COMMUNITY RADIO, COMMUNICATION POLICY

AND THE PUBLIC SPHERE IN SOUTH AFRICA:

CASE STUDIES FROM

KWAZULU-NATAL

By

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PREFACE

"What are you doing here?" This was one of the first phrases uttered to me when I arrived in Durban, South Africa, in the summer of 2001. Upon being asked this question, I was a bit stunned, maybe even crushed. For months, I had been looking forward to working with the Graduate Programme in Cultural and Media Studies at the University of Natal -- one of the most prestigious media research centers in Africa and, for that matter, the world. I thought my research project was important. Having read much of the early works of American scholars of development communication (see Lerner, 1967 and Rogers, 1976, for example), I was familiar with the notion that mass communication played an important role in national development and democracy initiatives. Thus, I wanted to look at how one of the world's newest democracies was instituting a community radio sector. With media concentration accelerating and the view of media as a public service deteriorating in my own country, South Africa seemed to be an oasis to me. I wanted to be one of the few American graduate students who had studied the development of what I thought to be democratic, locally controlled media institutions in South Africa. But the questioning of my motives made me look, at least temporarily, at what I was really doing halfway across the world, thousands of miles from the place I called home. Why should an American care about South Africa, especially when the predominant view of my country among many South African scholars was negative?

In hindsight, I now see the validity of that question. It made me think critically about my role as a researcher and sharpened my acumen. My advisors and some of my colleagues didn't trust me immediately -- and for good reason. Many American scholars who have written about African media have looked through a distant lens. The venerable 'ivory tower' perception of academia notwithstanding, some works, at least in the views of some of my colleagues, have tried to place the continent's media development within a framework that doesn't capture the complexity of the local situations -- especially in terms of history, identity and struggles for representation -- that have characterized many studies focused on African broadcasting. Indeed, for more than one reason, my hosts had a legitimate concern about my desire to probe media development in their country. After several months, however, I knew that people had begun to trust me.

My saving grace, so to speak, was my strong interest in the development of institutions that were established, partially in theory and partially in practice, with democracy and human rights in mind. Community radio in South Africa fascinated me then and continues to fascinate me now for several important reasons. First, my interest in broadcasting as a facilitator of the public sphere, that oft-critiqued, abstract realm of public concern and communication, motivated me to explore radio stations that were mandated by national law to independently serve their audiences with relevant, local information, provide a forum for the articulation of matters of public concern and encourage economic, social and political empowerment on the community level. The vision put forth by broadcasting policymakers, NGOs and other stakeholders in South Africa conceptualized these stations as part of a broader national project of re-constructing the nation's media landscape after years of information control by the

apartheid regime. It all sounded wonderful to me. But, as a young scholar, I also wanted to know more about how this overarching view of broadcasting as a tool of democracy and development was emerging on the ground. Were these stations really facilitating and maintaining their local and national public spheres and, more importantly, did they really see this function as their *raison d'être*? My natural skepticism about such broad claims, at least in my view, gave me a serious reason to "be there."

That skepticism, however, did not come from doubts about South Africa. In fact, it came from my own country. In an era of unprecedented moves toward deregulation in the U.S. telecommunications and broadcasting sectors, it is quite easy for an American studying communications to be a bit skeptical. Recent proposals to the Federal Communications Commission have focused on letting the markets regulate both industries. This philosophy, which seems at least to partially guide the 1996 Telecommunications Act, has had its consequences. In radio, for example, large corporations such as Clear Channel Inc., have assimilated thousands of radio stations -- more than 20 percent of U.S. radio stations as of 2002 -- with a singular motive of profit making. If one needed any evidence, the recent words of Clear Channel Communications CEO Lowry Mays more than satisfies the burden of proof: "We're not in the business of providing news and information. We're not in the business of providing well-researched music. We're simply in the business of selling our customers products."[1] Clear Channel, of course, owns the largest number of radio stations in the United States. If there were ever a time for an American scholar to be concerned with the future of radio as a tool of democracy and public service, it is now.

Indeed, an important concern of this study is the role of media in a democratic society. Admittedly, this is also a broad concern. What, indeed, *is* the role of media in a democratic society? For most, democracy implies popular participation in public affairs and freedom to determine and discuss the matters of public interest. Media's role in a democratic society, then, would seem to be one of agency and facilitation for the articulation of public concerns. However, it is important to remember: what *parts* of the public are mass media intended to serve? As Hamelink (1992) and Altschull (1995) have observed, the situation of mass media within a setting of commercial relations, regardless of whether or not they claim "independence" from outside influences, challenges the notion that such media are able to serve the needs of all citizens in a democracy, whether on a local or global level. If certain 'publics' are served and others are not, are mass media *really* acting as agents of democracy? At what level are these publics best served?[2] What role does public policy play in helping – or hindering – mass communicators to foster a "public sphere"[3] in which citizens of a particular polity freely and openly discuss matters of public concern? This study attempts to examine some of these issues -- and one of them in-depth -- within the context of community radio as it has been applied in a particular region of a newly democratic society.

As part of the mass communication infrastructure of a democratic society, community radio has been widely recognized as having an important role to play. The World Association of Community Broadcasters (2002), the world's largest non-governmental organization dedicated to the development of community radio, says the medium serves "as the voice for the voiceless, the mouthpiece of oppressed people…and generally as a tool for development." In the case of the Republic of South Africa, the

"voiceless," for many years, constituted the vast majority of the national population. Under *apartheid* -- literally, "apartness" in the Afrikaans language -- broadcasting was a tool of state propaganda and oppression. However, the situation of broadcasting in South Africa has changed in recent years, as new constitutional guarantees of freedom of expression and nearly 100 commercial and community stations now serve as a complement to a reformed public service broadcaster. Indeed, the variety of outlets for independently produced news, information and opinion has never been greater in the history of South African broadcasting. However, the concerns and conflicts among these sectors, not to mention their respective struggles for financial solvency and security, have made the imperatives of democratic communication difficult to achieve.

The opening chapter of this study provides a cursory introduction to community radio in South Africa, its importance to that nation's attempt at building a widespread, democratic mass media infrastructure and the historical context within which community radio developed. In this chapter, the reader will be introduced to some of the basic South African media policy debates of the last century as they relate to the development of community radio and how these debates have transformed, and continue to transform, South Africa's media landscape.

Chapter Two reviews the extant literature on South Africa community radio. The theoretical approaches applied in each study are presented in a way that leads to, and introduces, the theoretical framework that guides the questions asked in this study. The notion of the public sphere, as conceptualized by Jürgen Habermas and developed by other theorists, is then introduced and critiqued from the perspectives of recent scholarly work. The theory, and its application to community radio, is then examined in light of the

policy directives enshrined in South Africa's broadcasting legislation, namely the Independent Broadcasting Act of 1993, the Independent Communications Authority of South Africa Act of 2000 and the Media Development and Diversity Agency Act, which is circulating in a draft form at the time of this writing.

The theoretical framework and rationale outlined in Chapter Two informs the methodological choices presented in Chapter Three. In this chapter, the appropriateness of the case study methodology is presented and justified within the context of mass communication research and other general sociological applications. Specifically, the use of the case study is explained with regard to its usefulness in understanding and evaluating particular cases rather than seeking broad generalizations. Because of the type and scope of this study, the case study is used with the intent of avoiding sweeping conclusions in an area of inquiry that is not yet well-developed. Because of the lack of literature or understanding of how South African community radio works, it is argued, the case study is presented as a useful tool to begin the process of identifying issues and problems that could be examined in future research.

Case studies of two South African community radio stations follow in Chapters Four and Five. Radio Khwezi, a community radio station with ties to the Lutheran Church, is featured first. A rural station situation near the village of Kranskop in KwaZulu-Natal, Radio Khwezi serves a unique public sphere that is shaped by a community of faith that is also a community of citizens. Radio Phoenix, which is featured in Chapter Five, was a peri-urban station that served the mostly Indian suburbs of Durban, KwaZulu-Natal. A community of interest station that featured cultural programming, music, news and sports, Radio Phoenix went off the air in late 2001. The

case of Radio Phoenix, as it will be argued in the body of the thesis, raises a number of issues concerning the main questions of this study. A comparison of both cases, in fact, raises some urgent issues in need of further attention.

In Chapter Six, these issues will be summarized and discussed in detail. The input of media policymakers and activists is particularly important in this chapter, as it adds texture to the issues raised in the case studies. Most importantly, the issues point to new areas of research that might be investigated by other scholars. Finally, a set of preliminary conclusions related to the research questions is presented. The notion of the public sphere is found to be important, but the way this notion was conceived by each station -- and the relation of these conceptions to the ideals of community broadcasting policy -- is found to be quite different. Sweeping generalizations are not sought here. Rather, the particulars of both cases are analyzed in a way that allows new issues to emerge for future research.

Endnotes

[1] Chen, C.Y. (2003 February 18). "The bad boys of radio." *Fortune*, 147(4).

[2] See Jakubowicz (1994) for a discussion.

[3] This term is used in the context of Habermas's (1999) conception of the "public sphere" and will be applied as such in the second chapter.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

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It still remains for us to learn how we can put our magnificent mass communication technology at the service of each and every branch of the human family. If it continues to be aimed in only one direction- from our semi-literate western, urban society to all the "underdeveloped" billions who still speak and sing in their many special languages and dialects, the effect in the end can only mean a catastrophic cultural disaster for us all.

Alan Lomax (1915-2002)

I. INTRODUCTION

During the last ten years of sociopolitical developments in the Republic of South Africa, a more open environment for the creation and maintenance of both mainstream and alternative media outlets has emerged. Radio broadcasting is one of the most significant aspects of the developing infrastructure of democratic media institutions in South Africa. Recent market research figures show that nearly all South African households own and use a radio as opposed to a television, which not even two-thirds of South Africa's population of more than 46 million people possess,[1] according to the South African Advertising Research Foundation (as cited in Barnett, 1999a). The context for this state of affairs involves socioeconomic factors, such as poverty and illiteracy, and health concerns, such as HIV-AIDS, which are endemic not only in South Africa but in the African continent as a whole. Studies by the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (Maherzi, 1994; Majozi, 2000), the World Bank (Siemering, 1997), and some scholars (Ansah, 1992; Boafo, 1992, 2000) have confirmed that radio is a vital tool for democracy and development in South Africa and, indeed, in most other African nations.

While it is true that a radio receiver is the only electronic media resource that is owned by, and readily available to, most South Africans, the institution of radio broadcasting, when viewed within a historical context, was not always quite so useful as an information and development tool for the majority of South Africa's population. Despite the medium's longstanding pervasiveness, radio was for a long time a tool of

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state propaganda and oppression. From just before the World War II era until 1994, when new broadcasting legislation went into effect, South Africans had no opportunity to seek a plurality of information and opinion sources on the nation's airwaves. Because of an undemocratic and xenophobic regime, repressive policies and overt manipulation, the realization of radio's potential as a development tool was arrested for most of the 20th century.

State-controlled broadcasting and the apartheid state: An impetus for a radio revolution

For nearly five decades, government control of radio broadcasting through the South African Broadcasting Corporation (SABC) was a stifling force that prevented the open articulation of social and political concerns on South Africa's airwaves. The nefarious policies of racial segregation and separate development known as apartheid (literally "apartness" in the Afrikaans language) -- a term now infamous in the lexicon of world history and often misused in the popular media -- provided the backdrop for a state-owned and operated mass communication system that indulged the agenda of the powerful few, largely ignored the realities of the masses, and manipulated everyone. A framework of policies that reflected the apartheid agenda and a strict enforcement of these policies combined to create an environment where the free expression of ideas was discouraged and often punished (Louw, 1993; Mpofu, Manhando and Tomaselli, 1996; Tomaselli, Tomaselli, and Louw, 1989).

Prior to South Africa's first democratic elections in 1994, the notion of open and democratic radio broadcasting was meaningless in the context of the apartheid state. As Tomaselli and Tomaselli (1989) note, the ruling National Party's mass communication

policies saw "communication ... as a one-way process which allows for specified groups

to be taught certain things, rather than giving people the opportunity to express their own

views and values" (p. 85). The separation of ethnic groups, as enshrined by apartheid

policies, was also reflected in radio broadcasting. For many years, the SABC's radio

services not only had separate channels and language services for English and Afrikaans

speakers, but also an entirely separate array of African-language stations that were

controlled by white managers. Broadcasting policies only became more strict and

repressive after 1976, when television was introduced in South Africa. During that year,

the student uprising against police in the township of Soweto, near Johannesburg,

demonstrated the power of television as a medium. After seeing its potential to spread the

harrowing images of rioting students armed with sticks and stones battling, and in some

cases losing their lives to, fully armed police and military personnel, the government

passed strict new laws governing the content of all electronic media.[2] In the 1980s, more

laws were passed to prevent journalists from reporting on organizations and people that

were banned by the apartheid government. In the late 1980s, foreign television journalists

were banned from the country entirely. These restrictive mandates would last through the

State of Emergency years of the mid- to late-1980s until formal negotiations concerning

broadcasting reform were undertaken in the twilight years of the apartheid state -- the

early 1990s.

  With the end of the apartheid era in 1994, the painful and complex reform of the

SABC -- the mouthpiece of the apartheid regime -- was already underway. Both the

television and radio services were overhauled in terms of staff and policy,[3] and the lifting

of oppressive press and broadcasting laws created a new environment of optimism around

South African radio broadcasting. To be sure, the transition from apartheid to democracy was not a simple affair. Pervasive inequalities among socioeconomic groups in terms of income and standards of living, intra-tribal and other ethnic conflicts, lack of employment and a persistent sense of disenfranchisement continued to cause concern and even unrest in many areas (see Kitchen and Kitchen, 1992; Magubane, 1990; Murray, 1994). Part of the proposed solution to these problems, at least from the standpoint of mass communication policy, was the licensing of a number of community radio stations that would fill in the gaps where public service and commercial radio either did not penetrate or had little resonance with the needs of local populations. As a former University of Witwatersrand mass communication professor and prominent community radio trainer puts it, "Groups that had been marginalized during the apartheid era, or operating clandestinely, [could] now take advantage of the direct, participatory communication with the community" (van Zyl, 2001a, p.18).

The significance of community radio in South Africa

In the post-apartheid years, the medium of radio is considered to be a particularly important tool not only for news, information and entertainment, but also for development and commerce. The sheer number of people who use the medium on a daily basis perhaps best confirms radio's usefulness and importance in South Africa. According to the South African Advertising Research Foundation's 2001-2002 Radio Audience Measurement Survey (RAMS), approximately three-fourths of South Africa's population listens to radio each day of the week. In almost any given week, a third of those listeners tune in to a community radio station (SAARF, 2002).

Community radio is a relatively new, yet vital addition to South Africa's media infrastructure. Although some stations started broadcasting illegally as early as 1993 (see Siemering, 2000), the first group of community broadcasters were granted temporary licenses in 1995 (Davidson, 1995; IBA, 1996). According to the Centre for Democratic Communications -- a South African NGO that assists a variety of community radio stations with training, development and programming assistance through the South African Community Radio Information Network (SACRIN) -- community radio stations are some of the most vital components of public communication in areas serving the periphery of South Africa's urban centers, as well as under-resourced rural areas. Indeed, the bulk of South Africa's communications infrastructure is concentrated in the major cities, such as Johannesburg (the home of the SABC), Cape Town and Durban. Community radio stations do penetrate these areas, but they are most pervasive in townships, peri-urban areas and rural areas that lack many of the basic resources found in South Africa's sprawling cities. Indeed, as activists with South Africa's Centre for Democratic Communications (2000) have commented, community radio in South Africa was essentially part of a large-scale effort to give people in under-resourced areas access to local information about things happening within their communities. More importantly, the community radio movement was aimed at allowing people to "have their voices heard within their communities" (p. 1).

Since community radio stations in South Africa were conceived as an outgrowth of public service broadcasting in the mid-1980s (SABC, 2000), their significance and influence have continued to grow. In the words of one NGO, "broadcasting on low power, to small areas, community radio did not look as if it would ever be able to capture

the kind of audiences required to take a slice of national advertising. In spite of this, they have made their mark and some stations are even regarded by bigger commercial stations and the SABC as serious competition" (OSFSA, 1998). The road to increased success, however, has not been easy. An excerpt from one case study of a popular Cape Town community station, *Radio Zibonele*, paints a portrait of the grassroots origins of such stations, as well as their significance as communication tools:

> *Radio Zibonele* was established in 1993 in Khayelitsha, a homemade radio station that was set up under a hospital bed in an old container truck. The container truck served as a clinic for the Zibonele Community Health Centre. *Radio Zibonele* provided illegal broadcasts, which reached the community of Griffith Mxenge in Khayelitsha (i.e., approximately 20,000 people) initially every Tuesday morning for a period of about two hours. When *Radio Zibonele* went on the air, it did so with homemade equipment using a transmitter, power supply, amplifier, a mixing console, and a small ghetto blaster. The total funding to set up the initial radio station was R2,500.00 (about $250.00 USD). Additionally, R 1,500.00 (about $150.00 USD)[4] was needed to run the station for one year, with only one weekly broadcast (Communication Initiative, 1997, p. 30).

Today, Radio Zibonele is a full-fledged, licensed station employing both full-time staff and volunteers. Without help from outside organizations committed to the ideals of community radio, however, it would not exist today. NGOs, such as the Open Society Foundation for South Africa's Community Radio Support Programme and the National

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Community Radio Forum, have been instrumental in the development of community radio stations like Radio Zibonele. Organizations like the Open Society Foundation have employed experts from Africa, the United States, and several European nations to assist in the development of community radio stations, as well as to conduct research that can be utilized by station managers and staff. In fact, case studies and policy analyses prepared by NGOs such as the Open Society Foundation, Freedom of Expression Institute, the National Community Radio Forum, and the Media Institute of South Africa are among the few recent documents to deal comprehensively with the myriad of administrative and technical issues facing South Africa's community radio stations.

Much of the research conducted on South African community radio, while useful in practice, focuses more on descriptions of the sector and its technical, management, and operational issues. In fact, little has been written from a theoretical vantage point about the social and political issues that are vital to an understanding of the greater function of South African community radio stations. One way to conduct more research in this area -- and, indeed, the method of choice employed in this particular study -- is to examine individual stations in their respective environments and how they currently function in the context of South Africa's reformed broadcasting system. Barnett (1999a) recommends that "critical attention should be directed towards the structure of communication, forms of representation, and modes of participation that particular media structures facilitate and sustain" (p. 298). This is a major goal of the present study.

Before discussing a specific approach, however, it is important at this point to gain a clearer picture as to why the community radio sector is important to South Africa. Even a cursory look [5] at the history of radio broadcasting in South Africa -- from the

beginnings of the union of South Africa, through the apartheid era, and up to the advent

of community radio's emergence in the 1990s -- is useful in gaining a clearer sense of

community radio's usefulness as a medium of mass communication, and, therefore, the

necessity of studying its development in the post-apartheid era. Without such context, it

is difficult to gain perspective on why the medium emerged as a form of resistance and,

eventually, reconstruction.

Radio in South Africa: A brief history

The history of radio in South Africa is particularly telling of the legacy of racial

politics in the realm of broadcasting. Although radio's early years in South Africa were

rooted in the exploitation of the medium by commercial broadcasters, this period was

relatively short-lived. By 1936, when the Union of South Africa passed the Broadcasting

Act, broadcasting had become a state-owned enterprise. As part of the Act, the South

African Broadcasting Corporation was formed for the purpose of broadcasting in English

and Afrikaans -- the dominant languages of white South Africans. As Hayman and

Tomaselli (1989) note, black South Africans, and indigenous languages, were not

mentioned in the Act. South Africans of Asian descent were also not accounted for in the

legislation, making broadcasting a whites-only domain. This development, in particular,

placed the majority of South Africans at a distinct disadvantage in terms of the benefits

that were expected from wireless communications.

While the issue of racial discrimination is vital to an understanding of inequitable

development in South Africa's mass communication infrastructure, it is also important to

note that the developmental stages of broadcasting in South Africa preceded apartheid.

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The beginnings of radio, in particular, were mired in a different sort of conflict between English-speaking and Afrikaans-speaking whites. Before the creation of the SABC in 1936, a privatized service subsidized by the government provided programming to white South Africans. An American entrepreneur, I.W. Schlesinger, founded the African Broadcasting Company in 1927 as a commercial alternative to the previous system of localized stations owned by not-for-profit organizations. The ABC's programming, however, was predominantly in English, which alienated many Afrikaners and led to a call by government for cultural preservation. By 1931, an Afrikaans program was introduced on the ABC, which led to a push for the development of even more Afrikaans programming. The government of Prime Minister Jan Smuts felt this would be best accomplished on a separate Afrikaans service, as the language had not yet met "parity" with English programming (see Hayman and Tomaselli, 1989). Thus, the cultural conflict was mediated in 1936, when the Broadcasting Act created the SABC and, eventually, separate services in English and Afrikaans. Of course, no provisions had yet been made for the indigenous languages of black South Africans.

The apartheid era and "public service" broadcasting

1948 was an eventful year for the Union of South Africa and, indeed, would prove to be a significant turning point in the history of the South African Broadcasting Corporation. In this year, the Afrikaner-led National Party (NP) swept the national elections,[6] clearing the way for an NP-dominated Parliament and the rise of the so-called 'architect' of apartheid, Daniel François Malan, as prime minister. By the early 1950s, almost the entire SABC Board was comprised of powerful National Party insiders known

as the *Broederbond* – a secretive, elite group of Afrikaners that were among the fiercest defenders of the apartheid policies. During this time, another radio broadcasting channel was installed for the black population. The government thought it necessary to reinforce apartheid policies in maintaining control over blacks. For the first time, black South Africans would have their own radio service in the form of Radio Bantu -- one of the longest-running propaganda tools in the history of the modern South African state.

From 1952 onward, Radio Bantu broadcast so-called educational programs and other content designed for black audiences. The service initially reached only a small audience, but grew over the decade to serve thousands of listeners in some of the more predominant indigenous language groups, such as Zulu and Xhosa. The catch, of course, was that the service was under the complete control of the apartheid regime-appointed, white management of the SABC. Broadcasting policies reflected the agenda of the apartheid regime in that they specified certain types of programming that were "appropriate" for the "Bantu"; these policies were further bolstered by the introduction of the Bantu Educational Act in 1955, which effectively destroyed any chance that equal education between white and black South Africans would be achieved. However, the initial lack of control that the apartheid administrators had over black-targeted radio was also demonstrated during this time. In fact, some historical accounts allege that broadcasters who were members of the then-illegal African National Congress used the service to broadcast -- in their native languages -- some of the earliest resistance messages in the struggle for liberation (see Tomaselli and Hayman, 1989).

It was only a matter of time, however, until the SABC would intensify its efforts to exercise complete control over Radio Bantu's news, information and editorial content.

Indeed, it was becoming less and less likely that a plurality of voices would ever be truly represented on SABC broadcasts, as language was used as yet another propaganda tool. White administrators with knowledge of South Africa's predominant African languages were installed by the apartheid government to monitor compliance along with blacks who carried out the policies of the apartheid regime (see Hayman and Tomaselli, 1989; van Zyl, 2001a). By 1960, services in seven of the nine indigenous African languages had been introduced. In the following years, the SABC worked diligently to expand its linguistic offerings while developing the most advanced system of radio broadcasting on the African continent. The multilingual "super FM" service, however, was not necessarily empowering. As van Zyl (2001a) characterizes it:

> The aim behind this new super FM service was to give seven of the nine indigenous languages their own radio channel. A first glance this seems a major step forward towards democratising the public broadcaster, but in reality, the SABC Board was simply following the principle of "divide and rule." The Controllers of each of the "Bantu Language" services (as they were known) were white and their black advisers were invariably suitably subservient sell-outs (p. 6).

The year 1960 was important for other reasons, however, as it also marked a dire escalation of racial tensions in the wake of increased efforts to implement apartheid policies (see Ngubane, 1963). That year, one of South Africa's early opposition parties, the Pan-African Congress, organized a protest against apartheid laws outside of a police station in the town of Sharpeville. Police fired on the demonstrators, killing 69 and injuring more than 100. This event also marked a turning point in the implementation and

severity of apartheid laws, which were enforced with vigor after the so-called

"Sharpeville Massacre."

In the 1970s, millions of blacks were moved to special "homelands" established

under the Land Acts, which were cornerstones of the apartheid project. Zulus, for

example, were moved to Zululand near the province of Natal. Many Sothos were moved

to Qwa-Qwa near Lesotho and Lebowa in what is now Mpumalanga and the Northern

Province. Xhosas were moved to the Transkei and Ciskei on the southernmost tip of the

country. In addition, under the Group Areas Act, urban and peri-urban areas were

arranged so that non-whites were isolated from the residential areas of cities. Large tracts

of land between white residential zones and black, Indian or colored townships served as

literal buffer zones between 'races' (see Lemon, 1991). Under the Pass Laws, blacks

were required to carry a passbook with their identity number, photo and occupation.

Those who were caught in a whites only area after certain times of the day -- or were

caught in forbidden areas -- were often detained and intimidated, both physically and

mentally. Atrocities that were far worse also occurred, such as the practice of

'necklacing' -- a torture-and-murder method that involved placing gasoline-filled tire

around a victim's neck, lighting it and watching him or her burn to death. Disappearances

of detainees held by the South African police were not uncommon.

In the midst of the growing turmoil caused by apartheid, broadcasting was

controlled to an even greater degree than in the Radio Bantu years. For blacks, specific

language services also targeted to, and centralized in, the homelands were the only

widespread outlets of mass communication available.[7] Each "homeland" had an

indigenous radio service that was under the control as the SABC and the same type of

propagandized programming; indeed, this was the organization that radio would continue to have well after the initiation of Radio Bantu (see Tomaselli and Tomaselli, 1989). All told, the manipulation of radio continued through the 1960s and 1970s -- when television was introduced[8] -- until well into the early years of the post- apartheid era, when the SABC controlled 22 regional and national radio services (Tomaselli and Tomaselli, 2001). The SABC would continue to downsize and spin off its holdings to the private sector in the mid-1990s, including the venerable Radio South Africa.[9] However, this was not the initial desire of broadcasting activists, political parties and other stakeholders who initially debated South Africa's planned post-apartheid broadcasting policies. Several important conferences on post-apartheid media policy would soon engage in a vigorous debate about the roles of public service, commercial and community broadcasters in a newly democratic public sphere. The provision for a plurality of voices in South Africa's ever-changing atmosphere of social and political discourse was indeed a tall order, as the ideological divides among various media policy stakeholders would demonstrate.

New commitments, new policies and a new medium in the post-apartheid era

The state of emergency declared by then-prime minister P.W. Botha in the summer of 1986 further solidified South Africa as an international pariah. In its attempt to suppress and control non-whites, the NP government engaged in even more rigorous controls on the press and broadcasters, even going so far as to ban foreign journalists. Numerous conflicts between police and the ANC's armed wing, Umkonto we Sizwe, continued to rage well into the late 1980s. ANC commandos also engaged in intra- and inter-racial killings of those who were accused of helping the apartheid forces. Violence

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and bloodshed in the townships and general unrest throughout South Africa continued to a point that Botha, who suffered a stroke in 1989, resigned from office. His successor, F.W. de Klerk, was elected in 1989. Perhaps more than any Afrikaner leader that had come before him, de Klerk was well aware of the impending destruction that South Africa faced without some kind of panacea to the tensions caused by apartheid. In a speech delivered to Parliament in April 1990, de Klerk called for a transitional government and a new constitution that espoused democratic dispensation among all racial groups.

In 1991, de Klerk released Nelson Mandela from prison and legalized parties such as the ANC and the Pan-African Congress. In December of the same year, the Conference for a Democratic South Africa (CODESA) -- a constitutional convention that also functioned as an exhaustive review of all government policies -- was announced. While media policy was a major topic at the CODESA negotiations, another important conference held several months before CODESA was announced. At this conference, which was held in Europe, the notion of community radio broadcasting entered the realm of formal policy discussions for the first time.

The "Jabulani! Freedom of the Airwaves" conference held at Doorn, The Netherlands, in 1991, is commonly acknowledged as the impetus for the development of community radio in South Africa (Rama and Louw, 1993). The conference, which was organized by exiled African National Congress (ANC) members who operated Radio Freedom (the ANC's shortwave radio service based in Tanzania) and a Dutch broadcasting organization called Omroep voor Radio Freedom, focused on the structure and function of the South African broadcasting system in the looming post-apartheid era.

The delegates mapped out a plan of how broadcasting would be apportioned in terms of classification. In their final document, the delegates recommended a three-part structure of the national broadcasting system, including public service, commercial and community broadcasting. In the conference's final document, the delegates offered some of the following general recommendations in the text of its final document:

- Broadcasting should be structured in a way that it is open to all sections of South African society.

- Broadcasting should have a public duty to help overcome the divisions and imbalances caused by apartheid.

- Broadcasting should encourage the development of a society and culture that all South Africans can identify with.

- Broadcasting should express the full diversity of language and culture in the country.

- Broadcasting should be democratic in that everyone can participate in it and see the complexity of our society reflected in it.

- Broadcasting should belong to everyone in their capacity not just as consumers but in their capacity as citizens who have a say in their country.

- Since Black people will start off severely disadvantaged in broadcasting skills they will not be able to be competitive in the market place.

- Market forces tend to discriminate against minority groups and promote the interests of the economically powerful (Jabulani, 1991, p. 23).

These normative ideas, which focus especially on the political economy of broadcasting,
feature much of the ANC rhetoric that shaped South Africa's early policy discourse in the
transition years of the early 1990s.[10]

As the debates over broadcasting policy continued, a number of trade unions,
NGOs and civic organizations played a major role in shaping South Africa's inchoate
broadcasting policy structure. Community radio was an especially important part of these
plans, as it was seen as an empowering tool for communities that had long been
oppressed by the machinations of apartheid media. As a medium targeted to specific
geographical communities and communities of interest, community radio was also
thought to offer the freedom to articulate development and democracy needs to a mass
audience (see Rama and Louw, 1993; Tomaselli, 2001). After the demise of the apartheid
regime and the call of the transitional government for universal suffrage and democratic
elections, the creation of community radio were enshrined in national policy, specifically
the Independent Broadcasting Authority Act (RSA, 1993), which will be discussed later.
Before the elections, however, community radio was already trying to find its footing in a
transitioning society.

In the final years of F.W. de Klerk's presidency and the second round of
CODESA negotiations, community radio first appeared in the Western Cape. One of the
earliest and most influential community radio stations, Bush Radio, began broadcasting
near Cape Town in 1993. The station started as a cassette club that distributed
educational tapes to some of Cape Town's poorest residents. It later petitioned for a
broadcasting permit for two years prior to its first transmission. However, the station's
organizers were denied permission to broadcast by the apartheid government. Despite

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government opposition, Bush Radio went on the air, albeit for only four hours. According to van Tonder (1993), "the first 'democratic' radio station in South Africa had its transmitter sealed by the authorities for broadcasting without a license" (p. 58). After their experiment in civil disobedience was quashed, the station's chief organizers were charged with "illegal broadcasting, illegal possession of a broadcasting apparatus and obstructing the course of justice" (Bush Radio, 2002). The charges were later dropped.

The Bush Radio controversy served notice that community radio would not be ignored. Other pirate stations continued to broadcast in other parts of the country. In KwaZulu-Natal, for example, Radio Phoenix, which is examined in this study, started as a pirate operation run by a local radio enthusiast who transmitted from his garage. Back in the Western Cape, other stations similar to Bush Radio, such as Radio Zibonele, broadcast in conditions that were less than hospitable. Training initiatives at this time were just beginning in the Western Cape and Gauteng. Radio France International, Deutsche Welle, the Canadian Broadcasting Corporation and several agencies of the U.S. Department of State established partnerships with community radio stations, while a number of governments and NGOs provided additional training and equipment. By 1993, Bush Radio had become the first African member of the World Association of Community Broadcasters (AMARC) and took the initiative to train other community broadcasters that would take their newly learned skills into South Africa's rural areas -- hence, the name "Bush Radio" (Bush Radio, 2002). The newly formed IBA, which will be discussed further in the next chapter, also continued its drive to license new stations. Indeed, these developments paralleled a rise in the equitable distribution of mass communication resources across all of South Africa.

The diversification of ownership in South African media began not long before the 1994 elections. Commercial interests were among the first to play a major role in the process, especially in the publishing industry. Black empowerment firms, such as New African Investments Limited (NAIL), led the way in expanding ownership diversity in the newspaper business, in particular. By 2000, more than one-third of the newspaper readership in South Africa were reading titles that had significant (at least ten percent) ownership by black empowerment firms, according to South Africa's Media Development and Diversity Agency (2001). Although some of these ventures were not immediately profitable and others failed shortly after black investment firms gained a stake or assumed majority control of their operations (see Berger, 1998, 2002; Tomaselli and Tomaselli, 1996), Berger (2002) suggests that these hardships did not necessarily dilute the significance of the message that new black ownership sent in terms of the re-distribution of South African media ownership. Rather, the movement to diversify ownership continued well after 2000, as black empowerment firms continued to engage in strategic moves designed to acquire and consolidate additional media holdings (p. 156).

Broadcasters were even greater beneficiaries of the move to diversify ownership. The community radio sector was the first, and greatest, beneficiary of new ownership policies after the first Independent Broadcasting Authority (IBA) Act was passed in 1993. By 1996, the IBA had licensed 83 stations throughout South Africa and 65 of those had managed to begin broadcasting. In 1995, the majority of these stations were initially controlled by predominantly white, and especially Afrikaans-speaking, interests. However, the number of black, Indian and "coloured" people that managed and operated

community radio stations grew quickly in the following year. By the end of 1996, more than 30 licenses had been granted to people of color (IBA, 1996). In comparison to public service stations, the number of licenses granted to community radio stations is quite significant. The SABC, which sold some stations to commercial interests, only accounted for the creation of eight new broadcasting licenses. However, the new commercial stations were important in terms of ownership diversity, as previously disadvantaged race/class groups -- namely blacks and Indians -- had a significant stake in all of them. In this study, critical attention will be directed toward a South African province where commercial and public service radio are particularly powerful, but where community radio is just beginning to take hold: KwaZulu-Natal.

Community radio in KwaZulu-Natal

The province of KwaZulu-Natal is the home of South Africa's largest ethnic group, the Zulu, as well as the largest concentration of Zulu language (isiZulu) speakers, which number over 6 million in all of South Africa (SOAS, 1999). In addition, the province is also home to a significant population of citizens of Indian descent and many of South Africa's white citizens. The promises of a new media climate, new policy initiatives and the addition of both commercial and community radio stations in KwaZulu-Natal have broadened the base of radio choices for all residents in the province. However, this was not always true, especially in the years immediately preceding apartheid.

In the beginning stages of community radio development in South Africa, community radio initiatives were not as prominent in KwaZulu-Natal as in other

provinces. Now that the medium of community radio *has* begun to emerge as an important part of the new wave in cultural- and community-specific broadcasting in KwaZulu-Natal's rapidly changing media landscape, the opportunities for study are indeed present. As of 2001, six community radio stations were actively broadcasting in KwaZulu-Natal. Services such as Radio Khwezi, which is located in the rural village of Kranskop, and Radio Phoenix, which is a suburban station located in the Durban area, were two of the most influential at that point in time. At the time of this study, these stations featured music, news, educational, cultural and health programs that are directed not at "markets," per se, but at specific communities of individuals who were previously disadvantaged and who are currently ignored by larger public service and commercial entities that depend on advantaged socioeconomic groups for which the majority of commercial advertising is intended.

Despite the development of community radio, however, it should not be forgotten that the availability of such a resource is still not a reality for a large portion of the country's population, including residents of KwaZulu-Natal province. According to South Africa's Media Development and Diversity Agency (2001), more than seven million South Africans are out of reach of an FM signal. This can be partially explained by the existence of media policies that are, according to some critical scholars, more concerned with commercialization and economic development aims than with measures designed to ensure a plurality of voices (see Barnett, 1999a, 1999b; van Zyl, 2001a). Nonetheless, those who *are* served by community radio stations still have much to gain from them, as they have an important role to play in South Africa's civil society.[11] In KwaZulu-Natal, as in much of South Africa, this is especially true in poorer peri-urban

and rural areas that have either little access to or little to gain from communication outlets that serve urban areas and the upper strata of socioeconomic groups. Indeed, the rhetoric of national unity through public service and market-driven commercial broadcasters still has resonance, but at the moment has limited import. The pressures of reorganization on the SABC and a new competitive environment for all broadcasters have caused non-community broadcasters to focus heavily on improving their bottom lines, which has led to less attention being placed on the development needs of smaller, more rural communities.

Reprise

Due in part to the current media policy orientation in South Africa, community radio stations have an important function in serving publics that are not usually of concern to revenue-driven commercial and public service establishments. Community radio stations have been allowed room to develop through participation in the SACRIN network and the National Community Radio Forum, as well as through the receipt of financial and technical assistance provided by various NGOs such as Open Society Foundation for South Africa, the British Institute, and the Gesellschaft für Technische Zusammenarbeit of Germany, and training provided by the Konrad Adenaur Institute, a German democracy and development NGO. While these organizations have contributed to the stability and long-range planning abilities of community radio stations, new challenges have already arisen. Indeed, the dual tasks of providing underserved publics with content that meets programming mandates and maintaining steady revenue streams are costly and difficult to sustain over the long term.

Despite their efforts to meet the goals that were set for them by the regulator in the immediate post-apartheid years, many community radio broadcasters in South Africa have struggled to stay on the air and, as will be demonstrated in the case of Radio Phoenix, some have closed. Financial mismanagement, employee turnover, scarce revenue sources, licensing "logjams" with the broadcasting regulator[12] and training difficulties are but a sampling of issues that have faced South Africa's community radio sector since its inception. The fact that only about three-fourths of the originally licensed stations are still on-air is a telling sign that the issues are quite real and pervasive -- and perhaps deserving of a broader, more comprehensive study. For present purposes, however, this fact simply provides some additional context for why there are concerns about community radio in South Africa and, especially, why the ideal of maintaining a public sphere for historically disadvantaged communities is a daunting task.

In this study, two community radio stations in KwaZulu-Natal -- Radio Khwezi and Radio Phoenix -- are sought as subjects in part because of the significance of the special population demographics these stations serve in relation to the overall South African population and the relative newness of the medium to the province. However, the primary reason for the selection of Khwezi and Phoenix is centered on the potential for learning from these particular cases. In both cases, the normative goals of community radio, as defined by national policy and development communication NGOs, were perceived in different ways. Both stations employed different strategies in their attempts to fulfill ICASA mandates; one station was successful in pursuing its strategy, but, ultimately, the other was not. In the chapters ahead, each the perceived responsibilities of each station in terms of meeting national policy mandates and, accordingly, serving their

respective public spheres will be presented and analyzed within the context of the following questions:

- How do South African policy makers and practitioners perceive community radio and its sociopolitical function?

- What is the perception of community radio's function within particular stations in a particular geographic area in South Africa (and what might be learned from gathering data to answer this question)?

- How do these perceptions and practice relate to established theory dealing with the purpose and function of community radio?

In light of the third and final question, a look at the underlying theoretical assumptions that motivate this particular study is a logical starting point.

Endnotes

[1] This is likely an inflated figure, as the South African Advertising Research Foundation's "Living Standards Measurement" (LSM) is often criticized for overshooting its estimates (see Tomaselli, 2001).

[2] The Broadcasting Act No. 73 of 1976 replaced the 1936 Broadcasting Act and laid out apartheid policies in strict terms.

[3] See Hulten (1997) for an excellent overview and analysis of the SABC transformation and Stenhouse (1995) for a case study of Radio South Africa's re-making as SAfm.

[4] One U.S. Dollar is equal to approximately 10 South African Rands, according to the average exchange rate value in 2001

[5] For a comprehensive history of public broadcasting in South Africa, see Tomaselli, Tomaselli and Muller (1989), as well as Theunissen, Nikitin and Pillay, (1996).

[6] "National," in this case, is used to signify "Whites only." Black citizenship and suffrage, of course, were denied at this stage in South Africa's history.

[7] This statement only takes into account mass efforts initiated by government, which consisted of radio broadcasting. In terms of mass communication in general, the alternative press was also a major part of the apartheid-era media landscape. See Switzer (1997) for an overview.

[8] The introduction of television really deserves its own article, but space is limited here. For a critical analysis of television history in South Africa, see Tomaselli and Tomaselli (1989).

[9] In the mid-1990s, Radio South Africa became SAfm – now one of the nation's most successful commercial broadcasters. See Stenhouse (1995) for the definitive study on this transition.

[10] See Mokone-Matabane (1995) for an example of the rhetoric I mention here. See Barnett (1998a) for a critique of this rhetoric.

[11] I may be criticized for using the term "civil society" in this context, as my use of the term represents something much broader than just the political definition. "Civil society," in this case, represents a broader and more complex set of interactions within localized public spheres – social realms that are not concerned simply with interactions and relationships between the private citizen and the state – encompassing the communities upon which I focused in this study. For an interesting critique of predominant "Western" models of civil society, see Hann and Dunn (1996). I will leave this debate to another time and space.

[12] I thank Jane Duncan of the Freedom of Expression Institute (FXI) for using the term "logjam" in our conversation, as it aptly sums up the problems between ICASA and South Africa's CR sector. I use it here in that context and will explicate its relevance in later chapters.

II. LITERATURE REVIEW AND THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

Thus far, the literature on community radio in South Africa is relatively sparse and largely descriptive. Although some individual case studies (see Communication Initiative, 1993; Siemering, Fairbairn and Rangana, 1997) and general overviews of the sector and its structure exist (Fransman, 1999; Majozi, 2000; Siemering, 1997, 2000), none of these works go much beyond either the raw empirical data or the normative models they present.[1] More specifically put, none of these works employs data to test a group of assumptions about what community radio should accomplish or what role it plays as part of a larger system and infrastructure of mass communication in South Africa.

Some South African scholars have produced theory-oriented studies on the subject of community radio, while others have produced issue-oriented works or pilot studies. The notion of community, as it is defined by international NGOs and South Africa's regulatory legislation was examined by Teer-Tomaselli (2002). In her analysis, which was based on case studies carried out by Cultural, Communication and Media Studies researchers at the University of Natal, she probes the so-called "normative and idealist overtones" (p. 233) of community radio theories that center on the medium's role as a locus of community empowerment and democratic communication. She questions the optimistic ideas behind community radio -- as espoused by South Africa's National Community Radio Forum, UNESCO, The World Association of Community Broadcasters (AMARC) and other NGOs -- based on her and her students' "empirical"

experiences within community radio stations. Generally, she is concerned that there is a "dual problem" for the researcher attempting to locate and understand the manifestations of any "participatory, democratizing potential" that community radios have. Specifically, her preliminary investigation focuses on the notions that relationships between community stations and their intended audiences are "oft-times tenuous and contradictory" and that "their style of operation, in terms of civic responsibility, financial responsibility, staffing and technical capacity, frequently is unstable" (p. 233). Her research project, which is in progress at this writing, will test the hypothesis that community radios which have stable governance, produce sound budgets that are adhered to strictly, and fulfill the legal requirements set forth by ICASA, are usually "the same radio stations with strong community ties, effective 'development programming,' sustainable funding situations and high listenership levels" (pp. 249-250).

The religious uses (Mjwacu, 2002; Feyissa, 1999) and political functions (Ndlovu, 1999) of community radio have all been studied in the South African context. Mjwacu's and Feyissa's works, respectively, focus on the use of community radio as a literal 'pulpit' that serves particular communities of faith. Feyissa's study of Radio Khwezi in KwaZulu-Natal province -- which is also examined in the present study -- also focuses on the socializing capacity and function of community radio as a locus of information, worship, debate and entertainment in an impoverished rural area. Mjwacu's study also examines the structure and function of a religious community station in Durban, South Africa -- Highway Radio -- but within the context of a peri-urban area. In both of these studies, the case study method is cited as particularly helpful to understanding the dynamics of community radio environment. Both maintain that the

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case study allowed for a more textured description and interpretation of relevant issues that emerged from both cases.

The applicability of community radio as a tool for human rights promotion and its function as panacea for the legacy of apartheid has also been touched upon. Using a critical analysis of broadcasting history in South Africa, van Zyl (2001a) attempts to demonstrate the democratizing potential of community radio. Through the lens of the apartheid media structure, which he both experienced and researched extensively, van Zyl traces the history of the SABC in terms of its position as a mouthpiece of the apartheid regime and its subsequent transformation throughout the 1990s. In doing so, he suggests that the early rhetoric of democracy that characterized many SABC reforms has not translated into responsible public service broadcasting. In particular, he cites the SABC as having an "antagonistic attitude" (p. 19) toward the community radio sector because of the revenue competition it faces from these stations. Van Zyl argues that this position ignores the reality of the SABC's advantage over community stations in that it has access to more resources, especially programming, and that community stations actually do a better job of meeting the public service mandates laid out in the IBA Act. In particular, he suggests that community radio stations, because of their locations and abilities to produce relevant programming, are better able to meet these mandates and should be supported in doing so:

> If ... institutional support is not forthcoming from the public
> broadcaster then the voice of a community in dialogue with itself,
> reaffirming its identity, testing its rights as a community, and
> questioning any erosion of those rights at an individual or community

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fundamental social significance of community broadcasting. In the face

of globalization, access to unlimited information, television-on

demand, the infinite variety of facilities and utilities that can be

accessed, community radio provides a unique channel... (p. 23).

Van Zyl's concern with community radio's democratizing potential, and its arrested

development, is focused not only on the public service broadcaster and its relation to the

sector, but also the policy concerns that overlay and govern, at least hypothetically, the

actions of community broadcasters. Concerns about community radio policy and

ICASA's enforcement of these policies have been articulated numerous times by South

African media NGOs. Recent work by researchers at South Africa's Freedom of

Expression Institute (FXI) have scrutinized the licensing process for community radio

(Dooms, 2001) and the impact that delays in licensing have had on the sector (Tleane,

2001). Both studies find that delays by the agency and the numerous requirements of the

license application process have frustrated and hindered the efforts of community radio

stations to get -- and stay -- on-air. Indeed, nearly a decade before these studies, Rama

and Louw (1993) had already questioned whether community radio would really

represent the "people's voice" or, rather, an "activist's dream."

The present study, which is informed by more recent empirical evidence, is

markedly more optimistic. In this context, the nexus between policy directives and local

station perceptions of those directives will be examined in relation to the performance of

two South African community radio stations in Durban, KwaZulu-Natal. Within the

confines of individual case studies on these stations, interview data gleaned from NGO

advocates, policymakers and government officials will be employed to add texture to the issues articulated by subjects involved with the stations themselves. The findings will be compared to the mandates of South African community radio policy. Specifically, these policies will be discussed in terms of their perceived function by those involved in all levels of the community radio sector. These actors' perceptions of the role of community radio in the public sphere will be compared not only to expectations of these policies, but also to the underlying theories of the place of community radio in the public sphere.

Before delving into a methodological discussion and the case studies discussed above, it is first important to understand the policy and theoretical assumptions that support community radio's general existence and its existence in South Africa. First, an explanation as to why the public sphere is a valuable framework for the present study on community radio will be presented. Second, the salient policy documents -- and particularly the Independent Broadcasting Act of 1993 -- will also be presented, contextualized and critiqued. It will be argued that these policies fall within an implicit theoretical framework that guides most conceptions of community radio as a tool of development and democracy: the idea of a public sphere. Finally, a survey of existing definitions and theories of community radio will be examined and critiqued with a particular focus on their applicability in the South African context. The major issues raised in this chapter are then briefly critiqued and summarized in terms of the research questions that inform the analytical framework employed in the subsequent chapter on methodology.

The public sphere and its application to South African community radio

The debates surrounding a free and independent media infrastructure as an integral part of building a democracy are nothing new, especially in the ever-evolving South African situation. With the emergence of a constitutionally mandated and protected civil society in South Africa, one can also recall the theoretical framework of a "public sphere": a domain of common public concern and open discussion of issues and ideas that are vital to the functioning of a democracy (Habermas, 1999). In the case of South Africa, it is important to examine mandates such as community radio policies, which are designed to protect a space for free and open exchange of information among members of civil society. Indeed, the applications of the Habermasian conception of the public sphere in the South African context are not immediately obvious without some interpretation. A brief discussion of the notion of the public sphere, and its application by several other scholars who have studied South African media, reveals some of the key components of this normative theory and its relevance to the historical development of South African mass media and the recent development of the country's community radio sector.

Although it has been criticized often for its "idealizing of a bygone and elitist form of political life" (McQuail, 2000, p. 158), the presentation of the public sphere in *The Social Transformation of the Public Sphere: An Inquiry into a Category of Bourgeois Society* (Habermas, 1999) contains a useful conceptual framework that relates to certain aspects of media development and history in South Africa. The 'transformation' Habermas speaks of, of course, relates to Western European history and, specifically, to the role reversal of publicity that took place during the transition from feudalism to the Enlightenment and beyond.

The political realm of the public sphere, as described by Habermas, was originally an exclusive domain of the monarchy and nobility. However, with the emergence of the *bourgeoisie*, capitalism and the eventual emergence of representative democracy, the public sphere took on a new form of "publicness" and saw new forms of representation, such as political parties, public discussion of common concern through mass dissemination of news and advertising. As Habermas asserts, because commercial relations continued to drive these new socio-political relations, the state took an interest in protecting the buffer between state and citizenry couched in the idea of civil society.

According to Habermas, the commercialization of mass media and the treatment of information as a commodity, however, only continued to grow. The need to resist the transformation of mass communication and public opinion into irrelevant and outmoded forums for public representation and expression, he argues, became more urgent and continues to be urgent today as a "linking of the public and private spheres" emerges in democratic societies (p. 231). The contemporary form of the public sphere, then, is dominated by the competing interests of the very institutions that helped to transform the public sphere from the exclusiveness of the court to the hypothetical inclusiveness of the social democratic government.

Habermas's tracing of history and his reverence for the development of neo-liberal and social democratic forms of government, which are highly condensed here for reasons of space, are admittedly contestable from a variety of paradigmatic perspectives. Some of the many critiques of Habermas are outlined later in this chapter. However, it is important at this point to mention that many aspects of Habermas's interpretation of the social transformation of the public sphere in Western democracies -- through this author's

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interpretive lens -- relate well to many of the shifts South Africa experienced throughout the 20th century.

As explained in the last chapter, the shift from British colonial control to a minority, Afrikaner-controlled government, for example, precipitated a transformation in the way print, telecommunications and radio were approached, legislated for and utilized for nearly five decades. This development, which was a result of a larger set of policies designed to socially, politically and economically engineer South African society, also marked a pronounced transformation in the conception of the public sphere. Several scholars have traced not only how this transformation has occurred in South Africa, but also throughout the African continent.

Berger (1998), using White's (1994) definition of the public sphere, applies the public sphere to Africa in a way that accounts for the workings of four paradigms that have characterized media development and its significance to democracy in the newer nations of the South. The modernization paradigm refers to mass media as an agent of globalization and the spread of the ideologies and communication technologies developed in Western countries (Berger, 1998, p. 601). As a sort of resistance to this trend, he argues, many African nations since gaining independence in the 1960s and 1970s have operated within a disassociation paradigm that sees mass media as tools to assert national independence and the development goals of the state. In recent years, however, the development of mass media in African nations has also, as a result of local and global grassroots movements, has also operated within a "liberatory" paradigm that sees alternative media -- such as community radio, newspapers and drama teams -- as a tool to reach the lest advantaged members of a society. However, Berger also states that another

paradigm of "negotiation and integration" is at work. The notion behind the negotation paradigm is that mass and alternative communication networks work in tandem to provide multiple spaces for the articulation of development concerns (pp. 601-602).

Berger's contention is that these paradigms do not only pertain to media development; they also apply to the role of media as a component to fostering a culture of democracy. In his critique of mass media in Africa and the South in general, Berger states that a "free press" or media freedom is too simple of a notion because it is not sufficient to explain the democratic potential inherent in media systems that often goes unrealized in many countries. In Nigeria and Zambia, Berger argues, press freedom is paid lip service and allowed, but the press is not effective in mediating the power of the state or fostering increased accountability of government (p. 603). Thus, alternative networks are left to contest the centralized power of state media and its production of news, information and entertainment.

Alternative networks such as community radio operate on local levels of the social and political realms and have the potential to counteract the disassociative tendencies of state media. If one accepts Berger's argument, the public sphere is a useful "prescriptive" rather than "descriptive" notion (p. 604) when evaluating whether a particular media infrastructure is democratic. Although media freedom may not be protected and supported by the state, local contestations of state information control by alternative, community media outlets work to challenge official interpretations of matters of public concern. More importantly, as Berger argues, neither media nor the state should be analyzed as separate from society:

On its own, the [sic] media may harbour illusions about its role and
sphere, it is located in a nexus of relations, and like the state, the [sic]
media is usually dominated by the more powerful partners, or factions
of these partners, within these relations. It is within this context where
there is an articulation between media and state -- via the public sphere
-- which helps explain the implications for democracy (p. 604).

Thus, the public sphere is not necessarily inscribed in the relations between media and
the state, but it prescribes what relationship *should* ideally exist. In other words, it is a
state of affairs that media and the state *should* work to foster. On the African continent,
where institutions are not always in place to guarantee the protection and maintenance of
the public sphere, this is an especially helpful concept. In South Africa, such institutions
have emerged at a rapid pace since 1994. The South African government and alternative
media have been -- if not always harmoniously -- actively involved in this process.

Barnett (1999b) finds that South African media policy and attempts to restructure
the SABC do fall under the rubric of the public sphere but do not currently do much to
expand or develop the goals that such policies set out. This situation, Barnett argues,
stems from the conflict among "pluralist" and "statist" notions of broadcasting that pitted
the desires of civil society groups against those of the ANC in the early 1990s (p. 554).
Barnett also argues that the current desire of the ANC to foster a public sphere through
the rhetoric of "nation-building" is at odds with its push toward neo-liberal economic
policies. The tensions among commercialized notions of broadcasting, a strong, central
public service broadcaster, and the idea of a decentralized network of broadcasters,
indeed, have clouded the picture of community radio's role as a facilitator of the public

sphere. Nonetheless, as Stolze (2002) argues, Habermas has denied that the public sphere is incompatible with the institutions of a capitalist order such as the one espoused by the South African government's current economic policy goals. Rather, he says, Habermas sees the public sphere as a mitigating factor within the liberal political and economic system. As Habermas (1997) himself has stated:

> ... in my model, the forms of communication in a civil society, which
> grow out of an intact private sphere, along with the communicative
> stream of a vital public sphere embedded in a liberal political culture,
> are what chiefly bear the burden of normative expectations (p. 133).

Thus, if one applies this scenario to media policy in South Africa and its expectation for community radio, we see that the normative expectation of community radio is to act as part of the "vital" public sphere that Habermas envisions. In other words, community radio's purpose and function is not nullified by its couching within a system of centralized public service and commercialized broadcasting. Rather, it is seen as an alternative voice within the public sphere -- a counteractive force – that provides a separate channel for articulation of public concerns. Indeed, the policies that South Africa has put in place with regard to community radio demonstrate this perception and intention.

Transitioning from apartheid to the building of a public sphere: Exposition and critique

From the *shebeens*[2] of the former townships to the skyscrapers of Johannesburg, a new public sphere relative to the new democracy of South Africa is in its formative stages. Community radio broadcasting, because of its viability in serving a large cross-

section of the larger public sphere, is an essential component to the continuance of this formation. More specifically, the smaller, localized segments of this public sphere are where community radio has a particularly significant impact (see Feyissa, 1999; Kaihar, 2000; Mjwacu, 2002). However, as discussed in the previous chapter, the historical development and concomitant struggles for representation in South African mass media serve to underscore the challenges that community radio stations face in serving their 'publics.' The notion that a 'public sphere' is an indispensable part of the 'new' South Africa is readily apparent in the overarching goals of building a culture of democracy and human rights that are laid out in the South African constitution. Nonetheless, it is important to discuss how this idea has developed in South Africa, especially in terms of its localization in individual communities, and how it might apply to the development of the community radio sector.

Despite the fact that the central planning and social systems of apartheid created a variety of separate (and institutionally unequal) "publics" in South Africa, civil interaction between these publics existed. However, the social controls of apartheid severely limited the nature of this discourse, creating a climate of widespread ignorance and fear, and quashing any notion that matters of public concern would reflect the views of all South African residents. Indeed, the concept of full citizenship in a democracy only applied to whites. As governing elements over public communication and the "public interest," the institutions of the National Party-controlled state were not entirely unlike those of the principalities, duchies and kingdoms that Habermas (1999) described in his historical analysis of the emergence of a "public concern" in 18th century Europe:

The domain of 'common concern,' which was the object of public

critical attention remained a preserve in which church and state authorities

had the monopoly of interpretation not just from the pulpit, but in

philosophy, literature, and art ...(p. 136).

In both societies described above (despite their obvious differences), access to

information, and therefore knowledge, were keys to power and social mobility. Media,

and access to media, was a large part of this dilemma not only in 18th century Europe,

but also in the nascent stages of the Union (and later the Republic) of South Africa as

well. Put frankly, the sociopolitical climate in South Africa prior to the early 1990s did

not require such access, as most were denied a voice and could not participate in a

democracy, per se, as full citizens (Tomaselli, Tomaselli and Muller, 1989).

In 1994, the year of South Africa's first truly democratic elections, the importance

of media access was, for the first time, of paramount importance. The Independent

Broadcasting Authority, which was formed in the wake of legislation that began to tear

the apartheid system apart, was charged with reforming the South African Broadcasting

Corporation – previously the state's propaganda arm – into a representative and

independent broadcasting service (see Hulten, 1997). Controls on the press were lifted

and the IBA was charged with diversifying media outlets in the form of commercial and

community broadcasting. As these reforms continue today under the IBA's successor

agency, the Independent Communications Authority of South Africa, the 'new' public

sphere that has emerged in the 'new' South Africa is one of increased cooperation and

integration. However, the hindrances of the past -- such as socioeconomic disparities and

a lack of civic education and information -- are not far behind and many are still manifested on the local level (Berger, 1998).

While Habermas's public sphere is an important conceptual tool for examining the broader picture of a post-apartheid media environment, it requires local re-examinations and re-applications to interpret the South African context. Indeed, the idea of the public sphere itself is also rooted in social fragmentation and resistance, which leads to the creation of *different* public spheres, each of which involve the circulation of concerns unique to a community. In the study proposed here, the task is to analyze how two individual stations conceive of what their domains of common concern, or their "public spheres," are and how these conceptions intersect with the expectations of government policy.

To be clear, it is prudent to mention that community radio stations are thought of here as services that communicate to separate, distinct audiences, which are creations of the media that serve them. Thus, the goal here is not to generalize the notion of the public sphere to the structure, function and policy of South African community radio stations as a collective whole (indeed, each station is different and serves a vast array of distinct communities). Rather, the unit of analysis presented here is at the level of the *individual* community radio station and its surrounding community. This does not mean that it would be sensible to assume that one can separate the smallest local elements and approaches from their situation in a broader social context. The policy framework that outlines the structure and function of community radio stations in South Africa -- not to mention expectations for their performance -- certainly applies to all stations throughout the country. The means of reaching those policy directives, however, can vary a great

deal from station to station. Accordingly, the purpose here is to compare and contrast two separate cases of stations that have attempted to meet policy objectives and obligations. The objective of this study is, first and foremost, to gain as much understanding as possible about the cases under examination. However, if the data and analyses can also contribute to an understanding of broader concepts, then specific information gained at the micro level might also be useful in later studies that attempt to understand the overall purpose and effectiveness of South African community radio policy on the macro level.

The rationale for better understanding the overall importance and performance of community radio relates directly to a broader culture of democratic communication that is has, in terms of both policy and praxis, been an integral part of the post-apartheid social order. Although it is true that media access has been formally broadened in South Africa, the socioeconomic inequalities engendered by apartheid are still palpable. This situation is made no less challenging for policymakers, especially since the public service broadcaster, the SABC, is still subject to the money and power of business interests because of its dependence on advertising revenue (see Barnett, 1999a, 1999b). Indeed, community radio stations are faced with the competition of the public broadcaster, as well as commercial broadcasters, in the area of revenue generation. While this issue is worthy of a critique from the levels of both the needs of a democracy and the needs of a neo-liberal economy (see Garnham, 1996), it is beyond the scope of this study.

Nonetheless, if media access is part of the creation of a public sphere where all are involved in the public discussion and debate of matters of public concern, the integration of all voices into the fabric of a diverse and representative media environment

is, ostensibly, a key focus; community radio is a part of that infrastructure. White (1994), for example, has stated that:

> Descriptively, the public sphere refers to that dimension of social action, cultural institutions, and collective decision making that affects *all* people in the society and engages the interests of *all* people in the national body. By contrast with this common, public sphere, the "particular" spheres are the interests of limited sectors of society: different occupational or economic groups, different social classes and statuses, religious or ethnic interests, regions, and local communities. All private and particular interests have a public dimension, and the public sphere must respect these particular interests. Each of the particularistic groupings may have its own public sphere, but at the level of society these are particularistic interests (p. 251).

But before drawing conclusions about this idea, all of the possibilities of a mass media infrastructure that takes account of "*all* people in the society" should be considered. McQuail (2000) offers several perspectives on media as a factor of social integration, or as a *centrifugal* force in society:

1. *Freedom, diversity.* The positive version of the centrifugal effect stresses freedom, mobility and modernization.

2. *Integration, solidarity.* The positive version of the centrifugal effect stresses the integrative and cohesive function of the media.

3. *Normlessness, loss of identity.* The negative view of change and individualism points to individual isolation and loss of social cohesion.

4. *Dominance, uniformity.* Society can be over-integrated and over-regulated, leading to central control and conformity.

The first two approaches imply cohesion among disparate groups in a population, while the latter two outline a "cultureless" society, where the media unifies identity. The former is an ideal in some situations, of course, but the realization of that ideal is not easily achieved. Questions of socioeconomic status, ethnicity, gender, and religious identity inevitably come to mind when pondering the possibility of a socially integrative media structure and the role that community radio could possibly play. It is, of course, no simple matter to break once-formalized barriers of separation between segments of a society, even when new norms of social equality have been legally enacted on a macro level. Indeed, South African scholars have been struggling with exactly how to conceptualize the 'new' South Africa since the process of reforms began in the early 1990s.[3]

Marginalized groups that do not see the notion of the public sphere as particularly liberating also share the struggle for identity. Curran (1996) has argued that the Habermasian public sphere, at least when applied to contemporary democracies, is really a mythical concept rooted in an outmoded context that privileges the elite of a society. In addition, feminist scholars have criticized Habermas's theory on the grounds that its separation of 'public' and 'private' is necessarily, or essentially, repressive in that it rests on the historical pretext of a bourgeois, male institution (Griffin, 1996). Indeed, a number of critical and postmodern philosophers have criticized the notion of the public sphere for

its "universalizing" and "utopian" tendencies (Baynes, 1994), as well as for its idealistic application by those who have heralded the technologically driven age of global communications (see, for example, Tehranian, 1999).[4]

However, as Baynes states, the public sphere and Habermas's project of communicative ethics are not to be discarded entirely. In the case of the public sphere, he states that it should be "broadly conceived as a vast array of institutions in which a wide variety of practical discourses overlap ... in this model of the public sphere, responsibility for the formation and articulation of public opinion or the "public will" is not localized within any one institutional complex ... but is dispersed throughout a vast communications network" (p. 321). Walzer (1992) has also identified the importance of the public sphere as a conceptual tool for envisioning the free and open exchange of ideas by a diverse array of groups and individuals with differing value structures, relationships and ideologies. In this line of thinking, mass media, when used for the purposes outlined above, are liberating institutions that help empower civil society.

From the perspective of broadcasting infrastructure, this notion of "overlap" seems to point to the separation of roles among public, commercial and community broadcasting. Through this lens, community radio stations would maintain the 'local' as an emphasis (i.e. maintain self-control as a local institution), but would also serve as integral voices of a "vast communications network." In this sense, community radio stations are seen as autonomous elements, but also part of the "integrated" fabric of a mass communication infrastructure. In this study, Berger's notion of media as *parts* of a society is of particular importance. Indeed, Berger's and Barnett's respective critiques of

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the public sphere as it has been applied in Southern Africa point to the usefulness of community media in empowering marginalized members of civil society.

The way to realize a socially integrative media structure may not be, as Barnett (1999a) concurs, through an overarching policy aimed at "large scale social integration" (p. 276). Rather, an informal network of community-based media outlets may be more applicable because of their relative detachment from the everyday constraints (although not from the regulation) of state-owned institutions. Community radio in South Africa reflects these characteristics of autonomy at present and, accordingly, implies a democratic communication network.

When using the term "democratic" communication network, however, it is important to clarify what is meant. Drawing on Baudrillard's thoughts on democracy and communication, Jakubowicz (1994) suggests that "democratic communication," which the idea of the public sphere assumes, is not really democratic without the opportunity for the users of mass communication (the "receivers") to respond to the producers (the "senders"). He considers this idea on the interpersonal, intergroup and "society-wide" levels and establishes a model that attempts to pragmatically clarify the concept of democratic communication. "Direct communicative democracy," in his view, is when communication is horizontal and participatory, e.g. interactive, whether it is interpersonal, intergroup or inter-societal. On the other hand, *representative communicative democracy* is a case where all "segments" of a society:

> ... own or control their own media ... or have adequate access to them
> ... for the purposes of communicating to their own members and to
> society at large. Few of their members need to be active mass

communicators in their own right. Still, the group's views, ideas,

culture and world outlook do enter social circulation at a level

appropriate to the group's size and scale of operation (i.e., through the

intermediary of national or regional, local, or community media), can

be known to the community at large and can potentially influence its

views, policies, or outlook" (p. 44).

In the case of community radio, which in theory involves both types of democratic

communication outlined above, the result is what Jakubowicz has termed "representative

participatory communicative democracy" (p. 46). That is, the situational contexts and

practices of both forms of communicative democracy are combined on a community

level. Because of this community-level orientation, there is a greater possibility of

horizontal communication between sender and receiver; the hope is also that the products

of such communication -- what is actually articulated -- will circulate into the mainstream

of public opinion. Aside from its intersection with the theoretical notions of community

radio presented later in this chapter, the notion of the public sphere is also well reflected

in the construction and content of South Africa's national community radio policy.

Policy, regulation and the public sphere in South African community radio

The regulatory authority responsible for the community radio sector in South

Africa is the Independent Communications Authority of South Africa (ICASA). This

agency licenses, monitors and regulates all broadcasters -- public service, community and

commercial -- and enforces the laws of the IBA Act (RSA, 1993), the Broadcasting Act

(RSA, 1999), the ICASA Act (RSA, 2000) and all amendments related to these

documents (see, for example, ICASA 2001e, 2001f, 2001g). South Africa's government funds ICASA, but the agency is independent of Parliament and the executive branch.

Based in the Johannesburg suburb of Sandton, ICASA was formed in 1999 and formalized one year later by an Act of Parliament (RSA, 2000) that merged the Independent Broadcast Authority (IBA) and the South African Telecommunications Regulatory Authority (SATRA). The notion was that, by combining all facets of telecommunication, the process would be streamlined and more efficient (see ICASA, 2001d). However, several prominent NGO officials have doubted that efficiency is what was really achieved (Bird, 2001; Duncan, 2001; Pollecut, 2001). ICASA's function as a regulator of broadcasting is indeed important. However, it should perhaps be dissected in a separate study.

The concerns expressed in this study center on policies that the agency enforces with regard to community radio and its role in the public sphere. These policies are reflected especially well in the Position Paper on Community Sound Broadcasting (IBA, 1997). The most concise and direct statement of government policy dealing with community radio in South Africa, the Position Paper sets out regulations pertaining to licensing, frequency distribution, community participation, content and numerous other regulatory areas defined in the community broadcasting language included in the IBA Act (RSA, 1993) and what would later be included in the Broadcasting Act (RSA, 1999).

The Position Paper "sets out the policy and regulatory framework for community sound broadcasting services in South Africa," which are influenced in part by hearings and submissions from a number of citizens, NGOs and community activists, as well as the "framework of international experience" (p. 1). From the outset, then, it is apparent

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that the regulator and the public are willing, at least in terms of policy expectations, to operate in a similar manner to the prescribed norms that international scholars and organizations have worked to establish. However, the legislation is also clear that the particulars of how community radio would function on a local level in South Africa are also important. The paper quotes the Independent Broadcasting Act of 1993, which formally established community radio in South Africa. A community broadcasting service as defined in the Act is one which:

(a) is fully controlled by a non-profit entity and carried on for non-profitable purposes;

(b) serves a particular community;

(c) encourages members of the community served by it or persons associated with or promoting the interests of such community to participate in the selection and provision of programmes to be broadcast in the course of such broadcasting service; and,

(d) may be funded by donations, grants, sponsorships or advertising or membership fees, or by any combination of the aforementioned (p. 2).

There are two types of "particular" communities for which licenses are granted. Geographic communities are characterized by "persons or a community whose communality is determined principally by their residing in a particular geographic area," while communities of interest are characterized by a "common interest that makes such a group of persons or sector of the public an identifiable community" (p. 2). These requirements are not particularly clear. Some geographic communities share many common interests, while communities of interest are, in part, geographically defined.

Thus, the notion of "community" itself is sometimes blurred (see Tomaselli, 2001). However, both licenses require the same type of community participation and programming in all aspects of the station development process, including the license application.

In response to the general concepts of diversity and openness that South African policymakers and other actors in civil society worked to establish in community radio's development, current policy mandates require community stations to apply for a license that is supported by community members. The framework set forth in the IBA Act (RSA, 1993), as described in the Position Paper, sets out three particular characteristics of the licensing process:

4.2.1 Transparency

The applicant and the community to be served must at all stages of the process be clear about what is expected of them. All matters relating to the application are to be dealt with in a transparent and publicly accountable manner.

4.2.2 Empowerment

The applicant and community to be served must be able to be empowered by the process by ensuring that all matters relating to the application and general broadcasting industry are understood or by as many members of the community as possible.

4.2.3 Simplicity

The process should be simple enough to encourage community applicants to present to themselves before the Authority. The use of

legal personnel for representing an applicant before the Authority

should not be a necessity but only an option (p. 4).

Community members are charged with gathering the support for a license and forming a committee that is represented proportionally in terms of gender and ethnicity. According to a guide written by Mphale and Lane (1998), committees must make sure that at least 50 percent of their committees are comprised of women. Whether this unspecified requirement comes to fruition in all cases is not clear, but, as ICASA Broadcasting Director Eric Nhlapo (2001) said, gender composition does play an important role in the license evaluation process. Once a committee has held community meetings, surveyed the community and elected officials, a donor must be located and transmission equipment must be provisionally obtained.

After this process, most stations complete their four page applications, which require hundreds of pages of supporting material, by drafting a constitution, establishing rules and procedures, detailing technical requirements, setting up a programming schedule and staff, and collecting letters of support. After all of this, a frequency must be applied for through ICASA and members must attend the ICASA licensing hearing in their province, which is held only once every four years. As Nhlapo (2001) said, hundreds have applied, but less than 100 have been granted licenses. The amount of work and participation required of community license applicants is intense and even some well-qualified candidates are not granted licenses.[5]

Once the license is granted, a community must meet its programming objectives as defined by law and in its application. This is where the implied notion of the public

sphere, as well as theories of community radio and participatory democratic mass communication, come into play. For example, the content requirements state that:

> International experience has shown that community broadcasters are only deemed to be authentic community services if their programmes are community-driven. Accordingly, the Authority will require that licensees encourage the active participation of respective communities in the initiation and production of programmes beyond phone-in programmes (p. 4).

The news and actuality programming requirements also reflect these implications, but in greater detail. For example, section 5.1.1 of the document, which summarizes Section 2(c) of the IBA Act (RSA, 1993), requires ICASA to ensure that stations:

> (i) develop and protect a national and regional identity, culture and character;
>
> (ii) provide for regular:
>
> (aa) news services;
>
> (bb) actuality programmes on matters of public interest;
>
> (cc) programmes on political issues of public interest;
>
> (dd) programmes on matters of international, national, regional and local significance (p. 4).

Both geographic- and community of interest-licensed community stations are required to broadcast news and information programming, with a special focus on the local level. A provision for local music development is also enshrined in the document, which states that music of South African origin should comprise 20 percent of the daily playlist for a

radio station. In addition, the document pays special attention to language, as it also requires languages that best reflect the needs of the community and the provisions of the license to be the primary languages used on-air.

Concepts such as "development," "participation" and the "public interest" are not benign in their inclusion. As the documents reflect, the framers of these laws envisioned community broadcasting as serving these functions within the public sphere. In the present study, local perceptions of these policies are sought to clarify the intentions and actions of two community radio stations that serve very different segments of the public sphere. However, the respective analyses of these two stations will also examine perceptions of community radio's role and function in the public sphere within the context of community radio theories.

Theoretical notions of community radio

Notions concerning community radio's sociopolitical functions have largely been situated in the discourse of critical media theory and its suggestions of alternative media outlets as tools of liberation and empowerment. Robert White's (1983) typology of the structure and function of the community radio station – and its objectives   is perhaps the best example of this paradigmatic orientation:

- It is an autonomous radio station serving no more than a single city with its immediate geographical hinterland, all with a distinct local political-cultural identity.

- The governing organization of the station is a non-profit, cooperative form with a board of management elected by the people of the community or by

users of the medium who are members of the organization by reason of a nominal membership fee or purchase of a share. Station policies are made in the general meeting of the community or members. Representatives of the station staff or representatives of minorities that might not otherwise have a voice may also be appointed to the board of management.

- Community volunteers play an important role in the production of programming and distinctions between 'professional staff' and ordinary users are played down. Every user is also a potential producer.

- The station avoids as much as possible commercial criteria and seeks support primarily from the contributions of users supplemented by grants from community organizations, foundations, etc.

- The major objectives are to encourage widespread community participation in broadcasting, provide an opportunity for horizontal communication between individuals and groups in the community, stimulate more free and open debate of community issues and reflect the cultural and social diversity of the community.

- A special effort is made to provide an active voice for less powerful majorities of the community and to allow minorities a chance to make known their alternative views and styles of life (pp. 4-5).

Some parts of this typology may work in practice, while others may not. The situational context for each station is the independent variable, of course. However, the goal for each station, in White's view, is to attempt to meet these criteria through local methods that allow and account for difference (p. 16).

South African scholars have also weighed in with their own normative/theoretical definitions concerning community radio's structure, function and purpose in their nation-state. Teer-Tomaselli (2002), for example, states that community radio is "usually considered complementary to traditional media operations and as a participatory model for media management and production. Community radio stations are tasked with the provision of local programming and the encouragement of maximum participation by the community in this programming, as well as in the ownership, management, and control of the radio station" (p. 232).

Van Zyl (2001b), who has been heavily involved in community radio development and training, defines community radio (CR) in South Africa in the following terms:

> **Firstly**, as the voice of civil society it is a necessary element in the maintenance of democracy in a developing society. CR becomes a watchdog over civil liberties and strengthens local governance. Experience has shown that human rights radio programmes on the rights of children, the rights of women and similar themes draw a vigorous reaction from communities through phone-ins, and write-ins. Through the work of the Truth and Reconciliation Commission a culture of human rights is slowly growing in South Africa, but the full implications of human rights for every individual is still a long way off. CR provides an opportunity for a community to engage in dialogue with itself, to voice its concerns and to strive for social justice for all.
> **Secondly**, CR has the specific role of providing educational and

informational programmes to a resource-poor community which
facilitates training and developmental workshops. It can interact with
schools and with adult education centres to provide resource materials;
in fact, CR is ideally placed to play a much greater role in adult
education in South Africa.

Thirdly, it provides entertaining music, news and documentary
programmes that the community wants (p. 1).

In van Zyl's definition, participation is implied by the notion of a community's
"engage[ment] in dialogue with itself," but it is not laid out in explicit terms. Rather, he
chooses to focus on the macrosocial benefits of community radio, especially in terms of
the medium's role in fostering a culture of human rights, and bolstering community
development efforts. This definition is crafted in a similar manner to van Cuilenberg and
McQuail's (as cited in McQuail, 2000) concept of public service broadcasting, as its
focus on journalistic independence, human rights, a plurality of voices and community
accountability demonstrates.

Van Cuilenberg and McQuail's model is helpful in locating and understanding
community radio's place in the communication theory landscape, as it establishes a
similar typology for the functioning of broadcasting in service of the public good,
especially in terms of its emphasis on diversity and accountability. In their particular
model, the ultimate goal of media policy is democracy. However, they maintain that a
series of intermediate goals, such as the independence of the media outlet from
government and private monopoly, the accountability of the outlet to society and its
audiences/users, and political and social diversity, must first be met. This directive is

somewhat similar to White's (1983) general typology for community radio, which also calls for independence from external influence and control, representation of community diversity and "horizontal" communication among community members.

Reprise of issues and research questions

An arbitrarily unifying, centrally controlled media infrastructure, as history has demonstrated time and time again, cannot be expected to unify disparate groups, regardless of its pervasiveness (see Hachten, 1999). Rather, an open and diverse media infrastructure, which offers a plurality of choices to a plurality of listeners, is an alternative that allows the expression of cultural identities within smaller and larger public spheres. Community radio in South Africa is particularly well equipped to serve in the capacity outlined above, but has considerably less financial support than commercial and public service outlets. One reason for this is that community radio programming, whether news content, dramas, or musical performance, is largely aimed at groups that are often not "target markets" for advertisers or underwriters. Thus, representation in the commercial world is difficult to obtain for groups that may not comprise a consumer base.

While other forms of media have the same function, it is the medium of radio that has been most prevalent and influential in South Africa. The fact that South Africa did not have television access until 1976 has something to do with this state of affairs (see Maingard, 1997). However, it is both the low rate of literacy and high rate of poverty among the majority of its population (both due to institutionalized inequality) that have played major roles in creating such a situation. In assessing strategies to deal with the

social responsibilities of serving the public, community radio station managers and planners have had to tackle problems that stem from the overwhelming changes of the last two decades.

Radio, as a medium, is a source of information and entertainment that many South Africans depend on out of necessity. As mentioned earlier, because of its reach and accessibility, radio is the mainstay for most South Africans. Literacy is another issue that cannot be ignored: with literacy rates still extremely low for a large portion of the South African population, radio serves an audience that would otherwise be unable to consume print and other visual media forms. The research problems presented here are urgent in light of the new and fragile social and political relations of a new democratic civil society in South Africa. In this regard, the research endeavor is seen as having a function of activism as well.

Community radio, in particular, serves as a direct outlet for specific localities to express not just the culture of their predominant ethnic groups as a whole, but also the essential symbols of their specific cultural geographies -- a sort of documentation of items that are personally and socially significant to members of a particular community. In the study proposed here, the analysis will be focused on the ability of two South African community radio stations to meet the demands of policy mandates in this regard. Indeed, there is a public interest, from both government and civil society at large, in community radio's success. In order to gauge the perceptions of at least two stations on these matters, however, it is important to once again ask the following questions:

- How do South African policy makers and practitioners perceive community radio and its function in the public sphere?

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- What is the perception of community radio's function within particular stations in a particular geographic area in South Africa (and what might be learned from gathering data to answer this question)?

- How do these perceptions and practice relate to established theory dealing with the purpose and function of community radio?

In the next chapter, a methodological framework for answering these questions will be presented and critiqued from the theoretical standpoint outlined in the present chapter.

Endnotes

[1] Fransman's (1999) article is perhaps closest to establishing a model of democracy within the community radio station. However, it does not test particular theoretical assumptions, nor does it cite any particular empirical data that support assertions made in the text. The other studies cited are quite helpful for gaining an understanding of community radio and its purpose in South Africa. Nonetheless, they offer little in the way of interpretive analysis.

[2] "Shebeens" are small bars, usually located in the back of someone's home, that are commonly found in South Africa's townships. Female entrepreneurs known as "Shebeen Queens" often ran these establishments, which were illegal under apartheid (and are still illegal today if unlicensed). The shebeens were pragmatic institutions in that they were the only places where non-whites could gather to drink beer or alcohol during apartheid. They were also symbolic sites of resistance, as they represented a challenge to the authority of the apartheid regime. Today, many shebeens are licensed and serve as cultural tourism attractions on the numerous township tours now offered in peri-urban areas throughout South Africa.

[3] See Chapman (1998) for a postmodernist take on this subject.

[4] Inayatullah (1998) also implicitly criticizes this notion in a scathing critique of the 'new technologies.'

[5] See Mphale and Lane (1998) for an excellent description of the licensing process or visit the "Broadcasting" section of http://www.icasa.co.za for more official information.

III. METHODOLOGY

In the following chapters, two case studies focused on two KwaZulu-Natal community radio stations will be presented in the hope that insights on issues and possible answers to questions outlined in the previous chapter can be obtained. Accordingly, textured case studies of the two stations will be constructed through the use of field interviews, observation notes and primary source documents. Data from personal interviews with the stations' management and staff will be an integral part of both studies, as will additional data from NGO and other policy activists who are intimately familiar with the cases under study. The radio stations under examination -- Radio Khwezi, a station that serves primarily Zulu-speaking listeners, and Radio Phoenix, which serves South Africans of Indian descent -- are both seminal stations in the community radio movement in KwaZulu-Natal but are quite different from one another. This state of affairs makes both stations attractive subjects for comparison. Both case studies, as explained below, will be essential to the overall narrative of the thesis, as they will lend grounding to some of the theoretical literature on the subject of community radio, for which a significant but small amount of empirical evidence has been produced.

Rationale for case study

Case studies are "not a methodological choice, but a choice of object to be studied. We choose to study the case" (Stake, 1998, p. 86). The point of the case study, then, is to find out -- as specifically as possible -- what is happening in a particular

situation (and in what context). The case study is a methodology, per se, but it is not intended to produce a broad outline of general trends. Rather, it is meant to get to the bottom of situations in specific instances. In this study, the main interest is the performance of two South African community radio stations in relation to theoretical notions of community radio and democratic communication, as well as national broadcasting policies. Without specific knowledge of cases where policy has been applied, one would find it difficult to judge whether those policies have succeeded or failed in a given situation. Thus, for an analysis of performance on both ends -- policy and practice -- specific data is needed from cases that are exemplary of these successes and failures. The best way to approach such an analysis in the two case studies proposed here is through what Stake (1995, 1998) calls an "intrinsic" case study. This approach allows for a focus on what is happening in the particular cases under examination:

> It is not unusual for the choice of case to be no "choice" at all.
>
> Sometimes, we are given Θ [the case], even obligated to take it as the
>
> object to study. The case is given ... We are interested in it, not
>
> because by studying it we learn about other cases or about some
>
> general problem, but because we need to learn about that particular
>
> case. We have an intrinsic interest in the case, and we may call our
>
> work *intrinsic case study*" (Stake, 1995, p. 3).

The cases that will be reviewed here are interesting in their own rights for a number of reasons. One of the most important reasons is that they reflect many of the emerging problems and urgent issues under debate among community radio scholars, activists and practitioners with regard to community radio policy (see, for example, Feyissa, 1999;

Majozi, 2000; Mjwacu, 2002; Ndlovu, 1999; Siemering, 1997, 2000; Teer-Tomaselli, 2002). Seen from this perspective, the cases under examination here could, and perhaps will, be valuable to an evaluation of the more "general" problems affecting the sector and the potential solutions to those problems.

Design, data sources, collection systems and analysis

The following case studies on Radio Khwezi and Radio Phoenix were constructed in accordance with stages of development identified by several leading case studies theorists and practitioners (Denzin, 1984; Stake, 1995, 1998; Tellis, 1997; Yin, 1994). The units of analysis in each study are the stations themselves, as perceived by those who operate them. The case studies were designed to examine several distinct areas related to the research questions, including:

- introductory information intended to provide a sense of "place" or context for the station

- an explanation of the origins and history of the station

- the central purposes and functions perceived by the station; the structure, function and functioning of the station as perceived by those work at the station

- the station's programming and public service activities and perceptions of those elements

- relations with the Independent Communications Authority of South Africa

- a brief, evaluative summary of the station that summarizes what was learned in the preceding sections of the case study

In each case study, as well as the final chapter that summarizes the studies, the viewpoints of the primary actors or participants are given high priority. The station managers and staff are, of course, the primary actors because they represent and interpret the units of analysis. However, the viewpoints of other related actors, such as scholars, NGO activists and regulatory officials who have interacted with both stations, are also used as authoritative sources who support assertions made by the primary actors and the author. My choice to construct the studies in this manner reflects my desire to include and consider "not just the voice and perspective of the actors, but also of the relevant groups of actors and the interactions between them" (Tellis, 1997). The privileging of primary and related actors also serves to outline patterns or common perspectives held among all those involved with both stations. Through the case study design outlined above, these patterns are allowed to emerge in order to establish reliability. The construct validity of each case is established through the use of multiple sources of data (Yin, 1994). The use of multiple sources, which has been well-established in the qualitative research literature (Denzin, 1984; Stake, 1995, 1998; Yin, 1989, 1993, 1994), is also intended to provide for triangulation of data or a reaffirming of interpretations offered by more than one source.

All of the primary sources used in this study, as in many other case studies (see Tellis, 1997), are gleaned from a variety of primary sources, including written documentation as well as open-ended and semi-structured interviews (see Appendix F for sample questions). The written textual data was analyzed, interpreted and physically incorporated into the text by the researcher, while the interview data was extracted using the Nudist-NVivo qualitative analysis software program and worked into the case studies. The use of NVivo was employed only for the purposes of coding paragraphs numerically

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and searching text keywords from the personal interviews. Keywords used in searching the text included the terms "community," "public," "democracy," "participation," "development," "language," and "management." These themes were determined by the researcher to have the greatest degree of importance in relation to the research questions. In addition, manual text searches were employed to extract text that was missed by NVivo-generated text searches. Manual text searches were executed by numerically coding paragraphs of interview transcripts and searching each of these paragraphs for other relevant issue keywords, such as "ICASA," "regulator" and "programming." In addition, extended interpretations of key terms and concepts that were offered by primary and related actors were also extracted from each transcript.

Written documentation used as source material includes government policy documents such as the Triple Inquiry Report, the IBA Act of 1993, The Position Paper on Community Sound Broadcasting of 1997 and recent ICASA regulatory papers. For the case studies, source material is drawn from the most recent ICASA license applications and monitoring reports filed for Radio Khwezi and Radio Phoenix, as well as internal documents obtained from both stations. In addition, newspaper articles, NGO studies and articles gleaned from Internet research are also used to add texture to the case studies. These documents were searched in a manner identical to the method used for the interview transcript searches.

Human data used in this study consists of approximately 14 hours of taped, semi-structured personal interviews administered to managers and employees of both Radio Phoenix and Radio Khwezi as well as ICASA regulators, NGO activists and scholars who have had intimate contact with the issues examined here. Their statements helped shape

the theoretical framework and methodological approach employed in this thesis. My use of these statements was pre-approved by the subjects on an ethics form that was distributed prior to the interview. The ethics form specifically outlined the structure of the interview, how the data would be used, and contained an option of anonymity. None of the subjects interviewed chose to remain anonymous; therefore, real names are used in reference to each subject. This approach was approved by the Oklahoma State University Institutional Review Board (see Appendix G).

Interpretation and application of the case study

The intrinsic case study approach does not feign broad generalizability nor is it intended to do so (Stake, 1995). However, it does not preclude the possibility that information learned about the two cases presented in the present study could better inform, or even challenge, larger theoretical or practical issues (Yin, 1994). In this instance, theoretical issues involving models of community radio and its function in the public sphere are examined in light of practical issues that have emerged from two South African community radio stations in KwaZulu-Natal province. Accordingly, the performance of these particular stations in relation to the policy expectations of the broadcasting regulator is analyzed in an attempt to facilitate this empirical test. But this does not mean that the local should be separated from larger issues that affect the entire sector. Put differently: an intrinsic approach is the best strategy for the kind of analysis presented in this thesis, but the applicability of the information learned about the cases presented in later chapters is not to be construed as irrelevant to broader issues and debates surrounding South African community radio.

In the realm of media studies, the case study is a particularly important tool when one considers the relative lack of success and applicability that broadly generalized studies of media performance have had over the lifespan of mass communication study. What is sought here is a chance for details and complexities of two particular cases to emerge. As McQuail (1992) suggests:

> Broad generalization, like universal attention to media supply, is an
> increasingly unrealistic goal, given the scale of the task and the
> multiplicity of media experience. Only case studies can deal with the
> complexities involved in looking at structure, content and audience
> together (p. 313).

Indeed, this is what the case studies here are attempting to make: a nuanced evaluation of individualized experiences. Unlike an audience-centered reception study, however, the purpose here is to evaluate the performance of these stations in relation to the policy mandates under which they must operate and theoretical constructs that they allegedly resemble. Although the data from the case studies could also be used to inform and critique policy and suggest whether supposedly applicable theory does, in fact, "fit," these problems are left to another researcher. Indeed, the case study does not allow one to reliably generalize to other cases (an oft-heard critique). For this to occur, one would have to accept the notion that generalization is acceptable in the first place. The paradigmatic orientation of this study does not accept such a notion and, therefore, does not operate under the assumption that the 'truth' in these cases is identical to that in others.

Furthermore, the use of case study underscores another important point about the use of qualitative research in the South African context. As Obeng-Quaidoo (1987), Ansah (1994) and other scholars have commented in recent studies (see Phiri, 2000), the use of survey research does not always allow for the complexity of interpretation to emerge from situations where American or European communication theory is being examined in an African context, nor are the same uses and values of communication tools perceived (Obijiofor, 1998; Ngwainmbi, 1999, 2000). Although South Africa does contain many 'first world' elements of its communication infrastructure, the distribution of the benefits of that infrastructure, as discussed earlier, have not been equal. Thus, differing populations in South Africa do not necessarily articulate the same conception of the purpose and function of communication. Community radio listeners, for example, are among those who have perhaps benefited least from public and commercial broadcasting in South Africa. A case study format, then, allows a broader canvas, so to speak, or space for the articulation of different concerns and conceptions regarding communication values. It is hoped that this will become clear in the following chapters.

(Apologia): The 'lens' of the researcher and claims to knowledge

In Chapters Four and Five, case studies of two community radio stations in KwaZulu-Natal Province are presented and interpreted with regard to the research questions presented in the previous two chapters. In Chapter Five, these capsule studies are analyzed within the theoretical framework discussed in Chapter Two. However, this is not, as Stake (1995) has written, the kind of 'clean' process that one would expect to find in a quantitative study. The issues presented in the case studies and the analysis

thereof are results of the multi-dimensional task of one researcher with a unique interpretive lens, a unique value system and a unique personal and academic background. The issues that are important to one researcher, after all, may not be the same as a different researcher examining the same subject material. In the following chapters, it will become evident to the reader that my study is quite exploratory, experimental in its particular design and approach, and influenced by my own interpretive lens.

As I mentioned in the Preface, my personal background as a broadcaster and mass communication researcher -- and my point of origin as an American whose views have been shaped by a particular process of social and political acculturation -- determine the theoretical and methodological choices I have chosen to use for the subject material. Theorists elsewhere in the literature have outlined the problem of bias in case study research in terms of both the researcher's interpretation and the statements of the actors who offer their interpretations to the researcher (see Stake, 1995; Tellis, 1997; Yin, 1994).

I am confident that these choices are well informed by South African scholars who have had close contact with the issues that face South African community radio. As a young scholar, I am aware that there are issues that I may have overlooked and interpretations that may seem incomplete. I firmly believe, however, that these kinds of mistakes have helped broaden my understanding of the subject. It is important to mention here that external validity is not a strong feature of case studies (Tellis, 1997). This is important to bear in mind, as the studies presented here are intrinsic case studies and not intended for broad interpretation. Rather, they attempt to maximize what can be learned about the cases themselves within the context of a limited timeframe.

As Hammersley (1999) has commented, there are many different paradigmatic strands of qualitative research -- including empiricism, instrumentalism, postmodernism and ethicism, to name just a few -- and all share different concerns with how data are analyzed and presented as 'findings.' My methodological approach, the intrinsic case study, draws on a number of paradigmatic assumptions, including constructivism because it is a preliminary investigation. I do not feel comfortable taking a particular stance in an area that has not been extensively researched.

The intrinsic case study is particularly useful to me because of the subject area that I have chosen to study. Raw empirical observations, rather than empirical testing, have so far been the norm in much of the literature on South African community radio and its role within South Africa's media landscape. Thus, I found it useful for my own purposes to choose a methodology that attempts to understand particular cases first before drawing grand conclusions. After all, very little is known about the cases that exist in this area of inquiry because few have been analyzed.

The stations I have studied have been studied elsewhere (Feyissa, 1999; Kaihar 2000) but under different pretexts involving different research questions and concerns. My questions are unique to this study and have not been investigated in other works. Later research, including some of my own, might integrate the interpretations presented in my case studies and in other research projects with the purpose of drawing broader conclusions. However, I do not expect that this will be easy, given the active state of development that South African community radio is experiencing now.

As a final note, I would like to reiterate that my interpretations are not value free and they are not informed solely by raw data. Rather, they are the products of living in a

new place for six months, having day-to-day conversations with academics, laypersons, activists and other individuals whose regular proximity to the area of study is closer than my own, and unique experiences that I am only able to relay in my own manner. The notion that one can isolate experience without allowing the totality of experience in a particular locale to infiltrate the process of interpretation is difficult for me to accept. I operate under the assumption that I do not know the 'whole' story but that my interpretation of the story might be valuable to gaining future understanding, regardless of who reads this document.

Most importantly, however, the methods used in this study are structured, rigorous and inspired by other case studies that have been conducted in host of fields, including education, political science, psychology, mass communication and sociology.[1] The informality expressed in the tone of each case study should not dissuade the reader from interpreting this project as a scholarly work. As demonstrated earlier in this chapter, the case study method is very different from a quantitative sampling study because privileges the actors' viewpoints and their interpretations and, thus, features their and viewpoints and interpretations in a prominent fashion. It is left up to the researcher to interpret these with a well-thought and rigorously constructed method of data collection and analysis. I believe that this has been accomplished to the greatest extent of my abilities at the time of this writing.

Introduction of cases and rationale

The cases of Radio Khwezi and Radio Phoenix illustrate a number of oppositional elements that distinguish South African community radio stations: rural vs. urban, well-

funded vs. poorly funded, clear purpose vs. unclear purpose and well-organized vs. poorly organized to name just a few. Radio Khwezi, is rural -- which often translates into 'resource-poor' -- but is well-funded, has a clear purpose, and is well-defined. The more urbanized Radio Phoenix, on the other hand, was exactly the opposite during much of its existence. Because the notion of a public sphere in South Africa and, more specifically, the role of community radio in that public sphere are of interest here, these elements cannot be ignored. Thus, a great deal of attention is placed upon them within the following case studies.

Good organizational structures are certainly important and it could be argued that they often dictate a station's success. However, without a clear purpose and an adequate execution of the mandates a station must meet for itself and in terms of national policy, organization is really a moot point. Purpose is an important notion guiding these case studies because of the theoretical tenets that form the backbone of the analysis. Without the purpose of recognizing the communication rights of a particular public and allowing that public to articulate its social, economic, human rights and development needs, it cannot be said definitively that a community radio station is a tool of communication in the theoretical models of the public sphere and, indeed, community radio that are described in this thesis.

In the cases of Radio Khwezi and Radio Phoenix, perceptions of purpose, structure, function and programming of actors from both stations and related actors are particularly important to the continued study of community radio, just as perceptions held by other actors in other stations are also important to this area of inquiry. Although the intrinsic case study method cannot and should not be expected to provide a definitive

answer for all cases, it can be extremely useful in pointing to issues that are in need of further examination within the respective units of analysis and, perhaps, across South Africa's community radio sector as a whole. It is hoped that the following case studies will accomplish this not only for present purposes, but also for future researchers who are interested in the issues surrounding community radio's development in South Africa.

Endnotes

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[1] See Stake (1995, 1998) and Yin (1994) for a review of relevant literature that supports this assertion.

IV. RADIO KHWEZI: "The Heart of KwaZulu-Natal Beats at 90.5"

Radio Khwezi, or "Radio Morning Star" when translated from Zulu, serves a public that represents the intersection of cultures, religious faiths and ethnicities that characterize South Africa's unique history. The station began as an outgrowth of the Lutheran mission at Kranskop, a rural hamlet about 100 kilometers north of Durban. A small radio station housed in a beige stone building, Radio Khwezi looks more like a small church than a broadcasting facility. However, the reason for this is quite clear: the building rests among the community buildings, school, church, dormitories and farmhouses of the KwaSizabantu -- literally "Home to Help the Bantu" -- Lutheran Mission at Jammersdaal Farm.

The mission, which was founded by German missionaries in the late 19th century, is surrounded by the rolling green hills that seem, at least to the eye, to extend for thousands of miles. More than 5000 people of German descent -- including many of the station's staff -- live among the majority Zulu population; most area residents are involved in some facet of agriculture. In addition, a small contingent of Afrikaans-speaking people, many of whom own large farms, also lives around Kranskop. Some area residents speak English, but there are many who do not speak any English at all, according to Radio Khwezi's business manager, Ruthhilde "Ruth" Husslig.

Under apartheid, there was only a limited amount of English education. The Bantu Education Act emphasized Afrikaans, which was used by laborers on many of the area farms. For those who did study English, acquisition of advanced skills was

obviously moot under a regime that excluded blacks from working in most professions. For many of the area's Zulu population, any sense of opportunity was quashed before it even had a chance to be nourished. Of the elders, many never finished school and those who did had the equivalent of about an eighth grade education. This is changing today, but school fees are expensive. In an area with a per capita income of under R 4000 (about $450 per year),[1] many cannot afford to matriculate from their secondary schools.

Farms are more common than buildings in this part of KwaZulu-Natal. Mist often floats in the gaps between seemingly thousands of lush green hills that are dotted with cattle pens, maize fields and *kraals* (thatched huts). When I first arrived at KwaSizabantu to speak to Radio Khwezi's management and to spend time at the station in October 2001, it was Halloween. Ironically, the mist and fog were so thick that I could barely see on my way into the mission complex. My team consisted of my research adviser, Ruth Teer-Tomaselli, and a colleague from the Graduate Programme in Cultural and Media Studies, Mzwandile Dladla. We were lost for about 20 kilometers on the way from Durban, but Mzwandile -- who was born and raised near Kranskop -- pointed us in the right direction about half an hour after we had missed the exit (see Appendix A). The reason he didn't do it earlier, I surmised, was that he didn't want to be rude. This episode was, of course, all in good humor by the time we arrived.

The atmosphere in and around KwaSizabantu Mission has an air of bucolic charm. To many Americans or Europeans, it might resemble a stereotypical documentary about life in Africa -- black faces popping out of the misty green lushness of the rolling hills; mothers in colorful dresses and headscarves tending to children while trying to balance a 10 kilogram bag of maize or a ten liter water jug on their heads; cattle being

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prodded along by their grey-headed owner, who looks with bewilderment at the outsiders.
"Why would *they* be out in the bush?" he seemed to say with his eyes. We were city
people. The so-called romanticism of the third-world, a polar opposite to South Africa's
thoroughly modern cities, was staring us in the face.

It all sounds simple to understand, as if it should be within a television frame. But
it is far from easy to explain the plight of Kranskop, Eshowe, Maphamulo, and the
countless villages that dot the landscape of central KwaZulu-Natal. Any romantic notions
of Kranskop and its environs are quickly crushed as one encounters the crushing poverty
that is the hallmark of its meager economy. Thanks to the policies of apartheid, no
significant infrastructure developments, other than white-owned farms and commercial
forests owned by logging companies, accompany the natural beauty of the area. Many
area people like having a small plot of land to farm or raise *izinkomo* (cattle), but this is
no panacea for hunger and lack of opportunities.

The managers of Radio Khwezi gave me a litany of reasons why their task is
difficult: there are few jobs in rural KwaZulu-Natal, but a surplus of labor; the
unemployment rate is high -- nearly two-thirds in some areas; many residents want to go
to the cities, such as Maphamulo, Pietermaritzburg or perhaps Durban, but don't have
many of the skills necessary to find a job in KwaZulu-Natal's highly competitive labor
market; some residents do have skills, but there are no jobs and little opportunity to reach
areas where employment opportunities exist; others, especially the elderly, lack the
ability to read or write; HIV-AIDS rates are, similar to the rest of South Africa,
skyrocketing each year. Religious faith, which provides at least some hope, is generally
the center of social activity in the area around Kranskop.

The Reverend Fano Sibisi, a Zulu minister at the mission, is one of the founders of Radio Khwezi and, even in his frail health, continues to be its emotional and spiritual locus. I never had the opportunity to meet Rev. Sibisi during my visit to Radio Khwezi, but I felt like I knew him after my conversations with the station's staff members and management. Marketing Director Peter Rice, a mission employee who has worked with the station since it began broadcasting, calls Sibisi the "figurehead" of the station. Residents at the mission and in the surrounding areas see him as a father figure in the community and one of its most respected spiritual leaders. However, in recent years, Rice and Husslig have been responsible for most functions of the station and, of course, for its survival. The station's manager, Sibisi, is nonetheless in charge of all station operations.

Even before I arrived, I knew the station had many good reasons to exist. Part of Radio Khwezi's mission, according to its constitution (2001), is to remedy the social and economic hardships of its surrounding area through several aims:

- To carry out the work of Public Broadcasters generally with a target audience the community in general;

- To endeavor to educate the marginalized community about the culture of broadcasting;

- To promote development of the underdeveloped people by running education programmes;

- To promote peace and stability in order to create a climate conducive for the general restructuring and development of the country;

- To seek and encourage talents within the community;

- To improve the rural community in its exposure to local and national events;

- To carry out the[se] aims and objects…as a free and voluntary service to the community at-large on a non-profit basis (p. 3).

With 20 hours of programming per day, the station works diligently to serve its broad cross section of audiences and languages over a broad range of territory. According to its managers, Radio Khwezi (2001) has five primary areas of service: education, the promotion of local music and culture, community participation ("the chance to be heard" on the airwaves), local news, and the training of community broadcasters. Licensed as a "geographic community" station, Radio Khwezi defines its audience geographically rather than by special interest. The station does, however, cater to the special interests of its audience members, especially in terms of its focus on gospel music, sermons and local news and information. Judging by its technical capabilities, the station takes its geographic coverage responsibilities quite seriously: the station's two transmitters, which broadcast at the 90.5 and 107.7 FM frequencies, have a transmission footprint that covers approximately one-third of KwaZulu-Natal (see Appendix B).

In its 2001 license application, the station management stated that it could reach an estimated 3.35 million potential listeners, although actual listenership figures are quite impossible to measure due to the dispersion of the rural population. Husslig says the station uses the Radio Audience Measurement Survey (RAMS) -- a diary-based research battery used by SAARF -- but laments its inaccuracy:

> … can you imagine the rural audience having to handle a diary? I
> mean, it's illiterate folk very often, it's people who … I know what I'm

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like with manuals. If you give me a gadget and I've got to use a manual

to work through it, I ... I just ... I don't bother. So I ask myself how our

rural audience bothers to -- "Right, let's see ... list of a thousand radio

stations, what did I listen to today?" So we believe, and we strongly

believe that SAARF and RAMS do not really reflect our true audience

because we are rural and these people just don't provide for anything

like that.

Radio Khwezi (2001) estimates that it best reaches a population of 928,000 people from

Eshowe in the north to Greytown in the South with its primary transmitter, which

broadcasts at 10 kilowatts of power. Its one-kilowatt translator at 107.7 FM reaches from

Maphamulo in the east to the North Coast area and the northern edge of Durban to the

South (see Appendix B). Its best measure of how it serves its audience, however,

probably comes from the various correspondences that pour into the station from all over

its listening area. "We've got the letters, we've got piles of letters we get from them,"

Husslig told me. "And the phone-ins, very popular, which gives us um ... maybe a bit of a

tangible proof that people are listening and that they like Radio Khwezi." This has been a

regular occurrence, she told me, since the station started in the early days of South

Africa's new democratic government. Indeed, from its very beginnings, Radio Khwezi

has managed to garner a large degree of community participation and, in turn, produce

programs that have been popular and lauded as extremely relevant to the needs of its

listeners.

The staff claims that the history of Radio Khwezi reaches back to the 1980s. Around 1988, employees of KwaSizabantu Mission had a studio with equipment donated by Lutheran Church-affiliated organizations, but they didn't know what they were going to do with it. Talk had circulated about producing some programs and perhaps recording local choral ensembles and other musical groups. As Station Manager Ruthilde Husslig told me, "The studio and all this was standing here being highly underutilized. And, therefore, that also added to the opportunity of making it available for a community station." This fact is important now because of the use that the studio receives by Radio Khwezi. But the radio station might have happened sooner if not for apartheid-era broadcasting policies that forbade the transmission of a radio signal by a non-government entity. Instead, Radio Khwezi had to wait until 1994 to even be considered for a license.

1994, of course, was the year of South Africa's first democratic elections. Nelson Mandela -- the ANC's presidential candidate -- had been out of prison for three years. Not surprisingly, the former political prisoner of the apartheid regime ran for president on the ANC ticket. After winning in a landslide victory, Mandela became what most South Africans desired for decades: a democratically elected leader. For the first time in the nation's history, all residents of the Republic of South Africa were full citizens; hope was infectious. Rather than seek retribution for the many crimes committed against humanity under apartheid, the new ANC-led government established a Truth and Reconciliation Commission that was responsible for hearing the testimony of all who chose to come forward and seek forgiveness. Distributive, rather than retributive, justice was championed by Mandela, Archbishop Desmond Tutu and a number of other leaders as the

best path to reconciliation. Indeed, the changes in many facets of political and social life were poised, at least rhetorically, to transform South African civil society and notions of self-determination among its populace. The staff at KwaSizabantu Mission knew things wouldn't be this simple, especially in the economically depressed rural areas of KwaZulu-Natal.

The easternmost province in South Africa, KwaZulu-Natal, or "K-Zed-N"[2] as South Africans often call it, is a nation unto itself. Modern-day KwaZulu-Natal is an amalgamation of the apartheid-era homeland of Zululand, where millions of Zulus were forcibly relocated under the Land Act and Group Areas Act, and the province of Natal. Both entities hold special significance in South African history, as they served as the site for numerous bloody battles for territory that pitted the Boers against the British, the British against the Zulu, and the Boers against the Zulu. Originally called Port Natal when the British landed there in the 18th century, the sprawling seaside city of Durban has always been the focal point of the province. With a population of more than one million and a breathtaking view of the Indian Ocean, Durban is the busiest port in Africa and a center of sugar refining, finance, trade and manufacturing. While it wouldn't be accurate to say that jobs are plentiful for all, the economic prosperity of Durban far exceeds the conditions farther inland. The interior of KZN is like that in much of rural South Africa. Subsistence farming and small livestock operations are dominant forms of economic production. Illiteracy rates are high and the few jobs that are available center on the corporate timber industry and large, white-owned farms. Indeed, KwaSizabantu mission is the center of social life for many in the area surrounding Kranskop and provides a sense of hope where little is found. If not for the work of the mission,

Kranskop and other areas north and west of Durban would likely also be without a localized radio source.

According to Husslig, the station almost started without IBA approval. The staff members were so anxious, she said, that they had inquired about transmitting a radio signal as soon as they heard that "the airwaves were going to be open." The mission staff contacted Sentech -- the state-owned broadcasting equipment manufacturer -- and asked if they could start broadcasting. At the time, they were unaware that the IBA was opening up license applications. When the first call for applications was opened, a group from the mission calling itself "Inkanyezi Yokusa Radio" (IYR) applied for a geographic community license.[3] The station went on air for the first time in 1994 after waiting about one year for its temporary license to be approved. After IYR was granted the license, Radio Khwezi was literally on its own. As Husslig says, "... it was then at that point that Radio Khwezi became completely independent from the Mission."

Central purposes and functions

Radio Khwezi's constitution is quite clear on its aims and objectives. Education, empowerment and development are all important concerns for the station and its programming reflects those concerns. But the cultural services that the station provides to its hundreds of thousands of listeners are probably the most important components to its success. Zulu, of course, is the language that the station is known for best, as well as the most widely spoken language among its listeners.

For many years, the SABC's Radio Zulu was the only Zulu-language service that was offered to Zulu speakers. After the restructuring of the SABC, Radio Zulu became

Ukhozi FM ("The Eagle"). Although Ukhozi is part of the SABC, and thus considered a public service station, it is a nationally broadcast station that is gaining more of a reputation for being commercially driven and geared toward urban Zulu speakers. As Peter Rice (2001) told me, Radio Khwezi is the only Zulu language station in South Africa that caters specifically to rural people:

> ... because things have changed so and developed in the country so fast, Ukhozi has become more metropolitan orientated. Their whole programming format and the type of music that they play caters for the person in the city or the big town, and they have forgotten their rural audience. That's my view of this, and that's why Khwezi is become so strong in the rural areas because they've [Ukhozi] left a gap there.

Rice and some of the other staff members told me that their listeners won't listen to a predominantly English station because they do not speak English very well. Rice says the focus on local news, sports and religion -- almost all of which is broadcast in Zulu -- has been popular with the station's listeners. In fact, Rice said, listeners often call in to let the station know how important Zulu programs are to them:

> ... once we encountered somebody who said, "Listen here, you better stop playing English music on Khwezi." We said, "Why?" He said, "Listen, I listen to Khwezi because I can hear music in my own language, and whatever else I would like to hear I can hear on any station. So you better stop playing English music on Radio Khwezi, it's a Zulu station, and stick to Zulu music, that's what we want to hear." Which is quite surprising.

From my perspective, these statements were not made for public relations reasons. When one compares the needs of the rural areas to the needs of Zulu speakers in the cities, it is quite apparent. Despite the inherent difficulty in meeting language needs, South African media scholars have also come to the conclusion that indigenous languages and local dialects must be vital parts of the re-development of media (see Louw, 1992). Aside from the local news and public affairs programming that Khwezi offers in Zulu, its religious programming is also a good justification for this assertion.

Where the public service station, Ukhozi FM, offers a limited amount of religious programming, such as choral music and a Christian praise program, Radio Khwezi makes religion a focal point of its daily schedule. A large amount of religious programming and music for the hundreds of thousands of Christians who live in its broadcasting area is offered on each weekday and especially on the weekends. At 4 a.m., the daily devotion, *Umthandazo wasedikusi*, opens the programming rundown. Only five minutes long, it often contains a prayer or meditation and a brief Bible lesson. Other programs are more substantial in terms of time allotted. At 6:10 a.m., a member of the local ministry offers a 30-minute sermon called *Liphumile iKhwezi*, which is aired again at 11 a.m. and 10 p.m., respectively. A member of the production staff sometimes tapes the sermon, but ministers often visit the studio to offer sermons as well.

Although Zulu-language programming makes up 77.2 percent of the station's programming rundown each day, English (18.5 percent), Afrikaans (2.2 percent) and German (2.1 percent) programs are also important to the station. Indeed, Kranskop itself is part of the largest community of German Lutherans in South Africa, which is made up of more than 5000 people. They receive an hour a day of programming in German,

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Deutsche Stunde (German Hour), which I made a brief appearance on during my time at the station, as well as Deutsche Welle and the BBC. Afrikaners also receive an hour of Afrikaans language programming on the weekends and variety programs, such as the light music program, *Skuins voor Middernag* (Songs for Midnight), in the late evenings. Rice said the cultural component of the station is a strong bonding tool for the community. In addition to Zulu festivals, wedding feasts and other traditional gatherings, he said, the station's staff are always invited to the various bazaars that are held by members of the German community. The station keeps its Zulu listeners at the forefront, but pays a proportional amount of attention to other ethnic groups in the community. The English language, because of its common use by most members of Khwezi's listening audience, is the second-most used language after Zulu. The BBC News is the most prominent English-language part of the station's programming schedule, although some locally produced English news and information programming is presented in the late afternoon.

Structure, function and financing

As a non-profit community radio station, Radio Khwezi is licensed to serve a geographic community made up of primarily Zulu-speaking people, the vast majority of who have no access to the Zulu-language newspapers, such as *Ilanga* and *UmAfrika*, that are published in Durban. For those who lack literacy skills, essential public health knowledge and other development-related tools, the utility of radio as a medium is self-evident. However, it is expensive to offer such a service.

Radio Khwezi is a self-sufficient entity. It does receive some donations from Lutheran Church-affiliated and community organizations, but these only accounted for about R 68,000 -- about 5 percent -- of its overall revenues of R 1,291,000 (approximately $143,444) in 1999 and 2000. Rather, Radio Khwezi provides all of its programming with a funding base that relies on advertising revenue gained from selling airtime to local businesses of all sizes. As part of its charter, the station advertises a number of small businesses, from farm supply stores to roadside *spazas*, which are small shops that sell everything from fruit, sodas and snacks to cigarettes, toiletries and other sundries (see Appendix C). However, this does not represent the bulk of the station's income. Husslig says that national advertisers make up a majority of the R 788,000 (approximately $87,555) in advertising revenue that the station collected in 1999 and 2000.

The fact that Radio Khwezi pays little for labor -- only the management and the cleaning staff are paid salaries -- certainly helps with its budget. Of the income it receives each year, only about R 1,000 - 6,000 per annum is shown as profit on its balance sheet; indeed, it is difficult to question Radio Khwezi's non-profit status. Thus, the community radio ethos of volunteering is somewhat of a bonus. Keeping talented people and paying their program production and reporting expenses, however, is an expensive operation. Next to transmission costs, traveling expenses related to training and newsgathering comprised the largest amount of expenditures for Radio Khwezi. In lieu of a salary, Husslig said, the training offered to broadcasters is the best compensation the station can provide.

As for its governing structure, the station maintains a permanent board that oversees all functions of the station. Some original members of the Inkanyezi Yokusa Radio Association are still members of the board, but new members have been elected in recent years. According to Radio Khwezi's bylaws (2001), the station is required to hold an Annual General Meeting (AGM) within three months of the beginning of each fiscal year. The station is required to post notice of the meeting at least one month prior to its occurrence. In addition, special general meetings can also be ordered if at least 51 percent of the board agrees that such action should be taken. A quorum of 10 percent is required at each meeting the board decides to hold.

The board is responsible for property, bank accounts, obtaining loans and equipment and carrying out regular accounting measures such as balance sheets while a professional accounting firm from Greytown is contracted to do the station's yearly audit. There are also specific provisions in the station's constitution that forbid the board from engaging in economic activities that seek to make a profit. In fact, the document specifically prohibits the station from engaging in any transaction not related to the regular business of that station.

The station manager, Fano Sibisi, as well as Rice and Husslig, are paid salaries for their work. However, the program presenters and DJs, like the vast majority of community radio stations in South Africa, are unpaid. Their only compensation is reimbursement for travel expenses and skills training. Husslig told me that this state of affairs often sorts out those who are really interested in working at the station from those who are not:

We get about ten job applications a day and the first response is that we don't pay anybody … it's volunteers. "Should you be interested come back." And then the final stage is where we tell the people and say, "You know, listen here, you need first to have accommodation. Where are you going to stay? We can't offer accommodation. And secondly you need to have a source of income." And, well that whittles down the hopefuls to the determined and the tenacious in the end.

When I asked Rice about this situation, he said, "It is a very positive challenge because we see ourselves as a developer of skills within the rural community." With over 50 volunteers actively presenting programs, the station has plenty of help and, apparently, enough people who are willing to do the work that is required without a salary. But the effects of the training have perhaps been most remarkable. According to Rice, some presenters have left to find employment at public service stations, such as Uhkozi FM, or commercial stations. Rice said that this it is to the station's advantage "to know what we capable of … that the commercial stations can take people from community stations … that says that we're not bad at all."

Programming and the public interest

Because education is a central focus of Radio Khwezi, the station offers a great deal of assistance to area students. One of the station's most popular Zulu-language programs is *Cosh'Ulwazi*, or "Back to School." *Cosh'Ulwazi* airs at 4:30 a.m. each morning from Monday through Friday. The station's programming schedule (Radio Khwezi, 2001) calls it a "tutorial program for learners where problem areas are discussed

and teachers present tutorials, especially for the matrics." "Matrics" are students preparing for their matriculation exams, which is the British system's equivalent to a high school graduation test. Ruth Husslig asked me, "Can you believe that school children listen to this at four thirty?" I could believe it after she told me the following:

> Just to show you what a rural station is like ... people go to bed when the sun goes down and they get up when the sun comes up, and at four thirty you have school children listening to this. It's a tutorial program where we go through um ... mostly matrics, old exam papers, problem areas, and so on.

I laughed along with her and Peter in disbelief at the program's early hours. Even *they* have a hard time believing that the students listen that early in the morning. However, in a place where education is often the only way out, this is not so surprising. Ruth and Peter said that education is appreciated as a privilege in their area because many students can barely afford to go to school. In my experience, it took little but a brief look around the mission to believe them.

After *Cosh'Ulwazi*, Radio Khwezi airs its first newscast of the day. Although the first cast is only five minutes, news bulletins are scheduled for the top of the hour throughout the programming schedule. Because it is a community station, the station's news values focus mainly on matters of local interest. The bulletins deal with local, provincial, national and international news as well as current local and national affairs. During magisterial, provincial and national election times, the station's reporters cover elections and allow candidates to speak and debate publicly. In recent years, the station

has invited Parliamentary candidates to its studios for interviews and has sent reporters to polling stations to get feedback from voters.

Radio Khwezi, as Husslig says, is also the only source of information about births, deaths, marriages and coming-of-age feasts in and around Kranskop and central KwaZulu-Natal. Funeral announcements are an especially important service. A local listener's club, *Masibumbane*, has been instrumental in assisting the station with funeral information and providing funeral services to those who can't afford a proper burial. Rice offered praise to *Masibumbane* for its efforts to help raise school fees for local students. As for the funeral announcements, Husslig said:

> This is turned into a tool also as community development. There are
>
> very many bodies that go at the morgues which never get collected. So
>
> they know the names, they contact us and we announce it and the
>
> relatives turn up to fetch their people. And um ... then they found out
>
> that some people are so poor that they cannot bury their dead. Then
>
> they decided in this listeners' club that ...whenever one of their
>
> members is passed away they'll contribute some money to help the
>
> family with the funeral expenses. And that's worked wonders. We've
>
> had destitute people having a decent burial just because of this.

Masibumbane also helps fight crime by building local awareness when a criminal is sought by authorities. Husslig said the club was instrumental in apprehending a serial killer that stalked the Natal Midlands area in the late 1990s, when it supplied Radio Khwezi with updates and bulletins and encouraged local community members to do the same. She said that this and other incidents demonstrate the club's willingness to change

the fear of police and law enforcement that has lingered in the community since the apartheid era. According to Husslig, many community members do not report things to the police for fear of retribution. Thus, the station has an important role to play in maintaining community awareness and helping authorities to stay abreast of information that they would not often receive from community members.

During most of the day, Radio Khwezi broadcasts a wide variety of Zulu popular and gospel music. The station archives all of its programs in a self-contained and well-organized library that houses thousands of CDs and tapes of music from South Africa and beyond. Unlike many other operations of comparable size, Radio Khwezi maintains a budget for its music. Almost half of its total music output is South African in origin (Radio Khwezi, 2001) and some of what is played on-air is requested by local community members who wish to dedicate a particular song to someone who is ill at home or in the hospital.

I was particularly amazed to see the station's library, which was better organized than many American stations I had worked in or visited. Husslig said the revenue the station has managed to take in from advertising in recent years has enabled the staff to computerize its music database and invest in software that allows programmers and DJs to use computers to assist them in playing music and actualities on the air. During my visits to the station, I witnessed the use of this equipment both in production studios and in the main studio.

In addition to its music and educational programming, Radio Khwezi also broadcasts information about vaccinations and other public health initiatives. In an area where malaria, tuberculosis and HIV-AIDS rates are among the highest in Africa and the

world, this is obviously an important service. Development programs are also a large part of the schedule. *Sahkha Isizwe*, which airs in mid-morning, offers help with practical matters such as agriculture, electricity, mechanics and animal breeding. *Ezomame* is a women's issues program that deals with women's rights, child care, health and legal matters. This program also offers information on AIDS and child abuse prevention. In the afternoons and early evenings, historical and cultural programs such as *Iziko*, *Ikwezi nezingwazi* and *Imisebe nemikhathi yekwezi* feature historical lessons, oral histories and stories produced by local elders who have firsthand knowledge of Zulu history. Rice says these programs are especially popular because they relay traditional histories and knowledge that were previously only available through oral transmission. The station also airs book readings and literacy education programs produced by its volunteer presenters. Husslig said the book reading programs are particularly important to older members of the community who were denied access to literacy education under apartheid and for whom literacy training resources are still in short supply. All of the station's development programs involve local experts in the areas of agriculture, mechanics and health. Panel discussions are quite common and many hosts welcome callers to participate in the discussion on-air.

The station also covers sports frequently on its "Metro Sport" program and prides itself on its sports director, Jeffrey Zikhali. As Peter Rice told me, Zikhali often has fresh information on soccer teams and players -- information that is of major importance to area residents -- on his program before the national broadcasters:

> Metro sport is quite good. You know why? Jeffrey's got contacts. You
> see he goes to the games and he's got contact with the coaches, the

managers and also the players. And then what happens, you get people phoning him and asking, "Why didn't so-and-so play last night?" And then he gives some inside information and says, "Well, last night I spoke to the manager and he's actually on a transfer list." "Who's he going to?" and then that of course just starts the hype and Jeffrey becomes the center of information.

For the community's youth, *Ezabasha* is featured as an after-school program. The show, which is hosted by a revolving team of local presenters, deals with education, career and health information. Panels of local youth, NGO workers and community leaders are usually invited to participate and, like the daytime development programs, encourage participation by phone. Youth are encouraged to ask questions and, according to Rice, are often provided with answers or given information that can help them to find answers on their own.

Relations with the regulator

ICASA (2001b) has cited the station for its encouragement of its community participation and especially for its involvement of community members through call-in programs. The managers and staff of Radio Khwezi know they are somewhat lucky (they would say "blessed") for the approbation they have received from the regulator. Since it started broadcasting in 1994, the station's license applications have never been rejected. Of course, Radio Khwezi has some distinct advantages to its operation: a business manager is able to devote a great deal of attention to putting the packet together for each renewal period; it has more than 50 volunteers who create programming, run the

recording library, record local musicians in the station studio and operate the control board; the only paid staff members are three managers and a local woman who cleans and runs general errands. In comparison to what these kinds of activities would cost a commercial station, Radio Khwezi has managed to cut costs and provide high levels of service to its listeners. This has not gone unnoticed by ICASA.

In its 2001 ICASA Annual Monitoring Report, Radio Khwezi was cited positively for providing essential services to its community of listeners:

> Radio Khwezi certainly provides an important service to its
>
> community. From the above report, it can be seen that the station is
>
> truly representative of its community in that it interpolates listeners
>
> in a various ways making the community feel part and parcel of the
>
> station (p. 5).

With such a glowing assessment, it is difficult to understand why ICASA could not also gauge community participation. In its assessment of the station, ICASA monitors commented that, "Notwithstanding the fact that the entire staff compliment of Radio Khwezi and its volunteers meet regularly to exchange ideas and views for the programme schedule, there is however no clear indication on whether or not Radio Khwezi has formal structures to ensure effective community participation" (p. 2). It seems to me that ICASA misses the point entirely on this account. During my time at the station, I saw at least 20 community members active in the work of the station within an eight-hour period. The term "formal structures" seems to imply that there should be a special kind of program in place that encourages community participation. However, in Radio Khwezi's case, this was not a necessity. The "community," in fact, already understood the need for

participation and volunteerism. Community members took it upon themselves to become involved in the station's activities and the fact that more than 50 community members were regularly involved in the station's regular activities is more than enough evidence of "community participation." In any case, the positive evaluation of the station, which also led to its license renewal, seemed to be evidence enough that the station was meeting the requirements set forth by its own initiatives as well as national policy.

Rice and Husslig both expressed some frustration with the regulator. For example, both were concerned about the fact that their four-year license hearing was delayed several times by ICASA. Shortly before I arrived, the staff had just finished having its four-year license application heard by ICASA; they had been waiting for the hearing for three years. The length of the station's application -- in terms of pages required -- troubled Peter Rice, who said, "There's one thing I would say about ICASA, which would make us very happy if they relooked it, is the tedious process of applying for a license. You almost got to write books, just to apply for a community radio license." Indeed, Radio Khwezi's application was approximately 7 centimeters thick with nearly 300 pages of documentation. The station was required to submit fourteen copies of this document to the ICASA offices.

ICASA officials, however, have been more than pleased with the station's progress and commitment to its community of service. ICASA (2001b) praised the station for being the "only community radio station in the Kranskop area providing a platform for communication in the languages that people within the station's [transmission] footprint are best conversant" (p. 2). The station also received positive comments about its situation in a "culturally rich demographic area" and its efforts to

"provide for the multi-cultural society around it." Of course, the regulator only evaluates the station once a year. One wonders what it might say if it could see and hear the services that Radio Khwezi provides on a firsthand basis. The station's managers, however, simply wish the regulator would "streamline" its application process.

Radio Khwezi: A summary

It would be hard to find an area where Radio Khwezi is not meeting policy mandates set forth in the IBA Act (RSA, 1993) and the ICASA Code of Conduct (RSA, 2002g), among other measures. It has a diverse array of programming that serves its various "communities" -- in terms of both geography and interest -- and it has a permanent staff, board of directors and infrastructure. It features twice the amount of local music content required by law (currently set at 20 percent) and it has given hundreds of volunteers a chance to contribute to community development or start a career in broadcasting. Most importantly, Radio Khwezi's supply of funding has been relatively stable; the station is financially solid and has been managed well.

Some reasons for its success are self-evident, but others are not as obvious. What, for instance, makes Radio Khwezi so orderly and successful in meeting the national policy directives of community radio? How does the station manage to form strong relationships with its community of listeners and gain their trust? The answer, at least to this researcher, seems to be because the station actually does what it says it will do: it involves the community, meets the requests of its community and gives the community programming that it wants; this is not just a result of the fact that the station exists. The numerous volunteers I met and witnessed at work left quite an impression. In rooms that

resemble a cafeteria more than a production studio, the people who create the

programming at Radio Khwezi work through all hours of the day writing, editing and

taping content and they do so with relentless dedication. As for what keeps the station

financially solvent, licensed, on-air, and providing its community with relevant

information and a platform to articulate its concerns, Ruth Husslig said, "I think it's the

staff. The people who work here believe in what we doing."

Endnotes

[1] These figures come from 1995 South African Bureau of Market Research statistics. The Radio Khwezi staff told me this estimate has probably not risen much in subsequent years

[2] "Zed" is the British-style pronunciation for the letter "Z." This pronunciation has traditionally been a part of South African parlance.

[3] Geographic community licenses, as mentioned in Chapter Two, are easier to obtain because they cover a broader transmission area and do not necessarily have to focus on a particular interest area. Although Radio Khwezi could have qualified for either license, the management thought it best to commit itself to the real problems of their part of KwaZulu-Natal – the dispersion and isolation of many rural dwellers

V. RADIO PHOENIX: "Hit Music Radio!"

Unlike that of Radio Khwezi, the case of Radio Phoenix is difficult to fit into the idealized version of community radio sought by many NGO donors and government policies (see Mphale and Lane, 1998). In fact, it currently does not fit well into any models: it went off the air in November 2001. During its five years of existence (1996-2001), Radio Phoenix served an urban and peri-urban community that is ethnically and linguistically distinct from the majority of KwaZulu-Natal's population. Specifically, Radio Phoenix served the large community of Indian descent that lives in primarily in the northwest suburbs of Durban.

Situated in a former Standard Bank branch office in the suburb of Newlands East, Radio Phoenix's interior still looked much like a bank when I visited the station in August 2001. The front teller's desks were converted into offices for the secretarial staff, while the spacious offices in the back of the building were converted into offices for the station manager and programs manager and storage space. One of the corner offices had been converted into a control room with a single microphone. Sadly, a decrepit mixing board and two CD players -- only one of which worked at the time -- were crammed in front of a secondhand desk chair for the announcer. A few CDs and tapes were stacked against the wall. Vishal, the announcer who was working the afternoon shift the day I first arrived at the station, said that all of the station's production work was done in this space. On occasions where a band or performer was in the studio, he said, microphones would be extended into a larger "studio" space behind the control room.

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The building occupied the corner of a shopping center that is almost entirely vacant. Its location is so non-descript, in fact, that one would have had to know a radio station was on the premises to recognize Radio Phoenix's headquarters. I was warned before each visit to make sure my vehicle was locked and my valuables secured. High crime rates in the area make "smash and grab" attacks and vehicle thefts a common occurrence. The working class, northwest suburbs of Durban where the station was located are surrounded by many settlements and shacks, which are quickly encroaching upon the former "buffer" zones that characterize so much of Durban's apartheid-era civil architecture.

Radio Phoenix was named for the mythological bird "that arises from the ashes of its past, as symbolizing the triumph of the human spirit, the tremendous power of creative and dynamic renewal, fortitude and resilience, against all odds ..." (Radio Phoenix, 2001, p. 2). This poetic self-description, which the station offered in one of its license applications, underscores an important motivation for the Indian community in Durban to articulate its concerns: a desire to overcome the injustices of apartheid.

As far as the 20th century is concerned, the history of the Indian community in Durban was grounded in resistance. In 1950, when the Group Areas Act was passed into law, an inquiry into what apartheid officials and Durban City Council members called Indian acquisition of land, homes and businesses outside of the northwest area of the city a "penetration" into "European" areas of the city. In fact, the city council articulated this very concern to a special commission that had been set up by the South African government to evaluate the best ways to prevent racial groups from intermixing geographically. One of the earliest and most exhaustive studies of Durban that was

conducted by British scholars characterized the situation in terms of the dominant theories of a "desire" of certain "races" to live together that characterized so much of the apartheid-era legislation:

> The assumption is that people of the same race instinctively desire to live together. Thus, the Durban City Council complained to the First 'Penetration' Commission that Indians had acted in violation of the *communal instinct* implanted in all human beings, since they had scattered their acquisitions, instead of centralizing them in a particular area, where, that is to say, they would have lived with their own kind (Kuper, Watts and Davies, 1958, p. 144).

This philosophy of living with "their own kind," prevented the development of Indian-owned business and the acquisition of homes outside of the area around Phoenix. While Indians were initially allowed more leeway than blacks in terms of residential and economic self-determination, the apartheid regime did much to squelch these developments and frustrate generations of Indians who descended from the first migrant laborers who came to work in Durban's sugar cane fields. The complete story, indeed, is much more than can be told in this space (see Bhana and Brain, 1990; Freund, 1995).

Aside from its heritage of resistance against apartheid, it is also important to note that the Phoenix community's name is not merely symbolic. "Phoenix" is also of geographical import because it is the name of the residential area in Durban's northwest suburbs where much of the city's Indian population resides. The Phoenix area was once the home of Mahatma Gandhi and his famous Phoenix Settlement. From this community, Gandhi worked to spread his philosophy of non-violent political resistance. Indeed, the

mores and folkways of the Indian-sub continent -- albeit in a very different context -- run very deep in the area that Radio Phoenix once served, which runs from Durban North to the shores of Durban's southern suburbs (see Appendix D).

According to the Preamble and Mission Statement of the station's constitution, the motivation behind Radio Phoenix's development was a "deep, abiding and overwhelming need in the said historically disadvantaged communities [of the Phoenix area] to achieve a public and collective voice" (Radio Phoenix, 2001, p.2). To satisfy this need, the station resolved to:

> ... broadcast the authentic voice of our peoples freely, fearlessly and
>
> courageously, while jealously holding dear as a sacred trust the
>
> supreme value of truth; at all times holding as dear the inherent dignity,
>
> integrity, right to independent expression, thought, opinion and voice of
>
> our fellow brothers and sisters, and the equal right to voice such
>
> differing expressions, thoughts and opinions (pp. 3-4).

Aside from enumerating its obligations to the "community," the station also resolved to "observe the highest standard of media and broadcasting professionalism and ethics" (p. 4). From its very beginnings in the garage of a Phoenix community member, the station would maintain these goals, at least in theory, through the licensing process and eventually on-air. But the rest of the story behind Radio Phoenix's evolution -- as I learned during my time in KwaZulu-Natal and during my interviews with the station's staff -- is far more complex and contentious.

Started in 1996 by an audiophile and Phoenix community member named Francis Naidoo, Radio Phoenix circumvented the slow process of broadcasting reform by transmitting illegally. Former presenter O'Neil Nair (2001), whom I spoke with shortly after visiting Radio Phoenix, put the story like this:

> ... some smart and technical guy who was in his garage...he just set
>
> something up, I believe, not knowing what he was doing...and then
>
> there were people picking it up in their cars and saying, "This is good
>
> music! Who's playing this?" And then people rode up to the powers
>
> that be -- the broadcasting authority -- and said "What is this?" And
>
> that's when they traced the signal and nabbed this guy. That asked him
>
> what he was doing and he said, "I'm just playing music and fooling
>
> around here!" And that's where the station was born ... initially.

Knowing that he would likely be penalized if he attempted to broadcast again, Naidoo and a group of community members gathered in 1996 to apply for a license. Unfortunately, the community members who voted for the committee chairperson rewarded Francis Naidoo with a vote of "no-confidence" (Kaihar, 2000). Instead, they installed a local schoolteacher named Dinesh Maharaj, who retained the position until the station went off the air in November 2001.

As one former presenter remarked, "the enthusiasm" was there, but the "know-how" was definitely not (Nair, 2001). Apparently, enough "know-how" was present to get a license for the station, which was granted in 1996 and renewed in one-year increments from 1997 to 2001. Local individuals with engineering or electrical

experience donated time to get the transmitter working, while the Embassy of France donated some cursory broadcast studio gear, including a mixing board, several pairs of headphones, microphones and some compact disc players. After the station began broadcasting from its first home on the second story of a commercial building in Newlands East, the listening community responded actively and enthusiastically.

Rakhi Beekram (2001), a former presenter who now works for the SABC's Asian-focused station, Lotus FM, says she used to be surprised when fans would send her mail:

> ... we received fan mail from time to time, which was a bit strange.
> Because in a community radio station, you don't expect fan mail ... I
> certainly didn't expect fan mail, but people write in to let you know
> how much they like your show ... how much they appreciate what
> you're doing.

Radio Phoenix's presenters, indeed, often achieved a kind of local celebrity. Nair, who worked for the station, says he constantly received calls and correspondence from many listeners. Both Beekram and Nair told me that the recognition likely came from the station's involvement in community events. From fairs to special *bhangra*[1] events, Radio Phoenix was known for its presence not only on the airwaves but also among the events and institutions of Durban's Indian community.

According to the station's records of the annual RAMS surveys for 1998 and 1999, Radio Phoenix was drawing an audience of more than 100,000 listeners per day at its peak. In 2000, the station estimated that it had a listenership of approximately 120,000 (Radio Phoenix, 2001). The station prided itself on its diverse audience. Muslims and

Hindus; "Hindi-speaking" and "Tamil-speaking"; "men and women"; and "young and old" were all used by the station's staff and management as descriptors of the station's audience.

Central purposes and functions

According to its constitution (Radio Phoenix, 2001), Radio Phoenix considered its programming related to the "heritage of Oriental cultures and civilizations, especially that of India ..." as one of the most important aspects of its service. However, the station also envisioned itself as something broader and more comprehensive. Its primary objective was outlined in the following way:

> In its broadcasting activities to provide a channel of sound
> communication among persons of the community, on diverse aspects of
> social, cultural, intellectual, musical, recreational, educational,
> informational and wisdom interaction, with the view to forge new links
> of friendship, unity, sharing and collective growth in our community
> (p. 3) .

When I met Radio Phoenix's station manager, Sergie Naidoo,[2] I wanted to know what he thought about the station's mission. A congenial former SABC staff member who was trying his hand at community radio, Naidoo seemed a bit flummoxed when I asked him how he felt about the station's objectives. He characterized Radio Phoenix as a "voice for the community it serves" and a "platform to reflect community issues."

Linguistically, Radio Phoenix's programming was almost exclusively in English. However, the station also served its cultural communities through music and some

programming in Hindi, Tamil, Urdu and Telegu. These languages were judged by the management to be the most prominently spoken in the community, but even these were spoken sparsely. The reason, according to several scholars who have written on Indian identities in Durban, stems from a cultural disconnection between South African Indians and the Indian subcontinent. I noticed this to some extent, but only as an American who had witnessed a similar phenomenon with first- and second-generation Indian immigrants to the United States. The South African situation, of course, is quite different. Indians have been in KwaZulu-Natal, in particular, for at least a century and a half.

Structure, function and financing

With more than 50 volunteer presenters throughout most of its existence, Radio Phoenix had a strong level of community participation in the functioning of the station. A full-time staff comprised of a general manager and programs manager were on salary, as were two office workers and a janitor. In 2002, there were a receptionist, secretary and maid who were all on the station's payroll. Salespeople were paid on commission only, while all hosts and presenters were volunteers. Naidoo said presenters were recruited primarily from the surrounding community and mentioned that this was an integral part of the station's mission. According to Naidoo, after a successful audition and becoming part of the station staff, new presenters were trained over a period of several months by the manager and initially work the overnight shift (12 a.m.- 4 a.m.).

Nair, who honed his broadcasting skills as a DJ for several Durban clubs, said he was recruited by a friend who had worked at the station and believed that he was hired

"strictly on merit." However, Beekram mentioned that she witnessed hiring practices that did not conform to a strict set of standards:

> ... some people were taken in without auditions, I believe. Because when I was there, I had to go for an audition, send my full CV ... I had to go for an interview, an audition to do a graveyard shift before I could do my own show. I think after a while that stopped. They didn't follow proper procedures with presenters ... because a few friends of the station manager ... or you know somebody at the station, then your daughter can become a presenter. And my biggest issue ... the biggest problem I did ... there was a little girl ... I think she was about 10 or 11 who became a presenter because her father was good friends with the chairperson of our station. That annoyed me because I don't think a child should be on radio unless she wants to be, like, a child.

Naidoo said there were no strict rules for presenting set by Radio Phoenix's management. Rather, he said, the station's was to "nurture raw talent" and "give guidance" in helping presenters to develop their own styles. Sergie Naidoo felt that he was able to provide this experience. He also said that he felt that the station was producing quality talent through its training program, as seven announcers who worked at Radio Phoenix went on to work for the SABC's Radio Lotus -- the station with the largest Indian audience in South Africa.

After the training period, for which there was no set time period, presenters were left on their own to program music and host their own shift, as well as completing any production work that accompanies the program which they host. Their responsibilities in

presenting were ostensibly defined by the station's rules and mission, which determined programming proportions and basic guidelines for use of the studio. However, Nair said he "never" received training. He told me that, "there was not formal training as such … nothing. There was nothing coming in from the station, no "this is how you should do it." There was a mic, you get your music …"

In terms of its management structures, Radio Phoenix had a five-member permanent board and a management committee consisting of 10 members. When I visited the station in August 2001, the committee had recently been transformed into an interim working group that was working to restructure the station's operations and hire its new manager, Sergie Naidoo. According to Naidoo, these changes came about after the station's funding was mismanaged to the point where Radio Phoenix was nearly bankrupt. He would not explain why the station had hit such dire financial straits. His claim seemed to run counter to the station's FY 2000 balance sheet, which showed a net profit of more than R 340,000 (approximately $38,000).

Radio Phoenix generated all of its funding through the sale of advertising. The station has a marketing strategy in place to attract local businesses as clients and continually revises that strategy based on market research. Naidoo said that revenue had not been difficult to obtain, as advertising sales were generally strong. He also claimed that sales representatives worked hard to maintain this trend. This was not always the case, according to some presenters. Nair said that he often developed his own promotions because there was little to no support in terms of sponsorship:

> There was absolutely no support. That was the difference. There was
> absolutely no support and it was absolutely a sin, if I may say so, to

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have something as powerful as that and people that put it on so proudly,

and know that you have to really take the skin off your back to make it

whatever you made it. And it could have made it so much better if the

powers that be had put in something to better the presenter . to support

the presenter. At a community radio station, it could have been much

better.

Despite the difficulties that producers faced. the station was still able to support a full

program schedule. Although it broadcasted 24 hours per day, seven days per week. the

station had a relatively limited programming schedule in comparison to other community

broadcasters in KwaZulu-Natal.

Programming and the public interest

A 24-hour station, Radio Phoenix started each day with a devotional program that

featured light "inspirational" music for different religious faiths but focused mostly on

the Hindu and Christian faiths. After this segment, the station's morning talk show,

"Magic Carpet Ride," began with what Naidoo called "continuity music" culled from

popular Indian films and pop music to fill in the gaps between segments of news.

weather, sports, talk and "comedy." Geared primarily toward adults on their way to work

or preparing to do daily household chores, the "breakfast show" focused more on

entertainment value than news and information. In fact. each time I listened to the show, I

thought it was desperately trying to emulate the SABC's national service, Lotus FM.

Featuring the usual morning "talk" team one might expect to hear on a

commercial station. the breakfast program's two hosts relied on brief submissions from

some reporters and the occasional bit of actuality tape. However, much of the program centered on local and national gossip and tabloid news, humor, sports and music than news and information -- the traffic and weather reports notwithstanding. A former presenter for the station, Rakhi Beekram, summarized the disparity between entertainment and informational content at Radio Phoenix quite succinctly when she said, "I think we were supposed to have more education and information than music, but the entertainment value is what was greatest. I don't think we met the requirements that were needed."

After the morning show, several female presenters hosted a "Women's Interest" program. According to Beekram, the station's board and management first envisioned this as a "women's issues" program. However, it ended up becoming more of a "housewives' program" covering helpful beauty "hints," "recipes" and feature news about local "achievers" (Radio Phoenix, 2000). When I asked Beekram why this was the case, she said she did not know but surmised that it was probably because the format was more "entertaining." However, she expressed dismay about the program when she said:

> ... what I noticed were women's programs, which should have been
> empowerment programs, ended up being something about health,
> beauty, cookery ... that's not women's issues.

Following the women's program, music dominated almost the entire schedule. During segments titled "Tea Time Treats" and "Kiddies," disc jockeys played primarily Indian popular music from Hindi- and Tamil-language films for their adult and children's audiences, respectively. The station's largest audience -- stay-at-home females from the ages of 35-44 -- tuned in en masse during this part of the schedule.

Indeed, music -- even during the station's topical or discussion programs -- was a driving force behind Radio Phoenix. Its policy was to play 50 percent "North Indian" (Hindi, Urdu and Gujarathi) and 50 percent "South Indian" (Tamil and Telegu) music (Radio Phoenix, 2001). The station's slogan, "Hit Music Radio," perhaps said everything about its priorities. Nair said he was less than enamored by this but added that he understood the station's motivation for focusing on music more than news and information. Songs, of course, attract listeners, in turn, the songs sell advertisements. More importantly for the station, however, the music was what resonated most with the community. As Beekram told me, "I think people obviously liked it for the entertainment value that they got. Because compared to Lotus FM, Radio Phoenix has always been complimented for playing better music ... that was what reached out."

Music also represented some contentious issues at the station. For example, when I spoke with Nair, he seemed perturbed by the fact that Radio Phoenix sold enough advertising to "make" money but failed to provide for its staff expenses. In fact, Nair said, the station did not have a budget for music

> I don't even want to tell you how much time I spent on the Internet ...
> how much I spent buying my own music and at the end of the day to
> put a program together. Fair enough. And this was for me ... I got to do
> what I wanted to do. It was a burning desire to be on the radio ... I
> satisfied that goal of mine. Just taking it from there, I was trying to tell
> you what I put in ... but at times, management held us to a certain
> extent at ransom. Because the attitude was like, not what you put into it
> ... it was, "If you don't like it ... tough."

In the late afternoon, hosts would play more Hindi and Tamil pop tunes and take callers for a talk show geared toward youth issues, including school, sports, crime and personal safety, gender, identity, relationships and AIDS. Beekram presented this youth program, which was called "Teen Vibes." This program featured produced segments on topics affecting youth, such as school, dating and health, but, according to Beekram, also featured some celebrity gossip and on-air quizzes for good measure. She said that she accepted callers on the show and always had lively discussions about her chosen topic.

However, Beekram also told me that the most important aspect of the program was its function as a forum for younger members of the Indian community who found themselves caught between the values of their elders and the pressures of contemporary life in Durban and, indeed, throughout South Africa:

> ... some things actually are difficult to discuss, especially within the Indian community, is topics like sex, premarital sex. These are things that have to be discussed ... taboo subjects among Indians, but ... I think the best thing was getting professionals and social workers ... especially to make it more relevant. Because I think it was World AIDS Day when we had done this ... because people think AIDS is not prevalent in the Indian community ... they think the Indian community is immune to AIDS ... it's just not so ... they probably wouldn't hear about it ...

Beekram said that although her program did feature topical discussions, she did not produce any news programs or read news on-air. These tasks were left to the afternoon hosts.

After "Teen Vibes," the afternoon drive program, which was essentially mirrored after the morning program, offered afternoon news bulletins, traffic and weather updates. Kaihar (2000, 2001) mentioned that that station used national bulletins from the now-defunct Radio Network News, which was a radio news service based in Johannesburg. The rest of the news content was generated by intern presenters recruited from local journalism schools at the University of Durban-Westville, M.L. Sultan Technikon and Technikon Natal. Following the afternoon drive program, Radio Phoenix featured an hour of music comprised of "requests and dedications" from local callers, which saw a heavy audience of all ages. One of the most popular programs, the "request" show attracted hundreds of callers who dialed in to the studios with requests of their favorite pop tunes from Hindi and Tamil films as well as works by local musicians. The featuring of local music was one of Radio Phoenix's specialties, according to Beekram and Nair. As Nair told me:

… they had a fair amount of local music. We've got a potentially good growing local music industry … some very talented artists … Radio Phoenix gave a fair amount of air time to those artists. It's something that ICASA is now kind of enforcing certain limitations … 20 percent of music played should be of South African nature. Radio Phoenix took care of that and in doing so, I think the community recognized that … that they were supporting something of their own.

Indeed, Radio Phoenix did exceed ICASA local content regulations. In 1999, Radio Phoenix sometimes featured local artists in 30 to 40 percent of its rotation. The station

also hosted live performances in its studio and frequently interviewed local artists (Kaihar, 2000).

In the late evening, the station presented a current affairs program titled "Livewire." During this program, rotating hosts would open up the station's telephones for discussion on topics that were in the morning newspapers. The program featured "commentary of issues of relevance," according to Naidoo. However, not all shared this opinion. Nair's view was that the program resembled commercial talk radio more than an earnest discussion of news and current events. Nonetheless, the station did manage to feature several important public figures on the program. The station interviewed President Thabo Mbeki, several MPs (Members of Parliament) and other prominent Indian political figures, such as Essop Pahad and Valli Moosa, during the 1999 national elections. The station also put together special reports leading up to the elections and allowed community participation by opening up its phone lines to listeners who had questions for the politicians in the studio (Radio Phoenix, 2001). In addition, the station featured a "community diary" in the evenings, which contained announcements by local schools, health and religious organizations.

At night, the station devoted its airtime to a short business program intended to reach out to local business owners, many of whom advertised with the station. After the business segment, however, were programs that Naidoo said were central to the station's mission. From 10 p.m. to 11 p.m., the station played an hour of music programming that featured a specific language. On Mondays, *Raunage Sangeeti* featured music in Urdu; Tuesday's *Sa Re Ga Na* featured Hindi music; on Wednesdays, Telegu music was played

during *Gaana Sudha*; *Then Isai* featured Tamil music on Thursdays; and Gujarati speakers were served with *Shradanjali* on Fridays.

While these programs did fulfill the station's mission statement, at least in part, Nair told me that they also underscored some deep divisions concerning language and culture in the Indian community:

> You see, it is such a complex culture ... you're going to get so many people wanting something ...Urdu, Hindi, Telegu ... the big problem is, there's such a divide between Hindi and Tamil speaking people. It's such an issue. The religion, though, is Hindu. Hindi and Tamil are languages ... but that's the problem ... people don't understand that. People think it constitutes a community. This is not India, where North Indians live in the North and South Indians live in the South of India. There are no designated areas ... everyone's together. People say, "I'm North Indian ... I'm South Indian," and they haven't even been to India! So you can see, it's a lost argument ... and my concern is ... if you can't unite as your own race group, how are you going to unite an entire country of different race groups?

However, Nair also said the divide did not mitigate the fact that listeners appreciated a chance to be exposed to their respective languages. He mentioned that the long history of the Indian community in Durban caused a disconnection for many people between their daily lives and their identities. This explanation resonated with me, as I had read the work of cultural studies scholars and ethnographers (see especially Freund, 1995) who found the same phenomenon in their research.

Aside from its programming, Radio Phoenix also hosted community events for the Phoenix community. The most popular events were the community *bhangras* -- large, club-style dances accompanied by a special genre of electronic music with indigenous, usually Hindi, influences -- where the community had the chance to meet the Radio Phoenix staff. The community entertainment events, such as the "Bhangra Bash" and live remotes, represented some of its finest hours, according to the staff and management with whom I spoke. Beekram relayed one of the most interesting stories about Radio Phoenix's bhangras when she told me that, "at our Bhangra Bash, our bhangra parties, there were mostly older people. There were some younger people, but we got a huge older crowd ... like grandmothers ... it's good because it's a time for family to be together." Beekram was also involved with what she called "edu-fairs," where local schoolchildren would come to a booth that the station had established for activities and other special events:

> It was also entertaining, but it was ... I think what got them more
> interested is when they were watching something ... um, maybe little
> plays or concerts demonstrating something that would teach them
> something and they would always be there because we had prizes we
> would give away and so it was perfect ... it kept them interested ...

Nair said he also participated in community events where listeners were allowed to interact with the presenters and DJs. He said that the station's morale, from his point of view, was boosted by the community's response to programming and personalities. He said that, aside from regular mail and telephone feedback, events such as these gave him a distinct impression of "the power of radio."

Naidoo claimed that Radio Phoenix emphasized a "two-way" relationship with its listening community. He said that management welcomed direct feedback from listeners on both a formal and informal basis and that community members were welcome to schedule a time to speak with the manager or leave their comments with a staff member. He characterized the station's relationship with its community as "a personal relationship with community members, who are the primary beneficiaries of the station's decisions," and added that that if community members have a problem with some aspect of the station, he would prefer direct contact with community members. To be exact, he said he preferred if people did not "discuss it [their complaint] with friends and neighbors." Rather, he said, "they should come to me."

I wondered why Naidoo chose to keep things in-house. When I spoke with Rakhi Beekram, she alluded to some factors that may have shaped Naidoo's attitude about communication with the station's listeners. She concurred that the station received a large amount of feedback but added:

> I can't honestly say that we did much for the community other than
> what we did on air. Because, actually, to think of it very honestly ...
> there wasn't much we did do to the community. I mean, in terms of
> entertainment, yeah ... and education ... and information too. But I
> think that's as far as it went.

O'Neil Nair made a similar assessment but also pointed out the "passion" that Radio Phoenix's listeners had for the station and its programming. He said that, at times, it seemed as if Radio Phoenix "had more support than the national broadcaster, Lotus FM." However, as Sergie Naidoo reminded me, Lotus FM had recruited seven of Radio

Phoenix's announcers away from the station. Naidoo was proud of this, but he was also concerned about competing with Lotus FM for the same audience and advertising revenue. Nair had the same concern and confirmed what Naidoo told me about the Indian listener who is "primarily the over 30 guy who works Monday to Friday, listens to the station. But what you'd find is, our highest listenership comes from women at home, retired Indians who have it on 24 hours a day, sleep with it on…and that's the listener." However, as an employee of Lotus FM, Nair could speak well for how his current employer was trying to pull listeners away from Radio Phoenix:

> … And then you have the other problem that we at the national level
>
> are trying to change. You get the upwardly mobile Indian who's
>
> holding a professional job, living in an affluent area who's probably
>
> listening to East Coast Radio, 5FM … now there are specific program
>
> coming back to the Indian station … that's what categorizing it … and
>
> that's why we're trying to pull listeners back …

Relations with the regulator

The Independent Communications Authority of South Africa (2001a) was not quite enamored with Radio Phoenix. In its annual monitoring report, the authority cited numerous violations by the station manager, mostly stemming from the lack of community meetings that had been held according to law. The authority also commented on the lack of community empowerment programs and the large variety of music that Radio Phoenix seemed to favor over other types of programming. The station tried to remedy these problems in the summer of 2001, when it was off the air for several months

because of license difficulties. It came back on the air in mid-August 2001 with essentially the same program schedule.

The problems with the regulator would continue despite the station's resumption of broadcasting. In July 2001, ICASA wrote Radio Phoenix to inform the management that it had not met its licensing requirements. Specifically, the agency cited the station for not properly holding its Annual General Meeting and not properly informing the community of when such a meeting would be scheduled. ICASA officials made this evaluation after receiving an anonymous fax containing complaints from members of the Voluntary Association of Greater Durban Metropolitan Region, which had a number of Phoenix community members as part of the organization (ICASA, 2001a). Naidoo wrote ICASA back, informing the regulator that the Association's claims were "totally untrue." He also included several newspaper clippings and testimonials from employees about the radio announcements for the meeting that the station had aired. Naidoo claimed these were adequate protocols for a community notice, but the regulator disagreed. An ICASA councilor who reviewed the situation said in an internal report that the station's meeting had "most certainly not been advertised" in accordance with Radio Phoenix's own statues set out in its constitution (ICASA, 2001a). The regulator turned out to be correct. While the station did meet its advance notice requirements and did broadcast the announcement on the air, it did not print and circulate leaflets, not did it appoint temporary board members that the community considered "independent and reputable" (Radio Phoenix, 2001). When the station attempted to convene the meeting in October 2001, members of the Voluntary Association interdicted the meeting and kept it from proceeding because they disagreed with the manner in which the meeting was held.

Many financial questions about Radio Phoenix also remained unanswered when it went back on the air, but it did make an effort to restructure. I was told that a permanent management committee was to be in place shortly after the time I met with Naidoo and interviewed some of the station's former staff members. In fact, Naidoo said a board would be in place by the end of 2001 in accordance with license mandates that require a board to be in place within three months of going on the air. At the time, Radio Phoenix broadcasted under a temporary ICASA license and had only been back on the air for a few weeks. This followed the previous five-month suspension of transmission that resulted from ICASA's order to cease transmission and its threat to take away Radio Phoenix's license.

However, Radio Phoenix's troubles did not cease after its first lapse in transmission. The licensing authority became concerned about the station's high turnover of staff and an incident that occurred in September 2001, when the general manager sacked nine presenters over what he claimed was "insubordination" (Govender, 2001b). The community was not consulted about the dismissals and no meeting was held. Other presenters took jobs at the SABC station geared toward the Indian market, "Lotus FM". Indeed, some presenters, such as O'Neil Nair and Rakhi Beekram, argued that Lotus FM had always been a constant drain of Radio Phoenix's talent -- an interesting problem in its own regard. Soon, however, Radio Phoenix would have no need for talent of any kind.

In November 2001, Radio Phoenix went silent. The station manager and the board elected to oversee the station were at bitter odds with one another and accusations of financial and personnel mismanagement -- as well as unfair evaluation practices by ICASA -- flew through the local press (Govender, 2001a, 2001b; Naidu, 2001a, 2001b;

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Pillay, 2001a, 2001b). In the final evaluation report of the station, which was published in November 2001 by ICASA's Monitoring and Complaints Unit, the regulator concluded that "since the station's inception, the station has been engulfed by problems which it has never been able to address adequately" (ICASA, 2001a, p. 5).

Shortly after ICASA decided to terminate the station's broadcasting signal in November 2001, rumors began to circulate that another group was preparing to open a new station to replace Radio Phoenix, only this time with a greater focus on "North" Indian culture and the Hindi language. As of early 2003, this station has yet to materialize. The closest thing to replacing Radio Phoenix's focus on Durban's Asian community was a Muslim group called "Radio Azania." However, this prospective station's license application was rejected in December 2001. No secular initiatives to replace Radio Phoenix have emerged since the station's demise.

Radio Phoenix: A summary

Although it is clear that Radio Phoenix did provide a service that was heavily supported by its community, it perhaps more evident that it was unable to maintain its organizational structures in a manner that allowed it to meet more of the objectives it had set for itself. Radio Phoenix demonstrated some of the social goods sought by broadcasting officials and government policy. However, it succumbed to internal pressures that were only partly due to funding.

Radio Phoenix's troubles began in earnest perhaps much earlier than when its licensing difficulties began to erode its ability to provide a broadcasting service in early 2001. As internal pressures and politics, community struggles and other extraneous issues

continued to threaten the stability of the station, there was little room to maneuver in terms of improving programming and reaching out in a more significant way to its audience. Former announcers, including Nair (2001) and Kaihar (2001), told me that the station had an opportunity to meet its challenges and redirect itself toward renewed success, but they lamented the fact that this never materialized. As Nair put it:

> To draw a crude analogy, you and I are playing sport X, which has a goal. But if we don't have the right equipment, we're not going to extract the potential we have out of that…and that was Radio Phoenix. It was gold amongst the community, but it didn't have the pillars to stand on…to really reach its full potential.

Unfortunately for Radio Phoenix, this assessment was held by more than one person in the community -- not to mention the regulator -- and, indeed, became its epitaph.

Endnotes

[1] Bhangra is a special form of dance music that is entirely Indian in origin. It fuses Western pop and techno with variations of traditional Indian music. Bhangra "nights" and Bhangra "clubs" are extremely popular in Durban. The form's popularity in Bombay, Bangalore, Delhi, Madras, London, Abu Dhabi and a number of other international cities with large Indian communities has made it a worldwide phenomenon.

[2] It was brought to my attention by Sunita Kaihar (2001) that Sergie Naidoo is not related to station founder Francis Naidoo (Naidoo is a very common name among South Africans of South Indian descent).

VI. SUMMARY AND DISCUSSION OF RESEARCH FINDINGS

The purpose of this study has been to examine relationships between perception and theory. Specifically, we have seen how two community radio stations in KwaZulu-Natal, South Africa, view their roles in the country's emerging public sphere and how their perceptions relate to national broadcasting policies and established theories of community radio's role and function in the public sphere. As the case studies for both stations suggest, Radio Khwezi and Radio Phoenix serve distinct audiences on the local level and have (or in Radio Phoenix's case, had) unique perceptions of how they serve those audiences.

It is relatively easy to see, at least from this author's vantage point, how these perceptions -- and actions based on those perceptions -- helped to shape the respective development of each station. However, there are other issues that emerged during the collection of data and the analysis phase of this study that have yielded more subtle findings and interpretations related to the research questions. This chapter will present a general, exploratory overview of the critical issues that arose in each case and the relation of those issues to the questions and theories employed in this study. The focus will remain on issues and interpretations rather than conclusions.

It is important to keep in mind that the purpose of this study is not to draw hard and fast conclusions about community radio and its role in South Africa's public sphere. Rather, this study seeks to identify issues that emerged from two particular stations and examine how these issues relate to the broader problem of community radio's purpose

and function as a part of South African media. Thus, as discussed in Chapter Three, this study leaves space for contestation of the interpretations presented here as well as additional interpretations that the reader may have of the presented material. Any and all perceived errors are the responsibility of the author and are accepted as such. "Errors," in this case, also relates to differences in interpretation. Indeed, other interpretations may illuminate more significant issues and information related to the data presented here. It is hoped, then, that other research projects can emerge from the findings presented here.

In the following sections, the findings from Chapters Four and Five will be discussed and analyzed in terms of their relevance to the research questions and theoretical framework discussed in Chapter Two. The questions that have guided the chosen research methodology are:

- How do South African policy makers and practitioners perceive community radio and its sociopolitical function?

- What is the perception of community radio's function within particular stations in a particular geographic area in South Africa (and what might be learned from gathering data to answer this question)?

- How do these perceptions and practice relate to established theory dealing with the purpose and function of community radio?

To recapitulate: in Chapter One, we saw how the histories of South African broadcasting and community radio have informed the research questions employed in this study. Furthermore, in Chapter Two, the relevant literature and theoretical material were discussed in an effort to support, reinforce and inform the research questions and the methodology. Chapter Three outlined, justified and critiqued the case study methodology

chosen for the analysis of data in Chapters Four and Five. What remains is some interpretation and discussion of emergent issues. Due to the preliminary nature of this study, the terms "interpretation" and "discussion" are preferred over the term "findings." The following information is intended to reflect this epistemological perspective.

Discussion of issues

The major issues that were focused on in the case studies of Radio Khwezi and Radio Phoenix related primarily to their license types, perceived audiences and areas of service but were not limited to these aspects alone. Some of the major issues investigated in both studies include: perceptions of the function of community radio on the local level, perceptions of national community radio policy, and coherence of policies and practices with established theories of community radio's function in a society. However, other issues emerged from these case studies, such as financing, governance, ethics, community access and quality of service. All of these matters had, in this author's view, an effect on each station's perception of itself and its role in the public sphere.

As a rurally focused, "geographic area" community radio station, Radio Khwezi believes that its mission is to serve a widely dispersed and "marginalized" population in a rural area that is mostly poor and has an extremely limited educational base, high rates of disease and limited access to governmental and social institutions. The major issues for the management and staff of Radio Khwezi -- and for the researcher who observed and interpreted the station -- are related to these goals. The general function of the station as a tool of development and reconstruction in the post-apartheid era is paramount among these issues. Other, secondary issues include the station's encouragement of participation

among community members and its efforts to unify disparate ethnic and language groupings in its general transmission area. In addition, the station perceives itself as an especially important source of information for Zulu people, as it broadcasts most of its content in the Zulu language and maintained a high number of black volunteers who spoke the language. Indeed, more than two-thirds of the station's producers are black, which also reflects the local population dispersion in terms of ethnicity and the station's language breakdown within its weekly programming schedule.

However, other interesting issues related to the research questions and theoretical framework emerged from the case of Radio Khwezi. For example, the station's perceived role as a node of practical communication -- as demonstrated by its featuring of funeral announcements and other important pieces of community information -- demonstrated that the station thought of its community services well beyond the pale of "special interest" programming. Indeed, the staff saw itself as the "heart" of its community and attempted to manifest that perception within the station's programming offerings.

The levels of participation and service at Radio Khwezi raise similar issues to those outlined by White (1983) in his typology of community radio. Radio Khwezi's employment of more than 50 volunteers from the KwaSizabantu Mission reflects the desire of the station to use itself as a platform for the articulation of community concerns in its immediate area and its commitment to protecting the right to communicate that is enshrined in the Constitution of the Republic of South Africa (1996).[1] However, the station's approach to this end is complicated by the fact that its transmission signal goes well beyond its "immediate" surroundings. This state of affairs begs the question of

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whether the public sphere for Radio Khwezi is defined in strict geographical terms or broad ideological terms.

Structurally, Radio Khwezi is sound and stable in terms of its management and its license has been approved on each application attempt. However, the case of Radio Khwezi also raises some very important issues related to financing and governance for community radio in general. It does see itself as part of a local communication "network" and attempts to reflect that through its encouragement of community participation in programming and the general affairs of the station. Its balance sheet also shows only a minimal "profit" after expenses, which its managers claim was reinvested into station equipment and operating expenses. Because the station has managed to maintain a steady source of revenue, it has remained in good financial standing. This stability, according to the station's managers, is what allows it to continue and expand its community broadcasting services.

Radio Phoenix, as a "cultural community of interest" station, also saw its primary function as one of community development. However, its chosen vehicle to facilitate that development was focused primarily on music. Music and talk programming dominated Radio Phoenix's programming schedule to an extent that there was little room for other, more structured programs. Thus, the issue of appropriate content was also raised in this case, albeit in a different light than with Radio Khwezi. In terms of localization of content and participation, however, Radio Phoenix -- like Radio Khwezi -- performed very well. The station often invited local musicians for performances and interviews and played their music as part of its rotation.

The major issue raised in the case of Radio Phoenix was that of community support and the quality of community participation. Although it had a high quantity of participation, Radio Phoenix perhaps did not have the best quality of participants. As several former announcers told me, the station's hiring practices and policies were inconsistent and self-interest was rampant among the staff and management. In addition, the station's strong desire to comply with ICASA's request for an Annual General Meeting was thwarted by a group purporting to represent volunteer interests. In the face of great adversity, Radio Phoenix simply allowed its community support to slip away through its refusal -- or perhaps inability -- to acknowledge that its operations were not sustainable at the time and needed reassessment.

Structurally, the biggest issue confronting Radio Phoenix was its board. The inability of the board to maintain adequate oversight on managerial, financial and programming issues surely led to its demise. However, this situation also raised the secondary issue of appropriate forms of governance. Perhaps the expectation of a high level of organization in terms of internal affairs was expecting too much for Radio Phoenix. Nonetheless, the station was required to meet this expectation and did not do so. The issue, then, focuses on why the station was not able to meet its goals.

Although the above issues were examined in-depth in the case studies, it is necessary at this point to reiterate the evaluations and concerns that were articulated in earlier chapters. The following sections are intended to serve as recapitulations of the major issues of the case studies as well as to offer tentative conclusions that address the research questions. More importantly, however, these brief reviews of both cases also

serve as a transition to another important section of this study that focuses on other emergent issues and considerations for future research.

Interpretations and evaluations of Radio Khwezi

Radio Khwezi has not only met the policy mandates set forth in the IBA Act (RSA, 1993) and the ICASA Code of Conduct (ICASA, 2001g), but it has also met many of the normative expectations established by community radio theorists. The station has a diverse array of programming that serves, and is produced by, its various "communities." Although it has formal structures in place to interview and assess potential presenters before they are allowed on the air, the station encourages active community participation through its programming and invites panelists and callers to interact through various programs geared toward education and community development.

In accordance with ICASA regulations, Radio Khwezi has a permanent staff, board of directors and infrastructure designed to uphold and protect its community service mission. In terms of meeting special mandates outlined in ICASA regulations, the station features twice the amount of local music content required by law. It has also given hundreds of community volunteers a chance to contribute to community development or start a career in broadcasting. Most importantly from the standpoint of regulatory policy, Radio Khwezi's supply of funding has been relatively stable, it's financial status is solid the station has clearly been managed well.

Radio Khwezi is successful in meeting the national policy directives of community radio because it has a large degree of community participation and support. However, the fact that a mission sponsored by the Lutheran Church essentially

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established the Radio Khwezi's facilities long before it began broadcasting gives it an advantage over many other stations. What the station does with these resources, however, is most remarkable. Thanks to its positioning as the only community radio station that serves the vast majority of rural KwaZulu-Natal, it offers an alternative to public service stations that is not available through any other channel. The station has managed to form strong relationships with its community of listeners and gain their trust by adhering to its mission statement and developing programming that puts its objectives into action.

As mention in Chapter Four, the station actually does what it says it will do: it involves the community, meets the requests of its community and gives the community programming that it wants. With over 50 volunteers and an experienced staff that produces hundreds of hours of programming per week in the areas of development, education, history, news and health -- among many other areas of community interest -- the station has left quite an impression on NGO experts who have followed the station's development. The station's management credits its staff and their initiative with keeping the station stable and thriving as well as. However, ICASA's Head of Broadcasting, Eric Nhlapo (2001), made an important general point about the ability of Radio Khwezi and other stations with a Christian religious background have resources that others do not when applying for a license and implementing its requirements. He said that other applicants, whether secular, cultural or religious, "won't be as sophisticated as, say, the Christian radio station ... because they've been in the game too long, they know how to put this thing, they know how to get the funding and these sorts of things."

However, Nhlapo also mentioned that the content is what is most important. Radio Khwezi does perhaps have some clear advantages over other stations and license

applicants. However, these should not necessarily be considered in a negative light. The station works just as hard to produce programming and now, like other community radio stations across South Africa, survives solely on revenue generated by advertising. Radio Khwezi's commitments and mission statement are the same as other stations. However, what it does in terms of its approach to meeting its service obligations and modeling itself as an outlet that provides "quality broadcasting with sound values which will develop individuals, families and our community" (Radio Khwezi, 2001, p. 18). The values the station mentions are clearly reflected in the structure of its board, which is comprised primarily of Zulu-speaking, black community members who adhere to a denomination of the Christian faith. The station's programming provides spaces for this demographic segment and others to represent their interests, articulate their concerns and reinforce their value structures. Even from a critical vantage point, it is difficult for this author to see the station's ideological positioning as a negative effect. Indeed, it seems quite the opposite, and the station is taking full advantage of its opportunities to connect with its community and facilitate discourse among its listeners.

Interpretations and evaluation of Radio Phoenix

As its manager and employees enthusiastically confirmed, it is clear that Radio Phoenix did provide a service that was heavily supported by its community. However, as confirmed by other sources and ICASA, it perhaps more evident that the station was unable to maintain its organizational structures in a manner that allowed it to meet more of the objectives it had set for itself. Radio Phoenix demonstrated some of the social goods sought by broadcasting officials and government policy. It did, after all, provide a

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service that served a demonstrated cultural need and was involved with its community through formal feedback channels and other events. However, its demise was facilitated by internal dissent and a lack of clarity over how the station should be governed. The politicization of the station's function and purpose, then, also contributed to the erosion of its ability to provide a space for the broadest possible cross-section of its listening community.

Radio Phoenix's licensing difficulties and internal disputes began to erode its ability to provide a broadcasting service in early 2001. As community struggles and other extraneous issues continued to threaten the stability of the station, there was little room to maneuver in terms of improving programming and reaching out in a more significant way to its audience. Some of the station's former announcers were especially adamant about the respect the station had garnered from the community and the passion that fueled its operation. However, they also lamented that the station had an opportunity to meet its challenges and redirect the station toward success, but that this never materialized. To reiterate Nair's (2001) assessment of Radio Phoenix, "It was gold amongst the community, but it didn't have the pillars to stand on … to really reach its full potential."

Radio Phoenix's failure to reach its "full potential" likely stemmed from its inability to reach internal consensus among its board members and community members. In addition, programming and content issues, accusations of mismanagement and inconsistent personnel policies led to conflicts between management and staff that damaged morale and community support. The station's last manager, Sergie Naidoo, seemed to act as if these events would be easily overcome and told me that Radio Phoenix would be a "force to be reckoned with." However, the only thing that seemed to

"reckon" with Radio Phoenix was antagonism from a local volunteer association and disgruntled former associates of the station who wanted a stake in its downfall.

Perhaps the most important part about Radio Phoenix's demise is that it did actually serve its community with programming that listeners supported and, in some cases, demanded. Although the overall social value of the content it provided is debatable, it is nonetheless clear that the station made an effort to provide a space for its community to openly articulate its concerns, values and desires. In the end, the conflicts at the station overshadowed its advances and prevented it from serving the public with an alternative voice to the public service broadcaster, Lotus FM. Radio Phoenix's obsession with competing at the level of the national broadcaster, however, may have been a major reason for its downfall.

Summary and recommendations for further research

It is clear from this researcher's perspective that both Radio Khwezi and Radio Phoenix perceived South Africa's national community radio policies, their function as parts and facilitators of the public sphere and their function in relation to established theories of community radio in similar ways. Despite the differences between the two stations in terms of license requirements, reach and audience, both held the objectives of bolstering South Africa's new democracy and supporting community development in high regard. In addition, both made strong attempts to meet their goals. However, the difference in approach between the two stations seems to explain much about why one is still broadcasting and the other is defunct.

By putting its programming goals within the areas of development, education and information --as well as the nourishment of spiritual needs -- Radio Khwezi took an approach that was strongly geared toward strengthening community participation and development initiatives. In addition, its efforts to maintain solid managerial and financial structures helped it to continue meeting these objectives over a sustained period of time and expand its efforts to reach out to its community.

The continued participation of Radio Khwezi's community members and volunteers lends much to the assertion that the station understands its role well and does everything that it can to meet its obligations. While it does have some advantages in terms of funding, it is also well managed and well respected by ICASA, NGOs, trainers and scholars (see Feyissa, 1999; Teer-Tomaselli, 2002). As one expert remarked, one doesn't *necessarily* need a large amount of funding to produce relevant programming that serves the needs of a community, although it does help (Pollecut, 2001). Radio Khwezi is well-funded, but it does not take its funding situation for granted. Its revenues were even less than those of Radio Phoenix in 2000, yet it managed to perform at a higher level and consistently involve more of its community members.

Community involvement by Radio Phoenix's listeners was at an all-time high from 1998 through early 2001 when it had a staff of more than 40 volunteer presenters, featured a number of programs that encouraged community interaction and held 11 major community events that reflected the values and interests of its listeners. Radio Phoenix also claimed to have programming goals designed to uplift its community. But the impressions it left on this researcher, some of its own employees and ICASA were not coherent with its stated policy goals. The station's focus on music and entertainment may

have contributed to some of the station's problems in meeting the needs of its community and gaining the necessary input and support it needed to improve its performance and survive in the long term.

Although Radio Phoenix did make a strong effort to meet its language breakdown requirements, its programming in this regard was centered on music rather than education. Furthermore, the unequal balance between its limited amount of news and information programming and its relatively large amount of music request and phone-in talk programs may have compromised its approach to meeting its objectives of community empowerment. Nonetheless, one could also argue that the station did provide plenty of space for community interaction and articulation of public concerns. Whether the structure of this space for public communication actually had an impact on the community's perception of the station is a problem that cannot be answered with the data collected in this study.

Also problematic was a perception of Radio Phoenix's status that was widely held by the station's management and employees. The positioning of the station as a "competitor" with its national public service counterpart, Lotus FM, clouded its role as a community radio station and seemed to precipitate a lack of attention to the special needs of its surrounding area. In addition, its approach to community involvement seemed to center more on providing entertainment opportunities rather than enhancing and enriching public debate on issues that were focused on democracy and development. This is not to say that the station was not serious about reaching out to its community -- it clearly was interested in this. However, its self-image seemed to revolve around its relationship to a public service broadcaster that held a completely different set of

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broadcasting goals, had a different type of license and far more resources to reach its audience. Radio Phoenix could compete for listeners but it could not compete in terms of resources. Thus, its focus on competition, rather than enhancing its quality of service, seriously limited its ability to sustain its commitment to community empowerment and development.

Finally, claims of mismanagement and embezzlement, a lack of institutional control and problems with the regulator all plagued Radio Phoenix from 1999 to 2001, when it was closed indefinitely by broadcasting regulators. From their initial emergence to the time of this writing, many of these claims have remained speculative at worst and unclear at best. What is clear, however, is that the regulator did not believe that the station was adequately informing the community it was licensed to serve. The controversy over Radio Phoenix's 2001 Annual General Meeting ultimately proved to be its demise, and the specter of this incident prevented the station from meeting its stated goals during its final days of broadcasting.

In light of the data gleaned from the cases studies of Radio Phoenix and Radio Khwezi, I have identified several major issues that emerged in relation to each station's ability to meet policy objectives and serve the public sphere with a space for the articulation of public concerns. Although the research questions were, in my view, well informed and at least tentatively answered by the data collected during the course of this study, three major issues deserve urgent attention:

- Governance and internal stability

- Clarity of purpose and goals

- Relations with the regulator and the ability to meet policy directives

Interestingly, these issues are more pragmatic in scope than the actual theoretical issues that were sought for examination in this study.

In terms of governance, Radio Phoenix was the most exemplary of the difficulty engendered by the juxtaposition of two particular problems: serving a large community with diverse interests and accounting for all of these interests through mandated general meetings designed to accommodate community input. Radio Phoenix's inability to meet these objectives, according to ICASA Head of Broadcasting Eric Nhlapo (2001), was what ultimately led to its termination of service:

> ... they were given four months to set themselves out ... that was one condition; second condition, the old board had to step down to make way for this twelve month, and this four months under review or being tested. Now basically, they failed to have an AGM, they failed to have a constitution, there were a whole lot of fights between the groups there and so forth ...

While this may seem to be an obvious assessment, it also points to a conflict between the responsibilities of the regulator and the obvious inability of the community to meet the objectives that had been set out by the regulator. For example, what makes a particular community radio station better able to meet regulatory demands than others? Why are there so many regulations that an essentially volunteer organization must meet? Do these regulations prohibit stations from actually realizing these goals? In order to begin answering some of these crucial questions, more research needs to be done concerning governance and sustainability and the relation of these two concepts to ability of community radio stations to deliver their services.

A national community radio training NGO, ABC Ulwazi, already has a program in place to examine these institutional problems. The National Community Radio Forum and the Freedom of Expression Institute are also looking at ways to examine policies that are generated by government and enforced by ICASA. These policies need to be examined in terms of their relevance and effectiveness and recommendations should be made on exactly what actions need to be taken to make policy work toward the benefit of the community radio sector. Finally, a large amount of attention also needs to be directed toward how South Africa's Department of Communications and Media Development and Diversity Agency will execute the tasks of providing government funding and additional support to community radio stations. Indeed, without the proper institutional controls in place, it will be difficult for any station to survive in a media climate that is changing as quickly as South Africa's.

In addition to institutional constraints that affect the ability of stations to meet their objectives, the case studies included in this document have critically evaluated the stated purposes of two particular stations and the manifestation of these stated purposes in practice. Radio Khwezi was quite clear in its purposes and its methods to implement its mission through its programming. Radio Phoenix's ability to do this, on the other hand, was limited. It is curious to note that Radio Phoenix stated in its 2001 license application that it was "distinctively different from a commercial station, insofar as it does not purport to serve the interests of a few unrepresentative persons, or the interest of profit makers or the interest of private commerce" (p. 7). Based on data that I collected from a variety of sources, this assertion is difficult to believe. Radio Phoenix, by the admission of its own station manager, saw itself as a competitor of the public service broadcaster

and attempted to fight for revenue and prestige to this end. This state of affairs begs the question of whether other stations also see themselves as competitors with other public service broadcasters. Clearly, this is a problem for stations whose resources are dwarfed by the partially subsidized budgets of the national broadcasters. As Laura Pollecut, the former Director of South Africa's Freedom of Expression Institute and a respected media consultant, said:

> ... with regard to income ... I think, quite rightly so, that sometimes, a commercial station opposed to a community station ... they [community stations] seem to not understand the difference between a community radio station and a commercial radio station ... I mean the difference is quite vast when you think about licensing ... there's this whole thing that the audiences are underrated and, therefore, they're not getting the income, or the advertising revenue they should be getting ... but at the same time, I also think that A. they should think about the difference between the two stations and B. they should then think about really, really local advertising, in its true sense ... and retail advertising, which is very different than what you're going to get on national media ...

In the case of Radio Phoenix, the station did seek out plenty of local advertisers but also sought some of the same corporate portfolios as its larger national competitor. The question, then, becomes: if a station feels compelled to compete with a larger entity, are enough resources available for both to coexist? This issue runs parallel to another matter concerning talent. Radio Khwezi and Radio Phoenix both lost presenters to Ukhozi FM

and Lotus FM, respectively. Are community radio stations being perceived as "entry-level" institutions for the public service broadcasters? If so, is this a desirable effect? These issues and questions deserve further attention, as they point to potential difficulties in the areas of training and sustainability and could place community radio stations at a disadvantage.

Finally, ICASA and its relationship with the community radio sector also emerged as an important issue for both Radio Khwezi and Radio Phoenix. For Radio Khwezi, the task of putting together a license application was found to be onerous for the station. Despite the fact that Radio Khwezi is better resourced than many other South African community radio stations, the burden of putting together a license application of several hundred pages for each of its one-year licenses was difficult to bear for the station's managers. Tleane (2001) and Dooms (2001) have both examined this issue, while other NGO activists told me that the licensing process is one of the gravest problems facing South African community radio stations. Jane Duncan (2001), the Director of South Africa's Freedom of Expression Institute, called the situation a "logjam" between the regulator and the stations.

The licensing problem revolves around a delay in four-year licensing that some have claimed was caused by the merger of the IBA and SATRA (Mfundisi, 2001; Freedom of Expression Institute, 2001). As it was mentioned in Chapter Two, the IBA -- and eventually ICASA -- originally licensed community radio stations annually with temporary licenses. This, according to Eric Nhlapo, caused a great deal of tension in the agency, which has traditionally been understaffed and unable to meet all of the requests that come from over 60 community radio stations across South Africa. Since 2000,

ICASA has been licensing stations with four-year licenses -- a development that has shortened the paperwork load for both the stations and the regulator. The four-year licensing cycle was concluded in July 2002 and will be reviewed, in accordance with the Broadcasting Act of 1999, before the next round of four-year licensing begins in 2004. However, the relative newness of community radio and the four-year licenses may give rise to new difficulties. As Jane Duncan remarked:

> ... given all of the problems around the licensing and the entrenched disparities within licensing in the one-year process ... we may find once again that there are different kinds of disparities that are entrenched through the four-year licensing process that we're going to have to assess when that whole review takes place.

The "disparities" Duncan spoke of are related to the priorities of ICASA during the last round of licensing. Indeed, more urbanized provinces with a larger community radio presence, such as Gauteng and Western Cape, were given license hearings far earlier than the more rural provinces that, one could argue, had more of an urgent need for community radio. Radio Khwezi's staff expressed particular concern about the regulator's handling of the licensing situation and said they had to wait for more than a year after they were told that a hearing would be held before they actually received a hearing.

The uncertainties surrounding the licensing situation are, indeed, problematic and need further attention. However, as the Director of South Africa's National Association of Broadcasters[2] pointed out, the station's themselves could do much to avoid many of the other licensing difficulties they face:

> ... my sort of cynical advice to applicants would be, you know, like ...
> define your community as broadly as possible and even if you've got
> something else in mind with what you want to be doing. But, you
> know, people don't take that advice ... they really, especially the ones
> who exist ... who have had like five or six one-year licenses, you know
> ... they really believe that -- and I'm sure they're correct -- that they
> are serving a need, that this is how it works and that there's no need to
> shift (Kantor, 2001).

To this end, urgent research must be done into how ICASA licenses stations and what it expects from a successful applicant. Although many developers and trainers have assisted stations with the application process, there is still a lack of clarity as to what constitutes a successful model for the licensing process. ABC Ulwazi's ongoing Community Radio Project has begun to examine this and other related issues in-depth. More research needs to be conducted in this area in order to better understand the problems that stations face with the regulator in terms of the licensing process.

Furthermore, an assessment of the level of understanding that exists in the area of broadcasting policies also needs to take place. Radio Phoenix's troubles with ICASA stemmed not from its content -- although the regulator did have some questions about that as well -- but rather from its procedural failures. The station's failure to execute its Annual General Meeting requirements essentially caused its closing. Whether this was caused by infighting among community groups, as some have claimed or a lack of understanding of national broadcasting policies -- or a lack of appropriate structures to enforce policies -- is not particularly clear from the data collected in this study. However,

with each of these situations being a possibility. the general issue of policy understanding and execution becomes apparent. It would be very helpful to both the regulator and the community radio sector itself if more attention were focused on how well individual stations actually understand and implement the conditions of their licenses.

Conclusions

In the cases of Radio Khwezi and Radio Phoenix, several tentative conclusions are clear:

1. Both stations had similar perceptions of South Africa's policies pertaining to community radio's purpose and function as a tool for the articulation of social, political and development concerns. These perceptions were, for the most part, in line with the objectives set forth in the IBA Act of 1993.

2. Both stations had unique perceptions of their purposes and functions and both seemed to derive these goals from stated needs in the community. Radio Khwezi focused its efforts on general community development goals for an impoverished community that had a limited educational background. The station focused heavily on building a culture of participation and democracy, spiritual nourishment, language and education. Radio Phoenix also saw itself as a community development tool but geared its programming and community involvement toward meeting the perceived needs of a more urbanized and educated population with a distinct cultural background. While its definition of community and development needs differed drastically from Radio Khwezi, Radio Phoenix did believe that it was providing an essential service that met the particularized needs of its listeners.

3. Both stations perceived their purposes and functions in ways that were similar to the tenets of established theories concerning community radio's purpose and function. However, the respective perceptions held by each station were informed by their unique and particular surroundings, thus making a particular "fit" to a normative structure impossible to delineate. Although Radio Khwezi was clearly more consistent in its approach to community participation than Radio Phoenix, neither station provided unlimited freedom to articulate matters of public concerns. Furthermore, Radio Khwezi seemed to embrace its status as a non-profit organization more clearly than Radio Phoenix, which had other competitive ambitions along with its stated mission of community service.

While these tentative assertions relate only to the stations in question, it is interesting to note that they also point to significant issues concerning the purpose and function of community radio in South Africa. As the Independent Communications Authority of South Africa, the Department of Communications, the newly formed Media Development and Diversity Agency and Parliament continue to oversee the development of the sector, it is important for each of these institutions to take note of issues such as the ones outlined in this study as well as other issues that have emerged from other community radio stations. Issues such as the definition of community, meeting the communication needs of a particular community, sustainability and appropriate levels of regulation are all reflected in this document, as they have been reflected in several other community radio studies that are outlined in Chapter Two. However, the interpretations presented here can only be considered intrinsically within the framework presented in this study. More local level research on community radio stations in South Africa and a better understanding of

other cases of community radio stations throughout the country are sorely needed. It is

hoped that this research can contribute to these broader efforts, some of which are already

underway.[3]

It is my view that the stations examined in this study represent some very

important functions for community radio in South Africa and its role in the public sphere.

As White (1994) has stated:

> ... the public sphere refers to that dimension of social action, cultural
>
> institutions, and collective decision making that affects *all* people in the
>
> society and engages the interests of *all* people in the national body. By
>
> contrast with this common, public sphere, the "particular" spheres are
>
> the interests of limited sectors of society: different occupational or
>
> economic groups, different social classes and statuses, religious or
>
> ethnic interests, regions, and local communities. All private and
>
> particular interests have a public dimension, and the public sphere must
>
> respect these particular interests. Each of the particularistic groupings
>
> may have its own public sphere, but at the level of society these are
>
> particularistic interests (p. 251).

Both Radio Khwezi and Radio Phoenix clearly pursued the general goals of this

normative definition of the public sphere as a facet of civil society. In addition, both

stations worked hard to provide the "particular" spheres that they were licensed to serve

with relevant programming that reflected the concerns, cultures and histories of their

listeners. However, it is clear that both material and non-material issues that were

confronted successfully by Radio Khwezi, but confronted unsuccessfully by Radio Phoenix, will need further attention in the future.

As Jane Duncan (2001), Director of South Africa's Freedom of Expression Institute, told me:

> I think the establishment of the community radio sector -- especially
> over such a short space of time -- is extremely significant in terms of
> diversification of media. We have a vested interest in seeing the
> greatest possible diversification in media in the country, so I think
> simply on that level that it creates greater diversity of media. More
> specifically, I think that it's a form of media that, at least in principle,
> fosters a greater participation on the parts of listeners and communities
> in whose names those services claim to operate ... and it's a structured
> way in which participation actually occurs ... in ways which are
> demanded by the regulator.

Indeed, community radio in South Africa has an important role to play in the future of the nation's mass communication structure and as a facet of particularized public spheres as well as the larger public sphere. This study has attempted to look at the perceptions that some practitioners have with regard to the role and function of South Africa's community radio sector. Furthermore, an attempt has been made to extract some of the issues surrounding this role as well as the development of policies and practices related to the purpose and function of the sector. Through the contexts of two stations in a province where the medium is relatively new, this study has tried to establish a framework for empirical evaluation on the local level.

It is my hope that others will find the practical and theoretical issues presented here useful to further research on South African community radio stations and their potential to fill communication gaps that were left by the oppressive practices of the apartheid regime. In addition, I am also hopeful that more researchers and policymakers will examine the notion that these stations provide a real alternative to public service and commercial broadcasters and, through their localized focus, serve an important function in South Africa's public sphere. Of course, the inspiration for this study does not apply to South Africa alone. This research project, in tandem with others that are underway, could certainly inspire similar projects in other international contexts where democracy, development and human rights initiatives are emerging.

Due to the methodology employed here, the interpretations and tentative findings presented in the case studies on Radio Khwezi and Radio Phoenix, as well as the discussions and interpretations presented in this concluding chapter, cannot be extended beyond what has been presented in this document. However, it is hoped that the interpretations presented here will provide additional insight for other researchers who choose to investigate similar issues and questions. Despite the fact that South Africa has been a democratic nation and has had a relatively free and open media system for nearly a decade, it is not reasonable to expect that its policy decisions and the performance of its community radio sector should have been flawless. Indeed, the American and Western European broadcasting systems are also far from perfect in this regard.

The important, and exciting, thing about South Africa, is that it is making a broad-based effort to improve community radio. For the sake of the civil society goals that South Africa has set for itself, I believe it is urgent and necessary for its community radio

sector to not only improve, but to also be sustainable for years to come. Although much

more work remains to be done, I am hopeful for the sector's future and can only hope that

other researchers will feel the same.

Endnotes

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[1] The South African Constitution (1996), in clause 15, states that "Every person shall have the right to freedom of speech and expression, which shall include freedom of the press and other media, and the freedom of artistic creativity and scientific research." This clause represents South Africa's formal recognition of freedom of expression rights.

[2] Lara Kantor was the NAB's director at the time of this research project. As of 2002, former IBA councilor Johan Koster has taken this position.

[3] This report will be forwarded to the University of Natal for inclusion in Professor Ruth Teer-Tomaselli's Community Radio Research Project, as well as the Freedom of Expression Institute of South Africa for inclusion in its policy research library. Thus, it may be useful for others investigating similar or different questions.

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APPENDIX A

A community member walks along the road to KwaSizabantu Mission and Radio Khwezi.

APPENDIX B
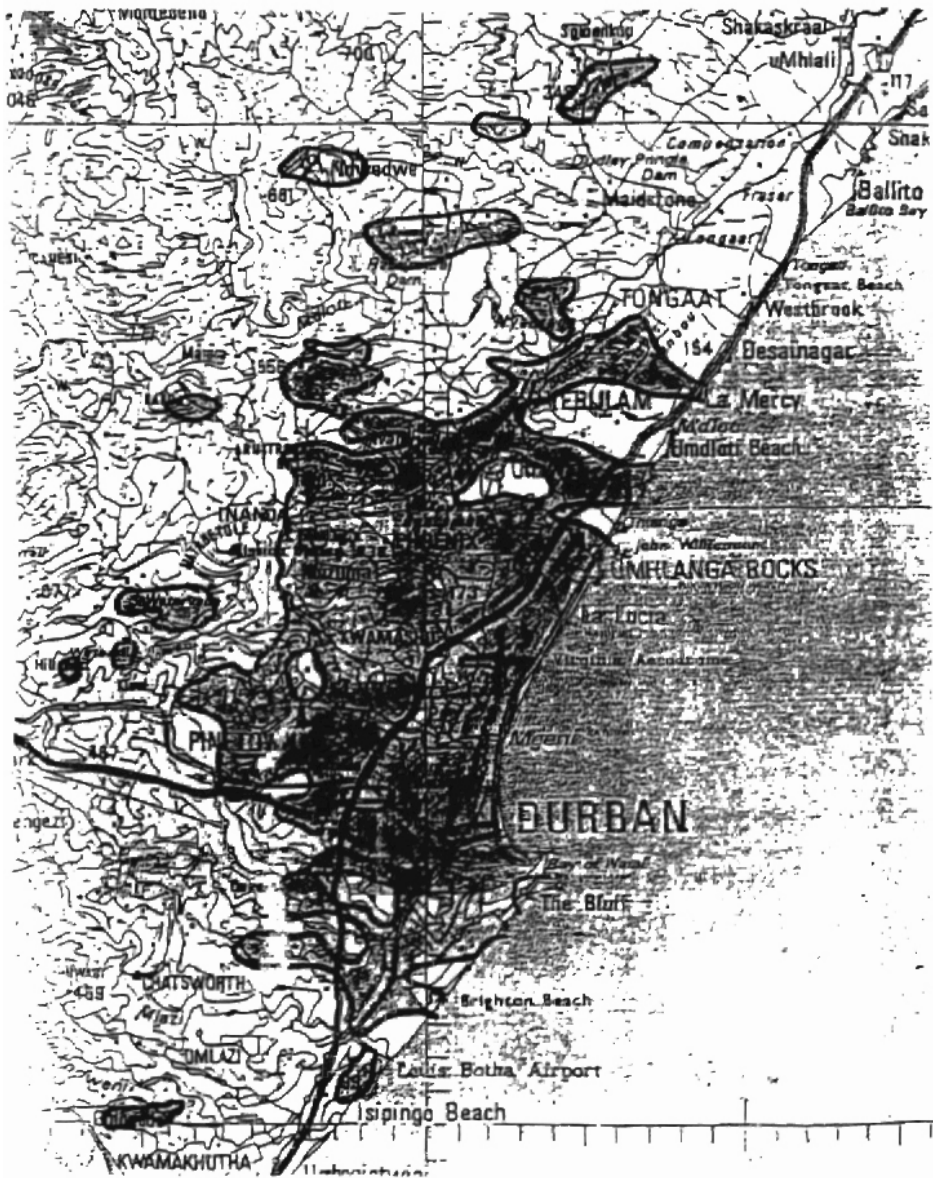
TRANSMISSION MAP – RADIO KHWEZI

APPENDIX C

Two local women shop at a *spaza* near KwaSizabantu Mission. *Spazas*, which are often found on roadsides and in bustling urban areas throughout KwaZulu-Natal, sell snacks, cigarettes, water, cold drinks and other sundries.

APPENDIX D

TRANSMISSION MAP – RADIO PHOENIX

APPENDIX E

FORM OF CONSENT FOR RESEARCH PARTICIPATION

DATE: _____ *(please print)*

I, _____ *(please print)*, consent to be interviewed by Kyle A. Enevoldsen, a visiting researcher associated with The University of Natal-Durban and Oklahoma State University in the United States of America, for the purpose of an official, academic research project focused on community radio stations in KwaZulu-Natal. I have reviewed the questions that I will be asked as a part of my interview and I have agreed to be asked these questions prior to my participation. In addition, I am aware that this is purely a volunteer activity and that I may withdraw from this research project at any time with no liability of any kind and no penalty for my actions.

I understand that my responses to questions asked in this interview may be included in the interviewer's research and, if so, that they will be associated with my name and place of employment unless I have indicated otherwise, according the terms outlined in the letter of request I received from the interviewer. I also grant the researcher permission to include my name and/or responses in an official report, which may be published in an academic book or periodical either within the Republic of South Africa or abroad in the future.

Pursuant to the above, I agree to this interview and hereby acknowledge that I am aware of my participation in an official, academic research project, the terms of which have been thoroughly explained to me by the interviewer.

If I have any questions about the nature and/or official approval of this project, I acknowledge that I have been given the addresses and phone numbers below so that I may do so:

Institutional Review Board   Phone: (405) 744-5700   World Wide Web:
203 Whitehurst   Fax: (405) 744-6244   http://www.vpr.okstate.edu/irb/
Oklahoma State University
Stillwater, OK 74078-1020
USA

Participant's Signature: _____ DATE:

Researcher's Signature:_____ DATE:

I have consented to the use of my: given name [ ] surname [ ] both [ ] Initials:____

APPENDIX F
SAMPLE INTERVIEW QUESTIONS

What is your name?

What is your age?

What is your cultural background (i.e. one ethnic group, mixed origin)?

How long have you worked here and what is your position?

How did you find out about this job?

How did you become interested in community radio?

Would you please describe your job and responsibilities?

How far must you travel to come to work?

What is a typical day like for you at the station?

Do you enjoy your work?

How important do you think your station is to your community and why?

What do other people tell you about your station?

Why do you think they say these things?

From your own experience, what can say about the importance of the station to your community?

What do you think are the most important programmes offered by your station?

Could you talk about the different types of programmes the station offers?

Do other people talk about the programmes they hear on the station?

(If so), what do they say?

(if not), why do you think they do not?

What do the elders say?

What do the young people say?
Does the station give you an opportunity to express and share your culture with others?

If so, in what way?

How important do you feel your job as a communicator is and why?

Do you feel like the things your stations broadcast have an effect on people in the community?

If so, what kinds of effects? If not...why not?

What are the difficulties you face at the station (please describe)?

What would you like to see happen at the station in the future?

How do you think these changes can be made?

Do you think media laws should change for these things to happen?

If so, why? If not, what should change instead?

Should there be more community radio stations in KwaZulu-Natal?

If so, why? If not...why not?

Additional questions for managerial staff:

How is your station currently funded?

Are there other funding avenues you would like to explore?

What audience research methods do you currently use?

Do you see needs for improvement in this area?

If so, what improvements? If not...why not?

What are some of your long-term goals for the station in terms of equipment?

Staffing?

programming?

What are some of the necessary tools you need to accomplish this goal (i.e. private funding, public funding, grants from NGOs)?

What kinds of national policy do you feel can help you achieve your goals?

Please name the greatest challenges you will face in the short term.

What about the long-term?

What solutions would you like to implement?

Do you feel that your community has a desire to become involved in station activities?

What do you think would help inspire more involvement and why?

How do the community members you have spoken to feel about what you are doing?

Do they feel it is necessary and beneficial?

How do community leaders respond to your programming?

Do they support the station?

If so, how? If not, why do you think this is the case?

Do they become involved in the station?

If so, how? If not, how do you think you can get them involved?

Does provincial government support what you do?

How are they involved?

What has your experience been like with ICASA?

How do you feel about this organization?

Is it helpful or unhelpful?

Are there any improvements that could be made in how regulatory practices are handled?

Should ICASA be involved in these decisions?

APPENDIX G

Oklahoma State University
Institutional Review Board

Protocol Expires: 7/2/02

Date. Tuesday, July 03, 2001   IRB Application No   AS0177

Proposal Title.   COMMUNITY RADIO INITIATIVES IN THE NEW SOUTH AFRICA CASE STUDIES
FROM KWAZULU-NATAL

Principal
Investigator(s):

Kyle A. Enevoldsen   Dr. Steven Smethers
228 N. Husband #1   313 Paul Miller
Stillwater, OK 74075   Stillwater, OK 74078

Reviewed and
Processed as: Exempt

Approval Status Recommended by Reviewer(s): Approved

Dear PI :

Your IRB application referenced above has been approved for one calendar year. Please make note of the
expiration date indicated above. It is the judgment of the reviewers that the rights and welfare of individuals
who may be asked to participate in this study will be respected, and that the research will be conducted in a
manner consistent with the IRB requirements as outlined in section 45 CFR 46.

As Principal Investigator, it is your responsibility to do the following:

1. Conduct this study exactly as it has been approved Any modifications to the research protocol
   must be submitted with the appropriate signatures for IRB approval
2. Submit a request for continuation if the study extends beyond the approval period of one calendar year
   This continuation must receive IRB review and approval before the research can continue.
3. Report any adverse events to the IRB Chair promptly Adverse events are those which are
   unanticipated and impact the subjects during the course of this research; and
4. Notify the IRB office in writing when your research project is complete.

Please note that approved projects are subject to monitoring by the IRB If you have questions about the IRB
procedures or need any assistance from the Board, please contact Sharon Bacher, the Executive Secretary to
the IRB, in 203 Whitehurst (phone: 405-744-5700, sbacher@okstate.edu).

Sincerely,

Carol Olson, Chair
Institutional Review Board

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VITA

Kyle Austen Enevoldsen

Candidate for the Degree of

Master of Science

Thesis: COMMUNITY RADIO, COMMUNICATION POLICY AND THE PUBLIC
SPHERE IN SOUTH AFRICA: CASE STUDIES FROM KWAZULU-NATAL.

Major Field: Mass Communication

Biographical:

Personal Data: Born in Ponca City, Oklahoma, On March 31, 1978, the son of
Kent and Kelli Enevoldsen.

Education: Graduated from Ponca City High School, Ponca City, Oklahoma in
May 1996; received Bachelor of Music degree in Music Performance from
Oklahoma State University, Stillwater, Oklahoma in May 2000; received a
Boren Graduate Fellowship from the National Security Education Program
to study and conduct research in South Africa in May 2001; completed
coursework at the University of Natal, Durban, South Africa in December
2001; received Graduate Certificate in International Studies from
Oklahoma State University in December 2002. Completed requirements
for the Master of Science Degree in Mass Communication at Oklahoma
State University in May 2003.

Experience: Employed as a reporter and producer for KOSU-FM Public Radio
(NPR Member Station), Stillwater, Oklahoma from 1997-2002; employed
as a Graduate Teaching Assistant in the School of Journalism and
Broadcasting at Oklahoma State University from 2002-2003. Employed as
a Media Specialist at the Oklahoma State Senate, State Capitol, Oklahoma
City, Oklahoma from 2003-present.

Professional Memberships: Society of Professional Journalists; Oklahoma State
University Mass Communication Graduate Students' Association;
Alumni, National Security Education Program