a program. For example,

we could broadcast the worst sort of hill billy orchestra and imme-
diately be overwhelmed with requests for tunes to be played. A
symphony orchestra brings forth little fan mail and yet we believe
we can determine this as a superior broadcast. The same thing is
true of educational speech programs, and the fact that a certain
program brings in a lot of fan mail is little indication of its suc-
cess. Therefore, we must in the last analysis use our own judgment,
keeping one ear to the ground, so to speak, and keeping alert for
criticism, suggestions and improvements from responsible sources.
(Letter to Frank McVey, 4 February 1936)[1]

Rating polls also showed that audiences preferred popular music to edu-
cational programming. In a letter to Mr Sulzer, Robert Kennet, pro-
gramme manager of WHAS, Louisville, addressed the results of a Gallup
poll conducted in what he called the 'bluegrass area comprising twelve
counties including the city of Lexington' along with small towns and
farms. He states that the university's Thursday night programme begin-
ning at 9 p.m. entitled *Capsules of Knowledge* received an 8 per cent
rating. The preceding popular music programme, starting at 8 p.m. on
Thursdays, however, 'commanded 80 per cent of the audience' (letter to
Elmer Sulzer, 23 January 1940).[2] John Lair's brilliance lay in his under-
standing of these listener dynamics. From what I uncovered, he read
much of his fan mail and seemed to know what he was doing with his
'hillbilly' orchestras. By examining the columns he wrote in magazines
such as *Stand By! Magazine*,[3] the scripts from his shows and mainly the
fan mail he received, along with his responses, what I found was a mul-
tifaceted, enigmatic good ol' country boy, savvy businessman, hawker,
salesman, marketer, PR promoter and performer.

    John Lair was born in Rockcastle County, where the Renfro Valley
music complex is now located. His defining show, *The Renfro Valley Barn
Dance*, premiered on 9 October 1937, but was originally staged at a
Cincinnati music hall and broadcast over WLW (Daniel, 1999: xii). Lair
finished building the Renfro Valley Music Center in 1939 and it became
known as 'the valley where time stands still'. On 4 November 1939,
radio listeners who were tuned to Cincinnati's clear channel superstation
WLW heard the radio announcer say, 'Friends, the long-awaited
moment has arrived and we are now about to take you down to Renfro
Valley' ('Musical heritage of Renfro Valley', 1990: xiii). Following the
theme song, John Lair took over the microphone, greeting listeners

with 'Howdy, folks! Welcome to *Renfro Valley Barn Dance*, coming to you direct from a big barn in Renfro Valley Kentucky – the first and only barn dance on the air presented by the actual residents of an actual community' (Daniel, 1990: xiii).

Lair was able to keep his finger on the pulse of his audience due to his career-long dialogue with his listeners. Along with being a radio personality, avid traditional music collector and businessman, Lair was also the author of numerous songs. One of his most noteworthy was 'Take me back to Renfro Valley', often performed on the *Renfro Valley Barn Dance* by Red Foley, who Lair was instrumental in helping become a radio star.[4] Many of the letters addressed to Lair requested that Foley sing other songs on the air. One listener from Michigan wrote, 'Dear Mr. Lair, Am enclosing a copy of the song "Jerry, the Miller," and hope it will be possible for Red Foley to sing it some time' (letter to John Lair, 9 March 1936).[5] This is but one example of the interactivity between listener and medium that one thinks of with phone-in radio programmes of today. Another means of communication between Lair and his audience was Lair's ongoing music collecting. In addition to writing songs, Lair collected folk songs, sheet music and old songbooks, which were sources of long-forgotten compositions that found new life on his programmes. His sources for music derived from when he was a producer at WLS and would ask people to send in their favourite old songs and poems (Daniel, 1999: xiv). Lair would also request old music in his 'Notes from the music library' column in *Stand By! Magazine* distributed by WLS. As a result, Lair's readers and listeners were quite generous in their response and sent in volumes of old songs. Listeners would also send in songs or poems written by themselves or the lyrics to songs they remembered hearing as children. Others, if unable to find published sheet music of the songs in question, would send Lair hand-written lyrics and request that one of their favourite performers sing the song on the air. For example, one listener wrote, 'Dear Sir: As you stated in *Stand By! Magazine* some time ago that anyone could submit songs to your department, I am sending in a couple of songs composed by my husband in hopes that some of the WLS entertainers can make use of them on some future program' (letter to John Lair, 12 January 1936). Many of the titles of songs that listeners sent in dealt with miners, millers, mothers and, of course, the south: 'Louisiana Lou, Louise', 'Legend of the Dogwood' and 'I am longing for my old home on the old Virginia shore', to name a few. But there were also songs from other parts of the

listening area – for example, 'Dreamy Minnesota Moon' – that reflected Appalachian migrants in the WLS listening footprint. Other titles, many of which were emotionally fraught and demonstrate the personal character of the correspondences with Lair, include: 'The dying miner', 'The prison evangelist' and 'Five years in prison'. And, of course, there were love songs: 'Oh won't you be mine', 'Be my Valentine', 'I'll go on loving you', 'Mother's boy', 'A mother's beauty will never fade' and 'Mother dear (I love you)'.

Other radio listeners would write to Lair to express their fondness of the southern music that he played, much of which took them back to the mountains of Kentucky:

> Dear Mr. Laird [*sic*]: My folks were born and raised in Ashland, Kentucky, and so I have grown up with the Kentucky lore and songs, even though I am not a Kentuckian . . . you don't know how many times I have heard a song on your program that mama had sung to us as children in 1920 and 1930 (especially 'Poor Babes in the Woods'). I used to cry when we heard that one! I visited the cousins for the summer every year, and manys [*sic*] the time we walked through the mountains around Cattlesburg and heard mothers lullaby-in' the kiddies to sleep as they rocked on their front porches. Some of these songs had never left those spots, until you started your program.
>
> Keep up your program . . . let's hope this new 'music' we're being assaulted with will die a natural death. (Letter to John Lair, undated)

Dorothy Cole, who was also from a southern Appalachian migrant family, expressed similar feeling about the music Lair played on his programme: 'The old time music and songs are the only ones for me. Every morning when Mr. John Lair talks about "back home" we all in memories see old Kentucky as we have folks there and make visits frequently' (letter to John Lair, 17 October 1932).

Southern migrants from as far away as Colorado would write to Lair stating that nothing under their control could keep them from listening to their favourite country music programme. Jack Lunsford, from Sedgwick, Colorado, wrote:

> Dear John, Much water has passed under the bridge since I had the privilege of conversing with you back in Rockcastle. Perhaps

you will not even remember me, however, I have kept in touch with you for the past few years through your weekly broadcasts . . . Static is the only power that is able to cause a broken date with that program and our radio is pretty faithful. Each Saturday night as I hear your theme song, I am carried back to the days when I taught in Rockcastle . . . We are planning a little visit back to the sticks this year and how eagerly I look forward to the pleasure . . . Your friend, J.F. (Jack) Lunsford.

Next to his typewritten name is a hand-written note: 'My wife says she never knew a Kentuckian that wasn't proud of his state – I'm no exception' (letter to John Lair, 5 May 1934).

Personal letters such as this speak to the complexity listeners imposed on their relationship with John Lair. Lunsford stresses that he has kept in touch with Lair through his weekly broadcasts, and reinforces his argument with the fact that he has worked hard to keep the relationship going. Only a force of nature or technological disturbances (i.e. static) could keep them apart. Living more than 1,000 miles from his old Kentucky home, Lunsford remains faithful to his dates with Lair. Although Lunsford admits to the likelihood that Lair will not remember him, he signs his letter, 'Your friend'. Thus Lunsford tries to connect with Lair, his fellow Kentuckian. As with other letters to Lair, Lunsford writes about how the music from his southern home carries him back to the good ol' days, which may have precipitated a trip back to 'the sticks'. The use of the term 'the sticks' is at once self-deprecating, since 'the sticks' is where Lunsford was from originally, but at the same time this phrase suggests an air of superiority, having escaped the region. The hand-written note next to his signature, however, reaffirms his southern pride. This is especially poignant given how these interchanges occurred decades before the global reach of streaming internet radio allowed homesick listeners to stay connected with their favourite radio programme.

Some displaced southerners not only missed the music of the south but also the stories and accents, as this listener from Wisconsin wrote: 'Dear Mr. Lair, I really hope you get to read this letter yourself. I feel so well acquainted with you . . . Your voice is wonderful; to hear you talk and tell about the hill country is just as good as any song on earth' (letter to John Lair, 25 February 1936). This identification with the country boy, even if only through his voice, is demonstrated by other letters from southerners living up north:

> Dear Sir: I have been listening to your *Barn Dance* for many years
> and my favorite is John Laihr [*sic*] and his entertainers. Laihr [*sic*]
> is a native of Kentucky and has all the rural mannerism of the old
> time Kentucky and Tennessee Mountaineer and knows so well
> how to portray the home life of those people. Every time his gang
> is on the air I know I am going to have at least one song I had not
> heard since leaving East Tennessee thirty-five years ago. The plays
> they put on are fine too of course. [E]veryone enjoys them but they
> make a Southerner want to go back again. Yours truly, M. Mann.
> Chicago, IL. (Letter to John Lair, 29 July 1935)

Regardless of in what area of the broadcast footprint Lair's listeners
were, he remained the source of music from people's memories.

This personal level of contact with his listeners through music
flowed over into other aspects of communication about people's lives
and experiences. For instance, listeners would send in death notices
from newspapers about loved ones, hoping that their passing would be
announced on the radio. Sometimes the radio personalities would send
back condolence letters to those who sent notices. Lair even felt com-
fortable enough to speak about the passing of his father on the radio
and share his grief with his radio family. In return, many of his listeners
responded by sending him letters of condolence. One was addressed
'Dear Mr. Lair' and signed 'from me and two of your unknown radio
friends' (letter to John Lair, 4 May 1931). Another listener wrote to Lair
saying that she had skipped her evening walk or boat ride to take time
to write a letter of sympathy. She even felt compelled to apologize for
having 'put it off' because of her busy schedule, as one would apolo-
gize to a good friend or family member. The letter was signed 'a radio
friend' (letter to John Lair, 8 May 1931). It is noteworthy that some
personal notes of sympathy were sent anonymously, from 'unknown
radio friends' in the vast ether network that pre-dates internet virtual
communities such as Facebook, Myspace and Twitter. These listeners
acknowledged both their personal relation with Lair and the anonymity
of older mass media, in contrast to modern communication technolo-
gies focused on individual identities. Still, other correspondents sought
to close the gap by sharing the details of their lives, almost as is the case
on Facebook. For instance, Mrs D. E. Shaw of New Mexico simply
writes about her adopted state, its foods, culture and people, after the
requisite compliments on the wholesomeness of the *Barn Dance* shows

and her old Kentucky home, which she left decades earlier (letter to John Lair, 3 March 1941).

Lair not only responded to listeners' mail within the content of his radio shows, he also wrote personal responses to many letter-writers. Specifically, letters in the archive from listeners dated from late 1940 usually had responses from Lair attached to the original correspondence. These were not form letters, as each one addressed the letters sent to him. For example, Mrs Ida C. Berkley wrote to Lair, stating, 'I am writing you in regard to some old song books I have. When you were on the WLS staff I heard you say one day that you would pay a good price for old song books, such as may be found in old organs, etc. I have on hand two music and song books in good condition' (letter to John Lair, 17 January 1941). She lists the titles and asks that he contact her if interested. Lair replied several days later stating that he could not use them as he already had the music in one form or another. He thanked her for remembering him. This response is especially impressive in that it had been years since Lair was on WLS, yet his loyal listeners followed him from his early years in Chicago to Renfro Valley, Kentucky.

Lair created a reciprocal relationship between himself and his listeners and there appeared to be an amalgamation of idealism and promotionalism that made up his personality: the country boy longing for the good old days and the businessman – almost snake oil salesman – asking people to send in their songs and poems and sometimes offering to pay a small fee for material. These requests created a flood of mail to Lair and a huge following. Lair got what he wanted: original southern, country and old traditional music that he added to his vast collection, and a loyal, personal listenership. For their part the listeners were able to communicate with Lair and establish a virtual friendship (via old-fashioned mail). They also received pictures of their favourite performers when they ordered the *Renfro Valley Keepsake Pamphlet*, which Lair hawked on the radio and at the *Renfro Valley Barn Dance*. On occasion, listeners would receive a few dollars from the sale of their music collectables or prize money for their poems.

Lair often encouraged listeners and correspondents to physically bridge the gap created by radio by inviting them to Renfro Valley. In the process, he brought paying listeners to the barn dance as well. For example, Lair replied to one letter that simply praised him but requested no reply. Perhaps Lair noticed the return address was from Monticello, Kentucky, about fifty-six miles from Renfro Valley. In his reply Lair

thanked Mrs John Tate for her kind letter and ended with: 'Since Monticello is such a short distance from Renfro Valley, we hope to have you with us on some broadcast in the near future' (letter to listener, 17 March 1941). Such a letter would almost obligate the writer to make the trip, perhaps in hopes of meeting her new friend, John Lair. Another listener wrote asking to purchase a piece of saltpetre from Lair who had mentioned the saltpetre mines in Rockcastle County. Lair wrote back offering to send her a piece at no charge 'providing you will pay the postage at that end'. Always the consummate promoter, Lair encouraged the listener to visit Renfro Valley so 'you can go in [the mine] and prowl around to your heart's content' (letter to listener, 10 April 1941).

However, some listeners wanted more than friendship out of their relationship with Lair. He constantly received letters from people asking for auditions or informing him of some undiscovered talent in the neighbourhood. Usually, Lair would respond with a letter saying he would be glad to listen to the performers but would 'not be in a position just now to add anybody else to our staff'. Although quite clear that there were no positions available, he was often encouraging, with phrases such as 'maybe we can get together some time in the future' (letter to listener, 12 March 1941). One listener, asking for a job, suggested the following as an enticement to being hired. Attached to the letter was a picture of his horse. 'Dear Mr. Lair, I will make you an offer. If you will give me a position as a musician on your show the horse is at your service at no extra charge. Only furnish my gasoline for pickup truck when using the horse any place other than the Valley. He would really add to your off the air shows' (letter to John Lair, 17 March 1941). The writer was referring to the travelling shows that Lair would sponsor during the summer months. Although an enticing offer, Lair returned the photo of the writer's horse saying his cast was full.

A complex radio pioneer, John Lair made invaluable contributions to southern and country music, and barn dance radio programming. His fans saw him as a friend, but he also acted as a patron to his radio community. On the one hand, he provided an outlet for the voices of his listeners through the inclusion of their contributions. On the other, he benefited greatly from the lyrics and music that he received from them. His historical identity is formed via his radio personality, his articles in magazines like *Stand By! Magazine* and his appearances on the *Renfro Valley Barn Dance*, all of which contributed to the interactive community he constructed with his audience. Regardless of whether his

listeners were living in the south, had migrated north or west, or simply loved country music, Lair created a listening environment on his programmes that took his audiences 'back home'. Sometimes this was done simply with his voice, stories and his 'down home' charm, but mostly it was with the southern music that Lair collected from and shared with his audiences.

Notes

1. WHAS Listening Centers Correspondences, Berea College Archives, Berea College, Berea, KY.
2. Ibid.
3. *Stand By! Magazine* is similar to viewer guides of today that list weekly broadcast schedules.
4. 'Take me back to Renfro Valley', performed by Red Foley on the *Renfro Valley Barn Dance* originating from Renfro Valley, Kentucky over Cincinnati Radio Station WLW, 18 November 1939 (*http://cdm272901.cdmhost.com/cdm/singleitem/collection/p15131coll4/id/2280/rec/1* (accessed 29 March 2012)).
5. John Lair Papers, 1931–41, listener mail. Appalachian Sound Archives, Berea College, Berea, KY. All subsequent letters quoted in this article are from this source.

Community Radio for the Czech Republic – Who Cares?

Henry G. Loeser

INTRODUCTION

If you ask ten people on the street in Brno, Czech Republic about community radio, how would they respond? If you repeated the action in Lyon, France you would likely get a completely different response. Czech society has little experience with the concept of community broadcast media – there is not a single community terrestrial radio in the entire country. France, however, has a rich history of a vibrant community radio sector, with numerous community radios in Lyon, and more than 600 nationwide. Alongside the first (public service) and second (commercial) sectors of the Czech broadcast media landscape, the third sector of community broadcast media has yet to develop. Hopeful community media organizations may seek to build studios and train volunteers, but the civil society environment in which they hope to operate must also be viable for them to develop and flourish. Recognition of community radio as a legitimate component of a pluralistic society is a necessary first step in its development, and recognition by political decision makers of the community media concept is an important precursor to the establishment of the sector. Legalization, licensing and access to legal terrestrial broadcasting for community radio are the natural next steps in the process of development. But, as in many journeys, the first step is often the most difficult. The Czech Republic has yet to take that first step as there appears to be a distinct lack of recognition of the concept of community media among not only political elites, but also organized interests in civil society and throughout society in general.

At present, there seems to be little or no awareness of the concept of community radio or the social benefits it might achieve. A cultural Czech reluctance towards involvement in public spheres and a general scepticism of the possibility of true success in voluntary initiatives

makes the landscape in which a community radio sector might emerge look somewhat inhospitable. Indeed, a lack of social and political capital among Czech citizens and organized interests may be the single greatest impediment to the development of community radio in the Czech Republic. Nevertheless, community radio is a fast-growing segment of traditional terrestrial media worldwide, with new licences and broadcasting stations commencing every year across the European continent as well as the world. L'Association Mondiale des Radiodiffuseurs Communautaires (AMARC) is a trade association of community radios worldwide that now lists more than 3,000 members from 110 countries (AMARC, 2011). Will the Czech Republic continue to be a bipolar public service/commercial radio landscape, or will it join the worldwide trend of implementing the triad system of public service/commercial/community radio and embrace the community radio paradigm with its focus on access, participation, locality and social gain? Does anybody in the Czech Republic really care?

BACKGROUND

If historian Edmund Burke in the nineteenth century saw the press as the 'Fourth Estate' (Cobban and Smith, 1967), then commercial media, and commercial radio as a component, were to be the broadcasting Fourth Estate of a new Czech democracy in the late twentieth century. After the fall of Communism in 1989, the new politicians, regulators and licence applicants were enthusiastic in their embrace of Western commercial radio models. Advised and consulted by numerous foreign political and media experts in the formative stages of the new democratic political system, the initial Czech model in the early 1990s was built to resemble a combination of the liberal American paradigm and the Western European paradigm. The model features a strong commercial radio sector financed through advertising revenue, balanced by a universal public service broadcaster supported mostly by government funding. Since those political changes and the implementation of democratic rule, the public service broadcaster Cesky Rozhlas has evolved from a state-controlled mouthpiece of the Communist regime into a legitimate European-style public service broadcaster providing nationwide programming of news, information and entertainment. The private commercial radio operators also emerged in the same time-frame, ostensibly as the independent media component in a developing open

and civil society. This model, with modifications along the way, is generally still in place today.

Access to the important and powerful radio spectrum is a basic tenet of a free and open society (Rennie, 2006). For marginalized groups and non-government organizations, the media is an extremely important component of their activist strategy. Just as a commercial business enterprise would utilize commercial broadcasters to advertise their product or services and advance their sales and profits, so too would a non-commercial organization need access to media for informing their constituent community, achieving their goals and advancing their activities. Community radio fulfils this societal need by providing primary affordable access to media on a local level that public service broadcasters often cannot, and commercial broadcasters often will not.

A triad system of public service, commercial and community radio stations does not exist in the Czech Republic because the nation has never had a community radio sector and isn't close to implementing one. In fact, the Czech Republic, like most of their post-Communist neighbours, is among the countries in the European Union without a viable community radio presence. While this may seem like a glaring omission, and to many international academics, practitioners and community radio activists it indeed is, the perception within the Czech Republic may be distinctly different.

PUBLIC SERVICE RADIO

Even in a free and open democracy, government can still be a far-reaching and dominant actor in the lives of citizens. Important components of society including security, transportation, healthcare, education, social welfare and public safety are often the province and responsibility of government, as decided by the society it serves. In the social democracies of Europe, this paradigm is especially true, as citizens come to expect their government to provide numerous social services and benefits. Thus, the government is often referred to as the first sector of society – easily recognized, readily available and mostly welcome. Such is the case in the Czech Republic, where social democratic values in the European tradition are evident, including the areas of education, healthcare, employment and public service media. If, in a democratic society, citizens indeed transfer upon their elected officials the power to act in their best interests, then those same citizens need vital and

reliable information to make these important selection decisions. That, of course, is the concept of 'informed consent', the empowerment of representatives to serve the will of the citizens (Herman and Chomsky, 1994). The Czech Government recognizes its responsibility to support public service radio and television for producing and delivering the information and entertainment citizens need and want.

Czech public service radio has a long and storied history. Organized first as the private venture Radioslavia in 1923 and later the state-owned Radiojournal in 1925, Czech public service broadcasting has long been a recognized institution with continuing government support. That government support has not always been benign and has been perhaps the single most important source of criticism of the Czech public service broadcaster throughout its history as well as today. Conversely, Cesky Rozhlas has earned a degree of iconic status in Czech history for its role during various conflicts, including providing the setting for street battles over Czechoslovak sovereignty in 1945 and 1968. The Communist state exerted absolute control on Cesky Rozhlas during its regime of 1948–89, the radio being an instrument of propaganda and control, severely damaging the legitimacy of the service. Since 1989, however, Cesky Rozhlas seems to have incrementally regained its legitimacy, surviving several well-publicized conflicts regarding government interference and control as it has progressed literally and figuratively from an authoritarian state broadcaster to a true European-style public service broadcaster once again. With numerous national coverage stations and their regional/local extensions, Czech public service radio is an accepted and legitimate source of news, information and entertainment. In many countries, a chief mandate of the public service broadcaster is to provide a forum by which important issues such as politics can be discussed. By international standards, Cesky Rozhlas provides a comparatively small interactive discourse on political issues, but this may be a function of the overall lack of political participation on the part of Czech society as a whole. At any rate, this societal lack of political engagement in the media is evident, and Cesky Rozhlas, as the sole Czech public service radio broadcaster, is certainly no exception.

Like the BBC, Radio France, China Radio and other public service broadcasters, Cesky Rozhlas is a national and international broadcaster serving Czech citizens at home and abroad. An important function of Cesky Rozhlas's domestic public service broadcasting is localism, an area where its commitment may be somewhat less emphasized. Local

insertion of news, information and entertainment into a national pro-
gramme feed is part of Cesky Rozhlas's offerings, but is that truly serv-
ing the local community and all the communities that comprise it? The
degree of localism is determined by three factors: allotted time, allo-
cated resources and the perception of need. Can a resident of a small
Czech city such as Hodonin in South Moravia, for example, expect to
hear their city council meeting, police report or obituaries broadcast
on Cesky Rozhlas South Moravian regional service? That responsibil-
ity is most often left to the local commercial broadcaster, or even more
likely to the local commercial newspaper. Locality, as defined by Cesky
Rozhlas, is seemingly closer to regionality in its philosophy and execu-
tion. This is not necessarily a criticism of the service. It is not clear
whether either listeners or the Cesky Rozhlas board of directors cur-
rently expect or decree some degree of locality in their radio content.
In general terms, Cesky Rozhlas is a legitimate organization fulfilling its
mandate as a European-style national public service radio provider in a
bipolar public/commercial radio sector. Thus, public service radio in the
Czech Republic enjoys full recognition as a legitimate and privileged
media entity, reaping the benefits of quasi-independent political status,
robust licensing policy and near 100 per cent financial support through
public taxation and fees.

COMMERCIAL RADIO

The second sector is business. To many citizens and their representatives
in democratic nations, business is the equal or superior to government as
a legitimate and competent purveyor of goods and services vital to the
needs of society. It is difficult to name a sector of society that does not
have a substantial provision for enterprises to profit from their participa-
tion. The same is true for the Czech Republic, where post-Communist
liberal policies have promoted business as the natural choice for the
provision of numerous societal components. After several generations of
authoritarian rule ended in 1989, Czech society welcomed free enter-
prise and its promise of abundance and quality. Consumers saw new
goods from domestic and foreign suppliers filling the shelves of newly
built shopping centres. Services of a quality and availability unheard
of during Communist times were now commonplace. Alongside that
new Czech consumerism was the attendant commercial media sector to
deliver consumers to the advertised brands, and vice versa.

Like its public service counterpart, Cesky Rozhlas, the commercial radio sector emerged to become one half of the Czech bipolar radio paradigm. The commercial radio stations are national, regional and local, providing mostly entertainment with limited news and information in their programme offerings. They are truly independent and mostly immune to undue government interference in their news coverage and programmes. Their chief concern is perhaps in the licensing and regulation activities of the regulator, where political influence and rumours of corruption generate persistent complaints among citizens. National radio stations Frequency 1, Impulse and Europa 2 combine with regional and local stations serving all major regions and cities to effectively cover the country with predictable, commercially viable programming similar to their European and American counterparts. One important and distinct difference would be that Czechs, and most of their European counterparts, do not participate in the commercial talk radio format at the same level as Americans. This important forum for opinion on timely societal and political issues is a major component of commercial radio in the United States, yet is almost non-existent in the Czech Republic and indeed rare throughout Europe. Nonetheless, the Czech commercial radio sector is generally considered to be a viable source for 'independent' news and information for Czech citizens, and an effective counterbalance to the public service broadcaster.

Similar to media broadcast environments on every continent, locality is also an important role for commercial radio in the Czech Republic. Commercial stations are licensed to serve local communities and in the process may serve those local communities with important local news, information and discourse. This is of course the regulator's policy. The reality is often much different: localism and serving local communities is a priority only when it helps to fulfil the commercial station's mandate, which is to make a profit (Gordon, 2009). Generally speaking, the smaller the size of the constituent group, the less likely it will be served by a commercial station that makes more money by serving large unrelated audiences. Because there are approximately eighty locally licensed commercial stations, the perception of the regulator may be that the needs of local communities for access, participation and coverage are being adequately met. Recent consolidations of ownership in the commercial sector have resulted in the centralization of programming and a subsequent reduction in locally focused and locally originating programming. If this trend continues, a distinct lack of local commitment

by locally licensed commercial broadcasters may lead to further erosion of the access, participation and coverage of local communities.

Foreign ownership and control of the broadcast radio market is another significant issue for the Czech Republic. While a substantial percentage of Czech commercial radio operations are still owned by Czechs, continuing consolidation makes the intrusion of foreign ownership easier and perhaps more likely. Already French, Irish and German operators have significant presence in the national stations and networks, as well as sales networks. With the largest remaining Czech-owned operator Stanford Managing having consolidated dozens of local stations, centralized sales and programming functions, and reorganized to become an attractive takeover candidate, the soil is fertile for the commercial radio sector to quickly transform into a truly foreign-dominated paradigm. As a counterpart to public service broadcasting, commercial media control the majority of licences, spectrum, listeners, viewers and advertising revenue in every corner of the country. They hold great sway with politicians and regulators to maintain their universally dominant status in the Czech broadcast media. With that, of course, come the substantial financial rewards, in the form of annual profits and often increasing business valuations. Despite numerous questions about their legitimacy and practices, commercial radio broadcasters in the Czech Republic are recognized by political elites and society in general as legitimate majority stakeholders in the Czech media environment.

SOCIETAL LANDSCAPE

The fundamental and perhaps most important aspect of community media is its inextricable link to the community. Community radio does not just serve the community or provide access to the community: it reflects the community (Fuller, 2007). It exists primarily for the social gain of the community, is operated by the community and measures its success not according to how big it is or how profitable, but by how much it is needed and utilized by its community constituents.

One component of the dynamic that is the dearth of community radios in the Czech Republic may be the lack of distinct communities created through the influence of external and/or internal forces. A society marked by substantial social and economic homogeneity and characterized by persistent apathy and a history of scepticism may not naturally spawn a large number of distinct communities. The Czech

Republic fits that description perhaps as much as any country in Europe. In the twentieth century, many European societies have experienced a substantial influx of immigrants representing an array of cultural and linguistic diversity, exemplified by nearby central European cities such as Berlin and Vienna. However, this is not the case in the Czech Republic. Post Second World War immigrant communities compose a minuscule portion of Czech society, notably Vietnamese and Ukrainian groups. An overwhelming majority of citizens being white, Slavic and middle class composes a societal landscape perhaps somewhat detrimental to the germination of legitimate 'out of the mainstream' organizations and communities. Among the few minority or marginalized groups, the Roma communities across the Czech Republic could be likely candidates to benefit from the social gain that community radio can engender. However, it could be a difficult journey. History has shown that initiatives that seek to organize Roma communities for the purpose of integration into majority institutions and values have met with resistance and ineffectiveness. Hence, there appears to be a lack of momentum for initiatives that target Roma communities. Other groups on the Czech political scene that could also be suitable candidates are NGOs in the labour, human rights, alternative culture, environmental and education spheres. One needs only to visit nearby central European nation Hungary to witness a community radio sector populated by the aforementioned groups. Most improbable to Czechs might be the existence of community radio stations in Hungary operated by Roma communities. These stations are examples of what is possible to achieve with a relatively small commitment of political will and government funds. While minority communities account for a substantial portion of community radio organizations worldwide, not all community media fits this description. Community groups come in many locations and interests, and indeed do form community media in the Czech Republic. The foremost example of this paradigm may be the popularity of community theatre in cities and towns throughout the Czech Republic. A long tradition of citizens' theatre among Czech community groups continues today in the abundance of community neighbourhood theatres. They are non-profit, local, participatory alternatives to the mainstream, and supportive of local arts and culture: all attributes common to community radio. Of course radio broadcasting presents obstacles over and above theatre, but could it be a natural next step? If their central European regional neighbour Hungary can develop an

effective community radio network, is there a compelling reason why it eludes the Czechs?

PATH TO RECOGNITION

Societal recognition, generally observed as the awareness and acceptance of community media, is usually the first step in the process of its development. This is a process in itself that takes place where organized interests such as commercial businesses, consumers, institutions, trade unions, community groups and other organized interests intersect and interact to form what is known as civil society. Outside, or, perhaps more precisely, alongside the government sphere, this civil society social marketplace of business and non-commercial organized interests takes place in a space often referred to as the 'public sphere' (Habermas, 1989).

The civil society organizers and advocates at local, regional and especially national levels are often the chief messengers responsible for connecting communities and their interests to the political process. Through their evangelizing, these advocates serve to educate societal elites, politicians, bureaucrats and other influencers of the political process. Once educated, politicians can officially recognize the aforementioned interests by incorporating them into political platforms and policy positions. The development of community broadcast media often follows this path, as a vague concept promoted by some organized interests to the political elites, then adopted as a policy initiative (Howley, 2010). In the Czech Republic, just a few small initiatives supporting the development of community media have arisen in the past decade, notable among them the alternative media movement in Brno. A university city with more than 60,000 students, Brno represents what could be a fertile environment for alternative media. Several years ago in Brno, an FM licence was awarded to a group for the now-defunct Radio Student. The radio was poorly designed for financial sustainability, with the attributes of a community radio, but the responsibility to function as an advertising-supported commercial radio. Saddled with ineffective management and a non-commercial programme format, and unable to compete with the established commercial operators for audience and advertising revenue, Radio Student soon faced financial ruin. The owners quickly relented, and the much heralded Radio Student was subsequently acquired by a rival, who changed the name and format.

There have been other successes and failures, such as Radio Rota, the Roma online radio in Prague, and Radio ICM, an online youth radio in Cesky Krumlov, both of which still operate utilizing government grants for funding their operations. Additionally, new online radio projects in Brno have emerged, including Radio R at Masaryk University and Roma Youth Radio. Radio R purports to be a pioneer in the development of community radio for the Czech Republic, emphasizing its alternative ethos and embracing the principles of community broadcasting, albeit serving mainly students. The Roma Youth Radio project seeks to build a network of FM radios by and for Roma youth in the Czech Republic. With its first partner organization in Brno, the project has successfully trained groups of Roma teenagers who now produce and deliver radio programmes for streaming on the web and podcast distribution. Community media activists assert that as the media environment becomes more enabling for community radio, so too must individual community radio organizations develop. Then they become prime candidates to acquire licences for newly opened terrestrial FM radio spectrum. However, there has been a distinct inability to generate a sustained organized interest or political force capable of effectively influencing public opinion and public policy. If the general public is mostly unaware of this concept, can we expect politicians to be any different? There still appears to be no mention of terrestrial community radio or television in any of the current political party policies or platforms in the Czech Republic, and very little in the public discourse. This lack of recognition and awareness makes the step to legalization altogether unlikely in the near future.

INSTITUTIONAL OBSTACLES

Among the accepted attributes considered essential to defining community media is the philosophy of not-for-profit status. As a clear reference to the profit-making ethos of commercial media and its perceived weaknesses caused by the profit motive, community media seeks to clearly differentiate itself and promotes social and cultural values that reach beyond profit. However, due to lack of recognition, not-for-profit community radio aspirants face a murky road of confusing legal and regulatory obstacles. For example, the law regulating radio and television licences in the Czech Republic apparently requires applicants to have an official business registration number. Not-for-profit organizations are

not permitted by law to have a business registration number, as they are registered under a different category. Are Czech not-for-profit organizations, therefore, allowed to hold broadcast licences? Academics, practitioners, activists and stakeholders of various stripes cannot claim to really know the answer, because the law can be interpreted in several ways. Interestingly, the one not-for-profit broadcaster on FM radio is the Catholic Church, which, through a third-party registered company licence holder, broadcasts its Radio Proglas across sections of the Czech Republic. This seems to be a conundrum for community media, and exemplifies the apparent lack of recognition in that the law does not specifically mention the existence or legitimacy of community radio. However, perhaps the regulator might welcome licence applications from community groups, but simply has not received any. Without a determined effort by organized interests to promote their community broadcasting agenda and to engage the government in dialogue, lawmakers and regulators have little knowledge or experience with non-profit broadcasting, and little incentive to legitimize it. In addition, commercial broadcasting interests and their powerful political lobby have shown the ability to dominate much of the media policy discourse in the Czech Republic (Stetka, 2010).

Another example illustrating the lack of recognition for community broadcasters is the situation with music copyright organizations. In the Czech Republic, as in many countries worldwide, the fees for usage of copyrighted material are negotiated and collected by agencies representing the artist and publisher of the material. This, of course, means that broadcasting entities using copyrighted music must negotiate and pay royalty fees to these agencies. The problem facing community radio organizers in the Czech Republic is a lack of recognition by these copyright institutions. Intergram, one of the commercial organizations that collect the copyright fees for music used by radios, refuses to recognize not-for-profit radio as a separate client category. Hence, any prospective Czech community radio is faced with paying exorbitantly high copyright licence fees designed specifically for commercial radios. These fees would likely represent a not-for-profit radio's single biggest monthly expense. Community broadcasters around the world deal with questions of copyrighted material (Coyer et al., 2007) and the associated costs. Many examples of successful cooperation exist, but developing effective working relationships with copyright agencies is often difficult, as they continue to pursue an entrenched defence of traditional revenue

models. These old copyright licence models are especially onerous for community radio development, and the Czech Republic is no exception. Coupled with the lack of awareness among political elites, this institutional lack of recognition by the other actors in Czech society presents a formidable obstacle to the development of the sector.

TECHNICAL CONSIDERATIONS

As the technical advances in media change the traditional media landscape for the public service and commercial broadcasters, so too are community broadcasters affected. The new technologies of online radio and telecom-based audio delivery present both challenges and opportunities for community radio to extend their reach and lower the barriers to entry that exist in the traditional terrestrial sphere. In the Czech Republic, a precious amount of space exists on the FM band and it is already mostly allocated to the bipolar operators of public service and commercial stations, leaving little opportunity for further expansion to accommodate any aspiring community radio stations. In addition, the current regulatory system requires potential licensees to conduct all necessary technological feasibility research of their own accord and with their own financing, to locate and then apply for open frequencies, further increasing the difficulty of obtaining a licence. The Czech regulator could draw inspiration from its United Kingdom regulatory counterpart, which provides this feasibility research as part of its regular services. In addition, the UK Office of Communications (Ofcom) also offers a unique and extremely successful tool known as a Restricted Service Licence. The United Kingdom regulator reserves space on the FM band in communities nationwide for small local groups to organize and broadcast their radio station for a predetermined finite time frame. This temporary service allows newly minted broadcasters to test their ability and commitment to operating a community radio. It also enables both the organization and the regulator to better determine their suitability for sustaining a successful community radio station operation for the length of a regular licence period of six years. This programme has already resulted in the incubation of hundreds of capable local community radio groups who have proven their worthiness to successfully operate and sustain a community radio station. Since the enactment of a reformed media law in 1998, more than 200 new community radio licences have been issued in the United Kingdom, and hundreds more

community groups are poised to apply in the next round of licensing (Fogg et al., 2005).

Digitalization of the radio frequency spectrum will also present challenges and opportunities for potential Czech community radio broadcasters. With the much-anticipated switchover to digital terrestrial technology, more frequencies could be available to potential new radio operators (O'Neill et al., 2010), but community radio may not even be considered as a candidate for this spectrum access. If Czech political policy holds true to form, the large public service broadcaster Cesky Rozhlas and the politically powerful commercial broadcasting sector stand to be the big winners in the spectrum allocation sweepstakes, especially if digital multiplexes are implemented. In the meantime, a nationwide study of the inventory of low-power FM frequency availability could be an effective first step for the development of community radio outside the traditional high-power FM and future digital multiplex world of the dominant bipolar operators. Technical obstacles remain in the path of potential community radio broadcasters, but these do not appear to be insurmountable, given the experience of successful initiatives elsewhere.

CONCLUSION

Interestingly, community broadcast media is a growing phenomenon across the globe, including in many countries in Western Europe, such as France (Lewis and Jones, 2006). As a post-Communist emerging democracy, the Czech Republic has seen a transformation of its society to embrace the recognition and legitimacy of independent broadcast media. Those media include the government-funded public service broadcasters and, of course, the advertising-supported commercial broadcasting sector. What we have yet to see emerge is a community broadcast media sector, a third sector recognized as a legitimate counterpart to the aforementioned public service and commercial operators, fully legal with access to licences and support from the regulator. Recognition is the natural first step in the ultimate establishment of a vibrant community media sector. The process of recognition of the community media concept from community idea, to organized interest, to political policy somehow has not taken hold in the Czech Republic, resulting in a bipolar broadcast media landscape without a community radio component.

While advocates of community radio and non-governmental organizations might disagree, there appears to be no substantial movement towards implementing such a community radio sector in the Czech Republic. As commercial radio consolidation continues at the expense of local ownership and programming service to the community, coupled with an upcoming battle for spectrum access in new digital technologies, a window of opportunity may develop. The citizens, regulators and political elites of the Czech Republic may then have the opportunity to take steps towards testing a triad system, perhaps using the effective models of their European Union counterparts as a roadmap. In any case, a vibrant community radio sector could greatly contribute to Czech society and help to address a myriad of social and community issues therein. Nations across Europe and the globe recognize, legalize and support community radio, benefitting their people, communities and societies. The people, communities and society of the Czech Republic might similarly benefit from developing a community radio sector. Does anybody really care?

Radio in the Republic of Moldova: The Struggle for Public Service Broadcasting

James Stewart

The former Soviet Republic of Moldova is a small, poor country (comparable in size and population to Wales) which has failed to establish itself as a united, democratic state since independence in 1991. When it left the USSR, it had one, state-controlled, radio broadcaster – what is now the legally independent public institution, Radio Moldova. By 2011, there were more than fifty other licensed stations. By comparison, Wales has fewer than half that number of licensed radio services (including two BBC and nine community stations). Many of Moldova's local stations – especially those outside the capital – have struggled to survive and rely on some form of subsidy. Both nationally and locally there are those who believe in the goal of providing public service broadcasting, but it remains both an ambition and a challenge. The author, who has more than thirty years' experience in journalism, has twice worked in Moldova, training radio journalists – first at Radio Moldova in 1994 and then, in 2006, working with independent local TV and radio stations.

In April 2004, staff on Radio Antena C, based in the Moldovan capital Chisinau, went on hunger strike in defence of their station, which was threatened with closure by the state regulator. Their campaign led to the intervention of both the Council of Europe and the Organisation for Security and Co-operation in Europe (OSCE). The council stated that the threat to the broadcaster was 'one of the key factors' behind its decision to launch a fourth investigation into the progress of local democracy in Moldova (Council of Europe, 2004). Two years later, when the station was again threatened, ten foreign embassies added their voices in support of the broadcaster.

The story of Antena C reveals how serious an issue the struggle for public service media has been in some post-Communist countries. As we shall see, it ended with a station which had provided an alternative voice finally silenced in 2007. Despite this, moves to establish the principles of public service radio in Moldova continued and were given new hope by the political changes of 2010. A reforming director took charge of Radio Moldova, for the second time, and resumed the task of trying to create a genuine national, public service. Meanwhile, international support continued for a loose network of stations, with the aim of providing a local service to communities around the country. However, the media remained vulnerable to financial and political pressures. Whether a sustainable model of public service broadcasting can be established in Moldova, at the national and local level, is the question that will be explored in this chapter.

The development of free and independent media was viewed (both from within and without) as a key building block of open and democratic societies in the former Communist states of Europe after 1990.[1] Radio was seen as having great potential: local stations were relatively cheap to establish and could reach a large audience, especially in urban areas. Stations such as Belgrade's B92 became iconic symbols of free expression. Western governments and NGOs supported a range of initiatives. The British model of public service broadcasting, both at local and national level, was influential, not least because of the direct involvement of British-funded trainers (mainly from the BBC) in many countries of the former Communist bloc.

The Western case for transformation of the media to serve the public was expressed succinctly by Article 19 in a report on Moldova published in 1999:

> In the days of Soviet rule, the media were entirely under state control and acted as the mouthpiece of totalitarian power. But in a democracy, the media's role is to serve the public at large, not the partisan political interests of those who hold power. Thus the media's key tasks are to promote the free flow of information to all, so assisting individuals to make their own decisions on matters affecting their lives, and to act as a watchdog of the public interest by bringing into the light matters which governments and other powerful forces wish illegitimately to withhold from the public domain. (Poulton, 1999: 1)

In most cases the original impetus towards public service broadcasting did not come from outside, as we will see from the experience of both Moldova and its neighbour, Romania. The history of radio in an independent Moldova began, with no external assistance, at the moment of crisis which gave birth to the new state. The story encapsulates many of the issues that influenced the later development of the broadcasting landscape in this small country on the eastern border of what is now the European Union. Central to it is Alexandru Dorogan, a man who has played a pivotal role in the development of both the national radio and the continuing attempts to introduce the principles of public service broadcasting in the independent, local radio sector.

EARLY HISTORY OF MOLDOVAN RADIO

The history of the populations and territories that make up and adjoin Moldova is complicated, but not unusual in those parts of Europe that have seen borders shift over the centuries in the competition between great empires. The territory which is now the Republic of Moldova has existed within its present borders for only seventy years and, as we will see, the government does not in fact control all that territory. The majority of Moldovans (65 per cent of the population) speak what is essentially the same language as their neighbours in Romania (which includes part of the medieval principality of Moldova) (Caraus, 2004: 325). All those brought up as Soviet citizens also speak Russian, as do many younger people.

The first radio service available to a Moldovan population went on the air in 1928, when most of modern Moldova was part of Romania, then much larger and which had established the Romanian Radio Broadcasting Company in that year. Two years later a radio service went on the air from Tiraspol, which was then the capital of an autonomous Soviet Moldavian republic, established in 1924, on the east bank of the River Dniester. In 1940, this Transdniestrian region was united with the Romanian province of Bessarabia (eastern Moldova), which was seized under the terms of a deal between Stalin and Hitler. They became the united Soviet Socialist Republic of Moldova – but their unity did not survive the collapse of the USSR (see Poulton, 1999: 7–9).

In the Soviet Union, radio was an arm of the state. Alexandru Dorogan's early career in broadcasting provides a vivid illustration of that world and shows how far he and radio in Moldova have changed.

Educated at the University of Kazan in Tatarstan, he began work as a journalist in the department of propaganda at Radio Moldova in 1974, where he went on to specialize in reporting on the construction industry and preparing Communist Party propaganda for broadcast. All programmes were pre-recorded and censored. The service ran for nineteen hours a day, of which ten came from Moscow. Of the locally produced programmes, 60 per cent were in Romanian and 40 per cent in Russian (apart from those programmes broadcast in minority languages) (Dorogan, 2010).

In 1987, Dorogan was sent to the elite Communist Higher Party School in Leningrad and came into contact with the reforming movement known as Perestroika, which was championed by Mikhail Gorbachev. He returned to Moldova with ideas for a radical reform of the radio service and was promoted as deputy editor of the propaganda department (the keystone of the service). He was soon made head of what became the news department. By 1989, he had succeeded in reforming the structure of the radio station and pioneered interactive programmes involving members of the public. He introduced payment by results, brought in new presenters and launched debate programmes (Dorogan, 2010).

A BAPTISM OF FIRE

In 1991, the Soviet Union was in a state of flux. Several republics, including Moldova, had already declared their sovereignty. In August, President Gorbachev was taken prisoner in his holiday home on the Black Sea. At the radio station in Chisinau, news of the coup by Communist hardliners came at 9 a.m. on 19 August, in what should have been a regular network transmission from Moscow – the news in Russian for the whole of the USSR. What Alexandru Dorogan and his listeners heard was an announcer reading out a message to the Soviet people from the self-appointed State Committee for the State of Emergency in the USSR (SCSE). This was followed by Russian music. The coup leaders had taken control of 'the means of mass information' (BBC Monitoring, 1991). In defiance of the SCSE, Dorogan took a unilateral decision to carry no more Moscow broadcasts but to try, instead, to inform the listeners of what was really taking place. From 6 p.m. on that first day, Radio Moldova broadcast its own news in Russian every half hour (Dorogan, 2010).

During the next decisive days, with the help of contacts in Moscow and international sources, Radio Moldova broadcast the news of the dramatic resistance in the capital and reaction from other parts of the Soviet Union. It obtained information by building on an existing relationship with the Interfax Agency in Moscow, encouraging them to send news to Chisinau. It also broadcast interviews with people on the spot in Moscow, where Boris Yeltsin was leading opposition to the coup. Apparently, the transmissions from Moldova were heard across other parts of the USSR, especially at night, because they were transmitted on medium wave, which carried over long distances. Dorogan told of one telephone call from Odessa in the neighbouring Republic of Ukraine, saying Radio Moldova was the only accurate source of information available in that area. He also described a phone call after the collapse of the coup, in which the Association of Electors of Moscow thanked Radio Moldova for its role in informing people of what had been happening (Dorogan, 2010).

Having relied in the past on ten hours of programming from Moscow per day, Radio Moldova now had to fill twenty-four hours – and prepare for the possibility of action to take it off the air. As Dorogan recalled, the local headquarters of the Soviet Army was only 500 meters away from the building which housed the radio station. He secretly visited the emergency reserve studio to check that it was all in order, in case it should prove necessary to move operations there (Dorogan, 2010). His concern was well founded. Soviet special forces attacked the TV station in Riga, the capital of Latvia, on 19 August and Latvian radio was silenced for several hours the next day; on 20 August, Estonian radio appealed for help in the defence of the TV station in Tallinn, which was also under attack (BBC Monitoring, 1991).

CIVIL WAR AND REFORM

Moldova declared its independence on 27 August 1991 as the Soviet Union fell apart in the wake of the failed coup. The radio station had already, in effect, established its own independence and was well placed to continue providing a twenty-four-hour service, now for a domestic audience coming to terms with a changed and still-changing political landscape. The service consisted of the main, first channel, a second channel carrying repeats of cultural programmes and a third channel carrying only music; an international service in English was established

later. Programmes were transmitted in Romanian, Russian and minority languages, including Gagauz and Yiddish. On 2 October 1991, Alexandru Dorogan was appointed director general of Radio Moldova. He went on to play a central role in the development of radio in the country during the following two decades, in which his career reflected the twists and turns in the political development of the state.

The honeymoon for newly independent Moldova was short-lived as deep divisions came to the surface in a brief and bloody civil war, which has left the country divided in one of the 'frozen conflicts' of the former USSR, and which had a direct impact on the radio service. On 2 March 1992, hostilities began with forces from the region to the east of the River Dniester which declared its intention to break away. The leaders of its largely Russian and Ukrainian population were partly motivated by the fear that Moldova was seeking to unite with Romania.

The conflict lasted four months and claimed an unknown number of lives – possibly more than 1,000 (Clej, 2007). One serious consequence was that Radio Moldova lost control of its main transmitters – the very ones that had carried news of the coup across the Soviet Union the previous year; they were isolated on the territory of the breakaway 'Transdniestria'. During the cold war which preceded the outbreak of hostilities, Dorogan, fearing for his transmitters, made an unofficial arrangement with Radio Romania to use their transmitter at Iasi, on the Moldovan border, and in this way kept his service on the air during the crisis (Dorogan, 2010.)

As a consequence of the civil war and its frozen aftermath, Radio Moldova has faced huge difficulties in obtaining material for programmes from Transdniestria (especially on sensitive subjects) and has no accurate information about how many of the population of the breakaway territory (some 500,000 people) receive its broadcasts. With the loss of the powerful transmitters, Radio Moldova was deprived of access not only to its audiences across the Dniester, but also among the Moldovan minority in Ukraine, and in the neighbouring Romanian region of Moldova, where there are many people with family ties.

Despite this difficult beginning, Dorogan showed a determination to embed the principles of public service broadcasting in Radio Moldova. In 1993, he approached the BBC for assistance in training journalists, producers and managers. From 1994 to 1997, a series of BBC-run courses was held with the aim of improving professional standards and supporting the move away from being a state broadcaster

towards becoming an independent, balanced and impartial public service. However, the progress being made came to a halt with increased political interference from 1996 and Dorogan's removal from the post of director general in 1997. Dorogan diverted his energy into the field of independent radio and television, where he continued to exercise an important influence until his return to Radio Moldova in 2010. In the meantime, attempts to transform Radio Moldova (and the whole of Teleradio Moldova) into a genuine public service made little progress, despite pressure from the Council of Europe and others and the nominal agreement of the government to establish an independent public corporation (Vitu, 2009: 192–3).

INDEPENDENT LOCAL RADIO AND
THE EXPERIENCE OF ROMANIA

Independent and local radio stations sprang up in many post-Communist states in the 1990s, usually, in part, as a direct response to the inertia that prevented reform of the former state broadcasters. In Moldova, as we have seen, it was the state radio station that took the lead in informing the population about the revolutionary political situation of 1991. In neighbouring Romania, where Nicolae Ceauşescu fell suddenly and unexpectedly in December 1989, it would have been unthinkable for the state broadcaster to have behaved in the same way. The first broadcasts with a 'public service' aim came instead from a new and independent radio station, run by university students in Bucharest. From that beginning, radio in Romania set out on a path that led – for a time at least – to the establishment of a local broadcasting culture which Moldova has aimed at but has struggled to establish. A brief diversion into the history of radio in Romania since 1989 provides valuable comparisons with the Moldovan experience.

In January 1990, days after the overthrow of Ceauşescu, a group of students got access to a transmitter brought to Bucharest from France and began to invent a style of broadcasting of which they had no experience. They had no licence, but a potential audience of over a million people in the capital city, desperate for information. As Daniel Klinger, one of the founders of the new station ('Unifun', later renamed 'Uniplus') recalled: 'We wanted to tell the truth. Until December 1989 the only radio was the national station which was pure propaganda – there was no tradition of proper journalism' (2010). The student broadcasters set out to

give people accurate information as well as to play music and enjoy the taste of freedom, on and off the air. From the very beginning, there was a public service impetus behind the establishment of independent radio in the new Romania. As Klinger said: 'It was like a mission. All of us thought it was very important, not a game' (ibid.).

During the 1990s, local radio stations were established in towns and cities throughout Romania (a pattern repeated in Moldova). In the beginning, these were small operations, often financed by new entrepreneurs who saw a potential to make money from advertising in the emerging local market economy. The programme makers, presenters and reporters were often students working as volunteers or paid on a casual, part-time basis. All those involved were at the cutting edge of something new in every way. As with the first station in Bucharest, there was a desire among many of them to provide a service to their listeners.

From 1992 onwards, support from the British Government and the Soros Foundation enabled the BBC to train hundreds of young radio journalists, producers and would-be commercial managers, with the result that many of Romania's local radio stations became equipped to play an important role as informers, educators (and entertainers) of a population struggling to understand a crowded and confusing political and economic landscape.[2] Local radio stations competed to get their young journalists into the BBC school in Bucharest and promoted them to senior positions when they returned. Many of the stations carried the news provided by the BBC Romanian service and strove to match its editorial standards in their local news. What developed appeared to be a viable model for commercial, local radio with a strong public service element, which could offer a real and lively alternative to the little-changed state broadcaster. The aspirations of those, within and without, who saw radio as an important building block of an open society seemed to have been realized. This model is still aspired to by those involved in supporting local radio initiatives in Moldova. In many respects, it resembled the shape of Independent Local Radio (ILR) as it existed in many parts of Britain in the 1980s, before mergers and the drive for profit pushed out the public service remit which had underpinned the original idea of ILR.

Unfortunately for Romania, and the hopes of Moldova, the model that Britain lost did not prove sustainable in the Balkans either. Early moves to create networks in the interests of greater commercial viability opened the way to takeovers of Romania's local stations by big business

or political interests (or often combinations of both). The public ser-
vice element of local radio services was sacrificed for a lower com-
mon denominator of music, with minimal, biased news coverage in the
interests of political owners or their political friends. What was lost was
a patchwork of diverse and varied voices that had offered something of
value at a local level to citizens who hoped for democracy.

INDEPENDENT RADIO IN MOLDOVA

From 1991, it had been possible for independent broadcasters in Moldova
to obtain licences, and by 2011 there were more than fifty radio stations
licensed by the Audio-visual Coordinating Council (ACC, 2011). Many
of these were small, local stations but some operated on a number of fre-
quencies in different areas, giving them considerable coverage, especially
in the main towns. One of the biggest stations was Vocea Basarabiei
(Voice of Bessarabia), which carried news, talk shows and debates (in
Romanian). Many of the other larger stations were music only. A sig-
nificant feature of the radio landscape was the reception of Russian and
Ukrainian stations that reached Moldova or were rebroadcast by some
of the Moldovan services. These attracted considerable audiences, but
offered those audiences little or no information about their own area.

When Alexandru Dorogan left Radio Moldova in 1997, he was
approached by the mayor of the capital, Chisinau, to set up a media
department, which would eventually include radio and TV stations as
well as a newspaper and a press agency. For Antena C, Dorogan managed
to obtain a frequency which covered 70 to 75 per cent of the country
and established a service which went on the air in 1999, using Moldova's
first FM frequency. It included political discussions and interactive pro-
grammes and gave a voice to those whose views were excluded from the
state-controlled media (Dorogan, 2010). As a municipally funded public
radio service, Antena C was not typical of the local stations in other
towns and cities, but it did set an example and it became a resource from
which they could draw moral and practical support.

Antena C came under heavy political pressure in 2004, in the run-
up to elections scheduled for the following year. The ACC suspended
its licence on 3 February; public meetings were held in support of the
service and its journalists occupied the building with several going on
hunger strike. As we have seen, the Council of Europe protested at the
attempted suppression of an alternative voice and was supported by the

Organisation for Security and Cooperation in Europe (OSCE) and the Special Representative of the Secretary General of the UN. This intervention may have been influential in the decision to relicense the station, which resumed broadcasting on 16 April (Council of Europe, 2004).

For the time being the service was secure but, in 2006, the law was changed to permit only one public service broadcaster (Radio Moldova and its sister TV station) and prevent local authorities, in this case the Chisinau council, from operating public service stations. The exception to this rule was Teleradio Gagauzia, serving the Gagauz minority in the south. A sixty-day deadline was imposed for the privatization of Antena C, which again provoked widespread opposition, including from Western diplomats (OSCE, 2006). In the long run, internal and external pressure proved ineffective and, despite renewed protests from the OSCE, Antena C was privatized in 2007 and sold to a commercial company which dismissed most of the journalists and reduced the service to one of mainly music (OSCE, 2007).

It was the struggle for control of Antena C which attracted international attention but, within the country, the fate of smaller local radio stations was also of concern to those who believed in a public service model. From as early as 1998, there had been discussions about ways of supporting them and enabling them to help each other. Alexandru Dorogan wrote a report in that year for the Soros Foundation of Moldova, suggesting a network of nine radio stations based on the nine administrative counties which made up the republic.

In 1999, Asociaţia Presei Electronice, 'the Association of Electronic Media' (APEL) was formed to represent the interests of independent radio and TV stations. Dorogan was elected president and more than thirty stations joined (these were all producing their own programmes, not rebroadcasting external stations). The first effective network, supported by APEL, operated for two years from 2000, with six local radio stations cooperating with Antena C and sharing programmes and training. At the same time, with funding from Soros, APEL translated key Council of Europe documents on the regulation of broadcasting, which proved to be valuable in the difficult discussions leading to the passing of new media laws in 2002. All this was intended to bolster the potential for local public service broadcasting.

The second initiative to support local radio stations and promote cooperation between them was launched directly by the Soros Foundation, whose founder George Soros had taken an interest in

community radio developments in South Africa. He encouraged his foundations in other countries to pursue the possibility of supporting community stations, but as Victoria Miron of the Soros Foundation Moldova explained, this did not prove practical there. Although many local stations were not commercially viable, neither did they fit the community model. The decision was taken to offer technical and practical support to existing privately owned local stations in order to strengthen their value to the community by way of public service content, encouraging 'community-oriented', rather than pure community stations (Miron, 2010).

LOCAL RADIO FOR LOCAL PEOPLE?

A 'community-oriented' station is one that offers its audience a service which it wants and needs. But it became clear that this was not what people were getting from their local radio stations in Moldova. This fundamental weakness was revealed when the Soros Foundation Moldova researched the state of local radio and TV stations in 2006. Its report found that they did not fulfil their main function of informing the public 'within the characteristic features of a local station'; indeed, they contributed to an 'informational void' by occupying the space of a public service broadcaster but failing to fulfil its functions. 'We know better what happens in the world than in our locality', one of the focus group participants was quoted as saying. In a vicious circle, the stations' poor reflection of local reality resulted in a very low level of engagement by the local population; even if they listened, they remained passive. The report revealed the size of the gap between the ideal of a local public service and the reality on the ground (Soros, 2006).

According to the report, the stations were suffering from 'a chronic lack' of professional staff with the skills to produce quality programmes which would appeal to the listeners. Most lacked any journalistic training, a defect that was clearly apparent to the audience, as evidenced by the response of a focus group to the question (no. 31 of the opinion survey), 'What is the professional level of the programs broadcast by the local radio/TV station?' Low pay and a high turnover of staff were seen to compound the problems. Poor management was perceived to be an underlying weakness. What was needed, according to the report, was training for managers and recruitment based on professional criteria rather than nepotism. Better pay and training for staff would contribute to stability and quality.

It concluded, however, that such reforms were unlikely to be achieved without a change in the financial basis of the businesses (Soros, 2006).

The report found that local stations could not be described as financially independent; their reliance on external funding was one of their main weaknesses, affecting both the quantity and quality of their output. Unable to cover their area properly, they relied on rebroadcasting programmes from other stations in return for payment – in effect subletting their transmitter and licence. Managers lacked the skills to put their operations on a sound financial footing and make them truly independent. There was evidence that politicians were the most likely investors in local stations and that the owners had failed to appreciate the dangers of such relationships. The report stressed the importance of minimizing dependence on external funding (especially from abroad). It concluded that resources should be directed towards filling the void in local news. Relations with local and national public bodies should be depoliticized to ensure a free flow of information (Soros, 2006).

BUILDING A NETWORK

In response to the report, Soros Foundation Moldova and APEL organized a training conference for radio and TV stations in 2006. It was attended by representatives of eleven local radio stations who had expressed an interest in joining a network. In a revealing session, they were asked to give their own analysis of what they saw as their strengths and weaknesses.

Several stressed the importance of the fact that they offered the only local news service in their area – or that they offered a service in the Romanian language in areas dominated by Russian rebroadcasts. Some were proud of the fact that they were able to sustain a twenty-four-hour service (again without resorting to rebroadcasting to fill the schedule). Their perceived weaknesses were significant – either a lack of professional staff or the inability to hold onto them; poor equipment; little or no advertising revenue (or vulnerability to political pressure in the placing of advertising), and poor management skills. In the discussions, a fundamental weakness that became clear was the lack of credible audience research on which advertising sales could be based. They believed one potential benefit of a viable network would be the opportunity to sell airtime jointly.

They were encouraged to establish an effective network, serviced from a central hub in the capital to which staff could be seconded,

while raising the standard of news and other programming for their local audience. Programmes of general or common interest could be shared between the stations. Funding for audience research would facilitate the sale of airtime.[3]

NETWORK IN ACTION

The first phase of the network development ran until 2009, with the emphasis on sharing programming, which meant less reliance on rebroadcasts from Romania or Russia. A view of how the system operated in practice was given in a report based on detailed monitoring over two weeks in April 2010. Four years after the founding conference, it revealed both progress and the distance still to be travelled in attempting to establish genuine local services (Soros, 2010).

There was a wide disparity in the number of programme items contributed to the network, with the top station offering twenty-nine and the bottom only six. The average daily offer per station was one item, meaning each member, on average, would benefit from four or five additional items for broadcast per week. The report did not measure the duration of these contributions, so it is not possible to say what value they would have had in expanding the stations' coverage in terms of minutes.

Cooperation had not led to an improvement in the quality or reliability of the material broadcast. The stations that contributed the most were also the stations singled out as having relied almost exclusively on only one, uncorroborated source for their material. The majority of information included in the items was from official sources – only one quarter came from members of the public. Most of the material was judged to be impartial, but the author was critical of a number of stations which submitted biased material.[4]

As of January 2011, there were twelve radio stations in the network. A central studio had been established in Chisinau for use in network production and as a training facility. The network was supported by Soros and the Swedish International Development Agency (SIDA), with the specific aim of 'enhancing regional broadcast media's ability to report on issues of public and community interest'. The wider goal of SIDA's involvement was to strengthen good and democratic governance in Moldova through increased public participation in decision-making at local and national levels (Soros, 2011).

FACING THE FUTURE

Moldova's position on the eastern border of the European Union and its aspiration to be a member of the EU means the health of its body politic, including the media, is under regular scrutiny from the West. The days of direct support for the national broadcaster appear to be over, but with his appointment as director of Radio Moldova in January 2010, Alexandru Dorogan took up, for the second time, the challenge of creating a genuine public service. He inherited a very different station from the one he had left thirteen years earlier. In 1997, he had 650 staff to run three networks; by 2011 he had 215 and only one service. The range of programming was still considerable. As well as the main broadcasts in Romanian, ten-minute news bulletins were transmitted in Russian four times a day, with an hour-long current affairs programme for Russian speakers every evening. In addition, there was a daily slot for other minority languages, with programmes in Ukrainian, Bulgarian, Gagauz, Roma and Yiddish (Dorogan, 2010).

Radio Moldova in 2011 lacked resources, had mainly outdated equipment and relied on technical staff set in old ways. While nominally free from political interference, it was still subject to bureaucratic processes which stood in the way of flexibility and change (see Vitu, 2009: 192–3). It is an illustration of the slow speed of progress in the country as a whole that when he returned to Radio Moldova, Dorogan found a report dated 1998, produced by consultants from the BBC who had been commissioned by him before he left. The technical improvements they recommended had never been implemented. The director had no illusions about the difficulties he would continue to face in attempting to establish a credible and sustainable public service and to survive with limited resources in an always-uncertain political climate.

CONCLUSION

The challenge of serving and engaging the audience and the electorate is relevant to an emerging democracy like Moldova but also to a small nation like Wales, where new democratic structures are struggling to take root and the debate about the extent of autonomy continues. Similar in terms of size, population, proximity to powerful neighbours and their bilingual nature, these two countries also lack vigorous indigenous media. The fact that 90 per cent of newspaper readers in Wales

read publications that do not contain any news about their country is a stark reminder of the heavy responsibility carried by the public service broadcasters (Welsh Assembly Government, 2008). Yet, the budget for programmes in both English and Welsh (on the BBC and the Welsh-language channel, S4C) has been cut back severely in the last few years (Ofcom, 2011d). The Swedish Government gave support to the local radio network in Moldova in the belief that participation in the democratic process can be increased through the reporting of issues of community and public interest. When only around 40 per cent of voters take part in elections for the National Assembly for Wales (Electoral Commission, 2007), it is clear that Moldova is not the only small nation where a poor penetration of public service broadcasting contributes to a less than healthy body politic.

Notes

1. There is general agreement that a public service broadcaster operates in the public interest and is independent of government and vested interests. Both the general principles of public service broadcasting and their application to societies in transition are explored in Price and Raboy (2003).
2. The writer was closely involved in BBC training programmes in Romania in the 1990s.
3. Source: notes taken by Mike Joseph, radio trainer at the APEL/Soros training conference, Vadului Voda, Moldova, 2006.
4. In total, seven monitoring reports were produced by Soros Foundation Moldova in 2010, each covering a two-week period. More than 900 pieces of radio news were analysed by monitors between March and November. The monitoring was done randomly and during the campaign for parliamentary elections of November 2010, in accordance with a set of professional journalism indicators. Monitoring provided an insight into the content of regional media programming and served as an instrument that measured each station's stage of development in programme delivery, quality and shortcoming of news and current affairs programming. The monitoring results were discussed at the monthly network meetings, and important issues were repeatedly raised aiming at improving the quality of regional programming. The final conclusions and the recommendations made by the experts were brought to the attention of the network members during the final meetings held in Bălți and Comrat in December 2010.

Radio in Wales: The Practitioner Speaks

Julie Kissick and Mary Traynor

INTRODUCTION

The media landscape in Wales is increasingly crowded. Globalization and commercialization create a competitive environment, and fast-moving technological development is blurring the edges of what is traditionally considered to be 'radio'. This is an exciting and challenging time for radio practitioners. While the congested marketplace makes it difficult for radio to be 'heard', internet and digital distribution make radio listening easier than it has ever been and social media creates new opportunities for two-way communication flows between radio stations and listeners. Drawing on the experiences of practitioners at three radio stations in Wales, this chapter provides an insight into how radio professionals are responding to this testing environment. What are their strategies for building, maintaining and interacting with audiences? What are their approaches to programming and distribution? How do they achieve sustainability? The contrasting narratives of the selected stations provide useful, practical information for those interested in establishing their own radio station, or pursuing a career in radio.

THE RADIO LANDSCAPE IN WALES

According to the UK media industry regulator Ofcom, radio listening in Wales is higher than the UK average, with around 93 per cent of the adult population in Wales listening on a weekly basis (Ofcom, 2011f: 6). Wales's radio spectrum consists of the public service broadcaster, the BBC, which offers a nationwide service in English and Welsh. There is a thriving commercial radio sector, consisting of one national station as well as local and regional stations of various sizes which are mainly owned by large UK-wide media conglomerates. Not-for-profit community radio has existed in Wales since 2001 and provides small-scale

radio services for niche audiences. Radio is distributed via FM and AM, through digital multiplexes and internet via PC and mobile devices. Analogue FM is most widely listened to but digital and other forms of consumption are increasing, though at a slower rate than in other UK nations (Ofcom, 2011f), probably due to the relatively limited availability of digital radio in Wales.

THE SELECTED STATIONS

The three stations selected for discussion have contrasting motivations, funding mechanisms and modes of distribution. The first is Wales's English-language public service station, BBC Radio Wales, which began in 1978 and broadcasts on FM, AM, digital and online. The BBC's overall mission to inform, educate and entertain takes on a Welsh emphasis on BBC Radio Wales. The station caters for listeners who are interested in Wales and Welsh affairs, with a mix of news and entertainment-oriented speech programming and music. Its listeners are predominantly over forty-five. The BBC was established by Royal Charter and is funded by a licence fee paid by UK households. The second station is Wales's first commercial radio, Swansea Sound, which commenced broadcasts on AM in 1974 to the Swansea area, the second most populous borough in Wales. Its sister station, The Wave, launched on FM in 1995. Swansea Sound's audience is aged over forty, while The Wave caters for a younger audience. Both are available on analogue, online and digital platforms. Output is in Welsh and English and consists of 'music you love along with news, sport and traffic updates' (Swansea Sound, 2011). Swansea Sound/The Wave are part of the UTV Media group, which owns fourteen stations in the UK. They are funded by advertising. The final station under discussion is a community radio station, Voice Radio, which began in 2006 and is located in the former mining town of Rhymney in the south Wales valleys. It broadcasts in Welsh and English online, digitally and occasionally on FM, offering participants and listeners 'education, training, employment opportunities, skill enhancement, the development of emotional intelligence, services and facilities, as well as entertainment' (Voice Radio, 2011). Voice Radio is predominantly a youth radio station but its strong community focus attracts listeners of all ages. It is funded by grants and donations.

The information in this chapter is largely based on interviews with key staff at the featured radio stations, conducted by the authors in June

2011: Steve Austins, editor, BBC Radio Wales; Helen Bowden, station director, Swansea Sound and The Wave; Phil England, director, UTV Media; Christian Williams, youth and community inclusion officer/station manager (sole full-time employee), Voice Radio.

APPROACHES TO PROGRAMMING

Wales is saturated with radio. In the capital, Cardiff, FM listeners can choose from six BBC radio stations, four commercial and one community radio station, in addition to a number of AM and English radio stations that are not actually targeted at Welsh listeners. In such an environment, distinctiveness is of great importance. All three stations identify their 'localness' as a distinctive feature. As a national station, BBC Radio Wales's localness is its emphasis on Wales and Welsh perspectives which, according to Austins, is structured around 'three editorial pillars: journalism, culture and knowledge'. He considers BBC Radio Wales's role to be one of championing Welsh arts and culture.

> That doesn't mean we only ever play Welsh songs or talk about Welsh things. We're realists in the sense that if Adele is the number one single in the UK then that means it's the number one single in Wales as well. We try to focus on what is going to matter to people in Wales. That's our point of difference. (Austins, 2011)

At the other end of the spectrum, Voice Radio's localness could be described as 'hyper' local. As Williams puts it:

> We focus on items of news which bigger broadcasters wouldn't touch, like Mrs Jones's dog has gone missing at the top end of the Rhymney Valley. Have you seen it? . . . It's no problem us shouting out happy ninetieth birthday to Mrs Davies. Everyone in this community has an opportunity to come in to the station and take part or just listen. They'll all get something out of it. (2011)

Swansea Sound serves a larger geographical area but also makes a feature of its strong relations with the community. Bowden describes it as a 'heritage station' which, partly because of its longevity, has strong loyalty from its listeners, many of whom have grown up with Swansea Sound. It achieves its local sound through output such as 'Swansea 'Til I Die'

(a show for Swansea City Football Club supporters), specialist local music and Welsh-language programmes. Both Swansea Sound and The Wave have a presence at local events at every opportunity.

> That is our ace card. That is what makes us local and different. We are the station in the area which can be live and broadcast back onto the airwaves, which obviously some stations can't do. Our listeners feel the presenters are their friends and that is important to them as well as being entertained. (Bowden, 2011)

Despite their similar emphasis on localness, the stations' attitudes to attracting listeners are radically different. BBC Radio Wales and Swansea Sound/The Wave strive to achieve a high-quality, slick sound, employing professional staff to achieve this. Swansea Sound/The Wave aim for high production values because they are driven by a commercial imperative to maximize listeners for their clients. The stations follow a typical commercial radio formula: music, speech (mainly presenters, news and sport) and commercials. The balance of content varies between the two stations: The Wave, which has a younger audience, plays more current popular music, has less speech and a clipped news service, which is popular with listeners from the target age group. Both stations carry around twelve minutes of advertising per hour. In contrast, BBC Radio Wales's motivation is not to maximize listenership but to 'serve . . . underserved audiences or distinct audiences. We're there to add depth and . . . as long as we are doing it consistently then we attract an audience' (Austins, 2011). There is a far greater emphasis on speech output on BBC Radio Wales, which features magazine, documentary and drama programmes. Music accounts for 35 per cent of the output, of which around 20 per cent is of Welsh origin. In common with BBC Radio Wales, attracting a high number of listeners is less of a priority for Voice Radio. The station aims to serve a niche local audience and its localness is achieved through its very direct links with the community. One aspect of this is the use of volunteer presenters who can take part with no previous experience.

> We've had some criticism in the past about individuals who have Down's syndrome or other learning difficulties and listeners can't understand them. Voice's ethos is that they are very valid members of this community and every member of the community has something to say. If you don't like it, turn over. (Williams, 2011)

According to Williams, listeners will be attracted to Voice Radio because they know the presenter and identify with the content. The approach to programming is similarly inclusive. There is no standard policy on content. The quantity and type of music played is determined by the volunteer presenters and listener requests. It is interesting to note that this freedom has not resulted in particularly distinctive music programming. In common with most commercial radio in Wales, the emphasis is on current popular music during the day, with more alternative music in the evenings and at weekends.

DIVERSITY OF DISTRIBUTION

Despite the increasing use of new technologies, most radio is still listened to on FM. However, two of the selected stations do not broadcast regularly on this waveband: Swansea Sound and Voice Radio. This is a matter of necessity, rather than choice, since FM frequencies are in high demand in the UK, particularly in urban areas. UTV has maximized Swansea Sound/The Wave's listenership potential by making clever use of its single FM allocation. The FM frequency is used for The Wave, whose younger target audience is more likely to engage with FM. In contrast, the more loyal, long-standing Swansea Sound audience will tolerate the poorer quality sound of AM. AM also has the advantage of increased penetration into the mountainous areas surrounding Swansea. FM licences for community radio are similarly restricted and were not available when Voice Radio was established. According to Williams, the decision to broadcast on DAB was informed by advice that was pointing to the imminent closure of analogue radio frequencies. With hindsight, Williams believes it was not a good decision.

> The geographical layout at this end of the borough is ridiculous. You can't pick up DAB anyway so we're broadcasting to an area that can't receive it. I would never look at DAB again. It's money down the drain because we live in a geographical area which is not benefitting. (2011)

Digital radio is broadcast on shared multiplexes, which are usually commercial ventures owned by consortia of commercial radio operators. For this reason, DAB is most available where it will generate income: populous urban areas such as Cardiff and Swansea. This obviously

disadvantages Voice Radio, which is based in a rural, impoverished town and so is not covered by a digital multiplex. More surprisingly, DAB is also a problem for BBC Radio Wales. BBC national networks, such as BBC Radio 1, are distributed through the BBC's own digital multiplex but the service does not extend to the BBC's many local radio stations. In terms of distribution, BBC Radio Wales is defined by the BBC as a local radio service, even though it is the 'national broadcaster for Wales' (BBC Radio Wales, 2011). As such, it has to make use of commercial multiplexes, which are only available in 45 per cent of Welsh homes (Ofcom, 2010b).

> We're in a situation where we cover about 70 per cent of Wales on FM, and yet at the moment the BBC sees FM as an old broadcasting medium. DAB is unlikely to increase significantly and cover the whole of Wales so the main challenge for us is to be able to achieve an all-Wales broadcasting distribution solution. (Austins, 2011)

The shutdown of analogue radio in the UK was set by the previous Labour government for 2015, but the minister for culture, communications and the creative industries for the new coalition government, Ed Vaizey, rescinded this on 8 July 2010, announcing that analogue will not be switched off until 'digital coverage matches FM' (Vaizey, 2010). For Swansea Sound, DAB offers a higher quality listening experience than AM and an opportunity to improve the listening potential for both Swansea Sound and The Wave. Bowden believes that this enhanced accessibility has increased the crossover between the two stations, improving brand awareness overall. The most recent development in radio distribution is via mobile devices such as phones and MP3 players, though with only 9 per cent of people in Wales having listened in this way (Ofcom, 2010b: 90), it is very much a niche listening mode.

> I think it will become far easier to listen to radio on the device that you use as a camera, as a phone, as a social media device etc. and I also think there is something very interesting about this kind of wireless radio. At the moment it isn't really breaking through as a technology. It is still in geek-land and yet it is radio in the traditional form through which you can listen to any internet station in the world. I think it will probably become more prevalent as time goes on. (Austins, 2011)

Perhaps online distribution is the greatest development for radio. Unlike the other selected stations, the internet is Voice Radio's preferred and most successful mode of distribution. 'Online is the cheapest, with very little regulation surrounding it. If you step on people's toes you get a row rather than a fine' (Williams, 2011). The fact that ownership of online radio is unregulated and therefore not subject to an application process and licensing fee is particularly crucial for Voice Radio. The station has been unable to generate commercial income due to its rural location and amateur philosophy, since advertisers tend to favour a professional sound and mass audiences, which is incompatible with Voice Radio's ethos. The look and sound of the station can be very specifically tailored for the online environment. For example, a decision was made not to include any form of news programming, other than very local stories such as Mrs Jones's lost dog, which we mentioned earlier. Williams argues that listening online frees the listener to access a multitude of information, including news, via the same online platform. If listeners want news, they can find it easily. He points out that young people, who constitute Voice Radio's main audience, are particularly adept at multitasking in this way.

Another distinctive feature of online radio is that it can subvert radio's time-based, linear nature, allowing listeners to consume radio when and where they choose. While Voice Radio would very much like to develop a 'listen again' and 'podcast' service, the levels of staffing are not sufficient to support it. However, Williams does upload material to other sites such as YouTube and link to it from the website. An important advantage to this method is that it subverts the requirement to pay copyright and performing rights fees. Of the selected stations, BBC Radio Wales is leading the way in providing listen again and podcast opportunities for listeners to manage their radio listening. In contrast, Swansea Sound/The Wave offer only a limited listen again service, instead preferring to prioritize radio's immediacy.

> When there was a major fire in Fforestfach we were the first to tell people who lived in the locality about it. There was a gentleman who phoned in and told us that the only way he knew he had to leave his house was because of The Wave and Swansea Sound. That's a great testimony to the power of local radio and the way we communicate. (England, 2011)

LISTENER INTERACTION

A further fascinating dimension to this heart-warming story is that because of Swansea Sound/The Wave's engagement with social media such as Twitter and Facebook, the audience was able to interact with the station as the drama unfolded:

> In the old days we'd ask for letters to be sent in which might take days or weeks but now it really is immediate so we can respond to the audience and literally interact ... in a way that had never been possible before. There were listeners calling in, tweeting and e-mailing saying 'thanks' to Swansea Sound and the Wave. These new platforms allow us to do that. (England, 2011)

Social media has not only altered the range of ways in which listeners can interact, it has also fundamentally changed the nature of those interactions. Traditionally, the listening experience is central: listeners respond to something that they have heard. However, through social media, interactions take place without listening to the radio. Austins believes that this has important benefits in increasing engagement with BBC Radio Wales.

> I don't think [Twitter] is being used by the audience as it currently stands in terms of the loyal listeners but I do think it is being used by people who have Radio Wales on their radar. And for some people Twitter has put Radio Wales on their radar. For me, Twitter is a great opportunity to sell the wares, if you like, of radio because it gets it out to an incredibly wide distribution. (Austins, 2011)

Another benefit is the way that social media can also be used dynamically to generate programme content, as Austins explains:

> We interact with the audience because we don't have all the answers. We can find the best experts in the world to talk to but actually the people who've got the stories and make radio brilliant are the people who listen ... we try to get those stories which traditionally would have taken a researcher, and maybe a few months to dig out. Phone, text, e-mail and social media have made that so much easier for us. (Ibid.)

Voice FM uses social media to the best of its ability, given the limited resources available. Many of the shows have their own Facebook page, where listeners can 'chat' during the shows and the website has a live message board. Williams points to 'Mad Al's Saturday Night House Party' as a particularly good example, which attracts 'massive interaction, with a Facebook page, e-mails and texts'. All the stations, including Swansea Sound/The Wave, are grappling with the huge potential of social media.

> One thing that we've recognized is the use of social media like Facebook and Twitter is a key way of ensuring we keep in touch with our audience. Do I think we do it properly? I don't think we do it well enough, there are things we could do better. Our biggest tool is how we can market ourselves. Our breakfast show is doing a thing called the 'Diet Tribe', a diet and fitness programme and it's all being done via Facebook. That's the first time we've done something so completely social media orientated on air and I think it is the start of a lot more really. (Bowden, 2011)

It is interesting to note that the Diet Tribe Facebook page shows very little radio station branding and displays only the most tenuous links with the station. The interactions between presenters and listeners appear to be individual and personal. According to Austins, this shifts control of social media away from radio station managers to individual presenters:

> What do people interact with? Is it presenters or is it brands? My instinct is that they interact with presenters because that's who they build the relationships with. However, the presenters then have to be prepared to put the groundwork in. The one thing that social media does is that it calls anyone who is being false! It is real. People are having conversations and building up relationships and I think if you are on there you have got to mean it. That is work in progress for us because it is something that can be beneficial. (2011)

Bowden, too, acknowledges that the exciting opportunities presented by social media are exercising radio station managers as they wrestle with the problem of controlling the interactions between presenters and listeners:

> I think one of the biggest challenges to us in terms of social media is containing it. There are dangers in opening up your private life or when we invite fans' comments on sites. We need to make sure they are appropriate and that can provide a headache for us on times. We have to be careful that it is used in an appropriate way. (2011)

The need to provide an attractive online presence and stimulating opportunities for interaction are challenging for all the stations, and significant resource is devoted to it. Voice Radio is not able to dedicate a member of staff to the website, so it is the responsibility of the station manager. Fortunately, Williams has significant expertise in web design and the website is vibrant and easy to navigate. It contains much of the content that would be expected on a radio site: pages dedicated to shows and presenters and links to Facebook and Twitter. However, Williams also goes to some effort to ensure that the website is a useful stand-alone community resource, with links to relevant information and RSS feeds from the local authority and *Caerphilly Observer* (local newspaper). Swansea Sound/The Wave is able to devote more resource to its website but, even so, providing the additional content required can be challenging.

> We're having to produce more output . . . for our new channels. So for example on the website there might be some new sets by a particular artist who is currently promoting themselves and as you'd expect we will package these things on line as well as on air. In terms of production values it is leading to greater content . . . all to our advantage of course because it is enhancing the experience for the listeners on air and off air. (Bowden, 2011)

IMPACT OF TECHNOLOGICAL ADVANCES

The development of internet technologies since the 1990s has led to a revolution in the accessibility and distribution of radio. However, the last twenty years has seen a similar revolution in the way that radio is produced. Perhaps the most fundamental change is the digitization of media production. Production used to involve recording on quarter-inch tape and editing with a razor blade. The technology was expensive, cumbersome and difficult to use. Now, portable

digital recorders and computer-based editing and mixing have made the process much cheaper, more portable and more intuitive to operate. While this has had an impact on the radio industry as a whole, it has particularly benefited small-scale radio stations. The digitization of media, along with legislation to enable community radio, has contributed to the process of democratizing radio in Wales: the air waves are no longer the preserve of professional broadcasters. In common with most community radio, Voice Radio makes a particular feature of accessibility, providing opportunities for members of the community to play a role in their radio station (the oldest volunteer is seventy, the youngest is ten). Amateur radio, such as student radio, hospital radio and community radio, often plays a part in developing talent for the professional media industry. However, Voice Radio takes a much broader view of its training role.

> We started an education programme in conjunction with Caerphilly Borough Council, working with local schools. We worked very closely with the literacy advisers and came up with a programme to improve literacy and oracy through radio. The trainees do a range of activities including web design and 'going live' on the radio. The 6-week programme culminates in a final presentation at their school which we also put on the radio so their families can hear. (Williams, 2011)

The programme is so successful that it has also been adopted by the neighbouring boroughs of Merthyr Tydfil and Blaenau Gwent. It recently received the highest possible Estyn (education and training inspectorate for Wales) mark. According to Williams, the inspector commented that he had never seen literacy and IT skills put together in that way and to such good effect.

For BBC Radio Wales, digitization has had a major impact on the way that radio is produced, as Austins explains:

> It offers us a much more dynamic way of doing things . . . When Swansea City Football Club won the play-off final we were able to be in Swansea the following day to cover the parade live, having been in Wembley Stadium on the day. The technology we use now means that we can broadcast from virtually any location in a very short space of time. (2011)

Bowden recognizes that technological advances have enabled Swansea Sound/The Wave to develop a much slicker sound, but she also appreciates that it is crucial to be at the cutting edge for commercial reasons.

> I would expect [my team] to be going out with iPhones and iPads and things that are going to look great but also be up to date from a technology point of view because radio is technology at the end of the day. We need to keep up with it and do what is expected of us from a market point of view and that makes us a credible force in a competitive area of industry. (2011)

Swansea Sound/The Wave and BBC Radio Wales are part of larger networks, and technological advances have streamlined the process of centralizing the production and distribution of some content. UTV Media operates a commercial production centre in Stoke on Trent, England which produces most of the commercials and audio promotional material (such as sweepers) for its network, including Swansea Sound/The Wave. According to Bowden, investment in the latest technology can be made centrally at Stoke on Trent, which optimizes the production capacity across the network in a cost-efficient way. BBC Radio also makes use of new technologies to improve access to the wider BBC network:

> It's little things like having access to all of the BBC's programmes, radio stations, TV output – at the click of a button. We can pull off a clip in next to no time. When I started we were still taping things and if you forgot to do it that was it, it was gone. Now it is so different because of digital production methods. (Austins, 2011)

Community radio is normally more concerned with creating hyperlocal or niche content, and centralization of production material is less of a priority. However, there are clearly benefits in centralizing the distribution of some resources, such as expertise or training materials. While community radio is a relative newcomer in Wales, technology is beginning to be used for this purpose. Voice Radio is a member of the Welsh Community Radio Cluster, a portal that is being developed by the Welsh Government and the University of Glamorgan, to which all community radio stations in Wales can contribute content.

SUSTAINABILITY

Wales is facing challenging cuts in public services and an economic downturn, which will have an impact on all radio in Wales. BBC Radio Wales is bracing itself for a 20 per cent reduction in core funding, due to a freeze in the licence fee imposed by the UK Government. Nevertheless, Austins remains optimistic:

> How do you do what we have set out to achieve with 20 per cent less? That's a major challenge. [At least] we know what our funding is. I could tell you now roughly what our budget is going to be like in 2016/17 ... There are people within the commercial sector doing my job who can't tell you that. That's the one thing that the licence fee gives us. The BBC is there to be kicked at but ...it does have security and stability and on that basis the BBC is allowed to have such a rich range of programming for licence fee payers. (2011)

The commercial radio sector does not have the stability afforded to the BBC by the licence fee. However, Swansea Sound/The Wave does receive some support from its parent company, UTV Media. The company has a centralized approach to selling advertising, so all the stations carry regional and national as well as local advertising campaigns, which gives the stations some security. Nevertheless, according to Bowden, the biggest proportion of revenue comes from local clients. She points out that marketing budgets are often the first casualties when businesses get into difficulties. This has a double impact on Swansea Sound/The Wave: businesses are less inclined to advertise on radio and there is a knock-on impact on the stations' budget for self-promotion.

> If we have a bad month and no one wants to spend any money then we're in for difficult times ... Very rarely now do we have clients who are desperate to get on air tomorrow so I have to make sure there is a strategy in place to maintain revenue and also come up with new and creative ideas which are going to encourage clients and listeners to come on board with us. (2011)

Achieving sustainability is perhaps most challenging of all for Voice Radio. All community radio stations in Wales are dependent on grant

funding of some kind, often linked to social gain projects such as improving employability in impoverished areas. Ofcom and the Welsh Government provide small grants that, combined, could fund one employee per radio station. However, the grants are competitive and insufficient to cover core funding for community radio. In any case, Voice Radio is not an 'official' station licensed by Ofcom, and so is unable to apply for these grants. At present, it is entirely dependent on the income generated by its training activities.

> We spend three weeks battling to get the schools in, mostly 'cold calling'. We have them in for six weeks and then we're back on the phone trying to get the next one going. We've got no time to look for other things because we're constantly chasing money. If you don't get the school in, you don't get the money, you're shut. (Williams, 2011)

SKILLS REQUIRED TO WORK IN RADIO

For the commercial and community radio sectors, income generation is the primary prerequisite for sustainability. In this sense, an ideal radio professional will have business skills and abilities that can be applied to radio, rather than advanced radio craft skills. The community radio sector in Wales demonstrates this trend. Williams's background is in youth and community work; he has never worked professionally in radio. The founding station manager of Wales's first community station, GTFM, is a radio enthusiast but had never worked in radio; he was previously employed as a manager in the social housing sector. Volunteer recruitment at Voice Radio is self-selecting: anyone who wants to participate can do so with a minimum of training. As Williams (2011) puts it, 'most shows are live. You don't rehearse life. We have an "open mic" policy. You come in, you go for it, if you mess up, you learn.' Bowden, too, downplays the importance of what she terms 'traditional' radio skills, instead emphasizing the importance of business acumen.

> It is crucial to our future because we are only funded by our advertising clients so if we're not successful commercially we wouldn't exist at all . . . Business skills and commercial awareness, whichever department you are working in, are very important. (2011)

Predictably, commercial acumen is not regarded as a particularly useful attribute at BBC Radio Wales, since the BBC is prevented by statute from generating commercial or grant income.

> You really do want nosey people working for radio because nosey people get to the heart of a story. You have to have a hunger for a story. What will change is that people need an understanding of how people are living their lives. That awareness becomes much, much more important. There is no sense any longer that media is there to provide a one-way communication. It isn't like that now. It is becoming ever more a partnership and I think people working in the industry need to understand that and work with it. (Austins, 2011)

THE FUTURE

What are the prospects for radio in Wales? According to Austins (2011), 'With a 92 per cent reach? I'm not sure there's a media out there that can touch us!' Radio, the oldest broadcast medium is clearly thriving, each technological advance strengthening and broadening, rather than diluting the medium. All the interviewees recognize that the modes of distribution and opportunities for listener interaction are reshaping radio at an extraordinary rate. The challenge is to keep pace. For Swansea Sound/The Wave, the concerns are pragmatic: how to continue to generate income, despite increased competition from existing and additional radio stations that are emerging on new platforms. England (2011) is optimistic about the future: 'We will do what we've always done as a heritage brand and continue to use our localness along with a much greater accessibility.' The future is more uncertain for Voice Radio. The station's financial dependence on its educational programme places it in a precarious position and Williams recognizes an urgent need to diversify. He is in the process of applying for an FM licence, which he feels will broaden the listenership and increase the potential to generate commercial income. As he describes it, 'there's a light at the end of the tunnel, it's just that the bulb has gone out'. He recognizes that this strategy will require Voice Radio to develop a more professional station sound.

> If we go to FM, we'll have to raise the bar as you are then competing in the market. We'd lose the people who've been given that

creative freedom to come in when they want to and not run to any particular format. I strongly believe that at least 80 per cent of the volunteers would walk because they enjoy that freedom. (2011)

The tension between creating a sustainable radio station and maintaining an inclusive philosophy causes Williams to question the purpose of community radio:

I think community radio is a waste of time. Looking at the other areas of the world where you've got vast areas with no media, there's a need for it to fill the gaps. In this country, there's too much media already. There's a need for the output but it should be put in the BBC's output instead. All the money that's been put into covering an area of no more than 5 km on FM is vast and quite crazy. You could do the educational side of things without actually broadcasting. (Ibid.)

No matter what the future holds for community radio, it is clear to all the interviewees that radio as a whole has a strong future. Perhaps it is fitting that we allow the BBC, pioneer of radio in Wales, to have the last word on the prospects for radio in Wales:

We are creatures of habit . . . As amazing as the changes in the way that we consume media are and will continue to be, we still want basic primary things when we get up in the morning. That is, to know what the weather is like, what's my road to work going to be like and has the world ended! . . . Those things are absolutely core. It isn't only radio that can tell you that but it can do that, and more. It can make you laugh and it can tell you what's going on and it can make you think and it does it brilliantly. Those are things that will keep radio as a primary and enduring medium. (Austins, 2011)

Note
Voice Radio ceased broadcasting on 31 July 2011, due to lack of funding.

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