Listening to the Listeners:

Intersections of Participation, Voice, and Development in Community Radio

by

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Abstract

Community radio has long been considered a "voice for the voiceless". But what good is a voice if no-one is listening? This thesis explores the role of listening in community radio. Specifically, how community radio broadcasters in India listen to their audiences and how these interactions influence broadcast content and other station activities. In discussing this, this research also examines the effect of a development agenda upon community radio stations in India.

Employing an interpretive framework of cognitive justice, this research employs a bricolage-inspired approach to ethnography. The Hindi term *jugaad* reflects community radio's contingent, determined, occasionally haphazard spirit, and therefore forms the basis of the methodology. A *jugaad* approach, in this case, means a multi-sited qualitative study that takes an adaptive approach and utilises methods from ethnography and other approaches as appropriate.

In alignment with this *jugaad* methodology, the methods of data collection included participant observation, interviews, Kusenbach's (2003) "go-alongs", and listener storytelling. Three types of in-depth, semi-structured interviews were conducted: listener focus groups, staff group interviews, and one-on-one interviews with key informants. The final method was listener storytelling which invited listeners to share personal narratives regarding their relationship and interactions with the radio stations. Data were then analysed using a combination of constructivist grounded theory and narrative analysis. Data collection took place at two rural community radio stations in South India. Though the identities of the stations themselves have been loosely disguised, the general location of this research is within the state of Tamil Nadu in the south of India.

The foremost findings of this research relate to the influence of a development agenda on the community radio sector in India. Manyozo's (2017) concept of "the spectacle of development" provides a useful frame for understanding the insidious ways in which development shapes the lives of so-called 'beneficiaries' at all levels. The spectacle of development was observed throughout the research data through the ways that audiences and station staff interpreted and performed development. Despite the participatory, horizontal flows of communication espoused in community radio literature, there was clear evidence of a modernisation discourse operating through a top-down transmission of information.

While the spectacle of development clearly influences the work of community radio stations in India, there were examples of how the spectacle and subsequent spectres can be subverted. One such example was when community radio stations act as amplification of local or indigenous knowledge communication systems. This was observed through the amplification of local technical knowledge, as evidenced by the knowledge sharing practices of farmers, as well as cultural knowledge, which could be seen in the preservation of local traditions and the sharing of various aspects of different cultures.

Community radio is intended as a participatory medium, but the spectacle of development and other contextual factors serve to limit who can participate and how. What emerged from the research

was the value or meaning that audience members derived from their participation, however limited or restricted it was. Audience members derived value in several areas - voice, ownership, identity, and agency - all of which are collectively termed "meaningful participation".

The final area of findings relates to listening, which emerged as a way of subverting deeply entwined power structures to create new communicative spaces. Creating these spaces requires those in positions of power, such as community radio broadcasters, to relinquish this power and act as "listeners" themselves to work towards political equality.

For community radio stations working within a development agenda, audience members most appreciate programming and activities that are deeply embedded within the contextual environment of the community and are based on listening to their needs and interests. The broader implications of these findings offer insight into how stations might design programming and activities to deeply engage with their audiences and embed themselves as an essential part of the local media landscape.

This thesis is dedicated to community radio listeners.

"Moving from silence into speech is for the oppressed, the colonized, the exploited, and those who stand and struggle side by side a gesture of defiance that heals, that makes new life and new growth possible. It is that act of speech, of "talking back," that is no mere gesture of empty words, that is the expression of our movement from object to subject – the liberated voice" (bell hooks, 1989, p. 9).

"You don't have to be a voice for the voiceless, just pass the mic" (@DrSuad, 2017).

Acknowledgements

Contents

List of abbreviations

AIR	All India Radio
AMARC	World Association of Community Radio Broadcasters
BJP	*Bharatiya Janata* Party
C4D	Communication for Development
CR	Community radio
CR-CIT	Community Radio Continuous Improvement Toolkit
EAR	Ethnographic Action Research
GBP	Great British Pounds
ICT	Information Communication Technology
ICTD	Information Communication Technology for Development
IKCS	Indigenous Knowledge Communication Systems
INR	Indian Rupees
IPDC	International Programme for the Development of Communication
KVK	*Krishi Vigyan Kendra* (agricultural science centre)
M4D	Media for Development
MCD	Media, Communication and Development
MDG	Millennium Development Goals
NGO	Non-Government Organisation
ODF	Open Defecation Free
RJ	Radio Journalist
RSS	*Rashtriya Swayamsevak Sangh*
RTI	Right to Information
SBM	*Swachh Bharat Mission*
SDG	Sustainable Development Goals
UN	United Nations
UNESCO	United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization
WASH	Water, Sanitation and Hygiene
WHO	World Health Organisation

1 Introduction

In India's southernmost states, there is a folk music style called *willupattu*. A genre of musical storytelling, *willupattu* directly translates to "bow song" and draws its name from the bow-shaped instrument that accompanies the singers. A *willupattu* group usually consists of seven or eight members supporting a lead singer-narrator. There are several formats that a *willupattu* performance might take. The lead narrator might take up a local folk legend or one of Hinduism's great epics, with the rest of the group forming a chorus that repeats refrains from the story or simply says in unison "Yes, yes" or "Is that so?" (Varadpande, 1987). Alternatively, a secondary narrator may assist the lead narrator, occasionally introducing new material into the narrative sequence but mostly embodying the role of an "ideal listener" (Herring, 1991). In this *willupattu* format, the secondary narrator responds to the lead narrator at each appropriate moment in the way most appropriate to the flow of the story. In this role, the secondary narrator articulates responses to rhetorical questions that are usually merely implied and left unspoken. The final format of a *willupattu* performance is a debate. Extempore debates can take place during performances where the group divides into "leftists" (*Idathe padupavar*) and "rightists" (*Valathe padupavar*). The rightists compose a verse on the spot about any topic at all, and the leftists respond in the same tune (Bhatt, 2006). Careful listening, not only to the content, but also to the metre, rhythm, and tune of the argument, is essential to formulating a response. Debates can go on for many hours. This format is one of the most unique aspects of *willupattu*.

Willupattu acts as a useful metaphor for this thesis. Listening may be simplistic and acquiescent, like the chorus agreeing with the narrator; it may be active but performative: the secondary narrator playing the role of an ideal listener; it may be engaged, even critical, but ultimately working within confines set by others, like the leftists trying to beat the rightists at their own game. What this thesis aims to make clear is the structures that govern listening in community radio in India. The structures implicit within community radio stations and their interactions with listeners. The structures that determine how listeners are able to participate. The broader structures that dictate what community radio stations should be doing and saying. Understanding these structures is crucial to understanding the work that takes place within and despite them.

Community radio can be many things to many people. It can be the voice of the young and disenfranchised, who tune in to hear their music and their politics. It can be a voice from home, that speaks in a familiar tongue in a foreign land. It can be a voice for those without sight. It can be a voice for those without representation. In some rural and remote areas, it can be the only voice. Community radio can be a lifeline. The voice of safety and reason in times of disaster, natural or man-made. It can be a local, human voice in a media environment saturated by over-produced, over-exposed products of globalisation and corporatisation. Community radio, as generally defined and understood, is a conversation, not an autocue script. It represents people over profit. Community radio is gaffer tape,

hand-me-downs, and baptisms of fire, rather than the latest technology and professional media training. Community radio creates alternative spaces of opportunity, representation, and voice. From remote indigenous communities in Australia (Fisher, 2012), to the coal mines of Colombia (Gumucio-Dagron, 2001); from post-conflict reconciliation in Cyprus (Carpentier & Doudaki, 2014), to listening clubs in Malawi (Manyozo, 2007), community radio is a "voice for the voiceless" (Gumucio-Dagron, 2008; Jallov, 2003; Scott, 2014; Sterling, O'Brien, & Bennett, 2009).

It is easy to be swept up or seduced by the rhetoric and quaint charm associated with your friendly neighbourhood community radio station, particularly when discussing development and social change. While development might suggest the blue helmets of peacekeepers or crates of rice parachuting from a passing helicopter, community radio suggests empowerment, democracy, a free press, and voice for all, even the world's poorest and most downtrodden citizens. Voice in this context has variously been associated with "personhood", "individuality", embodiment, and the right to engage in social and political discourse (Appadurai, 2004; Couldry, 2010; Kunreuther, 2012; Tacchi, Watkins, & Keerthirathne, 2009). And yet, to paraphrase the ontological question of a tree falling in the forest, what is the value of voice if no-one is listening?

This question is central to this thesis. As Servaes and Malikhao observe, being 'voiceless' is not attributed to having nothing to say but rather having no-one to listen (2005). Can the same be said for community radio in development contexts? In what ways is it a bastion of voice, free speech, and media diversity? That is what this thesis aims to explore: how listening manifests within community radio in India; if and how this listening influences broadcast content and other station activities; the effect of a development agenda upon community radio stations in India; and, arguably most important, if community radio audiences in India, who are traditionally conceived as the 'listeners', feel that their voices are heard. These questions were explored through qualitative research that takes an ethnographic approach at two community radio stations in South India.

In Chapter 2, this thesis begins by presenting the interpretive framework underpinning this research. Informed by constructivism, postcolonial feminism and the idea of cognitive justice, this framework informs the research design and the broader approach to inquiry. The chapter then identifies and defines the key contested terms employed throughout the research so as to establish conceptual clarity. Next is an introduction and discussion of a *jugaad* approach to ethnography as a methodology, and a rationale for choosing this methodology as an appropriate framework for the exploration of the research questions.

Building on this methodology, Chapter 3 discusses the specific methods of data collection and analysis which include traditional methods from the ethnographer's toolbox such as participant observation and interviews. Other more novel methods are also discussed including Kusenbach's "go-alongs" (2003) and, drawing on the work of King (2015), listener storytelling, both of which are aimed at eliciting more descriptive qualitative data while mitigating the influence of lines of questioning imposed

by an interviewer. Methods of data analysis are discussed, with a rationale for employing constructivist grounded theory alongside narrative analysis. Given the location of the research and the background of the researcher, Chapter 3 also includes a discussion of the issues surrounding translating and interpreting, and the techniques in place to account for these potential issues. Finally, the chapter explores the key limitations of this research and suggests how they may be overcome in future projects.

Community radio is complex in its theoretical underpinnings as well as how it is enacted. Chapter 4 offers some background and context into community radio by exploring its rationale and key theoretical approaches. Before delving more specifically into the research sites, this chapter provides an in-depth exploration of the modern history of community radio in India. Finally, Chapter 4 introduces the specific research sites, first, by introducing their state, Tamil Nadu, then offering a brief description of the stations themselves. As a point of ethics, the stations are lightly disguised, the rationale for which is also explored in this chapter.

Chapter 5 introduces the ways in which development agendas impact on community radio in India. Drawing on Manyozo's (2017) concept of "the spectacle of development", this chapter traces the history of development thought and the subsequent critiques of its dominant approaches. After a critical review of the literature in this field, the chapter then turns to practical examples from the research data to demonstrate how this "spectacle of development" manifests throughout the day-to-day activities of community radio stations in India through language, broader societal phenomena, and the impact on listeners.

Despite the bleak picture painted in the preceding chapter, Chapter 6 explores the positive work taking place within community radio in India, first discussing more in-depth historical context before turning to the research data. Drawing from development and communication literature, as well as examples from the data, the argument here is that the most beneficial or valued work of community radio is based on the amplification of existing local knowledge communication systems. These systems pertain to both cultural and technical knowledge, and also relate to the theoretical approach to community radio as rhizome.

Chapter 7 turns to the role of participation in community radio. This chapter applies a critical lens to the supposedly participatory nature of the medium to interrogate how participation is framed in both community radio and development literature, and how the literature aligns with practice. What emerges from this, in conversation with the data, is an alternative conceptualisation of participation, where the value or meaning of the participation is determined by those participating - namely, community radio audience members - rather than the extent to which the participation occurs.

The notion of listening is inherent throughout this thesis, but Chapter 8 is a dedicated discussion of listening in light of earlier findings. In this chapter, listening is first defined, in itself a complex task, before being contextualised and applied to the spectacle of development and its various manifestations. Turning then to the data, several 'circles' of listening that were observed are introduced and discussed.

Finally, Chapter 8 examines the role of community radio staff members as listeners themselves.

To conclude, Chapter 9 offers a summary of the discussions thus far before suggesting the implications of the research for both theory and practice, and directions for future research in this area.

This thesis sits at the intersection of two key research disciplines, namely media studies, specifically radio and alternative media studies, and communication for development and social change. By bringing these fields together, this research contributes to the broader understanding of the role of community radio within communication for development and social change. A focus on broadcaster listening adds new dimensions to the body of research surrounding community radio, while exploring this phenomenon within the context of a development agenda provides new insight which is particularly significant given the role that community radio has played in media, communication and development projects and interventions around the world.

2 Research design and methodology

Interpretive framework: viewing knowledge and realities through cognitive justice

"Sometimes our homemade traditional medicine is good for some things, better than English medicine. I had thyroid, blood pressure and cholesterol problems. I took tablets for these, which never seemed to work. It worked in the morning but I get shivering in the evening. Now after facing this much trouble, I completely reduced the use of cooking oil. It is not oil that gives taste to the food. It is in the method that we make it. On the radio, they go and speak to the grandmothers for traditional medicines and cooking. One old woman spoke in the radio and she told that she drinks Ragi porridge from traditional ingredients, and that keeps her strong. I prepared it for the first time and my husband loved the taste. He complimented me, and the next day he asked me to prepare some more porridge to give it to his brothers. They too loved the taste and my porridge became famous overnight. Through these recipes, and walking every day, I worked on myself and reduced my weight. Now I have got it under control and stopped taking medicines for thyroid and blood pressure. So, for some cases we should definitely consult a doctor and for some cases we should not believe in the doctor alone."

<p style="text-align:center">***</p>

The interpretive framework informing this research is a weak constructionist worldview. This paradigm guides the scope, methods, and epistemological and ontological positions of the research (Guba & Lincoln, 1994). While traditional constructivism focusses more on processes within the mind of the individual (Gergen & Gergen, 2007), this research draws more from social constructionism, which places more emphasis on social actors, interactions and collective meaning (Crotty, 1998). Schwandt suggests that such an approach "might focus on how our experience of some particular object or idea, our classifications of same, and our interest in same are socially constructed" (2001, p. 33). Weak constructionism recognises the socially constructed nature of our experiences without denying the existence of reality in the everyday sense of the term (Schwandt, 2001). The interpretive nature of the research questions requires a flexible worldview that considers a multiplicity of views and understandings around knowledge and reality.

While constructionism broadly captures the understandings of reality and the nature of knowledge underpinning this research, I have taken a bricolage approach to crafting specific aspects of this paradigm. Originally used by Levi-Strauss in his work on structuralist meaning-making in human knowledge, in this context, bricolage is used as a metaphor for qualitative, flexible, and emergent research design (M. Rogers, 2012). Denzin and Lincoln first applied the term to qualitative research when discussing the eclectic, multi-theoretical and multi-methodological approaches developed by postcolonial

and poststructuralist researchers (2011). Lincoln, Lynham and Guba also suggest that, where borrowing from other viewpoints seems useful, allows for greater depth of inquiry, or is theoretically heuristic, there is great potential for incorporating multiple perspectives, interweaving viewpoints, or employing bricolage (2011, p. 100). Crafting a bricolage interpretive framework informed by constructivism, rather than uncritically subscribing to the broader paradigm, allows space for addressing the blind spots of the traditional approach. Particularly pertinent, in this respect, is constructivism's problematic goal of consensus. Guba and Lincoln (1994, p. 113) observe that consensus is an aim of constructivism with progress achieved through the formulation of more "informed and sophisticated constructions". This implies that some interpretations are more "informed and sophisticated" than others, and positions the researcher as the unquestioned arbiter or, as Guba and Lincoln describe, the "facilitator of consensus" (Guba & Lincoln, 1994). A bricolage approach to crafting the interpretive framework allows space to navigate these issues and to draw from relevant theories, in this case, both feminist and postcolonial theoretical perspectives. A postcolonial feminist perspective is important in this context because, when researching the work of community radio practitioners, it is essential to take into account that "form and effectivity of the author-function is reliant on the cultural, and thus necessarily social, values of the era in which it emerges and those in which it is subsequently evaluated" (Lewis, 2013, p. 26). Postcolonial feminism offers a lens through which to deconstruct hegemonic representations of a "feminized Oriental other" so as to understand how such constructions contribute to imperialist ideas and policies (Lewis, 2013). Slack offers that "successful theorizing is not measured by exact theoretical fit but by the ability to work with our always inadequate theories to help us move understanding 'a little further on down the road'" (1996, pp. 114–115). This bricolage inquiry paradigm aims to inform sensitive research that considers historical and cultural factors while remaining reflexive and aware of the privileged position of the researcher and the power structures embedded in that role. Far from attempting to represent or "speak for" participants, this research aims simply to move understanding further on down the road.

The first theoretical perspective to influence this work is that of postcolonialism. Postcolonialism, in its most general form, is the area of study that deals with the cultural effects of colonisation (Ashcroft, Griffiths, & Tiffin, 2013). A broad field of study, postcolonialism incorporates many different bodies of work. In contemporary terms though, Sethi suggests that "it has less significance as denoting 'after colonialism' than in emphasizing the persistence of colonial tendencies in terms of a continuing imperialism" (2011, p. 5). In his seminal title on colonialism, *Orientalism,* Edward Said scathingly discusses the history of western knowledge silencing and oppressing their research subjects by speaking for them and ignoring their capacity for voice (1979). "The Orient" and those who dwell within it was constructed as an object of fetish, intrigue, and study, but also as one of control. Schwarz and Ray suggest that postcolonial studies works towards righting the imperialist, Orientalist tendencies of past research in this area through addressing unequal power structures and avoiding participation in "the politics of dominance" (2008). Bailur (2008) suggests two key subsets within postcolonial theory: the first

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refers to those works aimed at deconstructing colonial literature in order to understand the process of colonisation. Hemer et al. fall into this category, observing that literature and research played a crucial role in supporting colonial empires and therefore have the capacity to deconstruct and dismantle them as well (2005). Similarly, the work of Ashcroft, Griffiths and Tiffin (2003) explores the perceptual influences of colonisation through the study of postcolonial literature. The second subset of postcolonial studies, according to Bailur (2008), is subaltern studies. Though it stems from Gramscian theory, subaltern studies is most closely associated with Ranajit Guha and the work of the Subaltern Studies editorial collective who engaged in a postcolonial writing of "history from below" (Chakrabarty, 2000). "Subaltern" refers primarily to systemic disadvantage in South Asian society however it manifests whether it be through caste, class, gender, and so forth (Spivak & Guha, 1988), and examines the impacts of colonisation on previously "colonised" groups (Bailur, 2008; Bhabha, 1985; Spivak & Harasym, 1990). Spivak warns, however, of treating subaltern as a synonym for oppressed or 'Other', and instead recognising that "everything that has limited or no access to the cultural imperialism is subaltern" (De Kock, 1992, p. 45). For example, the working class may be oppressed, but they are not necessarily subaltern (De Kock, 1992). Given the complexities and various interpretations of the "postcolonial", Akindes argues that, rather than a movement along a theoretical continuum or a chronological progression, postcolonialism acts as an epistemological position aimed at de-privileging colonial worldviews (2003). This research predominantly draws from the latter two interpretations of postcolonialism, focussing on recognising the perspective of "subaltern groups" and understanding postcolonial as an epistemological position.

Though a postcolonial theoretical perspective provides an essential frame for this research, the field is not without its critics. One particular critique worth discussing comes from Mohan, who asserts that, while a postcolonial perspective highlights the epistemic violence of western discourses, such a perspective may also serve to isolate cultural processes from material conditions, and that it fails to offer any viable alternatives to the dominant epistemological frameworks it seeks to subvert (2001). Though this is a broad assertion, it prompts a consideration of the practical implications of a postcolonial perspective for research. Cognitive justice emerged as a guiding principle that offers an alternative epistemological perspective while still considering the various aspects of postcolonial scholarship. The concept of cognitive justice emerged from Indian scholar Visvanathan, well-known for his writings on science and technology as well as social anthropology. He introduced the concept of "cognitive justice" as a way of considering the hegemony of modern western science, considered "the best" and the most dominant form of knowledge, while alternative knowledge sources are either dismissed as folklore, ethnoknowledge, or superstition (Visvanathan, 2006, 2009). Santos refers to this destruction, marginalisation, and oppression of non-western, non-scientific knowledges as "epistemicide" (2006). Parallels are drawn between the domination of western scientific knowledge and the dominant development paradigm which implies that the "diffusion" of technology from the cities to the peripheries

is enough to prompt development or "modernity" (Santos, 2006). Visvanathan (2009, para. 7) offers cognitive justice as a practical way of recognising the value of alternative or traditional knowledges:

"Cognitive justice recognises the right of different forms of knowledge to co-exist but adds that this plurality needs to go beyond tolerance or liberalism to an active recognition of the need for diversity. It demands recognition of knowledges, not only as methods but as ways of life."

Cognitive justice offers a framework for understanding and actively recognising local knowledge, grounded in its own cultural, political, and historical environment. Cognitive justice suggests that western and "alternative" knowledge can co-exist as equal contributors to understanding and provide equal platforms from which to launch inquiry. Sethi (2011) observes that postcolonialism is often critiqued on the grounds of being overly theoretical and textually-focussed, and thus losing touch with historic-material reality. Cognitive justice presents a framework that draws from postcolonialism but recognises the historical and political realities that shape alternative knowledges.

In addition to postcolonialism, this work is also influenced by a feminist theoretical perspective. A critical inquiry paradigm, feminist research views gender as a fundamental organising principle that shapes the conditions of life; research, therefore, aims to be transformative and create change (Creswell & Poth, 2017; Denzin & Lincoln, 2011). A feminist perspective encourages considering the role of power, not just in terms of representation of research participants, but in all aspects of the research and the research context. Fenton (2016, p. 11) explains that "appreciating who holds power, how it is wielded and in what forms it exists – visibly or invisibly – enables us to understand how those who have it influence the decisions that are made, which structure and organise the distribution of resources – including knowledge resources – throughout societies.". Understanding these power relations also helps to establish "collaborative and nonexploitative relationships" between the researcher and participants, a key aim of feminist research practice (Creswell & Poth, 2017, p. 28). Employing a feminist perspective encourages considering the roles of gender and power in everyday life, and how these aspects shape individuals' experiences.

Though this emphasis on power has clear parallels with postcolonial theory, therein lies a key critique of feminist theory. The primary criticism relates to privileging the experiences of white, western women by viewing gender as the only relevant aspect of feminist inquiry (Carbin & Edenheim, 2013; Gouws, 1996). Though intersectionality in feminist research is no longer just a metaphor but rather *the* feminist theory (Carbin & Edenheim, 2013), even intersectional western feminist models are problematic for exploring the experiences of postcolonial women (Olesen, 2011). In describing the multiple, intersecting layers of oppression faced by postcolonial women, Spivak offers this summation: "White men are saving brown women from brown men" (1988, p. 92). Through this, she argues that the female subaltern cannot speak but is "spoken for" or "ventriloquized" (Moore-Gilbert, 2000; Spivak, 1988). Indeed, this was one of Spivak's principal critiques of subaltern studies: in representing subaltern experiences, historians and scholars were exercising their discursive power to *speak for* these groups

rather than making their experiences visible. Further, she argued that subaltern studies as a field was biased towards the experiences of men, effectively silencing the voices of subaltern women; perhaps unsurprisingly, the members of Guha's subaltern studies collective were all men (Spivak, 1985, 1988). Indeed, this represents a critical issue for feminist theorists, in questioning how their work represents 'others' and the political and power relations implicit in said representations (Gouws, 1996; Hinterberger, 2007). Deconstructing dominant representations of what Lewis calls the "other woman (the feminine and feminized Oriental other)" illuminates the gendered specificities of colonialist norms and characteristics of Orientalism (2013, p. 27). Centring the "other woman" is critical in understanding and challenging the "structural role of racism in the history and praxis of feminism" (Lewis, 2013, p. 29). Feminism and postcolonialism have a fraught relationship; the multiple layers of oppression affecting postcolonial women must be recognised, and any representations must be carefully considered at the risk of reproducing the biases under scrutiny.

A fundamental understanding inherent to both postcolonial and feminist theories is the concept of plurality of knowledge and reality. Constructivism posits that there is no one, single reality or truth, instead individuals construct their own realities based on lived experiences, culture, language and so on. Knowledge and worldviews are 'constructed' rather than simply absorbed or discovered (Creswell, 2013; Guba & Lincoln, 1994). This ontological relativity, a cornerstone of constructivist philosophy, denies the existence of universal truths and posits that reality depends on a worldview or conceptual scheme (Patton, 1990; Schwandt, 2001). Reality is constructed through our lived experiences and interactions with others; the interactive, collaborative nature of a relativist ontology implies that reality is fluid, as it is constantly being socially renegotiated (Spencer, Pryce, & Walsh, 2014, p. 86). For Lincoln et al., this means that research is a collaborative process between researchers and participants to ensure that the knowledge that is co-constructed is reflective of the participants' realities (2011). Spencer et al. elaborate on this, explaining that "if our reality is constructed, then, too our knowledge and meanings are derived from social interactions" (2014, p. 85). Ontological relativism aligns with subjectivist epistemologies in that knowledge is viewed as the result of an individual's feelings, beliefs, and points of view, rather than any absolute Truths (Kral, 2007; Schwandt, 2001). Such subjective beliefs emerge from the social, cultural, and historical norms that affect individuals in their daily life (Creswell, 2013). As such, subjectivities also refer to "social selves and collectivities" (Kral, 2007). Furthermore, Schwandt (2000) notes that social constructionist epistemologies, such as subjectivism, recognise that knowledge is not "found" or "discovered", but constructed against a background of shared understanding, language, practices and so on. Taking such epistemological and ontological stances also allows space to understand "postcolonial" as an ontological condition of a particular community (Mohan, 2001). The reality of this group is co-constructed through shared experiences and knowledge. Taking such ontological and epistemological perspectives present a unique set of challenges for researchers in this field: if knowledge and reality are simultaneously individual, emerging from a slew of cultural and historical factors, and

collective, co-constructed through social interactions, the question remains how to access and understand the complex perspectives of others.

The interrelated concepts of socially negotiated knowledge and realities lead us to explore ways in which the experiences and realities of others can be accessed and understood. The focus here, and often in constructivist research more broadly, is on understanding and reconstruction rather than developing explanations and theories (Guba & Lincoln, 1994). When discussing feminist perspectives in research, Gouws offers intersubjectivity as a way of accessing the shared experiences of others despite different ontological orientations (1996). Intersubjectivity has its roots in phenomenology and the work of Edmund Husserl (1929) and refers to how different people's perspectives relate to one another through shared meanings or empathy to others' mental processes (Coelho Jr & Figueiredo, 2003; Gillespie & Cornish, 2010). The study of intersubjectivity is not concerned with object truth, but interpreting shared, socially constructed meanings (Kral, 2007). Considering these potentially shared knowledge and experiences contribute to establishing an intersubjective understanding between the researcher and research participants; understandings that attempt to consider the unique cultural and historical underpinnings of each perspective, while forging connections through shared constructions.

Returning to the research questions reveals a potential operationalisation of intersubjectivity in the form of listening. By no means a revolutionary concept, the notion of listening emerges as a way for researchers to access what Murru calls "the intersubjective space of otherness", taking into consideration both "text and context" (2016, pp. 395–396). Listening offers a way of accessing the multi-faceted knowledges of others through dialogue and the co-construction of knowledge between researchers and participants. This does, however, eventually return to the problem of "speaking for" or representing the knowledge of others. From a postcolonial perspective, speaking for others privileges western ways of knowing which amounts to "epistemological violence" (Mohan, 2001; Raju, 2002, p. 174). The environment of listening, then, is as critical as the act itself. Murru suggests that "the possibility of understanding is affected by the kind of orientation we bring to listening" (2016, p. 395). Similarly, Manyozo ponders an excerpt from the 1930s novel, *Their Eyes Were Watching God* (Hurston, 2008, p. 8), in which a character asks, "If they wants to see and know, why they don't come kiss and be kissed?". He applies this question to development theory and practice, explaining that it "implies establishing a relationship with subaltern groups as a precursor to speaking for or on their behalf" (Manyozo, 2017, p. 71). The use of the term "subaltern" refers us back to Spivak's perennial question: "Can the subaltern speak?" (1988). The question is rhetorical but has powerful implications for the so-called "benevolent academics" who position themselves as transparent vessels of oppressed communication (Spivak, 1988). This is indeed the general constructivist approach: positioning the researcher as a "facilitator of multivoice reconstruction" (Lincoln et al., 2011, p. 105). In her critique of feminist epistemologies, which draws on the work of Spivak, Hinterberger argues that "feminist representational practices must therefore not assume to know, or have unmediated access to knowledge of 'others'… ethical strategies of

representing 'others' need to be based on working responsibly within this framework of impossibility, not trying to sidestep it" (2007, p. 77). Raju elaborates on this impossibility, explaining that authentic voices cannot be retrieved for two reasons: firstly because, at an existential level, the experiences of research participants are largely private; and secondly, because knowledge based on these experiences is co-constructed and therefore shaped by the researcher as well as the participant (2002). Therefore, a postcolonial feminist approach to constructivism recognises that knowledge emerging from research is co-constructed between researchers and participants, and that full or complete knowledge of others is impossible. If the co-created knowledge is to be truly situated within the experiences of the participants, it needs to emerge from reciprocal relationships based on respect and listening rather than representing and speaking.

The research design and selection of methodology of this work is also influenced by the axiology or values and ethics of the research. Given the interpretive framework and where this research is situated within its field, it is important to recognise the morals and ethics underpinning the research, as well as the positionality of the researcher. A constructivist interpretive framework is values-laden, which implies that researchers recognise that their background shapes their interpretations and reflect on how this happens (Creswell & Poth, 2017; Schwandt, 2000). In stark contrast to empiricist approaches that claim research as objective and descriptions as 'pure' (Gouws, 1996; Hammersley, 2013), this research draws on critical and transformative stances that recognise that knowledge, and research, is inherently political, ideological and value-laden (Schwandt, 2000). While eschewing "objective" positivistic frameworks can lead to critiques based on subjectivity and bias, transparency around the values and positionality of the researcher, as well as reflexive and self-aware practice, can help to mitigate risks of bias.

In order to extricate the influencing factors on researcher values, I draw on Ransome's discussion on research ethics in the social sciences. He suggests that "core values are drawn from the strong society thesis, from the strong individual thesis and, as a manifestation of the attempt to reconcile these two sets of values, the pragmatic quest for knowledge based on lived experience" (2013, p. 19). Using these three factors as a guide, I interrogated my own personal ethics and values as a researcher. I interpret the strong society aspect of this equation to refer primarily to the academic community and the codes of practice and ethics that govern research practice. In terms of individual thesis, my values are informed by my personal background, as well as my professional and social experiences. What has emerged from these experiences is a values system based around respect for human dignity, agency, and voice. In discussing alternative sociologies aimed at critically identifying non-hegemonic knowledge, Santos suggests an "axiology of care" exerted through "possible future alternatives" (2006, p. 31). This aligns with Sen's interpretation of development as the freedom to exert capabilities to achieve various lifestyles (1999). These linkages illustrate how my values system has influenced both the interpretive framework of this research, as well as the interpretations of key themes.

The final aspect of core values, according to Ransome, refers to reconciling the first two aspects through a "pragmatic quest for knowledge" (2013, p. 19). This prompts a further key question in terms of research axiology, one which refers to the ultimate purpose of inquiry. Heron and Reason take a more critical approach than Ransome, advocating for an interrogation of "what sort of knowledge, if any, is intrinsically valuable" (1997, p. 277). In my position as the researcher, I believe that knowledge is not necessarily inherently valuable; for knowledge to be meaningful or valuable, it must be useful. Applied knowledge or knowledge that affects change is, to me, infinitely more valuable than the positivist tradition of knowledge for knowledge's sake. As such, the core values of the research which underpin this research consider academic codes of practice and ethics, personal values centred on respect for human freedom, dignity and voice, and a commitment to reconciling these values through a search for practical, applied knowledge.

Though slightly tangential to axiology, given the postcolonial feminist perspectives underpinning this research as well as its location within the field of media, development, and communication, it is worthwhile to briefly discuss the positionality of the researcher. In light of the critical perspectives of feminism and postcolonialism that inform this research at a theoretical level, as well as the location of this research within development studies, Raju (2002, p. 174) poses a pertinent question: "Is the positionality of a researcher so irreconcilably privileged that there can be no bond of commonality between the researcher and the researched?". Perhaps idealistically, I would respond with no, though with several obvious caveats. A constructivist framework seeks input and recognition from participants in order to align with postcolonial aspirations, and challenge earlier paradigms that present an unproblematised view of the researcher's position of power (Lincoln et al., 2011). Having said that, it is my view that "researcher" is inherently a position of power. Though steps were taken to mitigate the effects of this, it is important to recognise the potential impact of this position on the participants and the research broadly. This position of power is further complicated by my status as a white female from a wealthy western nation, a subject position that comes with further layers of inherent privilege. Bearing this in mind, we return to Raju, who asks "we are different, but can we talk?" (2002). Therein lies a key approach to reconciling the positionality of the researcher with that of differently-privileged participants: dialogue, specifically listening rather than talking.

It is no coincidence that a key theme of the research questions acts as a guide to principled and mindful research practice. Listening is an ethical act that displays a commitment to understanding and appreciating the perspectives and knowledge of those who may be marginalised or "Othered" (Dreher, 2009b; Manyozo, 2016; Wasserman, 2013). By employing listening as a key ethical value and revealing my own multiple layers of privilege, I hope to maintain awareness of and reflexivity about my positionality in terms of both a postcolonial feminist theoretical perspective and the hegemony associated with the role of researcher. As a researcher with multiple layers of privilege, I commit to seeking common ground while maintaining a respect for the agency of individuals through open, honest

communication, and to careful listening with critical attention to silences. Accepting that power structures and layers of privilege are an unavoidable aspect of this research, I hope to maintain transparent and reflexive awareness of my positionality and listen rather than speak.

Interpreting 'development'

A key guiding concept, one that is critical to designing an appropriate methodology for this research, is development. Based on the interpretive framework, this research takes a critical view of development, adopting instead a definition based on cognitive justice and respect for individual agency. The term "development" can have negative connotations, particularly in the context of the Global South, which has a long history of being subjected to all nature of ill-advised, externally-imposed projects in the name of "development". Western development discourse has a tendency towards a narrow focus on economic growth and centring market logics with little regard for long-term solutions and broader social consequences (Tufte, 2017). This could be seen in the assumption that economic development progressed along a linear succession, with "developed", wealthy countries at one end and "underdeveloped" countries lagging behind (Frank, 1969). Critical development theorist Escobar (2011) argues that, despite various reiterations of approaches under different guises, – "another development", "participatory development", and so forth – little has changed in development discourse since the 1950s. An illustrative example of the dominant model of development in relation to media is the 1960s attempt to "modernise" the education system in American Samoa through televised lessons. Students were disengaged, teachers were disenfranchised; it was posthumously summarised by the American project advisors who asked "primarily whether television was feasible, not whether it was best" (W. L. Schramm, Nelson, & Betham, 1981, p. 193). While the "modernisation" paradigm is widely regarded as outdated, no single paradigm has truly replaced it (Waisbord, 2005). As Escobar (2011) observes, the approaches may have changed but the concept of development remains incontrovertible. This research, therefore, takes a critical perspective, rejecting any definition or interpretation of development as relating to unproblematic "modernisation".

Similarly, in interpreting development as a key concept of this research, arbitrary measures such as gross domestic product (GDP) or other organisationally-imposed indicators are viewed through a critical lens. Lister (2004, p. 38) describes the "hegemony of the measurable" within poverty and development studies, in which empirical, usually quantitative measures, such as economic growth or GDP, dominate definitions and approaches to development. This measurability hegemony is symptomatic of the current state of the broader development and aid industry. As Ramalingam observes, every country in the world is involved in the aid system whether as a donor or a beneficiary or, in some cases, as both (2013). The pervasiveness of the industry has given rise to what Manyozo terms the "spectacle of development", also more colourfully conceptualised as "bullshit" by Franfurt (1988, in Manyozo, 2017). The spectacle of development refers to the oppressive capitalist system of institutions that govern

development thinking and the elaborate regime of arbitrary rules and regulations that keep it in place (Manyozo, 2017). The spectacle consists of co-opted methodologies, irrelevant strategies, disregard for local context, and the fallacy that because one was born into a country of peace and prosperity, one knows how to achieve this for others; all of which are inconsequential to the lives of the intended beneficiaries (Easterly, 2006; Manyozo, 2017). According to the spectacle of development, "developed" societies in the West came to be that way due to linear, cause-and-effect processes; therefore, "developing" countries simply need to follow these same processes. Easterly draws parallels between the colonialism of the past and the pervasive attitudes and approach to development now: "the West should learn from its colonial history when it indulges neo-imperialist fantasies. They didn't work before and they won't work now." (2006, p. 305). As simplistic and imperialist as it sounds, this line of thinking is at the root of the political economy of development and therefore manifests in foreign aid and development efforts (Ramalingam, 2013). Seminal development author Nora Quebral questions whether any society is truly "developed". For her, development is transitioning "communities from poverty in all its forms to a dynamic state of overall growth that fosters equity and the advancement of individual potential… Given this definition, all societies are developing societies" (2012, p. 63). This definition begins to capture some of the problems with dominant approaches: the emphasis on poverty in all forms and dynamic states of growth hints at a much more complex model than exists in many development projects. Existing approaches to development employ overly simplistic, linear change models which are reinforced through a hegemony of measurable results.

  A key issue with the prevailing approaches to development is simplistic change models. Development problems are "wicked" problems: they are difficult to define, each problem is unique, there is no set of criteria as to whether they can be solved or not, they may continue indefinitely, every problem could be symptomatic of another problem, and once a solution is trialled, it cannot be reproduced or undone (Ramalingam, Laric, & Primrose, 2014). In an earlier work, Ramalingam (2013) uses the illustrative example of the attempted 1970s modernisation of *subak* rice farming in Bali as a metaphor for the complexity of development systems. The project, entitled *Massive Guidance,* introduced new technologies to a complex system of farming and water management that was deeply ingrained in the religious practices, culture, and way of life of the local people. The project ignored context and underestimated risk; pest populations exploded, and paddies were infested, social structures were upended, and the once consistent annual yields became highly unpredictable. "In the name of development, this thousand-year-old system was uprooted, literally sent into chaos" (Ramalingam, 2013, p. xiv). Wicked problems are ubiquitous within development, to even begin to understand them, their inherent complexity must be grasped. Complexity theory presents a way of studying relationships and social systems which allows for more nuanced understandings to developing appropriate change strategies (Lennie & Tacchi, 2013; Tacchi & Lennie, 2014). Applying complexity theory to development offers a more realistic view of the world that does not reduce development problems to overly simplistic,

linear models (Lennie & Tacchi, 2013). Complexity thinking implies moving from external interventions to supporting internal catalysts in order "to identify, expand, and sustain the space for change" (Ramalingam, 2013, p. 361). Though complexity theory does not offer donor-friendly, marketable catchphrases, or pre-packaged solutions to the wicked problems of development, it points the way towards asking the right questions.

Complexity theory presents a way of understanding development problems in all their realistic, messy, wickedness. While this provides a valuable lens through which to view development problems, it does not move us much closer to a definition of development, aside from that it is complex. The search though has narrowed to exclude oppressive institutional narratives and externally imposed, top-down initiatives, while considering the complexity of development problems and respecting local cultures and expertise. Returning to the concept of cognitive justice invites a definition of development that respects alternative knowledges outside of mainstream, western interpretations. Offering a broader, more inclusive definition, one that rejects the "hegemony of the measurable", is the work of Bengali economist and Nobel Prize-winner, Amartya Sen. Sen proposes thinking of "development as freedom" and employing what he terms a "capabilities approach" (1999). Rather than thinking in terms of wealth indicators and economic progress, Sen refers to what a person might value doing or being as "functionings", and those functionings that might be feasibly achieved as "capabilities" (A. K. Sen, 1999). The focus of development, then, is on increasing these capabilities or substantive freedoms (Jacobson, 2016; Kleine, 2009). As such, "expansion of freedom is viewed as both (1) the primary end and (2) the principal means of development" (A. K. Sen, 1999, p. 36). Wealth is factored into this interpretation, but primarily as a means to an ends rather than the key indicator of poverty or development (Jacobson, 2016). This definition recognises that what is valued in mainstream development discourses is not necessarily what people are struggling to achieve (McMichael & Morarji, 2010). The most obvious critique of this approach to development is its flexibility and broadness which Sen himself defends, arguing that human preferences cannot be limited or restricted and that individuals alone can define these preferences (A. K. Sen, 1999). The articulation of these preferences is where communication and participation become essential to Sen's capabilities approach (Jacobson, 2016; A. K. Sen, 1999). In a later work, Sen himself discusses this more overtly, stating that "an overarching value must be the need for participatory decision-making on the kind of society people want to live in, based on open discussion, with adequate opportunity for the expression of minority positions" (A. K. Sen, 2000, p. 44). The argument here, and indeed the definition of development that this research will employ, is that development is something that must be determined by the community involved, which makes communication and participation essential. This stance is echoed in much of the modern development literature. Servaes and Malikhao conceptualise development as an "integral, multidimensional, and dialectic process which can differ from one society to another" (2008, p. 163). Similarly, Tacchi and Lennie (2013) explain that there is no one path to development or social change, it is neither linear nor

predictable and relies heavily on contextual factors. As such, this research interprets development as the expansion of those freedoms that individuals and societies have reason to value. Whether those freedoms take the form of school attendance, vaccination rates, or something less easily measured such as confidence or mobility, development is simultaneously deeply personal and socially constructed, and as such can only be articulated through deliberative dialogue with those directly involved.

Media, communication and development

The role of media and communication has been recognised as an important part of development programmes since the 1950s. Echoing the development industry more broadly, approaches evolved from diffusions of technology to more critical, emancipatory paradigms, to the pervasive "participatory turn". Quarry et al. summarise the relationship between media and communication, and development: "it is in fact good development that breeds good communication" (Quarry, Ramirez, & Ramírez, 2009, p. 25). A number of scholars and practitioners have deconstructed the history and movement of paradigms and definitions around development and communication (see McAnany, 2012; Servaes, 2008; Wilkins, Obregon, & Tufte, 2014; among others). Rather than engaging in what Mansell 1982 calls "superficial revisionism" by reiterating these arguments, this research opts to use Manyozo's (2012) suggested terminology of "media, communication, and development". The use of this term clearly demarcates the distinctive but interrelated aspects of the field without assigning overt value or meaning to any one in particular. Media, communication and development, and the definition of development, as they have been employed in this research, are intentionally broad. Specific definitions can be limiting and can fail to account for the diversity of development communication projects. Manyozo explains that "the different approaches that characterise the study and practice of the field of media, communication, and development (MCD) make it very impractical to develop a single theory or model that may attempt to explain the heterogeneous field" (2012, p. 52). Lie and Servaes write of framing the field, which they refer to as "communication for development and social change", in terms of subdisciplines as a way of moving from "an emphasis on homogeneity toward an emphasis on differences" (2015, p. 252). Utilising the terminology of MCD encompasses the interrelated aspects of the field without privileging any one in particular and encourages a focus on practical approaches rather than a sweeping overarching definition.

Drawing from the literature, there are three approaches prominent within the field of MCD. The first is media for development or M4D. M4D draws its theoretical underpinnings from the modernisation paradigm (Scott, 2014). As discussed, this paradigm was characterised by top-down, centralised approaches towards development, which were reflected in the approaches to communication. Imperialist overtones aside, an additional criticism of the modernisation paradigm was its simplistic, prescriptive approach which can be summarised through one of the more prominent theories of the paradigm. Everett Rogers' (1995) diffusion of innovations theory detailed the stages that individuals work through in order to adopt innovations, which were assumed to facilitate development. As "awareness" and

"knowledge" were the two initial stages, the diffusion theory made use of mass media to achieve these steps, engaging in a one-way transfer of information (McAnany, 2012; Scott, 2014). Both the diffusion theory and modernisation more broadly were reflective of communication theory at the time, which assumed the communication process was linear and predictable (Tufte & Mefalopulos, 2009b). Despite this, M4D initiatives are widespread, with modernisation, among other early MCD paradigms still seeming to inform practice and policy (Tacchi, 2013). Simply disseminating information is not enough to affect long-term behavioural changes (Dagron & Bleck, 2001; Scott, 2014; Servaes, 2008). Within M4D also lies the assumption that audiences are passive, predictable, and will accept media messages without question. Disregarding audience agency reveals the problematic behaviour models used by many M4D interventions (Scott, 2014). In terms of community radio, Pavarala concedes that M4D is a "legitimate idea" but that using community radio as simply a way of disseminating "development" is a legacy of a postcolonial nation-building paradigm in which audiences are seen as merely passive recipients of information (2015). M4D represents a common approach to MCD, despite the problematic aspects of the underlying development paradigm.

The second approach to MCD is media development, which refers to building the capacity of the media in order to achieve and support a free, pluralistic, professional, and sustainable press (Deane, 2014). Building media capacity may refer to physical infrastructure and advocacy work to improve government policies, media ownership and training opportunities (Manyozo, 2012). As opposed to the communication for development (C4D) approaches that will be discussed in upcoming sections, media development in its purest form is focussed on the support of journalism and democracy rather than achieving specific development goals or agendas (Deane, 2014). Media development initiatives generally fall into one of two streams: the good governance stream, which derives from political theory and the assumption that because a pluralistic and independent press has contributed to democracy in the West, it will do the same in the global South; and the community development stream, which involves increasing citizen access and participation in local media by working within, rather than in opposition to, traditional governance systems (Manyozo, 2012). Media development is critiqued for its interventionist tendencies, despite the evidence to suggest the most successful examples of media development were derived from local governments and people rather than external influencers (Scott, 2014). Media development programs focus on establishing and supporting a pluralistic media environment. Though there is undeniable value in projects of this nature, locally-driven media development projects have enjoyed more success than interventionist approaches.

The final area of MCD is participatory communication, which can trace its origins back to the work of Paulo Freire and the Latin American school of thought on development communication (Manyozo, 2012). Emerging independently from western development thinking, early participatory communication projects yielded success stories like Radio Sutatenza in Colombia and the miners' radio stations in Bolivia (Gumucio-Dagron, 2005; Manyozo, 2009, 2012). Local participation and collective

decision-making are involved throughout the development process, from identifying the issues to taking action. Participatory communication also places emphasis on indigenous knowledge and experiences, which are understood to be essential to understanding and addressing local problems (Jacobson, 2003). Participatory communication rapidly gained popularity and is said to represent a new paradigm in development communication (Servaes & Malikhao, 2005). While this "participatory turn" did much to advance the role of more equitable access to development communication processes, there was little true democratisation of knowledge (Visvanathan, 2009). A point to note is that this research takes a critical perspective on the use of the term "participation", which will be further discussed in Chapter 7. This discussion is purely aimed at situating the research within the historical context of media, communication, and development, rather than accepting the application of participation here as unproblematic.

It is within this "participatory turn" that community radio's role in development emerged. Community radio has a long history with development projects. It is pervasive, an oral medium thus overcoming literacy constraints, it has the ability to facilitate interactive social communication, and deals with local issues in an appropriate language and cultural context (C. Fraser & Restrepo-Estrada, 2002; Girard, 2003). Community radio stations are, theoretically, deeply rooted within their communities, staffed by local people and focussed on local issues. Hussain and Tongia (2007) suggest that the participatory model of community radio facilitates empowerment, particularly when compared with the top-down approaches of state-run and commercial radio stations. Similarly, Scott discusses the importance of the inclusive nature of community broadcasting, explaining that it is "widely accessible and do(es) not require certain levels of expertise, resources or (media) literacy" (2014, p. 49). He goes on to explicitly suggest community radio as an appropriate medium for participatory communication in development, a recurring assertion in the literature (Bennett, 2003; Dagron, 2003; C. Fraser & Restrepo-Estrada, 2002; Manyozo, 2009). The role of community radio in development is particularly relevant given the environment in which this research takes place. This research is situated within the community radio sector in India, which has developed its own interpretation of community radio. Though community radio stations all over the world serve a multitude of different purposes, in India, community radio is "development, development, development" (Bailur, 2008, 2015). This interpretation of the role of community radio is, naturally, contested and contestable, but more on this later (see Chapter 4). For now, however, this dominant model or *raison d'etre* of community radio in India has implications for research design.

Researching community radio

Having established the interpretive framework underpinning this research, this section reviews several relevant approaches to researching community radio that serve to inform the methodology of this research. A range of approaches has been taken to explore the various facets of community radio over

the years. There is a significant body of theoretical literature, as well as studies devoted to policy and legislation. This brief review focuses only on the practice of research relevant to community radio.

Both quantitative and qualitative research have been used to research various aspects of community radio. Though both undoubtedly have their place in researching community radio, of particular interest to this research is the use of qualitative methodologies. This includes studies of community radio journalism (Forde, Foxwell, & Meadows, 2003; Forde, Meadows, & Foxwell-Norton, 2002; Meadows, Forde, Ewart, & Foxwell, 2009), policy-making (Tacchi, 2003), connecting communities (Carpentier & Doudaki, 2014; Pavarala, 2003; Santana & Carpentier, 2010), volunteering (Guo, 2015; Milan, 2008), and broadcast presentation styles (Kosnick, 2007; Siemering, 2000). Though community radio audiences have often been the subject of qualitative research (Forde, 2011; Guo, 2014; Ratan & Bailur, 2007), there is still a tendency towards seeking numbers in community radio audience research (Forde, Ewart, Foxwell, & Meadows, 2007). This echoes what Downing describes as the historically predominant dynamic of mainstream media research which is "expensive, initially secret, quantified, but actually very loosely estimated broadcast ratings" (2003, p. 634). He goes on to suggest that questions posed by those researching alternative media, such as community radio, need to be much more complex than "commercial surveys" in order to yield "illuminating results" (Downing, 2003, p. 638). In their comprehensive qualitative study of the Australian community broadcasting sector, Meadows et al. argue that, while quantitative data, or "numbers", are necessary to gain an understanding of audience reach, they reveal little about the audiences themselves (2007, p. 18). Foxwell argues that attempts to quantify community radio's role as a cultural and social resource are inappropriate at best (2001). Qualitative audience research allows for stations to develop a more nuanced understanding of their listeners, information which can be used for more targeted programming and engagement, for potential station sponsors, and to demonstrate philosophical and legislative commitments to serving certain audiences (Meadows, Forde, Ewart, Foxwell, & Morris, 2005). Though quantitative research has an undeniable role in community radio audience research, numerical data can fail to capture the nuances of the audiences themselves which are key to understanding the true role and impact of community radio.

Traditional approaches to broadcast audience research more broadly, such as perfunctory surveys and ratings data, have been critiqued in the literature (Ang, 1996; Downing, 2003; Juluri, 2003; King, 2016; Napoli, 2011). There has, particularly in relation to community radio, been a push to establish methods and methodologies of audience research that better capture contextual details about audiences and their media consumption. Ethnography has repeatedly been suggested as a way of circumventing the traditional traps that audience research has fallen into in the past. Ethnography helps to capture the complexity of the contextual details surrounding media audiences. While it is much easier and more manageable to consider the audience of a particular media text as a coherent, homogeneous group, this is rarely the case in reality, as media consumption represents just one facet of an individual's life (Algan, 2003). Ethnography helps to consider the overall role of media consumption within the broader picture

of the participants' lives and the actual complexity and diversity of local contexts (Morley, 1993). Ang, however, warns that ethnography is not a panacea to these problems unless "it ceases to be just a sophisticated form of empirical audience research, but becomes part of a more encompassing understanding, both structural and historical, of our contemporary cultural condition" (1990, p. 245). The risk of an ethnographic approach to audience studies, however, is the privileging of the audience's power over media texts while ignoring that of the producers of those texts (Algan, 2003). Though there are clear benefits to employing ethnography for audience research in media studies, it is important that all aspects impacting upon the media consumption of audiences, including the contextual details and the perspectives of producers, are considered.

Despite the many arguments for the use of qualitative research in community radio, traditional qualitative methods have, on occasion, been insufficient. There have been cases where researching community radio, particularly exploring the nuances of community radio audiences, have necessitated the development of new or specifically tailored research methods. In their comprehensive study of the Australian sector, Meadows et al. developed a participatory approach to audience focus groups, targeted specifically at community radio stations, that included broadcasters in the discussions (2007). Similarly, in her case study of a community radio station in Jordan, King drew on autoethnography and radical education theory to craft a storytelling approach to researching community radio audiences (2015, 2016). Qualitative research, and experimenting with alternative methods, offers an opportunity to conduct nuanced, detailed explorations of community radio audiences and their idiosyncrasies.

Alternative approaches to researching development and community radio

Having established the relevance of qualitative research to this study, there are several qualitative approaches to researching community radio and development that serve to inform the methodology of this research. While traditional methodologies, particularly case studies, understandably, feature heavily in the literature in this field (Bailur, 2015; Bosch, 2003; Carpentier & Doudaki, 2014; King, 2016; Pavarala, 2003; Pavarala & Malik, 2007; Prabakar, 2009; Rodriguez, 2001), this section focusses briefly on three innovative methodologies that represent alternative ways of exploring community radio and development. Common to these methodologies is a commitment to considering the social, political, and historical contextual environments in which community radio stations operate, and also recognising the complexity of linking community radio stations with specific development outcomes.

The first methodology draws from the field of Information Communication Technology for Development (ICTD), from which a significant body of community radio and development research is derived. Community radio has been referred to as a "low-tech" approach to ICTD, with proponents arguing that it represents an appropriate and sustainable alternative to more advanced technology (Hussain & Tongia, 2007; Sterling et al., 2009). Aside from an ICTD intervention in itself, community radio

has also been used as an intermediary between old and new media: through radio internet browsing programmes (Jeffrey, 2004; Pringle & David, 2003); in conjunction with mobile phones for grassroots news networks (Tacchi, Kitner, & Crawford, 2012); and for the establishment of community information communication technology (ICT) hubs, or telecentres, located at the stations themselves (Gómez & Ospina, 2001; Ratan & Bailur, 2007). Researching these projects is a complex task: there is a tendency towards technological determinism and treating ICTs as a "magic bullet", and ignoring local settings and other influencing factors (Tacchi, 2014; Thomas & van de Fliert, 2015). Ethnographic Action Research (EAR) was developed to avoid these traps and develop a more holistic approach to researching ICTD. Though not designed exclusively for community radio, EAR was developed over the course of a project aimed at evaluating a community radio internet project in Sri Lanka. EAR attempts to distance itself from traditional development monitoring and evaluation projects, and technocentric ICTD evaluations, instead aiming to establish a framework for reflecting upon the knowledge and experiences generated by a development project (Slater, 2013). This methodology employs an integrated range of methods in order to capture a holistic picture of the communicative environment (Slater, Tacchi, & Lewis, 2002). A foundational aspect of EAR is communicative ecologies which involve exploring the "wider contexts of information and communication flows and channels, formal and informal, technical and social, to understand communication opportunities and barriers" (Tacchi, 2015, p. 220). The role of communicative ecologies is to facilitate more meaningful ethnographic investigations by considering the entire system of communication structures in an environment and the relationships and dependencies (Tacchi & Lennie, 2014). Slater describes the strategy as "a broad mapping of the organization of communication without any prior commitment to specific kinds of entities, such as media, or to definitions of people, practices or place" (2013, p. 42). EAR combines ethnography with participatory techniques and action research in order to firmly ground new development activities in the local context and ensure they are relevant to the local community (Tacchi et al., 2007; Tacchi, Slater, & Hearn, 2003). The strength of this methodology is that it allows the researchers to generate deep understandings of the social environments and communicative contexts (Slater et al., 2002). Community radio stations are deeply embedded within the social fabric of their communities, but still represent just one part of the broader communicative ecology. Traditional monitoring and evaluation techniques, particularly quantitative methods, are unable to truly capture these interrelationships and the role that community radio plays in this environment. Investigating development outcomes adds an entire layer of complexity to this process. EAR represents a way of researching community radio within its broader communicative environment. Though this study does not involve an action research component, there is much to be learned from EAR's commitment to understanding how community radio fits into communicative ecologies, as well as assessing development outcomes based on the experiences of the local people involved in the project, rather than any predetermined benchmarks.

The second major area of community radio and development research focusses on monitoring and evaluation. The difficulty of establishing indicators and instruments for evaluating the developmental impact of community radio led to a prevalence of quantitative studies focussed on measurable impacts rather than the historical and cultural contexts in which the programs took place (Manyozo, 2009). As such, there was a distinct gap when it came to qualitative data about community radio stations and development. While monitoring and evaluation methodologies are common in the development field, there are only a limited number of methodologies specifically developed for use in community radio settings. In somewhat of a ground-breaking effort to address this gap, Jallov developed "barefoot impact assessments" to systematically evaluate the impact of community radio stations on the development of their communities (2005). This grassroots process uses local indicators and instruments to measure the effectiveness and impact of stations. Manyozo suggests that barefoot impact assessments offer "a perfect blueprint for participatory evaluations of rural and community radio alongside communities" (Manyozo, 2009, p. 14). Jallov offers three levels of impact that should be assessed: the radio station as an organisation, the radio programmes, and the impact on development changes within the community (2005). Barefoot impact assessments are community-driven and community-run, with the bulk of the monitoring, evaluation, and analysis conducted by community radio volunteers as opposed to expensive external consultants (Jallov, 2005). As Jallov herself puts it: "if we want to really promote people-based social change and improved lives, we need to listen to the people themselves" (2005, p. 34). Again, there is much to be learned from this methodology. While monitoring and evaluation is not the strict aim of this research, Jallov's appreciation of local knowledge and the experiences of those directly involved in the stations, and the subsequent operationalisation of this knowledge for monitoring and evaluations, presents an exemplary for incorporating and respecting multiple constructions of knowledge and reality.

The final methodology represents an evaluative approach specifically tailored to the South Asian community radio environment. The Community Radio Continuous Improvement Toolkit (CR-CIT) is an evolving framework that allows community radio stations themselves to evaluate their performance (Pavarala, Malik, Belavadi, Deshbandhu, & Raghunath, 2014). Developed through participatory, collaborative work with community radio station staff members and volunteers, and drawing on theories of continuous improvement and communities of practice, the CR-CIT incorporates both the mandatory provisions of the Indian community radio policy guidelines and identified "non-negotiable" principles of community media globally (Malik, Pavarala, & Belavadi, 2014; Pavarala et al., 2014). Instead of focussing on the impact of the stations, CR-CIT explores nine broad areas including: "content generation and programming; policies and guidelines; volunteers; technology – access and management; on-air standards of broadcast; governance; feedback and grievances; content-sharing and networking; revenue generation and financial accountability" (Pavarala et al., 2014, p. 8). What the CR-CIT makes extremely clear is that it is not intended as a tool for comparison between different community radio stations, nor is it intended to be an external evaluation with a pass/fail grade (Pavarala et al., 2014). An evaluative report

found that stations who participated in CR-CIT noted "palpable change" and demonstrated "internalization and ownership" (A. Sen, 2015, p. 14). What can be drawn from CR-CIT is the importance of expanding the scope of evaluations of community radio out from just impact on the community. This broadening of scope serves to recognise the behind-the-scenes operations of community radio stations while still considering the unique local circumstances of each station. Both of these aspects of CR-CIT offer a useful frame for this research, which is similarly not focussed on community impact or comparison between stations, but instead on the day-to-day operations of community radio stations and practices of community radio practitioners.

Methodology: a *jugaad* approach to ethnography

Akka reclined in her chair, watching the pre-recorded programme tick away on the computer, just a murmur coming from the headphones on the desk but a murmur being broadcast across the surrounding villages. The rumbling of the bulldozer starting on the much-needed renovations drew closer, the workers using the radio's pre-recorded time to get the noisy jobs done. Talking over the noise was impossible, and the afternoon heat made it hard to justify any extra vocal effort. The mood was languid, the only movement was the hard-working ceiling fan and the occasional flip of a newspaper page. Until suddenly a cord attached to the computer tightened and started to drag the whole console towards a hole at the top of the wall, pulling the keyboard, mouse, microphone, and everything on the desk with it. Akka leapt into action, grabbing at the cord and pulling, her bare foot braced against the desk, all the while hollering at the bulldozer driver. Whether he heard her or had just finished digging, the engine dulled to an idle. Reassured that the computer wasn't about to be pulled through the wall, Akka raced outside to accost the bulldozer. The murmur in the headphones was quiet. Thambi wrestled with the taut cord, struggling to pull enough slack so that the computer could sit squarely back on the desk. Akka appeared in the doorway, a sheen of sweat on her forehead, and motioned to the silver radio set on the shelf. Thambi raced over to switch it on and turn up the volume. A hiss of static could just be heard over the sound of the guilty retreating bulldozer. They had hit the cable that connected the station to the tower. We were off-air.

<div align="center">***</div>

Despite discussions on a postcolonial theoretical perspective, the interpretive framework of this research has predominantly drawn on western interpretations of knowledge and reality. While this is reflective of the researcher's academic background, it does not necessarily align with the day-to-day realities of the research sites. If, as the interpretive framework implies, knowledge and ways of thinking are constructed based on culture and context, then it is problematic that most research methodologies employed in order to understand how other people view the world are grounded in western thought (Honwad, Kern, & Hoadley, n.d.). Cognitive justice advocates for recognising and respecting alternative knowledges. Viewing western ways of knowledge through a critical lens does not mean that western and Indigenous

worldviews are incompatible or in conflict with one another (Evans, Miller, Hutchinson, & Dingwall, 2014). Drawing on the concept of cognitive justice, while considering the research location and focus on community radio, an alternative methodology was developed. Qualitative in nature, this research draws on ethnography to develop a methodology that is contingent, resourceful, and appropriate to community radio in India.

Traditionally, *jugaad* was a Hindi word referring to a type of makeshift vehicle, cobbled together from a mix of parts, that typically carried far more goods or passengers than one would reasonably expect (Birtchnell, 2011; Singh, Gupta, & Mondal, 2012). As the term evolved, *jugaad* became slang for a "quick fix" or "making do", with the concept now broadly encompassing creative, low-cost ways of navigating limited resources or overcoming obstacles to get just about anything done (Singh et al., 2012). *Jugaad,* as described by Radjou et al., is a "unique way of thinking... practiced by almost all Indians in their daily lives to make the most of what they have" (2012, p. 4). Indeed, the embodiment of *jugaad,* a comically overladen and flamboyantly decorated *Tata* truck has become unofficially emblematic of India (Botnick & Raja, 2011). The towering trucks are lovingly personalised and painstakingly repaired by their drivers - held together with gaffer tape, salvaged parts of other vehicles, and prayers - yet they are the blood vessels of India's goods transport system, barrelling down potholed highways and teetering around vertiginous hairpin bends laden with everything from fresh produce to heavy machinery. They are improvised from what is available, and they get the job done. *Jugaad* has recently been embraced by management and business scholars, who write of *jugaad* as "a work ethic reflecting the resilience and creativity nascent in Indian culture" (Birtchnell, 2011, p. 359). In a more pragmatic sense, Rai suggests that *"*the affect of *jugaad* is the capacity to move from a state of relative inaction or blockage to an improvisational encounter" (2015, p. 986). In a more recent work, Rai observes that though *jugaad* is often presented as an example of individual creativity, when considered as a collective practice, *jugaad* represents a pragmatic way of "intervening effectively in a volatile and increasingly precarious field of possibilities/probabilities" (Rai, 2019, p. 10). *Jugaad* presents a way of understanding the everyday realities of community radio stations in India: their tenuous legislative status, financial insecurity, technological problems, as well as the common broadcasting challenges associated with creating and broadcasting content. *Jugaad* reflects community radio's contingent, determined, occasionally haphazard spirit, and therefore forms the basis of the methodology.

Ethnography was employed as an overarching approach, drawing upon other approaches and methods developed as the research progressed, making adjustments based on the contextual environment and on reflexive practice. What emerged from this grounded, contingent approach was a qualitative study utilising a broadly ethnographic approach and combining a range of methods designed to address the research questions, while adapting to the research sites and any unexpected challenges that emerged. This research employs a bricolage-inspired approach to ethnography, but one that is contingent and specifically grounded in the field sites. A *jugaad* approach, in this case, means an

ethnographically inspired qualitative study that takes an adaptive approach and utilises methods from ethnography and other approaches as appropriate, to craft a qualitative methodology that aligns with the research foci, the interpretive framework, and considers the pragmatic issues affecting the research.

Based on the discussions of previous relevant research practice and the inquiry paradigm, a *jugaad* methodology presents a way of addressing the research questions. Though such an approach draws from a range of methods and methodologies, ethnography is employed as an overarching approach to indicate a commitment to understanding participants' "lived lives and practices… through their own unique complexity" (Slater, 2013, p. 11). Ethnography aligns with constructivism, recognising that knowledge and reality are socially and experientially constructed (Guba & Lincoln, 1994; Mefalopulos, 2005). Ethnography as a methodological influence encourages immersive research and interactions in order to help the researcher to learn to interpret the world from the perspective of the participants (Hammersley & Atkinson, 2007). Ethnography presents significant potential for exploring issues of voice and listening as these concepts are heavily dependent on context and cultural environments, and require rich, multi-faceted data to be fully understood. Pink et al. (2015) state that ethnography plays an important role in researching experiences like that of listening. They suggest approaching "unseen elements of the experience by investigating how they are manifested in those routines and activities of everyday life that can be seen and discussed" (Pink et al., 2015, p. 25). Ethnography has been successfully employed to explore "unseen elements" in the past (see Burrell, 2011; Ratan & Bailur, 2007; Tacchi et al., 2009). Tacchi (2015) explains that these concepts need to be engaged with as they arise and are lived. She supports the use of ethnography as a way of exploring and understanding voice in development, writing that "ethnography can help us to understand complexities, different contexts and classifications, cultural localities and meaning structures" (Tacchi, 2015, p. 4). Similarly, exploring community radio through ethnography may help to capture the uniqueness of each station by observing and recording participants' words and actions in their natural contexts (Hammersley & Atkinson, 2007). Drawing from ethnography presents a way of researching complex "unseen" issues such as voice and listening by exploring and recording the extensive contextual details necessary for analysis of such complex phenomena.

While ethnography presents an overarching approach in terms of exploring "unseen" elements and recognising the importance of situating research within its contextual environment, throughout the research, there has been a clear focus on listening on the part of community radio broadcasters. Traditionally, ethnographers, especially those working within anthropology, take an open-ended approach whereby the research questions emerge and are clarified through fieldwork (Hammersley & Atkinson, 2007). Similarly, such ethnographic research focusses on describing and understanding phenomena or developing theories, rather than testing a hypothesis (Hammersley & Atkinson, 2007). This research draws on what Tavory and Timmermans term the "extended case method" approach in which theory acts as a starting point (2009). This contrasts with a grounded theory approach, in which

theories and cases are constructed "from the field up" (Tavory & Timmermans, 2009, p. 251). This *jugaad* methodology draws from both approaches: rather than entering the field with a fully-formed theory or hypothesis, a loosely deductive approach was employed, with listening as an analytic lens (Jerolmack & Khan, 2017). Grounded theory was then integrated, with the aim of developing and testing theories from the emerging data. The approach to grounded theory is discussed further in the following chapter.

Tracing a phenomenon through multi-sited research

A key aspect of what I term a *jugaad* methodology is that it takes place across multiple sites. The aim is not generalisation or broad representation of the community radio sector, but rather tracing a complex social phenomenon. Marcus (1995, p. 99) makes the case for multi-sited ethnographies, explaining that "ethnography of a cultural formation in the world system is also an ethnography of the system, and therefore cannot be understood only in terms of the conventional single-site." Ethnography is, at its core, interpretive, and is shaped by the discipline through which it is engaged (Pink & Morgan, 2013), but still, a similar argument is made by Algan, in the context of media studies. She argues that focussing on multiple sites of consumption rather than on single texts contributes to "not only the study of everyday life but also the social, political and ideological context of media use" (Algan, 2003, p. 25). The additional context provided by exploring multiple sites of consumption is essential to understanding "practice" as the phenomenon to be traced through multi-sited ethnography (Marcus, 1995). Couldry argues that the idea of a researcher's movements perfectly tracking that of the phenomenon to be studied, in this case, the practice of community radio broadcasters, is somewhat unrealistic. He writes instead of partial intersections and "passing ethnographies" that yield knowledge under certain circumstances (2003). One successful example of the application of multi-sited ethnography to a community radio environment was Guo's exploration of audience engagement at two community radio stations in Texas (2015). This research allowed for exploring various aspects of audience engagement in select programmes across two very different stations. The diverse nature of community radio stations means that exploring the listening practices of a single station would reveal little about the phenomena while expanding the scope of the research would yield richer data.

While multi-sited ethnographies have great potential to trace a phenomenon through various settings, there are pragmatic issues to be considered. Hammersley and Atkinson reinforce the consideration of pragmatics, observing that the more settings are studied, the less time will be spent in each, necessitating a trade-off between depth and breadth of inquiry (2007). To strike a balance between depth and breadth of inquiry and given the practicalities of access to field sites and the time available, two stations were selected for this research. Though Marcus notes that "a certain valorized conception of fieldwork" may be threatened or displaced by multiple research sites, he argues that the key feature of ethnography – "the function of translation" from one culture to another – is maintained in multi-sited fieldwork (1998, p. 84). Mitchell agrees, suggesting that the only thing lost in multi-sited ethnography is

"the ambition of holism" (2007, p. 64). Holism, as interpreted in this research, refers not only to the social, political, cultural, and historical aspects of the field site but also to the generalisability of the research findings. The diverse nature of community radio stations means that it is difficult to generalise across any two stations, even if they are in close physical proximity to one another, let alone on a national or international scale. As such, the purpose of the multi-sited nature of this research is simply to explore how different stations take different approaches, rather than making generalisations. This attitude towards multi-sited research aligns with the constructivist interpretive framework of this research, which questions any notions of understanding, let alone describing, the multitude of constructed realities. Marcus suggests that a defining feature of multi-sited ethnographies is the notion of "complicity" between the researcher and the informant. He argues that complicity as "the vision of a collaborative relationship between anthropologist and informant as authors of ethnography in the field has provided a strong reimagining of the regulative ideal of rapport in the ideology of anthropological practice" (Marcus, 1997, p. 92). Complicity, rather than rapport, implies a relationship built on mutual curiosity and the search for alternative knowledge, co-constructed between researchers and research participants (Couldry, 2003). Rather than aiming to establish a holistic picture of multiple fieldwork settings, the *jugaad* methodology draws on complicity to establish relationships with participants that are built on mutual respect and curiosity. This approach recognises the limitations of multi-sited research, regarding trade-offs between depth and breadth of inquiry, but still facilitates the co-construction of knowledge between researchers and participants.

Reflexivity in ethnographic practice

Though this research takes a *jugaad* approach to ethnography, a commitment to one of ethnography's key principles is central. Reflexive practice, inherent to any ethnographic study (Hammersley & Atkinson, 2007; Pink et al., 2015), was incorporated into every aspect of the research process. Though reflexivity is implied through the interpretive framework, it is worth discussing the two key aspects of reflexive practice that were involved in the research process: self-reflexivity, and paradigmatic reflexivity.

First, employing self-reflexivity to critically reflect on research practices and potential sources of bias is of vital importance. Cadiz suggests "a cycle of action and reflection… that first analyses practice, then by reflection draws from such analysis theories and generalizations in the form of lessons learned" (2005, p. 148). Self-reflexivity was particularly important considering the role of ethnography and the subsequent ongoing theoretical dialogue taking place during fieldwork. In logistical terms, this meant taking time to critically reflect on field notes each day to identify and try to correct any potential biases. While prior knowledge of and experience in community radio contributed to the selection of methodology, it also emerged as a point of potential bias in that what was being observed in the field was subconsciously compared to prior experiences. This was identified in a critical reading of field notes; awareness of this point of bias contributed to a more open-minded approach to future observations and

field notes. Self-reflexivity also involves considering the positionality of the researcher and the impact of that on the research, particularly regarding interactions with others. Reflexivity was also incorporated throughout the writing stage of this thesis. Ruby (1977, 1980) observes the difficulties that anthropologists have faced in balancing reflexivity with scientific rigour: a work where the researcher is centred becomes autobiographical or self-referential rather than reflexive, while removing the researcher entirely, as in the scientific tradition, ignores the positionality and biases that the researcher may bring to the work. This thesis attempts to strike this balance in several ways: firstly, by making an explicit statement on the positionality of the research; secondly, through a clear exposition of the research methodology and methods, as well as potential limitations; and finally, through the use of ethnographic vignettes that include, without privileging, the experiences of the researcher. The use of vignettes in this way aims to subvert the "view from nowhere" or "god's-eye view" critique of some ethnographies and instead attempt to weave analysis of my positionality into these textual representations (Schwartz-Shea & Yanow, 2009).

Though maintaining an awareness of the positionality and inherent biases of the researcher is key, it is equally important to maintain a commitment to moving "beyond self-reflexivity" and ensuring that the voices of participants are truly heard and not merely spoken for (Ang, 1989; Bird, 1992). This leads to the second aspect of reflexivity, which relates to the subjective, co-constructed nature of knowledge. Not only does this align with the overarching interpretive framework, but it is also an ethical practice in that it allows for the acknowledgement of the collaborative nature of knowledge construction in ethnography while recognising the subjectivity of said knowledge (Pink et al., 2015). From a postcolonial perspective, Shome and Hegde observe that, despite the interdisciplinarity and diverse methodological perspectives within postcolonial scholarship, reflexivity is of utmost importance: "postcolonial scholars remain acutely aware of the history, heritage, and legacies of such methods, and the dilemma that consequently confronts the researcher" (2002, p. 259). Employing reflexivity and cognitive justice to respect other knowledge systems and bearing in mind the hegemony of western knowledge systems forms an important aspect of the methodology of this research.

3 Methods

In alignment with a *jugaad* methodology, research methods were drawn from methods traditionally associated with ethnography as well as some emergent tools. The guiding methodological principle of *jugaad* was carried throughout data collection, with the aim of making the most of any opportunity to collect data regardless of whether it strictly aligned to a specific research method. Hammersley and Atkinson suggest that ethnographers should aim to gather "whatever data are available to throw light on the issues that are the emerging focus" (2007, p. 3). Such an approach echoes Gopinath's "scavenger methodology" (2005, p. 22), which she employs to trace a history of queer South Asian diasporas, an archive that has been fractured and fragmented by dominant, hegemonic narratives and, as such, requires a more contingent approach to research methodology. The resulting data was predominantly in the form of field notes and interview transcriptions, however, there were also several photographs and documents.

The initial data collection stage consisted of pilot visits aimed at gathering background information, developing an understanding of the Indian community radio sector, and meeting with key researchers and practitioners. Despite the researcher's experience as a community radio practitioner in Australia, the Indian community radio sector is unique and required further exploration prior to commencing fieldwork. These pilot visits proved invaluable in developing an understanding of the sector and meeting with key figures, most notably members of the UNESCO Chair on Community Media, activists who played important roles in the struggle for community radio in India, as well as a number of practitioners currently working within the sector. The pilot visits were primarily spent at the UNESCO Chair on Community Media, drawing on their extensive resources and expertise, as well as attending a national conference on community radio, and visiting several stations. The relationships and networks developed over the course of the pilot visits were valuable in terms of "insider" insights into the sector, as well as providing guidance and facilitating introductions to potential sites. Furthermore, meeting with those closely involved in the community radio sector in India contributed to developing a much more nuanced understanding of the historical and legislative environment as well as the everyday issues affecting stations than could ever be established through desk research. Though these pilot visits were not intended for data collection, they contributed valuable background knowledge and familiarity, and also helped to build relationships that proved crucial to the overall research.

Participant observation

Participant observation is a fundamental data collection technique of ethnography and thus was extensively employed throughout this research. Participant observation took place throughout the research and occurred in several stages. Initially, observation was centred on the stations themselves, with a period of time spent at each station, observing and recording the activities of staff, as well as any

visitors to the station, and any other happenings. This period of observation was used to gain a general understanding of the everyday workings of the stations, to unobtrusively build relationships with the station staff, and to identify key informants. This phase of observation also contributed to understanding the role of the community radio stations both as an organisation in themselves and as part of broader organisations. While community radio stations take many forms, the ideal remains as a medium that is radically participatory, owned and managed by local community members, and privileging process over product and organisation (Atton, 2001; Downing, 2000). Regardless of opinions on the "correct" form of community radio ownership and management, or contentious arguments over the definitions of the name "community radio", viewing community radio stations as organisations is logical, given the context of this research. Legislation in India does not allow for more maximalist participation models; community radio stations in India are part of organisations, therefore it is useful to view them in such a way to further understand their operational environment. This period of participant observation drew on techniques from organisational ethnography in order to understand the role of community radio stations in this capacity. Atkinson argues that it is the organisational scope that shapes media content in the form of corporate strategies and economic concerns (2008). Though smaller in scale, community media are no exception. As discussed, assessing the ways in which community radio stations operate as organisations is a fundamental part of barefoot impact assessments (Jallov, 2005). The overarching organisations clearly impact the stations' work in terms of both content and daily operating procedures, therefore it is useful to draw from organisational ethnography. Nicolini suggests: "zooming in and out", first focussing on the details and impact of a specific practice in a specific place, before expanding the scope of observation to situate the practice and its products within its broader context (2009, pp. 120–121). This initial period of observation constitutes the "zooming in" by focussing on the details of the day-to-day operations of the staff at the station. This included observing work practices such as audio editing, recording pre-recorded programmes and broadcasting live, as well as handling enquiries from the public and managing administrative tasks.

Situating the work practices of community radio broadcasters within their organisational context provides valuable insight but, according to Nicolini (2009), work practices do not take place in a vacuum, they should be situated in their broader organisational and environmental context. When discussing media audience ethnographies, Couldry calls for "a decentred media studies", a form of media studies not necessarily focussed on traditional sites of media production and consumption (2006, p. 4). In a related, though more practice-driven article, Couldry advocates for asking "open questions about what people are doing and how they categorise what they are doing, avoiding the disciplinary or other preconceptions that would automatically read their actions" (2004, p. 125). This combination of approaches - a "decentred" media studies alongside organisational ethnography - allows for research that is focussed on the practices of community radio staff, and cognisant of the positioning of these practices within the larger organisation, while not necessarily being tied to practices occurring within the

organisation or any other traditional sites of media production or consumption.

Taking a decentred approach to media studies informed the second stage of participant observation, in which the research moved outside of the stations to incorporate the work that takes place outside traditional sites of production. This stage of participant observation was highly dependent on developing relationships with the key informants and involved work shadowing and what Kusenbach refers to as "go-alongs" (2003). A cross between an interview and participant observation, go-alongs involve accompanying informants on their everyday outings in order to understand their experiences of their physical and social environments (Kusenbach, 2003). Asking questions, listening, and observing while informants move through these environments represents a more active, focussed, and outcome-oriented approach, rather than just "hanging out with key informants - an ethnographic practice that is highly recommended in virtually all fieldwork manuals and textbooks" (Kusenbach, 2003, p. 463). Accompanying key informants on their outings, both work-related and, on occasion, personal, also assisted in building relationships, or at least a semblance of familiarity, with station listeners prior to interviews. In addition to time spent at the station and on go-alongs, the *jugaad* methodology led the researcher to capitalise on every opportunity to collect data, even when they were not necessarily directly related to the activities of the station. This resulted in attending community events including self-help group meetings, religious festivals, trade fairs, and social meetings with listeners and community members. While not necessarily directly related to the station or the practices of broadcasters, attending and observing at such events contributed to a more holistic understanding of the role of the station and its broadcasters within the community. Observations from these events, as well as time spent at the station and on go-alongs, were recorded in comprehensive field notes that included pure observations, as well as emerging prospective theories or areas for further research and analysis. As Hammersley and Atkinson (2007) suggest, periods of observation were selective and complemented by periods of reflection and recording, rather than attempting to capture absolutely everything. Participant observation formed a major part of the data collection and contributed to informing the topics to be discussed during interviews.

Interviews

Interviews formed a key part of the data collection strategy of this research. Interviews were semi-structured and in-depth with open-ended questions aimed at collecting descriptive qualitative data. So as to understand the day-to-day operations and activities of the stations, interviews took place following a period of participant observation, go-alongs, and work shadowing. Ratan and Bailur (2007) note that ethnography, through immersion in everyday life, can help illustrate and clarify discrepancies between what has been observed and data that has been collected directly from the participants through surveys or interviews. In addition to collecting specific data, interviews were also used to clarify what had been observed, and subsequent interviews were occasionally used to question any discrepancies between

what was done and what was said. Several approaches to interviewing were implemented in a specific order. First, towards the end of the period of participant observation, focus group discussions were conducted with groups of listeners. Following the completion of these, group interviews were conducted with the staff at the radio stations, followed by one-on-one, in-depth interviews with the key informants at the stations.

The first group of interviews conducted was the listener focus group discussions. Following a period of participant observation and shadowing, broadcasters were asked to identify key listeners who they felt they engaged with regularly, and that reflected their broader listenership. This approach draws on a study of Australian community radio in which the researchers sought the assistance of broadcasters in identifying and forming focus groups, which the broadcasters later also participated in (Forde et al., 2007). Meadows et al. refer to community media practitioners as "important – and overlooked - resources to enlist and to incorporate into research methodology" (2007, p. 18). After identifying and seeking permission from these key listeners, rhizomatic sampling (Akindes, 2003), based on those with connections to the station and other connections within the community, was used to create focus groups consisting of participants who were also regular listeners and shared demographic traits, namely location, gender, age, and occupation. This resulted in several focus groups in different locations within the broadcast range of the stations, consisting of either women or men, who the broadcasters felt represented their relationships with their listeners. In addition to listeners, who had only ever interacted with the station by listening to programmes, the focus groups included listeners who had participated in station activities in various capacities, volunteers with a semi-formal, paid or unpaid role with the station, as well as some members of the stations' parent bodies. This rhizomatic approach to sampling meant that discussions did not necessarily take place progressively along a linear sequence, as implied by snowball sampling, but rather provide "glimpses of experience from a variety of situated points of view" (Akindes, 2003, pp. 156–157). A total of six listener focus groups took place, two involving the listeners of Malai Vanoli and four involving listeners from Enkal Vanoli. All interviews, including both group and individual interviews as well as the focus group discussions, collected basic demographic information from participants before commencing with a series of open-ended questions (see Appendix 2) aimed at generating general discussions around the role of the radio stations within the community and the levels of audience engagement. Each of the six focus groups was held at times and places chosen by participants, in an effort to minimise any inconvenience, and also to make the participants feel more comfortable (Hammersley & Atkinson, 2007). For the most part, focus group discussions took place either in participants' homes or in informal village meeting spaces. Based on a request from participants, one discussion took place at the radio station itself. Verbal consent was sought and obtained from all participants prior to commencing the discussions, which were recorded. Focus group discussions were also used to recruit participants for storytelling interviews. Following the discussions, participants who were more comfortable and talkative, or who hinted at potentially relevant stories during the interview,

were asked to participate in one-on-one, storytelling interviews. This proved an effective recruitment method, with each focus group yielding at least two storytellers willing to participate, resulting in a total of 14 listener storytelling interviews.

The second stage of interviews involved group interviews with staff at each station. At this point, it is worth clearly demarcating between focus group discussions and group interviews, with the latter representing a more formal, question-and-answer format, aimed at collecting a range of responses from members of the groups, while the former is a more loosely-formatted and aimed at generating discussions rather than pursuing answers to specific questions (Kitzinger, 1995). One group interview was conducted at each station involving all staff who were regularly present at the station during the time of observation. Most of those present were radio journalists, though there were several participants who identified themselves as operating in ICT capacities. In both interviews, no members of the parent bodies were present. This was not through deliberate design, though it undoubtedly contributed to more candid discussions, rather it was reflective of day-to-day station attendance. During these group interviews, general discussions were encouraged, though specific answers were sought for some questions and from some individuals. Singling out individuals was particularly necessary in the case of junior staff members who tended to remain quiet and defer to their, older and more professionally senior colleagues. The group interviews (Appendix 2) covered topics directly relating to the research questions, as well as clarifying or exploring what had previously been observed and discussed in the listener focus groups. Group interviews took place at the stations during times of low activity, either when the stations were off air or broadcasting pre-recorded content.

The final interviews were conducted one-on-one with the key informants, who, in both stations, were the station managers. Though this may have been an attempt at a form of "gatekeeping" (Hammersley & Atkinson, 2007), there was an element of luck in that both station managers were women with demographic similarities to the researcher and translator. As such, over the course of the research, a strong rapport was established with both station managers which allowed for open, candid interviews despite the potential gatekeeping capacity of their roles. The size of the stations meant that, far from being a purely managerial role, the station managers were intimately involved in every aspect of production, including going out to the field to source content, the same as the other radio journalists. Based on this, the two one-on-one interviews covered a range of topics, from those specifically relating to the research questions, to those relating to everyday station activities, as well as more candid questions about the challenges of their roles. A detailed summary of the interviews conducted can be seen in Appendix 1.

Storytelling

The final method employed in this research was that of storytelling. Listener storytelling invited listeners

to share personal narratives regarding their relationship and interactions with the radio stations. The aim of this method was not to guide or influence participants through directive or specific questioning but to listen. Crook notes that participants already have the tools to tell their own stories in their own way, it is the role of the facilitator to simply enable this process (2009). Storytelling democratises the data collection process and promotes listening on the part of the researcher in order to provide the participants with an authentic voice in the research. Cortazzi (in Whittaker et al., 2004) even goes so far as to say that, because interviews are controlled, narratives are less natural and therefore less authentic. Storytelling in development projects personifies those who might usually be an "anonymous beneficiary" and assists in amplifying their voices which might otherwise be lost (Slim & Thompson, 1993). In terms of community radio, King (2016) specifically advocates storytelling as a way of promoting self-representation among community radio listeners. Storytelling as a method aligns with the research objectives and questions in that it aims to capture the unique experience of listeners in their own words. In contrast with researcher-led interviews, listener storytelling aims to elicit authentic narratives from listeners with minimal interference from the researcher.

Though by no means a common method of data collection, there is significant literature that supports the use of storytelling, particularly in relation to development and radio. Digital storytelling, particularly, has been employed by researchers previously to explore a number of phenomena. Burgess explains that the 'movement' towards digital storytelling is an attempt to re-balance the ethics of democratic access: "for too long we have been interrupting the ordinary voice, speaking instead of listening - repurposing 'found' everyday culture (by applying liberal doses of theory) in ways that complement our own sub-cultural taste patterns" (2006, p. 209). An example of digital storytelling at work in a media, communication, and development context is the "Finding a Voice" project. In this project (Tacchi, 2009; Tacchi & Kiran, 2008), researchers aimed to facilitate voice for marginalised and impoverished groups through digital storytelling. They found that these forms of "creative engagement" can promote dialogue and understanding at a grassroots level as well as contributing to horizontal development models (Tacchi & Kiran, 2008). While the focus on this project, in addition to sharing the stories of marginalised groups, was on the democratising powers of new media technologies, there are implications for more traditional forms of media also. Tacchi writes that audiences, in both developed and developing countries, are usually positioned as recipients of media messages, with their capacities to participate in self-representation in the media through content production completely overlooked (Tacchi, 2006). King made extensive use of a similar storytelling method in her recent exploration of a community radio station in Jordan. While her research focusses more on the community radio station's influence on the political awareness and engagement of listeners, King found storytelling as a method to be an accessible way of documenting this (2015). Personal narratives were sought "to facilitate a space for listeners to share stories of the impact of community radio in their civic lives" (King, 2016, p. 88). Listeners self-recorded their stories, excerpts of which were shared in listener groups and broadcast in an

on-air focus group discussion. Throughout both digital storytelling and King's use of the personal narratives of listeners, there are strong themes of providing access to technology and spaces to share everyday stories. While the technological aspects are outside the scope of this research, storytelling as a way for listeners to share their experiences presents a method with great potential for addressing the research questions.

Employing listener storytelling, in combination with the more traditional ethnographic methods of participant observation and interviews, has a number of benefits. Foremost, utilising this method allows for the collection of rich, detailed data, told in the participants' own words, which aligns with the ethnographic methodology and overarching worldview of this research. Secondly, a key objective of this research is to investigate listening; in this context, only making use of researcher-led data collection methods would fail to capture the essence of what this research is trying to discover. Using storytelling in this way provides a greater opportunity to "hear the listeners" (King, 2016, p. 88). Finally, on a more logistical but no less important note, listener storytelling assists in circumventing some of the challenges associated with translation. Language differences between the researcher and participants necessitated the use of a translator. King, who encountered similar language barriers in her work with a community radio station in Jordan, found that facilitating storytelling, as opposed to conducting interviews through translators or with limited language proficiency, procured richer data (2015). Furthermore, less interference from the researcher and, subsequently, the interpreter, may help to limit the potential for mistranslation or confusion and allow for the participants' words to be understood in their natural voice and context, without interruptions.

Storytelling took place following the focus group discussions with listeners. As discussed, storytelling participants were recruited from the focus groups based on which participants seemed more comfortable or talkative during the discussions. The response was quite positive, with at least two members of each focus group agreeing to participate in storytelling. The resulting interviews, however, yielded mixed results. Participants were asked to share an anecdote or story about their experiences interacting or engaging with the local community radio stations, with particular reference to times when they felt the station has, or has not, listened to them. While the storytelling method aims to minimise researcher interference, a list of prompts was developed (Appendix 2), in the event that participants needed more information or were having trouble thinking of stories. This proved useful because, although participants were selected based on how comfortable they were in the focus group discussions, there were several cases where participants were hesitant and seemed uneasy with the open-ended format and, as such, relied heavily on the prompts. This resulted in a more traditional, question-and-answer, interview format rather than the anticipated long-form narratives. Of the 14 listener storytelling interviews that took place (see Appendix 1), just eight could be considered stories rather than interview responses. Differentiation between these stories and interviews emerged from the narrative analysis, to be discussed in more detail shortly. Nonetheless, eight stories were collected and those storytelling

interviews that did not result in stories still contributed to the broader data set, albeit in a different capacity than planned.

Data analysis

Grounded theory

The primary method of data analysis was constructivist grounded theory. First discussed by Glaser and Strauss in their seminal text *The Discovery of Grounded Theory* (2009), grounded theory is an approach to analysis aimed at generating theories from the data, as opposed to extracting hypotheses from existing theories (Charmaz, 2014). Grounded theory has evolved significantly since its inception, most notably splitting into two schools broadly representing the scholarly backgrounds of the two founders: Glaser's positivist Columbia University empiricism and Strauss's (and later Corbin's, see Strauss & Corbin, 1998) Chicago school pragmatism (Dey, 2004; Glaser & Strauss, 2009; Pidgeon & Henwood, 2004; Spencer et al., 2014). While grounded theory traditionally aligned with positivist and post-positivist research (Clarke, 2007; Spencer et al., 2014), it was adapted to constructivist inquiries by Charmaz (2014). She writes that, in contrast to Glaser and Strauss "discovering" grounded theory, neither data nor theories are discovered, but constructed (Charmaz, 2014). Any resulting theories are interpretive portrayals, rather than exact representations of the studied world: "We construct our grounded theories through our past and present involvements and interactions with people, perspectives, and research practices... Participants' implicit meanings, experiential views - and researchers' finished grounded theories - are constructions of reality" (Charmaz, 2014, p. 10). Given the research foci and interpretive framework, Charmaz's constructivist grounded theory was employed to analyse the data in this research.

A key argument for the use of constructivist grounded theory relates to reflexive practice and accounting for the myriad constructions of knowledge and reality. Charmaz argues that theory is interpretive and "assumes emergent, multiple realities; indeterminacy; facts and values as inextricably linked; truth as provisional; and social life as processual" (2014, pp. 126–127). Following this approach, the idea that theory is "discovered" as it emerges from the data is problematic in that it silences the constructive nature of knowledge and the role of the researcher in this process. Pidgeon and Henwood argue that "theory cannot simply 'emerge' from data, because interpretation and analysis are always conducted within some pre-existing conceptual framework brought to the task by the analyst" (2004, pp. 627–628). They instead refer to "generation of theory" rather than discovery. This argument supports the use of more reflexive constructivist grounded theory that recognises the perspective that the researcher brings to the interpretive generation of theory.

As discussed in the previous chapter, Tavory and Timmermans (2009) suggest two approaches to ethnographic inquiry: the extended case method and grounded theory. The extended case method informed data collection through the use of a loose deductive approach, with listening acting as an

analytic lens rather than a fully formed hypothesis. The analysis of that data, however, draws on grounded theory. While Tavory and Timmermans position these two approaches as binary opposites and, to a degree, mutually exclusive, this research takes the position offered by Jerolmack and Khan (2017) who suggest moving recursively between theory and practice throughout the research process. Purists within the grounded theory tradition argue that developing truly grounded theories requires starting from a theoretical "blank slate". Glaser's interpretation of grounded theory calls for an initially "generalist position" that avoids subjecting research activities to theoretical scrutiny, while the other school of grounded theory advocates for being explicit about the research questions guiding the research (Pidgeon & Henwood, 2004). In her work on constructivist grounded theory, Charmaz refers to these starting points as "sensitizing concepts and disciplinary perspectives" and explains that while such concepts offer tentative tools for developing ideas, they are quickly disregarded if proven to be irrelevant (2014, p. 17). The use of sensitizing concepts and background or disciplinary knowledge in grounded theory helps to refine the research questions, prevent the repetition of previous research, and allows projects the opportunity to fully benefit from theoretical sensitivity (Pidgeon & Henwood, 2004). In terms of this research, the sensitizing concepts initially employed related to markers of listening and participation.

In terms of logistics, a traditional approach was taken: conducting multiple layers of coding to eventually generate theories from the data. Interviews were translated and transcribed, then uploaded to nVivo qualitative data analysis software. Interviews, fieldnotes, and documents were initially coded taking an open, line-by-line approach, before using axial coding to identify relationships between existing codes and synthesize the data in new ways (Charmaz, 2014). Finally, the data was re-coded based on thematic topics arising from the previous analysis of the initial coding phases.

Narrative analysis

The second method of data analysis is derived from narrative analysis. Narrative analysis has been employed here as somewhat of a counterpoint to grounded theory. Rather than fragmenting data into thematic categories, narrative analysis treats whole accounts as units of analysis (Riessman, 2008). Combining such a detail-oriented approach with what Riessman terms "category-centred models of research", like ethnography and grounded theory, can produce unique insights and different ways of understanding (2008, p. 12). Narrative analysis has been employed primarily to explore the stories resulting from listener storytelling. Riessman explains that narrative analysis is not appropriate for large numbers of "nameless, faceless subjects" (2008, p. 18). This method of analysis is slow and focusses on the minutiae of narrated accounts including language, audience, how the text is presented, the local context, and the underlying factors impacting upon what can be narrated and how (Riessman, 2008). In narrative analysis, it is not necessarily just the content of the interview that is important but also the storytelling itself, which reveals much about how the participants view themselves and the world around them (Bailur, 2012). Where a content analysis could potentially miss key contextual details, narrative

analysis adds coherence to experiences by locating them in terms of time and place (Cortazzi in Whittaker et al., 2004). Furthermore, narrative analysis complements ethnographic research strategies and is useful for exploring representations of voice, listening, and sharing experiences of particular groups (Whittaker et al., 2004). For these reasons, narrative analysis was employed to explore the eight listener stories.

There is disagreement within the field of narrative studies of appropriate terminology and what exactly makes an account or text a "story". Riessman suggests that it is "sequence and consequence" that makes diverse texts "narrative" - "events are selected, organised, connected, and evaluated as meaningful for a particular audience" (1993, p. 1). In contrast, Boje (2001) argues firmly against manufacturing narratives by imposing order and coherence on fragmented experiences. He suggests the term "antenarrative" which aims to capture contextual details and the messy, incoherent "pre-narrative speculation" (Boje, 2001, p. 1). Furthermore, Czarniawska suggests somewhat of a typology, comparing annals ("registering dates and times"), and chronicles ("causal connections... devoid of plot or meaningful structure"), with "stories" (2004, p. 652). Citing White (1987), she argues that chronicles might be narratives, but they are not stories due to a lack of "emplotment", a concept borrowed from Ricoeur (1984), which Czarniawska interprets as the process of "introducing structure which allows sense to be made of the events" (2004, p. 655). Sense-making is a retrospective act, she writes, hence, emplotment could be considered part of the process of moving from chronicle or narrative to story (Czarniawska, 2004). Boje disagrees with this interpretation, referring to stories as "folksy" and arguing that Czarniawska's definition of story is more suited to that of a narrative (2001). There is limited capacity for productivity in such discussions. Based on the contention within the field, I employ "narrative" and "story" interchangeably throughout this research.

Based on the vague and contested nature of the various terms within narrative analysis, the first step undertaken in this process of narrative analysis is to determine which accounts could be considered "narratives", and therefore appropriate for this kind of analysis. Despite the contentions in terms of terminology and approaches to narrative analysis, many of the authors cited here (Boje, 2001; Czarniawska, 1997; Lawler, 2002) ground their interpretations in the work of Ricoeur. Therefore, this research draws on Ricoeur's (1984) notion of "emplotment" in order to distinguish stories from what Czarniawska might term "annals" or "chronicles". Plainly stated: "it is emplotment which makes an account a narrative" (Lawler, 2002, p. 245). Ricoeur refers to emplotment as "creative imitation" of lived experiences; that is, "the imitation or representation of action proper to tragedy, comedy, and epic that alone is taken into account" (1984, p. 33). Ricoeur argues that there are three stages of emplotment that the terms "mimesis". The first mimesis refers to the pre-understandings necessary to be able to emplot. Ricoeur (1984, p. 54) explains:

> "... the composition of the plot is rounded in a pre-understanding of the world of action, its meaningful structures, its symbolic resources, and its temporal characters... If it is true that plot is an imitation of action, some preliminary competence is required: the capacity for identifying

action in general by means of its structural features... a supplementary competence is required: an aptitude for identifying what I call the symbolic mediations of action..."

The second mimesis involves linking seemingly disparate events or incidents into a totality: one meaningful story (Ricoeur, 1984; Lawler, 2002). The final stage, mimesis 3, refers to "the intersection of the world of the text and the world of the hearer or reader" (Ricoeur, 1984, p. 71). This temporal aspect of narrative is extensively explored by Ricoeur who further explains that "time becomes human to the extent that it is articulated through a narrative mode, and narrative attains its full meaning when it becomes a condition of temporal existence" (1984, p. 52). This concept of emplotment is a form of plot analysis, though when used in isolation, it is admittedly what Boje terms a "narrow and reductionist analysis" (2001, p. 121). As such, emplotment or plot analysis is used as a general basis for differentiating stories from question-and-answer-style interviews. The three stages of mimesis also offer prompts towards various areas of analysis including the contextual environment and prerequisite knowledge underpinning the story, which events or incidents have been selected and how they have been linked together, as well as how these events relate back to present temporality.

Having conducted a high-level plot analysis using Ricoeur's emplotment to determine if texts are appropriate for narrative analysis, this research then draws on the "hermeneutic triad" to guide further analysis. Czarniawska employs Hernadi's (1987) "hermeneutic triad" to suggest three ways of reading a text (2004). The first is referred to as explication, or what the text is actually saying. Traditionally, this involves the researcher "standing under" the text in order to understand "what really happened" in their own words (Czarniawska, 2014). Czarniawska warns of the "political act of totalizing" when it comes to retelling others' stories (2004, p. 658). The second part of the "triad" is explanation, which involved negotiations between the reader and the original intention of the text, or "standing over" the text and questioning why it says what it does (Czarniawska, 2014). The final stage of the triad is exploration. This involves "standing in" as the author in order to provide a "critique or an espousal of the ideas" in the text (Czarniawska, 2014). The use of this hermeneutic triad and Czarniawska's contemporary interpretation provides a useful guide for narrative analysis.

In addition to plot analysis and the hermeneutic triad, two tools from Boje's (2001) "alternative narrative analysis" are also employed: deconstruction and "grand narrative" analysis. Firstly, deconstruction offers a tool for analysis that questions the underlying points of view and ideologies of the text. Drawing from the work of Derrida, who resisted attempts to define deconstruction, this approach aims to problematise or decentre the authoritative Truth or centre presented by the text (Boje, 2001). Deconstruction is also critical to exploring antenarratives (Boje, 2001, p. 18):

"Deconstruction is antenarrative in action. Every story excludes. Every story legitimates a centred point of view, a worldview or an ideology among alternatives. No story is ideologically neutral; story floats around in the chaotic soup of bits and pieces of story fragments."

Deconstruction can encourage consideration of the underlying ideologies and external influences of the

text because, as Derrida so famously asserted, "there is no outside-text" (1976, p. 158).

A further technique suggested by Boje is to explore the "grand narrative" of the text. This involves considering the "metanarrative that subjugates and marginalizes other discourses" (Boje, 2001, p. 35) and looking beyond this metanarrative to consider how micronarratives might resist or conform to this narrative. Such "grand narratives" likely impact on each point of the hermeneutic triad: affecting what is said, how it is said, and why. It is anticipated that any grand narratives that emerge may also relate to mimesis 1: the prerequisite knowledges necessary for emplotting the story.

Related to both deconstruction and grand narrative analysis is what Fernandes terms "the political economy of storytelling" (2017). Through this, she refers to two intertwined activities: the "production, circulation, and consumption of stories that are mobilized toward certain utilitarian ends" and "the deployment of stories in the process of subject-making" (Fernandes, 2017, pp. 10-11). Given the relatively short amount of time spent at each site, an in-depth understanding of the political economy of each story is unrealistic. Assuming to have developed a holistic understanding of the entire political economy impacting upon listeners' stories is simplistic and problematic. In this context, the political economy of storytelling acts as more of a lens through which to view stories; a reminder to maintain a critical gaze and to consider the importance of context in shaping the narratives presented. Furthermore, it is necessary to consider the "curated" nature of the stories: these stories were told for a specific purpose, whether it be purely in response to the researcher's request or other less immediately clear reasons.

A final point to note in terms of narrative analysis is the role of reflexivity. Though reflexivity should be inherent throughout this research, it is particularly important in terms of stories and narrative analysis. At the risk of delving into reception studies, the factors influencing the researcher's reading must also be considered. Ricoeur suggests that "it is the reader who completes the work" (1984, p. 77). Similarly, Riessman argues that there is "dialogue" between the text and reader or researcher and researched (2008, p. 137). Having considered the contextual environment, prerequisite knowledges, and grand narratives, as well as having deconstructed and decentred the texts, it is only fair to apply the same rigour to the *reading* of the text. After all, the results of this analysis, by way of emplotment, become a story themselves (Riessman, 2008). By maintaining a reflexive approach and applying the same critical view to the new "story", the researcher's perspective can at least be recognised and potentially mitigated.

Having discussed the tools of analysis and now returning to the data, there were several storytelling interviews that failed to meet the criteria for narrative analysis. Drawing on the narrative markers of emplotment and antenarrative, five storytelling interviews were deemed inappropriate for narrative analysis. In each of these interviews, the participants seemed shy and uncomfortable with the format. These participants required a significant amount of encouragement and seemed to prefer a traditional interview of questions and answers rather than prompts and narrative responses. As such,

these interviews were deemed inappropriate for narrative analysis and were instead examined using the aforementioned grounded theory approach. Given this blurring of lines between methods - interviews and listener storytelling - the focus group transcripts were re-examined with a view of identifying any stories that may have been presented throughout the interviews rather than in the storytelling. Five stories were identified as fulfilling criteria of emplotment and antenarrative and therefore were also examined through narrative analysis.

Translation

At this point, it is worth discussing the role of the interpreter and language limitations within this research. Translation is rarely problematised by researchers; though translated transcripts are often presented, the politics of translation are rarely acknowledged (Riessman, 2008). In addition to the explicit imperialism of the dominance of English in academic writing, Tanu and Dales suggest that silencing the role of translators and interpreters stems from the colonial origins of ethnographic writing and the pronounced divide between "native" and "non-native" researchers (2016, p. 355). As such this research attempts to address this power imbalance and recognise that researchers depend on translators and interpreters "not just for words, but to a certain extent for perspective" (Temple, 1997, p. 608). Based on the interpretive framework, respecting cognitive justice and alternative knowledges, this section aims to recognise the role of the interpreter and the perspective she brought to the research.

There were no questions regarding the need for an interpreter: the researcher's proficiency in the local language was limited at best and, though there were varying levels of English within the primary research participants, it was naturally preferable to conduct interviews in the language in which they were most comfortable. Acknowledging that the researcher is "less than fluent" in the local language is key to an open discussion on language and translation issues (Gibb & Danero Iglesias, 2016). While fluency in the local language would have been ideal, the time available meant that it was more realistic to work with an interpreter/translator and supplement this with "informal language learning" (Gibb & Danero Iglesias, 2016). As such, a research assistant was engaged to interpret, translate, and assist in facilitating the logistics of the research. For cultural reasons, employing a female interpreter was preferred. Edwards suggests that, where possible, interpreters and interviewees should be of the same sex, culture, religion, and age (1998, p. 200). As the same interpreter was engaged throughout the research and the interviewees were not demographically homogeneous, this was not possible. In this case, it was deemed more important for the interpreter to be from the general area of the research sites and, as such, have first-hand experience in the local culture. Based on these guidelines, a research assistant was employed to act as an interpreter and translator, as well as to provide logistical support. The research assistant was a local Master's student recruited through networks established during the pilot visits to the UNESCO Chair on Community Media. In this case, it was desirable to engage an interpreter with a strong knowledge of the local area but little familiarity with community radio, in order

to avoid any potential bias or conflicts of interest with their own research.

The role of the interpreter was understood as being vital from the outset of the research, not only for overcoming language barriers but also for navigating local and cultural norms. As such, a way of recognising and making visible the role and perspective of the interpreter was sought. Temple (1997, p. 608) argues that the concept of "intellectual biographies" provides a useful frame for understanding the point of view of the interpreter:

> "Researchers' intellectual autobiographies influence what they know, and what they know and experience influences what they write, which in turn influences their intellectual autobiographies. Extending this concept to include the 'intellectual biographies' of others involved in research (for example, translators, interpreters, interviewers and transcribers) is a useful way for the researcher to engage with the perspectives of those who may be involved in a significant part of the research process."

This approach aligns with the social constructivist and cognitive justice interpretive framework, which recognises alternative knowledges and perspectives. Based on this, the researcher sought to understand the "intellectual biography" of the interpreter. Edwards suggests an induction process to ensure that "the interpreter is neither too active nor too passive" (1998, p. 200). While there was no formal induction, extensive discussions took place around the focus of inquiry as well as the preferred approach to interpreting. The structure of the research methods also allowed for somewhat of an acclimatisation period for the interpreter. With the initial stage at each site simply involving participant observation at the stations, the interpreter was able to build rapport with the key informants and also work reflexively with the researcher to develop appropriate interpretation approaches. By the time the interviewing phase commenced, the researcher and interpreter had built a strong working relationship and were very clear on expectations and approaches to interpretation in more formal interview settings.

As the research ended, it was deemed necessary to conduct a more formal "exit" interview with the interpreter. Though a clear picture of her intellectual biography had been established through social and informal interactions, an interview was conducted to make this position more overt and formally recorded. Edwards suggests applying reflexivity to the role of the interpreter through interviews and treating interpreters overtly as "key informants", though without privileging their insight over that of other interviewees (1998). Using this approach as a guide, the interpreter was questioned about certain life experiences, cultural nuances, her academic background, and the issues she saw as relevant to the research questions (see Appendix 3). Through this interview, the role of the interpreter as a key informant was solidified and made visible.

The final issue to be discussed around interpreting and translating is more pragmatic: namely that of the accuracy of the translations. Though multiple readings are possible in all qualitative research, this problem becomes highly visible when language issues are introduced into the mix (Riessman, 2008). To test the accuracy of the transcripts and account for contextual interpretations that may have been

included by the translator, a random selection of audio recordings of interviews free from any contextual or identifying information were also translated by an external, independent translator. The resulting translations were compared with the work of the research assistant to verify the accuracy of the translations. The two sets of translations, for the most part, matched, except for several contextual explanatory notes from the research assistant, which were clearly identified as separate to the transcripts. Had the results been less aligned, additional verification through back-translations would have taken place but, given the alignment between the work of the research assistant and that of the independent translator, this was deemed unnecessary.

Limitations

"You better leave"

The station's phone rarely rang. When it did it was usually someone from the NGO calling to check in about one thing or another, Akka usually fielded those calls. Thambi dutifully passed her the phone. She listened intently for quite some time, before turning to look at me with a deepening frown. She replaced the phone and motioned for us to follow her outside.

"There's some problem with your foreign registration, they want you to go to the police station. You better leave."

Akka gave me a brief hug and told us to keep her updated. The translator and I exchanged a look. What had just happened?

"We better go."

Indeed, there was a car waiting. Mercifully, not a police car.

The drive took an hour. Thambi who worked in the office came with us. He explained that the NGO occupied a tenuous status here. The government, or at least one member of the police department, was sceptical and dismissive of their work, and often caused problems for their foreign visitors. Despite being an hour's drive away, they kept a close eye on the comings and goings of the NGO. There was nothing the NGO could do, no-one to complain to that wouldn't make their lives even more complicated. So they walked the tightrope. Usually, visitors came in groups – donors on tour, students of agriculture on exchange – he tended not to bother them too much. But a lone researcher and one spending time at the radio station? Thambi clicked his tongue and rolled his eyes.

We pulled up in front of a colonial-style bungalow, complete with a carefully tended rose garden at the front.

"We can't go in with you, it's better that you go by yourself," he gestured to the door.

I walked through the open door and turned left towards the Foreigner Registration Office. I barely placed one foot over the threshold when a man on the phone impatiently pointed back outside and told me to wait. So I sat on a bench inside the police station, awaiting the bureaucrat holding my fieldwork to

ransom. Police officers in uniform strode past, some almost-comically double-taking at the sight of me. I felt like a naughty child waiting outside the school principal's office.

<p style="text-align:center">***</p>

All research has limitations: things that don't go to plan or don't work as well as expected. The reflexive nature of this research recognises the fallibility of all research, as such, it is necessary to have a frank discussion about the limitations of this research. The primary limitation of this research was the discrepancy between the time spent at each station. It was anticipated that one month would be spent collecting data at each site, with roughly two weeks for participant observation, one week for listener interviews, and one week for staff interviews and any final matters arising. Though this model was successfully employed at Enkal Vanoli, as indicated in the vignette, Malai Vanoli did not quite go according to plan.

In addition to obtaining an appropriate visa, foreigners staying in India for more than 14 days are required to register with the local police station. Though there are policies and procedures in place, in practice it is largely at the discretion of local Foreign Registration Officers to issue and manage registrations. Without delving into extraneous details, an alleged problem (or grudge, as it turned out to be) meant that I had to leave the district immediately and, as such, was unable to complete the full month at Malai Vanoli.

Community radio and NGOs occupy a somewhat tenuous status in this district. There is considerable ill-will towards certain NGOs, particularly those that are religiously affiliated, thanks to the practice of offering education scholarships to tribal people who convert to Christianity. Though the practice has been banned, NGOs are still closely scrutinised by the local government. Malai Vanoli's NGO attracts additional attention due to its regular foreign visitors. The NGO relies heavily on foreign donations and also collaborates on environmental research with foreign universities, so it was vital for them to keep the Foreign Registration Officer happy. Malai Vanoli itself has little brand recognition outside of its broadcast area and, given the relatively low status of community radio, it was, retrospectively, unsurprising that there was additional scrutiny and scepticism from local officials. In her book, *Street Corner Secrets,* Svati Shah recalls an interaction with strangers on a train who enquired about her research, which was focussed on migrant sex workers in Mumbai. She describes a detailed conversation that somehow manages to dance around the topic, unspoken but understood by all discussants (S. P. Shah, 2014). Similarly, Anjali Arondekar recounts the impatient inquiry of an archive official - "*'Tumhi kai shodhta*, madam?' (What are you looking for, madam?)" – and the realisation that her research was "an unrepresentable search for an impossible object" (2009, p. ix). Listening in community radio represents a less taboo, though similarly unspoken and unrepresentable topic, particularly from the perspective of government authority figures.

Rather than returning and potentially placing the station and NGO at risk of further harassment, it was decided to move on to the second site, Enkal Vanoli, as planned. As such, several months passed

between the initial visit to the first site and the return visit. The return visit was hampered by the same uncooperative official and time was severely limited. It was extremely fortunate that the NGO and station staff were willing to slightly bend the rules so the interviews could take place, though they needed to be done quickly and could not take place at the station. Ethically speaking, the situation was difficult. Having sought advice from other local researchers and the issuing body of the paperwork, everything was in order, it was essentially, a man with a grudge. Nonetheless, he was an official who could potentially make life very difficult for the NGO and the station. As such, the actions taken ensured that the researcher took full responsibility and that no-one else would face any adverse consequences. The result was that only nine interviews took place instead of the anticipated 14: two listener focus groups, five storytelling interviews, one group interview with the station staff, and one individual interview with the key informant (see Appendix 1 for a more detailed breakdown). Considering the circumstances, the amount of data collected at Malai Vanoli was acceptable and still comparable with what was collected at the other station. The total time spent at Malai Vanoli worked out to be roughly three weeks rather than the intended four, though with a significant gap between weeks two and three.

The experience at the first research site reinforced the need for a flexible methodology, responsive to the unique quirks of the research sites. This also demonstrated developing complicity with research participants through shared experiences and understandings.

"That's it?" "That's it."

A cow groaned. A bell was ringing, coming from the direction of the temple. The sound of a car labouring up a hill on a distant road. There was excited chattering and squeals from a group of school children who had just been dropped off by a bus and were slowly making their way up the hill towards the village. The village was alive with sound. The interview, however, was not.
These were the sounds that could be heard during the gaping silence following a question.
"How about you, Akka? What do you think?" the translator tried again, physically leaning closer so not to miss even a whisper of an answer.
The cow again. The children got closer.
The woman gave a small smile and looked at the ground.
"That's it?" the translator was defeated. We had come all this way.
"That's it."

<p align="center">***</p>

As the research progressed, a limitation surrounding the collection of interview data, particularly storytelling, emerged. As discussed in the data analysis section, there were several storytelling interviews that failed to meet the criteria to be considered a "story" and therefore were ineligible for narrative analysis. This limitation occurred several times across both sites. Storytelling participants were asked to self-nominate from the focus groups: it was usually the more talkative, confident participants of the focus

groups who volunteered. Despite this, there were several storytelling interviews that failed to yield "stories". Some participants were perhaps unfamiliar or uncomfortable with the format and seemed to prefer answering questions rather than sharing a longer narrative story. This could be due to a number of reasons. Firstly, the format: though most focus group participants had been interviewed for the radio, the format of these interviews compared with storytelling was quite different. Radio interviewees know in advance what they will be talking about and are guided by a clear, logical set of questions. It was perhaps the unstructured form, and lack of preparation time that made some participants uncomfortable. Though participants were aware of the questions and aims of the interviews, they were not asked to prepare anything in advance and may have been caught off-guard. A second reason for the reluctance to tell stories could have been related to the presence of the researcher and the perceived "formality" of the interview. The radio staff often observed people's reluctance to speak into microphones, and the phenomena of falling silent as soon as a recording device emerged. Indeed, it was for this reason that Malai Vanoli staff tended to use small, amateur recording devices or their mobile phones despite having access to higher quality, more broadcast-appropriate field recorders. The sight of a microphone was enough to intimidate potential interviewees, so they opted for less obtrusive recorders despite the lower sound quality. The act of being singled out, even if voluntarily, also seemed to play a role in the "limited" stories. Even some of the more garrulous focus group participants struggled in the storytelling interviews. A related factor could also be the relationship between the present radio staff and the listeners. It was observed that interview participants with a stronger relationship with the staff member present were more comfortable with storytelling. Those with stronger relationships with the staff members seemed less intimidated by the technology and less affected by the presence of the researcher.

In future research, these limitations may be overcome by giving participants the opportunity to prepare for storytelling interviews in advance. Specifically outlining the purpose and desired outcomes of storytelling interviews would allow participants time to think of a story that they are comfortable telling, and hence avoid the sense of being caught off-guard or put on the spot. Though this approach has implications for how the researchers might be influencing the results of the storytelling, it may result in more "stories" resulting from listener storytelling interviews. A second way of overcoming the limitations of listener storytelling could be to spend more time building relationships with the focus group and storytelling participants. Many of the storytelling participants, though known to the radio staff, were meeting the researcher for the first time. Meeting in advance and building confidence and trust prior to the interviews could result in more comfortable, forthcoming storytelling experiences.

A final impacting factor on the storytelling interviews, and the one illustrated in the earlier vignette, is that of culture. This is an excerpt from field notes detailing what was probably the most difficult interview experience. The interview took place in a remote, tribal village. Though the participants seemed eager to take part and seemed friendly and interested in the content, the focus group discussion was more of a group interview and required significant prompting and encouragement. The listener

storytelling was even more difficult. There was one participant who seemed to have the strongest relationship with the station staff. She was the wife of the head of the village and she was easily the most vocal during the focus group but still was very reserved in the storytelling. It emerged that, while the staff were in regular contact with some residents by phone, they rarely visited the village due to its isolated location. In fact, the village rarely had any visitors. The tribe were protective of their culture and their homes, only expressly invited visitors were permitted, and they had to be accompanied by a resident of the village. The limitations discussed earlier (discomfort with the format, the presence of recording equipment, the presence of the researcher, etc.) were compounded by the fact that participants were uncomfortable and unaccustomed to the presence of outsiders in their village, let alone a foreign outsider with a list of questions and a recording device. The headman's wife shared a jeep back to the main town with us, so she could do some shopping. Throughout the journey she chatted with the radio staff, there was clearly a strong, comfortable social relationship, therefore it could be assumed that the presence of the researcher was a key factor in influencing the interviews. Overcoming this limitation would be by no means an easy task. Omitting groups from research because they are culturally and/or geographically isolated is problematic, to say the least. Building relationships in this context would also have been quite difficult. Perhaps the best, and potentially only, way of improving the results of interviews in such an environment would have been to liaise more closely with the radio staff in order to ascertain how to make the participants more comfortable.

Given the mixed results of the storytelling despite the success of the focus groups, the transcripts of the focus group discussions were examined to identify any potential stories that may have emerged. Dart and Davies suggest that, aside from responses to open-ended questions, stories also emerge as embedded in interview transcripts (2003). As briefly discussed in the data analysis section, any stories identified within the focus group transcripts were also subjected to narrative analysis despite not resulting directly from the listener storytelling interviews.

4 Background and context

Community radio

The woman behind the visa counter at the Indian High Commission did little to hide her disinterest as she flipped through my paperwork. Her apparent boredom belied her thoroughness. She visibly straightened when she reached the section outlining my research.

"Community radio. What is that?"

"Yes, it's local broadcasting to specific surrounding communities."

"Local radio? Where's your letter from All India Radio? You only have one from the university. You need to get a letter of permission then you can resubmit the form online."

"No, wait!"

—

"Community radio?"

The immigration officer frowned and studied my research visa again.

"What is that?"

"Small radio stations that broadcast to specific communities – like farmers, or students."

"Student radio? Are you researching what happened with the protests at the university?"

"No! No, no, definitely nothing like that!"

—

"Community radio?"

"Yes, they're radio stations that aren't run by the Government, or for-profit, they cater to very specific groups of people."

The Foreigner Registration Officer leaned forward and steepled his fingers.

"We have many different religions here in India. Community radio is for religious people who will listen to their songs and prayers. How can you research them? What do you know about their religions?"

"Well, I mean... It's not quite…"

—

"Community... radio... Do we have that here?"

"Yes, there are lots of stations doing very interesting and valuable work."

"Oh... I think it's not very popular."

"Well..."

—

Each interaction with a Government official streamlined my definition of community radio. It had to be short, simple, inoffensive, and to the point. I needed a sound bite.

***

Defining community radio in any definitive way is an impossible task. Regulations, funding sources, and ownership models differ from country to country, and even the stations that are geographically close together can vary significantly. It is no cliché to say that no two community radio stations are alike. An all-encompassing definition is highly elusive (Carpentier, Lie, & Servaes, 2003). As a starting point, the World Association of Community Radio Broadcasters (AMARC) offers a rather clinical definition that is still rife with terms and phrases in need of clarification. They suggest that community radio is "a two-way process, which entails the exchange of views from various sources and is the adaptation of media for use by communities" (Mtimde, Bonin, & Opoku-Mensah, 1998, p. 9). This definition is laden with unclear and uncertain terms, much like the nature of community radio more broadly. As such, the aim of this chapter is not necessarily to establish an explicit, incontrovertible definition of community radio but rather to facilitate understanding of the complexities surrounding the medium, both at a theoretical level, and also on the ground, or on the airwaves, as the case might be.

This chapter will first discuss two key theoretical constructs within community radio: democratising media access and "community". These theoretical underpinnings appear throughout community radio literature and are influenced by the work of Carpentier, Cammaerts, and Bailey on theoretical approaches to community radio. They suggest four theoretical approaches: 1) community media as serving a community, 2) community media as an alternative to the mainstream, 3) community media as a part of civil society, and 4) community media as rhizome (Carpentier, Cammaerts, & Bailey, 2008). The first three approaches have influenced what this research considers to be the key theoretical constructs. While Carpentier et al. do emphasize the importance of considering these approaches together, they concede that the fourth approach, community media as rhizome, should be granted special attention (Carpentier et al., 2003; Santana & Carpentier, 2010). Based on Deleuze and Guattari's metaphor (1988), community radio as rhizome refers to the fluid, contingent nature of the medium and the ways in which community radio connects various disparate elements of society to each other (Carpentier et al., 2008). This theoretical approach to community radio will be further discussed in Chapter 6.

Following an exploration of democratising media access and community as theoretical approaches to community radio, this section concludes by briefly making a case for the use of "community" rather than "alternative" media. This contributes to situating this work within the broader field of media studies, specifically within alternative media studies, while defining a clear space for work specific to community radio. The second half of this chapter moves away from the theoretical to explore the diversity of community radio on the ground and provide relevant background information about the research sites. This section first provides an overview of the community radio sector in India before introducing the specific stations that acted as data collection sites for this research.

Democratising media access

The foremost underlying theoretical aspect of community radio is its role in democratising access to the media. In her seminal text, Rodriguez (2001) argues that alternative and community media represent "fissures in the mediascape". These fissures are associated with "increased and more democratic access, freedom of expression and operation, as well as creativity and innovation" (Tacchi, 2003, p. 2183). There are three key aspects of the role of community radio in democratising access to the media: firstly, community radio as an alternative public sphere; secondly, community radio as increasing access to and participation in media production; and finally, as an outlet for voice.

The idea of community radio as democratising access to the media is a logical continuation of Fraser's alternative public spheres. In her much-cited critique of Habermas' public sphere, Fraser suggests that "a plurality of competing publics better promote the ideal of participatory parity than does a single comprehensive, overarching public" (1990, p. 66). Fraser's work has often been employed to promote the democratic relevance of alternative media (see Atton, 2001; Guo, 2015; among others). Vojvoda, in conversation with Pavarala, (2015) suggests that marginalised groups find themselves without a voice in the "monolithic public sphere" and that community radio offers a space to forge "subaltern counterpublics" where alternative discourses can be created and circulated (N. Fraser, 1990). Further, the notion of one single public sphere fails to account for the different circumstances (socio-economic, for example) of various groups and individuals, and the implications that these circumstances might have on their participation (Katiyar, 2017). Indeed, Atton argues that alternative public spheres form "an appropriate conceptual foundation from which to understand the production and reception of autonomously developed accounts of experience, critiques, information and knowledge" (2001, p. 156). Community radio as an alternative public sphere helps to conceptualise the importance of a diversity of voices and discourses within the broader public sphere.

Having established the importance of this diversity to community radio as an alternative public sphere, the second aspect of understanding how community radio serves to democratise the media relates to access and participation. The importance of community radio in increasing citizen access and participation in the media is underscored by Atton who explains that a key aim of alternative media is "to provide access to the media for these groups on those groups' terms" (2001, p. 11). Pavarala and Malik (2007) go so far as to suggest that community radio is characterised by access and public participation in production and decision-making. A further perspective on democratised access to the media emerged from UNESCO debates in the 1970s around the New World Information and Communication Order (NWICO) (Bailey, Cammaert, & Carpentier, 2007). This project aimed to redress the imbalance in communication flows by "putting electronic media in the hands of citizens and communities who traditionally had been denied access to the production and distribution of media messages" (Rodriguez, 2001, p. 2). Alternative media featured significantly in these discussions with access and participation seen as key terms in improving public involvement in media production (Bailey et al., 2007). Indeed,

many discussions around the definition of community radio make specific reference to community access and participation (Bessire & Fisher, 2012; Dagron, 2003; C. Fraser & Restrepo-Estrada, 2002; Pavarala & Malik, 2007; Waisbord, 2005). The importance of access and participation are also discussed in greater detail in Chapter 7, but they remain contributing factors to the broader aim of democratised media access. Despite the failure of NWICO to subvert dominant media structures and information flows (Rodriguez, 2001), the project demonstrated global recognition of the need for media diversity and greater democratisation of the media. Such discussions relocated democratisation of the media from "international organizations, national governments, and large media conglomerates, to citizen groups and grassroots organizations, and their attempts to use the media in their own different way" (Rodriguez, 2001, p. 10). This relocation embodies what Atton refers to as "challenges to hegemony", which may refer to explicitly political goals and also indirect challenges through community media's use of experimentation and transformation of existing roles and processes (2001, p. 19). Returning briefly to Fraser's alternative public spheres, she suggests that "participatory parity is essential to a democratic public sphere and that rough socio-economic equality is a precondition of participatory parity" (1990, p. 74). Though equal opportunities for access and participation within community radio seems idealistic, it forms an essential conceptual basis for more democratic media access.

The final aspect of community radio and its role in democratising media access relates to voice. Acting as a "voice for the voiceless" is a popular refrain in community radio rhetoric, and community radio acting in this capacity is widely explored in the literature (see Downing, 2000; Harcup, 2015; Kivikuru, 2005; Rennie, 2006; Rodriguez, 2001; Tacchi, 2003; among others). By having access to and participating in community radio, ordinary people are able to engage in alternative public spheres by exercising their voice. Bailey, Cammaerts, and Carpentier suggest that alternative media give people the opportunity to have their voices heard and "take responsibility for distributing their own ideologies and representations" (2007, p. 14). Giving a voice to marginalised groups is a starting point for notions of alternative public spheres and access and participation because it is only through this process that the struggles of democratic societies to reconcile civil rights with structural inequalities come to light (Howley, 2002). As such, alternative public spheres, access and participation, and voice each play an important role in conceptualising the role of community radio as contributing to democratic media access.

"Community"

Crucial to understanding community radio is the concept of "community" itself. The "community" in community radio often appears as part of discussions around definitions or scope. In some cases, it appears repeatedly. Activist Louie Tabing offers a famed definition, stating that community radio is "in the community, for the community, about the community and by the community" (Tabing, 2005, p. 9). Despite the prevalence of the term, in an operational sense, it is rarely clearly defined. "Community" is

contested and contestable, and requires careful consideration and problematisation. Ever since Ferdinand Tönnies (1957) employed the concepts of *Gemeinschaft* and *Gesellschaft* as conceptual tools, "community" has been of widespread interest. Gusfield refers to the dichotomy of community and society as the single most influential framework for sociological inquiry (1975). For over 100 years, the concept of community has been debated, dissected, debased, and deified. Indeed, there is little that this research can add to the existing expanse of literature without sacrificing other more relevant discussions. As such, this brief exploration of community aims to stay as close as possible to the guiding theme of community radio. Even in this limited capacity, there are difficulties associated with establishing a precise definition of community in the context of community radio. This task, while complex, is an important one; defining their audience and the community served is considered to be a benchmark of an effective community radio station (Siemering, 2000). Any definition must include, or at least allow space for, the multiplicity of meanings attached to the term 'community', and while the location may contribute to the concept of community, there are far more factors at play than just physical proximity (Lowrey, Brozana, & Mackay, 2008). This section will briefly explore what community means in relation to community radio by first examining several interpretations of the term before situating community radio in how "community" is constructed and then casting a critical gaze over the discussion.

Types of communities

Despite the fundamental importance of the term "community" to community radio, there is little consensus on how it is defined and applied. This task is further complicated by contemporary reconceptualisations that take into account online communities, communities of practice, and interpretive communities, among others (Carpentier, Lie, & Servaes, 2007). The complexity of the term is further illustrated in the work of Price-Davies and Tacchi (2001). In their comparative report on community radio across six countries, they revealed that not one peak body or legislature offered a firm definition of what the "community" of a station might be. The Australian Broadcasting Authority states that community radio should "represent a community of interest" (p. 10); the Canadian Radio-Television and Telecommunications Commission (CRTC) outlines that community radio should provide programming "that reflects the needs and interests of the community served" (p. 21); French community radio must focus on "specific local programming" (p. 27); and South Africa's Broadcasting Act states that community radio stations should "serve a particular community" (p. 44). A single report reveals huge discrepancies across countries in terms of how guidelines and legislature interpret what "community" means in relation to community radio. Definitions of community have also been expanded to include virtual or online communities, which Carpentier (2011a) specifically identifies as an articulation of audience alongside social and interpretive communities. There are, however, two simple interpretations that appear regularly; according to AMARC, community radio should be representative of "local geographically recognisable communities or of communities of common interest" (1994). This section will briefly explore geographic communities and communities of interest, before exploring the concept of "imagined

communities". Though more abstract in its usage than geographic communities and communities of interest, imagined communities play a significant role in how "community" is broadly understood within community radio.

The first interpretation of "community" to be explored here is that of a geographic community. This interpretation is of particular relevance to this research seeing as it is the definition of community employed within Indian community radio. According to the Bangalore Declaration on Radio, "a community radio station serves a defined geographical area of a village or groups of villages" (A. Sen, 2003, p. 2199). This approach is common within the region: in the community radio sectors in India, Bangladesh, and Nepal, "community" refers to geographic community rather than a community of interest (Arora, Ramakrishnan, & Fernandez, 2015). A geographic community should be specific and well-defined in order to ensure that "the primary accountability of the CR [community radio] stations should be to their territorial or geographical community" (Malik, 2015, p. 6). Even the seemingly simple concept of a geographically bounded community is fraught though. Bailey, Cammaerts, and Carpentier remind us that geographic proximity is not "a necessary condition for, or quality of, community (2007, p. 9). The very idea of a clearly defined and demarcated community is a result of the discursive domain of the colonial period, prior to which communities were "fuzzy" and did not "claim to represent or exhaust all the layers of selfhood of its members" but instead were "definable with precision for all practical purposes of social interaction" (Chatterjee, 1993, p. 223). Sihlongonyane (2009) also warns that while the notion of geographically bounded, grassroots communities can represent a people-centred, participatory philosophy, it can also be romanticised and co-opted by colonial and modernist discourses in order to make wide generalisations about the supposed homogeneity of said communities. Similarly, in their work in Sri Lanka, Slater, Tacchi, and Lewis (2002) observed that the "community media" ideal of inclusion failed to align with the dominant nationalist "community" or "village ideology" that served to economically, culturally, and politically exclude the Tamil population. Indeed, Edward Said (1979) comments on the arbitrary nature of geographic distinctions between a familiar space that is "ours" and the unfamiliar spaces beyond as "theirs". The importance of taking into account the nuanced nature of geographic communities was a key recommendation that emerged from a National Consultation on Strengthening Community Radio (UNESCO, 2010, p. 1) in India:

> "The term 'community' is a contested concept and its manifestation on ground is very complex. Efforts must be made by the CR stakeholders to develop a more nuanced understanding of 'community' as heterogeneous and dynamic. They must be sensitive to the internal power structures of a community that make it difficult for everyone to participate equally and for all perspectives to be represented."

Despite the seemingly simple definition of a geographic community and its widespread employment within community radio in South Asia, the term remains contentious and subject to both colonial discourses as well as the existing power structures within the "community".

The second community that a community radio station might serve is that of a community of interest. Particularly in light of modern technology, geographic closeness is no longer a necessary condition nor quality indicator of "community" (Carpentier et al., 2007). Communities of interest are defined by Tacchi as "having a specific, ascertainable common interest" which may be "institutional, religious or cultural" that makes them an identifiable community (2003, p. 2185). Such communities may bridge geographic borders and cultural barrier through commonalities associated with shared interests (Gumucio-Dagron & Rodríguez, 2006). Communities of interests represent a reconceptualisation of the traditional interpretation of community - based on geography or ethnicity - to include broader definitions that may also include communities of practice or online communities (Bailey et al., 2007). While community radio stations do appeal to such communities in other places - notably miners' radio in Bolivia (Gumucio-Dagron, 2005), and the 37% of Australian community radio stations that cater to "specialist formats" including "religious, Radio for the Print Handicapped, Indigenous, ethnic, fine music and youth" (Foxwell, Ewart, Forde, & Meadows, 2008, pp. 6–7) - as discussed, Indian community radio employs a geographic definition, therefore this interpretation is the primary focus of this research.

No discussion of community, however, would be complete without mention of Benedict Anderson's seminal work on "imagined communities". In his book, *Imagined Communities* (2006, p. 6), Anderson explains that communities are merely constructions created by its members based on shared attributes:

> "It is imagined because the members of even the smallest nation will never know most of their fellow-members, meet them, or even hear of them, yet in the minds of each lives the image of their communion… In fact, all communities larger than primordial villages of face-to-face contact (and perhaps even these) are imagined."

Though Anderson is primarily referring to nations, he does mention the role of the mass media in communication and forming these imagined communities, specifically in terms of shaping the language of nationalism (B. Anderson, 2006). This perspective has been critiqued from a postcolonial perspective, with Chatterjee arguing that such an interpretation of nations and communities fails to account for the impacts of colonialism: "The result is that autonomous forms of imagination of the community were, and continue to be, overwhelmed and swamped by the history of the postcolonial state" (1993, p. 11). Such an interpretation divorces nationalism, communities, and politics more broadly from the complexities of such environments and the "presence of a dense and heterogeneous time" (Chatterjee, 2011, p. 136). Bearing this in mind, what is useful to draw from the concept of imagined communities is the conceptualisation and maintenance of communities. This "imagined" solidarity, alongside an increased capacity for empathy and affinity, is enacted and realised through social relations between community members (Amit, 2002). Carpentier, Lie and Servaes refer to social contact as a "defining feature" of community, with specific reference to the feelings of "belonging and sharing" (2007, p. 348). This builds on the same authors' earlier definition of community media audiences, explaining that "the audience is

not defined as an aggregate of individuals who share only socio-demographic or economic characteristics, but instead as a collective of people holding a series of identifying group relations" (Carpentier et al., 2003, p. 55). Imagined communities established and maintained through social contact provide a useful foundation from which to explore further interactions between community radio and community.

Constructing "community"

Having discussed several different interpretations of community, it is worth further exploring the concept of the constructed community. There are those that argue that community radio plays a vital role in the ongoing process of construction and maintenance of communities (Howley, 2009; Slack, 1996). Though this is an undeniable media-centric position, it is valuable to understand the ways in which community radio might contribute to building some specific interpretations of community.

Articulation theory provides a useful framework for discussions about "community" within community radio. Articulation was conceptualised by Stuart Hall, who employs the example of an "articulated lorry" to illustrate a key aspect of the theory: the cab and trailer of an articulated lorry can be connected, but are not necessarily so, through a specific, temporary linkage. As such, "an articulation is thus the form of the connection that can make a unity of two different elements, under certain conditions" (Hall in Grossberg, 1986, p. 53). Howley re-contextualised articulation for use within community radio, suggesting that articulation theory acts as a useful descriptive and analytical tool for both community radio theory and practice (2009). An important aspect of the use of articulation theory in this context is Hall's work on "unity and difference", specifically considering "difference in complex unity" without privileging difference (1985). The unifying qualities of community radio stations are discussed by a number of authors (Bessire & Fisher, 2012; Forde, 2011; C. Fraser & Restrepo-Estrada, 2001; Lowrey et al., 2008). Despite the number of arguments for the use of community radio in facilitating unity and bringing together disparate groups, in order to understand how this occurs, it is useful to return to the concept of imagined communities.

As discussed, Anderson suggests that all communities larger than the smallest of villages are imagined. How then does community radio construct these imaginings? Amit and Rapport (2002) argue that Anderson's "imagined communities" are only felt and claimed by their members through social relations and familiarity with other members. They explain that "community arises out of an interaction between the imagination of solidarity and its realization through social relations" (2002, p. 18). This imagined solidarity is perhaps evidenced through Carpentier and Doudaki's work on community radio in post-conflict states. They argue that by fostering agonism, as opposed to antagonism, community radio's "capacity to foster diversity, intercultural dialogue, and tolerance" makes it a valuable tool in peace-building, conflict resolution and reconciliation efforts (Carpentier & Doudaki, 2014, p. 419). This is a compelling argument for community radio's role in constructing solidarity, and also introduces dialogue into this discussion. Carpentier et al. describe this dialogue as the "catalysing role they (community

media) can play by functioning as the crossroads where people from different types of movements and struggles meet and collaborate" (2003, p. 62). Fostering interactions between diverse individuals and groups contributes to the process of building communities within and across these disparate groups, therein listeners are given the sense of being part of something cohesive and larger than themselves (Carpentier et al., 2003; Forde, 2011; Lowrey et al., 2008). Using the example of a fan club, Ahmed suggests that investing in the same objects as other people leads us to be oriented or directed in the same way. She describes this as an "affective" community: "We align ourselves with others by investing in the same objects" (Ahmed, 2010, p. 38). In turn, it is said to be this sense of affective community cohesion, or social connectedness, that contributes directly to the success of community radio (C. Fraser & Restrepo-Estrada, 2002).

Returning to Hall's lorry, we are then presented with a conceptualisation of community that is based on the "specific, temporary" linkages between groups and individuals of imagined solidarity and communication facilitated through community radio. The "specific, temporary" aspects of these linkages are important and relate back to Nancy Fraser's discussion of alternative public spheres. Alternative public spheres suggest "a plurality of public arenas" and the subsequent "multiplicity of publics" involved in those arenas (N. Fraser, 1990, p. 69). This implies that participation in multiple spheres is entirely possible. The idea of community radio as constructing and maintaining communities is both appealing and media-centric. Participation in one community may be facilitated by community radio through experiences of shared solidarity and communication, but the linkages or articulations within these communities are ephemeral and constantly renegotiated. Belonging to multiple communities may result in conflict when the needs or goals of one community fail to align with or even directly clash with the needs or goals of another; members are constantly, dynamically assessing which networks provide more value and the subsequent worth of participation (Bailur, 2012). While community radio audiences may actively engage in the construction of meaning and communities, these articulations operate within and are influenced by shifting temporal, cultural, environmental, historical, and socio-political structures (Gibson, 2000). Though community radio is often positioned as the binary opposite to an oppressive government or the mainstream media, the processes that govern participation and belonging to the "communities" constructed by community radio are "no different to any other participatory and democratic processes, in illustrating the cleavages, power struggles and temporary alliances which come together, but also disintegrate" (Bailur, 2012, p. 98). Though community radio may contribute to creating links between disparate groups by fostering dialogue and therefore, in a way, constructing their own communities, it is essential to remember that the nature of these linkages, and participation in these constructed communities, is "specific" and "temporary". Though a media-centric view is appealing from the perspective of exhorting the value of community radio, participation in communities constructed by community radio stations represents just one aspect of broader social and communicative networks.

Community vs alternative

Despite having dissected the term "community", it is still necessary to explore the other terminology that may be used to refer to "community radio". While the radio part is self-explanatory, what this research refers to as "community" has variously been referred to as "alternative", "citizen", "radical", "grassroots", among a wealth of other terms. This section will briefly clarify this term and make a case for its use in this research as opposed to other common terminologies.

The most prolific of these terms is "alternative media". The term is widely used by many authors (Couldry, 2015; Downing, 2003; Harcup, 2015; Min, 2004) and, though it refers to a wider range of media, it is often used to encapsulate community radio. Similar criticisms arise from the use of "alternative media" terminology because, as Downing puts it, "everything, at some point, is alternative to something else" (2000, p. ix). Similarly, Rodriguez, when making a case for "citizens' media" as opposed to "alternative", suggests that "alternative" invites binary thinking and therefore limits the oppositional capacity of such media outlets to resist the mainstream (2001). Despite these critiques, Rauch's (2015) study found that "alternative media" retains its meaning among audiences and that the mainstream-alternative dialectic still produces useful tensions. Despite the prolific use of "alternative media" and its support from audiences, there are some problematic aspects of the term that limits its use in the context of this research.

Though the use of the term "alternative media" has support within the literature, this research opts for "community radio". Aside from the specificity attached to the "radio" aspect, the term "community" encapsulates much of what this research aims to investigate, namely the connections and interactions surrounding the radio station. While, arguably, it is these interactions that make community radio an "alternative" to the mainstream, it is the inclusion of the mainstream as a point of comparison that lies outside of the scope of this research. In a strategy aimed at encouraging diversity rather than quashing debate, Carpentier suggests moving beyond the various labels associated with community media, or, in this case, community radio, and focussing on integrating the theoretical approaches underlying these labels (2016b). The use of "community radio" also aligns with the conceptual framework of this research and its focus on the connections formed by a certain type of radio station. The term community implies a variety of close connections; how these connections are formed is what this research aims to investigate.

Research context

Community radio stations around the world differ in nearly every aspect of their existence: from how they are funded and managed, to the type of content they broadcast. There can even be significant variations in approaches to community radio within regions and countries. This can easily be observed within South Asia. Sri Lanka was one of the first countries in Asia to adopt a form of community radio broadcasting through a collaboration between UNESCO and the Sri Lankan Broadcasting Corporation

(SLBC) which resulted in the Mahaveli Community Radio (MCR) project (David, 2001; Tilakawardana, 2007; UNESCO, 1983). Nepal, due to its liberal political environment combined with the exponential growth of electronic media, was the first country in South Asia to grant a broadcasting license to the nongovernmental sector (Banjade, 2007). In contrast, India and Bangladesh have lagged behind: a comparative study, though small scale, considered Nepal to have the most "evolved" community radio sector, as compared to India and Bangladesh, in that community radio are considered media organisations rather than "development" organisations (Arora et al., 2015). Given the diversity of approaches to community radio, within South Asia alone, it is essential to understand the social, political and historical context of the community radio sector under investigation. The following section provides an overview of the community radio sector in India and the contextual environment in which it now operates.

Community radio in India

"Disturbance because of the cow that entered the compound." - Translator's note, interview transcript.

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Community radio has a history of struggle in India. From the very beginning, the odds have been stacked against the establishment of a community radio sector with opposition emerging in the form of the established media, the regulatory environment, and disagreements within the movement itself. Pavarala and Malik (2007, p. 243) describe the radio landscape in India as "dominated by hierarchical, paternalistic public and profit-oriented commercial models of broadcasting." It is against this backdrop that India has also developed its own approaches towards C4D with distinct methodological and theoretical differences from western schools of thought (Manyozo, 2012). Manyozo (2012) considers the Indian School of development to be associated with M4D and media development rather than participatory communication; he notes that communities have few opportunities for control and ownership of media. There have been successful grassroots movements in terms of C4D in India, such as the struggle for Right to Information laws, a movement that "enabled local people to recognize the value of information as a right... Voice and participation became the means for the affirmation of life" (Thomas, 2014b, p. 17). For the most part, however, media in India favours the powerful and represents the interests of the wealthy (Manyozo, 2012; Pavarala & Malik, 2007). This section provides an overview of the historical context of the struggle for community radio in India.

The road to a community radio sector in India has been a long one, with still further to go. Thomas suggests that, from a political economy of communication perspective, British rule "laid the foundations for the media in post-colonial India" (2010, p. 36). Yet at the time of independence in 1947, the national broadcaster, All India Radio (AIR), had just six stations in metropolitan areas and the country had only 280 000 radio sets for a population of 350 million (Singhal, 2013). Shortly after, the Nehru government placed significant emphasis on developing radio infrastructure, laying the foundations for

what is now a formidable sector. AIR operates a three-tiered service with national, regional and local programmes broadcast on 195 stations across the country; "over 97 percent of India's population lives in areas that have access to radio broadcasts" (Singhal, 2013, p. 68). As promising as the progression and expansion of AIR seems, the Indian Government held a monopoly on radio and television broadcasting, at times reducing AIR and the public television broadcaster, Doordarshan, to no more than propaganda mouthpieces. As Kumar explains, both AIR and Doordarshan are enormous structures that are continuously expanding but in terms of messages, there is minimal manoeuvrability and negligible scope for innovative programming as "big people continue to address small people" (2003, p. 2179). Thanks largely to the Indian Telegraph Act (1885) together with the India Wireless Telegraphy Act (1933), which makes the possession of radio equipment without a license illegal, the exclusive rights to establishing, maintaining and operating radio and television broadcasting remain with the Central Government (K. Kumar, 2003; Pavarala & Malik, 2007). Despite the size and support provided to the public broadcasting sector, the stifling regulations and lack of autonomy meant that creativity and community engagement were lacking in both AIR and Doordarshan.

It was this regulatory environment that meant audience participation, even in the form of feedback, was not sought until 1956, despite radio for development making up an important part of the broadcasting policy (K. Kumar, 2003). The Pune Radio Farm Forum Project was a field experiment to assess the value of radio for rural development. Villagers gathered together once a week to listen to a 30-minute AIR programme and then discuss its contents. The goal was to disseminate information about new agricultural practices but the project saw communities spurred into action following discussions on a range of topics such as where to dig wells, establishing children's enrichment centres, planting different crops and village clean-ups (Singhal, 2005). Despite the project's success, AIR failed to build on what was discovered, particularly about the role of radio in prompting community discussions and actions (Singhal, 2013). This was but one in a list of examples of AIR failing to capitalise on innovative projects despite providing the space for them, the earliest versions of community radio included (Thomas, 2011).

Many scholars have noted the extensive legislative obstacles which have been placed in the way of Indian citizens obtaining their constitutional right to Freedom of Speech and Expression (Gunaratne, 2000; Saeed, 2009; A. Sen, 2003; Thomas, 2011). A key breakthrough in the struggle for community radio, and indeed the media environment generally, in India was the Supreme Court's historic 1995 ruling that the "airwaves are public property" and should be used for public benefit (Pavarala & Malik, 2007; A. Sen, 2003; Singhal, 2013; UNESCO, 2011). It wasn't until after this ruling, in 1998, that AIR and Doordarshan were granted relative autonomy from the government, despite the recommendations of two separate committees: the Chanda Committee in 1966 and the Verghese Committee in 1978 (Singhal, 2013). This landmark ruling proved to be of critical importance not only to the public broadcasters and communication rights more generally, but also for the community radio movement.

The first major step towards community radio in India took place in September 1996. A group of

media professionals and policy experts gathered in Bangalore to explore the relevance of community radio for India (SANCOM, 2015). The "Bangalore Declaration on Radio" made a strong case for community radio, describing it as "public service broadcasting in its most decentralised and its most democratic form" (A. Sen, 2003, p. 2199). Following this, the push for greater communicative and media freedoms gained momentum across the country. Then in 2000, a group of activists, academics and radio practitioners, supported by UNESCO, met and established the first systematic case for the creation of community radio as a third-tier of broadcasting in India, separate to the government-run and commercial sectors (Pavarala, 2013). The declaration resulting from the meeting was known as the "Pastapur Initiative on Community Radio", named after the area in which the meeting occurred, and defined community radio as having "three key aspects: non-profit making, community ownership and management, and community participation" (A. Sen, 2003, p. 2199).

In late 2002, the Ministry of Information and Broadcasting finally released "Community Radio Guidelines". Far from being a victory for the community radio movement, the guidelines restricted licenses to "well-established" educational institutions and banned advertisements and news and current affairs programmes (SANCOM, 2015). Following this, India's first community radio station was established at Anna University in Chennai. Anna FM began broadcasting in February 2004, to the area surrounding the university (Ghosh, 2011; Nirmala, 2015; Prabakar, 2009). Stations affiliated with educational institutions, often referred to as 'campus radio', have been subject to some scrutiny and criticism over the years. Thomas bluntly states that campus radio has "very little potential for becoming a tool for development" (2010, p. 221). Similarly, Prabhakar writes that activists are sceptical of the role of campus radio stations, in that expecting them to serve communities outside of the universities confuses the community radio mandate with that of public broadcasting (2009). Despite the disappointment of such restrictive guidelines, the following years marked a renewed push for community radio with a number of stations exploring alternative methods of distributions including narrowcasting and cablecasting (SANCOM, 2015).

While community radio was treading water, another grassroots movement was taking root. India's Right to Information (RTI) movement was another important milestone in the lead-up to community radio. The movement was also of vital importance to the broader media environment. Thomas, who has written extensively on the RTI movement in India, even suggests that the RTI movement played a role in revitalising participatory democracy in India (2011). The RTI movement began in central Rajasthan in the late 1980s with a small group of social activists and local people who took an interest in livelihood issues including the failure of the government to enforce minimum wage regulations, and the availability of subsidised foods (Jenkins & Goetz, 1999). The critical tool of this movement was the *jan sunwai*, a type of public hearing in which local issues are discussed by members of the community. Thomas suggests that the *jan sunwai* act as a local public sphere based on local idiom, in contrast with Habermas' bourgeois and exclusive interpretation of the public sphere, and that its strength

lies within its deliberate inclusivity in which all local people have space to share full accounts of their experience (2014a). The campaign for RTI laws incorporated the *jan sunwai* as well as other local information dissemination techniques such as street theatre to gain critical mass. In June 2005, the Right to Information passed and what started as agitation for basic livelihood-related entitlements became an important precedent for communication rights in India. Thomas writes that the movement offers the "best hopes for the rural poor to fulfil their right to development" (2008, p. 43). The success of the RTI movement can be attributed to a number of factors: firstly, it was an indigenous social movement that occurred in response to local needs; second, it employed familiar, colloquial tools, including the *jan sunwai* and community theatre; and third, the movement gained significant momentum and was supported by a large group of people who understood the need for RTI and were willing to mobilise themselves and others in pursuit of this goal (Thomas, 2011). It is worth noting that, while the RTI movement attracted significant attention in the mainstream media, the push for community radio was largely ignored (Saeed, 2009).

Finally, in late 2006, the India Telegraph Act (1885) was amended to include a second phase of guidelines for community radio stations (UNESCO, 2011). Alongside educational institutions, NGOs and agricultural science centres or *Krishi Vigyan Kendra* (KVK) were granted the right to apply for licenses. News was still not permitted but limited advertising was allowed (SANCOM, 2015). In October 2008, Sangham Radio in Pastapur village launched to become the first community radio station licensed to an NGO, with their license held by DDS, the Deccan Development Society (Ghosh, 2011; Pavarala & Malik, 2007)

More than ten years after the updated guidelines were released, community radio in India now finds itself at somewhat of a crossroads. There are 217 operational stations as of May 2018 (Ministry of Information and Broadcasting, 2018), as opposed to the 3000 or 4000 stations that the country's size, population, and diversity could accommodate (M. Kumar, 2018). Malik writes that the movement seems to have plateaued: "It is neither growing nor prospering. While there is recognition and acceptance of its potential in the upper echelons of administration, it looks as if there is a decline in buy-in from grassroots practitioners and communities in India" (2016). The sector now faces a number of issues, the foremost of which is "NGOisation". Stations find themselves forced to conform to the agenda of the NGO involved, under pressure from donors to "scale up" operations and demonstrate impact (Malik & Bandelli, 2012; Pavarala, 2015). Another issue facing the sector is its potentially outdated focus on development. Pavarala argues that there is now a need for the sector to move past its developmentalist agenda, which he sees as a legacy of postcolonial nation-building, and focus more on communication rights (Pavarala, 2015). Malik also expressed her concerns on this topic, explaining that, in India, a distinct development discourse operates throughout the community radio sector. Despite claims of providing "a voice for the voiceless" and supporting activism, the sector is primarily a development tool for soliciting participation (Personal interview, November 24, 2016). In addition to the political and regulatory challenges facing the

sector, there are also more palpable issues. The cost of the radio equipment mandated by legislation is prohibitively expensive and there is a noticeable lack of local manufacturers and suppliers (UNESCO, 2010).

In summary, establishing a community radio sector in India has been a long and arduous process, one that is by no means over. The sector is facing a number of internal problems associated with sustainability and independence. In addition, the contemporary regulatory environment in which community radio stations must operate is rigid and tightly controlled. Compared to the free-for-all of commercial broadcasting, community radio must adhere to the strictest rules around revenue-generating advertisements (Thomas, 2010). Alongside this, the restrictions on news content remain, and licenses are only granted to educational institutions, agricultural groups, and well-established NGOs.

Sites

The general sites for this research are within the state of Tamil Nadu in the south of India. Tamil Nadu as the general location for this research was decided following discussions with respected scholars within the UNESCO Chair for Community Media at the University of Hyderabad. The state is home to many community radio stations but only a relatively small amount of literature about these stations exists (Pavarala, personal communication, November 24, 2016). Tamil Nadu was a hub of activism throughout the push to establish community radio in India and is home to the first community radio station, Anna FM, in Chennai. Prominent community radio advocate Dr R Sreedher referred to Tamil Nadu as the "CCR [campus community radio] capital of India" (in Prabakar, 2009). For these reasons, Tamil Nadu has significant potential as a research site for explorations of community radio. This section provides some brief background about the state and its community radio environment.

Tamil Nadu is a state in South India bordered by Kerala to the west, Karnataka and Andhra Pradesh to the north and the Indian Ocean to the east. Tamil Nadu is the seventh largest state in India by population and the 11th largest by area (Office of the Registrar General & Census Commissioner, 2011). The population is split relatively equally between urban and rural areas with approximately 46 per cent of the land area used for agricultural cultivation (Department of Economics and Statistics, 2017). The major industries of the state are agriculture and textiles: Tamil Nadu is the second largest producer of rice in India and the textile industry earned the city of Coimbatore the dubious nickname: "the Manchester of the South" (Ministry of Micro Small and Medium Enterprises, 2015; Nandakumar & Sridharraj, 2014). In terms of religion, Tamil Nadu is predominantly Hindu – a group encompassing more than 87 per cent of the population – with the next largest religious group, Muslims, representing just over 5 per cent (Office of the Registrar General & Census Commissioner, 2011). The literacy rate in Tamil Nadu sits around 80 per cent, above the national average of 74 per cent, but considerably below the state with the highest literacy rate – Kerala with 94 per cent (Office of the Registrar General & Census Commissioner, 2011). Tamil Nadu represents a distinct linguistic and political environment as compared to other states in India

and has a history of resistance against the Hindi-speaking dominance of the north. A Dravidian language, Tamil is spoken by some 80 million people, mainly in South India, and has a literary tradition spanning more than 3000 years (Kamdar, 2018; Vāsanti, 2006).

Politics in Tamil Nadu has long been associated with the uniqueness of the Tamil culture in a political landscape dominated by the Hindi-speaking North. In the late 1800s, linguistic chauvinism, positing Tamil as a "pure" language, and anti-Brahminism gained political momentum. The British encouraged this Dravidianism as a strategy to mitigate the growing strength of Indian freedom fighters (Vāsanti, 2006). The South Indian Liberation Front, also known as the Justice Party, was established around this time and took the stance that the only ones who would benefit from India's self-rule would be the Brahmins (Vāsanti, 2006). As India approached Independence, the anti-Brahmin movement under the leadership of E V Ramaswamy Naicker, or Periyar (meaning Great Sage), called for the establishment of a "sovereign Dravidistan" comprising of those with a shared Dravidian history including Madras (modern-day Chennai), Kerala, and parts of what is now Karnataka and Andhra Pradesh (Rudolph & Rudolph, 2010). A major critique of the Dravidian movement was the disconnect between its ideology and its actions. On paper, Dravidianism rejected religion and stood for the fundamental human rights of all people, including Scheduled Castes and Tribes. In practice though, Dravidianism essentially worked towards the upward mobility of the middle class (Vāsanti, 2006).

The scoping of the Official Language Act in 1963 that would make Hindi the sole official language of India sparked anti-Hindi agitations and protests in Tamil Nadu (Annamalai, 2010). These protests led to the amended Act of 1967 which included English as an official language and enhanced the status of regional languages across the country (Annamalai, 2010). By 1967, the DMK (Dravida Munnetra Kazagam) had transformed from a secessionist movement to a powerful political party that, under the leadership of scriptwriter and director M Karunanidhi, commissioned a report into centre-state relations that called for a radical transformation of the powers that the central government held over the states (Annamalai, 2010). These efforts gained traction in other states including Karnataka, West Bengal and Punjab over the course of the Emergency and Indira Gandhi's rule (Annamalai, 2010). Though their efforts were eventually fruitless, the influence of Tamil Nadu politics on the rest of the country is undeniable in terms of the fight for recognising linguistic diversity on a national scale, and the political structures governing the country.

Political observer and journalist Vāsanthi (2006) writes that Tamil politics has all the makings of a blockbuster film, tracing the modern history of the state from the British Raj to the dramatic and, on occasion, violent political rivalry between former director and scriptwriter, Karunanidhi, and former actress, Jayalalithaa. Jayalalithaa proved just as popular with voters as she was on-screen, elected to her sixth term as Chief Minister of the state in 2016, a term that ended abruptly with her death in December the same year (Kamdar, 2018). Her long-term rival Karunanidhi, who was Chief Minister of the state five times between 1969 and 2011, passed away in August 2018, at the age of 94 (BBC, 2018). Though the

Dravidian parties are likely to maintain their dominance, a pressing political issue in Tamil Nadu is filling the void left by these two popular and outspoken personalities, particularly in the lead-up to the Lok Sabha (general) election in April or May, 2019 (Kolappan, 2018; Thangavelu & Roche, 2018).

In relation to community radio, Tamil Nadu has a long history with local, participatory radio projects and experiments in community broadcasting, and therefore represents a promising site for explorations of community radio practice. One of the earliest examples of innovation in community broadcasting in Tamil Nadu followed the experiments in farm radio (discussed in more detail in Chapter 6). Local AIR radio stations took a lead role in popularising the green revolution and linking agricultural extension services and farmers (Page & Crawley, 2001). In 1966, the local Trichinopoly AIR station started experimental broadcasts aimed at persuading farmers to adopt high-yield varieties of rice to great success, which earned them the nickname of "Radio Paddy" (Page & Crawley, 2001). In the 1970s, Tamil Nadu, specifically Nagercoil district, was also the site of experiments in encouraging greater participation from listeners. The participatory model was radically different from the usual top-down AIR approach and, at the time, was thought to represent a viable model for other stations (Page & Crawley, 2001). The structure of AIR, however, proved resistant to change, as the participatory formula was difficult to reproduce in stations staffed with broadcasters who had only temporary affiliations to the local area and communities (Page & Crawley, 2001).

As discussed, Tamil Nadu was also the site of the very first iteration of community radio in India. Anna FM, located in the state capital, Chennai. Perhaps because of this, campus radio has a strong presence within the community radio landscape of Tamil Nadu with 24 out of the 31 stations, or more than 75 per cent, associated with educational institutions (Ministry of Information and Broadcasting, 2018). This is higher than the national ratio which sees roughly 60 per cent of operational community radio station affiliated with educational institutions.

In addition to pioneering campus radio, Tamil Nadu was the site of India's first community radio station for disaster management, established to support those in coastal areas affected by the 2004 Boxing Day tsunami. Tamil Nadu was significantly impacted by the tsunami, which killed 230,000 people in 14 countries (ABC News, 2014). With funding from the UNDP Tsunami Recovery Support Programme, Kalanjiam Samuga Vanoli began broadcasting in 2005 and aimed to build the capacities of local communities in terms of disaster preparedness, management, and livelihood resilience (Krishnamurthi & Naguveer Prakash, 2007). The station employs a mixed media model, with a mix of broadcasts on local AIR stations, cablecasts, and loudspeaker narrowcasts, alongside video and web-based technologies (Kuppuswamy & Rajarathnam, 2009).

As of May 2018, there are 31 operational stations in Tamil Nadu (Ministry of Information and Broadcasting, 2018). This is particularly noteworthy given that Tamil Nadu is the seventh largest state by population, yet has the highest number of community radio stations (Ministry of Information and Broadcasting, 2018; Office of the Registrar General & Census Commissioner, 2011). In comparison, the

most populous state - Uttar Pradesh – which has more than double the population of Tamil Nadu, has just 24 stations (Ministry of Information and Broadcasting, 2018; Office of the Registrar General & Census Commissioner, 2011).

Based on this summary, Tamil Nadu represents an appropriate location for research into community radio. There is a large and innovative community radio sector and the political environment is conducive to research. Though discussing development and female infanticide, Rajagopalan offers a salient summary on Tamil Nadu as a research location. Firstly, the conditions for governance have been very stable as the state has not been directly involved in any wars or partition in modern times, and secondly, "the rationalist promise, especially in combination with the populist bent of the state's leadership" (Rajagopalan, 2012, p. 189). For these reasons, alongside the recommendations of experts in the field, Tamil Nadu was selected as the general location of the research.

In terms of the specific stations themselves, they were selected based on their ownership models, their rural locations, and relative proximity to major centres for logistical reasons. Given the critiques associated with campus radio stations, as well as the relative scarcity of KVK-owned stations, two stations with NGO as parent bodies were selected. As discussed in Chapter 2, the aim of this multi-sited research is not a comparison between sites but rather an exploration of different approaches under different circumstances. The identities of the stations have been loosely disguised. Given the highly unique nature of community radio stations and their embeddedness within their local communities, some general contextual information is necessary in order to understand the environment and challenges facing these two very different stations. A brief discussion of the social, political, and media environment of Tamil Nadu is useful to situate the stations within their state, but the descriptions of the sites themselves are general and aim to offer the bare minimum identifiable information while still providing enough context. Though the names of the stations have been changed, those readers deeply familiar with the community radio sector in Tamil Nadu and India, more broadly, will likely have a fair idea of the identity of the stations. These loose disguises are more aimed at preserving the identities of the radio station staff members and listeners. Interviewees and informants are referred to in this thesis with minimal identifying information, usually only which station they are associated with and their general relationship to that station – audience or staff. Jerolmack and Murphy (2017) offer a critical perspective on "masking" identities in ethnographies, suggesting that although it is somewhat of a methodological norm, there are benefits to disclosing identities if it is ethically justifiable to do so. Having said that, they recognise that there are "all kinds of combinations of disclosure and masking that can be used in a single study to balance legitimate ethical duties to one's subjects with the scholarly benefits of data transparency for one's audience" (2017, p. 19). Based on this, taking the approach of lightly disguising the research sites while masking the identities of the specific people involved was deemed to be most ethically appropriate for this research.

Enkal Vanoli

Everything was coated in a fine layer of dust.

The bus barely slowed as it took the exit off the highway. It careened around the hairpin bends of the turn-off, bends no doubt designed to discourage exiting the highway at such speed. They're called "traffic-calming measures" back home, though the effect here was less than calming. The local road was a narrow, single-lane, but there was a lot of traffic. Buses, tractors, bull carts, and scooters all vied for space, unwilling to yield to the gravelly road shoulders. The yielding, when it did happen, was quickly at the last minute, a high-stakes game of chicken which made things particularly exciting for pedestrians walking along that road shoulder.

From the road, it looked like any number of farms the bus had roared past. Though instead of orderly rows of crops or pens of disgruntled goats, the front of this block was overgrown with a thicket of dry, dead shrubs.

The only differentiating feature was the orange and white tower that pierced its way up from the dry and colourless field. On one side of the road leading towards the buildings at the back of the block were the tired remains of a coconut grove and a sprawling mehndi bush. The other side held the tower and a twisted thicket of dead twigs. Several concrete buildings in various stages of completion sat towards the back of the block. The sounds of hammers on stone and the grumbling of a cement mixer could be heard clearly through the still, baking air.

The construction workers initially stopped dead in their tracks to stare. As the days and weeks passed, the stares turned to nods and smiles, and eventually brief exchanges of pleasantries, but at first, it was stares. Picking through the construction debris right to the back of the block, along the fence line furthest from the road, was the smallest concrete structure. It was weathered but meticulously kept. Several pairs of shoes were scattered on the recently swept dirt floor in front of the doorway, which had both a step and a steep, short ramp just wide enough for a motorbike tyre. The new concrete building loomed over the station, providing some welcome relief from the morning sun. Inside, there were three rooms of decreasing size. The first acted as the station's reception, dining room, editing suite, meeting room and, on occasion, garage. The second housed the broadcasting equipment, the sound desk and another computer for editing. Whoever was sitting at the desk could look through a small window into the third room: the studio. Dusty curtains lined the walls and the only furniture was a single table with two microphones and a slumping office chair missing a wheel.

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Enkal Vanoli is a rural station located in a small village about one hour's drive from a large and prosperous town. The area is largely agricultural with farmers growing a variety of crops depending on the season and markets. In this semi-arid region of dusty plains and increasingly erratic monsoons, water management is critical. Irrigation tanks have been central to socio-ecology and agriculture in many arid parts of India for centuries (Amarnath & Raja, 2006). Recent years have seen the degradation of tanks

due to poor management and encroachments from those digging wells (Gurunathan & Shanmugam, 2006). By forming collectives, farmers develop a broader, more cohesive system of water management. These collectives also hold greater bargaining power in terms of accessing government services. With funding support from an NGO, a larger federation of farmers was established to form a networked chain of collectives in order to promote water management and formalise the work of these local farmer groups. Though primarily focussed on water conservation and management, the federation has broadened its scope to other community development activities including the provision of technology centres with computer and internet facilities, as well as various enrichment classes. The federation applied for a broadcasting license after a survey of 1000 households revealed a preference for television and radio over print media, with over half of respondents reporting that they listened to radio regularly. Enkal Vanoli has a broadcasting range of 15km, which covers much of the surrounding villages. The station broadcasts in Tamil, mainly around the themes of agriculture and health.

Malai Vanoli

The station in the clouds.

The local bus seemed to always be followed by a bright yellow school bus full of tiny children in plaid and blazers. After a week or so, the children knew to crowd to the windows on one side as it stopped at the junction to get a glimpse of the stranger. The bravest ones even waved.

The journey continued on foot along a road that wove between a tea field and an orderly plantation of pines. There was a small temple whose earthly residents were a family of macaques. A neat sign announced the campus with an arrow pointing the way as if to reassure visitors who might be unnerved by the gradient of the driveway. It was viciously steep. Only jeeps and four-wheel drives attempted the ascent. Autos, buses and small cars deposited their passengers at the gate, leaving them to follow the sign and groan and wheeze their way up the hill.

The radio station was, of course, right at the top. Damp swirling clouds chilled sweaty brows as the driveway climbed past neat clusters of small buildings all painted the same shade of dull orange. The property seemed to narrow as you climbed, with tea plantations closing in on both sides. Eventually, the driveway concluded in a carpark in the shadow of the radio tower. The building was the same shade of orange with a cheerful mural painted on one wall. Half of the building housed offices and a hall that was used for lectures and events. The other half was a radio station.

It was a large room with high ceilings that always seemed to be colder than it was outside. One wall was lined with a row of mismatched computers. The opposite wall had a cabinet and a pile of blankets, and a window through to the studio that was partially obscured by a stack of boxes in the other room. The studio was narrow and seemed to be partially used for storage. There was a single computer, a sound desk, and two microphones.

<p style="text-align:center">***</p>

Malai Vanoli is located just outside of a small village in the hills. Popular with tourists escaping the summer heat of the plains, the hills are characterised by cooler temperatures and higher altitudes. Partially a nature reserve home to wildlife including elephants, leopards, and gaurs, the area tends to be either densely forested or blanketed in tea plantations. Malai Vanoli is part of a well-established NGO that has been working in the region for many years. The NGO focusses on environmental sustainability, biodiversity, and supporting local indigenous tribal communities in preserving their traditional knowledge. There are several culturally and linguistically different tribes in the area, with some maintaining very isolated traditional lifestyles deep in the forest. For many years, the NGO has published a community newspaper targeted at these groups. Though Tamil is widely spoken and understood throughout the area, many tribes have no tradition of written language which has affected literacy rates. As such, the NGO decided to apply for a broadcasting license in order to establish a station to continue and expand on the work of the newspaper. Radio staff now work closely with newspaper staff to share content aimed at the different tribal groups and villages in the area. Malai Vanoli broadcasts primarily in Tamil with some programming in several local tribal languages as well. The station broadcasts to a 15km area around the village, though their actual coverage is heavily affected by the landscape. The villages closest to the station in valleys often struggle to get signal while competition is fierce in the hilltop villages as listeners can tune in to popular FM stations in major cities hundreds of kilometres away.

5 Development: spectacles and spectres

"The spectacle of development"

"Have you ever spoken on the radio?"

"Yeah. I have. I spoke even last month. But I speak again and again about the same thing. That much suffering I have undergone because of my daughter's health."

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So far, this thesis has situated itself and its approaches in relation to a perspective on development that values cognitive justice, complexity, and respect for individual agency. This view of development, however, does not necessarily reflect the dominant development approach. Having introduced the contextual environment in which this research took place, as well as some of the foundational concepts related to community radio, this chapter turns to the influence of development. Development represents one of the primary discussion threads running throughout this thesis. The influence of "the spectacle of development" (Manyozo, 2017) permeates every part of the community radio sector in India, from the legislative requirements through to the day-to-day activities of the stations themselves. This chapter explores how "the spectacle of development" provides a useful frame for understanding the broader influence of development and how it manifests within community radio in India. After introducing the spectacle and examining how it takes shape within media, communication, and development thought, namely through outdated "spectres" of development paradigms, this chapter then turns to the research data and how the spectacle and spectres of development can be observed in practice.

Development is big business: it is a multibillion-dollar industry, involving every single country in the world either as a donor or a recipient or, increasingly, both (Ramalingam, 2013). As Hobart reminds us though, "the prevailing rhetoric is of altruistic concern for the less fortunate, it is wise to remember that development is big business" (2002, p. 2). Powell and Seddon go so far as to refer to the development industry as "a monstrous multinational alliance of global corporations, a kind of juggernaut" (1997, p. 3). Much like other big businesses, not only does the development industry respond to global demand, but it finds ways of shaping demand to suit its own interests (Powell & Seddon, 1997). These interests are not explicit but are pervasively shaped by a framework of beliefs and assumptions about systems, problems, human agency, social structures, and the nature of change itself; beliefs that guide the way the development juggernaut learns, makes decisions, relates to external actors, and assesses itself (Ramalingam, 2013, p. 125). Manyozo refers to this phenomenon as an "organized systemic discourse", that sees oppression operate through these "structured, orderly and symbolic set of structures and processes and systems" (2017, p. 35). Both symptomatic and supportive of these structures are the institutions - local and international NGOs, donors, foreign governments, financial lenders - institutional oppression is essential to holding this "regime of rules, regulations and arbitrary

considerations" together (Manyozo, 2017, p. 23). These institutions, supported by a systemic discourse, serve to support the dominance of the development industry around the world.

The robustness of the development industry has stood the test of time and seems impervious to critique. Despite the extensive and high-profile critiques levelled at the development and aid industries on the basis of inefficacy and economics (Easterly, 2006; Moyo, 2009; Ramalingam, 2013, among many others), the juggernaut rolls on. The reason for this could be attributed to the robust system of beliefs underpinning the sectors that serve as self-reinforcement and act as somewhat of a shield against these incisive criticisms. Manyozo terms this phenomenon "the spectacle of development" which involves the "production, exchange and utilization" of imaginaries that are based on stereotypes, fail to acknowledge difference, and silence the voices of subaltern groups (2017, p. 14). Considering development as a performative spectacle provides a useful frame for understanding the insidious ways in which development shapes the lives of so-called 'beneficiaries', from the highest level of government and multilateral organisational policies, all the way to the grassroots, including the on-the-ground activities of community radio stations.

How exactly does this take place though? The money and power invested in the development industry inarguably contributes to its influence, but the systemic discourse underpinning the sector also serves to gird against critique and ensure compliance at all levels of involvement. Escobar argues that mainstream development thought and literature supports an "underdeveloped subjectivity" laden with powerlessness, poverty, passivity, ignorance, a lack of agency, illiteracy, and oppression resulting from its own stubbornness and traditions (2011, p. 8). Members of oppressed groups exist only as stereotypes in dominant discourses and, as such, do not see their perspectives of the world expressed (Bickford, 1996). Instead, they are positioned as powerless, colonial subjects, as Other (Spivak, 1988): "waiting for the (white) Western hand to help" (Escobar, 2011, p. 8). Indeed, the spectacle has developed highly pervasive and efficient methods of producing knowledge about, and exerting power over, the global South (Escobar, 2011). The production of knowledge about oppressed people represents a particular type of epistemic violence that serves to silence the voices of oppressed people and may insidiously affect the way they view themselves. The result of this endemic 'Other-ing' is that subaltern groups may begin to view reality through the lens of their oppressors and, as such, when given the tools to exercise power they tend to reproduce the same imbalances, making them complicit in their own oppression (Manyozo, 2017). Aside from this, there are also instances were subaltern groups are forced to assume a subject position that aligns with the dominant narratives of the oppressors. An example of this can be observed in the work of Dutta and Roy, who offer a critique of the imposition of "transgender" as an umbrella term by international NGOs and development agencies. Through this, South Asian discourses of gender/sexual variance are subsumed as merely "local" expressions of transnational transgender identity in accordance with the "hegemonic anglophone discourse of LGBTIQ identities recognized by the state and the development sector" (2014, p. 321). The imposition of "transgender" has real implications for subaltern

communities forced to exist under this umbrella term: Dutta and Roy write of *hijras* and *kothis* with multiple identity cards who experienced difficulties accessing healthcare services "due to the expectation of a stable, singular identity" (2014, p. 333). Here we see the spectacle of development force complicity and compliance upon subaltern groups in exchange for essential service provision.

Many authors have observed and written on the phenomena of voluntary or coerced complicity, notably Gayatri Spivak, bell hooks, and Edward Said, though it was Freire who made this central to his arguments about conscientization, explaining that raising the consciousness of both the oppressors and the oppressed is necessary in order to affect transformative social change (Freire, 2000). Conscientization, as Freire envisaged it, fails to align with the operationalisation of the spectacle of development. More often the pedagogy of the spectacle of development is one of disempowerment rather than a pedagogy of liberation (Freire, 2000; Manyozo, 2017). Indeed, if we consider development as both a spectacle and an industry, it is more efficient to support these structures of disempowerment. While dialogue, two-way flows of information, and co-creation of knowledge are regularly touted as highly important aspects of development (Tacchi & Kiran, 2008), they are expensive, loosely defined and difficult to market to donors. Co-creating knowledge requires listening, a strong commitment to decolonization and creating spaces for recognition and representation for oppressed groups (M. J. Dutta, 2014). Direct, tangible benefits are far more of an incentive. Just one example of this can be observed in Mosse's (2001) work on the valorisation of "people's knowledge", particularly in participatory development initiatives, as a way of address top-down, bureaucratic systems. While seeking out local consultation and "people's knowledge" is framed as participatory and cooperative, the reality is that this knowledge is constructed within the broader planning systems and social contexts. This leads so-called 'beneficiaries' to shape their expressed needs to align with the development project's institutional interests so as to ask for what they think they will get. The overall effect is that development agencies project their own needs onto communities so that "people's knowledge" is subsequently articulated and structured by the development agencies themselves (Mosse, 2001). As such, it is the broader political economy of development that serves to reinforce itself through the exploitation of oppressed groups: oppressed groups become complicit in their own oppression through supporting people and institutions that work against their own interests (Manyozo, 2017). Committing to co-created knowledge and conscientization of the oppressors and the oppressed is a complex, unclear, ill-defined approach, and thus highly unappealing within the neoliberal spectacle of development.

Far more appealing than these "wicked problems" (Ramalingam, 2013), is a clear problem with a logical solution. The development industry deliberately perpetuates the complicity of oppressed groups through the construction of a politics of truth that posits poverty as the problem and development as the solution (Escobar, 2011; Manyozo, 2017). More complex interpretations of development, as briefly discussed in Chapter 2, and as posited by the likes of Sen among others, do not fit neatly into this formulaic summation of what's 'wrong' in the Global South. Indeed, while scholars and practitioners alike

have embraced more nuanced approaches, Jacobson (2016) suggests that there are two key reasons why the dominant development practices persist. Firstly, the development industry is premised upon donors and funding bodies committing resources based on promises of pre-determined, tangible outcomes, not on the basis that people might be empowered to make their own choices. Secondly, the practical application of "expansion of freedom" (A. K. Sen, 1999), for example, as a development outcome is difficult to imagine; operationalising the "conceptual richness" of such an approach into the mainstream development cycle of "planning, execution and evaluation" is no simple undertaking (Jacobson, 2016, p. 119). The spectacle of development makes it almost impossible to operationalise alternative models of development because it is predicated on linear, cause-effect solutions to the most "wicked", complex problems facing the world (Ramalingam, 2013). Social change is non-linear, complex and often contested (Tufte, 2017). Packaging problems as neat, simple, and linear with clear, tangible solutions capable of scaling up make them far easier to sell to development donors than alternative approaches that consider the complexity of poverty and oppression.

The spectacle of development is a critical perspective applied here in the sense of guiding inquiry rather than dismissing development completely. Not all western interventions are necessarily colonial, oppressive and, thus, worthless (Manyozo, 2017). The spectacle of development as a critical perspective instead encourages the expansion of communicative spaces on the part of western organisations to listen and learn about the experiences on the ground, and to consider the rights-based advocacies that have yielded results away from the structures of the global development industry (Manyozo, 2017). In this research, the spectacle of development is an observable phenomenon: one that influences even the day-to-day activities of community radio stations in rural South India. As such, it is a valuable lens through which to view these activities and apply a critical perspective to the way 'development' is understood and operationalised on the ground.

'Spectres' of development

The spectacle of development is clearly deeply entwined within the work of the development sector and presents ethical dilemmas for those looking to engage in more collaborative, meaningful initiatives to contribute to the liberation of oppressed groups. Given the myriad critiques of the spectacle and its overtly problematic nature, how has this framework been enacted on the ground? The answer to this lies in the history of modern development thought. As much as development literature and research claim to have moved on or past the previous models, earlier paradigms remain entrenched in the day-to-day operations of development practice and practitioners. As briefly mentioned in Chapter 2, development paradigms guiding development communication practice and thinking have changed over time. One of the earliest paradigms, modernisation/diffusion represents an embodiment of the spectacle of development and, despite being widely decried as outdated, continues to guide much development practice, even through supposedly participatory initiatives. How these paradigms took shape and gained

traction in development thought and practice is reflective of the historical context. At the risk of engaging in what Mansell (1982) calls "superficial revisionism" in tracing the history of development and development communication, this section first provides a very brief modern history of development thought in order to demonstrate how modernisation, one of the earliest paradigms, continues to inform programs and initiatives on the ground, including the supposedly participatory medium of community radio.

Development as we know it took shape in the late 1940s when President Truman advocated for the Marshall Plan to improve the economies and societies of developing nations as part of the US Cold War strategy to sway countries to their side of the conflict (McAnany, 2012). The initial development paradigm, modernisation, was dominant until around 1965 and focussed on the transfer of technology and culture from developed societies to 'traditional' societies (Servaes & Malikhao, 2008). Development was understood as a linear progression, based on economic growth, through various stages to evolve to 'modern society' (Servaes & Malikhao, 2008). The problem was seen as the existence of 'traditional' cultures that were lacking in information and technology; the solution, therefore, was the transfer of said information through communication (Waisbord, 2001). One of the most influential theories of the modernisation paradigm was Rogers' (1995) "diffusion of innovations" theory, which detailed the stages that individuals work through in order to adopt innovations to facilitate development (Waisbord, 2001). As "awareness" and "knowledge" were the two initial stages, the diffusion theory made use of mass media to achieve these steps, engaging in a one-way transfer of information (McAnany, 2012; Scott, 2014). Both the diffusion theory and modernisation more broadly were reflective of communication theory at the time, which assumed the communication process was linear and predictable (Tufte & Mefalopulos, 2009b). This paradigm was characterised by top-down, centralised approaches towards development with Schramm going so far as to imply that development activities should be entirely government-run (1964).

Retrospectively, it is easy to see that such a paradigm is deeply problematic. The words of Kothari are particularly appropriate when considering early development thought: "where colonialism left off, development took over" (1988, p. 143). Modernisation has been critiqued on the basis that it is imperialist and western-centric (Melkote & Steeves, 2001), relies on overly simplistic communication models (Tufte & Mefalopulos, 2009b), and that simply disseminating information is not enough to affect long-term behavioural changes (Dagron & Bleck, 2001; Scott, 2014; Servaes, 2008). The modernisation paradigm, however, maintains particular relevance to this research. As Waisbord (2005) observes, while the diffusion/modernisation paradigm is widely regarded as outdated, no single paradigm has replaced it. Indeed, modernisation/diffusion continues to influence modern policy and practice (Tacchi, 2013). Despite the harsh critiques, this particular "spectre" of development persists.

Aside from modernisation, there have been two other key approaches to development thought. They can be broadly categorised into critical perspectives, such as the "underdevelopment" or

"dependency" model argued by Gunder Frank (1969), and liberation or monastic perspectives, including the work of Freire (2000) among others (Melkote & Steeves, 2001). Of particular relevance to this research is the work of Freire, who is considered to be a key participatory theorist (Cooke, 2004). Indeed, the participatory development approach can trace its origins back to the work of Freire and the Latin American school of thought on development communication (Manyozo, 2012). Emerging independently from western development thinking, early participatory communication projects yielded success stories like Radio Sutatenza in Colombia and the miners' radio stations in Bolivia (Gumucio-Dagron, 2005; Manyozo, 2009, 2012). Freire played an instrumental role in the evolution of participatory communication and its role in development. Though his work was developed for an education setting, it has been widely applied to development communication (Scott, 2014). Freire advocated for active participation through dialogue with a goal of emancipation or "conscientizacão" – action-oriented awareness (Freire, 2000; Tufte & Mefalopulos, 2009b). Participatory development represents a popular and widespread approach: Slater observes that, for at least 15 years, knowledge in development has been framed as "'participatory' research and development" (2013, p. 157). Modernisation and participatory development represent the key competing paradigms with both dominating as the main conceptual orientations in the practice of communication for development and social change (Tufte, 2017).

A final significant movement in development thought is post-development. Post-development also emerged as a severe critique of the modernisation paradigm, notably through Sachs' "obituary" of development (1997). Post-developmentalists argued that, rather than some linear, biological process, development is something "being done" to people (Ratan & Bailur, 2007). Central to the post-development critique is the unequal power relations between benefactors and beneficiaries that characterise the dominant paradigm (Manyozo, 2017). Participatory development was not immune to such critiques: participation was viewed as a "failed project of 'development'" with a tendency towards "dominance and cultural homogeneity rather than empowerment" (Hickey & Mohan, 2004, pp. 60–61). Post-developmentalists instead argued for alternatives *to* development, rather than "alternative development" which, they argue, still perpetuates the idea that parts of the world are "underdeveloped" and need help to become "like the West" (Ziai, 2017). The most significant failings of post-development were that it offered little in terms of theory and praxis, downplayed the role of the state, glorified the concept of 'community', and failed to account for the socio-political agency and institutional support needed to enact "alternative development" (Hickey & Mohan, 2004). The trend, among post-developmentalists, was to stop at critique which, in practice, served as "endorsement of the status quo and, in effect, more of the same" (Pieterse, 2000, p. 184). As such, post-development was brought to somewhat of an impasse and failed to gain further widespread traction in development thought.

Given the failings of critical movements to gain a foothold as development paradigms, what we are left with, then, is diffusion and participation (Morris, 2003). Modernisation, however, despite its

widespread critiques and dismissal, has permeated even within its supposed alternative - participatory development. This can be seen throughout the critiques of participation in development. Participation, as it was intended by Freire, among others, should act as the basis of learning, innovation, and emancipation from oppression. In practice, however, such radical ideas are co-opted and operationalised in technical, instrumental terms, as simply another tool for development management and the circulation or "deposit" of information (Cooke, 2004; Slater, 2013). There remain unequal power relations at even the most fundamental levels: for example, the definition of problems and terms surrounding interventions. Interrogating whose interpretations prevail and the processes through which this takes place reveals much about the nature of the so-called "empowering", "participatory" development projects which, in many cases, serve to reinforce the oppressive power structures they aim, or purport, to subvert (Hildyard, Hedge, Wolvekamp, & Reddy, 2001). As Pavarala and Malik (2007, p. 172) explain:

> "the interventionist who attempts to 'sell' solutions to 'target population' is accused of being manipulative as s/he may bring along an alien set of cultural premises. A participatory social communicator who enters a village hoping people will come to perceive their oppression the way s/he sees it is equally manipulative".

True commitment to the empowerment of others is highly contradictory (White, 1996). Though participatory initiatives may have the potential to support alternative development narratives, the reality is that the spectacle and its subsequent discourses remain intact within such initiatives. A linear and modernist presence is maintained, even within alternative interpretations of development (Manyozo, 2017). If post-development wrote the obituary of development, modernisation emerges as its spectre, continuing to insidiously haunt and operate, unseen, through even the most supposedly participatory, collaborative development projects. As Manyozo observes, even throughout the most well-intentioned, participatory approaches, the "template of development" still serves to frame "encounters and the outputs no matter how cooperative and consultative the process might be" (2017, p. 21). Morris writes of this phenomenon in terms of "hybridity", arguing that the diffusion and participatory models are not polar opposites: "the diffusion model has evolved in a participatory direction since its initial formulation, and participatory projects necessarily involve some element of information transfer" (2003, p. 227). The notion of hybridity is further encouraged by Quarry and Ramirez who suggest that little has been done to encourage blurring the lines between the two approaches (2018). This research, however, takes the opposite perspective. The lines are already blurry and the hybridity we see in participatory development approach is symptomatic of the broader spectacle of development, and the spectre of modernisation, influencing the ways in which development is practiced.

Given the obvious failings and problematic theoretical underpinnings of both the spectacle of development and the spectre of modernisation, how have they been able to gain such a foothold within contemporary development theory and practice? Particularly given the range of critiques and more nuanced alternative interpretations of development, as suggested by the likes of Amartya Sen, among

others. The answer relates to the strength and pervasiveness of development discourse. Discourse plays an important role in how both the spectacle and spectres of development operate within society. Indeed, the word 'development' itself, like many words within development discourse, has a certain quality that is taken for granted and thus seems to render much of what is done in the name of 'development' beyond question or reproach (Cornwall, 2007). Taking a discourse approach to examining development reveals the constructed nature of what is considered as "natural, universally applied historical and social evolution" (Sosale, 2004, p. 87). Closely examining and questioning these taken-for-granted assumptions reveals a lot about how these discourses are constructed and how they serve to shape the way we think about development.

It is through these discourses of development and modernisation that the spectacle of development reproduces and reinforces itself. Discourses of development serve to solidify colonial mindsets and methodically reproduce a culture of imperialism that serves to support the dominance of the west over the global south (Shrestha, 1995). In his work on alternative modernities, Gaonkar laments that it is virtually impossible to escape western discourses of modernity (1999). Modernity influences "cultural forms, social practices and institutional arrangements", but also acts as a "discourse that interrogates the present" (Gaonkar, 1999, p. 13). The influence of modernity has greater implications for how those on the receiving end of development come to see themselves. Sen (1999) argues that freedom is mediated by values which are, in turn, influenced by public discussions and social interactions.

Communication here is utilised as a tool of the powerful elite classes who foreclose discursive spaces to reproduce the specific types of inequalities that serve to benefit them (M. J. Dutta, 2014). The role of communication in reinforcing discourses brings us to the potential role of community radio in such a context. Rodriguez suggests that the "richness" of community media lies in their "potential as forces of resistance" (2001, p. 158). She warns though that this richness is lost if community media is seen and employed as a "one-dimensional static platform" aimed at a unified goal (Rodriguez, 2001). This hints at the trap that community radio stations in India may find themselves falling into. As discussed in Chapter 4, recalling Bailur's words, community radio in India is focussed on "development, development, development" (Bailur, 2008, 2015). Further, Malik lamented the development discourse that runs deeply throughout the sector (Personal communication, November 24, 2016). The following section examines how such discourses of development and modernisation manifested within the research sites and how the spectacle of development served to influence the day-to-day activities of the community radio stations.

The spectacle in action

Having established the ways in which the spectacle of development operates throughout the development sector, we now turn to how the spectacle manifests on the ground. The spectacle, operating through modernisation and development discourse, was observed in several different forms

throughout the data collection. The first instance where the spectacle of development can be clearly observed is within the general, day-to-day operations of the community radio stations and their interactions with listeners. The spectacle of development was observed and experienced quite differently between the listeners and the broadcasters. This section will first discuss how the spectacle of development through modernisation emerged within conversations with community radio listeners, before moving on to the experiences of community radio broadcasters.

Firstly, community radio listeners often found themselves complicit in interpreting development according to traditional, modernisation definitions. When asked overtly about the station's contribution to development in their community, the listeners' responses were overwhelmingly positive. There were several themes that emerged as emblematic of what development meant to these listeners. Health represented a key area of what they considered to be development, particularly among female listeners at both stations.

> *"Definitely it helps in development. How to say? If she is sick suddenly (points to the pregnant woman in the group) and if it is raining, we cannot take her to the hospital immediately. In such cases, it is very useful."*

> *"Yes, they talk about cleanliness and that is necessary for us throughout our lifetime. There are programmes that are very useful to pregnant women. So, I guess in that way they contribute to the society"* - Malai Vanoli listeners' focus group.

There were other interpretations of development that were less clear, but no less positive in their support of the role of the station.

> *"Malai Vanoli is definitely beneficial starting from a child to an adult. It is useful for our community."* - Malai Vanoli listener.

> *"They told about diabetes and its symptoms and they have also spoken about tuberculosis. It was useful to me. But if you ask if it was useful for the society. I'm unable to give a reply."* - Malai Vanoli listener.

> *"In this era of women's development, this program contributes for the same."* - Enkal Vanoli listener.

> *"They tell us information we don't know. They hold awareness campaign and create awareness. Although we are aware of most of the information they tell in common."* - Malai Vanoli listener.

While their listeners were generally very positive about the contribution of the community radio stations to development, interrogating this further revealed unexpected results from the listeners of Enkal Vanoli.

> *"I very well knew about everything before. The information given on radio could be considered as additional qualification."*

> *"No, not like that. I hear a lot of informative news from the radio, but I cannot tell that I learnt anything new. They tell information that I already knew."*

> *"But in present situation agriculture is not in its full glory. There is no rain and there is no*

conditions favourable for doing agriculture. So, the information told in the community radio is not useful at all. Even though the programs broadcasted in community radio reaches people, it is neither useful nor impactful as there is no rain and no agriculture." - Enkal Vanoli listener focus group.

The participants of this particular focus group were predominantly farmers, and some were members of the farmers' federation. They represented the key target demographic for the station's programming, yet they felt that much of the programming was irrelevant to them. Interestingly, this was not something that the members of the farmers' federation objected to: they felt the station provided useful information even if it was not useful to them specifically. The state of agriculture at the time represented a disconnect between what the station was broadcasting and the realities of their listeners. The modernisation paradigm can be clearly observed here through the emphasis on providing information regardless of the local context and the existing knowledge of a key listener demographic. The broader spectacle of development is perhaps seen within the attitudes of the listeners and farmers' federation members. Despite Enkal Vanoli being 'their' station, it seems not to represent them or their information needs, instead following an unseen directive of what they should be broadcasting, as opposed to responding to the needs of the community.

Community radio broadcasters had quite a different experience of operating within and, at times, perpetuating the spectacle of development through modernisation discourse. In relation to media, communication, and development, the influence of modernisation can be clearly seen through approaches like Media for Development (M4D), a form of intervention that uses the media to influence the knowledge, attitudes, and behaviours of a public for development purposes. In this approach, the perceived development problem is a lack of information, therefore the solution to that problem is to simply provide that information (Scott, 2014). Beyond this approach to media, communication, and development though, the influence of the modernisation paradigm can still be observed elsewhere. As discussed, community radio is generally considered to fall within participatory communication approaches to media, communication, and development. What was observed during the research though, was that the influence of modernisation had permeated even this supposedly participatory, grassroots medium. At its most fundamental level, this was observed in the language of the broadcasters when discussing how they viewed their impact on the local community, as well as discussing their day-to-day responsibilities.

"We impart knowledge to the needy. We give them information that they don't know. We act as their mediator between the education and the people who can't afford it."
"We can also help them through the knowledge we provide. It is a chain process and that is how it goes".
"We tell them what is good and what is bad while we go field visits". - Malai Vanoli staff group interview.

These statements appear to echo the model of information transfer as seen in the "diffusion of innovations" approach (E. M. Rogers, 1995). The language of the statements is highly reflective of a modernisation discourse through words like "give", "impart", and "tell". It is also worth noting that these statements emerged during more general discussions about the broadcasters' day-to-day activities and what they enjoyed about their job. When questioned directly about the role of community radio, broadcasters at both stations mentioned more traditional community radio and participatory development roles including "helping the needy" and "providing a voice".

A further aspect of the broadcasters' experiences that relates to the spectacle of development is the reporting and organisational requirements that the stations must adhere to as part of the broader parent organisations. This is symptomatic of the "ascendance of accountancy" in evaluating aid and development projects (Lennie & Tacchi, 2013, pp. 2–3). Evaluation is, of course, important, but there is some misunderstanding among mainstream evaluators about the most appropriate evaluation approaches for specific situations and interventions (Tacchi & Lennie, 2014). Indeed, the kinds of administrative control and emphasis on quantitative evaluation observed in this research go against best practice in community radio. Pavarala and Malik reviewed the community radio broadcast regulations across five countries (Australia, Canada, Ireland, South Africa, and the USA), and found that regulators in all five countries endorse a qualitative approach to audience research "for authoritatively evaluating the relationship between a station and the audience" (2007, p. 77). In contrast, the limitations of narrow approaches to evaluation were recognised by the Enkal Vanoli broadcasters:

> "What I hate the most is submitting reports. I don't know if I'm not still skilled to make a report. Our performance is calculated only to the report we submit. If suppose I perform well but not give a proper report then it will be taken that I did not perform well. We have to spend at least two days on making this report. Also, the impact cannot be calculated through listenership like commercial radio. Only through survey we can understand the impact. But our report demands an impact that is difficult to produce. What impact could be understood only gradually and not suddenly. But we have no other choice as we are working for a funded agency"
>
> "If there something I dislike it is the targets. I am working here from the beginning and there was a lot of freedom while I started. We worked according to the schedule. we work as a team to achieve targets, while get projects from outside there will be a compulsion to do a half an hour slot every day. We manage to gather content to do the program but it's frustrating."
>
> "It's been a month I have joined and I am due to submit my report. It's not report that is stressful but it's the target. While we work in the creative side alone there is no need for stress. But while we undertake project from outside, although it makes us financially sustainable, it is difficult and stressful to face the target." - Enkal Vanoli staff group interview.

The difficulties associated with managing the administration and content-related requirements of community radio have also been observed by Mittal. She suggests that while community radio journalists

initially do a good job building community participation for content and operations, over time their administrative workload increases which leaves less time for other tasks (2011). The senior broadcaster at Enkal Vanoli spent a significant amount of time each week logging the daily progress sheets of the staff members. The progress sheets detailed all the tasks they were working on and how long they spent on each task per day. The station manager maintains a detailed tracking sheet that must be submitted to the parent body each week alongside a plan for the next week. This is in addition to other administrative work including managing invoices for advertisers, travel claims and staff salaries, event and station budgets, emails, and so on.

Conversely, Malai Vanoli seemed to face less of these struggles, which the broadcasters appreciated:

"They do not pressure as to complete our work. I like that." - Malai Vanoli broadcaster.

There was, however, a sense of impotence associated with being just one part of a larger NGO, as opposed to a semi-autonomous station that reports to an external parent body.

"We cannot straight away do anything as Malai Vanoli is a part of the NGO. But there are several other departments in the NGO through which we could do some help." - Malai Vanoli broadcaster.

Malai Vanoli's parent body is a large, well-established NGO. While this seemed to alleviate some of the pressures associated with reporting requirements and balancing budgets, it also seemed to create a layer of distance between the community radio station and their listeners. Malai Vanoli was under more pressure to conform to the developmental priorities of their parent body rather than what their listeners might want. While this gave the station scope to host and support a number of valuable community events, such as an eye clinic that provided free eye tests, consultations with doctors, and follow-up treatments, where necessary, it also served to create distance between broadcasters and listeners, alongside a sense of powerlessness in the broadcasters. As indicated earlier, the broadcasters at Malai Vanoli have a strong sense of what their role is and how they perceive their contribution to the community, but actioning these roles appears to be more complex. This could be symptomatic of "NGOisation" of community radio content, which involves "the broadcast agenda reflecting the programmatic agenda of the NGO" (Pavarala, Malik, & Belavadi, 2010, p. 67). Community radio stations in this position find themselves to take less participatory approaches as they are under pressure to demonstrate "impact" and "scale up" (Pavarala, 2015). This is indicative of the spectacle of development at work: community radio broadcasters are powerless to contribute in the ways they see fit and wind up complicit in the NGOisation of the station.

Swachh Bharat

Aside from the day-to-day examples of the spectacle of development in action, a further, more large-scale example is the Government of India's *Swachh Bharat Mission* (SBM). Launched by Prime Minister

Narendra Modi in 2014, SBM involves a suite of initiatives aimed at improving sustainable sanitation, most notably with the ambitious goal of making India open defecation free (ODF) by 2019, ostensibly as a tribute to the 150th birthday of Mahatma Gandhi (Ministry of Drinking Water and Sanitation, 2018). Spearheaded by the Ministry of Drinking Water and Sanitation and the Ministry of Urban Development, the program began with a focus on anti-littering campaigns and volunteer clean-ups, the program has expanded to include inter-ministry collaborations on other projects such as a special focus on improving the sanitation practices of villages along the banks of the River Ganga, improving water, sanitation, and hygiene (WASH) and ODF activities in the areas surrounding hospitals and health centres, and the *Swachh Iconic Places* project which focusses on cleaning 100 sites of cultural and historical significance (Luthra, 2018; Ministry of Drinking Water and Sanitation, 2018). The five-year program was approved for INR 620 billion in funding, of which 15% was allocated to information, education, and communication (IEC) in order to:

> "undertake massive public awareness campaigns on sanitation and establishing its link to public
> health, hygiene and the environment through various means including - radio, social media,
> documentaries, plays, workshops, etc." (Ministry of Urban Development, 2014, p. 13).

C4D represents a significant part of SBM with community radio also acting as a key tool for promoting the program and its aims.

SBM represents part of a global commitment from the UN to improved sanitation, one that was expressed in both the Millennium Development Goals (MDG) and the Sustainable Development Goals (SGD). Goal 7 of the MDG ("Ensure environmental sustainability") made specific mention of improving the conditions of the "2.4 billion" people who were using "unimproved sanitation facilities including 946 million people ... still practicing open defecation" (UN, 2016). The subsequent SDG Goal 6 ("Ensure access to water and sanitation for all") aims to "achieve access to adequate and equitable sanitation and hygiene for all and end open defecation, paying special attention to the needs of women and girls and those in vulnerable situations" by 2030 (UN, 2018). Even at the most basic level, the SDGs place a clear emphasis on sanitation with a specific goal of ending open defecation. Why though has this particular goal gained such widespread traction within India? Drawing on the results of a survey, Da Costa observes that communicating the SDGs has been far more successful than that of the MDGs. He posits three potential reasons for the fact that the SDGs appear to have reached a far greater segment of the global public far quicker than the MDGs:

> "Is this really because the SDGs have been better communicated in two years than the MDGs
> were in seven? Because the process of consultation for the SDGs was more far- reaching than
> that for the MDGs? Because the challenges facing the world in 2015 were of a higher order than
> the preoccupations of 2000, forcing citizens to be more aware? There may be an element of
> truth in each of these three reasons" (da Costa, 2018, p. 160).

Why though is it this particular goal that has resulted in such a widespread, well-funded campaign in

India? Though improved sanitation is inarguably important, one could also argue for the importance of any of the 17 SDGs. How, then, can the dramatic uptake of SBM be explained?

A critical view on the proliferation of Goal 6 and SBM returns us to neoliberalism. Ending open defecation requires establishing alternatives - a technical 'solution' to the 'problem' of open defecation - therein lies the economic potential of such a movement. Indeed, economic opportunities represent one part of the broader marketing plan of SBM. Prime Minister Modi has spoken of the money to be made by "*swacchata* (cleanliness) entrepreneurs", referring not to those formally and informally employed as sanitation workers and rag pickers, but to private firms ready to displace such workers in the name of generating profit from cleaning up India (Luthra, 2018). Really, for the vast majority of people in India who have been excluded from the benefits of a capitalist economy, this is not a profitable deal (Doron & Raja, 2015).

The economic and technocentric perspective of SBM is framed by a simplistic problem-solving model eerily reminiscent of the spectre of modernisation. This is discussed by Doron and Raja (2015, p. 189), who make the following observation about the theoretical foundations of SBM:

> "If we can make enough toilets for everyone to go around, the sanitation problem would be solved, Modi suggests, displaying no self-reflexivity about a mode of problem solving that is wearily reminiscent of the long-discredited focus of the development studies going back to the 1960s."

Indeed, the spectacle of development, operating through modernisation could easily be observed through the discourse of broadcasters, and even listeners, surrounding SBM.

> "*We have done a programme regarding sanitation. We formed groups and did a campaign to stress the importance of building toilets.*" - Enkal Vanoli broadcaster.
>
> "*Peoples very basic need is toilet. Most of the people who live in these surroundings, build their own house. We help them in to build toilet. First of all, we go and ask them what is their problem in building their own toilets. Secondly, they go to the panchayat level and help them get the subsidy from the government to build toilets.*" - Malai Vanoli broadcaster.
>
> "*The radio created awareness to promote Swachh Bharat and build toilets. We went individually to every house and insisted them to build toilets. We also helped them to get the subsidy from the government for building the toilets. Few people built from their own pocket and few built after getting the subsidy. In this way, our community was benefitted*". - Enkal Vanoli volunteer
>
> "*Radio insists people about hygiene. The radio tells the people to build toilets in their houses. The villages associated with the radio station are in top position in hygiene. We give them training personally and it is also insisted through the radio. When little people give some example about hygiene, they understand it much better and implement it properly...*" - Enkal Vanoli listener.

SBM seemed to be a recurring theme throughout interviews with listeners, volunteers and

station staff. There appeared to be a widespread understanding of the dominant definitions of development among the community radio listeners. Listener focus groups were asked about development in a general way, without imposing any definitions or examples on what might be considered "development" or a development outcome. Listeners were also asked separately if the radio stations had benefitted them personally. Some listeners directly associated SBM, and its promotion via radio, with development:

> "They do tell some information like we should build toilets and use it, which is very useful. So, it is important for development." - Malai Vanoli listener.

> "I recently took part in a programme that gave awareness to build and use toilets for defecation. Recently they have announced a mission to make our district devoid of open defecation recently. So, I felt very proud to have contributed to spreading awareness." - Malai Vanoli volunteer.

Other listeners observed the proliferation of the campaign through other means, such as local self-help groups.

> "We came to know about the subsidy for building the toilets. We ourselves helped few people to get the subsidy from the government. Many of us have built toilet getting the subsidy from the government. We were given training from our self-help groups to educate the people to built the toilets and to help them get subsidy from the government. In one village alone, about 90 people have got subsidy. Few people get the subsidy and built the toilets on their own and for a few people the government itself builts the toilet. They ask us to spread awareness for building toilets in our self-help groups, in our 100 days workplace." - Enkal Vanoli listener.

It is clear that SBM is not only widespread within the community radio programming, but, from the perspective of listeners, there are clear links between the campaign and what they consider to be development. From the perspective of the stations though, how can this be explained? An essential contributing factor to the proliferation of SBM rhetoric on community radio can be attributed to funding. Government advertising represents a significant revenue stream for community radio stations with Enkal Vanoli earning 7000INR (~72 GBP, almost equivalent to a station staff member's monthly salary) per month for two advertising spots per day. There is clearly a significant financial incentive for community radio stations to take part in promoting government initiatives, but some research suggests there might be other forces at work. Bose writes of the growing politicization of community radio in India, particularly referencing the Ministry of Information and Broadcasting's "recommendation" that stations should air the Prime Minister's *"Maan ki Baat"* pronouncements (2016). *"Maan ki Baat"* (roughly translated as "the heart's voice") is a monthly radio broadcast by Prime Minister Modi in which he shares his thoughts on various topics suggested by listeners. The programme has emerged as a significant revenue generator for AIR, with advertising slots costing as much as 200,000 INR (~2200 GBP), as compared to high profile cricket matches which only attract around 10,000-15,000 INR (~100-160 GBP) for a similar slot (Rathore, 2015). Similarly, April 2015 saw an "informal directive" that "advised" community radio stations to derive

their content from government schemes such as SBM (Bose, 2016). The scope of the stations to ignore such "informal directives" is unclear, particularly given the tenuous legislative status that community radio stations in India occupy. The impact of such directives was also observed by a listener:

> *"We have only heard our Prime Minister insisting as to build toilets in our home. We have seen many such advertisements."* - Enkal Vanoli listener.

SBM clearly represents a highly pervasive and, therefore, potentially successful C4D program aimed at reducing open defecation and, as a result, improving hygiene standards across the country. An appraisal of the effectiveness of this intervention lies outside the scope of this research, though it is worth noting that a recent WHO report found that "while messaging and awareness raising approaches may result in short term improvements in handwashing with soap, the changes are unlikely to be sustained over time. Further, these approaches seemed to have no effect on open defecation" (World Health Organization, 2018, p. 136). What is more relevant to this research though, is how the insidious spectacle of development works within and through SBM through discourses of modernity and technocentrism. Once open defecation was identified and labelled as a 'problem', the spectacle of development was quick to offer 'solutions' that were ready-made, technocentric, and laden with values relating to progress, surveillance, and "proper", "bourgeois", civil conduct (Doron & Raja, 2015). This further represents the spectacle of development through a discourse of modernity and the subsequent glorification of the west. Filth in India is compared to a lack of filth in the west, with order and cleanliness of urban spaces presented as the kind of modernity possessed by western cities that Indian cities should be striving towards (Luthra, 2018).

Further, the technocentrism and problematic cause-and-effect assumptions associated with SBM do little to address the underlying cultural attitudes to open defecation. Somewhat of a sub-theme of this thesis, the role of class, caste, religion, and gender cannot be discounted in any discussions of Indian society. First and foremost, even a high-level reading of SBM reveal closely linked religious and political discourses. Indeed, the entire SBM campaign is inherently political: Prime Minister Modi is a member of the right-wing Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) as well as the Rashtriya Swayamsevak Sangh (RSS), a Hindu extremist group. He is described as a "hard-line Hindutva ideologue" who gained infamy as the Chief Minister who presided over the 2002 pogrom in Gujarat where over 1000 Muslims were killed in targeted violence (Ramachandra Guha, 2017, p. 681). It is against this backdrop that notions of *swachh* (clean or cleanliness) take on new connotations. Further, while SBM as a tribute to Gandhi is admirable on some levels, there have been similar critiques of the Mahatma's politics in that, while he personally may have considered all religions equal, politically "one religion was, inevitably, more equal than the other" (P. Anderson, 2013, p. 23). Related to this was Gandhi's approach towards the caste system, particularly emphasized by his run-ins with the former-Untouchable leader B R Ambedkar who claimed that Gandhi's Congress party served to only represent upper-caste Hindus (Ramachandra Guha, 2017). Though he may have decried Untouchability and the "sin" of *jāti* divisions, Gandhi believed in an idealized division of

society based on the *varṇa* (Chatterjee, 1984, p. 190). He argued that such a system had "saved Hinduism from disintegration" (P. Anderson, 2013, p. 37). Considering these socio-political factors, a focus on technological solutions to OD fails to account for structural and cultural inequalities that shape social practices, particularly within the public domain (Doron & Raja, 2015). The daily, mundane tasks associated with waste removal are performed by those who are marginalised and oppressed due to their caste and class (Luthra, 2018). Dalits have been relegated to this work for thousands of years, while those of higher castes retain their status through avoiding association with such "degrading" work (Royte, 2017). As Doron and Raja explain, like activities such as eating and dressing, "in India defecating also serves to reproduce the social order" (2015, p. 193). Further, Coffey and Spears suggest that it is these "casteist" ideas that have led to the ingrained nature of open defecation in India (2017). It is these ideas and cultural norms that make latrine pits, normal in many other parts of the world, symbolic of generations of oppression and humiliation (Coffey & Spears, 2017). Times are slowly changing though. Dalits are increasingly shunning the work historically used to justify their oppression, which has resulted in rising costs of waste removal due to a lack of willing workers (Royte, 2017). It is this social and economic landscape that acts as a disincentive to building the small latrine that most households can afford, one that would require regular emptying, and sees people choosing to defecate in the open instead (Royte, 2017). This does little to question or subvert the caste system:

> "So long as the removal of human excreta is assigned to the impure castes, the practice of defecating in public does nothing to undermine upper-caste purity. If anything, upper-caste 'purity' is seen to be reinforced by having the 'untouchables' perform the unclean task for them." (Doron & Raja, 2015, p. 193).

The class and caste politics associated with waste disposal are infinitely complex and embedded within a system of oppression that has been in place for thousands of years. Such complexity is simply not accounted for in SBM.

Aside from class, caste, and issues surrounding 'untouchability', there are other cultural factors at play that serve to complicate how best to address open defecation, namely gender. A key marketing strategy of SBM is that men should be building private toilets for their wives and daughters to prevent danger and indignity associated with open defecation (Doron & Raja, 2015). Royte, however, observed that, for women, defecating in the open can represent a valued opportunity for socialising away from the domestic confines of in-laws and husbands (2017). Similarly, while building toilets for women is encouraged, it is seen as "manly" for men to eschew their facilities and go in the open (Royte, 2017). There are clearly complex gender dynamics at play here, in addition to the ingrained systems of class and caste. The spectacle of development serves to mute these nuances and complexity so as to present solutions that are simple, technocentric, and appeal to a neoliberal agenda. Such solutions are easy to package and sell from a marketing perspective - C4D that "looks good" dominating over C4D required for "doing good" (Noske-Turner, Tacchi, & Pavarala, 2018) - and work to appease international donors by

appearing to demonstrate quantifiable impact as opposed to meaningful social change.

A final point to note is the practical constraints of SBM. The construction of private and community toilets represents a key component of SBM. Subsidies of roughly 12,000INR (~ 123GBP) are available for building toilets in private homes. Community radio listeners and broadcasters spoke of promoting access to these subsidies either through the stations or their local government. There was fervour and pride at the thought of living in an ODF district. Outside of the interviews, however, listeners lamented the extra costs associated with building private toilets. The subsidy is barely enough for a small, single-tank, latrine. In order to build a practical facility, people still need to invest money from their own pockets. Then there are the ongoing maintenance costs associated with private facilities, for which there are no subsidies.

Despite the support given to SBM in terms of broadcast content and dissemination of public service information, there is irony surrounding the situations of the stations themselves. One station was less than 100m from a communal toilet block that remained padlocked throughout the research. At no point, during the time spent at the station was the toilet observed unlocked or in use. Similarly, the other station was undergoing renovations at the time of the research visit and had no operational toilet facilities. Staff had to use the surrounding fields for their eliminatory requirements.

This example is highly indicative of the problems with SBM. According to official reports, as of October 2018, with just under one year to go in the program, SBM has achieved household toilet coverage across 95.13% of India and has seen more than 87,000,000 toilets constructed (Ministry of Drinking Water and Sanitation, 2018). How many are actually in good condition, in regular use and are accessible to those who need them is less clear and, arguably, a more important statistic. It is this narrow cause and effect view - approaching open defecation as an infrastructural and behavioural problem – that sees SBM as symptomatic of the broader spectacle of development in its approaches and the ways in which it engages with community radio stations and audiences. The top-down dictum pays little attention to local context or what those at the grassroots might want or prioritize, instead it has employed a well-funded campaign to persuade, cajole, and, in some cases, violently discourage. This is the spectacle of development in action. Even grassroots, 'participatory' media, like community radio, have been swept up in the spectacle that operates through a modernisation approach to development that sees information proclaimed from the top-down.

A story of the spectacle

"My girl is a little sick. She has gone through a surgery in her brain. I have learnt many things through radio. While I was pregnant there were no such facilities. My mom used to be very casual and I used to go for work and I never stayed home. But out of all, I had no problem in my delivery. My second child was born at home. My mother was there, and she took care of the delivery. I did not have any complication. I thought it would be the same for my daughter.

I got her to my home in her seventh month of her pregnancy and only after that, I took her to a doctor. The doctor told that her blood pressure levels are high and asked us why we did not contact a doctor before. I asked her In-laws and they told that they took her to regular check-ups. After that, I took her to three different doctors including both private and government practitioners. All of them told that her blood pressure level is low and the growth of the baby is also not up to the mark. They asked us if we left out the dates and calculated wrongly. But there was nothing wrong with the calculation. We got afraid and admitted her to hospital. They took a scan and later told me that the condition of my daughter is critical and the baby is not grown enough. They told me that both their lives are in threat and asked me to sign a form immediately for them to continue the treatment. I'm already afraid of hospitals and I felt very helpless in that situation.

We stayed there for 15 days and her health was improving. Then they took a final scan and told me that the baby had no movement and told me to take her to the hospital that is down the mountains. After admitting her there, the doctor told me that the baby could not be saved and asked me to be strong. I was informed not to tell anything to my daughter and they also told me inform people at home. I called people at home to inform. They consoled me to be happy for at least saving my daughter. Even then I did not realise that the baby had died. Though the scan was done, I still believed that I will have the baby in my hands and it wouldn't die. The doctor told me to buy a medicine from pharmacy and place it under my daughter's tongue. They told that the baby would come out in three days or a week or even three minutes. But they asked me to sign a form that I wouldn't create any trouble for future complications. I agreed but did not let my daughter know this. The doctor told that Caesarean could be done to take the baby out, but she is young and this is her first baby. "Only if you co-operate we could make it normal delivery. She would have her second child in future, only if it is done properly. You shouldn't be frustrated as the first baby died and you should be in no hurry to leave the hospital. Only if you listen to us, she will have a second baby without any problem." Only then I realised the first baby is no more.

My daughter immediately had her labour pain after the medicine was given. She suffered all through the night in her labour and she managed a normal delivery as she obeyed the doctor's instructions. But only after the delivery, she became aware that her baby died. Doctors told that she should stay in hospital for 40 days as her blood pressure level was the reason for her baby's death and it should be attended. But without our knowledge, my girl went and told the doctor that she is alright and wishes to leave home as the newborn kids around her in delivery ward are making her sad and lost. I wasn't aware of this as I had gone home with the dead baby to bury it. Before I arrived, she had spoken to the nurses and cried that she needs to go home. They kept her in observation for one week and sent us home.

After coming home, she complained that she is developing headache. While I asked the elderly people around my home, they told it is normal post-delivery. But then her headache started to get severe. She told that there was pain all along her face and head. I was casually following the home medications

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till then and took her to a doctor for check-up. The doctor told that her pulse rate was very low and asked us to admit her immediately in the hospital where her delivery happened. I got to understand about pulse only after listening to radio and after my daughter fell sick. But at that point, I did not know what exactly "pulse" meant.

We decided not to give it any more time and immediately admitted her to the nearby hospital. My daughter was active and was talking to me casually when she was admitted. I gave her food then when I went to eat, I heard a loud scream from her calling out "Amma! Amma!". It just lasted for a second and then she immediately collapsed and had fits. Her body became stiff and chill and she immediately went to coma stage. Doctors told me that it is bound to happen to a person with high blood pressure and asked me to wait for a day.

From Saturday afternoon till Sunday afternoon, there was no improvement in her. The hospital administration did not allow us to get discharged. But somehow, we managed to get her discharged to get her admitted to a hospital in the city. She developed fits en route to the hospital. They admitted her at the first hospital in sight. They told that a CT scan should be done immediately rather than trying out medications. Before that, all other tests such as ECG were done and at last the CT scan was done to find the exact problem. After the CT scan was taken, they told us that there is a brain haemorrhage because of high blood pressure. They also told us that only an immediate surgery could save my daughter. They asked as to pay one-and-half lakhs (150,000INR, ~1600GBP) to take her inside the operation theatre. They also told that she had already lost 90% of chances and left with 10% chance to be alive and asked us to think about the operation.

We decided to give it a try as we were desperate to save my daughter. Even after the doctor's warning that it is risky, we stood stubborn to continue the surgery. After they performed the surgery, she got back her life and recovered. Even after recovery, she was like a child who had to be taken much care. She was not very much conscious and she was behaving the same way she behaved in her childhood. She forgot that she Is a woman and she is educated. Sometimes she wouldn't remember us too. We were there at the hospital for 6 months. There was another surgery for complete recovery. She almost forgot everything and now we are reminding her things one by one.

So, I would say our home medicine won't work in all cases. I kept her at home for 3 days even after knowing she is sick. I feel she wouldn't have gone to coma stage if I had taken her to the hospital earlier. Only after admitting her to the hospital, the doctor told we should have stayed in the previous hospital for 10 more days, as they did not discharge us and we came out of our own risk. He blamed us for this. Only after that, I realised. I just signed the form without reading it as I don't know to read English. I just thought it was a procedure to sign before getting discharged. I just thought I am signing to take my daughter home. Only the doctor who carried the operation later told us we have signed to discharge on our own risk. Then it is not a mistake of me, right? It is their mistake too? My daughter requested them to discharge her while I went home, as she was uncomfortable seeing the other babies in the ward. She was

longing for a baby and was heartbroken. She was physically looking normal. If I had made my daughter stay there, listening to the doctor's words, it wouldn't have got this serious. I have spent more than 8 lacs (800,000INR, ~8400GBP) and even mortgaged this house. I managed all the expenses as I had money to do so but if I had no money, my daughter's life would have gone.

Only because I left my daughter's blood pressure unattended, it led to so many complications. Then afterwards, we listened to what doctors said and my daughter recovered completely. Now she teaches us things that we don't know. Now she comes to me and tells that she had learnt many things and she feels bad for her ignorance that killed her own baby."

- K, Malai Vanoli listener

Note: This story has been edited for length and clarity, though care was taken to ensure the original meaning and, where possible, the wording was preserved. K's daughter volunteers at the radio station and, at the time of the interview, was happy, healthy and heavily pregnant.

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K spoke confidently and at length about the harrowing ordeal her family faced, while her daughter looked on, seemingly unperturbed by the retelling of what was surely a traumatic time in her life. Deconstructing this story, it is clear that the spectacle of development can be seen operating through a modernisation discourse. Examples of this include the emphasis placed on modern medicine, as opposed to traditional medicine, as well as the recurring importance of education and being "informed", and the radio's implied role in this process. Indeed, alongside the dramatic and tragic nature of the story, there is a strong sense of it being a cautionary tale of the consequences of not being 'informed'.

This story also serves to hint at broader power relations, most notably within the medical system and the dynamics between doctors and patients. The unwillingness of doctors and hospital staff to clearly explain the procedures and risks, as well as the expectations of uncritical acquiescence to their instructions, speaks to the power structures in place. Such power relations were also observed at a medical camp hosted by Malai Vanoli. The visiting doctors were first introduced to the waiting crowd of prospective patients by one of the radio station staff members, who then asked the doctors to briefly explain the tests that they would be conducting. The doctors blanched. "Why?", asked one. It took a lengthy, hushed conversation to convince the doctors of the necessity of explaining the tests to patients. Returning to K's story, it is also possible to see how she positions herself in terms of power. She initially introduced herself as a tea plantation worker without much formal education, but we can see from the story that she has, or at least has the ability to find, the means to pay for her daughter's medical expenses. This status seemed to give her little power in her interactions with the medical professionals, instead, the complicity associated with the spectacle of development shapes these interactions and renders her relatively powerless to understand and make decisions about what was happening to her daughter.

Without an in-depth understanding of K's life and the context of this experience, extensive

deconstruction would be irresponsible. Fernandes argues for considering the "political economy of storytelling", which refers to two intertwined activities: first, the production, circulation, and consumption of stories that aim to achieve certain ends; the second is the deployment of these stories in the process of subject-making (2017, p. 11). She explains that stories disembedded from their contexts - as K's story is here in this thesis, and as it would be broadcasted on Malai Vanoli - serve to individualize collective struggles and promote emotional responses and "feeling over thinking" (Fernandes, 2017, pp. 26–27). This form of storytelling does little to improve the conditions of communities, instead, the relaying of personal experiences devoid of their broader context serves to reinforce the status quo and see storytellers complicit in their own oppression.

The fact that the broadcasters ask K again and again to tell her story could also be considered problematic, and borderline exploitative. This represents a powerful example of the co-option of storytelling to serve the narratives of others. Fernandes observes that storytelling is touted by grantmakers as an effective tool for evaluation, albeit one that reduces social issues to technical problems that can be "resolved" through the sharing of personal narratives (2017). In a particularly salient comment, she critiques western therapeutic discourses that operate through storytelling "whereby individuals come to blame themselves for their problems and seek solutions by adapting to rather than challenging the structures that create those problems" (Fernandes, 2017, p. 21). This could be clearly observed throughout K's story and is representative of the broader neoliberalism underlying the spectacle of development. From the perspective of the community radio broadcasters though, the appeal is clear: she is an articulate speaker who is active in her community and has ties to the station, making her highly accessible for interviews. Further, the story itself is gripping and emotive, it could have happened to anyone. The central tenets of the story are also appealing - she gained knowledge as a result of listening to the station, it is implied that there were dire consequences for her perceived ignorance. In their recent book, Enghel and Noske-Turner ask if communication in international development is about doing good or looking good (2018). Given the prosaicism of stories that are divorced from their true, detailed contexts, this is clearly a case of community radio yielding to, or perpetuating, a development discourse that serves to make themselves look good rather than actually affecting any meaningful change.

6 Amplify

Context of the spectacle

"I know every minute detail related to agriculture. I know everything about cows and goats. There are 60 types of disorders in a cow and I can identify everything. More than technology, I believe in the experience I got from my grandfather. Right from my eight years, he kept teaching me. He took me to the panchayat* and explained to me how to deal with different situations giving an example. He has told me all the important life philosophy, with simple examples and local sayings. Those days we used to have rice only on Saturdays while we are in fasting for the god. Other days we will have only millet porridge. We had four workers to work in our farm. My grandfather will tell me to find out if they will stay for work, while they join our farm for the first day. If they have seven glasses of porridge, they will stay and work. If they have just two or three, they will certainly run away unable to do farm work. So, my grandfather will put his shirt in such way that the farm worker has access to his pocket while he runs away from the work. As per my grandfather's judgement, the one who had just two glasses of porridge would run away with 20 or 30 rupees from my grandfather's pocket. The one who drinks eight glasses of porridge will stay for work and take his salary home. He also taught me to identify talents. He has told me that I shouldn't spoil the soil or a woman's heart. I should water the soil appropriately and not let it dry. In the same way, I should keep my wife happy and should not make her cry." - Enkal Vanoli listener.

*The local governance system in a village.

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Having established the role of development as both an overt spectacle and an insidious force, this chapter returns to the alternative roots of community radio in order to discuss how the spectacle and spectres of development can be subverted to support the grassroots needs of the communities. This chapter begins by briefly discussing and contextualising how the spectacle of development came to be so ingrained within the community radio sector, before highlighting the similarities between several 'success stories' within the sector. The key argument here is that, when working within such a pervasive development discourse, the most effective efforts of community radio stem from amplifying indigenous knowledge communication systems (IKCS) to share cultural and technical information and knowledge. IKCS also play an important role in the construction and maintenance of community relations and rhizomatic linkages across various groups and organisations within the community. This chapter explores these concepts and examines how they can be observed through the research data.

The spectacle of development seems to influence everything about community radio in India, from the legislature to the everyday operations. It could be argued that the prevalence of the development discourse within community radio in India, as well as its lingering, insidious commitment to a modernisation paradigm, falls far from the participatory, voice-affirming goals of community radio. How

did community radio develop in this way? The spectacle of development did not emerge overnight but is the legacy of colonialism as enacted through broadcasting systems. It is this history that led Page and Crawley to suggest that, in South Asia, community radio "is a term which is generally used to describe radio for the benefit of the community rather than radio which the community runs itself" (2001, p. 327). This is clearly quite different from the "voice for the voiceless", "maximalist participation" interpretations of community radio that seem to dominate global literature (see Carpentier, 2015; Downing, 2000; Harcup, 2015; Kivikuru, 2005; Rennie, 2006; Rodriguez, 2001; Tacchi, 2003; among others). Rather, radio "for the benefit of the community" seems to be the very embodiment of the paternalistic spectacle of development. It is worth understanding how Page and Crawley came to this conclusion if only to develop a richer understanding of how the spectacle of development came to be so embedded within community radio in India. To do this, this chapter delves further into the history of broadcasting in India.

The history of broadcasting in India is deeply rooted in development discourse and colonialism. Though the history of community radio in India has been discussed in Chapter 4, the historical context of broadcasting in India more generally offers important insight into the current state of community radio and its role within a development agenda. A commercial venture, the first radio broadcasting in India took place under the Indian Broadcasting Company (IBC) which began broadcasting from its first station in Bombay (Mumbai) in 1927, just seven months after the creation of the BBC (K. Kumar, 2003). The IBC lasted just over two years before going into liquidation, with the high costs of radio sets, difficulties associated with collecting license fees, and "Indian conditions and traditions" blamed for its failure (K. Kumar, 2003). The Government of India took control after this and introduced the Indian Wireless Telegraphy Act of 1933 to deal with the evasion of license fee payment while also effectively making the possession of radio receivers and equipment without a license illegal (Pavarala & Malik, 2007).

While broadcasting in India more broadly was struggling to find its feet, there were some early experiments that could be considered precursors to community radio. Several public servants working in rural areas made cases for local broadcasting in local dialects with content that was relevant to the everyday lives of the listeners (Page & Crawley, 2001). Experiments were conducted in Lahore, Poona (Pune), Delhi, and Peshawar, though none survived very long with even the successful projects absorbed into the national broadcaster and subsequently losing much of the local focus (Page & Crawley, 2001).

The British investment and interest in Indian broadcasting increased around the second World War with Sir John Reith, founder and first director general of the BBC, making the case that if India's needs were not met by its own broadcasting system, there was a risk of listeners tuning into short wave broadcasts from other countries such as Russia and Germany (Page & Crawley, 2001). Reith argued that central control was essential for efficiency: this structure and Reith's paternalistic legacy - "to 'improve' the masses by giving them not what they sought to hear, but what they ought to hear" - influenced AIR for many years to come (K. Kumar, 2003, p. 2174). Indeed, using AIR for development purposes was a logical extension for the central government, for which development was a primary goal with AIR its

natural, media partner (Page & Crawley, 2001).

Following India's independence, from the 1950s through to the 1970s, the dominant paradigm of development saw the mass media deployed to change the mindset of the people in order to enable rapid modernisation through the expansion of communication infrastructure, centralised economic planning and widespread industrialisation (K. Kumar, 2003). Under Indira Gandhi's Government, the first formal review of the official media took place in 1964. Known as the Chanda Report, after the former auditor-general and chairman of the review committee Asok K Chanda, the review was scathing in its critique of AIR which, in their opinion, had not been adequately harnessed to educate, inform or encourage participation (Pavarala & Malik, 2007). They found that AIR's programmes were dull with little variety or engagement with topical political or civic matters; further, there was no audience research taking place, which could explain AIR's lack of popularity among listeners (K. Kumar, 2003). The Committee's recommendations led to the establishment of a competitor to AIR. In 1957, a new channel, *Vividh Bharati,* began broadcasting film songs and other light entertainment (K. Kumar, 2003). Ten years later, *Vividh Bharati* would, also on the recommendations of the Chanda Report, become India's first commercial radio station with advertising ruled unlikely to infringe upon the station's light entertainment fare (Baruah, 2017). The Chanda Committee and a subsequent inquiry - conducted by the Verghese Committee in 1978 - both recommended granting autonomy to AIR and the public television broadcaster, Doordarshan, a recommendation that wasn't implemented until the late 1990s, after the 1995 Supreme Court ruling that "the airwaves belong to the public" (Singhal, 2013).

Despite the critiques, AIR has enjoyed some notable successes; the Pune Radio Farm Forum in the 1950s was one of the earliest. Following a successful Canadian model, the Pune Project established a network of farm radio forums in five districts of Maharashtra with the aim of broadcasting agricultural information through a 30-minute programme on AIR and facilitating listener discussions about the content (Page & Crawley, 2001; Singhal, 2013). The forums were, however, short-lived, with AIR failing to capitalise on the lessons of the Pune experiment (Singhal, 2013). AIR's local broadcasting also played an important role in popularising the "Green Revolution" - the industrialisation of farming - and linking farmers to agricultural extension (Page & Crawley, 2001). AIR's broadcasting to rural areas though, much like its broader goals, was aimed at furthering development goals through disseminating information. The broadcasts were in local languages and were intended for community, rather than individual listening (K. Kumar, 2003). This soon proved to work against local broadcasting, as radio sets quickly became cheaper and thus more ubiquitous, leading to a decline in group listening (Singhal, 2013). The structure of AIR itself also worked against local broadcasting: while stations were broadcasting in many local languages, the programming objectives were set in Delhi and were often politically motivated (Page & Crawley, 2001). Despite its issues, however, AIR's local broadcasting, particularly broadcasts aimed at farmers, are still very popular. Echoing, or perhaps explaining, the success of farm radio programs on AIR, Ilboudo and del Castello (2003, p. 39) argue that radio holds particular importance for farmers:

"farmers must be able to communicate with peers, local authorities and institutions and have access to relevant knowledge and information, including technical, scientific, economic, social and cultural information. However, to be useful, information must be available to the users in appropriate languages and formats. At the same time, it must also be up-to-date and communicated through appropriate channels".

Indeed, quoting an AIR official, Page and Crawley explain that AIR's programmes for farmers are "perhaps the only service which is fully utilised by listeners because it closely relates to their life" (2001, p. 328).

Given the history of broadcasting in India, it is easy to see how the spectacle of development has become so ingrained and pervasive. Despite its involvement in early experiments in local and community radio, Thomas observes that the AIR archives reveal a "fixation with an essentialist, dominant cultural tradition at the expense of the diversity of Indian cultural traditions" (2011, p. 122). Even the earliest experiments with community radio, that were subsequently absorbed and dismantled by the national broadcaster, have colonial, development-driven underpinnings. What does this mean for the contemporary community radio environment in India? The nature of AIR's successful experiments provides a clue as to the role of community radio outside of this overwhelming development discourse. We can extend on this theory by briefly discussing a success story within the community radio sector before moving on to the data from this research. Despite the plethora of good work undertaken at any number of community radio stations in India, this section is limited to what could be considered the most noteworthy, or perhaps best-known, example.

No discussion of community radio in India could take place without mention of Sangham Radio. A landmark project in India's community radio landscape, Sangham Radio was the first community-based station that was licensed to an NGO, as opposed to an educational institution (Ghosh, 2011). Located in a drought-prone and impoverished area in Telangana, the station is managed and run by local Dalit women (Pavarala & Malik, 2007). Supported by the Deccan Development Society (DDS), a grassroots NGO that has been working with women, the impoverished and Dalits since 1983, Sangham Radio started narrowcasting in 1998 and broadcasting in 2008 (Pavarala & Malik, 2007; Shukla, 2014). Sangham Radio employs a unique community shareholder model in which each one of the approximately 5000 members contributes roughly 60INR (~0.65GBP) per year towards the maintenance of the station (Pavarala et al., 2010). In terms of content, the broadcasters cover a range of issues in their local dialect from agriculture to public health, to education, to gender justice, as well as the promotion of local folk songs and traditions. Their use of radio and video led to Sangham Radio and DDS taking part in a study of innovative uses of technology in low infrastructure regions (Tacchi, 2012). Tacchi found that the traditional speaker-listener relationship here was effectively and deliberately inverted, explaining that the women use "media for both outward 'speaking' and sharing of knowledge, and inward 'listening'" (Tacchi, 2012, p. 663). Indeed, in their analysis of programming, Pavarala, Malik and Belavadi (2010) observed that less than one percent of those featured on programmes are professional, external experts such as doctors,

scientists or bureaucrats, and that more than 80 percent of programme participants are women and Dalits. The philosophy of DDS is that the community is a repository of tremendous local knowledge on agriculture, health, and any number of other topics. As such, their approach represents a reversal of the top-down communication employed by the mainstream media (Pavarala et al., 2010). This commitment to communication rights within an integrated approach to development that places rural Dalit women at the centre has made the work of DDS and Sangham Radio "legendary" (Thomas, 2011, p. 129).

Crucial to the success of Sangham Radio, and the previous AIR experiments, was the involvement of local people and the sharing of local knowledge. The argument here is that community radio stations in India are able to do their best work when they are amplifying existing community knowledge communication systems. This section now discusses the concept of indigenous knowledge communication systems in more detail before examining how it applies to the research data.

IKCS

Drawing on AIR's early experiments in community and farm radio, as well as the success of Radio Sangham, it would seem that sharing local knowledge is a critical factor in establishing the value of community radio. This was echoed in the data of this research, with the best work of community radio, as recognised by both listeners and broadcasters, occurring when the station was acting as a way of amplifying existing knowledge communication systems. Manyozo (2012, p. 95) defines indigenous knowledge communication systems (IKCS) as:

> "media and communications that are rooted in local and indigenous epistemology, prior to being co-opted by external organisations and institutions. Such indigenous knowledge has always had educational elements that catalyse communities to adopt knowledge and practice that could strengthen communities".

In addition to sharing local knowledge, there is an important cultural dimension to IKCS as it represents a repository of a community's history, culture, and identity (Shukla, 2014). IKCS are particularly relevant in the context of community radio in India because they have the potential to offer horizontal forms of listening and dissemination of ideas, despite and sometimes within the pervasive influence of development and modernisation discourse (Manyozo, 2017).

It is, of course, necessary to problematise the term "indigenous". Adjaye interprets the term 'indigenous' as "something that originates from or is rooted in a specific cultural milieu", in contrast with the 'endogenous' which derives from the external world which, in this context, is usually the west (2008, p. 237). Indigenous knowledge can thus be conceptualised as "the way of knowing that a social group generates and accumulates over generations of living in an environment, allowing them to make sense of their world" (Manyozo, 2018, p. 395). As such, indigenous knowledge tends to be dialogical, interactive, and deeply embedded within its local context (Adjaye, 2008; Manyozo, 2018). The spectacle of development is often present within interpretations of indigenous knowledge, positioning it as

unscientific, irrational, and the antithesis of modernity: what Mohan calls a "primitivist discourse" (2001, p. 159). Modernity is hegemonic in how it constructs "the primitive": their knowledge is considered "irrational or condemned as ethno-knowledge" (Visvanathan, 2006, p. 166). Indeed, there is a tendency to compare 'indigenous' with 'modernity' as though the terms are mutually exclusive: however, indigenous does not refer to primitivity but rather to the organisation of social structures and, as such, can coexist with notions of modernity (Manyozo, 2018; Servaes & Verschooten, 2008). Aside from positioning indigenous knowledge as 'primitive' and in opposition to modernity, the spectacle of development also serves to present indigenous knowledge in a way that serves to "exoticize the Other" (Murphy, 2011, p. 381; Said, 1979). Such a view romanticizes indigenous knowledge which serves to privilege the cultural over the material and its subsequent appropriation by the west (Mohan, 2001). Discounting material, westernised consumption as evidence of exploitation fails to acknowledge agency and complex, hybrid identities, as well as the nuance of indigenous materiality (Iqani, 2016). This privileging also fails to take a critical view of the role of power within such indigenous knowledge systems because, naturally, local knowledge reflects local power structures (Mosse, 2001). 'Indigenous' as a key term is, therefore, at risk of both vilification and deification, neither of which is productive. Shresta (1995, p. 276) provides an apt summary and warns of the dangers of a lack of nuance in discussions of IKCS:

> "I am not trying to suggest that whatever was old was good and desirable and that every aspect of our lost heritage should be reclaimed. Nor am I implying that the old social structure should be revived in its entirety and that we should adopt an exclusionary position and advocate 'nativism.' Such a fundamentalist position is neither possible nor acceptable."

As such, this research interprets indigenous knowledge as: behavioural, social, and political; intrinsically linked to local context; compatible with, rather than in opposition to, modernity; and subject to the hegemonic structures of the society.

Having established a working definition of indigenous and, therefore, IKCS, it is useful to now explore different types of IKCS. IKCS does not take just one form: it is, of course, unique to its community and context. Manyozo (2012, 2018) proposes a useful theory of three forms of IKCS: common knowledge, technical and non-specialised knowledge, and privileged and specialised knowledge. He defines common knowledge as daily lived experiences within "open public forums... such knowledge is aimed at giving community members a sense of identity and citizenship, by increasing their levels of social capital as well as and their social and knowledge infrastructure" (Manyozo, 2018, pp. 401–402). Technical and non-specialised knowledge refers to the governance of the "legislative, political, economic and social" aspects of a community and its resources (Manyozo, 2018, p. 103). Finally, privileged and specialised knowledge "mediates the relationship between the community and its gods or spirit deities" (Manyozo, 2018, p. 405). In highly spiritual communities, this represents the highest form of IKCS as it can influence the other two. While Manyozo's theory offers a useful guide to understanding different types of IKCS, this thesis restricts itself to discussions of the first two categorisations of IKCS, common knowledge and

technical/non-specialised knowledge. Though the third category undoubtedly plays a role at both research sites, given the time spent in the field, any conclusions or discussions of privileged/specialised knowledge would be speculative and irresponsible. The importance of privileged/specialised knowledge at Malai Vanoli, in particular, with the highly traditional tribal villages within its broadcasting range, could be observed even from the perspective of an "outsider". Nonetheless, an in-depth discussion of the role of privileged/specialised knowledge in community radio lies outside of the scope of this thesis but represents a valuable area for future research.

As briefly discussed, it is important to recognise that IKCS are not immune to the spectacle of development. They too have been co-opted and approached through a frame of modernisation, where the assumption is that, unless they are repackaged to fit western modernity, indigenous systems are "unitary, unbounded, static, consensual, non-reflective, unscientific and traditional" (Manyozo, 2018, p. 396). Indeed, this assumption underpins much mainstream development thinking: those who value indigenous knowledge are faced with the full weight of the spectacle of development with its highly qualified "experts" and technological solutions (Cross, 1993). Dominant theories of development see knowledge transfer from the centres to the peripheries, disregarding the value of existing local knowledge. Viswanathan (2009) employs the example of a botanical fragment that is appropriated into a mass-produced drug without any acknowledgment of the indigenous epistemologies that made it possible. There is silencing and then there is also the re-appropriation of IKCS. Adjaye observes three different attitudes towards IKCS within the literature: the first is that of those who advocate for the retention of IKCS and argue for their adoption alongside modern mass communication technologies; the second involves hybridization/synchronization of the two; and the third group is that of "supplantationists" who argue for the elimination of IKCS in favour of ICT (Adjaye, 2008, p. 238). Manyozo suggests that these groupings themselves are "problematically orientalist" as they represent the commodification and positioning of IKCS outside of modernity (Manyozo, 2018, p. 397).

Community radio has been directly linked to media development initiatives involving IKCS. Media development refers to building the capacity of the media in order to achieve and support a free, plural, professional and sustainable press (Deane, 2014). Building media capacity may refer to physical infrastructure and advocacy work to improve government policies, media ownership and training opportunities (Manyozo, 2012). The dominant approaches to media development can take a somewhat supplantationist view, with Scott suggesting that media development, when "transplanted uncritically in the global South", can completely disregard the importance of IKCS (2014, p. 131). Manyozo goes so far as to refer to media development as "an instrument of modernisation" (2012, p. 151). He does admit though, that there are media development initiatives that focus on developing small-scale, local communication processes and working within, rather than opposed to IKCS (Manyozo, 2012). An interventionist double-standard remains though, with Berger observing that media development discourse generally is narrow in its definitions: media development is considered as "externally

originating proactive steps to 'develop' the media ... between North-South developers and 'developees'" while more organic, local growth is not perceived as a form of media development (2010, p. 550). The formation of news network Al Jazeera is a high-profile example of this double standard: significant for the perceived "development" of Qatar's media landscape, yet rarely considered an example of media development (Berger, 2010). Scott (2014, p. 96) provides a succinct summary of this critique:

> "Focussing on media development as an external intervention is problematic because it obscures the central role of internal or indigenous developments within the media. This is important because the most successful examples of media development are widely agreed to be those driven by local governments and people, rather than donors."

Such an example of this is the advocacy efforts around India's Right to Information (RTI) laws. Started in response to a perceived need, the grassroots social movement placed emphasis on voice and participation, and rejected institutional financial support in favour of local contributions (Scott, 2014; Thomas, 2008). Support was garnered through the use of local pedagogical tools and eventually gained enough momentum to successfully lobby for a more enabling media environment (Malik, 2015; Thomas, 2014a).

Community media has run the gamut of experiences in terms of IKCS and media development. The experiments with rural telecentres in India, which will be discussed in more detail in Chapter 7, represent a technocentric, supplantationist view of IKCS, while Sri Lanka's Kothmale Community Radio and its internet radio programming offer a form of hybridization. It could be argued that the establishment of community radio stations by NGOs, as opposed to organically from the community (extremely difficult in India's legislative environment, see Chapter 4), represents an interventionist approach to local media development. What was observed in practice, however, was a balanced relationship where IKCS were applied to support the work of community radio and vice versa - where community radio amplified existing IKCS.

Technical

"They asked me to speak about agriculture in the radio. For the past six or seven years, I am doing organic farming without the use of pesticides and insecticides. My father learnt this technique from Burma. We usually need 30kg of seed per hectare but through this method 3kg is enough for a hectare and we could save 27kg. Instead of planting five or six paddy saplings together, in this method we can plant just one sapling. I attended a meeting where 55-year-old man told that we can avoid use of insecticides if we plant the saplings in a row such that sunlight directly falls on them. Sunlight prevents the saplings from the attack of insects and other pests. After learning this technique, I have been doing agriculture without the use of insecticides. Initially, people in my community discouraged me that this technique won't work out and scolded me for spoiling the agricultural land. This method won't look good for the initial 15 to 20 days but later, only after the crop's development, they believed in me. This method is very fruitful as it gives

*good yield, chemical-free food crop to the people, and less expenditure. It is problem-free yield as it never gets affected even if the cows graze. It is not that every people knew everything. Only through radio, I came to know about organic farming. I also learnt about various diseases that would attack the cattle and also learnt the cure for them through radio. I also came to know about Ayurveda medicines through radio. I came to know about ayurvedic cure instead of English medicines. I had ulcer trouble for many years and I used to take Digene tablets as a temporary cure. Only through radio I came to know it is harmful to take Digene tablets so I stopped those tablets. They tell many useful information. They tell about the need to eradicate seemai karuvaeli (*an invasive species of cactus*), encourage renovating local water bodies, they tell about fish farming in the local water bodies and what kind of fish will be suitable to grow in lakes. They also tell about poultry farming with country chickens at home, techniques to maintain them and to prevent them from the local diseases. I've gained a lot of profit through the information told in the radio."*
- Enkal Vanoli listener.

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For ease of analysis, this thesis separates the types of IKCS observed into two categories: technical and cultural. While Manyozo's theoretical types offer a solid foundation from which to launch inquiry, given the diversity of the community radio stations and the villages and groups within their broadcasting range, a broader categorisation was necessary in order to capture the range of IKCS. Technical IKCS represent a key area of knowledge production and sharing at both stations. This area of IKCS draws from Manyozo's (2012, 2018) conceptualisation of technical and non-specialised knowledge and its focus on the management of the community's resources including land and water. Technical IKCS may also refer to other forms of technical knowledge that are not so easily categorised using Manyozo's theory. The technical knowledge of women, particularly surrounding local medicine, health, and nutrition, was observed as a key area of knowledge sharing across both stations. This section discusses the iterations of technical IKCS as observed and discussed in the research.

Technical IKCS was most noticeably observable at Enkal Vanoli, given its agricultural focus and the composition of their parent body (a farmers' federation). Recalling the earlier discussions of AIR, farm radio has a strong tradition in Indian media, which was clearly articulated by listeners and broadcasters at Enkal Vanoli.

> *"Farmers have habit of copying other farmers. They copy the same crop that the farmers are planting. If a farmer plants Basmati paddy and gets 20 sacks per hectare, the other farmers also do that. If any other farmer plants IR20 and faces loss, the other farmers desist from doing that. We learn from experiences and caution ourselves. We know all this as we are doing agriculture from very young age. Many other farmers listen to me in the radio and do cultivation. If I plant lady's finger, the other farmers tell my speech was good and they are also planting the same and ask me to pay a visit. I will feel very happy. Some call me and ask me remedy for white patch disease in lady's finger. I will tell them remove the plant and suggest organic and inorganic*

medicine to be sprayed... If I am always in my farm without contact with the outer world. I won't know all this. And even if I come to know, I should tell it to other farmers also. If I attend a meeting, I should come and tell what was told in the meeting. Out of hundred things told in the meeting, one particular thing will be very important. It will be a fact that we didn't know before and will be told by a youngster. In China, a young boy can tell how much amount of water is needed to cultivate 1kg of rice and for 1kg of meat, by referring to the net. I cannot refer to the net and tell the same. Let it be a youngster or let it be an elderly person, we should take whatever is productive. We should also take scientists words and even thief's words. Even they'll have some stuff to tell us." - Enkal Vanoli listener.

Such a testimony says a lot about the knowledge sharing tradition of local farmers and the relatively progressive attitudes in terms of new approaches to agriculture. Such an attitude was also observed by Ilboudo and del Castello (2003) who noted that, when introduced by familiar, trusted sources of information, rural populations are receptive to innovation and creative application of technology. Critical within this statement though is the importance placed on communication and knowledge sharing between farmers, as opposed to external parties. This was recognised in Enkal Vanoli's approach to agricultural broadcasting and their use of "resource" people from the community as opposed to external "experts"

"We do not have many resource person from our side in the community radio. People are our resource persons. Only their experience helps us. In regard to agriculture, it is traditional and inherited through generations. They will like to go according to what experienced farmers do. Even if we bring agricultural officials to guide them, they wouldn't listen. They will follow only what successful farmers have done. If a farmer has took high yield in brinjal or paddy, they wish to follow the same. Agriculture is a thing that is inherited through generations and hence experienced farmers are our resource persons. In our radio, people are our contributors."- Enkal Vanoli broadcaster.

Technical IKCS were not restricted to just agricultural information. Health and medicine represented key areas of technical IKCS, particularly among the female listeners.

"I have spoken about pregnancy. I have given suggestions about the diet of pregnant women. What all they can eat and what should be avoided. Also, I have suggested about food habits for each trimester and how we should take care of ourselves in the time of delivery. The radio people and I were mutually happy for this programme. And importantly, I told from what I know very well and that made me content." - Malai Vanoli listener.

The value of such knowledge sharing is intrinsically related to the local contexts. Many listeners were unwilling to seek professional medical help unless it was absolutely necessary due to the prohibitive costs and travel distances to health services. As such, IKCS focussing on local remedies to common problems were popular among the listeners.

*"They conducted a debate show emphasizing the importance of taking fruits. They set the debate as a conversation between a mother-in-law and daughter-in-law. It was easily understandable. The doctor has advised me to take fruits such as apple, pomegranate, and mozambi as it is good for my health. But through this programme, we can get such advice without visiting a doctor so it is helpful. The other thing is, we got to know more about homely medicine through our mothers. Now, as my daughter volunteers in the radio, she collects facts from the old grannies about this medicine, records it and tell it in the radio. In such times, it is helpful for us to know some unknown facts. It tells about the simple medication for the children. Last week, my friend complained that she has a burning sensation in her throat. I remember hearing a granny telling in the radio that vallarai keerai (*a kind of local spinach*) soup will heal it. I tried once for me and I got cured. So, I considered doing it for her. But I was little hesitant but somehow, I took spinach from my garden and gave her the boiled spinach soup around 3 in the afternoon. By 8 in the night, she told she got completely healed of that burning sensation. She did not even consult with the doctor as it was completely healed. It is useful for such small health issues. And we got to know about it only through the radio."* - Malai Vanoli listener.

"Earlier, my son used to fall sick every now and then and develop fever. I usually had take him to doctor at least once a week as he was malnourished. But after I participated in this programme, I came to know about local medicines that would help anaemia. I started giving moringa leaves soup and several other pulses which are rich in iron. I'm not telling it for the sake of telling, but it really worked better on my son, he is ok now. I have reduced the frequency of taking him to the doctor and he is sufficiently nourished now. I am happy that he is playing normally as any other child, which was not the case earlier. It is surely a benefit I reaped through the radio." - Enkal Vanoli listener.

The programming area of health represents an interesting intersection in terms of IKCS and the development imperatives of the stations. While both listeners and broadcasters discussed the value of sharing traditional, local medicines, there also remains a significant emphasis on 'modern' or, as one participant put it, "English" medicine. Building on Adjaye's categorisations of IKCS literature, Manyozo defines "knowledge integrationism" as a form of IKCS which refers to "the co-existence and duality of modern and traditional governance systems in the global South" (2018, p. 399). The approach to health coverage at both stations could be considered a form of knowledge integration: community radio facilitates dialogue between "exogenous and indigenous knowledge" (Manyozo, 2018) and provides listeners with the information that enables them to make decisions that best suit their circumstances.

Cultural

"The self-help group I am in went to the city to get a loan. After the loan got sanctioned, the tribal people

became happy and told that they want to dance in front of the collector immediately. I shied away
thinking that the women are also going to dance. But the tribal people did not take it as a great deal.
Seeing me enthusiastically watching their performance, one girl from the group called out to me and
asked me join the group and she will teach me the steps. While I was still shy, she told me stand in the
centre so that they would dance around. So, I performed with them that day. And that is why I started
listening to the tribal programme in the radio every day." - Malai Vanoli listener.

<p style="text-align:center">***</p>

This section focusses on how cultural IKCS could be observed in my field data, which may involve recording and sharing of local cultural traditions and practices of the various groups within the broadcast range, as well as sharing the cultural talents of listeners. Supporting cultural IKCS represents an important role of community media. Gumucio-Dagron rather poetically writes that "culture does not exist in a vacuum of silence and confinement; culture lives because it is communicated" (2014, p. 110). He sees community media as playing a critical role in this communication of culture, particularly in terms of its ability to facilitate "balanced negotiations" and "dialogue in equal conditions" among cultures, as opposed to mass media information flows where one culture dominates (Gumucio-Dagron, 2014). This could be more readily observed at Malai Vanoli given the unique cultures of the different tribal groups within their broadcasting range. Tribal listeners were often given the opportunity to share their cultural knowledge:

> *"They will ask us to sing devotional songs and I have sung such songs."*
> *"I have also sung, I have told about my culture, I have told about agriculture if they asked about it."* - Malai Vanoli listener focus group.

IKCS in this context also involves the preservation of local traditions and customs. Community radio can play a role in reducing the distance between the conditions of cultural production and the everyday experience from which such cultural productions emerge (Atton, 2001). Community radio working in this capacity was discussed by listeners and volunteers at both sites who recounted their experiences in how their cultural practices had been shared and supported by their community radio stations.

> *"We went to the field where they collect seedlings. That was a raining season when seedlings*
> *were transferred. We went there asked to sing the folk songs and record them. They sang for all*
> *of us so that it gets broadcasted in radio. By singing leisurely, they work and enjoy at the same*
> *time. In the old days they used to sing, even now they are singing. I added kulavai (*ululation*) in*
> *that. It is customary and auspicious to raise kulavai and start the transplantation of seedling.*
> *What they shared on that day was really impressive. Through our radio, our villagers' talents*
> *came to limelight."* - Enkal Vanoli volunteer.

> *"Recently the radio hosted a baby shower ceremony. I'm conceived for the second time*
> *and hence baby shower ceremony was not done at home. But radio people hosted it and many*
> *other women who are not privileged to celebrate this ceremony at home participated in this*

ceremony. It was happy for us and it is a useful thought too." - Malai Vanoli listener.

Several community radio stations have also developed formats specifically aimed at preserving and sharing the culture of the local community. In one of many noteworthy cases, Shukla (2014) points to Rudi No Radio in Gujarat and its programme that preserves the history of the community through recording and broadcasting the memories of village elders. Malai Vanoli placed particular emphasis on this aspect of IKCS, perhaps due to the prominence that its parent body gives to preserving and recording the local traditions and customs. The broadcasters spoke passionately of their role in preserving and sharing the unique cultures and traditions of the different tribal groups within their broadcast range. They also noted that their listeners expressed appreciation for such work and how they had applied such cultural learnings to their everyday life.

> *"We do work with diverse communities because the knowledge that one community withholds will not be present in other community. Through their knowledge, we could help other community."*

> *"We do programs on English health and medication. Although it is useful, the listeners request us to do programs on traditional medicine. So, we travel to the villages and get knowledge about traditional medicines from the elderly people. In olden days, one tribe used to have a priest who prescribes traditional medicine. There was a religious reason for the people to go and visit the temple while they are sick. But apart from this, the priest knew certain traditional herbs that would cure certain ailments. They will advise people to take certain herbs that would be best for petty health problems."* - Malai Vanoli staff group interview.

Community radio operating in such a role is particularly important given the increasingly globalized media environment. Howley argues that community media support and encourage local cultural production and autonomy in the face of "the homogenizing influence of national media industries and the encroachment of cultural forms produced and distributed by transnational corporations" (2002, p. 11). Encouraging cultural production and showcasing the talents within their local communities were seen as key roles by staff at both stations.

> *"Also, we encourage them to display their talents through radio. For example, in our countryside they sing a lot of folk songs while they work in the field... But in spite of all the shortcomings, we have recorded over 200 folk songs."* - Enkal Vanoli broadcaster.

> *"Even recently one of the listeners wrote a poetry for us and recited in the radio."* - Malai Vanoli broadcaster.

Broadcasters at Enkal Vanoli also discussed the difficulties that they encountered in pursuit of this aim. When working with their female listeners, they had developed several strategies to make them feel more comfortable about engaging in cultural IKCS.

> *"Women have many talents and in the way of bringing out their talents in the radio we engage*

with them."

   "It's very difficult to make women talk. They hesitate at first point because they think they lack knowledge in certain topics. So, I take some books handy while I go for interviews. If they can't suddenly remember any. I will ask them read from the book and tell some points. After a few points gradually they will remember some more points on their own. Some women need motivation to talk. I simply talk to some women to motivate them for speaking in the radio. Few women will like to talk on their own. But few others will prefer answering for questions. For such people, I will ask questions such that they answer. Sometimes we'll ask them to refer to the book we take. Sometimes we ask them to consult with their elders if what they speak is correct." - Enkal Vanoli staff group interview.

Community radio clearly plays a key role in amplifying the cultural aspects of IKCS. Community radio serves to amplify existing cultural IKCS by recording and sharing the various cultural acts and traditions of groups within their broadcasting range. Not only does this contribute to greater understanding and communication between different segments of the listening community, but it also serves to act as a cultural repository. Aside from this, community radio offers space for listeners to engage in their own forms of cultural production by allowing them to showcase their talents, be it singing, poetry, storytelling, and so on. In these ways, community radio represents a valuable tool of IKCS regarding culture.

IKCS and the rhizome

Related to the role of community radio in amplifying IKCS is the conceptualisation of community radio as rhizome. Briefly discussed in Chapter 4, the rhizome is one of four theoretical approaches to community radio as posited by Bailey, Cammaerts, and Carpentier in their seminal work, *Understanding Alternative Media* (2007). Though the authors suggest that the four approaches should be considered together, they concede that special attention must be given to community media as rhizome (Bailey et al., 2007; Santana & Carpentier, 2010). Community radio as rhizome draws on the work of Deleuze and Guattari (1988) and refers to the fluid, contingent nature of the medium and the ways in which community radio connects various disparate elements of society to each other (Bailey et al., 2007). Deleuze and Guattari suggest a number of characteristics of a rhizome: connection, multiplicity, heterogeneity, no beginning or end, it is always between things, an intermediary (1988). Deleuze and Guattari (1988) suggest that the philosophy of the state is arbolic: linear, hierarchical and static. In contrast, the rhizomatic is "non-linear, anarchic and nomadic" (Carpentier et al., 2007). The rhizome has also been used in postcolonial theory to conceptualise power flows and dispute the centre/margin view of reality. Ashcroft, Griffiths, and Tiffin suggest that the "repressive structures of imperial power themselves operate rhizomatically rather than monolithically" (2013, p. 207). The connection and heterogeneity of a rhizome imply that any point of the

network can connect to any other point and multiplicity suggests that rhizomes operate outside of fixed sets of rules (Santana & Carpentier, 2010). Therein lies the importance of community media: through the "catalysing role they can play by functioning as the crossroads where people from different types of movements and struggles meet and collaborate" (Carpentier et al., 2003, p. 62). This mediated interaction need not take place at the individual level and can involve groups, organisations, and even interpretive communities (Carpentier, 2015). Indeed, community media as rhizome also accounts for the linkages and interconnections between community media and civil society, as well as with the market and state (Carpentier & Doudaki, 2014). Community media as rhizome also contribute to the amplification of IKCS by establishing themselves as what Jallov refers to as "efficient local knowledge centres" through the creation of "independent, sustainable, and indigenized" networks (2005, p. 33). The next section explores the relationship between community radio as rhizome and IKCS, specifically through social linkages and links with other organisations and groups within and outside of the community.

Social

"As most of our listeners are farming communities, it builds a sense of oneness among them. They appreciate the programs that were good. Women especially bond well through radio. Some women formed a motherly bond which one of the regular speakers. They were requesting me many times for meeting her in person. I arranged their meeting in one of the events, and they exchanged their numbers and grow affectionate since then. Even people who haven't met face-to-face appreciate if some content in radio is good. Also, they are very affectionate towards the radio staff and develop friendship with us. So, I hope in this way we built a sense of community." - Enkal Vanoli broadcaster.

"Yes, one Amma came to our village for cooking competition. But she later become our soul mother. She shared her preparations with us and treated us like her daughter. She was a stranger and we didn't even know her before. But she instantly bonded with us sharing her sorrows. Now we are in regular contact with her." - Enkal Vanoli listener.

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A critical aspect of both community radio as rhizome and as amplification for IKCS is the social interactions and relationships that are built and maintained through the station. The role of the social is a basic assumption of IKCS, which sees individuals, not as socially isolated, but as members of social groups. These social relationships affect how media messages are received, with information often shared with friends and family before the individuals themselves react to it (Adjaye, 2008). Indeed, for Manyozo, a key purpose of common knowledge in IKCS is increasing levels of social capital and "giving community members a sense of identity and citizenship" (2018, pp. 401–402). The social relationships facilitated by the community radio stations were a major recurring theme throughout the research, with listeners and broadcasters at both stations discussing the importance of interpersonal relationships for the stations

broadcasting and other activities.

Establishing and maintaining social relationships emerged as a critical factor in enabling the radio station staff to do their jobs. The importance placed on local knowledge at both stations meant that strong social networks within the community are essential.

"It's not easy if we don't connect with them personally. They won't immediately talk to us if we give them the mic. First, we try to make them understand that we are no strangers and we come from radio that is within their geographical region that is broadcasted one and only for them. Next, we explain them that if they knew something and if they share it in the radio then 10 other people will benefit from that. Also we should encourage them that the display of the talents through radio will fetch them some other better chance from outside. For example, in our countryside, they sing a lot of folk songs while they work in the field. But if you ask them to personally sing and record, they might not be comfortable. Only by talking to them continuously, we could overcome all these crisis. But in spite of all the shortcomings, we have recorded over 200 folk songs. Especially when it comes to the kids it is very difficult. They will have talent and they will have experience talking before but they will hesitate while we record. We should make them comfortable and we should make them feel that we are one among them and only then they will talk. We should also convince the people to make use of opportunity to talk in a radio which is otherwise quite impossible for the people to go to other radio stations and talk." - Enkal Vanoli broadcaster.

"Listeners will not interact with us properly when we go for the first time. Only when they get to know what's better they'll start sharing their personal stuff. Even to share useful information on the radio we should be well known to them. While we go for the first time they get all nervous as they have to speak in the radio and they won't open up properly. But weeks after weeks they get accustomed and they make themselves ready to speak in the radio in between the gap of each visit. So, following up goes a long way." - Malai Vanoli broadcaster.

"The listeners who know us or who have participated in radio program, invite us to record any of their temple fair or any events that happens in their village. They feel proud that their village event is broadcasted in the radio." - Enkal Vanoli broadcaster.

One of the broadcasters at Enkal Vanoli had only been working at the station for about one month at the time of fieldwork. He observed that the social relationships between the station staff and their listeners represented a key difference between community radio and other media.

"I did not have a community radio in my home place. I used to listen to All India Radio. But I feel it did not create the impact that community radio could create. There it is a wide range and there are a lot of audience but there is a disorientation in interaction. But here it's all the small geographical area and we could interact very well. That's what I like about community radio." -

Enkal Vanoli broadcaster.

The social nature of interactions between broadcasters and their listeners often led to unexpected discussions and interview topics:

"People do share their personal experiences. We actually go for some other interview, but they start interacting with us about their personal experiences."

"Whenever we go for interview we become one among them. Even today we went for an interview for snake awareness. But they invited us to their home and served tea and got us some fresh merakkaai (vegetable pear)*. All this happens when we go for field work. We become their friends while we go for any recording."* - Malai Vanoli broadcaster group interview.

It is clear that the broadcasters' investments in building relationships with their listeners is worthwhile. A number of listeners discussed their relationships with the broadcasters as individuals as key motivators for their engagement and participation in the radio.

"The workers in radio are in regular contact and they became my friends. I participate in all the events organised by the radio. I also follow the programmes in the radio. We spend time for radio out of our busy schedule as it is useful for us in many ways." - Enkal Vanoli listener.

"They are one among us. We consider them as a friend or sibling." - Malai Vanoli listener.

A further aspect of the role of community radio as rhizome, and as amplifying IKCS, is the way in which the stations facilitated social linkages between disparate groups of listeners. This was observed and discussed most frequently at Enkal Vanoli, possibly given the larger body of volunteers that the station engaged.

"We haven't socialised much before. But now we go to the radio and do programmes. We ourselves are surprised listening to our voices in the radio. We cannot believe it is our work. Likewise, we got many friends outside our village. We meet them once or twice in any events but later become thick friends. We even invite them over to our houses while they come here. We have got many friends."

"Apart from this radio workers, we also maintain a good friendship with the volunteers from other villages. We all are in volunteering team and hence we know each other. We are in regular contact and maintain a good friendship with them."

"As I have done my diploma in nursing, I basically knew a few things. But if I had to tell something that I learnt after listening to the radio, it is connecting with people." - Enkal Vanoli listener/volunteer focus group.

Relevant to this aspect of community radio as rhizome and IKCS is the role of community radio in the construction and maintenance of communities. As discussed in Chapter 4, community radio

audiences may actively engage in the construction of meaning and communities, but these articulations operate within and are partially influenced by shifting temporal, cultural, environmental, historical, and socio-political structures, including IKCS (Gibson, 2000). Viewing community radio as a process of articulating community through the linking of separate entities, as implied by the rhizome metaphor, enables one to consider the complex role that stations play within their communities, particularly in a development context, and the role that listeners play in contributing to this process. Manyozo writes that IKCS have "always had educational elements that catalyse communities to adopt knowledge and practice that could strengthen communities" (2012, p. 95). Employing the rhizome metaphor alongside IKCS provides a useful framework for understanding how community radio facilitates what Howley describes as "an ongoing process of community building and maintenance" (2009, p. 64). Bessire and Fisher (2012) suggest that, in this context, it may be more productive to view the concept of 'community' as created, to some extent, by the media forms that audiences engage with, rather than as a paradigmatic way of understanding community radio. While this seems a media-centric approach to constructing community, such a definition of community allows space for multiple communities to be served by a single community radio station, as was observed at both stations.

Other organisations

"If there is any new scheme implemented by the government, the radio makes people aware of it and tells the details of the scheme and which government official should be approached for getting the scheme done. Similarly, if there is an agricultural scheme or subsidy, the radio tells them the process of obtaining the subsidy, the agricultural officials to be met etc. Even if the farmer is ignorant, the radio will make them aware of it and acts as their guide. If not for the radio. we need to go and tell people individually about the scheme but now radio does the job." - Enkal Vanoli listener and parent body member.

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Community radio as rhizome also involves linkages with other organisations and groups within and outside of the community. These linkages develop in two ways: firstly, through the broadcast of information, such as in the previous interview excerpt; secondly, through the other activities of the station, unrelated to broadcast content. In this context, sharing information about schemes and subsidies relevant to their listeners represents an important aspect of community radio as rhizome. Sharing such information is a relatively common phenomenon across community radio stations in India, especially given the number of schemes and subsidies available but the relative dearth of information on how to access them (Shukla, 2014). Broadcasters noted that this represented a recurring theme of the feedback from their listeners: they want information about the schemes relevant to them.

> *"Some people ask us about the subsidies from the government and request us to broadcast that information in the radio."* - Enkal Vanoli broadcaster.

The role of community radio in this regard is also recognised by the local government, with Malai Vanoli

fielding requests from their local representatives to share information about their various schemes.

> *"There are few local schemes sponsored by the panchayat. Not every people will be aware of this. So, they requested to give information and do programs regarding the schemes. We spoke to the panchayat and do programs that creates awareness among the people."* - Malai Vanoli broadcaster.

The station manager of Malai Vanoli however, expressed frustration at having to negotiate with government officials to gain information about the various scholarships available. It appears this linkage was more arbolic than rhizomatic, given that the government officials seem to be offering one-way communication, strictly on their terms.

> *"People of these tribal communities are not very rich. There is middle-class people or low-class people. They sought our help for education. They ask us if we could help them getting scholarships from the government. But most of the time we cannot help them as it is difficult to correspond with officials regarding scholarship. There is another problem too. The officials do not allow us to broadcast these matters in radio as they fear any complication in future. They will avoid meeting us even if we ask for appointments. Because of this information flow is cut down. I consider this as a huge problem."* - Malai Vanoli station manager.

Information sharing via community radio stations also create rhizomatic linkages through phone-in programmes. Such programmes, particularly those linking health professionals and agricultural experts with listeners, were widely used and appreciated, particularly at Enkal Vanoli.

> *"We do many medicinal programs, where doctors participate as expert speakers. Programs will be useful for the people who cannot go and meet the doctor by getting an appointment. They can directly call and talk to the doctor about their ailments. They get benefited by this way."*

> *"The doctors they are talking about are high profile doctors and it is nearly impossible to meet them in person if not through the radio. So it is very useful for listeners and creates a connectivity. The gynaecologist charges Rs. 300 for an appointment. But she does it for free for the radio. Even though we cannot meet her in person, we could talk to her through the radio. She also gives preference if we tell her that we come from the radio. One of our members took her mother for a check-up as she developed symptoms of diabetes. The doctor is a famous diabetician and charges thousand rupees for an appointment. But he did the tests for free and charged minimal amount for the treatment."* - Enkal Vanoli staff group interview.

> *"We maintain a good link with the radio staff. We visit them frequently. We talk to the doctors through them. We ask various health-related doubts and doubts about agriculture. We share whatever problem we face and ask for remedy. We also share about our neighbours' doubts. Sometimes while we cannot talk to the doctor directly we tell to the radio staff and they convey it to the doctor. Most of the time we contact doctor through the radio only."* - Enkal Vanoli listener.

Both stations also had several initiatives in place to engage with various other organisations in the community. Building and maintaining these organisational linkages represented a significant part of staff responsibilities. At the time of site visits, Malai Vanoli was in the process of engaging with local schools on developing a waste management program as an extra-curricular activity for students. The idea for such a program emerged from a staff meeting and aligned closely with the aims of the parent body, as well as a local government initiative on recycling and reducing plastic use. Enkal Vanoli also placed emphasis on engaging with local schools and colleges, with groups of agricultural extension students from a nearby college visiting the station twice a year. Students were asked to prepare a radio drama skit on a topic of their choosing that the radio staff recorded for broadcasting later. Two boys performed a conversation between farmers discussing drip irrigation, two very nervous girls who had been taking extensive notes recorded a discussion between a mother-in-law and her daughter-in-law, and finally, the students' professor was interviewed. The recordings were then played for the students who were waiting outside to much laughter and applause. Such linkages formed valuable relationships with the communities, which served to support the stations in terms of broadcasting content and other activities.

The influence of the parent bodies was particularly noticeable through the other activities of the stations. While school visits and hosting medical camps were observed at both stations, more targeted activities that closely aligned with the parent bodies' objectives were also common. Staff at Enkal Vanoli invested significant amounts of time in building relationships with agricultural banks in order to build support for the activities of the parent body. The farmers' federation facilitates seller's collectives to develop value-added products for market. Millet, for example, does not yield profit when sold in its raw form due to the cuts extracted by middlemen but when farmers are able to produce cookies, flour, or other products out of the raw materials and sell them as a cooperative, they are able to significantly increase their earnings. These cooperatives are supported by a local agricultural bank that then works closely with Enkal Vanoli to publicise such schemes. Malai Vanoli is able to leverage its position within a larger NGO to inform diverse radio content; a strategy that, according to a broadcaster, is appreciated by the listeners.

> "They like the chunk of informations we provide in the radio. As we are associated with many departments inside our organisation itself we give a collective knowledge on all these informations through our radio. They appreciate our move and encourage doing more." - Malai Vanoli broadcaster.

While community media clearly can act as rhizome in linking disparate parts of civil society, it is worth noting the power structures and limitations at play. While the linkage activities outside of broadcasting content are, ostensibly, for the benefit of listeners, there is evidence to suggest that such activities are shaped by forces external to the radio stations. This was blatantly obvious in the interactions between government officials and the stations, which seemed to take place strictly on the terms of the officials. The parent bodies also clearly influenced the rhizomatic linkages that the stations

make, as observed through the relationships with agricultural banks at Enkal Vanoli, and the cross-promotion of other divisions within the parent NGO at Malai Vanoli. This is not to say that the listeners do not benefit from such linkages, but the role of power relations cannot be discounted, even within the structural fluidity associated with the rhizome.

7 Meaningful participation

Defining participation

Participation is crucial to community radio acting as an amplification system for traditional knowledge sharing practices. Far from embodying the idealised "maximalist" models of participation as espoused in traditional definitions of community radio (see Chapter 4), in the stations studied community participation may best be described as "limited". The discussions that took place in Chapter 5 are particularly relevant here, alongside several other factors that serve to impact on who can participate and to what extent. Despite these restrictions, there were many examples of how value or meaning was derived from these participatory experiences. This chapter makes an argument for widening the lens to take into account the local contexts and individual experiences of participation. To do this, this chapter first attempts to establish a broad interpretation of participation in terms of how it applies to community radio working within a development agenda. The concepts of access and interaction are introduced as distinct from, yet at times prerequisite for, participation, and the dichotomy of minimalist and maximalist models of participation are explored. This section concludes with a brief discussion on participation as a political act laden with power relations. Drawing on the research data, this chapter goes on to outline the various factors that serve to limit or restrict full or maximalist participation in community radio stations more broadly, as well as those factors that apply more specifically to community radio stations in India. Finally, this chapter turns to a discussion of meaningful participation. Meaningful participation is introduced as a way of understanding participatory experiences that may not redress power imbalances or even traditionally be defined as participation, but that hold meaning and value for those involved.

Participation remains a subject of intense debate. Its conceptual vagueness and malleable applications across a range of disciplines have meant that participation has come to mean 'everything and nothing' (Carpentier, 2011b, p. 14). Given the complex and indistinct nature of the term, rather than attempting to prescribe a specific definition, this section instead explores how participation has been classified in the literature, the role of power, and several related but distinct terms that are *not* participation. Though this roundabout method may not arrive at a specific, lexical definition of participation, such an approach aims to generate a broad understanding of what participation might look like in a community radio for development environment and the various factors that contribute to what constitutes participation.

Given the complex and malleable nature of participation as a concept, as well as its myriad uses across numerous fields, several prominent authors have found it valuable to develop various ways of classifying participation in order to establish a definition. This section will explore several key works across several fields so as to explore the different degrees, motivations, and influences on participatory environments. Firstly, we turn to the work of Farrington and Bebbington (2005). Writing from the

perspective of agricultural development, they proposed a simple tool for evaluating participation based on depth and breadth, where "deep" participation sees participants involved throughout all stages of the process or initiative. The other axis refers to breadth, where "narrow" participation may only involve a handful of people; as such, participation can be "deep" and "narrow" in the same way it can be "wide" and "shallow" if many people are involved but their participation is limited to consultation. This tool may be useful for cursory or rapid assessments of participatory initiatives, but it lacks the nuance to truly contribute to evaluating or classifying participation in a meaningful way.

One of the most prominent works on participation is Arnstein's (1969) seminal ladder of participation which retains contemporary relevance. Arnstein suggests that citizen participation is like eating spinach in that no-one is opposed to it in principle because it is good for you (1969, p. 216). More academically, she equates citizen participation with citizen power and, from an urban planning perspective, develops a ladder outlining different levels of redistribution of power from manipulation at the bottom through to citizen control at the top (Arnstein, 1969). Arnstein's ladder makes specific reference to the role of power throughout participatory processes, and differentiates between "non-participation", "tokenism", and "citizen control".

While Arnstein focussed more on those on the receiving end of participatory interventions, Pretty (1995) developed his model by looking at the users or facilitators of said interventions. In a typology ranging from "manipulative participation" up to "self-mobilization", Pretty explores the motivations underpinning participation in the context of sustainable agricultural development. He suggests that what is implied by his typology is that "the term 'participation' should not be accepted without appropriate clarification" (Pretty, 1995, p. 1253). There are a number of similarities between the work of Arnstein and Pretty, though the 'top' of Pretty's typology is "self-mobilization", which "may or may not challenge existing distributions of wealth and power" (1995, p. 1252). In contrast, Arnstein's "citizen control" sees "have-not citizens obtain the majority of decision-making seats, or full managerial power" (1969, p. 217). Despite the more limited nature of Pretty's approach, Cornwall (2008) suggests that what Pretty demonstrates through this typology is the importance of the motivations underpinning participation, while Arnstein reminds us that participation is essentially about power and control.

An alternative model, one that focusses more on participation and development, was developed by White (1996) who explores the various motivations for participation from the perspective of recipients and those implementing the initiative. She offers four forms of participation from nominal, in which the participation is mostly for display from the side of the implementer and inclusion or access to benefits from the side of the participation, through to transformative, in which participation is seen as both a means and an ends (White, 1996, p. 7). White's model is particularly useful in this context, as it explores both sides of the participatory exchange, specifically the motivations of potential participants versus the motivations of an implementing body. Considering competing motivations is a valuable lens through which to view participatory exchanges, as it begins to shed light on the environmental conditions in which

the participation is taking place, as well as the power relations at play.

Turning now to the field of media studies, amidst these ladders and typologies, Carpentier offers a simplified tool for assessing "participatory intensities" which classes participation as "minimalist" or "maximalist" (2015, 2016a). Minimalist forms of participation see media professionals maintain control of the processes and final outcomes, and participation is strictly limited and somewhat superficial. Carpentier argues that such a model articulates "non-political" media participation and places the participatory activities of audiences in a vacuum - disconnected from other societal fields and discussions (2015, p. 18). In contrast, maximalist forms actively work to balance the power structures by encouraging participation of non-privileged groups and recognising the heterogeneity of audiences. Such an approach, according to Carpentier, acknowledges the "political nature of media participation" (2015, p. 19).

These models represent just a tiny fraction of the broader literature on participation. Even this limited segment reveals the complexity of what can be considered participation, and how motivations and perspectives of those involved in participatory processes can differ greatly. Viewing various accounts of what constitutes "participatory" through the lens of these models encourages the exploration of both the motivations and power relations at play and the specific characteristics of the supposed participation. Despite the number of models and literature surrounding participation, there appears to be little consensus as to what might actually be considered participation. Is "functional participation" (Pretty, 1995) true participation despite the materialistic motivations? Can "delegated power" (Arnstein, 1969) really be considered participation when the decision-making power can be bestowed and removed by higher powers? Is participation in name only, "nominal participation" (White, 1996), real participation or does it just look good on annual reports? Despite best intentions, in practice, the lines in these ladders and typologies are complex and unclear. However, this is precisely what should be drawn from such models and classifications: that participation is, in practice, complex and unclear. There are myriad factors that may influence participatory processes, hence the difficulty of evaluating participation, let alone placing it in a two-dimensional model.

A final point to note on these models of participation is that although these typologies offer simplified, visual ways of thinking about participation and its conditions, what is implied within each is that more participation is better. To use Carpentier's dichotomy, in each of these cases, maximalist participation is presented as the peak or the aspirational. More participation implies more power-sharing, therefore more political power for those "recipients" of participation, with the caveat that the motivations for this participation should be altruistic and not tainted by thoughts of improving access to resources or perceived benefits.

What is missing from these discussions is agency. Inherent to the aforementioned models of participation is the assumption that potential "participants" actually want to participate, given the chance. The thought that some people could make the active choice *not* to participate fails to register in these models (Cornwall, 2008). This could be attributed to a wilful naivety on the part of implementing

agencies about the authenticity and motivations for participation (Cooke & Kothari, 2001). Or perhaps it could be down to an inadequate model of individual action in relation to changing motivations, social structures and livelihoods (Cleaver, 2001). For whatever reason, the theory that the motivation to participate is inherent serves to limit the agency of those on the receiving end of the participatory endeavour. Community media is not immune to such assumptions. Semujju observes that community media "came with an assumption that merely starting to operate would develop whatever community they were put into, after all, the media were participatory" (2014, p. 198). Katiyar made a similar observation, writing that "the participation of the community seems to imply that the motivation for participation by a community is inherent" (2017, p. 326). In fact, community radio, and other forms of media and technology, can only facilitate participation if the community is willing and has the capacity to participate (Katiyar, 2017). The concept of agency is a valuable one to bear in mind throughout discussions of participation in community radio. To return to Arnstein's simile, despite the theoretical value, few adults are forced to eat their greens.

Access

Given the complexity of establishing a firm interpretation of participation and how it applies to community radio, it may be useful to employ a kind of diagnosis of exclusion. Access and interaction are different but related concepts that are generally not considered to constitute participation in themselves, but nonetheless, represent important aspects of the broader phenomenon. This section will discuss these concepts in turn and explore how they relate to participation and community radio. This section also aims to demonstrate the importance of what some models may term "non-participation".

Firstly, the concept of access represents a key aspect of participation. At its most fundamental level, in this context, access refers to "the establishment of presence" (Carpentier, 2011b, 2016a). This "presence" may refer to access to technology and media content, as well as to feedback mechanisms and presence within the media organisation itself (Carpentier, 2016a). Carpentier has written extensively on both access and interaction as necessary preconditions of participation, without necessarily constituting participation in themselves (2015). Nonetheless, access represents a key concept within both media, communication, and development, and community radio literature. This section explores how access is conceptualised and operationalised in both fields, before examining how access is interpreted and enacted in the research data. These discussions serve to illustrate the distinctions between access and participation while preserving the importance of access as a necessary pre-condition for deeper participatory experience.

Access represents a key tenet of community radio, as alluded to in Chapter 4. Community radio is characterised by providing media access to communities on their own terms (Atton, 2001; Pavarala & Malik, 2007). Indeed, Carpentier, Lie, and Servaes argue that "access by the community and participation of the community" represent defining features of community radio (2003, pp. 54–55). As discussed in

Chapter 4, community radio should act as an alternative public sphere that is accessible to anyone in the respective community (Guo, 2014, p. 126). Access represents an essential part of Habermas's original conceptualisation of the public sphere: when defining his seminal concept, he specifically wrote, "Access is guaranteed to all citizens" (1991, p. 49). Community radio as an alternative public sphere (N. Fraser, 1990) relates issues of access to broader discussions of communication rights. From a communication rights perspective, access may refer to physical access to media texts and technologies, social access to public spheres and political debates, and more fundamental personal access to media knowledge and critical literacy (Fornäs & Xinaris, 2013). Indeed, Thomas suggests that "the right to communication was built around notions of 'access', 'participation', people's voices and the right of communities to contribute to the making of communication environments of their choice" (2011, p. 13). The relationship between community radio and communication rights is particularly explicit in the context of India. Community radio is said to represent a key part of the broader struggle for communication rights (Pavarala & Malik, 2007). In India, equitable access to communication media is seriously threatened, not so much by excessive state power as in the past, but by uninhibited growth of media entities into large-scale, globalised conglomerates (Pavarala & Malik, 2007). The importance of access to community radio has been recognised by the governing body of the community radio sector. "Equal opportunity and access" were underscored as one of nine "non-negotiable principles" of community radio in a government-funded evaluation of the sector in 2014 (Vemraju, 2014a, 2014b). Investing in access has paid off for many community radio stations, with Patro and Singh (2017) observing that community access to stations was a key reason for superior performance in a listenership study. Based on this, it is evident that access is a crucial aspect of community radio, not just in itself, but also in relation to broader communication rights.

From a media, communication, and development perspective, access represents an appealing policy goal and is central to each of the three key approaches discussed in Chapter 2 (Media for Development, Media Development, and Participatory Communication). Scott argues that "a free press is not free if the public cannot access it, understand it and contribute to the creation of it" (2014, p. 87). Similarly, Waisbord refers to the "lack of access to communication and information" as "one of the most tangible problems in the developing world" (2005, p. 87). Indeed, one of the seminal UNESCO publications in terms of media, communication, and development, *Many Voices One World*, colloquially termed the MacBride report, explicitly advocated for more equal access to communication systems so as to facilitate "communication between men [*sic*]" to support development from below (MacBride, 1980, p. 205). In this context, access implied "the ability of the public to come closer to communication systems, and in concrete terms, it can be related to two levels: of choice and of feedback" (Berrigan, 1979, p. 18). It was this report that proved influential in establishing the New World Information and Communication Order (NWICO). This UNESCO project aimed to address the power imbalance between media corporations and audiences traditionally denied access to media production by providing

electronic media directly to citizens and communities (Rodriguez, 2001). Despite its lofty aspirations, the ill-fated NWICO project had limited success and was critiqued on the grounds of the technologically determinist assumption that "access equals participation and social change" (Lie & Servaes, 2015, p. 248). Nonetheless, this example demonstrates the emphasis placed on access within the field of media, communication, and development.

A more recent example of the operationalisation of access within media, communication and development initiatives is the short-lived proliferation of telecentres as a part of ICTD interventions. The centres offered community access to computers and the internet, alongside other "offline" technologies such as photocopying and digital photography. The assumption was that access to technology, and therefore information, would result in individuals acting on said information and somehow empowering themselves (Ratan & Bailur, 2007). The premise is good on paper, but in practice, it takes more than computers with internet access to realise such lofty goals as increased empowerment, education, and economic opportunities (Gómez & Ospina, 2001). Despite such lofty goals, citing the work of Kuriyan et al. in Kerala and Kumar and Best in Tamil Nadu, Ratan and Bailur note that, respectively, 35 out of 60 and 39 out of 35 telecentres were closed or non-functional within a two-year period (2007, p. 120). Facilitating access does not, in itself, promote development (Gómez & Ospina, 2001). As Mansell (1999, in Hamelink, 2014, p. 80) explains, the policy bias that focusses on access neglects social process and the creation of relevant content - both necessary conditions for converting media access to socially or economically useful knowledge. Similarly, the provision of access, and the subsequent expectation that said access to information can be leveraged for other ends, fails to take into account disjunctures in infrastructural growth and development services elsewhere within the development apparatus (Thomas, 2008).

What does this mean for community radio? The telecentre example demonstrates the crucial distinction between access to technology and the capacity to utilise that technology in a way that the individual has reason to value (Gómez & Ospina, 2001; A. K. Sen, 1999). Despite the importance placed on access in both community radio and media, communication, and development literature, it remains a precondition rather than an end result in more ways than one.

Access in action

Despite the problematic aspects of access from the perspective of both participation, media, communication, and development, the data supports the importance of access to community radio stations and their listeners. There were several different aspects of access that served to shape how listeners were able to engage with their community radio stations and vice versa. These aspects related to technological access, physical access, and content access.

One of the key challenges identified by both listeners and staff at both stations related to technological limitations. Though both stations reported tower issues, the station manager of Malai Vanoli described the further implications for listeners when technological access is limited or denied:

"The greatest challenge is the tower. The information does not reach every people because of the network problem. We could hear the radio clearly here but not near the radio station. * People from cities on the plains** call and tell that they're listening to our programs. They cannot understand the tribal songs but still, ask the meaning of the song through phone. But here there are only two tribal villages where the radio could be heard. For one group of tribal people, none of their villages can hear the radio. We play content and songs in their language, but they cannot hear it. When you are not able to hear the radio, gradually the interest to participate in the radio programs decreases. They hardly show any interest in participating. Only if they could hear what they speak they will get interest in participating. I consider this as the greatest challenge. In spite of this, we record their programs in CD player and play while we go to their villages for field visit. But nothing matches the joy of hearing their voices in live program."

 - Station manager, Malai Vanoli.

* This interview took place in a village some 20km from the station, far beyond the station's 15km broadcast range.

** More than 100km from the station.

This example clearly demonstrates the broader ramifications of problems associated with technological access and, more broadly, how access impacts on deeper participation. Due to a technical problem, an entire key demographic of the station has been denied access and, as such, has lost much of their motivation to participate further.

Enkal Vanoli has taken major steps to provide technological access to listeners wherever possible. A volunteer at Enkal Vanoli discussed the results of a listener survey they had undertaken on behalf of the station:

"Many people told that they will listen to the radio regularly if we provided them one. We asked them if they need an individual radio or a common radio, they told even a common radio will be enough, as they could listen to it while they are working in the field". - Enkal Vanoli volunteer.

The results of this survey prompted the station to supply radio sets, where possible. While this provides access to some listeners, it does little to address or circumvent the tower problems that they, like Malai Vanoli, regularly experience. As such, Enkal Vanoli has been experimenting with alternative methods of providing technological access.

"The radio has given us a phone SIM. We receive calls from it and if we attend the call, they tell us everything about the organisation. People don't listen to FM, so they propagate information using the phone. We talked over the phone and through video conference. In four or five villages, they cannot hear because of the tower problem. They have given us FM devices though. They promised to give radio for all in the beginning, but they only gave for few." - Enkal Vanoli listener.

Similarly, such an approach does little to address the root causes of the technological problems and may only alleviate access issues for a small number of listeners, it demonstrates the appreciation that the

station has of the importance of technological access.

The next aspect of access involves the physical accessibility of the station to listeners. Physical access refers, not only to the station and its facilities but also to the station staff in terms of social interaction and building relationships. The geographic location in relation to their broader locality played a key role in the physical accessibility of the stations. While the Enkal Vanoli station is located on the main road into a large village, walking distance from several bus stops and even a major highway, Malai Vanoli is comparatively less accessible. Though within walking distance to a bus stop, the station is located off the main road, nestled among tea plantations, within the campus of its parent NGO. Though the NGO is clearly signposted both from the main road and at the entrance, the presence of the station is not prominently advertised. Indeed, a visitor to the station must follow the driveway that winds up through the different buildings of the NGO, right to its end, where the station is located. The large campus is meticulously maintained and presents a professional and efficient image. Though it was not explicitly mentioned in the interviews with listeners, one is prompted to speculate about the impact of the somewhat imposing NGO campus and whether such a facade serves to deter uninvited or casual, spontaneous visits. This is however purely speculative and merits further research.

During the time spent at each station, listeners coming to the station were a semi-regular occurrence at Enkal Vanoli. One listener was considering rabbit husbandry and recalled that the station had previously broadcast a programme on the topic. He dropped by the station to ask for advice from the radio staff and borrow a recording of the programme. On other occasions, the physical location of the station contributed directly to listener access, with several listeners visiting on their way into the village, seemingly with no agenda other than to chat with radio staff and have a drink of cold water. This was reflected in the listener focus groups, with most participants reporting that they had visited the station.

"I have been to the radio station many times. I still remember the first time I visited. I went there with lots of expectation. I thought that they won't allow us to make any sound or noise. But it was completely different."

The translator teases that her expectation might have been set by a popular Hindi movie, Radio. There is laughter and a brief recitation of a song from the movie.

"As the place looked very familiar I got a feeling that I belong to that place. I observed editing and how live programs are being connected. I also learnt the basics of editing." - Enkal Vanoli volunteer

In contrast, during the time spent at Malai Vanoli, no spontaneous visits from listeners were observed. There were pre-arranged visits from school groups and interviewees, but for the most part, radio station staff visited listeners rather than the reverse. Malai Vanoli staff made mention of the fact that they try to conduct interviews with listeners in the field, so the listeners do not have to travel to the station. The mountainous terrain, inclement weather, limited public transport, remote nature of some of the villages, as well as the cost of both transport and lost working time were all observed as barriers to more listeners visiting the station. Just one participant from the Malai Vanoli listener focus groups had ever visited the

station itself.

A further key area of access refers to the accessibility of the broadcast content. Though this has been discussed in more detail in Chapter 6, it is worth reiterating that the accessibility of the broadcast content is a crucial factor in community radio. While this primarily refers to the relevance of the content to the listeners, as previously discussed, an additional aspect of access of this nature is how accessible the language of the broadcast is to the listeners. This has emerged in other studies as an important feature of community radio, with Meadows et al. explaining that community radio presentation styles characterised by a "lack of professionalism" and "the very distinctive and often, personal style of many of the presenters" are deeply appreciated by audiences (2007, p. 34). Indeed, a more approachable presentation style is seen to break down the barrier between presenters and audiences, so listeners see the presenters as "just like us" (Meadows et al., 2007). There are observable differences between the language use on AIR, for example, which one research participant referred to as "high Tamil", and the more colloquial voices of both Enkal Vanoli and Malai Vanoli. One listener commented:

> *"It was like the villager's talk. In other FMs, it will be different. But in this radio, it felt like it was face-to-face conversation."* - Enkal Vanoli listener

It is evident that the personable and colloquial language use of the presenters is valued by listeners and contributes to the accessibility of the broadcast content. The perceived accessibility of the broadcasters through their language use and the highlighted comparison to "face-to-face conversation" directly links to the second necessary precondition of participation: social interaction.

Interaction

The next aspect of participation to be explored here is that of interaction. Interaction, alongside access, is the second necessary precondition for participation that, in itself, does not constitute participation (Carpentier, 2015). Interaction is a term with a long sociological tradition and refers to establishing socio-communicative relationships (Carpentier, 2011b). While access represents a more logistical aspect of participation, or non-participation as it were, interaction explores more of the socio-communicative aspects. Interaction represents an important aspect of community radio. McQuail (2000, p. 132) writes of a "democratic-participant" model of communication that sees alternative media not just as a tool of political resistance, but as a space for "interaction and communication in small-scale settings of community, interest group and subculture" that enact "horizontal patterns of interaction". The importance of interaction is further highlighted by Slater, who argues that "theories of 'the media'... are fairly meaningless (or 'technologically determinist') if they posit media that are defined independently of the social worlds in which they are configured in actual use" (2013, p. 97). Interaction is not only valuable in its role as a precondition to participation, but it is also a critical part of the day-to-day workings of community radio in its own right.

Interaction can be divided into two dimensions: the social and the communicative (Carpentier,

2015, 2016a). Key terms associated with the social dimension include "contact, encounter and reciprocity", while the communicative aspects are referred to through "response" and "communication itself" (Carpentier, 2015, p. 14). Though these terms provide a useful guide to exploring interaction within the research data, in practice, the lines between the social and communicative dimensions of interaction were significantly blurred. Reciprocity emerged several times throughout the course of the focus groups, with listeners at both stations commenting on the reciprocal nature of their communicative exchanges with radio station staff.

> *"We ask them about things we don't know and they too ask us things they don't know."* - Enkal Vanoli listener.

> *"They come to us and ask us to participate in the programmes. It is an opportunity to us and it also benefits them."* - Malai Vanoli listener.

Such encounters hint at a rebalancing of power relations between broadcasters and their listeners, although the extent to which this occurs still appears too superficial to constitute true participation. In contrast, more perfunctory interactions were also observed in action and noted by the listeners.

> *"They come to visit us... We speak to them and welcome them when they come. But otherwise, we do not have any contact."* - Malai Vanoli listener.

This example represents contact, or perhaps an encounter, but it seems to align more with the communicative dimension of interaction, rather than the social.

The social dimension of interaction was roundly recognised by radio station staff as an important part of encouraging listeners to take part in various activities.

> *"Listeners will not interact with us properly when we go for the first time. Only when they get to know what's better, they'll start sharing their personal stuff."* - Malai Vanoli staff member
> *"It's not easy if we don't connect with them personally. They won't immediately talk to us if we give them the mic."* - Enkal Vanoli staff member.

Developing social relationships through sustained interaction was essential to building the connections necessary to create relevant broadcast content. Though these interactions undoubtedly have a content-focus, there were undeniable deeper social relationships that developed as a result. This is contrary to the limited amount of empirical work on the role of interaction within community radio. In one of the few studies that explores the interaction between community radio producers and audiences from the perspective of the audience, Atkinson (2008) found that producers usually interact with their audiences in person, but the exchanges are often superficial or simplistic encouragements. These results were echoed in the work of Guo several years later. She observed that though community radio broadcasters are grounded in their communities, "interaction between them and their listeners - those beyond their personal circles - is limited" (Guo, 2014, p. 130). This was not observed at either of the stations where this research took place. Though there were undoubtedly many interactions that took place within the personal circles of the radio station staff, there were also relationships that had developed further than

the initial content-focussed interactions, not only between station staff and listeners, but also between different groups of listeners. Though this will be discussed in more detail in Chapter 8, the following account illustrates the development of social relationships based on interaction, as well as the intersection of physical access:

> *"We also visited Madam [station manager]. Just we used to go for filling petrol to our vehicle and the station is on the way. We visit them as if we are visiting our relatives and our parents*." - Enkal Vanoli listener.

Power

It is clear from these discussions that power is a critical influencing factor on participatory processes. Throughout the various typologies, precursors to participation, and the excerpts from the research data, it is clear that power negotiations play a key role in how participation is shaped and enacted. Power is a recurring factor within the various ladders and typologies discussed but it is notable in its absence in the discussions on access, interaction, and engagement. Carpentier considers there to be two main schools of thought when it comes to defining participation: a sociological and political. A sociological approach interprets participation as simply "taking part in particular social processes", while a political definition is far more restrictive, arguing that participation refers to the "equalisation of power relations between privileged and non-privileged actors in formal or informal decision-making processes" (Carpentier, 2015, pp. 71–72). Carpentier is highly critical of a sociological approach in terms of media studies, arguing that there is more to be gained by taking a political perspective so as to understand the power structures operating within media participation processes. Considering participation as simply "taking part" in social processes would render all our prior discussions of access, interaction, and engagement as discussions on participation, when it is quite clear that, for the most part, they are not. To return to an earlier excerpt from the data, taking a sociological approach to defining participation reframes the case of a listener visiting the station on his way to get petrol as participation in a social process, rather than as an example of access and interaction. Similarly, attempting to place this example on to any one of the typologies of participation discussed earlier is almost impossible, even when examining the lowest rungs. What is missing here, is the absence of any power negotiations that differentiate the preconditions of participation, from participation itself.

Taking a political perspective, as this research does, participation implies power-sharing, rather than simply taking part in a process. As such, evaluating a participatory process requires questioning whether any redistribution of power has actually taken place. Based on the research findings, which will be discussed shortly, taking a political approach that views participation strictly as the "equalisation" of power relations fails to consider the nuanced negotiations of power that take place across the spectrum of participatory activities. This is not to discount the role of power within participatory discussions, but rather to highlight the complexity of negotiating power relations across multiple spheres of influence.

Indeed, not every form of participation necessarily involves ousting the powerful; returning to Arnstein, who considers participation to be a categorical term for power, it is really only the topmost rungs ("partnership", "delegated power", and "citizen control") where citizens experience any sort of "decision-making clout" (Arnstein, 1969, p. 217). The point of this discussion is not to discount or dismiss any forms of participation based on their position on a conceptual ladder, but rather to emphasize the role that power structures play in how people are able to participate. Though the notions of alternative public spheres and democratised access to media production are somewhat fundamental to understanding the value of and rationale for community radio, it is important to remember that who is able to participate in these processes and if or how they are able to do so is still governed by underlying power structures. Community radio, despite the best of theoretical intentions, remains subject to the participatory and democratic processes of society and the subsequent power struggles at work (Bailur, 2012; White, 1996). This is true for community radio broadly and even more so for community radio working within a development agenda, as discussed in Chapter 5. When Chambers posed his seminal question - "Whose reality counts?" – the answer was, invariably, that power determines not just whose reality counts, but also whose knowledge counts and how (Chambers, 1995; Ramalingam, 2013).

Returning to the data, there are few, if any, examples of true participation according to this emerging political definition. The examples that do emerge come from those in existing positions of power: representatives from the parent bodies, figures who were instrumental in establishing the stations, older males of standing within their communities. These were the "participants". These were the parties who spoke of their ability to share in the power to influence the content of the radio station, as well as the structures within the station, and impact on the station, such as funding sources and liaisons with regulatory officials. Does this, then, constitute participation? By our emerging definition, there is power-sharing and influence on decision-making, but does participation for a small group represent the upper rungs of the ladders or maximalist dimensions of participation? Is this small group representative of the broader community? Do they "speak for" others in the sense of the "politics" of participation, as opposed to the "political" (Laclau & Mouffe, 2001; Spivak, 1988)? The answer must be no. White (1996) argues that, while participation may have the potential to challenge power relations, it can also serve to reinforce and reproduce existing structures of inequality. As such, there must be special mechanisms in place to encourage and support the participation of disadvantaged groups (White, 1996). This privileged group cannot represent all listeners of the community radio stations, nor do they aim to. What, then, does this mean for the realities of participation in a supposedly participatory media working towards participatory development outcomes?

Limited participation

What is evident from these brief discussions on participation is the prevalence of "non-participation" - access and interaction - and the complexity of power relations operating within and impacting on

participatory experiences. While community radio rhetoric paints an idealistic picture of maximalist participation, with non-participation gracefully giving way to full and open participation for all, what emerged from the research findings was very different. There were clearly structures in place that served to influence the breadth and depth of participation in community radio in India. As has been observed across the lower levels of the ladders and typologies of participation, the concept of restricted or limited participation is not a new one. Pateman (2014) terms "partial participation" as the process when two or more parties influence each other in a decision-making process, but the final decision-making power rests with only one of the parties. In contrast, full participation sees each member of the process hold equal power in determining the outcome of the decision (Pateman, 2014). Returning to the field of media studies, Carpentier (2015) draws on the examples of talk shows and reality television in his work on what he terms "structural" participation: participation that only occurs within the media organization's decision-making structures. In contrast to structural participation is content-related participation, which constitutes a different sphere of decision-making, but, despite giving participants the chance to exercise their right to communicate, still takes place within the power structures of the media (Carpentier, 2015, 2016a). A further illustrative example of this comes from the work of Ewart in her discussion about the brand of participation employed by talkback radio programmes. She observes the importance of considering the specific conditions and processes that affect the interaction and participation facilitated by talkback radio: "such processes, rather than facilitating participation in the public sphere for callers, actually work to limit access to it for callers to these programmes" (Ewart, 2016, p. 3). The work of these authors both refer to the structural conditions and processes within media organisation that serve to limit or, at the very least, shape how audiences are able to participate.

In addition to the internal factors that serve to influence participation, there are myriad external factors at play as well. Naturally, the contextual environment plays a significant role in limiting or restricting how communities can participate in community radio in India. As discussed, community broadcasting legislation in India restricts ownership models to educational institutions, well-established NGOs, and agricultural science centres. This, in itself, significantly impacts on the amount of true participation or representation a community radio station can aim to achieve, as representation at the higher levels of management and ownership are restricted to the aforementioned ownership models rather than derived organically from the community. Related to this is the development discourse that operates throughout the community radio sector in India, as discussed in Chapter 5. It must be re-emphasised that participation is not a key focus of the sector. Despite the importance placed on community participation in community radio literature, community radio, from the perspective of legislators, should serve a development purpose. Community radio stations are thus controlled by the developmental objectives of their parent bodies, which may or may not include community participation as an area of focus. Participation is not explicitly mentioned in the organisational aims of either of the stations involved in this research.

A further influencing factor that serves to limit or restrict who can participate in community radio, and how, relates to social structures. Cleaver writes that, in terms of individual action and participatory initiatives, the impact of social structures is under-researched and they are variously perceived as both opportunities and constraints (2001). Structures may refer to the "communicative processes, rules, roles, and rituals that constitute the realms of participation and representation... they also refer to the institutions, organizations, and systems within societies that frame the ways in which material resources are distributed" (M. J. Dutta, 2014, p. 71). Community radio rhetoric may serve to downplay the impacts of such structures through its discourse of community. However, as discussed in Chapter 4, the concept of community must be problematised. Shah argues that simplistic interpretations of the term imply that communities are homogeneous, static, and harmonious units (1998). Use of the term in this way conceals power relations and biases based on age, gender, class, caste, and religion (M. K. Shah, 1998). As discussed, power relations impact both implicitly and explicitly on who is allowed to participate and how they do so. Any attempt at community representation is limited by both the arbitrary power structures of society, not to mention the practical limitations of achieving representation (Katiyar, 2017). This framework of impossibility is indirectly acknowledged by Indian community radio policymakers, who instead turn their focus to ensuring that the "needs of the local community get relevance through the programming" (Katiyar, 2017, p. 325). Such phrasing absolves responsibility for equal or broader representation of various social groups and instead reinforces the status quo in terms of social structures. As such, community radio stations in India are subject to the prevailing social structures and have little support or impetus to challenge them.

Meaningful participation

The concept of limited participation, be it resulting from internal structures of the media organisations, or any number of various social, cultural, economic, and discursive factors, paints a bleak portrait of community radio in India. Observing similar challenges in his work with a Ugandan community radio station, Semujju laments that, in an environment where access and participation are only for a select few, "community media do not differ from commercial media" (2014, p. 207). As we have seen, the instances of non-participation, namely access and interaction, were relatively common. Participation though, as we understand it in terms of influence and power-sharing, was limited to those parties in existing positions of power, be it institutional, professional or cultural.

Such a pessimistic outlook was not necessarily reflected in the data. Rather than lamenting a 'lack' or 'restricted' form of participation in their local community radio station, participants repeatedly expressed what they had gained from their participation, in whatever form it took. This prompted a re-examination of participation and how it is viewed in community radio and development literature. Though a number of models have been developed with the aim of exploring various facets of participation in terms of both media and development (see Carpentier, 2016a; Pretty, 1995; White, 1996;

among others), the outcomes of participation for participants at a grassroots level, as opposed to implementing bodies, are far less understood. At first glance, considering participation in terms of the benefits to those involved may imply "participation for material incentives" (Pretty, 1995) or "instrumental participation" (White, 1996). However, given our prior discussion of agency and the problematic assumption that the motivation to participate for participation's sake is inherent, considering participation from the perspective of the benefits to those involved may paint a more realistic picture of both the latest and manifest motivations for participation. Further, many of these evaluations of participation tend to dichotomise a complex concept. Though discussing oppression and development more broadly, as opposed to participation specifically, Manyozo makes a salient point about the tendency towards binary arguments. He argues that there are many grey areas in between these binaries: "in fact, there are moments and ruptures when oppression functions as liberation. This thought is significant because as societies work towards liberating the oppressed subaltern groups, there is conscious or subconscious use of the language and discourse of the oppressor" (Manyozo, 2017, p. 33). This argument, for the grey areas, is central to what can be drawn from the research data.

As such, based on the earlier discussions on participation and the research data, I introduce the concept of meaningful participation. Meaningful participation builds on the concept of "meaningful mobility", introduced by Tacchi, Kitner, and Crawford in their work on mobile phones and development in India (2012). They argue that there is an over-emphasis on economic development in the field of Mobiles for Development (M4D, see Donner, 2010) which has led to a narrow view of the meanings attached to communication technologies. There is an entire spectrum of intangible benefits that such a narrow view fails to recognise: "personal empowerment, gender equity, emotional fulfilment, etc" (Tacchi et al., 2012, p. 530). Applying this perspective to another form of technology, community radio, encourages a more qualitative, holistic view of the benefits and outcomes of those who participate. Considering 'meaningful' rather than maximalist or minimalist allows space to explore the impacts of participation in environments where it may be limited or restricted by structural factors. Hence, the concept of meaningful participation emerged as a lens for viewing the research findings.

'Meaningful' is evidently a vast term, imbued with any number of interpretations based on the context and discipline through which it is employed. Countless literature exists debating and defining what is 'meaning' and what can be considered 'meaningful'. For the purpose of this research, however, we posit that it suffices to take an intersubjective ontological view of the term: though meaning takes shape within the minds of individuals, it comes to exists through communicative dialogue with others (Leontiev, 2005). A deliberately broad interpretation was employed throughout this research in order to allow a definition of what might be considered 'meaningful' to emerge from the data. Based on this, through drawing on the research findings and the previously conducted work on meaningful mobilities (Tacchi, 2014; Tacchi et al., 2012), a number of themes emerged relating to different facets of what could be considered meaningful. The key themes were voice, identity, ownership, and agency.

Voice

Voice represents a particularly important aspect of meaningful participation in community radio. Voice has variously been associated with "personhood", "individuality", embodiment, and the right to engage in social and political discourse (Appadurai, 2004; Couldry, 2004; Kunreuther, 2012; Tacchi et al., 2009). Defying simple definition, voice references "inclusion and participation in social, political, and economic processes, meaning making, autonomy, and expression" (Tacchi, 2009, p. 169). In terms of the personal aspects, voice is a basic dimension of human experience and constitutes an intimate account of one's life and its conditions (Couldry, 2015). There is a significant body of theoretical work on the value of voice in both development and community radio literature, and much of this work supports the role of voice within a conceptualisation of meaningful participation.

In terms of fulfilling the preconditions of participation, voice has clear links with the non-participatory processes of interaction and access. There is somewhat of a cyclical and closely intertwined relationship between access and voice. Thomas and van de Fliert capture the complexity of this relationship: "access is enabled by voice in environments supportive of voice" (2015, p. 137). While access represents a pre-condition of voice, the realisation of voice can lead to further improvements in access. Participation does not necessarily feature in this equation, with Lister warning that participatory interventions can be a way of "managing" rather than "hearing the voices of the poor" (2004, p. 171). Similarly, Cornwall differentiates participatory processes from voice, arguing that while these processes may create space, supporting the realisation of voice is more nuanced:

> "Voice needs to be nurtured. People need to feel able to express themselves without fear of reprisals or the expectation of not being listened to or taken seriously. And this, of course, cannot be guaranteed no matter how well-meaning the instigators of the process may be" (Cornwall, 2008, p. 278).

As discussed, community radio may present an opportunity to create such spaces, but there are no guarantees as to how voice may actualise in such an environment.

Turning to discussions of development, "voice poverty" explores the importance of voice to alternative interpretations of development. Voice poverty is "the denial of the right of people to influence the decisions that affect their lives, and the right to participate in that decision making" (Tacchi & Kiran, 2008, p. 31). This concept draws from the work of Sen (1999), in exploring aspects of development more related to capabilities and freedoms, as well as Lister's work on poverty, and voice as human and citizenship rights (2004). Voice is systematically denied to the large segments of the population who are not recognised by the market (Thomas & van de Fliert, 2015). In terms of media, voice poverty sees groups with negligible access to the mass media denied opportunities for political participation and self-expression (Malik, 2012). Access is linked closely to voice here, as voice poverty is the result of "systematic efforts to restrict access to modes of self-expression" (Pavarala, 2015, p. 15). Further, it represents a policy environment and media landscape where freedom of speech and

expression through the media is confined to powerful groups (Malik, 2012; Pavarala, 2015). Clearly, community and alternative media could have a role to play here; indeed, Pavarala suggests that eliminating voice poverty by creating space for the articulation of marginalised voices could see community radio contribute to a more democratic public sphere (2015). Ideally, community media should function as the collective process for the "production, sustaining and enacting of collective voice" (Couldry, 2015, p. 51). How this operates in practice, particularly in an environment of rampant voice poverty, is less understood.

Despite the overwhelmingly theoretical support for the concept of voice, what was identified in the research data was quite different. The perspectives of the broadcasters overwhelmingly identified voice as a key factor in terms of how they viewed their contribution to their listeners:

"Some people cannot bring out their voice. We need give them a voice through radio. So, it is basically giving voice to the voiceless". - Malai Vanoli broadcaster.

"They find happiness in hearing their voice and informing their friends and family about their participation." - Enkal Vanoli broadcaster.

"Let it be their personal matters, or let it be matters related to the country happenings, it gives them a chance to speak their hearts out... For example, if a person called Ramesh from a particular community speaks in the radio, then it becomes a chance for the entire community to listen to the radio for hearing what Ramesh has spoke." - Malai Vanoli broadcaster.

The community radio rhetoric of "voice for the voiceless" is clearly pervasive, but how this is realised is more nebulous. Broadcasters highlighted the role of pride and social interaction in relation to voice, but some of the more political aspects of the term discussed in the literature did not emerge.

While broadcasters at both stations discussed voice at length, particularly how they saw their role in relation to "providing" a voice, listeners barely made mention of voice. Instead, they discussed feelings of pride surrounding their participation or hearing their voices on the radio as illustrated in the following excerpts:

"That day I spoke in a local channel and it made me feel very happy." - Malai Vanoli listener.

"We will feel very happy while we hear our own voice in the radio. We feel proud of ourselves for the content we have spoken." - Malai Vanoli listener.

"We ourselves are surprised listening to our voices in the radio. We cannot believe if it is our work." - Enkal Vanoli listener.

"I feel accomplished and proud about this program out of all I have done for the radio." - Enkal Vanoli volunteer.

Any notions of embodiment of self, expression of individuality, or political engagement failed to emerge in discussions. Though listeners roundly agreed that the radio station "represented" them, any more direct or explicit actualisation of voice was not overtly discussed. This is not to discount or minimise the experiences and realisations of voice for these listeners, quite the opposite. As Malik (2012) wrote in a

piece for media watchdog *The Hoot:* "Indeed, for those who have traditionally been unacknowledged and silenced, socially and culturally, the opportunity to have one's voice heard can be an imposing experience of self-worth".

A further point to note in relation to listener perceptions of voice, one that will be discussed in greater detail in Chapter 8, is the emphasis that listeners placed on listening in relation to voice, as opposed to voice in itself. Couldry (2015) suggests that alternative media, including community radio, act as the social application of both the speaking and listening that are the social process of voice. This is illustrated in the following quote:

"We speak in many places and that's different. But in radio, people listen to what we speak." – Malai Vanoli listener.

What is implied in this quote is that the authority and power bestowed on those that speak on the radio somehow means that their voice is more likely to be listened to and taken seriously, both key factors to realizing voice. Returning to our original discussions on defining participation in community radio, does an interview constitute participation in community radio? This particular listener spoke with great enthusiasm about the first time she spoke on the radio, and how she gathered her friends and family together to listen to the broadcast. From her perspective, it was a reciprocal exchange between herself and the interviewer, they both got something out of it and she was proud that her opinions were valued enough to be broadcast. Similarly, the listeners and volunteers quoted earlier expressed pride and a sense of accomplishment resulting from their experiences within the community radio station which, for the most part, consisted of being interviewed and then hearing themselves broadcast on the radio. Though perhaps being interviewed could be interpreted as falling within the category of 'minimalist', content-drive participation, it is evident that there has been significant value derived from these experiences from the perspective of the listeners.

Ownership

The second aspect of meaningful participation is ownership. In this context, ownership does not necessarily refer to property, but rather to "individual identity, agency, and wellbeing - including what Gandhi described as *swaraj* (self-rule or self-reliance)" (Tacchi et al., 2012, p. 533). Ownership appears regularly in participatory development literature as a critical factor impacting upon participant buy-in (Gumucio-Dagron, 2001; Tufte & Mefalopulos, 2009a), as well as in relation to community media, where community ownership represents both an ideal model and a fundamental theme (Carpentier, 2015; Katiyar, 2017; Tabing, 2005). Ownership is a relevant concept to both participatory development and community radio; it was observed in the research that it also represents a valuable component of meaningful participation.

Ownership as a manifestation of meaningful participation was observed throughout the research in several different ways. First, in perhaps a more traditional interpretation, ownership was discussed at

length between members of Enkal Vanoli's parent body, the farmers' federation. There was a strong sense of ownership over the station among this group.

> "It was started for the purpose of the farmers. It was for farmers and, as a farmer, I felt it was my radio. For example, if I own a watch, I will have the feel that it belongs to me. But if I watch time from other's watch I won't feel it is mine. The same way I felt this as my radio from day one." – Enkal Vanoli listener and farmers' federation member 1.

> "Earlier people used to shy away from speaking in the mic. Nowadays they are enthusiastic to speak in the radio as they feel it represents them... and so they don't hesitate to record their opinion in the radio." – Enkal Vanoli listener and farmers' federation member 2.

> "As it is our radio and it is under our control, we could order them to broadcast programs that would create awareness among the people... All this is possible only because the radio belongs to us and we a part of it, we could ask them to broadcast programs that would benefit the people and the programs that would be liked by them." – Enkal Vanoli listener and farmers' federation member 3.

Ownership and control were clearly recognised by this particular group, though it is also worth noting the omnipresent development discourse, operating throughout discussions of representation and the perceived needs of and benefits to the listeners.

In different groups, however, notions of ownership emerged in distinctly different ways. Among the female volunteers at Enkal Vanoli, ownership emerged through local links with a staff member and is closely related to agency, which will be discussed shortly.

> "At first, the people at home protested and did not allow us go anywhere. But now they have slowly started to understand what we are doing. (Enkal Vanoli RJ) has a great role in that. She came door-to-door and encouraged us to participate, and we have also benefitted through it. We are very proud that a woman from our village is doing so much for the community. We are also determined to become like her". - Enkal Vanoli listener and volunteer.

The importance of locality was also discussed by another predominantly female listener focus group, where a sense of ownership derived from the physical proximity of the station.

> "Instead of moving towards opportunity, it comes toward us and we utilize it."

> "It is near to our village and that gave an affinity. It is near to us and we feel it is our station" - Exchange between two Enkal Vanoli listeners.

Similarly, a Malai Vanoli listener touched on a number of these relating to her feelings of ownership over the local station, notably representation and social interactions:

> "They work for us, right? So they are like us. We should think that they are one among us, right? We talk with them and they take our opinions out, right? So we co-operate with them and they are like our friends". - Malai Vanoli listener.

Participation emerges in some way throughout most of these examples. From the perspective of the

parent body, listeners are more likely to participate because they are represented; from the perspective of a volunteer, her ability to participate was influenced due to her family and husband's sense of pride, trust, and ownership of a local staff member; a combination of factors - a sense of ownership, representation, and social interaction - contribute to a listener's willingness to participate. This illustrates a complex web of empowerment and meaning that simultaneous prompts and results in participation.

Identity

A further aspect of meaningful participation, one highlighted by Tacchi, Kitner, and Crawford (2012), is that of identity. Identity can be understood as the ways in which individuals and groups define and give meaning to themselves in relation to others (Fornäs & Xinaris, 2013). Identity, particularly mediated identity, represents a complex interplay of apparent opposites in that it represents both affiliations with others, in the sense of a community, as well as individuality and uniqueness from others (Fornäs & Xinaris, 2013). The role community radio plays in constructing communities and group identity has been discussed in more detail in Chapter 4, identity as a facet of meaningful participation, however, was observed to relate more to individual identity. Identity links closely with other facets of meaningful participation, most notably voice and ownership. Voice represents personhood and individuality, and is significant as an identification of personal identity: Kunreuther describes this as "as natural in its relationship to identity as the fingerprint or signature" (2012, p. 51). Identity falls within the broader category of ownership. In their work on meaningful mobilities, Tacchi, Kitner, and Crawford (2012) describe this relationship between ownership and identity in terms of marginalised women in India taking ownership of their own identities, which had always been subsumed under their husbands'. The formation and expression of individual identity was observed throughout the research and represents an important facet of meaningful participation in community radio.

Community radio can play a particularly important role in identity formation and expression. Fornas and Xinaris argue that "people shape their tools of communication that then shape them" (2013, p. 12), explaining that media plays a critical role in identity formation as it has such an impact on the way people understand and define themselves and others. Community radio does this through participation. Through participation in management, organisation and content production, community radio allows 'ordinary people' and marginalised groups to have their voices heard and, in doing so, define, strengthen and express their internal identities to the outside world (Malik, 2015; Pavarala & Malik, 2007). Echoing radical democratic theory, Rodriguez argues that political action can involve any attempt by non-hegemonic groups to contest dominant discourses and redefine their identity in their own terms (2001, p. 150). Thus, for those who are generally excluded from both media production and representation, identity formation and expression represent the political dimension of participation through the balancing of power relations. This quality of community radio represents an appealing attribute of the medium for development purposes. Buckley (in UNESCO, 2010) suggests that community media have

both intrinsic value, facilitating communication as a basic human need, and instrumental value, relating to access to information and social and political influence. Development impacts tend to focus on the more instrumental impacts of community media, whereas the intrinsic value of community media strengthens the capability to communicate, which is central to "self-identity and to recognition by others" (Buckley in UNESCO, 2010, p. 113). Despite the lack of primacy granted to identity formation and expression as a function of community radio, particularly within development agendas, there is evidence to support the value of community radio contributing in this capacity.

While other aspects of meaningful participation were far more visible, the expression of identity, cultural and individual, was observed among the listeners who participated in the research. Rather than make assumptions based solely on these observations, bearing in mind that community radio represents just one part of the broader communicative ecology, among other modes of identity formation and expression, more emphasis is placed on the listeners' expressions of their sense of identity. There was one particular example that represented the liberating and empowering act of identity formation, expression, and recognition resulting from participation in community radio.

Earlier I was just me, without any identity. But after being a part of this radio I am identified in my village as a girl who makes them speak in the radio. - Enkal Vanoli volunteer.

This powerful statement was in response to a question that asked if she had learned anything or gained anything from her interactions with the radio station. When asked the same question, most other participants spoke of an interesting fact or programme that they had heard. This particular woman's response was unprompted by any mention or prior discussions on identity. The woman who expressed these sentiments is married with two children, she has a diploma in nursing and had worked for the village ICT centre for a number of years. It is, however, her participation in the local community radio station that she associates most with her identity. Having said that, it is worth paraphrasing Tacchi, who reminds us that technology, like mobile phones in her research or community radio here, contributes to processes rather than acting as mechanisms, as they serve to "highlight, extend and magnify communicative and other capabilities" (2014, p. 116). A final point to note relates back to participation. While this woman was a volunteer at the station and thus took a more active role in content-creation, volunteers were, for the most part, unable to influence programming decisions or participate in higher management. Again, this serves to relegate the activities of this volunteer to the lower rungs of the aforementioned participatory models or ladders, though the value and meaning derived from this "minimal" participation is undeniable.

Agency

The final facet of meaningful participation that was observed and discussed throughout this research was that of agency. Dahlgren and Alvares explicitly refer to participation as "an expression of agency" (2013, p. 48). It is through such "expressions" that citizens are able to extend and exert their rights as members

of political communities and subsequently leverage greater control over socioeconomic resources (Hickey & Mohan, 2004). Agency is particularly important in postcolonial settings as it interrogates how postcolonial subjects are able to engage or resist imperial power (Ashcroft et al., 2013). Jacobson, drawing on the work of Sen, argues that agency forms part of the conceptual basis of understanding development as freedom – the freedom to choose the life one has reason to value (Jacobson, 2016; A. K. Sen, 1999). Kleine (2011) explains this process in more detail, explaining that individuals use agency to navigate the various opportunity structures to which they have access. More agency results in more choices and thus a higher degree of empowerment to choose and enact the development outcomes that the individual most has reason to value. Couldry summarises: "people require knowledge and a sense of agency if they are to be actively involved in determining what happens to them" (2006, p. 52).

By far the most common examples of agency that were observed throughout the research related to women's empowerment. Participation in local community radio stations, even at the level of simply being interviewed for a programme or volunteering to conduct listener surveys in their local village, had a profound effect on women. This is of particular importance because often, even where participation has resulted in increased agency for other community members, there are those within the community whose voices are silenced (M. J. Dutta, 2014). From a development perspective, Sen argues that women's agency and voice influences the nature of other public discussions: "freedom in one area (that of being able to work outside the household) seems to help to foster freedom in others" (1999, p. 194). In each of the women's listener focus groups at Enkal Vanoli, empowerment and increased agency resulting from engagement with the radio station was discussed at length. There was also a brief discussion in one of the women's focus groups at Malai Vanoli, but it was in the context of an existing self-help group rather than relating specifically to the work of the radio station. Interestingly enough, rather than any specific initiative or development project run by Enkal Vanoli, it was a female staff member who, through her social interactions and respected position in the community, used her power to persuade a group of women, and their families, to take a more active role in volunteering and taking part in station events. The results of her work frequently appeared in the findings of the research, with many female volunteers at this particular station mentioning this staff member by name and crediting her with their increased confidence and freedoms. This is the same staff member credited with the feelings of ownership among female listeners and volunteers, as discussed earlier. There were numerous examples of this from the Enkal Vanoli listener focus groups:

> "Earlier we used to be at home. Nowadays we travel a lot. At first, the people at home protested and did not allow us go anywhere. Earlier our husbands won't allow us to travel like this alone. But now they are allowing us, now after we explained what we are doing, they have slowly started to understand."

> "Earlier, we don't go anywhere and were not interested in it. Now in the home, I get support for traveling. Now we get the opportunity to go freely."

"In the beginning, a negative attitude to talk and participate in the radio was there. But my in-laws came and saw the program at the station. My husband too [came for the program]. The respect we get in the station and the exposure to what they do in the program changed their attitude. Now also in our home, they wish and send us to participate. In many homes they support them."

The impact of the radio station, particularly the role of the staff, is tangible in terms of agency and mobility for these women. A further aspect of agency related closely to increased social interaction and expanded social circles resulting from this increased mobility:

"Likewise we got many friends outside our village. We meet them once or twice in any events but later become thick friends. we even invite them over to our houses while they come here. We have got many friends."

"Yes, like one Amma came to our village for cooking competition (hosted by the radio station). But she later become our soul mother. She shared her preparations with us and treated us like her daughters. She was a stranger and we didn't even know her before. But she instantly bonded with us sharing her sorrows. Now we are in regular contact with her."

This echoes Sen's (1999) observation about agency and freedom in one area fostering further freedom and agency in other areas. Recalling the discussions of the *jugaad* methodology in Chapter 2, here we see an altered interpretation of *jugaad.* One that moves away from agency focussed on an intentional subject, and instead understands *jugaad* as "distributed and ecological and nonrepresentational processes of converting movement, contingency, and matter into specific kinds of value" (Rai, 2015, p. 989).

Returning, once again, to participation, the volunteering that these women were able to take part in involved conducting listener surveys and being interviewed for different radio programmes. This could hardly be considered "maximalist" participation by Carpentier's definition, nor does it represent any particular power shift from the producer of content to the listeners, yet it presents an example of meaningful participation in action. This group of volunteers clearly perceived significant value resulting from their work, despite the supposedly "limited" nature of their participation, as well as the more tangible benefits in terms of increased agency and mobility.

8 Pass the mic

Defining listening

"What stood out for me in the interviews, still I can remember, we spoke to one Amma. Her name was V, I even remember that. And I didn't know she was a single woman like alone with her children. And at the end of the interview, she never talks out it seems, she has never told this to anyone it seems. But, by the end of the interview, she wanted us to record what happened in her personal life. She lost her husband to extreme drinking and smoking. So he had TB and suffered a lot and he had a kidney failure, liver failure, some complications because of his bad habits. So she lost her husband to that. And uh, she was in tears, and she tried to tell that: I have not spoken this anywhere but please record. Radio is giving more awareness to it. So please be sure that your husband or your son is not getting addicted to any of such. So that was the thing which stuck my mind. Yeah, that was the thing which is standing out to me. Like she wanted to tell some social message through the interview and the radio. So... yeah, that was good." - Translator.

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This chapter represents an attempt to draw together the various elements of this thesis that are based on what was observed and discussed in the data. To summarise our discussions up to this point, the development industry, through the spectacle of development, plays a major role in influencing community radio in India from the policy level through to the grassroots. As discussed in Chapter 5, the spectacle of development, operating through discourses of modernisation, influence what stations say, what they do, who they talk to, who is able to participate, and how they are able to participate. This was evidenced through several examples, from the influence of large-scale, top-down development initiatives and their pervasiveness within a supposedly community-driven media, to the language that the broadcasters use when discussing their role in the community. Despite the overwhelming influence of the spectacle of development, there remain cases of community radio listeners deriving value from the limited way in which they are able to participate in content decisions and production. Furthermore, as discussed in Chapter 6, there is evidence to support that the most effective work of community radio stations takes place when they act as amplification to existing forms of community knowledge construction and sharing. How though, do these positive examples of the work of community radio emerge from within and, sometimes, in spite of the domineering spectacle of development? The answer to this question, and the focus of this chapter, is listening.

Listening is a curious phenomenon. It is one of the most fundamental learnings of human life: Wolvin and Coakley explain that listening is the first language skill we develop, thus "our ability to speak, read, write, and master complex cognitive skills is directly and indirectly dependent upon our ability to listen" (Wolvin & Coakley, 1985, p. 13). Simultaneously, and perhaps because of this, listening as a skill is

often underestimated: it is assumed that listening does not require doing much, just showing up or staying quiet when someone is speaking (Manyozo, 2017). Listening has similarly been underestimated in communication theory, relegated to the periphery of discussions, falling unproblematically under the blanket term "receiver" (Berlo, 1960; Shannon, 1948; among others). In order to develop a meaningful discussion of listening in this context, it is essential to move beyond simplistic, 'traditional' interpretations of listening, particularly those usually applied to community radio. As communication theory has developed, there has been a growing understanding of the complexity of listening, though it still represents a distinctly under-researched area. Listening refers to both the cognitive tasks associated with receiving, understanding and interpreting messages, and the behavioural tasks of verbal and non-verbal feedback in response to those messages (Burleson, 2011; Jones, 2011). Purdy differentiates between "hearing" as "the physiological process of receiving sounds", and "listening" as the infinitely more complex process of "attending, perceiving, interpreting, remembering, and responding to other human beings, in a sociocultural-linguistic environment that thoroughly permeates and influences the receptive, meaning creation process" (1991, p. 61). Such definitions imply that the onus for listening - receiving, interpreting, and responding to messages - rests with one party or one side of the communicative equation. What is more useful, at least in the context of this research, is considering listening in terms of dialogue as opposed to passive reception. Dialogue implies much more than a multitude of voices, instead it refers to a "discursive communion" entered into with the aim of understanding alternative perspectives, "not as a way of reaffirming and strengthening our position" (Manyozo, 2016, p. 4; Thomas & van de Fliert, 2015). Penman and Turnbull advocate for a reimagining of the concept of distinct speakers and listeners, instead referring to "participants" in dialogue for whom speaking and listening occur contemporaneously (2012). The distinction between listening as it may traditionally be interpreted and as engaging in dialogue is further explained by Bavelas and Gerwing (2011), who suggest that while "addressees" are active participants in dialogue, "overhearers" are merely passive recipients of information. Indeed, from Blackman's perspective, dialogue is a critical feature in distinguishing hearing from listening: she explains that while hearing is "monological", listening is "always dialogical and relations, directed towards the other" (2012, p. 139). Listening is clearly a complex phenomenon involving both cognitive and behavioural tasks, that is interpreted here as engaging in dialogue with others, as opposed to the passive act of receiving messages.

Turning to listening in community radio, media consumers are generally considered to be overhearers; kept at such distance from the sites and processes of media production that they are "doubly assumed and imagined – assumed and imagined to exist and assumed and imagined to listen" (Macnamara, 2013, p. 161). Interpreting audiences as "overhearers" is problematic when discussing community radio where the relationships between broadcasting and listening are supposedly more complex and multidimensional, given the participatory ideal of the medium. Community radio ideals, however, are also guilty of falling into the trap of privileging voice over listening. Indeed, providing a

"voice for the voiceless" dominates community radio rhetoric on a global scale. Voice has variously been associated with "personhood", "individuality", embodiment, and the right to engage in social and political discourse (Appadurai, 2004; Couldry, 2010; Kunreuther, 2012; Tacchi et al., 2009). Couldry offers a caveat to such valorisations of voice though, writing of the importance of voice that is met with recognition: "it is through the process of listening that the value of voice is mutually registered" (2009, p. 580). Similarly, being 'voiceless' is not attributed to having nothing to say but rather having no-one to listen (Servaes & Malikhao, 2005). Community radio is clearly a site of complex interplay between voice and listening; in all conceptualisations though, the onus for voice and listening seems to be on community radio audiences. What is less explored in the literature on voice and listening in community radio is the role of the broadcasters in listening to their audiences. Having established a working definition of listening, this chapter now explores the role that listening plays within the day-to-day operations of community radio.

The façade of listening

"What were the changes that happened in your daily life by listening to Enkal Vanoli?"

*"I learned how TB develops in the human body, which I did not know earlier. Sister (*radio staff member) *asked people directly about it. I learned and now I am explaining this to others. I made a note of the symptoms and conditions. When my husband was admitted to hospital, on seeing the TB patients I got scared and asked the doctor to shift him to another ward. The patients were without the mask; my husband too was unwell. There were many TB patients around so, I requested the doctor to shift him to another ward. When the doctor asked I explained the conditions and my fear. He consoled and assured. He told every ward the status is same, but I came to know the facts. Hence I asked."*

"You clarified with the doctor after knowing it?"

"I had explained the details to many. I knew. I was very much afraid. My brother consoled me. He advised us to drink hot water during the stay in the hospital. I drank hot water at the hospital. My husband died later. He had liver problem due to his liquor habit. I did not have awareness about it. I have not told that when I have spoken on the radio programmes. You were asking about it and I wish to tell it. Through this event, the awareness can be created. I did not have adequate awareness about his habit. I lost him now. Likewise, others should not lose their dear ones. We must create awareness. I thought of this and wanted to create awareness among women. I am emotional about it. But I have managed to talk about this today. I was not aware of any of this earlier. Now I know so much. From my hospital experience, I learned considerably. I wish I could create awareness for others. Information must reach many people through FM radio."

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Listening clearly represents a complex and contestable term that has been employed in a number of very different ways, even within the same discipline. Similar to the conceptual vagueness of participation as an overarching term, such definitional fluidity means that listening can easily be co-opted to fit the agendas

of those employing it. Dutta (2014) suggests that the growing critiques of top-down approaches of development have led neoliberal governance structures, discussed in this thesis as the spectacle of development, to co-opt the language of listening and participation to further consolidate their power. He refers to this co-optation as "the façade of listening" where contemporary global oppression manipulates "the language of listening to fundamentally silence and erase the opportunities of participation of the margins" (2014, p. 76). There are clear parallels between the way the spectacle of development co-opts participation and the workings of the façade of listening. As discussed in Chapters 5 and 7, the spectacle of development works to limit opportunities for participation and keep marginalized groups complicit in their own oppression. To illustrate the façade of listening in practice, Dutta (2014) draws on the example of narratives of resistance that are co-opted by discourses of nationalism and homeland security and portrayed as "threats to security". This exact scenario has been enacted within the community radio sector in India. Broadcasting license applications from "troubled regions" have fallen victim to the Ministry of Home Affairs and "its hawkish approach to security matters"; with the entire northeast as well as those areas affected by Naxalite insurgency served by a minimal number of stations as compared to the rest of the country (Pavarala, 2013, p. 3). It wasn't until 2014 that applications for community radio stations in Chhattisgarh and Jharkhand were granted, the first given to states affected by "left-wing extremism" (Dhawan, 2014). Moitra, Kumar and Seth observe wryly that the groups that would benefit most from community media platforms - "women, those in Naxal areas, groups marginalized by caste or class" - were more difficult to reach due to costs, cultural dynamics, existing social inequities, and local politics (2018, p. 126). Given this particularly pertinent example, it is clear to see that the façade of listening has particular relevance to discussions of community radio working within a development agenda. This section explores this influence in more detail, specifically in relation to how the spectacle of development serves to exploit this façade of listening.

The spectacle of development makes use of the façade of listening to silence dissenting voices in two related ways: through performative listening and through co-optation. Performative listening celebrates listening as performance: as a scripted, planned activity that results in expected results that align with broader goals. Community input is invaluable, so long as it contributes to the strict articulation of a specific stance or approach, the one that aligns with that of the intervening organisation (Manyozo, 2017). The tools of performative listening are numerous and in widespread use - questionnaires, forums, even phone-in radio programmes - all offer the impression that people are being listened to and, more importantly, that the organisation is 'listening', even if there are no indicators of how all this listening shapes the final outcomes of the policy or intervention (Manyozo, 2017). In his work on organisational listening, Macnamara discusses the sophisticated "architecture of speaking" developed by large organisations, including those in the development business, which serves to dominate conversations, intimidate smaller players, and facilitates "non-listening" including instrumental, selective, placative, defensive, as well as performative listening (Macnamara, 2016, 2017; Waks, 2010). Not only does

performative listening only take place through mainstream markers and structures of listeners, such as the aforementioned engagement tools, it also forecloses opportunities for listening to voices that express alternative logics (M. J. Dutta, 2014). Such strategic, performative listening serves to silence dissenting and authentic voices by restricting the conditions and outcomes of listening to suit the agendas of dominant structures and institutions.

Listening can also be co-opted by the spectacle of development to silence voices of resistance through co-optation. As White, very succinctly, summarises: "incorporation, rather than exclusion, is often the best means of control" (1996, p. 7). When marginalized groups want a say on the decisions that affect their lives, the spectacle of development, under the guise of 'listening', responds with a benevolent invitation into structures that minimise opportunities for true participation and influence, thus absorbing and containing any dissenting voices (M. J. Dutta, 2014). This is, of course, not the case for all marginalised groups, some of whom are not even granted a flimsy façade of listening. True listening is messy and time-consuming, and is unlikely to result in what decision-makers or donors want - "staking territory, expanding influence and maintaining political profile" (Ramírez & Quarry, 2018, p. 136). In this case, the voices of marginalised communities are treated as "products", packaged to best suit any number of policy-driven scenarios (Manyozo, 2017). Thus, the facade of listening, and the broader spectacle of development, is an exercise in power. The power to choose whose voices are heard, how they are used, and even what they are saying. The manipulation of voice in this way prevents marginalized groups from giving account to their lives and conditions; to deny the capacity for narrative and voice is to deny a basic dimension of human life (Tacchi in UNESCO, 2010). For marginalised groups, acts of voice are a dialogical pathway towards questioning their socio-political and economic oppression (Manyozo, 2017). These acts of voice gain power through how they are valued; co-optation and silencing do not value voice, only through recognition and listening can the true value of voice be realised (Couldry, 2010; Tacchi in UNESCO, 2010). Listening here is more than speaking to, or speaking for each other, it is speaking alongside one another (Manyozo, 2017). Listening of this kind is empathetic and identity-building, but it also can demonstrate awareness of dominant voices and work to undermine them (Freire, 2000; Manyozo, 2017). In this way, listening is a constant interrogation of power because, by its very nature, listening is shaped in opposition to dominant speech (M. J. Dutta, 2014; Manyozo, 2017). The façade of listening represents a deliberate and strategic silencing of dissenting voices, either through performative listening or co-optation. Not only does this limit opportunities for voice and dialogue, but it denies marginalized groups the space to question the dominant power structures and broader nature of their oppression.

Layers of listening

From these discussions, it is clear that listening is incredibly important from a political perspective but also easily co-opted by dominant structures and groups. Turning to community radio, listening is usually

conceptualised in a simplistic way in that it is seen as primarily the task of audiences. Despite its radical theoretical underpinnings, community radio also falls into the simplistic binary of active producers and passive consumers (Burgess, 2006). While voice in community radio has received much more attention, from the perspectives of both broadcasters and audiences (see Genilo, Bhowmick, & Hossain, 2016; Howley, 2002; Rodriguez, 2001; Tacchi, 2003; Tacchi & Kiran, 2008; among others), listening on the part of community radio broadcasters is far less explored. Placing the onus for listening solely on community radio audiences is problematic, particularly within a development and social change agenda, as the focus becomes "whether those poor populations are listening effectively and therefore ... whether their lives and behaviours change as a result" (Tacchi, 2013, p. 232). While listening may serve to "anchor" social change activities (O'Donnell, 2009), such a perspective fails to account for the complex structural causes of poverty and disempowerment (Wilkins, 2012). In the context of media, communication, and development, listening should represent an "ethical value", particularly in situations where social polarisations impact media narratives and economic equalities mean certain groups lack the ability to be heard in the public sphere (Wasserman, 2013). Dreher observes that "attention to listening shifts some of the focus and responsibility for change from marginalized voices and on to the conventions, institutions, and privileges which shape who and what can be heard in the media" (Dreher, 2009b, p. 447). As such, focussing on how community radio broadcasters listen represents an ethical rebalance of traditional media, communication and development conceptualisations of listening.

While listening forms the key focal points of this chapter, the concepts of voice and listening are inextricably linked, particularly in a media like community radio. The relationship between voice and listening is clearly articulated by Couldry in his work on voice as a value. He suggests that valuing voice requires specific attention to the conditions under which voice is effective (2010). Listening is a crucial factor in this as "it is through listening that the value of voice is mutually registered between us" (Couldry, 2009, p. 580). Thus, articulating the concept of listening contributes to a deeper understanding of voice as a process and a value (Couldry, 2009, 2010). The link between voice and listening has been written about by a number of authors. Most notably, Bickford, in her seminal title *The Dissonance of Democracy,* suggests that democracy and politics revolve around the interplay between speech and listening, and that listening does not at all diminish the role of speech (1996). In a more recent work, Bassel (2017) reiterates this observation, explaining that listening as a political process has the potential to disrupt the power and privilege of traditional speaker/listener roles. The links between voice and listening, and the blurring of the roles of speaker and listener, clearly have the potential to rebalance power structures, but how this listening manifests within a community radio environment is less clear.

Community radio represents a promising site for political listening given its conceptual focus on participation and alternative public spheres. What emerged from the data though, was three different but connected circles of listening. These circles of listening can be conceptualised through a Venn diagram in which there are various overlapping possibilities across each distinct circle of listening. It is

worth emphasizing that such a conceptualisation is non-hierarchical and aims to display the interconnections rather than placing particular importance on any one type of listening.
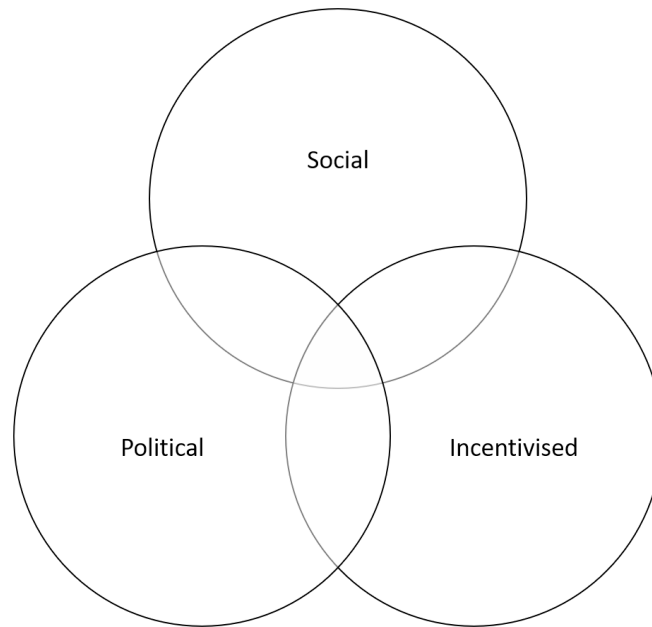

Figure 1: Circles of listening in community radio

Slater (2013, p. 70) advocates for considering the "onion-like layers of relationships and value which may seem, at first, remote or unconnected". Not every form of listening represents a challenging of power relations but listening, even in its most perfunctory forms, is a critical part of everyday life, more so for community radio broadcasters, whose livelihood depends on their ability to listen, record and re-package for broadcasting. In order to explore political, boundary-blurring listening, it must first be differentiated from everyday forms of listening. To identify and differentiate these various circles of listening, a number of markers were drawn from the literature and applied to the research data. Slim and Thompson (1993, p. 2) suggest that listening must result in "acknowledgement and action" so that speakers know that their words have been taken seriously. Based on this, they developed a notion of "applied" oral testimony so as to differentiate the use of listening in development projects from purely academic studies (Cross, 1993). Further, in her discussion of digital storytelling, Dreher suggests a "listening framework" based on processes of "receptivity, recognition and response" (2012, p. 159). Receptivity forms a critical first point for political listening because the listener must at least be open to, or even want to know what others have to say (Macnamara, 2014). Recognition offers a "productive way of thinking about response or what comes after listening" (Dreher, 2009b, p. 454). Finally, response and action are related outcomes or results of listening. Bickford argues that response is indicative of listening in that it signifies paying "attention in order to understand and judge others' contributions, reshape their own opinions, and determine their own responses" (1996, p. 51). Macnamara also draws a specific link between these, and

related, markers of listening and voice: "the conceptualization of listening as comprising attention, recognition, interpretation with a view to understanding and response is important for voice to be meaningful and matter" (2013, p. 171). Based on the markers identified in the literature, receptivity, recognition and response/action were used to frame audience/broadcaster interactions in order to identify and differentiate the various layers of listening identified within the research data.

Social

"I used to listen to radio in my parents' home. We used to listen to the radio while we work in field. Earlier days we had only radio and no TV. My paternal home lived in poverty and hence there was no scope for having TV. Me and my father listen to songs and health tips in the radio. After the advent of cell phones, we used to listen to the radio in the cell phone." - Enkal Vanoli audience member.

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The first circle of listening that was observed within the research data related to listening for social purposes. There is a significant body of literature exploring the role of interpersonal listening (Bickford, 1996; Dreher, 2009b; Husband, 1996, 2009), but the role of such listening within a community radio context is much less explored. As discussed throughout this thesis, community radio audiences benefit from listening to community radio in a number of different ways. Listening, as facilitated by community radio, supports the knowledge sharing and local communication channels that serve to amplify IKCS. Given the observed role of community radio as amplification of IKCS, it is worth noting that, outside of modernity, IKCS are also considered pathways that facilitate the development of listening skills and tools (Manyozo, 2017). This relationship between IKCS and listening was also observed by a Malai Vanoli staff member, who spoke of learning from traditional knowledge and the role of community radio in supporting this:

> *"We might not know many things in life. Elders teach us better, but in their absence radio teaches us about life. We can also teach the same to our kids." - Malai Vanoli staff member.*

Further, the social aspects of listening form an important part of how community radio audiences enact and derive meaning from their participation in such environments. This area also represents an intersection of both voice and listening in that audience members relish the opportunity to express their voice and have this voice heard, and that community radio staff members appreciate their role in facilitating this voice and actively engaging in listening.

> *"They find happiness in hearing their voice and informing their friends and family about their participation. We record events from a temple festival. The entire village will be happy as the other villagers listen to what was spoken during the event and send their feedbacks." - Enkal Vanoli staff member.*

This happiness and pride resulting from the expression of voice may serve to subvert the spectacle of development, at least in some small way. Though warning of the limits of the promise of happiness,

Ahmed observes that "empire is justified in terms of the augmentation of human happiness…. For happiness to become a mission, the colonized other must first be deemed unhappy" (2010, pp. 124–125). Thus, this happiness and pride through the exertion of voice may serve to subvert the spectacle of development by questioning the narrative of the miserable "wretched of the earth" waiting to be saved from their unhappiness (Ahmed, 2010; Fanon, 1963).

Listening as a social function is also essential to the construction and maintenance of 'communities'. The relationship between speech and listening is vital in the formation of groups: the negotiated process of interaction between speaker and listener could even be considered a "shared community" (Purdy, 1991, p. 63). While 'community' within community radio has been more extensively discussed in Chapter 4, listening represents an important aspect of developing the social connections necessary to sustain feelings of community. Purdy, rather poetically, refers to communication as "the source and sustenance of community" and suggests that community is created and shaped through the interpretive process of listening (1991, pp. 51–52). While social groups may often share interests, this is not what makes them a group. Instead "it is the shared set of practices and the affinity that sharing creates" (Bickford, 1996, p. 105). Such shared practices may manifest through knowledge sharing facilitated by the community radio station. One station staff member observed the community-building nature of such shared practices:

> "One of our listeners told us whenever his programmes broadcasted he gets many call informing him and he, in turn, call us to share his happiness. Whichever program is good, many listeners call us to appreciate. This builds a sense of oneness." - Enkal Vanoli staff member.

This "one-ness" or sense of community is not restricted to among audience members. Social listening contributes to the embedded nature of community radio staff within their communities and supports the role of community radio as rhizome in connecting disparate elements of the community. The social nature of the relationships that both stations had developed with their various stakeholders - parent body representatives, volunteers, organisations, and audience members - appeared to facilitate open communication channels and, thus, deeper listening:

> "We feel like we are a joint family. We mutually co-operate with each other. We organise monthly meetings where they (radio staff) share their insights. They tell us if they have some problem or if they are in need of something. They also ask us suggestions for the improvement of the radio. This is how our relationship works." - Enkal Vanoli parent body member.

> "Yeah, as they are localities, they know us personally. So they act accordingly. In some cases, they exactly know what we need from them." - Malai Vanoli audience member.

The value in acting in this capacity was recognised and valued by community radio staff. Indeed, developing these relationships was one staff member's favourite part of her job.

> "What I like is going for fieldwork. I get to meet many people, receive feedback, and develop relationships. So I love doing field work." - Enkal Vanoli staff member.

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Social listening clearly represents an important circle of listening that is deeply entwined with the value that audience members are able to derive from their engagement with community radio. Social listening on the part of community radio staff members plays a role in the amplification of IKCS, the construction of community radio as rhizome, and contributes to how community radio audiences are able to express voice and derive value from participation in community radio. The social circle of listening, however, represents just one aspect of the broader listening practices that community radio stations and staff engage in. The second circle of listening that explores these practices is incentivised listening.

Incentivised

A further circle of listening that was observed is incentivised listening. Incentivised listening may take any number of forms and describes listening with the explicit aim of resulting in a positive outcome for the 'listener'. While this may have negative connotations, it realistically represents the day-to-day realities of interaction and communication. This is equally true in a community radio context. Listening, even in its most simplistic form, is central to the work of community radio broadcasters. This does not mean that incentivised listening is inherently negative, particularly when discussing the experiences of marginalized groups. As Iqani (2016, p. 16) explains:

"oppression and justice always take material form. No question of equality is ever only a matter of principle, philosophy, ideology or rights. It is always a matter of who has what and who does not. Equality is a question of access to material resources and the chance for comfortable, enjoyable lifestyles."

While listening for overt material incentives was not often demonstrated throughout the research, there were examples of incentivised listening for other reasons. Employment was one, with one audience member listening in the hope of securing a job for her daughter.

"I passed my daughter's resume for a job in the radio as she is at home without a job. My brother-in-law who is a pastor also passed her resume. She was earlier a teacher but the school was shut down. I encouraged her to do this job, even though she wasn't paid for six months. Still, I encouraged her to continue as she would see many people in the workplace and get exposed to the outer world. Now after joining there, she has evolved strength of her own. She goes for interview without my assistance and many people compliment for her new-found boldness." - Malai Vanoli audience member.

Other examples of incentivised listening from the audiences were fairly innocuous and potentially in line with the goals of the programmes and the station.

"Some information that they give will be unknown to us. So we listen to it as it may be useful." - Malai Vanoli audience member.

"I listened to tips given by a diabetician. My husband has diabetes. I came to know eating shallots and marinated fenugreek is good for eliminating diabetes only through that show." - Enkal Vanoli

listener.

Incentivised listening also relates to expression of voice:

> *"I participated in a documentary drama that was broadcasted in the women's show. I remember listening to it because I participated in the drama and I tuned in to listen to what I have spoke."* - Enkal Vanoli audience member.

Such examples serve to demonstrate the benign nature of most incentivised listening despite its connotations. The one overt case of listening for material incentive that emerged from the Enkal Vanoli broadcasters discussing the results of a listenership survey.

> *"We went to take a survey on listenership of the radio. Why we asked them if they listen to the radio, many of them told that they will answer only if we get them a radio. Few people told they will listen and few people told they will listen if we get them a radio. Few people also requested for a public radio."* - Enkal Vanoli volunteer.

At first glance, this appears to be an overly cynical response on the part of survey respondents. Pretty is critical of the role of incentives in participation, suggesting that material incentives, in particular, can "distort perceptions, create dependencies, and give the misleading impression that local people are supportive of externally driven initiatives" (1995, p. 1252). While such a critique raises valuable points, recalling earlier discussions on participation, the choice not to listen, or participate, is equally valid, though less recognised. As Cornwall observes, communities on the receiving end of so many well-meaning engagement attempts can become tired and cynical - she recounts the words of a "would-be community representative": "'You can't eat participation, can you?... what is in it for us?'" (2008, pp. 274–275).

When turning to the broadcasters, incentivised listening could be observed through interactions that took place purely to generate broadcast content. Genilo et al. suggest that being interviewed for a news programme or 'participating' in a news interview is enough to constitute "giving voice to the voiceless" in community radio (Genilo et al., 2016, p. 157). While this may be enough for some individual cases, what we now know about participation suggests that this may not be the case. From a participation perspective, this is reflective of a minimalist or "consulting" form of participation. In terms of listening, such an approach, when taken in isolation, represents incentivised listening. Naturally, there were many examples of station staff conducting this kind of listening, one particularly noteworthy example though, emerged from a Malai Vanoli audience focus group.:

> *"We have participated in the events while they have come here. But we have not spoken in phone calls much... They come to visit us. We speak to them and welcome them when they come. But otherwise, we do not have any contact. They have come here to take interview... They have come for two or three times. They will ask us to tell the information we know."* - Malai Vanoli audience member.

While this focus group was conducted in a small village that was quite some distance from the station, it

is representative of a more transactional form of incentivised listening. In contrast to this, more reciprocal forms of listening seemed to include relational or social aspects.

> *"The workers in radio are in regular contact and they became my friends. I participate in all the programmes organised by the radio. I also follow the programs in the radio. We spend time for radio out of our busy schedule as it is useful for us in many ways. Even today we have lot of work to do but we have come just for the cause of radio."* - Enkal Vanoli audience member.

To refer to the circles of listening diagram (see Figure 1), such listening would fall within both incentivised listening and social listening. What is also worth mentioning in relation to incentivised listening which may not be captured on any diagram is the aspect of enjoyment. While pride and meaningful participation have been discussed in Chapter 7, incentivised listening may also refer to "community radio as fun" (Milan, 2008, p. 30).

> *"I will point out this pregnancy programme. It has something to do with a child's future. The radio people and I were mutually happy for this programme. And importantly, I told from what I know very well and that made me content."* - Malai Vanoli audience member.

Feedback

"We announce the telephone number at the end of every show. We also give the listeners our WhatsApp number, Facebook ID and email ID and request them to give feedback. Most of the listeners give their feedback through phone. Few also give feedback through WhatsApp. But as most of our listeners are also our members, they give their feedback while we go for a meeting. They tell us if the program was good or bad. They give feedback to check the quality of broadcasting. They will also appreciate us if the program was good. They will share their happiness if the program they participated is broadcasted in the radio and so on. They will also give suggestions for better broadcast and adjustment of time slots. Apart from this, we conduct radio assessment camps every six months. We gather all the members and ask him what type of programs they need from the radio and which time will be convenient for them to listen to the radio. So they will give feedback about what programs can be included. They request us to broadcast information about subsidies training programs and doctors' programs. They will also ask us to look for the time slot as the time we broadcast is not convenient for them to listen. We do not broadcast in the afternoon and continuously request us to change that. They will also tell about the signal and tower problem they face. We get feedback in the field, through phone calls, and also during these assessment camps." - Enkal Vanoli staff member.

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A related aspect of incentivised listening, one that represents the dominant form of incentivised listening for community radio staff, is that of audience feedback. While soliciting and receiving feedback is generally unrelated to personal listening incentives, listening in such a context is clearly motivated by other factors. The above statement from an Enkal Vanoli staff member clearly demonstrates the importance of audience and, especially, parent body feedback to the station. The importance of ongoing,

grassroots feedback in a development context is further demonstrated by Easterly in his seminal work, *The White Man's Burden.* Easterly (2006, p. 169) uses changing the temperature of a thermostat as a metaphor for the aid industry:

"The difficulty of foreign aid agencies is that a bureaucrat is controlling the thermostat to the distant blanket of some poor person, who has little ability to communicate whether she is too hot or too cold. The bureaucratic Planners get little or no feedback from the poor. So the poor foreign aid recipients get some things they never wanted, and don't get things they urgently need."

Indeed, feedback represents a critical part of complex systems such as the change processes involved in development (Ramalingam, 2013). Diversity and participation are vital in such processes as feedback loops affect how change occurs (Lennie & Tacchi, 2013). This is particularly true given the regulatory environment of the Indian community radio sector and the limitations on community ownership of stations. Audience feedback represents one of the few ways foster participation and a sense of ownership around the station. This is particularly important recalling the brief history of AIR discussed in Chapter 6: it wasn't until 1956 that AIR first made an attempt to solicit audience participation, even in the form of feedback (K. Kumar, 2003; Pavarala & Malik, 2007). In their in-depth study of community radio in India, Pavarala and Malik found that participation is key to increasing listenership and further involvement in community radio: "If any village has participated in production of a programme for community radio, its residents listen, pay attention and identify with it more closely" (2007, p. 250). This phenomenon was noted by Enkal Vanoli staff:

"At the end of every big package, we conduct survey to find the success of our programmes. We could understand the impact of our programs through the feedback given during the survey. Earlier while we took survey 1000 people only 34% of them were our listeners. After this program, it increased to 65% and we could learn from their feedback that they listened to this program." - Enkal Vanoli staff member.

From a participation perspective, feedback is usually associated with access. As discussed in Chapter 7, access may imply audiences gaining a presence within media organisations through feedback discussions where they are encouraged to comment and criticise (Bosch, 2003; Carpentier, 2016b). As demonstrated in the opening interview excerpt, there are many ways in which audience members can access the station by providing feedback. The primary method of obtaining feedback though seemed to be either through surveys or conversations that took place while gathering interviews.

Returning to the markers of listening discussed earlier, what differentiates standard feedback from feedback as a form of listening is that of response and action. There were numerous examples of both stations acting in response to feedback:

"We have shared our opinion and even given advice. Here we start work since morning, say about six o'clock in the morning, and we have recommended to broadcast the programme in the

evening from five o'clock to seven o'clock. And they accepted our recommendations. Because in the evening, generally the farmers will be finished their work in the field. So we have put forth our suggestions for those programme timings and they have accepted." - Enkal Vanoli audience member.

"Earlier, we used to do agriculture-related programs, with whatever resources we had. But then we got feedback at one of the events we arranged. They asked us to give information about the seasonal crops, about what could be planted in which season and how it can be maintained. So we got messages from agricultural officers regarding the monsoon and suggestion for crops that are appropriate to be planted in monsoon. As per the listeners' requests, we started broadcasting this information in the radio. We started changing our program schedule as per the listeners choice." - Enkal Vanoli staff member.

"There are a few local schemes sponsored by the panchayat. Not every people will be aware of this, so they request us to give information and do programs regarding the schemes. We spoke to the panchayat and do programs that creates awareness among the people. When we do this, they show some involvement. This act as a platform for the people to involve and work with us." - Malai Vanoli staff member.

An interesting intersection of voice and listening emerges from the feedback that Enkal Vanoli station staff received and subsequently about some of the programme formats:

"From the initial stages of the radio, the one complaint we receive is we talk more in the radio and there is no entertainment. After their continuous complaints, we changed the format. Instead of hosting all the programs ourselves, we started involving lots of listeners in the program. We took interviews and broadcasted them. Earlier, we used to collect facts from internet and books and tell them in the radio. But the listeners got bored as it was in the tone of a lecture. But now we choose a certain topic and make a panel discussion about the topic. It can either be a discussion or a debate. Based on the feedback given by the people, we gradually changed the time and format of various programs." - Enkal Vanoli staff member.

In the case of Malai Vanoli, their parent body was both a hindrance and a help in relation to acting on listener feedback.

"We cannot straight away do anything as we are part of the NGO. But there are several other departments through which we could do some help. For example, we could deal the water crisis of the people through water project that is going on. If there is a sanitation problem, then we check with the workers if there is any problem regarding the salary or any other and try helping them through radio." - Malai Vanoli staff member.

Despite this, both stations seemed to place significant emphasis on audience feedback, with audience members at both stations discussing numerous opportunities to provide feedback. This suggests an environment of receptivity to and recognition of audience feedback. As such, in the majority of cases

within this research, the process of soliciting, receiving, and responding to feedback represents a commitment to listening - incentivised listening, but listening nonetheless.

Political

The final circle of listening is political listening, which serves to blur the boundaries between speakers and listeners, and allow marginalised groups to question the power relations that support their oppression. While political listening has been hinted at throughout this thesis, this circle of listening focusses on how the political emerges through and within the listening practices of community radio. In her work on the politics of listening, Bassel proposes a fundamental question that really should underpin any discussions of listening: why listen? "The answer is very simple and impossible at the same time: political equality" (Bassel, 2017, p. 6). Political listening can and should be a major factor in how policies are developed and implemented; institutions and policy-makers should not just be promising 'voice' to their constituents, but must also commit to listening (Dreher, 2012; Manyozo, 2017). Shifting the responsibility for listening on to mainstream institutions is an act of valuing the voice of those groups that are so often denied access to such institutions (Dreher, 2012). Despite the value placed on voice in both community radio and development rhetoric, listening is critical if voice is to be valued. Dutta (2014) advocates for taking a culture-centred approach to listening in order to broaden discursive spaces to include the voices of marginalized groups. A culture-centred approach to communication strategies for change interrogates the role of communities and focusses on whose voices are heard (Tufte, 2017). The concept of listening as creating space is also discussed by Dreher, who suggests that this does not necessarily represent absence or withdrawal, "but rather a space that sustains interconnection and interaction" (2009a, p. 12). What is worth briefly mentioning here though, is the presence of multiple layers of oppression. Listening may represent an opportunity to create spaces that facilitate the deconstruction of dominant communication frameworks (M. J. Dutta, 2014), these spaces, and who can be invited into them, are inherently political. While community radio may create space for certain oppressed groups to exercise voice and participate in public discourse, there are other groups who remain excluded from such spaces. Class and caste represent crucial undercurrents of this research: while not explicitly discussed by research participants, such factors clearly influence who is able to enter these discursive spaces. Manyozo (2017) reminds us that oppression is a behaviour, not an identity; as such, local organisations, not just western or international groups, may also perpetuate oppressive discursive practices. Alternative spectacles of development are equally susceptible to a linear, modernist repertoire (Manyozo, 2017). While listening itself can represent a counter-hegemonic act, Purdy (1991, p. 63) observes the inherent power relations of interpretation: "despite the intended meaning of a speaker, the listener still has the final interpretation of the message presented. The listener in essence shifts the speaker's meaning or interprets from his experiential point of reference in the world." If listening is to be politically meaningful, there must be "continual interrogation of power to unpack the ways in which power works to minimize

the opportunities for listening to diverse voices" (M. J. Dutta, 2014, p. 76). Thus, listening within community radio for development does not represent a panacea to the problems associated with the spectacle of development or broader societal power relations, but instead offers a space of potential interconnection and deconstruction.

One relatively simple example of how the political is embedded within the listening practices of community radio is the interview format. Interviews, so widespread in radio broadcasting and journalism, represents a key site of power struggle. Interview questions are primarily asked by those already in positions of power - doctors, lawyers, loan officers, and journalists; furthermore, asking a question, and even more so a sequence of questions, serves to constrain the discourse options available to the interviewee (Hutchby, 2005). Recalling Chapter 6, the comments of a female Enkal Vanoli broadcaster appear very different when examined through a lens of political listening:

> *"It's very difficult to make women talk. They hesitate at first point because they think they lack of knowledge in certain topics. So I take some books handy while I go for interviews. If they can't suddenly remember any. I will ask them read from the book and tell some points. After a few points gradually they will remember some more points on their own. Some women needs motivation to talk. I simply talk to some women to motivate them for speaking in the radio. Few women will like to talk on their own. But few others will prefer answering for questions. For such people I will ask questions such that they answer. Sometimes we'll ask them to refer to the book we take. Sometimes we ask them to consult with their elders if what they speak is correct."* -
> Enkal Vanoli staff member.

The power structures and agendas in such an example are clear. Community radio as a space of political listening is certainly not immune to power relations. As listeners, community radio staff have the final say of interpretation which is magnified in their power over broadcasting decisions. This disconnect between the authentic expression of voice and listening often resulted in discomfort on the part of the staff members:

> *"Some of the listeners call us to ask why their program isn't broadcasted. It wouldn't have been broadcasted in the schedule time, we would have changed the schedule or we would have left it without broadcasting as it is not fit for broadcast. But we cannot tell it to them openly..."* - Enkal Vanoli staff member.

The position of power that community radio broadcasters hold, even when creating spaces of listening, offers a new perspective on the incentivised listening discussed earlier. As one audience member put it:

> *"Only when they came for interview we spoke, otherwise we haven't."* - Malai Vanoli audience member.

Despite the incentivised nature of some of this listening and the unequal power relations associated with the broadcasting/listener model, community radio still represents possibly the best chance for audiences to express voice and be listened to in the media. One staff member recognised this as the imperative for

them to encourage participation:

> *"We should also convince the people to make use of opportunity to talk in a radio which is otherwise quite impossible for the people to go to other radio stations and talk."* - Enkal Vanoli staff member.

The sense of personal responsibility in relation to facilitating voice and listening was observed among staff members at both stations, as were the results of these efforts:

> *"Earlier we used to go in search of them. We go in search of people who can speak about agriculture and our volunteers helped in identifying them. But later after the radio started getting popularly broadcasted, people came voluntarily to share their views in the radio. So that is how they participate."* - Enkal Vanoli staff member.

> *"People do share their personal experiences. We actually go for some other interview but they start interacting with us about their personal experiences."* - Malai Vanoli staff member.

> The political circle of listening is complex and multi-faceted. Community radio stations that operate within a development agenda are faced with a multitude of competing social, economic, legislative, and discursive power relations. Disrupting any one small facet of these sets of deeply entwined power structures represents a significant deconstruction and subsequent creation of new communicative spaces. In specific relation to this research, this is best encapsulated by the comments of a community radio audience member, who later came to volunteer for her station:

> *"We have come out of our shells to speak. That itself is a great development. Earlier, we don't speak and feel very shy to speak in the mic. Now, we have started to speak casually and now we're holding mike for others."* - Enkal Vanoli volunteer.

This example illustrates a clear disruption of dominant communicative practices through the intersection of voice and listening. Creating such an environment requires those in positions of power, in this case, the community radio broadcasters, to take action and yield so as to create space for others. Listening represents a challenging, or even a risky, possibility, as there is the potential that what we hear may require real change (Bickford, 1996). Listening, therefore, when not co-opted by corporate or oppressive forces, represents hopeful practice that aims to equalise power relations. While the hopeful aspect of listening is important, so is the practice. Bassel, paraphrasing a literary work of China Mieville (2015), argues that listening must be combined with action so as to embody "hope with teeth".

"Listeners"

"All these people long to come out of their shells! I feel tremendously guilty for not using them. I realised this only during these interviews. I have the interest to do what I can and bring them out, but I have no resources. If we train them properly and set up some listeners club similar to readers club, through this club they will work together, solve each other's problem or even go for a tour. I got this idea only during these interviews. We have to separately form this club and have a separate person in charge who is

trained for this purpose alone. I hope this will become a success and aid the radio too..." - Enkal Vanoli staff member.

<p align="center">***</p>

The final aspect of listening to be discussed here is the role of those doing the listening. In this section, the 'listeners' are community radio staff. It is worth making a point of methodological clarification here on the terminology used throughout this thesis. Readers may note that, until this chapter, the terminology used to differentiate audiences from community radio staff has been "listeners" and "staff" or "broadcasters". This is reflective of traditional media dichotomies and signifies a one-way exchange of information rather than the participatory, collaborative nature of community radio. Until now, this terminology has been useful so as to demonstrate the dominant expectations placed on the various stakeholders. In this chapter though, taking in to account the multifaceted nature of speaking and listening, it has been more useful to refer to the groups as 'audience' and 'staff', rather than 'broadcasters' and 'listeners'. Indeed, traditional media terminology is somewhat problematic in this context. Naturally, 'audience member', 'listener', 'volunteer', or 'staff member' represents just one facet of complex identities and it is reductive, and somewhat offensive, to assume otherwise. As Couldry, Livingstone and Markham suggest, taking such a stance represents a "media-centric" perspective: "being part of an audience is just one of many activities in daily life, and media just one of many sources of meaning and influence" (2016, p. 26). Indeed, this section explores the role of the 'listeners' - community radio staff - in facilitating and engaging in the three identified circles of listening.

There have been a number of efforts to describe the role of community radio staff within their communities. Gramsci's concept of the "organic intellectual" has previously been applied to community media practitioners in that they serve as grassroots "intellectuals" that articulate the aspirations of subaltern groups (J. Atkinson, 2005; Downing, 2000; Howley, 2002). In this capacity, community radio staff should be in constant interaction with audience so as to incorporate their thoughts into what is broadcast. Further, community radio staff as organic intellectuals should encourage their audiences to take a critical view of the dominant hegemonic discourses and perspectives (Guo, 2014). Further, the concept of the organic intellectual suggests partnership between the 'intellectuals' and the local people so as to generate knowledge that is contextual and relevant (Pavarala & Malik, 2007). Manyozo (2018, p. 404) also discusses the role of organic intellectuals in IKCS, suggesting that they "evoke, administer and circulate" technical and non-specialised knowledge. The concept of organic intellectuals clearly holds a lot of appeal in a community radio context, yet it is not an exact fit in terms of community radio staff in India. While the connections between community radio staff and audiences were clearly strong, and community radio staff were deeply embedded within their communities on both a professional and a personal level, there was a disconnect in relation to broadcasting outcomes. The community radio broadcasters within the research were not observed encouraging critical views of hegemonic forces and were limited in how they expressed the aspirations of their communities. The ownership models and

restrictive legislature of the community radio sector in India directly contribute to this. The listening focus, in addition to much of the content and onus for encouraging participation, was more on improving the day-to-day lives of communities rather than necessarily directly questioning power structures. Nonetheless, there are aspects of community radio practitioners as organic intellectuals that prove useful, namely the close partnerships and relationships with local people. This represents a running theme through this thesis: the role of the social across the various aspects of community radio. Manyozo argues that meaningful friendship and genuine commitment to liberation is crucial if listening is to manifest as a form of speaking for, or on behalf of, oppressed groups without ventriloquising (2017). As such, the social aspects of listening, namely friendship and social contact, are considered more important in this context and interpretation of community radio staff as organic intellectuals. The importance of friendship and social connections in listening on the part community radio staff were repeatedly observed at both stations. In fact, each one of the participants in all the listener focus groups had come to listen to their local stations through a recommendation of a friend or family member. This is logical given the lack of budget for other forms of advertising the stations, but it also speaks to the embedded nature of the community radio staff members within their communities and the networks they have built.

> *"Usually I am a very introvert and shy person. She (*staff member*) used to encourage me to talk in the radio. I have participated in many programs and I have also gone to the radio station to talk in many programs. Only through radio I started knowing things that I did not know before. I also started sharing the information I hear in the radio to others also."* - Enkal Vanoli listener.

> *"If they are not working in the radio, we wouldn't even know about it."* - Malai Vanoli listener.

There were numerous discussions on this topic within the data that served to demonstrate the importance of the social and interconnected aspects of community radio staff as listeners.

The comment that prefaced this section - the Enkal Vanoli staff member's idea of forming a listening club - represents the complex and often frustrating nature of the role of community radio practitioners. Organisational constraints - on resources, on programming restrictions, on ownership models and so forth - play a significant role in limiting the listening that community radio staff can engage in. The passion and dedication of the staff members - which cannot be downplayed - is critical to the success of the stations, as opposed to the investment of the parent bodies. This disconnect is best illustrated through the following quotes from an Enkal Vanoli community radio practitioner and a member of the station's parent body:

> *"We are giving them the salary, they are under control. We give them salary of 5000 or 6000 rupees* (~55-66 GBP)*. For that salary, they work with utmost involvement and they do their job in a good manner. They feel this salary is comfortable. This salary is equal to six labourers' wage. We distribute among six labourers. In that scenario, they understand the situation and execute their work as their duty with service in mind. They are not money-minded or keeping salary in*

mind." - Enkal Vanoli parent body member.

"According to me, the greatest challenge is inadequate staff. There are ongoing projects and it is difficult to deal with it without staff. Even if we get new staff, it takes time to equip them. The reason for this is money. They get paid well in other jobs and the salary here is not enough for them. We also need money for new equipments. Some equipments are not in proper condition to work. But if you ask me even if there is money when there are not enough staffs, the work we do does not progress and the things get stalled. I consider these both as great challenges." - Enkal Vanoli staff member.

Nonetheless, it was this same staff member whose quote prefaced this section. Despite the organisational constraints and the clear disparity in expectations, this staff member was passionate, energised and actively looking for ways to further engage the audience. As a side note, such an approach - establishing a listening club - has enjoyed success in other community radio stations in India as an accessible group listening environment may offer a democratic space that can facilitate collective problem-solving and decision-making (Malik, 2015; Pavarala & Malik, 2007). Community radio staff members are clearly restricted by the organisational environment in which they operate. As such, the organisational attitude to listening within community radio stations has the potential to significantly affect how staff are able to listen. Though organisational listening was not a primary focus of this research, it represents a potential area for future investigation: the organisational listening practices of community radio stations may significantly influence the way station staff are able to or are encouraged to listen to their audiences.

9 The bowstring

"I did not reveal any individual talent. I did not bag any prize in competitions. I never thought of winning an event. I just wanted to be a part of it. My participation and contribution itself makes me feel proud. No individual talent; never got opportunities to explore the same. When an opportunity came, I just utilized it. It made an impact in my life." - Enkal Vanoli listener.

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Bow songs tell stories. They tell the epics tales that have been retold and refined over centuries, they tell of local myths and traditions, they offer moral guidance and advice, and they bring people together by way of theatrical performance. Community radio too, tells stories. It proselytizes and shares, it brings people together through exchanging ideas and knowledge, through shared experiences and community. In both *willupattu* and community radio, there is contingency, there is tenacity, there is *jugaad*. There must be, particularly given the forces that serve to influence and shape outcomes, whether those forces are the voices of the leftists or the powerful and pervasive spectacle of development. Throughout this thesis, there have been clear parallels between *willupattu* and community radio. By working within the spectacle of development and spectres of modernisation, we see community radio assume the role of a passive, agreeable chorus, or the embodiment of the "ideal listener". But through the amplification of local knowledge communication systems, through deriving deeply personal meaning and value from limited participation, and through multifaceted listening on the part of the stations, it is possible to see the narrative of the rightists emerge, clear and strong, despite the structures imposed by the leftists. Understanding these governing structures, whether they be legislative or discursive, reveals the true contingency of community radio stations and the value that they are able to elicit and provide for their audiences.

This research employed a bricolage approach to crafting a knowledge paradigm loosely informed by constructivism. The research design draws on principles of postcolonial feminist thought as espoused by authors such as Edward Said (1979) and Gayatri Spivak (1988), as well as the concept of cognitive justice which recognises the equally valid existence of different forms of knowledge outside of mainstream, western thought (Visvanathan, 2009). Such an interpretive framework considers the knowledge emerging from this research as co-constructed by the researcher and research participants. Given the co-constructed nature of the knowledge emerging from this research, it is important to recognise the influence of the positionality of the researcher both in terms of the power associated with the 'researcher' subject position, but also the researcher's privileged background as a white, female from a wealthy country. Based on an interpretive framework informed by cognitive justice, there are several key terms that form the basis of the research and thus required clear interpretation. Firstly, the concept of development, which attracts myriad definitions, is interpreted as deeply complex and highly dependent on the individual freedoms and capabilities that people have reason to value (A. K. Sen, 1999).

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Following on from this, the research is situated within the field of media, communication and development, which consists of three primary approaches: media for development, media development, and participatory development (Manyozo, 2012). Community radio is most often associated with this latter - as a tool of participatory development.

Community radio has been researched in a variety of ways, though qualitative audience research was identified as most relevant to the research aims and questions at hand. There have been a number of alternative methodologies associated with evaluating the impact of community radio, including ethnographic action research (Tacchi et al., 2007, 2003) and barefoot impact assessments (Jallov, 2005). These methodologies provide a useful guide in developing the *jugaad* approach to ethnography that forms the methodology of this research. Hindi slang for a "quick fix" or "making do", *jugaad* captures the contingent, versatile nature of community radio and applies such an attitude to the design of a methodology. Drawing on principles of ethnography including thick description, immersive interaction, multiple sites, and reflexive practice, a *jugaad* approach facilitates the design of a qualitative methodology that aligns with the research aims, interpretive framework, and the practicalities of data collection.

Based on the *jugaad* methodology, data collection took place using several methods from the ethnographer's toolbox including participant observation and interviews, as well as several more novel approaches including Kusenbach's "go-alongs" (2003) and listener storytelling, loosely based on the work of King (2015). Data collection took place over several phases. First was an initial acclimatising phase at the UNESCO Chair on Community Media at the University of Hyderabad which served to orientate the researcher to the local community radio environment through meetings with key figures in order to develop an understanding of contemporary debates and discussions within the sector and contemporaneous research taking place. Fieldwork commenced in earnest with an initial period spent at each of the stations in order to observe the day-to-day operations and work practices of staff. Following this, the research moved outside of traditional sites of media production (Couldry, 2004) by conducting "go-alongs" with community radio staff members so as to observe work in these spaces and to establish initial contact with key audience members. The final phase of data collection consisted of interviews: specifically, focus group discussions with key groups of listeners as identified by the community radio practitioners; listener storytelling interviews with select individuals; group interviews with community radio staff members; and finally, one-on-one interviews with key informants from the stations. The data collected was analysed using constructivist grounded theory (Charmaz, 2014) and aspects of narrative analysis. There were several limitations associated with the methods of data collection and the circumstances of the research, namely issues surrounding foreigner registration, as well as the accessibility and familiarity of research participants in terms of storytelling interviews. While these limitations certainly affected the time and amount of data collection that was possible, particularly at one site, the quality of the data that was collected was uncompromised.

Community radio is a complex and multifaceted medium. Regulations, funding sources, and ownership models vary around the world, and even the stations that are geographically close together can vary significantly. As such, an all-encompassing definition is highly elusive (Carpentier et al., 2003). Given this diversity, rather than try to establish a general definition, two broad theoretical constructs were established: community radio and its role in democratising media access, and community radio in the construction and maintenance of communities. Having established the key theoretical underpinnings of community radio generally, it is possible to see similarities among the significantly different approaches to community radio across South Asia. The way community radio is enacted in India is based on its history of colonial broadcasting as well as the Government of India's reluctance to explore even the possibility of a community radio sector. It wasn't until 2006 that the sector was truly able to grow into what we see today: 217 operational stations across the country owned by educational institutions, agricultural science centres, and established NGOs. The sector is currently grappling around issues of "NGOisation" (Malik & Bandelli, 2012; Pavarala, 2015), communication rights, and the omnipresent issues of sustainability. This is the contextual environment of the research sites: two rural stations located in the southern state of Tamil Nadu. The stations were loosely disguised so as to respect the privacy of research participants, with pseudonyms given to the stations and all research participants.

The foremost findings of this research relate to the influence of a development agenda on the community radio sector in India. Manyozo introduces the concept of "the spectacle of development" to describe the ways in which oppression is perpetuated by the "production, exchange and utilization" of imaginaries that are based on stereotypes, fail to acknowledge difference, and silence the voices of subaltern groups (2017, p. 14). Considering development as a performative spectacle provides a useful frame for understanding the insidious ways in which development shapes the lives of so-called 'beneficiaries', from the highest level of government and multilateral organisational policies, all the way to the grassroots, including the on-the-ground activities of community radio stations. The spectacle of development operates through what is termed here as a "spectre" of development - a modernisation discourse. Modernisation represents a paradigm of development that is widely regarded as imperialistic and outdated yet pervades throughout even the most supposedly participatory development interventions. The spectacle of development was observed in a number of ways throughout the research data. Foremost, in the ways that audiences and station staff interpreted development, as well as the language they employed to discuss what they considered to be development. There was clear evidence of a modernisation discourse operating through a top-down transmission of information, which stands in stark contrast to the participatory, horizontal flows of communication espoused in community radio literature. Furthermore, the spectacle of development was also observed in the saturation of the Government of India's *Swachh Bharat Mission*, a sanitation project with a key aim of ending open defecation by the end of 2019. Both community radio staff and audience members consistently associated SBM with development. The broad approach to SBM, however, is deeply indicative of the

spectacle of development in that it employs top-down communication and fails to account for the social and cultural structures that also govern a complex issue like open defecation. Community radio stations find themselves a cog in a highly publicised and well-funded intervention where financial rewards and veiled threats ensure compliance. Finally, the spectacle of development was observed on a personal level through one community radio audience member's storytelling interview. The audience member recounted the story of when her daughter fell seriously ill and almost died after a miscarriage. Upon analysis, the spectacle of development through the spectre of modernisation emerged through the emphasis placed on western medicines, the power structures between doctors and patients, as well as the cynical way in which the community radio station exploited the story for its overtones of gaining knowledge as a result of listening to radio, and the 'dangers' of failing to do so.

While the spectacle of development clearly influences the work of community radio stations in India, there were examples of how the spectacle and subsequent spectres can be subverted. The spectacle of development has a long history of operating through the Indian media: it is the legacy of colonialism as enacted through broadcasting systems. It is this history that led Page and Crawley to suggest that, in South Asia, community radio "is a term which is generally used to describe radio for the benefit of the community rather than radio which the community runs itself" (2001, p. 327). Tracing this history, the limited number of success stories relating to early iterations of community radio and public broadcasting all relate to local broadcasting about local issues in local languages. The same can be said for one of India's most prominent community radio stations, Sangham Radio, which is widely lauded for being operated by Dalit women who cover local issues in their own dialect. The implication of these success stories is that the spectacle of development can be subverted, particularly when community radio stations act as amplification of local or indigenous knowledge communication systems. This was observed through the amplification of local technical knowledge, as observed through the knowledge sharing practices of farmers, as well as cultural knowledge, which could be seen in the preservation of local traditions and the sharing of various aspects of different cultures. Community radio was also observed to support IKCS through its role as a rhizome, as described by Bailey, Cammaerts and Carpentier (2007). This takes place when community radio stations establish themselves as what Jallov refers to as "efficient local knowledge centres" through the creation of "independent, sustainable, and indigenized" networks (2005, p. 33). These networks were constructed and maintained through the close social connections between community radio staff members and various segments and individuals within the communities. These social connections were not just between station staff and community members, but community radio also served to facilitate connections between disparate groups that otherwise had no contact. This was an example of community radio amplifying IKCS in its role as rhizome, but also engaging in the process of community building and maintenance. Further, community radio acted as a link between community members and other organisations, such as government officials, NGOs, and other professionals such as agricultural experts and doctors.

As discussed, community radio acted as a key facilitator in amplifying IKCS among listener communities. What is heavily implied by this though, is that audience participation is necessary in order to benefit from such practices. It has been established that community radio is intended as a participatory medium, but the spectacle of development and other contextual factors serve to limit who is able to participate and the extent to which they can do so. Participation in community radio has been defined in a number of ways ranging from minimalist approaches, where participation is limited to access, to maximalist, holistic approaches which see participation at all levels of content and management (Carpentier, 2015, 2016a). Access and interaction represent important preconditions to participation that were widely observed throughout the data, yet in themselves, they do not constitute participation. Participation implies power sharing, which is near impossible given the ownership structures and the influence of the spectacle of development. What was also observed though, was the value or meaning that audience members derived from their participation, however limited or restricted it may be according to definitions in the literature. Audience members derived value in several areas - voice, ownership, identity, and agency - all of which were termed "meaningful participation" which draws on the work of Tacchi (Tacchi, 2014; Tacchi et al., 2012) on meaningful mobility.

The final area of key findings relates to the role of listening. Listening here is understood as more than the physical act of hearing, but rather embodies an ethical value as well as the reception and interpretation of messages. Listening acts as an underlying thread throughout this research, both in the ways that audience members are able to derive value from their engagements with community radio, to the way that community radio staff members connect with their listeners. Listening is certainly not immune to the co-optations of the spectacle of development. Indeed, what Dutta (2014) terms the "façade of listening" accurately describes the kinds of performative, placative listening employed by development professionals in the pursuit of nominally 'participatory' development interventions. Fortunately, there were other forms of listening that emerged from the research data, namely three interrelated circles of listening: social, incentivised and political. Social listening is critical to the development and maintenance of interpersonal relationships. The importance of this kind of listening can be seen throughout the role of community radio in amplifying IKCS and the social aspects of community radio as rhizome. Further, social listener contributes to the ways in which community radio audience members form aspects of their identity through their engagements with the community radio stations. A key aspect of meaningful participation was the opportunity to express voice and the feeling of being listened to. The second circle of listening is incentivised listening. While this has connotations of the instrumental listening associated with the facade of listening, incentivised listening is not inherently negative. Instead, it describes much of the reason for tuning in to community radio - to get something out of it, whether that be entertainment, information or to learn something new. On the part of community radio staff members, incentivised listening may take the form of listening for the purpose of generating content or listening to solicit feedback. Incentivised listening was seen on the part of both

community radio audience and staff members through the sharing of IKCS, which requires a cycle of staff listening, then audience listening in order for the IKCS to be amplified. The final circle of listening is political listening which aims to blur the boundaries between the defined roles of speaker and listener in order to achieve political equality. Community radio stations that find themselves navigating the spectacle of development are faced with a multitude of competing social, economic, legislative, and discursive power relations. Disrupting any one small facet of these sets of deeply entwined power structures represents a significant deconstruction and subsequent creation of new communicative spaces. Creating these spaces requires those in positions of power, such as community radio broadcasters, to relinquish this power and act as "listeners" themselves so as to work towards political equality.

The findings of this research have implications for both community radio theory and practice. Though India represents a unique community radio environment and the highly contextual nature of community radio stations themselves make it difficult to generalise, understanding the impacts of a development agenda on the day-to-day activities of a station does have wider implications. This is particularly significant given the role that community radio has played in media, communication and development projects and interventions around the world. The restrictive nature of a development agenda should act as both a cautionary tale and a question as to the fundamental purpose of community radio. Is the purpose of community radio to work towards externally imposed, vaguely defined 'development'? Or is community radio about communication rights, voice, activism, critiques of mainstream media discourse, expression of alternative views and interests, or even fun? Answers to these questions lay far beyond the scope of this research but warrant ongoing reflection and perhaps offer a critical guide to further inquiry. As Dutta explains, listening as a communicative framework for social change requires a re-imagining of the very idea of social change (2014). It requires looking beyond the spectacle of development and looking through the spectre of modernisation discourses so as to remove the distractions for meaningful listening. As this thesis has demonstrated, even within the spectacle of development, change and improvement find a way. Despite the constraints, limitations, and thinly-veiled imperialism imposed by the spectacle of development, community radio, through its grassroots engagement with people facilitates the preservation and celebration of local cultures and knowledge, it creates space for participation in media production where the value is defined by those participating, and it creates space for a more equitable platform for listening and voice to intersect.

What is clear from this research however is that, for community radio stations working within a development agenda, audience members most appreciate programming and activities that are deeply embedded within the contextual environment of the community and are based on listening to their needs and interests. This could take the form of programming that supports and amplifies local approaches to knowledge sharing or activities that encourage different groups to meet and socialise. It could be through offering the kinds of participation that audiences have reason to value and give

meaning to. It could also take the form of programming and activities that are intimately aligned with the community's needs thanks to a commitment to deep, multifaceted listening. The broader implications of these findings offer insight into how stations might design programming and activities to deeply engage with their audiences and embed themselves as an essential part of the local media landscape. Encouraging listening on the part of community radio stations also emphasises the role of the staff members and the importance of employing and adequately valuing (and compensating) passionate, driven people who are themselves embedded within the local community. Community radio staff and the impacts of relationships with audience members represents a potential area for future research. This thesis has demonstrated that these relationships are crucial, but further investigation into why and how this is the case would surely prove valuable.

Returning to our fictional *willupattu* song, while the spectacle of development alongside spectres of modernisation might demand a single voice with passive listeners, and the facade of listening suggests a single voice with a chorus of well-behaved "ideal" listeners, responding predictably and on cue, community radio is a co-production: a conversation between staff and audiences, rightists and leftists. While the rightists may set the tone and timbre, without the leftists, there is only half a song.

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Appendix 1: Interview details

Interview type	Duration	Location	Participants
Malai Vanoli			
Listener FGD 1	12:25	Participant's home	5 female listeners and volunteers
Storytelling 1.1	3:54		M…
Storytelling 1.2	3:55		P…
Storytelling 1.3	32:37		K…
Listener FGD 2	9:19	Village common area	5 female listeners
Storytelling 2.1	4:31		Sk…
Storytelling 2.2	2:53		Sb…
Group interview 1	18:54	Radio station	5 male RJs
One-on-one 1	17:00	Village common area	Female station manager
Enkal Vanoli			
Listener FGD 3	18:49	Radio station	4 male listeners and parent body members
Storytelling 3.1	43:39		K…
Storytelling 3.2	14:48		R…
Listener FGD 4	50:03	Village hall	3 female listeners and volunteers
Storytelling 4.1	4:42		Kv…
Storytelling 4.2	5:50		Sy…
Storytelling 4.3	9:20		VN…
Listener FGD 5	19:56	Under a tree	5 male listeners and volunteers
Storytelling 5.1	8:18		MV…
Storytelling 5.2	5:44		UK…
Listener FGD 6	43:29	Participant's home	6 female listeners and volunteers
Storytelling 6.1	7:30		B…
Storytelling 6.2	17:02		P…
Group interview 2	34:55	Radio station	5 RJs: 2 male, 3 female

One-on-one 2	27:31		Female station manager
Totals			
Total listener focus groups		6	
Total listener storytelling interviews		14	
Total radio station staff group interviews		2	
Total one-on-one staff interviews		2	
Total listener participants		28 (19F, 9M)	
Total radio station staff participants		11 (7M, 4F)	

Appendix 2: Participant interview questions and prompts

Malai Vanoli

Group interviews with staff

- How long have you worked at Malai Vanoli?
- What was your previous journalism/broadcast experience before working here?
- What's your favourite part of your job here? Least favourite?
- What do you see as the role of community radio?
- Who is your audience? How do they engage with your programmes?
- What do audience members say they like or dislike about your programmes?
- Has an interaction with a listener ever influenced the way you work? (E.g. Have they provided an idea for a programme that you have used?)
- In what ways do you think Malai Vanoli engages with its listeners? (Events, interviews, personal conversations?)
- How do you personally feel like you engage with your listeners through your work?
- How often do you find yourself interacting with your listeners? In what way? (Over the phone, in person socially, for interviews)
- Do you feel as though Malai Vanoli contributes to building a sense of community among its listeners? Why do you feel that way?

One-on-one interview with station manager

- What sort of feedback mechanisms are in place at Malai Vanoli?
- What are the main ways that content is sourced?
- Who are the volunteers? How many are there? How are they recruited?
- What role does the local community have in the production/presentation of the programmes?
- What do you consider to be the biggest challenge facing Malai Vanoli?
- Can you think of a time when you feel like Malai Vanoli has listened to the community and responded to their needs?
- Can you think of a time when this didn't happen? Why?
- How do you think Malai Vanoli listens to their audience? Does this impact on the content and the way you work?

Listener focus group discussions

- Please introduce yourself: where are you from, what do you do for work, age etc
- How often do you listen to the community radio station? For how long?
- What are you doing while you listen? (Working/cooking/childcare/focussed on listening)
- What was the last show you listened to?
- Do you discuss what you hear on the radio with your friends/family?
- Have you ever visited the station?
- Have you ever been in contact with the station? How? (Feedback, events, talk back, existing relationships with station staff)
    - Can you tell us about these interactions? What were the results of these interactions?
- Do you feel as though the station broadcasts material that is relevant to you?
- Do you feel like you can relate to the broadcasters? Do you feel they represent you? Why?
- Do you feel as though Malai Vanoli gives you a voice?
- Do you think that Malai Vanoli contributes to community development? In what ways?

Storytelling

- Can you introduce yourself? Tell your story (age, from, family, education, work, etc.).
- Tell the story of how you found RK
- What is the first program you can remember listening to? What did you think of it?
- Have you ever visited RK? If so can you tell the story of your first visit? If not, why?
- Have you ever produced content/participated in content-creation (interviews etc) for RK? If so, can you tell the story of the production you are most proud of? If not, why?
- Have you ever heard anything on RK that informed your actions?
- Do you recall any programmes that had a direct impact on you or someone or something in your community?

Enkal Vanoli

Group interviews with staff

- How long have you worked at Enkal Vanoli?
- What was your work background before starting work here?
- What do you see as the role of community radio?
- Who is your audience? How do they engage with your programmes?
- What do audience members say they like or dislike about your programmes?
- Has an interaction with a listener ever influenced the way you work? (E.g. Have they provided an idea for a programme that you have used?)
- In what ways do you think Enkal Vanoli engages with its listeners? (Events, interviews, personal conversations?)
- How do you personally feel like you engage with your listeners through your work?
- Do you feel as though Enkal Vanoli contributes to building a sense of community among its listeners? Why do you feel that way?
- Do you think that Enkal Vanoli contributes to development within the community? In what ways?

One-on-one interview with station manager

- What sort of feedback mechanisms are in place at Enkal Vanoli?
- What are the main ways that content is sourced?
- Who are the volunteers? How many are there? How are they recruited?
- What role does the local community have in the production/presentation of the programmes?
- How significant is the influence of the parent organisations on how the station runs?
- What do you consider to be the biggest challenge facing Enkal Vanoli?
- Can you think of a time when you feel like Enkal Vanoli has listened to the community and responded to their needs?
- Can you think of a time when this didn't happen? Why?
- How do you think Enkal Vanoli listens to their audience? Does this impact on the content and the way you work?

Listener focus group discussions

- How often do you listen to the community radio station? For how long?
- What are you doing while you listen? (Working/cooking/childcare/focussed on listening)
- What was the last show you listened to?
- Do you discuss what you hear on the radio with your friends/family?
- Have you ever visited the station?

- Have you ever been in contact with the station? How? (Feedback, events, talk back, existing relationships with station staff)
    - Can you tell us about these interactions? What were the results of these interactions?
- Do you feel as though the station broadcasts material that is relevant to you?
- Do you feel like you can relate to the broadcasters? Do you feel they represent you? Why?
- Do you think that Enkal Vanoli contributes to community development? In what ways?

Storytelling
- Can you introduce yourself? Tell your story (age, from, family, education, work, etc.).
- Tell the story of how you found Enkal Vanoli
- What is the first program you can remember listening to? What did you think of it?
- Have you ever visited Enkal Vanoli? If so can you tell the story of your first visit? If not, why?
- Have you ever produced content/participated in content-creation (interviews etc) for Enkal Vanoli? If so, can you tell the story of the production you are most proud of? If not, why?
- Have you ever heard anything on Enkal Vanoli that informed your actions?
- Do you recall any programmes that had a direct impact on you or someone or something in your community?

Appendix 3: Translator debrief interview

- Tell me about your own research. What sort of methodology/theoretical worldview do you take on?
- You're currently guest lecturing, what classes/courses do you teach?
- What did you think of/know about community radio before we started this research?
    - Have you ever listened? Which stations?
    - Have you ever participated? How?
- Have your knowledge and opinions of community radio changed over the course of this research? How/why?
- What was the best part of this research for you?
- What was the worst, or most challenging part?
- How did you find working with the station staff? How about the interviewees?
- Was there anyone that was harder or easier to get along with/talk to?
- Your family is originally from the area of one of the stations, how did that affect your work there?
- What do you think are the most interesting/important issues/topics that arose throughout the course of the research?
- Is there anything else I should know/anything you want to add?